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**Making Merry and Destructive Drinking:
Uncovering Peasant Drunkenness in
England, 1552-1606**

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Introduction

“A law setting a minimum alcohol price in Wales will come into force on 2 March [2020]... Ministers want retailers and bars to charge a minimum of 50p per unit.”¹ This policy was introduced by the Welsh government in order to tackle the high number of alcohol related deaths and excessive drinking in the country. Unfortunately, the law was put into effect 455 years too late to protect James Johnson. Late one evening in 1565 Johnson drunkenly stumbled up Deadman’s Lane heading towards The Clink Prison, London. Johnson decided to sleep near a ditch on the side of the lane after the debilitating effects of alcohol overwhelmed him. When he awoke “barely possessed of a healthy and calm mind from his great drunkenness” he decided to “empty his bowels, [so] he undid and let down his breeches” to his ankles. But as Johnson did, he lost his footing “and by misfortune fell face-first into the ditch, it being full of water, mud and filth.” Johnson was unable to stand because of his intoxicated state and the breeches which were tangled around his legs. Johnson drowned in the filth of the ditch on Deadman’s Lane on the 21st August 1565 at 8pm.²

The gruesome description of Johnson’s demise offers us more than a droll tale of accidental death or an example of great misfortune as a result of alcoholic indulgence. The incidental information provided by this source is a microcosm for drunkenness between 1552-1606. It is one of many sources which can be utilised to create a framework for studying the period. In the 1980s, Peter Clark suggested that evidence for studying this physiological state in the sixteenth century was too incomplete for any reliable analysis to take place.³ The misconception that there is a dearth of source material on this subject still somewhat pervades contemporary scholarship, hence why many historians who do attempt to unpick the history of drunkenness choose to start their examination in later centuries. A work which is indicative of this is Dana Rabin’s article *Drunkenness and Responsibility for Crime in the Eighteenth Century*.⁴ This dissertation will directly contest this assumption made by Clark by elucidating overzealous drinking between 1552-1606. This elucidation will refine some generalisations which have been made on this topic and bring more nuance to pre-

¹ Unknown, ‘Welsh minimum alcohol price set for March 2020’, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-50068865#> [Accessed 26 Feb. 20].

² D. Plato *Death Records Database*, 2020: No. G766, KB: 9/1110/unnumbered.

This unpublished spreadsheet has been compiled using information from Stephen Gunn’s ‘Everyday Life and Fatal Hazard in Sixteenth-Century England’, https://tudoraccidents.history.ox.ac.uk/?page_id=17 [Accessed 26 Feb. 20]. All referencing in this essay and the spreadsheet has been copied from Gunn’s records. Hereafter cited as: PDR: No. X, KB: Y.

³ P. Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History 1200-1830* (London: Longman Ltd. 1983), p109.

⁴ D. Rabin, ‘Drunkenness and Responsibility for Crime in the Eighteenth Century’, *Journal of British Studies* Vol. 44, No. 3 (July 2005).

existing arguments on sixteenth century drunkenness. For the purpose of this enquiry two spreadsheets of information have been created in order to successfully overturn Clark's misconception and fill the historical lacuna which he has created.⁵ One is comprised of death records and the other consists of court depositions. The databases will aid the uncovering of excessive drinking among the lower orders of society, the so-called popular class or the peasantry.⁶ Chapter 1 will focus on the legislative history of drinking so that the findings from the spreadsheets can be contextualised, while Chapters 2 and 3 will analyse the evidence from each database independently. This will facilitate the reconstruction of the more unsavoury aspects of sixteenth century drinking which recent histories have not stressed enough.

The study of alcoholic drinking has not been neglected by academics. Both historians and anthropologists have enthusiastically attempted to unpick the reasons for drinking and comprehend the human love affair with alcohol. In addition, there are medical and psychological discussions regarding the drug.⁷ While there is an appreciation for this area of research, this investigation will remain disengaged from scientific studies relating to drinking. Within the more theoretical studies of alcohol there are two main strands: production and consumption. For historians, the study of production has generally been centred around the brewing industry. Much of this history has already been written by twentieth century scholars, particularly Peter Mathias.⁸ The focus here will be with the second strand, consumption. More specifically scholarship relating to England. For this reason, Ann Tlustý's analysis on Germany or Thomas Brennan's in-depth review of eighteenth-century France lie outside the scope of this dissertation.⁹ Hence there will be no critical engagement with this secondary literature.

The dominant theme of the Anglo-centric scholarship has concentrated on where alcoholic drinking took place and how people interacted with these victualling houses in a wider societal context. Clark's seminal 1983 book *The English Alehouse* is symptomatic of this focus on peasant drinking in

⁵ The Second database is D. Plato *Court Depositions Database*, 2020.

This unpublished spreadsheet has been collated from records produced by Phil Withington, Angela McShane and Michael Pidd for 'Intoxicants & Early Modernity', <https://www.dhi.ac.uk/intoxicants/about.jsp> [Accessed 9 Apr. 2020]. All referencing has been copied from the online material. Hereafter cited: PCD: X, date.

⁶ Definitions for this class has been taken from: K. Wrightson (eds.), *A Social History of England 1500-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp267-330. And D. Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp3-7.

⁷ An example of this literature is: M. McMurran (ed.), *Alcohol-Related Violence: Prevention and Treatment* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Ltd., 2013).

⁸ P. Mathias, *The Brewing Industry in England, 1700-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

⁹ A. Tlustý, *Bacchus and Civic Order: The Culture of Drink in Early Modern Germany* (Virginia: The University of Virginia Press, 2001). And T. Brennan, *Public Drinking and Popular Culture in Eighteenth Century Paris* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

victualling houses.¹⁰ Indeed, this trend has permeated most of the recent twenty-first century scholarship, like Mark Hailwood's *Alehouses and Good Fellowship* or James Brown's *Alehouse Licencing and State Formation*.¹¹ The alehouse has been the most commonly studied out of the three types of victualling houses present in sixteenth century England, the other two being the inn and the tavern. In general, inns and taverns were elite establishments which only accounted for a fraction of the victualling houses in England compared to alehouses.¹² The alehouse was typically a smaller establishment which was frequented by the peasantry, the poorest in society; and those who the pioneering social historian E.P Thompson desperately sought to save from the "enormous condescension of posterity."¹³ Since this enquiry is focused on the lower rungs of society, the alehouse shall be the main drinking establishment which is discussed. Even though alcoholic consumption has been a consistent strand of the social and cultural histories of England the physiological state of drunkenness is rarely the central theme. This has led to historians making sweeping generalisation and caused there to be a distinct lack of nuance in the arguments relating to drunkenness between 1552-1606. The purpose of this research is to uncover some of these nuances and emphasise trends within early modern drunkenness which have been overlooked in the field of study thus far. That is not to say that the work of Clark or Hailwood is inaccurate, far from it; these histories provide a start point from which the framework for the analysis of drunkenness can be built.

Previous scholarship which has commented on drunkenness has usually been based on supposition and expressed merely as a passing comment. For example, Clark wrote that overzealous drinking must have been "primarily an anaesthetic against a harsh oppressive world."¹⁴ The rather bleak outlook that drinking was nothing more than an escapist venture from the tribulations of peasantry life and that there was no way to uncover this past was the accepted conclusion for most of the twentieth century. Aside from some minor chapters littered in comprehensive studies of the early modern period like Susan Amussen's section, *The Gendering of Popular Culture*, from Tim Harris' *Popular Culture in England*, there was little critical engagement with drunkenness.¹⁵ The aversion to discussing excessive drinking began to shift at the turn of the millennium. Phil Withington can be somewhat credited with this shift. He produced several articles which attempted to trace the

¹⁰ A.E. Richardson and H.D. Eberlein, *The English Inn Past and Present: A Review of its History and Social Life* (London: B.T Batsford, 1925). And Clark, *Alehouse*, 1983.

