

REPORT on 7th.

National Conference

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IRISH DIMENSIONS IN BRITISH EDUCATION

7TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE - Saturday 10 February 1990

QUESTIONS OF EVIDENCE - THE "FAMINE" AND THE "TROUBLES".

This conference was aimed at teachers, parents, first and second generation Irish, Irish community organisations and all those interested in the relationship between culture and education.

This year there were two guest speakers:

- (1) Dr. BOB PURDIE of Ruskin College, Oxford, BAIS Executive member and member of both the Irish and Scottish Labour History Societies, who spoke on "CIVIL RIGHTS TWENTY YEARS AFTER". He discussed the origins of the Civil Rights movements and the current situation with regard to the community and civil liberties.
- (2) <u>Dr. CHRISTINE KINEALY</u>, Director of the <u>Ulster Historical Foundation</u> who discussed <u>"THE FAMINE GREAT HUNGER OR STARVATION?</u> She examined the role of the Government, using new archive evidence, and examined "revisionist" interpretations.

There was a wide range of <u>Workshops</u> to choose form covering many aspects of development:

- IRISH DIMENSIONS TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE MARTIN FLYNN of the Birmingham Library Service considered issues and developments.
- CREATING AN IRISH STUDIES GROUP HOW TO DO IT PAT DUFFY (W'ton Ir. Cult. Asscn.), JOE FLYNN (Man. Ir. Ed. Group), & GREG QUIERY (Merseyside Ir. Stds. Ents.)
- IRISH LANGUAGE WORKSHOP SEOSAMH WATSON of UCD and Oideas Gael: presenting Irish Literature in Adult Education: sources, preparation and problems.
- THE IRISH MATERIAL IN MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY LIBRARY an exploration, led by JANET WALLWORK of the John Rylands University Library.
- CELTIC STUDIES FOR THE 9 15s: MAGGIE GARVEN of SOAR VALLEY COLLEGE explored uses of History and Archaeology and use of I.T. re the National Curriculum.
- RESEARCHING WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES SOURCES & PROBLEMS ELLEN STAGG of Wigston FE College (Leics.) led a workshop discussion
- "AN IRISH PROTESTANT IN ENGLAND" a viewpoint and discussion led by SEAN TRAYNOR, children's author.
- THE IRISH COMMUNITY ASPECTS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS; a workshop led by GEAROID O'MEACHAIR of the London CARA project.

During lunch there was a showing of the new video of THE IRISHMAN - AN IMPRESSION OF EXILE made by Philip Donnellan in 1965 - an early example of a film that the BBC felt they could not programme.

We wish to thank BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARIES and the 'BUILDING SIGHTS

PROJECT' for the loan of the PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION ON THE IRISH IN BIRMINGHAM called "A ROUGH CROSSING".

The bookstall was operated by FOUR PROVINCES BOOKSHOP of London (071-833-3022).

The Conference was supported by the British Assocation for Irish Studies, Soar Valley College Community Association, the Leicestershire Multicultural Service, our commercial sponsors, and the Recreation and Arts Department of Leicester City Council. We wish to express our gratitude to all of these bodies.

NESSAN J. E. DANAHER, B.A., M.Ed. Irish Studies Co-ordinator (Hon. Fellow, Irish Studies Institute University of Liverpool) 14.11.90

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The Civil Rights Movement: Twenty Years After.

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Lecture delivered to the Soar Valley Irish Studies Conference.

Leicester, 10 February 1990.

Strictly speaking the anniversary we should be marking this year is not that of the civil rights movement, but twenty years of the Provisional IRA military campaign. This highlights a problem about writing the history of civil rights. For most commentators the events preceding the outbreak of the conflict have been relevant mainly as an explanation for the violence of the last two decades and the civil rights movement, therefore, has been seen as the prelude to a war. But during most of its history Northern Ireland was at peace and it is wrong to ignore everything in that history except the conflict. The civil rights movement marked a transition and it has to be seen in the light of the events of the 1970s and 1980s. But it also has to be seen as a consequence of the 1960s, and as a product of events which took place during a time of rapid, but peaceful, change.

The civil rights movement began as a new way of tackling an old problem. Complaints about discrimination against Catholics in Ulster were older than the state itself, but the term, "civil rights", was never used to define the aspirations of the minority community in Northern Ireland before the 1960s. The inspiration was the black civil rights movement in the United States. It militantly expressed the passion of Southern blacks and their demand for the rights their citizenship should have given them. At the same time its aspirations were moderate; it simply demanded that the United States apply the letter of its Constitution. The civil rights movement was based on the same fundamental principle. That uniform standards of civil rights should prevail throughout the United Kingdom. This did not neccessarily imply a desire to be British, simply a willingness to put aside longer term aspirations in favour of unity around one basic demand.

To understand where this movement came from you have to look back at Northern Ireland during the 1960s. It was a period during which there were widespread expectations of change, and a belief that the old animosities and the social and cultural backwardness of the past would be overcome. These ideas were closely associated with the Premiership of Terence O'Neill. The new Prime Minister, who came to office in 1963, adopted an economic strategy of state investment and planning and a liberal image. His best known gestures were the meetings with Sean Lemass and Jack Lynch and his visits to Catholic schools. But his intentions were less generous than the gestures appeared.

The 1962 Stormont General Election had seen a serious slump in the Unionist vote. Large numbers of Protestant workers had voted for the Northern Ireland Labour Party in protest at unemployment and economic stagnation. Many middle class voters, particularly in Belfast, had voted for the NILP and the Liberal Party as a protest against the sectarian attitudes of the Unionist Party. To overcome these electoral problems O'Neill needed to turn the economy round and to win back disaffected voters. His economic strategy required collaboration with the British government, and incorporation of the trade unions into economic planning structures. This meant substantial enough gestures to create an impression of change, but not enough real change to alienate his existing supporters. He was not prepared, for example, to try to reform the Unionist Party so that Catholics could join it.

