

Drink and the Historians

SOBER REFLECTIONS ON ALCOHOL IN NEW ZEALAND 1840–1914*



WHERE ALCOHOL HAS APPEARED in the writing of New Zealand social history, aside from its influence on some of the practitioners, the accounts almost entirely concentrate on its negative effects and the sustained campaigns for its suppression. As Caroline Daley observed, ‘New Zealand social historians have tended to focus on the wowers of our past, the prescribers who preached a message of personal temperance if not prohibition’.¹ Indeed, the prohibition movement, at its peak from the mid 1880s to the late 1920s, tends to be portrayed as an inevitable and justifiable response to a colonial society that was marred by widespread drunkenness and related instability. The rising tide of prohibition agitation fits seamlessly into what James Belich has described as the ‘Great Tightening’, a series of interlocking campaigns designed to create order, discipline and a strong nation.²

In many respects there is a ‘Clayton’s historiography’ of alcohol in nineteenth-century New Zealand; the casual observer is deceived by the historiography’s supposed complexity, but ultimately it lacks depth, balance or a sense of conviviality. It would be foolish to deny that significant numbers of people in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries drank more than was good for them or those around them. Reliable evidence of drink-induced financial, physical and psychological damage is substantial and inescapable. Nor can the fact be ignored that 25–30% of all convictions during the last third of the nineteenth century were for drunkenness.³ But an account of alcohol-induced catastrophe need not dominate to the exclusion of all other historiographical possibilities. Too much of the existing literature is uncritical and too inclined to take prohibitionist rhetoric at face value. It is also largely devoid of meaningful international comparisons.

In reviewing the existing historiography of alcohol in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century New Zealand, this article emphasizes the need for histories that examine the perspective of the drinker and that consider the culture of alcohol consumption in its own right, and not merely as a counterpoint to temperance and prohibition. Why did people drink and did they do so excessively by contemporary international standards? What did people drink and in what circumstances? How did tastes change over time? What role did brewers and publicans play in the community other than as dispensers of alcohol? To determine the impact of alcohol on New Zealand society we need to distinguish between those who drank to excess, those who drank in calm moderation, those who abstained quietly and those who abstained noisily. Just as Patricia Grimshaw insisted that ‘It would be wrong for the later generations to remember only the fanatical wing of the [prohibition] movement, and to forget the patient, dedicated and enlightened work of many hundreds of sensible and intelligent humanitarians, reacting to a genuine evil in society’,⁴ it would be equally wrong to view all drinkers and drink sellers as harbingers of damage and disruption. Moreover, although the prohibitionists’

most enduring legacy, the ‘six o’clock swill’, shaped several generations of New Zealand (binge) drinkers and a set of twentieth-century licensing laws rightly characterized by W.H. Oliver as ‘illiberal and degrading’,⁵ the era of the swill also provides a long barrier that tends to obscure aspects of a more nuanced alcohol culture in the decades preceding it.

In 1918 Prime Minister William Massey observed that ‘there is no subject in which members of Parliament take more interest, and no subject about which so much feeling is shown as is the case in anything concerned with the licensing laws of the country’.⁶ A perusal of newspaper columns and a seemingly never ending pamphlet debate, to say nothing of *Hansard*, suggests that this is not an exaggeration for the period from the mid 1880s to the early 1930s. Massey, as with his predecessors, was very well aware that the wide range of conflicting interest groups and reform agendas around alcohol required constant and delicate balancing. It is strange, then, that such a dominant issue, let alone the diversity of opinion on it, is not reflected in the writing of New Zealand history. William Pember Reeves, a firm opponent of prohibition and of T.E. Taylor in particular, wrote surprisingly little on the subject beyond a legislative summary of the political maelstrom of which he was very much a part.⁷ In their general histories Keith Sinclair and W.H. Oliver each gave drinking and its critics scarcely a page.⁸ Two recent general histories hardly mention alcohol, let alone prohibition.⁹ A 1968 masters thesis by P.F. McKimney traced the rise of the temperance and prohibition movement to 1893. In a 1977 doctoral thesis and two subsequent articles A.R. Grigg continued the story up to 1914, while Richard Newman provided a brief treatment of the 1911 election.¹⁰ These works have become the standard sources for those few historians who have mentioned prohibition over the past four decades, including Jock Phillips’s discussion of ‘the boozier and the decent bloke’.¹¹ Little use has been made of a number of local studies,¹² and since the late 1980s there have been few lengthy examinations of any aspect of prohibition.¹³ McKimney and Grigg worked from the premise that there was a severe alcohol problem in pre-World War I New Zealand that needed to be addressed. Both found much of their confirmation in the opinions of prohibitionists and neither gave much attention to the variety and complexity of those who opposed prohibition. Recently Paul Christoffel has provided a detailed and valuable analysis of New Zealand alcohol law and policy since 1881, but his work is very much concerned with the motives and methods of those who sought to restrict rather than those who wished to enjoy alcohol.¹⁴

Perhaps the most surprising omissions in the historiography are in the realm of political history. Beyond discussion of the manoeuvrings between Richard Seddon and Robert Stout for the Liberal leadership in 1893 and the role this played in shaping the significant licensing legislation of that year, Seddon’s subsequent and artful juggling of trade and prohibition forces is neglected.¹⁵ Nor is anything to be found in the account of Joseph Ward’s premiership, which encompassed the high tide of support for prohibition, or that of Gordon Coates, who assumed office shortly before national prohibition secured 47.3% in the 1925 licensing poll.¹⁶ While both Libby Plumridge and Barry Gustafson have examined tensions within the fledgling Labour Party, especially between the strongly prohibitionist James McCombs and moderates such as Michael Joseph Savage, who worked for more than a decade at the Captain Cook Brewery, they did not extend their discussion

beyond 1919 and explore how the drink issue was negotiated during Labour's rise to political influence in the 1920s.¹⁷ Indeed, as Christoffel recently pointed out, most historians assume that the prohibition movement faded away after its narrow defeat in April 1919.¹⁸ Moreover, despite the instrumental role of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in the extension of the franchise in 1893, there has been no lengthy or critical analysis of the alcohol debate that galvanized the organization from 1885.¹⁹

While there are a number of celebratory accounts of aspects of the beer, wine and spirits industries in New Zealand, scholarly discussion of alcohol as a legitimate component of sociability is less developed.²⁰ Conrad Bollinger's blend of reasoned argument, conspiracy theory and diatribe awarded equal culpability for the barbaric drinking culture of the twentieth century to prohibitionists who sought to demonize and legislate against any degree of consumption, and greedy brewers who were unwilling to invest in the creation of a civilized drinking atmosphere.²¹ Christoffel partially absolves the trade from criticism by emphasizing both the enduring faith in 'restrictionist thinking' — the view that to restrict alcohol availability would reduce consumption and therefore reduce its harmful effects — and the general aversion to change that prevailed in an era of triennial liquor polls when such a sensitive issue was never far from the public eye.²² In *Pleasures of the Flesh* Stevan Eldred-Grigg veered between a familiar chronicling of the rise of prohibition and its accompanying legislative web and a very sound appreciation of why and what people drank, the circumstances in which they drank and the role of brewers and publicans in a dynamic liquor industry which constantly adjusted to changing needs and tastes. But in too many places pivotal aspects of his argument are compromised by assertion and generalization, lack relevant international contexts, are hidden in an almost impenetrable set of endnotes or are derived from questionable sources that allow little room to further explore the proportions or frequency of the claims being made. The ardent prohibitionists J.W. Jago and William Fox are not, for example, reliable authorities on the profits of brewers or the qualities of licensed establishments.²³