¹¹ M. Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014). And J. Brown., *Alehouse Licencing and State Formation in Early Modern England* in J. Herring, C. Regan, D. Weinberg, P. Withington (eds.) *Intoxication and Society: Problematic Pleasures of Drugs and Alcohol* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013).

¹² Clark, *Alehouse*, p16.

¹³ E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Harmondsworth, 1963), p13.

¹⁴ Clark, *Alehouse*, p111.

¹⁵ S.D. Amussen, *The Gendering of Popular Culture* in T. Harris (ed.), *Popular Culture in England c.1500-1800* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1995).

interaction between the state and drunks in order to understand wider social relations, although excessive individual consumption in the sixteenth century was largely ignored.¹⁶ What may have also stimulated this new wave of interest is the anthropological understanding of constructive drinking, spearheaded by Mary Douglas in the late twentieth century. This is the idea that alcohol does not necessarily lead to anomie and highlights that positive cultures can be built around alcoholic drinking.¹⁷ This anthropological influence created a historical dichotomy and resulted in scholarship produced after 2000 challenging Clark's idea of anaesthetic escapism. Hailwood is an advocate of the application of constructive drinking to past cultures; he suggested that drinking was a crucial sociable activity in the sixteenth century and as a result people visited drinking establishments for more than physiological effects of alcohol.¹⁸ Paul Jennings' *A History of Drink and the English* is another example of recent scholarship which is far less critical of excessive consumption of alcohol. Jennings emphasised the continuities in the history of drunkenness, from this he concluded it would be crude to argue that there are massive differences in the reasons for people getting drunk across history.¹⁹

While these debates surrounding victualling houses are fruitful, the implication is that historians have attached greater weight to the establishments rather than directly focusing on individual consumption. Pre-2000, Clark's assumption that the source material was not available for successful analysis of this topic dominated the scholarship. Post-2000, the anthropological idea of constructive drinking and a greater interest in the seventeenth century meant that there was an aversion to focusing on the more objectionable facets of drinking. Consequently, the issue of drunkenness between 1552-1606 has been largely neglected and there is a distinct lack of nuance when it is discussed by scholars. The goal of this dissertation is to bring clarity to the more destructive drinking habits in the period and highlight that the positive aspects of drinking have been slightly overstated in the more recent histories.

¹⁶ P. Withington, 'Intoxicants in Early Modern Society', *The Historiographical Journal*, Vol.54, No.3 (September. 2011). And P. Withington, 'Intoxicants and the invention of 'consumption'', *The Economic History Review*, Vol.73 Iss.2 (May. 2020).

¹⁷ M. Douglas, *A Distinctive Anthropological Perspective* from M. Douglas (ed.), *Constructive Drinking: Perspectives on Drink from Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p3.

¹⁸ Hailwood, *Alehouses*, p9.

¹⁹ P. Jennings, *A History of Drink and the English, 1500-2000* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), p136.

Chapter 1: Legislation

The dates for this study require some justification. This first chapter will explain why the period is crucial with regards to the history of drunkenness by outlining the chronology of the nascent drinking legislation which was passed into English law between 1552-1606. Simultaneously, 1552-1606 also witnessed a rapid increase in the number of alehouses in England which led to them occupying a central place in early modern society.²⁰ Hence these dates are the limits for this study. This chapter will also explain how this contemporary legislation guides the approach for studying drunkenness between the dates in question.

The most important drinking legislation, which will be discussed first, was passed at the end of this period. The crown legally codified drunkenness as a usable term for the first time by passing the 1606 Act for Repressing the Odious and Loathsome Sin of Drunkenness. This watershed act stated that “drunkenness is of late grown into common use within this realm, being the root and foundation of many other sins, [such] as: bloodshed, stabbing, murder, swearing, fornication, adultery.”²¹ Drunkards faced six hours in the stocks and a fine from the Justice of the Peace (JPs), on top of the other punishments they may have acquired whilst debilitated by alcohol. Since the focus here is prior to this act the sources presented which reference drunkenness are reflective of contemporary understanding rather than a legal definition. In addition, this often means the authors of certain documents are forced to explicitly explain events since there was no legislative phrasing for them to rely on when constructing narratives. This shall be evidenced in chapters 2 and 3. Consequently, not only do the sources offer a lens for studying the popular class, they also contain a rich amount of incidental detail in the surviving material which facilitates this investigation. This is one reason why Clark’s assessment of the usability of sources is now antiquated.

So, if drunkenness was codified at the end of the period what legislation had come before? Prior to 1552 laws passed had been concerned with the financial aspects of alcoholic production and monitoring what vendors sold.²² The 1495 Act Against Vagabonds and Beggars was an exception to

²⁰ Hailwood, *Alehouses*, pp3-5.

²¹ *Statutes of the Realm: Printed by Command of His Majesty King George III, in Pursuance of an Address of the Houses of Commons of Great Britain. From Original Records and Authentic Manuscripts* (London: Dawson’s of Pall Mall, 1810-28). Volume IV, p1142. All Statutes to be taken from these volumes. Hereafter cited: SOTR Vol. X, p.Y.

²² Example of Statue regarding Price of Beer from 1531: SOTR Vol. III, p367. Example of Statue regarding Gauging from 1380: SOTR Vol. II, p16.

this rule. It gave JPs the right to “put away common ale selling” where they “think convenient.”²³ This gave JPs more autonomy with regards to the policing of alehouses. It marked an important change to drinking legislation, because, as Hailwood stated, it is the first time there was regulation over *who* could sell alcohol rather than *what* was sold.²⁴ It also meant that poor behaviour as a result of alcoholic excess could now be tried in secular courts, before 1552 only ecclesiastic courts were allowed to try such cases.²⁵ Whilst this law was significant with regards to alehouse legislation, it did not refer to personal consumption of alcohol or clarify what behaviour constituted the closure of an alehouse. There are also very few records of this law being enforced.²⁶

The 1495 Act was a precursor for the more significant 1552 Act for Keepers of Alehouses. This act claimed that victualling houses had been “newly set up in a very great number in back lanes, corners and suspicious places.”²⁷ To combat this increase the crown forced all houses to be licenced, bringing with it a new stream of tax revenue. This act was the first sixteenth century law which considered drinking and therefore drunkenness, to be a problem. This kind of legislation is part of what Ronald Hutton and other historians like Keith Wrightson called the Reformation of Manners, which began in the sixteenth century and continued into the seventeenth century.²⁸ This is the idea that reformers in western Christendom were attempting to enforce a higher standard of personal decorum. It is generally assumed that this focus on improved personal decorum was motivated by the elite class so that they could differentiate themselves from the popular rabble who lacked their etiquette.²⁹ These theories are developed from Pierre Bourdieu’s sociological critique of twentieth century France which contrasted “pure taste and barbarous taste.”³⁰ By creating more regulation in these suspicious places this barbarous taste and poor personal decorum could be ousted from society. As importantly, it was also assumed that the improvement of moral standards of those frequenting alehouses would prevent them from being the focal points for civil unrest. The prevention of this was particularly important during the minority reign of Edward VI.

