

Adelaide Hotels and Temperance 1860-1930

Shall I not take mine ease at mine inn?
(Henry IV Part 1 III iii 93)

Alison Painter

The rotund Sir John Falstaff was a great frequenter of inns and taverns; surely Shakespeare enjoyed the convivial atmosphere of such places. Adelaide's William Shakespeare had some connection with the hotel business, though unlike Prince Hal no one drank 'small beers' in this establishment but were restricted to tea, coffee or mineral waters for this was a temperance hotel. The building on the corner of Blyth Street and North Terrace was known as Grayson's Coffee Palace and was run by Shakespeare's sister, Mary Ann, who was married to Lawrence Grayson a railway worker with William in the 1860s. Grayson was prominent in the temperance movement and was also a member of parliament from 1887 to 1893.

However, there were very few such temperance hostelries in Adelaide. The majority of hotels in the city catered for the citizens in a manner brought from Britain by the early colonists. From the beginning of settlement inns and the breweries which supplied them with beer featured as an important part of the social fabric of the colony and state. As Dean Jose wrote, 'A city without churches and hotels would be abnormal, for they are integral parts of British colonisation. Adelaide has never shown any disposition to be niggardly with either of them'.¹ This chapter investigates the number and ownership of the city's hotels, the long argument over their hours and conditions of trading in liquor, and then examines some of the other services they provided to the citizens of Adelaide and visitors to that fair city. All these were aspects of the civilizing role hotels were expected to promote - or in the eyes of some, destroy.

Civilizing the pubs

In the second half of the nineteenth century Adelaide had a proliferation of hotels within its terraces and in North Adelaide. In 1850 there were 88 hotels in the city, and with economic recovery during that decade the number increased to 113 by 1861.² Gradually, a body of regulations was imposed on these pubs in an effort to improve order, decency and respectability on them. The major requirement of a hotel was a liquor licence, renewed annually by the Licensing Bench of magistrates, which was generally composed of a stipendiary magistrate and several honorary members. The Licensed Victuallers Act of 1858 required publicans to hold a general licence costing £25 per annum. It stipulated that public houses had to provide suitable accommodation, stables and stockyards with a provision of hay and corn, keep a lamp burning in front all night and take in dead bodies when necessary.

These regulations prompted criticism from many publicans who felt that while they were strictly controlled, holders of a wine licence, which cost only £12 per year, were able to operate without having to provide these services. They claimed that many wine saloons also sold spirits and allowed card playing and other 'improper conduct'. The problems associated with wine saloons, as a report by the Commissioner of Police in 1875 indicated, flowed from the low price of colonial wine. Saloons became drinking houses of the 'lowest kind', and what was worse, since they were usually located in out of way places where a public house would not pay, they were difficult to control.³ The introduction of one licence, which was recommended by the House of Assembly Select Committee on beer and wine licences in 1858, was not achieved. The highest number of wine licences was in 1868 when there were 167 (this would be for the colony) but after this the numbers began to decline, and by 1891 there were 140.⁴

The structure of ownership of Adelaide's hotels began to change from the 1860s to the 1880s. Since the beginning of settlement inns and hotels had been built and run by individuals who often brewed their own beer. The Tasmanian Hotel in Hindley Street was built in 1839 and in 1844 John Wheland established a small brewery at the rear of the premises. William Williams, who built the Victoria in Hindley Street in 1839, was also a brewer and this probably applied to many others. But because brewing in the early days was at times a hazardous venture and the local product viewed with suspicion and disdain, beer was still imported in quantity from Britain. The same was true of wine and spirits, for colonial wine also had a poor reputation in the early days and the local brandy was, according to Anthony Trollope, who visited South Australia in the early 1870s, 'a villainous, vitriolic, biting compound of deadly intoxicating qualities'.⁵

By the mid 1870s there were six breweries in the city: Simms' West End in Hindley Street, Syme and Sison's Adelaide in Pirie Street, Primrose's Union in Rundle Street (the oldest), the Anchor in Morphett Street, and the newer Dragon of Chambers and Blades on South Terrace, together with the Lion in North Adelaide. These breweries were by this time producing an acceptable product, at least for the majority of Adelaide's beer drinkers. Even so there were still regular complaints about liquor being adulterated in one way or another. Over the years the brewers regularly denied any suggestion that their beers contained additives and offered large rewards to anyone who could prove otherwise. But comments by public figures such as Thomas Burgoyne who said, during debates in the House of Assembly on the subject of the brewers' monopoly in 1884, that 'he had more regard for his constitution than to drink colonial ale' would not have pleased MLCs and brewers E.T. Smith and W.K. Simms.⁶

Greater competition between the breweries was probably one reason why the brewers moved into the hotel business and became owners or lessees, thus enabling them to tie houses to their products. At the Royal Commission into Liquor Laws in 1879 it was stated by Thomas Bee, the Inspector of Public Houses, that probably more than half of the 136 pubs in Adelaide were owned by the brewers.⁷ While this was seen as a good situation by many because the brewing companies were prepared to spend money on upgrading their premises, others saw it as a restriction on trade. Charles Mallen, owner of the

Waverley Brewery at Mitcham, said in evidence that he was against the monopoly in public houses as it meant there was no free competition in trade. The publican's occupation was placed in jeopardy if he did not stock the owner's products exclusively. He knew of one publican who continued to sell his Waverley beer who had had his rent increased from £2 10s to £5 and then to £10 and was compelled to leave. He felt brewers should not have control over liquor sold in their houses.

