DRINK

IN

VICTORIAN NORWICH

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ABSTRACT

This thesis maintains that Victorian social cohesion depended to a significant degree on drink. In Norwich and other urban centres, population growth led to an expansion of the supply of alcoholic drink. Inadequate sanitation and water supply problems meant that beer answered a dietary need for a liquid that was safe to drink. Alcohol provided depressant comfort in the face of poverty and squalor for the working class. In these circumstances, most social and political functions were connected with the public house. Most public houses in Norwich experienced sufficiently long periods of publican stability to have played an important role in the development of working-class communities. At a time of acute housing problems, the public house provided both a public space and relief from squalor.

In Norwich and elsewhere, the urban elite used working-class dependence on drink to their own political advantage at election time through bribery, treating, and the control of organised gangs of 'roughs'. These traditional practices were eventually proscribed by the government at Westminster but proved difficult to eradicate in Norwich.

There was little overt interference with the infrastructure of drinking in Norwich. Although Norwich had the highest density of drinking places to population in England, the city could boast the lowest rate of drunkenness. This infrastructure was effective not least because brewers were key members of the urban elite and were influential in the Watch Committee that controlled the policing of the city. However, the Temperance Movement developed as a consequence of the challenge to traditional Christian ethics presented by the consumption of drink in this new urban context. By 1901, Norwich was becoming a more sober, compassionate and just society, but this was not due to the victory of Temperance but rather to a shift in the 'structure of feeling' that placed more emphasis on social responsibility.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EDP	*Eastern Daily Press*
NC	*Norfolk Chronicle*
NM	*Norwich Mercury*
NN	*The Norfolk News*
LVG	*Licensed Victuallers Gazette*
NHC	Norfolk Heritage Centre
NRO	Norfolk Record Office
UEA	University of East Anglia
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
CETS	Church of England Temperance Society
UKA	United Kingdom Alliance

PP	*Parliamentary Papers*
Drink	Brian Harrison, *Drink & the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815-1872* (second edition: Keele, 1994)
British Brewing	T.R. Gourvish and R.G. Wilson, *The British Brewing Industry 1830-1980* (Cambridge, 1994)
Lords Intemperance Report	House of Lords Select Committee, *Reports on Intemperance*, *PP* (1877): (12.), (12.-I.); (1879): (28.)
Hawkins	C.B. Hawkins, *Norwich: A Social Study* (London, 1910)
Steward & Patteson	Terry Gourvish, *Norfolk Beers from English Barley: A History of Steward & Patteson 1793-1963* (Norwich, 1987)
Wicks	Walter Wicks, *Inns and Taverns of Old Norwich (with Notes on Pleasure Gardens)* (Norwich, 1925)

First Register of Victuallers Licences	NRO, PS1/8/1, 'City of Norwich Register of Victuallers Licences 1867-1893'
Second Register of Victuallers Licences	NRO, PS1/8/2, 'City of Norwich Register of Victuallers Licences 1894-1925'
WCM	NRO, N/TC 7/1 – N/TC 7/16, 'Watch Committee Minutes Books', 1836-1901

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INTRODUCTION

DRINK IN NORWICH

IN THE VICTORIAN PERIOD

As a prelude to this introduction, three points require some attention: the choice of the Victorian period, the adoption of Norwich as the focus for research, and the emphasis given to beer as the particular drink under study.

Queen Victoria's reign provides an accepted period for an historical analysis but in some ways it is an arbitrary choice for the study of the significance of drink in the history of Norwich. There needs therefore to be a perspective in this thesis that is wider than these sixty-four years since the historical forces at work did not start in 1837, nor did they finish in 1901. Nevertheless, the selection of the Victorian period does provide an opportunity to highlight both important continuities and significant changes in society in relation to drink in Norwich.

The adoption of Norwich as the locus for the research may also seem to be arbitrary. However, the argument of this thesis is that understanding the role of drink in an urban centre like Norwich provides a number of insights that help make sense of what was happening within the nation. Comparisons and contrasts between Norwich and other

localities, in particular towns of similar size like Portsmouth in the south, and Bradford in the north, and larger cities like London, Liverpool and Manchester, have been made in order to add further support to the generalisations that have been advanced.

Beer, rather than spirits, was the main alcoholic drink of the working class in the Victorian period and the argument of this thesis will be that its consumption by the majority of the population had important social, economic and political consequences.

As a point of departure, it seems appropriate to provide in the introduction a social and economic overview of Norwich in the early Victorian period, set against its historical, topographical and demographical background, showing the dependence of the working class on the consumption of beer. With this perspective established, a view of Norwich in the late Victorian period will be presented, examining change and continuity and introducing the arguments in the thesis about how, and to what extent, the role of drink had changed by the turn of the nineteenth century.

Until the middle of the eighteenth century, Norwich was the second largest city in the country.[1] Norwich was also the largest manufacturing town, specialising in textiles, despite being a county town of gentry resort.[2] As a cathedral city with scores of parish churches, Norwich had a remarkable medieval past. It is possible to reconstruct a map of Norwich on the eve of the Black Death of 1348-49 that depicts a city of extraordinary size and complexity. Within an area some one and a half miles from north to south and one mile from east to west – larger than London and Southwark combined – lived a population of between 20,000 and 30,000. The population had recovered to reach these figures again by the early modern period.[3]

The expansion and prosperity of textile towns like Norwich had depended, until at least the 1780s, on hand spinning and handloom weaving and on the enterprise of merchant-manufacturers who organised and financed increasingly elaborate and extensive putting-out systems within the urban centre. Urban locations like Norwich offered advantages in access to markets, merchants, services, and labour supplies, particularly of skilled labour, that outweighed the cheaper labour of cottage and village industry.[4] From the 1780s, though, Norwich was competing in a market economy shaped by a nascent factory system and northern entrepreneurs. The future prosperity of Norwich would require a more diversified urban economy that utilised the pool of relatively cheap labour that the increase in its population provided.[5]

The influence of the topography of Norwich in its rural eastern England setting helped shape a number of distinctive features in its social, administrative and economic life that are significant in this study of drink. The city was a natural centre for transport by road and also by water, situated on the banks of the river Wensum close to its confluence with the river Yare, the latter providing a navigable outlet for small craft to the sea at Yarmouth. Its hinterland comprised some of the most fertile and profitable agricultural land in the country and thus a plentiful supply of barley for malting for the production of beer. Norwich, in 1837, continued to have a remarkable and singular provincial importance. It was the capital of the county of Norfolk, but also had a separate status first as the county of the city of Norwich since Henry IV had placed the city under the exclusive jurisdiction of its own corporation in 1403, and then as the parliamentary and municipal borough of Norwich after the Reform Acts of 1832 and 1835. Its industrial status and role as an agricultural market for its hinterland had helped produce considerable wealth and meant

that Norwich was the largest city on the eastern side of England. With a medieval cathedral, Norwich was also the see of an extensive bishopric.[6] Norwich was likely to have seemed a rather self-sufficient city to many among its social and economic elite in 1837, even as its textile industry struggled.

Although Norwich was nearly one hundred and ten miles from London, and around eighty miles from Peterborough, the nearest major town on the main north-south route, this isolation had not mattered in the past.[7] The pride of Norwich citizens in their history perhaps blinded some to the realities of the present. Whites's *Norfolk Directory* in 1845 recorded that:

'Norwich was one of the largest cities in England, and perhaps the most important as respects its manufactures … no place in England, Manchester excepted, has made a more distinguished figure in the weaving trade than the city of Norwich.' [8]

Such proud if perverse provincialism was a particular feature of the outlook of a section of Norwich society at the beginning of the Victorian period, leaving its mark among some of the urban elite for much of the reign even as the physical isolation was ended through the railway transport revolution in the early Victorian period.[9]

The demographic trends in the nineteenth century are of critical importance in this study of drink. By 1801, the population of Norwich had been officially recorded at 36,238 and the pressure for development outside the city walls was just beginning.[10] The only suburban development prior to the late eighteenth century was Heigham Street to the west, a small medieval suburb, and Pockthorpe to the east, which was probably established in the sixteenth century. It was within the framework of the medieval city that the working-class majority had lived and drank until only a few decades before the accession of Victoria.[11] In 1801, assuming a similar ratio of drinking places to population as in the published figure

for 1873, that is 1:121, there was likely to have been around 300 drinking places mainly within the walled city to support a resident population of 36,000 that would increase significantly on market days as travellers came from within walking or riding distance of the city to buy and sell produce and savour city life.[12]

By the early Victorian period the population had nearly doubled, reaching nearly 62,000 in 1841 and rising to just over 68,000 in 1851.[13] This significant demographic change occurred at the same time as the economic conditions that underpinned its manufacturing dominance were being eroded. Yet the city did seem able to support its population increase even if there were periods of crisis when unemployment and hardship led to problems of social control.[14] Textiles, although facing the chill of competition from the north, did adapt and survive in a reduced form. When the industry was the focus for a special report to the Royal Commission in 1839 on the handloom weavers, the trade was described as 'considerable though decaying'. [15] Industrial diversification was already apparent. Between 1840 and 1850, as the old industries reorganised and adapted, new industries like the manufacture of ready-made boots developed and absorbed the surplus labour.[16]

The increase in population in Norwich is significant but needs to be examined in the context of national trends. The population of England had begun to rise from the 1740s onwards in a sustained and incremental growth. From 5.7 million in 1750, it reached 8.6 million by 1800 and 16.5 million by 1850.[17] Demographic change in Norwich that had seen the population nearly double in the first half of the nineteenth century is on a par with

the national averages, although the increase was less smoothly incremental and very different from the experience of the industrial cities and some ports. Between 1801 and 1811, and again between 1831 and 1841, there had been little increase in population at all.[18] As in the nation, so in Norwich, the consequences of this population increase for all aspects of public life were profound. The urban elite in Norwich was faced with the challenge of governing a society that was more numerous and more difficult to control with thousands living in poverty and hardship, subject to economic movements which seemed resistant to human manipulation. Similarly, within the nation, the government attempted to respond to the pressures caused by the millions whose terrible living and working conditions challenged the sense of compassion and justice inherent in the Christian morality of the governing classes. This study of drink indicates how those in power, within Norwich and elsewhere, were able, in their pursuit of good government, to use the dependence of the working class on the consumption of beer to help keep social order and control. Drink did bring social problems and drunkenness was a major issue; a temperance movement developed that had important political consequences. But for most of the elite, in Norwich and elsewhere, at both the beginning and the end of the Victorian period, there was a justifiable sense that they and the working classes were better off with drink than without.

The reality facing those who governed city or nation was that drink supply expanded to match the demand from an increase in population. Within Norwich, the pressure from the rise in population in the first half of the nineteenth century not only led to the further development of Pockthorpe and especially Heigham, the two suburbs already established beyond the city walls, but also the growth of new suburbs at Lakenham, Thorpe, Eaton and

Trowse. Inside the city walls, pressure on land intensified producing more infilling of available space through the building of courts and yards behind and between existing houses, particularly those that fronted the main routes into and out of Norwich.[19] Predictably, the number of drinking places increased to satisfy the needs of this enlarged working-class population.

