Rhythm and Booze: Contesting Leisure Mobilities on the Transpennine Real Ale Trail

Abstract

Ale Trails, where a series of pubs noted for serving real ale and craft beer are linked together along a prescribed route followed either on foot or by bus or train, are now a well-established activity in the UK and beyond. However, in some cases they have become associated with large groups of rowdy drinkers characterised by excessive consumption and disorderly behaviour. While copious research has focused on drinking urban leisure spaces, few studies have examined leisure mobilities involved in drinking in, and intoxicated mobilities through, rural and suburban spaces. This article uses Henri Lefebvre's concept of rhythmanalysis to analyse leisure mobility through the spaces constituting the Ale Trail - including pubs, train carriages, station platforms and village streets. In these spaces, the differing rhythms of diverse individuals and groups as they move through heterogeneous spaces on foot and by train give rise to both shifting alignments and conflicts. The article concludes with a discussion of the spatial, temporal and affective dimensions of alcohol consumption and demonstrates the relevance of rhythmanalysis concepts and methods for exploring contemporary forms of leisure mobilities.

Introduction

Ale Trails, where a series of pubs noted for serving real ale and craft beer are linked together along a prescribed route followed either on foot or by bus or train, are now a well-established activity in the UK and beyond. One of the most prominent examples of this, the Transpennine Real Ale Trail which links eight villages and towns along the train line between the Northern

English cities of Manchester to Leeds, has recently become a popular leisure activity[1]. While Ale Trails were initially praised as a novel way of bringing customers to rural and suburban drinking venues that was praised on national television (on the BBC's 2009 series 'Oz and James Drink to Britain'), the Transpennine Real Ale Trail has in recent years courted controversy for being 'hijacked' by large groups of unruly drinkers characterised by excessive consumption and disorderly behaviour (BBC News 2013). Local newspaper articles lamenting 'Rowdy ale trailers blamed as police called to reports of fighting at Slaithwaite railway station'[2] have prompted moves by authorities and transport providers to limit or reduce the impact of disruptive drinking on the Ale Trail[3]. Thus, while the Ale Tail concept was originally driven by an interest in the potential economic and social benefits to local communities and was widely promoted by train operators, local councils[4] and organisations such as the British beer and pub consumer campaign group the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)[5], the continued promotion of Ale Trails, and the Transpennine Ale Trail in particular, has proved highly contentious.

The case of the Transpennine Ale Trail brings behaviour more readily associated with the 'circuit drinking' of inner city drinking venues (Hadfield *et al.* 2009) into suburban towns and rural villages. In doing so, the ale trail provides a vivid illustration of the centrality of spatial context, and movement through space, to the study of alcohol, drinking and drunkenness (Jayne *et al.* 2008a; 2010). Yet, while academic studies of urban leisure have been 'overly fixated on traditional (hedonistic) nightlife' (Eldridge & Smith 2019, 373), there is relatively little research on alcohol consumption in rural and suburban contexts (Valentine *et al.* 2008). This

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[1] http://www.realaletrail.net/
[2] https://www.examinerlive.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/rowdy-ale-trailers-blamed-police-14629164
[3] http://www.liverpoolchamber.org.uk/UserFiles/file/TPExpress%20Newspaper%20June%202018.pdf
[4] Kirklees Council include the Transpennine Ale Trail as an item on their website list of activities suggested for residents and visitors: https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/visitors/towns-and-villages/dewsbury/create-shop-relax.aspx; accessed 2 September 2019.
[5] https://huddscamra.org.uk/rail-ale-trail/

does not mean that ale trails lack the complexity and multifaceted nature of their urban counterparts nor that non-urban drinking should by its nature lack the vibrancy and potential for tension seen elsewhere in studies of bar crawls (Tutenges, 2015), stag party tours (Author B), football supporters 'away' trips (Treadwell, 2015), 'booze cruise' boat trips (Törrönen & Maunu, 2007) and beer festivals such as those taking place in German cities during the annual 'Oktoberfest' (Bosch, 2011). Importantly, in these studies and in the present study of the Transpennine Ale Trail, mobile drinking practices involving mobility through public space, commercial venues and various forms of public transport give rise to antagonisms and conflicts. Further still, while recent research has analysed train-based transportation and commuter practice (Holton and Finn 2018), there is relatively little research on trains as facilitators of leisure. The ale trail therefore involves a leisurely mobility which brings drinkers from cities to towns and villages, and thus into potential conflict with other occupants of those spaces.

In this article we draw Henri Lefebvre's (2004) concept of rhythmanalysis which the French social theorist first proposed in 1992. The ale trail is a specifically trans-spatial phenomenon in that it involves the mobility of individuals and groups by train and on foot, at times coordinated and at times conflictive, through public, private, commercial and residential spaces and across the urban, suburban and rural. Integral to the phenomenon is the movement of bodies through space and, as such, studying the ale trail offers the chance to build on existing conceptions of alcohol consumption as an embodied and sensory experience (Jayne *et al.*, 2010; Author C). Drawing on insights from ethnographic fieldwork, the article shows how the leisure rhythms of ale trail participants as they traverse the trains, streets and pubs comprising the Transpennine Ale Trail are a fruitful ground for the study of the spatial-temporal politics of leisure mobilities. A contribution of the article is therefore to demonstrate that rhythmanalysis is a way of 'understanding social life through the lens of rhythm' (Lyon 2019, 2) and

encouraging researchers to become 'more sensitive to times than to spaces, to moods than to images, to the atmosphere than to particular events' (Lefebvre 2004, 94). By examining the ale trail as involving the movement of drunken bodies, on foot and by train, through public and semi-public space, the article concerns how leisure mobilities are experienced and contested.