This legislation directly affects how drunkenness can be studied. Of course, the only possible route for analysis is when drinking appears in the historic records. With licensing beginning in 1552 the

²³ SOTR Vol. II, p569.

²⁴ Hailwood, *Alehouses*, p23.

²⁵ Clark, *Alehouse*, pp5-7.

²⁶ Clark, *Alehouse*, pp6-7.

²⁷ SOTR Vol IV, p169.

²⁸ R. Hutton, *Rise and Fall of Merry England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p112. And K. Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp176-178.

²⁹ Hutton, *Merry*, p112-4.

³⁰ P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* translated by R. Nice (London: Routledge, 2010), pp22-25.

source material which refers to drunks or issues relating to drinking greatly increases. This is because it now fell under direct crown jurisdiction and JPs were more involved in their regulation. The paucity of source material prior to the 1552 Act must be accounted for when making comparisons to the preceding period to ensure that arguments made maintain their validity. The readiness of source material after 1552 also necessitates that the focus of this enquiry should be restricted to the second half of the sixteenth century.

The overwhelming sources which do exist are from local government records, most notably court depositions and coroners' reports. Records of these which related to intoxication greatly increased after 1552. However, there is a lack of uniformity in these sources and the term drunk is not always explicitly mentioned as it was yet to be put into law. Consequently, other phrases are used to describe excessive drinking. This description is mostly done with unambiguous explanation. This trend is present in the court depositions. One deposition from Cheshire in 1575 depicts two men accused of "making merry" shortly before they stole from an alehouse.³¹ Whereas in Norfolk in 1586 a vicar was arrested for "habitual drinking and drunkenness" even on the Sabbath.³² Both examples involve excessive drinking and have been included in the data, but only one mentions drunkenness directly. Regardless of this diversity these descriptive phrases, the most commonly used being "making merry", were all deployed by contemporaries to explain the state of an individual. This description is often more reflective of their own personal understanding of drunkenness, which provides a direct window through which the past can be observed. Overall, coroners' reports and court depositions represent the most credible way for approaching the period 1552-1606. These sources can be used to create a concentrated framework which facilitates research into sixteenth century drunkenness. It allows drunkenness to be situated in its contemporary context along with other underlying trends in the period, namely the Reformation of Manners.

Another common source which has often been used to reconstruct the past are Broadside Ballads. They are a useful tool for a scholar of the early modern period, but for the sixteenth century alone they are somewhat less useful. Indeed, as Angela McShane has highlighted the proliferation of ballads was at its peak after this century, consequently there is limited source material from which to draw from.³³ This makes it difficult to legitimately reconstruct attitudes to drunkenness between 1552-1606 using ballads alone. Therefore, they will be avoided because there are so few examples,

³¹ PCD: ZQSF29/79, 1575.

³² PCD: DN/DEP 22/23, fols 209r-212v Wynne c Fenwick, 1586.

³³ A. McShane, 'Digital Broadside: The Upsides and Downsides', *Media History*, Vol. 23, No.2, (April. 2017), p283.

making it difficult to understand if they are representative, unlike court depositions and death records of which there is an abundance.

Chapter 2: Death Records

This chapter will utilise information from Steven Gunn's records of "deaths submitted by coroners to the assize justice" from 1500-1600.³⁴ Using death records to reconstruct quotidian events is not unusual. Barbara Hanawalt used them when studying everyday life in medieval England and Gunn has used the database to understand Tudor sport.³⁵ Whilst using death records to create a framework for analysis is a common practice for the cultural historian, it does not mean that it is without its criticisms. R.F Hunnisett protested that coroners routinely amended inquest dates in order to appear more efficient, from this he concluded that the reports lack the required reliability for historical enquiry.³⁶ Indeed, in this database it is highly likely that there is some falsification of dates so that coroners appeared more organised and efficient. The average wait time between the date of the accident and the inquest is only 5.4 days, and when the two inquests which have a wait time of over a month are discounted the wait time is just 3.3 days. It is unrealistic to assume that every single coroner could carry out an inquest this quickly, indicating that there are some potential limitations to using these sources which must be considered.

By focusing on information which could not be fabricated the problem of reliability can be combatted. Coroners were integral to the legal mechanisms in England, specifically relating to crown forfeiture, resulting in the reports produced being largely reliable. The crown had the right to seize property from suspected or convicted felons.³⁷ It was the coroner's task to confirm if an accident had occurred by surveying local witnesses, and if a death was found to be accidental then the crown could not seize said property. This accentuates the pivotal role which coroners had within the system of governance. Despite some smaller details being amended, significant information (like the specific year an accident occurred in) could not be because of these legal ramifications. By focusing on this objective, more reliable arguments around sixteenth century drunkenness can be made.

Carrie Smith raised another important implication that often the narratives presented could be

³⁴ S. Gunn and T.W Gromelski, *Sport and Recreation in Sixteenth-Century England: the Evidence of Accidental Deaths* in A. Shattner and R. von Mallinckrodt (eds.) *Sports and Physical Exercise in Early Modern Culture: New Perspectives on the History of Sports and Motion* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), p49.

³⁵ S. Gunn, 'Archery Practice in Early Tudor England', *Past and Present*, Vol.209, No.1, (November. 2010). And B.A., Hanawalt, *The Ties that Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

³⁶ R.F. Hunnisett, *The Reliability of Inquisitions as Historical Evidence* in D.A. Bullough and R.L. Storey (eds.), *The Study of Medieval Records* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p227. And R.F. Hunnisett, *The Medieval Coroner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p118 and p123.

³⁷ K.J. Kesselring, 'Felony and Forfeiture and the Profits of Crime in Early Modern England', *The Historical Journal* Vol. 53, No. 2 (2010), pp271-88.

skewed since there were incentives for people to do so.³⁸ The coroner was usually from the local area and could have had a vested interest in the outcome of any trial which might subsequently occur. Smith highlighted that since murder and manslaughter carried the death penalty narratives in accident records were altered in order to protect a guilty party from being tried for these crimes.³⁹ One possible example of this shift in narrative in this database is the death of Robert Warrom. The report states he heard fighting between three men in the streets of York at 10pm. Warrom, “excessively numbed by drink, came out of his house to said affray to keep the king’s peace.” However, in his inebriated state he toppled over backwards and hit his head on a rock in the street which “penetrated the top of his head.”⁴⁰ By claiming that Warrom fell to his death accidentally rather than being involved in the said affray no one could be accused of murder. It does not take a large imagination to devise a different narrative which paints Warrom’s demise as murder.

While the skewing of narratives may compromise truthfulness of a source, it does not imply that they are worthless. In the words of Smith the narratives cannot be “accepted as historical truth, but they are not complete legal fictions.”⁴¹ While most of the narratives are probably true because of the importance of the coroner to the legal system in England some may have been altered. These skewed narratives offer an insight into the prism of contemporary thought. The truthfulness in the description of Warrom’s death is largely irrelevant to a historian; it is not their job to be a sixteenth century detective and survey the validity of claims made to make sure justice is achieved. Instead, all narratives must be accepted and utilised in an appropriate way. The information in the narratives exemplify what contemporaries believed to be feasible events. A narrative created as a credible alibi for the avoidance of accusations would not be so far-fetched to prompt more questions. It would be reasonable to assume they represent what was considered normative behaviour. In this example it is completely believable that by 10pm a man would be so debilitated by alcohol he could not stand. By accepting this incidental information about intoxication these normative practices can be reconstructed. The study of death records affords the historian a unique view into the past which many other sources do not facilitate, therefore they will be the first primary route of analysis.