Frederick Bucknall, President of the Licensed Victuallers Association, and co-owner of Haussen's Brewery at Hindmarsh, differed from Mallen. He was in favour of brewers owning hotels because they had more capital available, which meant better houses were being erected. Fellow brewers and hotel owners, such as Smith and Simms, no doubt agreed with him as when these two men amalgamated their Kent Town and West End breweries to form The South Australian Brewing Company in 1888, they owned or leased 97 hotels in the colony.⁸

The main concerns of the Commission in 1879 were the standard of accommodation and service in public houses, the situation regarding the licensing of wine shops, and hours of opening on Sundays. The Report of the Central Board of Health for 1875/76 had criticised the inferior accommodation and defects in sanitary arrangements in some hotels and had urged the inspector, supported by the Licensing Bench, to take a firm stand on the matter.⁹ The Commission called many witnesses, from the police chief to publicans and ministers of religion, to give their opinions on the conduct of public houses in the city.

Thomas Bee, continuing his evidence, said he thought there were too many public houses in the city, with only a few providing good accommodation, while many, particularly in the west end, were low class houses with women 'going in and out all evening'. Captain Richard Berry of the City Mission stated that men and women hung about the bars around the area, quarrelling and using bad language. He blamed much of the criminal activities in the city on drink. Another witness claimed that one landlord in the west end owned six miserable cottages which he let to prostitutes and their companions, who frequented the pub, for £7 10s per week at a time when a day labourer's wages were 6s 6d and a barman earned 28s per week.¹⁰ The hotel at the centre of this haunt of the *demi-monde* was the Shamrock (later Colonel Light) in Light Square which had free concerts, featuring strong men acts and acrobats, nearly every night. According to a later writer it was a trap for many an unwary man down from the bush before the Bushmen's Club was established in 1870.¹¹

Not that soliciting was confined to the areas of Light Square and Waymouth Street. The licensee of the Theatre Royal Hotel in Hindley Street, which was defined as having mainly a bar trade, was asked by the Hon. J. Fisher:

You have, in connection with your house, a place familiarly known as the 'saddling paddock' I believe? ... Yes

I gather from your evidence that you consider that a special place should be set apart for these girls of easy virtue rather than that they should be allowed to come into the general bar? ... Yes, *I never allow the barmaids who serve at the general bar to serve or mix with the customers in the 'saddling paddock' in any way.*¹²

While the existence of these lower class establishments and the activities which occurred in them was deplored, it was generally conceded by the Commissioners that closing them down would not put an end to the evils connected with them. On the issue of the connection of crime and hotels one witness commented that the criminal class lived too much by their wits to muddle their brains with drink. Similarly, many witnesses agreed that the problem of drunkenness could not be solved by closing the pubs, although the closure of bars on Sundays was pursued with vigour by several church groups. The well-known temperance advocate David Nock, a Wesleyan storekeeper from Kapunda, who was on this Commission together with another abstainer, the Honourable John Carr, had succeeded in getting a bill through Parliament in 1877 (No 68, Nock's Act) restricting trading hours on Sundays to two hours between 1 pm and 3 pm, with the option of closing all day; Nock wanted them closed all day. He also wanted no new liquor licences granted if two-thirds of residents within a quarter of a mile of the proposed location of a hotel petitioned against it; the distance was reduced to 500 yards, but this was the first provision for local option in South Australia.¹³ At least two hotels, the Southern Cross in King William Street and the Exchange in Hindley Street, did close all day on Sunday.

While there had been temperance associations established in Adelaide from quite early in the settlement it was during the 1870s that they became more outspoken about what they claimed to be the evil of alcoholic beverages. In England increased pressure was brought to bear on the government about this issue in the decade 1860-70.¹⁴ Ideas, as well as news and fashions, took time to reach the colonies and thus the surge of activity of the movements came a little later in South Australia. The long confrontation which ensued between the drinking public and these groups reflected changing social attitudes as Adelaide developed into a more mature community. The years had brought changes which had seen the city progress from a frontier town of muddy or dusty streets, according to the season, and temporary buildings to a city of respectable business houses surrounded by the substantial residences of its more prosperous citizens. Along with this physical improvement in the city came the growing conviction that morally and socially Adelaide needed 'reforming'. It appears that the acceptability of hotels in the city depended largely upon their respectability: houses frequented by the better class of citizen generally provided better amenities. It was perceived that in the lower class areas drinking and associated evils were the main activities and these needed to be curtailed.

The strength of the temperance movements in South Australia could be attributed, in part, to the large number of Nonconformist Protestants who were generally in the forefront of these organisations. In 1876 nearly 50% of the population belonged to the Nonconformist churches.¹⁵ These people saw themselves as the guardians of social and public good and their concern was to maintain the sobriety of the society in which they lived. The desire for respectability, one of the values which permeated Victorian society, was another reason for the rise of these movements. One of their main aims was to assist the election to parliament of men of sound character and righteous principles who would pass the necessary reforming laws which, in their view, would make it more difficult to do

wrong than to do right.¹⁶ The cause lost one of its strongest advocates when Thomas Reynolds, former premier and treasurer, known around the city as 'teapot Tommy', was drowned in the *Gothenburg* disaster on the Barrier Reef in 1875.¹⁷

In July 1877 the *Register* reported on the formation of the Sunday Closing and Liquor Law Amendment Association, the mainstays of which were David Nock, the Reverend Joseph Nicholson, who wanted to close the pubs at 6 pm on Saturdays as well, and Matthew Madge, a city councillor. The efforts of this group may have helped Nock achieve the change to legislation later that year which reduced Sunday trading hours.