O'Neill's cosmetic changes blinded many people to the reality that the old problem of sectarianism had not been eliminated. Beneath the surface communal antagonisms flourished; homes churches and halls were daubed with slogans; soccer fans clashed; Orange and nationalist bands provoked conflict. It was all fairly low key and quite unpolitical, but it did call in to question the extent to which Northern Ireland had really changed.

The fact was that there were basic reforms which O'Neill could have brought in and which were of pressing neccessity. The local government electoral system was anachronistic and unfair. Many small

local authorities were too small to provide adequate services and had become cockpits of sectarian animosity. Housing was too scarce a commodity and some local authorities allocated it in a discriminatory way. Discrimination in employment was covert in the public sector and often blatant in the private sector. Both sides discriminated, but they were not equally culpable. It was Catholics who suffered most, and they also had their hands on fewer levers of power. Power confers responsibility and the Unionist Party seriuously failed to fulfill its responsibility to ensure fair treatment of all citizens. Terence O'Neill, by simultaneously giving hope of change and refusing to bring it about, must be blamed for much that followed.

There were serious warnings of trouble ahead in 1964, with the Divis St. riots, when Paisley blackmailed the government into sending the RUC into the Falls to seize a tricolour flag from the Republican elction H.Q. In 1966 there was tension around the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising and the emergence of the UVF. These events showed that the small section of the Protestant community which was consumed by sectarian passions was large enough to cause a problem when given political leadership by Ian Paisley. Paisleyism had two effects. It limited the room for manœuvre of O'Neill and his supporters in the Unionist Government and Party, but it also undermined trust in O'Neill amongst those who were to become civil rights supporters.

By 1968, O'Neill had, quite independently of Paisley's actions, succeeded in alienating most Catholics, and many liberal Protestants. But Paisleyism was important in providing the nationalist community with an explanation for what they saw as unacceptable in O'Neillism - it was believed that Paisley's pressure, together with that of the "backwoodsmen" in the Party had frustrated the Prime Minister's weak liberal instincts. This reinforced the communalist divide within Northern Ireland and it was an important part of the process whereby opposition to the Government took to the streets - no other effective means of pressurising the Unionist administration had been found, and O'Neill had done nothing effective to deal with the mounting frustration. An important example was the one attempt to bring a

court case against a local authority for discrimination; this collapsed when legal aid was denied.

The stagnation of the O'Neill years was particularly tragic for the new opposition forces which had emerged in the earlier atmosphere of optimism. There were the constructive nationalists of the National Democratic Party, the Republican Labour Party of Gerry Fitt and individual Nationalist politicians like the Gormley brothers and Austin Currie. The Republican Movement had given up its guerrilla war and was trying to engage in grass roots social agitation. The Northern Ireland Labour Party broadened its support to include some Catholics and some talented middle class intellectuals. The Ulster Liberal Party led by a likeable Protestant clergyman, the Rev. Albert McElroy, began to revive a political tradition which had been dead since the early twentieth century. This growing opposition, and the electoral reverses for the Unionists gave hope that the Unionists could be ousted at the ballot box by a coalition of opposition groups. By the 1965 Stormont general election O'Neill's strategy had dissipated this potential and it is this which explains the emergence of the civil rights movement.

Between 1962 and 1968 there were several attempts to create a civil rights movement. The Republicans set up a Northern Ireland Council for Civil Liberties in 1962. In January 1964 a group of Catholic professional people set up the Campaign for Social Justice in Northern Ireland to circulate information about abuses of civil liberties in Northern Ireland. The same year students in Queen's University Belfast set up the Working Committee on Civil Rights; it carried out surveys in Derry and Newry. In 1965 a group of London Irish people in the British Labour Party launched the Campaign for Democracy in Ulster. In January 1967 the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association was formed as a result of an initiative from aRepublican discussion forum, the Wolfe Tone Societies.

None of these organisations achieved any significant results. The Republicans quickly abandoned the NICCL in favour of a campaign to free Republican prisoners. The Working Committee ran out of funds before its surveys could be published. The CSJ and the CDU failed to

prod the Westminster government or Parliament into intervening to end Unionist abuses of power. The NICRA was completely unable to get results by lobbying government ministers and departments on civil liberties issues. It was only the Association's decision to organise a March between Coalisland and Dungannon in August 1968 which opened a breach in the wall of indifference.

The success of the march led to another one in Derry on 5 October. This was prohibited from following its proposed route by the Minister of Home Affairs, William Craig, and an attempt to defy the ban brought a brutal police attack which was seen right across the world on televison news bulletins. In its wake there emerged a mass civil rights movement, with groups organised right across Northern Ireland. But it also led to a spiral of increasing tension. In January 1969 the students of the People's Democracy were brutally ambushed at Burntollet, while marching from Belfast to Derry, and in August 1969, serious violence spread from Derry to Belfast and the British Army was sent in to take control from the exhausted and demoralised RUC.

In retrospect, the decision of the NICRA to turn to street demonstrations was a fateful one. Street marches in Northern Ireland had a very definite historical and sectarian significance. The civil rights movement was perfectly sincere in viewing its marches as non-sectarian, but it was a perception which was not widely shared. It was not just that many Protestants were upset and angered, but some less politically sophisticated Catholics interpreted the tactic as a signal to become more aggressive and combative towards the police and the Protestant community. By August 1969 it was clear that the minority community was so alienated that it was no longer possib; le to find a solution in purely civil rights terms. But that is another story - the story of the Troubles and we should not get the two things mixed up.