Others who have written about alcohol at any length tend to view it as a corrosive influence on society and present the prohibition movement as a predictable response to astronomical rates of consumption and a decidedly unwholesome, predominantly male, drinking environment. Long before Miles Fairburn articulated his vision of frontier chaos it was common to regard drinking, and its seemingly inevitable descent to drunkenness and probably violence, as an entirely normal reaction to a harsh and challenging colonial setting. McKimney claimed that 'From the 1830s to the 1890s and in every settlement in New Zealand one of the salient features of life in colonial society was widespread drunkenness'.²⁴ As a motive, Grigg insisted that 'For many people on the frontier alcohol offered an escape from squalor, loneliness, isolation and poverty'. It was a 'psychological prop' for those homesick for Britain and ill-prepared for the demands of colonial life. But the problem was not simply created by New Zealand conditions: 'At home the pub had been their social life, the bottle their escape from the misery of their surroundings. It is little wonder that in a new society, where conditions were so harsh even if their prospects were better, people continued to imbibe with regularity and often intensity.'²⁵ Eldred-Grigg provided a more colourful portrayal of colonial drinking: 'Drunks were everywhere in early colonial

New Zealand. In the towns, they staggered about the streets, propped themselves up on lampposts and vomited into the gutters. In the country, drunken bullockies swore at their teams and drunken runholders collapsed on their verandas. Every public gathering, whether a procession, circus, race day or show, provided a heavy harvest of drunks.²⁶ All of these drinkers, according to Fairburn, were trying to 'blot out the psychic pain of social isolation'. They used alcohol 'to break down the barriers that separated people and prevented intimacy in an atomised society'. The tradition of 'shouting', or buying rounds of drinks among large groups, guaranteed instant friendships but also enshrined immoderate drinking because there was no logical end to the round.²⁷ Jock Phillips, although beginning on a more cautious path in which assessments of frontier male drinking were presented as contemporary perceptions rather than fact, quickly moved to a confident pronouncement that 'drunkenness was a serious social problem in nineteenth-century New Zealand and convictions for drunkenness were high'.²⁸ With the partial exception of Eldred-Grigg, the focus of all of these interpretations is very largely on the drinking habits of the working class and especially of 'frontier' males. Typical is Matthew Wright's assertion that 'Beer, gin and cheap wines were consumed by the lower classes, many of whom found solace in the bottle and were reluctant to give up what was to them their only comfort in a hard world'.²⁹ Relatively little has been written about the equally determined, if less publicly visible, drinking habits of the middle class.³⁰

Closer scrutiny and contextualizing of the existing historiography, especially in relation to studies of other comparable societies, suggests that as well as instances of excess there was also ample evidence that the drinking habits of many New Zealanders were moderate, sensible, social and more normal than abnormal by contemporary standards. In turn, the prohibition movement was less a local inevitability than an international moral crusade in which New Zealand was only one small player. That it left a unique legacy of licensing laws and arcane attitudes might say more about pressure group politics than drinking.

At the very least, we need to question the qualifications of many who portrayed nineteenth-century New Zealand as an alcohol-soaked society. Edward Jerningham Wakefield and Charlotte Godley can hardly be trusted as unbiased commentators on those who did not conform to the older Wakefield's vision of sober settlement.³¹ To resort, as McKimney does, to the *Temperance Herald* for confirmation of deaths attributable to alcohol, or to the *Prohibitionist* for evidence of 'highly questionable if not illegal' actions by the licensed trade in defence of its interests, tells us little that is credible.³² George Chamier, whose account of 'repellent and disgusting' drinking conditions in his semi-autobiographical *Philosopher Dick* informs the arguments of Eldred-Grigg and Phillips, is another less than impartial observer of factors shaping the drinking habits of colonial labourers.³³ The son of an Anglican clergyman and from 'a family closely bound up with English literary, intellectual and civil life', according to Lawrence Jones, Chamier's broader purpose in *Philosopher Dick* and its companion *A South-Sea Siren* was to lament the failure of New Zealand to become anything more than 'a rather servile imitation of life in the Mother Country', with 'little or no attempt to revert to a purer, simpler and more primitive mode of existence'. Both books were written against the background of a growing prohibition movement during the

1890s by an author who had left New Zealand more than two decades earlier.³⁴ For apparent evidence of high levels of drunkenness beyond the officially recorded figures, Grigg presented a 1903 survey of 37 Auckland hotels that discharged 560 patrons on a Saturday night ‘decidedly under the influence of liquor’. Only ten of them faced the magistrate on Monday morning charged with drunkenness. That the survey was conducted by members of the Auckland Prohibition League suggests that it ought not to be cited as reliable evidence of drunkenness.³⁵ Keith Sinclair once called for a generation of pedants to uncover New Zealand history.³⁶ Perhaps it is time for a second generation to excavate the footnotes of many who have already mined the archive.

Although these accounts often claim that alcohol consumption and drunkenness in nineteenth-century New Zealand was excessive, the yard stick by which such claims are measured is rarely stated. Moreover, the authors do not explain why the amount consumed necessarily translated into an undesirable drinking culture. Brian Harrison reminds us that ‘drunkenness’ is not a scientific term.³⁷ It is highly impressionistic and very much in the eye of the beholder. So while it is true that nineteenth-century consumption was considerably higher than for the early twenty-first century, a multitude of cultural, economic and social changes over the intervening period renders such a comparison meaningless. What we need to know is whether drinking in nineteenth-century New Zealand was abnormal by contemporary standards, especially when compared to Britain, from where most of the population originated.

On the basis of estimates from an unidentified source, Eldred-Grigg, echoed by Phillips, claimed that an average Pakeha male consumed 45 litres of commercial spirits and 14 litres of beer per annum during the 1840s, dropping to 24 litres of spirits but 167 litres of beer by the 1860s.³⁸ However, it is simply not possible to draw this or any other conclusion from available evidence for the 1840s. Import statistics are not reliable until 1853. Moreover, dramatic fluctuations in the amounts and proportions of different beverages imported each year — such as 231,494 gallons of spirits in 1859 but only 164,281 the following year, or 89,662 gallons of wine in 1855 but only 46,420 the following year — also cloud patterns of consumption.³⁹ In 1849 the Auckland merchant firm of Brown & Campbell claimed to have six years’ supply of wine on hand, suggesting that there was frequent stockpiling of supplies to ensure an even distribution over time.⁴⁰ Therefore we cannot simply divide annual import quantities by population. But seemingly by this method Keith Sinclair claimed that the inhabitants of Canterbury and Otago each consumed three gallons (13.6 litres) of spirits per year during the early 1860s.⁴¹ Although this amount would by turns shock or challenge the modern reader if it arrived at their feet in a single job lot, the statistic is meaningless unless we know what else they drank or where this placed them on an international drinking league table for the period. Indeed, three gallons of spirits and nothing more would amount to little more than half the rate of per capita pure alcohol consumption for England and Wales at the same time.⁴²

Proceeding cautiously with per capita consumption statistics for Europeans only, and adhering to uniform assessments of alcoholic strength for beer, wine and spirits, allows some useful comparisons with both England and Wales together and with the wider United Kingdom. Of course the problem with per

capita consumption is that it covers the entire population, including children, who generally did not drink, and women, who are assumed, by the nature of physiology if nothing else, to have drunk less than men. One possibility is to only count adult males as drinkers on the basis that males who abstained from their portion would have been offset by women who did not. Another possibility is to assume that women drank at half the rate of men. But such methods are purely speculative. Ideally, we also need to incorporate the vexed question of drinking by Māori, for which meaningful statistics are not available before 1881.⁴³ Further, there is no reliable information as to the proportions of beverages drunk by particular groups within colonial society. Assumptions that beer was primarily the drink of the working class are countered by its prominent place in the cellars of even the best hotels.⁴⁴ Likewise, as the prohibitionists always pointed out, wine and spirits were not the preserve of the wealthy. For present purposes, then, the discussion is limited to a comparison of overall consumption by European populations in England and Wales, the United Kingdom as a whole, and New Zealand.

