

# Some Evidence of Drinking Culture in Ale Ballads

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## Introduction

Literary prose has often made allusion to the subject of ale and beer in the past. An early work which contains such reference is the epic saga of *Beowulf*, possibly the most important surviving work of Anglo-Saxon poetry.<sup>1</sup> High-spirited, drunken warriors boast how they will aid the hero to defeating a dragon, using swords, for they 'boasted full off, as my beer they drank, earls o'er the ale-cup, armed men, that they would bide in the beer-hall here, Grendel's attack with terror of blades'.<sup>2</sup>

As the medieval period progressed, it is further apparent that a much greater quantity of literature makes reference to alcoholic drinks.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, in the Middle English anagogical narrative poem by William Langland, *Piers Plowman*, Glutton consumes 'a gallon and a gill' ('Til Gloton hadde yglubbed a galon and a gille') in a London alehouse before finding that he cannot walk or stand without his staff, stumbling about like a 'bird-catcher' or a 'minstrel's dog', and finally passing out, falling flat on his face at the alehouse door.<sup>4</sup> ('He [st]umbled on the thressshfold and threw to the erthe').<sup>5</sup> Further, many contemporary references to ale are found throughout much of Chaucer's writing of the late

fourteenth century. In the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*, proclamations such as 'Wel koude he knowe a draughte of Londoun ale' and 'Our Hooste saugh that he was dronke of ale'<sup>6</sup> are uttered. Other examples from *The Canterbury Tales* are found in *The Reeve's Tale*, with allusion to 'ale and breed',<sup>7</sup> and at the period before hops became popular, ale was often drunk mixed with honey or spices, as evidenced in the *Tale of Sir Thopas*; where 'notemuge' was used 'to putte in al'.<sup>8</sup> Later, Shakespeare's plays make frequent references to the subject of ale. In *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Launce states 'Blessing of your heart, you brew good Ale'.<sup>9</sup> Again, in *Henry IV, Part One*, Prince Hal chooses to drink with the tapsters and drawers<sup>10</sup> and later in *Part Two*, at the Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap, London, Mistress Quickly has Falstaff arrested for debt.<sup>11</sup> Further, in *King Henry V*, on the eve of the battle of Agincourt, whilst Boy is conversing with Pistol, he laments that 'Would I were in an alehouse in London/ I would give all my fame for a pot of ale and safety'.<sup>12</sup>

However, this article is not overly concerned with the above earlier prose, but rather will concentrate principally upon the 'Ale ballads' to be found amongst the Roxburghe and Pepys collections,



interjected where appropriate, with other contemporary writings. The *Roxburghe Ballads* consist of 1,341 broadside ballads from the seventeenth century. Originally collected by Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford (1661-1724) and later owned by John Ker, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Roxburghe, after whom the collection is named. They are housed and maintained by the British Museum Library, ironically, once again, amongst the Harleian MSS. Manuscripts deposited by Robert Harley.<sup>13</sup>

Samuel Pepys' ballad collection is the largest surviving collection of English ballads printed in London. The original collection of 1,800 sixteenth and seventeenth-century broadsheets is housed in his old college in Cambridge.<sup>14</sup> Pepys himself grouped the ballads into volumes

by subject.<sup>15</sup> As an outstanding contemporary source of English popular culture of the period, the ballads in the 'Drinking and Good Fellowship' section of volume 1 of the collection are naturally of great interest to scholars of beer and more generally, brewing history.

## Dating

Even though the majority of the Pepys and Roxburghe ballad sheets do not contain publication dates printed on them, one can approximate a timeframe within which these were produced by examining the years of publishing activity for the stationers. Therefore imprints, licensing information and authors enable a broad printing history to be reconstructed. Pepys' ballads do not on the whole pay close attention to chronology, and volumes of this collection are by no means rigorously or primarily chronological. Nevertheless, volume 1 maintains a more distinct timeframe than do volumes 2-4. The majority of the first volume appears to contain works that date from the early to mid seventeenth century with few ballads seemingly printed later than the 1630's.<sup>16</sup>

## Drinking and Good Fellowship

The ballads in the 'Drinking and Good Fellowship' section of volume 1 share many common themes such as drinking and the rowdiness of alehouse life, friendship and company. Debt, pawning

and toasts, as well as home-making and family-building are also common strains found throughout these alehouse ballads, as are the tropes<sup>17</sup> of beer and comic mishaps.<sup>18</sup> The idea of keeping 'drinking company' or 'good-fellowship' repeats throughout these texts and in many cases asserts specific occupational loyalties - the clientele of the alehouse. Further inspection reveals that the ballads can also appear inherently contradictory to the reader; naturally, when representing the viewpoint of a cross-section of the population, various ballads are seen to condone drinking whilst others condemn, with the 'fellowship' they depict often merely trade or guild-based.

Whilst sharing some commonalities, nevertheless, there are also major thematic differences throughout these ballads which appear to fall into three general categories; Firstly, a number of ballads, such as *Here's to thee Plain Harry*<sup>19</sup> and *Round Boyes Indeed*,<sup>20</sup> focus on positive elements of drinking culture such as praising ale or beer for its euphoric effects, to portraying beer as a social lubricant, encouraging alehouse camaraderie and male social bonds, or 'good-fellowship'. This is qualified further in ballads to be found amongst the Roxburghe collection, for example in, *A Health to all Good-Fellows or the Good Companions Arithmeticke*, which is an old drinking song printed at the beginning of the seventeenth century, for Henry Gossen.<sup>21</sup> The author was almost certainly Lawrence Price, who is known to have written many other ale ballads.<sup>22</sup>

Although no doubt a very popular ballad in its day, no copy beyond that in this collection is known to be in existence. It is an excellent ballad drinking song written to encourage audience participation: during the ballad, the number increases sequentially by one drink in the last line of each verse, the last verse reaching thirteen.<sup>23</sup>



*A Health to all Good-Fellows or the Good Companions Arithmeticke. To the tune of To drive Cold Winter Away.*

To save shoes and trouble, bring in the pots double

For he that made **one, made two**.<sup>24</sup>

Never fear to carowse, while there is beere in the house

For he that made **nine made ten**.

Then fill t'other pot, here's money for't,  
for he that made **twelve made thirteen**.

Evidently, a task causing much 'dehydration', the actual ballad-singer/reader also implores the alehouse audience to 'Give hansell for to buy me beere/ To

make my throat more shrill & cleere' - what one might consider an excellent 'perk' of the job.<sup>25</sup>

Another ballad/song amongst the Roxburghe collection, of much the same spirit as the abovementioned is *Monday's Work*, the work being no work at all, but a day spent at the alehouse!<sup>26</sup> Next, the ballad *Here's to thee Plain Harry or The Plaine Dealing Drunkard* is another example of a good alehouse crowd participatory ballad focusing on positive elements of drinking culture such camaraderie and male social bonding as well as promoting honesty and hard work.<sup>27</sup>



*Monday's Work or The Two honest neighbours both birds of a feather Who are at the Alehouse both merry together. To the tune of I owe my Hostess Money.*

When positive traits are highlighted such as in the line, 'thus being honest jovial blades',<sup>28</sup> there is a positive response from the alehouse crowd through the repeated chorus of 'I'll drink to thee kind Harry'. However, when negative qualities such as, 'He that is an idle Sharke/ That

lives by shifts and will not work' are uttered, these are followed by the chorus of 'dery dery downe'. The ballad ends suitably:

But such as we  
have nam'd before  
Them and their dealings  
We abhorre  
Now 'tis time to depart  
Let us drinke up this quart,  
And then no longer wee'll tary,  
Each man pay the shot  
What falls to his lot  
But I will pay for Harry.

A further ballad of much the same genre is *The Careless Drunkards* which too, focuses primarily on the positive elements of drinking culture, with scant regard for the consequences:<sup>29</sup>

Let Mault bear what price it will,  
To us all one 'twill be,  
We are resolv'd out Guts to swill,  
And live most Merrily.

We'll drink all day, and sing all night,  
We'll drink and live like petty Kings,  
We'll stand till we can't stand upright.



A comparable ballad found in the Roxburghe collection equally similar in context to the above is *Little Barley-corne* and again eulogises beer:<sup>30</sup> 'That I the vertues doe proclaime, of the little Barley-corne'.