Out on the Town? Drinking Spaces and Contested Leisure Mobilities

The study of alcohol consumption is now an established field of academic enquiry for scholars from disciplines including sociology, criminology, geography, urban planning and youth studies (Author A). During the 1990s and 2000s, the control of disorder in the urban leisure spaces of the night time economy emerged as a prominent theme in both academic research and public discourse (Hadfield, Lister & Traynor 2009). While the night time economy became the primary location of what Measham and Brain (2005) terms a 'new culture of intoxication', it brought together diverse practices, bodies and materials necessitating careful management and control (Shaw 2014). Studying alcohol consumption in these urban settings has allowed academic researchers to interrogate the complexity, and often antagonistic, of spatial and social arrangements of drinking and drunkenness (Tiesdell & Slater 2006) and show how these atmospheres encourage, or even demand, a loosening of social propriety (Author B; Tutenges 2015).

In contrast to urban drinking practices, alcohol consumption in rural and suburban settings has been the subject of only sporadic academic attention (Valentine *et al.* 2008). For example, rural pubs have been studied as valuable catalysts for community interaction and sociability (Cabras & Mount 2017), as sites for the intersection of local economies (Maye, Ilbery & Kneafsey 2005) and as stages for the performance and maintenance of traditional gender roles and relations (Campbell 2000; Leyshon 2009). Rural drinking is therefore often depicted as being more firmly rooted in the traditions and rituals of local communities and this can risk

overlooking the complexities of drinking in rural and other non-urban locations such as those this article will go on to examine.

That the drinking and drunkenness that takes place away from urban centres is under-researched is surprising given the important advances that have been made in analysing the implicit spatial, temporal and affective dimensions of alcohol-based leisure (Shaw, 2014). Both time and space, as essential components of rhythm, are essential facets of understanding drinking practices. Andrade (2019), for instance, argues that distinct temporal drinking patterns associate greater or lesser concentration of alcohol consumption across the course of the week and weekend, while Wilkinson (2015) highlights how adolescent drinkers experience alcohol as bound up with their mobilities through suburban spaces such as parks, youth clubs, bus stops and taxis. Further still, even drinking spaces we might think of as spatially static, such as a specific 'local' pub, are reshaped and reconfigured as different actors move into and out of them (Goode & Anderson 2015) and are places of contested allegiances and loyalties (Watson & Watson 2012).

The framing of the weekend revellers on the Transpennine Ale Trail as a worrying threat to public decorum – with local news reports highlighting outbreaks of violence[6] and other anti-social behaviour[7] – follows a long tradition in which the 'binge drinker' of the post-industrial city centre 'alcohol quarter' (Jayne *et al*. 2008b; Plant & Plant 2009) follows the 'lager lout' of the 1980s and the football hooligan of the 1970s (Dunning *et al.* 1988) as the 'folk devil' of a wider 'moral panic' about the state of UK society (Cohen 1972; Marsh & Fox 1992).

An alternative reading of this context would be one where the participants of the Transpennine Ale Trail conform to an earlier regionally specific form of leisured Northernness (see Snape

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[6] https://www.examinerlive.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/rowdy-ale-trailers-blamed-police-14629164;
https://www.examinerlive.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/cctv-demands-marsden-could-met-14592462
[7] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-22689020;

2016) which often entails, and celebrates, a form of resistance to the constraints of polite society and, more recently, a response to the marginalising effects of urban change and gentrification (Jayne *et al.* 2008b; Nayak 2003). This is a specifically spatial phenomenon and involves 'problem drinking' being 'corralled' into manageable areas of urban space (Jayne *et al.* 2008, 97) which then become associated with spatialised class identities understood as more or less respectable depending on the clientele found drinking there (Chatterton & Hollands 2003). The spatial politics of post-industrial leisure therefore continue a long running class-based spatial closure that associates working class leisure as fixed in its own space, such as the community based 'local' pubs of the traditional industrial North (See Mass Observation 1943), yet 'out of place' in that of others. Indeed, as Author B/Author E's study of stag tour groups in Eastern European cities shows, the presence of large groups of working class drinkers is often perceived as being too conspicuous and, as such, their presence in and movement through public spaces such as city streets, bars and nightclubs requiring surveillance.

The analysis of the Transpennine Ale Trail that follows is, therefore, necessarily one rooted in an awareness of the class-based spatial mobilities of leisure. These connections between leisure and working-class identity can be traced back to the 1880s (Hobsbawm 1969) and the organised leisure activities and outings that took groups of workers from the Lancashire mill towns to costal resorts such as Blackpool (Walton 1992). Such leisure excursions 'helped to form a collective consciousness and identity' in Northern working-class communities by providing a sense of release from the strictures of the work-place and everyday life (Snape 2016, 40). As train excursions were joined by 'charabanc' motor-coaches in the middle decades of the 20th Century the, for some, 'unwelcome' working-class day-trippers became a point of annoyance and scorn. Law (2015, 45-9), for instance, refers to shocked accounts of fighting amongst 'lads' from the South Yorkshire mining town of Maltby and of day-tripping factory workers making riotous stop-offs at pubs ('halfway houses') as an integral part of their Bolton to Southport

group outings. According to Snape (2016, 40), such leisure mobility involving movement on foot but also by new modes of public transport allowed the Bolton millworkers of the inter-war years to use their leisure tactically to resist the authority and control imposed on them by industrial working life through the affordance of spaces such as the seaside resorts in which Rojek (1995) argues a pleasurable carnivalesque loosening of social rules took place.

Research Methods and Context: Making a Rhythmanalysis of the Transpennine Ale Trail

Similarly to the alcohol-based leisure phenomena examined above, the Transpennine Ale Trail involves spatial and temporal features which we sought to observe and analyse by drawing on the concept of rhythmanalysis proposed and developed by Lefebvre (2004) and since developed by the likes of Lyon (2019). For Lefebvre (2004), social life and social space are replete with rhythms. These can be linear, as in the regular passing of minutes and hours during the working day, or cyclical, as in the passing of seasons and the daily transition through daytime into night, and tend to include both contrasting and repetitive elements. Importantly, rhythms interact with each other constantly and specific rhythms can align or conflict with each other in multiple ways. Lefebvre conceptualises this as polyrhythmia (where multiple rhythms are present and co-exist more or less independently of each other in the same social space and time), eurhythmia (where different rhythms coincide, synchronise and are in union, however briefly, in a coordinated and often serene alignment) or, finally, arrhythmia (where a discordance between rhythms causes stress, disruption and conflict).