Why did the leadership of the civil rights movement not foresee the effects of its tactics? They did, after all, call off the demonstrations towards the end of 1968, when it was obvious that sectarianism was on the increase. The truth is that the tactic itself was not foreseen. It arose out of a particular situation in

Dungannon, when a local campaign for better housing linked up with a small civil liberties group looking for some way to make an impact. The apparent success of the march encouraged the NICRA to agree to proposals from a group of militants in Derry that a march should be arranged for their town. There were those within the Association who counselled caution, but for the majority it was the only way to break out of isolation and frustration.

The crisis which the civil rights movement precipitated transformed the context within which the grievances of Northern Ireland Catholics could be considered. The Unionist Party could never have responded adequately because, quite apart from its sheer lack of political and administrative competence, it was too susceptible to communalist pressures. But when Westminster took over in 1972 it became possible to tackle the problem of discrimination through the more detached processes of bureaucratic social engineering.

The early civil rights activists wanted to get Britain involved because they believed that Westminster would impose British standards of impartiality and fairness. This was a somewhat naive view but, in any case, by the time Britain did intervene it was in circumstances which they had not envisaged. It was not primarily to bring about equality of rights, but to contain civil unrest and in a situation poisoned by violence and suspicion. To the caution of all governments responding to popular demands, was added a fear of provoking Protestant opposition and a deep seated reluctance to get entangled in Irish affairs at all. By the time Westminster took over full control of Northern Ireland in March 1972, the British presence, itself, had become a problem, and the Provisional IRA had changed the terms of the debate. Discrimination shrank back in importance when compared with the problem of political violence.

In considering discrimination we should distinguish between the repression and bigotry which Catholics living in Republican areas and some working class Protestants suffer at the hands of the security forces and the structures of discrimination which are not associated with the current violence and would survive if the war were to end.

There have been ten official and officially commissioned reports on the problem of discrimination since 1978, and in addition there have been regular reports on their work by the Fair Employment Agency, the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Police Authority and the Police Complaints Board. These have been supplemented by a mass of academic research and by investigative journalism. Much more information is now available, and more sophisticated techniques have been applied to interpreting it, than was the case in the 1960s. They have brought out the fact that discrimination is deeply rooted because it reflects assumptions, predjudices and practices at the grass roots of the The exclusion of Catholics from skilled trades in the shipbuilding and heavy engineering industries, for example, arose from the practice of recruiting through family networks, but it is hard for governments to overcome that kind of traditional practise. Try being a civil servant instructing a father or uncle that their son or nephew should not have privileged access to an apprenticeship in the shipyard.

Governmental efforts have not succeeded in clarifying completely the origins, causes and extent of dicrimination, and they have certainly not succeeded in eliminating it. Moreover it has become clear that Northern Ireland is not unique within the United Kingdom. Many of the problems faced by black people in Britain do not differ in kind from those experienced by Northern Ireland Catholics. In both societies, discrimination on ground of race or religion is cross-cut and intensified by discrimination on grounds of gender. In Britain, as in Northern Ireland, every attempt to deal with these problems reveals a further layer of complexity.

The civil rights movement broke down the old system of discrimination and bigotry because it had a vision which was broader and more generous than any seen in Northern Ireland before. It inspired people who had lost faith in the possibilities of change, although it did not succeed in finding a way to bring change about. The civil rights movement is dead. It was torn apart by violence and sectarian polarisation. It cannot be revived, but it can be learned from.

Northern Ireland is part of Europe and will be affected by the changes now taking place throughout the continent. This does not mean that it will be changed by some disembodied abstract force. It will be changed by its people. Most of the problems now coming to the fore in Europe concern precisely the issues of civil liberties and of relations between ethnic and religious communities which Northern Ireland has been trying to solve in the last twenty years. The fundamental decency of the Northern Ireland people and their great common sense will enable them to learn from the experiences of the new Europe - and also to contribute to creating that new Europe by helping others to learn from their experiences.

RECOMMENDED READING Items sent for review and evaluated positively for inclusion in Bibliographies for FE, Ad Ed and HE.

CRONIN, J., The Anglo-Irish Novel, Vol. II (Appletree, 1990, £15.95)

DARBY, J., DODGE, N. and HEPBURN, A.C., Political Violence: Ireland in a Comparative Perspective (Appletree, 1990, £15.95)

RYLE DWYER, T., Michael Collins, the Man Who Won the War (Mercier, 1990, £6.95)

BRADY, M., The Love Story of Yeats and Maud Gonne (Mercier, 1990, £5.95)

ABBOT, V., An Irishman's Revolution - The Abbé Edgeworth and Louis XVI (Goldsmith/Kavanagh, 1989, £5.95)

EGAN, D., A Song for My Father (Bems) (Goldsmith/Kavanagh, 1990, £4.95)

EGAN, D., Poets Choice (Own Works), (Goldsmith, Kavanagh, 1990, £5.95 cassette)

ATTRIDGE, D., The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce (C.U.P., 1990, £27.50 H/B and £8.95 P/B)

WARD, M., Maud Gonne, Ireland's Joan of Arc (Pandora, 1990, £8.99)

THE IRISH FAMINE 1845-52

Christine Kinealy, Administrator of the Ulster Historical Foundation

Subsistence crises were not unusual in nineteenth century Ireland. In 1817, 1822, 1831, 1835, 1836, 1839 and 1842, for example, there were partial crop failures which resulted in localised distress in various parts of the country. Because, prior to 1838, there was no state provision for poor relief in Ireland, the government responded to each of these crises on an 'ad hoc' basis usually by providing the distressed areas with sums of money equal to contributions which were raised locally and by importing additional foodstuffs into the affected areas. In 1838, however, a Poor Law, closely modelled on the 1834 "new" English Poor Law was introduced into Ireland. The Irish Poor Law divided the country into 130 new administrative units known as Unions, each of which was to have its own workhouse.