The public house was a social necessity that became ever more important as the population increased.[20] Beer answered a dietary need for a liquid that was safe to drink in a society where an alternative like tea only became affordable and acceptable to increasing numbers later in the century. Its alcoholic content brought a temporary relief from the difficulties of life, as did the special character of the drinking place that served as the centre for urban recreation for many. Drink provided a means of helping society absorb the pressures of population increase. Early Victorian social cohesion may owe as much to the supply and consumption of beer as to any legislation passed by parliament or any measure agreed by a town corporation.

In Norwich, new opportunities for brewers were opened up, issues of social control were highlighted, and attention concentrated on the efficiency of the police force founded in 1836. Rich and powerful brewers such as Peter Finch and Richard Bullard became involved in issues of local government out of a sense of civic duty and in order to protect the business interests of their family breweries. Their particular concerns, however, were shared by a much wider community; issues like social order and policing, and sanitation and water supply, were emerging in the early years of Victoria's reign as matters of public importance that national and local government had to address. This identification of the

brewing interest with key issues of social importance further highlights the significance of drink in early Victorian society.

What does a social and economic overview of Norwich in the late Victorian period reveal about change and continuity in relation to the role of drink? A comparative analysis of the 1851 and 1881 census returns provides significant evidence of the degree to which the supply and consumption of drink continued to have a direct relationship with further population increases and movements. It also indicates the continuing and substantial social and economic importance of the drinking place in Norwich. Drink remained a vital force for social cohesion. Yet the paradox was that by this late Victorian period, the alcohol question was polarising society. Drink had become a political issue that divided national parties, and a religious issue dividing Christians within and between denominations. The Conservative party had become associated with the brewing interest and were seen as defenders of the drink trade. The Liberal party had an influential section devoted to temperance in varying degrees but agreed on the need to limit 'the evil' of drink. Non-conformists were usually identified with the temperance movement and with the Liberal party; Anglicans too had their temperance advocates but generally were more likely to favour the drink trade and support the Conservative party.

Yet the argument of this thesis is that drink did remain an instrument of social cohesion. Until such time as national and local government developed the ideologies and political will to address effectively the degrading conditions in which significant numbers of the working class lived and worked, the consumption of alcoholic drink, generally in the form of beer, remained the most important form of working-class recreation and an important way of satisfying a dietary need for uncontaminated water. As we shall see, the formation of that new way of thinking within the governing classes was in part made possible by the

economic developments in the last two decades of the Victorian period that were bringing more diversification, greater consumer choice, better living conditions, improved health and less dependence on drink. The effects of the expansion in educational provision and the emergence of the professional were also contributory factors. Schooling, and the systematic application of rational thought to contemporary problems through professions like medicine and engineering, promised much as new forces for social cohesion.

With these alternative means of safeguarding social order, the governing classes were in time able to free themselves from the horns of the dilemma that industrialisation and urbanisation had produced. On the one hand, the supply and consumption of drink had satisfied vital needs for the working class and acted as a force for social cohesion; on the other hand, since drink could and did lead to drunkenness and was associated with poverty and crime, a significant temperance movement had evolved during the Victorian period. The governing classes became divided. But the social and economic forces that underpinned those divisive issues were beginning to fade in significance by the end of the Victorian period, although the extent of these changes should not be exaggerated. Poverty and drunkenness had not been eradicated and those who held power therefore still faced some issues of social control associated with destitution, criminality and drink.

Footnotes to the Introduction

[1] F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950* (3 vols., Cambridge, 1990), I, p.14.
[2] Thompson, *Cambridge Social History*, I, p.18.
[3] Brian Ayers, *Book of Norwich* (London, 1994), pp.63, 68. See Map Intro.1 (p.3, below) to appreciate the extent to which the development of Norwich by the late eighteenth century was still concentrated within the natural boundary of the river Wensum to the east and the medieval city walls in other directions.
[4] Thompson, *Cambridge Social History*, I, p.27.
[5] *Hawkins*, pp.1-11.
[6] White's *Norfolk Directory* (Sheffield, 1845), pp.49-50.
[7] Barry M. Doyle, 'Middle Class Realignment and Party Politics in Norwich, 1900-1932' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, UEA, 1990), p.28.
[8] White's *1845 Directory*, p.73.
[9] Frank Meeres, *A History of Norwich* (Chichester, 1998), pp.165-167.
[10] See below, p.6, Fig. Intro.1. Also, see Barbara Green and Rachel M.R Young, *Norwich: the growth of a city* (Norwich, 1981), p.29. Not until the decade 1791-1801 were all the city gates taken down on the grounds that they were obstructing traffic.
[11] The term 'working class' or 'working classes' is used throughout this thesis in a similar way to how it was first used in the early nineteenth century and by later historians. Whereas in the eighteenth century, the poor, labourers, and artisans were often referred to in the language of rank and orders, the intensification of capitalist relationships of production had led from the early nineteenth century to the increasing use of the term 'working class' or 'working classes' to identify such groups. See R.J. Morris, in John Cannon (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to British History* (Oxford, 1997), p. 1004.
[12] See below, p.8, Table Intro.1. It would seem that one key reason why Norwich had so many drinking places was because they served not only its residents but also those from outside the city who attended the markets.
[13] See above, p.6, Fig. Intro.1.
[14] White's *1845 Directory*, pp.72-73.
[15] *Hawkins*, p.3.
[16] A.D. Bayne, *A Comprehensive History of Norwich* (Norwich, 1869), p.582. Bayne gave the following example of such adaptation: 'The Albion Mills in King Street, were erected in 1836 and 1837, for the spinning of worsted yarns, in consequence of the great demand in Norwich … after the trade in worsted yarns declined, he [George Jay, the owner] imported mohair from Asia minor, and commenced the spinning of mohair yarns … while mohair goods were in demand'. Also see Christine Clark, 'Norwich at Work, 1800-1939', in Carole Rawcliffe and Richard Wilson (eds.), *A History of Norwich* (forthcoming). Clark argues that throughout the period of economic crisis, 'some sectors of the Norwich economy enjoyed more stable and prosperous conditions', and that the economy was 'revitalised' between 1860 and 1914.
[17] Cannon, *Oxford Companion*, pp.763-764.
[18] See above, p.6, Fig. Intro.1.
[19] Ber Street and King Street in the south and St.Martin's Street and Magdalen Street in the north are typical of these main routes. Drinking places proliferated in such situations,

serving both the needs of the residents in the courts and yards and the passing traffic along the main route. The *Eastern Evening News* in 1925, noted with reference to King Street: 'Fifty years ago [around 1875] there were 83 pubs and 3 breweries in King Street alone' (John Riddington Young, *The Inns and Taverns of Old Norwich* (Norwich, 1975), p.79).

[20] Brian Harrison, 'Pubs', in H.J. Dyos and Michael Wolff (eds.) *The Victorian City: Images and Realities* (London, 1973), pp.162-178, argued that the urban pub had three major roles in nineteenth century society: transport centre, recreation centre, and meeting place (pp.162-178) – and that its social significance was in its street location:

'The Victorian slum pub must be seen in the context of street-life. All but the busiest streets at that time united rather than divided the community … (p.169)'.

Harrison made a plausible parallel with street-life in the mid-twentieth century by quoting (p.169) the sociologists M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Class in a London Suburb* (London, 1960):

'(In working class areas) the emphasis is not so much on the individual home, prized as this is, as on the informal collective life outside it in the extended family, the street, the pub and the open-air market'.

CHAPTER 1

DRINK AND SOCIAL CONTROL

A review is presented in this chapter of the academic literature concerned with issues of social history, drink, and urban development in the Victorian period. These writings include a focus on two concepts – the 'urban elite' and 'social control' – that together help to provide a heuristic structure for the argument in this thesis. My concern in developing this argument has been to incorporate one of the important lessons of the 'new cultural history': to keep the focus on how people actually put together and made sense of what they were experiencing. In part, I do this to try to avoid explanations that depend on conceptual structures that are too rigid and therefore lacking in subtlety and depth. As this literature review will suggest, social history can be made less effective through too formalised an approach.

At the heart of this analysis, there is the key idea that the issue of 'drink' was one of the major and defining concerns of Victorian society. Already, in the Introduction, a case has been made that drink played an important role in Norwich throughout the Victorian period. Now, within this chapter's framework of a literature review and the focus on the 'urban elite' and 'social control', the argument is made that the regulation of drink, drinking and drinkers by the elite citizens of the city of Norwich was an exercise in social control that

helped lead to social cohesion. This idea has helped shape the argument in each of the other eight chapters in this thesis and their content is also outlined here.

The significance of drink in Victorian society still perhaps awaits a full appreciation by historians. The advent of the 'linguistic turn' in the 'new cultural history' may provide an opportunity for such a reassessment, even if the conceptual structures that Patrick Joyce employed may seem overblown at times. His emphatic message that social history should be about how people make meaning needs recognition and respect.[1] Joyce developed the concept of the 'linguistic turn' to argue that 'language' may be taken as a 'shorthand for all kinds of sign systems that inevitably extend to material life and practices'. By this he meant that 'language' becomes synonymous broadly with how people articulate the meanings they make in life through words and actions. It is in this sense that 'language becomes the proper model for culture'. This is the key insight of the 'linguistic turn' and the 'language revolution' of the twentieth century. It then follows that the historian's hermeneutic task is to discover and explain more about how people went about 'the central human activity of the making of meaning'. Joyce concluded that this perspective might help 'revitalise social history'; I hope, at least, that my emphasis on the importance of focussing on how people made sense of their experiences – the similarities and the differences - may help shed more light on the role of alcohol in the Victorian period.

Certainly, the historian is brought face to face with one aspect of this 'central human activity of the making of meaning' when confronted with the task of explaining the density of drinking places in Norwich in particular, and more generally the proliferation of such licensed houses in the nineteenth century as urban populations increased. Why should so much meaning have been made through drink and drinking places? There are 465 drinking places named on the twenty-four sheets of the first *Ordnance Survey of Norwich* in 1883,

providing the visual evidence for a licensed house at least every few hundred yards in most areas.[2] Yet nearly two hundred licensed drinking places are not even recorded on these maps. The first Register of Victuallers Licences detailed 530 houses that were licensed continuously during the period from 1867 to 1893 and in any particular year the figure was higher still.[3] A Memoranda section at the end of this first Register recorded that in 1886 there were 581 public houses (alehouses), 46 beerhouses, and 18 wine licences for 'refreshment houses'. Remarkably, it seems therefore that the figure for drinking places in Norwich in the late 1880s was around 645. However, I have settled on a figure of around 620 drinking places for the working class by excluding the places with wine licences and making a small allowance for the grander hotels whose customers would not have been working class.[4] A decade and a half earlier, it seems to have been slightly higher still. Statistics from the *Lords Intemperance Report* in 1877 indicated that Norwich had the highest density of drinking places to population in the country, with one licensed house to every 121 persons in 1873. If the statistician had estimated a population in 1873 of around 82,000, then the total number of drinking places would have been around 675.[5] Again, it needs emphasising that the customers in most of these drinking places were exclusively the working classes who comprised at least three-quarters of the population of Norwich in the late Victorian period.[6] These statistics and issues are examined further in Chapter 2: Drink and Population Change, where an argument is made that developments in drink supply were linked with complex population changes and that, within Norwich as elsewhere, drink helped society absorb the pressures of an overall population increase.