With the methodological limitations outlined, what more nuanced conclusions can be made from the information death records offer? First, and most obviously, the sheer volume of people who were

³⁸ C. Smith, *Medieval Coroners’ Rolls: Legal Fiction or Historical Fact?*, in D.E.S. Dunn (ed.), *Courts Counties and the Capital in the Later Middle Ages* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1996), p111.

³⁹ Smith, *Coroners*, pp111-112.

⁴⁰ PDR: No. A/168, KB. 9/4/70.

⁴¹ Smith, *Coroners*, p114.

dying from excessive drinking or while intoxicated implies that drunkenness was a widespread issue. The death records are taken from 32 counties which also highlights that this trend is not localised. These deaths were not uniform across the period. There was a steady decline in accidental death as a result of overzealous drinking after the 1552 Act for Keepers of Alehouses. In the 1540s intoxicated accidental death was at its zenith, but over the next four decades this declined, until the 1580s where there were no cases relating to drunkenness in the database. Figure one, a graph for the number of cases from each decade between 1500-1600, exemplifies this trend.

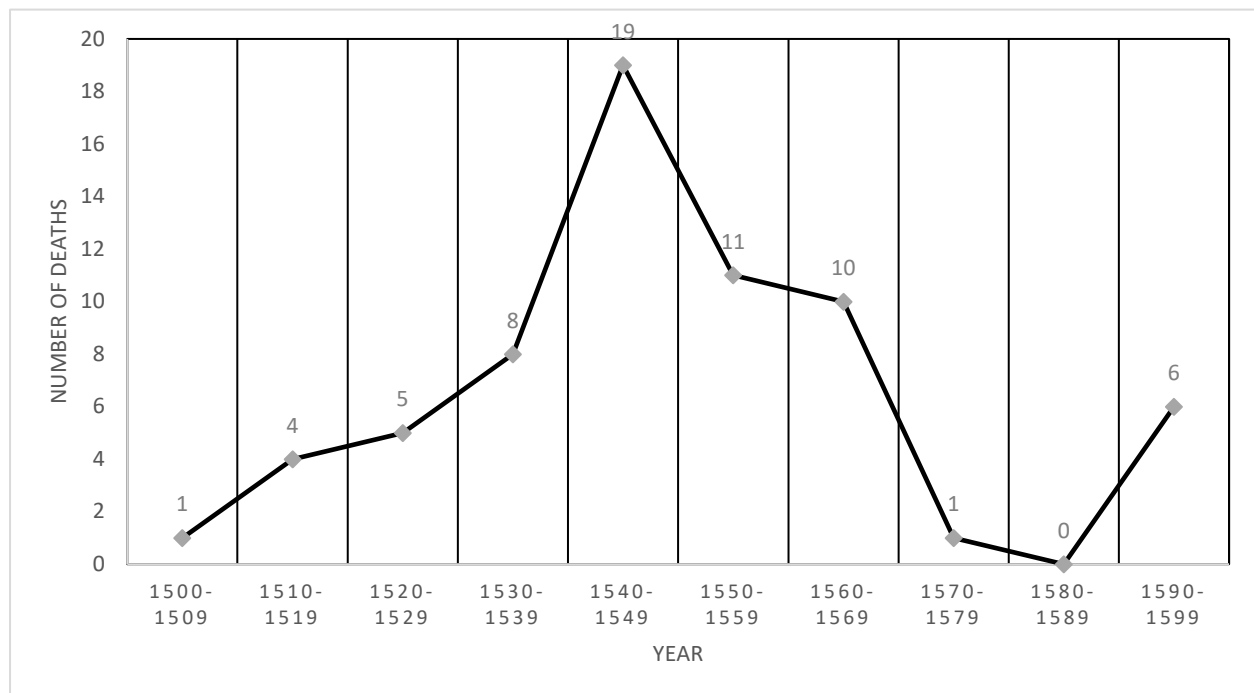


Figure One Accidental Deaths relating to Drunkenness compiled using information from Gunn's Database, 1500-1600.

While there should not be uniformity in the graph because accidental death by its very nature is mutable and arbitrary, the decline is obvious. Moreover, there is an expectation that after 1552 there should be more examples relating to intoxication since victualling houses were now under direct jurisdiction of the crown and there was an increase in source material. This makes this decline in deaths even more surprising. The paradoxical decrease after the 1550s suggests that the 1552 Act was able to prevent a considerable amount of drunkenness. It is not implausible to argue that this was because the licencing of alehouses made them more accountable for their patrons than they had been previously. If a death could be linked to an alehouse perhaps this would lead to the closure of the establishment. Thereby creating a motive for alehouse-keepers to prevent dangerous levels of drinking and drunkenness in their houses.

This trend also confirms assertions made about the Reformation of Manners. Hutton claimed that the 1560s were “a notable time for old-fashioned merry making” and that church reformers sought to

stamp out this unchristian behaviour after this period.⁴² Not only does the information presented here foster this conclusion, but also that perhaps attempts to reform were not solely orchestrated by the church. The 1552 Act was implemented by central government. The decrease in drunken deaths means that this civilising process had a far-reaching impact across all of England's drinking houses, implying there was a confluence of enforcement of Reformation of Manners. Both elites in central government and senior churchmen were involved in attempts to improve social behaviour of the popular class.

Regretfully, the death records do not cover 1600-1606. Any claims made for the period would therefore be based on supposition. What is clear is that there was an increase in the number of deaths in the 1590s and therefore it is probable that overzealous drinking was on the rise at the end of the century. If this trend were to continue it makes the timing of the 1606 Act against drunkenness far more logical; especially when considering the success of the 1552 Act in reducing excessive drinking. The ability to make these two inferences illustrates that it is a fallacy to claim there is a dearth in source material for studying drunkenness in the sixteenth century. One generalisation made by Clark can be refined using this data. He argued that before the 1640 Long Parliament local officials had exaggerated the threat which the alehouse could pose as a way of justifying their own intervention.⁴³ While this theory may be true for the seventeenth century, it would be misplaced to hastily apply it to the preceding century as well. From the information presented above it is clear that excessive drinking at the alehouse did pose a threat to the individual and central government directed a successful campaign against this almost a century before the 1640s. Clark's assertions about the following century will not be questioned, but his application of this reasoning to multiple centuries can be. This is an example of Clark's obfuscation of sixteenth century drunkenness by suggesting that prior to 1640 there was almost uniformity. This facilitated generalisations in the historiography which stifled debates. This investigation strives to present evidence to allow more nuanced arguments to be made, rather than these cross-century generalisations.

Amussen's hypothesis that women drank less excessively than men can also be tested. Similarly to the following chapter, Amussen used court depositions referring to drunken behaviour as a lens for studying gender differences. She found that men drank more than women, and male drinking was more likely to lead to violence. From this she concluded that men must have dominated issues of

⁴² Hutton, *Merry*, p113.