Two possibilities, 5% and 7% alcohol by volume, are offered for the strength of beer.⁴⁵ These allow for both diversity in the types of beer available, ranging from weak harvest ale to XXXX ale and strong imported pale ale, and some uncertainty as to the proportions brewed at each strength.⁴⁶ If we then assign figures of 40% alcohol by volume to spirits, of which a few were stronger and others weaker,⁴⁷ we may conclude that the alcoholic impact of spirits was about six to eight times that of beer for consumption of an equivalent liquid quantity. More importantly, given that most people did not consume spirits by the pint, these values enable an estimate of pure alcohol intake across different combinations of beverage such that, if beer is taken at 5% alcohol by volume, an annual consumption of five litres of spirits and 100 litres of beer contained the same overall alcohol content as 15 litres of spirits and 20 litres of beer. Wine, a fairly minor contributor in both nineteenth-century New Zealand and Britain, is estimated at 12.5%.⁴⁸

Table 1: Per capita consumption (litres) by European population for selected periods

	New Zealand			England & Wales			United Kingdom		
	Beer	Spirits	Wine	Beer	Spirits	Wine	Beer	Spirits	Wine
1840–4	-	-	-	138.6	3.2	-	88.6	5.0	1.0
1845–9	-	-	-	132.7	3.3	-	88.2	5.9	1.0
1850–4	-	-	-	134.1	3.4	-	95.9	5.7	1.1
1855–9	18.1	14.1	5.2	133.2	3.7	-	100.0	5.4	1.0
1858	20.2	14.9	2.7	-	-	-	102.3	4.5	1.0
1860–4	25.0	16.3	5.6	143.6	3.5	-	112.3	4.4	1.5
1861	14.5	12.4	3.8	-	-	-	108.6	3.8	1.7
1864	28.4	16.3	6.5	-	-	-	119.1	4.1	1.8
1865–9	-	11.7	4.3	163.2	3.4	-	130.9	4.4	2.0
1867	71.6	11.0	4.4	-	-	-	130.9	4.5	2.0
1870–4	-	8.5	2.4	173.6	3.8	-	141.4	5.0	2.4
1871	82.2	9.6	2.1	-	-	-	134.6	4.8	2.3
1874	68.0	8.2	2.7	-	-	-	151.4	5.7	2.4
1875–9	-	7.0	1.9	184.1	4.3	-	150.9	5.7	2.3
1878	67.0	6.9	2.0	-	-	-	152.7	5.3	2.1
1880–4	44.0	4.9	1.4	152.7	4.1	-	132.3	5.2	1.9
1885–9	34.9	3.5	0.9	147.7	3.5	-	128.6	5.4	1.7
1890–4	34.6	3.1	0.7	151.8	4.1	-	135.0	5.0	1.7
1895–9	36.5	3.0	0.6	156.8	4.4	-	141.8	5.0	1.8

Figures in italics are *imports* only.

Source: *Statistics of New Zealand*, 1853–1900; *New Zealand Census*, 1867–1901; T.R. Gourvish & R.G. Wilson, *The British Brewing Industry 1830–1980*, Cambridge, 1994, p.30; G.B. Wilson, *Alcohol and the Nation: A Contribution to the Study of the Liquor Problem in the United Kingdom from 1800 to 1935*, London, 1940, pp.330–2; B.R. Mitchell, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics*, Cambridge, 1962, pp.8–10, 408–10.

Table 1 shows quinquennial averages of per capita consumption augmented by New Zealand census years.⁴⁹ There are no reliable figures for New Zealand beer consumption until 1871. Figures for the period up to 1864 represent imports only, on the basis that the fledgling colonial brewing industry did not have a significant production capacity. Having said that, we must assume some contribution from at least 20 small breweries operating during the late 1850s and perhaps another 50 that existed for varying periods from 1860 to 1865. Thereafter numbers and production capacity expanded dramatically, with a consequent sharp decline in imports. The production for the 51 breweries recorded in the 1867 census was acknowledged as an underestimate due to incomplete returns. It is therefore impossible, other than in the census years of 1871, 1874 and 1878, to measure beer available for consumption. This changed in 1880, following the imposition of a beer duty on local production. There is greater certainty in the figures for wine and spirits as, aside from a brief period of legal distilling in New Zealand during the early 1870s, these are derived entirely from imports.

The other potentially significant qualification of these data is that they represent licit consumption only. Eldred-Grigg claimed that there was both a substantial amount of smuggling and illicit production during the nineteenth century. By its very nature, the true extent of such production and consumption cannot be determined. While some claimed that smuggling and sly grogging were rampant, others were doubtful.⁵⁰ Convictions for ‘sly grog’ refer merely to selling without a licence, and reveal little beyond anecdote about whether the alcohol was self-produced or purchased for re-sale, its quantity or its strength. Illicit production was not easy. It required either access to malted barley or some skill in malting one’s own, yeast maintenance for beer and a variety of bulky equipment to produce in any significant quantity, although domestic manufacture of fruit wines was more straightforward, fruit and sugar being the only essential ingredients. Skills in illicit production of alcohol substantially declined during the nineteenth century. With industrialization in the British brewing industry, home production went from being a dominant to an insignificant cultural feature during the first half of the century.⁵¹ Likewise, official encouragement of legal commercial whisky production in Scotland from the early 1820s, and more determined efforts to pursue excise evaders, sharply reduced traditions of illicit production.⁵² In short, we ought not to overestimate the number of those in New Zealand with an understanding of how to produce their own alcohol. Moreover, in assessing whether New Zealand alcohol consumption was excessive by contemporary standards, the level of illicit production needs to be set against some continuation of domestic brewing in England and Wales and some smuggling and illicit distillation in Scotland and Ireland.⁵³ Aside from issues of erratic supply of licit alcohol that undoubtedly affected isolated areas at particular times, there is no compelling reason to assume

that New Zealanders had a peculiar propensity to smuggling or skills for illicit production.

The overall drinking pattern, and the specific role of spirits within it, is further complicated if the consumption levels in Table 1 are converted to amounts of pure alcohol (Table 2). Table 1 reveals that until the early 1880s people in New Zealand consumed substantially larger quantities of spirits and wine than those in England and Wales in particular, and the United Kingdom more generally, but substantially less beer. This was hardly surprising given the relative bulk of beer compared to spirits, and to a lesser extent wine, as import and internal transport commodities, and the time required to establish a substantial local brewing industry. However, the noticeable drop in some types of spirit consumption, especially rum, following the departure of imperial troops in the mid 1860s is a reminder that the settler population was not solely responsible for high spirits consumption.⁵⁴

Table 2: Per capita consumption by European population as litres of pure alcohol

	With beer at 5% alcohol by volume		With beer at 7% alcohol by volume	
	New Zealand	United Kingdom	New Zealand	United Kingdom
1840–4	-	6.56	-	8.33
1845–9	-	6.58	-	8.35
1850–4	-	7.21	-	9.13
1855–9	7.09	7.27	7.55	9.27
1858	7.31	7.01	7.71	9.06
1860–4	8.46	7.57	8.96	9.86
1861	6.16	7.17	6.45	9.34
1864	8.73	7.81	9.29	10.20
1865–9	9.29	8.57	10.20	11.19
1867	8.54	8.27	9.98	11.21
1870–4	7.78	9.38	8.93	12.22
1871	8.20	8.92	9.85	11.62
1874	7.02	10.15	8.38	13.19
1875–9	6.42	10.11	7.74	13.13
1878	6.37	10.01	7.71	13.07
1880–4	4.34	8.91	5.22	11.56
1885–9	3.25	8.81	3.95	11.38
1890–4	3.06	8.96	3.75	11.66
1895–9	3.09	9.31	3.81	12.14

Source: See Table 1. Beer is assumed as 5%, spirits 40% and wine 12.5% alcohol by volume. New Zealand figures to 1864 are for *imports* only and quinquennial averages for 1865–79 are derived from an estimate that per capita beer available for consumption in New Zealand was the same as the nearest reliable census year.