In relation to a 'new cultural history' that places the emphasis on exploring ways of 'making meaning', the significance of the above statistics for earlier historians may perhaps have been obscured by cultural familiarity with drink and drinking habits.

Certainly, for those Victorian contemporaries who identified with the temperance way of making meaning they had a profound if dismal significance. Yet other contemporaries from the middle and upper classes, sharing similar backgrounds and education, could avoid making that meaning. Instead, this section of the urban elite in Norwich could turn to other statistics taken from the same *Lords Intemperance Report* in order to congratulate themselves and the citizenry for having fewer arrests for drunkenness than any other borough.[7] Rationality and reasoning were exercised within parameters defined by prior convictions. The world of drink, drinkers and drinking places was 'experienced' in manifestly different ways by people within the same broad grouping: the urban elite of Norwich.

Why then did it seem reasonable to many, although not all, of the urban elite – and to most of the working-class majority – to have so many drinking places in Norwich, and indeed in other urban centres throughout the nation? (Norwich was different only in degree of density and not in kind.) A way of teasing out an answer is to explore a converse position: it would have seemed unreasonable if this number had not been licensed. In other words, the numbers of drinking places were in a direct and rational relationship to the need for them. For a variety of reasons that will be elaborated in this thesis, those who drank in such places were a majority of the working classes and for these men – and numbers of women too - the drinking place provided a number of ways of making meaning in life.[8]

At the same time, many but by no means all of the urban elite were participants on the supply side of the drinks trade, owing part of their wealth and power either directly, in the case of the brewers and the farming interest, or indirectly in the case of others through share-holding or other investments, to the barley, malting, brewing, liquor-retailing nexus.

Only towards the end of the Victorian period did a general consensus emerge that the supply of drinking houses had now outstripped demand, leading to the closure, with compensation, of the least profitable drinking places from 1904 after the brewers had brought pressure to bear on the Conservative government to pass the Licensing Act of that year.[9]

It was reasonable for the working classes to need drinking places.[10] They made their meaning in life in response to experiences shared across the labouring classes wherever and whenever industrialisation and urban growth had taken place. They were poor. They lacked the educational opportunity of those in the middle and upper classes. They lived and worked in conditions that could endanger their health. They therefore consumed alcoholic drink as their main leisure-time activity, both for the depressant comfort it brought as a drug, and for the associated social comforts of the drinking place that for many became their 'local', with its identifying features: the publican, the other 'regulars', its specific brews, its particular ambience. These drinkers are the people who constitute the 'issues' and 'problems' for those in the urban elite who did not share their way of living and who experienced a range of feelings, from scruples about the absence of Godliness and decency in such working class ways of life, through to fear of social and political turmoil in response to such conditions.

If the historian is to do justice to the task of explaining how the majority of a city population made meaning in their life then his heuristic journey will be through a landscape defined by the public house and beerhouse. When the temperance maxim: 'Drink is the curse of the working classes' was subverted by the drinking wit to read: 'Work is the curse of the drinking classes', more than a measure of truth was captured. The

majority of the working classes in Norwich, as elsewhere, laboured not for intrinsic satisfaction but in order to earn enough money for food, clothing and shelter and then to be able to enjoy a brief period of leisure with the comfort and security provided by alcoholic drink and the companionship and activities to be found in a drinking place that was likely to be less squalid than home.[11] In Chapter 3: Drinking Places and their Importance, I argue that the social importance of the public house remained throughout the Victorian period, even though its political importance did grow less towards the end of the reign. Indeed this social importance may even have deepened because the public house played a pivotal role in the accelerating diversification in leisure-interests in the later Victorian period. The public house provided personal and social meaning for most of the working-class majority of the population of Norwich, serving as one of the key elements in the working of the local economy, and, not least, acting as a critical agency for social cohesion. In this late-Victorian period, the great majority of the 650 drinking places in Norwich were owned and controlled by a handful of wealthy brewing families who in turn were key figures in the urban elite of the city. These public houses can indeed be regarded as bastions of social order. In effect, they served as instruments of social control albeit in a subtle and scarcely acknowledged fashion.

There is an historical problem in that we lack the qualitative evidence to draw too many hard conclusions about life in the drinking place but this should not prevent plausible speculation that can then be tested as far as is possible. The importance of the drinking place in the development of urban communities is in fact open to some lines of investigation that are rigorous and telling. My analysis of the Registers of Victuallers Licences indicated that a significant number of the publicans and their public houses would have played an important role in the development of working-class communities in

Victorian Norwich. In Chapter 4: Publicans and Social Cohesion, I present an argument that the majority of public houses experienced sufficiently long periods of publican stability for those drinking places to function as agencies of social cohesion. Furthermore, the phenomenon of publican instability was concentrated in only a small number of public houses and even these 'difficult' drinking places experienced a remarkable shift to greater publican stability in the last two decades of the Victorian period, thus further reinforcing the thesis that publicans and public houses served as key agencies of social cohesion within working-class communities and therefore within the whole population of Norwich, viewed as a polity under the overall control of its urban elite.

A further social dynamic was at work, reinforcing the need for drink and helping explain the remarkable number of drinking places. The working class 'made their meaning' at a basic survival level by seeking to avoid, in so far as they could or knew how, illness and death. Experience had taught them that beer and spirits were safe liquids to drink whereas water was not. Paradoxically, the temperance drink maps of Norwich that were published in the last three decades of the century, although intended to be propaganda in the war against drunkenness, may now be seen to have another unacknowledged dimension: they were also health maps indicating the locations where it was safe to drink to satisfy dietary needs. Norwich was a chronically unhealthy city for most of the working class in the early Victorian period and remained so for very many. At least 16,000 out of 75,000 working class within Norwich at the end of the Victorian period remained dependent on boiled or fermented liquid. Culturally, beer was still the preferred – and relatively cheap – option. In Chapter 5: Drink and Public Health, I develop an argument that links the unsanitary living conditions and absence of safe drinking water supplies with the need for drinking places offering alcoholic drinks. The temperance movement's concern to highlight the un-

healthiness of drinking to excess is also examined as a prescription for an alternative re-ordering of industrial society by sections of the elite.

The historian is concerned to explain how all sections of society 'made their meaning' in their life, in whatever sphere, be it religious, moral, social, economic, or political. Such an explanation needs to take into account how each section 'made sense' of the existence of the other sections in society. In the Victorian context and using the contemporary terminology of 'classes', it is important to evaluate how the middle and upper classes responded to the ways in which the working classes made their meaning. It should be no surprise, therefore, that the issue of drink was an important defining element in how meaning was made for those with wealth and power. On some occasions, the historian cannot fail to see this reality. When, for instance, Gladstone observed that 'We have been borne down in a torrent of gin and beer' in order to explain why his Liberal party had been defeated in the 1874 General Election, there is a clear glimpse of the interface between the drinking way of life of many of the recently enfranchised working classes and the political fortunes of the elite.[12]

Similarly, the historian of the new police forces that were developed in the Victorian period also needs to focus on how those in the urban elite who were members of the Watch Committees responsible for these police forces responded to the enforcement of the laws relating to drink, drinking and drinking houses, and how they dealt with the issue of drinking on duty by the working class members who constituted the police forces. In Chapter 6: Drink and Public Order, my argument emphasises how little the urban elite interfered with the infrastructure of drinking in Norwich, whilst congratulating themselves, with some justification, on their increasing control over the drinking habits of both the working-class majority and those working-class members of the police force that the elite

had set up as an agency of social control. Drink had been developed, effectively if often less than knowingly, as an instrument of public order, whatever the claims of the Temperance movement concerning its dreadful personal and social consequences.

Yet the responses of the middle and upper classes, although sharing values like duty and deference and increasingly sobriety, were not homogenous. There were deep divisions within these groups over the issue of drink. At one end of the spectrum, there were those who occupied the 'Hands off the Poor Man's Beer' position of the brewers and related trades. In Chapter 7: Brewers and Social Cohesion, I analyse the economic relationship between the 650 licensed houses of late Victorian Norwich and its brewing firms who supplied beer to nearly all and who owned the great majority. My argument concludes that brewers and the brewing industry occupied one of the most important interfaces between the urban elite and the working-class majority and in effect they too acted as agencies of social cohesion. Brewers were key members of the local government of that elite and had influential roles within the Watch Committee, the employer of the Police Force, as well as within committees concerned with public facilities like the provision of water, sewerage and waste disposal. For two generations, members of particular brewing families felt called by a sense of duty and business acumen to involve themselves in the polity of Norwich. The policies they helped shape may now seem in many instances to lack vision and to appear to be penny-pinching and lacking in an understanding of community needs. Yet these brewers were gentlemen of the elite, prominent figureheads whose family names were displayed on public house signs across Norwich. Their insistence on the values of deference and conservatism reinforced the social control exercised by the elite and so further deepened the social cohesion that had been in part developed by the consumption of the beer they brewed and the attractions of the drinking houses they supplied and owned.

The prohibitionist stance was at the other end of the spectrum of responses to the issue of drink within the elite. In Chapter 8: The Temperance Movement, I trace how this movement, itself split between teetotallers and moderationists, became significant in Norwich and remained so through the Victorian period as a consequence of the challenge to traditional Christian ethics presented by the consumption of drink in a new industrial and urban context. Those who had wealth and power and shared a Christian faith argued and divided over the drink issue and by the 1870s this polarization was reinforced by a political division between a Liberal Party that had become associated with Temperance and a Conservative Party now supported by the Drink Interest. My argument concludes that those in the elite who made their meaning through wanting to see a more sober society that was healthier, more compassionate and more just, did have a measure of success - but not through the victory of Temperance. It was instead through a shift in the 'structure of feeling' at the end of the Victorian period that saw a wider sense of community and social responsibility becoming more acceptable within the ranks of the middle and upper classes.

This diversity of outlook within the elite is one that the practitioner of the 'new cultural history' would expect. Patrick Joyce, following Cornelius Castoriadis, argued that our concepts of 'society' and the 'social' are the outcome of the 'social imaginary', that is they are derived from the way in which people put their experiences of life together. Different individuals, albeit from similar broad categories of 'class', will 'constitute' the world in sometimes remarkably polarised ways. Joyce insisted that the reality of fantasy and the unconscious must be acknowledged and that therefore:

'those many forms of the symbolic, such as religion, which have been seen as epiphenomenal or secondary, now become fundamental to understanding how society has become conceived'.[13]

Certainly, the religious imperative was evident in the language of many individuals in the

Temperance movement. The Victorian elites made their meaning from a kaleidoscopic cluster of experiences comprising a whole gamut of economic, religious, moral, social and political features. It is hardly surprising that their attitudes to the issue of 'drink' should be as varied as they were, but always 'drink' remained as a defining issue on which it was imperative to have a position. In Chapter 9: Drink and Politics, I argue that a culture shaped by drink provided the context for local and parliamentary elections in Norwich almost throughout the Victorian period. Electoral corruption, associated with drink, served as a means of social control. For a while, the increase in the franchise actually led to an increase in such corruption. From the 1870s, there was a polarization within the ranks of the wealthy and powerful and an increasing identification of the Liberal Party with the temperance cause and the Conservative Party with the Drink Interest. Only at the end of the Victorian period did the traditional politics that that been shaped by deference, social control and drink begin to give way to one more informed by professionalism, democratic representation and sobriety. Only then did social cohesion become less dependent on drink.