An example of the temperance movement's approach to the issue can be seen in a report of a meeting of the Grand Lodge of the Independent Order of Grand Templars which stated unequivocally that drunkenness and crime were on the increase and went on:

Any trade that induces so much crime and insanity, and so many preventable deaths, to make no mention of domestic squalor and misery, is deserving of reprobation of all true lovers of humanity.¹⁸

But the 1879 review of the effects of Nock's Act, in the Report of the Commission on Liquor Laws, disclosed that arrests for drunkenness on Saturdays and Sundays had not diminished since its introduction.¹⁹ While some witnesses from the temperance side were of the opinion that the sobriety of the public could be improved if the bars were closed every day at the earlier hours of 10 pm or even 6 pm, other people were inclined to agree with Lord Cairns, the Lord Chancellor of England, who had said at a temperance lecture, 'I have little hope of making men sober or temperate by Act of Parliament'.²⁰ William Townsend and E.T. Smith, who both served as mayors of the city expressed the opinion that the majority of people were against Nock's Act. One argument promulgated was that the working classes could not get their supper beer on Sundays. The belief that beer was an essential part of a workingman's diet was a long-held British tradition and any suggestion that they should go without this refreshment was bound to be met with disapprobation.

The struggle between the temperance people and the drinking public about the conditions regulating the public sale of liquor was continuous during the 1880s and 1890s although fairly low key. Most of the battles were verbal, waged through the papers or in parliament, although occasionally the argument became a little more heated. In July 1880 a large gathering at the Family Hotel in Rundle Street advocated full Sunday trading. The next day a monster meeting called by the Licensed Victuallers on this issue was held in the Town Hall. The debate raged back and forth, with the temperance people being loudly derided until one man finally stated that 'It was not for the publicans or the teetotallers to say how or when an Englishman should get his refreshment'.²¹ That year three petitions on the question were presented to Parliament, two begging for the complete closure of hotels on Sundays, one signed by six signatories and the other by the president of the Wesleyan Conference, the third signed by 9826 people asked for the opening of the pubs on Sundays.²²

In 1883 another row erupted about the low life to be found in several public houses in the city. The *Register* took up the issue of the re-licensing of hotels

with bad reputations and asked in an editorial why the Licensing Bench allowed these places which were public eyesores and public nuisances to continue operating. The writer paid particular attention, yet again, to the 'Back Bar of the Theatre Royal', which he claimed was only used as a place of assignation. The narrow alley, from which various entrances to the theatre led, was nightly blocked by prostitutes and their companions, and the language and sights were foreign to all decency. This prompted a spate of correspondents who agreed that such a place was akin to the 'gates of hell' for many young men who were subjected to 'fearful temptations'.²³

Apparently the reputation of the Theatre Royal had not been enhanced despite renovations in 1880 when it was reported that the 'magnificent improvements now affected to internal arrangements of the hotel, including the superb bar, after the most approved American principles are now brought to a state of completion. Accommodation is unparalleled in Australia'.²⁴

Other hotels to come under fire were the Shamrock (again), the Ship Inn and the Edinburgh Castle in Currie Street, and the Provincial, formerly the Phoenix, and the City in Hindley Street, which were all described as places which night after night became 'the resort of all the very worst classes of the city, thieves, prostitutes of the lowest description, and perhaps worse characters. Hardly a night passes without some scene of brutal violence occurring'. Indeed a murder was committed in November 1882 at one of the cottages near the Shamrock used by the prostitutes.²⁵

An attempt to have the licence of the Shamrock refused on the grounds that the place was frequented by 'bad and improper characters' and that illegal concerts were held on the premises failed to sway the Licensing Bench. All these hotels were fined either for allowing prostitutes on the premises or for Sunday trading. Only the licensee of the Provincial was refused renewal of licence, on the grounds that the applicant was of drunken habits and had an interest in a brothel, an attached 'filthy' cottage.²⁶ But this was not necessarily the end of the case, for the licensee could re-apply and a higher court could override the decision of the Bench.²⁷ In 1882 26 convictions for Sunday trading were recorded, including some of the more respectable hotels such as the Tattersalls, Sir John Barleycorn and Queen's Arms at North Adelaide. Nonetheless it was claimed that the police shut their eyes and ignored some of the activities which occurred, and concluded by stating that the liquor laws were in 'total collapse', as recommendations for repairs and additions were ignored, wine licences were used as public licences and concerts were given without permission. The newspaper also suggested that the existence of such places depreciated the value of properties in the neighbourhood.²⁸ A correspondent to the paper blamed Smith and Simms, the brewers and members of parliament, for obtaining the most liberal liquor laws 'south of the Line'.²⁹ Only the publican at the Ship Inn replied to these accusations, predictably rejecting all of them. The *Licensed Victuallers Gazette* criticised the stance taken by the *Register* stating that it was better to allow these lower class hotels to continue to operate, in spite of their bad reputation, than to close them thus forcing their clientele to frequent other more respectable houses.³⁰