Even without reliable data for the availability of beer, the levels of pure alcohol consumption in Table 2 hardly present the New Zealand intake as excessive by the most valid nineteenth-century reference point; they were relatively moderate if a higher strength for beer is used. In addition, New Zealand's pure alcohol consumption was in marked decline by the early 1870s and in freefall relative to Britain by the end of the decade. And it must be remembered that the New Zealand figures are for Europeans only. If Māori are added, the per capita rates fall even

further. For beer at 5% alcohol by volume, the rate for 1885 to 1889 decreases from 3.25 litres of pure alcohol to 3.06. To acknowledge, as most historians do, the irony that New Zealand consumption was in decline before the prohibition movement gathered momentum during the 1890s is to severely underestimate the situation.⁵⁵ The beginning of the decline, as Miles Fairburn recognized, occurred during the late 1860s and certainly by the early 1870s.⁵⁶

Consumptions statistics tell us how many people should have had a hangover but not who they were, how they obtained it or whether they regretted it. It has been suggested that the high rate of spirits consumption in New Zealand had a more deleterious effect than the consumption of beer in Britain. Owing to their greater strength, spirits were a much faster road to oblivion. As Phillips put it, 'On vile liquor men's behaviour quickly deteriorated'.⁵⁷ Their drinking was also sporadic. Abstinence during times of hard frontier work was periodically traded for a chaotic 'spree' or 'binge' in which men came to town determined to make up for lost drinking time. There are many assumptions and generalizations in this rather sensational portrayal. Why is it assumed that spirits were consumed rapidly and destructively merely because they were spirits? Most drinkers, especially Scots and Irish settlers with a long-established tradition of spirit drinking, would be unlikely to imbibe spirits in the same physical quantities as beer. Further, why are spirits characterized as 'vile liquor'? Certainly there is ample evidence of some adulteration of spirits by unscrupulous and profit-minded importers and publicans, not to mention the products of illicit producers, although the colonial laboratory could find only the faintest evidence of such practices in its report for 1874.⁵⁸ But there is equally evidence of a discerning colonial market that was particular about what it drank. The failure of the two legal New Zealand distilleries during the early 1870s was largely the result of an inability to compete with imports for quality once the government abolished their protective duty in 1874.⁵⁹ As for the spree, Henry W. Harper's observation in July 1861 is a good indication of the range of possibilities.

[S]o far as I have seen, people here are temperate, but there is a curious custom among many of the station hands; for many months they stick to work, never showing any craving for drink; then comes their annual holiday; they draw a considerable amount for wages, and travelling to some shanty of a public house, or to Christchurch, proceed to 'knock down their cheque', giving it to the landlord, and bidding him to treat all comers as long as it lasts. Needless to say that all they get for their hard-earned money is a sore head and empty pocket. You may argue with them, and they gravely plead that to 'have a burst' is necessary for health after the long monotony of station life and fare, and that it beats any medicine. Few are habitual drunkards, at least in the country districts. Of course, there are many who save money, and in a few years' time are in a position to start for themselves, and not a few who have overcome temptation and are thoroughly temperate.⁶⁰

Some indulged furiously; others moderated their habits over time or stayed away altogether. Likewise, a perusal of biographies of those who became prosperous from the goldfields, and others who did so from the land, suggests that hard work rather than constant drinking was the ethos for many.⁶¹ Moreover, the very implication of the spree is that there were long periods when localities were not exposed to the troublesome drinker. Nor does an emphasis on the spree give any

insight into the drinking habits of town dwellers who were presumably more temperate and cautious due to the proximity of community networks that mediated excessive behaviour. Without question, some people worked particularly hard to sustain the per capita alcohol consumption figures. But we have no way of knowing how many of them did this via a healthy and habitual pint after work and a whisky at bed time, or how many saved their entire quota for a periodic binge. We are left with many unanswered questions as to how much drinking was going on in an ordinary environment on a day-to-day basis.

Fairburn found proof of excessive nineteenth-century drinking in the fact that rates of conviction for drunkenness among adult males were significantly higher in New Zealand than in England and Wales and were 'astronomical' compared to later periods in New Zealand.⁶² Although convictions may be more an indication of tough policing than intemperance, and some provinces paid rewards to constables for convictions,⁶³ the actual rates of conviction show a correlation with patterns of consumption, especially for spirits. 'The inescapable conclusion', according to Fairburn, 'is that if the police used their power of arrest arbitrarily and over-zealously at times . . . the conviction rates are nonetheless a reasonable sign of the tendency to imbibe excessive quantities of hard liquor'.⁶⁴ From this Fairburn suggested that a highly atomized society prior to the 1870s left many people free to violate established social mores around drinking because they had few connections to groups that would exert peer pressure on them not to. He attributed the decline in consumption, especially of spirits, and alcohol-related convictions from the 1870s to the decline of factors contributing to this deficient social organization.⁶⁵

No doubt Fairburn was right about the motives of any number of individual drinkers, although there is no statistical evidence that can validate a claim for drunkenness achieved by 'hard liquor' as opposed to 'excessive beer' or 'wine on an empty stomach'. But there is room to question the premise that convictions for drunkenness are a sound measure of excessive drinking, even allowing that they were much higher than in Britain and that they dominated all New Zealand convictions.⁶⁶ If we acknowledge, as official contemporary sources tended to,⁶⁷ that levels of consumption of alcohol were not astronomical by international standards during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, and that they were substantially lower by the end of the century, then we must question whether the much higher rate of convictions for drunkenness in New Zealand than in Britain was a reflection of drinking or of enforcement policy. We must remember that in the later nineteenth century it was an offence merely to be drunk in a public place. The caveat of 'and disorderly' only applied to perhaps one-third of all convictions.⁶⁸ As the 1881 Licensing Act prescribed: 'Any person found drunk in a highway or other public place whether a building or not or on any licensed premises may be apprehended.' Although one assumes that some sections of the constabulary displayed latitude, rates of conviction do not tell us whether they were always right in the rather unscientific business of assessing drunkenness, how many of the convicted drunks caused damage to others, to property or merely to themselves, or whether the police used the offence of drunkenness as a more general means to clear the streets of those causing problems without the excuse of alcohol. Further, although 5.8% of adult males were convicted at least once for drunkenness in 1858, the figure dropped to 3.1% in 1861, peaked again at 5.3%

in 1864, fell to 4.5% by 1874 and 2.6% by 1881.⁶⁹ Expressed in these terms, one may wonder whether public drunks were especially ubiquitous among the total population. Indeed, if we allow for the nature of the periodic 'spree', it is probable that convictions occurred in clumps and in very particular areas. For example, although the rate of convictions for drunkenness in Oamaru was somewhat above the national average, at least one-third of the convictions in 1896 involved non-residents such as transient labourers, shearers and swaggers. At other times the town was comparatively quiet.⁷⁰