Viewed from the perspective of this 'new cultural history', some of the conceptual thinking within the literature that that been concerned with the 'urban elite' and 'social control' may seem problematic because of its use of categories that do not do justice to the complexities of human interactions. Indeed, the unease with the conceptual underpinnings of some recent developments in social history stretch back two decades. F.M.L. Thompson [14], in his critical appraisal of the body of recent literature on social control that had appeared in the previous decade [15], made a telling case for a more balanced and subtle use of the concept. The values and institutions of working-class culture in 1900 were indeed different from those of 1800 not simply because 'middle-class values' had been imposed on the workers through 'cunning…manipulation' but because these new 'working-class values' had been

‘developed through selection and adaptation to the changing environment, by the worker, for the workers.’ [16]

Thompson’s central argument was that in the course of the nineteenth century there was a process of social transformation that produced ‘a social order at least roughly appropriate to an urban, industrial, capitalist society’. [17] How had this happened? Defining ‘social control’ in a specific and restricted sense to refer to ‘efforts which induced people to behave willingly and “voluntarily” in ways that the guardians of law and order deemed conducive to law and order’, Thompson made the case that such efforts had indeed been largely successful and that this factor needed to be part of any explanation.[18] However, even more important, was the response of those targeted for reformation. ‘By accepting, rejecting, absorbing, adapting, distorting, or countering the wares on display’, the working class majority itself played a critical part in the way in which the social transformation occurred.[19] Their responses, in turn, need to be examined in the context of underlying structural changes during the nineteenth century. These Thompson outlined as the impact of the work situation, with its disciplines of punctuality and routine (leading to the factory as the centre of local communities, with the factory master as their focus [20]); the law enforcement of the new, larger, professional police forces; the economic growth, improvement in living standards, and the increasing availability of the goods and services which now became affordable for some of the working class and led to the dynamic of emulation; the improvement to a degree in public health, housing conditions, and civic amenities; and the effect of poor law rules and practices as ‘goads to maintain respectability and avoid the stigma of the workhouse’. But, above all, it was ‘self-respect, self-help, and self-discipline - the autonomous or independent evolution of working-class culture’ that constituted the key explanation for such a harmonious social transformation.[21]

Thompson's highlighting of the degree of working-class autonomy, although perhaps inflating that independence, also provides the multi-dimensional perspective essential for an adequate explanation of social history.[22] Crucially, it is a view that suggests the importance of the interface between different social groups through which the meanings and resolutions were 'negotiated' that then ensured Victorian 'society' did in the long term produce that 'roughly appropriate' social order. This analysis of the importance of drink in Norwich shares such a perspective; my argument is that the interface between the brewer (as employer, brewer, and member of the urban elite) and the worker (as employee, drinker, and member of the working class) did seem to lead to social cohesion.[23] It follows that the drinking places of Norwich can be viewed as the territory where the interface was transacted, with the publicans of these public houses and beerhouses serving a critical role as agents of social cohesion.[24] The connection between drink, social order, and social control can be taken further still. Joyce and Thompson had seen 'work' as the central experience of the working classes and so could be presented as 'the supreme instrument of social control, manifest more as the agent of community formation than of class domination'. [25] My analysis would suggest that drink in its turn may be seen as another central experience of the working classes, and so, following a parallel argument, drink too may be presented as a most significant instrument of social control in this broad sense of furthering community formation within the general sweep of social transformation.

My emphasis on the importance of the interface between the classes is to be found in Donajgrodzki (1977), too. Thompson's critical overview perhaps does less than justice to the subtlety of thought apparent in Donajgrodzi's 'Introduction' [26], in which he argued that:

'One general advantage (the concept of social control) possesses is its assertion that the cultural forms of social systems are formed in a process of interaction. Sometimes in the

past, the history of … the middle or working classes has been written from a standpoint which has failed to recognise this. … it may be anticipated that it will be in the study of the relations between rich and poor that such an approach will have most immediate value.' [27]

Donajgrodzki developed this idea of the importance of the interface by arguing that during the nineteenth century there was a critical shift in the nature of the actual mechanisms of social control. At the beginning of the century, control was exercised in the context of personal relationships, either informally or through institutions. By the end of the century, control was 'increasingly mediated, at one remove, through institutions'. In other words, paternalism was beginning to give way to bureaucratic authority.[28] Such a thesis needs careful scrutiny; it would be a mistake to underestimate the continuing strength of paternalism right up to the First World War. Yet clearly society was becoming more bureaucratised and more professional and Donajgrodzki's stimulating question remains to be answered: How and why did such a transition prove possible, even easy? [29] I would like to suggest that drink provides an important part of the explanation. The drinking place was a vital interface between classes and gave meaning and comfort to those who at times of economic crisis might have threatened to disrupt the relatively peaceful development of Victorian society.

If not Donajgrodzki, then others did present an over-simplistic case for embourgeoisement by social control, and Thompson's critique was able to open up a richer vein of analysis. Other practitioners, too, were beginning to sound notes of caution. John A. Meyer warned that 'Social control interpreters often do not address the … issue of whether the seemingly widespread social control measures were effective'. Precisely who was doing the controlling, for what reasons, and by what means often remained unclear issues. [30] The concept of social control had become the dominant paradigm in the United States for explaining not only the reform movements but also inter-class relationships from the

1830s. Within this model, industrialisation and urbanisation had produced a breakdown of communal and deferential authority patterns, and an economic and residential separation of classes – and generated the need for social control.[31] Meyer, however, argued that such generalisations confuse by clouding distinctions. Why, for instance, was there so much conflict within the middle classes over a number of the reforms? The social control concept needed to be refashioned, becoming as necessary both a narrower and a broader concept in order better to fit and explain particular situations.[32] On both sides of the Atlantic, by the mid-1980s, the customary use of this concept had been challenged and pointers established to a more effective usage.[33]

Patrick Joyce, in his later writings, has attempted to widen this corrective perspective even more. He has teased out the importance of the autonomy of all members of society, made evident in their own 'social imaginary' as each makes meaning of life through personal experience within a social landscape. Of course, there are intellectual dangers, as well as advantages, in this new emphasis on the language of the individual in some sense 'creating' the 'social'. It is, after all, the 'social' that helps shape the articulation of the personal experience. It may therefore be that the sense of the general historical movement will be harder to grasp and express. Understandably, there has been a fear that the 'real' world of the historian is under threat, through this critique of established concepts and procedures.[34] The 'immensely troubling ' message of post-modernist thought is that there is no centre that will serve as a fixed point for knowledge and action, yet this is a message that Joyce can also find 'immensely liberating'. [35] But it is a perspective not shared by perhaps the majority of social historians, as Joyce acknowledged.[36]

There is a sense in which I have to include myself in that majority. It would indeed be unfortunate and 'troubling' if the social insights of historians like Hugh Cunningham and Martin Daunton were to be diminished in a post-modernist world. Cunningham's research on working-class leisure and the links with social control helps underpin my analysis in Chapter 3 below, as does Martin Daunton's study of working-class housing.[37] I, too, would therefore see dangers in emphasising the individual at the expense of the social but do see a measure of liberation in breaking the hold of at least some of the older categories. The following review of the literature focussed on the concept of 'urban elite' indicates how a more rigid analytical approach has prevailed, relying on received categories of social classification, class and structure. Scant attention appears to have been paid to those like David Phillips [38] who concluded that 'historians working in the field are going to have to develop and test their own tools for the job' in the quest for a 'genuine model of historical explanation'. [39]

My own research has led me to recognise the value of both the concept of 'social control' and 'urban elite', but subject to important reservations. The 'social control' concept is useful when used in a sense similar to how Thompson advised: to refer to efforts by the elite to induce those below them in the social hierarchy to behave voluntarily as the elite wished. It is also useful to work with a definition that can encompass the role of the drinking place itself as an agency of social cohesion and therefore itself a factor in the process of social control. I have found the 'urban elite' concept valuable, but my use of the term differs from that of Richard Trainor: an historian whose research has contributed to an appreciation of the importance of those who exercised power in urban politics.[40] The justification for taking this singular path is rooted in my already expressed intention to learn one of the important lessons of the 'new cultural history': to keep the focus on how

people actually put together and made sense of what they were experiencing, and to avoid explanations that depend on conceptual structures that are too rigid and therefore lacking in depth and subtlety.[41] Further grounds for my critique will be established in the literature review that follows.

Richard Trainor made the important observation in the 1980s that it was only recently, after years of emphasis on the working class, that social historians had 'rediscovered the upper and middle classes' and recognised that elites within them have been 'major influences in urban society'. [42] He acknowledged that 'conflicting impressions of Victorian urban leaders' were emerging from this research field and distinguished between two types of historians. There were those who saw a pattern of what he termed 'positive continuity' within the Victorian period, with wealthy businessmen remaining dominant figures in urban politics, expanding local institutions and services, and in the later period gaining support from newly-enfranchised working men.[43] And then were others who saw a more 'negative' picture, identifying degrees of discontinuity at both the beginning of the period with its 'organizational vacuum' and towards the end as both Whitehall and the working class movement increased their power at the expense of the mid-Victorian leadership.[44] How could these apparently contrasting trends be reconciled? The conclusion Trainor offered after his survey of the literature was that on balance the 'positive' assessment was more justified as a generalisation.[45] Nevertheless, further research was necessary and these investigations needed to focus on the issues central to his own survey of the literature: the nature of 'the institutions, aims, recruitment, backgrounds, coherence, independence, methods and influence of local elites'. [46]

In his later study of Black Country elites and their exercise of authority [47], Trainor again faced the issue that is also addressed in this thesis. How can effective generalisations emerge from the study of a single area, especially given the highly varied regionalism of the economy with significant differences between districts in size, economic activity, and social structure? These variations were accentuated not only because contacts between districts, and with the metropolis, were limited by the time and expense involved in travel and communication, especially in the first half of the century before the railway network was established, but also because of the decentralised tradition of national government which meant that Victorian towns exercised a measure of discretionary power in the adoption of 'permissive' national statutes for much of the century.[48]

The response of Trainor to such a question clearly places him in the category of historians whom Joyce saw as being caught up in inappropriate conceptual structures. Trainor seemed to accept that effective generalisations were more likely to emerge from an historical investigation buttressed by traditional 'precisions' and therefore followed 'much Victorian practice in employing a tripartite system of class division – into upper class, middle class, and working class – supplemented by subcategories … that allow for diversity within classes'. [49] He did acknowledge that, on the issue of the importance of class as an active force in nineteenth century Britain, Joyce had a 'much more qualified view'. [50] One could indeed anticipate that Joyce would view the social classification schema used by Trainor [51] as rigid and over-elaborated, presenting a descriptive order that was artificial and leading to a view of the urban elite that risked making the concept a reification as had happened to 'class structure'.