The potato blight, which was the immediate cause of the Famine, was first noticed in County Cork at the beginning of September 1845 but its full extent was not realised until general digging took place in October. Following this, it became obvious that the blight had affected the potato crop in the south and west of Ireland with only isolated instances in other parts of the country.

The British government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, reacted quickly to the news of the blight. At this stage, they believed that they would be applying a temporary remedy to a "temporary though widespread calamity". In November 1845, a Temporary Relief Commission was established which was to operate parallel to, but distinct from the Poor Law system. The function of this Commission was to control and co-ordinate the efforts of local relief committees. The relief committees, in turn, could receive a 50% grant from the government to be used to provide employment and supply food to the distressed areas. The government also purchased £100,000 worth of Indian corn which was to be distributed through these committees. In

addition to this, in December 1845, the government gave the Board of Works a grant of £5,000 which they were to use to provide employment in the affected areas but, again, this government money could only be awarded if it was matched by money which was raised locally.

By July 1846, almost 700 relief committees had been established in Ireland, predominantly in the south and west of the country, and they had raised a total of £98,000 in voluntary subscriptions - the largest sum ever raised for the relief of distress in Ireland. To this the government added a further £66,000. At the same time £733,000 had been spent on public works, half of this sum being raised locally and half provided by the government. But despite the substantial amount of voluntary contributions the government was determined that the Irish landlords should be forced to play an even larger role in the provision of relief. In January 1846, Sir Charles Trevelyan, Permanent Secretary at the Treasury, informed Sir Randolph Routh, the Chief Commissioner of the Relief Commission that:

"the landlords and other ratepayers are the parties who are both legally and morally answerable for affording due relief to the destitute poor. The efforts of those persons are to be stimulated, directed and supported, but not, if it can possibly be avoided, to be superseded but the direct agency of the offices of the Government."

Although Sir Robert Peel's government fell in June 1846, his successor, Lord John Russell, allowed the relief operations to continue as the harvest was only a few weeks away. Generally in the summer of 1846, the mood of the government and the relief officials was optimistic. The relief measures which had been introduced were felt to have been successful and some government officials were hopeful that the blight would finally end the dependance of many Irish people on the potato. Sir Randolph Routh explained this thus:

"The little industry called for to rear the potato and its prolific

growth leave the people to indolence and all kinds of vice which habitual labour and a higher order of food would prevent. I think it very probable that we may derive much advantage from this present calamity."

Although the government's relief operations were due to end in August 1846, by this time the potato blight had again appeared in an even more virulent form, with no part of the country having escaped from it. The blight in 1845 had been localised but in 1846 it was reported to have affected the potato crop in every part of Ireland. As a consequence of this the Government was forced to review its temporary relief measures. Although the relief measures of the previous year had been successful it was thought that this had ben achieved at a very high price. This resulted in a shift of policy by the government; more of the responsibility for financing the relief systems was now to be placed on the Irish landlords whilst at the same time, gratuitous relief was, as far as possible, to be replaced by relief in return for employment. To facilitate this, in August 1846 the system of public works was greatly extended whilst simultaneously employment on them became more tightly controlled.

The role of the relief committees also changed in 1846. They were no longer to recieve a grant from the government but instead were to apply for an 'advance' or 'loan' which would be provided on the credit of the local poor rates. In 1845, the relief committees had been the main distributors of Indian corn but in 1846 the government purchased a much smaller quantity of corn on their behalf. This was because they were reluctant to interfere in the free market economy and so promised the Irish corn merchants that they would not import corn into the east of the country and would only import it into the west of it proved to be absolutely necessary. The local relief committees in turn were informed that in cases were it proved essential to distribute corn they were to sell it in small quantities and at a price as near as possible to the local market price. Free corn was only to be given

to people who were unfit to work on the public works and only if the local workhouse was full.

During the winter of 1846/47 a mood of despair, panic and hysteria prevailed in many parts of Ireland. The demand for relief was far higher than it had been at the same time in the previous year. As early as October 1846, for example, over 100,000 were employed on the public works alone. But the regional distribution of this relief varied greatly - 20,000 of these people were employed in County Clare whereas the total number of people employed in the nine counties of Ulster amounted to 1,200. The demands made on the local relief committees for corn were also much higher than they had been 12 months earlier and by the beginning of 1847, as the supplies of corn ran out, it was increasingly being replaced by soup. By this time 100 of the 130 workhouses were full but outdoor relief continued to be forbidden. However, when faced with this overwhelming demand for relief, many local relief officials and Boards of Guardians abandoned the guidelines laid down by the government, and instead provided relief on an 'ad hoc' and liberal basis.

At the beginning of 1847 the government announced a further change in policy. The public works and relief committees were to be replaced by soup kitchens. As their name suggests, their primary function was to distribute soup in the distressed areas. During the summer of 1847, approximately 3 million people were receiving relief in the form of soup. The soup kitchens were only a temporary measure; they were to close in August 1847 and after this the Poor Law was to be the main provider of relief. In order to facilitate this, the Poor Law had to be extended; for the first time relief outside of the workhouse was permitted.

Although there was little evidence of blight in the 1847 potato crop, a variety of factors combined to plunge the country into a third season of distress.

Within Ireland the amount of land cultivated was much less than in previous

years. Fever, which traditionally followed in the wake of famine, was rampant throughout the country. Internationally, grain harvests were below average. Britain was undergoing an industrial and financial crisis which had repercussions on the linen industry within Ulster, particularly the weavers in counties Antrim and Down. As a consequence of this, the north-eastern part of Ireland was more vulnerable to the affects of the potato blight than it had been in the previous 2 years. Within Ireland as a whole, therefore, the effect of a small potato harvest combined with a more general economic recession, made continuing widespread distress inevitable.