In recent years, rhythmanalysis has been put to good use by scholars in several disciplines to analyse the spatial and temporal qualities of numerous social phenomena. This has included studies of the spatial and temporal experiences of particular workplaces (Lyon 2016, 2019; Nash 2018) and of public spaces such as city streets (Vergunst 2010), railway stations (Revill 2013), mountain ranges (Flemsæter *et al.* 2018) and coach tours (Edensor & Holloway 2008).

Further, rhythmanalysis has proved an incisive means of examining the embodied experiences of leisure mobilities in diverse cases such as running (Larsen 2019), skateboarding (Platt 2018) and cycling (Aldred & Jungnickel 2012). Cutting across these studies is an interest in space and time where, as Lyon (2019) asserts, the concept of rhythm can be a particularly useful 'lens' through which to observe, analyse and explain the varied intersecting and at times coordinated, converging or conflicting, spatial and temporal norms and practices. Further to this, then, we suggest that rhythmanalysis is an opportune means to explore the case study of the Trans-Pennine Ale Trail. Specifically, rhythmanalysis helps to conceptualise the conflicts inherent in much contemporary leisure practice, particularly those involving the movement of varied groups and individuals through both commercial leisure space and the adjacent landscape of residential spaces and transport infrastructure.

It is generally accepted that rhythmanalysis is not a strictly prescribed method. Indeed, Rhythmanalysis has therefore been described as a 'strategy of inquiry' (Lyon 2019, 5), an 'investigative disposition' (Hall, Lashua & Coffey 2008, 1028) and by Lefebvre himself (2004, 15) as a 'philosophical method'. Rhythmanalysis prompts a flexible approach to social research which makes use of various forms of participatory observation and data collection, all of which put emphasis on perceptions of a place, its temporal events and the experience of patterns of movement and stasis lived out by the people within it. The task of the rhythmanalyst then is to 'inhabit the rhythms of others with his or her own body, tuning in to others' movements and gestures, attentions and anticipations, letting different rhythms make themselves felt' (Lyon 2019, 80). According to Lefebvre (2004, 31), the rhythmanalyst calls on all their senses and thinks with their whole body 'not in the abstract, but in lived temporality'. It is an approach that requires the researcher to be part of the social situation under study to experience and 'grasp the rhythm' by immersion, movement and bodily engagement (Lefebvre 2004, 37). As Nash (2018, 8) suggests, the use of rhythmanalysis in fieldwork means that 'the focus

throughout was on apprehending the rhythms – perceiving, discerning and living them'. It therefore shares a set of common concerns with a range of recent trends in qualitative social research that seek to re-centre the body, the senses and the emotions in social research (Author C; Pink 2015; Tutenges 2015).

With these concerns as a starting point, fieldwork was undertaken by the team of four researchers as a single group and involved three all-day Saturday sessions between spring 2018 and spring 2019. Ethics approval was received by the lead author from their institution. The researchers are all male and are all real ale drinkers familiar with the practices, etiquette and vocabulary of real ale culture. As such, the presence of this group was unlikely to appear out of place within the context of the ale trail, making it relatively easy to carry out participant observation unobtrusively in the guise of bona fide real ale enthusiasts (See Author D). Moving between pubs, railway stations and train carriages also afforded opportunities to observe and, in many cases, interact with ale trail participants. During field work, the undulating pace allowed occasions for both immersive involvement (e.g. crowding onto an already packed train carriage or queuing at the bar to order beers) and sedentary observing (e.g. settling into position at a table in the quieter corner of a busy pub or awaiting the arrival of a train from a station platform). One member of the research team lives and works in one of the towns along the ale trail and frequently travels for work and social reasons along the same train line and provided important supplementary data and insights drawn from the perspective of local resident.

Members of the group made their own jottings during fieldwork, as and when this was practical, and wrote up extensive fieldnotes as soon as possible following each visit. At the completion of each session, the researchers compared notes, reviewed their observations and agreed follow-up actions. This was particularly useful for discussing situations encountered on railway platforms and on the trains themselves, during which unobtrusive note-taking and discrete conversation between researchers was not always possible. Indeed, as ale trailers were

frequently compressed into busy confined spaces on platforms and railway carriages, the time spent travelling the route provided rich data about research subjects' places of origin, binding values and leisure priorities. Following Lyon's (2016) reflections on the use of audio-visual materials to apprehend and communicate rhythms in ways that words alone may not (Lyon 2016), photographs and short videos were taken to record the sights and sounds of the ale trail but care was taken to avoid identifying particular individuals or otherwise infringing the privacy of groups. In such cases, audio-visual data was primarily of use as an aide memoire to invoke multisensory recollections which assisted in the writing up of 'thick' descriptive vignettes used as the primary data for analysis.

This methodological approach allowed the research to be firmly rooted in the specific local context of the Transpennine Ale Trail. There are eight stops on the trail: Stalybridge (Greater Manchester); Greenfield (now in Greater Manchester, but until 1974 in Yorkshire); Marsden (Yorkshire); Slaithwaite (Yorkshire); Huddersfield (Yorkshire); Mirfield (Yorkshire); Dewsbury (Yorkshire); and Batley (Yorkshire).

[Figure 1 here]

The completed pub-crawl thus consists of travelling by public transport from one railway station to another and drinking in a pub in or near each station[8]. Although prescribed pubs are listed in ale trail guides, most stops involve a choice of venues and larger towns like Huddersfield, a city in all but name, include a plethora of pubs and bars to tempt groups away from the 'official' ale trail drinking venues. The cities forming the start and finish points are not traditionally considered to be stops in themselves, however some groups of ale trailers do 'start' or 'finish' with drinks in these places. Aside from Leeds and Manchester, then, Huddersfield is the largest town on the trail with a population of 162,949, followed by

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[8] More information about each stop: https://www.examinerlive.co.uk/whats-on/food-drink-news/real-ale-trail-everything-you-11481499; accessed 2 September 2019.

