

IRISH STUDIES IN BRITAIN

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175



'MAD MICKS AND ENGLISHMEN'—anti-Irish racism in Britain
THE IRISH IN BRADFORD 1830—1920

INTERVIEW WITH G.L.C. IRISH LIAISON OFFICER
IRISH VIDEO PROJECT—THE IRISH IN ENGLAND TAPES

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EDITORIAL

It is now well over two years since Mrs Thatcher met in a blaze of publicity with her counterparts in Dublin (first Charles Haughey and then Garret FitzGerald) to discuss ways of 'encouraging mutual understanding between the peoples of these islands'. At the time there was much talk of how educational facilities could be developed to convert this laudable aim into practice. We said that the crunch would come when some group in Britain or Ireland, fired with zeal, approached its local authority, or central government, or the EEC, or UNESCO, and asked for finance to do what needs to be done. Only then would we find out the true commitment to breaking down barriers through educational links. We advised all organisations and individuals who shared the philosophy of this magazine to pressure all grant-giving bodies, Irish and British, local, national and international, so that the lofty sentiments contained could become reality.

Two years later what is the verdict? Well, some local authorities in Britain, specifically the radical progressive councils such as Brent and the GLC, have made an honest and determined attempt to financially recognise the Irish in Britain as an integral part of their multi-ethnic societies. Others, such as Islington and Leicester (reported elsewhere in this issue) are not far behind. Still others which claim to be favourably disposed towards recognising the Irish as a fundamental component in the wide diversity of the communities they serve can only be described as being found wanting. For example, the Inner London Education Authority, universally recognised as providing the country's most progressive education service, still seems to be reticent about according the Irish in London full recognition if financial commitment is the yardstick as in the end it must be - and this is five years after the ILEA first stated its commitment to multi-ethnic education. How else are we to judge the following:

Despite the ILEA's much-vaunted commitment to multi-ethnic education and their recognition that Irish Studies has an important part to play in this, the Polytechnic of North London is still waiting to hear if its application for funding to mount a two-year part-time course leading to a Diploma in Irish Studies will be successful. The sum involved is £6,000.

The purpose of the course is to provide a structured and academic introduction to aspects of the Irish experience, particularly Anglo-Irish relationships. The Diploma would be a three-semester evening course taught on two evenings a week. There would be six units comprising a 'core' of four units in Social Structure, Economic Affairs, History and Cultural Studies, with a further unit from a list of options, including 'The Irish in Britain', 'Irish Literature' and a project unit. It would be particularly suitable for students who wish to develop their own teaching materials for Irish Studies and in fact the ILEA multi-ethnic Inspectorate has expressed interest in the course as training for the many London teachers who wish to introduce Irish-related materials into classwork. All students would attend a one-week residential course at an Irish university college during the summer vacation. An intake of about 30 students is anticipated and there is no doubt that there would be great demand for such a course, as is evidenced by the interest shown in Irish Studies evening classes in the London area.

The large North London Irish community makes PNL the ideal location for this course and it has been supported by community groups. In addition to PNL, University College Galway and the Ulster Polytechnic would also be involved in planning and running the course. The £6,000 is needed to pay for part-time tutors and visiting specialist lecturers as well as for course development expenses and to assist in funding the residential week in Ireland. A previous application for EEC funding was backed by DES and FCO officials but was unsuccessful. Surely it is about time that the ILEA and the Irish and British governments started to put their money where their mouths are. In the 'Anglo-Irish Joint Studies' document published in November 1981 the desirability of, and commitment towards, extending educational contacts in order to break down barriers of ignorance and suspicion was continually stressed. Yet the proposed Diploma in Irish Studies has been hanging fire for at least three years despite verbal commitments from the ILEA as to the integral role of Irish Studies in multi-ethnic education and fine-sounding statements from both British and Irish governments. How much longer will this go on before some cash is put on the table?

In fact overall the ILEA's recognition of Ireland, Irish people and Irish Studies as part of its multi-ethnic educational provision leaves a lot to be desired. For example the ILEA has recently published a set of position papers on 'Race, Sex and Class'. The Irish feature only twice – once in the astoundingly simplistic repetition of the old cliché that the Irish community in Britain owes its origin to droves of Irish navvies forced out of Ireland by the famine to seek employment in Britain's industrial revolution of the 1840s and secondly a series of tantalising graphs indicating that London children of Irish background were under-achieving at school – again with no further elaboration in the text.

Whether the Irish component in multi-ethnic education has ever been part of the consciousness of the ILEA's multi-ethnic inspectorate or whether the possibility has been considered but rejected, this latest offering is simply just not good enough. Two throwaway references to the largest ethnic minority in the capital city is nothing less than an insult. Already many Irish community groups, angered by this latest rebuff, have protested to the ILEA. It is a pity that the ILEA, the most progressive educational authority in the country, cannot allay the suspicions of the Irish in London that it does not regard them as being an integral part of our multi-ethnic community. With the publication of this latest travesty it has just provided ammunition for those who said all along that the ILEA's concept of multi-ethnic education did not include the Irish.

CONTRIBUTIONS

If you are working in, or are interested in, any area of Irish Studies and would like to contribute to this magazine, or if any of the articles in this issue stimulate you into making a response, please send all material (articles, letters, etc.) to the publishers.

We are particularly interested in bringing to the attention of a wider public the mass of research that has been done on the history of the Irish in Britain; most of which remains hidden in libraries, colleges and universities where it languishes unpublished. Articles submitted should ideally be between 1,500 and 2,000 words and can either be abstracts of the relevant work or in exceptional circumstances, if this is not possible, the whole work can be spread over two issues of 'ISIB'.

Finally, we cannot leave this subject without examining the performance of the Irish government in this respect. When it was first announced that resources were to be ploughed into education in order to break down ignorance and suspicion many of us trying to develop Irish Studies in this country were encouraged as it seemed that at long last there seemed to be some recognition of the fact that many had been ploughing a lonely furrow trying to get Irish Studies off the ground in this country and that at long last official recognition (and financial assistance) would be forthcoming.

Yet from the Irish government over the past two years there has been nothing. The more cynical would say that it was naive to expect any Irish government to concern itself with the Irish in Britain as every administration in Dublin since independence has regarded the Irish in Britain as an embarrassment – as a constant reminder of repeated economic mismanagement of the country, resulting in many Irish being forced to earn their living over here.

No Irish government has interested itself in the characteristics, the problems, the structure of the Irish in Britain. The recent visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Peter Barry, is a case in point. The reason for his visit seemed to be his concern, in line with Dublin's paranoiac way of looking at these things, to prevent the Irish community in Britain from joining, en masse, the Provisional Republican movement! Certainly, he showed no sign of being aware of the political, social and educational issues which are of major concern to the Irish in this country and around which they have been organising. When is the Irish government going to realise that no amount of talk or 'New Ireland Forums' is going to replace the valuable work already being done in this country to break down the very barriers it keeps talking about and when is it going to do something about throwing some cash in their direction? Watch this space!

BACK ISSUES

Issues 1 and 2 are now sold out. There are some copies of issues 3 and 4 remaining. Issue 3 featured articles on attracting the second generation; Irish Studies in South East London; the IBRG Policy Document and the Irish in Britain – A Question of Identity. Issue 4 contained items on studying Northern Ireland in West London; Building Up a History of the Irish in Britain; Irish Studies in Lancashire and a profile of students attending Irish language evening classes in London 1981-2.

Send £1.25 (sterling) to the publishers for copies of both issues.

ADVERTISING

With a circulation of over 2,000 in schools, libraries, colleges and universities throughout Britain and abroad as well as throughout the Irish community in Britain, our rates are extremely competitive:

£50 (sterling)	full page (A4)
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NEWS

LONDON IRISH WOMEN'S CENTRE

The newly established GLC-funded London Irish Women's Centre is organising a series of educational activities and classes. Monthly sessions on the theme of 'Ireland and Women' take place at A Women's Place, Hungerford House, Victoria Embankment, WC2 on Sundays from 4.30 to 7.30 pm and will include discussions on Irish culture (11 December); women in Armagh gaol (12 February); Reporting Ireland (15 April); Teaching of Irish History in English Schools (20 May); Religion and Racism. The Irish Women's Centre is also running Irish flute and whistle classes throughout North London. Further information can be obtained from Bridget Boland at the London Irish Women's Centre, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1 (tel. 01-251-4977).