Following August 1847 the onus for providing relief rested almost exclusively on the Poor Law. But the transfer of this food relief resulted in an immediate increase in the rate of emigrations and evictions, and a growth in the number of deaths from starvation. Following this, Edward Twistleton, the Chief Poor Law Commissioner, warned the government that even more deaths could be expected unless other forms of/relief were introduced. But the Government refused to deviate from its policies, still adhering to the belief that the Famine could bring long term benefits to Ireland, especially if, by loosening the hold of the people on the land (by whatever means), it brought about the consolidation of property in Ireland.

Edward Twistleton was increasingly critical of the system of relief which he was forced to adminster. He believed that only a relatively small amount of money was necessary to bring to an end all deaths from starvation. In 1849 he informed a parliamentary committee:

"I wish to leave distinctly on record that, from want of sufficient food, many persons in these unions are at present dying or wasting away; and at the same time, it is quite possible for this country to prevent the occurrence there of any death from starvation by the advance of a few hundred pounds".

But the continuation of distress did result in a modification of Government policy. In May 1849, the Rate-in-Aid Act was introduced in Ireland. Its main objective was to sever the financial dependance of the poorest areas on the government. This was to be acheived by levying an additional rate on the more prosperous Unions which was then to be re-distributed under the directions of the Government. The introduction of this Bill marks an important change of policy by the British Government in relieving Irish distress: the responsibility for providing relief was now to become a national rather than a local charge but definitely not an imperial one.

The harvest of 1849 marked the first of a series of good harvests in many parts of Ireland, the potato blight appearing in some parts of the west. Following this there was a marked contrast between areas in which the famine could be said to be 'over' and those where the consequences of the blight were still having a devastating effect on the local population. In counties Clare, Kerry, Limerick and Tipperary blight was widespread and these areas the number of deaths from starvation continued to increase.

The potato harvest of 1851 was virtually free from blight but some areas in county Clare still required external financial assistance. It was not until 1852 therefore, that the Famine could be said to be over in Ireland although the levels of disease, mortality and emigration were still much higher than they had been prior to 1845.

In conclusion, the impact of the Famine throughout Ireland was uneven. Initially the distress was localised and short-term measures were introduced to relieve it, but by 1847 the whole country was reeling under the effects, not only of food shortages within Ireland, but also of an international agricultural and commercial crisis. Following the 1848 harvest the worst of the Famine was over in much of Ulster and after the 1849 harvest the demarcation between the areas which were showing signs of recovery and those where conditions were deteriotating had become marked.

During those years potato blight, depression and recession combined to leave Ireland temporarily without the resources to compensate for such a widespread deficit. The larger and more buoyant economic unit of the United Kingdom, and ultimately the British Empire, chose not to use its resources beyond a certain point to relieve this distress. Instead, the British government increasingly regarded the Famine as an opportunity to bring about social and economic reform in Ireland. Within Ireland large-scale evictons, mass emigration, deaths from disease and starvation were part of the price to be paid for the government's adherence to these policies. The administration of relief during the Famine therefore, was an example of social legislation being subjected to economic theory despite the obvious imperfections of the theory itself.

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BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARIES IRISH STUDIES GROUP

Early in 1988 a group of librarians representing a cross section of libraries in Birmingham met to explore the relative absence of an Irish dimension in library provision in the city.

The Irish form the largest ethnic minority in Birmingham, accounting for at least 7% of the population. This is fairly evenly spread across the city but rises to 10-11% in the Sparkbrook Constituency and Erdington Ward. If the large number of people who identify with their Irish descent is added to this figure, the percentage is even higher.

Yet, for such a sizeable minority, the Irish have had a low profile in terms of service provision and delivery in local government and Birmingham has lagged behind other cities with large Irish populations. The reasons for this are many and varied, but undoubtedly the pub bombings of 1974 have contributed to political caution being exercised both within the Irish community and by the service providers.

When we first met as the Irish Studies Group there were already signs that awareness of the Irish dimension was on the increase in the city, particularly in the field of education. It seemed timely for Birmingham Libraries to mount an initiative and be in at the forefront of this emerging awareness.

At the outset the group had as its aims:

- 1. To promote awareness of the existence and needs of the Irish community in Birmingham.
- 2. To actively acquire relevant bookstock including material in the Irish language.
- To develop contacts with a diverse range of community groups representing and serving the Irish population in the city.
- 4. To produce an exhibition about the Irish community in Birmingham to tie in with the city's centenary celebrations in 1989 and to act as a focus for the Irish Studies initiative.

Researching the exhibition gave us a 'way in' to the Irish community; we began by contacting the Irish Welfare and Information Centre and the ethusiastic Birmingham correspondent for the Irish Post, the weekly newspaper for the Irish in Britain. This uncovered a closely linked network of vibrant social and cultural activity encompassing music, dancing, sport, language classes, parish centres and women's groups. As we gained the trust and respect of key figures in the Irish community we scoured our own Local Studies Department and official sources for background material and pictures. We soon realised to our surprise (and Horror!) that there was a complete dearth of any written material on the Irish in Birmingham and only a handful of photographs. The subject had been uncharted and virtually ignored.

Fortunately, a Ph.D. student was able to help us out with some background material. The rest was up to us - original research at a grassroots level demanding a huge commitment in terms of time, unsocial hours (most groups meet in the evening) and motivation, as we endlessly followed up unanswered letters and desparately tried to hunt down photographs. To our original aims we added a fifth: to gather together as much contemporary and historical material as possible to ensure recognition of the Irish contribution to the life of the city.

