Leisure and Masculinity in ‘Dear Old Dirty Stalybridge’, c.1830-1875.

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Nathan Booth
School of Arts, Languages and Cultures
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Abbreviations

CRO    Cheshire Record Office
LRO    Lancashire Record Office
OLSA   Oldham Local Studies and Archives
OS     Ordnance Survey
TIA    Tameside Image Archive
TLSAC  Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre
VA     Victoria and Albert Museum
Abstract

The mid-nineteenth century has been presented in popular and academic narratives as a crucial period in the history of modern leisure in Britain, as urbanisation and changes to working hours provided new opportunities for recreation. These leisure practices shaped individual and collective identities. However, much of the scholarship in this area has focused on class, at times marginalising or overlooking themes such as gender, generation and sexuality. This thesis does not attempt to dismiss class as a useful tool for historical analysis, nor does it suggest that leisure did not feature at all in the formation and performance of class. Instead, it demonstrates that leisure played a powerful role in shaping masculinity. Men used specific leisure practices to construct, conceal and express different aspects of their male identity. The character, materiality and spatial dynamics of recreational sites helped men to move fluidly between different roles, in doing so asserting their own version of masculinity. Examining sites of leisure helps reveal these processes, as well as extending our knowledge and understanding of everyday life in the mid-nineteenth century. By doing this, the thesis argues that historical engagement with gender formation has to take place at the intersections of themes and methodologies, be it liminality and domesticity, emotion and space, or sound and space.

This thesis presents a micro-history case study of leisure in Stalybridge, a textile town in the north west of England. Leisure practices in mid-nineteenth-century Stalybridge reflected the newness of both the town and the idea of leisure itself; as the town’s inhabitants sought to make sense of their newly urbanised and evolving environment, social and economic changes brought about an increasingly accessible and compartmentalised area of everyday life. Leisure thus shaped – and was shaped by – Stalybridge’s built-environment, place-identity and wider geography. Local writers drew on Stalybridge’s proximity to the countryside of the Peak District and southern Pennines in their depictions of the town, emphasising the opportunities for outdoor pursuits this presented. In calling attention to leisure, these authors attempted to shift focus away from industry as the central tenet of the town’s identity.

Alongside its focus on gender and place-identity, the thesis makes two further key contributions to the study of identity and experience in the mid-nineteenth century. First, it engages with the recent ‘affective’ turn in history to uncover men’s emotional experiences. It reconstructs the walking practices of Stalybridge schoolmaster James Knight to show how he used this leisure practice to organise romantic encounters, form homosocial networks, and grieve in private. Secondly, a recurring theme is the unfixed nature of sites of leisure, from the liminality of the pub to the contested nature (or ‘in-between-ness’) of Stalybridge itself. This focus on liminality demonstrates that the past is not fixed, because people and places in the past were not fixed themselves. Recognising specificity and subjectivity in our research is thus vital to uncovering and understanding authentic experiences of the past.

The thesis looks at three distinct leisure practices. Chapter One examines the liminality of the mid-nineteenth-century pub, arguing that, for young men in particular, these were sites of surrogate domesticity. It also challenges negative stereotypes of the Victorian pub, emphasising the diverse functions they fulfilled and the plurality of drinking cultures. Chapter Two discusses the prevalence of music in the mid-nineteenth-century urban environment, as well as its centrality to how Stalybridgeans viewed their town. It highlights the relationship between space, sound and local identity, as exemplified by the discourse surrounding the suitability of the town hall as a concert venue. Chapter Three argues that walking for leisure helped people both acquire and utilise knowledge of their surroundings, abetted by the inherent rhythmicity of that act. It also presents walking as an everyday act that played a crucial role in shaping and progressing key events and relationships in young men’s lives.
Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.
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Introduction

Stalybridge is often spoken of as “a place to get away from as quickly as possible”… but few towns possess such facilities for getting away… If the perusal of this little work should cause anyone to take a deeper interest in our ‘dear old dirty Stalybridge’, the trouble will not have been in vain.1

In this introduction to his 1908 travel guide, *Stalybridge: Its Beauty Spots and How to See Them*, local author and printer John Taylor Clark presented a town that was maligned by outsiders and much loved by its citizens. He described an urban environment in which leisure was crucial to the experience and identity of its inhabitants. Taylor Clark meant ‘getting away’ in a literal sense, chiefly by walking in the countryside that surrounded and permeated Stalybridge, but his claim could also apply figuratively to the role of leisure in the town for much of the previous century. Between 1830 and 1875, Stalybridge was a town in its infancy, still expanding but finding stability after half a century of economic upheaval. Almost all of its working population were employed in the cotton industry. Urban development reflected this pattern, with residential districts occupying the spaces between the mills, factories and workshops. With the town’s new urban status came new leisure opportunities, further abetted by changes to working hours and holidays in the second half of the nineteenth century.2 Institutions such as the pubs found throughout the town, and concert halls in the centre, serviced this recreational zeal. Many pursuits were also informed by the nature of Stalybridge’s piecemeal urban expansion and its wider rural landscape – fishing, skating, walking and pedestrianism were all popular exploits, reflecting the ‘in-between-ness’ of the town. These particular activities were not unique to Stalybridge, nor all new to the nineteenth century. Indeed, a commercialised leisure culture had existed, for the middle classes at least, from the eighteenth century.3 Yet

leisure became central to the way Stalybridgeans perceived themselves and their town in the mid-nineteenth century. Men in particular used different leisure practices to construct and perform their identity, finding opportunities for homosociability, networking, domesticity and emotional engagement. However, historians are yet to fully uncover or explain the ways in which masculinity was constructed, or to fully elucidate the role of material spaces and environment in these processes.  

This thesis presents a micro-history case study of leisure in a mid-nineteenth-century industrial town. Situated in the fields of urban and social history, it examines three distinct examples of leisure – pub culture, the practice and performance of music, and walking. Each chapter focuses on the sites in which these activities took place, analysing their character, materiality and locational properties. In doing so, the thesis aims to demonstrate two main points. First, leisure was a key component of social life in a new provincial town, shaped by and in turn shaping its place-identity. Popular culture provided opportunities for civic pride, as well as eliciting both an individual and communal sense of ownership. Secondly, the thesis argues for the importance of leisure as an act that helped construct masculinity. The character and design of sites of leisure facilitated the creation and performance of gender identity; men were able to negotiate these spaces to cultivate and project certain tenets of their character. Each chapter also makes a point unique to each area of leisure, challenging established narratives about the activity in question and demonstrating the utility to historical research of engaging with new methodologies. Chapter One seeks to reclaim the pub from a reductive and condescending narrative of poverty and inebriation that dominates research into mid-nineteenth-century drinking cultures. Chapter Two argues that we need to engage with sound and materiality to a greater extent when discussing music. Chapter Three questions the efficacy of applying a

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strict urban/rural dichotomy to social histories of places. It also engages with the 'affective turn' to demonstrate how men's actions can be read as expressions of emotion. In doing this, I am contributing towards a more nuanced history of each of these individual forms of leisure, as well as seeking to add to our understanding of the ways in which masculinity was constructed, experienced and disseminated.

The Provinces in Urban History

Studies of nineteenth-century urban history have often focused on traditional 'smoke cities' such as Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds and Glasgow, as well as of course London. With few notable exceptions, when historians have examined smaller or newer industrial settlements they have tended to focus on the economic narrative – on their products and production techniques and their role as satellite towns servicing the established commercial centres. The question of how similar these newer towns were to the larger cities they surrounded was a point of debate in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1849, journalist Angus

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Bethune Reach described the factory towns of Lancashire and Cheshire as 'all little Manchesters.' However, Disraeli observed in 1844 that Manchester was actually an atypical modern manufacturing town, and that places like Stalybridge and Bolton were far more developed in terms of machinery and economic organisation. This interpretation was borne out by research conducted by the Manchester statistical society in 1844, which found that 90% of Stalybridge’s working population were factory operatives, compared to just 64% in Manchester. The historical geographer Richard Dennis tests these conflicting claims, suggesting that, for the relative size of the satellite towns, they had a comparable number of sites of leisure as Manchester. Yet leisure in new towns represented a particular urban experience, one that developed due to the pace and scale of change in these places, as well as their specific geographical location. It is therefore necessary to be more discerning and nuanced in our classification of urban areas – to avoid perpetuating a simplistic and falsely dichotomous relationship between urban and rural, to avoid accidently reducing towns like Stalybridge to merely 'little Manchesters.'

The definitions used by Peter Clark et al in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* provide a useful framework for classification. At one end of the scale was London, and regional centres such as Manchester or Birmingham. At the other were the 'small towns' – those with a population under 10,000, such as Brecon, Lewis or Swindon. For larger towns than this, it is helpful to organise according to industry, as this dictated their demography (and thus, in part, culture). Ports remained dynamic commercial centres, although most were already well-established prior to the nineteenth century. Then there were industrialising towns, which can be broadly split in to the following groups: textile

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towns; coalfield towns; metalworking towns; and transport towns. To this list we might add Peter Borsay and J.K. Walton’s leisure towns, in particular the coastal resorts that developed as popular tourist destinations in the mid-nineteenth century, abetted by the creation of a national railway network. There is evidently room for some overlap between these categories; Stalybridge was primarily a textile town, but it also appealed to tourists thanks to its geographical situation near the southern Pennines and Peak District. Moreover, the above categorisation of urban areas has some limitations. First, as Barrie Trinder argues, this taxonomy of towns can sometimes present ‘too simplistic a division’, as towns engaged in similar industries often displayed a number of differences in their patterns of growth or culture. Secondly, this categorisation does not fully explicate or account for the ‘newness’ of some industrialising towns, or the regional specificity in their development. Thus it is important to apply these definitions with care and flexibility, to avoid generalising or subsuming specific towns within broader historical narratives of urban areas. Mid-nineteenth-century Stalybridge was a textile town, but its relative newness and geography were as central to its culture as was its industry.

Stalybridge lies nine miles to the east of Manchester on the Cheshire side of the county’s historic border with Lancashire, now incorporated into the metropolitan borough of Tameside in Greater Manchester. The settlement (known in the twelfth century as Staveley or variations thereof – Staley, Stavel’, Stavelegh) expanded to the banks of the River Tame in the early-eighteenth century, necessitating the construction of the bridge from which the town’s modern name derives. Stalybridge’s history, as with so many towns in the region, is inextricably connected to a period of industrialisation in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century. In 1748 it had a population of just 140, and 54 houses; the principal industry in the village was the spinning of worsted yarn, manufactured for Nottingham hosiers. Significant events which took place in Stalybridge in this period were usually related to wider regional happenings - such as political unrest (the army of Prince Charles Edward, the Young Pretender marched through the district in 1745, on route to indecision at Derby and defeat at Culloden Moor) and the emergence of Methodism (John

Wesley frequently visited the district; his biographer, John Whitehead, was born in Staley Bridge in 1740; the first Wesleyan Chapel in the town was opened in 1815).

The first cotton mill in the town was built in 1776, powered by a small stream that flowed off Ridge Hill into the River Tame. Little under 20 years later, steam power (at the equivalent of 6HP) was introduced to the mill and sparked violent opposition. In 1801, a 40HP engine was erected, and the town’s economic and urban development continued apace. By 1823 the population stood at 5,500; by 1825 it had increased by just over 63% to 9,000. This rapid expansion was underpinned by a marked increase in the quantity of cotton manufactured in the town: from 1 December 1824 to 1 June 1825 77,080 additional spindles were put into operation. Steadier growth continued throughout the nineteenth century, albeit tempered by intermittent periods of social unrest and economic hardship.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Stalybridge acquired the political autonomy and cultural institutions which officially bestowed upon it the status of a self-governing town. In 1828, the authorities obtained the Stalybridge Town and Market Act (also known as the Improvement Act) which regulated the borough’s police force and facilitated the development of a new public market, situated on the Hyde’s Folds plot just off Market Street. This coincided with the formation of the Stalybridge Gas Company, which was responsible for lighting the whole town. The Act also initiated discussion of a central municipal building, and on 30 December 1831 a procession featuring nine brass bands marked the opening of the town hall. The newly-urbanised and industrial appearance of Stalybridge drew criticism from social commentators, most notably Friedrich Engels, who characteristically complained of the town’s ‘multitudes of courts, back lanes, and remote nooks [arising] out of [the] confused way of building ... Add to this the shocking filth, and the repulsive effect of Stalybridge, in spite of its pretty surroundings, may be readily imagined.’

27 The town was subsequently made an independent parliamentary borough in 1857.
My research looks at Stalybridge between c.1830 and c.1875, shortly after the town attained self-governing status, and before the late-nineteenth-century realisation of a more homogenous, nationalised leisure culture. During the mid-nineteenth century, Stalybridge was becoming established as a town in its own right – politically, economically and culturally. Examining this period in the town’s history allows us to understand how its citizens experienced their everyday environment in the context of emerging social stability. Following almost fifty years of industrialisation and urbanisation, the town’s population increased steadily as the century progressed (Fig.0.1). This coincided with the creation of designated leisure spaces to service this growing population and satiate a broader zeal for recreation. Economic stability sustained this growing industry. With the exception of violent protests against wage reductions in 1842, and the Cotton Famine of 1861-1865, which affected Stalybridge particularly badly, the town experienced few significant economic or political difficulties.

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30 Although there were both continuities and transformations in mid-nineteenth-century urban society, historians such as Martin Hewitt have recognised that this period, in particular the 1850s and 1860s, saw the emergence of stability in industrial society: Hewitt, The Emergence of Stability, p.3.
31 During the famine, only five of the town’s 39 factories and 24 machine shops were able to offer full-time employment; over a thousand skilled men and women left the town to search for work.
Fig. 0.4: Stalybridge, 1830; TLSAC Map Collection.

Fig. 0.5: Stalybridge, 1849; OS 1:10560 County Series Map, Lancashire CV (1849).
However, urban expansion continued to be piecemeal, informed by landscape and opportunity rather than adhering to a designated plan or ideology (Fig.0.2 to Fig.0.6).\textsuperscript{32} Indeed, Edwin Butterworth said of Stalybridge in 1842, ‘many of the streets have been rather hastily and imperfectly constructed.’\textsuperscript{33} An interesting tension underpinned and shaped the town’s place-identity. Whilst Stalybridge was accruing the cultural spaces and municipal focal points befitting of a Victorian town, these practices and buildings reflected the stage the town was at in its development. There was a certain ‘in-between-ness’ about the town and its leisure culture – a tension between old and new ways of life, between urbanisation and the rurality of the town’s wider geographic milieu. Even the town’s position right on the border of Lancashire and Cheshire, as well as its proximity to West Yorkshire and Derbyshire, added to this sense of contested identity. As such, using Stalybridge as a case study provides insight into how leisure culture developed alongside place-identity in a new factory town. It also allows us to explore how men used the ‘in-between-ness’ of spaces and places of leisure to develop and moderate their own gendered identity and behaviour.

\textsuperscript{33} E. Butterworth, An Historical Account of the Towns of Ashton-under-Lyne, Stalybridge, and Dukinfield (Ashton, 1842), p.145.
Masculinity and Gendered Spaces

The first problem this thesis seeks to engage with is how historians have developed a notion of mid-nineteenth-century masculinity chiefly attendant to class, politics and the organisation of labour. Prompted by second and third-wave feminism and the subsequent emergence of gender studies in the 1980s and 1990s, historians have increasingly sought to expose and explain the construction, performance and representation of male identity. They have used gender as a means of illuminating other social signifiers and challenging received historical narratives; for example, Anna Clark attempts to rewrite the traditional narratives of the British working class by ‘infusing gender into class.’ This relationship seems to be reciprocal – masculinity’s meaning is mediated through class, ethnicity and sexuality. Subsequently, Raewyn Connell’s vision of multiple masculinities has displaced an


essentialist reading of masculinity.\textsuperscript{37} The recent focus on subjectivity and the history of the emotions has abetted this theoretical framework, as it exposes ever more divergent and intricate gendered experiences and ideologies.\textsuperscript{38} Yet class still features heavily in studies of nineteenth-century masculinity.\textsuperscript{39} There are two reasons for this. First, class remains the prevailing grand narrative of modern British social history, from its formation, to its representational forms, to its alleged decline.\textsuperscript{40} Secondly, many sources available to gender historians, especially those that deal explicitly with personal notions of selfhood, come from more affluent members of society. In keeping with the theory of multiple masculinities, historians who use these sources rightly acknowledge that the gender identity they are discussing is only representative of the middle or upper strata of society. The experiences of the ‘popular classes’ (whose self-identification remains at the crux of the debate on class) were far less commonly recorded; historians must dig deeper in the archives, or employ...
new methodologies, to give voice to these groups.41 For both these reasons, historians of the mid-nineteenth century are perhaps conditioned to think in terms of class, even though this may not always be analogous to the experiences of our subjects. This has played a key role in the way gender history has developed, especially in terms of its focus on spheres of influence.

Research into masculinity has emphasised three main areas of men’s lives: their home life (in particular their relationship to other family members and to the notion of domesticity); work; and homosociability.42 There exists a relationship between these compartmentalised categories of existence through which both subjective notions of selfhood and broader identities manifest.43 The notion of separate spheres – in which, it is argued, a dialectical polarity between public (male) and private (female) space shaped gendered behaviour and identities – has proved remarkably resilient throughout the historiography.44 However, the boundaries of these domains – like the identities they

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constructed – were fluid, transient and regularly transgressed. As Amanda Vickery and others have shown, the idea of a division between public and private only reflected the experience of a small, affluent part of society.45 Indeed, the very notion of the home being a private space would have been alien to many professional, let alone poorer families.46 One can thus query the existence of a strict public/private dichotomy guiding the gender identity of the majority of nineteenth-century Britons. However, the ways in which men understood, negotiated and, perhaps most importantly, moved between the different spaces in which they operated remains key to our understanding of masculinity. As John Tosh has argued, men were required to finely balance home, work and social life, conducting themselves appropriately in each scenario.47 Whilst the precise details of this balance and appropriate behaviour varied according to subjective experience, the overwhelming conclusion that can be drawn is that men were required to move fluidly between the different arenas in which they operated. This has been effectively demonstrated in recent scholarship focusing on alternative masculinities; spatial analyses of 'otherness' have shown how men used the liminal spaces and blurred lines between home, work and leisure to construct, articulate and conceal behaviour that deviated from societal expectations.48 These studies reaffirm Tosh’s definition of masculinity as an often abstract expression of personal authenticity, as opposed to 'manliness', which was a conscious expression of 'a single standard of manhood… expressed in certain physical attributes and moral dispositions.'49 This is the theoretical definition of masculinity I use throughout this thesis: as a process through which individuals understood and presented themselves. These processes were informed by external factors, including sometimes notions of manliness. However, it was men's ability to adapt their behaviour according to environment, and their ability to move fluidly between roles, through which they constructed their own particular,

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authentic version of masculinity. This thesis examines some of the forms that this behaviour and identity took, as well as the processes through which they developed or were manifest. It stresses the role of leisure in facilitating this.

There have been three key recent debates in the history of masculinity. The first of these concerns the chronology of masculinity – how it has changed or progressed over time. This, in part, stems from the desire to find a long-term narrative to contextualise the perceived contemporary ‘crisis in masculinity.’

Elaine Showalter, for example, presents the fin-de-siècle as a convenient parallel to our late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century anxieties, arguing that it epitomises a similar period of disquiet, due to the emergence of the New Woman and the public homosexual. Yet by speaking of a crisis, we falsely imply that masculinity is an otherwise stable construct. Instead, gender historians have chosen to focus on turning points (the cult of domesticity in the nineteenth century, the First World War) and continuities (especially across the early modern period). This approach reflects the difficulty of historicising a construct as fluid and subjective as masculinity. This problem recurs in the second major area of deliberation, which concerns the existence and importance of hegemonic masculinity. This debate focuses on the ways in which ideas pertaining to gender roles and identities were disseminated through language, behaviour and culture. As such, research in this field is

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50 For a detailed review of these debates, see: Harvey and Shepard, ‘What Have Historians Done with Masculinity?’, pp.274-80.  
vital to understanding the operation of power and resilience of patriarchy. Thirdly, in response to this, historians have challenged the extent to which one should prioritize subjective experience over representations of masculinity. So, through these methodological approaches and historical debates, what firm suppositions and key themes have emerged? For a start, historians now tend to think in terms of multiple, transient masculinities. There is a focus on the different spaces in which men and masculinity operated, as well as how men transitioned between different roles. Above all, increased research in the field has unsurprisingly exposed the diversity of male experience, although historians still tend to emphasise class when talking about gender.

The purpose of my study is not to argue that any of these approaches are incorrect, nor to contradict the important conclusions drawn from this body of work. Indeed, the thesis uses several key tenets of these readings of masculinity to provide context or support for its own interpretations of male behaviour. However, what I also argue is that environment was essential to the shaping and practice of male identity, and these spaces were not always organised according to class or labour status – especially in a new town such as Stalybridge. This thesis thus represents an attempt to expand our historical understanding of male experience in the mid-nineteenth century. It does not try to redefine masculinity – on the contrary, it seeks to demonstrate that such a construct was manifold, fluid and, above all, shaped by environment. This view of transient gender identities agrees in large part with Connell’s work on multiple interconnected masculinities, but expands our understanding of the role performed by leisure, material space and place in constructing and perpetuating these identities. This thesis uncovers a number of interpretations and expressions of male identity, borne out through the practice of leisure in a provincial town. Through this, I aim to show the breadth of experience and ideas that constituted masculinity in the mid-nineteenth century.

**Uses of Leisure**

The established historical narrative places the mid-nineteenth century as a ‘dynamic new phase’ in the development of leisure. The emergence of economic and political stability, continued urbanization and population growth, new technologies of transport and

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60 Connell, *Masculinities*.

communication, and a dedicated leisure service industry all facilitated a move towards mass culture. However, several analyses of this period have examined leisure through the prism of rational recreation and the often-vague notion of respectability. A modern concept of leisure conflicted with the values of a newly formed middle class, whose success and identity had been determined by the imperatives of work. Leisure represented ‘a discrete new sector in an increasingly compartmentalised life-space’ – it required extensive planning and preparation, and demanded distinct temporal and spatial distinctions from work. Most disconcertingly for some, it represented a new and relatively unstructured area in which social distinctions were particularly vulnerable. As a means of assuaging these anxieties, the middle classes projected work disciplines into play, re-imagining leisure as duty; they valorised activities that were improving and respectable. However, for historian Peter Bailey, respectability was a nuanced and interdependent notion: a choice, not a universal normative role. Using the example of Thomas Wright’s Bill Bank’s Day Out (1868), a fictional document of a working-class railwayman’s leisure activities, Bailey posits that respectability was incorporated into – but did not replace – the working-class lifestyle; it could be

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64 The sociologist Nels Anderson contends that the creation of leisure by Western society was unintended, founded by a society ill-prepared for this by-product of work; N. Anderson, Dimensions of Work: The Sociology of a Work Culture (New York, 1964), p.90.
65 Bailey, Popular Culture and Performance, pp.20.
66 Bailey, Popular Culture and Performance, pp.16-21.
'assumed or discarded as easily as the collar that was its symbolic accessory.' In response to portrayals of idealised, homogenised and neatly-integrated working-class communities, Bailey instead depicts the Victorian city as a heterotopia, 'bristling with others' and generating both opportunity and anxiety. Similarly, in *Victorian Babylon*, Lynda Nead examines the products of 'an accumulation of uneven and unresolved processes of urbanisation' to re-imagine leisure within the metropolis. Dissecting the changing geographies and new technologies of nineteenth-century London, Nead reconsiders women's use of public space, demonstrating that for unaccompanied middle-class women (like Bailey's working-class men) respectability was a complex performance but ultimately one which could be assumed at will.

In his 1977 historiographical review, Gareth Stedman Jones warned against over-politicising leisure as an area of study, suggesting that to focus myopically on a polarity between class expression and social control is both reductive and anachronistic. Yet historians such as Simon Gunn and John K. Walton have successfully built on Pierre Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital to demonstrate that leisure created an arena for the performance of class. Significantly, they have done so without losing sight of the primary function of leisure: enjoyment. Academics have also developed Norbert Elias' writings on sport to articulate the centrality of leisure 'to processes of identification and to the production and reproduction of difference and distinction.' I do not wish to dismiss work on rational recreation and social control; indeed, as part of a broader historical narrative of class relations and political structure such an approach is both inevitable and extremely

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68 Bailey, *Popular Culture and Performance*, p.44.
However, class is not the primary mode of analysis in this thesis. As Andrew Davies argues, to view mid-nineteenth-century leisure primarily through the prism of class belies the diverse experiences of many of its participants. Doing so also stands in the way of exposing other identities and their attendant behaviours. Class identities may in reality have been ‘submerged’ beneath other socio-cultural characteristics. Indeed, age, gender, location and sexuality were all key factors in how, where and with whom individuals enjoyed themselves.

Recently, historians have used leisure in a number of ways to expose and elucidate male gender roles. Melanie Tebbutt has noted the complex ways in which rambling in the Derbyshire moorland reflected anxieties about masculinity despite the assumed inherent ‘manliness’ of that act. Martin Johnes’ research on pigeon racing reveals that for some men, building and visiting the pigeon loft offered a welcome retreat from domesticity, whereas for others it was an extension of family life. In his work on youth gangs and violence as expressions of masculinity in late-Victorian Manchester and Salford, Davies argues that historians of leisure have been preoccupied with class politics, which has obscured representations and experiences of gender, generation and poverty. This approach marks a shift away from a historical focus on institutions and activism, towards a better understanding of the everyday lives of ‘ordinary people.’ This thesis seeks to build on this research to further explicate the role that leisure played in shaping male behaviour and notions of selfhood.

**The Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is structured to provide three micro-studies of distinct leisure practices, each of which further elucidates our understanding of the uses of leisure, the construction and performance of masculinity, and the experience of everyday life in a mid-nineteenth-century

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factory town. Chapter One challenges several stereotypes of Victorian pubs, stressing the existence of multiple drinking cultures rather than a homogenous experience. Much of the historiography on pubs has concentrated on, and – in many cases – echoed the polemic of the Temperance movement in depicting these establishments as harbingers of immorality and vice responsible for working-class poverty. Yet this approach is both reductive and unrepresentative, and marginalises the pub as a site of leisure and community. Most drinking establishments in the mid-nineteenth century were small, liminal and transitional sites that retained a strong element of domesticity. The spatial dynamics, material culture and various roles of these sites shaped the way men behaved and socialised. As well as developing social and professional networks, young men in particular used the pub to engage in independent activities that their living situation may not have allowed. The chapter evidences how drinking establishments facilitated both homosociability and this surrogate domesticity.\(^84\) It does so by closely examining the material spaces of the pub, using auction listings and building plans to reconstruct these spaces. My findings are illustrated and further supported by an analysis of conduct guides, newspaper reports, print adverts and diary extracts. These sources provide insights into the various everyday functions of the pub, the multifarious drinking cultures that operated there, and in particular how these sites constructed individual and collective male identity.

Chapter Two considers the ways in which music shaped and reflected experiences and local identity in the mid-nineteenth century. Music was a central component of Stalybridge’s place-identity; according to the *Stalybridge Reporter*, there was ‘nothing in which we have a better right to pride ourselves.’\(^85\) This conviction was largely due to the successes of Stalybridge’s brass bands and choral societies, but the claim could also relate to the prevalence and centrality of music in the town. The urban environment featured a variety of different forms of music in a variety of places; these practices shaped the development and lived experiences of the town. This chapter argues that the location in which musicians performed informed the audience’s response to the music. Two interwoven factors were crucial to this process. First, the character of the venue – produced chiefly by its design and ownership – shaped the experience of attending a performance and, perhaps more importantly, the affection of the town’s inhabitants


\(^85\) *Stalybridge Reporter*, 15 December 1883.
towards that site. Secondly, the quality of the auditory experience was key to the audience’s enjoyment of music and the ability for music to convey its intended and/or subjective meanings. To illustrate this, the chapter examines a number of prominent music venues in mid-nineteenth-century Stalybridge, focusing in particular on the competition between the town hall and Mechanics’ Institution. It also considers music performed in the pub, home and street. The chapter reconstructs these sites and the experience of listening through building plans, newspaper accounts, band and society records, and diary extracts. It also reads music-making as a gendered act, by analysing the language used by and about musicians in Stalybridge.

Chapter Three explores walking as a leisure practice in the mid-nineteenth century. This chapter begins by discussing how Stalybridge’s geographical location, infancy as an urban settlement and piecemeal early development all influenced how residents and outsiders perceived the town. The proximity of the town centre to the distinctive terrain of the southern Pennines and Peak Distinct was a recurring motif in the written accounts of the region, as was the coalescence of industrial and idyllic in the landscape. The character and intricacies of this urban environment provided opportunities for men to develop intimate relationships and engage with their emotions. To evidence this, the chapter presents a close reading of Stalybridge schoolmaster James Knight’s diaries to interpret three of the ways in which his walking patterns constructed or reflected his male identity.

First, Knight used his knowledge of the built environment and the accessibility of the countryside to arrange discreet romantic meetings. Secondly, following a succession of family bereavements, Knight changed his walking patterns and routes to grieve in private. He used his perambulations as a means of coping with his losses and forming closer relationships with his children. Thirdly, Knight went ‘strolling’ with male companions around town, in doing so establishing himself as part of a homosocial network for whom being recognised (especially by women) was an essential part of their performed male identity. The chapter argues that mid-nineteenth-century masculinity did not necessarily preclude emotional engagement, but men mostly did so away from other male friends. It also presents walking as an everyday act that played a crucial role in shaping and progressing the key events and relationships in young men’s lives.

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88 Diaries of James Knight, 1856-63, TLSAC DD86/1.
Chapter One: The Domesticity of Drinking

The emergence of the pub into mainstream culture in mid-nineteenth-century Britain is often dismissed as a product of working-class immorality or escapism – be it escapism from the monotonous physicality of labouring life, pitiable living conditions, or the stereotypical vexing (and vexed) spouse and unruly children.1 The following passage from James Walvin’s chapter on ‘Sinful Recreations’ exemplifies this approach:

Men and women drank because they were poor; fewer were poor because they drank... To take a man away from his beer and out of his pub was to isolate him... In the harsh circumstances which dominated working-class life such enforced isolation, involving being thrown back on the even bleaker environment of domestic life, was more than most men could tolerate.2

Such a narrative is complicit in constructing the myth of a homogenous drinking culture, hence sustaining one-dimensional depictions of the establishments that purportedly represented this culture. This chapter explores the mid-nineteenth-century provincial pub, which, as a prominent site of popular culture and working-class leisure, performed an important role in the construction of identity and the dissemination of societal ideals.

The dominant narrative of the public house during the mid-nineteenth-century is one of expansion (numerically rather than spatially) and gradual modernisation, rather than diversification.3 The sustained increase in the number of licensed venues was ostensibly a product of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century urbanisation combined with the passing of the Beerhouse Act of 1830, which liberalised regulations governing the brewing and trade of beer. Beyond this overarching economic narrative, little attempt has been made to investigate the centrality of the pub in Victorian society, other than to attribute its popularity to an endemic disposition to alcohol (and alcohol abuse) among the working class.4 Conversely, this chapter elucidates the experiences and appeal of such sites for those who frequented them, in doing so revealing a nuanced and didactic set of values in operation. The socio-cultural upheaval of late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain brought about an abrupt transformation and reconfiguring of pub culture, manifest by larger venues and the rise of the tied-house system. Prior to these changes, though several entrepreneurs took advantage of the relaxation of licensing laws to establish more pubs to accommodate

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the increasing population, the drinking establishments of Stalybridge reflected the transitional nature of the town in this period. These establishments incorporated several facets of domestic design. This domesticity dictated the way in which drinkers interpreted and used these spaces, and, subsequently, contributed towards the construction of specific regional, gendered and class-based identities.

Histories of the Victorian pub have tended to belong to one of two groups. The first of these categories, exemplified by scholars such as Brian Harrison, examines nineteenth-century drinking culture within the context of the Temperance movement. Here the pub is used chiefly to propagate a narrative of working-class poverty and criminality through inebriation and alcoholism. Indeed, criminologist Henry Yeomans has noted that the scholarship on both Victorian and current drinking cultures has been preoccupied with either excessive consumption or complete abstinence (as the counterpoint to that excess); more mundane experiences of drinking and historically contingent notions of moderation are rarely studied outside of this dichotomous overarching framework. Conversely, the second genre of pub history over-romanticises its subject. Such texts are largely descriptive, documenting the interior and exterior design of establishments, and are supplemented with numerous photographs and nostalgic reminisces. Recently, local historians and enthusiasts from special interest societies such as the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) have added to this body of work. Such texts are aimed at the popular reader, so fail to address academic concerns with the public house as

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a formative and contested space in the mid-nineteenth-century provincial townscape. The depiction of the pub as a predominantly masculine space is a consistent feature of both academic and popular histories of drinking. Valerie Hey’s *Patriarchy and Pub Culture* explores how this gendering of space was (and often still is) manifest in the social dynamics of licensed drinking venues. Whilst Hey’s research and personal experiences combine to present a powerful polemic lamenting the exclusion of women from pub culture, her portrayal of it is at times one-dimensional and highly selective, especially when discussing the nineteenth century.

Although historians have explored the social and political economies of early modern drinking establishments at length, they have rarely extended a similar theoretical approach to their nineteenth-century counterparts. Furthermore, there have been limited attempts to contextualise Victorian criticisms of the pub interior. James Kneale contends that whilst the morality, economic organisation and regulation of drinking were not newly contentious issues, the preoccupation with the internal spaces of the pub within these debates represented an original approach. He suggests that the public house directly rivalled spaces created to ‘re-moralise’ the working classes, and sometimes – in the case of the tearoom and coffee house – informed their design. However, further engagement with the material spaces of the public house is required to recover the experiences of the social actors who inhabited it. In doing so, this chapter will argue that such experiences reveal that male behaviour in the pub was far more varied than the conventional narrative may suggest, reminding historians that male identity likewise was a fluid and nuanced construct.

This chapter scrutinises the pub in the context of the problematic (and remarkably resilient) notion of separate spheres. The coalescence of public and ‘private’ space

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10 Mark Girouard has produced a comprehensive narrative of the development of Victorian pubs which considers their architecture, layout and interior design. However, this study is almost exclusively focused on London pubs: M. Girouard, *Victorian Pubs* (London, 1984), p.226.


dictated the territorial and ideological demarcation of the mid-nineteenth-century urban landscape. Victorian moral imperialists (along with many historians of the nineteenth century) conceived of a fixed dichotomy between public and private, yet in reality the lines dividing such domains were multiple and shifting.\textsuperscript{15} Leisure in the provincial industrial town took place in a number of contested spaces, the negotiation of which elicited a compromised perception of, and engagement with, notions of identity.\textsuperscript{16} This third way often represented a reinterpretation of the idealised private sphere for application within the public domain. The design and function of public spaces responded to this, incorporating many tenets typically associated with the domestic environment. As this chapter shows, this reconciliation of public and private was particularly evident in the pub. However, recent studies into public space in the nineteenth-century town or city have overlooked the humble beerhouse, choosing instead to focus on (tangential) establishments such as ‘clubland’ and the music hall.\textsuperscript{17} Historians, such as Harrison and Alistair Mutch, have discussed the geographical position of the pub within the urban townscape, but have rarely explored the internal space of the pub on anything other than a descriptive basis.\textsuperscript{18}

The spatial dynamics and material properties of the pub interior determined three things. First, the immediate way in which people perceived that space, with attributes ascribed social significance through their linguistic or material connotations. Secondly, the way in which social actors used that space. Thirdly, how the cultural institution of the pub (as represented by that particular site) was imagined, or culturally constructed, to establish a set of practices that shaped identity. Identity could be constructed through the interpretation of such (liminal) spaces and ‘the practice of everyday life’ – the use of the space, affected by both its design and interpretation by its user.\textsuperscript{19} The domesticity of many


\textsuperscript{18} Brian Harrison assesses how three predominant roles fulfilled by public houses determined their location in nineteenth-century London: catering for commuters, acting as a centre for recreation and providing a space for various public meetings. More recently, Alistair Mutch has compared the location of Manchester and Liverpool pubs, arguing that the prominence of smaller beerhouses suggests that such establishments generally served the needs of a restricted locality; Harrison, ‘Pubs’; Mutch, ‘Manchester and Liverpool Public Houses Compared’, p.26.

\textsuperscript{19} C.G. Pooley, ‘Getting to Know the City: the Construction of Spatial Knowledge in London in the 1930s’, \textit{Urban History} 31:2 (2005), p.212; H. Lefebvre, \textit{The Production of Space} (Oxford, 1991); M. De...
provincial drinking establishments is fundamental to our understanding of identity, given its centrality in existing histories of class construction. Together, the liminality and domesticity of the mid-nineteenth-century public house determined its status as a site in which a distinctive culture could be authored by the individuals that frequented it. Space (as a cultural locator) could then act as a process (alongside discourse) by which this was further disseminated.