⁴³ Clark, *Alehouse*, p40.

excessive drinking and women were barely involved in the practice.⁴⁴ The proposition that women did not consume as much alcohol compared to men cannot be proven; there would be far too many discrepancies and these individual sources have not survived in enough abundance to make concrete claims. Although, it would not be inaccurate to assume that men were capable of drinking more due to their sex. The absence of women in the court records does not necessarily mean that they did not drink in excess at all. However, Amussen's claim that women drank less excessively than men is corroborated by findings in this database. There is only one example after 1552 of a woman dying from alcoholic indulgence. Ellen Powell was "wandering for her sustenance as a destitute beggar", but "being drunk" as she tried to cross a bridge she fell and drowned in the river below.⁴⁵ Whereas there are 25 examples of men dying as a result of intoxication between 1552-1600. This overwhelming evidence supports Amussen's postulation that men were drinking more excessively than women. This finding is perhaps not massively surprising, nonetheless it is necessary to highlight in order to avoid assumptions.

A focus on gender reveals another interesting trend. The 1552 Act seemingly had a bigger impact on reducing female excessive drinking than it did male. Prior to 1552 men account for 70% of the reports, whereas after 1552 this rises to 96%. There are two explanations which could justify why the act seem to have more of a profound impact on women than men. The first reason is that the number of women attending victualling houses or involved in the production of beer was already declining in this century. Both Clark and Jennings have highlighted the decline of female involvement in the production and consumption of alcohol compared to the medieval period.⁴⁶ They stressed that in the embryonic stages of ale selling the practice was dominated by women for various reasons, however Clark uncovered evidence from the early seventeenth century that implied this was no longer the case. Using Kent as a case study he found that by 1619 only 9% of the alehouse-keepers in the county were women.⁴⁷ Therefore, he argued that over time female involvement in the trade must have been gradually decreasing. This would offer an explanation as to why men began to dominate the records after 1552. Not only did the 1552 Act thwart excessive drinking for both genders it perhaps also accelerated an ongoing trend in society – the exclusion of women from victualling houses. This ongoing trend can be used as one explanation for why there was such a great decline of female accidental deaths in the database.

⁴⁴ Amussen, *Gendering*, p51 and p63.

⁴⁵ PDR: No G/201, KB: 9/605a/76.

⁴⁶ Clark, *Alehouse*, p21 and Jennings, *Drink*, pp42-43.

⁴⁷ Clark, *Alehouse*, p79.

The second possible explanation for this decline is that the Reformations of Manners could have been more directed at women than men. Bourdieu's sociological theory of distinction demonstrated that while class was the dominant factor which dictated taste and expected behaviour, there were further distinctions between genders.⁴⁸ The application of Bourdieu's theory within the field of history by Hutton or Wrightson did very little to contrast the experiences of each gender. They were more focused on class and regional difference.⁴⁹ Perhaps the sharper decline in women dying from drunkenness after 1552 compared to men implies that social reforms were more concerned with female behaviour than their male counterparts. This is in line with feminist thinking which put forward the idea that women in England in the early modern period were subject to a higher standards than men and this was enforced in both the domestic and public sphere.⁵⁰ Irrespective of what explanation is more plausible, what is clear is that women were not drinking as excessively as men between 1552-1606. Male drinking was more likely to result in accidental death; therefore, it would not be inaccurate to suggest that men were getting more drunk than women. Although this does not mean that women in the period were abstinent. There are still countless examples of female drunkenness, particularly in the court depositions that will be analysed next.

One final point is that none of these sources present a death occurring in a drinking house, which implies that no excessive drinking occurred in these establishments. Since the majority of previous scholarship which has discussed intoxication has focused on these houses this could explain why drunkenness has been somewhat overlooked. At first glance its absence could mean that excessive drinking was confined to more of a domestic environment. However, what is more likely is that drunks were removed from these establishments before they could do harm to themselves or others. There are two reasons why excessive drinking was probably not exclusively a domestic activity. The first is that many of the records discuss people who are "returning home" when they were struck by misfortune. James Johnson was returning home up Deadman's Alley when he was overcome by alcohol.⁵¹ Another source discusses Hugh Hudson; he was "returning home" when "having consumed much beer" he became lost and "deviated from the common road" where he lay on the floor and died.⁵² Frustratingly, the records do not usually say where a person was coming from, although in the case of Hugh Hudson it explains that he had been at a town market and had a drink after selling fruit. The amount of people "returning home" while intoxicated combined with the

⁴⁸ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p102.

⁴⁹ Hutton, *Merry*, p112 and Wrightson, *Society*, p176.

⁵⁰ A. Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* (London: Boydell & Brewer, 2007), pp39-73. And S. Pennell, 'Pots and Pans History: The Material Culture of the Kitchen in Early Modern England, *Journal of Design*, Vol. 11, No.3 (1988), pp201-16.

⁵¹ PDR: No. G766, KB: 9/1110/unnumbered.

⁵² PDR: No. D/688 KB. 9/548/55.

ubiquity of the alehouses in England means that it would not be unfounded to assume this is where some people were coming from. There was an extensive attempt by the crown in 1577 to survey the number of drinking houses in each shire. While the main aim of this was probably fiscal, because of its extensiveness Hailwood was able to calculate that there was one alehouse for every 142 inhabitants.⁵³ This highlights that despite the sources not explicitly discussing drinking houses it would not be misguided to claim that large amounts of the excessive consumption was done in a victualling house. “Returning home” indicates they have been somewhere prior, to suggest that this was never the alehouse would of course be misguided.

These death records oppose Douglas’ idea of constructive drinking by providing examples of alcohol leading to anomie.⁵⁴ They provide an insight into a class whose practices and beliefs are often not represented in the surviving source material. This is displayed by the extreme detail for the death of the destitute beggar Ellen Powell. This type of information is rare for the period, hence why the spreadsheet created has been so useful when attempting to uncover diurnal rhythms in late Tudor England. The steady decline and subsequent rise in alcoholic excess and the removal of women from drinking habits are two points which can begin to bring nuance to the generalisations which have previously been made by historians regarding drunkenness in the sixteenth century. Crucially, the records used in this chapter overcome Clark’s frustration that drunkenness in the period cannot be analysed.⁵⁵

⁵³ Hailwood, *Alehouses*. p3.

⁵⁴ Douglas, *Constructive*, p3.

⁵⁵ Clark, *Alehouse*, p109.

Chapter 3: Court Depositions

This final chapter uses court depositions which reference intoxication as the main primary source to aid the elucidation of the more unsavoury activities which could arise from excessive consumption. What is clear is that drunkenness and excessive drinking did not facilitate an increase in all types of crime. These sources also represent a further way to understand historic drunkenness and the diversity of sources which can be used to approach it. The table of depositions has been compiled using examinations which have been digitalised by researchers for the *Intoxicants and Early Modernity Project*.⁵⁶ The depositions are not national records; they are an assimilation of records from various county courts. These county courts were located across the north and south of England and provide examples of crimes committed in both urban and rural environments. As a result, they are representative of England as a whole. In addition, there are depositions from secular and ecclesiastical courts, therefore offering evidence from the two legal systems present in England at the time – church law and crown law.⁵⁷ The database includes cases of assault, sedition, murder, and theft, which would usually be tried in secular courts. As well as cases of fornication, adultery, defamation, matrimonial disputes, and clerical misconduct, which would be tried in ecclesiastic courts. Since their jurisdiction often overlapped it is not inaccurate to compile evidence from these two courts together.⁵⁸ Ultimately, the database created has a broad and varied range of examples which allow an inspection of sixteenth century drunkenness to take place.

