

MANCHESTER AND LIVERPOOL PUBLIC HOUSES COMPARED, 1840-1914

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*"As Manchester framed an Education Bill of its own, so Liverpool put forth a Licensing Bill of its own."*¹

This article explores some points of comparison between the public houses of Manchester and Liverpool. It draws in particular on differences in the ways in which public houses were run in both cities to suggest some potential implications for the way in which we understand the social history of each. In this, it is attempting to inform social history through the study of business history, but business history conceived as rather wider than the writing of individual company histories. It is business history understood as taking seriously the impact of business decisions on the broader life of the local contexts in which those businesses operated, and business history as recognising that different companies adopted different strategies, shaped in turn by their local social, economic and regulatory context. However, it as well to recognise the pitfalls that await the comparative exercise. The choice of comparator is particularly important. Graeme Milne's recent study, for example, suggests that the appropriate comparators for Liverpool are other port cities involved in world trade.² We would do well to remember this when considering the evidence presented below, but it remains the case that contemporaries, as illustrated in the excerpt from a *Times* leader that heads up this article, made frequent contrasts between Manchester and Liverpool and that such comparisons suggest some interesting avenues for inquiry. Liverpool was the touchstone for debates over licensing and drunkenness in the nineteenth century, and yet Manchester had more pubs per head of population (whilst also coming close behind its Lancashire rival in convictions for drunkenness). A comparison between practice in the two cities, therefore, might offer some new avenues for inquiry. Two of these are selected for particular discussion in what follows: the preponderance of beerhouses in Manchester and the institution of public house management in Liverpool.

The comparison begins with the built environment, where the differences between the physical nature of pubs in the two cities is taken as a measure of the difference in business practice. We then consider the evidence related to numbers of licensed outlets in the two cities, which immediately raises a need to distinguish between types of outlet. The unusual profile of Liverpool, dominated from mid-century by full licences is contrasted with the preponderance of the beerhouse in Manchester. This difference in profile is related to the nature of local markets, to differences in local regulation and to business practice. These differences are used to set in context the widespread use of managers, as opposed to tenants, in the pubs of Liverpool. This very distinctive practice is again set in the context of business practice and competition in the two cities. These comparisons are then used to suggest some implications for the study of social life, focussing on the potential impacts on social mobility and

the role of the pub in community life. The word 'pub' has been used as a readily recognised form of shorthand in the last sentence and will continue to be used to cover the full range of outlets licensed for the sale of alcohol on the premises. The article will draw attention to the need to distinguish between types of outlet, but continuous writing of this distinction might prove tedious. By the same token, it is important to state that this article is based on detailed work on Liverpool licensing and business practice. The comparative material on Manchester is drawn largely from secondary sources, but the hope is that this might encourage students of Mancunian history to explore the history of their pubs in a little more detail.

Architecture

One simple indicator of the physical difference between the pub in Manchester and Liverpool might be the existence of a number of recent volumes dedicated to the pubs of the latter.³ Now, these might simply reflect the existence of particularly good photographic archives, or the interests of particular individuals, but if we turn to the more academic accounts of the architectural histories then we find the impression confirmed. John Parkinson-Bailey's substantial recent architectural history of Manchester has some limited comments about the numbers of pubs in the early nineteenth century, but nothing on their design until a discussion of late twentieth century bar design.⁴ The only Victorian pubs to merit a mention are the *Peveril of the Peak* and the *Sawyers Arms*.⁵ By contrast, Hughes' account of the development of Liverpool architecture gives five pages over to a discussion of pub design, accompanied by several photographs.⁶ The concentration, understandably, is on the dramatic magnificence of pubs like the *Vines* and the *Philharmonic*, pubs also covered in some detail by Girouard in his national survey of Victorian pubs.⁷ This is, in truth, largely about the London pub, but the major areas treated outside the metropolis are Liverpool and Birmingham – not Manchester. However, there is more to this comparison than just the presence in Liverpool of some spectacular city centre pubs. As Girouard comments of the *Philharmonic* "it is not a typical Liverpool pub".⁸ The volumes of photographs of Liverpool pubs, and the elevations in Figure 1, enable us to see that this typical pub was one which was based more on shop design than on the extension of the house that most pub design represented.

They were characterised by large plate glass windows, extremely high façades, signboards that emphasised the name of the brewer rather than the name of the pub and an emphasis in decoration on the vertical. Individual components, such as doors and windows, were often relatively simple but an effect of magnificence was achieved by, for example, use of pillars to emphasise height.⁹ The full history of such outlets would rest on a much more detailed analysis of the surviving evidence, photographic, documentary and physical, but there is enough to indicate a consid-

erable difference. The Liverpool pubs described were not confined to the city centre, but extended out into much humbler areas.¹⁰ By contrast, such visual evidence as there is for Manchester suggests both a relative absence of the magnificent from the city centre and the predominance of the more 'homely' beerhouse in the suburbs.¹¹ Of course, some of what we can say here is conditioned by the survival of evidence, and the design history of the Manchester pub would stand further investigation, but one suspects that the essential comparison, between magnificent 'shops' in Liverpool and humbler 'houses' in Manchester is an important one, and one moreover that can be sustained by an examination of other forms of evidence.