This chapter begins by providing a brief overview of the development of the pub throughout the nineteenth century. It will then contest and explain the pervasiveness of an insidiously homogenous depiction of the pub and its inhabitants. It argues that the prevailing nineteenth-century (and often historical) narrative (in which sites of drinking are identified as the cause and locus of extreme inebriation and a violent and sexually explicit underclass) represents a deliberately negative ‘invented’ tradition. This section also introduces the domesticity and liminality of the pub.

The chapter then examines three interrelated aspects of provincial pub culture(s), in doing so positing that mid-nineteenth-century drinking establishments fulfilled a far broader array of functions than has been credited. The domesticity of the pub environment facilitated, and in turn perpetuated, these roles. First, I shall consider the construction of masculinity; the pub acted as a surrogate home for many young men, offering a space for solitary leisure and relaxation alongside affordable nourishment and social opportunities. Secondly, this section discusses the development of a working- and lower-middle-class culture of education and self-improvement. Thirdly, it elucidates the role of the pub in the formation of inclusive and self-consciously defined communities. This section uses personal testimony and newspaper adverts and articles to uncover the diverse roles at work (or play) in the pub.

Finally, the chapter explores the design of the pub, suggesting that the order and use of space reflects the original domestic usage of such buildings. There are few remaining plans of public houses before 1875, and none for the first half of the nineteenth century in Stalybridge and its environs at least. However, archival material documents the

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22 Quintin Colville, in his examination of the shipboard homes of Royal Naval officers, uses schematics to consider further the (ultimately flawed) concept of surrogate, corporate male domesticity propagated by the design of such interiors: Q. Colville, ‘Corporate Domesticity and Idealised Masculinity: Royal Naval Officers and their Shipboard Homes, 1918-39’, *Gender and History* 21:3 (2009), pp.499-519.
large number of redesigns and extensions to drinking establishments during the final two decades of the century. Significantly, the documents outlining such proposals reveal the changes made to the pub. Thus, the plans allow us to reconstruct the mid-nineteenth-century pub as well as its successor. This section also examines the objects and paraphernalia that adorned drinking establishments. Historians of the home have drawn attention to the importance of material culture, and the potential for objects to act as agents within the spaces in which they were deployed. For example, Thad Logan considers collections of items in the Victorian parlour, examining their material properties, spatial positioning within the room and their symbolic and cultural reference points. She uses the domestic environment as a site through which one can read several broader aspects of Victorian society and culture. Other historians have applied this methodology to the objects that adorned drinking establishments; Rudolph Kenna and Anthony Mooney, in People’s Palaces: Victorian and Edwardian Pubs of Scotland, attempt to read certain objects as cultural signifiers. They argue that the bric-a-brac accumulated by many late-Victorian pubs transformed these spaces into quasi-museums celebrating a national or regional heritage, imperial power and masculinity. This section uses auction listings collected from local newspaper advertisements to reconstruct the pub interior. The level of description provided by auctioneers for each item varies. However, the descriptions that are used become especially pertinent, as they demonstrate the aspects of the objects deemed significant to sellers and prospective buyers.

It is hoped that this emphasis on the spatial dynamics and materiality of the pub leads to a greater recognition amongst urban historians of how the interpretation of, and interaction with, spaces of leisure impacted upon the construction of male identity. The chapter also encourages all historians to re-evaluate common tropes associated with mid-nineteenth-century drinking culture; it implores them to uncover the experiences and attitudes of those who regularly frequented the pub - as opposed to the polemic of those external to the multiple pub cultures in operation, who simply sought to condemn it.

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25 For example, Scottish publicans and breweries exploited a heavily romanticised popular image of the Highlands through their choice of paintings, stained windows, tile and fitting patterns and bottle designs: R. Kenna and A. Mooney, People’s Palaces: Victorian and Edwardian Pubs of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1983), p.86.
1.1: Defining the Pub

In the mid-nineteenth century, the umbrella term ‘pub’ encompassed myriad types of drinking establishment. These differences, in part, influenced the drinking experience of their customers. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term ‘pub’ originated as a graphic abbreviation used in reference to (British) public houses, and first used colloquially during the nineteenth century.\(^{26}\) A ‘public house’ is more broadly defined as ‘A building whose principal business is the sale of alcoholic drinks to be consumed on the premises’ or ‘[a]n inn or hostelry providing food and lodging for travellers or members of the public, and usually licensed for the sale of alcohol.’ This chapter uses the term ‘pub’ as shorthand to discuss any venue with a license for the sale and consumption of alcohol on site. In the mid-nineteenth century, this included a range of establishments. The beer shop or beerhouse was the most recently developed model of drinking establishment. It retained a strong association with the smaller taverns of the previous century; customers drank in designated rooms in an otherwise domestic property. What was new was the relative ease of setting up such a business following the changes to licensing laws in 1830. Such a business opportunity required little capital, save for the license (which was initially inexpensive) and first order of stock (which they hoped to quickly recoup through sales). This, coupled with the well-documented population increases and urbanisation of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, led to entrepreneurs opening a remarkable number of beerhouses in urban areas.\(^{27}\) As the final section of this chapter will demonstrate, owners of these establishments did not tend to adapt their homes in any significant way when entering business. Yet as the century and their businesses progressed, the beerhouse gradually incorporated more items specific to sites of drinking and conviviality.

Inns retained their atavistic role providing accommodation for travellers; Stalybridge and neighbouring Dukinfield boasted a number of coaching inns catering for travellers on their way to or from nearby Manchester.\(^{28}\) These survived well into the nineteenth century, although by the mid-nineteenth century the emergence of the railways threatened their primary function.\(^{29}\) Nonetheless, they continued to trade, albeit with a greater emphasis upon serving locals as well as travellers. As defined by the Law Times in 1883, ‘An inn... is an establishment, the proprietor of which undertakes to provide for the


\(^{27}\) Harrison, ‘Pubs’.

\(^{28}\) Magee, Stalybridge Pubs.

entertainment of all comers, especially travellers. Provision of accommodation dictated the size and layout of the older coaching inns. More of the household rooms, most notably upstairs bedrooms, were open to customers, thus making them more overtly public sites than beerhouses. Yet by the mid-nineteenth century, the distinction between the two types of establishment had become increasingly blurred. Some beerhouses chose to call themselves ‘inns.’ Indeed, the Oxford English Dictionary notes that the term ‘inn’ was sometimes erroneously ascribed to ‘a tavern which [did] not provide lodging.’ Some establishments later legitimised this title by letting rooms for temporary accommodation. Concurrently, traditional inns increasingly focused on their role as a site of drinking, perhaps envious of the relative successes enjoyed by the beerhouses in this area. The hotel was the most distinct form of drinking establishment; they were larger and more grandiose, with a heightened emphasis on hosting functions and dinners, as well as, of course, accommodation. Their clientele were often more affluent than that of the inn and beerhouse, yet hotels were also used for events attended by a broader social range of the local community.

The late-nineteenth century witnessed the most conscious and extreme developments in the history of pub design. The rapid development of larger establishments, either purpose-built or extensions of smaller existing properties, signalled an end to the dominance of the beerhouse model. These changes almost entirely eradicated distinctions between the different types of pub and the functions they fulfilled; drinking and conviviality were now the chief, if not only, concerns. As in larger urban areas, the provincial pub too became a more homogenous site with a purpose-built layout and fittings: a markedly different beast to that of the mid-nineteenth century, which reflected its humble domestic origins. As its overall size increased, the late-nineteenth-century pub segregated its space, featuring carefully delineated taprooms, bar parlours, snugs, clubrooms and billiard rooms. The redevelopment of the pub accompanied a sharp rise in the number and profitability of drinking establishments, which had been gradually decreasing since changes to licensing acts in the 1860s. Yet this resurgence was short-lived: in the 1890s many independent businesses collapsed under the intense competition (and high overheads required). Larger breweries purchased many establishments under the tied-house scheme, which gave them control of the manufacture, distribution and point-of-sale of their

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30 Law Times, 27 October 1883, p.432.
31 Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, p.345.
32 Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, p.335; Magee, Stalybridge Pubs.
product.\textsuperscript{36} Subsequently, by the early-twentieth century, critics accused many urban pubs of being increasingly indistinguishable and characterless.\textsuperscript{37}

The design of the mid-nineteenth-century provincial pub (and its pub culture) represented continuous progression rather than abrupt change. The major development was the dramatic increase in the number of establishments, and the lowering of the threshold in terms of who could afford to set them up. As the century continued, the distinctions between the roles performed by different types of pub became increasingly blurred. Although some auction lists reveal aspects of hotel or inn bedrooms, this chapter discusses drinking establishments as sites of leisure rather than accommodation. My research is chiefly concerned with the rooms of the pub in which drinking and socialising occurred. Despite their obvious differences, most beerhouses, inns and hotels performed a similar social function in terms of providing alcohol and spaces for sociability, each contributing towards leisure culture and the construction of identity in their locale.

\textbf{1.2: Rethinking the Pub}

Victorian drinking establishments have received a bad press in several histories of the period.\textsuperscript{38} The sociologist Michael Smith questions why the relationship between the public house and the ‘under-mass’ remains the central premise for the majority of academic research into drinking culture, especially given the breadth and diversity of uses of pubs in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{39} He states that, ‘the historical stereotype of a beer sodden working class steeped in a culture of song, sin and sensuality, opposed to the civilizing sobriety of a rational middle class culture of morally good, intellectual and aesthetic qualities, may well be a distorted one.’\textsuperscript{40} There are several reasons why such stereotypes persist. First, some notorious urban drinking establishments undoubtedly attracted a sordid and dangerous underclass, conducting criminal activity and soliciting sexual services.\textsuperscript{41} Secondly, the strong correlation between high numbers of pubs and deprived inner city areas implicated drinking as a chief cause of poverty.\textsuperscript{42} Medical practitioners and academics understood the short and long-term physical and economic effects of alcohol abuse; in turn, this exacerbated national anxieties about the moral character and physical health of the

\textsuperscript{40} Smith, ‘Social Usages of the Public Drinking House’, p.383.
\textsuperscript{42} Harrison, ‘Pubs’, p.177.
British race.\textsuperscript{43} Thirdly, the pub eradicated or transgressed boundaries of gender and class, and critics voiced concerns over the invasion of personal space and privacy.\textsuperscript{44} The image of the pub as an overtly sexualised space (perhaps brought about by the relaxation of inhibitions following alcohol consumption) did not deter this.\textsuperscript{45} To many who had no experience of such a site, the projected image of the pub did not seem to adhere to or promote the etiquette and social structure expected of ‘rational’ recreation.\textsuperscript{46} Yet the tropes I have just discussed were not representative of all — indeed, most — drinking establishments. The moralistic popular press and assiduous Temperance reformers highlighted particular cases to further their own agenda. Yet there was a larger process, underpinning these reasons, which explains the longevity of these stereotypes. The depiction of the working-class pub as disorderly, immoral and a threat to British society represents a deliberately disparaging polemic, codified (though not necessarily originating) in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Temperance reformers cultivated an imagined homogenous pub culture against which they could rally — one that embodied the worst attributes of certain pubs rather than the positive or typical experiences of the majority.\textsuperscript{47} Some parts of the earlier Chartist and emerging socialist movements did likewise.\textsuperscript{48} Other political parties too recognised traction in this narrative; for some it provided a convenient scapegoat for the failures of successive governments to rectify the social and economic ills of the country.\textsuperscript{49} In the public consciousness, at least of the ruling and middle classes, the pub became a microcosm of the real and imagined problems caused by industrialisation.


\textsuperscript{44} Kneale, ‘A Problem of Supervision’, p.344.


\textsuperscript{49} J. R. Greenaway, Drink and British Politics since 1830: A Study in Policy Making (Basingstoke, 2003).
Histories of the pub have overlooked the role performed by the leisure industry in propagating this myth. In the late-nineteenth century, several landlords tried to change the image of their establishment in response to the criticisms described above. In choosing to accept rather than challenge such polemic, they effectively contributed towards the demonization of Victorian drinking culture.\(^{50}\) New pub ownership models were an important factor in this process. The tied-house or free-house system, wherein large breweries purchased drinking establishments in order to secure a market for their product and increase profit margins by removing the middle men, grew steadily from the mid-nineteenth century but came to prominence in the late-Victorian and Edwardian period. Many independent pubs struggled to compete and breweries subsequently bought them out. The new owners then either redeveloped or closed down these pubs to remove competition. Economic opportunism dictated this revolution, assisted by a marked change in taste, which David Gutzke attributes to Progressivism.\(^{51}\) Conversely, Alistair Mutch emphasises regulatory pressures (chiefly local politicians, pressure groups and magistrates) as the driving force behind changes in the alcohol industry.\(^{52}\) Whether responding to genuine cultural anxieties, a broader shift in political thought, or the attack on the institution of the pub by the ruling classes, the owners of tied houses in particular attempted to legitimate their version of pub culture through differentiation from the beerhouse model (and its perceived vices).\(^{53}\) They believed that to continue as a commercially prolific site of mainstream popular culture, that the pub required a change of image. In doing so, the tied-house pubs required a falsely homogenous and negative precedent to identify against, an 'other' to their modern and 'respectable' alternative.\(^{54}\) Furthermore, many of the newly built tied-houses were larger purpose-designed venues, so were easily able to juxtapose themselves with the domestic nature of many earlier nineteenth-century establishments. As the twentieth century progressed, the increasingly nationalised leisure industry propagated this depiction, in doing so attempting to position the pub as outdated and alien compared to emerging media such as cinema.\(^{55}\) This negative

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\(^{50}\) Martin Hewitt argues the demonization of the pub remained ‘unchallenged’ because ‘it epitomised working-class improvidence and rejection of respectability’: Hewitt, *The Emergence of Stability*, p.170.


\(^{52}\) Mutch, ‘Shaping the Public House’, pp.179-81.


'invented' tradition may also be one reason why, in the popular imagination pubs have, until recently, continued to be perceived as somewhat regressive patriarchal institutions almost exclusively frequented by older, licentious men. Yet David Beckingham’s assertion that women constituted a significant proportion of pub customers in Victorian Liverpool (albeit often attendant to stringent legal and social frameworks) suggests that this is an example of the ‘invented’ tradition superseding the historical evidence of experience. Unfortunately, very few contemporary sources discussed women’s experiences of drinking in mid-nineteenth-century Stalybridge, making it difficult to elucidate the role of women in shaping both pub culture and the surrogate domesticity of the pub.

The pubs of mid-nineteenth-century Stalybridge were not the gargantuan edifices depicted by Cruikshank and Dickens, boasting ostentatious mirror-plate glass and garish jet streams of gaslight. Instead they were often little more than the front room of a terraced house, sometimes fitted with a serving hatch or small counter. At one beerhouse, a barmaid served drinks in the kitchen, whilst pubs in nearby Manchester were ‘modest and homely.’ As Peter Bailey explains, such sites were ‘a centre of warmth, light and sociability… in an age of social dislocation.’ The dominant beerhouse model was a product of the Beerhouse Act of 1830, which enabled any householder who paid rate to apply for and purchase a licence permitting the manufacture and sale of beer and cider on their premises. Customers often drank at the same table at which the owner also ate. As well as bringing the domestic realm into the drinking experience, this was another

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58 Recently, David Gutzke has tried to address the lack of historical attention on women’s experiences of drinking, albeit for a slightly later period: D.W. Gutzke, Women Drinking Out in Britain Since the Early Twentieth Century (Manchester, 2014).
60 Walton, Lancashire: A Social History, p.189.
61 Ashton and Stalybridge Guardian, Saturday 22 February 1868 - the newspaper reported the theft of two glasses which had occurred whilst the defendant was drinking in the kitchen with only the landlord’s daughter present; Mutch, ‘Manchester and Liverpool’, p.26. See also: K. Theodore Hoppen, The Mid-Victorian Generation, 1846-1886 (Oxford, 1998), p.355.
arrangement by which the home became less 'private.' Mark Girouard suggests that by the 1840s the pub assumed a semi-private, semi-public character, its spaces increasingly shared by the publican and their select customers. Likewise, Hannah Barker and Jane Hamlett, writing about the late-eighteenth-century inn, have questioned the extent to which 'the domestic life of the family was separated from the daily business of the Inn, if at all.' The rise of the beerhouse model in the mid-nineteenth century did little to deter this trend, with families and homeowners apparently very willing to concede the (already limited) privacy of their home in exchange for the possibility of swift financial return. The diaries of a Stalybridge schoolteacher record him visiting Shaw's beerhouse (referring to either the Blue Bell or the Oddfellows' Arms) to drink, and being invited to play dominoes with the publican and his daughter, 'little Alice.' Thus, the provincial drinking establishment was often a liminal space – the locus of intimate family moments, a hub of business transactions and the site of the diverse and capricious events that one might expect to experience in a licensed drinking venue. Indeed, a letter to a local newspaper, The Protector, in 1859 claimed, 'the publican has no private life: at all hours, he is bound to open his doors to meet certain emergencies of accident or travel. He cannot say 'nay' to the reception of the sick; he must even provide (in certain localities) a temporary resting place for the dead.' Customers could easily transgress the lines separating public and personal space in the pub. In August 1874, the landlord of the Park Road Beerhouse was charged with serving alcohol during prohibited hours, after a constable witnessed three young men enter through the backdoor and kitchen, before receiving beer. In this event, the designated 'private' rooms of the pub were infiltrated, first by customers (whether by invitation or persuasion) and then by a police constable. In another case that month, a riot in an inn spread to the lobby and kitchen, impeding the local police-sergeant's attempts to reach the instigators and greatly distressing the servants who could not return to the safety of the back quarters. On another occasion two police constables, 'hearing a noise in the defendant's house' (the

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64 Girouard, *Victorian Pubs*, p.42.
66 Diaries of James Knight, 8 January 1857, TLSAC DD86/1.
67 For a working definition of liminality, and how it affected the ways in which individuals articulated and experienced space, see: Bryden and Floyd, 'Introduction', p.1. Fiona Williams proposes the term 'borderline spaces' to discuss a similar concept: F. Williamson, 'Space and the City: Gender Identities in Seventeenth-Century Norwich', *Cultural and Social History* 9:2 (2012), pp.169-85.
68 The Protector, 7 May 1859. There are several examples of larger inns being used as the venue for death inquests in Stalybridge and the surrounding area. Following a body being removed from the River Tame in 1855, the corpse was immediately taken to White Hart Inn, Newton, for identification and an enquiry into the cause of death; Ashton Standard, 2 July 1870, p.2.
69 Stalybridge Reporter, 15 August 1874.
70 Stalybridge Reporter, 15 August 1874.
Snipe Inn), 'went round to the back, and found 6 men drinking hot ale and gin in the presence of the landlord and landlady' after one o'clock in the morning.\footnote{Ashton Reporter, 4 August 1855.}

As the distinction between personal and public space was distorted, so too was the distinction between guest and customer; indeed, a common defence by licensees to accusations of illegal hours trading was to state that the offending individuals were accommodated as personal acquaintances rather than customers. One landlord in 1864 evaded punishment by maintaining that a group of 'music chaps' found drinking in the kitchen were 'in fact, partaking of the landlord's hospitality, and even if they had been drinking the landlord would not have been finable.'\footnote{Ashton Standard, 17 March 1864.} The front door was bolted (thus allowing the defendant to state his house was not open to business) and the drinkers 'did not pay a copper' for their glass of ale. This strategy was not always successful; as the afore-mentioned letter to The Protector lamented, 'If [the publican] has a party of private friends, and they engage in midnight revelry, ten to one if he is not found guilty of violating the regulations that bind him hand and foot.'\footnote{The Protector, 7 May 1859.} A beer seller found guilty in 1858 of holding spirits in his 'Entered Premises' (such a license only permitted beer or cider) employed a similar tactic.\footnote{North Cheshire Herald, 25 December 1858.} The court rejected his claim that the quantity of rum and gin in his cellar and bar was a personal possession being stored for a friend. When newspapers reported these types of cases, they commonly referred to the landlord being charged with having his house open.\footnote{Ashton Reporter, 4 August 1855.}

As well as being liminal sites, mid-nineteenth-century drinking establishments represented a rival site of domesticity.\footnote{Bailey discusses 'the domesticity of the old pub' giving rise to the new grand-scale developments and gin palaces of the 1830s, but this transition was not as prevalent or rapid as his statement suggests – especially not in provincial towns such as Stalybridge: P. Bailey, Leisure and Class, p.16.} Some Temperance reformers and nineteenth-century conduct guides depicted the pub as a recreational space to endanger the home. Such polemic was primarily concerned with encouraging women to construct a domestic environment that enticed their husbands away from drinking establishments, and inculcated the much-valourised family-orientated lifestyle.\footnote{F.M.L. Thompson, 'The Family', in F.M.L. Thompson, The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain, 1830-1900 (Cambridge, 1988), pp.51-84.} However, much of this rhetoric appears to acknowledge that the mid-nineteenth-century pub embodied many of the revered qualities of the domestic ideal such polemic sought to preserve. An article entitled 'How to Make the Home Happy', in Lee's Stalybridge Family Almanack 1866, warned of the temptations of the 'snug public-house, where everything is clean and tidy, where the fire burns briskly, and
where [man’s] slightest want, so long as he has money to pay for it, is attended to. It implored housewives to maintain a domestic environment that exceeded the cleanliness and personal comforts of the pub, to prevent ‘pleasant companions’ tempting their husbands elsewhere. The article advanced familiar themes concerning the division of labour (‘a man is awkward about household duties; he continually feels it is not his place’), the need for ‘honest occupation’ and the importance of a ‘tidy... comfortable, happy home.’ Yet its discussion of the ‘false pleasures of the public-house’ conceded that many of the attractions of the pub and home were similar. Indeed, the Temperance movement gradually acknowledged that the ‘cultivation of domesticity among drinkers’ was their only means of competing against the pub.

The domesticity of the mid-nineteenth-century public house was complex and multivalent. It was not simply a straightforward adoption of domestic design, but an integration and reconciliation of the values of the home and a site of social adventure and escapism. It was a contested space, a dialogue between public and private in which a multitude of social actors reinterpreted notions of masculinity and local identity. The experience of the pub was one that developed a pedagogical function for its customers, inculcating and reinforcing the virtue of domesticity (albeit relocated). The following section will explore how this was manifested.

1.3: Pub Culture(s) and the Construction of Masculinity

The pub powerfully shaped the construction of masculine identity. It presented a space for young men to engage in activities that furthered their social and professional development. The sustained depiction of a homogenous Victorian pub culture is perhaps the enduring legacy of the Temperance movement; it represents a deliberately disparaging ‘invented’ tradition in which late-nineteenth-century social reformers, twentieth-century politicians and many historians remain complicit. It subsumed the pub within a narrative designed to either condemn the working class or diminish their responsibility (and thus agency). Yet mid-nineteenth-century drinking establishments catered for a broad range of clientele, not always delineated according to class. Broader identifiers such as social status, gender and sexuality often determined choice of drinking establishment, but so too did individual interests, business opportunities, social connections and chance. Pub (and the drinking

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79 Walvin, Leisure and Society, p.38.
cultures they manifest) were representative of the communities they served. Local customs and the economic milieu of the town shaped these sites of leisure; in turn, their role in supporting those engaged in local industry and maintaining atavistic customs affirmed their institutional status. The provincial pub was frequented by a multitude of social actors transcending supposed class and gender boundaries: the itinerant young professional; the fatigued labourer; the politically-forthright landlord; the publican’s wife; the community figurehead; the female socialite; the fêted musician (and his discordant young pretender); the brassy barmaid; the stringent police constable (and his more convivial off-duty colleague); the aspiring intellectual; and the family man in search of solitude.

The pub was a mutual space inhabited by a heterogeneous crowd, and as such was both experienced and imagined in a myriad of ways. Smith is one of few historians to have explored in detail the numerous social usages of the pub, acknowledging that these sites were simultaneously the focus of community life and criminal subculture, and centres for recreation, entertainment and sexual license. Likewise, Robert Storch has described the pub as ‘an all-purpose institution’, providing ‘a house of call, toilet facilities, a treasury for sick clubs, refuge from the wet and from the wife, dominoes and cards, reading matter, food and music.’

It is more accurate therefore to consider multiple socially and geographically sensitive pub cultures, than to reduce the diverse roles performed by mid-nineteenth-century pubs into a singular set of values and practices. This section does not attempt to elucidate all facets of pub cultures. Instead, it focuses on three prominent and significant cultural traits that affected the construction of identity (either individual or collective). First, the pub performed a formative role in several aspects of the lives of men of the popular classes. The underlying domesticity of such sites in part facilitated this. Secondly, some drinking establishments reflected and promoted a culture of self-improvement and educational zeal. Thirdly, the pub experience engineered a sense of inclusivity, establishing or consolidating both national and regional identities and networks.

The domestic functions fulfilled by the pub conferred on these sites a key role in the construction of male identity. As has been noted, the relationship between masculinity, domesticity and public space is an increasingly contested area of debate. The existence of homosocial separate spheres and ‘domestic environmentalism’ has been widely rejected


over the last two decades. The boundaries between gendered spaces and public/private realms were instead unstable and regularly transgressed. Acknowledging this has led to an increasingly nuanced reading of the constructs of masculinity and femininity; historians have subsequently explored multiple masculine identities and cultures, and in particular the relationship between men and the family home. For example, John Tosh has advanced a narrative of (Victorian) domestication, reaction (from 1870 to 1914) and ultimate re-domestication (following the First World War). Martin Francis, who acknowledges the potential for men to transgress the ‘frontier of domesticity’, challenges Tosh’s notion of a late-nineteenth-century ‘flight from domesticity’. Instead, he asserts, in transgressing such boundaries, men sought ‘to reconcile and integrate the contradictory impulses of domestic responsibility and escapism.’ Amy Milne-Smith’s exposition of the late-Victorian and Edwardian gentleman’s club complicates this assessment further, suggesting that these public sites represented a rival incarnation of domesticity. According to Milne-Smith, the concept of domesticity could be ‘meaningfully disentangled from the context of family life,’ enabling the club to act as ‘a substitute for and a complement to the home.’ Likewise, the pub requires re-evaluation in the light of new approaches to male identity, homosociality and alternative domestic life.

The diaries of James Knight (Fig.1.1), a young schoolmaster living in Stalybridge in the 1850s and 1860s, demonstrate that the pub provided a surrogate domestic space for young male professionals, and thus contributed towards a specific construction or interpretation of male identity. Although Knight’s profession elevated him to lower-middle-class status, his family were of humbler background and his social networks varied. He was born on 29 November 1835, the youngest of labourer James and Hannah Knight’s seven children. In 1856, James Knight junior married Mary Ann Ford, the daughter of a plumber, in Ashton-under-Lyne. He was 21. The couple had eight children together between 1857 and 1871, although one child, Walter, died within a year of being born. Knight also took in his nephew Ernest Knight in 1860, after the child’s mother (Knight’s sister) died aged 39. The diary entries run from 1855 to 1863, although some of the diaries are missing or damaged. The entries are largely prosaic descriptions of weather and routine – with some notable exceptions that, as Chapter Three in particular demonstrates, allow us

90 Milne-Smith, ‘A Flight to Domesticity?’, pp.796-818.
92 Diaries of James Knight, 1856-63.
to interpret Knight’s subjective and emotive responses to key events in his family and social life. During the period covered by these diaries, Knight taught at a private school. He later set up his own school in Stalybridge, with his wife leading the girls’ department (Fig.1.2). However, Knight rarely wrote about his working life. Instead, the diaries provide an insight into Knight’s everyday experiences of leisure and Stalybridge’s urban culture. His primary pastimes were walking and visiting pubs, although occasionally he adopted short-lived new interests, such as calligraphy, pigeon fancying and ice-skating. Knight died in 1888, aged 52.

As Margot Finn acknowledges, diaries ‘suffer from obvious limitations, most notably their preoccupation with the experience of exceptional individuals, the inevitable selective working of authorial recollection and the difficulty of determining the diarist’s intended audience [if any].’\(^3\) However, Anna Green has also noted the recent rediscovery of the individual in social and cultural history.\(^4\) The use of Knight’s diaries in this thesis conforms

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to that wider trend; a close reading allows us to uncover the everyday experiences of a lower middle-class man, as well as providing insight into the emotional responses these experiences elicited. I do not claim that Knight was exceptional, or that his actions and words were representative of all men of his background. We know from broader social histories of the mid-nineteenth century that his leisure practices were typical of that period, but not necessarily the way in which he engaged with those activities. Personal testimonies from the social actors who inhabited drinking establishments are uncommon; those that do exist can only reflect the experiences of a literate (and leisured) minority. It is important, therefore, to acknowledge that the masculine culture or experience explored here is that of a young, middle or lower-middle-class professional. Individual circumstance often determined the functions required of the pub, thus reinforcing the multiplicity and diversity of the pub cultures in operation in the mid-nineteenth century.

Fig.1.2: Advert for Cocker Hill Academy School (1867); TIA c12758.
The key characteristics that dictated the way men behaved (and learnt to behave) in the pub were its inherent domesticity and liminality. The contested nature of such sites developed from their origins as household spaces, as well as from the ambiguity concerning the boundaries demarcating the public and private areas of the establishment. As a result, many customers perceived the pub as a venue to conduct activities that they would otherwise have practiced at home, were it not for a lack of privacy in their lodgings or the distractions of their cramped family dwellings. The provincial pub offered a surrogate home for young unmarried males. The domesticity of the pub stimulated the alternative domestic experience, and their daily routines encouraged it further. Men used these sites every day, for nourishment, socialising and business. Harrison has demonstrated how the commute of manual labourers, who frequented the pub before and after work for meals, dictated the geography of pubs in London. Likewise, a plethora of establishments served food and drink (the latter as a form of nourishment) to the cotton machinists and operators of mid-nineteenth-century Stalybridge. Employers commonly treated their workforce to meals held at nearby pubs, inns and beer-houses; for example, Mr. Cross, a local cotton manufacturer, regularly gave his employees 'a treat at Waggon and Horses Inn.' The pub played a key role in James Knight's professional career and social life. Knight, who started keeping a diary in 1855 on his twentieth birthday, spent many evenings away from his lodgings. The leisure time of his early-twenties consisted of long walks with a love interest (see Chapter Three), accepting the hospitality of friends or his employer, and frequenting local drinking establishments.

Prior to his marriage, Knight went out for dinner most evenings, usually at one of the establishments near his lodgings. He often ate at a local beer shop which he referred to by the initials of its owner (and Knight’s good friend), 'J.K.' Knight’s living situation may not have provided access to kitchen facilities, or he may not have felt comfortable dining with his landlord’s family on a regular basis. These meals were sometimes planned as sociable occasions. For example, on 24 March 1856, Knight and three companions ‘took tea’ at the Wellington Inn, following an afternoon ‘stroll along the [Ashton] water works bank.’ However, the majority of Knight’s meals out were more mundanely recorded, suggesting that the primary motivation was necessity rather than conviviality; in the summer of 1857, he wrote merely that he ‘called at an inn, & had boiled ham & beer.’ Even this level of

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97 Ashton Standard, 18 January 1862.
98 Diaries of James Knight, 26 December 1858.
99 Diaries of James Knight, 24 July 1857.
detail is anomalous; Knight rarely listed what he ate, instead focusing on the venue in which he took his meal.

The weather regularly disrupted Knight’s long walks around town and the nearby countryside, somewhat conveniently forcing the young man into a nearby pub.100 A pub visit sometimes preceded other sojourns, as in July 1857 when Knight called at George’s Inn before walking to Glossop.101 Knight occasionally enjoyed evenings of drinking in the pubs ‘in town’, usually calling at two or three different establishments. On 31 March 1856, he spent three hours in the Commercial, the Talbot and the Angel Inns, returning home at one o’clock in the morning. Two months later, he and two friends met at the local fish market in Stalybridge and quickly retreated to the Commercial Inn for a fifty minute drinking session.102 The pub provided a site in which Knight was able to develop friendships; his original group of friends was constantly being extended to include other like-minded individuals they had encountered on a night out. Historian Wolfgang Schivelbusch has noted the inclusivity and generosity of drinking companions, albeit acknowledging the underlying power struggle inherent in the act of giving and receiving a drink.103 Knight’s friendship group appear to confirm this culture of mutuality; on 9 October 1858, Knight and four companions walked to the barracks, where two friends made a one shilling wager. The victor quickly spent the winnings at the ‘Old Whim’ on drinks for all five companions. In the autumn of 1856, by which time Knight had moved out of lodgings and started his own household, his friends routinely called to invite him out. On 24 September 1856, he was enticed to the Grapes Inn, sitting ‘in the shop for three quarters of an hour.’ This pub was obviously a favourite, with Knight eventually referring to such outings simply as ‘a walk... By the Grapes.’104 An excursion to Manchester represented a more elaborate or chaotic night out. On 28 August 1858, Knight and two companions ‘strolled around Manchester, calling at several places, until too late for the last train, so that [they] were obliged to walk home.’ They arrived home at three o’clock in the morning, having been involved in ‘a scuffle’ on the road with some ‘young men strangers.’ The diary entry - written by a possibly still-inebriated Knight - reveals that he was extremely distressed at losing his cap in the fight. Knight referred to certain local pubs by the name or initials of the owner, implying that he viewed such establishments as extensions of the publican’s home. He often recorded when

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100 Diaries of James Knight, 10 January 1857.
101 Diaries of James Knight, 25 July 1857.
102 Diaries of James Knight, 30 May 1856.
104 Diaries of James Knight, 5 October 1856.
he visited pubs specifically to drink, and sometimes what he drank and how he felt the following morning. Yet the pub provided other possibilities too for the young teacher.

Knight often used the pub to partake in solitary leisure activities, with the snug front room of a beerhouse perhaps providing more personal space and comfort than his lodgings. Knight visited pubs to study, frequenting one establishment to read its newly purchased Shakespeare collection. Temperance reformers talked of the pub as a site to which weak-minded husbands could retreat to escape the mundane pressures of family life. Aside from that polemic, it seems the pub did offer a refuge for lodgers struggling to forge a relationship with their cohabitants, or young professionals attempting to enhance their social connections. Friends and colleagues invited Knight to several community events, many of which took place in or involved the pub. In March 1856, Knight attended Miss Higginbottom’s party at the Victoria Inn, Dukinfield. The only other detail he recorded (in a rather wobbly hand) was that he ‘did not get home until 5am’; the following day’s entry is tellingly succinct. A chance meeting at the Star Inn on 16 May 1856 led to an excursion to the Gardens, Greenhouses and Hall owned by Mr. D. Harrison, where the butler supplied them with ‘free beer.’ The pub was also a central part of Christmas festivities; Knight went to the Forester’s Inn after seeing his father and his long-time drinking companion ‘J.J’ on Christmas day 1856. Two days later, he visited the Grapes Inn, the British Standard and the Traveller’s Rest for several hours, and went to bed at half past one feeling ‘very poorly.’ In 1858, after a Christmas dinner ‘fit for a priest... or what you like’, Knight went to the Star Inn at half past ten until quarter to midnight, and ‘finished up’ at J.K’s beer shop for supper where they drank, sang and danced with an Irishman.

Knight also visited pubs in a professional capacity, for meetings and to complete business transactions. He also paid tradesmen at the pub. On 31 May 1862, Knight met Mr. Bradley, a clothier from Shepley, West Yorkshire, whilst out walking. Upon agreeing to buy clothes from Bradley, Knight returned home to fetch more money. They agreed to reconvene and complete the trade at the Dog and Partridge, but Knight missed the rendezvous. The teacher spent the rest of the afternoon searching the pubs of Stalybridge to find Bradley and complete the deal. It is unclear whether traders regularly brought their wares to the pub, though there is evidence that they used these sites to talk-up and sell their products to prospective customers. That some establishments displayed notices asking patrons to refrain from ‘talking shop’ suggests that this practice was common.

105 Diaries of James Knight, 1 May 1856.
106 Diaries of James Knight, 26-27 March 1856.
107 Diaries of James Knight, 27 December 1856.
108 Diaries of James Knight, 25 December 1858.
although viewed disapprovingly by some publicans. Auctioneers often selected larger establishments to host sales of furniture, with fires and refreshments provided to entice potential buyers.\textsuperscript{110} The domesticity of the pub would have also rendered such spaces ideal for the display of items on sale. Customers could better view items such as furniture in a setting that mirrored their own household aesthetic, albeit relocated in a broader public domain. The pub was also, on occasion, a space in which men and women met together - perhaps romantically.\textsuperscript{111} On his twenty-first birthday Knight excitedly recorded some family gossip in his diary: he had spotted a rather prosperous local gentleman cavorting with his partner’s cousin at an establishment in Ashton. In an uncharacteristically reflective mood, he signed off the entry ‘Thus ends this strange eventful day.’\textsuperscript{112} On another occasion, Knight spent the evening following ‘a young lady’ from one pub to another, having mistaken her identity for ‘[his] own beloved.’\textsuperscript{113}

Knight’s relationship with the pub changed as his professional and domestic situation progressed. In the later diary entries, drinking establishments featured far less frequently. When they did, they represented a more consciously defined site of entertainment: a planned ‘one-off’ rather than a spontaneous or habitual visit. By the late-1850s, Knight was typically dining at home, and thus the pub was no longer part of his necessary daily routine. He may have subsequently found himself increasingly ostracised from the community of pub regulars, or accepted that professional or family commitments took precedence. Nonetheless, when Knight did occasionally run into his old drinking companions, their reaction was more than welcoming. On 23 January 1859, Knight wrote in his diary that he ‘Took a short stroll around the town and... met W. Moors near the White Hart tipsy and nothing would do but I must go to the Dog and Partridge... this was at 10pm and we stayed until 11pm.’ On leaving, Knight met some other friends who insisted on taking him and Moors into their home for ‘some beer’ – as Knight disparagingly remarked, ‘or rather grout.’