The 1880 Licensed Victuallers Act, although basically the same as the 1877 Act, introduced the principle of local option which allowed any ten

ratepayers within the same ward of municipal corporation or district council to petition for a poll on the subject of closing hours to be held. The Act confined the local option poll to the issue of Sunday trading but it was not a great success because it was considered that the districts were too small.³¹ A campaign for these polls to have wider powers over the issuing of licences was then embarked upon by the temperance people in their efforts to have at least the badly conducted houses closed. Early in 1884 a debate on the question of an extension to local option attracted a large crowd to the Town Hall. The main protagonists were the Reverend Joseph Nicholson for the Total Abstinence League and Ebenezer Ward for the Licensed Victuallers Association, with Henry Ayers presiding. While Nicholson admitted that inns were needed for travellers he wanted bars to be closed and saw the use of Local Option polls as a way of allowing the people to vote for a reduction of licences. Ward expressed the opinion that Local Option was bad in principle and it was better to set an example by the moderate use of liquor. He felt a reformed system of licensing for the sale of liquor and more effectual supervision of the quality of liquor supplied would be more beneficial than trying to ban a commodity which many people desired.³² The result of this debate was inconclusive but the temperance people continued to promote their cause whenever they could. Later that year, to keep the pressure on the government, the Congregational Union of South Australia presented a petition which sought further restrictions on the liquor traffic. They advocated closure on Sundays, and closure on weekdays to be at 10 pm instead of 11 pm, and that the system of keeping pubs open after hours by special permits be entirely prohibited. It was suggested that dancing in connection with hotels be banned and the use of hotels as polling booths, which occurred in country districts, be abandoned. They also requested that liquor should not be sold to children under 15 years. Nothing eventuated from this petition.

These issues of Sunday trading and the liquor trade in general were to remain in the arena of public debate for many years as the temperance movement grew in strength and vigour. David Nock and Dr Sylvanus Magarey, referred to by some as the 'beloved physician' because of his work at the Children's Hospital,³³ another stalwart in the fight against the liquor trade, continued to be the voices in parliament. They were supported and pressured by groups such as the Total Abstinence Society, the increasingly vocal Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), and the South Australian Alliance formed in 1885 to combine the efforts of several temperance bodies. Its objects were declared to be:

To call forth and direct an enlightened public opinion on the drink question; to procure the closing of public houses during the whole of Sunday and to restrict the traffic in intoxicating liquors by every legitimate means.³⁴

The first of many pamphlets the Alliance issued over the years was their 'Catechism on Local Option', which promoted the idea that local communities should have the power to choose whether or not a public house was wanted in a district.

In 1886 further parliamentary attempts were made to amend licensing laws. For the first time it was suggested that the employment of barmaids should be made illegal. Petitions from the Sunday School Union and the WCTU tried again

for Sunday closing and requested that liquor should not be supplied to children of 'tender years', while a number of Wesleyan and other churches begged that licensing fees should go to local councils. There was also a petition signed by 12,042 requesting that pubs be open on Sundays from 1-3 and 8-10pm. The bill was discharged.³⁵ One presumes William Shakespeare was a signatory, as on 2 April that year he recorded in his diary that he hurried from a meeting planning to protest about high church practices in the city's mission churches to the Town Hall for a 'temperance address'.

During these years the efforts of the temperance bodies were monitored by the *Licensed Victuallers Gazette* which continually commented upon the 'self-satisfied tone' used by these people who saw only evil in the liquor trade and wanted nothing short of complete prohibition. The *Gazette* argued that it was better to educate people about the proper use of liquor than legislate against it, as, since many would still want to drink, this would force the trade underground. In reply to the claims that disreputable hotels were dens of iniquity the *Gazette* asserted that the report of the Licensing Bench showed that generally most hotels were well conducted and respectable and that only a few had black marks for breaches of Sunday trading laws. This, commented the writer, was to be expected until Sunday trading hours were extended again.³⁶

However, extended Sunday trading was not to be. In 1890 a further effort was made to have the hotels in North Adelaide closed on Sundays. A poll was held but as less than one third of the ratepayers voted, the matter lapsed. The following year, with apparently very little trouble, Dr Magarey succeeded in having legislation passed which closed all hotels on Sundays.³⁷ This again prompted the argument about the workingman's Sunday beer, but a letter to the *Register* suggested that this was not the real reason. The writer stated that he had been in a hotel in King William Street on a Sunday evening and found people having drinks such as whisky and water and said that this was the trade the publicans wished to foster, not 'the poor man's Sunday beer' as reported in the papers.³⁸ Dr Magarey's efforts in the matter prompted the *Quiz* to comment later: 'Men will be drinking wine and whisky when you, my dear Doctor, are waving palm leaves and singing bass in the celestial choir'.³⁹

While statistics of arrests for drunkenness in Adelaide are not available, figures for convictions for 'Drunkenness in a Public Place' in the Magistrates Court for the colony show that through the 1880s the percentage of the population convicted on this charge ranged from a high of 1.65% in 1878 to a low of 0.61% in 1889 and continued through the 1890s at about 0.5%. Were there more arrests in the late 1870s or did the effects of the depression of the 1880s reflect in the lower figures for that period? Leaving aside possible changes in policing practice, no doubt the temperance people would have attributed the decrease to the success of their movements, but who can ascertain the real reason?

In 1893 a lecture given by H.S. Anthony, the manager of the Adelaide Brewery, on 'The Liquor Laws' was fully reported in the *Register*. Criticising the aims of the temperance proponents, he stated that it was because many of the leaders of the temperance movements in the colony 'would completely ostracize and ruin the publican that so much bad feeling has been imparted in the

controversy'. In reference to the claim that crime and poverty were the inevitable result of drinking, he commented: 'The drink bill is the barometer of trade and prosperity and not of morals. With prosperity the glass rises'. He felt that generally the opponents of the liquor trade were too extreme. They ignored individual rights and wanted to stop drinking and not just drunkenness. He also pointed out that over £1 million was invested in hotel properties as well as in the industries which supplied the trade, including the growing wine industry which promised to be a boon to the colony's economy.⁴⁰ Anthony's argument was not advocating the injudicious use of alcohol but he was offering a more balanced view of the social use of liquor.