It is perhaps a truism that historians are in the business of producing 'effective generalisations'. There may be legitimate differences between practitioners like Trainor and Joyce as to what best constitutes the means to that end but one would expect general agreement that as many as possible of the 'particulars' in any historical situation need to be explored before the generalisation can be attempted. Nearly forty years ago, Asa Briggs made the point that:

'A study of English Victorian cities, in particular must necessarily be concerned with individual cases' since 'nineteenth-century cities not only had markedly different topography, different economic and social structures, and quite different degrees of interest in their surrounding regions, but they responded differently to the urban problems which they shared in common'. [52]

It may then follow that those engaged in the search for inclusive generalisations, whether about cities, or elites within those cities, or other communities that made up the populations of those polities, need to recognise the inherent limits and necessary qualifications of that search.[53]

In relation to the issue of drink, however, it does seem clear that drink was an integral part of working-class life throughout the nation, and the reasons for this seem common to all urban areas. There are also likely to be similarities in the responses of urban elites to the issue of drink. But there may well be differences too. How typical, for instance, was the involvement of Norwich brewers in urban politics? Teasing out answers to such questions requires the historian to work with both depth and breadth, recognising the insights of the 'new cultural history', with its emphasis on the 'particular' and its heuristic of analysing the way individuals put their experiences of life together, and at the same time respecting the importance of the comparative study and the need to keep a wider perspective.

It seems pertinent that the conclusions from Trainor's research into urban elites in the Black Country become most significant when they centre on the interface between the working class and the elite. Trainor has outlined the case that 'Black Country social leaders increasingly encouraged rather than imposed respectability'. [54] The reader might then justifiably expect the citing of more particular instances to support the argument (and instances that might tell against it) than are in fact given. An effective analysis of urban elites needs to provide a narrative of the relationship between the elite who hold the power and wealth and those who do not but still, through their thoughts and actions, help sustain the elite's status. The focus of Trainor seems too concentrated on the 'urban elite' itself which can only ever be a social construction of the historian.

A comprehensive examination of the urban elite in Norwich is beyond the scope of this present thesis, but the concept does have a value in the framing of my argument about the importance of drink in Victorian Norwich, provided a broad enough meaning is given to its definition. Trainor adopted a restricted meaning to include only those who held leadership posts in the major institutions, rejecting alternative criteria that would include: 'in addition to the upper class, all the especially well-off middle-class citizens, the "bourgeoisie"' [55]. My broader definition would be closer to the rejected alternative. Without becoming tied down in rigid categories, my concern is to explore the role of those with wealth and power with respect to the issue of drink in Norwich. These are my 'urban elite'. Men – and sometimes, if rarely, women – from that elite had views that they expressed and which were reported on the issues of drinking and temperance. Men from that elite made decisions that played a part in determining where and when and in what manner alcoholic drink would be consumed. In particular, it is significant that men who were responsible for making the alcoholic drink and dispatching it to its retail outlets for sale – the brewers of

Norwich – were also important figures within the urban elite and played their part in the decision-making of the polity which affected the drinking majority of the population of Norwich. By examining what these wealthy and powerful people said and did in relation to the issue of drink, we gain more understanding about how and why they went about 'making meaning', and also the nature of the drink issue in the Victorian period that had spurred them to react in their particular way.[56]

Why did the drink issue become so important in the Victorian period? This question lies at the heart of the analysis in this thesis.[57] Some of the factors that need to be taken into account have already been referred to: the sheer number of drinking places, not least in Norwich, in itself prompted a concern for regulation; the dependence of the majority of the working class on drink and drinking places for making meaning of lives that were often impoverished, wretched and unhealthy meant that drunkenness and disorder were always feared and the occasion for law and order measures; the willing acceptance by the majority of the elite of the infrastructure of drinking (again not least in Norwich where so few drinking places ever lost their licences), and its active support by brewers and investors, indicated that there were important social as well as economic reasons for its existence; and the turning against alcoholic drink by a significant minority in the elite as they prescribed, at different points on the temperance spectrum, alternative re-orderings of industrial society, often from an evangelical Christian position, provoked intense debate and further division.[58]

Yet underlying these factors is perhaps the most fundamental: alcohol is a mind-altering drug that for centuries had produced ambivalent responses from those with elite status and power. On the one hand, local government had long accepted the drug as a social fact of

life; so, too, had central government. Indeed, in the case of beer, the State had one occasion singularly encouraged its consumption. The Beer Act (1830) 'acknowledged the universal belief that consumption of beer (as opposed to spirits) was not harmful' and that 'in its wholesomeness, and the benefits it brought to British agriculture, beer production was to be encouraged'. [59] Nevertheless, it had also been long recognised that measures of control were needed to deal with the incapacity and disease produced by excessive drinking in general, and in particular the idleness and disorderly living that was identified with the 'lower orders'. Offences against life and property, and active and potential riot and rebellion, had long been viewed as social misbehaviours that required state and local government intervention. The primary purpose of such laws and law enforcement has been, as the Webbs expressed it nearly a century ago, 'to prevent the social disorder and personal misconduct brought about by excessive drinking'. [60]

The concerns of the urban elite in Norwich over excessive drinking and its consequences need to be examined in the context of more general anxieties about social disorder that were a feature of the nineteenth century and in particular its first half. The shadow of the French revolution at the end of the eighteenth century was a long one; the poor in 1789 had risen against those above them in the social hierarchy- and might conceivably do so in Britain. At Norwich, in May 1800, the mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen hastened to the market place in the city centre and reasoned with the crowd, assuring them that their grievances could be met without their resort to violence. In September, they had to repeat their promises with the crowds assembled around the New Mills.[61] Crowds were threatening, drunken crowds even more so in a society that depended on the practice of deference. The consumption of alcohol reduced inhibitions and could well lead to challenges to social hierarchy. The dangers were all the more keenly felt because one

effect of the Industrial Revolution had been to concentrate more people than ever before in urban centres. The population of Norwich had increased from around 37,000 in 1811 to around 75,000 in 1861 – a crude growth of 102.7 per cent. By 1911, the population was around 121,000 – a further crude growth of 61.3 per cent, indicating a relative slowing in the rate of population growth but still significant enough. [62] In a century, the population of Norwich had more than trebled.

Throughout this period, most of the population were poor – and most drank. The grounds for the anxiety of the urban elite were always there but were most apparent in the first half of the century during the period of most rapid growth in population, particularly at times of economic crisis. As unemployment rose, so too did the level of insecurity. The new-style police force in Norwich was set up in 1836, the same year as the Chartist movement began to develop and at the same time as the worst industrial depression of the century gripped the country. A collapsing textile industry and the constant threat of rural unrest combined to create a sense of menace. Four years later, Edwin Chadwick received a copy of the report of the Chief Constable of Norfolk, whose office was in the same building as the head of the Norwich police in the city, in which the link between 'problem individuals' and 'specific public houses and beer shops' is made explicit. Returns for both categories were included in the report and suggest that 'an intense invigilation over the most important of their meeting places' had been intended.[63] Even if it were doubtful whether such a watch was kept by the Norfolk police, it is indicative of a level of insecurity and an association between drinking houses and disorder that would have been shared, perhaps with even more justification, by those responsible for the Norwich police.

Since the 1550s, the State had addressed the potential disorders associated with drinking through a system of licensing victuallers in order to regulate and police the use of intoxicating liquors by the customers of inns, taverns and alehouses. Justices of the Peace were responsible for operating this licensing policy through the mechanisms of local government.[64] It was therefore urban (and rural) elites who controlled the regulation that helped allay the anxieties about excessive drinking and social disorder. Within Norwich, the magistrates who presided over the annual Brewster sessions served as a visible, institutional reminder that alcohol was a controlled drug. The boundaries for its use were delineated. As a last resort, a licence could be revoked. Those magistrates involved in such regulation and policing were members of the urban elite and representative of their majority view. They made decisions that determined where and when and in what manner alcoholic drink would be consumed within a framework of national legislation that became markedly more prescriptive only in the second half of the century. In Norwich, as already noted, very few licences were extinguished.[65]

Those members of the urban elite who had the responsibility of local government needed to ensure that the manufacture, the sale, and the consumption of this controlled drug proceeded in a regulated way that, on balance, worked to the advantage of society rather than to its detriment. Their ranks included a number of important brewers, although the vested interest of these brewers excluded them from membership of the licensing magistrates' bench. As was the case elsewhere, these 'city fathers' of Norwich did seem to get the balance more or less right. Paraphrasing Thompson, there was by Victoria's death a social order at least roughly appropriate to the needs of urban, industrial (and agricultural), capitalist Norwich. Their calculation, however, generally seems to have depended on a combination of gut feeling and vested interest rather than on more elevated reasoning. Yet

any objective assessment of the influence of drink on society was bound to be fraught with difficulty, not least because most of the urban elite drank regularly and therefore had themselves a degree of dependence on alcohol. It is difficult to be objective about the effects of a drug that was a taken-for-granted part of personal and social life.[66]

In analysing the actions and concerns of the urban elite, it is relevant to note that the Victorians used the term 'city fathers' in much the same way as I use 'urban elite'. This term became part of their linguistic currency because paternalism was such an important feature of Victorian society. It is also an important focus within my own argument. Central to this thesis is the idea of an interface between two broad groupings within the polity of Norwich, between those who had power and wealth, and those who did not. Norwich was no different from any other town or city in the sense that there were always identifiable leaders to whom others deferred as paternal-like authority figures. The values of duty and deference were central to the making of meaning for the urban elite and adopted in varying degrees by many in the working classes beneath them in the social hierarchy.[67] Although it remains a valid argument that 'there was no single Victorian England' [68], the urban elite of Norwich in 1901 at Victoria's death shared important characteristics with its counterpart in 1837 at her accession, not least in these consistent threads of paternalism, duty and deference that are apparent throughout the reign. Victorian society was shaped by the Judaeo-Christian emphasis on patristic authority and virtue and the consequent obligation of the children to respect and obey. It was also true that paternalism meant there were areas of responsibility for the 'city fathers'. They had a duty to look after the health, long-term welfare, and economic fortune of the 'lower orders'. [69] In some of these areas, the urban elite of Norwich may be judged as having failed to carry out their responsibilities.

To conclude, the historical study of drink in Norwich can indeed afford important insights into the Victorian world provided that the research remains true to the spirit of the 'new cultural history'. The local press and the surviving minute books of local government committees are indispensable sources in discovering and interpreting the way meaning was made by those within the urban elite and the working classes. Licensed victuallers' registers are also vital in so far as they provide the opportunity to draw conclusions about the length of residence of publicans. So too are the decennial census returns in that they offer the means of recreating socio-economic pictures over time of the areas served by the clusters of neighbourhood public houses and beerhouses within the communities of working class Norwich. Historical studies of drink, to quote Barrows and Room, 'are not simply pleasant distractions or antiquarian pursuits'. As they concluded, they can reveal much of the strangeness of our contemporary customs of drinking and can help 'chip away at our own preconceptions', in addition to illuminating the past.[70] The historical study of drink in this thesis offers a significant and neglected key to understanding how the process of social transformation in the Victorian world was achieved.