MORE COURSES

Still on the subject of courses, a 13 week course on 'Northern Ireland - A Divided Society' starts at the Addison Centre, Addison Gardens, London W14 on Tuesday 10 January 1984 (7.15-9.15 pm). The fee is £8 for ILEA residents and £12 for non-ILEA residents (usual concessions). Regular readers of 'Irish Studies in Britain' will recall that this course, its content and the interaction between its students, was the subject of an article in issue 4.

Meanwhile an innovatory experiment bringing adults and children together to learn Irish traditional music, language and dancing continues apace in West London. Every Wednesday evening at the Last Chance Community Centre, 87 Masbro Road, W14 is 'An Oiche Ghaelach' from 7 to 10 pm. For further information ring 603 6102 or 603 7118. Details on these and all Irish Studies classes in London are contained in 'Irish Studies in London', the annual directory of local authority evening classes in the Greater London area for 1983-4. It costs 65p (including postage) from Addison Press, 83 Frithville Gardens, London W12.

MICHAEL DAVITT AND HASLINGDEN

An interesting addition to the neglected history of the Irish contribution to 19th century industrial Britain is the publication of 'Michael Davitt and Haslingden' written by John Dunleavy and published by Haslingden Local History Society (price 60p including postage). The booklet has been reprinted in response to continuing interest in the early life of the founder of the Irish National Land League and discusses the events, institutions and individuals which helped shape Davitt's character and career in this Lancashire mill town. 'Michael Davitt and Haslingden' is available from Haslingden Public Library, Deardengate, Haslingden, Rossendale, Lancashire.

LEICESTER IRISH CENTRE

Following local authority approval for the Brent Irish Cultural Centre in London, Leicester Council has given the go-ahead for the establishment of a community centre where Irish traditions can be encouraged and made available for all the people in the city.

Towards the end of 1982 the Leicester branches of Comhaltas, the GAA and the IBRG as well as various Irish dancing and music interests got together to form the Leicester Irish Community Centre Project Steering Group which also contains two local Labour councillors as well as representatives from the city's Recreation and Arts Department who have been active in providing expert help and advice in developing the project. The steering group pro-

duces a regular quarterly newsletter which is distributed to councillors, local papers and the local community. The steering group meets weekly and in July held a public meeting at which the project received an enthusiastic response. This was followed by a formal bid to Leicester City Council for funding to the tune of £250,000. This was approved on the basis that the council and central government would provide half and in return the Irish community in Leicester would provide half - not necessarily in cash terms but also in labour, services and materials. If you live in the Leicester area and would like to contribute to this project or take an active part in its development contact Danny Hirrell on 0533 882787.

IRISH STUDIES CONFERENCE

Also in Leicester the IBRG has organised an Irish Studies conference to take place at Soar Valley Community College on Saturday 11 February 1984. Themes examined will include multi-cultural issues and development; curriculum development in secondary schools and adult and community education in Irish Studies. The organiser and contact is Nesson Danaher, IBRG Education Officer, who can be reached on 0533 875368. The conference is intended for all Irish community groups as well as for parents and teachers. Keep an eye on the 'Irish Post' for further details.

HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM IRISH ASSOCIATION

Readers in West London will be interested in this new and vibrant Irish society which places great emphasis on cultural and economic developments. Since its foundation in June 1983 it has signed up 400 members and has participated in the local CRE Multi-Cultural Festival. If you want to find out more write to the secretary, Mrs G. Farrell, 25 Holman Hunt House, Field Road, London W6 or else turn up at one of the monthly meetings held on the last Tuesday of each month (8.30 pm) at The Distillers Arms, Fulham Palace Road, W6.

SECONDHAND IRISH BOOKS

Bernard Canavan, 44 Tylney Road, London E7 is offering a secondhand and antiquarian Irish books by post service. There are a number of interesting books on offer and the service will plug another gap in the availability of Irish books here. Send an SAE for catalogue.

TEACHING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Michael Noctor of the Curriculum Review Unit is, as part of his work as Research Officer with the unit, interested in the way in which Ireland is dealt with in English schools. He is currently involved in running a number of short courses focussing on the teaching of controversial issues. He is also co-author of 'Teaching Controversial Issues' (Edward Arnold, £4.25), a handbook which discusses what makes an issue controversial, includes strategies for approaching such topics as unemployment, sexism, Northern Ireland, the nuclear debate, and the Third World. It examines teachers' roles, their influence on their students' beliefs and the effect of the students' own attitudes on their teaching of this kind of issue. Michael Noctor can be contacted at 16 Gower Street, London WC1 (tel. 01 631 3399).

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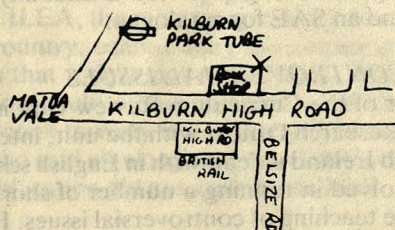
There are thousands of people up and down the country who are avidly interested in Irish published books but find it nearly impossible to purchase them in Britain. In an attempt to remedy this sorry situation Addison Press, the publishers of 'Irish Studies in Britain', has arranged with various Irish publishers a books by post service in this

country. If you are interested send an SAE to Addison Press, 83 Frithville Gardens, London W12 for the catalogue of Irish published books available through this service, or keep an eye out for ads in the 'Irish Post'. The main Irish concern involved is Irish Bookhandling which distributes O'Brien Press, Wolfhound Press, Dolmen Press and Co-Op Books publications although Albertine Kennedy Publishing and Appletree Press in Belfast will also have their publications distributed through this postal service. This means that a wide variety of books from Wolfhound's 'Granuaile - The Life and Times of Grace O'Malley' and 'Charles J. Kickham 1828-1882', through O'Brien's 'Me Jewel and Darlin' Dublin', 'Ireland's Shopfronts', 'Traditional Irish Recipes' and 'Crown and Castle - British Rule in Ireland', to Albertine Kennedy's 'Book of Irish Books' are now more readily available to readers in Britain. Of particular seasonal interest are the Appletree Press 1984 calendars, 'Irish Folk Customs', 'Ireland from Old Photographs' and 'Irish Stone Walls', all available for £2.50. In a similar vein is O'Brien's 'Ireland Yearbook and Appointment Diary 1984' (£4.95). For further details see the advertisement elsewhere in this issue or write for the full catalogue.

While we're on this subject any bookseller reading this magazine may be interested to know that Irish Bookhandling have appointed a UK representative, whose role is to ensure greater distribution of Irish books to British bookshops. His name is John Burke and he can be contacted at 22 Richmond Crescent, London N9 (tel. 01 805 6634).

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LETTERS

SUCCESS IN BRISTOL

Dear Mr Gibbons,

I wrote to you last year in connection with Irish Studies courses in this area, and as you suggested I lobbied my local education authorities requesting that they include the subject on the adult education curriculum, and success, I have just obtained this year's prospectus, and am pleased to say there is a course at the North Bristol Institute entitled Past & Present, Themes in Irish History, where the tutor is a Mr K. Flanagan. I will of course be attending!

I thought you might like to know about the outcome.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs) J.P. Woods,
Bishopston,
Bristol 7.

IRISH HISTORY AT STRAWBERRY HILL

Dear Sir,

I lecture in the History Department at St Mary's, and from September 1983 we are offering B.A. and B.Ed. degrees of the University of Surrey (up to this year, they have been degrees of London University). As part of the History degree, I am proposing to teach a third year Special Subject, entitled 'The Anglo-Irish Crisis, 1880-1921'; although obviously only one part of a three year degree course, it will nevertheless be treated in depth, and is, to my knowledge, one of the few courses offered at degree level in Irish History in England. The college itself has a strong Irish connection, and many of the students are of Irish descent.

May I also add that I find your publication 'Irish Studies in Britain' both interesting and informative, and I hope perhaps to contribute to it some time in the future.

Yours sincerely

J. O'Hara,
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INTERVIEW WITH STEVE BRENNAN

G.L.C.'s Irish Liaison Officer

One of the first acts of the Labour-controlled Greater London Council when it assumed office in May 1981 was to establish an Ethnic Minorities Unit designed to promote and nurture the economic, cultural, educational and political opportunities of ethnic minorities in Greater London.