The increasing activity of the temperance movements also brought forward the issue of women in the liquor trade. Women had owned or held the licences of numbers of hotels from the early days and of course women had worked as domestics or barmaids. In 1881 there were 331 females employed as servants, cooks and bar people in public houses.⁴¹ During the debate on the Licensed Victuallers bill in 1896, which sought to ban barmaids, a petition opposing the bill signed by 73 women working in hotels was presented to the Legislative Council. Albert Landseer MHA, in supporting barmaids, said that many were very respectable and anyway he preferred to be served 'by a pretty girl than by a short sleeved barman'.⁴² The leading protagonist in this particular attempt to ban barmaids was the colourful and loquacious King O'Malley. In his speech on the issue he described, in his usual flowery manner, the employment of barmaids as 'besmattering with mud the golden mantle of the loving moon-eyed goddess of democracy - South Australia'.⁴³ Ebenezer Ward matched O'Malley, arguing in support of women, and the clause for the progressive abolition of barmaids was defeated in the Legislative Council. On the other hand Sunday closing was retained, in spite of a number of petitions requesting its repeal. The Act also changed the Local Option districts making them the same as the House of Assembly electoral districts and allowed the formation of clubs (in a corporate town by 50 persons and elsewhere by 30) at an annual license fee of £10 with no limit on trading hours.⁴⁴

Ten years later in 1906 three Licensed Victuallers Amendment Bills were introduced into parliament in succession in an attempt to have barmaids banned. The *Quiz* was quick to come to the support of these women when it stated that only 'narrow visioned people looked down on barmaids' and noted that one young woman, Ethel Gibson, aged 27, who had died suddenly at the Napoleon Hotel, was supporting her mother and younger brother and sister. While conceding that perhaps some women were less moral than others, the paper suggested that most were the epitome of modesty and civility.⁴⁵ Although all of these bills were shelved, the issue, which had been O'Malley's great concern before he moved interstate and into the federal parliament, had some success in Act No 970 of 1908 when it was enacted that all barmaids must register and could only continue to work if they had been employed in that situation in the district in the previous three months. This registration had to be accompanied by a report from a policeman, confirming the good character of the woman, striking evidence of the official propensity to increase the regulatory powers of the police as agents of civilization, as defined of course by the elite. Over three hundred women registered,

but over the years the number of women working behind the bar declined as no new barmaids could be taken on. According to A.H. Peake (Country Liberal), who introduced the Bill, the 'most chivalrous and righteous thing any man could do who had respect for the female sex was to keep women out of the public house bars'.⁴⁶ T.H. Smeaton (ALP) agreed with his colleague adding that it caused physical, mental and moral deterioration.

This same Act also barred single women from holding liquor licences. Widows who had inherited the licence from their husbands were excepted. Laurence O'Loughlin (MHA) stated during the debates on the issue that it was a 'well known fact that more mischief was carried on in houses kept by single women than in any other houses'.⁴⁷ Just how many of the approximate 175 women who held licences, out of a total of 700 licences, were single or kept less than reputable houses was not stated.

This was another victory for the WCTU and their male supporters in parliament, who showed no sign of easing off their campaigns in the new century. For the 1905 elections the SA Alliance in their Reduction of Licences Campaign issued postcards showing parliament house with the words '1905 - closed to brewer's candidates'. Meanwhile in 1904 the Local Option Extension Act was passed which allowed the Governor, by proclamation, to divide an electoral district into smaller Local Option districts whose residents could then petition for a poll to be taken on whether a public house was deemed necessary.⁴⁸ This was seen as a compromise between the temperance pressure groups and the interests of the liquor trades. It also moved some of the control from the central administration of the government to local areas. Local Option polls were held in the city and other districts in February 1906 which saw only a small turnout of voters. Although the temperance people achieved some wins in suburban and country areas, the city voters both north and south of the river, voted against any reduction in licences.⁴⁹ In fact for a variety of reasons the number of hotels had been declining: in 1891 there were 763 hotels for a population of over 324,000 while in 1906 there were 700 for 366,000 people.⁵⁰

In order to fight the strong assaults of these temperance groups the licensed victuallers and brewers formed the Liquor Trades Defence Union in 1904 which held regular meetings in the city and country areas to put the liquor trades' view in perspective. With funds donated by publicans, brewers and winemakers the Union continued its efforts until the 1920s.⁵¹

Another Local Option poll was held in April 1910, at the same time as the state elections. The result was much the same as in 1906 with all but one country district voting for no reduction of licences.⁵² However, several hotels in the city had already shut their doors, some through the refusal of the Licensing Bench to renew their licences on the grounds of poor amenities or management. This led the *Register* to decry the lack of accommodation in the city stating that there were fewer hotels than 20 years earlier when the population was 100,000 less.⁵³

The greatest success for the temperance cause came in 1915 with the passage of early closing legislation, which shut all bars at 6 pm. The outbreak of war in 1914 and the action of the governments of Britain, France and Russia in restricting the sale of liquor had assisted the moves to curtail the trade in