Footnotes to Chapter 1

[1] See Patrick Joyce, *Democratic subjects: The self and the social in nineteenth-century England* (Cambridge, 1994), pp.1-20, for an overview of the main features of the 'linguistic turn' and 'the new cultural history' that I have outlined in this paragraph. Also, see Patrick Joyce (ed.), *Class* (Oxford, 1995), pp.3-16.
[2] *Norwich within the Walls: 1883 survey*, A reprint at a reduced scale of 1:1250 of 24 sheets from the first 1:500 Ordnance Survey published 1884-5. See Appendix 1, pp.347-351 for four representative sheets from this survey. Also see Appendix 2, pp.352-353, for two Temperance 'drink maps' showing drinking places in Norwich in the late-Victorian period, and Appendix 3, pp.354-365, for photographs of late-Victorian public houses.
[3] First Register of Victuallers Licences.
[4] See above, p.8, Table Intro.1.
[5] *Lords Intemperance Report*, 1877, First Report, Appendix C: Table showing the proportion of licensed houses to population for nineteen boroughs with populations of over 50,000, north of Birmingham. The statistics are for the year ending 29 September 1873.
[6] Joseph Rowntree and Arthur Sherwell, *The Temperance Problem and Social Reform* (ninth edition: London, 1901), pp.9-10, calculated a national figure for the working class of 75 per cent of the total population in 1899 – see below, p.63.
[7] *Lords Intemperance Report*, 1877, First Report, Appendix C: Table showing the proportion of population taken up for drunkenness in the nineteen boroughs with populations of over 50,000, north of Birmingham. The statistics are for the year ending 29 September 1873. See also, *EDP*, 8 April 1879, for a report of the 3rd Annual Banquet of the Norfolk and Norwich Licensed Victuallers Association in which the sheriff of Norwich, the brewer Donald Steward, referred to these statistics and confirmed another 'quiet' year in which 'a very small number of 150 people were supposed to be drunk and incapable and of these only 100 were convicted. (Applause).' The mayor of Norwich, the brewer Harry Bullard, also alluded in his speech to the 'high position in which Norwich stood with regard to sobriety, a fact which completely rebutted the foolish rubbish of teetotallers when they asserted that the more public houses there were, the more drunkenness. Norwich had very many public houses and yet little drunkenness'. With brewers filling the offices of sheriff and mayor in 1879, their status within the urban elite of Norwich is evident.
[8] See above, pp.10, 14, note 20.
[9] *British Brewing*, pp.289-291.
[10] See above, pp.9-12.
[11] *Hawkins*, p.313, '… it still remains true that the public-house is the centre of social intercourse amongst working men in Norwich. Compared with larger cities the Norwich public-house is smaller and more home-like. There is a bar with room to sit down comfortably, and "smoke-room", or "porter-room" adjourning. This is used for small meetings, and there is often a larger room or hall behind.'
[12] John Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone* (2 vols., London, 1903), II, p.495.
[13] Joyce, *Class*, p.13.
[14] F.M.L. Thompson, 'Social Control in Victorian Britain', *Economic History Review*, 34 (1981), pp.189-208.
[15] See in particular A.P. Donajgrodzki (ed.), *Social Control in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London, 1977) and Philip McCann (ed.), *Popular Education and Socialization in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1977).
[16] Thompson, 'Social Control', pp.206-207.
[17] Thompson, 'Social Control', p.207.
[18] Thompson, 'Social Control', p.199.

[19] Thompson, 'Social Control', p.193.
[20] Thompson (p.195, note 14) drew attention to the 'most important and original treatment' in Patrick Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics: the Factory North of England in the second half of the Nineteenth Century* (Brighton, 1980) that pointed to this central role of the work experience in the making of meaning for the labouring majority.
[21] Thompson, 'Social Control', pp.195-196.
[22] David Taylor, *The new police in nineteenth-century England: Crime, conflict and control* (Manchester, 1997), p.3, recognised the validity of F.M.L. Thompson's critique of the indiscriminate use of the 'social control' concept, agreeing that 'used indiscriminately and uncritically, to explain everything, the concept explains nothing about social relations'.
[23] See above, p.23 and below, Chapter 7, Brewers and Social Cohesion.
[24] See above, pp.20-21 and below, Chapter 4, Publicans and Social Cohesion.
[25] Thompson, 'Social Control', pp.204-205.
[26] Donajgrodzki, *Social Control*, pp.9-26.
[27] Donajgrodzki, *Social Control*, pp.15-16.
[28] Donajgrodzki, *Social Control*, pp.21-22.
[29] Donajgrodzki, *Social Control*, p.22.
[30] John A. Mayer, 'Notes towards a Working Definition of Social Control in Historical Analysis', in Stanley Cohen and Andrew Scull (eds.), *Social Control and the State – Historical and Comparative Essays* (Oxford, 1983), p.19.
[31] Mayer, 'Definition of Social Control', p.17.
[32] Mayer, 'Definition of Social Control', p.22.
[33] Gareth Steadman-Jones, in his paper in *History Workshop*, 4 (1977), pp.162-170, reprinted as 'A Critique of Recent Trends in the Social History of 'Leisure'', in Cohen and Scull, *Social Control and the State*, pp.39-49, made the point even earlier in the late-1970s: 'it is not difficult to demonstrate that a casual usage of "social control" metaphors leads to non-explanation and incoherence' (p.42).
[34] See Joyce, *Democratic subjects*, p.7, notes 14 and 15, for references to historians critical of 'post-modernism': Bryan D. Palmer, *Descent into Discourse: The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History* (Philadelphia, 1990); Gertrude Himmelfarb, 'Telling It as you Like It: Post-Modernist History and the Flight from Fact', *Times Literary Supplement*, 16 October 1992; Geoffrey Elton, *Return to Essentials: some Reflections on the Present State of Historical Study* (Cambridge, 1992); Lawrence Stone, 'History and Post-Modernism', *Past and Present*, 131 (May 1991), pp.217-218, and Idem, 'History and Post-Modernism III', *Past and Present*, 135 (May 1992), pp.189-194.
[35] Joyce, *Democratic subjects*, p.6.
[36] Joyce, *Democratic subjects*, p.3: 'Whether class has fallen quite so far as some think is another matter: the hold of older categories is still strong in labour and social history, both in Britain and the US, for liberal as well as for left historians'.
[37] See below, pp.85-87 and pp.96-97, and in particular, H. Cunningham, 'Leisure and culture' in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950*, II (Cambridge, 1990) and H. Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution c. 1780-1880* (London, 1980); M.J. Daunton, *Councillors and tenants: local authority housing in English cities, 1919-1939* (Leicester, 1984), pp.2-8; Idem, *A Property-Owning Democracy? Housing in Britain* (London, 1987) and Idem, 'Introduction', pp.1-58, in Martin Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, III, 1840-1950 (Cambridge, 2000).
[38] David Phillips, ''A Just Measure of Crime, Authority, Hunters and Blue Locusts': The 'Revisionist' Social History of Crime and the Law in Britain, 1780-1850', in Cohen and Scull, *Social Control and the State*, pp.50-74.
[39] Cohen and Scull, *Social Control and the State*, p.68.

[40] See in particular, Richard H. Trainor, 'Urban elites in Victorian Britain', in *Urban History Yearbook* (Leicester, 1985), pp.1-17; Idem, *Black Country Elites: the exercise of authority in an industrialised area 1830-1900* (Oxford, 1993) and Idem, 'The Middle Class', in Daunton, *Cambridge Urban History III*, pp.673-714.
[41] See above, p.15.
[42] Trainor, *Urban elites*, p.1.
[43] Trainor, *Urban elites*, p.13, note 2, cited as examples: J. Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution* (London, 1974); D. Fraser, *Power and Authority in the Victorian City* (Oxford, 1979); E.P. Hennock, *Fit and Proper Persons: ideal and reality in nineteenth century urban government* (London, 1973) and P. Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics* (Brighton, 1980).
[44] Trainor, *Urban elites*, p.13, note 3, cited as examples: M.J. Daunton, *Coal Metropolis: Cardiff 1870-1914* (Leicester, 1977); J. Garrard, *Leadership and power in Victorian industrial towns 1830-1880* (Manchester, 1983); W.D. Rubinstein, 'Wealth, elites and the class structure of modern Britain', *Past and Present*, 76 (1977), pp.99-126. .
[45] Trainor, 'Urban elites', p.12.
[46] Trainor, 'Urban elites', p.1. However, the statement of these issues had taken a slightly different and subtler form by the time Trainor, 'Black Country Elites' was published in 1993, since here the argument was that: 'Investigating social leadership in the Black country requires consideration of the identity, aims, recruitment, background, internal cohesion, and outside interactions of the members of its local and district elites'.
[47] Trainor, *Black Country Elites*.
[48] Trainor, *Black Country Elites*, pp.15-16.
[49] Trainor, *Black Country Elites*, p.17.
[50] Trainor, *Black Country Elites*, p.17, note 73, in which P. Joyce, 'Work', in *Cambridge Social History*, III, p.192 and Idem, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1840-1914* (Cambridge, 1991) are cited.
[51] Trainor, *Black Country Elites*, Appendix 1, pp.385-390.
[52] Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London, 1963) quoted by P.J. Waller, *Town, City, and Nation: England 1850-1914* (Oxford, 1983), p.11.
[53] The Popperian insight applies in the historical field as in those of philosophy and science: the scientific (or historical) method should be informed by the search for evidence to disprove the hypothesis rather than confirm it. Brian Magee, *Confessions of a Philosopher* (London, 1997), pp.46-55, provides a guide to Karl Popper's intellectual significance. Magee concluded: 'Popper (realised) that scientifically we could never 'know', in the traditional sense, anything at all. The search for certainty that had been the central preoccupation of western philosophy since Descartes was an error: it was a search for something that it was logically impossible we could ever find … (Human knowledge) is what we have the best grounds at any given time for believing' (pp.52-53).
[54] Trainor, *Black Country Elites*, p.363.
[55] Trainor, *Black Country Elites*, p.18.
[56] The local press – the *Eastern Daily Press*, the *Norwich Mercury*, and the *Norfolk Chronicle*, in particular – provides a rich source. So, too, do the minutes books of the Watch Committee (NRO, N/TC 7/1 – 7/16).
[57] See above, pp.15-16.
[58] See above, pp.16-25.
[59] *British Brewing*, p.22.
[60] Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The history of liquor licensing principally from 1700 to 1830* (London, 1963, reprint from 1903), pp.4-5.

[61] C.B. Jewson, *The Jacobin City* (Glasgow, 1975), pp.99-100, quoted by John Stevenson, 'Social Control and the Prevention of Riots in England, 1789-1829', in Donajgrodzki, *Social Control*, p.44.
[62] Barbara Green and Rachel M.R. Young, *Norwich: the growth of a city* (Norwich, 1981), p.30; Waller, *Town, City and Nation*, p.10.
[63] A.P. Donajgrodzki, ''Social Police' and the bureaucratic elite: a vision of order in the age of reform', in Donajgrodzki, *Social Control*, p.72.
[64] *British Brewing*, p.5.
[65] See above, pp.18-19, and below, pp.203-207.
[66] See, in particular, *Drink*, Chapters 2 and 14.
[67] See, for example, Chapter 6 below and the analysis of the relations between the Watch Committee and its working-class police force. The values of duty and deference still held sway in 1901even though the working class had gained more rights as evident, not least, in the dramatic increase in the size of the local electorate.
[68] Asa Briggs, *Victorian People: some reassessments of people, institutions, and ideas and events, 1851-1867* (London, 1954), pp.12-13.
[69] John Kleinig, *Paternalism* (Manchester, 1983), p. xii.
[70] Susanna Barrows and Robin Room (eds.), *Drinking: Behaviour and Belief in Modern History* (Berkeley; Oxford, 1991), p.20.