*The Little Barley-corn. Whose properties and vertues here Shall plainly to the world appeare; To make you merry all yeere. To the tune of Stingo.*

Whilst not actually part of the Pepys or Roxburghe collections, the following shows evidence of alternative yet positive contemporary verse. The subsequent prose associated with hostleries is concerned with a tavern much frequented by Cambridge University scholars during the seventeenth century.<sup>31</sup> The Mitre Tavern collapsed after a great fire and this circumstance occasioned the ballad by Thomas Randolph, poet and dramatist.<sup>32</sup> Randolph no doubt recalled the event from personal experience as he is known to have gained his M.A. degree at Trinity College in 1628. The emboldened text below highlights salient points alluding to its principally University clientele. The tavern was also known colloquially as 'the ancient foundation of Miter Colledge',

again alluding to its close association with University members.<sup>33</sup>

*The Fall of the Mitre Tavern in Cambridge*

**Lament, lament, yee schollers all,  
Each ware his blackest gowne,**  
The Myter that held up your witts,  
Is now itself fall'n downe.  
The dismal fire on London bridge,  
Can move noe hart of mine,  
For that but o'er the water stood,  
But this stood o'er the wine;  
It needs must melt each Christian's harte  
That this sad newes but heares,  
To think how the poore hogsheads wept  
Good sack and claret teares.  
The zealous students of that place  
Chainge of religion feare,  
That this mischance may soone bringe in  
A heresie of beere.  
Unhappy Myter! I would know  
The cause of this sad hap:  
Came it by making legges to low  
To **Pembroke's cardinal cap?**<sup>34</sup>  
Then know thyselfe, and cringe no more  
Since Poperie went downe,  
That cap should vayne to thee, for now  
The myter's next the crowne.  
Or was't because our companie  
Did not frequent thy cell  
As we were wont, to downe those cares  
So forc't thyselfe and fell?  
Nay sure the divell was a dry,  
And caused this fatal blow;  
'Twas he that made the cellar sinke  
That he might drinke below.  
And some say that the divell did it  
That he might drink up all,

But I thinke that the pope was drunke  
 And let the myter fall.  
 Rore, conquerors, at your owne disgrace;  
 The want of skill acknowledge,  
 To let your taverne fall, that stood  
 On th' walls of your own colledge.  
 But whither walke we up and downe,  
 For to enjoy our wishes,

**The Dolphin** too must cast her crowne;<sup>35</sup>  
 Wine was not made for fishes.

That signe a taverne best becomes  
 That shewes who loves wine best;

**The Myter's then the only signe  
 For 'tis the scholler's crest.**

Then drinke sacke, Sam, and cheare thy  
 hearte,

Be not dismay'd at all,

For we will drinke it up againe,

Though we doe catch a fall.

Wee'le be thy workemen day and night,

**In spight of bugge-beare proctors,**

**Before, we dranke like freshmen all,**

**But now wee'le drinke like doctors.**<sup>36</sup>

Further works by Randolph, *Aristippus* or, *The Joviall Philosopher* and *The Conceited Pedlar*, (1630) which were far-  
 cical comedies portraying a lecture in  
 philosophy - the whole piece being an

argument to support the claims of wine  
 against small beer, are found several  
 allusions to the Cambridge taverns and  
 inns of this period. The most famous of  
 which were the Dolphin, the Rose and  
 the Mitre, kept by Hammond, Wolfe, and  
 Farlowe, respectively, who were colloqui-  
 ally known as 'the three best Tutors in the  
 Universities'.<sup>37</sup> Further proof that the  
 Rose Inn was frequented by scholars  
 comes to us through the diary of Samuel  
 Pepys, who on '23 May 1668 (at the  
 Rose) ... after supper to bed and lay  
 very ill by reason of drunken scholars  
 making a noise all night...'<sup>38</sup> It is also little  
 wonder that Samuel Pepys devoted a  
 section of volume 1 of his ballad collec-  
 tion to 'Drinking and Good Fellowship', for  
 a record exists at Magdalene College,  
 Cambridge (where he was an under-  
 graduate, and the original ballad collection  
 is still housed), that he was punished for  
 being drunk on college beer.

John Wood, the College Registry,  
 noted that on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1653,

**Peapys & Hind** were solemnly admonished  
 by mys[e]lf] & Mr Hill **for having bene**

Sept: 2. 1653. M. m. J. & Burton...  
 Oct: 21. 1653. M. m. J. Peapys & Hind...  
 John Wood Registrus.

*Pepys's admonition on drunkenness, 1653 (B 422, f94b).*

**scandalously overseene in drink the night before**; This was done in the presence of all the fellows then resident in Mr Hills chamber.<sup>39</sup>

The quality of the beer produced by Magdalene College's own brewhouse must have been perceived of being of superior standard, for Pepys when revisiting Cambridge recorded an entry in his diary dated 25<sup>th</sup> May 1668:

...and so we away and got well to Cambridge about 7 to the Rose [Inn]<sup>40</sup> ... And here lighting, I took my boy and two brothers and walked to Magdalen College; and there into the Buttery as a stranger and **there drank my bellyfull of their beer, which pleased me as the best I ever drank** ...<sup>41</sup>

## Drink Preference

Numerous ballads in both the *Collections* deal specifically with the subject of preference of the favoured tittle of the populace. In consequence, it is apparent that some preferred unhopped ale over hopped beer, some strong ale over small, whilst others condone beer over wine. The transition from unhopped ale to hopped beer is well-recorded elsewhere, however, suffice to say this transition was far from smooth, and as one would expect, this was reflected in ballads throughout the period. Contained within the Roxburghe Collection are nineteen ballads by Lawrence Price, a celebrated writer of the time of Charles I. The following drinking song is from his pen and

believed to be the only example in existence: *Good Ale for My Money* or *The Good-Fellowes resolution of Strong Ale, That cure his nose from looking pale*.<sup>42</sup>

One stanza in particular is extremely relevant: 'Beer is a stranger, a Dutch Upstart come / The old Catholic drink is a Pot of Good Ale'. Equally significant prose in favour of unhopped ale over beer is London Chanticleers, a rude sketch play printed in 1659 in London, but evidently much older as hopped beer by this time was the most popular drink especially in the capital city.<sup>43</sup> The reference to being 'without hops' in verse vii, is particularly pertinent: 'Ale is immortal / And be there no stops/ In bonny lad's quaffing/ [we] Can live without hops'

Whilst it is apparent that strong ale was preferred by men, it seems that ale or beer was not always the most popular tittle amongst women.<sup>44</sup> In Fowre Wittie Gossips disposed to be Merry, Refused Muddy Ale, to drink a cup of Sherrie,<sup>45</sup> the title is self explanatory:

*Their Husbands did their judgements spend  
Strong Ale was best who did intend to try it  
Their Wives reply to every man  
That Sacke is best and no man can deny it.*

It seems sack or sherry was also approved of on the grounds of economy, for:

A quart twelve cups containeth,  
Its cheaper than a dozen of ale  
Where froths and snuffes remaineth.

This is also borne out in the chorus line, to be sung at the end of every verse.

Wee will not depart,  
Wee'll drink a quart,  
Of Sacke to make us merry,  
Your barley broth fild up with froth,  
Is nothing like old sherrie.



