General editor's introduction

The 'local', the beloved neighbourhood public house which is the focal point of the community, has an iconic role in British popular culture. As *The Rover's Return*, *The Queen Vic* and *The Woolpack*, it is at the heart of the most popular and long-running television soap operas, *Coronation Street*, *EastEnders* and *Emmerdale*. But, according to David Gutzke – and it is only one of the many fascinating revelations in this book – the concept of the 'local', even the actual term, came into general use only during the Second World War. It then became a potent symbol of the class and gender egalitarianism that was seen as a characteristic of the democratic struggle against Fascism.

The pub has traditionally been seen as a bastion of masculine leisure activity. But in this ground-breaking book, David Gutzke, who has already published two notable studies on the role of the public house, *Protecting the Pub* (1989) and *Pubs and Progressives* (2006), shifts the focus to women and their relationship to the drink culture.

He traces in detail the evolution of the pub from the old-fashioned, brown-painted, spit and sawdust, men-only establishments of Edwardian England to the brightly coloured, family-friendly, food-serving Wetherspoon pubs of the 1990s. In assessing the appeal of such institutions to women and the extent of their patronage of them, he examines the changing architecture of the buildings, the attitudes and mentality of the brewers, the impact of the two world wars, the nature of advertising and promotion, the role of women in pub management and the nature of the drink being sold.

Significant rivals to the pub began to appear and are analysed perceptively by Gutzke. From the 1960s onwards wine bars develop to meet the rise in wine-drinking and the perceived need to provide somewhere different and distinctive for women drinkers. More recently there has been the emergence of the clubbing culture of which age rather than class or gender has been the

determining feature. This and the associated practice of binge-drinking has led since the 1980s to city centres becoming infested with teenage drunks both male and female and turning into no-go areas for respectable citizens at weekends. Gutzke takes the 'moral panic' which this latest development has provoked and sets it firmly in historical context by comparing and contrasting it with similar 'moral panics' about youth and female drinking in Edwardian England and the two world wars, with fascinating results.

Drawing on a wide range of sources, including memoirs, opinion surveys, newspapers, the trade press, novels, films and advertisements and vigorously engaging with previous commentators on the subject, Gutzke charts and analyses in illuminating detail the rich, complex, enduring and evolving role of women drinking in twentieth- and now twenty-first-century British culture.

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