Although geography dictated many of Knight’s pub selections, it is apparent that he operated in several different, overlapping communities. The pub was the unifying feature of each of these relationships; it was the central locus of the majority of Knight’s actions and social networks. The pub fulfilled a number of purposes for the young teacher, but its most significant role was as a site of surrogate domesticity in his early career. Knight undertook

\textsuperscript{111} Jeff Hearn and Peter Bailey have acknowledged the sexual subtext or inherent parosexuality of the pub; Hearn, \textit{Men in the Public Eye}, p.206; Bailey, ‘The Victorian Barmaid as Cultural Prototype’, pp.151-74.
\textsuperscript{112} Diaries of James Knight, 29 November 1856.
\textsuperscript{113} Diaries of James Knight, 1 May 1856.
several early visits to the pub with a view to attaining nourishment and personal space, as well as extending his social and professional networks through drinking and conviviality. The period in which the pub was used as a substitute or secondary home was formative – the companions he made in those early visits to ‘J.K.’s’, and the practices or traditions he learned from such venues, remained prominent features of his married life. Knight’s relationship with the pub developed in tandem with changes in his professional or familial circumstances. Despite these changes, the pub always retained a certain centrality in the schoolteacher’s life – a space with which he held an emotional connection and which continued to influence his activities or tastes. By examining Knight’s diaries, this section has shown that the pub helped facilitate social and professional networks, as well as providing necessary amenities such as food, shelter and a surrogate home from home, away from lodgings. It was a central institution in Knight’s life, as it was no doubt in the lives of many other young men. As such, one can view the significance of the pub in the construction of male identity, especially during such a formative period in their life cycle. This identity was based around both sociability and domesticity – men’s perceptions and experiences of such sites were shaped as much by the security proffered by drinking establishments and pub communities as it was by the conviviality these sites promoted.

The following section argues that a culture of self-improvement was manifest in many drinking establishments. However, this culture was often tempered or maligned by more disreputable behaviour that can be viewed as pub-goers asserting their ownership of such spaces. Historians have argued that in the mid-nineteenth century the middle class attempted to exert a degree of cultural control over the working classes; this moral imperialism ‘ranged from institutions of religious or politico-economic propagandism to associations and mechanisms of control designed to inculcate and enforce bourgeois standards of conduct.’ Recent academic discourse has called the efficacy of these endeavours into question. Historians such as Peter Bailey have argued that attempts to dictate working-class attitudes via a hegemonic structure of influence were either reinterpreted or rejected by their intended beneficiaries. Despite middle-class efforts, a distinctive working-class culture flourished, within which the working classes ‘retained the intellectual space to sustain and develop their own values and ideology.’ One egalitarian facet of this ideology was the desire to acquire and disseminate knowledge via a series of accessible cultural institutions and practices, which (unlike many of the religious societies and Mechanics’ Institutes) the popular classes perceived as their own. Indeed, the

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114 Hewitt, The Emergence of Stability, p.295. See also: Yeo and Yeo, Popular Culture and Class Conflict; Donajgrodzki, Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain.
The mid-nineteenth-century pub was a much-maligned establishment, often depicted as leisure site in which clients ignored behavioural codes and engaged in illicit activity. Yet many events hosted by these sites tapped into a culture of education typical of a working-class intellectual zeal for self-improvement. In Stalybridge, botany and horticulture were especially popular interests; pubs in the area regularly held lectures or exhibitions, signifying a coming-together of competition, conviviality and education. On 7 August 1858, James Knight attended a gooseberry show at the Forrester’s Refuge. A month later, he and his companions visited a dahlia show and concluded the night with a tour of four local pubs, calling at the ‘Tame Leatley’ Hotel as well as the Brunswick, Commercial and Star Inns. In the same year the North Cheshire Herald reported on a botanical meeting at the ‘Quiet Gill’ beerhouse in Broadbottom, at which rare plants were displayed and a course of lectures on ‘The Physiology of Plants’ was ‘listened to with the greatest attention.’ At another ‘Botanists’ Party’ in 1870, ‘the proceedings were enlivened by song and dance’, demonstrating the convergence of education and gaiety at such events. A rose show at Commercial Inn in 1870 evoked a deluge of local pride from the Ashton Standard – ‘Stalybridge, famous for its musical talent as it is, is no less celebrated for the number of cottage gardeners it can produce. These gardeners have their various clubs or societies, among which there exists a laudable rivalry as to who can produce the best flowers and plants, and perhaps there is no place within an extensive area where horticulture is so industriously and successfully carried out.’ The inn had previously held two tulip shows that season. The rose show received entries from twenty male gardeners,

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118 Bailey, ‘Role Analysis of Working-Class Respectability’.
122 Diaries of James Knight, 26 September 1858.
123 North Cheshire Herald, 20 February 1858.
124 Ashton Standard, 2 July 1870, p.5.
125 Ashton Standard, 9 July 1870, p.8.
and was ‘staged’ in a room decorated by the club secretary and the landlord’s wife. The
pride taken in such events by the hosts, spectators and local press suggests that these
competitions were an important part of local identity.

Many drinking establishments aimed to contain a masculine culture of competition
within a carefully constructed framework that supported the moralistic aspects of working-
class culture. For the most part this represented another case of failed ‘moral imperialism’,
as customers recognised the attempt to appropriate control and authorship of what they
perceived as their space. Some publicans attested to instil an attitude that valorised both
physicality and, more importantly, the control of that physicality. They advocated
‘honourable’ sportsmanship, carried out through organised (and thus ‘respectable’) bouts
and matches; according to K. Theodore Hoppen, publicans were more often the patrons of
sporting events than local church representatives.126 There is plenty of evidence to
demonstrate that Stalybridge pub communities supported local sporting success and
physical prowess. A local swimming teacher who won the 1870 Leeds Regatta received a
‘triumphal entrance’ upon his return at the Talbot Inn.127 The Dukinfield Arms was home
to ‘The United All England Angling Society.’128 The landlord provided prize money for
competitions involving roughly fifty ‘disciples of Isaak Walton.’129 Following their
endeavours, ‘the anglers adjourned to the Dukinfield Arms, and spent a very pleasant
evening in singing and dancing’, the landlord no-doubt recouping much of his initial
investment in the process. The Hare and Hounds boasted a ‘substantial and commodious’
accompanying building which was ‘fitted up and used as [a] theatre for Wrestling, Batting
and various other English Sports and Games.’130 Some larger inns and pubs also had bowling
greens, either for the use of subscribing clients or drinkers at the establishment.131 Indeed,
the aptly named Recreation Inn, located in the countryside between Dukinfield and

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127 Ashton Standard, 16 July 1870.

128 Stalybridge Reporter, 16 May 1874.

129 The veneration of Isaak Walton, a prominent English writer of the seventeenth century and author of ‘The Compleat Angler’ further demonstrates the celebration of national sporting (and literary) heroes within pub culture.

130 This also provides an example of the Victorian drinking establishment as a theatre, and the actions within as staged performance. However, it must also be conceded that the proprietor of the Hare and Hounds also informed prospective buyers that the attached building had the potential to be converted into ‘genteel private residencies’, perhaps signifying that a sporting arena on the site of a pub was not universally recognised as an attractive proposition; Ashton Standard, 2 April 1864.

131 Such as Old General Inn and Queen’s Arms, Dukinfield: Ashton Reporter, 19 April 1856; 6 September 1856.
Stalybridge, possessed a bowling green, pleasure grounds and fishing lakes. A Stalybridge pub ‘in the most improving part of town’ advertised a ‘capacious’ billiard room, implying a perceived connection between social mobility and participation in ‘moral’ sports and hobbies at the local pub. Another Stalybridge pub advertised its new billiard room to ‘Gentlemen who are fond of... moral and healthful recreation.’ The emphasis on morality within a prominent drinking establishment demonstrates that pub culture was analogous to nineteenth-century perceptions of propriety and improvement of character.

Despite attempts to control the behaviour and attitudes of customers, infrequent problems with violence remained. One of the primary functions of the pub was to serve alcohol, and, as such, occasional instances of drunkenness were unavoidable. For many Temperance reformers, the pub could never be anything but a harbinger of immorality. However, defenders of the pub could downplay or disguise the prevalence of alcohol. Indeed, the role of drink in constructing the conviviality of a social occasion was only referenced in the papers when the revellers were middle to upper class – perhaps in the hope that their partaking in such actions would legitimise drinking for both themselves and those of a lower social order. It would be naive to maintain that mid-nineteenth-century drinking establishments in Stalybridge were entirely virtuous, and their appeal purely wholesome. They remained sites of occasional drunkenness and violence, as superbly illustrated by an 1870 court case featuring a defendant thrown out of the Lamb Inn for being ‘anything but as quiet as a lamb.’ Disagreements over prices, personal threats and insults to family members or friends were common causes of fights. A brawl at a Stalybridge public house in 1874 was incited by a verbal and physical attack on a barmaid. A gentleman declared he ‘wanted her finery and pride pulling down’ and accused her of ‘immoral actions’, before his wife ‘threw her down on the fender.’ In court, the defendant claimed that the barmaid had only entered the room ‘to look at her husband’ and had fallen over when assaulted because she had been drunk. Drinking in confined spaces contained and exacerbated tensions. The confrontation had to be resolved, whether physically or verbally. The small beerhouse acted as a stage framing the conflict. When a

133 Hobson’s Advertiser No. 31, July 1854.
134 Ashton Reporter, 31 May 1856.
135 Although such ‘healthful recreation’ did not always prompt a similarly ‘moral’ response from patrons – a bagatelle ball was stolen during the Stalybridge wakes of 1874: Stalybridge Reporter, August 15 1874.
136 See, for example, Ashton Standard, 5 March 1864.
137 Ashton Standard, 2 July 1870.
138 The innkeeper of the Hare and Hounds was found guilty of assault, following an attack on a customer who complained about the price of brandy and insulted the landlord’s wife: Ashton Standard, 22 February 1862.
139 Stalybridge Reporter, 23 May 1874.
fight broke out, drinkers became an audience circling the action, in doing so making it harder for the landlord, barmaid or local police to enforce order. A court in 1858 heard that, following a disagreement over the theft of betting money at a beerhouse in the Broadbottom area of town, two customers moved into the centre of the room and fought. At ‘A Disorderly Beerhouse’ in Stalybridge, ‘There was a great crowd in the room, and it was with great difficulty that [the police] could get into the roots. There was a regular ring round the two defendants, and the landlord himself was upon a form [a long bench-like seat – see section 1.4 in this chapter] at the back, and he refused to help them to clear the place, as he said he had been kicked already.’

The chance to participate in or observe such violence may have been part of the appeal of a visit to a certain establishment, and newspaper accounts suggest that most customers were neither surprised nor condemnatory when witnessing fights. Even when there was no evidence of malicious intent, the activities of the public house could still be hazardous. During a conversation in one Stalybridge pub, a pistol was ‘introduced... and went off.’ A former landlord of a nearby inn was fatally shot. The court ruled that the shooting was accidental (although one cannot entirely eliminate the possibility of a more sinister motive, given the highly ambiguous circumstances of the case), but this event presents the pub as a site in which violence and the tools of its manifestation (the loaded pistol) were discussed, displayed and no doubt ‘introduced’ to many patrons.

As with other attempts to dictate behavioural extremes, drinking communities often rejected imposed values. Pub-goers recognised the attempt to control their conduct, and deployed their eigensinn—a spontaneous and paraconscious self-will, a self-assertive prankishness rather than a formalised rejection of constraints or politic norms. The effect of eigensinn (though not the conscious objective) was to subvert attempts to exert cultural hegemony, in the process demarcating a space of one’s own. For example, the well-intentioned promotion and running of sporting clubs in and by pubs resultantly forged rivalries that were often resolved physically in these sites. Drinkers often contested the outcome of an upcoming, recent or hypothetical competition in the beerhouse. Thus the pub (and impositions upon the culture within) often facilitated an unintentionally aggressive culture of male competition, manifest by a valorisation of physical prowess and sporting success. Those engaging in pub brawls occasionally removed their shirts, a display of physicality in which the male body became a symbol of strength, virility and unabashed

\[140\] North Cheshire Herald, 13 February 1858.
\[141\] Stalybridge Reporter, 1 January 1876.
\[142\] North Cheshire Herald, 27 March 1858.
manliness. In 1862, the Ashton Standard reported that a fight at the Bull’s Head Inn was instigated following a conversation about prize fighting, in which a gentleman was offended by the suggestion that a well-known local fighter ‘could ‘lick’ any man in Waterside.’ That the defendants proudly explained the motives for fighting in court suggests that they perceived their actions to have been the appropriate and honourable response – their sporting allegiances had been criticised and they sought to respond in a manner which demonstrated their manliness, and in turn reaffirmed their ownership (or right to authorship) of the space of the pub.

This section has illustrated some of the social usages of the pub, contending that many of these demonstrate a prevailing interest in self-improvement amongst the drinking community. Some scholars have read this zeal as the result of middle-class moral imperialism, yet the way that some members of the drinking community adapted or circumvented impositions upon behaviour in the pub suggests that they felt a degree of ownership of such sites and the agency to demonstrate it. The seemingly conflicted images presented here are not incompatible – the pub was a diverse site in which an assortment of social actors engaged in an equally varied range of activities. It could be both a space for reading Shakespeare and fighting, but historians have tended to emphasise the latter rather than the former. By trying to understand the ideologies and cultural meanings underpinning both positive and negative pub experiences, one can recover a sense of what these institutions represented, rather than simply reducing the debate to a judgement on the moral character of the pub.

The final part of this section will examine the role of the pub in shaping or celebrating local and national identities. In the social and cultural landscape of mid-nineteenth-century Britain there remained an underlying emphasis on localism, on civic pride attained through both modernising processes and retention of historic distinctiveness; Lucy Hewitt has recently linked this emphasis on spatial differentiation to a ‘desire to maintain the local distinctiveness granted by an old and beautiful townscape.’ Some historians have positioned this as a response to cultural anxieties manifest by eighteenth-century urban improvements, the subsequent disappearance of preindustrial townscapes and the perceived disruptive impact this had on communities. These cultural anxieties were borne out of loss of the physical (both literal and imagined). Conversely, or perhaps as a response to this, the construction of the physical addressed or alleviated nineteenth-century cultural anxieties. Indeed, ‘many… provincial groups placed a firm emphasis on the

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144 Stalybridge Reporter, 1 January 1876.
145 Ashton Standard, 18 January 1862.
tangible legacies represented by buildings, monuments and distinctive landscapes.' The physical reflected both modernity and tradition (either imagined or constructed). On one hand, modernising practices aroused civic pride, reflecting a conscious zeal to surpass the improvements afforded to neighbouring towns and villages. On the other, communities recognised the potential for such developments to signify and commemorate the historically constructed local specificity of the town. Physical spaces functioned as signifying practices, refracting and engineering local identity in the process. Yet the roles performed by the pub were also significant, abetting the construction or consolidation of civic and national identity.

The inherent drinking and conviviality of the pub was central to the assimilation of cultures within mid-nineteenth-century Stalybridge. The pub was a site in which communities celebrated and bonded over their different backgrounds; it was via this process that immigrant communities integrated with local culture (without subsuming their national identity). The Ashton Standard reported that following an agricultural fair, 'lots of fun' at the New Inn 'drew a many customers.' The entertainment included a series of songs celebrating identity: 'Mr. John Scott [sung] in true Irish tints, “Paddy is the boy at Dennybrook fair,” Mr. Israel Lawton, in a more serious and sentimental strain, sung “the death of Abercrombie,” which Mr. William Mellow followed by reminding the company that their “Ancestors were Englishmen.” Customers regularly performed humorous sketches, gently mocking and venerating their local area: 'A Mr. J.C. Charlton gave a humorous description of “the new town of Mossley.”'

On Christmas Day in 1858, James Knight and his drinking companions met an Irishman at J.K’s shop, where they 'had a long discussion with him on a multitude of subjects and the Paddy sang 2 songs danced etc.' However, there were sometimes tensions – in 1857, Knight marked every night of the Stalybridge Wakes with a visit to the Star Inn, despite registering his annoyance at the 'great many strangers' populating the town. Other events evoked British national pride; 'the usual loyal and patriotic toasts' often preceded and punctuated formal dinners. In 1859, the Commercial Inn held a party until the early hours of the morning, 'keeping up Burns’ centenary.' The fall of Sebastopol during the Crimean War was marked with a battle re-enactment, bands performing national and military anthems, and celebrations in the Mason’s Arms, Dukinfield, where revellers ‘enjoyed themselves until a late hour.'

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149 Ashton Standard, 21 May 1864.
150 Ashton Standard, 21 May 1864.
151 Diaries of James Knight, 19 July 1857 to 22 July 1857.
152 Ashton Reporter, 15 December 1855. See also: Ashton Reporter, 4 August 1855.
153 Diaries of James Knight, 25 January 1859.
154 Ashton Reporter, 22 September 1855, p.3.
26 April 1856, the Clarence in Stalybridge celebrated the anniversary of Shakespeare’s birth with a meal, singing and a series of lectures. The Forrester’s Refuge in Stalybridge held an Annual dinner for members of the Orange order, at which sixty attendees drank to ‘The memory of the glorious William III,’ who had ‘freed the country from the papacy.’ The chairman then proposed ‘the usual loyal and patriotic toasts, which were most enthusiastically honoured.’ Other events promoted companionships upon which new communities might be formed. Intending emigrants in 1858 attended a dinner at the Commercial Inn, at which ‘the company... amused themselves in dancing, singing and reciting.’ Such an event was primarily designed to promote the emigration process (and the host agency), reassure potential emigrants and provide information to clients. However, the conviviality and camaraderie of such an event also aimed to construct an inclusivity that would improve the lengthy Atlantic crossing and form the basis of new communities in North America. Local music and spirited drinking (‘the healths of the intending emigrants were afterwards drunk with due honours’) incited such solidarity, and the pub was the venue deigned suitable for such an occasion.

The pub proffered a space in which broader identifiers, such as nationality, could simultaneously be celebrated and incorporated into local culture. Two aspects of the pub dynamic were critical in this process. First, the domesticity of the pub forged a welcoming atmosphere that facilitated communication, and hence shared understanding. The pub was a mutual space in which people of various backgrounds recognised and celebrated their shared tastes – alcoholic or otherwise. Secondly, the process of drinking and conviviality was critical to the inclusivity of the pub. Indeed, Schivelbusch has described the giving of beer as a gesture that both enforces social inclusion and signifies the superior status of the buyer over the receiver. It was also a recognised token of gratitude, such as at the Junction Inn in 1858, when a group of passers-by who had extinguished a haystack fire received ‘a plentiful supply of ale’ as a reward.

This section has demonstrated that the pub performed a number of roles other than supply alcohol and conviviality – although both of these enhanced many of the pub’s extracurricular roles. In particular, such sites provided a space for young men to develop their social and business networks, in doing so marking their progression to adulthood.

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155 Ashton Reporter, 26 April 1856.
156 Ashton Standard, July 9 1870, p.8.
157 Ashton Reporter, 23 January 1858.
158 Ashton Reporter, 23 January 1858.
161 North Cheshire Herald, 9 January 1858.
Self-improvement and the celebration of geographical identity were also important components of the pub culture of Stalybridge. All of these roles were made possible by the character of the pub, in particular its inherent domesticity and inclusivity. The material culture and spatial dynamics of the pub also encouraged interaction and facilitated this inclusivity, as this chapter will go on demonstrate.

1.4: The Materiality of the Pub

Historians have increasingly turned to material culture to elucidate the practice or performance of leisure and popular culture.\(^{163}\) This section engages with this material turn to demonstrate that the objects of the provincial mid-nineteenth-century pub reinforced its association with the domestic. They were indicative of the contested nature of that space, and hint at alternative pub cultures in which consuming alcohol was not the only function of such sites. Moreover, the way customers used many of these objects shaped the social and convivial character of the pub. The relationship or interaction between object and user can lend the object a form of agency, as its design and function can be seen to dictate the actions (and subsequent responses) of the user. Mimi Hellman explores this concept in her discussion of what she terms ‘the work of leisure’ in eighteenth-century France.\(^{164}\) She contends that ‘tables, chairs and other decorative objects were objects that both facilitated and... monitored the leisure acts of privileged society.’\(^{165}\) Similarly, the design of the furniture employed in pubs facilitated social interaction. The agency of such objects was integral to the construction of the ‘snug’ public house and the surrogate domesticity it proffered. By examining the material culture and spatial design of the mid-nineteenth-century pub, one can develop a more detailed picture of how these spaces operated.

This section examines auction listings from six different drinking establishments – the Dog and Partridge (also known as Wildes’ Beerhouse), the Highland Laddie, Holt’s Beerhouse, the Park Hotel, the Union Inn and the White Hart Inn.\(^{166}\) All of these


\(^{165}\) Hellman, ‘Furniture, Sociability’, p.416.

\(^{166}\) Ashton Reporter, 22 November 1856; Ashton Reporter, 28 July 1855, p.1; Ashton Reporter, 9 August 1856; Ashton Reporter, 21 July 1855; Stalybridge Reporter, 13 January 1877; Stalybridge Reporter, 22 August 1874.
businesses were situated in Stalybridge or nearby Dukinfield. Four of these listings are from the 1850s, and two are from the 1870s. I have compared them here concurrently rather than chronologically, because the dates pertain to when the items were sold, rather than acquired and in use. The turnover of furniture in businesses during this period probably was not very rapid, due to economy, with the contents of the auction lists supporting this supposition. Newspaper articles advertising auctions of pub and beerhouse furnishings were commonly addressed to ‘innkeepers [or ‘beer sellers’], families, brokers and others.’

Significantly, auctioneers advertised the items of family homes, joiners and cabinetmakers to publicans, suggesting that either setting could appropriate such furnishings. Having become part of the late-eighteenth-century social scene in London, the perception of the auction as a social experience gradually spread to the provinces. Auctions generally represented a select method of acquiring furniture, although the choice of venue was a key marker of the relative value of the goods and their authenticity. Auctioneers arranged this venue, usually opting for a salesroom, a nearby inn or the home that was being 'sold up.' The latter provided an expedient means of legitimising the items being traded, especially when the sale concerned a household of the gentry. All the auctions discussed in this chapter took place in the pubs or homes from which the items originated. There has been some suggestion that the customer base at auctions broadened as the nineteenth century progressed. Indeed, books and periodicals wrote features advising inexperienced buyers how to avoid being fleeced by manipulative dealers. Yet, according to Clive Edwards and Margaret Ponsonby, auctions remained largely aimed at a middle-class clientele, based upon the quality of auction catalogues and tone of the descriptions of items in newspapers.

In 1877, Mary Earnshaw of Union Inn in Stalybridge sold by auction the whole of the beerhouse’s assets. The upholstery was almost exclusively mahogany. Mahogany was the most prominent material used in pub design; its rich, dark-brown finish provided a veneer of constrained elegance and it was widely regarded as a robust, quality wood. Mahogany was also a common feature of the middle-class parlour; the material itself was a symbol of taste and expense, which the design historian John Styles contends, helped construct ‘the ultimate symbol of respectability.’ In the Union Inn, mahogany chests and a secretaire with drawers provided concealed storage space. Holt’s Beerhouse boasted a large mahogany corner cupboard and a large oak chest, manufactured in 1818 by a

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167 Stalybridge Reporter, January 13 1877.
171 Stalybridge Reporter, 13 January 1877.
reputable local carpenter.\textsuperscript{173} Again, oak was a material associated with quality and strength, and was often employed in domestic design.\textsuperscript{174} A ‘handsome’ mahogany pedestal sideboard with a silver plate-glass back, carved frame and hidden drawers at the White Hart Inn was both decorative and functional.\textsuperscript{175} Storage permitted the publican to keep personal effects at hand yet out of sight, meaning that the family could use the room outside of trading hours. It also made it harder for opportunistic thieves to steal the best glass and earthenware. Both the White Hart Inn and the Union Inn displayed an ‘excellent’ mahogany eight days clock, with ‘handsome’ casing and chimes. Holt’s Beerhouse had a similar item, half-covered in mahogany with an oak case.\textsuperscript{176} These longcase clocks would have been a dominating feature. Their presence also reaffirmed associations with home design; as Logan contends, clocks assumed a prominent position in the Victorian parlour.\textsuperscript{177} The Dog and Partridge featured a more humble round faced clock.\textsuperscript{178} A mahogany branched hat stand (with a carved shaped dove at its head) and a marble table with drawers and umbrella receivers provided storage for customers’ seasonal baggage in the hall of the White Hart Inn. Some items were made from resilient but inexpensive hardwood – at Mr. Wright Wilde’s beerhouse in Dukinfield, the small kitchen that neighboured the taproom contained a dresser with a hardwood top.\textsuperscript{179} Just two of the auction lists mention a bar counter, despite the importance placed upon it by some historians, who claim it facilitated a culture of accelerated alcohol consumption.\textsuperscript{180} The Park Hotel had both a bar and vault counter.\textsuperscript{181} The former contained drawers and shelving, whilst the latter featured a panelled front covering more storage space and drawers. Neither listing made any allusion to the shape of the bar counter. The bar at the Dog and Partridge was simply a table with lead surface and shelving.\textsuperscript{182} The choice of material would have been purely functional, to prevent liquid damage to the underlying wood. However, there were numerous less-detailed adverts which mentioned pubs being sold or let ‘including all the relevant fittings’, which suggests that some establishments featured items which were fixed or too large to sell individually from the house; these fittings may have included a bar counter, or forms attached to the walls of the bar parlour.

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{173} Ashton Reporter, 9 August 1856.
\textsuperscript{175} Stalybridge Reporter, 22 August 1874.
\textsuperscript{176} Ashton Reporter, 9 August 1856.
\textsuperscript{178} Ashton Reporter, 22 November 1856.
\textsuperscript{179} Ashton Reporter, 22 November 1856.
\textsuperscript{180} Schivelbusch, Tastes of Paradise, p.202. See also: Bailey, Leisure and Class, p.16.
\textsuperscript{181} Ashton Reporter, 21 July 1855.
\textsuperscript{182} Ashton Reporter, 22 November 1856.
\end{footnotes}
Transactions in many beerhouses took place at the customer’s table, with the barmaid or publican (or a member of their family) fetching the drink from the kitchen. The Highland Laddie of Dukinfield had ‘two good taproom tables’ and ‘half-a-dozen’ taproom chairs.\textsuperscript{183} Holt’s Beerhouse also featured eight round, oblong and square tables; both Union Inn and the Dog and Partridge owned a similarly arbitrary assortment.\textsuperscript{184} The diversity of the tables advertised by these pubs suggests that proprietors acquired good quality furniture as and when the opportunity arose, rather than with a consistent design scheme in mind. Furthermore, the size and shape of tables dictated how users interacted – longer rectangular tables could accommodate more people, but the positioning of those seated meant that separate factions or conversations could develop more readily than, for example, at a round table, where all users were required to look inwards towards the same central focal point. The White Hart Inn had a small mahogany dining table that extended to 2.2m by 1.16m, rested on sturdy carved supports.\textsuperscript{185} The ‘telescope frame’ design supported the table top on inner pillars using a patent centre screw. The advantage of this design was that it allowed customers to sit at any position around the table without the table legs obstructing their body. Park Hotel had a wide array of tables, including both long and round drinking tables, painted dining tables and clubroom tables; the broad range reflects the larger size of the establishment and its greater emphasis upon accommodation and catering.\textsuperscript{186}

Fig. 1.3. Types of seating found in mid-nineteenth-century provincial pubs:
Balloon-backed chair, c.1850; VA W.3B/1,2-1929.

\textsuperscript{183} Ashton Reporter, 28 July 1855, p.1.
\textsuperscript{184} Ashton Reporter, 9 August 1856; Stalybridge Reporter, 13 January 1877; Ashton Reporter, 22 November 1856.
\textsuperscript{185} Stalybridge Reporter, 22 August 1874.
\textsuperscript{186} Ashton Reporter, 21 July 1855.
The two primary functions of pub seating were to provide comfort and to facilitate socialising. At both Holt’s Beerhouse and the Union Inn, an oak couch chair (with accompanying cushion for comfort, decoration and possibly to conceal the choice of cheaper wood) and a sofa provided seating.\footnote{Ashton Reporter, 22 November 1856; Stalybridge Reporter, 13 January 1877.} The high curved back of the Victorian couch chair offered support whilst still permitting interaction with those positioned behind it. Holt’s Beerhouse also owned four sets of six hardwood chairs, including strong taproom,
spindle-backed and flat-backed versions; the use of a non-specific hardwood, their description as 'strong', and the basic spindle and flat-back designs suggests that practicality and cost were the chief consideration in a smaller establishment that perhaps had fewer social pretensions than its peers did. The larger White Hart Inn had more varied seating. There were six walnut chairs with carved balloon backs, the cabriole frames on which supported heavy pieces of furniture yet featured thin, unobtrusive legs (see Fig.1.3 for an example). This gave the chairs a more intimate quality, enabling the user to sit without overbearing, clunky supporting frames restricting their movement or position. The 'balloon back' was the most common form of Victorian light chair, originating from the rococo style and, as such, was a common feature of mid-nineteenth-century home design. A ladies chair, gentleman’s easy chair (Fig.1.4), two single-ended couches and six 'excellent' mahogany chairs provided more individual seating, presumably over two or more rooms. Park Hotel also predominantly featured seating designed for individual use, namely seven Windsor chairs (Fig.1.5), strong taproom chairs with rush seats, rocking chairs and two-armed chairs. The Windsor chair in particular contributed towards the authentic Englishness and domesticity of the space. According to Asa Briggs, the Windsor was an atavistic design associated with hearth and home; it had 'survived industrialisation' and 'seemed to belong to the same universe as trees and flowers.' With the exception of Holt’s Beerhouse, much of the seating used in these pubs featured prominently in the mid-nineteenth-century home. Furthermore, the arbitrary assortment of different items mirrored the prevailing trend in home design. Christopher Breward talks of the greater stylistic diversity of the middle-class home, manifest in its amalgamation of competing styles and the proliferation of objects ‘which marked the age as one of material excess.’ Similarly, Michael Snodin describes the nineteenth-century home as ‘a veritable bazaar of style, aided by ever-increasing access to cheap, mechanically produced goods.’ This translated to poorer households, in which the possession and display of furniture was a strong trope of a working-class culture which valued these forms of conspicuous consumption. As such, front rooms or parlours were proudly adorned with the finest examples of furniture available to their inhabitants, with little consideration of consistency of design or limitations of space. Similarly, the pubs of mid-nineteenth-century Stalybridge

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188 Stalybridge Reporter, 22 August 1874.
190 Ashton Reporter, 21 July 1855.
overloaded their 'public' rooms with a diverse array of objects more commonly associated with the home.

Pieces of furniture with overt domestic associations were often juxtaposed with purpose-built seating, contributing towards the liminality of the public house; long benches, or forms, were cheap, sturdy and efficient, supporting a large number of customers in an extended row. This kind of communal seating was a common motif of the design of certain prominent Victorian institutions, notably the workhouse, religious buildings and schools – indeed, the Stalybridge schoolmaster James Knight spent the night of the birth of his second child at the school, constructing a makeshift and 'uncomfortable' bed by laying across three forms.\(^{195}\) The Highland Laddie advertised five 'very good' forms and the Dog and Partridge had nine 'long and good' forms.\(^{196}\) Holt's beerhouse possessed six 'capital' forms, each 'about ten feet long'.\(^{197}\) Park Hotel also featured forms, although these were loose rather than fixed so prospective patrons could easily remove them if required.\(^{198}\) Significantly, forms encouraged social interaction, as they did not provide a physical barrier between the individuals using them. Furthermore, forms offered little - if any - back support, thus compelling users to sit forward towards each other or towards the shared table. The function of purpose-built bench seating in the pub was to facilitate rather than prohibit interaction, and thus forms represented a cheap yet practical solution. It could also be contended that the less comfortable the seating (forms or hard-backed hardwood chairs, for example) the less inclined the user to become settled there, causing them to consume their alcohol quicker than, for example, a customer reclining in the couch or arm chair by the fireplace. This increased rate of consumption meant that the former customer was likely to consequently purchase more alcohol, or move on to another establishment. In doing the latter they helped facilitate a rapid turnover of customers; this provided businesses in the area with a larger customer base, as certain parties of drinkers moved from one establishment to the next.\(^{199}\) This partially explains the geographical distribution of pubs, in particular the close proximity of several smaller establishments – there was a culture of 'pub-hopping', as further evidenced by the experiences of James Knight and newspaper accounts of factory labourers’ nights out. That pubs offered both individual and communal seating further demonstrates the multiple uses of the pub in the mid-nineteenth century. These sites catered for customers wishing to partake in a leisurely drink in solitude or with a select few friends, yet they simultaneously provided space and appropriate furniture for larger groups requiring a more inclusive and less genteel form of

\(^{195}\) Diaries of James Knight, 6 November 1858.  
\(^{196}\) Ashton Reporter, 28 July 1855, p.1; Ashton Reporter, 22 November 1856.  
\(^{197}\) Ashton Reporter, 9 August 1856.  
\(^{198}\) Ashton Reporter, 21 July 1855.  
\(^{199}\) Schivelbusch, Tastes of Paradise, pp.194-203.
conviviality. As the public house developed from a liminal space into an overtly public site in the late-Victorian and Edwardian era, purpose-built furniture (like the forms) gradually replaced the remaining items that betrayed its domestic origins.\textsuperscript{200} However, in the mid-nineteenth century, provincial drinking establishments were transitional spaces featuring a gloriously diverse accumulation of seating.

Pub decoration represented local tradition and individual taste, rather than the uniformity that came to define late-nineteenth-century pubs.\textsuperscript{201} Publicans decorated rooms with flags, plants and flowers to mark special events or religious holidays.\textsuperscript{202} A Stalybridge pub hosting a Druid’s anniversary dinner in 1859 was ‘tastefully decorated with evergreens, garlands, small flags, pictures... and surpassed all other occasions.’\textsuperscript{203} A set of engravings adorned the walls of the Union Inn, whilst the White Hart Inn boasted a number of tapestries.\textsuperscript{204} Likewise, paintings and engravings were prominent features of many mid-nineteenth-century homes, as social commentators believed they could ‘refine the minds of individuals, and... sweeten the intercourse of families.’\textsuperscript{205} Most establishments discussed advertised full gas fittings, although the brass and iron candlesticks of the Dog and Partridge implies that other modes of lighting were used to complement this.\textsuperscript{206} Sarah Milan suggests that ‘combined light technologies’ – gas, candles, oil – were the norm in the parlours of early and mid-Victorian homes.\textsuperscript{207} Gas lighting signified the ‘public’ spaces of the home used to entertain visitors. Yet it did not remain a symbol of refinement, especially in the latter half of the nineteenth century when it became affordable to less affluent households and was rapidly usurped by electricity as the dominant form of domestic lighting.\textsuperscript{208}

Some historians identify decorated plate glass as a strong signature or trope of Victorian pub design.\textsuperscript{209} Indeed, the White Hart Inn had a pane of ‘brilliant plate chimney glass’ in a gilt frame, the aforementioned sideboard with a silvered plate glass back and several glass lustre ornaments.\textsuperscript{210} The Park Hotel also displayed a large chimney glass in rosewood and gilt frame.\textsuperscript{211} Gilding, the application of gold leaf to glass, probably appeared

\textsuperscript{200} Schivelbusch, \textit{Tastes of Paradise}, p.195.
\textsuperscript{201} For a detailed exposition of the homogeneity of late-Victorian pub design, see: Girouard, \textit{Victorian Pubs}, p.187.
\textsuperscript{202} \textit{North Cheshire Herald}, 9 January 1858.
\textsuperscript{203} \textit{Ashton Reporter}, 8 January 1859.
\textsuperscript{204} \textit{Stalybridge Reporter}, 13 January 1877; \textit{Stalybridge Reporter}, 22 August 1874.
\textsuperscript{205} Breward, ‘Fashionable Living’, p.401.
\textsuperscript{206} \textit{Ashton Reporter}, 22 November 1856.
\textsuperscript{209} See: Bailey, \textit{Leisure and Class}, p.16; Kenna and Mooney, \textit{People’s Palaces}; Girouard, \textit{Victorian Pubs}.
\textsuperscript{210} \textit{Stalybridge Reporter}, 22 August 1874.
\textsuperscript{211} \textit{Ashton Reporter}, 21 July 1855.
in pubs at the same time as in hotels and shops, from the 1850s. The Victorians inhabited a world newly mediated by glass, in which that material assumed symbolic significance in the contemporary imagination; its properties created ‘an aura of glamour and duplicity’ that appealed to the conspicuous consumption inherent in Victorian culture. The development of glass pressing in the 1830s enabled manufacturers to produce decorative glassware far quicker and at less expense than with the previous blowing and cutting technique. Yet historians have exaggerated the predominance of the pub in its use of glass. Many other types of nineteenth-century buildings used decorated glass, yet because most surviving examples were in drinking establishments it became a dominant motif of the public house. Conversely, just two of the public houses studied in this chapter advertised plate glass, and even then not in great quantity. Smaller ornaments and drink receptacles still featured heavily, but it appears that the humble beerhouses of mid-nineteenth-century Stalybridge largely chose to emphasise their domestic qualities rather than appear ostentatious and thus highlight their ‘otherness.’