Dewsbury (62,945), Batley (38,573) and Stalybridge (23,731), then the smallest towns of Mirfield (19,563) and Marsden (14,071) and the villages of Slaithwaite (5,000) and Greenfield (1,831). The ale trail is an activity mainly undertaken by those from outside the towns and villages, primarily residents of Manchester and Leeds or the suburban conurbations of either city. From speaking to locals, we know that residents of the towns and villages on the trail itself do not follow the ale trail as a defined activity although they may use many of the pubs that comprise the trail as well as using the trains as transport for their own mobilities in the local area, thus providing the spatial context in which various overlapping and, potentially, competing rhythms occur. It is these encounters that form the focus of the analysis that follows.

Results

Puns, Pints and Platforms: Rhythms of the Transpennine Ale Trail

In contending that 'rhythm appears as regulated time, governed by rational laws, but in contact with what is least rational in human being: the lived, the carnal, the body', Lefebvre (2004, 9) explicates a dynamic which we found to be central to the ale trail phenomenon. While the rhythms of the ale trail are made possible by the exactitude of factors such as train timetables, pub opening hours and, not least, the temporal conventions dissecting the working week from the leisured weekend, they are also emergent from the bodily experiences of individuals and social dynamics within groups and the movement of those same individuals and groups through heteronomous social space. As a group of ale trailers step, or tumble, from the hourly train into Marsden, Slaithwaite or Dewsbury and make a beeline for the nearest pub, a pace is set that dictates that each group member must purchase and consume a drink, invariably a pint of beer, leaving sufficient time to board the following hourly train on to the next stop on the trail. In this attempt to follow this pacing and, as we shall see, the increasing inability to keep pace that comes with inebriation, we find the centrality of rhythm to the ale trail phenomena. As in other

instances of 'pub crawl' style drinking phenomena (Author B; Tutenges 2015) there is a clear pressure to align alcohol consumption within the group so that, as rounds of drinks are bought, the pace of drinking becomes collective rather than individual.

Standing on the platform of Marsden train station on a Saturday afternoon, as both platforms fill with large groups of drunken ale trailers, the regulative role played by railways in setting the rhythmic patterns of modern life (Revill 2013) is readily apparent. We feel both the linear rhythms of the hourly passage of trains along the line and the cyclical rhythms both of each individual stop – locate pub, order and drink beers, return to station, repeat – and the weekend that brings Saturday as a time to relax and unwind with friends before the onset of the working week. The platform fills and bursts of song can be heard. The size of groups varies but a difference between the ale trailers is noticeable. Groups of six or more, sometimes as large as twenty, consistent exclusively of men in their 20s, 30s or 40s. Smaller groups, often noticeably hanging back from the main throng on the platform, are formed of threes and fours, also invariably male, in their 40s and beyond. Once in the pubs, there will be an easier way to distinguish the groups as the former without fail order commercial branded lagers or cider and the latter groups, also predictably, purchase real ale and craft beers such as bitter, stout and IPA whilst often being at pains to carefully peruse the range of beers on offer before ordering.

Today, the sun is out and the early afternoon sun warms the platform and picks out the hills that flank the train line's path through the valley in redolent hues of green and gold but we recall the last time we were here, hunched into our winter coats and sheltering from a fine snow and icy wind that rendered that particular Saturday platform nearly empty. That day the snow caused problems on the line and a local in The Riverhead Tap down the hill in Marsden told us that the weather would keep the crowds down and only a few 'hardcores' would be out on the trail. The trains arrive within three minutes of each other and in this passing moment there's an upheaval of movement on both platforms as the groups on the platform shuffle and nudge their

way past groups leaving the carriages, briefly creating several streams of jostling bodies. We hang back to observe the melee and overhear the shouts and laughter of newly arrived groups. A tired looking conductor glances along the train's length and then over his shoulder at a small group just emerging over the road and rushing for the steps to the platform. Too late! The conductor waves and the doors press shut. Through the train window we see their puffed cheeks and heavy breath resulting from their mistimed dash up the hill. For this group, the strict hourly pace of the trail is broken, and they'll return to the pub to repeat another hour in Marsden.

The rhythmic qualities of the ale trail are felt in the timetabled movement of trains and licence-restricted opening and closure of pubs but also, importantly, in the seasons, the weather and a calendar of competing or complementary festivities. Across the year there is a distinct 'season' for increased ale trail activity which commences in the Spring and builds to its climax in June and July, with events such as St Patricks Day, the FA Cup Final and Six Nations rugby matches providing occasional peaks before the onset of school holidays slowing things down somewhat in August followed by a more rapid decline in September. During the autumn, winter and early spring the ale trail carries on albeit it in a less concentrated form.

As the afternoon edges towards evening our train nears our next stop, Dewsbury. The carriage is noisy and crowded. A near empty bottle of white rum is being passed around one group and amongst another, further down the carriage, cans of lager are produced from a blue plastic carrier bag, one for each member of the group. The largest group stands out amongst the general pack as one of their number is dressed as Superman. We take all this in from our end of the carriage, where we stand near the luggage rack and toilet. It smells of sick. Superman makes his way unsteadily down the carriage, swings the toilet door open and looks ponderously into the compartment, considering whether to relieve himself. When we get off in Dewsbury, where the West Riding pub occupies former waiting rooms adjoining the station building and

platform, both larger groups stay aboard the train as it forges onwards to Batley and then its final stop in Leeds.