*Fowre Wittie Gossips disposed to be Merry,  
Refused Muddy Ale, to drink a cup of  
Sherrie.*

The song further endorses the above-mentioned drink in another line by extolling 'The quintessence of Sherrie'.<sup>46</sup> Another ballad in the Pepys collection further supports the drinking of 'Sack'<sup>47</sup> by describing it as 'Better far than Cards or Dice', and that 'All the faculties of Man, are enriched [sic] by this Treasure'.<sup>48</sup> Indeed the ballad goes even further by stating that 'Water we disdain, Mankinds adversary'<sup>49</sup> and 'the Enemies of Joy, Seek with Envy to destroy, and murder good Canary'.<sup>50</sup> There were many other proposed benefits associated with imbibing sherry according to the above ballad: It supposedly made the imbiber more *intelligent*, whereby 'Sack it doth

inspire the Wit', and 'Some that ne'r knew nothing yet, by it's vertue falls to study', further adding 'Some that silent tongues did hold, now can speak a learned Lecture'. It supposedly made the imbiber stronger - 'He that tipples up good Sack, finds sound Marrow in the Back, that's wholsom for the Belly'. It claimed to make the sherry-drinker more virile - 'Which doth kindle new desire, to do a women Pleasure'; to make one braver - 'Give us Liquor that will please, and will make us braver fellows, than the bold Venetian fleet' and finally supposedly made the drinker disposed to *peace* not violence - 'No Rebellion e'r was heard, where the Subjects soundly ply it'.<sup>51</sup>

During the seventeenth century when it is apparent most of the ballads herein were printed, England was periodically on hostile terms with our Continental neighbours and it was often seen as unpatriotic to drink wine or sherry which was imported from France and Spain. However, the ballad *The Loyal Subject (as it is reason), Drinks good Sack and is free from Treason* reacted to the above accusation with such stanzas as 'We that drink good Sack in Plate', Never Plot against the State' 'And with many a cheerful Cup, we blow one another up, and that's our onely Treason'.<sup>52</sup>

As inferred earlier, there is plenty of contrary evidence within the ballads in the Collections to suggest men often preferred ale and beer to wine or sherry.<sup>53</sup> A ballad promoting this fact, whose author is given on the title page as G.M. Gent

was printed at York in 1697,<sup>54</sup> *The Praise of Yorkshire Ale or Wherein is enumerated several sorts of Drink, and a Description of the Humours of most sorts of Drunkards*.<sup>55</sup> This ballad whilst not only cites the virtues of this regional beer, culminates in a mock contest between Ale and Wine, in which the Yorkshire Ale proves too strong for Bacchus and his Court.

Bacchus swore to come he would not fail  
to glut himself with Yorkshire nappy ale  
it is so pleasant, mellow too and fine  
that Bacchus swore he'd never more drink  
wine.

Another ballad appears in the third volume of the Roxburghe Collection and promotes the predilection for ale over wine, this time amongst young women.<sup>56</sup> *The Merry Hoastess*, dates slightly earlier than 1664 and bears the initials T.R.<sup>57</sup>

The gayest lady with her fan  
doth love such nappy ale,  
Both city maids and country girls.

### Strong Ale

Whilst it has been shown from the above examples taken from ballads in the Collections that men preferred ale and beer: this can be further refined, by which strong ale was preferred to small. Again, another ballad this time taken from Pepys' fourth volume has a self explanatory title:<sup>58</sup>

**The Jolly Porters** or The Merry Lads of  
London  
Whose kind Advice to their Fellow  
Brethren is,  
That they should love Mirth better than  
Money, and prize Strong Beer before Small.

Contained therein are many cautions with regard to the consumption of small beer - even to the extent of implying that it was the cause of several diseases known to be fatal of the period!

But if you drink Small, 'twill ruine you all, You  
in a Consumption or Dropsie may fall

**Beware of Small Beer**, 'twill hurt you I fear,  
Stout nappy Strong Liquor, your Spirits will  
cheer

If you come in Place, where Strong Beer is  
scarce,  
I know you will be in a sorrowfull case

### Negative Traits

Continuing on with other themes in the 'Drinking and Good Fellowship' section of the first volume of Pepys' collection are examples such as *The Drunkards Dyall*,<sup>59</sup> *Roaring Dick of Dover*,<sup>60</sup> and *Backs Complaint*,<sup>61</sup> which go beyond the initial positive elements of drinking culture toward a conclusion that brings in a note of debt, loss or regret.

A case in point, the *Drunkards Dyall* or *Good Sir, Your Nose is Dirty*, ends thus:



*Drunkards Dyall or Good Sir, Your Nose is Durty.*

All men that love good Ale  
 And other Liquor  
 Nothing in nimble braines  
 Can be more quicker:  
 It will steale cunningly  
 In your pates by and by  
 And will make shamefully  
 All your nose durty.

Further, in *Mondays Work*<sup>62</sup> there is a second part to this ballad, which ends with the verse;

Tis strong ale I conceive it  
 'Tis good in time to leave it  
 Or else it will make  
 Our foreheads to ake  
 'tis vanity to outbrave it

Similarly, debt, due to the expense of excess drinking, is a favoured subject to be tackled in ballads, such as in *The Goodfellowes Complaint*:

When I had coine no tapster durst  
 Refuse to trust me shillings three  
 But now thele see my money first  
 Because strong beere hath undone me'



*Roaring Dick of Dover*

I once enjoyed both house and land  
 But now t'is otherwise you see  
 My moneys spent my clothes are pawnd  
 And tis strong beere hath undone me.<sup>63</sup>

Another ballad which illustrates debt or more precisely, the consequences of debt - whereby being in the unfortunate situation of having to pawn items to afford drink. In *The Good Fellowes Frolick* the Porter 'pawnd his Sack', and the Broomman, 'he pawnd his shirt from's back' in desperation to acquire drink.<sup>64</sup>

Likewise, another ballad song still extant in Pepys' collection is entitled:

*A pleasant new Song, Of the Backes  
 Complaint, for Bellies Wrong:  
 or a Farewell to Good Fellowship.*<sup>65</sup>

Amongst the verses are many allusions toward a note of loss or regret, especially with regard to 'good-fellowship'.<sup>66</sup>

Me thinks I oft doe heare it say  
 Mongst drunkards thou consum'd away  
 Thy monny, memory and witt

All wasted by *good fellowship*.

But when that all the money is gone  
And score nor credit thou hast none  
These friends from thee away will slipe  
And farewell all *good fellowship*.

Some that have had possessions store  
Lands, goods, and cattell, few had more:  
But lands & goods, oxen, horse, and sheepe  
Were wasted by *good fellowship*.

Farewell all such as take delight  
To drinke and gousell day and night  
Their sole sicke healths, & healthles whiff  
And causes the same *good fellowship*.

The ballad ends on a moralistic tone,  
thus:

Then learne this vice for to refraine  
The onely cause of grieffe and paine  
Least yee like mee in sorrow sit  
Lamenting of *good fellowship*.

Finally, ballads such as *A Goodfellowes Complaint Against Strong Beere*,<sup>67</sup> *No body Loves Mee*,<sup>68</sup> *The Backes Complaint, For Bellies Wrong*,<sup>69</sup> and *Looking Glass for Drunkards*,<sup>70</sup> show a superficial side of drinking and good fellowship, through repenting and recovering drinkers' laments.

*Goodfellowes Complaint Against Strong Beer*  
or  
*Take heed Goodfellowes for here you may*  
see,  
*How it is strong beere that hath undone*  
*me.*<sup>71</sup>

The verses set out to caution potential heavy drinkers of the superficial nature of alehouse culture and the debt allegedly caused by the cost of strong beer consumption:

Besides ther's Tapsters three and foure  
Where I have spent my money free  
Are like to thrust me out of doore  
And say there is no roome for me.

I once enjoyed both house and land  
But now t'is otherwise you see  
My moneys spent my clothes are pawnd  
And tis strong beere hath undone me.

The ballad ends on a note of regret which the balladeer blames his predicament on potent drink:

All you good fellows that heare my case,  
Take heede least in your owne case be  
I might have liv'd void of disgrace  
Had not strong beere thus undone me.

This is further legitimised with the repeated chorus line at the end of every verse, 'tis strong beere hath undone me.'

In *Looking Glass for Drunkards or The Good-Fellows Folly*<sup>72</sup> again has a self-explanatory subtitle:

*Moderately Deproving all such as practice the*  
*Beastly Sin of Inordinate and Excessive*  
*Tippling; With an Admonition for the future to*  
*forbear the same.*

Drunkards how dare ye boast of your hard  
drinking

think you there is neither heaven nor hell  
 Whilst ye do headlong post, to the pit sinking  
 you take no care, but think all things is well  
 O fie! Forbear, 'tis a sin that will cry;  
 And pierce the clouds and the heavens so  
 high:

Fye, Drunkards, fye!