The clash of values between drinkers and their opponents was not unique to New Zealand. Although McKimney and Grigg portrayed prohibition as a particular and somewhat conservative response to local circumstances, more recent scholarship, echoed by Christoffel, has emphasized the international nature of the prohibition movement. It is certainly no coincidence that prohibition gained much of its traction and legislative victories in the New World societies of North America and Australasia and less so in Britain, despite a lengthy campaign there. These were new societies notable for emerging democratic principles, progressivism and a growing determination to set themselves against the ills and vices of the Old World. The prohibitionists, with a predominant input from the pietist non-conformist churches, found ready converts with their insistence that drink undermined reformist objectives.⁷¹ As the *Prohibitionist* put it in 1900, 'Ours is the cause of progress and enlightenment and a free humanity, the great social forces of the future are on our side'.⁷² But the fact that New Zealand prohibitionists became increasingly vociferous from the mid 1880s, at least a decade after the marked decline of alcohol consumption and at the same time as per capita convictions for drunkenness were also falling, points to a crusade somewhat divorced from specific local circumstances. In many respects New Zealand prohibition was simply the farthest destination for what Craig Heron has described as an American 'export industry'.⁷³ Although local temperance societies appeared from 1835, many of the prominent and enduring organizations, such as the Good Templars, the Sons of Temperance and especially the WCTU, were American in origin. The New Zealand Alliance, formed in 1886, spent the next half century sustaining its campaign with an extraordinary volume of American literature and a succession of visiting speakers from the United States and the United Kingdom.⁷⁴ We ought to allow for the possibility that those who carried their drinking culture to the New World were particular targets of opprobrium from those who had consciously left it behind, and from many among the native born who had a rather different vision for the future.

Closer scrutiny of this drinking culture suggests that by British standards there is a case to be made that New Zealand's increasingly puritanical attitudes to drinking and rapidly declining rates of consumption during the later nineteenth century might be considered abnormal. Rather than gazing with open-mouthed incredulity at nineteenth-century drinking capacity, we need a much greater focus on the reasons why people drank and the settings in which they did so. We must set aside the tendency of prohibitionists to portray drinkers as almost innocent victims of an unscrupulous trade, and pursue a more systematic examination of the very genuine and considered reasons that many had for drinking in significant quantities and spending a large amount of time on licensed premises. The best framework

for such an understanding remains Harrison's *Drink and the Victorians*. Harrison argued that despite both dramatic change in most facets of Victorian society and the determined energies of a growing temperance movement, the essential functions of drink and the drinking environment in Britain changed only slowly from the 1820s to the 1870s. In terms of alternative beverages, water and milk were widely and reasonably perceived to be unsafe, even in the countryside, and other thirst quenchers, such as cordial, ginger beer, tea and coffee, were only beginning to enter common usage, but not always with the affordability or accessibility of alcohol.⁷⁵ In addition, alcohol was sought for its medicinal properties and was frequently prescribed by doctors. It was believed to impart physical stamina to workers, to act as a barrier against cold, to cleanse the system and cure indigestion, and to act as a pain killer, especially for the poor, who regarded pain as a disease in itself rather than a symptom of disease. Although medical science began to question these ideas by the 1860s, not least the view that fatter beer drinkers embodied superior physical strength, the use of alcohol for medicinal purposes endured along with the idealization of a rotund John Bull, tankard in hand.⁷⁶ The role of alcohol as a traditional accompaniment to pre-industrial work patterns was certainly challenged by the discipline of industrialization with its regularity, enclosed work environments and new technologies. On the other hand, new occupations such as iron smelting, with its extremes of heat and cold, may have encouraged drinking, as did the psychological strain of monotonous factory work often conducted by labourers dislocated to new locations in a quest for employment. Agricultural communities, and those crafts which clung to a St Monday holiday late into the nineteenth century, were slower still to abandon alcohol around the workplace.⁷⁷

As to sites of drinking, these 'mirrored the interests and needs of their localities; broadly speaking, their two main roles were as recreation centre and as meeting place'. The inn, tavern or alehouse was often preferable to a cold, crowded and noisy home. Indeed, 'Light, heat, cooking facilities, furniture, newspapers and sociability were then obtained by the poor only at the drinking place'.⁷⁸ In an age with a relative prevalence of solitary occupations, these establishments provided important contact and served as local news centres and venues for all manner of formal and informal meetings. Even as organized sport and leisure began to capture the popular imagination during the nineteenth century, the public house remained a significant provider of recreation and entertainment. Hence to accede to the calls of the temperance movement entailed much more than merely giving up alcohol.⁷⁹

Improvements in housing, the impact of the railway on patterns of travel, changing leisure patterns and the emergence of other public buildings such as town halls and libraries, all gradually altered the role of the public house from the mid nineteenth century. But there were still complaints in the 1870s that England had largely failed to grasp the continental model of cafés or other alternative eating and drinking establishments.⁸⁰ In sum, despite more than half a century of temperance agitation, the number of drink-selling outlets in Britain increased, as did per capita beer and wine consumption between 1825 and 1829, and between 1865 and 1869; only spirits consumption declined. Teetotalers, although articulate and influential in some respects, numbered rather less than 100,000 by the early 1870s, while publicans and brewers continued to enjoy wealth and respectability

within communities and the latter group secured a significant stake in local and national politics.⁸¹

Although colonial society, by circumstance and design, rapidly diverged from its forebear, it was at the same time constantly replenished by migrant arrivals with a cultural baggage, or perhaps bottleage, that surely took time to adjust to the new setting. Indeed, such things as the importance of the pub as a source of warmth, shelter, companionship and entertainment on a primitive frontier, have been briefly canvassed by New Zealand historians as factors contributing to heavy drinking and the proliferation of drinking outlets.⁸² But if we accept that the drinking habits of the settler population were in part a cultural tradition as opposed to a reaction induced by the new environment, then we need to shift from the standard bleak generalization of motives for drinking to an analysis emphasizing the same elements of necessity and sociability as for Britain. Of course Harrison stressed the value of alcohol and drinking places in assisting social interactions in a changing British society and easing fear in those for whom catastrophe and economic disaster were not far away. As he explained, 'Such places brought temporary harmony into the disordered lives of many bored, exhausted or exploited individuals'.⁸³ Harrison also stressed that 'Besides moderating gloom, drink enhanced festivity'. It was a positive social lubricant in many rituals of community interaction, as evidenced by the 2000 Nelsonians who enjoyed liberal quantities of sandwiches, Nelson ale, London porter and Devon cider while celebrating the fall of Sebastopol in January 1856.⁸⁴ Why assume that alcohol was always a 'psychic prop' or a balm for the atomized? Why assume that those who went to the pub in search of companionship, not least as a substitute for far distant family, did so in an air of desperation rather than as part of a more affirming endeavour to expand their social horizons?