The White Hart Inn featured kamptulicon flooring, a flexible but plain covering made from powdered cork and natural rubber. Even in 1874 (when the material was auctioned) the product was relatively novel, having been publically launched (to great acclaim) at the 1862 International Exhibition in London. Patterns were often stencilled on using oil paint to compensate for its natural dull grey-brown hue, but it is unclear whether the owners of the White Hart Inn did this. A similar material, linoleum, was used for domestic floor coverings from 1860 onwards; according to Styles, ‘Customers appreciated the superior functional properties that [such] new materials could bring, such as improved durability or ease of cleaning, as well as the widening of choice.’ The White Hart Inn was also carpeted throughout with several pieces of ‘very excellent’ three-thread Brussels and Kidderminster carpet. The 1855 Park Hotel auction list included a large floor drugget (a heavy cloth constructed from cheap wool, or mixture of wool combined with silk or linen) and hearthrug. Breward discusses the prevalence of ‘fluffy wool mats’ in the mid-nineteenth-century home, a trend which abated in the late-nineteenth century.
hearty rug and traditional carpet is largely absent from our stereotypical depictions of the Victorian pub, possibly because it seems incongruous to the perceived impersonal nature of that space. Yet it was these aspects of pub design that enabled it to become a rival definition of home. Such touches were integral to the construction of 'the snug public-house, where everything is clean and tidy, where the fire burns briskly, and where [man's] slightest want, so long as he has money to pay for it, is attended to.' 

Nineteenth-century drinking establishments have been frequently condemned for harbouring a reprehensible culture of drunkenness, yet the pub could also be a site that promoted learned conduct and interests. The furniture and curios of the pub support its claims to have offered a far broader array of cultural activities. Many of these objects reveal the intellectual or education zeal of either the owner or their patrons. Both the landlady and her customers may have used the Union Inn's open bookcase with desk for study or business. Indeed, as discussed earlier, the diaries of local schoolmaster James Knight record him visiting pubs to read Shakespeare. However, the Union Inn's mahogany card table suggests that entertainment of a less 'improving' and intellectual kind was also prevalent. The White Hart Inn, Stalybridge, also had a walnut card table with a shaped top, on carved pillars and castors. The Highland Laddie owned 'a very excellent' Bagatelle, with accompanying lining and table. The elaborate finishing touches on these items represented an attempt to legitimise their function, providing a refined arena for public participation in, and performance of what were, at best, parlour games, and, at worst (in the eyes of moral reformers), opportunities for gambling. The presence of a pianoforte reflected the strong culture of music performance in the pub. For example, the White Hart Inn boasted a sweet-toned seven-octave cottage pianoforte, in a handsome walnut-wood case. Suzanne Fagence Cooper has labelled the richly decorated piano as the archetypal Victorian object, dominating middle-class drawing rooms and signifying both their owner's taste and social status. Indeed, Breward suggests that by 1875 many parlours incorporated a piano. The upright cottage model was a more humble early-nineteenth-century design; nonetheless, it affected the perceived status of the pub, opening those sites up for use by gentleman's bands and glee clubs. As Chapter Two of this thesis will discuss, music played a powerful role in the construction of pub culture and identity.

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221 Stalybridge Reporter, 13 January 1877.
222 Diaries of James Knight, 1 May 1856.
223 Stalybridge Reporter, 22 August 1874.
224 Ashton Reporter, 28 July 1855, p.1.
225 Stalybridge Reporter, 22 August 1874.
The smaller objects that adorned the pub were more closely related to the role of the pub as a site of nourishment and refreshment. Stillages, which supported casks of ale, may have been visible to customers, or kept on the floor concealed by the bar counter (if the establishment possessed one). Spirit taps, such as the eleven-tap fountain at the Park Hotel, were grandiose and undoubtedly added to the allure and performativity of serving beverages. However, they were not common features in the pubs examined in this chapter. More familiar were the pot shelves of the Dog and Partridge, laden with copper cans and jugs (in two gallon, one gallon and half-gallon form), glasses and earthenware. Whilst such objects were obviously essential pub items, their display also reinforced the identity of the establishment. In a smaller venue, such as the Highland Laddie or Wilde’s Beerhouse, these may have been the only items that distinguished the space as that of a public house. Edwin Ousey, of the King’s Arms Inn, Stalybridge, owned a jug branded with his establishment’s name (Fig.1.6), although this may have reflected personal vanity rather than common practice, considering there is no record of other named or branded goods auctioned later in the century. Jonathan Reinarz has discussed the importance of distributing branded paraphernalia (mirrors, signs, glasses) in the rise of the major national brewers. Yet such items were less commonplace in provincial town pubs, at least until the late-nineteenth century when larger breweries began purchasing tied houses on an unprecedented scale.

Fig.1.6: Jug belonging to Edwin Ousey, The King’s Arms, Stalybridge, c.1830s; TIA t06992/ t06994.

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229 Ashton Reporter, 22 November 1856.
The list of receptacles for food and drink auctioned by the larger Park Hotel was extensive:

- Pewter ale and spirit measures and funnels;
- Large and small wine decanters;
- Wine and spirit glasses, tall ale glasses and goblets;
- Glass sugar bowls, sugar cutters, crushers and tongs, quart and pint jugs, large and small water jugs, quart, pint and gill pots;
- Five tin ale warmers, eight tin ale cans, winter bedges, mugs and tubs, water cans, lading cans, iron and tin pans, coffee kettle, set of castors, three celery glasses [Fig. 1.7], china tea and coffee services...
- [and a] blue and white dinner service, containing one-hundred and fifty pieces.  

This list reveals the broad range of drinks served by the hotel, as well as the very specific receptacles required to serve them in. The importance of knowing and requesting the correct receptacle would have distinguished the taste of the clientele; the ability to provide it would have reinforced the status of the hotel. The list also provides evidence that customers occasionally consumed non-alcoholic beverages in some drinking establishments. Tea paraphernalia was also present in smaller establishments. In 1885 a tablecloth and a copper teapot were the items stolen from two Stalybridge beerhouses whilst barmaids had their back turned or were collecting drinks from the kitchen.  

The Park Hotel also possessed a ‘large China Punch Bowl and Ladle.’  

Karen Harvey has analysed the material culture of the punch bowl in the eighteenth century, concluding that these vessels ‘playfully united masculine homosociability and feminine domesticity, at a time when the discourse of domesticity was being consolidated.’ The distinction between the perceived refinement and barbarity of punch drinking depended upon the establishment in which it was served. The design of the punchbowl and the manner in which customers used it was also crucial.

231 Ashton Reporter, 21 July 1855.
232 Stalybridge Reporter, 17 January 1885.
233 Ashton Reporter, 21 July 1855.
Although Harvey emphasises the domestic use of the punchbowl in the eighteenth century, there is evidence of its continued use in mid-nineteenth-century pubs. In 1864, the Astley Arms Inn at Dukinfield hosted the sixtieth birthday party of a prodigious local gentleman, at which ‘there were many professional gentlemen present, and the singing &c, was first rate.’ During the evening, revellers filled a sixteen-gallon punchbowl, at great cost. The *Ashton Standard* proudly reported that the contents ‘were not drunk until three o’clock the following afternoon’, proclaiming this to have been a ‘jolly good spree.’ The act was clearly a demonstration of the wealth and lavish lifestyle accessible to these individuals. Drinking communally from the punchbowl enforced social interaction, but it also reinforced a collective identity through a shared understanding of the ‘refined use’ of the vessel. Furthermore, it may have elicited a nostalgic response among the revellers, recollecting a time when such an activity had the potential to shock if performed incorrectly.

The objects that adorned the mid-nineteenth-century pub reveal both its domesticity and the broad range of functions it fulfilled. There was an eclectic mix of furniture rather than a consistent design scheme. Like the parlours or front rooms of working-class homes, where ‘the best room of the house was set aside as a well-tidied shrine, filled with mementoes of family life, prized ornaments... and patriotic memorabilia’, the provincial pub was cluttered with the best furniture, objects and ephemera the publican could provide. The public rooms of drinking establishments were, like the parlour of the Victorian home, ‘a site of collection and display comparable to the museum.’ Furthermore, the materials and designs chosen by publicans openly referenced the origins of that space as a household, and perhaps even its continued use as such outside of trading hours. Personal taste and prevailing trends influenced floor and wall decoration – there was no uniform design, unlike in the much criticised chain pubs and tied houses of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century.

This chapter has demonstrated how the material culture of the provincial pub informed its character and uses. It will now finally demonstrate how the layout of such sites reveals its underlying domesticity. Before the grand redevelopments at the close of the nineteenth century, the archetypal drinking establishment possessed a layout that betrayed its humble origins. Even larger establishments retained elements of domestic properties in their allocation of space. Many premises used as pubs in the mid-nineteenth century were relatively small; it was not until the late-Victorian and Edwardian period when larger establishments became commonplace. Smaller establishments were the norm because most

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235 *Ashton Standard*, 5 March 1864.
236 *Ashton Standard*, 5 March 1864.
237 *Breward, ‘Fashionable Living’,* p.408.
238 *Logan, The Victorian Parlour, p.xiii.*
beerhouses were opportunistic endeavours originally set up in the front rooms of an otherwise domestic property. As the century progressed the designated public areas of the house extended to infiltrate more of the personal spaces, but throughout this process these rooms retained a close association with the domestic function for which they were originally intended.

Fig. 1.8: The Reindeer Inn, 109 Huddersfield Road, Stalybridge; TIA, t06650.

Fig. 1.9: Elevation; Proposed Alterations and Additions to Beerhouse, Brierley Street, Stalybridge; TLSAC 63 (29 August 1874)
Nineteenth-century street scenes provide a strong indication of the architectural character of many provincial public houses. Externally, these establishments displayed little to differentiate themselves from the terraced commercial and domestic premises that they neighboured. The earliest photographs of Stalybridge pubs available are from the early-twentieth century, by which time many establishments had expanded or boasted elaborate fascias. However, even by the turn of the century, some pubs retained the earlier design with which this chapter is concerned. The Reindeer Inn (Fig.1.8) was identical to the seemingly domestic properties at either side of it, other than a curved porch over the front door, two signs (a name-banner above the door and a larger rectangular board to its right), and the fact that its premises extended across two former domestic properties. Building plans also often included an elevation, revealing how the establishment corresponded to those structures around it. In a plan detailing the elevation of an unnamed beerhouse in Stalybridge (Fig.1.9), the drawing of the roof continues beyond the property in question because the two adjacent properties were part of the same terrace. These examples show that the pub was not markedly different in its external appearance to other domestic properties on the same street. This reflected the origins of these businesses, as well as contributing towards the domesticity of such sites.

Fig.1.10: ‘Proposed Erection of Addition to the Lodge Hotel’, TARC 193 (6 September 1887)
The size of mid-nineteenth-century public houses is itself a key indicator of the domestic origins of such spaces, and it undoubtedly influenced the ways in which social acts inhabited and used this space. An 1887 planning application to erect a side extension (housing a billiard room) to the Lodge Hotel in Dukinfield (Fig.1.10) reveals that the establishment was previously just twelve yards (11m) wide by fourteen yards (12.8m) long. The Lodge had four almost-identically shaped rooms over just one floor, each of which was (at a generous estimate) 6.5 metres long and 5.5 metres wide. A beerhouse on Brierley Street in Stalybridge (Fig.1.11) had a very similar layout. The ground floor consisted of four rooms – an 1874 planning proposal added a scullery and outside toilets. The kitchen was located at the back corner of the house, leading to the private quarters upstairs. This room was effectively the border between the public and personal spaces of the house. The remaining three rooms included a taproom, measuring seventeen square metres, connected to a shop of similar proportions. There was a slightly smaller snug situated across the hallway. The size and order of these rooms reflected the property’s intended original use as a middle-class home; prior to 1874, the owners had not attempted to adapt the original layout of this establishment.

Fig.1.11 ‘Proposed Alterations and Additions to Beerhouse, Brierley Street, Stalybridge’; TARC (29 August 1874)

239 ‘Proposed Erection of Addition to the Lodge Hotel’, TLSAC 193 (6 September 1887).
Edward Davies, owner of Newmarket Tavern in Dukinfield, applied for planning permission to make extensive alterations to the building in 1890. These developments included installing a large upstairs clubroom and updating the bar and commercial room to include bowed walls and contemporary fittings. Yet the original layout reveals a modest establishment that had clearly evolved from a domestic property. The living room, parlour and scullery at the back of the building remained as private space, whilst the two front rooms functioned as the bar and commercial room. The commercial room was approximately 3.65m long and 1.8m wide. The bar was slightly smaller. The proprietors extended a narrow kitchen on the right of these rooms prior to 1890. Otherwise, these were small, confined spaces, more akin in size and order to the rooms of a domestic property. Drinking in such rooms determined the culture of the mid-nineteenth-century public house. It enforced sociability, whilst limiting the number of people who could populate that space. In doing so, space controlled the social functionality of the pub.

The Queen’s Arms Hotel, Dukinfield, was updated in 1883 to incorporate a larger upstairs clubroom at the expense of three bedrooms. Located on a corner property, the Queen’s Arms was a larger venue in the area. Its status as a hotel (rather than an inn or beerhouse) determined its larger premises and original allocation of bedrooms. The only changes to the ground floor were the adaptation of a living room into a larger kitchen and the conversion of the shop into two storerooms. Despite being a hotel, the plans detailing the original layout affirm many of the well-documented tenets of the typical Victorian drinking establishment. The proprietors divided the original rooms into smaller, segregated spaces. A vault was positioned immediately next to both entrances, backing onto a bar room which presumably had serving hatches through to the adjacent vaults. An open plan bar parlour, with forms lining each of the walls, was next to a tiny snug. There appears to have been no immediate access to the snug from the bar area, rendering it the most private room in which one could drink. The term ‘snug’ did not have a universal definition. In London, it referred to extremely small rooms or compartments around the bar. However, in the beerhouses of Lancashire it was often just a small parlour.

Some scholars have viewed the segregation of space in the pub as an attempt to control social interaction, assuaging fears that outsiders threatened the privacy of an

240 ‘Alterations to the Newmarket Tavern, Dukinfield’, TLSAC 252 (4 August 1890).
241 The redesign entirely altered the shapes of the bar and commercial rooms, linking the two previously separate rooms with the bar opening out into the corner of each room. A similar proposal was put forward by the owners of the Wharf Tavern in 1889, in which the bar parlour was split into two rooms (a bar and a vault) conjoined by a bar counter with serving hatch; ‘Alterations: Wharf Tavern, Dukinfield’, TLSAC 235b (1889).
242 It is unclear whether these bedrooms accommodated guests or the owners of the business; ‘Plan of the Queen’s Arms Hotel’, TLSAC 120 (6 November 1883).
243 Girouard, Victorian Pubs, p.69.
individual or group. During the 1880s, rebuilding of public houses commenced on a grand scale; proprietors removed furniture and catering equipment and extended the bar to incorporate more patrons. Gutzke argues that as public houses increased in size, they simultaneously attempted to accommodate the privacy deemed to engender notions of propriety. Indeed, Kneale suggests that many perceived the open bar to be counterproductive to advancing respectability because, 'it encouraged a heterogeneous mixing of different classes of people.' Thus, compartmentalised interiors provided 'the greatest amount of privacy during the consumption of drink and secrecy as to company.'

Yet one should not use the layout of the late-nineteenth century pub to propagate this narrative without considering the origins of this design. As the plan of the Queen’s Arms demonstrates, segregated rooms were favoured by the mid to late-Victorian period; however, these rooms were not too small to prohibit a reasonable number of customers frequenting them at one time. Parties of at least ten people could use each of the two vaults, and the forms stationed along the bar parlour wall maximised the available space. The segregation of rooms into smaller sections was perhaps because of the domestic origins of the public house rather than (or as well as) a conscious yearning for privacy in the public realm. The familiar setup of the pub for much of the previous century involved drinking in a small front room, sometimes with very few (if any) fellow customers. When larger establishments divided their space, they did so to conform to expectations of the public house.

A planning application was submitted in 1885 for redevelopment of the Black Horse Inn, Dukinfield (Fig.1.12). The most radical proposal was to double the size of the inn, expanding from its original position within a terrace to occupy the end plot. In doing so, people could access the building from two roads, with a new bar situated on the corner to make this possible. The addition of separate smoke rooms, bar parlour and upstairs clubroom was typical of late-nineteenth-century developments in pub design, where segregation and size were the chief maxims of planners. However, in terms of the mid-nineteenth-century Black Horse Inn layout, half of the original rooms are included in the plan. The pre-1885 building consisted of approximately six rooms on the ground and first floors, as well as a cellar and store in the basement. Although not impossible, it seems

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248 This is based upon the layout of half of the building, documented in the proposed building plans. It has been assumed that, as both parts of the building (originally two terraced houses) share the same basic shape and size, each building contained a similar room layout; ‘Alterations to the ‘Bridge Inn’, King Street, Dukinfield’, TLSAC 176 (29 July 1886).
improbable that many of these rooms were reassigned as part of the redevelopment. The 1885 extension plans largely concerned the kitchen and scullery, both on the ground floor. Furthermore, the cost of relocating these facilities would have been undesirable, and possibly prohibitive. The upstairs boasted at least three bedrooms. The remaining ground floor room on the plan is listed as a shop, although this space may originally have been a bar or bar parlour. That the cellar was positioned beneath the kitchen suggests that the kitchen may also have been used to serve alcohol. The presence of a bar counter or serving hatch on the plans further supports this assertion. The domesticity of the public house is evident in this allocation of space – of the known six rooms, five fulfilled functions typically associated with domesticity rather than drinking. The small yard, no different to those of the terraced buildings it neighboured, consisted of an outhouse and toilet, and opened onto

Fig.1.12. ‘Proposed Rebuilding of the ‘Black Horse’ Inn, Dukinfield’; TARC 160 (3 August 1885)
a communal cart path. The size and location of the pre-1885 building reveal its progression from terraced household to the Black Horse Inn; its layout suggests that, until its expansion, by necessity or design, its origins as a household dictated its character as a site of conviviality. Above all, examining the material spaces of mid-nineteenth-century drinking establishments reveals their conviviality, their liminality and their similarities to domestic properties. These attributes were central to the way patrons perceived such sites, and facilitated the pub’s role as, among other things, a site of surrogate domesticity and sociability for young men in particular.

**Conclusion**

By examining the material spaces and myriad uses of the pub, this chapter has argued that the domesticity of these establishments shaped the experiences of those who frequented them. Their size, layout and material culture manifest this domesticity and liminality. Most pubs in mid-nineteenth-century Stalybridge were small ventures, based in the front room of an otherwise domestic property. The Beerhouse Act of 1830 made it easier for people to enter the trade, even with relatively little capital. Many entrepreneurs took this opportunity, responding to Stalybridge’s new urban status, its growing working population, and the emergence of leisure as an increasingly accessible and compartmentalised area of life. These pubs were basic in size and layout, and featured furniture and objects commonly associated with the home – often because these establishments had recently been, or were in fact still used out-of-hours, as homes.

However, historians have emphasised aspects of pub culture and design that conform to negative stereotypes of the Victorian pub as sites of immorality and working-class inebriation and poverty. This is, in part, because they have tended to examine drinking establishments in larger cities, rather than new towns. Yet, the pub design and drinking culture alleged to have been the national norm was not prevalent in new factory towns such as Stalybridge. Here, drinking establishments reflected and promoted a markedly different set of pub cultures, informed throughout by the inherent domesticity of the pub. Indeed, Temperance reformers and conduct guides acknowledged that it was the home comforts of the pub that made it a rival to the home. Even alleged tropes of Victorian drinking culture, such as the removal of seating and elongation of the bar counter in order to accelerate drink consumption, are contradicted by the provincial pubs studied in this chapter, most of which did not even serve from a bar. In the late-nineteenth century, pubs in the town began to increase in size, and incorporate designs which overtly identified them as sites of leisure. However, before these developments, they remained transitional sites featuring a sporadic accumulation of furniture and retaining a strong sense of the domestic properties from which they originated.
Moreover, Stalybridge’s drinking establishments provided far more than alcohol; they acted as a surrogate home for many young men, proffering sociability, a retreat from home (parental or lodgings) and the opportunity to develop communal and professional networks. As James Knight’s diaries show, they were at once community hubs and personal retreats, a place for both standing a drink and sitting down to Shakespeare. The pub shaped male identity, especially during the formative years in their young adulthood, by offering both homosociability and surrogate domesticity; they were not simply places where men went to escape the pressures of home and work. This suggests that the historian of masculinity needs to consider the pub, not solely as a site of drinking and drunkenness, but as an everyday space used by men for multifarious purposes. The historiography on Victorian drinking culture also needs to be extended to acknowledge the experiences and roles of women in the pub; however, a lack of appropriate sources (and the limitations of those sources) has restricted research in this area to date.

This chapter has shown that examining spatial dynamics and material culture can help uncover experiences of leisure in the mid-nineteenth century. The character of the pub – its domesticity and liminality – and the myriad roles it fulfilled, informed the ways in which men behaved and interacted in these spaces. The pub thus shaped individual notions of masculinity, but also helped form collective male identities, for example through the veneration (and sometimes emulation) of sporting heroes. As community centres, pubs also reflected and stimulated local culture. They helped promote other leisure practices, either by disseminating information or introducing people with shared interests. In particular, the pub played an important role in developing the leisure practice that was to best define mid-nineteenth-century Stalybridge: music. The pub was one of many venues (both formal and informal) that contributed towards the musicality of the town. The character and acoustic properties of these sites determined public responses to the music performed there; these responses expose and explain the centrality of music to local identity. This will be explored further in the following chapter.
Chapter Two: ‘We Musical People’ of Stalybridge

Fig.2.1: Drawing of a musical band of operatives from Stalybridge in London, c.1861-65; TIA t01798.

Citizens of nineteenth-century Stalybridge considered themselves ‘a musical people.’¹ This was, they argued, the characteristic which best defined them. The successes of the town’s brass bands and choral societies sustained this conviction; these groups represented Stalybridge at a regional and national level, competing in musical contests, such as the 1860 Great National at Crystal Palace, and performing at important socio-political events, such as at protests in London during the 1861-1865 Cotton Famine (Fig.2.1). Yet Stalybridgeans’ self-identification as musical people also relates to the prevalence and centrality of music in mid-nineteenth-century provincial towns more generally.² There was a variety of different forms of music making and music listening, both intentional and inadvertent, in a variety of places in Stalybridge. These practices shaped the development and lived experience of the urban environment. Local authorities and societies constructed municipal concert venues, such as the town hall, Foresters’ Hall and Mechanics’ Institution. Pubs bought instruments and, towards the end of the century, designed purpose-built music rooms. Musicians

¹ Stalybridge Reporter, 15 December 1883.
sometimes performed in mills and factories. Music infiltrated the home and filled the streets. Instruments were even used as a form of civil disobedience, such as during a cotton trade dispute in the winter of 1830. Recognising this musicality is crucial to our understanding of towns in the mid-nineteenth century. This chapter attempts to put music back in its place, to emphasise the relationship between music and the site in which it existed. Audiences responded to music differently according to location. These responses (emotional or ideological) in turn shaped broader communal boundaries (local pride) and notions of selfhood (masculinity). Exploring the musicality of spaces, through both the physical properties of venues and the sensibilities of listeners and performers, raises questions regarding identity, public space and gender in the mid-nineteenth-century town.

Historians have seen the nineteenth century as a definitive point in the development of Britain’s modern musical landscape. The mid-nineteenth century in particular was the period in which this culture expanded most rapidly and became more inclusive. An entire service industry coalesced to support, and in turn enlarge, a distinct popular music culture. The networks of production and promotion interlinked, each responding to, and in turn perpetuating, the expansion of the other. Scholars such as Ruth Solie and James Walvin have used a number of established narratives to contextualise and explain these developments: increased leisure time and wealth gradually permeating down through the classes (albeit inconsistently and with regional variation); the improvement of provincial and national transport links; the emergence of a popular periodical press; key developments in the teaching and sharing of music (such as the Tonic Sol-fa notation system, developed by the Reverend John Curwen in the early 1840s); new technologies in the manufacture of instruments; and a renewed religious zeal exemplified by the Methodist movement. Dave Russell provides a broader narrative by identifying three key overarching

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1 Shareholders held a private concert at Boston Mills in December 1854, ‘which a very respectable audience attended’: North Cheshire Herald, December 1854.
processes that underpinned the creation of Britain’s nineteenth-century music culture: expansion, diversification and (towards the end of the century) nationalisation.9 Whilst the emergence of a modern, national music culture represents a key point in the history of Britain’s leisure industry and broader social history, such an approach can overlook both local and personal responses to music making and listening. As music historian Celia Applegate suggests, concentrating on this narrative shifts the focus away from the specific role of the music in shaping this leisure practice and its associated cultural meanings.10

This chapter engages with the current aural turn in history to elucidate the relationship between music and spaces of performance.11 The opening statement of Jacques Attali’s Noise: The Political Economy of Music invokes the use of music as a tool of understanding, a means of perceiving the world: ‘The world is for hearing, not beholding; it is audible, not legible.’12 For Attali, music is a play of mirrors that reflects, defines, records and distorts every activity. Developing this idea, Peter Bailey, in his landmark chapter

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‘Breaking the Sound Barrier’, calls upon all historians to listen more closely to the past. However, until recently Victorianists and urban historians have seemed reluctant to engage with sound as a historical source. According to Applegate, the focus remains on an ambiguous or ephemeral ‘musical culture’ rather than on music or sound itself. It is unsurprising, she argues, that historians have been more susceptible to a visual turn than an aural one when one considers the difficulties in finding and unpacking sources that discuss the specific experience of creating or listening to sound. Vanessa Harding also suggests that urban historians have overlooked music as an historical tool due to ‘the intimidating traditions of connoisseurship associated with the field.’ In particular, there has been little engagement with the physical locations in which music existed. Fiona Kisby argues that this is symptomatic of a fundamental crisis in urban history – the abandonment of a truly interdisciplinary approach that examines cities not as merely the sum of their constituent parts, but offers an analysis of the interaction of these parts in a unique spatial setting. Musicologists have tended not to engage in contemporary debates concerning the use of written sources, which has resulted in an anecdotal rather than systematic use of archive material. Conversely, historians often resort to descriptions of (often male-orientated) institutions, biographies of performers and accounts of attendances and finances to conduct their appraisals, instead of interpreting the aesthetic experience of music.

This chapter focuses on the relationship between music and sites of performance to address a number of difficulties historians face when they engage with sound as a historical source. The Victorians inhabited urban environments mediated by sound, yet the experiences of and responses to these soundscapes remain elusive concepts for historians to grasp. If the nineteenth century was one defined and understood aurally, the irony is that the experience of such cannot easily be re-imagined. As Bailey maintains, ‘Perception and response [to music] are largely subjective and culturally determined, affected by specific

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20 Borsay, ‘Sounding the Town’.
temporal and locational properties.' Cultural historian Michael Steinberg contends that music performance involves both physicality and otherness – ‘the otherness of someone else’s rendering.' The temporality of sound and the subjectivity of the listener ensure that one cannot ever fully recover or reconstruct experiences of music. Yet, music can act as a social and cultural locator, with styles and practices articulating notions of civic identity, but music’s relatively weak ability to signify or communicate precise meanings and its ephemeral nature mitigates its power to do so.

This chapter first discusses the connection between music and identity, looking in particular at how music shaped and reflected identity in the mid-nineteenth century. More specifically, it provides examples of the relationship between music, masculinity and local identity in Stalybridge. Secondly, this chapter examines the sites of music performance and production. It compares the contrasting fortunes of the town hall and Mechanics’ Institution, before considering the less ‘formal’ venues of the pub, home and street. In doing so, it focuses on the material spaces of these venues and locations, and the responses they engendered. Such an analysis asserts the importance of space and place in how an audience consumed and perceived the music they heard.

As a popular music culture developed in the mid-nineteenth century, and became increasingly intertwined with notions of local identity and civic pride, the listening experience proffered by a town’s prominent venues became a pertinent issue. A number of intangible variables marked the auditory experience and character of a music venue. For example, the behaviour of the audience at a performance would have affected the quality of the listening experience. The dynamics of one venue may have permitted a limited amount of noise ‘out of place’ (sound that was unexpected and unrequested) to be generated by the audience (through conversation, heckling, joining in unprompted, applause out of place) without too much disruption, whereas in another venue the slightest noise may have

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21 Bailey locates a newly commercialised leisure industry and culture of musical entertainment by exploring a series of images, performances and glances. In response to portrayals of idealised, homogenised and neatly integrated working-class communities, he instead depicts the Victorian city as a heterotopia, ‘bristling with others’ and generating both opportunity and anxiety: Bailey, Popular Culture and Performance, pp.7-8, p.201.

22 M. Steinberg, Listening to Reason: Culture, Subjectivity, and Nineteenth-Century Music (Woodstock, 2004).


26 Garrioch, ‘Sounds of the City’, p.6.
drastically maligned the audience’s enjoyment of the performance. Of course, the opposite was also true of some musical experiences, where spontaneous audience involvement and interaction was part of the appeal. However, audiences were especially discerning of the sites in which their concerts were held – even more so if the venue was a municipal building. The design of a music venue influenced responses to the music in two distinct ways. First, the spatial dynamics determined the quality of the auditory experience. Secondly, the character of the venue dictated its popular reception. The building’s interior design, or, on a more ideological level, its status within the town, helped impart this character.

2.1: Music and Identity

Music is a significant component in the construction and presentation of identity; it provides a means by which different cultural groups understand and negotiate the everyday. These processes are circular – they occur in a specific location, drawing on existing imaginative and sociological inflections to construct a sound that subsequently shapes and redefines that space. Locally produced music interacts with what Andrew Bennett terms ‘the local structure of feeling’, as people turn to specific music as a signifier of community, belonging and a shared past. Indeed, Bennett suggests that the act of music making becomes invested with discourses concerning the impact of local cultures on collective creativity, to the extent that specific sounds and timbres produced by musicians are regarded as a direct consequence of a shared knowledge of local experiences. Music can also determine how individuals author space – as a creative resource it maps onto and becomes a medium for the articulation of discourses concerning individual and collective identity, especially gender identity and the gendering of place. As sociologist Ruth

30 Borsay maintains that it is conceivable for music to be disseminated throughout an urban area, shaping urban identities in the process, without it being specifically urban in itself; Borsay, ‘Sounding the Town,’ pp.93-5.
32 Although Bennett does concede that individual authoring of space produces multiple competing local narratives; Bennett, Music, Space and Place, p.3.
Finnegan shows, ‘at the local level, music functions as one of a series of ‘pathways’ via which individuals negotiate the urban wilderness of urban life.’

Scholars of the nineteenth century have long recognised music as something that constructed and conveyed class identity. In particular, there exists an extensive literature on music hall and the construction and performance of working-class and national identities. Peter Borsay argues that the extent of professionalization and commercialisation in the nineteenth-century music industry constructed a uniquely urban consumer experience, with many music halls songs or ‘urban ballads’ articulating very specific concerns of the urban working class. As with other leisure or cultural practices, much of the historical debate has centred on the extent to which middle-class moral imperialism informed popular music. The seminal work in this field is Peter Bailey’s exploration of the ‘knowingness’ of music hall, which studies the working classes’ appropriation and subversion of middle-class mores, demonstrating the working-class agency intrinsic to such leisure practices. Work on music making has similarly focused on class boundaries. Research into civic band culture has examined the sense of working-class community and agency at work in these organisations, whereas studies of Britain’s nineteenth-century composers tend to focus on the privileged social and professional

34 Applegate, ‘Music Among the Historians’, p.338.
36 Borsay, ‘Sounding the Town,’ pp.92-102.
circles in which these eminent figures moved. Historians have routinely framed music making within the wider discourse on moral imperialism; Sarah Taylor concludes that, 'amateur music-making blossomed in an environment where desires for self-improvement, moral salvation, and respectability predominated in every community.' However, this reading limits the diversity of experience and agency attributed towards the musicians themselves; Russell criticises historians for 'unwittingly depicting' the working class as mere recipients of, rather than co-partners in, the process of cultural production. Trevor Hebert also notes that the largely working-class brass band movement took a cultural product and made it their own, 'investing them with a new and lasting identity.' Moreover, music-makers and audiences in mid-nineteenth-century Stalybridge rarely articulated such precise and moralistic sentiments.

There has also been wide-ranging research on the role of music in religious practice and identity. The connection between Christianity and the early development of nineteenth-century popular music (in particular the role of choral societies) was imperative to the public uptake of music as an accepted cultural practice. Likewise, church communities organised and mobilised much of the early brass band movement. The nature and characteristics of music itself too appealed to religious sensibilities; as Russell contends, 'the religious mores of high Victorian England had protected many forms of music from those attacks so frequent in other areas of popular recreation, and fostered 'suitable' musical institutions.' Music often elicited a subjective and sentimental response; the perceived relationship of choral singing to God and the church (manifest on both a literal and spiritual level) established the practice as one commonly regarded to be a means of 'achieving moral elevation.'

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41 Russell, Popular Music, p.4.
42 Herbert, 'Nineteenth-Century Brass Bands', p.49.
46 Russell, Popular Music, p.17.
47 Taylor, 'Musical Revolutions', p.225.
The focus of this section is, however, not on the themes of class and religiosity, but instead on the links between music and place (and thus local identity) and music and masculinity. Music was a significant part of how the inhabitants of Stalybridge perceived themselves and their town. Indeed, in 1883 the Stalybridge Reporter claimed that, ‘We are musical people in Stalybridge. Everybody says so and everybody is right. There is, in fact, nothing in which we have a better right to pride ourselves.’ This sentiment and self-identification was manifest in the early uptake and success of musical societies in the town. By the mid-nineteenth century, Stalybridge boasted several bands and choral societies. These groups regularly performed at concerts in the town, and were prominently involved in civic ceremonies such as the Easter parades, Whit Walks (an annual day of processions and festivities in manufacturing towns in North West England) and processions marking the opening of a municipal or communal building. These performances were often interactive experiences, with young people (usually men) from the town and neighbouring villages pushing ‘in front of the players’ to ‘dance and sing to the music.’ The fervidity of local support for these musical societies reflected an underlying sense of community ownership. Stalybridge’s brass bands in particular were the focus of pronounced civic pride, with audiences revering individual virtuoso performers even more for their shared background. Although Stalybridge boasts a tenable claim to have had the first civilian brass band in the country (the Stalybridge Old Band, initiated by Thomas Avison in 1809, and officially established by 1814), the town’s love for music (and self-identification of such) was not unique. The popularity of such societies was typical of several new towns in the mid-nineteenth century, especially, although not exclusively, in the industrial communities of east Lancashire and west Yorkshire. The Stalybridge Reporter’s statement thus

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48 Stalybridge Reporter, 15 December 1883.
49 S. Hill, Bygone Stalybridge: Traditional, Historical, Biographical (Stalybridge, 1907), pp.176-82.
50 ‘Stalybridge Old Band: A Record of 100 Years’, (Stalybridge, 1914), p.13.
51 Hill, Bygone Stalybridge, pp.177-8; Herbert, ‘Nineteenth-Century Bands’, p.50.
represents an attempt to lay claim to a musical heritage or intrinsic musicality that superseded that of their neighbouring towns.

The competitive ethos encouraged by regional band and choral contests stimulated this association between music and local identity. The Stalybridge Old Band and Boro Band were successful at several band meetings. The former dominated competitions between 1859 and 1882, winning an impressive £1,449 5s., in this period. Victories over renowned performers such as Lancashire's Besses-o'-th'-Barn and West Yorkshire's Black Dyke Band elicited much excitement and public vaunting. Such contests were integral to the dissemination of popular music culture, whilst at the same time bringing together groups of people whose connection to each other and projected identity was chiefly geographical. Intra-city and intercity rivalries helped consolidate regionalism, as did the identification of certain towns with particular musical standards or styles of playing. As Cyril Ehrlich and Dave Russell have argued, music provided 'a fertile source of civic pride and of empowering myths which allowed a community to view itself against rival towns or regions according to the prowess of its musical servants and ambassadors.'