Other ballads were written in response to  
 legislation of the period, aimed at curbing  
 drunken behaviour, and this is apparent  
 in

*A Statute for Swearers and Drunkards*

or

*Forsake now your follies, your booke cannot  
 save you,  
 For if you sweare and be drunke, the Stockes  
 will have you.*<sup>73</sup>

In 1607, James I's Parliament passed *An  
 Acte for repressing the odious and  
 loathsome synne of Drunckennes*, the  
 penalties throughout the land for inebriation  
 being a fine of five shillings or confinement  
 in the stocks for six hours.<sup>74</sup> This length  
 of time no doubt purposely chosen, because  
 by the end of it, the delinquent would have  
 sobered up sufficiently to have regained their  
 senses and would no longer be considered a  
 nuisance.<sup>75</sup>

Typical throughout, the ballad ends thus,  
 with the same chorus to every verse,  
 containing a stark warning.

You that desire to dwell  
 In heaven hereafter  
 Must not of this device

make jest or laughter  
 But must shake off these crimes  
 With much distasting  
 If you hope to enjoy  
 Life everlasting  
 To honest men let this be  
 Sound admonition  
 To bewhile their past sinnes  
 With sad contrition.  
 Forsake now your follies, *Chorus*  
 your booke<sup>76</sup> cannot save you,  
 For if you sweare and be drunke,  
 the Stockes will have you

Certain senior academics in the Oxbridge  
 colleges also championed sobriety  
 amongst scholars. A Fellow of Jesus  
 College, the Reverend Doctor John  
 Dod, whilst in his official capacity as  
 University Proctor,<sup>77</sup> frequently observed  
 the irregular behaviour of various students  
 of Cambridge University, particularly



*Reverend Doctor John Dod*

excess in drink, 'to which they were greatly addicted', took occasion to explode such practices in public from the pulpit.<sup>78</sup> He made it his duty to expound on the evils of alcohol and made regular trips around the county on his mission and particularly castigated the drinking habits of the collegians. There are several versions of his 'sermon' he is said to have preached, with two in manuscript form in the British Library, amongst the Harleian Manuscripts, donated by Robert Harley, who was the original compiler of the Roxburghe Collection. The version below is dated to circa 1620.<sup>79</sup>

The tale follows that one afternoon several students met Reverend Dod in a nearby village and decided to have some fun at the erudite teetotaler's expense. They implored him to give them a sermon on the 'Temperance' question, there and then, and pointed him to the stump of a hollow tree at hand which was to serve as a pulpit. He was then given the word, 'MALT' for the text. Never being short of words, the venerable Dod mounted the rostrum, and addressed his audience in the following manner:

*A Sermon upon the word MALT*

Beloved, I am a little man, come at a short warning, to deliver a brief discourse upon a small subject, to a thin congregation, and from an unworthy pulpit.

Beloved, my text is MALT which cannot be divided into words, it being but one ; nor into

syllables, it being but one ; therefore, of necessity, I must reduce it into letters, which I find to be these :

M.-A.-L.-T.

M - my beloved, is Moral,

A - is Allegorical.

L - is Litteral and

T - is Theological.

The Moral is set forth to teach you drunkards good manners ; therefore

M - my Masters

A - All of you

L - Listen

T - to my Text

The Allegorical is when one thing is spoken, and another is intended, the thing expressed is MALT ; the thing signified is the oil of MALT, which you Bacchanals make

M - your Meat,

A - your Apparel,

L - your Liberty, and

T - your Trust

The Litteral is according to the letter

M - Much

A - Ale,

L - Little

T - Thrift.

The Theological is according to the effects it produces, which I find to consist of two kinds, The First, respects this life, the Second, that which is to come. The

effects it produces in this world, are in some,

M - Murder, in others,  
A - Adultery, in all,  
L - Licentious Lives, in many  
T - Treason.

The effects consequent in the world to come, are,

M - Misery  
A - Anguish  
L - Lamentation  
T - Torment.

Thus, Sirs, having briefly opened and explained my short text, give me leave to make a little use and improvement of the foregoing and First, by way of admonition,

M - My Masters  
A - All of you  
L - Leave off  
T - Tippling,

or, Secondly, by way of combination,

M - My Masters  
A - All of you may otherwise  
L - Look for  
T - Torment.

Now to wind up the whole and draw to a close take with you the characteristic of a drunkard. A drunkard is the annoyance of modesty, The spoil of civility, His own shame, His wife's sorrow, His children's curse, His neighbour's scoff, The alehouse man's benefactor, The devil's drudge, A walking

swill bowl, The picture of a beast, and, Monster of a man.

We are thus left with no allusion as to the Reverend John Dod's opinion of beer and drunkenness. Following on from the above prose, there were other social commentators at Cambridge who wrote most disapprovingly of the subject of beer, or more particularly, the result of the brewing operation. Thomas Fuller, writing some 30 years later in 1655, produced the *History of the University of Cambridge*, and described Magdalene College, (whilst Samuel Pepys was studying there as an undergraduate), thus:

*An ill Neighbour to a studious College  
Magdalen*

This College alone, cut off from the continent of Cambridge, is on the north-west of the river, having a rose-garden on the one, and (what is no rose) a smoking brewhouse on the other side thereof, belonging this one hundred and fifty years to Jesus College. It were no harm to wish this House either removed, or otherwise employed on terms mutually beneficial to both Societies.<sup>80</sup>

## Symptoms

Many ballads in the Pepys and Roxburghe collections contain graphic detailed descriptions of the physiological symptoms and consequences of excessive drunkenness. Even though published four hundred years ago, many

analogous parallels can be detected, as it is possible to empathise with the same symptoms into modern times!

In *How Mault doth deal with Every One*,<sup>81</sup> men are unified in their failed attacks on an personified 'Master Mault', and no individual, regardless of his specific skills, cannot avoid being felled by drunkenness, rendering each of them drunker than the last, and brought together by their common weakness for alcoholic malt drink.

A similar outcome occurs in *Sir John Barley-Corne*, where once again, beer portrayed in anthropomorphic form, takes 'their tongues away, their legs or else their sight'.<sup>82</sup> A ballad akin to the foregoing, also a vivid depiction of the effects of drunkenness is the *Little Barley Corn*: 'Twill make the tongue-ti'd lawyer lisp, and nought but (hic-up) say'.<sup>83</sup>

Further, in the ballad *A Health to all Good-Fellows* 'strong drinke all our wits now deprives' and in *Mondays Work*, a song describes the previous evenings drinking exploits:<sup>84</sup>

Last night I was shot,  
Through the braines with a pot  
And now my stomach doth wamble.

This ballad also contains a very early usage of a now commonplace phrase used in modern parlance 'And a haire of the old Dogge'. There is a second part of this song, which ends with words of advice with regard to potent drink;

'Tis strong ale I conceive it  
'Tis good in time to leave it  
Or else it will make  
Our foreheads to ake<sup>85</sup>  
'tis vanity to outbrave it

The effects of drunkenness are mentioned again in *London Chanticleers*,<sup>86</sup> where the advantages and disadvantages of beer are described:

It keeps us from grave/Though it lays us on ground.

In the Roxburghe ballads *Good Ale for My Money*,<sup>87</sup> other symptoms are discernable:

it cues no pain but breaks the braine  
and raps out oaths and curses  
and makes men part with heavily heart  
but light it makes their purses.

'twill bring the body out of frame  
and reach the belly wider.<sup>88</sup>

Another ballad, this time to be found in Pepys' collection, *Looking Glass for Drunkards*, again described the effects of extreme drunkenness in graphic detail:

Some were carousing, while others were singing,  
others like sotts lay dead drunk on the floor,  
Some of their fellows Glasses were slinging,  
another a vomiting behind the door:  
Such a confusion I ne'r did espy,  
Men in their shape but like beasts they did lye:

Fye, Drunkards, fye!<sup>89</sup>

Finally, in *Of the Backes Complaint*, for Bellies Wrong, the unpleasant side-effects of excess alcohol consumption are described: 'Ach of the head, breach of the braines/ Like festred fistolles, foul and deepe'.<sup>90</sup> However, small beer is also blamed as a causal factor toward many diseases of the period, such as, 'Surfetes, dropsies, and divers paines' as is also apparent in *Jolly Porters*, with a warning that, 'But if you drink Small, 'twill ruine you all/ You in a Consumption or Dropsie may fall'.<sup>91</sup>

## Trade

The Pepys and Roxburghe ballad collections also provide an excellent source of information for the occupations of the clientele who frequented the taverns and alehouses.