The Role of the Pub in Social and Economic Life

In 1877 Samuel Rathbone of Liverpool, appearing before a House of Lords Select Committee on Intemperance, handed in a table of nineteen English towns with a population of over 50,000 north of Birmingham ranked by the proportion of apprehensions for drunkenness to their population.¹² Leading in the number of apprehensions was Liverpool, with 1 apprehension to every 25 members of the population, followed by Manchester with 1 to 40. (Newcastle, Salford and Blackburn took the next three places). However, Liverpool was thirteenth in terms of pubs per head of population (1 to every 209), whilst Manchester with 1 pub to every 140 people retained second place in this 'league' too. Of course, there are problems with these figures, with the discussions of the Committee amounting to an extended disquisition on the lack of value in figures for drunkenness, reflecting as they did police practice as much as the 'true' extent of drunkenness, but these figures are suggestive. They convinced Rathbone that there was no relationship between the number of pubs and drunkenness and that one needed to look more closely at the character of those pubs.¹³ Using this evidence William Rathbone, a Liverpool MP, argued "that the mere arbitrary diminution of the number of public houses had the effect of converting more and more of the old-fashioned public houses into new-fashioned gin-palaces, so that the number of public houses might be reduced and yet the temptations to drunkenness increased."¹⁴ This importance of the character of outlets for the consumption of alcohol is illustrated by a comparison of types of outlet in the two cities, as in Table 1.

Table 1: Types of Pub 1840-1890

	1840	1850	1857	1860	1867	1870	1890
Manchester							
Public houses	502	481		485	484		494
Beer houses	812	1298		1645	2016		1649
	1314	1779		2130	2500		2143
Liverpool							
Public houses			1493	1543	1942	1929	1860
Beer houses			897	926	819	438	237
			2390	2469	2761	2367	2097

Source: *Manchester 1840-1867: Hewitt, Manchester, p.185; Liverpool 1857-1870: First Report of Lords Select Committee on Intemperance, 1877, Appendix B, pp. 332-3. Paper handed in by Major Greig, 27 February 1877; 1890: Return of the number of licences for the sale of intoxicating liquor: 1890 (98) LXIII 65 (82).*

What these figures indicate are the widely divergent profiles of pubs in the two cities, despite broadly similar overall numbers. 'Public houses' in these figures relate to those which were licensed to sell beers, wines and spirits. Such houses were licensed on an annual basis by licensing magistrates. Beer houses, by contrast, were introduced by the Beer Act of 1830.¹⁵ A licence to run a beer house could be obtained by the payment of a fee to Customs and Excise, but this was subject to no magisterial control. The number of licences taken out grew at an explosive rate, with the Webbs claiming that "In Liverpool alone there opened more than fifty additional beershops every day for several weeks."¹⁶ Beerhouses were brought under the control of licensing magistrates in 1869, and in 1872 they obtained wider powers to suppress licences that they considered unnecessary. What is of interest here is the way in which these mechanisms operated differently in the two cities, resulting in a markedly different profile of outlets.

In Manchester one notes the broadly constant level of full licences. The growth in outlets was in beerhouses, which doubled in the twenty years from 1840. By contrast Liverpool had always had higher numbers of fully licensed houses. The fluctuations in the number of beerhouses require some further explanation. Their drop in importance relative to full licences came about in the 1860s because of the Liverpool experiment in 'free licensing'.¹⁷ This came about when some magistrates, under pressure to convert beerhouse licences into full licences, unconvinced by the criteria against which to establish the 'needs of the neighbourhood' and influenced by broader notions of free trade, won the bench over to a policy whereby they would grant a full licence simply on the grounds of the suitability of the applicant and the premises. As can be seen this experiment, before it was abandoned in 1867, produced a considerable increase in the number of fully licensed houses and gave Liverpool a distinctive profile that was to persist until the gradual incorporation nationally of the surviving beerhouses into the ranks of fully licensed houses. When beerhouses were brought under the control of the magistrates in 1869, the response of the Liverpool magistrates was instant. 325 beer house licences were removed on the grounds of misconduct or structural inadequacy in the first year of control alone.¹⁸ While the number of beerhouses in Manchester declined, the magistrates there seemed less willing to adopt the same restrictive policy as their Liverpool counterparts and we still find them complaining in 1902 of "the profusion of ill-conditioned, badly-managed, and grossly unfit beerhouses licensed before 1869."¹⁹

Part of the reason for the difference in profile was, then, the local interpretation of state regulation of licensing, but we also need to consider differences in the market for alcohol. Part of this difference might relate to differences in the character of the city centres of each town. Parkinson-Bailey points to the domination of Manchester's city centre by the warehouse, leaving little room for other buildings.²⁰ Messenger, resting on Disraeli's portrait of Manchester as 'Mowbrary' in *Sybil*, makes a similar point.²¹ Of course, there are issues of definition and perspective here; oral history has revealed, for example, the use by the poor of street markets as a form of leisure activity penetrating the central core.²² There was also the growth of the theatre and the music hall in parts of the city. However, the evidence available, including the