The establishing of the EMU came about at the same time as a growing awareness in various Irish groups and organisations of the role and position of the Irish in Britain as an integral part of Britain's multi-ethnic society. Politicians, including those on the GLC, came under pressure from Irish groups, notably the IBRG and Federation of Irish Societies, to recognise in material terms the position of the Irish as an ethnic minority – the largest ethnic minority not only in Britain but in the EEC – and to make resources available for the Irish in the cultural, educational, political and welfare spheres. The first and most tangible evidence of the GLC's recognition of the Irish as part of the capital's ethnic diversity was the appointment early in 1983 of an Irish Liaison Officer attached to the GLC's Ethnic Minorities Unit.

Steve Brennan, 26, a Tynesider with an Irish background and with considerable experience in trade union affairs (he was an officer with the civil service union, the CPSA and ran Waltham Forest Centre for Unemployed Workers) is the GLC's Irish Liaison Officer. His involvement with the Irish community in this country includes being active in Comhaltas Ceoltairí Éireann (the association that promotes Irish traditional music) for 6 years as well as many other Irish organisations. He is a prominent member of the radical pressure group for the Irish in this country, the IBRG (Irish in Britain Representation Group). In fact he was encouraged to apply for the post by the IBRG which argued that no one could hope to understand Irish demands and aspirations except a member of the Irish community who could initiate 'self-mobilisation' of the Irish from within.

Steve Brennan believes that initially the Ethnic Minorities Unit to which he is attached, had little conception of problems facing the Irish or of the Irish as an ethnic minority, despite the fact that the Irish are immigrants and are culturally different from the host community. He regards his role as being to encourage the development of Irish organisations along the lines of other ethnic organisations. First of all, however, he says, it is necessary to understand and to get the Irish to understand that they are here to stay. This 'short-term mentality', Steve Brennan believes is a psychological barrier initiating against the Irish recognising their potential social and political strength (*The Guardian*, for example, has recently claimed that if one includes first, second and third generation, there are over 7 million Irish in this country).

One of Steve Brennan's first aims was to ensure that embryo Irish organisations in need of development, have financial assistance. He was instrumental in helping to establish an Irish Consultative Steering Group to co-ordinate autonomous Irish groups in London and which planned the first Irish in London Conference in May 1983 and which continues to co-ordinate lobbying in the field of employment, welfare, education and politics.

When it comes to comparing the Irish with other ethnic groups Steve Brennan is adamant that there is no more discord amongst the Irish than amongst other groups. All minorities, in his experience, are characterised by a distrust of authority and each other. Obviously the major difference between the Irish and other ethnic groups is that the Irish are white but he believes that there are also some fundamental similarities, the most important being a shared colonial experience. He makes the distinction between an ethnic minority such as the Poles and a colonial minority living in the country of their former colonisers – for example, West Indians and Irish. Furthermore he believes that anti-Irish racism is far more insidious, in that it is far more subtle and oblique.

As regards education Steve Brennan believes that the existence of an identifiable Irish community in 20 years' time depends on the second generation who rely on the British education system for developing their Irishness – which it abjectly fails to do at the moment. Brennan argues that it is imperative that there is an Irish input into the ILEA's multi-ethnic education policy. He is expecting a response from the ILEA in terms of examining teachers' attitudes; withdrawing offensive textbooks and using material from the Irish Video Project (see article elsewhere in this issue) in ILEA teachers' centres.

BOOKS Ireland

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Steve Brennan's job permeates all aspects of Irish culture and politics in the capital. He frequently works a 17-hour day; mornings are spent dealing with correspondence, administration and preparing reports for committee. In the afternoon and more frequently the evening visits are made to one or two Irish organisations. The majority of contacts are made with Steve Brennan going out to Irish organisations rather than the other way round. He admits that the conservatism and suspicion towards authority of many Irish groups is a problem as is the latent racism in being unwilling to identify with other ethnic groups. Above all, Steve Brennan believes, Irish groups need resources. If talks between the British and Irish governments or the deliberations of the New Ireland Forum fail to produce cash this will merely indicate that despite the fine phrases they are not really interested in the future of the Irish community in this country.

What criteria does Steve use in assessing a project's worth and what is his response to objections that his close connection with one particular Irish organisation, the IBRG, could bring into question his impartiality?

'I look upon a project for worth and the ability of those proposing it to carry it out and not for partisan considerations,' he says. 'The Irish community must come together if it is to succeed and achieve. I fully expect criticism of my impartiality because of my connection with the IBRG but I can confidently say that there has been no criticism from any organisation that I have discriminated against them and I take this as an acknowledgement that I have acted impartially.' As evidence he cites the Haringey Community Care Project. £38,000 was given to this Federation of Irish Societies Project. The Federation and the IBRG are, it is fair to say, not the closest of allies.

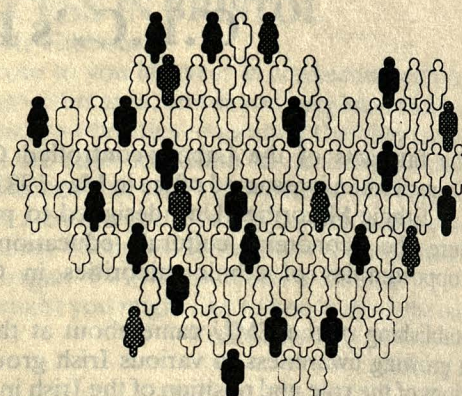
The sorts of projects that Steve Brennan and the EMU have been involved in need no introduction to regular readers of 'Irish Studies in Britain'. For example the proposed Brent Irish Cultural Centre will have EMU funded project and development workers with Brent Council, Urban Aid and other GLC departments contributing to total financial assistance of over £1 million.

The EMU has also assisted in setting up a London Irish Women's Centre (funded by the GLC Women's Committee); has given £40,000 to the Irish in Islington Project which concentrates on women, young migrant workers and the elderly and which has considerable cultural and educational content, and has awarded £8,000 to the Irish Chaplaincy Scheme for its welfare projects. Welfare, in fact, is the next priority area which Steve Brennan intends to concentrate on, especially in the field of homeless Irish people.

On the cultural side there are plans for a mobile Irish Film Festival for 1984 going on tour of the London boroughs. The festival will include early Irish films; films illustrating the British view of the Irish as well as films on how the Irish view themselves. An Irish theatre, youth theatre and community arts group are also in the development stage.

Steve Brennan is also looking for employment related projects suitable for joint EMU-GLC employment committee funding. In all cases Steve is looking for projects either just started or in the planning stages, *not* established projects. It is hoped that all projects will be ultimately self-financing.

If you have a project relating to the Irish community in London Steve's advice is to know the potential of your project and know how you are going to undertake it. Then contact Steve Brennan either by writing to him at the Ethnic Minorities Unit, G.L.C., County Hall, London SE1 or telephoning 633 4262.



London's ethnic diversity is an asset. Yet, held back by racial disadvantage, the ethnic minorities are prevented from realising their full potential or playing their part as equals in society. It is currently a fact of life—but one the GLC will help to eradicate.

It has established the Ethnic Minorities Committee as a major committee of the Council supported by an Ethnic Minorities Unit, and more recently an Irish Liaison and Outreach Worker.

Together their job is to:

- 1** Develop positive policies and programmes to tackle racial disadvantage:
 - as an employer, by developing equal opportunity programmes;
 - as a provider of services, such as housing, jobs, training and recreation, by ensuring equality of access for ethnic minorities;
 - as a grant-aiding authority, by supporting ethnic minority, self-help initiatives, and projects designed to counter racism;
 - as an influential institution, by campaigning for central and local government to respond with policies and proposals to meet the needs of ethnic minorities and to repeal all racist legislation.
- 2** Establish effective consultations with ethnic minority communities by:
 - encouraging active participation in the proceedings of the Ethnic Minority Committee;
 - convening London-wide consultative conferences;
 - establishing working or advisory groups on specific topics;
 - circulating regular information to ethnic minority groups;
 - encouraging written submissions.

If you want to know more about the work of the GLC's Ethnic Minorities Committee write to: The Irish Liaison and Outreach Worker Ethnic Minorities Unit, Room 602, The County Hall, London, SE1 7PB.

GLC

Working for London

THE IRISH IN BRADFORD 1830-1920

Parallels with Today's Multi-Ethnic Society

Ann Brophy

The following is but an abbreviated version of an example of Irish in Britain historiography which relates the experiences of Irish migrants to today's more recently arrived ethnic groups. Unfortunately this type of thought-provoking material is too often stagnating on the shelves of our university and college libraries.