Several months into the exhibition project and still lacking the good quality visual material necessary to mount a successful display, we approached Building Sights Community Education through Photography Project funded by West Midlands Arts and the City Council. Our proposal was for funding that would enable us to continue researching and eventually writing the text of the exhibition, whilst Building Sights took on the design and production and some contemporary location photography. The proposal was accepted and for the next eight months we worked in collaboration to produce 'A Rough Oul' Crossing: Shades of the Irish Experience in Birmingham'. On 21 April 1989 the exhibition was launched at Acocks Green Library attracting publicity from the Birmingham press, the Irish Post and local radio. The event was a true celebration incorporating a lively programme of Irish music and dancing. Of the 200 people present the majority had contributed to the exhibition.

From a library point of view, one of the most fulfilling aspects of the exhibition launch was the interest shown in the 200 or so books and other library resources. This was a selection of the material of Irish interest bought over the last year, much of it from London and Manchester bookshops. This material has formed the basis of the three stock revisions organised to date by the Irish Studies Group covering fiction, non-fiction and women's issues. There is now a much larger and wider range of material available throughout the city and this will back up the exhibition as it tours other libraries.

Whilst the exhibition ended up on a much larger scale than originally envisaged, it showed us in a unique way the diversity of the Irish community in Birmingham. It also explored the main issues which run as themes through the exhibition — the intense cultural pride and political guardedness of the Irish community, the level of negative stereotyping and prejudice, and the crisis of identity — do individuals disguise their Irishness or declare it? Also in evidence is a resurgence of cultural identity amongst second—generation Irish reflected not only in areas such as dancing and music but also in the growing popularity and status of the Irish language and Irish Studies in general.

The timely creation of the Irish Studies Group and the respect and trust generated by the exhibition project has meant that the Libraries Department is seen as a key component in the general coalescence of initiatives in the field of Irish Studies in Birmingham. The Group is represented on the steering committee of a Bournville F.E. College project to set up Irish language classes initially but eventually broadening into more general Irish Studies classes. It is also providing booklists and publicity for a new AS level course in Irish Studies being run at St. Philips Sixth Form College. 'A Rough Oul' Crossing' has been displayed at both of these colleges and formed part of the Irish community's own Birmingham Centenary celebrations in September. The wealth of research material generated by the exhibition has prompted Conradh ra Gaeilge (The Gaelic League) to put in an application to Ireland Funds to enable this to be published as a book. This application has been actively supported by the Irish Studies Group. We have also been asked to run a workshop at the 7th Annual Irish Studies Conference at Soar Valley College in Leicester in 1990.

As events continue to take place in libraries, there is also a far greater awareness of the Irish dimension within our own department and amongst elected members. The councillor who launched the exhibition voluntarily attended a Community Lunch at Sparkhill library on the theme of Irish Studies in Birmingham (this attracted no fewer than 30 organisations and resulted in

a commitment by Birmingham Public Libraries to produce a directory of the Irish in Birmingham). This same councillor personally presented a report to committee on the exhibition, generating a request for the Irish evening to be repeated at Erdington Library in July 1989. Other libraries are now planning their own initiatives and the Irish Studies Group is looking for new ideas for events to highlight the exhibition at different venues as well as at the production and publication of booklists.

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Eighteen months on we can certainly claim that there is now an Irish dimension to library provision in the city. Equally important is that libraries are regarded with trust and respect by voluntary bodies within the Irish community and by other service providers and are playing a key part in the development of strategies and resources to celebrate the Irish identity in the city.

Felicity Rock and Martin Flynn Birmingham Public Libraries

For more information on the activities of the Irish Studies Group contact 021-440-3123

clude several from the ninth and tenth centuries featuring Cattic illumination, such as the posterior from the Telephone and Light Toley Course they close code non-of the Telephone and Light Toley Course they close code non-of the Telephone code non-of-code non-of-code

Cultural, artistic and literary events of Irish interest continue to take place in libraries in Birmingham. These have included theatre productions, author visits and an introduction to Irish genealogy by the Ulster Historical Foundation.

Birmingham Library Services are currently in the process of compiling a Directory of the Irish in Birmingham and surrounding areas. This is being published jointly with Conradh na Gaeilge and Wheaton Books and is due to appear in late Spring 1991. A history of the Irish in Birmingham over the last two centuries will follow later in the year.

In response to the growth of Irish Language classes in Birmingham, collections of books in Irish are now available in five libraries in the city. These collections include some dual language books and language learning materials.

A set of ten annotated bibliographies on books of Irish interest are now available from local libraries. These are aimed at the general reader and cover such topics as Politics, Music, Womens Issues and History.

M. Flynn/F. Rock - November 1991

The Guardian Archives also contain much valuable material on the subject of Irish politics in the form of correspondence from prominent individuals, both littlish and Irish including the form of correspondence from prominent individuals, both littlish and Irish including such diverse figures as Lloyd George, Sir Roger Casement, Tim Healy, Eva Gore-Bouth and Michael Davitt. The Hugh Fluor Archive contains scripts production notes and cut-tings from the Abbey Theore, and the papers of Annie Horniman include both correspondings from the Abbey Theorem, and the papers of Annie Horniman Income.

John Rylands University Library of Manchester

THE IRISH COLLECTIONS

In a city to which, for two centuries, Irish men and women have come in search of livelihoods and homes, and which now contains over 150,000 people of Irish origin, it is perhaps not surprising and yet, paradoxically, little-known that the John Rylands University Library of Manchester possesses a remarkable collection of books and manuscripts relating to Ireland. Though the Library is world-famous, its Irish collections are less well-known, even within the academic community.

The present Library was the result of a merger, in 1972, between the Library of the University of Manchester, and the independent John Rylands Library, which together now make up one of the most important research libraries in Great Britain. The research collection in the Main Library, on Oxford Road, is complemented by the various "special collections" which are mainly held in the Printed Books and Manuscripts Departments, in the Deansgate building.