*Round boyes indeed* or *Shoemakers Holy-day*<sup>92</sup> is an example of a ballad firmly in favour of drinking and revelry with friends, is also at once an ode to all working men: 'Our livings we get by our hands,/ as plainly you may understand,/ Whilst many gallants sell their land,/ for money to serve their need' and a very specific call to shoemakers ('Shoemakers sonnes were princes borne' and 'S. Hughs<sup>93</sup> bones up we take in hast,/ both pincers, punching alle and last,/ The gentle Craft was never disgrast,/ they have money to serve their need'). After singing general praise for manual labourers, these shoemakers maintain their own specific group identity in the first part of

the ballad. In the second part, a host of drinking protagonists are introduced first generally, and then specifically, according to their trade careers. This ballad functions in a manner that appeals to and includes any working class alehouse listener, especially to individual trades.<sup>94</sup>

Similarly, in *How Mault doth deal with Every One*,<sup>95</sup> the personified 'Master Mault' fights with a range of tradesmen, rendering each of them drunker than the last. Mault's opponents read as the whole scheme of popular alehouse working professionals: they include a miller, a smith, a carpenter, a shoemaker, a weaver, a tinker, a tailor, a tinker, a sailor, a chapman,<sup>96</sup> a mason, a bricklayer, and a labourer. The author takes pains to have each man carry a tool of his trade, and distinguishes each approach to Mault according to a specific type of labour, again alluding to the make up of the alehouse clientele.

Trade skills and occupations are evident too in *A Mad Crue*, where each stanza ends with a fill-in-the-blank style space for many working class tradesmen.<sup>97</sup> The version to be found in Pepys' collection has been filled in with a list of workers including a malt-man, a fiddler, a horse-courser, a hangman, a beadle, a sergeant, a cook, a bear ward, a broker, a pillory, a brewer, a thief, a cuckold, a beggar, and a drunkard.<sup>98</sup> Nor is the list strictly masculine, as the ballad sheet also includes a midwife, a milkmaid and an oyster-wench. Again, each of these professions is given its own specific spot in a chorus,

and was clearly included to please listeners from each professional group.<sup>99</sup> The ballad has a poignant ending with mention of 'Well quoth the *ballad-singer*'.

## Comedy

Many ballads also contain comic outlines that are centred on alehouse culture or have more general associations with either brewers or beer. *The Trappened Maltster or the Crafty Ale-Wife*,<sup>100</sup> though has many comic antics contained within, underlies a more serious moral message. The long subtitle sets the scene:

Plainly shewing how a Maultster in the County of Harford, did earnestly solicit an honest Ale-wife who being a good comely woman that she would consent to his will, which she often refused, but feeling he was the more urgent, she at last seemingly consented, and appointed the time when he might come, which at length proved contrary to his expectation ...

## The Trappened Maultster ;

### © R. The Crafty Ale-Wife.

Plainly shewing how a Maultster in the County of Harford, did earnestly solicit an honest Ale-wife who being a good comely woman that she would consent to his will, which she often refused, but feeling he was the more urgent, she at last seemingly consented, and appointed the time when he might come, which at length proved contrary to his expectation, as you may see by this following List.

To the Tunes of, A Fig for France.



The tale relates how the maltster is himself deceived and cheated for his own unscrupulous actions, after hiding in a beer barrel to escape the attentions of the alewife's husband, with typical disastrous but hilarious consequences. Although containing comical overtones, later in the ballad a moral message comes across clearly with the stanza: 'Strive to amend your wicked lives/ And be you honest to your Wives'.

Next is a work of a later date. The following comedy is worthy of reproduction. *Quod Petis Hic Est* is attributed to Samuel Bishop, MA, former rector of St Stephen's, Walbrook.<sup>101</sup> This ballad is a comic tale of two drinkers who share the same tankard of ale - whereby one of them attempts to gain advantage, which ultimately backfires.

No plate had John and Joan to hoard  
Plain folks in humble plight;  
One only tankard crown'd the board  
And that was filled each night.  
Along whose inner bottom sketched  
In pride of chubby grace  
Some rude engravers hand had etch'd  
A babys angels face  
John swallowed first a moderate sup;  
But Joan was not like John;  
For when her lips once touched the Cup,  
She swill'd till all was gone.  
John often urged her to drink fair  
But she ne'er changed a jot;  
She loved to see that angel there  
And therefore drain'd the pot.  
When John found all remonstrance vain  
Another card he play'd

And where the angle stood so plain  
 He got a devil poutrayed  
 John saw the horns, Joan saw the tail  
 Yet Joan as stoutly quaffed;  
 And ever when she seized her ale  
 She cleared it at a draught.  
 John star'd with wonder petrify'd  
 His hairs rose on his pate;  
 'And why dose guzzle now' he cryd  
 'At this enormous rate?'  
 'Oh John', says she, 'am I to blame  
 I can't in conscience stop;  
 For sure **'twould be a burning shame  
 To leave the devil a drop.**

Lastly, the attributed author of the Elizabethan farce *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, originally written for the entertainment of students at Cambridge, was John Still, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, 1577-1593, and later Bishop of Bath and Wells.<sup>102</sup> It contains one of the most famous ale songs in Early English Comedy and can be no coincidence that it was originally written by and for Cambridge scholars who were surrounded by the all pervasive 'College Ale' as many colleges of the period brewed their own beer from their own brewhouses.<sup>103</sup>

*The Ale Song* from *Gammer Gurton's Needle* Act ii follows thus:

I cannot eat but little meat,  
 My stomach is not good;  
 But sure I think that I can drink  
 With him that wears a hood.  
 I stuff my skyn so full within  
**Of jolly good ale and olde.**

### *Refrain*

Back and side go bare, go bare,  
 Both foote and hande go colde;  
 But, Belly, God send thee good Ale enoughe,  
 Whether it be newe or olde.  
 I am so wrapped, and **thoroughly lapped of  
 jolly good ale and old!**<sup>104</sup>

### **Tax and Excise Duty**

The current price of beer is a lively point of debate nowadays for brewers, landlords and drinkers alike as it has been for the past four hundred years, and the tax or excise placed duty on malt and beer are well documented in many contemporary ballads which have also been used as a platform show the general public's discontent. A representative example being *The Innkeeper's Complaint* or *The Country Victuallor's Lamentation for the Dearness of MALT*, found in volume 4 of the Pepys Ballad Collection.<sup>105</sup> Typical stanzas are:

For the malt here does rise,  
 Beside **Double Excise**

But malt now is dear, With cares and trouble,  
 It makes the **price double**

Although no date appears on the ballad, it can be dated with reasonable precision; It must have been printed c. 1690 or slightly later when the excise duty on beer was raised (in fact, doubled) from 3s. 3d to 6s. 6d per barrel under William and Mary.<sup>106</sup> Both monarchs are also

alluded to in the above ballad with the line of 'When **William** our king' as well as the fact that the ballad was to be sung, 'To the Tune of, *Let **Mary Live Long***'.

Another ballad in volume 4 entitled *The Careless Drunkards*<sup>107</sup> also highlighted the increased price of malt, throughout the ballad with repeated chorus of 'Though Mault be ne'r so dear'.