Such moments serve to depict the ale trail as not a single linear rhythm but a series of overlapping rhythms. We observed this in the pubs, as individuals and groups jostled at the bar, strained to buy rounds from harried bar staff, sipped or downed pints and glanced at watches and rail apps on mobile phones to time their walk, or run, to the station for the hop to the next ale trail stop. But it was on the trains and the station platforms that this became most manifest as bodies walk in groups, shuffle for entrance to train carriages and bounce along train carriages with increased levels of intoxication making coordination of self and others sporadic, at times comically so. The ale trail is therefore formed by not just the spatial forms of pubs, platforms and train carriages and is never strictly aligned with the rationality of the train timetable listing of stops and times of arrival and departure. Rather, the movement of groups of bodies through these spaces and the inaccuracies brought on by intoxication – a missed train, the undulations of energy throughout the afternoon and the fragmentation of groups as some carry on and others, by design or by error, stay behind at favoured stops – bring to the fore the spatial-temporal co-construction of a specific social event. Following Lefebvre's (2004, 15) assertion that 'everywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm', this section shows how the phenomenon that is the Transpennine Ale Trail serves as a useful case through which to illustrate the rhythmic energies of the ale trail phenomenon, specifically, and alcohol-focused leisure mobilities more generally.

Polyrhythmic, Eurhythmic and Arrhythmic Encounters on the Ale Trail

Having outlined some of the rhythms which shape the multiplicity of spatial and temporal aspects of the ale trail phenomenon, this section extends our analysis by deploying the three related concepts of polyrhythmia, eurhythmia and arrhythmia introduced by Lefebvre. Thus,

the real ale trails was understood to be polyrhythmic, in that it incorporated multiple co-existing rhythms and during fieldwork we observed instances of eurhythmia, where the various individuals and groups brought together by the ale trail fell into alignment, but also of arrhythmia which, according to Lyon (2019, 27) 'arises when there is discordance between rhythms'. Polyrhythmia can therefore contain both moments of 'eurhythmic consistency and arrhythmic inconsistency' (Edensor & Holloway 2008, 499) and it is the interplay of these facets of the real ale trail which the proceeding analysis takes as its focus.

The co-presence of two distinct types of ale trailers provides the clearest example of polyrhythmia on the ale trail. These two types of drinkers inhabit a similar rhythm, are both engaged in a similar activity of ritualised beer drinking and do so in characteristically different ways, yet this does not appear to give rise to a great deal of conflict. For example, at the Buffet Bar inside Stalybridge station we chat with two young men who prop up the bar and smirk at us as we bob our heads in the characteristic movement of real ale drinkers surveying the line of hand pumps, making the protracted decision of what to order from the various pale ales, bitters and stouts available. 'What's that one?' one of them asks on seeing a freshly pulled stout placed on the bar in front of us. Our description, and allusions to it being 'a local one', doesn't garner much interest from the young man, whose face is now obscured by the upturned Stella glass as he takes a sizable gulp of his lager. As the choice of drink marks us apart, so too does our attire. The two lads, along with the rest of their group, wear polo shirts or replica football jerseys, jeans and trainers in contrast to us, also in jeans, but like many of the ale enthusiasts, wearing checked shirts or t-shirts bearing the logos of rock bands or microbreweries and zip up fleece jackets.

These visual clues to the tribal leisure preferences of those observed along the ale trail would be immediately apparent to anyone taking more than a passing interest in the crowds gathering in the summer sunshine outside The Riverhead Tap in Marsden. On this, our third occasion to

this spot, the bustle inside as staff serve the newly arrived crowds in short order stands in contrast to the adjacent areas outside where ale trailers mix with locals. Today, these groups are joined by a few fatigued looking fell runners wearing medals from a morning event in the hills above the town. These different groups mix, sitting, standing or leaning on walls next to the river that flows directly opposite the pub or, in the dining room upstairs where groups settle in for longer drinking sessions and await food orders of 'pub grub' dishes of burgers or pie and mash.

The Riverhead Tap, like many of the other pubs along the ale trail, retains a great appeal to real ale drinkers and beer connoisseurs who, research shows (Author E), value the taste of the beer and the enactment of specific knowledge about beer and breweries in a manner that sets them apart from those 'binge drinkers' seeking intoxication alone. These two groups mix along the ale trail, queuing at the same bars and walking the same streets into and out of the same pubs and stations. Particularly during the earlier parts of the day, when both types of ale trailers seem united at the task at hand and a mood of excitement and relaxed leisure brought on by the first drinks of the day, eurhythmia can be observed in the spatial-temporal experience of the ale trail. At times, the various groups feel almost coalesced into on throng of a hundred or more people. Sharing both being in and moving through space, such co-presence often takes a jovial or even carnivalesque form where group walking is a shared spatial activity which can be an intensely social and even 'liberating' experience (Vergunst 2010). At each station a long line of people snakes out of the train, along the platform and down the hill to the awaiting pub. Within this chain of movement, larger groups fragment into twos and threes and chatter and laughter mix and mingle between the groups. On numerous occasions, the real ale drinkers and some locals would stand at a comfortable distance and observe some unfolding tableau of drunken behaviour involving larger groups of ale trailers, often in fancy dress. Here we see a form of sociability often observed in the bustle of urban spaces (see Smith & Hetherington

2013) present in a rural or suburban space where the conviviality created in mobility aboard trains, within pubs and in the transition between such spaces. Further, we see the potential contrast between what Matos Wunderlich (2016) refers to as 'purposive walking', involving a specific task and a fixed destination, and 'discursive walking', which is more spontaneous and exploratory. Thus, we witnessed local residents walking in either direct lines and with purposeful strides or, at times, adjusting their walking routes by strategically crossing roads or increasing or slowing walking pace to avoid or 'get ahead of' large groups of drunk ale trailers. We also observed groups of ale trailers whose walking between pubs or from pubs to train stations demonstrating characteristically spontaneous, or at least erratic, walking involving playful detours, hesitations and pauses in movement and tracking back, especially once levels of intoxication increased. Here, the immersive nature of the research is important, and our data recounted above shows a variety of movement, stances and positioning of bodies in space. On reflection, we did not simply observe 'walking'; rather, our observations were of sauntering, jostling, stumbling and staggering with each field note seeking to capture the variations in cadence, intention and meaning bound up with these diverse ways of moving the leisured body through public space either individually or as part of a collective group.