Much work is needed generally and locally on the diverse roles of pubs and publicans in this period. Obviously there were many temporary and insalubrious shanties cobbled together to capture the demand of a shifting frontier population, especially on the goldfields. But many of these quickly became permanent multi-storied establishments. There were 84 hotels crowded along the main street of Hokitika in 1866. As well as providing single bedrooms, bathrooms and a diverse menu, Hokitika's better establishments offered dancing to orchestral accompaniment, hosted regular public dinners and balls, and supported a wide range of sport and games.⁸⁵ Many publicans also had clearly defined obligations to their locality. When the first publican's bush licence was issued to George Simpson at Lyell Creek in March 1864 he was required, in lieu of an annual fee, to provide a boat 'at a charge not exceeding one shilling for each person' crossing the river. A second licensee without these obligations was required to pay £20 a year.⁸⁶ In 1869 Joseph Giles, the goldfield's warden and resident magistrate at Westport, although generally opposed to the proliferation of licensed establishments, nevertheless endeavoured to ease travel problems up the Buller and Inangahua rivers by granting a free publican's licence to those willing to keep ferry boats available at all times.⁸⁷

The New Zealand historiography also needs to move beyond a portrayal of the nineteenth-century pub as an unrelenting bastion of frontier male culture. Sandra Quick's account of the diverse contribution of women to the Otago goldfields' alcohol industry 1861–c.1901 is an important first step.⁸⁸ While the prostitutes, sly

grog sellers and proprietors of 'dirty shanties' provided easy targets for indignant moralists, some women in the industry achieved prosperity and respectability within family establishments or as licencees in their own right. By the late nineteenth century the four leading establishments in Queenstown were all owned by women renowned for their business acumen and community endeavour.⁸⁹ Such careers alert us to a rather two-dimensional depiction of women and alcohol. The concerns of the WCTU and other prohibitionist women and of women blighted by drink are well enough known.⁹⁰ Yet contrary to many prohibitionist expectations, including perhaps those of the anti-prohibitionists who seem to have done nothing to address their arguments specifically to women until the early 1920s,⁹¹ it is clear that women did not flock to the prohibitionist cause in disproportionate droves after the extension of the franchise in 1893. By a series of sophisticated statistical traverses, Linda Moore has suggested that although women were consistently more likely to support prohibition than men, they did not necessarily favour prohibition over continuance.⁹² Had they done so, New Zealand would have been dry by 1896. We require, therefore, a much broader examination of drinking habits and attitudes to drinking among New Zealand women and with it a more cautious appraisal of the influence of the WCTU and its allies, at least as far as prohibition is concerned.

What of those who supplied the publicans? As in Britain, brewers quickly became respectable members of the community, noted for their philanthropy and rewarded with political office by a majority of electors who clearly did not begrudge their success in the alcohol industry. Aside from the large number who can be found on harbour and road boards and local councils, George Swan, founder of the Swan Brewery, and William Dawson, brewer and partner in Speight's, were Members of the House of Representatives and mayors of Napier and Dunedin respectively. Joseph Dodson, from an enduring Nelson brewing dynasty, was first mayor of that city in 1874, followed shortly after by another brewer, Joseph Harley. James Paul, founder of the Taranaki Brewery, was mayor of New Plymouth from 1884 to 1886. Charles Louisson, a director of the Crown Brewery, was mayor of Christchurch from 1888 to 1889 and again from 1898 to 1899 and was succeeded after his first term by Samuel Manning, proprietor of another significant brewery.⁹³ Nor must we forget John Logan Campbell who, despite his self-serving insistence to William Fox in the late 1880s that he had only ever been a reluctant player in the liquor trade,⁹⁴ and used its financial rewards to buttress his many contributions to the development of Auckland. Eventually his company amalgamated with that of Louis Ehrenfried, sometime mayor of Thames, to form part of the bedrock of what became Lion Breweries.⁹⁵ Perhaps the most broadminded philanthropists were the owners of the Staples Brewery of Wellington, who in 1899 contributed £500 towards the construction of a new Catholic cathedral and later gave the Anglicans the same amount for the same purpose. As the *Australian Brewers' Journal* commented, 'Actions like these should surely be a little proof to the most rabid prohibitionists that, after all, there are still a few good qualities left in those interested in the brewing trade'.⁹⁶

While prohibitionist overtures presumably saved some from the gutter, there were perhaps many more moderate drinkers who wondered what all the fuss was about and why a long-established component of sociability was being marginalized and stigmatized. Yet the views of such people have drawn little attention in their

own right from New Zealand historians overly preoccupied with trying to fit colonial drinking habits into models of atomization, frontier masculinity or the tight society. While many individual responses to and votes on the prohibition question were undoubtedly shaped by very immediate opinions, experiences and prejudices, or those of friends and relatives, it is also logical to assume that, as well as the voluminous arguments of orators and pamphleteers financed by the New Zealand Alliance, those of the Brewers' Association, the Moderate League and others also informed both tea room *and* bar room decisions. Yet only Grigg has addressed anti-prohibition at any length to convey a sense of the real obstacles that stood in the way of prohibition campaigners. Even then his interrogation of the arguments is fragmented rather than systematic.⁹⁷ At the very least we need a greater understanding of the full range of ideas and evidence informing all sides, and a greater sense of the drink question as a debate in which claim met counter claim, or perhaps bypassed each other in the scramble for converts.⁹⁸

Future work must set drinking in its broader contemporary cultural context, examine the arguments of its proponents and scrutinize the rhetoric of its critics. In turn, prohibition must be recast less as a mounting crusade that failed by less than 2000 votes to rescue a drink-blighted country from itself in 1919 and more as a strange sort of cargo-cult movement in which progress was contested every step of the way by articulate antagonists who constantly questioned the validity of its claims. Progress along these paths must eventually inform general histories inhabited not merely by the polar opposites of wet and wowsers but by all kinds in between.

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NOTES

*I am very grateful to Liz Martyn, Jim McAloon and two anonymous readers for insightful comments on earlier versions of this paper.

1 Caroline Daley, *Leisure & Pleasure: Reshaping & Revealing the New Zealand Body 1900–1960*, Auckland, 2003, p.10. However, economic historians have provided a more dispassionate analysis of changes within the brewing industry. See in particular S.R.H. Jones & D.R. Paul, ‘Concentration and Regulation in the New Zealand Brewing Industry, 1870–1970’, *Australian Economic History Review*, 31, 2 (1991), pp.66–94.

2 James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland, 2001, pp.158–73.

3 Derived from *Statistics of New Zealand, 1853–1900*; A.R. Grigg, ‘Prohibition, the Church and Labour: A Programme for Social Reform 1890–1914’, *New Zealand Journal of History* (NZJH), 15, 2 (1981), pp.137–8.

4 Patricia Grimshaw, *Women’s Suffrage in New Zealand*, 2nd ed., Auckland, 1987, p.23.

5 W.H. Oliver, *The Story of New Zealand*, London, 1960, p.157. For particular condemnation of the drinking culture produced by six o’clock closing, see A.R.D. Fairburn, ‘Mr Fraser’s Way of Doing Things’, *Here & Now*, October 1949, pp.8–10; Conrad Bollinger, *Grog’s Own Country: The Story of Liquor Licensing in New Zealand*, 2nd ed., Auckland, 1967, esp. pp.2–5, 54–55; David Ausubel, *The Fern and the Tiki: An American View of New Zealand National Character, Social Attitudes, and Race Relations*, rev. ed., North Quincy, MA, 1977, pp.51–53; Robin W. Winks, *These New Zealanders*, Christchurch, 1954, pp.92–93.

6 Quoted in Jock Phillips, *A Man’s Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male — A History*, Auckland, 1987, p.55.

7 W.P. Reeves, *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand*, Vol. 2, London, 1902, pp.309–24; *The Long White Cloud*, 3rd ed, London, 1924, pp.266–9.

8 Oliver, pp.153, 156–7; Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, rev. ed., Auckland, 1991, pp.185–6, 238.

9 Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, Auckland, 2003; Philippa Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, Melbourne, 2005.

10 P.F. McKimney, ‘The Temperance Movement in New Zealand, 1835–1894’, MA thesis, The University of Auckland, 1968; A.R. Grigg, ‘The Attack on the Citadels of Liquordom: A Study of the Prohibition Movement in New Zealand, 1894–1914’, PhD thesis, University of Otago, 1977; Richard Newman, ‘New Zealand’s Vote for Prohibition in 1911’, *NZJH*, 9, 1 (1975), pp.52–71. Despite his title, McKimney acknowledged that this was really a prohibition movement rather than a true temperance movement.