By 1920 the impact Irish immigration had made on Bradford was considerable. The Irish people were emerging from their 'insular settlements' to establish themselves with the life of Bradford. Asserting themselves in the community and often providing positive social and political leadership there. As numbers of fresh arrivals from Ireland declined the Irish became more and more amalgamated with the native population. In studying the 'assimilation process' there has to be some understanding of the Irish background and I have tried to do this in my study, as it is an essential aspect of the immigration experience of the Irish in Bradford and their descendents.

The 'Assimilation' of an immigrant group is a two-way process – whereby the immigrant and the native population become more alike as a result of social interaction. This does not imply that the immigrants assimilate completely to the 'host' community, without the hosts changing in any way. Education, both as a process and an institutional system is involved in any society faced with an inflow of immigrants. The Irish in Bradford were in many ways eased into the institutional system, as it came from a familiar source; the Roman catholic church. Catholic schools provided an avenue of mobility which would lead some of the Irish out of the working class into the more skilled and professional fields. It is significant that from the start the Irish were involved with the growth and expansion of the educational system in Britain. Those among the Irish who succeeded financially often owed their achievement to their own community, and the development of its social institutional life. Irish publicans, pamphleteers, priests, pawnbrokers and politicians all contributed to the developing life of the Irish community. Also there was a great deal of lay participation in the educational process and the catholic schools in Bradford had a large number of Irish teachers working within them. This must have been of great advantage in communication with, and understanding of Irish families. A problem which has to be overcome in working with present-day immigrants in Bradford.

The general problems associated with the Irish in nineteenth-century Bradford are to some extent a feature of the present-day situation of immigrants. Inadequate housing prevails and the Irish quarters of the nineteenth century are today still occupied by Asian and West Indian communities; with all the accompanying problems of health and crime which continue to be realities that immigrants must meet on their arrival in Britain. The process of settlement and accommodation to the host society cannot be adequately explained by a model which assumes that the immigrant is the only changeable factor in a complex situation of interchange and inter-relationship.

A number of theories have been put forward to explain the forces governing migration. In looking for causes and explanations, examining demographic and statistical data that is available or the arbitrary impositions of national

boundaries and regulations, is far from adequate. Irish migration to Bradford did not occur as the result of sudden, unique and relatively brief historical circumstances. The popular assumption is that the main stream of immigrants came to Bradford as a result of the 'great famine' of 1845–7, but this is untrue, although undoubtedly it perpetuated an already established trend, which was to continue up to the present day.

Rather it has developed as the result of the balance of social, economic and demographic forces in the British Isles and the Western World. The development of the fertile rural areas, and in particular the introduction of the potato into Ireland, with the ensuing increase in population, along with the growth of the town in the train of industrial expansion were the consequences of economic and political development and change, as harvesters and migrant labourers and as permanent or temporary settlers the Irish have been available to fill the vacuum left by shifts in the economic and industrial sphere.

It is interesting to note that the majority of the Irish labour force in Bradford at the beginning of the nineteenth century were employed in the rapidly deteriorating and very lowpaid class of woolcombers; they fulfilled the needs of this transitory period preceding the powerloom. It also meant that the Irish working force was being kept together as an isolated group, especially as the process of woolcombing was carried out in their own homes. Religious and cultural differences were found in the relations between the British and the Irish working classes in Bradford, as well of course between protestant and catholic workers within Ireland. The British trade unions consistently endeavoured to avoid Irish issues, but when they were compelled to confront them, they refused to support the Irish position. This reflected not only British prejudice, but the difficulty of coping with an Irish working-class division between unionists and home rulers and influenced by a vigorously anti-socialist Irish catholicism. Although the Bradford trade unions did assist the Dublin strikes in 1913, led by Jim Larkin, although there was criticism against them for not fully supporting the Home Rule issue.

John Berger in his book *The Seventh Man* makes a very interesting survey on exactly this same theme. He examines the position of the migrant worker in Europe today, who, he states is experiencing in a few years what the working population of every industrial city once experienced over generations. He asks very pertinent questions, 'Why do the industrial European countries depend for their production on importing two million hands and arms to do the most menial work? Why are the owners of those arms and hands treated like replaceable parts of a machine? What compels the migrant worker to leave his village and accept this humiliation?' All of these are relevant questions for the nineteenth century Irish immigrant in Bradford. The European migrant worker of today is in one aspect different; as the majority are prevented or discouraged from settling permanently in the country in which they work. Although, in the case of Bradford, immigrants are again, like the Irish a permanent community.¹ To gain understanding of migration, one must start by analysing the economic position of migrant workers; expressly rejecting ethnicity and racism as determining factors. Furthermore,

we should be critical of studies that accept the migrants own definition of their position:— 'Immigrants (in Europe) should be looked at not in the light of their specific group characteristics, ethnic, social and cultural – but in terms of their actual social position. Immigrant workers have come to form part of the class structure of the (host) countries. . . In objective terms (they) belong to the working class. But within this class they form a bottom stratum, due to subordinate status of their occupations.'

The position of the Irish in nineteenth-century Bradford would certainly fulfil these conditions. As settlement became more permanent and secure, this situation improved, and was further helped by the arrival of other immigrant groups, although of course all the problems which one subordinate group may have succeeded in coming to terms with, will be there afresh for the ensuing minority. Emigration must be understood in the context of international capitalism which nurtures the backwardness of the 'sending societies'. 'Labour migration is a form of development and given by poor countries to rich countries. The presence of a bottom 'stratum' also gives the indigenous working class the illusion of social mobility and material advancement, thus eroding class consciousness. Berger argues also that the presence of migrant workers, seen as intrinsically inferior and therefore occupying an inferior position in society, confirms the principle that a social hierarchy – of some kind or another – is justifiable and inevitable. The working class he claims comes to accept the basic bourgeois claim that social inequality is finally an expression of natural inequality. Once accepted, the principle of natural inequality gives rise to fear, the fear of being cheated out of one's natural and rightful place in the hierarchy. The threat is thought of as coming from both above and below. Some academics conclude in the orthodox Marxian note that the ruling classes in Europe actively manipulate the concept of race in order to divide the working class. Others challenge this interpretation, claiming that they ignore differences between groups and treat immigrants as if they were a uniform, faceless mass of new proletarians. Ethnicity is conveniently dismissed as a manifestation of 'false consciousness'. They go on to say that in their model the nefarious ruling classes take the place of 'push' and 'pull' forces; migrants thus being the pawns in a game they neither control nor understand. They point out that thousands of migrants treat their working-class jobs as stepping stones to self-employment. They believe it is a fallacy to argue that migrants' own cultural predisposition and personal attitudes are irrelevant.

In nineteenth-century Bradford, the Irish immigrants gradually came to identify with the aims of the working classes, and they became increasingly involved in the emerging working-class movements. Although, at the same time they never seemed to lose sight of the political interests within Ireland. But, they tended to take their lead from events in Ireland, rather than taking their own initiative. An example of this may be seen in the minutes of the Yorkshire Federation of the United Irish League Clubs, where they appear quite confused as to the activities around the 1916–22 period. They pledge allegiance to Redmond right up to his death and condemn the early activities of the Sinn Féiners, though by 1919 when the Sinn Féiners had achieved a degree of respectability with the establishment of Dáil Éireann under DeValera, the Bradford Irish sympathies seem to turn again, and they also demand a withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, although the distance and time lapse from Ireland is very apparent. As the political situation in Ireland quiets down, the Irish clubs gradually move away from the

political forefront and move into the social welfare of the Irish in Bradford. It was through these clubs that the Irish preserve some sort of personal identity, and while existing as integrated members of Bradford life, they retained their own 'cultural' pursuits, while the culture of Bradford must have been enriched by the introduction of new elements of music, art and literature. The same is true today as the immigrant groups are making their own contribution to the 'cultural scene' of Bradford.

Hostility and prejudice persist today in respect to immigrants in Bradford. Problems which were once 'Irish' problems are now very much Asian or West Indian ones. It is still to some extent the case that while these problems are not caused by the immigration of Irish or West Indians or Pakistanis, their presence may exacerbate the difficulty and thus serve to expose the inadequacies of social provision for the community at large. The blame for these conditions may be misguided. In the nineteenth century, the Irish in Bradford formed the largest ethnic minority and the most separate, single, sub-group of the poor. In the reports of social workers and welfare committees they were identified with the poor and underprivileged. But gradually they emerged from this position, and gained acceptance of the host community in Bradford.

The experience of the Irish in Bradford demonstrates the need for studies of immigrant communities – not in isolation from the host community, nor divorced from the continuing influence of past origins, but in relation to the total experience of cultural, historical and social aspects of personal experience.