CHAPTER 2

DRINK AND POPULATION CHANGE

In this chapter, the links between population movements and developments in the drink trade are explored, first in an analysis of the 1851 census returns that examines changes since 1801, and then through a comparative analysis of the 1851 and the 1881 returns.

The argument that drink supply expanded to meet the demand from an increase in population has already been outlined above.[1] It seems that the number of drinking places rose proportionately to match the almost doubling of the population between 1801 and 1851, assuming the notional figure for 1801 of 300 drinking places has some validity. The census of 1851 recorded 440 drinking places but this is less than the actual total which seems to have been around 600.[2] The cultural importance of drink is self-evident from this large number of public houses and beerhouses.[3] Indeed there may have been more pubs per head of population by 1851; the ratio of drinking places to population changed from the notional figure of 1:121 in 1801 to around 1:114 in 1851.[4] Using the 1851 census figures that depress the actual number of drinking places, it is also significant that the ratio of drinking places to population in 1851 within the walls of the city (1:136) is more intense than in the suburbs (1:232).[5] Norwich between the walls was the location for markets that swelled the population on market days; it also contained some of the worst housing and produced the conditions in which drink and drinking places became an essential part of life for nearly all the working class.

A further analysis of the development of Norwich from 1801 to 1851 suggests that the population increase of 31,957 was evenly divided between the city itself and the suburbs. Around fifteen thousand more people were accommodated within the city in 1851 compared to 1801.[6] Living conditions must have become even more difficult and unpleasant. In the longer term, as we shall see, this added to the momentum to move beyond the city walls but in the context of the early Victorian period it would have intensified the need for drink and drinking places.

The comparative analysis of the 1851 and 1881 census returns has produced a complex picture in which the centre of Norwich experienced population decline and a reduction in drinking places whilst other areas within the city walls of Norwich, as well as the suburbs outside, saw an increase in both population and drinking places. Norwich was likely to have been experiencing both expansion and contraction in population throughout the Victorian period as the city adjusted to the decline in textile manufactures and new industries developed.[7] Alan Armstrong has pointed out that the doubling of the city's numbers between 1831 and 1911 was 'a more impressive achievement than had at one time seemed likely' given the decline in the staple textile industry, yet Norwich still slipped from ninth position in the hierarchy of British towns in 1831 to thirtieth in 1911.[8] Contrary trends are apparent and the pattern of the shift in location of drinking places in Norwich between 1851 and 1881 mirrors these divergent movements.

The analysis of the census returns established the parish figures for population and drinking places in both 1851 and 1881, and the percentage increase or decrease was calculated. The data was then transferred to a parish map of Norwich in order to show population and drinking place changes between 1851 and 1881.[9] This presentation of the

data shows that hidden in the statistics that indicate a population increase in Norwich from just over 68,000 in 1851 to nearly 88,000 in 1881 – an increase of around 30 per cent – there is a significant counter-trend at work: a migration of population from the central areas of Norwich. Similarly, this presentation also shows that concealed in the statistics that indicate the number of drinking places increased from 440 to 503 between 1851 and 1881, there is a contrary trend evident through most of the central area of Norwich, matching the population decline.[10]

There are limits to the value of conclusions drawn from the examination of individual parishes and the population movement within their boundaries. However, since economic forces were likely to influence areas covered by a number of parishes, it is significant when trends across parishes in particular areas become evident. In the north of Norwich, beyond the Wensum, the population figures remained generally static between 1851 and 1881 in most parishes, excepting the Coslanys, with a small increase in some, and a small decrease in others. This pattern is replicated when the number of drinking places is examined. There was little change in most individual parishes, even in the Coslanys, but overall there was a small increase in population.[11] Elsewhere in Norwich, the movements are much more pronounced. In the south and east of Norwich, excepting Etheldreda, parish populations increased and in two cases – Julian and Sepulchre – by nearly a half. The number of drinking places also rose within this area. Yet in the centre and west of Norwich, there was a broad swathe of parishes where population fell, and in a significant number of cases the decline was substantial.[12] Broadly, with some exceptions, there was a matching decline in the number of drinking places in these areas during this thirty-year period.[13] Finally, and most significantly, there was a remarkable increase in population in the suburb of Heigham and large increases in other suburbs at Earlham, Eaton, Lakenham and Thorpe. Predictably,

there was a related increase in the number of drinking places in these areas. The ratio of drinking places to population in the suburbs was less intense than within the walls and therefore there was a change in the overall ratio for Norwich from the 1851 figure of 1: 114 to 1: 142 in 1881.[14]

The economic viability of certain areas within Norwich had clearly declined between 1851 and 1881. A detailed investigation of the economic factors explaining such changes is outside the scope of this thesis, but interesting pointers did emerge from a specific study I made of the census returns for the suburb of Pockthorpe, comparing the 1851 and 1881 figures and examining the occupations of all the heads of household. Pockthorpe experienced a slight decline in population (6 per cent) but an increase in drinking places from ten to fourteen (40 per cent) during these thirty years. Drink had played an important economic role in the parish for a considerable time. There had been a small brewery on the site before, but it was from 1794 under the guidance of John Patteson that the production of beer in the Barrack Street brewery expanded rapidly. By 1851, the partnership of Steward, Patteson, Finch & Co. was well established as the leading brewing firm in Norwich owning 183 public houses, nearly a third of the total and 112 more than their nearest rivals, Youngs and Burt.[15]

It is therefore not surprising that the analysis of the census returns for Pockthorpe in 1851 should indicate that the brewing trade provided one of the main occupation categories for household heads. It is striking, however, to note how thirty years later this brewing influence has become even more significant. In 1851, 8.2 per cent of the household heads had an occupation linked with brewing as a brewer's servant, cooper, maltster, innkeeper or publican; in 1881, the figure was 14.6 per cent.[16] Generally, the demand for beer had

increased steadily in Britain with the general rise in population and standard of living in the three decades after 1850.[17] In these circumstances, in brewing parishes like Pockthorpe an increase in the economic importance of the drink industry was to be expected. As the dominance of textiles, still employing nearly one third of the household heads in 1851, gave way to a more balanced and diversified local economy by 1881, it is the brewing interest that has become one of the leading occupational categories.

Brewing was becoming ever more important in the economy of Norwich. Drink had followed the working class out into the suburbs and the profits from that suburban trade alone must have been considerable; within Norwich between the walls, in those areas that succeeded in developing a more balanced local economy after the decline in textiles, the influence of a local brewery would be considerable. Three of the four biggest four breweries in 1881 – Steward, Patteson, Finch & Co in Pockthorpe., Youngs Crawshay & Youngs in King Street, and Morgan also in King Street were all in areas that had avoided significant population loss and economic decline. The other leading brewery - Bullards at St.Miles Bridge, was just within the declining Coslany area but would have had an influence over areas like Colegate and other parts of the more stable area north of the river Wensum. Barbara Green and Rachel M R Young have suggested that brewing 'was probably the most stable and lucrative trade in the City throughout the nineteenth century.'[18]

The case that alcoholic drink provided a means of helping society absorb the pressures of population increase has also been outlined above. Drink was an instrument of social cohesion and the drinking place remained important throughout the Victorian period.[19]

These arguments are also supported by the analysis of the census returns for 1851 and 1881. The considerable number of people connected with the retail supply of alcoholic drink provides another indicator of the continuing importance of the drinking place in Norwich. The study of how many licensees had families, and how many of these households had domestic servants and boarders or lodgers, highlights the significant role of the drinking place during a period of complex population change and relative instability.

By 1881, there were around 620 public houses or beerhouses in Norwich, each one with a licensee. Although it may not have been recognised as such, alcohol was a controlled drug and the system of licensing had developed in part as a means by which the urban elite supervised, however loosely, its intake by the working class. Almost without exception, the licensees had family members to help in the running of the drinking place. Around 90 per cent of the licensees in 1851 and 1881 were male and married and most had children. Wives, children and other relatives within the family household were part of the family economic unit led by the licensee. Many of the around 10 per cent of the licensees who were female were widows, but almost all drinking places were supported in their operation by family members.[20]

It is difficult to resolve how much time, if any, a particular member of the family household might have given to the running of the drinking place. Even when the census record shows that a member of the household had another occupation outside the home, he or she might still have contributed directly to the retailing of drink when not engaged in that other occupation. It seems reasonable, nevertheless, to assume that on average at least two or three people within each household would have been directly employed in the retail supply of drink. It then follows that in 1881 when there were around 620 drinking places,

there would have been in the region of 1240 to 1860 adults directly employed in this supply, that is around 5 per cent of the working population of around 35,000 in a total population of 87,842. [21] This figure of 5 per cent is high enough to justify its use as another measure of the social and economic importance of the drinking place.

The family was a vital economic unit servicing the drinking place as a retail outlet, and often augmenting their income from other sources in the low wage economy of Norwich.[22] Hawkins in 1910 made the point that 'Compared with larger cities … another difference is that the landlord has usually some other occupation. The house is not his only means of livelihood.' [23] The census returns, in both 1851 and 1881, indicate that around three-quarters of the licensees were solely employed in running their drinking place, but there may well have been a degree of under-recording of other occupations. A small percentage of licensees (3.6 per cent in 1851 and 6.4 per cent in 1881) did not record their connection with the licensed trade at all and gave only the name of another unrelated occupation. A slightly larger number of licensees (6.6 per cent in 1851 and 8.3 per cent in 1881) recorded another occupation after their first occupation of drink-retailer. Around one-in-eight of the licensees, in both 1851and 1881, actually gave another occupation as their first employment before giving their second occupation as publican, beerseller, innkeeper, tavern keeper, or licensed victualler.[24] Those other occupations that provided their first or second employment cover most of the ways of generating income in the working-class Norwich communities.[25] The drink trade provided work and additional income for many who had other skills and experiences, thus further highlighting its social and economic importance.

Within these census returns there is no doubt a concealed hierarchy of drinking places and publicans, ranging from the beershop keeper at the bottom to those publicans in prestigious inns who probably would not have seen themselves as working-class. For some at least of those who gained a licence to trade on the strength of their own savings or through a loan from the brewery whose tenant they became, that licence became a passport, if they managed the business well, to the higher ranks of the working class. Customers would have seen some publicans as 'labour aristocrats'.

Those licensees who could afford to keep servants would certainly have had enhanced status. In fact, significant numbers did in both 1851 and 1881, although the total was declining. In 1851, the census returns indicate a total of 268 servants in licensed premises, with almost 40 per cent of the drinking places employing at least one servant. By 1881, the total had fallen to 151 servants, but nearly a quarter of the drinking places were still employing at least one servant.[26] The sharp decline in the total number of servants recorded in 1881 is due at least in part to the transport revolution that saw the end of the coaching age and the coaching inn, and with it the need for grooms and stable lads.