Australia.⁵⁴ A referendum was held in South Australia on the issue of early closing with the 6 pm option winning by a clear majority. The only electorate to vote in favour of 11 pm closing was the City of Adelaide. Early closing was achieved in spite of the efforts of the Liquor Trades Defence Union and the non-support of some politicians such as Henry Barwell who saw the hour as 'unreasonably early' and expected that it would be reviewed after the war. Early closing did not apply to parliamentary bars or to private clubs. This legislation also included the provision that all hotels must close on the arrival of a troopship. On the night the legislation came into effect in March 1916 the president of the Licensed Victuallers Association led a rowdy throng from the Imperial Hotel to the Adelaide Club, whose members were no doubt still imbibing, where the crowd threatened to besiege the doors.⁵⁵

The effect of this Act was to see the re-appearance of sly-grog shops. The 1920 report of the Inspector of Hotels showed that since hotel trading hours had been curtailed this activity had greatly increased, with nine convictions in the metropolitan area in a few months and more prosecutions pending. The police, with the support of the publicans, were making strong efforts to stamp the sly grog trade out, but not without some resistance. When the police raided one shop, next door to the Rose Inn in Sturt Street, they were jostled and a police constable was 'compelled to draw his truncheon'.⁵⁶

But even the success of the early closing of bars did not satisfy prohibitionists. They were stimulated by the vigorous American movement to push for total abolition of the drink trade. In 1919 there was an Alliance Drive for a referendum on prohibition which prompted the Chairman of the United Licensed Victuallers Association, P.J. Flannagan, to write a letter urging all members to again fight against 'any action intended to destroy the Trade and the convenience and liberty of the people, which have already been drastically interfered with and curtailed'. In a paper against prohibition it was pointed out that there was a vast difference between drinking places in America and Australia. Generally drinking in America was done in saloons which, it was claimed, were merely 'drinking dens' whereas in Australia hotels were residential and therefore had to supply more amenities than just a bar rooms.⁵⁷

The abolitionist pressure continued through the 1920s but without success, possibly because the situation in the United States did not encourage a similar course of action. As a compromise, from 1924, the WCTU campaigned to have the hotels close at 1pm on Saturdays, but the Labor premier, John Gunn, was reported as stating that this would not happen.⁵⁸ Despite their continued efforts the bill was finally defeated in November 1929.⁵⁹ When the United Licensed Victuallers Association began its *Gazette* in 1930 many of its early editions were taken up with articles on the question. With a fair degree of hyperbole one article, written by a clergyman, obviously not a Nonconformist, gave the drinking of liquor the seal of approval by quoting the Bible on the question and claiming that freedom of choice was an essential of the Christian religion. He concluded by stating that the consumption of liquor in moderation:

provides a healthy relaxation to the mind, bestows a generous and considerate grace toward other people, renews health and vigour to the body, and creates a

spirit of joy and merriment in the social life.⁶⁰

The opposition to the liquor trade which was pursued with some vigour for over forty years resulted in many changes to the licensing laws relating to public houses as well as other regulations applied to the liquor trade. Hours of trading were curtailed and rules regarding the facilities provided were more stringently applied. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century probably the worst of the old hotels had disappeared, either demolished or taken over and used for other purposes. Some, including the infamous Shamrock which became the Colonel Light, changed their name, cleaned up their act, and continued to trade. While legislation had some effect on the changes which took place, possibly the increasing maturity which Adelaide assumed in the latter part of the nineteenth century contributed to the demise of some of the worst aspects of the lower class hotels. Generally the public houses of Adelaide continued to provide the services and amenities to the people of the city as they had always done. Over the years many had undergone substantial renovations and some had emerged as first-rate hotels to accommodate visitors and to supply suitable venues for a multitude of social activities.

Civilizing Adelaide

From Adelaide's earliest days the public houses were used not only as places to get a drink and a bed, but for many other purposes. Business was conducted inside at the bar or in rooms specially set aside as exchanges and outside in yards set up for the selling of stock. When the old Stag Inn was built on East Terrace in the mid-1840s it was on the outskirts of town and had stockyards around it. Townsend and Son, the well respected firm of auctioneers, held weekly auctions at the livery stables of the Windsor Castle Hotel on the corner of Franklin Street and Victoria Square. The East End Market Hotel built on East Terrace in the late 1860s was allowed to stay open until 2 am on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays to serve the people of the market.⁶¹

The Exchange Hotel in Hindley Street was so named because it was next door to the Commercial Exchange, one of the major venues for business in the city. In 1867 Charles Ware came down from Burra where he had been the proprietor of the Koorunga Brewery and took over the licence of the Exchange. When he died in 1871 his widow, Fanny, carried on the business with her sons following her. One son, Arthur, served as mayor of the city from 1898 to 1901 and was also a president of the Licensed Victuallers Association. With his brother, Tom, he built the Torrenside Brewery at Southwark in 1886.⁶² The Wares were regarded as jovial and generous hosts who conducted a good hotel.

The Guild Club met in a room at the back of the pub every Friday evening to sample the specially imported Old Guild wine from Oporto. The dining room, which had the look of an old English inn, was popular with many of the city's notable businessmen who dined there at the regular roast lunch carved at 1pm daily. A virtual who's who of Adelaide could be found at one time or another breasting the table: William Townsend, Luther Scammell of Faulding, James Miller Anderson, F.J. Botting, W.K. Simms, Henry Ayers and many more over the years. One gentleman 'occupied the same chair for lunch for 42 years until the

introduction of an electric fan blew him further down the table'. The Wares held the licence for 56 years and old 'Mother' Moseley was manager for 47 years.⁶³