While the ethos of the ale trail implies linear movement, stop by stop along a train line and, from each station, a spur line to the closest 'approved' or 'official' ale trail pub and back again, this movement is by no means simplistic. Walking, especially in larger groups and under the increasing effects of intoxication, highlights the social complexity of bodily movement through social spaces (Kärrholm *et al*. 2017) and the coordination of individual bodies all moving at their own pace and with different purposes and levels of intoxication becomes increasingly unsustainable during the day. An illustrative example of this occurred during a fieldtrip in August 2018 when leaving The Railway Inn in Greenfield to make the hundred meter walk up the steep road back to the train station. With the departure of the next train imminent, we were

one of three groups leaving the pub at the same time. On crossing the road and being slightly further downhill than a large hen party group, all wearing sashes and many in high heels, we hold back slightly to let them cross but one calls to her friends 'here, let the CAMRA lot go ahead'. We nod in acknowledgement and cross the road before heading uphill to the platform where we are shortly joined by the other groups. This moment of coordination, involving the interrelation of different forms of walking with each group's movement influencing the flow of the others walking practice (Kärrholm *et al*. 2017), illustrated a number of things. First, the temporal alignment of various groups is clear. Just as the various groups had left the train together, made their way downhill at more or less the same tempo and then crowded the small bar inside the pub to place orders, the departure of the next train brought the groups out of the pub and back up the hill within seconds of each other. Our pause to let the hen group cross ahead of us, and their reading of us as part of 'the CAMRA lot', no doubt draws on a range of physical cues based on age, gender, dress and bodily comportment which frame widespread cultural stereotype of hen parties as loud and boisterous (Pilcher, 2011) and members of CAMRA as 'serious' about beer and pubs (Author G). Their correct interpretation of us as real ale enthusiasts meaning we would not want to be inconvenienced by the larger group delaying our efforts to catch the imminent train to the next pub illustrates how such perceptions of one's actions in relation to the perceptions of those of others inform corporeal practices by which people coordinate their movements in public spaces in relation to others (Crossley 1995, 147) and by which walking can be understood as a heterogeneous practice (Kärrholm *et al*. 2017).

As the day draws on, the observed eurhythmia becomes unstable and the feeling of being 'in the groove', merry and relaxed but not yet wasted, appears to fragment both within and between groups. It becomes notably less straightforward to align the train timetable with decisions about ordering another beer or not and the ability or willingness to monitor the train timetable to coordinate departure from one pub in time to meet the next train onwards diminishes. It also

becomes increasingly common to see ale trailers carrying half-finished drinks with them out of pubs and onto trains, although this was exceedingly rare amongst ale enthusiasts. Often groups break up, with some of their party pressing ahead with keeping the hourly pace to the next designated stop and others remaining in situ at a chosen pub as competing attractions of mobility and stasis divide groups up as some prioritise the appeals of new drinking destinations while others covet a more sedentary experience, settling into a more traditional 'session' in one venue. It was common to hear conversations within groups involving some voicing a desire to stay ensconced in the same pub, particularly once a good seating position was secured and options for ordering hot food discovered. Likewise, on trains to the next stop on the trail we frequently heard conversations between friends relating to calling or sending text messages to locate others in the group. At the midpoint of the line, Huddersfield, the two pubs adjoining the station compete for the ale trailers attentions with larger nearby town centre chain pubs and craft beer venues. Most notably, two large venues in the town operated by the national pub operator JD Wetherspoon, famed yet often denigrated for its emphasis on serving low price drinks and food in oversized generic venues, and the brewery and tap room of the acclaimed Magic Rock craft brewery appear to siphon off drinkers from the ale trail at this midpoint.

Most notably, however, arrhythmia emerges between local residents making use of the train for transport and finding their own work and leisure mobility intersecting with that of the ale trail drinkers. As one of the research team came to learn first-hand having moved into the area and become a resident of one of the smallest ale trail villages during the period during which research was being undertaking, village residents quickly become aware of and practice a familiarity with the rhythms of the ale trail and deliberately organise their weekend errands to start early and finishing by mid-morning prior to the arrival of rowdy crowds of ale trailers who would impede their mobility within and between villages and towns. As one local resident commented to us, 'it's like they're on holiday' is apt as it attests to the different competing

rhythms of leisure and work, with the routine Saturday morning of the resident threatened with disruption by the presence of ale trail drinkers for whom this is a one off event. This well-intentioned comment, clearly hoping to indicate that it is not the behaviour or the people as such that they oppose, positions ale trailers and their behaviour as out of place and out of time in the rural and suburban setting.

On the ale trail, we also see such friction as groups of working-class and middle-class drinkers, local residents and, on occasions, groups of travelling Huddersfield Town football fans all contest and cohabit the space made up by the pubs of the ale trail and the trains and streets that link them together. Such resonates with participants in Goode and Anderson's (2015, 348) study, who felt that 'the arrival of football fans signifies the end of the peaceful pub atmosphere', and offers another telling indication of how the multiple rhythms of the ale trail are co-produced and easily modified through interactions with others.

At times where the activities of different groups, such as residents and leisured patrons of drinking venues, overlap both spatially and temporally, the perceived disturbance of one group over another is shown to be malleable, with noise in particular being more or less tolerated at different times of the day (Tiesdell & Slater 2006). Tellingly, on our meeting with one local couple living adjacent to the village station, the husband played several recordings from his phone to illustrate the noise of the ale trail groups arriving at the station as being unacceptable. His running commentary, that '*this* is a Saturday *morning*' and 'it goes on and *on*', clearly emphasising his stance that the crowd walking from station to pub was too big, too noisy and too early in the day. Likewise, his wife commented that she would have 'no problem with [the behaviour of ale trailers] if it were in Manchester city centre on a Friday night' serves to contextualise the spatial and temporal suitability of large groups of drinkers and the attended noise that go with them. Thus, the leitmotif of this local couple's complaints is an appreciation

that such behaviour *is* acceptable just not in *this* time and *this* space; that these are 'urban rhythms' (Smith & Hetherington, 2013) and as such are unwelcome in their rural space.

