

the magistrates tend to either coincide with or be closely followed by those again relatively few periods of rationalisation for the brewers when licences are dropped, or not renewed, or surrendered on the grant of a licence elsewhere.<sup>63</sup> In Norwich, the urban elite and the brewers seemed to speak with one voice and their joint message was that the lower orders in society were under effective control. Low figures for crime and drunkenness were used to justify this claim. The Recorder of Norwich, W.J. Metcalfe, Q.C., addressed the Grand Jury at the opening of the Norwich Quarter Sessions towards the end of 1878 and claimed, in his self-congratulatory speech on behalf of those in public life in Norwich, that: ‘It really was an exceptional thing to find so small a number of cases to be tried’. He then sought explanations and concluded that despite the population increase and the degree of social mobility and the reports of drunkenness, crime was still significantly lower in Norwich than in most other places, ‘despite the present great distress of the country’. He therefore further concluded that the reports of drunkenness could not be true. There was not the same amount of drunkenness ‘going on here’. Moreover, since he connected crime very closely with poverty, the people of Norwich could not be poverty-stricken. Finally, there must be ‘a spirit of sympathy between the master and the employed’ in Norwich, as there was an absence of both strikes and ‘the poverty entailed by them’. <sup>64</sup> The Recorder’s perception of Norwich was driven by a vision of what ought to be; it denied much that actually was the reality of life in the streets and courts and yards.<sup>65</sup>

Such a tone of complacency reoccurs in the words of those who spoke for the brewing interest as reported in the *Eastern Daily Press* and *Norwich Mercury* during the first half of 1879, both before and after the publication of the final report of the House of Lords Select Committee on Intemperance in March of that year.<sup>66</sup> However, although it was the dominant tone in the urban elite, the temperance interest did have a voice and its rational