(Ann Brophy submitted this dissertation as part of a 'Interdisciplinary Human Studies' course at the University of Bradford).



'MAD MICKS AND ENGLISHMEN'

An Historical Look at Anti-Irish Racism

Brian Parsons

The last few years have borne witness to a growing consciousness amongst Irish people of the significance of anti-Irish racism – its role in such interrelated areas as the 'Northern Irish Problem'; so called Irish jokes, to say nothing of the present debate about the 'crisis of identity' of Irish immigrants in Britain.

And yet, despite these positive signs of awareness there remains much confusion as to just how, when and why anti-Irish racism took root throughout wide sections of the British population.

As to its origins, there are those – like the following reader of the *Irish Post* – who see it as a conscious creation of Fleet Street and the British mass media: 'It is as if a subtle propaganda machine were at work for the purpose of indoctrinating the generally decent British public so that they have a warped perspective on Ireland and things Irish'. Whilst the British media have undoubtedly perpetuated racist attitudes toward the Irish – and whilst there is much evidence to show that conspiratorial manipulation of the media on 'Irish issues' is far from non-existent – nevertheless the media conspiracy argument is an inadequate explanation as to the origins of anti-Irish racism. First and foremost it fails to consider conflicting historical evidence which indicates that racism against the Irish predates even the invention of the printing press – let alone the establishment of a British mass media.

Likewise there is the erroneous view – as applicable to anti-Black as to anti-Irish racism – that both developed as a response to large-scale immigration to this country. Variations on this theme point to the added pressures of industrialisation and the fierce competition on the labour market.

Again, one cannot and should not underestimate the racist treatment suffered by generations of Irish immigrants in Britain – especially when it is given scant recognition by the 'host' population – seeing complainants as over-reacting or paranoid. Nonetheless, it needs to be stressed that racism in both its anti-Black and anti-Irish contexts predates large-scale immigration to this country.

Richard Ned Lebow in his Book *White Britain, Black Ireland* correctly focused on the long and bitter history of English (and later British) colonialism in Ireland for an explanation of racial stereotyping of the Irish (e.g. as lazy, dirty, violent and stupid). This and the stereotyping used regularly in white racist imagery of blacks was rightly seen as no historical accident; the common denominator being the experience of Ireland like much of the 'Third World' as victims of enforced colonial rule – colonialism needing to rationalise conquest and continued subjugation of the native population. To quote below:

'while they describe such widely differing environments and peoples as those of Ireland, and Indonesia, Algeria; Black America, Burma and Nigeria, the characteristics that colonisers attributed to the natives are remarkably uniform. With almost monotonous regularity colonial natives have been described as indolent, and complacent, cowardly but brazenly rash, violent, uncivilised and incapable of hard work. On the more complimentary side, they have been characterised as hospitable, possessing a natural talent for song and dance,

and frequently as curious but incapable of a prolonged span of attention. In short, the image of simple creatures in need of paternal domination, emerged very clearly.'

And while Lebow is able to trace the roots of stereotyped imagery of the Irish back to the initial Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland he then makes the error of falling back on his own conspiracy theory for an explanation of how such stereotypes originated. According to Lebow, King Henry II consciously created such imagery in order to sanction an English invasion of Ireland. Certainly, Henry II sought papal approval for his plans by sending the Pope 'defamatory reports of Irish customs and religious practices'. Henry offered to 'subdue' Ireland (which, unlike England, was independent of the Roman Church) in order to bring 'true Christianity' and 'civilisation' back to its people.

The English Pope of the day (England's first and last), responded by giving his backing to the planned invasion. A Papal Bull issued describing Henry as 'a Catholic Prince labouring to extend the borders of the church and teach the truth to a rude and unlettered people'.

In order to back up his claim that barbarism ruled in Ireland Henry sent the anglo-Welsh monk and man of letters, Gerald De Barry (alias Cambrensis) to collect evidence. The 'treatise' of Cambrensis were to be extremely influential on latter-day British historians who for centuries sustained the image of the Irish as seriously lacking in moral, intellectual and religious pedigree. Cambrensis, for his part wrote scathing reports on Irish habits and customs, describing the country as 'more barren of good times, the more replenished with actions of blood, murder and louthsome outrages'. Similarly – and the



THE IRISH FRANKENSTEIN.

parallels with present-day imagery of the Irish are once again striking – the Irish were viewed as 'a race more ignorant than all others of the first principles of the faith'. In their favour Cambrensis wrote: 'It is only in the case of musical instruments that I find any commendable diligence in this people.'

From Cambrensis at his most hostile or patronising one can easily identify the stereotyped 'paddy' so common in today's 'Irish joke' – the Irish as rash, violent, unreasonable and ignorant yet possessing in their musical abilities certain 'quaint' and 'charming' attributes – illustrating that like anti-Black racism the Irish are stigmatised not only by the downright hostile but also by patronising 'affection'. To quote a more recent children's nursery rhyme: 'An Irish child can dance a jig and share a pillow with a pig'.

But, can the legacy of racism against the Irish, although clearly reinforced by the colonisation process really be laid at the door of one man (King Henry II), no matter how powerful? Does Lebow's conscious conspiracy theory really hold water? The historian W.R. Jones, in his essay 'England Against the Celtic Fringe' suggests that the cultural stereotypes that developed at this time were a reflection of wider socio-economic differences that distinguished feudal England from the Celtic fringe. To cite Jones 'The Norman conquest (of England) accentuated differences between the Celtic and English worlds by importing into England the Norman feudal regime, continental urban institutions and the reformist ideas of Roman christianity. The tribal, mobile, dissaggregative societies of the Irish, Scots and the Welsh seemed irreconcilable with the richer, more highly centralised feudal and manorial regime of Anglo-Norman and Angevin England'. This was characterised by its 'agrarian, feudalised' society of 'town and village dwellers'; in short a 'politically consolidated and more affluent society of wheat growing and wine drinking Englishmen.'

King Henry's views of the Irish appear to be a reflection of this context rather than something cynically 'conjured up' for the sake of expediency. The characterisation of such differences as that between 'civilisation' and 'barbarism' proved 'immensely satisfying to advocates of the dominant life style, who thereby assured themselves of their own superiority and the desirability of the conquest and conversion of their rivals.'

Like previous invaders, the English proved susceptible to assimilation from the Gaelic culture which surrounded them. Many were to take to Irish fashions in dress and even to speaking the Irish language, although for such uncivilised behaviour they were dubbed the 'degenerate English' by their disapproving countrymen. Settlements of English controlled territory (the Pale) marked the border between 'civilisation' within the Pale and 'barbarism' beyond the Pale – this latter term still being used in modern English to denote unacceptable behaviour.

From the late thirteenth century onwards there were to be repeated attempts at a rigid cultural separation of native Irish and English settler, leading to the Statutes of Kilkenny of 1366. These were an attempt to halt the settlers' assimilation of Irish customs. As the historian Roger Stalley points out, 'Marriage of the Irish was forbidden, so too were Irish fashions in riding and dress. Only English was to be spoken by the settlers and they were to receive no Irish minstrels or entertainers... No monastery in the English areas was allowed to accept an Irishman into its community.'

The difficulties faced in imposing such restrictions and maintaining a cultural apartheid are highlighted by the fact

that similar proscriptions were still being attempted (and frequently disregarded) two centuries later. An injunction to the citizens of Galway in 1536 was demanding that they wear 'English dress' and 'learn English' within a year. An Act of Parliament was passed 'for the English order, habit and language'. The Act, as Irish historian Brian De Breffny wrote, 'forbade cutting or shaving the hair above the ears, glibes, moustaches' and included a virtual shopping list of Irish fashions in dress which were outlawed. Such decrees were a reflection of the inability of the English finally to conquer Ireland – a factor which was eventually to lead to the forced supplantation of the native Irish by 'loyal' Protestant settlers. The unwillingness of the Irish people to forego their own cultural traditions and language was to be portrayed by the English as a sign of Irish ungratefulness and a further illustration of their ignorance. Supposed 'Irish stupidity' was taken out of the confines of 'religious ignorance' and given a wider, all-embracing significance.