The tensions raised by the ale trail bringing together large groups of people in the activity of heavy and sustained drinking have given rise to specific and notable responses. These tensions go beyond simply differences in choice of drinks or drinking styles. Rather, such tensions attest to the embodied and sensory aspects of alcohol consumption identified by Jayne *et al.* (2010) and highlight how leisure mobilities involving walking through and dwelling in public space manifest in divergent and divisive perceptions of movement, noise, and emotions and of feelings that certain groups are out of place and off pace.

Attempts to control or regulate behaviour and therefore ease the conflicts evident between ale trailers, local residents and others who pass through the chain of spaces comprising the ale trail are irregular and largely unsuccessful, although several locals indicated that CCTV installations at several stations had, at least, helped evidence incidences of unruly behaviour such as littering and trespassing. Several times during fieldwork we observed British Transport Police and police community support officers, ostensibly deployed to deter drunken misbehaviour, being approached by groups of drunken ale trailers to pose for photographs. As Brands and Schwanen (2014) note, police presence in settings of heavy and reckless drinking can be counterproductive. Likewise, signs and posters adorning numerous surfaces in trains, stations and pubs themselves, reminding ale trailers about safety and behaviour where invariably ignored (See Figure 1). Notably, in summer 2019, a train timetable change came into effect. The change, which meant that trains would not make every stop on the full Manchester to Leeds line, was designed to inhibit or prevent the ease with which ale trailers could make their series of stops. However, the same changes also impeded local residents and proved impractical and unpopular enough to be reversed soon after their implementation.

[Figure 2 here]

Aside from these interventions, the most prominent attempt to address tensions and local disquiet about the impact of the ale trail on their town and village communities was in June 2018 when Transpennine Express, the train operator, published a newsletter announcing a campaign to address disorderly conduct by restating the 'Rules of the Trail' (See Figure 2). Consisting of posters displayed in stations and beer mats distributed to pubs along the ale trail, the campaign was intended 'to directly talk to our customers, reminding them of the standards of behaviour expected whilst on board our trains'. In contrast to the limited attempts to enforce behaviour through police presence, cautions and powers of arrest, the rules are an interesting attempt not to replace but to modify, influence or 'orchestrate' ale trail behaviour.

[Figure 3 here]

Most items on this list serve to demarcate forms of behaviour as required (e.g. 'Purchase a ticket for the full length of your travel'), desired (e.g. 'Be mindful of other passengers, families and children) or unacceptable (e.g. '2: No fancy dress' and '4: No trespassing!') in the 'sleepy' rural setting of the trail. Further, the first item appears to use types of drinks as a proxy for types of ale trailer (1: Real ale only! No shots, fizzy lager or alcopops!). This clear implication here is that ale enthusiasts – the original occupants of the ale trail phenomenon – are preferred to lager and shot drinking 'others'. This resonates with Author E's research which shows how types of drinks are used to distinguish between good and bad drinkers. Some items mix colloquial terminology, with references to 'booze cruise' and 'steaming drunk' appearing to attempt to acknowledge that such hedonistic behaviour is relatively normal, just not acceptable here. Several of these 'rules' (e.g. 'No swearing or loud singing!' and 'No drinks on the train (full or not)') are flouted with a striking regularity that attests to previous observations by Author F and Hackley et al. (2015) that such transgressions are an essential and desired

component to many people's drinking, while the final 'rule', asking ale trailers to 'Be mindful of other passengers, families and children' makes an important allusion to the relationality of movement through and presence in public space.

Concluding Discussion

The rhythmanalysis of the Transpennine Ale Trail offered above has examined the ways in which alcohol consumption and leisure mobilities are experienced and acted out through the rural and suburban locations which the trail brings revellers into. The movement of new groups, and of specific individuals whose behaviour is at odds with the social setting. While the ale trail creates moments of jovial conviviality, it can also bring to the fore conflicts and tensions manifest in the sounds, sights and, ultimately, emotions of public leisure spaces (Goode & Anderson 2015), especially where visiting revellers are felt to be out of place and off the pace by local residents (Author B).

We have sought to put rhythmanalysis to use in examining this specific leisure phenomenon and the subjective and situated performances of place that it involves (Nash 2018) in a way that accords with recent developments in understanding drinking and drunkenness as being embodied and sensory (Jayne *et al.* 2010). Rhythmanalysis is useful here as it attunes our thinking to viewing the phenomenon of the ale trail not through reified concepts such as 'binge drinking' (Plant & Plant 2009), but as a phenomenon comprising multiple actors, atmospheres, mobilities and cycles. The ale trail, and the varied responses to it, are made possible and made palpable not through one specific causative action or influence but by multiple movements and overlapping – at times competing, at times complementing – rhythms. Rhythmanalysis therefore proves a useful conceptual lens through which to analyse our data, collected across a series of visits to the ale trail, but also serves to teach us a wider illustrative lesson about

drinking and drunkenness, specifically, and the contested nature of social life, leisure, place and time more generally.

Following Shaw (2014, 93), we agree that drinking spaces such as bars and nightclubs 'form just one group of materials and practices which make atmosphere out of assemblage, bringing together people, objects, ideas, affects and discourses'. However, we have tried to move away from a preoccupation with this being solely an urban phenomenon. Whilst a wealth of academic research has shown that urban drinking spaces are both spatially and temporally multifaceted (e.g. Tiesdell & Slater 2006), our analysis has sought to extend this appreciation of space and time, rendered here as rhythm, to drinking in villages and small towns and, significantly, mobile drinking and drunkenness through trains, stations and streets.