Peeveril of the Peak, Manchester, 1896

testimony of architectural history, seems to suggest that as far as the pub is concerned, there was not the central market to sustain the same number of large-scale outlets as found in Liverpool. In Manchester outlets for drink seem to have been much more concentrated in the local beerhouse in the working class districts fringing the city centre.²³ By contrast, Liverpool city centre was close to the docks, which sustained a vibrant leisure culture. This was dominated by the large number of sailors who would be decanted into the city and whose payment patterns tended to encourage heavy consumption in short concentrated sessions. Just outside our period the *Brewers Journal* reported “some of the brewers owning dockside houses have an organisation by which, when vessels are due to arrive, squads of barmen are drafted to the premises, where it is known the normal trade will for a certain period be doubled or even trebled.”²⁴ The nature of this trade encouraged the provision of large outlets dealing in a wide range of products. Contemporary comment drew attention to the particular nature of the Liverpool pub. A witness to the 1834 Select Committee on Drunkenness complained that Liverpool pubs were designed in such a way as to tempt customers: “the windows of the public-houses are decorated with placards, setting forth the superior quality of the article which they sell, in contradistinction to others, in order to induce persons to come in and purchase.”²⁵ This seems a relatively mild form of inducement, but the case was made more strongly by the *Quarterly Review* in 1875. It explicitly linked the built form of the pub to the experiment in free licensing, claiming that “the street architecture became still more largely interspersed with that unmistakable form of elevation, with ornamental cornices, swing door, plate-glass windows, and peculiar gas arrangements, which we know too well.”²⁶ The *Times*, too, joined in the attack, thundering in the same year

The glaring, showy character of the modern gin-palaces and the overcrowding of these in all the low parts of the town, are set down as among the most objectionable features of the traffic in Liverpool. These gin-palaces, with their flaring barrel lamps and other external decorations, are in some respects peculiar to

the port. The poorer the locality, the better chance there is, it seems, of the house succeeding, and the wretched customers cannot complain that they are not honoured with splendid establishments.”²⁷

We might want to relate the “glaring, showy character” to a general air of magnificence in Liverpool architecture, and no doubt there are some influences here. But it is also helpful to relate differences in types of outlet and their design to business practices in the city, and to compare these to those obtaining in Manchester.

Running Pubs: Business Strategy and House Management

It is helpful at this point to review briefly the ways in which pubs were run in the nineteenth century. Many companies preferred to restrict their activities to the brewing and wholesaling of beer, supplying ‘free’ houses. The Leeds firm of Joshua Tetley is a useful example, winning large volumes of business from beer houses who lacked the facilities to brew their own beer.²⁸ In some areas, notably London and Scotland, brewers used the ‘loan tie’ to ensure outlets for their beer.²⁹ Under this, publicans undertook to take a proportion of their supplies from a brewery in return for loans. Over the course of the century such ties frequently led to the acquisition of property by brewers themselves, which they let to tenants who were tied to take their beer (and sometimes other supplies) from the brewery. However, in all of these arrangements the emphasis was firmly on the brewing of beer as the prime activity, with pubs being regarded as distribution outlets. Few companies were heavily involved in retailing, preferring to keep this activity at arm’s length. This attitude characterised the Manchester breweries, but not those operating in Liverpool. The ownership of pubs by brewers there seemed to have been a widespread practice from early in the century.³⁰ Allegations of majority ownership of the town’s pubs by brewers in 1852 were easily disproved by Henry Danson of the Licensed Victuallers Association, but the pace of acquisition speeded up from then.³¹ According to Danson 180 of 1,450 public houses were owned by brewers, approximately 60 of whom operated in the city. They were operating in a climate in which the ready availability of beer house licences devalued the existing value of public houses, something exacerbated by free licensing. What this meant was that those with access to capital were able to acquire pubs relatively cheaply. In 1877 John Patterson of Liverpool observed to the Lords Select Committee

it so happened that 10 or 12 years ago the largest proprietor of public-houses then in the town made this observation in my hearing: “If the magistrates continue the free trade system I shall double the number of my houses, and if they stop it will double the value of the houses I have.”³²

That person is likely to have been Andrew Barclay Walker of the firm of Peter Walker & Son, twice mayor of Liverpool and head of the most successful company operating in the city. Some of their eventual scale of operation, and the importance of major pub-owning brewers, is indicated by the figures in Table II:

	Walker	Cain	Bents	Threlfall	Total	All houses	Walker share %	Major brewers share %
1881	96	47	61	19	223	1904	5.04	11.71
1891	220	138	114	88	560	1843	11.94	30.39
1901	291	147	119	95	652	1795	16.21	36.32