The Library is famous for its collection of over five hundred medieval codices, which include several from the ninth and tenth centuries featuring 'Celtic' illumination, such as the exquisite Trier Psalter and Liege Gospels. These show clear evidence of the influence of those Irish monks who followed St.Columbanus and established monasteries accross Europe during the Dark Ages. The Library has a number of other manuscripts from France, Belgium, Italy and Spain, with similar decoration. The earliest manuscript, with certain date, from Ireland is a 1431 copy of Higden's 'Polychronicon' from St.Mary's Abbey, near Dublin, which includes a version of Giraldus Cambrensis' writings on Ireland. The earliest manuscript in the Irish language is a late 15th century 'Materia Medica' - a form of early dictionary of medical "cures". This latter comes from perhaps one of the most significant collections, the Rylands Irish Manuscripts which were brought together by the great nineteenth-century scholar Denis Henry Kelly. Together with his close friends, Eugene Curry and John O'Donovan, Kelly went to great lengths to locate and copy, and later translate, early Irish manuscripts, and the collection, of over 130 works, includes histories, literature, genealogy, heraldry, mythology and grammar books. Apart from the intrinsic interest of individual items (the originals of some of which are now lost) the collection as a whole bears witness to an important phase of Ireland's Cultural Revival.

The Library also possesses manuscripts of a more contemporary nature, both literary and political. For example there are a number of letters from W.B. Yeats in the Hugh Hunt Archive, in the Katharine Tynan Collection and the Guardian Archives, as well as correspondence from such distinguished figures as J.M.Synge, Sean O'Casey, George Bernard Shaw, and Douglas Hyde.

The Guardian Archives also contain much valuable material on the subject of Irish politics in the form of correspondence from prominent individuals, both British and Irish including such diverse figures as Lloyd George, Sir Roger Casement, Tim Healy, Eva Gore-Booth and Michael Davitt. The Hugh Hunt Archive contains scripts, production notes and cuttings from the Abbey Theatre, and the papers of Annie Horniman include both correspondence and scrapbooks relating to her work with the Irish National Theatre.

The Library also possesses remarkable collections of Early Printed Books which include examples of some of the earliest printing in the Irish language. There are copies of the first Irish New Testament (1602) and Old Testament (1685) as well as early catechisms, the first dictionaries, and grammar books. Some of these came from the Strachan Collection, the private library of Professor John Strachan, which was presented to the Library on his death in 1907 as a lasting tribute to one of the truly great scholars of the nineteenth century. In 1946 the Library purchaed the Cassedy Collection, which was formed by James Cassedy (Seamus O Casaide) the Celtologist and bibliographer. This contains over 1200 items from Ireland, comprising books, periodicals, newspapers, directories, almanacs and chapbooks, and reflects his interest in the Irish language and the various nineteenth century attempts which were made to revive it.

The Main University Library is fortunate in having an excellent collection relating to all aspects of Irish Studies. This has been built up over many years, both by the efforts of the Celtic Studies Department, and of other departments with an interest in Ireland. The resulting collection which is both comprehensive and wide-ranging, covering all aspects of Irish history, life and culture; it is reinforced by substantial periodical holdings, and backed by the Library's superb Reference and Information Service. The combined holdings of 3,400,000 printed books and over 1,000,000 manuscripts, enable the Library to act very much as the research library of the region, and though the actual student population numbers 18,000 there are in fact over 40,000 registered readers. For bona-fide researchers who are not members of the University, and for corporate institutions, the Library can offer appropriate membership on a reference-only basis.

One of the most exciting developments at the Library in recent years has been the setting up of the John Rylands Institute, in January 1988. The purpose of the Institute is to promote awareness and use of the Library's collections, and positive benefits for students of Irish studies are already being felt. A high priority has been given to the production of a series of Research Guides to the collections, and it is hoped that the Guide to Irish Studies will be available by Spring 1990. Recently a number of seminars were held for students on a local Irish Studies course, and they were able to examine rare Irish books and manuscripts relevant to their studies. A number of other such visits are planned for next year, and the Library is always prepared to consider sympathetically similar requests from interested groups. The Institute has also raised sufficient funds to offer a Fellowship, and a number of short-term bursaries to support scholars pursuing post-doctoral or equivalent research in the Rylands special collections; further information on this is available from the Librarian. Anyone wanting to know more about the Library or its collections is of course welcome to contact me there, on 061 275 3726.

Janet L. Wallwork
Cataloguing Department.
John Rylands University Library of Manchester
Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PP

Aspects of Ireland in Early Books

With examples from the collections of the John Rylands
University Library of Manchester

Anti-Irish Histories: HIGDEN, Ranulphus: Polychronicon Dublin, 1431 (Ryl.Lat 217.)

Giraldus Cambrensis: <u>The history and topography of Ireland</u> Translated by J.O'Meara. Dolmen Fress, Fortlacise, 1982.

HOLINSHED, Raphael: <u>The firste volume of the Chronicles, etc.</u>
J. Harrison, London, 1577. (Contains the writings of Giraldus.)

STANIHURST, Richard: 'Historie of Ireland' in HOLINSHED, Raphael: The second volume of Chronicles, etc. London, 1586

DERRICK, John: The Image of Ireland... 1581 Blackstaffe Fress, Belfast, 1985, (Facsimile edition)

SFENSER, Edmund: A View of the State of Ireland Dublin, 1633

SPEED, John: Theatre of the empire of Great Britain. etc. London, 1676. (Contains drawings based on Giraldus Cambrensis.)

MEYRICK, S.R. & SMITH, C.H.: Costume of the Original Inhabitants of the British Isles. McLean, London, 1821

Pro-Irish Histories:

CLERY, Micheal (% others): <u>Annals of the Four Masters</u>. Geraghty, Dublin, 1846. (First complete English edition.)
VITO, Stephano: <u>Apologia pro Hibernia adversus Cambri Calumnias</u>.
Johannem O'Daly, Dublin, 1849.

