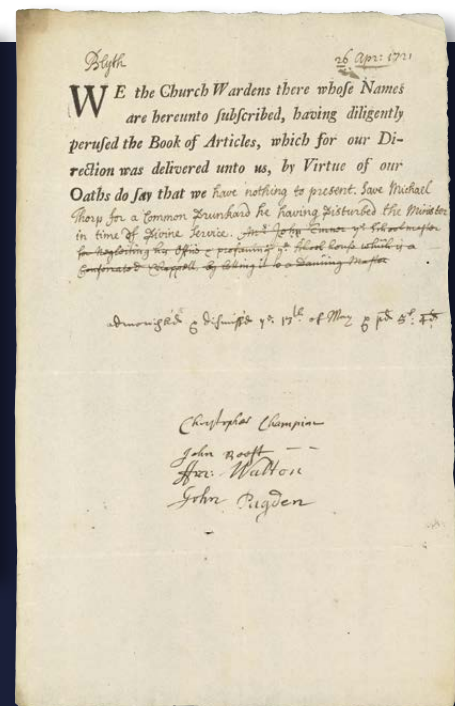
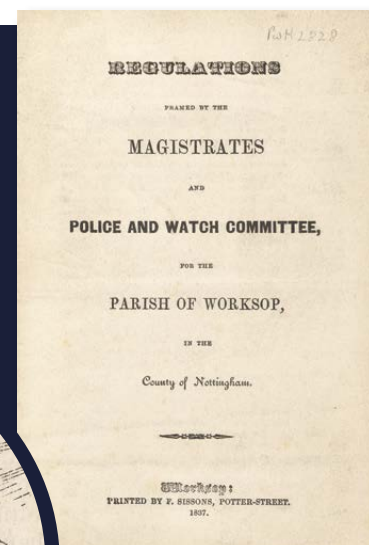


Questions of control

Drink poses a series of regulatory dilemmas, which connect personal habits to public and economic impacts. Legislation in 1552 required local justices of the peace to issue licences for ale houses. Parliament would repeatedly revisit and redefine licensing law, weighing the provision of licensed spaces against the perceived impacts of what went on in them.

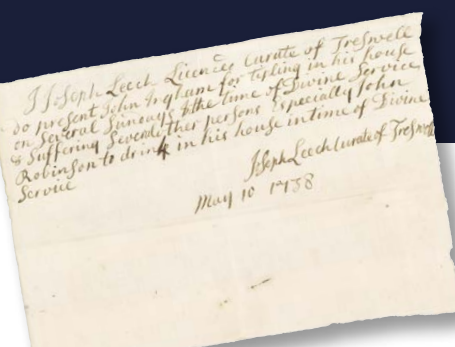
→ Regulations framed by the Magistrates and Police and Watch Committee for the Parish of Worksop, 1837. Portland (Welbeck) Collection, Pw H 2828

↓ Engraving from W and R Chambers, *Chambers's Miscellany of Useful and Entertaining Tracts* (1845). Briggs Collection, LT210.A /C4



↑ Churchwarden presentment bill charging Michael Thorp as a 'Common Drunkard' he having Disturbed the Minister in time of Divine Service', Blyth, Retford Deanery, 26 April 1721. Archive of the Archdeacons of Nottingham, AN/PB 348/109

← Abstract of notes regarding 'A scheme of the gross and neat Excise from midsummer 1674 to midsummer 1688', 1688. Portland (Welbeck) Collection, Pw A 2083



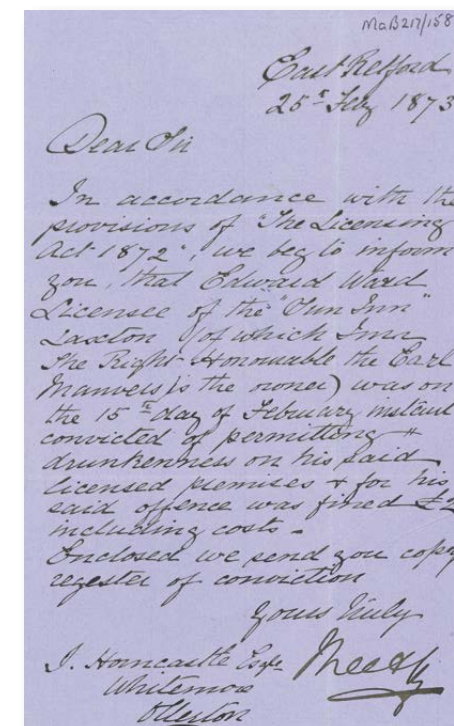
← Clergy presentment bill charging John Ingham for 'tipping in his house on Several Sundays in the time of Divine Service', Retford Deanery, 10 May 1738. Archive of the Archdeacons of Nottingham, AN/PB 349/649/2

Duties on drink provided an important source of government revenue that could be drawn from a broad population. As one correspondent of senior statesman Henry Pelham put it in 1742, the negative impacts of alehouses would have been intolerable 'were it not for the advantage the Government draws from it by the Excise'. This reflected the idea that alehouses were disreputable spaces. Drink was dangerous, but profitable.

Church courts had traditionally intervened where drink interfered with the moral and religious life of communities, especially on Sundays. A wider range of drink-related offences would become the business of secular authorities. In urbanising and industrialising Britain, the subject of drink brought together concerns about poverty, overcrowding and poor health. New police forces took on the role of dealing with drunkenness, largely where it threatened public order. They also supported the work of the licensing authorities, providing information about publicans and premises that might be in breach of regulations.

For the temperance movement, the benefits of any excise revenues were outweighed by the social and economic costs of drink. Only the self-control brought by sobriety could reduce poverty and crime, reduce public expenditure on policing and the Poor Law, and restore home and family life.

Weighing up whether to introduce further regulations demanded that alcohol be viewed alongside policy questions of agricultural productivity and public order, market freedom and economic prosperity, and even foreign relations.



↑ Letter to Mr Horncastle informing him that the licensee of the Sun Inn, Laxton, had been convicted for permitting drunkenness on his premises, 25 February 1873. Manvers Collection, Ma B 217/158