Table II: Public Houses in Liverpool, 1881-1901

Source: LRO 347JUS Liverpool licensing registers 1881, 1891, 1901

The distinctive practice associated with Walker was the direct management of houses. The general manager of the company claimed in evidence to the 1898 sessions of the Royal Commission on the Licensing Laws that “the founders of my company are generally credited with being the originators of the system” of running houses through the employment of salaried managers.³³ Their espousal of such a system may be linked to the control that it gave them. Using such control they could, it was alleged, use the ‘long pull’, a much frowned upon method of gaining extra business by giving extra quantities of beer.³⁴ Using their reserves they could use such a tactic to win market share from their tenancy-based rivals. Another advantage of direct management was the ability that it gave the company to introduce food into their outlets in a consistent fashion, rather than relying on exhortations to tenants.³⁵ They could dismiss errant managers instantly, thus protecting their licences. The employment of managers also went hand in hand with the scale of the outlets run, and the company was particularly associated with the extension of pubs into neighbouring premises.

Such tactics were not viewed with equanimity by the city’s active Temperance advocates, nor by some of the city’s magistrates. However, the Head Constable of Liverpool in the 1890s was firmly of the opinion (and had kept statistics to prove his point) that managed houses were the best run in the city.³⁶ With such an advocate the practice of house management came to be endorsed by the magistrates. Such a stance was controversial in the country as a whole, with many magistrates refusing to grant licences to managers and with temperance advocates questioning the legality of the practice in the House of Commons. The practice became a central part of the debates around the ‘Peel’ Royal Commission on licensing in the late 1890s, giving us a further comparison with practice in Manchester. The question was first raised by G.H. Conden Powell, secretary of the Tied House Tenants League Association. He presented a copy of a manager’s agreement from a Manchester brewery, argued that managers were not allowed under the current law and concluded that “Notoriously the cradle of the system is the most drunken town in England. Facts are stubborn things”.³⁷ The status of his association was questioned, but his evidence was supported by Henry Haggis, hotel broker and former outdoor manager for a Manchester brewery. He argued that

90 per cent of the licenses that are obtained before the licensing magistrates in Manchester are bogus. Here is one I have here. I have had to do the same thing myself when I was manager for a brewery. Instead of saying this man is going in as our manager

*and is paying us nothing, they put him down as a tenant whereas he is not a tenant.*³⁸

The reason for employing such managers, however, was not as a central part of business strategy as in Liverpool. Rather, “If there is a bad house to be worked up we can generally put our hands on him and ask him to work it up, and after he has worked it up he gets a small consideration and has to go out, because we have got a tenant for it.”³⁹ The accuracy of such claims was to a large extent confirmed by the subsequent debate that was caused in Manchester. This prompted a letter from the chair of Manchester magistrates in which he declared

*The applicants invariably declare on oath that they are the bona fide holders and occupiers of the premises for which they seek a transfer, and taking these two facts into consideration, the statement on oath and the production of a stamped agreement, the justices have felt themselves powerless to do more than has already been done.*⁴⁰

The differences between the two cities seemed to be two-fold. On the one hand, the magistrates in Liverpool had a history of active intervention in the licensing affairs of the city. Operating in the highly charged atmosphere of a city polarised by the



The Sawyer's Arms, Manchester, 1968

temperance debate, they adopted a restrictive attitude towards licensing that became renowned throughout England. As part of this strategy they came to an open advocacy of a form of business practice that they saw as helping them maintain order. By contrast, the Manchester magistrates seemed to have adopted a policy which turned a blind eye to 'abuses' of the licensing system. In this they were aided by the second difference – the attitude of the city's brewers. They seemed to lack any interest in pursuing a policy of direct management as opposed to the use of managers for pragmatic reasons. This in turn can be linked to the nature of the city's licensed outlets. Thus, James Groves of the Salford firm of Groves and Whitnall explained that they did not employ managers in their houses "first of all, from a deliberate preference, and secondly, because a large number of our houses are beerhouses."⁴¹ Beerhouses were too small to be able to stand the costs of a direct manager, often being run by a tenant with a second occupation. Their prevalence in the profile of licensed houses in Manchester meant that there were few incentives for companies in the city to embark on a course of house management as a key plank of business strategy. So, for example, Hydes Anvil Brewery had three houses under management in 1907, with numbers not increasing significantly until the 1950s.⁴² Unfortunately other histories of Manchester breweries either do not mention the use of managers or accept the public view of Manchester not accepting managers, so we lack evidence on business practice elsewhere.⁴³ It is, however, interesting to note that when Peter Walker & Son came to expand into Manchester and the surrounding towns, their purchases were largely of beer houses which they continued to run under tenancy.⁴⁴ We are once again forcibly reminded of the strength of local practices in this period.