The use of brass bands in town processions, religious celebrations and grand openings of municipal buildings further reinforced the association between music and civic identity. The prestigious character of such events legitimised the band's performances, but this relationship was reciprocal; as Russell asserts, 'a communal event was a poor affair indeed if not dignified by music.' There was a correlation between a specific town, its municipal culture and its music. Folklore played an important role in shaping this relationship; stories of the successes and escapades of brass bands reinforced their endearment by the local community. The story which best illustrates this is that of Stalybridge Old Band's participation at the Peterloo Massacre of 1819, a demonstration in favour of parliamentary reform in which fifteen protesters were killed and hundreds injured. What is interesting about this tale is that the emphasis of the account differed according to the audience. Brass bands were rarely overtly political in their actions or

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55 Hill, Bygone Stalybridge, p.177.
56 Hill, Bygone Stalybridge, p.182.
aspirations, although the Old Band’s claim to have represented their town at Peterloo suggests an exception to this rule.\textsuperscript{61} Official band publications and local newspapers proudly listed the band’s presence at the protest, in doing so attempting to lay claim to Stalybridge’s involvement in the history of the radical movement.\textsuperscript{62} The version of events told within the town presented a far less heroic narrative; the musicians were indeed engaged to perform for Henry Hunt on 16 August 1819, but on the way to St. Peter’s Field they stopped for refreshments at a pub in the Ancoats district of Manchester.\textsuperscript{63} Distracted by drink and perturbed by rumours of the violence unfolding, the band remained in the pub until word got around that the Manchester constabulary had begun entering pubs and smashing instruments. The musicians promptly fled home, avoiding neighbouring Ashton to ‘prevent Tories laughing at them.’\textsuperscript{64} They received a warmer welcome in Stalybridge, particularly at the Spread Eagle Inn, where customers greeted them as conquering heroes. The musicians were in no mood to correct their admirers, but eventually they revealed the truth. Nonetheless, the myth became part of the band’s heritage; the version of events passed on orally within the town may have been comical rather than valorous, but despite – or perhaps because of – this comical ignominy and the deceit of those outside of the town, Stalybridgeans still identified with the men sent to represent them at Peterloo. These events and their retelling show that it was possible for people to attach identity to even the idea of music, rather than its actual performance.

These ‘local structures of feeling’ were integral to the reception of music.\textsuperscript{65} The plethora of musical societies, public performances and the sharing of anecdotes relating to musical experiences each contributed to a sense of communal ownership of music as a leisure activity. Stalybridgeans believed the town’s musical heritage rendered them unique, yet despite their bands’ successes, it did not. Their conviction demonstrates the significance of local and civic identity, particularly when prompted by inter-town rivalry. It also reveals music’s ability to bring communities together, providing a leisure practice and cultural art form that the popular classes used to articulate a sense of collective identity and belonging.

Music making was also a gendered leisure practice. Musicians deemed certain instruments better suited to men or women according to their size, shape, method of


\textsuperscript{62} Hill, Bygone Stalybridge, p.177.

\textsuperscript{63} ‘Stalybridge Old Band’, pp.13-17.

\textsuperscript{64} ‘Stalybridge Old Band’, p.16.

\textsuperscript{65} Bennett, ‘Going Down the Pub’, p.107.
Musical societies were organised along class and gender lines, although there was the potential for music to transgress these boundaries. Brass bands and choral societies were chiefly concerned with providing opportunities for communities traditionally excluded by private concert societies and gentlemen's glee clubs. Throughout the nineteenth century, brass bands remained predominantly male-orientated, with women's involvement restricted to non-musical supporting roles. This is not to suggest that the roles performed by women were not instrumental in the development of the brass band movement, simply that their role rarely involved instruments. Women did feature in choral societies; at least three of the original members of the Stalybridge Harmonic Society were women (Amanda Lee, Martha Sunderland, and Elizabeth Garlick – wife of the society's conductor, Samuel Garlick). According to Eric Mackerness, choral festivals were well-mannered affairs compared to brass band contests, with the latter infused with 'a kind of masculine gaiety which was not diminished by the necessity for discipline in actual performances.' Historians have played down the rougher element of brass band culture. Nonetheless, their competitions and performances regularly took place in male-dominated environments, often to the exclusion of women. Stalybridge poet Samuel Laycock worked as the librarian and hall-keeper of the Mechanics' Institution from 1865-67. His dialect poem Th' Mechanics o' Seturday Neet espoused the virtues and appeal of the establishment as a site of learning and entertainment. As this chapter will go on to discuss, in the 1860s and 1870s the Institution became Stalybridge's premier live music venue. At the height of its popularity, Laycock presented the venue as an exclusively masculine space. It was a place for 'real sterlin' men'; it kept 'a young fellow moor manly an' pure.' His verse on music at the Mechanics' does not mention women, instead appealing to 'chaps' and 'lads' to 'pop in' and 'listen for nowt.' These sentiments reflect the initial aims of such institutions: to entice working-class men away from the pubs and streets to develop friendships and new skills.

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66 Historian Richard Leppert discusses representations of masculinity in images portraying the practice and performance of musical instruments: Leppert, Music and Image, pp.107-46.
69 Russell, Popular Music, pp.11-12.
74 S. Laycock, Th' Mechanics o' Seturday Neet.
Yet the orientation of Stalybridge Mechanics’ Institution towards men meant that, as a concert venue, many of its performances were also specifically male orientated.

The language used by and about brass bands was often gendered. A common sentiment expressed was that of the younger musicians ‘graduating’ to adult manhood, via their commitment (both financial and practical) to their band or society. A report of the first meeting of the Stalybridge Old Band described its founding members as ‘five young lads’ who ‘paid up like men.’

Musicians in the mid-nineteenth century also viewed their leisure practice in the context of economic difficulty and the male breadwinner status. The Old Band’s self-appointed historian, Mr T.A. Wood, reflected that:

> During the Forties, bandsmen were surely live enthusiasts. Then there were no Trade Unions, no dreams of a minimum wage, or of eight hours work, eight hours play, &c. Instead we worked twelve hours, wages low, very dear bread, Chartist risings and religious disturbances. Band practice after twelve hours toil in the mill was surely a well-earned luxury.

This statement directly related the musicians’ gender and labour status to their right to play their music. An 1864 speech by the mayor of Stalybridge further demonstrates the gendering of public music making. Complementing the Stalybridge Old Band on their performance at the Grand Jubilee March, Dr. Hopwood told the crowd that they ‘ought to feel proud that they had in the town a band which had the vigour of youth, the strength of manhood, and the experience of old age.’

While both men and women in Stalybridge thought of themselves as a musical people, the performance of music in public was male-oriented, thus making venues such as the Mechanics’ Institution and the pub masculine spaces. This idea adheres to historical understandings of music and gender, such as Bailey’s claim that public performances were ‘an essential signal of masculine identity’, whereas similar acts ‘unsexed’ women. The brass bands that were so critical to Stalybridge’s musical identity were almost exclusively male, and their performances often took place in venues aimed specifically at male audiences. Furthermore, the discourse surrounding banding reinforced the gendering of this leisure activity. However, it is important to acknowledge the subjectivity of experience, especially in this particular leisure practice – as Garrioch argues, specific sounds might have different associations for different people according to an extensive range of subtleties, such as rank, gender, origin or something far more abstract.

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75 ‘Stalybridge Old Band’, p.10.
77 ‘Stalybridge Old Band’, p.22.
79 Garrioch, ‘Sounds of the City’, p.6.
problematic to divorce music from its place of performance, as the character and spatial dynamics of these sites was crucial to the audience’s experience of the music.

2.2: Sites of Production, Practice and Performance
This section examines sites in which music was performed in mid-nineteenth-century Stalybridge, focusing in particular on the town hall and the Mechanics’ Institution. The story of these two buildings reveals the importance of auditory experience and spatial dynamics in determining a venue’s public reception and legacy. The section also discusses less formal venues such as the pub and the home. Finally, it contemplates music sometimes considered ‘out of place’, such as street music and the use of noise as protest. These analyses demonstrate that the character and listening experience of a venue were crucial to the experiences of the music performed there.

The nature of sites of musical performance influenced how audiences experienced music; they also reflected the intentions of those who owned, designed and funded these sites. Publically funded spaces engendered, or sought to instil, a sense of polite society and ‘rational’ recreation; they often evoked civic pride alongside Victorian notions of self-improvement, manifest in grandiose architecture and branded interior design. Music performed in ‘casual’ sites (such as the pub) also provided a discourse on local and class identity, but these spaces often subverted the prescriptive nature and sincerity of formal sites. Even in more formal venues, the responses desired by proprietors and civic authorities were not automatically or unthinkingly assumed by audiences, who sometimes flaunted and subverted requisite behavioural codes. Nor were the designs of certain sites always successful in practice; as this chapter will now discuss, Stalybridge town hall lost credibility as a venue due to its inherent architectural flaws (affecting the listening experience it proffered) and dated design (becoming a source of embarrassment rather than civic pride for Stalybridgeans).

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80 This section develops Rachel Milestone’s research into these buildings, to further consider the role of sound and spatial dynamics: R. Milestone, “That Monstrosity of Bricks and Mortar’: The Town Hall as a Music Venue in Nineteenth-Century Stalybridge,’ in Cowgill and Holman, Music in the British Provinces, pp.295-323.
83 Bailey, Popular Culture and Performance.
Stalybridge town hall (Fig.2.2) was nationally one of the earliest town halls built in the nineteenth century, and the first of any of its neighbouring towns. The 1828 Stalybridge Police and Market Act (otherwise known as the Town Improvement Act) enabled Stalybridge to become an independent, self-governing town; a town hall was subsequently developed during 1830-31 on an unusual (and ultimately incongruous) site on the corner of Stamford Street (Fig.2.3). When the town hall opened in 1832, attending a performance there was a signifier of status and respectability, and the existence of the building itself a symbol of the wealth and prosperity of both town and patron. Audiences at shows transcended class divides, and the repertory featured a mix of high and popular music. The ‘People’s Concerts’, established ‘to provide good cheap music’ for the less affluent, enjoyed much success. The professional and middle classes were also keen attendees. Diarist and schoolteacher James Knight often frequented concerts at the town hall; on 14 October 1858, he attended a philharmonic show which he ‘liked very well.’ Knight’s commitment to attending the entire performance was often found lacking – on several occasions, he retreated to a nearby beerhouse during the interval, not returning for the second half of the show. This suggests that concertgoers subverted prescribed codes

87 Diaries of James Knight, 14 October 1858, TLSAC DD86/1.
88 Diaries of James Knight, 22 March 1860.
of behaviour at such formal venues; it also demonstrates that the pub and the town hall were often directly competing forms of leisure. Knight regularly took his pupils to see musical acts at the town hall, such as the ‘Little Men’s Concert’ in 1859 – he evidently regarded shows at the venue as an educational and morally credible form of entertainment.\textsuperscript{89}

Fig.2.3: View from Cocker Hill of Stalybridge Town Hall on the corner of Stamford Street, c.1893; TIA t02133.

The town hall was the main location for performances by several local musical groups. The Harmonic Society used the site from 1854 onwards, predominantly performing oratorio and sacred music. Stalybridge Philharmonic Society held on average four ‘People’s Concerts’ a year there from 1856, following the success of their founder (and organist of St. Paul’s church) James Marsden’s ‘Grand Concerts’ at the venue in the early-1850s.\textsuperscript{90} A review in the \textit{Ashton Weekly Reporter} of a ‘tea party and concert’ at the town hall in 1862 enthused that, ‘the songs, ballads, and choruses were such as breathe the most lofty and pure sentiments, and their effect upon the audience must have been of the most beneficial character.’\textsuperscript{91} This statement neatly iterates the idealised (and actualised) emotive response to music as performed at an early concert in the venue. The character of the venue

\textsuperscript{89} Diaries of James Knight, 27 January 1859.
\textsuperscript{90} \textit{Ashton Weekly Reporter}, 8 September 1855; Milestone, ‘That Monstrosity of Bricks and Mortar’, pp.306-7.
\textsuperscript{91} \textit{Ashton Weekly Reporter}, 10 May 1862.
facilitated the writer’s evocation of the inherent spirituality of music and its invigorating worth. Furthermore, the town hall as an institution was a symbol of Stalybridge’s independence and importance; early musical performances there appropriated much of this civic pride. The materiality of the building abetted this – arched neoclassical doorways and chandeliers in the entrance and reception rooms displayed town crests (Fig. 2.4 and Fig. 2.5). The modestly decorated main concert room had few embellishments or ornaments to detract from its scale. Despite being a secular institution, its use by prominent local religious figures, such as James Marsden, helped retain an element of spirituality and legitimacy within the music performed there.

Fig. 2.4: Town Hall interior, displaying Stalybridge crest above the doorway; TIA t10342.

Fig. 2.5: Town Hall interior with detail of doorway and moulding; TIA t10341.

See also Simon Gunn’s discussion of the rivalry between Leeds and Bradford, in which he posits the musical festival that followed the grand opening of Leeds town hall as a ‘corporate institution’: Gunn, Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class, p. 139.
Despite its initial popularity, the town hall quickly dated; it lacked the ornamental flourishes of the later Gothic or Italianate town halls. Indeed, architectural historian Colin Cunningham claims that it ‘only [avoided] being mistaken for a mill by the provision of a careful Doric portico at the level of the ground floor and pedimented gable two floors above.’ The building stood on an acute-angled triangular site on a steep incline, which was problematic given the elected Greek Doric structure, a popular style in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. According to historian Rachel Milestone, financial efficiency inspired the town hall’s architecture, rather than a real sense of civic pride or functionality, with several inherent flaws restricting ease of accessibility to the public. It shared more characteristics with eighteenth-century models than it did its contemporaries—such as the addition of a fish market beneath the main body of the town hall. Reflecting on the building in 1881, the Ashton Reporter declared that it had been ‘built at a period before the revival of architectural taste, and one of the relics of that unfortunate Georgian era in which almost every building erected was a model of hideousness and bad taste.’ As early as 1855 its legitimacy as a prestigious venue was waning. The concert room began to attract complaints about its functionality from both performers and audiences, and the hall was lambasted as ‘the laughing-stock of all who came to the town’ in a meeting of Stalybridge Town Council in 1866. The establishment of the Mechanics’ Institution in 1862, discussed later in this section, accelerated this desertion and decline. As Attali has shown, numerous factors comprise and confound the experience of listening. The town hall no longer evoked the civic pride required of a central municipal building, thus the experience of listening to music there diminished. A space that failed to inspire detracted the ability of the music to do the same. In doing so, it offended sensibilities, contravening one of the main tenets of Stalybridge’s place-identity; Milestone concludes that only when it stimulated the civic pride of ‘those musical people’ of Stalybridge could the town hall claim to have truly influenced or represented the popular culture of the town.

Crucially, as well as failing to evoke civic pride, Stalybridge town hall did not provide a functional space for the practice and performance of music. The top floor of the town hall featured a ‘large handsome public room, 67 feet long, 38 feet wide, 23 ½ feet

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94 Cunningham, Victorian and Edwardian Town Halls, p.127.
97 Ashton Reporter, 10 December 1881.
98 Ashton Weekly Reporter, 9 June 1866.
99 Attali, Noise, p.19.
high; with small and convenient ante-rooms and an orchestra.' In 1832, the Manchester Guardian suggested that 'the room will consequently be very well adapted for concerts, balls, assemblies, public meetings and public exhibitions.' At a Commissioners’ Meeting in the same year, it was determined that the room was available to let ‘for public purposes as to be made [financially] productive.' However, in 1854 the Stalybridge Harmonic Society paid William Clay to fix the gas pipes, update the fittings and replace the concert platform, which suggests that the space was initially lacking in terms of its utilities, décor and acoustical properties. The ballroom was a long rectangular space, which may have left many attendees at the rear of the room feeling somewhat distant (and thus disconnected) from the performance on stage. The upkeep of the room was also condemned. In 1855, the Ashton Weekly Reporter complained that it:

… afforded undoubted evidence of public property at present in this town; everything was filthy and covered with dust – the walls, the blinds, and the floor – were all thickly coated, and it may be easily imagined what were the feelings of… patrons after sitting there for two hours in the dust-clouds so repeatedly raised.

As well as presenting palpable health risks and an unpleasant atmosphere in which to attend concerts, the disorder offended sensibilities; cleanliness in the home was perceived to demonstrate the moral condition and hard-working values of the inhabitants, yet in this case the central municipal space of the town (of which all inhabitants shared a notion of ownership) was found wanting. Worse criticism was to come, revealing inherent problems with the site’s infrastructure and design. In 1857, John Frederick Cheetham, secretary of the Stalybridge Philharmonic Society, ‘complained of the inconvenience of the Town Hall for the performance of music, [and] denounced it as ‘that monstrosity of bricks and mortar, in which it was difficult to keep one’s gravity.’ The suggestion that the town hall hindered the dignity of their performance reveals the serious and dedicated approach the society took to music making. It also shows how far the town hall had fallen in the public's opinion. Speaking at a public meeting, Cheetham called for a new building 'that would give the society sufficient accommodation for the concerts (cheers).’ The crowd’s support for this proposal reveals their desire for a central municipal music venue of which they could be proud. The arrival of the Mechanics’ Institution in 1862 satisfied their wishes.

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101 Manchester Guardian, 7 January 1832.
102 Manchester Guardian, 7 January 1832.
104 Stalybridge Harmonic Society, Accounts and Treasurers’ Books, 1844-1855, TLSAC D111.
105 Ashton Weekly Reporter, 29 September 1855.
prompting performances at the town hall to cease almost immediately. The Institution acquired all the shows previously held at the town hall, including those by Stalybridge’s leading choral societies.\textsuperscript{108}

The redecoration of the town hall’s assembly room in 1870 coincided with a brief revival in its popularity, but despite claims that, when finished, the room would be ‘the most handsome in the town and a credit to the [Stalybridge] Corporation’, criticism still abounded.\textsuperscript{109} A review of Stalybridge Harmonic Society’s performance of Handel’s \textit{Solomon} in 1876 claimed ‘that the acoustic properties of the hall interfered with proper effect of [the tenor soloist’s] vocal powers… At the outset the defective acoustic properties of the hall were painfully apparent, preventing, as it did, the thorough blending of the vocal and instrumental parts.’\textsuperscript{110} The public assembly room still did not meet the required acoustic and aesthetic standards of a venue for live music and – despite short-term attempts to circumvent the hall’s deficiencies – its inherent flaws proved too great an obstacle. The decision to improve the town hall due, in part, to problems with sound foreshadows a growing interest in architectural acoustics in the early-twentieth century.\textsuperscript{111} However, the 1870 modifications addressed visual aesthetics but not audibility, and ultimately failed to entice the majority of performers back to the site.\textsuperscript{112} A review in the \textit{Ashton Reporter} of the actor, singer and child prodigy Lydia Howard’s 1872 performance at the town hall lamented that it was ‘very poorly attended.’\textsuperscript{113} In the same week, four hundred people engaged in evening dancing ‘kept up with much spirit’ at the Mechanics’ Institution.\textsuperscript{114}

By the second half of the nineteenth century, Stalybridge boasted several alternative sites specifically constructed with musical production and performance in mind. Comparatively, audiences found the town hall lacking in its physical condition. It stood as a symbol of the town corporation’s lack of both ambition and progressive ideology. Following the 1881 Stalybridge Extension and Improvement Act, the town hall underwent major redevelopment. The developers expanded the assembly room, improved access into and throughout the building, and installed an imposing main entrance. Extensions to the building were in the prominent ‘Queen Anne’ architectural style, and the new interior design was

\begin{flushendnotes}
\item[109] \textit{Ashton Reporter}, 2 July 1870.
\item[110] \textit{Ashton Reporter}, 7 October 1876.
\item[112] Comparing the musical life of Stalybridge town hall to that of nearby Ashton-under-Lyne’s town hall during this period, Milestone concludes that the latter – designed specifically ‘with performances in mind’ and as ‘a place for rational recreation, the embodiment of the Victorian values of temperance, self-improvement, and morality’ – ‘seemed to provide for all musical needs.’ Indeed, in 1876 Ashton Town Hall held twelve significant musical events, compared to just two shows at Stalybridge town hall: Milestone, ‘That Monstrosity of Bricks and Mortar’, pp.312-3.
\item[113] \textit{Ashton Reporter}, 3 February 1872.
\item[114] \textit{Ashton Reporter}, 3 February 1872.
\end{flushendnotes}
fashionably grandiose. Where the building had once been dated and disowned, it was now contemporary and inspiring – the town’s premier concert venue and a locus of civic pride once more. However, until this modernisation process, Stalybridge town hall had for fifty years ‘stood as a monument to the utilitarian buildings of the past’; this undoubtedly shaped the experience of listening to music there, as the sound became imbued with the inherent physical and symbolic deficiencies of that space.

Stalybridge Mechanics’ Institution (Fig.2.6), opened in July 1862, was built by subscription rather than public money, ‘for the improvement of the intellectual and moral condition of its inhabitants.’ The architecture was Italianate, but with ‘a considerable amount of Gothic Feeling in the details’, ensuring that, unlike the town hall, the site adhered to contemporary taste. As Milestone contends, ‘the Institution was built as if it were a town hall, both physically and symbolically; and was designed to offer the people of

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115 For images of Stalybridge Town Hall’s refurbished public assembly room, post-1881, see: TIA t10347; TIA t10348; TIA t10351; TIA t10349. 
118 Ashton and Stalybridge Reporter, 25 January 1862. 
119 Ashton and Stalybridge Reporter, 24 August 1861.
Stalybridge everything they had missed out on in the building of their town hall in 1831." Performances at such institutions tapped into to a popular zeal for music, education and self-improvement, in doing so seemingly conforming to a middle-class ideal of rational recreation. However, historians have questioned the extent to which such institutions upheld these original aims as the nineteenth century progressed. Similar institutions in Stalybridge’s neighbouring towns invested in music as a means of education and source of entertainment during the 1860s and 1870s. In 1867 the Hyde Mechanics' Institute acquired a six and a half-octave pianoforte ‘with metallic plate throughout etc. in mahogany’, made by the London firm Broadwood & Sons. It was valued at £25, but the hire price was twenty-five shillings a quarter, ‘unless purchased outright.’ Concerts took place at the Albion-Street Reading Room and the Droylsden Educational Institute, featuring renditions of the ‘educational’ music of Mozart and Handel, alongside glee, choirs and duets. This repertoire supports Russell’s claim that the popular classes regularly engaged with and enjoyed ‘high culture’ or ‘art’ musicians, leading to a ‘vast middle-ground’ of music that became ‘common property’ for performers regardless of class.

As has been noted, upon its opening in 1862 the Mechanics’ Institution instantly emerged as the town’s chief music venue, with all performances previously held at the town hall immediately transferred to the Institution. It featured purpose-built facilities for both performers and audience:

The large hall is a splendid room, and apparently well adapted for meetings, concerts, lectures, &c., and we understand that it will contain between 400 and 500 chairs […] they have provided for the comfort and accommodation of the members, as well as to the useful and ornamental character of the interior, they would have felt highly rewarded for the great care with which they have attended to the true interests of the institution. […] it will be a most useful institution and well adapted for the object its promoters have in view. Both this acclamation and the subsequent success of the venue reflect the importance of a purpose-built concert room. The planners had considered the aural experience and comfort of the audience, thus enabling audiences to consume the music without distraction. Various mottoes inculcating notions of progress, prosperity and civic pride adorned the large public hall. These ideals were manifest in the architecture itself – the imposing symmetrical fascia of the building conveyed the integrity that the town hall had lost. The

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121 For a discussion of the aims and successes of Mechanics’ Institutes and similar projects, see: Mackerness, A Social History of English Music, pp.147-52.
123 Stalybridge Reporter, 29 January 1872, p.5; Stalybridge Reporter, 29 January 1872, p.7.
125 Ashton and Stalybridge Reporter, 12 August 1862.
'useful character' of the interior represented the intended function of the building, to educate and improve the local community. Concurrently, the 'ornamental character' of the large hall constructed a public space which demonstrated the stature and taste of the town. Subsequently, music performed at the Institution appropriated the communal worth and civic pride this space elicited.

The Foresters’ Hall was the one venue that came close to matching both the capacity of the town hall and the character of the Mechanics’ Institution, at least until the development of Oddfellows’ Hall and the Drill Hall in 1877 and 1879 respectively. The Foresters’ provided a venue for many of the town’s friendly societies. The building (designed by John Hallsworth, trumpeter and a founding member of the Stalybridge Old Band) cost £2200, the majority of which was raised by contributions from the 420 members of the Forester’s Lodges in the Stalybridge district. The procession to celebrate the laying of the foundation stone on 25 July 1836 evoked a sense of the tradition, musicality and performance that was apposite to the building’s intended purpose. The party congregated on the road leading towards the town hall and market (both symbolic sites of civic authority and prestige) and marched to this site, arranged as follows:

Three gentleman on horseback, the stone-layer or spokesman, the building committee of the Order, the stone getters, the stone masons, the joiners, Band, the Independent Order of Oddfellows, the Ancient Druids, the Modern Druids, Band, the Loyal Ancient Shepherds, the Gardeners and the Foresters.127

The Stalybridge Harmonic Society held concerts at the venue until 1854, when they relocated to the town hall. Their Accounts and Treasurers books, 1844-1855, reveal some of the material culture accumulated during their time here. The majority of items listed were drinking and eating ephemera, with an ‘ale glass’, ‘pitchers, pots and glasses’ and ‘six Forester’s glasses’ all purchased by the society during the 1840s. These items suggest that alcohol played a significant role in the practice and performance of music in this venue. Like the mid-nineteenth-century pub we saw in Chapter One, the Foresters’ Hall featured an indiscriminate assortment of furniture and objects, both reflecting and constructing that site as one of both conviviality and edification. A timber bookcase with moulded tiles held books and sheet music, and ornate candles were common purchases. The venue boasted gas lighting facilities, but may have used the candles to uphold an intimate aesthetic during performances. The Victorians were often suspicious of gas; its odour, glare and potential volatility offended middle-class sensibilities, and many critics perceived it as an ostentatious

126 ‘Building plans for Oddfellows Hall, High Street’, TLSAC 152 (1877); ‘Building Plans for Drill Hall, Walmsley Street’, TLSAC 22 (1879).
127 Hill, Bygone Stalybridge, p.185.
128 Stalybridge Harmonic Society, Accounts and Treasurers’ books, 1844-1855.
and deceitful form of lighting. The hall also exhibited a collection of oil paintings and boasted a large organ and library, again evoking an educational zeal apparent in many of its members and subsequently imbued in the character and experience of the venue. Much like the Mechanics’ Institution, music performed at the Foresters’ appropriated the sentiment of communality, conviviality and self-improvement engendered by such spaces.

* * *

This chapter will now consider the role of music in three other sites in mid-nineteenth-century Stalybridge: the pub, the home and the street. As well as exploring how the character and design of these sites affected the auditory experience, this section also discusses the mid-nineteenth-century developments that stimulated music making in such venues. The rise of musical performances in drinking establishments represented a commercialisation of an existing musicality and conviviality inherent in pub culture. Similarly, whilst affluent families and individuals had long practiced and performed music in their homes, the increasing popularity and affordability of the pianoforte century prompted a wider range of people to do so. The music performed at each of these sites assumed some of the characteristics of that space, although audiences at these venues did not articulate the relationship between place and sound in the same conscious terms as when discussing the formal or ‘official’ venues in the town. This may have been because attending performances in such ‘venues’ represented a more informal or spontaneous leisure activity, or, as suggested in the introduction, audiences considered the acoustic experience secondary to other characteristics of these sites, such as the conviviality and communality of the pub or the domesticity of the home.

Pubs were the most numerous and accessible type of musical venue in Stalybridge. They also played an important role in promoting musical participation, founding networks of musicians, and disseminating popular music.\footnote{130}{Clark and Houston, ‘Culture and Leisure’, p.601.} Building on the enthusiasm engineered by local societies and professional performances in formal venues, landlords sought to commercialise the existing musicality of their establishments. In the final decades of the nineteenth century, publicans of many Stalybridge establishments developed their venues to incorporate live music as a central tenet of the pub’s appeal.\footnote{131}{See Chapter One on Pub Redevelopments. See also: Russell, Popular Music, p.19.} This was in part an attempt to capitalise upon the contemporary fervour for music, and in part, a commercial response to the increased competition brought about by the emergence of the beer-house model.\footnote{132}{Russell, Popular Music, pp.84-6.}

By the end of the nineteenth century, 388 establishments in the Manchester region had licenses for live music.\textsuperscript{133} Music is also likely to have featured in sites without such a license. Musicians had performed spontaneously in drinking establishments for centuries, but by the mid-nineteenth-century publicans increasingly provided instruments and professional performances for their clientele. Musical ability was not necessarily a requirement – the ironically named Quiet Shepherd Inn owned a self-acting organ playing ‘forty tunes.’\textsuperscript{134} A notice in the \textit{North Cheshire Herald} in 1854 advertised the Globe Inn Concert Room, where every Monday and Tuesday evenings, ‘the most popular and Interesting Songs, Glee’s, \\&c., will be introduced.’\textsuperscript{135} The proprietors employed a ‘Professional Gentleman’ to ‘attend at the pianoforte’, taking requests from the audience, some of whom may have performed a ‘turn’ on stage. On Saturday evenings, the room was open for dancing, accompanied by a performance by a quadrille band. Admission was 3d., but was ‘returned in Refreshments’, thus suggesting that alcohol performed a facilitative role in the conviviality of the evening. In permitting and promoting drink, the pub often subverted the prescribed behavioural codes of more formal concert venues; whilst alcohol was available to purchase in many formal sites, organisers rarely used the promise of alcohol to entice customers in such an overt manner. However, it is worth noting that the proprietor of the Globe Inn concluded his notice by declaring ‘The strictest attention will be observed as to the company taking the above amusements, to avoid disruption’, thus suggesting that musical performances at public houses were liable to fall into disrepute.

The musicality of the pub reflected and responded to local traditions and practices. During the annual wakes season, local newspapers contained several notices from publicans advertising musical entertainment to accompany the festivities. Amateur music nights were a regular fixture at drinking establishments throughout the town, such as the ‘FREE and EASY’ events held by James Knight’s local, the Grapes Inn, on Monday, Friday and Saturday evenings from the 1850s onwards.\textsuperscript{136} These nights, also known as ‘tune ups’, featured local musicians congregating in the pub to entertain each other, with those unable or uninterested in performing expected to purchase drinks for the performers.\textsuperscript{137} The practice further facilitated the conviviality and solidarity of the drinking community, and constructed the pub as a locus of creative musical talent and a key networking space in the dissemination of popular song. These events also provided another opportunity for the residents of Stalybridge to prove that they were ‘a musical people.’ By the 1870s, such

\textsuperscript{133} This number that seems more remarkable in the context of the burgeoning Temperance movement of the late-nineteenth century; \textit{Yorkshire Daily Observer}, 30 January 1902.
\textsuperscript{134} \textit{North Cheshire Herald}, May 1854.
\textsuperscript{135} \textit{North Cheshire Herald}, October 1854, p.4.
\textsuperscript{136} \textit{Ashton, Dukinfield and Stalybridge News}, 11 May 1857.
\textsuperscript{137} Russell, \textit{Popular Music}, p.223.
entertainment was well established and ingrained within the culture of Stalybridge pubs, with professionals booked to supplement the amateur or ad-hoc performances. Publicans sometimes assumed this duty; the Swan Inn ran a ‘free and easy’ every Saturday evening, featuring proprietor John Haworth as both pianist and violinist.\textsuperscript{138} Such nights were the forerunners of the music hall, an emerging form of predominantly working-class entertainment.\textsuperscript{139} By the end of the nineteenth century, music hall was an established form of entertainment in Stalybridge. These shows took place in new commercial venues, most notably the Hippodrome, which opened in 1890 as the Grand Theatre. The popularity of music hall also underpinned the redevelopment of pubs in the late-nineteenth century, with many publicans expanding or renovating their businesses to include specifically designed music and dancing rooms.\textsuperscript{140}

Music did not only occur in the pub when planned or advertised; drinking establishments were sites of spontaneous musical performance and participation. Street singers visited pubs to give unarranged performances, and impromptu songs by patrons were commonplace, often resulting in a form of call-and-response discourse between drinkers.\textsuperscript{141} The presence of a pianoforte in many pubs facilitated and encouraged such activity, as well as reinforcing the pubs liminal status and inherent domesticity; the piano was the archetypal Victorian domestic object, dominating middle-class drawing rooms and signifying both their owner’s taste and social status.\textsuperscript{142} The White Hart Inn boasted a sweet-toned seven-octave cottage pianoforte, in a handsome walnut-wood case.\textsuperscript{143} The upright cottage model was a more humble early-nineteenth century design; nonetheless, it affected the perceived status of the pub, opening those sites up for use by gentleman’s bands and glee clubs. Society dinners held at drinking venues often culminated in singing and dancing – the songs performed were predominantly humorous or whimsical folk songs celebrating local or national identity.\textsuperscript{144} The Ashton Standard reported that following an agricultural fair in 1864, ‘Mr. John Scott [sang] in true Irish tints, ‘Paddy is the boy at Dennybrook fair,’ Mr. Israel Lawton, in a more serious and sentimental strain, sung ‘the death of Abercrombie,’ which Mr. William Mellow followed by reminding the company that

\textsuperscript{138} Ashton Reporter, 3 February 1872.
\textsuperscript{140} See Chapter One.
\textsuperscript{141} Russell, \textit{Popular Music}, p.183.
\textsuperscript{143} Stalybridge Reporter, 22 August 1874.
their ‘Ancestors were Englishmen.’ In 1858, James Knight described in detail a spontaneous performance by a ‘Paddy’ who ‘dropped in’ to J.K’s beershop and ‘saung 2 songs danced &c.’

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<th>Band</th>
<th>No. of Players Present</th>
<th>Meeting Venue</th>
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<tr>
<td>Old Original Band</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mechanics’ Arms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Old Band</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Mechanics’ Arms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stalybridge Ancient Shepherds’ Band</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Royal Oak</td>
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<td>Stalybridge Catholic Band</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Wheat Sheaf</td>
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<td>Millbrook Band</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Star Inn</td>
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<td>Ashton Victoria Band</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Q Inn</td>
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<td>Mottram Band</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Fleece Inn</td>
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<td>Moorfield Band, Denton</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Refuge Inn</td>
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<td>Hurst Village Band</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Rose &amp; Crown</td>
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<td>Parkbridge Band</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Fox Tavern</td>
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<td>Mossley Band</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Moulders Arms</td>
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Fig.2.7: Band meetings at the 1864 Jubilee Celebrations; ‘Stalybridge Old Band’, p.21.

Although rational recreationalists viewed banding as a means of keeping members away from drink, pubs played a central role in the establishment of two of Stalybridge's most prominent musical societies. Stalybridge Harmonic Society's first communal site was a schoolroom in the Castle Hall area of the town, offered to the society at the dispensation of Reverend T. Floyd of Holy Trinity church. Yet Stalybridge biographer Samuel Hill deemed it appropriate to note the proximity of this schoolroom to the Castle Inn, thus reinforcing the association between the pub and the development of the town’s musical heritage. Indeed, early meetings of the society often concluded with a trip to the pub, where the customers undoubtedly heard some of the society’s first (unofficial) performances. Likewise, a pamphlet produced by the Stalybridge Old Band to commemorate their centenary noted that they originally met in a private room next to the Hope and Anchor pub. Between 1819 and 1868, the band practiced at the Mechanics’ Arms on Market Street (where one of their players was the landlord), before moving to the Pine-Apple Inn on Kenworthy Street. The list of bands booked to meet and perform at Stalybridge pubs for the 1864 Jubilee celebrations on Good Friday (Fig.2.7) perhaps best displays the connection between drinking establishments and bands, as well as the popularity of musical societies in the mid-nineteenth century. This special occasion

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145 Ashton Standard, 21 May 1864.
146 Diaries of James Knight, 25 December 1858.
147 Russell, Popular Music, p.223.
149 ‘Stalybridge Old Band’, p.9.
magnified the everyday musical practices of the town; it also demonstrates the centrality of music and institutions like the pub in prestigious civic events.

Chapter One provided an in-depth analysis of the spatial dynamics and material culture of the mid-nineteenth-century pub, and argued that drinking establishments in Stalybridge were often small, liminal sites with inherent domestic qualities. The character and culture of the pub shaped how customers perceived the music performed within these sites. Although many publicans began to alter the layout of their establishments in the second half of the nineteenth century, the limited size of many pubs conferred an intimacy and inclusivity to musical performances that took place there. Yet music (or noise) emanating from the pub and its clientele could be oppressive; if the diarist James Knight wished to read his Shakespeare folio, he moved between pubs should the conviviality in one venue become a distraction. Indeed, he complained during one wakes week that the widespread festivities prevented him from enjoying his regular retreats in the peace to which he was accustomed.\footnote{Diaries of James Knight, 19 July 1857 to 22 July 1857.} Publicans in mid-nineteenth-century Stalybridge did not plan their establishments with acoustics in mind – in fact, as the previous chapter showed, pubs in the mid-nineteenth century were rarely consciously ‘designed’ at all. Whilst pubs were certainly sites in which drinkers constructed or expressed a sense of community and local identity, people did not expect these sites to evoke civic pride in the same way as they did their municipal buildings. This might also explain why Stalybridgeans did not seem to apply the same level of scrutiny to the pub’s suitability as a site of music performance as they did formal sites like the town hall or Mechanics’ Institution. There were no complaints in the local press about the acoustic standards of the pub, just occasionally the timing of performances, or lack of talent of those making the noise. Perhaps the type of person writing in, or to, local newspapers about the sound quality of the town hall was less likely to frequent music performances in the pub – or deem them worthy of comment or review. However, the lack of critical engagement was probably more representative of the more relaxed or informal status of such performances. There was also an element of group participation in music performed at the pub, embodied by the ‘Free and Easy’ nights discussed above. This was different from the communal listening experience of the more formal venues, where audience participation was purely through music and less so through interactive performance and drink. The spatial dynamics of the pub further facilitated this culture – the small, unsegregated rooms cultivated an environment in which everybody in the pub could get involved.