Rhythms are bound up with the sensory and embodied experiences of place and movement which are central to understanding leisure mobility and tend to be heightened by the often copious and sustained consumption of alcohol (Jayne et al. 2010; Author B). Being immersed in the setting on foot, walking alongside fellow ale trailers between trains, station platforms and pubs, has emphasised an epistemologically useful co-presence in mobility (Smith and Hall, 2016) and the heterogeneous nature of walking (Kärrholm et al. 2017). Following Lyon (2019, 89), who posits a 'relativity of rhythms' whereby 'a rhythm is only slow or fast in relation to other rhythms', the analysis has shown how the leisure activity of drinking alcohol is implicitly rhythmic and that the drinking, and for many drunkenness, of different groups and individuals is understood as fast or slow, as excessive or moderate, only in relation to the pace and practice of other drinkers or other expressions of leisure. As Author E (94) suggests there is 'a relational constitution of understanding (un)acceptable drinking practices'. By throwing together a mix of individuals and groups whose pace, patterns and practices of alcohol consumption, and leisure more generally, align in some ways but diverge in many others, the rhythmanalysis of

the Transpennine ale trail illustrates this well and adds to academic understandings of mobilities in and through social space.

In spite of being based on a specific case study, the Transpennine Ale Trail, the analysis offered recommends the benefits of attuning ourselves to different but interrelated rhythms to better understand the policies of management and regulation required of contested environments (Flemsæter *et al.* 2018) and recent returns in social policy to a concern with fostering harmonious use of public spaces by different individuals and groups (Jones, Roberts & Morris 2007). The analysis offered here has endeavoured to unravel and understand the interplays of contested uses of, and movements through, these spaces and understand how the application of Lefebvrian concepts of polyrhythmia, eurhythmia and arrhythmia apprehend the workings of the ale trail and its associated controversies. The article reminds us of the importance of mobility to the study of leisure and the need to avoid thinking of categories such as 'rural' and 'urban' as fixed and hermetically sealed off from each other. Indeed, the case examined here illustrates how social action blurs across time and space. Using rhythmanalysis to further understanding of the spatial and embodied nature of drinking alcohol as a social practice alcohol embodied and spatial, following the likes of Jayne *et al.* (2010), adds to understanding of how mobility often involves a contested range of embodied senses and diversity of moods and emotions. Further work can build on that of Held (2015) who highlights the way in which comfort and safety in public leisure spaces are constructed through intersectional identities in which lines of inclusion and exclusion are affected by age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and class formations. In doing this, rhythmanalysis presents a methodological approach and a set of conceptual tools both for apprehending the subjectivities of mobility and for unravelling the multifaceted and often competing expressions of mobility which are central to understanding the by turns competing and complementary practices and perceptions of movement through social spaces.

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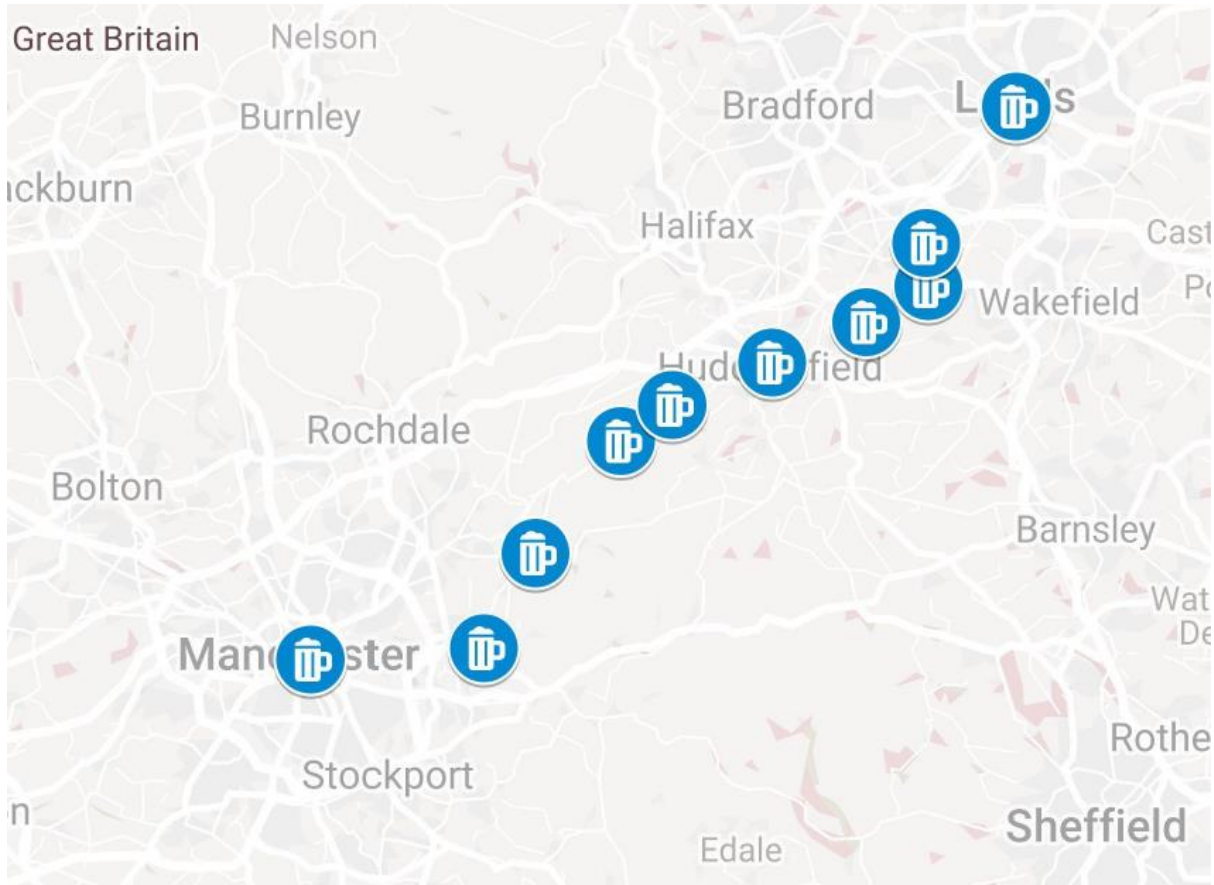
Figure 1: Sign on display outside pub in Slaithwaite

Figure 2: Sign on display outside pub in Slaithwaite

Figure 3: 'Rules of the Trail' poster on display in Huddersfield railway station