Our comparison therefore indicates that Liverpool licensing was dominated by large fully licensed public houses, a significant number of which were owned by large brewery companies and run under direct management. These houses were magnificent in scale and appearance, with design principles based more on the shop than the house. In this they reflected a distinctive business practice in which they were seen in the context of the growth of multiple retail systems.⁴⁵ The most magnificent of these outlets were to be found in the city centre, but the same principles were used on a smaller scale across the city. By contrast, Manchester pubs were on a more modest scale, dominated as they were by the beer house. The large city centre pub seems to have been exceptional, with even pubs here (such as the *Peveiril of the Peak*) being on a more homely scale. The city's brewers regarded themselves as being involved mainly in production, choosing to keep retailing activities at arms length. In this they were supported by a rather 'hands off' approach by the city's magistrates, which contrasted sharply with the interventionist and restrictive policy operated by their counterparts in Liverpool. The implications of these differences for life in the two cities are explored in the concluding section of this article.

Conclusion: Taking the Pub Seriously

We have seen that there were considerable and significant differences in the way in which pubs were owned and run in Manchester and Liverpool. However, such differences have been largely taken for granted by historians of both cities. Both popular and academic accounts of Liverpool, for example, take the manager

as being an unproblematic part of city life, despite the heated controversy that surrounded their existence.⁴⁶ In Manchester, the pub in general receives little mention in many histories. In the one work which does take the pub seriously, Martin Hewitt uses the terms beer house and public house as if they were interchangeable.⁴⁷ In this he is not alone; a supporting reference, Vernon's work on *Politics and the People* discusses the pub without differentiating between types, despite having the example of Joseph Platt "Oldham's radical 'auctioneer and occasional orator', and proprietor of the beer shop 'The Bird in Hand'".⁴⁸ Walton's discussion of the history of the hospitality trades refers to this linking of beerhouses with radical activities, but his use of Liverpool as an example of this trend seems at odds with the evidence presented above.⁴⁹ Manchester seems to have represented the triumph of the beer house, so we need to consider what implications this might have had. It might be useful to discuss these under three headings – the impact on social mobility, the impact on the nature of pub life and the impact on the built environment.

It is worth reminding ourselves of some of the characteristics of the beer house, characteristics that endured even after they came under tighter control in 1869. They were on a small scale, often in a converted room in a house. This small scale nature persisted in Manchester into the twentieth century. In 1902 the Manchester magistrates reported "In some cases there was only one bedroom, and the justices in the course of special visits had found people living in cellars which were not fit for a dog, whilst in others the bedroom or the cellar was reached by means of a ladder."⁵⁰ This small scale meant that beer houses generally served the needs of a restricted locality, often serving more as off-licences with some bar accommodation. At the Vescock Street, Liverpool beer house in 1905 "the business done in the house is principally an outdoor trade; about 25% of the trade being indoor." No proper books of account were kept and the landlord also owned neighbouring rented property.⁵¹ This combination of occupations was common in beer houses, as noted above in the case of John Platt.⁵² The 1881 licensing register for Liverpool contains entries for 258 beer houses. A comparison of licensee details to the census reveals 21 with joint occupations – coach painter, boilermaker and joiner being three examples – and a further 40 where the licensee has another occupation entirely given. It is entirely probable here that the licence was in the name of the husband, with the wife running the beer house. Given these circumstances, the running of a beer house, either as a free house (either owning or renting the property) or as a tied tenant was a feasible strategy for those members of the working class able to accumulate a modest sum for the 'in-going'. As Roberts notes

*The less ambitious among skilled workers had aims that seldom rose above saving enough to buy the ingoing of a beerhouse, open a corner shop or get a boarding house at the seaside. By entering into any business at all a man and his family grew at once in economic status, though social prestige accrued much more slowly.*⁵³

It would be interesting to test this assumption on a sample of beer house keepers in Manchester, using census and other records

to search for origins.⁵⁴ What we might suggest is that this cements the ‘artisanal’ nature of Manchester social life observed by Hewitt, in stark contrast to that in Liverpool. Publicans have not featured in discussion on the lower middle class in the nineteenth century, but in Liverpool their numbers were few and declining. What we had was a much more polarised structure, with employed managers replacing semi-independent businessmen. The attitudes of such businessmen, of course, cannot be read off their social position – whilst there was a strong association between publicans and Conservatism, Vernon presents us with the example of William Newton, publican and trade union leader in Tower Hamlets in 1852.⁵⁵ However, the relative lack of semi-independent tenants in Liverpool might be thought to have contributed to the rather polarised nature of politics in that town as compared to Manchester.

