

subscribing members.³⁰ In the 1890s Charles Booth, discussing temperance societies, could claim that they were ‘almost all connected with some Christian church or mission, and there are few churches or missions which do not interest themselves in work of this kind.’³¹

Christian congregations faced the problem of making sense of urban societies in which often less than half of the population attended church.³² One solution was to identify ‘drink’ as an ‘evil’ that tempted the working class from the ways of righteousness and church attendance, and the drinking place as less than ‘respectable’. Temperance periodicals highlighted the individual’s ‘choice’ between wealth, respectability and virtue on the one hand and drink, disease and death on the other.³³ The church and the tavern offered different ways to re-create the self and the competition between the two was recognised even before the Alehouses Act (1828) stipulated closure during the hours of divine service on Sundays, Good Friday and Christmas Day since magistrates already often closed taverns during Sunday morning church service.³⁴ The demonising of drink by many Christians was as much part of the battle for the souls of the working-class ‘neighbours’ they were called to love as the rapid expansion of church building in urban centres in the second half of the nineteenth century or the new emphasis within the churches on moral reform and mission work.

Christians in Norwich, and elsewhere, were also more likely to be drawn into the ‘Drink Question’ after the founding of the United Kingdom Alliance (UKA) in 1853 with its programme of prohibition through parliamentary legislation. By 1872, ‘...the prohibitionist movement was flourishing, and dominated the entire temperance movement.’³⁵ The arrival of the ‘Drink Question’ at Westminster had brought with it a degree of respectability for the issue that had previously been missing. When the Alliance launched itself ‘with