A hotel specifically built to hold a lodge was the Earl of Zetland which was constructed in 1869 as a family hotel and Masonic hall. There were two parlors, a banqueting room, a public bar and a dining room with a handsome polished blackwood and cedar staircase which led to the Masonic hall above.⁶⁴ Many other groups held their meetings in hotels. From its formation in 1871 the Licensed Victuallers Association quite naturally held its meetings in a pub, the Sir John Barleycorn in Rundle Street. The Sir John Barleycorn was also the home of United Trades and Labor Council for over five years after the inaugural meeting which was held at the Bristol Tavern in Franklin Street on 1 February 1884.⁶⁵ The upper floor of Hann's Hotel, on the corner of King William and Grenfell Streets, was devoted to the Union Club with a library, smoking room and billiard room for its members.⁶⁶ The Tattersalls Club had its inception in the Globe Hotel in Rundle Street in May 1879 and moved to its own premises, the Blenheim Hotel, in Hindley Street in 1882 which was renamed Tattersalls.⁶⁷ Even the City Council held its early meetings in the Blenheim until the Town Hall was built in 1866. The Prince Alfred Hotel, next to the Town Hall, played host to the meeting which formed the South Australian Cricket Association in 1871.⁶⁸ Obviously all these associations were for men only and were characteristic of the male dominated society of the time.

Besides acting as the venue for private clubs and associations, hotels also served as places for public hearings. For many years inquests were conducted in hotels, usually the one close to where the accident or sudden death had occurred. In 1877 at the Hotel Europe in Grenfell Street a hearing by the Commissioner of Crown Lands and Immigration was held at which charges against Captain Kamman, master of the immigrant ship *Herschel* were brought. It was claimed that the insanitary and unsatisfactory conditions on board his ship had caused distress and hardship to the passengers and that he had been uncaring of them. As the hearing was conducted in German three of Adelaide's leading German citizens sat on the enquiry and acted as interpreters.⁶⁹

The large community of German settlers had their own particular public houses. The appropriately named Hamburg in Rundle Street and the King of Hanover on North Terrace were two which catered for the German people, stocking German beers and no doubt where there was the singing of German drinking songs on special occasions. The advent of World War I, when many German place names were changed, saw these two hotels caught in the general anti-German feeling. In 1915 the Hamburg, which ironically had been the virtual headquarters of the Scottish Volunteer Corps, became the Oriental and the name of the King of Hanover, which had its wall of mirrors behind the bar smashed by a group of soldiers, was changed to the Commonwealth.

Another hotel frequented by the German community was the National in Pirie Street, in those days shaded by a row of large Moreton Bay fig trees. In the 1880s, on the eve of market day, the cobbled yard would be filled with wagons and carts, as the German market gardeners came to town with their produce. Huge late teas and early breakfasts were served and at times of celebration the large grounds

at the rear were hung with lanterns and used as a *biergarten*. There was also a ballroom which was used by clubs for dances. When the Leipzig orchestra was in Adelaide its members stayed there.⁷⁰

Entertainment formed an important part of the social activities in the pubs in the latter part of the century. As well as the circus acts in the Shamrock, other hotels had music halls attached to them or kept at least a piano and had musical evenings, or for the more serious music lovers there was an organ in the bar of the Norfolk Arms in Rundle Street. Augustus Klauer, for over 30 years licensee of the White Hart in Hindley Street, played in the Theatre Royal orchestra and ran 'Free and Easy' nights in his hotel. Other forms of entertainment included skittle alleys such as the large one at the National, and others at the Stag and the Launceston, which also catered for bagatelle. Billiards was another favourite pastime and many hotels ensured they had good tables. The Globe had a billiard room included in its renovations of 1879 but the Imperial came under fire in the report to the Licensing Bench in 1906 as the upstairs billiard room was said to be frequented by 'thieves, rogues and vagabonds ... idle persons who did no work'. Although there had been no complaints of disorderly conduct it was considered that the room was not necessary for the public and the licence for billiards was cancelled.⁷¹

Boxing was the passion of Dave Green, licensee of the Marquis of Lorne in Hindmarsh Square, who built an athletics hall next door where various events were held especially boxing matches. So keen was he that he renamed the hotel the Marquis of Queensbury in 1892, although in 1894 it became the Aurora. Originally built as the Black Eagle for Benjamin Da Costa, the hotel generated considerable funds for the Da Costa Samaritan Trust. When Henry Gepp was licensee in the early 1900s his friend Hans Heysen was a frequent customer and some of his early paintings adorned the walls.⁷²

The sport of kings, racing, was generally associated with the Globe and the card was read there the night before any big events. The South Australian Jockey Club was founded there, as were the Adelaide Hunt Club and the Squatters Club. Major renovations carried out in 1879 included additional stabling at the rear on Stephens Place. The hotel ceased business on Christmas Day 1907 and was demolished.⁷³ Another pub interested in racing was the Family Hotel, later in the 1880s called the International and in 1898 the Austral, in Rundle Street east, which once held a dinner in honour of the first winner of the Goodwood Handicap at which the horse was also present at the hitching rail outside.⁷⁴

Naturally dinners and banquets were always a part of the scene in a hotel: the bigger and better the house, the grander and more elegant the fare and the guests. E.T. Smith gave a public breakfast at the Family Hotel on the occasion of his election as mayor of Adelaide in November 1881. In December the same year the visiting English cricketers enjoyed a dinner there following the second day's play at the Adelaide Oval.⁷⁵ Reunions such as that of the Tynesiders could only be held at a place which could supply the necessary cheer for such an occasion. In August 1883 these northerners held their first get-together in the colony at the South Australian Club Hotel where 22 of them had an 'excellent repast'.⁷⁶ Among the many hotels which advertised a 'first class trade' was the Earl of Aberdeen which, in 1890, offered 'every convenience for the comfort of visitors and travellers' at a

cost of 30s upwards per week. Tariffs at other hotels ranged from 6s to 10s per day inclusive. On the northern side of the river the Oxford Hotel, described as one of the best looking in North Adelaide, provided a free lunch in the bar from 11 am.⁷⁷