A further ballad also collected by Pepys exemplify this, namely, ***The Bountifull Brewers Or Who Pays the Kings Taxes out of the Poor Mens Purses, rather than diminish their own Golden Stores and The Brewers Answer: or, Their Vindiction, against those Aspersiones that hath been put upon them concerning the Double Excise.***<sup>108</sup>

Incidentally John Wright, a London based publisher of many ale ballads, also printed an official document for the introduction of excise on beer in order to raise funds for the King's Army for the Civil War:

An ordinance of the Lords and Commons ... shewing that all brewers of beere, ale, cider, or perry, shall pay the Excise imposed ... also An ordinance of both Houses, ... to take some speedy course for the bringing in of monies ... for the maintenance of the Armie ...  
17 Octob. 1643<sup>109</sup>

## Regionalism

Evidence of regionalism is also noticeable in ballads found in the Pepys and

Roxburghe collections. In their basic form many ballads merely make a passing reference to or the ballad story line is centre specifically on a city or town (usually encompassed within the title) such as *The Jolly Porters* or *The Merry Lads of London* and *London Chanticleers*, which were printed in and were concerned with London folk.<sup>110</sup> Another ballad, whose countywide regionalism is supported within the main title, this time from the north of England, printed at York in 1697, is *The Praise of Yorkshire Ale*.<sup>111</sup> Further, the ballad *Round Boyes Indeed* attempts to appeal to a much wider audience by 'Being a very pleasant new Ditty/ To fit both Country, Towne and Citie'.<sup>112</sup>

Not only do some ballads such as those listed above, disclose the regional identity in their titles, but other ballads were published of which there were many regional variations of the same basic original storyline. *Sir John Barley-Corne* or to give it its full title, *A Pleasant new Ballad to Sing Evening and Morn Of the Bloody Murther*<sup>113</sup> of *Sir John Barley-Corn* is such an example of which at least three differing regional versions are in existence amongst the Pepys and Roxburghe collections.<sup>114</sup> This ballad is possibly the most well known and important ballad connected with the subject of ale and beer of which there are versions from the North of England and the West Country, and even as far away as Scotland. In later editions, printers have frequently varied the text, and in more recent times the Scottish poet and

balladeer Robert 'Rabbie' Burns recast the verses of the old ballad. Accordingly, Sir John Barley-Corne is an anthropomorphic<sup>115</sup> character of a grain of barley which the farmer, the maltster, the miller, and the brewer do their best to destroy.<sup>116</sup> However, after having forced Sir John to go through the various processes of agriculture, malting, and brewing, a friend Thomas Good-Ale,<sup>117</sup> takes vengeance by making them all extremely drunk by taking 'their tongues away, their legs or else their sight'.

The North of England version commences thus:

As I went through the **North Country**,  
I heard a merry meeting,  
A pleasant toy, and full of joy,  
Two Noble-men were greeting.

Sir John Barley-Corn fought in a Bowl,  
Who one the victory,  
Which mad them all to chafe and swear,  
**That Barley-Corn must dye.**

Another version commences:

There were two brothers liv'd under yon hill  
As it might be you and I,  
And one of them did solemnly swear,  
**That Sir John Barley-Corne should die.**

Burns' ballad commences:

There went three Kings into the East,  
Three Kings both great and high,  
And they have sworn a solumn oath,  
**John Barleycorn should die.**

And ends patriotically '...Ne'er fail in old Scotland'.

Burns almost certainly founded his ballad on the earlier West Country version:

There came three men out of the **West**,  
Their victory to try;  
And they have taken solemn oath,  
Poor Barleycorn should die.

The *Merry Hoastess*<sup>118</sup> printed in London c. 1664 and attributed to 'T.R.' (Thomas Randall),<sup>119</sup> is found in the third volume of the Roxburghe collection.<sup>120</sup> This ballad demonstrates not only urban regional associations such as 'London City' but also makes allusions to many British and even European nationalities as 'Englishmen', 'Scot', 'Dutch', 'Irish', 'Welshman', and a Spaniard. Another ballad amongst Pepys' collection, *The Loyal Subject*, also eludes the regionalism on a European scale, by mention of 'Turks', 'Dardonellows', 'Venetian fleet', 'Valentia', 'French-men', and 'Spaniards'.<sup>121</sup> All to no doubt included to appeal to a wider readership by stimulating debate of important contemporary events of the period.<sup>122</sup>

## Woodcut analysis

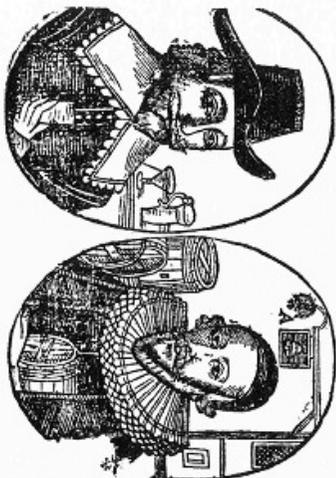
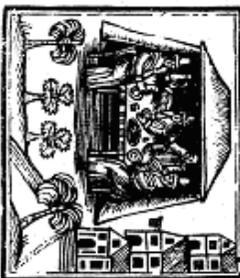
Most broadsheets contain one or more illustrative woodcut iconography used to enhance and complement the ballad storyline, and ale ballads were no exception: they form an excellent source for imagery of contemporary alehouse

# The Alewives Invitation

to Married-Men, and Bachelors.

S H E W I N G

How a Good Fellow is lighted when he is brought to Poverty.  
 Therefore take my Careful Advertisement with you, that I long to see you have Money, come early  
 For money you have need, and I will give it you, but you must be ready to receive it.  
 Calling you Rascal, and fishing Name.  
 As a Good Tune, in Doby's farewell.  
 (Maid Song.)



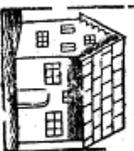
Inkeepers, 1641.

## The Jolly *revelly*: *delomant*.

Who drinking at the Sign of the *Groser* in *London*, found a Spring  
 from the *Spring*, the joy of which has sung the praise of *Old England*, refreshing men to return to  
 their *sign*.

Tune of, *My sweet Poppy*, &c.

Licensed according to Order.



society of the period. Numerous and wide ranging illustrations associated with ale-house culture are depicted, including inn signs,<sup>123</sup> drinking companions seated around tables enjoying each others company are also popular portrayals,<sup>124</sup> as well as evidence of contemporary drinking vessels such as tankards, pots, black-jacks<sup>125</sup> and ale barrels.<sup>126</sup> Surprisingly perhaps, images of extreme drunkenness are graphically portrayed (often including depictions of vomiting) which might appear inappropriate for our modern politically correct sensibilities.<sup>127</sup>

Woodcut iconography concerned with contemporary legislation are also found in ballads such as the 'stocks' in *A Statute for Swearers and Drunkards* and an Excise man holding bag of tax coin collected from increased revenue placed on beer in the *Innkeepers' Complaint*, both found in Pepys' collection.<sup>128</sup>

It is apparent that many woodcuts were recycled for use in other ballads, presumably for financial as well as pragmatic reasons, or else a new designed individual woodcut stamp block would have to be engraved for every new broadsheet at a relative high cost and time compared with the universal letter typeset which naturally could be used on any ballad sheet. Examples of multiple use of the same identical woodcut design are discernable in *The Loyal Subject*, *Good Fellows Frolik* and *Brewers Benefit* ballads amongst the Pepys collection.<sup>129</sup> However it is apparent that the woodcut block used in *The Loyal Subject* was in new condition as the image on the ballad sheet is highly defined, whereas the images on the other two ballad sheets were printed using worn blocks as the images are indistinct.<sup>130</sup> Conversely, it is also evident that not all identical illustrations were used on the same ballads, for



Looking Glass for Drunkards



Sir John Barley-Come

4

A Statute for Swearers and Drunkards,  
OR  
Forfake now your follies, your booke cannot faue you,  
For if you swear and be drunke, the Stockes will haue you.  
To the tune of When Canoos are roaing.



*A Statute for Swearers and Drunkards*

example, different versions of Sir John Barley-Corne, often contain different woodcut imagery.

## Conclusion

The voices of the alehouse crowd are clearly heard in Pepys' *Drinking and Good Fellowship* ballads and amongst the Roxburghe collection. Throughout, they offer a window into the development of an alehouse culture with the ballads making clear that these details always involve good beer, good song, and good company. However, contrary ballads, show there was also a common strain that goes beyond the initial positive elements of drinking, toward a conclusion that brings in a note of superficial culture leading to debt, regret and lamentation.

It would not be difficult to fill a volume of considerable size with songs and ballads which have ale or beer for their subject and the preceding examples give a fair representation of works available. This article has not set out to be a comprehensive or critical analysis, but an introductory appraisal into the potential wealth of information concerning ballads found in the Pepys and Roxburghe collections, most of which are now extremely rare but would have been commonplace four hundred years ago. If this article has served to spark further interest in these mostly obsolete and long-forgotten ballads, then it would have served its purpose.

A Pleasant New Ballad to Sing Evening and Morn,  
Of the Bloody Murder of *Sir John Barley-Corne*.