11 Phillips, pp.43–81.

12 In particular, A.K. Burt, ‘Aspects of Prohibition and Drunkenness in Wanganui, 1880 to 1920’, MA thesis, Massey University, 1973; P.J. Higgins, ‘The Prohibition Movement in Oamaru, 1893–1905’, MA thesis, University of Otago, 1978; Alastair C. Hercus, ‘Doing Away with the Demon Drink: Prohibition in Invercargill, 1893–1905’, BA(Hons) Essay, University of Otago, 1981; A.R. Blackman, ‘The Righteousness which Exalteth a Nation: Prohibition in Dunedin 1919–1923’, Research Essay, University of Otago, 1987.

13 Craig Turney, ‘The New Zealand Alliance and Auckland, 1905–1920’, MA thesis, The University of Auckland, 1996; Hillary Knowles, ‘Promoting Prohibition: The New Zealand Alliance for the Abolition of the Liquor Traffic’s Campaign, 1914 to 1920’, BA (Hons) Research Essay, Massey University, 2002.

14 Paul Christoffel, ‘Removing Temptation: New Zealand’s Alcohol Restrictions, 1881–2005’, PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2006.

15 R.M. Burdon, *King Dick: A Biography of Richard John Seddon*, Christchurch, 1955, pp.121–3; David Hamer, *The New Zealand Liberals: The Years of Power, 1891–1912*, Auckland, 1988, pp.115–19.

16 In particular, Michael Bassett, *Sir Joseph Ward: A Political Biography*, Auckland, 1993; *Coates of Kaipara*, Auckland, 1995.

17 E.W. Plumridge, ‘Labour in Christchurch: Community and Consciousness, 1914–1919’ MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1979, pp.121–56; Barry Gustafson, *Labour’s Path to Political Independence: The Origins and Establishment of the New Zealand Labour Party, 1900–19*, Auckland, 1980, esp. pp.120–31; *From the Cradle to the Grave: A Biography of Michael Joseph Savage*, Auckland, 1988, pp.102–103.

18 Paul Christoffel, 'Prohibition and the Myth of 1919', *NZJH*, 42, 2 (2008), pp.154–75.

19 In addition to Grimshaw, see Phillida Bunkle, 'The Origins of the Women's Movement in New Zealand: The Women's Christian Temperance Union 1885–1895', in Phillida Bunkle & Beryl Hughes, eds, *Women in New Zealand Society*, Auckland, 1980, pp.52–76; Judith Devaliant, *Kate Sheppard: A Biography*, Auckland, 1992; Sandra Coney, *Standing in the Sunshine: A History of New Zealand Women Since they won the Vote*, Auckland, 1993, pp.24–25; Jean Garner, *By his own Merits: Sir John Hall — Pioneer, Pastoralist and Premier*, Hororata, 1995. An exception is Sarah Dalton, 'The Pure in Heart: The New Zealand Women's Christian Temperance Union and Social Purity, 1885–1930', MA thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1993, pp.16–45.

20 Perhaps the best of these is Donald Gordon, *Speight's: The Story of Dunedin's Historic Brewery*, Dunedin, 1993. Gordon McLauchlan, *The Story of Beer: Beer and Brewing, a New Zealand History*, Auckland, 1994, is part beer manual and part general brewery history with a pronounced bias towards the formation and growth of Lion Breweries. Stuart Perry, *The New Zealand Whisky Book*, Auckland, 1980, is somewhat idiosyncratic and ought to be read in conjunction with P. Hanna, "'Why not Whisky?': The Short History of the New Zealand Distillery Company', Long Essay, University of Otago, 1975, and Hugh R.K. Logan, 'A Business History of Whisky Distillation in Dunedin', Hist 480 Research Essay, University of Otago, 1993. For a valuable discussion of limitations in the existing historiography of the New Zealand wine industry, see Brendan Seal, 'Illusions of Grandeur? A History of the New Zealand Winemaking Industry, 1895–1919', MA thesis, University of Otago, 2001, pp.5–10. See also pp.95–22 for an excellent discussion of the culture of wine drinking in New Zealand during this period.

21 Bollinger, *passim*.

22 Christoffel, 'Removing Temptation', pp.3–4, 207–34.

23 Stevan Eldred-Grigg, *Pleasures of the Flesh: Sex & Drugs in Colonial New Zealand 1840–1915*, Wellington, 1984, pp.79–80, 82.

24 McKimmey, p.10.

25 Grigg, 'Attack on the Citadels of Liquorism', pp.11–12. See also Phillips, p.56, who clearly borrowed from Grigg in describing alcohol as a 'psychological prop or an antidote to oppressive loneliness'.

26 Eldred-Grigg, p.92.

27 Miles Fairburn, *The Ideal Society and its Enemies: The Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society, 1850–1900*, Auckland, 1989, pp.203–204.

28 Phillips, p.59.

29 Matthew Wright, *Hawke's Bay: The History of a Province*, Palmerston North, 1994, p.140.

30 A brief exception is Eldred-Grigg, pp.94–95.

31 Phillips, pp.47–48.

32 McKimmey, pp.16, 180–1.

33 Eldred-Grigg, p.77; Phillips, pp.56, 58.

34 Lawrence Jones, 'Chamier, George', in *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography Vol. Two, 1870–1900*, Wellington, 1993, pp.84–85.

35 Grigg, 'Prohibition, the Church and Labour', p.138. See also *Patriot*, 1 October 1904, p.3. Evidence suggests that the survey was in 1904 not 1903.

36 See Erik Olssen, 'Where to From Here? Reflections on the Twentieth-Century Historiography of Nineteenth-Century New Zealand', *NZJH*, 21, 1 (1992), p.60.

37 Harrison, p.21.

38 Eldred-Grigg, pp.76–77; Phillips, p.57.

39 Derived from *Statistics of New Zealand, 1855–1860*.

40 M.N. Pearson, 'Brown and Campbell in Early Auckland, 1840–56', MA thesis, The University of Auckland, 1964, p.67.

41 Sinclair, pp.104–105.

42 See Tables 1 and 2 below.

43 See Marten Hutt, *Te Iwi me te Inu Waipiro: He Tuhituhinga Hitori / Māori & Alcohol: A History*, Wellington, 1999.

44 See, for example, *New Zealander*, 27 December 1848, p.4; *Otago Witness*, 10 January 1857, p.1; *Evening Post*, 3 April 1869, p.1; 12 June 1871, p.3.

45 Alcohol strength is expressed as the volume or percentage of the beverage that is pure alcohol.

46 Eldred-Grigg, p.77 makes an unsubstantiated claim for beer at a strength of 10%. This is extremely unlikely even for the heaviest Scotch ales. For estimates of nineteenth-century beer strength see Martyn Cornell, *Beer: The Story of the Pint*, London, 2003, pp.146–9, 154–5; Frank G. Leckie,

Otago's Breweries: Past and Present, Dunedin, 1997, p.13; Alan V. Stewart & Jimmy K. Stewart, *The Last of the Small Breweries in New Zealand: A History of Stewart's Brewery, Greymouth, 1880–1961*, Christchurch, 2004, pp.18, 45; Gordon, pp.22–23; *Brewers Journal*: William Dawson, Brewer, City Brewery [Speight's], Dunedin, 1879–91, in possession of Lion Nathan Library, Auckland.