The home was another site of musical production and performance in mid-nineteenth-century Stalybridge. The Harmonic Society, established following a dispute at
the King Street chapel between the choir and minister, originally practiced at the houses of their members. Russell labels the home as 'a cornerstone of musical life', invoking Joseph Craven's romanticised depiction of a remote Yorkshire textile village during the 1840s and 1850s where 'in many a house, if one could have gone in, he would have heard a good concert.' In June 1854, the North Cheshire Herald contained an advert for an organ 'to be sold cheap', deemed 'suitable for a Small Chapel or House.' This notice suggests that instruments were common features of both public and domestic spaces during this period. That the other suggested site for the instrument was a religious building reinforces the perceived piety of music as performed either in a domestic or overtly spiritual setting. Fiddlers and flautists commonly practiced at home in the early-nineteenth century, but the pianoforte (or the cheaper concertina or harmonica) was the quintessential mid-nineteenth-century domestic instrument. Exploring the symbolic qualities attributed to the piano and its emergence as a household item can help historians to uncover perceptions and experiences of the home as a site of musical performance.

The piano entered into widespread domestic use in the mid-nineteenth century due to the development of smaller models, decreasing production costs and a more affluent middle class. Retailers of musical instruments dominated the advertising pages of Stalybridge's local press. Mason's of Glossop invoked the patronage of 'His Grave, The Duke of Norfolk', John Shaw and Son boasted a 'Music Warehouse' in the same town, Newell's of Ashton-under-Lyne offered 'Piano-fortes by the best London makers; and Harmoniums by Alexander... The Prices as Low as Good Articles can be sold out', and Slater's of Hyde targeted 'Lovers of those Delightful Instruments, The Accordeon, Concertina, Flutina, &c...'. H. Woodney of London Road, Manchester offered his services as 'Musical Instrument Maker and Repairer,' reminding any prospective customers that he also stocked all London manufacturers. In 1872, Ashton-based upholsters and cabinetmakers Sladin Brothers placed an advert in the Stalybridge Reporter: 'Pianos suitable for a cottage or mansion: Harmoniums suitable for a house or a large assembly, where power and melodious harmony are required.' Businesses predominantly advertised new pianos in the local press during the 1850s, but in the subsequent decades, second-hand instruments and 'let-to-buy' schemes featured more prominently; for example, Lomas'
Warehouse offered ‘Pianos by Broadwood, Kirkman, and other celebrated makers, for sale or hire on the one, two, or three years system.’ The piano hire system, believed to have been first introduced by Bethnal Green firm Moore & Moore, was well established by the 1860s, but impractical for many prospective buyers until dealers began accepting smaller deposits in the 1880s. Individuals also sold second-hand pianofortes in personal adverts, although by the 1870s the music emporiums undercut those doing so by offering old models at vastly reduced prices. In 1872, the £4 asking price for a Broadwood piano belonging to a household in Ashton decreased by two shillings each week until it sold. In the same year an individual seller offered a ‘fine-toned, 7 octave Cottage Pianoforte, in rosewood case; second hand’ at ‘a great bargain.’ The rise of the piano coincided with huge increases in the sales of sheet music. Several retailers of sheet music advertised in the Stalybridge local press. Booth’s of Hyde published a list of their most popular songs, a selection of ‘Sacred Choruses’, songs for the ‘Family Choir’, ‘Metrical [songs] and Other Chants’ and songs suitable for ‘The Juvenile Choir’. Their selection reflects the popularity of broadside ballads in this period, a trend expedited by their mass production and by improving literacy rates. Between 1844 and 1855, Stalybridge Harmonic Society made several payments for scores, which they then copied or reprinted for use by individual members. The availability of printed sheet music facilitated the distribution of music, ultimately resulting in the nationalisation of popular music culture. It also encouraged enthusiasts to recreate this popular music outside of institutions and societies, in pubs or the home. The popularity of the piano and the increasing sales of sheet music reveal that at the very least the intention to play or make music was prevalent in many homes.

The home was a site onto which individuals projected socially consecrated values; the experience of listening to music in this space responded to the process and results of this discourse. Family performances confirmed the healthy status of the family unit, whilst performances to outside guests perpetuated this ideal. The emergence of the piano as a

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160 Stalybridge Reporter, 6 January 1872.
162 ‘Whittaker's Pianoforte Warehouse... Old Pianofortes and Harmoniums taken in exchange... Good second-hand pianofortes always in stock.’ Stalybridge Reporter, 6 January 1872.
163 Stalybridge Reporter, 20 January 1872.
165 North Cheshire Herald, November 1854.
167 North Cheshire Herald, March 1854, p.2; Stalybridge Harmonic Society, Accounts and Treasurers’ books, 1844-1855.
household item also enabled individuals to utilise their musical abilities professionally.\textsuperscript{169} Organists and choirmasters of local religious institutions, Stalybridge’s self-appointed ‘Professors of Music’, offered lessons at their homes.\textsuperscript{170} This gave some men and women from less affluent backgrounds the chance to learn and play the instrument, even if they lacked the money or the space to own a piano themselves. Domestic music making was also a gendered act.\textsuperscript{171} Victorian literature commonly depicted the home as a site in which women practiced music and performed to their families and guests.\textsuperscript{172} According to Ronald Pearsall, the piano was associated with women in polite society; the instrument (or a cheaper imitation) was thus a status symbol in the lower-middle class or working-class home.\textsuperscript{173} Historian Cyril Ehrlich also argues that the purchase of a piano by the lower middle and working classes was an act of ‘social emulation.’\textsuperscript{174} Indeed, as late as 1881, music writer and critic Frederick Crowest described the instrument as a ‘highly respectabilising piece of furniture.’\textsuperscript{175} Even the popular twenty-guinea cottage piano, embellished with silk-facings across intricate fretted fronts, ‘merged with the clutter of the middle class drawing room.’\textsuperscript{176} Instruments, adorned with fripperies such as built-in candlestick holders, reflected a desire for an accumulation of the ornate – a display of objects that, individually and en masse, signified status.\textsuperscript{177} Yet this reading is reductive. The piano embodied certain societal mores, but these were manifest in the act of playing. Purchasing a piano did not symbolise respectability; the ability to use it did. Learning to play the piano tied into a wider notion of self-improvement; perfecting that musicianship demonstrated quasi-religious levels of devotion.\textsuperscript{178} To understand and adhere to playing etiquette was also imperative – how to sit, what to play, how to accept praise (or criticism).\textsuperscript{179} Moreover, the emergence of the piano as a household item unmistakably represents an attempt to satisfy the innate musical appetite of contemporary society. To focus on narratives of respectability and conspicuous

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{169} Ehrlich, \textit{The Music Profession}, pp.69-72.
\bibitem{176} Pearsall, \textit{Victorian Popular Music}, p.74.
\bibitem{179} Many middle-class conduct guides instructed women, in particular, in the etiquette and art of playing the piano; Russell, \textit{Popular Music}, p.181; Mackerness, \textit{A Social History of English Music}, pp.173-4.
\end{thebibliography}
consumption ignores the primary function of these objects, and the wider context of an emerging popular music culture. As Russell contends, 'over-emphasis upon the search for respectability obscures the existence of deep levels of musical sensibility amongst the working population.'

This chapter will finally briefly consider street music, whether deliberate or inadvertent. For example, performances in the home were not necessarily private acts. Confined living conditions and proximity to streets and neighbouring houses made it difficult to refine one's audience. In Elizabeth Gaskell's 1848 novel, Mary Barton, a factory worker in the street overheard Margaret's performance at the Barton's home, observing, 'She spun it reet fine.' In this way, music believed to be operating strictly within the confines of the home (and imbued with the meaning of that space) leaked into the street, in doing so reaching a new, unintended audience. The urban environment was full of music considered in and out of place, often simultaneously so. As historians John Picker and Alain Corbin and composer Raymond Murray Schafer have shown, specific sounds, such as church bells, punctuated and ordered nineteenth-century society. Moreover, soundscapes helped construct local identity, through both familiarity and resistance. Composer Barry Truax posits that shared experience of local sound signals created 'acoustic communities' which helped engineer a sense of place.

The Stalybridge streetscape featured a cacophony of noise, a series of pleasant and unpleasant frequencies emitted by street hawkers, buskers, marching bands and audiences. However, music performed in the street is possibly the hardest sound to historicise, as

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185. Garrioch, 'Sounds of the City', pp.5-25.
very little experiential evidence remains. Street performances were divisive or incendiary acts, with performers undoubtedly aware of the contrasting reactions elicited by their performances. On one occasion, James Knight and his walking companions were overjoyed to meet the illustrious Higham’s Band marching through the town from Manchester. Yet, in his diary entry for Christmas day 1858, Knight complained that he had ‘heard several bands during the night.’ The following Christmas Eve his response was less embittered; Knight and his companions continued drinking in various establishments in the town until eight o’clock in the morning, leaving a pub at six o’clock when they ‘heard the singers several times.’ Days later, on New Year’s Eve, Knight stayed awake so he could hear the church bells ‘ring the old year out and the new year in.’ This is another example of sound produced in a formal venue (the church) permeating the informal spaces of performance, the streets and homes of the provincial town, contributing to the soundscape of Stalybridge. Music performed outdoors was often invasive; nineteenth-century politicians articulated concerns over the physical and moral threat of street music, and authorities attempted to control or suppress this perceived public nuisance. In these instances, place and time determined both the response to the musical performance and, additionally, the power of that music and political agency of those performing it.

Playing instruments outdoors was often a knowingly subversive or political act. For two months in 1830-1831, a Stalybridge constable kept a logbook during a cotton trade dispute in the region. His account is largely concerned with the aural rather than the visual; he rarely witnessed disorder, but heard it frequently. One otherwise comfortable shift in which ‘the streets ha[d] been very quiet and the public houses orderly’ was disrupted when the constable was ‘disturbed at seven when a bugle went round sounding through the main streets.’ His entries suggest a sense of vindictiveness on the part of the performer. On 17 December 1830, having apprehended two men playing a bugle in the street, someone retaliated by ‘play[ing] a bugle about half past 11 o clock opposite the Police Office.’ The constable was incensed at the targeted slur, printing angrily (and perhaps in self-justification), ‘It is particularly legislated that if any Performer or Persons, plays any description of Musick whatsoever in the night time, that the persons & the Musick must be seized.’ Citizens used music, or noise, as a weapon in a variety of ways. On 25

189 Diaries of James Knight, 7 May 1859.
189 Diaries of James Knight, 7 May 1859.
190 Diaries of James Knight, 24 December 1859.
191 Diaries of James Knight, 31 December 1859.
194 Stalybridge Constable’s Log Book, 15 December 1830.
195 Stalybridge Constable’s Log Book, 17 December 1830.
December 1830, a ‘quantity of men with bells’ alarmed the police picket, forcing them to ‘go more in a Boddey at a night like this.’ On this occasion, a mass demonstration of noise forced the police to travel together in a larger group. On 10 January 1831, dissenters deployed another tactic, using isolated bursts of noise to disconcert the authorities. The constable heard infrequent, single whistle blasts in various locations across Stalybridge. These whistles were intended to split the police pickets up into smaller groups, as ‘several gangs [had] gone through the street’ in nearby Mottram and were heading to the town apparently intent on violence. These acts of disobedience occurred within the context of the economic and political unrest in the region, but they demonstrate the potentially subversive nature of noise in the urban environment. Their use by protesting citizens ties into E.P. Thompson’s work on the use of ‘rough music’ as a moral code in early-industrial societies. Furthermore, the tactics used against the constable and his colleagues can be read as an early formative experience leading to the ideological and organisational establishment of the ‘new police’ in the mid-nineteenth century.

Street music, pleasant or disagreeable, intentional or accidental, affirms the importance of place in shaping the cultural meanings and reception of musical performance. By taking place in the public spaces of the town, passers-by became part of the audience, enveloped in the sound whether they desired it or not. The spatial dynamics of the street and gusto of the performer dictated the volume of the sound and the distance it travelled. These outdoor acts of music making provided musicians with a means to express political dissatisfaction or their own self-will. However, it was more often a necessary means of conducting business and conveying messages. Many of those responsible for the musicality of Stalybridge’s streets may have viewed their actions as banal rather than exceptional or seditious. They may not even have been conscious of their actions, rather just caught up in the tumultuous chorus. Street music elicited contrasting responses, from the gleeful dancing in front of a marching band to the anxiety manifest by rogue whistles and horns. In the mid-nineteenth century, many considered the performance of street music to be a subversive act, as evidenced by the growing discourse on the moral and sensory sanitation of cities. Yet it was also a significant component in the construction of identity.

196 Stalybridge Constable’s Log Book, 25 December 1830.
197 Stalybridge Constable’s Log Book, 10 January 1831.
Competing sounds clashed, harmonised and blended to create a temporally and geographically unique experience; this soundscape provided another means by which Stalybridgeans understood and negotiated the landscape of their everyday.

**Conclusion**

By examining sites of music performance, as well as the responses they provoked, this chapter has argued that location was a crucial component in the experience of making and listening to music. Two aspects of a venue’s design were integral to its reception. First, the spatial dynamics determined the quality of the auditory experience. Secondly, the character of the venue determined its ability to evoke civic pride and the reverence of audiences. The competition between Stalybridge town hall and the Mechanics’ Institution best illustrates this. When the town hall first opened, pride helped the town’s inhabitants overlook its deficiencies in style, layout and auditory experience. Yet as neighbouring towns built their own town halls and other buildings offered a better concert experience, citizens began to question the legitimacy of their central building as a music venue, as well as its legitimacy as a receptacle or vehicle for civic pride. Refurbishment of the assembly room in 1870 restored some affection for its aesthetics, but crucially failed to address issues with the acoustics. The relationship between sound and space was symbiotic – the character of a venue shaped the responses to, and broader cultural meanings of, music performed there, whereas the audibility of the music was central to the reputation of the venue. Stalybridge Mechanics’ Institution benefited most from the town hall’s decline; performances there – and, to a lesser extent, at the Foresters’ Hall – appropriated some of the character and values, both idealised and actualised, of the organisation. More importantly, these venues elicited an affection and sense of public ownership that was lacking in the town hall.

Whilst the emergence of a popular music culture in the mid-nineteenth century is well documented, the prominence of music in the everyday urban environment has been less thoroughly examined. Stalybridgeans enjoyed and endured music in a number of venues and locations. There were formal concert venues, such as the town hall and Mechanics’ Institution, where the focus was on listening to the quality of the music and connecting with its sentiment – although it is important to note that audiences did not always follow prescribed behavioural codes, or respond to music as moral imperialists would have wanted. There were also informal music sites. The size and layout of the pub engineered a sense of inclusivity and interaction in its music experience. Drinking establishments also

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played an important role in instigating and supporting musical networks in the town, as evidenced by their role in the formation of the Old Band and Harmonic Society. The home was also often a site of impromptu musical performance. The increasing affordability of the piano made it a popular domestic object. Historians have argued that, for the popular classes, owning a piano (and, more importantly, being able to play it) was an act of social emulation. Yet this reading overlooks the wider context of music’s increasing accessibility and popularity. Furthermore, such idyllic representations neglect to acknowledge that music making in the home was not always a melodious experience, and that it rarely remained confined to the home, instead permeating neighbouring buildings and adding to the ambience of the already noisy streets.

This chapter has also read biographical and autobiographical sources for discussions or descriptions of music, to provide examples of the ways in which that practice shaped or reflected identity. Public music making was a predominantly (although not exclusively) male act. Leading venues in the town were explicitly aimed at men, and the language used by and about brass bands, in particular, focused on the labour status and responsibilities (familial and financial) of men. However, it is harder to read gender in the experience of listening, as responses from women of Stalybridge’s popular classes largely went unrecorded.

This chapter has shown that music was central to Stalybridge’s place-identity. This may have been chiefly inspired by the successes of the town’s brass bands and choral societies, but it was also manifest in the intensity of feeling about the town’s main musical venues. The failings of the town hall offended sensibilities; it threatened something in which Stalybridgeans had a ‘right to pride themselves.’ The perceived musicality of Stalybridge also relates to the prominence of music (and sound more broadly) in the town. Music existed in a variety of forms in a variety of locations. Even music considered ‘out of place’, such as the ‘rough music’ of the protesters, contributed towards an urban soundscape that helped Stalybridgeans negotiate their everyday environment, constructing local identity through familiarity, engagement and resistance. Examining the relationship between listening and location provides a means of uncovering individual and collective musical experiences. Thus, historians of identity and leisure need to engage more with sound and space to elucidate the experiences and cultural meanings of music. As with the pub, spatial dynamics and material culture determined the character of a music venue, which in turn shaped the ways in which people engaged with that form of leisure. Even leisure practices that took place outdoors, such as walking, responded to the character and physicality of the environment in which it took place. Understanding and negotiating this environment

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201 Stalybridge Reporter, 15 December 1883.
presented opportunities for men to develop important relationships and engage with their emotions. The following chapter will explore this further.
Chapter Three: Walking, Masculinity and Place-Identity

For James Knight, a Stalybridge schoolmaster in his early twenties working in the 1850s and 1860s, walking was both a necessary part of his everyday life and a means of expressing his identity.¹ When undertaken as a solitary leisure activity, walking provided a space in which he could privately reflect upon or manage his emotions; whereas with male friends, strolling offered a chance to develop homosocial networks and be recognised about town. Major events in Knight’s life were punctuated or made possible by walks in Stalybridge and its surrounding countryside. His courtship of Mary Ann Ford (his eventual wife) consisted of a number of carefully-planned rendezvous around town and subsequent escapes to the relative privacy of a hill in the nearby Peak District. Later, following the death of his son – the second of his children to die in infancy in as many years – Knight chose to hike alone, unable to bear the company, or pity, of his regular walking companions. After a few weeks of mourning he slowly reintegrated into the group, although not without a number of setbacks. Similarly, in the months following the passing of his father he took several trips to his father’s old garden – despite not having done so often before his bereavement. Knight used his walks, rather than the pub or the home, to express or engage with his emotions in response to great personal tragedy. This pattern suggests that, as well as providing a homosocial environment in which Knight’s social networks and public identity could thrive, walking also fulfilled an introspective purpose or achieved an emotional release for the young teacher – an aspect of the male psyche that is often difficult to read in our limited autobiographical sources yet which is fundamentally important to our understanding of mid-nineteenth-century masculinity.

Using Knight as a case study, this chapter seeks to elucidate two related aspects of mid-nineteenth-century society. First, the way in which one perceived and practiced (engaged with) one’s environment shaped the collective and individual identities of a town and its inhabitants. Secondly, leisure activities that took place outdoors, particularly walking, were integral to the construction of masculinity and gender roles. Walking conferred unto its participant a transient social space in which male companionship was consolidated and collective masculinity performed. Yet it also provided a realm for more personal or individual events – the management of emotions and the pursuit of romance, for example – which were equally significant in the construction of the male self.

Following the spatial turn, historians have recognised that physical milieu and material culture orders the everyday life of towns and cities.² This relationship is reciprocal

¹ Diaries of James Knight, 1856-63, TLSAC DD86/1.
— as Matt Houlbrook states, practices and identities ‘do not just take place in the city; they are shaped and sustained by the physical and cultural forms of modern urban life, just as they in turn shape that life.’ Simon Gunn, Patrick Joyce, Leif Jerram and Lynn Hollen Lees have all — amongst many others — built on the work of Henri Lefebvre to examine the design and use of urban public space as a means of understanding and controlling the city. Cities and towns exist both as physical and imagined spaces; it is this relationship between the perception and the reality that can often reveal the attitudes and psychologies of past generations to historians. Yet a focus on a dichotomous relationship between ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ (and their perceived divergent and conflicting cultures) has concealed the unsettled nature of many mid-nineteenth-century factory towns. More recently, Tom Crook has discussed the need to ‘de-urbanise the urban’ to fully comprehend the machinations of modern society. He claims that the process of urbanisation was facilitated by a dialogue between urban and rural, society and nature; realising the healthy city involved the technological reworking of the concept of nature to operate in an alien setting.

The pace and scale of urban growth in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries resulted in several villages becoming centres of industry within decades, placing enormous strain on space and lifestyle. However, by the mid-nineteenth century many of these new towns, such as Stalybridge, had not become fully urbanised in either a physical or imagined sense. The nature of their development meant they were still surrounded and, in some parts of town, permeated by countryside. Scholars such as Katy Layton-Jones have


discussed the transience of the early-nineteenth-century manufacturing town; this sense of ephemerality or ‘in-between-ness’ remained a feature of some new towns well into the second half of the century.\(^8\) The contested nature of such places shaped the perceptions and practices of their inhabitants, and thus constructed the identity (individual and collective) of those who traversed that space. As Alan Bairner and Sverker Sörlin have argued, it is vitally important to understand ‘the different processes of articulation and re-articulation of landscapes in the context of shaping… regional images and identities.’\(^9\)

Over the last two decades, there has been a renewed interest in masculinity as part of a broader body of work in gender studies. Historians have advocated a turn away from studies of masculinity based almost exclusively upon (often elite) homosocial environments, towards an appreciation of male interaction in the domestic realm.\(^10\) John Tosh argues that in the nineteenth century middle-class men developed and projected their masculinity through their ‘private’ behaviour as much as through their ‘public’ persona, highlighting the period 1830-1860 as a golden era for the pervasiveness of domesticity as a key component of male identity.\(^11\) Historians’ previous focus on ‘manliness’ (an often incongruous concept to ‘masculinity’) and the exclusive public sphere only served to propagate the problematic ‘separate spheres’ model of gender ideals and relations.\(^12\) Martin Francis asserts that men travelled back and forth across the frontier of domesticity; as Chapter One demonstrated, aspects of domesticity (and the particular forms of masculinity it engendered) were translocated from the home to sites of leisure and popular culture (such as the public

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\(^11\) Tosh, *A Man’s Place*, pp.51-142.

house), and disseminated from both platforms. Both Tosh and Amy Milne-Smith consider domesticity to be embodied in both a physical orientation and a state of mind: ‘it denotes not just a pattern of residence or a web of obligations, but a profound attachment.’ This chapter focuses on a site of leisure more problematic to categorise: the great outdoors. The distinct ‘in-between-ness’ of Stalybridge and the rural landscape which enclosed it provided a space in which public and ‘private’ (or personal) machinations of masculinity were constructed and performed; traversing this terrain presented opportunities for men to engage with notions of selfhood. This chapter does not attempt to examine this phenomenon within the well-trodden historical narrative of a flight towards or from domesticity. Knight’s frequent extensive walks away from home may at first suggest that he was unaffected by such ideals, even in the ‘golden age’ of male domesticity. Yet, upon closer examination, his preoccupation with family affairs on many of his walks suggests a more complex interpretation is required. This chapter engages with recent academic discourse on emotions and affect to add a further dimension to our understanding of men’s everyday experiences, to work towards a more nuanced reading of the nature of masculinity both performed and internalised.

There has been an interesting relationship between walking and masculinity in modern British urban history. The eighteenth-century ‘man about town’ and the literary flâneur of the nineteenth century featured in the writings of Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin. These ‘passionate spectators’ have been described by Lynda Nead as paradigmatic figures of modernity, anonymously traversing the city consuming spectacle and experience.

Acknowledging the male and upper-class privilege required for and ascribed

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by this act, Janet Woolf asserts that the central figure of the flâneur could only be male.\(^\text{18}\) Men held a privileged position in the nineteenth-century public sphere, developed through their control of exclusive homosocial environments. When undertaken with his male companions, can we describe Knight's jaunts through town as operating in such a demarcated and exclusively male setting (albeit a transient one – a space without a fixed place)? Furthermore, did the knowledge of the urban and rural environments (and the performance of that knowledge through 'strolling') represent a means of exhibiting status, thus facilitating the construction of public male identity?

Many scholars have approached the act of walking from a theoretical perspective, suggesting it is integral to the way in which the 'urban' is constituted and experienced.\(^\text{19}\) Michel de Certeau has argued that the act of walking is a process of appropriation and a spatial 'acting-out' of place – a 'pedestrian speech act' that is to the urban system what speaking is to language.\(^\text{20}\) Walking constructs the environment, ascribing meaning (and thus power) to both the act and place. Architects and anthropologists such as David Seamon, Jane Rendell and Tim Ingold have developed this idea to consider the value or experience of walking practices, and how they shape our sense of place.\(^\text{21}\) As an embodied practice, walking is at once mundane, natural and habitual. Yet, at another level, it responds to pre-acquired knowledge of the route, internal biological and psychological rhythms and the shifting cadences of one's environment.\(^\text{22}\) Indeed, historians such as Penny Corfield and Colin Pooley have considered walking – 'the art of human ambulation' – as a process of acquiring knowledge and developing subjective responses to the city which subsequently shape the practices and identities of city dwellers.\(^\text{23}\)


\(^\text{19}\) For an overview, see: J.A. Amato, On Foot: A History of Walking (London, 2004).


This chapter is divided into two sections. First, the chapter will examine the ‘in-between-ness’ of the new provincial town. Stalybridge experienced rapid urban growth during the industrialisation of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century. By the mid-nineteenth century the town existed in a hinterland between old and new, large and small, essentially urban and yet with resilient tropes and atavistic memories of its recent rustic past. As the topography of Stalybridge changed, so too did the way in which the town was perceived by those who negotiated its streets and environs. Technological innovations, such as the introduction of street lighting and the arrival of the railway, also changed the way in which spatial knowledge of the town was acquired and applied. This section establishes a framework for the rest of chapter; in mapping the geography and culture of Stalybridge, it demonstrates that how people understood their local environment shaped their identity and practices.24

Secondly, the chapter explores the relationship between masculinity, emotion and the great outdoors. Using the diaries of James Knight, it shows that walking, as both an everyday act and deliberate leisure practice, presented a number of opportunities for men. Walking facilitated sexual or romantic encounters with women. More significantly, it provided a space away from the home for men to manage their emotions in relative privacy. At first glance, Knight’s frequent walks appear to support the Victorian stereotype of an absent father and husband.25 However, whilst Knight spent a large part of his spare time away from home, his family were never far from his thoughts. He often returned bearing gifts for his children or objects for the home, and began taking his son and daughter on walks following a series of tragic but formative events. Knight’s peripatetic practices reflect a genuine passion for the outdoors; they also provided an opportunity for intimate family moments and solitude in times of emotional distress.

In charting James Knight’s walking practices, I am, more than at any other point in the thesis, providing the reader with the fullest-possible account of his early adulthood. Such was the centrality of walking to his life; it both underpinned the mundanity of the everyday and permeated the major events of his social and family life. It provided an arena for public display and, significantly, personal introspection. Whether he understood or was conscious of it, Knight’s passion for the outdoors was a key aspect of his development as a young man in the mid-nineteenth century. For the schoolmaster, traversing the contested landscape of Stalybridge was fundamental to the development of key relationships and

24 Houlbrook, Queer London, p.11. See also: S. Pile and N. Thrift (eds), Mapping the Subject: Geographies of Cultural Transformation (London, 1995).
emotional maturity, both of which shaped his male identity. Thus, for Knight and other men like him, walking was at once a functional, formative and reflective practice.

3.1: The In-between-ness of the New Industrial Town

Historians of nineteenth-century cities and towns have tended to depict a dichotomous relationship between urban and rural cultures, focusing primarily on the former and using the latter largely as a comparative means of illustrating the enormity of societal changes. This approach does a disservice to the complexities of, and changes within, rural communities during this period; moreover, it obscures attempts to uncover the subtleties of the urban experience. Louis Wirth argues that the separate development of rural and urban sociology is regrettable, and is the reason why methodological analysis of rural and urban likenesses and differences is lacking today: ‘To lump the great varieties of cities and rural settlements respectively together obscures more than it reveals the distinct characteristics of each.’ In several new factory towns, their connection to the countryside and agrarian economy was not severed immediately at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Rather, the coalescence of urban and rural helped support the character and culture of the town. Industrialisation gave rise to townships of thousands where villages and hamlets had stood decades earlier, but the development of these towns was still shaped by the topography and natural boundaries which had underpinned the earlier settlements. This was particularly true of Stalybridge; the mountainous landscape in which it was situated dominated depictions by social commentators and the leisure practices of its inhabitants. This first section of the chapter seeks to assert, through an examination of the shifting topography of Stalybridge and the public responses its geography engendered, that the character of the town was dictated by its status as a site in which urban and rural intersected. This section also serves as an introduction to some of the terrain (both geographic and intellectual) covered later in the chapter.

Recent scholarship has emphasised the need for historians to avoid perpetuating the notion of a rigid dichotomy between urban and rural in the nineteenth century. The

flow of business between town and country ensured that aspects of each culture were shared; moreover, the relative newness of industrial towns meant that such urban environments retained a strong connection to earlier settlements and some of their customs. Katrina Navickas and Patrick Joyce have addressed the need to emphasise regional specificity in their research tracking the resilience or appropriation of older agrarian cultures in the emergent political and labour cultures of Lancashire cotton towns. Histories of urban spaces need to consider their broader geographical milieu; in short, they need to recognise the sense of place which contributes towards the character of space. Michael Conzen and Marina Moskowitz have recognised the role of landscape (both vernacular and exceptional) in shaping identity. Landscape historian Paul Groth suggests that ‘landscape denotes the interaction of people and place: a social group and its spaces, particularly the spaces to which the group belongs and from which its members derive some part of their shared identity and meaning.’ Whilst historians of town planning have examined ‘built’ or provisioned green spaces in Victorian cities, there has been far less research into the congruence of the built and the bucolic, especially in newer towns such as Stalybridge. Using contemporary local histories and literary accounts, this section argues that the piecemeal development of Stalybridge in the mid-nineteenth century, coupled with its proximity to a distinctly northern countryside, led to its paradoxical or contested nature – what Jill Steward and Alexander Cowan term ‘the cultural liminality of... key areas that

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so often linked the urban and rural.‘34 This liminality then informed the perception and lived experience of the town, contributing to an urban culture which felt somewhat fixated on the possibilities of its broader geographic environs.

This section first discusses accounts of Stalybridge, to give the reader a sense of place and a background to the town’s urban development. Secondly, it explores how the advent of walking as a popular pastime precipitated greater intellectual and emotional engagement with one’s surroundings; Stalybridge’s quintessentially northern countryside assumed certain symbolic qualities which shaped the experience of traversing that terrain. Thirdly, this section examines the congruence of urban and rural in Stalybridge, arguing that this contributed towards the contested feel of the town. Throughout it will argue the importance of environment in constructing a town’s place-identity, especially in the new factory towns of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These settlements developed organically – they were unplanned and, unlike ‘smoke cities’ such as Manchester and Birmingham which similarly experienced unprecedented population growth, lacked any prior urban tradition on which the foundations of that place-identity could build.35 The novelty of towns such as Stalybridge shaped the way they were perceived and used by inhabitants; the very act of traversing these towns on foot was a formative process constructing both place-identity and individual notions of masculinity.

This chapter will now use four literary accounts of Stalybridge (written in c.1831, c.1893, 1907 and 1908, at the beginning and shortly after the period covered in this thesis) to illustrate the character of the town. These texts reaffirm the notion of a sustained connection between the built areas of the town and its adjacent countryside. A manuscript entitled The Town of Stayley Bridge: Its Present and Past Topography was written in c.1831 by James Butterworth, a local historian from Oldham.36 The text was discovered and reprinted in the first decade of the twentieth century. Although incomplete, Butterworth’s account presents a detailed history of the town’s parochial connections, infrastructure and culture. Unsurprisingly, the overarching theme is the arresting scale of urban growth which occurred in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries:

36 James Butterworth was born on 28 August 1771, at Pitses in the hamlet of Alt, within Ashton-under-Lyne parish: ‘In his early years he published several poetical pieces, which were favourably received by several gentlemen of acknowledged literary taste; at a later period he produced a number of publications descriptive of Oldham, Ashton-under-Lyne, Rochdale &c. which he entitled Histories; they were not destitute of interesting facts, but the composition bore evidence in some degree that the author was calculated to be more successful as a pastoral poet than as a provincial Historian.’ Quote from: Edwin Butterworth, Oldham Reports, 13 October to 23 November 1837, LSA D-BUT/F/52.
For some considerable time a few straggling habitations were all that marked the place, which neither increased nor retrograded, till its situation was judiciously chosen by manufacturers for the erection of their works, and in flew capital; population came to its aid; navigation seconded its commercial views; good roads, and, above all, the abundance of coal, multiplied its means and laid open the future opulence, extent, and magnitude of Stalybridge...[It] became every day larger and larger, its streets multiplied, houses started as if by magic into existence, extensive factories lined the avenues, and the once gloomy woods of Stayley became a busy town. “Perhaps,” says an intelligent inhabitant, “no place has increased so amazingly within the last half-century, both in its buildings, population, cotton mills and consequent extension and improvement in trade.”

This narrative (and the early-nineteenth-century quote used to embellish it) could apply to several other manufacturing towns, such as Bolton, Glossop and Macclesfield. Nonetheless, the description retains a sense of the indigenous response to such rapid change; the imagery of the town multiplying ‘as if by magic’ to replace ‘once gloomy woods’ suggests a celebration of the urban over the rural, the triumph of striding modernity over a ‘straggling’ bygone era. Yet as Butterworth’s account progresses, the ways in which atavistic practices and the surrounding countryside imposed themselves upon the character of the town becomes clear. It is apparent that the narrative espoused by Butterworth is not one of urban expansion devastating or supplanting the rural environment, but instead a reworking of the relationship between the two. Indeed, the second sentence of his history reveals that “[Stalybridge] was formerly, and is yet in some degree, a wild and romantic region, interspersed with bold hills and Moorish gullies separating them.”

Stalybridge’s position in the foothills of the South Pennines and on the north-west boundary of the Peak District ensured that this terrain dictated the appearance and feel of the town. John Mortimer, in his 1893 chapter on Stalybridge in a yearly guidebook, emphasised the town’s proximity yet contrast to this distinctly northern countryside:

A crowded mass of human habitations, mills, weaving sheds, foundries and workshops, with the consequent whirl and din of machinery, and outside these the silence of the hills and the solitude of broad, dark breadths of unreclaimed moorland, these are the sharp contrasts left upon the impressionable mind by the modern matter-of-fact town and its wildly picturesque surroundings.

The numerous peaks and troughs within the town each provided a different perspective on the surrounding landscape, and in turn the status of the urban form within this environment. Butterworth claimed that ‘From the foot of [Stamford Street]. Stalybridge appears

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38 Butterworth, *The Town of Stayley Bridge*, p.5.
stretching over the whole valley to the brow of Hough Hill. Houses, mills, and streets lie at your feet. The effect, heightened by the lofty ‘Wild Bank’ mantled in moorland line to the east, with the vernal Hough Hill to the south, is truly imposing and remarkable.' Conversely, the view from the aforementioned Wild Bank (399m above sea level) or Hough Hill (244m, Fig. 3.1) made the town seem less commanding.

Stalybridge’s town centre and extensive factories appeared much reduced in the context of the vast expanse visible from the peak, overlooking Merseyside, Lancashire (including the city of Manchester – ‘north and west of our standpoint, and generally half hidden by a valley of smoke, lies the most densely populated and the richest district in the world.’), Cheshire, Staffordshire, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and Clwyd, including Snowdonia on a clear day.