In turn, the character of life within the pubs might have been affected by the combination of small beerhouses run by tenants not too far removed from the background of their customers on the one hand, and the combination of salaried managers running magnificent large-scale bars on the other. It is important not to exaggerate the differences too much – there are examples of managers serving many years in the same pub in Liverpool, with many houses becoming known by the name of their manager. There is also little direct evidence of the nature of pub life. However, we can contrast Roberts’ account of Salford pubs with that supplied by O’Mara for Liverpool. Roberts gives us an account of pubs carefully graded by status, both externally and internally. Externally

each establishment had its status rating over and above the social gradations to be found within a house itself. Lowest on our scale came the ‘Boatman’, haunt of bargees, loose women and thieves, and at the pinnacle the ‘Duke of Clarence’, frequented by shopkeepers, foremen (in the ‘Best Room’) and artisans in the Vault.⁵⁶

Internally, “Each part of the tavern had its status rating; indeed, ‘he’s only a tap-room man’ stood as a common slur.”⁵⁷ By contrast O’Mara gives an impression of Liverpool pubs as essentially interchangeable. When his drunken, violent father returns from jail he repairs to “Cain’s public house at the top of the street.”⁵⁸ Similar mentions of pubs never give them a name, but refer to them by the name of the company that owns them, and his mother seems to have used any of the pubs in the neighbourhood indiscriminately. This evidence is very slight, but the earlier writing of the journalist Hugh Shimmin seems to support this notion of the interchangeability of the Liverpool pub. His lurid description of one vault has

Men dirty, unshaved, drunk, blasphemous. Women half-naked, ragged, riotous, and obscene. Children trying to sell matches, or pick a pocket, under the pretence of selling pencils or cleaning shoes. Mothers with infants at their breasts, and market-baskets at their feet, sitting on the form half drunk and wholly asleep, waiting for their husbands, who are taking a parting glass at the counter.⁵⁹

It also supports the extensive use of the pub by women (and, indeed, whole family groups) in a way which runs counter to the emphasis on pubs elsewhere as a masculine domain.⁶⁰ Indeed, the magistrates in Liverpool in 1912 made a specific attempt to enrol the city’s pub owners in a campaign to reduce if not eliminate women in pubs. They laid down the following conditions:

- (1) *It is necessary that the strictest vigilance should be exercised in serving women at all.*
- (2) *That any woman of known bad character, or of drunken habits, or whose appearance is not respectable, should be refused altogether.*
- (3) *That when women are served they shall only be served once, and shall not be allowed to treat each other to drinks.*
- (4) *That women shall not be allowed to remain an undue length of time upon premises.⁶¹*

These were found to be completely unacceptable by representatives of the drink trade nationally, not a trade noted for its progressive ideas. However, the existence of such attempts, regardless of their success, is indicative of a difference in drinking practices. A comparison between the two cities suggests that the material form of the pubs, conditioned by business strategy and local regulation, could have had an impact on the nature of social relations within the pub – just as the shift towards themed and branded pubs in the late twentieth century might have been expected to have similar effects.

Finally, it is interesting to return to our starting point in the built environment. Tony Lane has a suggestive comment in his work on Liverpool as the ‘gateway to empire.’ He suggests that the rhetoric that the merchant families used about Liverpool as a world city “passed to others whose livelihood in the city was dependent upon a continuation of its traditional role as a port. The sense of stature that Liverpool people have of themselves is due in part to the extravagant language once used so readily and frequently by the ‘old families’”.⁶² Is it going too far to suggest that the stature of Liverpool’s pubs might also have contributed to this feeling, extravagant as they were in both external and internal decoration in even the meanest of streets? Of course, it could be argued that what this comparison confirms once again is simply the exceptionalism of Liverpool, and that the dominance of the less pretentious beer house in Manchester simply reflects patterns elsewhere. Those familiar with the work done by Mass Observation at a later period might already have spotted the parallels with the pub in ‘Worktown’, which “isn’t much different from the other houses in the block, except for the sign with its name and that of the brewing firm that owns it, but its lower windows are larger than those of the others, and enclosed with stucco fake columns that go down to the ground.”⁶³ However, the discussion of the controversy over managers in Manchester suggests that we need to go behind appearances. If we contrasted the experience here with, say, that in Leeds, where the magistrates made their opposition to managers absolutely clear, then we see the importance of differences in the relationship between local state regulation and business strategy.⁶⁴ Steven Jones, for a later period, notes that “the public-house - part of a significant Capitalist industry - was the hub of working-class social life, catering for all kinds of activities.”⁶⁵ What has been argued in this article is that we need to go

further. Social historians need to go beyond the bar to look at the nature of those running the pub and how they might have had an impact on the character of what happened in the pub. Beyond this, they need to consider the influence of those who owned the pub and the way that their business strategies interacted with regulatory practices. There is plenty of material here

for an analytical narrative of Manchester's pubs along the lines of that already essayed for Bradford by Jennings.⁶⁶ It is hoped that the points of comparison sketched out here between Liverpool and Manchester provide some encouragement to others to explore further.

Notes

My thanks to staff at the Liverpool Record Office for their assistance in locating material to do with the business history of that city's public houses.

¹ *The Times*, 30 Nov. 1870, p. 8.

² G. Milne, *Trade and Traders in mid-Victorian Liverpool: Mercantile Business and the Making of a World Port* (Liverpool, 2000), p. 3.

³ F. O'Connor, *A Pub on Every Corner* (4 vols) (Liverpool, 1995-2001); T. Cooke, *The Pubs of Scottie Road*, (Liverpool, 1999) (hereafter Cooke, *Scottie Road*).