47 Derived from Brian Glover, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Wine, Beer & Spirits*, London, 2006.

48 Jancis Robinson, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Wine*, 3rd ed., Oxford, 2006, p.10.

49 Quinquennial averages have the advantage of diluting certain of the problems in using per capita amounts derived from annual imports or production, such as import fluctuations between years due to the nature of shipping or poor knowledge of the colonial market, or deliberate stockpiling for later consumption.

50 Eldred-Grigg, pp.73–75.

51 John Burnett, *Liquid Pleasures: A Social History of Drinks in Modern Britain*, London, 1999, pp.111–16, 119–20; Josephine A. Spring & David H. Buss, 'Three Centuries of Alcohol in the British Diet', *Nature*, 15 December 1977, pp.567–8.

52 Burnett, pp.169–70.

53 Harrison, p.37.

54 Imports of rum, the preferred spirit of the military, declined from 145,486 gallons in 1866 to 85,574 in 1867 and continued to decline thereafter. See *Statistics of New Zealand*, 1866–1880; Eldred-Grigg, p.61.

55 For example, Belich, pp.170–3; Eldred-Grigg, p.209; Christoffel, 'Removing Temptation', pp.16–17.

56 Fairburn, pp.210–17.

57 Phillips, p.58.

58 *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1874, H-19: *Colonial Laboratory Reports (Special Report on Adulteration of Food & Co.)*, pp.1–7.

59 Logan, pp.4–14.

60 Henry W. Harper, *Letters from New Zealand 1857–1911: Being Some Account of Life and Work in the Province of Canterbury, South Island*, London, 1914, pp.64–65.

61 See, for example, Jim McAloon, *No Idle Rich: The Wealthy in Canterbury and Otago 1840–1914*, Dunedin, 2002, pp.48–49. Numerous others are to be found in the *Cyclopedia of New Zealand: Industrial, Descriptive, Historical, Biographical*, Vols 1–6, Wellington & Christchurch, 1897–1908.

62 Fairburn, pp.206–207. See also McKimmey, pp.7–11; Phillips, p.59; Eldred-Grigg, p.94.

63 Fairburn, p.209.

64 *ibid.*

65 *ibid.*, pp.210–17.

66 Harrison, p.315, argues that arrest statistics for drunkenness are not a reliable measure of drinking problems in Victorian England. Sharp fluctuations from year to year and between areas indicate changes to both administrative districts and enforcement policy.

67 For example, *Statistics of New Zealand*, 1889 p.130; *New Zealand Official Handbook 1893*, Wellington, 1893, p.14

68 For example, according to *Statistics of New Zealand*, in 1873 there were 3212 convictions for drunkenness and 1783 for drunk and disorderly.

69 Derived from *Statistics of New Zealand*, 1853–1900.

70 Higgins, pp.17–19.

71 Christoffel, 'Removing Temptation', pp.33, 37.

72 *cit.* Christoffel, 'Removing Temptation', p.37.

73 Heron, p.53.

74 Christoffel, 'Removing Temptation', pp.34–35.

75 Harrison, pp.37–39, 298–302.

76 *ibid.*, pp.39, 41, 302–303, 307–308.

77 *ibid.*, pp.40–41, 302–303, 309.

78 *ibid.*, pp.46–47. See also Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200–1830*, London, 1983.

79 Harrison, pp.48–53.

80 *ibid.*, pp.302–303, 319–20, 334–9.

81 *ibid.*, pp.58–62, 312, 317.

82 For example, *ibid.*, pp.56–57; McKimmey, pp.12–13; Eldred-Grigg, pp.82–83. The most comprehensive treatment of these themes is Jason Wright, 'Company of strangers: Patea and Wanganui

Hotels, 1866–1899’, MA thesis, Massey University, 2004.

83 Harrison, pp.42–43, 49, 310.

84 *Nelson Examiner*, 26 January 1856, p.2.

85 Philip Ross May, *The West Coast Gold Rushes*, 2nd ed., Christchurch, 1967, pp.309–10, 330–1.

86 Darrell Latham, *The Golden Reefs: An Account of the Great Days of Quartz-Mining at Reefton, Waiuta of the Lyell*, 2nd ed., Nelson, 1992, p.53. See also W.J. Gardner, *The Amuri: A County History*, 2nd ed., Culverden, 1983, p.207.

87 Latham, p.65.

88 Sandra Quick, “‘The Colonial Helpmeet Takes a Dram’: Women Participants in the Central Otago Goldfields Liquor Industry 1861–1901’, MA thesis, University of Otago, 1997.

89 *ibid.*, pp.41–49.

90 For the former, see n.19 above. For the later see, for example, Robyn Anderson, “‘The Hardened Frail Ones’: Women and Crime in Auckland, 1845–1870’, MA thesis, The University of Auckland, 1981, pp.67–88; Jan Robinson, ‘Canterbury’s Rowdy Women: Whores, Madonnas and Female Criminality’, *Women’s Studies Journal*, 1, 1 (1984), pp.6–25.

91 Christoffel, ‘Prohibition and the Myth of 1919’, p.160.

92 Linda Moore, ‘Gender Counts: Men, Women and Electoral Politics, 1893–1919’, MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 2004, pp.222–46.

93 Donald Gordon, ‘Dawson, William’, in Jane Thomson, ed., *Southern People: A Dictionary of Otago Southland Biography*, Dunedin, 1998, p.122; *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, 3, p.290; 5, p.89; J.S. Tullett, *The Industrious Heart: A History of New Plymouth*, New Plymouth, 1981, pp.262–3.

94 R.C.J. Stone, *Makers of Fortune: A Colonial Business Community and its Fall*, Auckland, 1973, pp.158, 165–6.

95 McLauchlan, pp.40–45; Paul Goldsmith and Michael Bassett, *The Myers*, Auckland, 2007, pp.45–48.

96 *Australian Brewers’ Journal*, 20 July 1899, p.354.

97 Grigg, ‘Attack on the Citadels of Liquordom’, pp.36, 45, 52, 75–80, 90–95, 151–4, 199–208; ‘Prohibition, the Church and Labour’, pp.141–7. See also McKimmey, pp.173–83, who characterized anti-prohibition arguments almost entirely as a defence of the rights of property and the principles of laissez-faire economics.

98 The most articulate and comprehensive critique of prohibition is William Salmond, *Prohibition a Blunder*, Dunedin, 1911. Among other lengthy contributions to the debate are W.W. Collins, *Prohibition: A Plea for Liberty*, Christchurch, 1892; It Is, *Isitt and his Prohibition Fad Proved Complete Failures*, Dunedin, 1893; Speight’s Brewery, *The History of a Glass of Beer*, Dunedin, 1893; Dunboy, *Two Wrongs, One Right: A Prohibition Maxim*, Dunedin, 1899; *Prohibition Destructive of Temperance*, Dunedin, 190?; W.D. Lysnar, *Opinions and Facts Showing Prohibition to be a Hideous Failure*, Gisborne, 1902; W. Thomson, *Anti-Prohibition: A Lecture Delivered . . . in the Zealandia Hall, Invercargill*, Temuka, 1905; J. McKeague, *Liquor Reform: Prohibition or no License in New Zealand: Its Real Effects* Sydney, 1905; W.H. Symes, *Prohibition: A Racial Fallacy*, Wellington, 1911; ‘Liberty and Regulation’, *National Prohibition Opposed to the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Spirit of Christ, Sound Ethics, Common Sense, Enlightened Politics, is a Fallacy, a Tyranny, a Failure, a Cure Worse Than the Disease*, Dunedin, 1920; A.R. Fitchett, *Dean Fitchett’s Speech on the Religious Objection to Prohibition*, Auckland, 1922; J.A. Harrison, *The Case for Continuance*, Wellington, 1922.

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