There is an abundance of Tudor court depositions. However, like death records the process of their construction somewhat impedes their reliability, suggesting that they may not always be true to events. There are two factors which lead to this. The first issue, which has been raised by Chariman Mansell and Hailwood, is that the records are mediated accounts of events.⁵⁹ They are collaborative efforts to piece together the past so that justice could be achieved. Usually witnesses were asked questions by a clerk who would note down their own personal interpretation of the events. As such they are written in the third person and not verbatim statements made by witnesses. All the witness statements in this database have been constructed in a similar manner and are written in this way. Therefore, the clerks were literally putting words into the mouths of the illiterate peasantry so that

⁵⁶ P. Withington et al., 'Intoxicants & Early Modernity' <https://www.dhi.ac.uk/intoxicants/home.jsp> [Accessed 20. Apr. 20].

⁵⁷ P.R., Cavill, 'Heresy, Law, and the State: Forfeiture in Late Medieval and Early Modern England' *The English Historical Review*, Vol.129 Iss.537 (April 2014), pp270-1.

⁵⁸ C. Mansell and M. Hailwood (eds.), 'Court Depositions of South West England, 1500-1700' <http://humanities-research.exeter.ac.uk/womenswork/courtdepositions/#courts> [Accessed 20 April 20].

⁵⁹ Mansell and Hailwood 'Court Depositions'.

the statements were coherent enough for a court of law.⁶⁰ The second-hand reinterpretation of these events could result in the blurring of narratives which could potentially mean the sources are not historically true to events. However, as it has already been stated these constructed narratives offer a route into the contemporary mindset. This allows access to their understanding of what constituted a normative or expected behaviour.

In addition to this collaboration many of the witness interviews were carried out a long time after the discussed events. The large gap between a crime being committed and a witness being questioned could result in some of the more specific details of crimes being forgotten. For example, Christopher Heyward was being questioned in January 1597 over an altercation between Thomas Spooner and Thomas Coppinge. Coppinge had supposedly used slanderous words while drunk and accused Spooner of being a drunkard. Not only is Heyward's statement written in the third person, which highlights the collaboration in the construction of his statement, the altercations between Coppinge and Spooner had happened "on Easter Monday last past."⁶¹ Therefore, Heyward is being asked to recount specific details of an event occurring six months earlier. These layered accounts usually written months later call into question the accuracy of some statements. Not only have the events been reinterpreted by a clerk, the witnesses may have also misremembered specific details. This could prevent the statements from being factually accurate which could limit their usability. However, by focusing on the alibis and accusations, rather than unreliable descriptive accounts of events, a window from which to view the past is created. This is because this offers an insight into the prism of contemporary thought and what witnesses considered unsavoury behaviour to be. Hence why they are such a useful primary source.

One further issue which will impact the source material is that the structural changes to the judicial processes in the sixteenth century has led to an underrepresentation of certain crimes. JPs became more involved in legal cases throughout the sixteenth century. They began to chair hearings for crimes which only carried a fine or a few days in the county house of correction, these were known as the petty sessions. These were a step down from the more serious quarter session which occurred four times a year. JPs were not obliged to keep physical record of these petty trials.⁶² The underrepresentation of lesser crimes means that the database has the potential to be somewhat

⁶⁰ H. Falvey, *Relating Early Modern Depositions* in C.J. Griffin and B. McDonagh (eds.), *Remembering Protest in Britain Since 1500: Memory, Materiality and the Landscape* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018), p84.

⁶¹ PCD: DN/DEP 28/30b, fols 422r-v, 453r-v Sponer c Coppinge, 1597.

⁶² H. French, 'Legal and Judicial Sources' from L. Sangha and Jonathan Willis (eds.), *Understanding Early Modern Primary Sources* (London: Routledge, 2016), p39 and p41.

skewed, since an overwhelming amount of the remaining evidence is for more serious offences and not petty trials. Fortunately, within this specific database there is evidence for minor offences. An example of this is from 1594 when a group of tailors from Chester were only accused of drunken lewd behaviour, but tried at a quarter session.⁶³ It is surprising that a minor trial like this was heard at one of these sessions, it is even more surprising that these men were tried for drunkenness 13 years before it was legally codified. Indeed, of the 191 cases 71 of them are less serious crimes like verbal abuse, slander or merely accusations of overzealous drinking. The structural changes to the judicial processes could have meant that petty crime is underrepresented, however it does not mean that it has been omitted entirely. This overrepresentation of the more severe offences which could stem from drinking must be noted when analysing the sources, but it does not impede their usability.

From the database, figure two has been created to highlight the breakdown of types of crime relating to intoxication in the period. For the most part the number of crimes is relatively equal, with the exceptions of theft, verbal altercations, and excessive drinking. The lack of uniformity in the structure and wording of sixteenth century depositions means there is a large amount of variation in description of almost identical crimes. For example, in a church court in Cheshire in 1603, a drunk Edward Bagh accused Elizabeth Filshe of being “a whore, an arrant whore, a drunken whore, a common hedge whore” in an alehouse.⁶⁴ Bagh was tried for slander. However, in 1604 in a church court in Lancashire, Anna Banks was accused of drunkenly entering an alehouse and claiming the owner, Anna Barker, was “a whore and kept or keepth a bawdy house.”⁶⁵ Banks was tried for defamation and abuse, not slander. The contrast in language use was likely due to differences in regional dialect. Consequently, similar crimes in the spreadsheet have been grouped together under one term to enable the easier representation of information provided in figure two and subsequent analysis of the crimes. This avoids the issue of regional discrepancies in phrasing and allows the link between drunkenness and crime to be better understood. In the case of Bagh and Barker they have been grouped together under the term verbal altercations, the other groupings have been listed in the appendix.

⁶³ PCD: ZQSE 5/29, 1594.

⁶⁴ PCD: EDC 5/1603/2 (unfol.) Filshe c Bage, 1603.

⁶⁵ PCD: EDC 5/1604/46 (unfol.) Barker c Bank, 1603.