Local poet and biographer Samuel Hill, in Bygone Stalybridge: Traditional, Historical, Biographical (1907), noted that ‘when looking south, the fair valley… lies at our feet, and with its background of the Peak District hills forms a truly noble landscape.’ Hill’s descriptions of the town reinforce the centrality of the hills and the views they proffered to the town’s place identity:

Stalybridge may not exactly be a lovely town, but here at its gates we have scenery of which one can never tire, and mountain air of the purest and most health-giving nature. I have been permitted to see many of the beauty spots of this earth in Europe, Asia, Africa and America, and possibly I may be considered a bad judge, but in my eyes there is nothing in the wide

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40 Butterworth, The Town of Stalyley Bridge, p.11.
41 S. Hill, Bygone Stalybridge: Traditional, Historical, Biographical (Stalybridge, 1907), p.133.
42 Hill, Bygone Stalybridge, pp.132-34.
43 Hill, Bygone Stalybridge, p.132.
world which surpasses the view from Wild Bank, looking south, when the
heather is in bloom, and the sun is sinking in the west at the close of a
summer's day. God has been very good to us in giving us this hill.44

John Taylor Clark’s *Stalybridge, its Beauty Spots and How to See Them* (1908) makes
reference to the urban improvements of the mid-nineteenth century and focuses
predominantly on the countryside immediately adjacent to the town. Taylor Clark initially
speaks of ‘dear old dirty Stalybridge’ – a town he claims is often described as ‘a place to get
away from as quickly as possible.’ Yet his qualification of this statement reiterates the
significance of the town’s geographical location: ‘few towns possess such facilities for
going away, and such pretty scenery so very close and so easily accessible.’ Taylor Clark
takes the reader on a tour, briefly through the central streets (no ‘fine streets’, few
‘imposing public buildings’, but ‘the monster mills and chimneys, which form so prominent a
feature… have grandeur of their own’) and, in more detail, out into the countryside.
Significantly, Taylor Clark emphasises the proximity of urban and rural, and how easily the
boundaries between the two could be transgressed: ‘…in ten minutes it is possible from any
part of the town to get among the green fields, and a little longer takes one right up among
the mountains, whose pure air and glorious scenery one would have to travel far to
surpass.’46 Taylor Clark’s description of the route from the town centre to the northerly
countryside reaffirms the accessibility of the countryside, but it also demonstrates that
within the town the mountainous surroundings dominated the panorama:

Leaving [Stamford] Park and coming north-east to Thompson Cross, the
two hills of Harridge and Wildbank, each 1250 feet high, form a splendid
background to the bird’s-eye view of the town, and create a strong desire
in the mind of the visitor to inspect them…. Passing the Town Hall, ugly but
convenient, we presently ascend Mottram Road, and… we get fine views of
the woods around the base of Hough Hill.47

Upon reaching the edge of the town,

We ramble off to the right for Bury-me-Wick, with its pretty little
Waterfall, or the secluded and sylvan beauties of Matley. So we walk up to
the Deep Cutting, taking the left-hand road by the quarry, and keeping to
the left, we skirt the mountain side, getting magnificent views of the
Longdendale, with the Old Church of Mottram ever in view. Then for half-
a-mile, by a well wooded road, we pass several neatly appointed farms and
the picturesque Hollingworth Hall.48

The guide describes several of the areas visited by James Knight on his extensive walks,
examined in more detail later in this chapter. An area known as ‘The Brushes’ (Fig. 3.2) was

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44 Hill, *Bygone Stalybridge*, p.133.
47 Taylor Clark, *Stalybridge, its Beauty Spots*, pp.24-5.
48 Taylor Clark, *Stalybridge, its Beauty Spots*, p.25.
a popular and easily accessible retreat for the inhabitants of Stalybridge. Situated to the north-east of the town centre, the valley was densely covered by ‘scrub oak’ and, according to Taylor Clark, the water collected here was ‘the best in England’ (Fig. 3.3).\textsuperscript{49}

Fig. 3.2: The Brushes, c.1893; TIA t00195.\textsuperscript{50}

Fig. 3.3: Reservoir at the Brushes, c.1903; TIA t05552.

The approach to the Brushes valley is described thus: ‘Proceeding along the road for a furlong or so, we turn through the narrow stile on the left, presently reach the summit, and descend to North Britain Farm [where many walkers paused for refreshment]. Here again

\textsuperscript{49} Taylor Clark, \textit{Stalybridge, its Beauty Spot}, p.15.

we have a very fine view of the mountains Wildbank on the left and Harridge on the right, and between them the Brushes Waterworks of the Joint Boroughs of the district.\textsuperscript{51} Taylor Clark’s account gives a sense of the view approaching the summit of the peaks and the emotional response it elicited: ‘Along a deep hollow way through the trees, and a glorious prospect of mountain and deep valley bursts suddenly into view. Here and there are the dotted farm steadings, and the green of the cultivated fields shows bright against the sombre moorlands. Away south is the village of Tintwistle, and the rugged outlines of the Derbyshire hills, with fine views of the immense reservoirs of the Manchester Corporation Waterworks.’ The language used by Taylor Clark evokes a sense of spectacle and a passion for the (distinct character of the) landscape which can be traced to the broader social history of walking, as this chapter will now elucidate.

Much of the historical narrative of walking as pastime centres on the valorisation of the countryside by the Romantic Movement.\textsuperscript{52} William Wordsworth has been credited with popularising cross-country walking as a leisure activity at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The poet was renowned for his peripatetic zeal, undertaking vigorous and extensive walks with his sister Dorothy in his native Cumbria (formerly Westmorland) and further afield. Roving across the countryside provided the inspiration for several of his works, both in terms of content and in facilitating the writing process.\textsuperscript{53}

Walking was prescribed throughout the early modern period due to its perceived health benefits; the focus was on the act itself, as a form of exercise, rather than about an engagement with place and self.\textsuperscript{54} As such, the chief proponents of walking (as leisure activity) were the upper classes; the design of the interiors and gardens of their stately homes reflected this.\textsuperscript{55} The popular classes also walked frequently in this period, although according to the theoretical framework established by historian of urban design Filipa Matos Wunderlich, they mostly did so purposively rather than discursively.\textsuperscript{56} By the late-eighteenth century, the actions and verses of Wordsworth built on a steadily-growing enthusiasm for exploring the countryside – a zeal perhaps instigated by changes to the

\textsuperscript{51} Taylor Clark, \textit{Stalybridge, its Beauty Spots}, pp.25-6.
\textsuperscript{53} Solnit, \textit{Wanderlust}, pp.113-5.
\textsuperscript{54} Solnit, \textit{Wanderlust}, pp.118-25.
\textsuperscript{56} Filipa Matos Wunderlich identifies three different types of walking practices: ‘purposive’ walking (a necessary activity, focused on destination), ‘discursive’ walking (in which the journey is more important than the destination, involving walking at one’s own pace and rhythm whilst responding to that of the environment) and ‘conceptual’ walking (choreographed, pre-meditated and thus ‘performed’; often a creative response to an existing understanding of place); M. Wunderlich, ‘Walking and Rhythmicity: Sensing Urban Space’, \textit{Journal of Urban Design} 13:1 (2008), pp.125-39.
British landscape (both real and imagined) wrought by industrialisation.\textsuperscript{57} Wordsworth’s writings formed part of a broader cultural framework in which walking came to be seen as a respectable and viable leisure activity for all.\textsuperscript{58} This development had profound implications on several aspects of society. It formed part of a broader trend in the nineteenth century, in which access to culture became more widespread, both in terms of geography and class.\textsuperscript{59} Perhaps most significantly, the popularity of walking for leisure marked a shift in the way individuals engaged intellectually with their environment. Pedestrians sought out the picturesque (itself a term coined in the late-eighteenth century by William Gilpin, a clergyman and artist who instructed his readers \textit{how} to view landscape) and the sublime, attempting to enact what sociologist John Urry terms ‘the romantic gaze.’\textsuperscript{60}

Yet the popular perception of walking in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth century remained closely related to the environment in which that activity was conducted. The health benefits of walking in the countryside for leisure were widely publicised in medical literature; conversely, walking in urban spaces carried negative connotations in terms of wellbeing and affluence.\textsuperscript{61} The accessibility of the countryside from Stalybridge was highlighted by promoters of the town seeking to tap into this emergent public discourse on health and the benefits of ‘fresh’, countryside air: ‘The town is healthy; visitors who stay a few days find their appetites sharpened, and happily there is no scarcity of means for gratifying it.’\textsuperscript{62} As well as seeking to attract health tourists to the area, this agenda also reinforced the link between countryside and national identity; negotiation of the rugged mountainous terrain was deemed beneficial to the development of a strong physical and mental character, in turn assuaging cultural anxieties of degeneration brought about by widespread urbanisation and the perceived upheaval of older social and economic structures.\textsuperscript{63}

Taylor Clark’s description of the moorland surrounding Stalybridge as ‘sombre’ hints at the character of the landscape, both experienced and projected upon it by locals. Furthermore, the evocation of bleak, wild moorland ties into popular contemporary depictions of such terrain. Building on the work of David Matless and Catherine Brace, Melanie Tebbutt has shown how distinct regional landscapes contributed to a localised

\textsuperscript{57} Tosh, \textit{A Man’s Place}, pp.33-4.
\textsuperscript{62} Taylor Clark, \textit{Stalybridge, its Beauty Spots}, p.15.
sense of place, yet also remained central to projected notions of national identity. Indeed, many of the descriptions of Stalybridge discussed in this chapter restate specific tropes of the northern landscape and the character or identity it purportedly represents. Adjectives such as ‘dark’, ‘sombre’ and ‘bleak’ recur, yet above all there is a sense of the countryside as autonomous, beyond the authority of man: it is ‘wild’, ‘imposing’ and ‘unreclaimed.’ Even in Samuel Hill’s effusive account of the area’s beauty, the town is ‘hemmed in by… purple moorlands.’ Mortimer’s ‘A Factory Town’, in particular, evokes a sense of struggle between the built environment and its rural surroundings, each taking it in turns to appear the dominant party according to where one is stood in the town. This narrative (and the figurative language used to sustain it) is interesting for three reasons. First, the stubbornness (perhaps conservatism) and independent character of the landscape suggest that the terrain has assumed characteristics often associated with northern identity. Secondly, the allegorical resistance of the countryside to the effects of industrialisation manifestly taps into wider cultural anxieties about modernity that were being vocalised in popular culture and public discourse in the nineteenth century. Thirdly, the character of Stalybridge’s surrounding countryside was subject to gendered responses. In her article on Derbyshire’s Dark Peak moorland (situated roughly twenty miles from Stalybridge), Tebbutt argues that the landscape was gendered as the object of the male gaze. Similarly, Stalybridge’s landscape was a terrain to tame or conquer; pedestrianism (and later rambling) was a popular male pastime in the region, with local (and, on occasion, national) athletes demonstrating their physical prowess by walking great distances across the foothills of the Pennines and the Peak district. This practice ties into popular representations of manliness in which the countryside is complicit and necessarily gendered – as a viable opponent it has to be dangerous, obdurate and male. However, as Tebbutt reminds us,

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65 Hill, Bygone Stalybridge, p.132.
68 Tebbutt, ‘Rambling’, pp.1150.
landscape is susceptible to ‘multiple and frequently contradictory readings.’ It is worth remembering that the terrain near Stalybridge was also described by writers as ‘picturesque’ and ‘romantic.’ Indeed, one ‘well-known gentleman’ quoted in Bygone Stalybridge depicted the landscape as feminine: ‘[The] hills are the everlasting glories of Stalybridge, and almost identical in height and shape as they are I am always reminded… of Rider Haggard’s description of the mountains he calls “Sheba’s Breasts” in his book “King Solomon’s Mines”… No two hills can be more like the swelling breasts of a fair woman than Wild Bank and Harridge.’

To the inhabitants of Stalybridge, the geographical landscape of their everyday assumed a set of complex meanings. It was banal and functional: a terrain to be traversed and a basic factor in the development of the region’s agrarian and industrial economies. Yet the town’s rural backdrop also evoked feelings of belonging, providing a constant and commanding sense of place. Familiarity with this countryside engineered local identity, and traversing it provided opportunities in which the self could be understood and constructed.

This section will now examine some of the natural and man-made phenomena which shaped Stalybridge and its everyday use by its citizens. In doing so it aims to demonstrate the confluence of urban and rural in the town, further developing the notion of the settlement as a contested space. The river Tame, running directly through Stalybridge and forming the ancient border between Lancashire and Cheshire, was perhaps the first key feature of the town’s topography. It dictated its initial urban development. The proliferation of cotton factories and the construction of several bridges along the river were critical in the eighteenth-century expansion of the town. Although the opening of the Huddersfield canal in 1811 and the introduction of two railway branch lines in the 1840s opened up new sites for industrial growth, the town’s commercial and municipal centre remained based along the north and south banks of the Tame. The rebuilding (‘in a firm, plain, but substantial manner’) of the ‘Stayley’ bridge in the early-nineteenth century coincided with the construction of a new road, Stamford Street, which became the main thoroughfare for trade between Wakefield (to the north-east) and Manchester (to the west). Stamford Street was ‘constructed along [an] elevated bank and ranging immediately north of the town, thereby opening a free wide avenue without passing through the narrow, dirty passage of Rassbottom.’ Mortimer described the valley as ‘a convenient groove of communication’, with north and south linked by ‘at least two broad roads, a canal, and two

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70 Tebbutt, ‘Rambling’, p.1130.
71 Cited in Hill, Bygone Stalybridge, p.132.
72 Butterworth, The Town of Stayley Bridge, p.10.
73 Butterworth, The Town of Stayley Bridge, p.10.
lines of railway, all running parallel with each other.\textsuperscript{74} Despite Taylor Clark's valorisation of the countryside there is little sense of resentment in his text of the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation. He remarked that:

Though the land is not now so well covered with trees as it was when a squirrel could travel from Stockport to Saddleworth without touching the ground, there are so many lovely nooks and groves of trees, and if the sun is occasionally obscured by smoke from the numerous chimneys, we must put up with it as part of our teeming industry, until such time as legislation or the more effective economics compel an alteration.

Indeed, discussing the mid-nineteenth-century developments on remaining green spaces in Stalybridge town centre (in particular the market and public baths), Taylor Clark acknowledged that, 'What the place lost of a somewhat dingy picturesqueness has been more than made up by the convenience and cleanliness of the improvement.'\textsuperscript{75} Such a statement was representative of, and informed by, a twentieth-century view of industrialisation as a necessary and almost entirely-beneficial process in Britain's social and economic development; contemporary descriptions of industrialising communities placed greater emphasis on the pace and scale of change.\textsuperscript{76} Yet Taylor Clark's reflections retain a sense of this change, if not the experiences and emotions it engendered. His account reveals the piecemeal development of Stalybridge in the nineteenth century and the resultant synergy between urban and rural in the town's place-identity.\textsuperscript{77}

The countryside surrounding Stalybridge was also marked by a network of man-made amenities and landmarks. These included several farm buildings, the remains of an Iron Age fort at the peak of Buckton hill, railway lines cutting through the valleys, the reservoirs and dams of the Manchester Corporation Waterworks and the Joint Boroughs’ Waterworks, Ridge Hill and Stamford Park’s fishing and boating lakes. The latter provided a form of leisure for local inhabitants, even out of season: 'In winter the depth of the lake is reduced to two feet and if the frost is hard enough, it forms a splendid and safe skating place. The ice is well swept and otherwise well attended to, and after dark, immense lights are kept burning until late, so that all classes may have an opportunity of fully enjoying the somewhat rare pastime of skating.'\textsuperscript{78} Taylor Clark’s description of the view from Cockerhill (to the north of the town centre) highlights the confluence of urban and rural, industrial and agrarian, in the landscape:

\textsuperscript{74} Mortimer, ‘A Factory Town’, p.102.
\textsuperscript{75} Taylor Clark, \textit{Stalybridge, its Beauty Spots}, p.30, p.12.
\textsuperscript{77} See also: M. Nevell, \textit{Tameside 1700–1930} (Chester, 1993), pp.166-7.
\textsuperscript{78} Taylor Clark, \textit{Stalybridge, its Beauty Spots}, p.20.
From the top… there is a magnificent panoramic view of the Pennine Mountains, passing leafy Beechwood through the pleasant hamlet of Heyrod and away through industrial Mossley to the borough boundary at Roaches, and from there either walk to Chew Valley, Ashway Gap, the moorland inn Bill’s-o-Jack’s, or climb up to the wild rocks at Pots-and-Pans, said by some to be a Druidical altar.  

This infiltration of rural by elements of urban, and vice-versa, demarcated the town and its milieu as a contested site. As Samuel Hill noted in 1907, ‘One hundred and twenty years ago the vales before us were filled with forest trees, no canal existed, no turnpike road, and no railway track.’ His account provides a sense of the pace of transition, and of the coalescence of urban and rural, past and modern in the town.

Urban improvements such as street lighting and the railway contributed towards the spatial dynamics of the town. Railways cut across country terrain, drastically altering the landscape. They distorted notions of time and distance. As Michael Freeman and Ian Carter have demonstrated, this provoked cultural anxieties concerning the threat of modernity to nature and, symbolically, to established social orders and imagined national identity. The railways also altered the physical fabric of the country; they provided a national network, connecting cities and towns, but they restricted access within – and necessitated changes to – the local built environment. This was certainly the case in Stalybridge, where three different branch lines (each owned and operated by separate railway companies) connected in the town. The Manchester, Sheffield and Lancashire (later known as the Grand Central) line opened in 1845, followed a year later by a line running to Miles Platting in north east Manchester. In 1849, the London and North Western Railway Company added a third line running to Huddersfield through the Standedge Tunnel. After the three railway companies reached an agreement in 1849,
Stalybridge became a joint-junction station. However, this station was poorly designed and mismanaged. Passengers had to cross up to three railway lines to access different platforms, resulting in several accidents. In December 1866, an elderly man slipped when crossing the lines and was run over by a passing train. This incident elicited widespread condemnation of the station, and improving access to platforms became a major political issue in the town. An official from the Board of Trade recommended building a new station, or, if the railway companies could not agree to this, the construction of a footbridge linking platforms. However, the companies refused to co-operate, and nothing was done. In 1869, the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company returned to their original 1846 station. A large boundary wall separated the two adjacent stations, further frustrating commuters. Following the death of a 33 year-old man in 1877, Stalybridge MP and former mayor, James Sidebottom, prioritised a solution. The companies immediately erected a footbridge and discussions began about redeveloping the joint-junction station. After several delays and complaints of poor services and overcrowding, the new station opened in 1885. Street lighting, another symbol of modernity, also changed the way citizens envisaged and negotiated the built environment. It created different levels of visibility, pockets of light and shadow which people used to their advantage for safety, privacy or anonymity. Chris Otter locates such actions within a framework of the everyday operation and experience of power. As this chapter will later discuss, individuals (such as James Knight) used their knowledge of when and where the town was illuminated to arrange suitable meeting places and find less conspicuous sites for romantic encounters. This knowledge, in turn, fostered a sense of identification and association with the built environment.

New technologies of illumination captured the public imagination. Butterworth recorded that, following the erection of gasworks in 1828, ‘the streets [of Stalybridge] brilliantly shine at night by lamps, and the luminous vapour in shops render the scene magnificently grand and beautiful.’ Yet such familiar and glowing testimonies to urban lighting require assessment and contextualisation. Street lighting elicited several concerns in the popular imagination. These concerns were both literal and symbolic, playing on prevalent cultural anxieties. Over-illumination and dimness were recurrent complaints; the former often prompted an unpleasant or debilitating experience, whereas the latter was

85 Heap, Stalybridge in the North West, pp.17-19.
88 Otter, Victorian Eye.
89 Pooley, ‘Getting to Know the City’.
90 Butterworth, The Town of Stayley Bridge, p.11.
synonymous with areas of high criminal activity and seedy activity. Scholars such as Sarah Milan have discussed the (often realised) dangers of gas lighting and the negative symbolic properties of gas itself. Furthermore, as Otter argues, the growth and management of gas and electricity networks in the nineteenth century can be viewed as part of the development of a ‘technological state’ closely tied to an emerging liberal ideology. As such, the introduction of gas lighting to Stalybridge probably provoked diverse and complex responses. The reactions and attitudes of those who experienced it every day, often in less-celebrated districts of the town, are less well-documented. Technologies such as the railway and gas lighting, as agents of modernity and (complex) symbols of urbanization, contributed towards the contested nature of the town.

In presenting varied aspects of Stalybridge’s piecemeal urban design and idiosyncratic geographical milieu, I have deliberately sought to immerse the reader in a series of paradoxical or problematic attributes which convey the town’s contested nature. To isolate the urban history of Stalybridge from the specific character and cultural meanings of the distinctively northern terrain in which it was situated is reductive. The conflict between old, new, urban and rural permeated the actions and perceptions of those who lived and worked in the area. These tensions determined their ways of life and the town’s place-identity. Stalybridge’s unique position as the point ‘where Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cheshire all meet’ also contributed towards the contested or slightly ambiguous character of the town – especially when one considers the historic rivalries of these counties. It is critical that, in exploring the emotional responses experienced in and social functions elicited by walking through these spaces, one also acknowledges the significance of their cultural meanings to individual inhabitants of Stalybridge.

Several urban historians writing in the 1970s argued that mid-nineteenth-century conurbations were essentially ‘walking cities’ – compact enough to traverse on foot and/or

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without established or affordable intra-city transport. Although the veracity and usefulness of this claim for larger cities has been challenged, many new provincial factory towns such as Stalybridge could still comfortably be circumnavigated on foot, despite the marked urban expansion of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century. As such, walking was the chief mode by which Stalybridge’s inhabitants travelled within the town. This everyday act was central to the way the town was experienced and its place-identity created. Yet walking was also (and remains) an action that facilitated the construction of individual agency and identity. According to the cultural geographer Tim Edensor:

As a geographically and historically located practical knowledge, walking articulates a relationship between pedestrian and place, a relationship which is a complex imbrication of the material organisation and shape of the landscape, its symbolic meaning, and the ongoing sensual perception and experience of moving through space. Thus besides (re)producing distinctive forms of embodied practices (and particular bodies) walking also (re)produces and (re)interprets space and place.

Building on Henri Lefebvre’s *Rhythmanalysis*, Giorgio Riello posits that there exists a tripartite relationship between space, walking and the body. Walking enables one to engage with geography, the meaning of self and physical acts. The body is transformed through its encounters with the environment: each step places a stress on the body, each walk throws one’s gaze upon something temporally and geographically specific. It is through this ‘complex feedback relationship’, in which ‘bodies and environments reproduce each other’, that walking can construct both agency and identity. Furthermore, the change in walking habits in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries meant that, even when on purposive walks, individuals were perhaps more finely attuned to their environment. The contested nature of Stalybridge’s topography, brought about by its rapid growth and geographical situation, dictated the way in which its inhabitants perceived their town. Traversing this environment provoked individual and collective emotional responses; the

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act of walking provided a personal space which both aroused feeling and facilitated introspective reflection thereupon. It is to this phenomenon that the chapter now turns.

3.2: Walking and the Management of Emotions

James Knight’s diaries illuminate the ways in which walking in the contested landscape of Stalybridge provided opportunities for men to manage and experience emotions. Proponents of the recent ‘emotional turn’ in history have sought to recover individual subjectivity, writing history not just from the bottom up but also from the inside out.\textsuperscript{100} By exploring the psychological conditions and cultural rhythms, institutions and ideologies which shaped broader emotional codes, one can uncover the intentions, motivations and values that propelled everyday life.\textsuperscript{101} The interaction between an act, the response it engenders and how that response corresponds to contemporary ideas of emotional behaviour represents a process which can easily be overlooked if only external behaviours are studied. Knight’s diaries record a number of everyday acts and (implicitly or explicitly) his emotional state when conducting them. The ways in which Knight negotiated his environment are of particular interest; walking played a significant role in facilitating close relationships but also provided a space in which he could reflect on those personal relationships and the emotions they elicited. Knight walked with companions as a means of male bonding and a performative opportunity to display social status. Undoubtedly this aspect of outdoor leisure evoked both subjective and collective emotional responses, but these are difficult to grasp from the sources available. Instead, this section focuses on Knight’s relationships with his partner and children, on his roles as lover, husband, and father. The contrasting emotions encountered in these intimate relationships were expressed through changes in walking habits, with Stalybridge’s surrounding countryside providing a valuable space for introspection in particular during times of intense personal grieving.

The origins of emotions history can be traced to the social historian Lucien Febvre, who in the 1930s called for a ‘historical psychology’ that recognised the discontinuities in emotional experience across generations and civilizations.\textsuperscript{102} His appeal to historians to


\textsuperscript{101} Moran, Reading the Everyday, pp.1-28.

\textsuperscript{102} L. Febvre, ‘History and Psychology’, in P. Burke & K. Folca (Trans.), A New Kind of History: From the Writings of Febvre (New York, 1973 [1938]), pp.1-11; L. Febvre, ‘Sensibility and History: How to
‘establish a detailed inventory of the mental equipment of the time’ was borne out in Norbert Elias’s seminal text *The Civilizing Process* and the Annales School’s focus on *mentalities*. Over the last thirty years the debate has gathered momentum, prompting some scholars to refer to an ‘emotional’ or broader ‘affective’ turn. The focus has shifted towards uncovering structures of feeling - both in terms of the way emotions are disseminated throughout a particular society, and as a means by which traditional historical superstructures can be subverted. Three historians have emerged at the fore of this theoretical discourse. Peter Stearns contends that social expectations give shape to feelings and thus stipulate the repression or control of emotion in certain situations; ‘groups in social history… respond to emotional signals and cues from emotional culture.’ William Reddy and Barbara Rosenwein develop this idea to generate two competing theoretical structures of emotion. Reddy uses the term ‘emotives’ to describe the (consciously-performed) speech act of expressing feelings. Such utterances are both representative of feeling and instrumental in the self-management of emotion; they are produced and in turn produce. Reddy also advances the concept of ‘emotional regimes’ and ‘emotional refuges’ to demarcate the codes of expression and repression constructed by societies and governments. However, Rosenwein refutes such a dichotomous underlying structure of emotion. She contends that multiple emotional communities existed in a particular society at any given time; as individuals moved through different venues and social groups they modified their emotions accordingly, or their emotional style took on a different affect in this new arena. This structure grants individuals a greater degree of flexibility and agency in their command of emotions. Significantly, it also accentuates the historical and geographic specificity of emotion. This chapter develops these methodologies, emphasising the flexibility of emotional experience (according to location and company) and the expediency of Reddy’s emotives as a tool to read and comprehend the ways young men in the nineteenth century felt.

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109 A major debate in the history of emotions has been whether emotions are constant across time and space, or whether their definition (in terms of how they are felt, expressed and socially constructed) fluctuates according to circumstance.
Since the affective turn, academics have been particularly attentive to gendered experiences of, and gendered conventions related to, emotion.\textsuperscript{110} Recently, scholars have sought to approach the history of emotions ‘from below’, proposing methodologies which circumvent the problematic nature of the quantity and scope of suitable sources available.\textsuperscript{111} In using Knight’s diary to gauge his emotional responses, one is heavily reliant upon text or (recorded) speech as an instrument for expressing feeling. Yet something of the potency or immediacy of emotives is diminished in diary extracts written after the event. The expressions used in Knight’s testimony represent his considered emotional reaction, which differed from his instinctive response. Furthermore, sentiments recorded retrospectively do not fulfil the same function of ‘directly changing, building, hiding [or] intensifying emotions’ – at least not of the event which triggered those responses itself; as Susan Matt contends, even private scribbles and diaries are composed for an audience (even if that audience is only ever an imaginary).\textsuperscript{112} The relationship between words and feelings is problematic; as Rosenwein notes, ‘emotives privileges words over other forms of emotional behaviour’, in doing so overlooking the historical and geographic specificity of how a culture engages with emotions.\textsuperscript{113} This problem can be counteracted by embracing more abstract methods of ‘reading’ emotion.\textsuperscript{114} Everyday acts can be read as text, as a discourse between behaviour and spatial environment that reveals socio-political constructs of power and the subversion of such hegemonic structures. In turn, certain everyday acts and the environment in which they occur can be read as a form of emotives. Building on de Certeau’s classification of walking as a ‘pedestrian speech act’, this methodology makes it possible to consider walking practices as an example of emotional discourse.\textsuperscript{115} Knight’s diary extracts allow one to examine both text (as retrospective emotives) and actions to

\textsuperscript{110} Matt, ‘Current Emotion Research’, p.122.
\textsuperscript{112} Matt, ‘Current Emotion Research’, p.119.
\textsuperscript{114} Moran, Reading the Everyday, pp.1-28.
\textsuperscript{115} De Certeau, Practice of Everyday Life, pp.97-9.
reconstruct his emotional experience. The two examples discussed here illustrate Knight’s use of walking to experience and manage feeling, first in the early stages of his relationship with his partner, and secondly through his responses to the highs and lows of fatherhood. They affirm the significance of walking as a leisure activity, hint at the ways in which young men in the nineteenth century processed emotions, and reveal male attitudes to familial love and grief.

3.2.1: Romance and Courtship

In the spring and summer of 1856, James Knight used his local geography to arrange discreet romantic meetings with Mary Ann Ford, the daughter of a local plumber. Their relationship progressed via a series of encounters around the town and excursions in to the relative privacy of the countryside. Knight routinely took Mary Ann away from prying eyes to the “farthest pool” of Stayley Brushes, a renowned area of local beauty. A typical encounter involved the couple meeting on the steps of, or behind, a religious building (an unsuspicious urban location suitable for a supposedly ‘chance’ meeting), walking in the countryside over Hough or Ridge Hill towards the Brushes, before going their separate ways at the top of the Cinder walk (crucially before reaching Ford’s family home). Knight’s infatuation is first recorded in his surviving diaries on 20 March 1856, when he met Mary Ann (‘M.A.’) at ‘9 ½ pm near the Baptists’ Chapel’ but noted disappointingly that he ‘Staid with her only five minutes.’ The brevity of the meeting may have been due to the couple appearing too conspicuous, taking into account the time of night, street lighting and passing pedestrians. The following day the couple planned to meet at the Guide Post at half past two, but Mary Ann did not arrive. Knight ‘went forward to the Brushes & she overtook me on the way.’ Later the couple walked ‘a short distance up Ridge Hill.’ Their day was somewhat spoiled, however, when they returned to the town. Knight recorded that ‘in going home we stood for a few minutes besides a man’s door when he came & used very abusive language & at length struck me… I knocked him down kicked him and ran home.’ On 19 May, Knight and Mary Ann were chased away by someone who came out of a nearby yard. Such incidents illustrate the difficulties faced by the young couple in finding privacy for romantic or sexual encounters in the more built-up parts of town. Mary Ann’s disapproving family was even more of a concern; later that same week Mary Ann failed to meet Knight ‘on account of an “angry father.”’ On 21 April the couple met on the ‘Cinder walk’, but after just five minutes Mary Ann’s mother came to find her. Knight hid

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116 Diaries of James Knight, 16 May 1856.
117 Diaries of James Knight, 30 March; 1 April; 20 April; 18 May; 25 May 1856.
118 Diaries of James Knight, 23 March 1856.
‘out of sight’ and ‘heard an argument between her mother and her for staying out too long in going her errand.’

When faced with such difficulties, James or Mary Ann reverted to walking past the other’s house until they emerged for a ‘chance’ encounter. These impromptu meetings remained frustratingly brief for Knight, who resented only being permitted fifteen minutes with his beloved. Indeed, these frustrations provoked disagreements between the couple. The day after she had been chastised by her mother, Mary Ann walked past Knight’s house twice until Knight reluctantly followed her into Ashton. They did not get any time alone until half past nine that night, when they met for half an hour during which Knight was ‘rather sour with her.’ The situation was exacerbated the following day when the couple saw each other at the usual meeting spot at the agreed time but ‘had not an opportunity to speak.’ Mary Ann disappointed Knight again the next day. Knight followed ‘M.A.’ to the coal pits, then they walked together briefly (on account of her ‘running errands to Ashton’) and arranged to meet at nine o’clock, ‘but she did not get back until close upon 10pm & I was very angry with her & so we fell out.’ The situation reached its apogee on 25 April, when Knight ‘Saw M.A peeping at the chamber window (but that was all).’ He waited at the top of Wakefield Road (the usual meeting place by the Ford household) but soon lost patience and instead joined a passing male friend for a walk, not returning home until late in the night. (Whilst it is tempting to speculate upon the mood and subject of conversations undertaken on this walk, Knight’s diary does not give anything away). Knight then made no attempt to meet with Mary Ann for an entire week, other than a mistaken sighting when leaving a pub. The tiff was eventually alleviated following pressure from mutual friends. A Mrs Platt told M.J. Allen to ask Knight to visit; when he did, he was told that M.A. was ‘anxious to make friends with me again.’ The following day the couple met and walked together but did not speak. Despite the lack of verbal communication, the walk appeared to alleviate the tension, with Knight exclaiming ‘bless her’ at the close of his diary entry.

On 4 May, after taking a long solitary walk Knight waited opposite the Ford household, ‘looking out at the door at 9pm.’ Eventually Mary Ann’s cousin emerged and spoke to Knight for twenty minutes (‘I think M.A. had sent her to pry a little…’). Knight’s behaviour was becoming increasingly irrational, intimidating and expectant. This culminated in an outburst on 7 May, when he waited at the bottom of the church steps until Mary Ann passed, followed her up the Wakefield Road and ‘threatened her if she did not keep silent something I had been so foolish as to tell her.’ Their friendship was resolved on 8 May,

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119 Diaries of James Knight, 22 April 1856.
120 Diaries of James Knight, 23 April 1856.
121 Diaries of James Knight, 24 April 1856.
122 Diaries of James Knight, 2 May 1856.
123 Diaries of James Knight, 4 May 1856.
when Knight walked with his friend ‘S.S.’ in the evening and noticed Mary Ann at the corner of Acre’s Lane:

But [I] did not speak to her. We went forward as far as the Sportsmen’s Inn & went back, coming past home at 9½ pm. We met MA again. I went across the road and spoke to her at the bottom of Church steps. I bade S.S good night & went with MA towards the church yard after talking matters over we came down the road & went to the top of Wakefield Road where we parted at 10.15pm the Best of Friends.

The couple resumed their regular arrangements from the following Sunday, when they met behind the Catholic Chapel at half past six in the evening. They then took an unusually long walk together over Hough Hill, through Bury-me-wick and ‘along the bottom of the Moors & home by St. Paul’s church.’ Subsequent quarrels were less dramatic. After a disagreement on the moors on 8 June 1856, the couple parted. Knight, fearing that Mary Ann did not know the way home, ‘relented & followed her & met her at the ashes Farm & we afterwards made the quarrel up & took another walk by the bottom of the moors.’ What Knight and Ford discussed or practiced on their more amorous walks is less apparent. On 10 April 1856, Knight met Mary Ann on the ‘Cinder walk’ and stayed with her until half past ten in the evening. Two days later, Knight ‘met M.A. in Wakefield Road at 8¼ pm and staid with her until 10.15 pm.’ Both diary entries are concluded with an undecipherable code that reappears sporadically throughout Knight’s diaries, perhaps indicating when a secret (perhaps sexual) act or discussion had occurred. On one occasion the code is accompanied by the atypical observation that the liaison had occurred at ‘dusk’, perhaps indicating a romanticism felt by Knight. The infrequency of the code seems to conform to accepted historical patterns of sexual intercourse in working and lower-middle class courtship; premarital sex was tolerated (perhaps expected) within a long term relationship – but only infrequently and under the promise of eventual marriage, especially should the woman become pregnant. Indeed, by 7 September 1856 the couple had married and moved in alone together, and the couple had their first child early in 1857. Post-marriage, Knight walked far less frequently with Mary Ann (and rarely recorded in similar detail when he did), instead spending far more time strolling the urban environment

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124 Diaries of James Knight, 11 May 1856.
125 Diaries of James Knight, 1 June 1856.
127 The diaries entries from June to September are missing.
and rambling through the countryside with male companions. This affirms that Knight and Mary Ann’s walks were driven by the need to spend time alone together, and were less crucial once the couple had found their own home. It was not just Knight who took walks or ‘strolls’ in Stalybridge with female companions as a form of courtship. On 31 May 1857, Knight recorded that his friend ‘W.K.’ abandoned the group to meet with ‘his Lady Love’ and return to town alone with her. On another instance, whilst on a rare post-marital walk with his wife, Knight met ‘W.M.’ with ‘his intended’, and insisted upon accompanying the couple for the duration of the stroll, perhaps much to the chagrin of ‘W.M.’.

‘Walking out’ was a typical and crucial part of working and lower-middle class courtship rituals. It was particularly important for younger couples, who had to negotiate their lack of private space and, in many cases, the expectations of their families. If the woman was still living with her parents then the man would be expected to call for tea and sit with his intended and her family for the rest of the evening. These meetings included discussion of engagement and wedding plans, the planning of which in itself became a key component of the courting process. However, the typicality of such formal practices is uncertain. Such prescribed rituals were somewhat problematic when tensions arose between one or both of the couple and their families; in such cases the act of ‘walking out’ together assumed greater significance. This was the case for James and Mary Ann. Knight avoided being seen at Mary Ann’s house, wary of her chiding mother and ‘angry father.’ Indeed, Knight’s later diary entries hint at a fractious relationship with the Fords — Knight did not speak to Mary Ann’s father until his own father had died, after which the two became considerably closer. Class remained a central factor in relationships, with a particular onus on women to marry into a slightly higher social class, although without leaping too many social barriers. However, given that Knight was a schoolmaster and Mary Ann the daughter of a plumber, a perceived imbalance in social status seems unlikely. Mr. Ford may simply have taken a personal dislike to James, or the two families may have had long-standing grievances. It is also plausible that Mr. Ford struggled to accept the maturing and perceived loss of his daughter. Whatever the quarrel, the result was that walking became the primary means by which the couple’s relationship developed. These walks required an intimate knowledge of the urban topography and each other’s everyday movements to arrange meetings in discreet locations. The couple then utilised the

128 Diaries of James Knight, 6 October 1861.
129 Frost, Promises Broken, p.58.
130 Frost, Promises Broken, p.63.
countryside which was so easily accessible from the town centre to continue their acquaintance in relative privacy. In doing so, walking became a means by which the two demonstrated their knowledge and ownership over local public space. It became more than merely a banal or everyday act; it was an act of intimacy and subversion which begat a relationship which lasted thirty-two years.