⁴ J. Parkinson-Bailey, *Manchester: An Architectural History* (Manchester, 2000) (hereafter Parkinson-Bailey, *Manchester*).

⁵ Parkinson-Bailey, *Manchester*, pp. 321, 324. This impression of the relative lack of significant Victorian or Edwardian public houses is confirmed by the more detailed guide in C. Hartwell, *Manchester* (London, 2001). Of the fourteen pubs mentioned, nine are, at a generous count, Victorian or Edwardian and it is just the *Castle* on Oldham Street and the *Peveril of the Peak* that are of particular significance.

⁶ Q. Hughes, *Seaport* (1964), pp. 88-93.

⁷ M. Girouard, *Victorian Pubs* (1975) (hereafter Girouard, *Pubs*).

⁸ Girouard, *Pubs*, p. 197.

⁹ Many examples in the books cited, but see for example the picture of the Eagle, Scotland Road and Collingwood Street in Cooke, *Scottie Road*, p. 60, which exemplifies all these components.

¹⁰ Evidence for which might be found on the cover of Ringo Starr's 1970 album 'Sentimental Journey'! This shows a small pub in The Dingle, where he was born, which displays considerable magnificence.

¹¹ See for example a picture of 'The Three Pigeons', Irlams o'th' Height, in N. Richardson, *A History of Wilson's Brewery 1834-1984* (Swinton, 1983), p. 2 (hereafter Richardson, *Wilson's*).

¹² *House of Lords Select Committee on Intemperance*, (P.P. 1877, XI) Third Report, Appendix G, p. 318 – note that this is the amended version.

¹³ *S.C. Intemperance*, (P.P. 1877, XI) First Report, Evidence of Samuel Rathbone, p. 21.

¹⁴ 'Drunkness in Liverpool', *The Times*, 1 Jan. 1878, p. 10.

¹⁵ On the background to licensing generally see T.R. Gourvish and R.G. Wilson, *The British Brewing Industry 1830-1980* (Cambridge, 1994).

¹⁶ S. and B. Webb, *The History of Liquor Licensing, principally from 1700 to 1830* (1963 [1903]), p.124.

¹⁷ Explored in much greater detail in A. Mutch, 'Magistrates And Public House Managers 1840-1914: Another Case Of Liverpool Exceptionalism?' *Northern History*, 40(2).

¹⁸ 'The New Beerhouse Act', *Brewers' Journal*, 15 Aug. 1870, p.160.

¹⁹ 'Manchester Justices and Licensing', *BJ*, 15 Jan. 1902, p. 13.

²⁰ Parkinson-Bailey, *Manchester*, p. 155.

²¹ G.S. Messinger, *Manchester in the Victorian Age: The Half-known City* (Manchester, 1985), p. 94. Messinger argues that Engels makes similar points in *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, p. 91.

²² A. Davies, 'Saturday Night Markets in Manchester and Salford 1840-1939', *Manchester Region History Review*, 1987, pp. 3-12.

²³ This is a contention that could stand testing by the use of, for example, trade directories and licensing registers to map the spatial distribution of outlets in a manner that is beyond the scope and ambition of the present piece.

²⁴ 'Advance of the Managerial System', *BJ*, 15 Oct 1921, p. 417.

²⁵ *Select Committee on Drunkness* (PP 1834 VIII), evidence of Charles Purnell, dockmaster, Liverpool, p. 696.

²⁶ 'Drink: the Vice and the Disease', *Quarterly Review*, 139, 1875, p. 414.

²⁷ 'The Licensing Laws in Liverpool', *The Times*, 2 Sept. 1873, p. 3.

²⁸ J. Chartres, 'Joshua Tetley and Son, 1890s-1990s: a century in the tied trade' in J. Chartres and K. Honeyman (eds.), *Leeds City Business 1893-1993* (Leeds, 1993), pp. 112-44.

²⁹ P. Mathias, *The Brewing Industry in England 1700-1830* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 119-134.

³⁰ H. Shimmin, *Pen and Ink Sketches of Liverpool Town Councillors, reprinted from the Liverpool Mercury 1857*, Edward Howell, Church St, Liverpool, 1866, pp. 119-120.

³¹ *Select Committee on Public Houses* (P.P. 1852-3, XXXVII), evidence of Henry Danson, p.271.

³² *S.C. on Intemperance*, (P.P. 1877 XI), Evidence of John Patterson, p. 193.

³³ *Royal Commission on Licensing Laws* (P.P. 1898 XXXVI), Third Volume of Evidence, evidence of Ernest Ellis, p. 391.