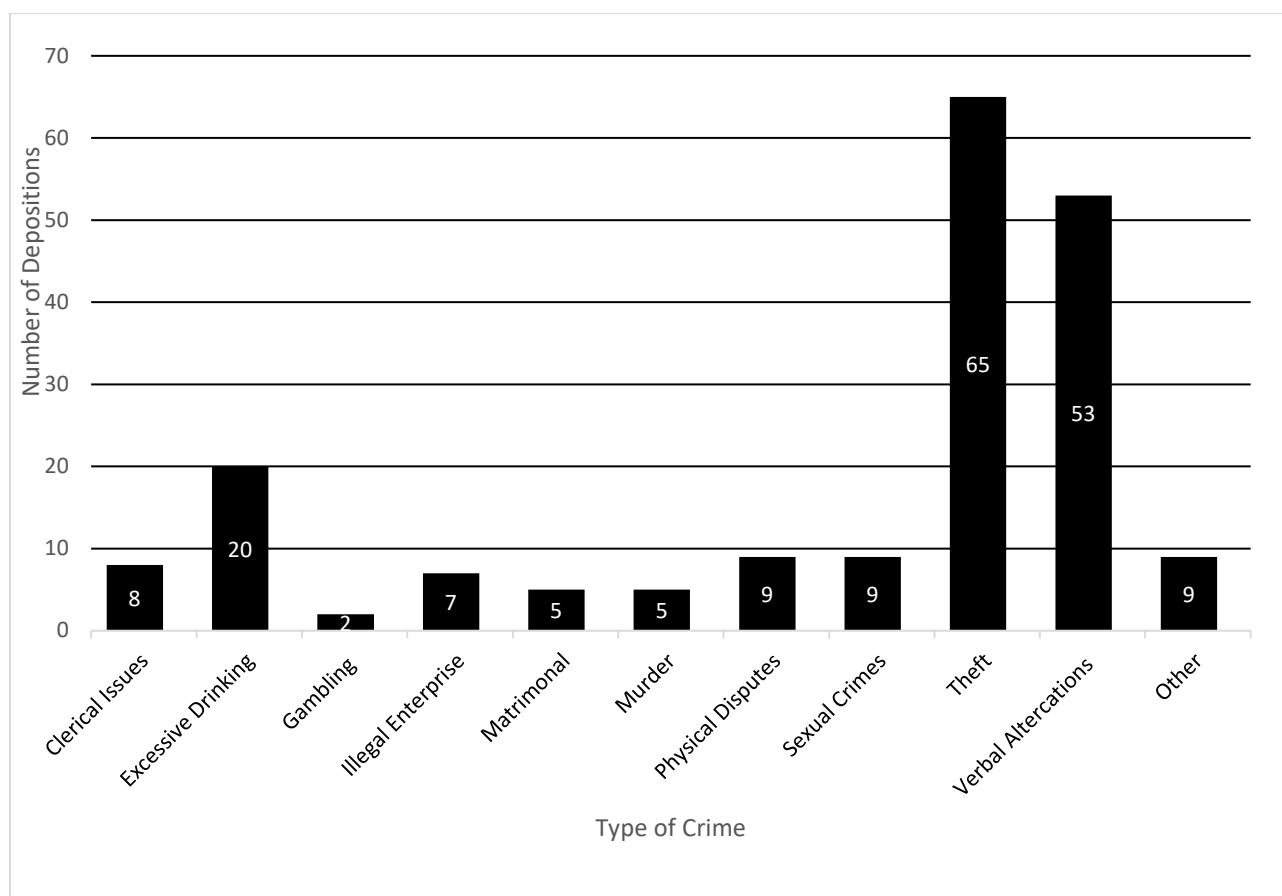


Figure Two: Breakdown of Court Depositions Involving Intoxication, 1557-1606

Despite high levels of crime being linked to intoxication it does not follow that drinking perpetuated *all* types of crime. Each crime must be studied in isolation to comprehend its link with excessive drinking. One must not conflate crimes committed in a victualling house and drunkenness facilitating crime. They are not one homogenous event, they are discrete. While theft was the most common crime committed, it was not facilitated by excessive drinking. First, the perpetrators were not usually intoxicated, and the depositions rarely reference the consumption of alcohol. For example, in 1599 a mariner tried to sell a stolen bible in an alehouse and in 1606 there is an example of a man selling a stolen horse.⁶⁶ These are examples of unscrupulous behaviour, but there is no mention of alcoholic consumption. In the database there are only eight occasions when the defendant is noted as drinking excessively before committing a crime, and in only two of these cases is the defendant listed as drunk from this excess.⁶⁷ It is not possible to suggest that overzealous drinking meant someone was more likely to commit a robbery since there are virtually no examples of someone intoxicated doing so. Furthermore, there are no depositions that list the victim as drinking heavily or being drunk. This could be because the victims claim might be weakened if they were perceived to be intoxicated. Or

⁶⁶ PCD: ZQSE 5/129, 1599 and PCD: ZQSE 7/10, 1606.

⁶⁷ PCD: ZQSF29/79, 1575 and PCD: ZQSF 49/15, 1600.

because the witness statements are made by third parties and they may have been unable to reliably confirm to the clerk if the witness was intoxicated. However, these are all assertions. Ultimately, the large amount of court cases for theft of property do not actually reference drunkards or excessive drinking. This evidence is more reflective of the unsavoury activity which was ongoing in victualling houses. It would be inaccurate to use this information to justify that excessive drinking perpetuated crime.

There is far stronger evidence that verbal altercations, the second most prominent crime, was perpetuated by alcoholic consumption. There are several more examples of the defendant being intoxicated when committing this type of crime. The deposition for John Jepson, a curate from Grappenhall is symptomatic of this. Jepson claimed he was abused by a drunk Thomas Swanbrook in August 1576. Jepson testified that the local alehouse keeper James Claier kept his establishment open during the gospel and homily readings on Sunday. After Jepson carried out his service, Swanbrook came from Claier's alehouse and insulted him. In front of the parishioners, Swanbrook "called him naughty, drunken and false priest, with many other indecent words." Fortunately, for this deposition Swanbrook's witness defence has also survived. Swanbrook claimed that Jepson had previously said "reproachful words" about his deceased father and that Swanbrook had confronted the curate about this in an alehouse, not after a church service. Swanbrook was so offended by the defamation of his father that he "called the said curate a knave and offered to fight with him at the same time."⁶⁸ The amount of detail in this deposition is extremely useful. First, there is evidence of alehouse-keepers opening on the Sabbath, highlighting that even after the 1552 Licencing Act there were still many illicit businesses. Second, there is an accusation of a clergyman drinking in an alehouse being used as a defence. This demonstrates that it was totally plausible for even churchmen to frequent drinking houses. This also indicates the vast number of people who drank in an alehouse and the importance of beer for sustenance, as the food historian Alison Sim emphasised.⁶⁹ Most notably, however, the deposition has evidence of two differing accounts of verbal abuse, but both were prompted by alcoholic drinking. If we are to believe the churchman's statement Swanbrook only came to insult Jepson after being suitably intoxicated at the clandestine alehouse. The assumption is that Swanbrook would have been far less likely to act in this manner if he had not been intoxicated. While not all the other cases of verbal abuse are as overtly linked to overzealous drinking the majority of them are. Excessive drinking often resulted in slanderous or abusive language being used. It would not be wrong to suggest that drunkenness perpetuated this crime. It is

⁶⁸ PCD: EDC 5/1576/41 (unfol.) Jepson c Swanbrook, 1576.

⁶⁹ A. Sim, *Food and Feast in Tudor England* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1997), p46.

this use of foul language that elites were so keen to eradicate, and what the 1552 Act for Alehouse Keepers suggested these drinking establishments propagated.⁷⁰

It is also necessary to study the prominence of women in the depositions regarding verbal abuse. Similar to Amussen's findings in her study of court depositions, men dominate the statistics for all crimes relating to intoxication with one exception, verbal altercations.⁷¹ Out of the 53 examples of the verbal altercations in drinking houses 17 are women and 36 are men. While women account for more of this type of crime than any other the evidence still implies men are mostly responsible. However, as Amanda Flather proposed, the spatial gendering of drinking establishments meant that women frequented them less than men.⁷² If we accept that women would have been in these situations less than men then the slight imbalance in depositions for verbal abuse can be accounted for. While male excessive drinking was far more likely to lead to physical disputes or illicit trading, female drunkenness often resulted in verbal altercations. Bagh's deposition is indicative of this.⁷³ This is also evidence that women were not abstinent between 1552-1606; like men, they were also susceptible to the destructive facet of excessive consumption. Using Flather's contention that women attended drinking houses less than men to account for the imbalance in the reports of crime cannot be applied to any of the other examples, this is because the others are so male dominated. Only in the records for verbal altercations is there slight parity.