In 1887 a Tourist Guide written by Thomas Worsnop, Adelaide's Town Clerk for many years, listed the main hotels in the city as the York, South Australian Club, Prince Alfred, Globe, New Market, Exchange, Clarence, Criterion, Gresham, Terminus (usually frequented by country visitors and people from the Northern Territory), United Services Club (Ambassadors), Imperial, Southern Cross, Victoria, Crown and Sceptre, Red Lion and Tavistock. All these hotels were concentrated in King William Street, Rundle Street, the east end of Hindley Street and North Terrace near the railway station, and were the haunts of the business people of the city and the more affluent traveller. This left the hotels further south and in the west end, the nether regions, to provide cheaper accommodation and to serve the tradespeople and the workers of the area.

Of the classy hotels the York was probably the best known and the largest at the time. From humble beginnings as a boarding house run by the Misses Bathgate, the hotel was remodelled in 1865 to give it 46 bedrooms and five bathrooms. In 1909 the building was demolished and in its place rose the lavish Grand Central Hotel, the 'Ritz of Adelaide', designed to be a first class luxury hotel. Many notable people stayed there and in July 1920 the Prince of Wales was entertained at a State Banquet in the ballroom. But in spite of its modern appointments it did not prosper and in 1926 it was bought by the retail company of Foy and Gibson. In 1913 L. A. Jessop recorded his nostalgic memories of the old York:

What a strange phantasmagoria one can conjure up with the light of memory shining on the dear old York. There were the habitués - Abraham Abrahams, clothed summer and winter in black cloth with high collar, black satin stock and chimney pot hat. The Local Government Engineer, a great whist player and something of a Bohemian. Dr Walker, the gentlemanly Protector of Aborigines; old Paddy Gleeson, King of Clare; Osborne of the Kapunda mine; the mammoth Cornishman, Killicoat of Burra; Morris of Anlaby; "Handsome" Fitzroy afterwards Earl of Euston, victim of an unfortunate matrimonial venture; old time squatters; that magnificent man William Marchant; the festive Henry Gawler; and Whitby who was lost on the *Gothenburg*.⁷⁸

Marvellous memories of memorable people brought together under the roof of a public house to share a meal, a drink and lively conversation.

The South Australian Club Hotel, which originally housed the Bank of South Australia, was the forerunner of the well loved South Australian which was the epitome of style and grandeur especially after its renovations, designed by the architect Alfred Wells in 1894. The Military Officers Club was on the first floor, cut off from the rest of the hotel and with its own private entrance. In 1898 the magnificent three storied verandah was added and the wide balconies became the focal point of Adelaide society's attention being used for all their major events from afternoon teas to wedding receptions.⁷⁹

The advent of World War I, which brought about the early closing of public houses, probably also saw the beginning of a decline in the amenities offered

by some city hotels. While some were rebuilt or refurbished in the early 1920s others tended to allow their accommodation to run down, resulting in the cry that Adelaide was short of first class hotels. The Inspector of Public Houses refuted the claims of the *Register* stating that there were more than enough rooms to cope with the Melbourne Cup week influx of visitors.⁸⁰ An unfavourable report by the Inspector often prompted action, for example the Brecknock was demolished and rebuilt in 1922 after it had been deemed unfit. The Oriental and the Napoleon also underwent extensive renovations in this period.⁸¹ The Richmond, the former Plough and Harrow, in Rundle Street was demolished in 1926 and rebuilt offering accommodation with all modern appointments for a hundred guests. It was opened in May 1928 with a grand dinner given by the owner, C.J. Glover. Another new hotel in which shares were offered in 1925 was to be called the Hotel Adelaide. It was to be built on the eastern side of the Adelaide Club on North Terrace and was to be nine storeys high with 220 bedrooms, each with its own bathroom and telephone, but it did not eventuate, possibly because the licence of the defunct Grand Central could not be transferred to the site without an enabling Act of Parliament. This was the last attempt to build a new hotel in Adelaide for many years.

Refined Adelaide

Although the struggle with the temperance movement had seen some battles lost the publicans retained their position as purveyors of conviviality, if curtailed by the tightening of controls over the liquor trade. But governments of all persuasions resisted the efforts at total prohibition, thus avoiding the worst aspects brought about by the banning of liquor to people who wanted to enjoy it.

The changes in Adelaide's drinking facilities in these 60 years reflect the changing attitudes of the times. There was the Victorian era with its emphasis on morality and respectability which saw the rise of the strong temperance lobby. In the latter part of the nineteenth century this led to the rather odd situation, in South Australia at least, where women were allowed the vote and entrance to the university, but were gradually restricted more and more from either working in hotels, except as domestics, or from joining their menfolk in the bar. The twentieth century saw the continuation of the movement to more restricted trade, which was reinforced by the advent of the war. Even the roaring twenties did little to effect change in this area in conservative Adelaide and by 1930 there were more important and potentially more devastating events on the horizon than whether or not a person could have a drink if he so desired.

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The original volume aimed to examine a variety of aspects of the life of the City of Adelaide during the years when William Shakespeare was an inspector on the staff of the City Corporation.

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