If, as was argued, subjugation of 'the mere Irish' was necessary so that they be 'civilised' then it followed by the same 'logic' that resistance was a further sign of Irish ignorance since it was clearly in their self-interest to be coerced by the 'more civilised' English. That the 'stupid Paddy' stereotype had become firmly rooted in the English mind is illustrated by the publication in the sixteenth century of the first catalogue of anti-Irish jokes by an English jester named Joe Miller. The preface of his book referred to 'the bulls and witticisms that too frequently drop from Irish mouths,' which, wrote Miller, 'made them the discourse and entertainment of all sorts of companies'. Nothing more recommends 'Teague and his countrymen,' continued Miller, 'than their natural stupidity.' Miller's jokes, 400 years on, could easily have tripped from the tongue of Bernard Manning or graced the hallowed pages of a student 'rag mag'. Like Miller's 'joke' about the Englishman who asks Paddy how far it is from Waterford to Cork. 'Be Chreest,' Paddy replies, 'I cannot tell dee how many miles it is from Waterford to Cork, but it is about ayteen miles from Cork to Waterford.' The dividing line between denying a nation a positive sense of its own intellectual abilities and the denial of its right to self-determination had already become a very hazy one.

Then, as now, violent resistance to English rule was viewed, not as the inevitable response of a subject people to their colonised status, but rather as symptomatic of the 'natural' barbarism of the Irish.

The Elizabethan historian Barnaby Rich, who partook in Ulster plantations, described the Irish as 'rude, uncleanlie, and uncivill, bloodie minded and apt to commit any kind of mischief.' Rich, a forthright advocate of the 'short sharp shock' of coercion, had little time for those who thought the Irish might well be 'educated' through 'kindness' and clemency, the supposed advantages of English rule. Rich's scathing descriptions of Irish violence (like that of Cambrensis before him) echo the oft-cited, present day 'blood-bath theory' which depicts 'the troubles' in Northern Ireland as stemming from a seemingly irrational desire of Irish people to kill each other.

'The time hath been,' wrote Rich, 'when they lived like barbarians in woods, in bogges and desolate places, without political law or civil government, neither embracing religion, law or mutual love. That which is hateful to all the world besides is only beloved and embraced by the Irish. I mean civil warres and domestical discentions. The wild uncivil Scythians, do forbear to be cruell the one against the other. The Cannibals, devourers or mens flesh, doe learne to be fierce amongst themselves, but the Irish, without all respect are even more cruel to their very neighbours.'

Amongst British historians and 'men of letters', Rich's damning characterisations of the Irish were the rule rather than the exception. Edmund Spenser, the eminent poet who helped administer Ireland for the Protestant Tudors, though espousing genocide against the Irish, is still thought of as a moderate by contemporary historians. Like Rich, Spenser was an unequivocal advocate of increased military repression against the native 'Kerns' or 'Woodkearns' as the Irish were variously known. He also called for the forced occupation of Ireland by planters, as a necessary measure to 'civilise' the Irish.

Certainly, the antipathy shown by Spenser toward the Irish was reciprocated in kind by them. One can only guess that Spenser's contempt towards Ireland increased when his castle was burnt down by rebels in 1598 – Spenser fleeing for his life in the process. Spenser wrote of the Irish, 'Those bee the most barbaric and loathy conditions of any people under heaven... they doe us all the beastly behaviour that may bee, they oppress all men, they spoil as well the subject as the enemy, they steale, they are cruel and bloody full of revenge, and delighting in deadly execution, licentious swearers and blasphemers, common ravishers of women and murderers of children.'

But it wasn't only the stereotypes of 'Paddy' as stupid and violent that had firmly become entrenched at this time. The more mobile, pastoral existence of the Irish was seen as proof of Irish barbarism and indolence. As the historian Roger Stalley points out, 'The pastoral way of life, the tending of herds, did not require the same toil involved in arable farming and therefore the Irish were thought to be indolent.' The English colonist, Sir Thomas Smith, wrote of 'the idle following of herds as the Tartarians, Arabians and Irishmen doo.'

In feudal English eyes, mobile, nomadic, pastoral societies were equated with barbarism. Spenser had claimed that the Irish were directly descended from the Scythians.



References to the Irish as 'Scythians' and 'Tartarians' (tribes from Western Asia/Eastern Europe) were still being used as late as the nineteenth century by anti-Irish historians such as Thomas Carlyle. The historian and philosopher Joannes Boemus viewed the Scythians and their offshoots, the Tartarians, as the world's most barbarian people because they 'neither possessed any grounds, nor had any seats or houses to dwell in, but wandered through the wilderness and desert places drawing their flocks and herds before them.' Similarly the sixteenth century colonist Sydney was to compare the Irish chieftain Shane O'Neill to the Huns, Vandals, Goths and Turks.

As wider European expansion to the Americas was taking place during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there developed a growing cross-fertilisation of ideas as to the general lessons of colonisation. As the historian Nicholas P. Canny has rightly argued, 'Writers such as Thomas Hariot who had Irish as well as American experience, frequently compared the habits of the Gaelic Irish with those of true (American) Indians.' Furthermore, continues Canny, 'We find the colonisers in the New World using the same pretext for the extermination of the Indians as their counterparts had used in the 1560s and 1570s for the slaughter of numbers of the Irish. The adventurers to Ireland claimed that their primary purpose was to reform the Irish and in the words of Smith, 'to reduce that country to civility and the manners of England'. It is evident, however, that no determined effort was ever made to reform the Irish, but rather at the least pretext – generally resistance to the English – they were dismissed as 'wicked and faithless peopoll' and put to the sword. This formula was repeated in the treatment of Indians in the New World. At first the English claimed their mission to be that of civilising the native inhabitants, but they quickly despaired of achieving this purpose. When relations between the English and Indians grew tense emphasis was given to the barbaric traits of the native population. After the Indian insurrection of 1622 we find the colonisers exulting in the fact that they were now absolved from all restraint in dealing with the Indians.'

Similarly, prior to the killing of 30,000 Irish at Drogheda, the Irish were described by Cromwell as 'bloodthirsty' and 'barbarous'. On another occasion the killing of Irish children was sanctioned by an English officer on the pretext that 'nits will be lice'.

As early as 1700, over a century before the advent of social Darwinism with its elaborate pseudo-scientific racial theories, there were already ample signs that the Irish had been allotted, in English perceptions, an inferior status that was frequently compared with other subject and colonised peoples. The point is well illustrated by the following summary of 'the character of an Irishman' contained in Edward Ward's novel, 'London-Spy'. 'To conclude,' wrote Ward, 'he's a coward in his own country, a lusty stallion in England, a graceful footman in France, a good soldier in Flanders and a valuable slave in our Western plantations where they are distinguished by the ignominious epithet of white negroes.'

Already, at this time, anti-Irish racism was over 500 years old. And yet, today, 800 years after its inception, anti-Irish racism, like the colonisation process which has sustained it, has still to be finally eradicated!

(The following is but an abbreviated version of an example of Irish in Britain historiography which relates the experiences of Irish migrants to today's more recently arrived ethnic groups. Unfortunately this type of thought-provoking material is too often stagnating on the shelves of our university and college libraries.)

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IRISH VIDEO PROJECT

—The Irish In England Tapes

Ken Lynam

Back in 1980, the newly-formed Irish Video Project sent an application to various funding bodies to produce a series of 6 videotapes documenting the Irish experience in this country. Since we were aware of the dearth of material and the resulting lack of understanding, and at times, hostility, towards the Irish immigrant experience, we recognised that it would not be easy to get the funding bodies to accept the validity and necessity of such a project. We were successful, however, and three years on we have just completed two tapes, recently shown on Channel 4, which are now available for sale/hire to interested groups and individuals. Regular readers will be aware of our existence, but I would like to refer briefly to our history before covering the tapes themselves and how we're aiming to use them.

During the 'Sense of Ireland' extravaganza in 1980, a number of us – Irish people living here – organised an alternative event with the emphasis on what it means to be Irish in England. In organising the event, we were struck very forcibly by the lack of material – books, films, t.v. programmes – about us as an immigrant community. On the other hand, we were very aware of the racism affecting our lives here – the anti-Irish joke, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and so on. After the event, two of us, Don Magee and myself, put together the proposals for the series of tapes, which would begin to document our experiences as Irish people here, and at the same time challenge the racism that we're subjected to. We decided to direct the tapes primarily at the Irish population, where there were the beginnings of a growing awareness of ourselves as an immigrant community, and also at the educational system, where some pioneering work was being undertaken by a handful of teachers and educationalists in promoting Irish studies. Andy Porter, with many years of experience in community media, completed the team, and late in 1980 we were successful in securing grants from the Commission for Racial Equality and the Greater London Arts Association, which enabled us to *begin* work on the first tape. The initial funding eventually ran out, and after a period of applying unsuccessfully to various bodies, Channel 4 expressed interest on the basis of the material we had already taped, and commissioned us to finish this tape, which was later extended to two tapes. In our dealings with the Channel, we have negotiated the non-television rights to the material, which means we have control over distribution to schools, colleges, Irish organisations, etc. More of that anon; I would now like to describe what the tapes cover.