The Tune is, *Shall I lie beyond Thee.*



A joyful Banquet then was made,  
When Barley-Corne was dead.  
He rick'd still upon the car, till  
rain from Sky did fall,  
Then he grew again hyacinth green,  
Which foye and'd them all.  
Increasing thus till Whidsummer,  
he made them all of raih,  
For he sprang up on high,  
and had a goodly Beard.  
When opening at St. James tide,  
his countenance wondrous wan,  
He now full heavy in part of strength,  
and thus became a man.  
Wherefore with Hooks and Sickles keen,  
into the fields they he'd  
They cut his Legs off by the Trees,  
and Lamb from him did sever.  
Then bloody they cut him down,  
from place where he did stand,

They rub'd and stir'd him up and do  
and set him to rest,  
The Shale-man likewise takes his  
his dog should be sure.  
They put'd and had him up in spits  
and shew'd him on a Hill,  
You try'd him s' he a fire he,  
the more to work their will.  
Then to the Hill they took him  
whereas they had his bones,  
The Miller tooke to murder him  
betwixt a pair of Stones,  
The last time when they took him up,  
they serv'd him worse than spar,  
for with hot scalding Water hose,  
they wash'd him in a Jar.  
But not content with this  
they brought him to mill  
which could they eat they put  
to beat him into Saven.

*Sir John Barley-Corne*

Note: In order to be fully appreciated, the ballads need to be read in their entirety to gain a greater understanding and context of the seventeenth century alehouse society and culture within which they were published. Therefore, for the readers' convenience, an appendix is available upon request which contains fully transcribed versions of the ale ballads collected by Pepys mentioned in this article. Likewise, the English Broadside Ballad Archive located at the Early Modern Centre, University of California, Santa Barbara is extremely helpful as it displays facsimile images of all Pepys' ballads online with a great deal of them transcribed, but not in entirety.<sup>131</sup>



*Sir John Barley-Corne*

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*Pepys' Ballad Collection* vols.1-4, Pepys Library, Pepys Building, Magdalene College, University of Cambridge

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Volume and folio reference

Volume 1 - *Drinking and Good Fellowship*  
Folio

- 214-15 *A Statute for Swearers and Drunkards*  
428-29 *Drunkards Dyall*  
430-31 *No Body Loves Mee*  
432-33 *Heres to thee kind Harry*  
434-35 *Roaring Dick of Dover*  
436-37 *Four Wittie Gossips*  
438-39 *A Goodfellowes complaint against strong beer*  
442-43 *Round Boyes Indeed*  
444-45 *Mad Crue*  
446-47 *Of the Backes Complaint, for Bellies Wrong*  
470 *Sir John Barley- Corne*  
471 *How Mault deals with every man*  
536-37 *Cooper of Norfolk*

Volume 3

- 277 *The Trappened Maltster or the Crafty Ale-Wife*

Volume 4

- 238 *The Careless Drunkards*  
239 *The Good Fellows Frolick*  
243 *The Loyal Subject*  
258-59 *Looking Glass for Drunkards*  
292 *Jolly Porters of London*  
330 *The Innkeeper's Complaint*  
335 *Bountifull Brewers*  
337 *Brewers Answer*  
338 *Brewers Benefit*  
434-35 *Roaring Dick of Dover*

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1. Written in Old English sometime before the tenth century A.D., it describes the adventures of a great Scandinavian warrior hero of the sixth century, Beowulf, and the blood-thirsty monster, Grendel.

2. Gummere, F.B. (trans.) (1910) *Beowulf*. The Harvard Classics, Volume 49. P.F. Collier & Son: New York. episode VII.

3. Not unsurprising as ale was the staple drink, and levels of literacy increased.

4. This is an early example of intoxication, following high levels of ale consumption, to be found in literature.

5. Donaldson, E.T., (trans.) (1990) *W. Langland, Will's Vision of Piers Plowman*.

W.W. Norton: London. p. 50.

6. i.e. 'Our host saw he was drunk of ale'

7. i.e. 'Ale and bread'

8. i.e. 'And nutmeg to put in ale'

9. *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act iii, Sc.1

10. Those who tapped the kegs of beer, drew it, and brought it to the customers

11. *Henry IV.*, Part 2 Act 2.

12. *Henry V.*, Act iii. Sc.2.

13. Transcripts are also available in Chappell, W. and Ebsworth, J. (eds.) (1866-99) *The Roxburghe Ballads*. London and Hertford.

14. Pepys Library, Pepys Building, Magdalene College, University of Cambridge CB3 0AG. The author of this article is also an alumnus of Magdalene College.

15. The collection is also available in facsimile form to allow greater accessibility in Day, W.G. (ed.) (1987) *The Pepys Ballads: Facsimile Volume*. D.S. Brewer: Cambridge. The second part of the catalogue consists of the indexes. Titles and sub-titles are indexed together, as these are often interchangeable. First lines and refrains provide text indexes; tunes and music are a guide to the musical element.

16. A known rare exception being The Brewers Answer (Pepys vol 1. 337) printed c.1690.

17. 1. A figure of speech using words in nonliteral ways, such as a metaphor; 2. A word or phrase interpolated as an embellishment in the sung parts of certain medieval liturgies.

[Latin tropus, from Greek tropos, turn, figure of speech;]

18. These ballads also present themes which have been interpreted as an emerging middle or working class identity. Refer

Fumerton, P. (2002) 'Not Home: Alehouses, Ballads, and the Vagrant Husband in Early Modern England' *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, vol. 32, issue 3, Fall.

19. Pepys vol. 1 f. 432- 33.

20. Pepys vol. 1 f.442- 43, to the chorus of 'Round boys round/ round boys indeed'.

21. Roxburghe vol.1 f. 447

22. The initials 'LP' appear on the original sheet and he is also known to be the author of the ballad Good Ale for My Money found amongst the Roxburghe collection (vol.1 f. 412); Contained within the collection are a further eighteen ballads by Lawrence Price, a celebrated writer of the time of Charles I.

23. Ending at 13 presumably for superstitious reasons?

24. The 'he that made' might indicate either the brewer or the drinker.

25. Round Boyes Indeed Pepys vol. 1 f.442-43; The format of ballads can also be seen as a reflection of the largely illiterate society of the period- they were designed to be read by a single person to other drinking companions amongst the alehouse crowd would join in with the chorus line which could easily be learned through repetition as ballads were set to familiar tunes of the day. This would also tend to encourage companionship or 'good-fellowship'. The sign and/or alestake placed outside the alehouse, tavern or inn used to advertise the premises also did not require any reading skills, again reflecting a largely illiterate society.

26. Monday's Work or The two honest neighbours both birds of a feather, Who are at the Alehouse both merry together.

Roxburghe Ballads vol 2 f.149

27. Pepys vol.1 f.432-33

28. In The Good Fellowes Frolick (Pepys vol

4. f.239) a similar description is used , 'a crew of jovial Blades, that lov's the Nut-brown Ale'.

29. Pepys vol. 4 f.238

30. Roxburghe Ballads vol.2 f.29

31. The Fall of the Mitre Tavern in Cambridge, Cooper, C.H. (1842-1852) *Annals of Cambridge, vols. 1-5*. Warwick: Cambridge. iii, p.265; The Mitre Tavern was owned and leased by King's College and is often mentioned in accounts. (Kings College Accounts: Mundum Book vol. 40)

32. He was also a disciple of Ben Jonson, (1572 - 1637) English Renaissance dramatist, poet and actor.

33. Mentioned in Randolph's Aristippus and Conceited Pedlar cited in Cooper, Annals, iii, p. 265

34. The Cardinal's Cap was a medieval inn located opposite Pembroke College.

35. Was a major Cambridge inn and has associations with Thomas Cranmer, who resigned his Fellowship from Jesus College due to the requirement of celibacy which was imposed, in order to marry the landlady's niece resident therein, John Foxe, *Book of Martyrs* (1583) book 11, p.1860

36. The Fall of the Mitre Tavern in Cambridge, op. cit., iii, p. 265

37. The Rose was sometimes known as Wolfe's College, again an allusion to its University clientele.

38. Latham, R. and Matthews, W. (eds.) (1976) op. ct. entry 23 May 1668.

39. Magdalene College Registry (1653): B/422, p.3a.

40. A coaching inn that used to be situated in what is now Rose Crescent, named after the inn.

41. Latham, R. and Matthews, W. (eds.) (1976) diary entry for 25 May 1668, vol. ix.

42. Evidently an admired 'side effect' of drinking strong liquor at this time was to sport a 'dirty or ruby coloured nose'. Roxburghe Ballads vol.1 f.412

43. Bickerdyke, J. (1889) *The Curiosities of Ale and Beer*. S. Sonnenschein & Co.: London, p. 306-8.

44. Whilst small beer or ale would have been the staple for all, when drinking socially, however, it seems wine was favoured by a certain category of women of 'well to do' society judging from their dress portrayed on the ballad sheet.