- ³⁴ Liverpool Record Office (hereafter LRO), 942 WAK 40, Wakefield MSS, Benefactors of Liverpool: Sir Andrew B. Walker Bt.
- ³⁵ 'Sir Andrew Barclay Walker', *Liverpool Daily Post*, 28 Feb. 1893.
- ³⁶ R.C. on the Licensing Laws (P.P. XXXVI, 1898), Third Volume of Evidence, p. 4.
- ³⁷ R.C. on the Licensing Laws (P.P. XXXV 1897), Second Volume of Evidence, evidence of G.H. Condon Powell, p. 392.
- ³⁸ R.C. on the Licensing Laws (P.P. XXXV 1897), Second Volume of Evidence, evidence of Henry Haggis, p. 441.
- ³⁹ R.C. on the Licensing Laws (P.P. XXXV 1897), Haggis, p. 442.
- ⁴⁰ R.C. on the Licensing Laws (P.P. XXXV 1897), letter from William Murray, chairman of Manchester magistrates, reproduced from *Manchester Guardian*, 1 April 1897, p. 460.
- ⁴¹ R.C. on the Licensing Laws, (P.P. XXXVI, 1898), Third Volume of Evidence, James Groves, p. 376.
- ⁴² N. Hyde, *Brewing was a Way of Life*, (Hales, 1999), p. 94.
- ⁴³ F. Cowen, *A History of Chesters Brewery Company*, (Swinton, 1982) asserts "Many towns in those days, Manchester, Salford and Crewe, for example, did not allow managers in public houses, whilst Glossop, Walsall and Winsford welcomed them. The vast majority of Company-owned houses were perforce tenanted" (p.13).
- ⁴⁴ Company property records indicate that by 1914 they owned 117 beer houses in Manchester as against 6 public houses. LRO, 380PWK Papers of Peter Walker & Son, 2/2/1 Leases and 3/4/6 property records.
- ⁴⁵ According to a company publication the managerial system was "a product of the natural evolution of our commercial system, and has its precise equivalent in other trades in that process which has reduced small traders to the position of managers of large establishments". Peter Walker & Son, *Walker's Warrington Ales* (Warrington, 1896), p. 56.
- ⁴⁶ P.J. Waller, *Democracy and Sectarianism: A Political and Social History of Liverpool 1868-1939* (Liverpool, 1981), p. 112; O'Connor, *Pub on Every Corner*, *passim*.
- ⁴⁷ Note the following: "The massive expansion of beerhouses in Manchester is detailed in Table 6.1; it was not surprising that the overriding image of working class districts remained the pub on every street corner." – M. Hewitt, *The Emergence of Stability in the Industrial City: Manchester, 1832-67* (Aldershot, 1996), p. 187.
- ⁴⁸ J. Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture c1815-1867* (Cambridge, 1993), p.143 (hereafter Vernon, *Politics*).
- ⁴⁹ J. Walton, 'The hospitality trades: a social history' in C. Lashley and A. Morrison (Eds.) *In Search of Hospitality* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 57-73.
- ⁵⁰ BJ, 'Manchester Licensing', p.13; See also Richardson's note about the state of beerhouses offered for sale by the Empress Brewery which "decided to sell some of its Hulme beerhouses in 1904: Wilson's were interested and shortly after the Britannia Brewery purchase Hubert Wilson went to have a look at them. He was not impressed. a terse note in the Directors' Minute Book ends with "...in consequence of such an inspection the company decided to decline." – Richardson, *Wilson's*, p. 5.
- ⁵¹ LRO 720 KIR Papers of Edmund Kirby and Sons, Architects and Surveyors, 3012, Charles Taylor, 1-3 Vescock Street.
- ⁵² Cf. similar findings in P. Jennings, *The Public House in Bradford, 1770-1970*, (Keele, 1995) (hereafter Jennings, *Bradford*).
- ⁵³ R. Roberts, *The Classic Slum*, (Harmondsworth, 1971), p. 6 (hereafter Roberts, *Classic Slum*).
- ⁵⁴ In this context it is of interest to note the existence of a *Return of Beerhouses (Manchester and Salford)*, (P.P.1839 XXX) which gives addresses for all licensed premises in the two towns in 1839 and details of transfers.
- ⁵⁵ Vernon, *Politics*
- ⁵⁶ Roberts, *Classic Slum*, p.94.
- ⁵⁷ Roberts, *Classic Slum*, p.6.
- ⁵⁸ P. O'Mara, *The Autobiography of a Liverpool Irish Slummy* (1934), p.43.
- ⁵⁹ H. Shimmin, *Liverpool Life; The Courts and Alleys of Liverpool [1856, 1864]* (New York, 1985), p. 85
- ⁶⁰ A. Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty* (Buckingham, 1992), p. 30.
- ⁶¹ 'Liverpool Justices' Stringent Conditions', BJ, 15 Mar. 1911, p.138
- ⁶² T. Lane, *Liverpool: Gateway of Empire* (1987), p.82.
- ⁶³ Mass Observation, *The Pub and the People* (1970), [1943], p. 21.
- ⁶⁴ R. C. on the Licensing Laws (P.P. XXXV 1897), evidence of J. Thornton, clerk to Leeds justices, p. 73; cf. Chartres, 'Tetleys'.
- ⁶⁵ S.G. Jones, *Workers at Play: A Social and Economic History of Leisure 1918-1939* (1986), p.84.
- ⁶⁶ Jennings, *Bradford*.