Tape 1 concentrates on the last big wave of immigration from southern Ireland after the Second World War, and through the experiences of a group of women and men who came to this country during that period, build up a picture of the historical and economic forces that created the influx. We look briefly at areas of work which relied heavily on Irish labour – navvying, nursing, and factory work, and confirm the vast contribution which Irish people have made to this country. The tape explores some of the racist attitudes – including the 'No Irish need apply' signs – which people encountered, and we look at how our traditions, music and religion in particular, helped to both offset this hostility and to maintain our culture here.

Tape 2 continues the story. Once established here, we set up organisations and associations to maintain our traditions and to pass them on. We look at how successfully this has been done. Although highly organised, we are a very invisible community, and have maintained a very low profile politically. The tape explores some of the reasons for this, and how anti-Irish racism has contributed to that. We trace the history of the anti-Irish stereotypes, and link their current popularity with the struggle in Northern Ireland. We look at how that struggle has affected our lives here – in particular the jokes and the PTA – and finally we chart the growing movement within the Irish community to challenge these attacks.

Earlier this year, the Project received a grant from the GLC to enable us to do the following: (i) set up a distribution outlet for the tapes, and (ii) set about getting the tapes used within the educational system. We have shown the tapes to numerous teachers and educationalists during the past few months, and the consensus view has been that they would be extremely useful as a resource, and that we should concentrate on producing teachers' notes (which we've done). At the same time there was a strong response to the second generation content in tape 2, and a feeling that additional material which reflected more of the issues affecting the second generation would be extremely useful. To that end we have been working on a short 20-30 minute tape based on interviews with a number of school children born of Irish parents, which we hope to have finished by the end of the year. Meanwhile, we are expecting a decision by ILEA within the next month as to whether they will take copies of the two tapes for their Film and Video Library, and the Brent Education Committee have already shown an interest. With many other education committees up and down the country, we are hoping that many more will 'buy in' the material, but with limited resources we're not in a position to do the necessary groundwork. However we are willing to give whatever assistance we can to anyone who wishes to put pressure on the authority within their area, and would be grateful if people would contact us in that respect.

Finally, a brief note on our current activities. Apart from work on the second generation tape, we have several proposals before Channel 4 for further tapes on different aspects of the Irish experience in this country.

(For further information/details about the tapes you can contact us by writing to:

The Irish Video Project,
c/o West London Media Workshop,
St Thomas Church Hall,
East Row,
London W10.

or by phoning 01 740 8223 (Ken Lynam) or 01 459 1036 (Don Magee).

(Ken Lynam is a worker at the West London Media Workshop and a co-producer of the Irish in England programmes recently shown on Channel 4.)

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(Books; films; tapes; records; packs, etc.)

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Emma Thornton of the ILEA Learning Materials Service has been working on an information book on Ireland full of pictures and documents in order to illuminate the theme of imperialism for use with third year students in ILEA schools. The pack will also include a pupil's workbook full of questions and activities and some teachers' notes with background information, extra questions, etc. She can be contacted at the ILEA Publishing Centre, Highbury Station Road, London N1 (tel. 01 226 9143) but the ILEA need to be pressed to actually publish it.

Emma has also been working with ILEA advisor Stuart Scott, who specialises in inventing exercises, games, etc., for 'lower ability' and English as a second language students. The idea was to try and produce some materials that these students could use so that Ireland wasn't just an academic subject for 'O' and 'A' level. They are available from Stuart Scott, Collaborative Learning Project, Isledon Teachers' Centre, Blackstock Road, London N4 (tel. 01 226 0041).

TAPES

'Ulster - History of Conflict' is a tape with booklet available from Audio-Learning Ltd, 84 Queensway, London W2.

SLIDES

'Introduction to Ireland 1900-1972' is a series of 24 colour slides plus detailed booklet available for £5 from Nicholas Hunter Filmstrips, Mutton Yard, 46 Richmond Road, Oxford.

FILMS

The Canada House Film Library, Trafalgar Square, London SW1 (tel. 01 629 9429 x 243/215) supply, for free, a true-life feature film (55 minutes long) called 'The Irish 1847' and another, 'Passage West - A Dream of Freedom', both about Irish emigration to Canada.

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

'A Social Science Bibliography of Northern Ireland 1945-1983' is a major new resource for social scientists, researchers, journalists and anyone with an interest in Northern Irish affairs. It includes over 5,800 citations from the local and international literature on Northern Ireland, covering material published since 1945 relating to Northern Ireland since 1921 and including politics, economics, sociology, geography, education, history, etc., etc. It is available for £13.95 hardback (plus £2.30 p & p) and £6.95 paperback (plus £1.25 p & p) from University Bookshop, University Road, Belfast 7, Northern Ireland.

'New Approaches to Teaching Irish History' is a pamphlet published by the Historical Association, Publications Department, 59a Kennington Park, London SE11, price £1.60.

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BOOKS

RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS

Recently arrived Irish published books on the 'Irish Studies in Britain' desk include:

'Ireland – A Directory', edited by Tony Farmar (Institute of Public Administration, £28.50)

This massive tome includes information on every aspect of Irish society – government, education and religion as well as sections on Northern Ireland and the EEC.

'An Anti-Imperialist's Guide to the Irish War' by the Irish Freedom Movement (Junius Publications, £1.95), described as 'a handbook for people in Britain who want to end the war in Ireland'.

'Unequal Achievement – The Irish Experience 1957-1982', edited by Frank Litton (Institute of Public Administration, £4.95)

A major analysis of Irish contemporary history in which sixteen contributors each give their specialist view of the last 25 years in Irish society, including reviews of society and culture, politics, social structure, the environment, the arts, the economy, the health services and foreign affairs.

'No Man's Man' by Leon O Broin (Institute of Public Administration, £9.95)

A biographical memoir of Joseph Brennan – civil servant and first Governor of the Central Bank of Ireland.

'Great Britain and the Holy See 1746-1870' by Matthias Buschkuhl (Irish Academic Press, £17.50)

Contains a mine of information on Irish ecclesiastical history and is indispensable for anyone studying Irish and British ecclesiastical history during the second half of the 18th and whole of the 19th centuries.

Finally, the 'Irish Times' sent us their 1983 Desk Diary which was available for £7. We are assuming that they will be publishing a similar diary for 1984. Find out by contacting Brenda McNiff, General Services Manager, Irish Times, PO Box 74, 11-15 D'Olier Street, Dublin 2.

To convert punts to sterling, subtract 20p in the pound (approximately). If you have any difficulty getting the above books, contact 'Irish Studies in Britain'. But remember to enquire in bookshops first; only this way, if there is an evident demand, will booksellers begin to stock more Irish books.



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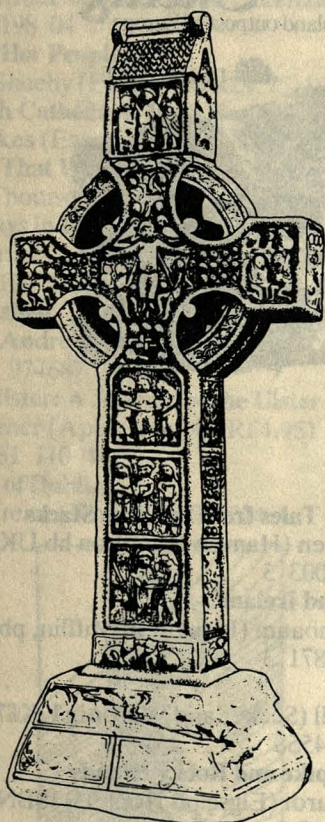
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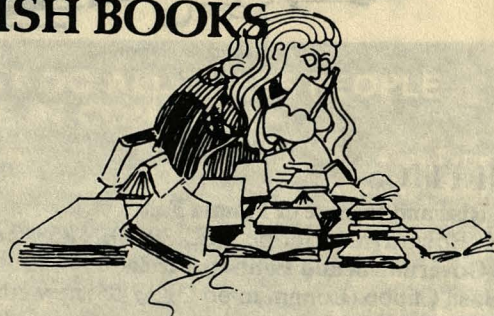
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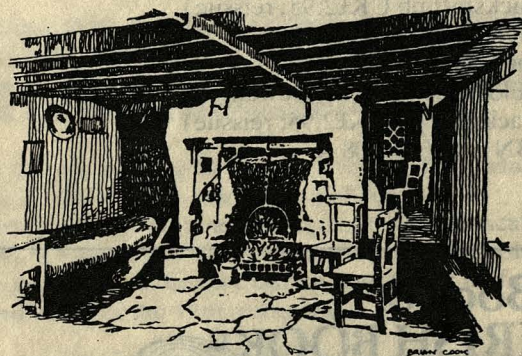
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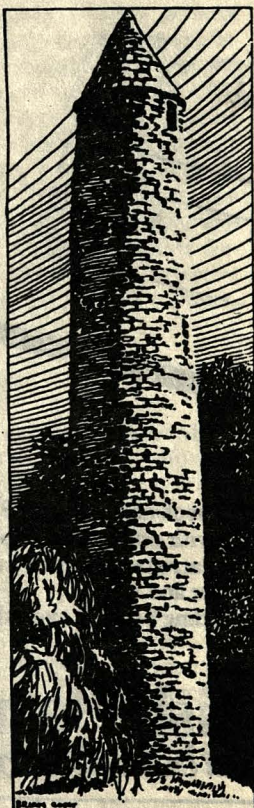
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IRISH IN BRITAIN