45. Pepys vol. 1.436-37

46. The Fowre Wittie Gossips ballad is also of interest as it lists many contemporary popular female names of the period as in Nel, old Jane, Moll, and Bridget.

47. Sack - a wine fortified with brandy such as Sherry, Madeira, or Port, mainly from Spain

48. The Loyal Subject, Pepys vol 4 f.243

49. Water throughout this period would only have been drunk by the very poor who could not afford small beer, as water was often contaminated and invited typhoid, dysentery or cholera. Beer sterilised in the making, was safe to drink.

50. Spanish sherry or wine from the Canary Islands.

51. The author questions whether such allegations would hold scrutiny or even be allowed if produced for a marketing campaign in the present day!

52. Pepys vol. 4 f.243

53. Although this might be biased to Alehouse ballads as wine was not served in alehouses, only in taverns and inns.

54. By F. White for Francis Hildyard

55. Bickerdyke, J. (1889) op. cit. p.312-17.

56. Roxburghe Ballads vol. 3 f.307

57. Thomas Randall - the author of another ale ballad entitled High and Mightie Commendation of a Pot of Good Ale also in the Roxburghe Collection. In recent times it has also been suggested that the author T.R. was T. Robins.

58. Pepys vol 4. f.292

59. Pepys vol.1 f. 428-29

60. *ibid.* f.434-35

61. *ibid.* f.446-47

62. Roxburghe Collection vol.2 f.149

63. Pepys vol.1 f. 438-39

64. Pepys vol.4 f. 239

65. Pepys vol. 1 f.446- 47 'Good fellowship' i.e. (heavy) drinking companionship in the alehouse.

66. Refer also The Alewives Invitation, to Married-Men and Batchelors, Shewing how a Good Fellow is flighted when he is brought to Poverty.

67. Pepys vol. 1 f.438-39

68. *ibid.* f.430-31

69. *ibid.* f.446-47

70. *ibid.* f.258

71. Goodfellow - 'an affable companionable (drinking) person'

72. Pepys vol. 4 f.258-59

73. Pepys vol. 1. f.214-15; Other evidence of drunkenness causing bad language can be found in The Good Fellowes Frolick (Pepys vol 4 f. 239) where, 'the Landlady they did abuse, and call'd her nasty Whore' and 'Twould make ones hair to stand on end, to hear how they did swear'.

74. Stat. 4. Jac.I. c. s.8

75. Monckton, H. A. (1966) op. cit. p. 111.

76. 'Booke' i.e.Bible.

77. Head of the University constables. Students at this period were tried by a

University Court not Civil.

78. (1555-1645) He one of the father figures of the Puritan movement and was also the author of *Plaine and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments* (16th edn, 1625).

79. Gray, A. B. (1921) *Cambridge Revisited*. Heffer: Cambridge. pp. 125-26.

80. Fuller, T. (1840) *The History of the University of Cambridge from the Conquest to the year 1634* (1655), Prickett, M. and Wright, T. (eds.) C.U.P.: Cambridge. p.17; the operational brewhouse of Jesus College was sited literally a few metres adjacent to Magdalene College; refer Hammond's map of Cambridge 1592.

81. Pepys vol.1. f.471 or *How Mault deals with Every Man*.

82. *ibid.* f.470. Anthropomorphic - the attribution of human characteristics and qualities to non-human beings, objects, natural, or supernatural phenomena.

83. Roxburghe Ballads vol.2 f.29

84. *ibid.*

85. *ache*

86. Verse viii

87. Roxburghe Ballads vol.1 f.412

88. Perhaps early written evidence of the characteristic 'beer gut'?

89. Pepys vol. 4. f.258-59

90. Pepys vol.1. f.446-47

91. Pepys vol.1. f.292

92. *ibid.* f. 442-43

93. St. Hugh - patron saint of shoemakers/cobblers

94. With regard to association with trade, there are also perceivable underlying class issues. The tradesmen who frequented the alehouse have been linked to the emergence of a recognisable working class identity.

However, this subject is not in the remit of

this article. Refer Fumerton, P. (2002) *op. cit.*.

95. Pepys vol. 1. f.472

96. The *chapman* is a person of interest to us as the retailer of such ballads as these.

97. Pepys vol.1. f.444 - 45. This 'customisation' could thus enable any demand even for an unusual trade.

98. A weaver, blacksmith, tailor, porter, barber, and broom-man are also mention in *The Good Fellowes Frolick*. Pepys vol 4 f. 239 *ibid.* f. 442-43.

99. And who presumably would be tempted or encouraged to purchase a copy of the customised ballad. They also are unified in that they each say the same thing, over and over in the chorus, revealing a unified working class alehouse voice.

100. Pepys vol .3 f.277

101. *Quod Petis Hic Est*, 'That which you seek is here' after Horace.

102. This play has recently been also attributed to William Stevenson of Christ's College, Cambridge c.1562

103. John Still as Master of Trinity College, Cambridge would also have been well acquainted with the extra potent Trinity Audit Ale. For further information on college brew houses refer Compton-Davey, J. A. R. (2007 - in progress) 'Brewing in the Cambridge Colleges 1550-1750', PhD thesis University of Cambridge.

104. Farmer, J.S. (ed.) (1906) *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, (c.1562). Gibbings: London.

105. Pepys vol. 4. f.330

106. Monckton, H. A. (1966) *op. cit.*, p.203.

107. Pepys vol 4 f.238

108. Pepys vol 4 f.335, 337

109. London: for John Wright, 1643.

110. Roxburghe collection

111. by F White for Francis Hildyard in

Bickerdyke, J. (1889) op. cit. p. 312-7

112. Pepys vol.1 f.442-43

113. murther = murder

114. Pepys vol. 1 f.470-71

115. Anthropomorphic - the attribution of human characteristics and qualities to non-human objects.

116. The ballad is essentially a metaphor for the malting and brewing process.

117. Personified 'Ale'.

118. *Merry Hoastess* or A pretty new Ditty, compos'd by a Hoastess that lives in the City.

119. The author of another ale ballad *High and Mightie Commendation of a Pot of Good Ale* also in the Roxburghe Collection.

120. Roxburghe Ballads vol. 3 f.307

121. Pepys vol. 4 f. 243

122. As well as possibly foreign traders/visitors to London.

123. The Crown Inn in *Jolly Welsh Women*, the Rose Inn in *A Statute for Swearers and Drunkards* in the Pepys collection and another inn sign (The Fox?) in *High and Mightie Commendation of a Pot of Good Ale* found in the Roxburghe and The Bell from 1641, found in Bickerdyke, J. (1889) op. cit. The Chequers

Inn illustrated in the *Sir John Barley-Corne* ballad in the Roxburghe collections.

124. Depicted in *Heres to thee Kind Harry, A Health to all Good-fellows, Little Barley Corne, Careless Drunkards and Brewers Benefit and Mad Crue* and *The Alewives Invitation*.

125. Refer Roaring Dick of Dover, High and Mightie Commendation, Careless Drunkards and Mondays Work in Appendix.

126. In *Brewers' Answer* and *Sir John Barley-Corne*.

127. As found in *Looking Glass for Drunkards and A Statute for Swearers and Drunkards*.

128. *A Statute for Swearers and Drunkards*. Pepys vol. 1 f.214-15. *Innkeepers' Complaint* vol. 4 f.330

129. Pepys vol 4 f.243; vol 4 f.239; vol 4 f.338

130. *Careless Drunkards* (vol 4 f.238 )and *Looking Glass for Drunkards* ( vol 4 f.258) are other examples which utilise the same design woodcut in Pepys' collection.

131. [http://emc.english.ucsb.edu/ballad\\_project/index.asp](http://emc.english.ucsb.edu/ballad_project/index.asp)