Lodgers and boarders (in practice there appeared to be no distinction between the two categories) were also a means by which income could be augmented for the household as an economic unit. In 1851, just over one-in-three of licensees (37.7 per cent) - and in 1881 just under one-in-three of licensees (30.6 per cent) – registered a lodger or boarder in the census returns. Although the total of lodgers and boarders had declined by one –quarter between 1851 and 1881 – from 579 to 431 – their residence in licensed premises clearly

continued to provide an important source of direct additional income, from both rent and expenditure on drink.[27]

This comparative analysis of census statistics across a generation does provide findings that indicate the continuing social and economic importance of the drinking place in Norwich. In so doing, it helps overcome the substantial problem for the researcher intent on understanding the role of drink that Victorian publicans and beerhouse keepers in Norwich, as elsewhere, have left few if any personal records.[28]

An understanding of the link between population movements and developments in the drink trade in Norwich has been developed from the quantitative data analysis of census returns. It is likely that similar mechanisms and reasons apply in other Victorian urban centres. It is these urban centres, including Norwich, that account for most of the national picture of drink and its influence within the population that is brought so vividly to life in the statistics for 1899 presented by Joseph Rowntree and Arthur Sherwell.[29] Although these averages should not be pressed too far and are presented with a temperance bias, they do still have a statistical validity. Understanding the role of drink in a particular locality like Norwich is a necessary precursor to making sense of these remarkable national figures.

Rowntree and Sherwell calculated that in 1899 the per capita consumption of beer in the United Kingdom was 32.70 gallons, requiring an annual average expenditure of nearly £4 per head. They then reckoned that 23 million (57.5 per cent) of the total population of 40 million were alcohol drinkers on the basis that there were 3 million (7.5 per cent) abstainers and 14 million (35 per cent) children under the age of 15. Significantly, Professor Leone Levi had produced a similar figure for alcohol drinkers of 17.5 million (56

per cent) of the total population of 31.25 million over a quarter-century earlier in 1872. Using this figure of 23 million drinkers, they then recalculated the per capita consumption of beer at 57 gallons. With per capita consumption of spirits at 1.93 gallons and wine at 0.72 gallons, the dominance of beer production within the legalised alcohol trade is remarkable. They refined the statistical picture even further by assuming that women did not drink on average more than half the quantity consumed by men and therefore concluded that men drank around 76 gallons of beer in 1899 and women 38 gallons.[30] The national drink bill was £162 million in 1899, one and a half times the national revenue and equivalent to all the rents of all the houses and farms in the United Kingdom. The working classes who constituted around 75 per cent of the population spent at least two-thirds of that national drink bill. Rowntree and Sherwell noted that a Special Committee of the British Association in 1882 had estimated the figure for the working classes at 70 per cent and suggested that their slightly higher figure was due to the greater increase in the working classes in the intervening years. They calculated therefore that of the £162 million spent on drink in the United Kingdom in 1899, more than £108 million must have been spent by 30,400,000 working-class persons. Assuming five persons to a family, this figure represented 6,080,000 families and meant that working-class families spent on average £17 15s 3d a year, or 6s 10d per week, in 1899 on alcoholic liquor. With average family income calculated at 35s per week, this meant that one-fifth of that income was spent on alcohol.[31]

In the light of these figures, the obstacles facing the temperance movement become clearer still. Working-class drinkers, with their dietary and recreational needs; publicans, with their need to make a living; brewers, with their wealth derived from the profitability of beer; and governments, with their attachment to the considerable revenues secured from

taxes linked to brewing and the drink trade – all these constituted perhaps a too formidable set of pressure groups for the more radical in the temperance movement ever to make much headway.

As in the nation, so it was in Norwich. At the end of the Victorian period, as at the beginning, drinking places continued to meet the working class need for liquor and recreation. As the population increased so too did the number of drinking places. In those areas of Norwich where there was population decline, the numbers of pubs and beerhouses tended to decline. One fact alone distinguished Norwich from other urban centres. By 1896, with a population of around 105,000 and a total number of drinking places of around 600, Norwich had a ratio of licensed premises to population of 1: 175. Norwich thus continued to have the highest ratio of drinking places to population, just as in the 1870s when the *Lords Intemperance Report* calculated a ratio of 1: 121.[32] The question then arises: why did Norwich have the greatest density of drinking places to population? The argument has already been made above that the drinking places of Norwich served not only its residents but also those from outside the city who attended the markets.[33] There is, however, another important dimension to consider in providing an answer to this question. Norwich had been the second largest city in England until the middle of the eighteenth century when Bristol took that position. It remained the largest manufacturing town until the 1780s.[34] Manual workers in the city would have been as dependent on alcoholic drink as their nineteenth century counterparts and there would therefore have been a remarkably large number of drinking places to satisfy that need. There was likely to have been a degree of continuity in the density of drinking places to population, from the eighteenth century through into the nineteenth century. By the end of the eighteenth century, quite large breweries were established in the city and had acquired large numbers of tied houses,

unlike other areas in England. Public houses, with many under brewery control, were likely to have remained in use once established, especially with the population of Norwich increasing dramatically on market days and daily subject to increase due to its role as the regional capital.

Historians now view the Industrial Revolution that led to the decline in the importance of Norwich as a gradual process rather than an abrupt event. Nevertheless, the evidence for the former industrial dominance of Norwich remains sparse. As Richard Wilson has pointed out:

'…at first sight (the city) provides so few traces of the pinnacles of its industrial past'.[35]

However, the case can be made that the number of drinking places in Victorian Norwich and the remarkable density of population to those drinking places was one such trace that did survive, at least through the nineteenth century and for part of the twentieth century.

Footnotes to Chapter 2

[1] See above, pp.5-11.

[2] Blyth's *Norwich Directory* (Norwich, 1842) had a total of 609 drinking places, including fifty-three beer shops and six hotels. See *Steward & Patteson*, Table 8, p.36. In explanation of such a discrepancy, Edward Higgs (1996) noted the following changes in the census instructions as the officials sought to obtain ever more accurate returns:
'In 1851 a person "following more than one distinct trade may insert his occupations in the order of their importance" … in 1861 "business" was added to "trade" and "may" had become "should" … in 1871 "trade and business" had become "occupation/s" … but not until 1891 did "should" become "must". (Edward Higgs, *A clearer sense of the census – the Victorian censuses and historical research* (HMSO: London, 1996), p.97.
Under-recording in the census returns still remained a problem in 1881 when 503 drinking places were recorded. In fact, the first Register of Victuallers Licences detailed 530 houses that were licensed continuously during the period from 1867 to 1893, and in any particular year the figure was higher still. A Memoranda within the register in 1886 had a figure of 581 public houses and, in addition, forty-six beer houses for that year – see above, p.17. The 1881 figure is an under-recording by over one hundred; the 1851 figure of 440 represents an under-recording of over 150.

[3] See above, pp.10, 14, note 20.

[4] See above, p.8, Table Intro.1. The Beer Act (1830) had led to the establishment of over fifty beerhouses by 1841 – (see note 2 above). This new category of drinking place is likely to have been the key factor in explaining the change in the ratio of drinking places to head of population.

[5] See below, p.46, Table 2.1A and 2.1B.

[6] Assuming less than five thousand of the city's population of 36,238 in 1801 would have been living in the suburbs – and noting that the suburban population of Norwich was around 20,000 in 1851 (see Table 2.1A) – it follows that over 15,000 of the population increase – around one half - was accounted for by suburban growth between 1801 and 1851. The other half of the increase would have been accommodated within the city between the walls.

[7] See Richard Wilson, 'The Norwich Textile Industry' in Carole Rawcliffe and Richard Wilson (eds.) *A History of Norwich* (forthcoming), for an analysis of the reasons for the failure of Norwich to mechanise enough to meet the threat from the north.

[8] Alan Armstrong, *The Population of Victorian and Edwardian Norfolk* (Norwich, 1999), p.8.

[9] See below, pp.48-49, Fig. 2.1 and Fig. 2.2.

[10] The decline in the number of drinking places in the city centre in this mid-Victorian period seems to suggest that street communities in that area were experiencing major change and disruption. The drinking place acted as an agency of social cohesion but could not resist the pressure of economic forces that were redefining the way livings were made in Norwich.

[11] Northern Norwich (inclusive of Pockthorpe and Earlham) had an increase of twenty-one drinking places.

[12] In the case of Michael at Plea the decline was by 60 per cent, and in four other parishes by between 40 and 50 per cent – Lawrence, Maddermarket, Martin at Palace, and All Saints.

[13] Overall, there were in 1881 some forty drinking places fewer in the centre of Norwich than in 1851.

[14] Between them, in 1881, Heigham (pop. 24,031), Lakenham (pop. 6,378) and Thorpe (pop. 2,864) accounted for 38.3 per cent of the population of Norwich - over one third – (33,273 out of 87,842). There had been an increase of fifty-nine drinking places in these three suburbs between 1851 and 1881. Since the overall increase in Norwich had been sixty-three on the census figures – from 440 to 503 – in this same period, there is a sense in which that increase is almost wholly explained by the development of Norwich suburbs.

[15] *Steward & Patteson*, p.19 and Table 8, p.36.

[16] See below, p.52, Table 2.2.

[17] *Steward & Patteson*, p.45.

[18] Barbara Green and Rachel M.R. Young, *Norwich: the growth of a city* (Norwich, 1981), p.33.

[19] See above, pp.9-12.

[20] See below, pp.116-117.

[21] *Hawkins*, p.20, has a figure of 50,555 for the occupied population aged ten and upwards for Norwich in 1910. The total population was then around 125,000. Extrapolating from this ratio of 50:125 gives the figure of 35,000 for the occupied population in 1881 in a total population of around 88,000.

[22] *Hawkins*, p.73, noted that one of the outstanding facts about the city was 'its low wages'. See also Christine Clark, 'Norwich at Work, 1800-1939', in Rawcliffe and Wilson, *Norwich*.

[23] *Hawkins*, p.312.

[24] See below, p.56, Fig. 2.3. Since 1851, occupations could be inserted in the census 'in the order of their importance' - see above, note 2 - hence the distinction between categories B and C in Fig. 2.3.

[25] See below, pp.57-58, Tables 2.3 and 2.4.

[26] See below, p.60, Table 2.5.

[27] See below, p.62, Table 2.6.

[28] See below, pp.115, 147, note 11.

[29] Joseph Rowntree and Arthur Sherwell, *The Temperance Problem and Social Reform* (ninth edition, London, 1901), pp.2-10.

[30] Rowntree and Sherwell, *Temperance*, pp.2-7. See below, p.170.

[31] Rowntree and Sherwell, *Temperance*, pp.8-10. See below, pp.172, 179, note 65, for A.E. Dingle's argument that U.K. expenditure on drink as a percentage of total consumer expenditure remained unchanged at 12-13 per cent in the 1880s and 1890s but was already coming under pressure as prices fell for other consumer items and the age of "high mass consumption" began to develop. After 1900, the total amount spent on drink did start to decline.

[32] *Lords Intemperance Report*, 1877, First Report, Appendix C.

[33] See above, p.13, note 12, and p.45.

[34] F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950* (3 vols., Cambridge, 1990), I, pp.14, 18.

[35] Rawcliffe and Wilson, *Norwich*.