Michael Hannon

To those of our race who have made their homes abroad, Christmas is the time of the year when thoughts turn again to Ireland, and to the homes of their childhood. This applies to us here in Britain just as much as it does to those who have gone to more distant lands. Back surge our memories to other Christmases when we gathered round the open hearth on Christmas night. The sparks like a million stars ascending the darkened chimney. All around was the aroma of a country kitchen. In the light of the oil lamp the delph shone brightly on the dresser, and in every window the Christmas Candle glowed.

Fifty years ago or so Christmas was a more subdued season than it is today – a time when all the family came together. They came from overseas, the savings of many summers having made it possible to spend Christmas in Ireland. The words 'You're Welcome Home' echoed and re-echoed many times in the ears of the visitor – for indeed visitors they were for the most part. For many their sojourn was all too short. One by one familiar faces disappeared and a bit of us went with them when they left. I was younger then; never dreaming that one day I would follow in their footsteps. Nottingham was just a name then – a name linked with Robin Hood, Maid Marion and Nottingham Castle. Today it is my home, and has been for over thirty years.

For the Irish in Britain, Christmas is a great social occasion – more so today than in earlier years. This is because of the many Irish Centres which are to be found in most major cities and towns. These are the meeting places, the new 'Visiting Houses' where we gather to celebrate and have the crack. These are the places where old friendships

are renewed and new friends made. It is here, too, that our cultural heritage is kept alive and passed on to our children. Irish music and dancing is played and practised in many of these centres.

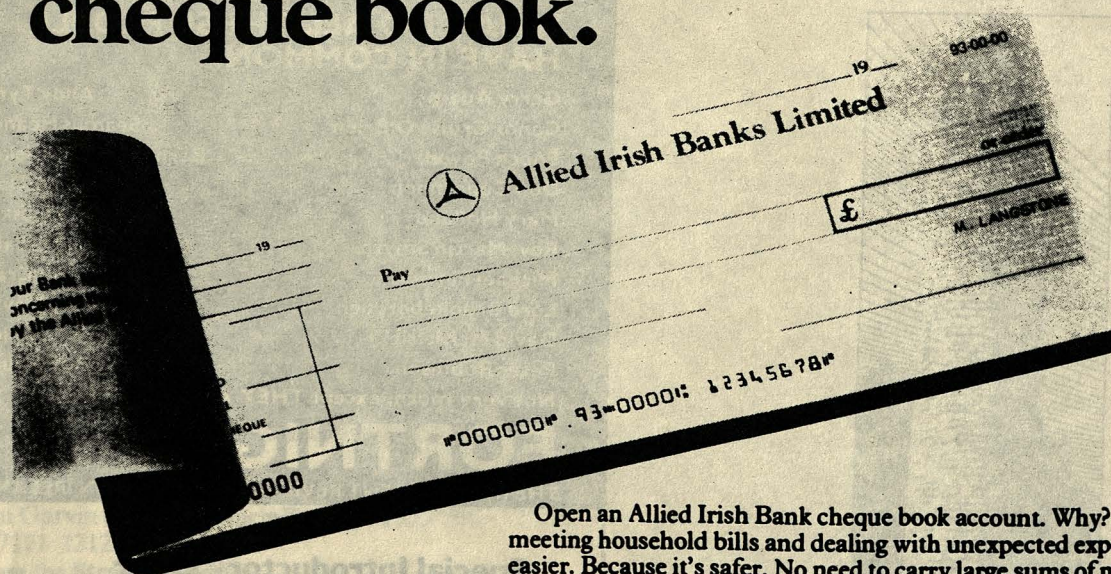
Once Christmas is over people's thoughts turn to spring, and with the spring comes the next great day for all of us; that day, of course, is 'St Patrick's Day'. Again there is 'The Gathering' in the Centres and Clubs. Again there is music, song and dancing, all washed down by lashings of good liquor.

After St Patrick's there comes a lull. Not until the May-flowers appear does one get restless. The fragrance of the whitethorn hangs heavy now down Irish country lanes and it's these same winding lanes that begin to lure us back once June comes in. For many it will be what they have been waiting for all the year – the renewing of old friendships; revisiting favourite haunts; relaxing in some secluded cove or country hide-away; taking with them when they leave glorious memories of a summer holiday. Memories to keep them warm all through the dark winter days – right up to Christmas time again.

But no matter the season, for those of us separated from our native land, constantly our –

*Thoughts turn Homewards
To mountains of purple hue
To the lush green fields
Kissed by the morning dew,
To a little winding road
In a peaceful glen
Where folks are always glad
To clasp your hand again.*

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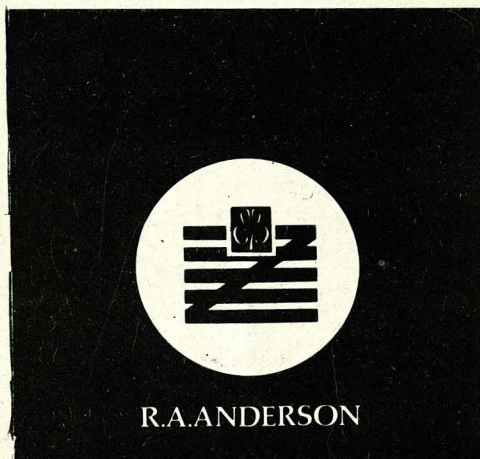
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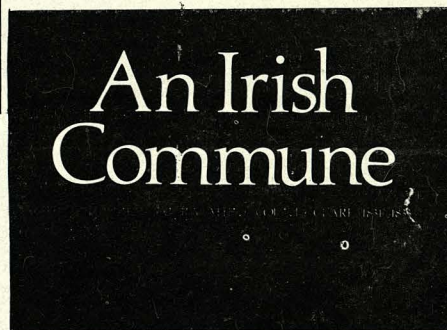
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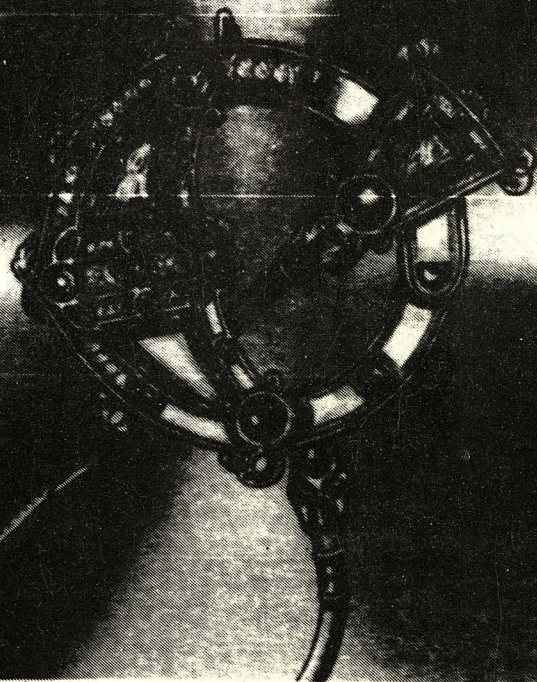
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