Depositions for excessive drinking and drunkenness specifically were not as prevalent as those for theft or verbal altercations, yet it still accounts for around 10% of the total depositions. It is also important to recognise that people were being put on trial in secular courts specifically for excessive drinking despite the fact the crown had yet to criminalise it. This could mean the number of people who were actually arrested for being drunk between 1552-1606 is underrepresented. The main question is: what were the basis of these arrests for drunkenness if it was not illegal? One postulation is that these arrests were made because contemporaries believed that excessive drinking had the propensity to develop into more severe crimes like murder, fornication or fighting which would pose a threat to moral order. Essentially, these arrests for drunkenness were being pre-emptively made because of the elite's fear of drunkenness. The contemporary view that drunkenness could breed crime is purported by the writings made by Tudor commentators who were advocates of the Reformation of Manners. An example of this is Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique: for the Use of*

⁷⁰ Hutton, *Merry*, p112 and SOTR Vol IV, p157.

⁷¹ Amussen, *Gendering*, p51 and p63.

⁷² Flather, *Gender*, p113.

⁷³ PCD: EDC 5/1603/2 (unfol.) Filshe c Bage, 1603.

All Such as Are Studious of Eloquence. This piece of polemical writing was written in 1553 for John Dudley, Queen Elizabeth's Master of the Horses and a prominent member of the privy council during her reign.⁷⁴ Wilson advises Dudley that "no man trusteth a dronkard... drunkenness of rage, and madnesse of anger, are much more daungerous then other surfeitinge."⁷⁵ Essentially, Wilson is attempting to explain that one must avoid excessive drinking since it can lead to anger and rage. Wilson's comments on excessive drinking were not unique. The dangers of drunkenness pervaded throughout this elite literature in England from the beginning of the period 1552-1606. This view goes some way to explaining why there are so many arrests for drunkenness in the database compared to other crimes. Essentially, it was a preventative measure of JPs in order to stop more serious crimes occurring.

This elite literature is part of the wider Reformation of Manners highlighted by Hutton and Wrightson.⁷⁶ This dissertation is concerned with reconstructing the popular class and illuminating their interaction with excessive alcoholic consumption, consequently there has been limited interaction with this elite scholarship. This elite source material does not illuminate the popular class; it instead represents how they were viewed by their more wealthy peers. However, it is useful when understanding why arrests for drunkenness appear in the database before 1606, hence why it has been utilised in this chapter. Ultimately, this material means that the depositions for drunkenness which predate 1606 can be very easily placed into the wider chronology of the Reformation of Manners. These arrests are from the embryonic stages of this reform and perhaps could mean that the start point for this reformation could have been even earlier than historians first thought.

As with accidental death records, court depositions provide a route of analysis for studying the popular class in the sixteenth century. There clearly is far more to be explored using these court depositions. The specifics surrounding excessive drinking and the contemporary understanding of it could definitely be investigated further. Another potential route for study would be to try and explain why there are no cases of rape in the database. Does this mean forced sexual intercourse was not considered a crime if someone was intoxicated? What has been emphasised in this chapter is that there are discrepancies to how drunkenness and excessive drinking influenced crime. Some crimes were perpetuated by alcohol, whilst others were clearly not. By formulating arguments like this, sweeping generalisations which have been made surrounding drunkenness can be refined. But more

⁷⁴ S.J Lee, *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (London: Routledge, 2007), p2.

⁷⁵ T. Wilson, *The Arte of Rhetorique: for the Use of All Such as Are Studious of Eloquence*, set forth, 1553. (Doc. Image 75, Consulted via Early English Books Online).

⁷⁶ Hutton, *Merry*, p112 and Wrightson, *Society*, p176.

importantly this chapter has offered another route for studying drunkenness in the period which Clark suggested was not possible.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Clark, *Alehouse*, p109.

Conclusion

While excessive drinking may have fluctuated throughout the period, it was clearly a quotidian feature of life between 1552-1606. Even churchmen were susceptible to the enjoyment of making merry and the demons of destructive drinking. The problem with understanding alcohol's centrality to life is that the diurnal rhythms of the past are often not overtly present in the surviving sources. This means that drunkenness usually only appears as incidental information in various scenarios. However, it is this incidental nature that allows drunkenness in the period to be analysed and is why Clark's disparaging comments of the availability of sources is misplaced.⁷⁸ The two separate routes of analysis presented in chapters two and three have attempted to disprove Clark's assumption. By contextualising the incidental data from death records and court depositions it is possible to bring nuance to previous generalisations made by some historians like Withington or Hailwood. These refinements to previous generalisations should not be viewed as a critique of Clark's work or these other erudite histories.

There are three key refinements to our previous understanding which have been uncovered. First, the successful crown assault on drinking between 1552-1606 can be seen to be part of the Reformation of Manners. Suggesting that it was not just church reformers seeking to improve behaviour. Second, men were predominantly those who were getting drunk, but women were also involved in this practice. This could have been because they were subject to higher moral standards compared to their male counterparts. Finally, not all crime associated with alehouses was perpetuated by excessive drinking, although many unsavoury verbal altercations were. The idea that some people took drinking too far, becoming drunk should not be unsurprising; and a government concerned with a society who enjoyed alcohol to its extreme could highlight similarities with the present. However, the focus here has not been to anachronistically study the sixteenth century in order to draw parallels with contemporary life. The purpose of this dissertation has been to employ protagonists like the unfortunate James Johnson and study those who did take drinking too far. Each individual event is a microcosm for the physiological state. By piecing these together a framework for studying it between 1552-1606 can be constructed, creating a window from which the past can viewed.

There are of course further routes of analysis which would refine these generalisations even more.

⁷⁸ Clark, *Alehouse*, p109.

For example, there could be a focus on the occupation of people who were drinking to examine how this influenced consumption; or were certain age groups more predisposed to excessive drinking? The sources which have been used are not comprehensive, but they are representative. They highlight there is not a scarcity in material. One issue is that some of the necessary sources for further studies are fragmented and scattered in church records or archives yet to be examined in detail. The opportunity to make use of this empirical approach from a wide selection of sources is due to the digitisation of the material. This is testament to those working to digitise and publish sources for the *Everyday Life and Fatal Hazard* and *Intoxicants and Early Modernity Project*. This digitisation has enabled this dissertation to go beyond traditional qualitative source analysis and create two databases from which many quantitative conclusions have been drawn. As the study of history progresses in this digital age, it is vital that these sources are digitised and made available to all scholars. Not only will this prevent information from being lost, as the primary sources decay over time, it also facilitates more fruitful analysis and debate. This digitisation allows the individual to utilise and comprehend much larger amounts of information more easily. Perhaps this new digital approach could explain why Clark's comments on drunkenness now seem so outdated.

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Appendix:

Breakdown of Court Deposition Groupings

- Clerical Issue: *Church disputes (1), Clerical Misconduct (5), Violation of church rights (1) and Payment of the tithe (1)*
- Excessive Drinking: *Making merry (4), Drinking (4), Drunkenness (9) and Habitual drinking (3)*
- Gambling: *Gambling (2)*
- Illegal Enterprise: *Illegal imports/sales (4), No licence (2) and Poor work (1)*
- Matrimonial: *Matrimonial (5)*
- Murder: *Murder (3), Poison (2)*
- Physical Disputes: *Fighting (5) and Physical assault (4)*
- Sexual Crimes: *Fornication (3) and Adultery (6)*
- Theft: *Theft (65)*
- Verbal Altercations: *Slander (33), Defamation (16) and Verbal Abuse (4)*
- Other: *Vagrancy (2), Capture of Escaped Prisoners (1) and Illegible (5)*