It is evident that walking with Mary Ann represented both a functional (necessary) and emotional activity for James Knight. His diary entries become more excitable, and his tale of courtship is one of very few narratives to be recorded in detail. Both in the course of taking these walks, and in reflecting upon them, his behaviour is strikingly out of character, revealing an emotional range that is otherwise largely absent in his interactions with friends and in other diary entries. Other entries are informative but prosaic, yet when discussing his encounters with M.A. his style becomes increasingly fragmented and erratically punctuated. The Brushes, in particular, were a favourite romantic spot for the couple. The inherent beauty of the site and the view it proffered was coupled with the potential for privacy. Indeed, Knight’s description of the view in the spring of 1862 captures some of its appeal: ‘Some heaths on the Moors were on fire tonight, away over the Brushes towards Glossop, & it illuminated the sky giving it a grand appearance.’

Escaping to the countryside surrounding Stalybridge afforded young men and women the opportunity to develop close relationships and experience passionate emotions away from prying or disapproving eyes. As such, these sites (and the sundry activities conducted there) performed a formative role in young adulthood. The contested urban-rural topography of Stalybridge provided a demarcated space in which such emotions could be experienced and shared in relative privacy. In retreating to such sites to display and convey their feelings to one another, young couples unknowingly reinforced social norms which determined that such emotions were not to be flaunted or openly discussed in public. This coyness was, in part, concerned with ideas of propriety and preserving reputation. Such behaviour contributed towards the construction of a nuanced and complex view of masculinity – one which did not preclude introspective engagement with certain emotions, but discouraged their public display.

3.2.2: Fatherhood and Grief

James Knight’s walking practices also provide an insight into his role as a father and his experience of grief. Although such topics are discussed less candidly in his diary (making it problematic to analyse his reflections as ‘emotives’ in a linguistic sense), the loss of first his

132 Diaries of James Knight, 21 March 1862.
sister, then father and infant son within a short space of time brought about significant changes to his patterns of walking for leisure. His immediate response to the grief elicited by these losses was to become increasingly insular, avoiding or being especially selective about companionship whilst walking. Knight’s final diaries also hint at a shift in his relationship with his surviving children, as they increasingly became a presence (both physically and emotionally) on his sojourns into the moorland terrain surrounding Stalybridge.

Prior to the summer of 1860, Knight rarely discussed his children in his diaries. Their birthdays, illnesses and the occasional present purchased on an excursion to Manchester were recorded prosaically. Indeed, he discussed absentees from his school almost as frequently – and usually with more interest. Post-marriage, his leisure time was spent predominantly with male friends, on walks or in pubs. The births of the first three of his eight children (those covered in his surviving diaries) did not disrupt these social patterns. Knight’s first child and daughter, Sarah Hannah, was born on 27 March 1857. Unfortunately, the diaries for this period have been lost. However, Knight’s account of the birth of his first son, Harry, in November 1858, suggests that he assumed a passive role in the process. Knight left his wife with female companions and went to the pub for a celebratory two gills of porter. He slept for two nights on long benches at the school and spent the majority of the following week seemingly avoiding the house. The exclusion of the father during labour and his limited access to child and mother in the subsequent days would not have been considered exceptional practice in the mid-nineteenth century. Although fathers were increasingly present in the delivery room as the century progressed, especially in more affluent families, that Knight stayed away does not necessarily mark him out as an ‘absent’ or disinterested father. Whether through choice or necessity, Knight undertook a greater proportion of solitary walks in the first weeks of his son’s life – perhaps as a means of reflecting or engaging with his emotional response to the situation or perhaps simply to avoid the house. In 1861, during the birth of his second son, Walter, Knight walked to Chadwick’s dams to ice skate. He visited the

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134 Diaries of James Knight, 6 November 1858.
dams and reservoirs around Stalybridge extensively over the following week. At twenty-five years old, Knight’s requirement to be away from the home evidently did not preclude gaming with friends. Unlike when Harry was born, Knight did record Walter’s progress and the state of his wife in the days following the birth. Nonetheless, the only discernible change in lifestyle following the birth of his second child was that, again, Knight walked alone more often. It was Knight’s reaction to bereavement which prompted a notable change in both his walking practices and approach to fatherhood.

Walking presented an opportunity for Knight to privately experience the grief brought about by a death in the family. On 2 August 1860, Knight’s sister Mary died, aged thirty-nine. Knight’s next series of walks were punctuated by a seemingly morbid obsession with symbols of death and mourning. He adapted his routes to visit a number of local graveyards, and began walking into the countryside alone far more frequently. Knight’s father (also James Knight) fell ill the following month. Initially the teacher responded to the situation in a somewhat aloof and business-like manner; on 6 September 1860 he made several visits to his father’s house but remained preoccupied with checking if ‘by any means [my father] can prevent my br[other] making a merchandise of the goods if my Father should not get any better.’ However, the following day’s entry adopts a far more sombre tone, noting succinctly and bluntly that he ‘went to see father die.’138 Knight retreated from social situations over the following weeks, taking extended walks alone into the countryside. He declined all offers from friends, barring two second class tickets for a concert by the Stalybridge Old Band (these were a gift from his employer, so Knight may have felt obliged to attend). On 23 September 1860, Knight re-joined his male walking companions. Yet on the first occasion, he soon reverted to walking just ahead or behind his friends, eventually losing them altogether after deliberately staying on one road too long. By November 1860, Knight had resumed walking socially, but continued to take extensive walks alone as well. For example, on 16 November 1860 Knight walked alone over Ridge Hill for an hour in the morning, took another solo walk at 3pm through Park Hall and the army barracks, before strolling into town with ‘J.F’ in the evening (the day culminated in a visit to the White Hart with ‘J.F’, ‘W.W’ and ‘J.M’). The deaths of Knight’s father and sister elicited a marked change in his walking habits and personal outlook. Shortly after his father’s death, Knight resolved to reach out to his wife’s father – on 11 November he met with Mr Ford and they talked ‘for the first time... since or before I was married.’ This may have been an attempt to replace the familial support network (emotional, financial or instructive) Knight and his young family had just lost. Yet to completely reduce this reconciliation to such a clinical motive overlooks the social and psychological significance of

138 Diaries of James Knight, 7 September 1860.
this act for Knight, whose relief at having made peace with his father-in-law is palpable in
his record of their meeting. The bereavements also stimulated Knight to spend more time
with his children. From the spring of 1861, Knight took 'little S.H & Harry' on regular walks,
usually over Ridge or Standwick Hill.\textsuperscript{139} On 10 February 1861, the trio walked to his
father's old home. Knight had not been able to resolve all his grief by this point – he wrote
in his diary, 'my father's garden' before noticing his mistake and (rather pointedly) changing
the entry to 'what was my poor father's garden.'\textsuperscript{140}

The event that had the most lasting impact on Knight occurred later that year. On
25 November 1861 Harry and Walter fell ill, to be diagnosed two days later with
inflammation on the lungs (bronchitis). Knight's anxiety is palpable in his subsequent diary
entries; on his birthday he 'went to bed at 12pm but could not sleep for thinking about my
Little Lamb.'\textsuperscript{141} On 1 December 1861, Knight printed in large, calligraphic text that 'My
Dear Little Walter Died.' The child was interred on 6 December in nearby Ashton under
Lyne. For the next two weeks Knight avoided his regular walking companions (with the
occasional exception of close friend 'J.H.'), visiting churches and graveyards in the local area
alone.\textsuperscript{142} Peculiarly, Knight's grieving was partly alleviated (or perhaps internally
contextualised) by the death of Prince Albert on 16 December 1861, which prompted a
period of official national mourning. Knight busied himself attending lectures and sermons
on the death of the Prince Consort; over the Christmas period he became involved in
convivial socialising and walking socially again.\textsuperscript{143} Other than a poignant aside in his diary on
14 January 1862 – 'Our dear Little Walter's Birthday... He would have been one year old'
– the events (and motions) of the last two years seem to have brought about a marked
adjustment in Knight's relationship with his surviving children, and, indeed, his attitude
towards fatherhood. He subsequently wrote more openly about the deaths of his friend's
children. In early 1861 he simply noted that 'Little Samuel Hilton died at 9pm', but a year
later he confided that, 'I went to the funeral of J.H's little baby [...] registered Sarah Jane but
not christened which in my mind will not exclude the little innocent from Heaven.'\textsuperscript{144} This
change in paternal approach was perhaps best exemplified by his attempts in February 1862
to 'take & bring up Little Ernest, my late Sister Mary's Orphan Child.'\textsuperscript{145} Knight set about
the task of preparing for his nephew's arrival with vigour, purchasing new clothes and toys.
Yet Ernest was reluctant to leave his Aunt Nancy's house, where he had been staying since

\textsuperscript{139} Diaries of James Knight, 14 April 1861; 5 May 1861.
\textsuperscript{140} Diaries of James Knight, 10 February 1861.
\textsuperscript{141} Diaries of James Knight, 29 November 1861.
\textsuperscript{142} Diaries of James Knight, 15 December 1861.
\textsuperscript{143} Diaries of James Knight, 22 December 1861.
\textsuperscript{144} Diaries of James Knight, 23 January 1861; 30 March 1862.
\textsuperscript{145} Diaries of James Knight, 14 February 1862.
his mother's death. This upset Knight, who lamented that Ernest, 'being strange', was 'afraid to come & I cannot persuade him.' On 24 February, after a final failed attempt at persuading Ernest to stay overnight, Knight returned the child to Nancy's house and, extremely dismayed, embarked on a solitary walk. That Knight wanted to be alone to contemplate is evident in his irritation at meeting a friend, Mr Clayton, shortly after he set off – 'He would insist on standing treat for a glass of something for me so we went to the Volunteer's Inn & staid ¾ of an hour.'

These changes in James Knight's behaviour reveal certain tenets of male gender roles and identity in the mid-nineteenth century. They complement a rapidly growing literature on Victorian parenthood that challenges stereotypes of the absent or uncompassionate father. Historians such as Julie-Marie Strange show that working-class fathers were extremely affectionate towards their children, albeit this affection was expressed in subtle or unconventional ways often difficult to trace in the archives. The loss of a child could elicit intense emotional responses that require considerable unpacking. Men's active role in the upbringing of their children was a key part of their projected identity; fatherhood was central to notions of social stability, in particular masculinity. Megan Doolittle suggests that the 'sense of adult masculinity was usually linked very closely to marriage and parenthood and the heavy responsibilities this implied... None saw parenthood as choice, more of an inevitable consequence of marriage and full adulthood.' Thus the act of parenting was, in part, a social performance - albeit one which did not necessarily prohibit an emotional attachment. When viewed through this prism, Knight's walks with his children assume an alternative function, a means of displaying (and

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146 Diaries of James Knight, 18 February 1862.


149 S. Brady, Masculinity and Male Homosexuality in Britain, 1861-1913 (Basingstoke, 2005), p.35.


151 Tosh, A Man’s Place, pp.100-1.
subsequently consolidating) his paternal (and thus masculine) status. Similarly, in the opening chapter of Elizabeth Gaskell’s social realist novel Mary Barton, John Barton and George Wilson continue their country walk each carrying one of the baby twins whilst their wives rest. Here both men are defined by their parental role – the weariness exhibited by Wilson awaits Barton, whose wife is ‘far advanced in pregnancy.’ When passing the infants to the older children for supervision, Wilson’s ‘smacking kiss’ on the baby could even be interpreted as a performative act. Yet whilst displays of fatherhood undoubtedly served to uphold societal expectations of male behaviour, they cannot be viewed in isolation from the emotions which both prompted and were engendered by them. James Knight’s walks enabled him to develop closer relationships with his children and, in the process, assuage some of the grief elicited by the deaths of his loved ones.

Knight’s response to bereavement should be viewed in the context of a wider Victorian culture of death; there is a vast and expanding literature on how individuals in the nineteenth century experienced and understood grief. Such emotions often elicited a physical response. Ellen Ross has noted that mothers expressed grief for their deceased children through convulsions of the body. Similarly, the rhythmic nature of walking – the strain placed on each foot as it, in turn, propels the body forward – may have functioned as a means of Knight conveying or ‘working through’ his grief. Just as Stephen Garton has interpreted the diaries of J. W. Springthorpe (an Australian doctor lamenting the death of his wife in the late-nineteenth century) as a ‘peculiar [written] performance… shaping and rendering explicable intense mourning’, Knight’s recorded behaviour can be read as a bodily enactment of his anguish. His actions illuminate the nature of, and tensions elicited by, performed mid-nineteenth-century masculinity. Walking allowed Knight to rigorously maintain his public persona whilst also permitting him a formative space and activity in which to engage with his emotions discreetly. The northern countryside, and the ‘silence’ and ‘solitude of broad, dark breadths of unreclaimed moorland’ it proffered, facilitated this. Popular depictions of this landscape as bleak and foreboding – yet wildly romantic – encouraged such melancholy, as did many of the literary works which were a product of

\[153\] Gaskell, Mary Barton, p.8.
\[154\] Gaskell, Mary Barton, p.15.
Being able to grieve with discretion enabled Knight to continue to present a controlled and ordered self in public. On the one occasion when his ability to sustain this performance was failing, he hastily removed himself from the situation by deliberately losing his walking companions. Yet for Knight – and other grieving men in the mid-nineteenth century – the value of walking was not primarily to uphold moral reputation or help preserve a public persona. To limit the act as such is reductive, and threatens to ignore the psychological experiences and emotional range of men in this period. The act of walking – its rhythmicity, the location in which it was conducted, the seclusion or anonymity it could proffer – was an authentic response to loss which permitted men to engage with and ultimately process their grief, both psychologically and physically. The distinction between public and ‘private’ male behaviour (and the tensions arising when traversing the boundaries of these problematic and often falsely-dichotomous realms) remain central to the understanding of mid-nineteenth-century masculinity. However, emotional experiences should not become subsumed within this discussion – men felt and understood grief in public and private, even if it was more demonstrable in the latter.

By examining the words and actions recorded in Knight’s diary, one can recover a sense of the emotional state of the young man during key events in his life. Knight experienced (or chose to experience) the extremities of these emotions alone. This is particular evident in the ways Knight adapted his walking patterns following bereavements, to enable him to experience and manage the grief elicited by his losses. This suggests that whilst mid-nineteenth-century notions of masculinity permitted engagement with a range of feelings, aspects of that engagement were considered more personal acts to be concealed when with other male companions. Knight kept his emotional responses to love and loss largely hidden to all but his partner. Whilst attentive companions may have noticed general changes in his behaviour (such as periods of self-imposed solitude or the frenzied walks past Mary Ann’s family home), the exact nature of his emotional experience on such occasions was an acutely personal matter. As this chapter has shown, such behaviour can be read within the context of mid-nineteenth-century social norms and the wider Victorian culture of death. However, as this chapter also argues, how Knight chose to manage emotion was informed by but not primarily driven by societal expectations. Instead, walking was a rhythmic and somatic act which, in a contested and distinctive environment, enabled the schoolmaster to experience and process emotion on his own terms. This emotional role is why walking into the countryside near Stalybridge was so central to Knight’s life and

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undoubtedly many men like him – it was an act that, when required, provided a transient personal space in which one might engage with thoughts and emotions. Such privacy was perhaps otherwise hard to obtain in the domestic and public lives of working and lower-middle class individuals in the mid-nineteenth century.

**Conclusion**

Exploring the leisure practices of James Knight, and understanding the contested nature of the landscape in which they occurred, reveals the significance of walking to the development of his gender identity. John Tosh shows gender identity in this period as something which developed over time.\(^{160}\) ‘Becoming a man’ entailed a process of detachment from the family home, attaining (financial) independence, acquiring knowledge (both worldly and sexual), experiencing competition, and ultimately finding a wife and starting a family.\(^{161}\) Yet for an individual, this route was anything but routine. In the case of Knight, some of these milestones occurred whilst, or were made possible by walking. For instance, escaping from the town to the Brushes allowed him to form a relationship with M.A, and, once away from prying eyes, acquire some of the aforementioned sexual knowledge. Knight’s walks were also formative experiences; contemplating his grief coincided with a marked change in his approach to fatherhood, a role central to the construction and performance of male identity.

Yet walking also functioned as a means of experiencing and asserting another aspect of mid-nineteenth-century masculinity: homosociability. Many of James Knight’s walks were undertaken with male companions. The nature of these outings, and the ways he discussed them in his diaries, differed significantly from his solitary, paternal or romantic sojourns. Applying the tripartite theoretical model proposed by Wunderlich, one can identify three distinct categories of collective walking practices carried out by Knight and his male companions. First, journeys that were pragmatic in nature (‘purposive’), for example to pay for or collect specific items. Secondly, walks purely for the principle of leisure, albeit responding to previous experiences and surroundings (‘discursive’). Thirdly, those ‘strolls’ in which walking was engaged upon as a performative act (‘conceptual’).\(^ {162}\)

Discursive walks into the immediate countryside developed Knight’s friendships with other men. Knight recorded these frequent outings somewhat prosaically in his diaries. He mainly listed the names or initials of his companions and the route or destination of their walk.\(^{163}\) This suggests that the twin objectives of these walks were to socialise and to enjoy the countryside. In demonstrating their physical prowess and successfully negotiating the

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\(^{160}\) Tosh, *A Man’s Place*, p.103.


\(^{163}\) Diaries of James Knight, 30 March 1856; 12 April 1856; 13 April 1856; 24 May 1856.
landscape, Knight and his companions were affirming (to each other, at least) both their manliness (their physicality) and their masculinity (via their knowledge and negotiation of environment). Longer rural walks were also undertaken, perhaps indicative of the increasing popularity of pedestrianism. On 25 July 1861, after an evening in the pub Knight challenged J. Swallow to ‘a pedestrian excursion to Buxton and back’. They began the trip from the Church Inn at quarter past seven the next morning, arriving in Buxton ‘at 4pm just as the clock was striking.’ Knight noted that ‘We were in pretty good trim considering we had walked 22 miles.’ Despite having spent the entire day walking, in the evening they relaxed by taking a ‘stroll across the Crescent’, during which they ‘met some people from Stalybridge’. The following day they walked a further thirty miles north to Glossop, where they ‘resolved upon staying the night’ due to fatigue. The second day of their excursion also included a detour to ‘Lover’s Leap’, where they met ‘an old gentleman from Bolton’ with whom they later bathed in one of Buxton’s spas. As Knight and Swallow were preparing to return north, they met a further two friends from their hometown, perhaps suggesting that Buxton was a popular destination for Stalybridgeans during Whit weeks. That Knight and Swallow spent much of the walk home with the men they met affirms the significant social element of these walking feats. Later treks to Huddersfield on Christmas Eve 1861 (twenty four miles) and Buxton in the summer of 1862 were similarly sociable occasions. Such walks were borne out of a spirit of competition (an experience central to the process of ‘becoming a man’ as described by Tosh), but remained inclusive and convivial (further enhancing the homosociability of this leisure practice).

Knight’s diary entries reveal relatively little about his more routine walks with male friends. Some exceptional events are described, such as a walk ruined by the weather on 23 June 1861:

At 2½ pm J.H. called with a new suit of clothes on. We met with J. Shaw & we three went into the Brushes to bathe & just as we had begun to bathe we were caught naked in the Thunder Storm. Our clothes were under shelter but the rocks only afforded us a partial shelter & we were exposed partially to the fury of a very heavy shower of rain with hail for upwards of an hour we were quite naked. At the hour’s end we partly dressed as the rain nearly stopped but it shortly began again & we sheltered under the rocks & under an umbrella as well as we could & when the storm was over the brook was so swollen that it was with the utmost danger & difficulty that we could descend the fall from our hiding place. We were comparatively dry when we emerged and were [impressed] by the beauty of the scenery as every little stream was swollen to the dimensions of a rapid torrent forming beautiful cascades.

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Although such adventure was anomalous to Knight’s social walks, the unusually verbose manner with which he recorded the comic event suggests that he particularly enjoyed the camaraderie and male bonding prompted by the storm (despite the concern for his new suit). The group’s walks more often included a visit to North Briton or Goddard’s farm in the Brushes valley for refreshments. On one occasion, Knight and his companions were disappointed to find that ‘there was a very rough party’ at Goddard’s. The resentment of their excursion being disrupted is evident in the brevity of the visit and Knight’s supercilious remark that his employer was there with his wife, ‘but not with the party of roughs.’ This reaction reinforces the idea that Knight’s discursive walks were opportunities to develop homosocial networks of like-minded individuals; when confronted by people they considered a threat to this (either physically or by association) they relocated to a space in which they had greater control of their company: the countryside.

The third category of collective walking practice undertaken by Knight and his male friends is perhaps the most interesting. The visibility or performance of ‘strolling’ (a term used frequently by Knight) was essential to the construction and projection of the schoolmaster’s public male identity. The desire to be seen (and the fulfilment of that desire) consolidated this leisure activity as one operating in a transient but homosocial space. In promenading ‘about the town’ Knight’s band of young men sought companionship and recognition, but also to assert their ownership of the public spaces of Stalybridge. ‘Strolling’ took place in the built environment, and often culminated in a visit to the pub. Knight strolled with two or three close male companions (normally ‘J.H’ or ‘S.S.’), calling for them at their homes or pacing the streets until he chanced upon their company. As the group walked they often picked up other acquaintances. Their peripatetic conversations could be extensive, although precisely what was discussed is unclear – on 19 April 1861 Knight simply noted that he and his companions ‘strolled about until 11 1/2 pm conversing about different matters.’ Purposeful walks even occasionally turned into strolls, such as on 24 March 1856, when Knight was sent by his employer on errands to fifteen different locations in Stalybridge, Ashton and Dukinfield. Knight met two friends en route, both of whom then accompanied him on his final errands before undertaking a final lap of the town and retiring to the Wellington Inn for tea.

165 Diaries of James Knight, 1 September 1861.
166 Diaries of James Knight, 15 May 1856; 12 June 1856; 23 January 1859; 15 December 1861; 29 March 1862.
167 Diaries of James Knight, 5 September 1856; 15 December 1856; 24 May 1857; 26 May 1857; 28 February 1861.
168 See also: Diaries of James Knight, 5 April 1862; 27 December 1862.
These walks presented an opportunity for Knight and his friends to socialise and, perhaps more importantly, be seen doing so – either by potential recruits for their band or by onlookers (male or female) to impress. This behaviour represented a collective attempt to gain status in the town and, in doing so, demonstrate their autonomy in the public spaces they traversed, and was particularly evident in the group’s willingness to appoint themselves as guardians of others (especially women) who felt threatened whilst out in the town. For instance, on 1 April 1856 Knight, ‘S.S’ and J.S’ escorted ‘2 young girls’ to their destination because ‘some young man had tried to way lay them.’ However, Knight’s strolls with male companions were not without some misjudged demonstrations of bravado. On 28 June 1862, with the cotton famine causing significant economic and social problems in the region, Knight went with J.H. to see the damage caused by a group of rioters who had ‘spoiled 20,000 bricks’ and shot a policeman at Lime Hurst – despite Knight’s own misgivings in earlier diary entries. The duo walked home through Ashton-under-Lyne, noting they had to ‘look... about us’ for potential trouble as they did so. This was perhaps the only documented walk on which Knight experienced fear. Other misdemeanours or scrapes were discussed with levity or frivolity, but on this occasion the unease in the tone of Knight’s writing is telling.

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By exploring the walking practices of James Knight, this chapter has argued that men in the mid-nineteenth century used leisure to engage with their emotions, pursue intimate relationships and develop social networks. Knight was able to adapt his behaviour according to environment. He used his knowledge of local geography to move fluidly between different roles. Walking helped Knight construct his own particular version of masculinity – one which permitted private engagement with emotions such as love and grief, but also required the control of these emotions in public.

Walking was a formative act, providing opportunities for romantic or sexual encounters that marked men’s passage to adulthood. Familiarity with Stalybridge’s built environment and its surrounding countryside (such as picturesque but discrete places like the Brushes) allowed Knight to successfully meet and court Mary Ann Ford away from discerning parties. Walking helped Knight to overcome bereavement, and form closer relationships with his surviving children; these experiences enabled the construction and realisation of his familial role and identity. It also encouraged homosociability. Knight and his male friends ‘strolled’ the streets and explored the countryside easily and openly accessible to them. Their knowledge of Stalybridge and its environs may have given them a sense of ownership over these spaces. Moreover, they provided convenient meeting places and presented myriad opportunities for private discussion or public performance.
Stalybridge’s geography was essential to the role of walking in facilitating intimate experiences and emotional engagement. Understanding this landscape – and how Stalybridgeans perceived and experienced it – reveals the ways in which leisure and environment shaped both local and male identity. The town’s proximity to the southern Pennines and Peak District, infancy as an urban settlement and piecemeal development all shaped how residents and outsiders perceived the town. The accessibility and distinct character of the landscape dominated contemporary depictions of Stalybridge, with writers such as John Taylor Clark emphasising the contrast between the industrial and bucolic. This suggests that urban historians need to consider the contested nature of mid-nineteenth-century industrial towns, in particular the ‘in-between-ness’ (or liminality) brought about by their newness and wider geographic milieu.

This chapter has shown that leisure and location helped men construct, conceal and perform different facets of their particular male identity. The ability to move fluidly between different roles is a consistent characteristic of the multiple transient masculinities in operation in the mid-nineteenth century (and now). Men used their knowledge of their everyday environment to enact this fluidity. The mechanics of walking – its inherent rhythmicity and the tripartite relationship between walking, space and the body – stimulated this familiarity and identification with place. As in Chapters One and Two, this demonstrates that leisure responded to the character and physicality of the setting in which it took place. Exploring this relationship enables historians to elucidate the ways in which leisure constructed masculinity in the mid-nineteenth century.
Conclusion

This thesis began by proposing that investigating sites of leisure in towns might further our historical understanding of identity and experience in the mid-nineteenth century. It emphasised the need to acknowledge the regional specificity, uneven development, and newness of towns such as Stalybridge, to better understand their place-identity and cultural practices. It warned against depicting these towns as less-developed versions of the larger commercial centres they served and surrounded. This approach informed two further hypotheses. First, historians often privilege class in their analyses of both gender and leisure, whereas examining the material spaces in which leisure took place can help address this imbalance and better elucidate the experiences and meanings of those practices. Secondly, leisure played a powerful role in the construction of masculinity in towns such as Stalybridge; it presented men with opportunities to develop, conceal and convey different aspects of their male identity, as well as facilitating social and professional networks.

In the mid-nineteenth century, leisure was a relatively novel and increasingly distinct area of everyday life. However, this thesis challenged the notion that leisure in this period was, above all, informed by class. Instead, it emphasised the role played by leisure in shaping both local identity and, in particular, male identity and behaviour. This emphasis was not an attempt to dismiss class as a useful tool for historical analysis, or to suggest that leisure did not feature at all in the formation and performance of class. Instead, the thesis responded to Andrew Davies and Patrick Joyce’s calls to begin with culture and work backwards, rather than instinctively and immediately projecting class on to every source.¹ In adopting this approach, my research has exposed how factors such as gender, life cycle and local identity shaped – and were shaped by – experiences of leisure.

Leisure was an integral part of the urban culture of a new town such as Stalybridge. In 1828, following half a century of industrialisation, Stalybridge took its first steps towards political autonomy with the Town Improvement Act. The next fifty years saw a period of emerging stability in the town’s history. Other than during the 1861-65 Lancashire cotton famine, the town’s population and economy continued to grow at a significant but steady rate, and, despite piecemeal urban development, a number of key institutions emerged, from informal sites such as the pub to municipal buildings such as the town hall and Mechanics’ Institution. Leisure shaped Stalybridge’s built environment and the everyday life of its inhabitants. Furthermore, as Chapters Two and Three both argued, leisure was a significant factor in how locals perceived their town. Although many mid-nineteenth-

century towns experienced a similar upturn in the practice and performance of music, Stalybridgeans considered their passion for music to be particularly remarkable. They prided themselves on their musical culture, as evidenced by the claims of the Stalybridge Reporter and their response to the acoustic and architectural failings of the town hall, the town’s principal music venue. Likewise, several local writers drew on Stalybridge’s proximity to the countryside of the Peak District and southern Pennines in their depictions of the town, emphasising the opportunities for walking provided by this geographic setting. In calling attention to leisure, these authors attempted to shift focus away from industry as the central tenet of the town’s identity, whilst still acknowledging the changes brought about by urbanisation. As such, the ways in which Stalybridgeans discussed music and walking demonstrates the importance of leisure, not just in terms of how they viewed their town, but also how they wished others to view their town. Leisure also helped familiarise people with their environment. Thus leisure was particularly important in a new town, such as Stalybridge, where the townscape was continually changing and expanding. Walking was perhaps the most obvious leisure practice that helped individuals both acquire and utilise knowledge of their surroundings. The inherent rhythmicity of that act (the tripartite relationship between movement, space and the body) abetted this. Music, especially that performed ‘out of place’ as part of the cacophonous urban soundscape, also helped Stalybridgeans understand and negotiate their everyday environment, through familiarity, engagement and resistance.

This thesis returned throughout to the Stalybridge schoolmaster James Knight as an example of a young man who used leisure to construct and express his gender identity. The ways that historians such as Carolyn Steedman, Matt Houlbrook and Hannah Barker use individuals to provide a narrative and analytical thread throughout their research informed this approach. Using Knight’s diaries in each chapter of this thesis enabled me to uncover some of the forms and uses of leisure in Stalybridge, as well as present an extensive account of how one individual experienced his specific urban environment. Whilst I have tried not to present Knight as either unique or typical, his diaries provide a relatively rare

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2 Stalybridge Reporter, 15 December 1883.
4 Diaries of James Knight, 1856-63, TLSAC DD86/1.
account of the everyday life of an 'ordinary person' in the mid-nineteenth century, both in what he recorded and the way he did so.⁵

Knight wrote about his leisure activities far more frequently, and in far more detail, than he did his work or domestic life. Born in 1835, he was part of the first generation to have grown up in Stalybridge as a recognized town and his diaries cover a formative period in his male identity, during which he established a career and started a family. Knight’s experiences show that leisure was not merely a retreat from these other areas of life, but instead provided opportunities for him to explore and express his identity. Knight’s two main passions were pubs and walking. He visited drinking establishments to eat, socialise and study, whereas walking helped him to form male friendships, arrange romantic encounters and advance his relationship with his children. Walking also provided opportunities for the schoolmaster to engage with his emotions, and, when necessary, conceal them from others. Thus Knight used leisure and his knowledge of the local environment to move fluidly between different roles, in doing so constructing his own subjective male identity. Historians thus need to consider the flexibility and transience of identity, as well as the subjectivity of experience, within wider debates on masculinity and urban space.

In studying Knight’s walking practices, this thesis has also engaged with the recent ‘affective turn’, responding to recent research on loss and on fatherhood that emphasises men’s emotional and physical involvement in these situations.⁶ Knight responded to the losses of his sister, father and child by removing himself from social situations. Whilst regular walking and drinking companions would probably have been aware of the context for this change in Knight’s behaviour, his actual experience of grief was private. Furthermore, although he may not have articulated or been conscious of the link, bereavement elicited a marked change in Knight’s parental role. He subsequently spent more time with his children, taking them on walks and buying presents for them more frequently. These actions show the flexibility and evolution of Knight’s male identity, as well as demonstrating that emotional engagement played a powerful role in the development of character and gender roles. Thus the historiography of fatherhood (and male identity more broadly) needs to be extended to further consider the relationship between emotions, selfhood and actions.

A central theme of this thesis is its focus on the role of material spaces in shaping experiences of leisure and the construction and performance of identity. Chapter One argued that the mid-nineteenth-century pub retained strong elements of the home in its layout and material culture. This brought about the inherent liminality and domesticity of the pub, which in turn affected the way clientele used these sites. Moreover, it allowed men to appropriate the pub as a site of surrogate domesticity, making it a formative site in their everyday life and social development. The diversity of the functions fulfilled by the pub also helped men to move fluidly between different interpretations or expressions of their male identity. Chapter Two demonstrated that the spatial and acoustic dynamics of a venue shaped the experiences of, and critical reception to, the music performed there. It contended that the suitability of a venue determined music’s ability to inspire its citizens and subsequently shape local identity. Chapter Three extended the definition of material spaces to include the natural as well as the built environment. It argued that the piecemeal nature of Stalybridge’s urban development and the distinctiveness of its wider geographic milieu played a powerful role in the construction of male identity. Traversing this environment presented opportunities for men to form homosocial and romantic relationships as well as engage with their emotions. As such, men used these transient sites of leisure to construct and perform their own authentic version of masculinity. A recurring theme of my analysis has been the unfixed nature of sites of leisure, from the liminality of the pub to the ‘in-between-ness’ of Stalybridge. Indeed, the broader point that the thesis makes, via its central theme of liminality (which could also be read as making history plural, and multiple), is that the past is not fixed because people and places in the past were not fixed themselves. This tells historians that recognising specificity and subjectivity in our research is vital to uncovering and understanding authentic experiences of the past.

The kinds of urban culture explored in this thesis were unique to the mid-nineteenth-century provincial town, and changed dramatically from the late-1870s. The late-nineteenth century saw a discernible advance in the organisation and practice of leisure, as the popular leisure culture that had developed gradually over the previous hundred years approached its maturity. The idea of demarcated leisure time was no longer a novel concept, even if it was still not accessible to all. Furthermore, an increasingly nationalised industry emerged to support (and regulate) leisure; businesses and governments better recognised the commercial and political potential of leisure, as well as its permanency. The character and design of sites of leisure responded to this shift. Whereas most mid-

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nineteenth-century Stalybridge pubs were opportunistic ventures set up in the front room of an otherwise domestic property, from the 1870s publicans began to redesign properties or commission new buildings specifically as commercial drinking sites. Similarly, several new private concert halls and theatres (most notably the Stalybridge Grand Theatre, later known as the Hippodrome) emerged as competitors to municipal music venues such as the Foresters’ Hall, Mechanics’ Institution and Town Hall. The increase in private commercial venues was largely brought about by the popularity of music hall, but was also the logical conclusion to publicans’ attempts for much of the last fifty years to capitalise on a rapidly growing zeal for making and listening to music. Walking as a leisure practice also underwent a significant evolution post-1875. The last two decades of the nineteenth century saw the creation of walking clubs, particularly in the north of England; this coincided with a shift in the discourse around walking that eventually led to the rise of rambling and the public debate over the ‘right to roam.’ The opening of Stalybridge’s first public park, Stamford Park, in 1873 was also significant, providing for the first time in the town’s history an officially demarcated and municipally controlled space for outdoor leisure. Finally, as has been well documented, the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century also saw the rise of mass spectator sports, such as association football. Whilst none of these late-nineteenth-century developments represent an abrupt or total transformation in the forms and uses of leisure, they do signify a new phase in the broader history of leisure, and, as such, provide an appropriate end point for my research.

It is difficult to speculate on the extent to which the experience of Stalybridge reflected the wider experiences of leisure in other provincial towns. On one hand, the types of leisure covered in this project, particularly the pub, were widespread in mid-nineteenth-century Britain. On the other, this thesis emphasised that regional specificity and individual subjectivity shaped the ways in which leisure and urban identity was formed and understood. Thus, as with the approach taken towards James Knight, the aim has not been to focus on the typicality of Stalybridge, but instead to use the town as a micro-history case study through which one can more fully recover the specific experiences, meanings and machinations of the everyday leisure practices of its citizens. Future research might provide a comparative study, either of an alternative new textile town or another category of town. The value of such a project would not be to pass judgement on the extent to which the towns were similar, but to further explicate the relationship between place-identity, material spaces and experiences of leisure in another location. Another

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A follow-up study would be to investigate women’s involvement in the leisure practices discussed here, to explore how their presence affected the construction of male identity in these sites. Knight’s diaries depict drinking, public music-making and strolling as almost exclusively male-orientated practices. Yet they occasionally reveal the presence of women, such as Miss Higginbotham celebrating her birthday at the Victoria Inn, or the two ‘young girls’ that Knight helped out on one of his walks. This thesis has largely focused on men’s homosocial and personal experiences due to the nature of its sources and their limitations. However, further research into the materiality of sites of leisure may advance our historical understanding of how women used these spaces, and in particular how their presence affected men’s ability to move fluidly between different roles, and thus construct their own particular, authentic version of masculinity.

Leisure practices in mid-nineteenth-century Stalybridge reflected the newness of both the town and the idea of leisure itself. As the town’s inhabitants sought to make sense of their newly urbanised and evolving environment, social and economic changes brought about an increasingly accessible and compartmentalised area of everyday life. Leisure presented opportunities for Stalybridgeans to construct both collective local identities and individual, gendered notions of selfhood. These processes, like the identities they constructed, were complex and fluid, and thus can be nebulous concepts for historians to fully expose and explicate. By means of a micro-history case study, this thesis has argued that engagement with gender formation has to take place at the intersections of themes and methodologies, be it liminality, emotion and space, or sound and space. Examining the material spaces in which leisure took place can help us understand the relationship between space and identity, as well as further uncover and interpret everyday experiences in mid-nineteenth-century towns such as ‘dear old dirty Stalybridge.’

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