LUCIUS, Gratianus: Cambrensis refuted. Joseph Hill, 1795

KEATING, Geoffrey: The general history of Ireland. 1715. (Ryl. Irish 123.) KEATING, Geoffrey: The general history of Ireland. B.Creake, London, 1723.

KEATING, Geoffrey: The History of Ireland. Trans. by D.Comyn. Irish Texts Society, Dublin, 1902

The Irish Language

MATERIA MEDICA c15-16th cent. Ryl.Irish Mss.35

TIOMNA NUADH, etc John Francke, Dublin, 1602 (1st New Testament)

LEABHUIR NA SEINTIOMNA, etc. London, 1685 (1st Old Testament)

AN BIOBLA NAOMHTHA, etc. Etheringham, London, 1690 (in Roman script)

MOLLOY, Francis: <u>Lucerna Fidelium</u>. Typis Sacrae Propaganda Fide, Rome, 1676. (Catholic catechism in Irish)

MOLLOY, Francis: <u>Grammatica Latino-Hibernica</u> Typis Sacrae Propaganda, Rome, 1677. (The first known printed Irish grammar.)

LHUYD, Edward: <u>Archaeologia Britannica</u> Frinted...for the author, Oxford, 1707. (Contains a translation of Molloy's Grammar, and an Irish-English dictionary)

O BEAGLAOICH, Conchobar and MAC CUIRTIN, Aodh: <u>An Focloir Bearla Gaoidheilge</u>. Guerin, Paris, 1732. (The first English-Irish Dictionary.)

BROOKE, Charlotte: <u>Reliques of Irish Poetry</u>. George Bonham, Dublin, 1787. (The first published secular literature in Irish.) (Facsimile edition produced by Scholars' Facsimiles, Florida, 1770.)

A brief sketch of various attempts which have been made to diffuse a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures through the medium of the Irish language. Dublin, 1818

RICHARDSON, John: A short history of the attempts to convert the popular natives of Ireland to the established religion London, 1712

MASON, Henry Joseph Monck: Reasons... respecting the duty of employing the Irish language...[for] conveying scriptural instruction to the native peasantry of Ireland. Dublin, 1848

MCDUIGE, James <u>The importance of schools for teaching the native</u>
<u>Irish language, etc.</u> Lonodn, 1818

TRANSACTIONS OF THE GAELIC SOCIETY OF DUBLIN, v1. Dublin, 1808 DUBLIN FENNY JOURNAL, V.1. Dublin, 1883

IRISLEABHAR NA GAEDHILGE - The Gaelic Journal. v1.,no.1. Dublin, 1882. (Originally published by the Gaelic Union.)
GAELIC LEAGUE PAMPHLETS, No.2: <u>The case for bi-lingual education in the Irish-speaking districts.</u> Dublin, 188(4)
AN CLAIDHEAMH SOLUIS, v1. Dublin, 1888 (Banned in 1718.)
AN MACAOMH v1.no.1, Dublin, 1909 (Founded by Patrick Pearce)

Further Reading

Curtis, Liz: Nothing but the same old story. Information on Ireland, London, 1784
Lebow, Ned: British historians and Irish History in 'Eire-Ireland', vol.VIII, no.4, Winter 1973, p.18.
Wallwork, J. Treasures of the John Rylands Library. Parts I-III Irish Heritage Magazine, Manchester: Winter 1988/87, Autumn 1989, and Winter 1990 issues.

REPORT ON 'IRISH STUDIES WORKSHOP' ACTIVITIES 1989-90

In the Autumn of 1989 we ran our 7th annual <u>Irish Studies Adult Education Programme - "Celtic Encounters"</u>. This is an inter-disciplinary course, with varied inputs (guest speakers, resident speakers, films, videos and drama groups) and proves consistently to be a popular option, attracting 40 enrolments and an average weekly attendance of around 25 persons. The course duration is 15 weeks (please refer to programme, reproduced in full an page 27 - 30).

The Workshop has, over the year, made a number of contributions to external activities:-

- locally, we contributed an Irish input to the access course run at Highfields Youth and Community Centre, called "Imperialism and the Colonial Past". This leads to the Certificate in Urban Studies and attracts post-18 students, mainly drawn from the Afro-Caribbean and Asian Community in part of the inner city.
- again at the local level, the Co-ordinator was invited to address the Leicestershire Family History Society on the subject of the Life of Tom Barclay and the Irish in Victorian Leicester: perhaps not surprisingly, family history is a very popular topic; this meeting had around 150 in attendance, mainly senior citizens. It was fascinating to meet an elderly lady who remembers being part of an English family on holiday in Dublin City in Easter 1916. Her perspective on things was interesting.
- we noticed that in a local museum publication Senior Citizens Memories of Leicester, there were a few clues about the origins of one particular local lady. We approached her for an interview and came away with a fascinating account of her family background: a father and uncle in the old R.I.C., the family's move to Leicester c.1920, various educational and cultural experiences, and her career in nursing. We hope to use the information so kindly volunteered by Ms. Kathleen McDonagh for our ongoing research project into the history of the Irish Community in the East Midlands.
- In the Spring, the Co-ordinator was invited to address a session at the William Parker School in Hastings, whose annual Multicultural Week this year featured the Irish. (The BAIS Executive Director, Sean Hutton, was also a contributor to this programme)
- The same two guest speakers also addressed a day conference on <u>Irish</u> <u>Dimensions in Further Eduation at Brooklyn FE College in Birmingham;</u> this was most ably organised by Eddie Falahee, a full-time lecturer at the College.
- Perhaps the most important aspect of educational development at national level concerned the <u>National Curriculum</u> debate. The Workshop has been actively involved in this, corresponding with Commander Saunders-Watson, the Chair of the History Working Party and with the DES. The Workshop Co-ordinator was commissioned by the "Irish Post" to write a feature article on this topic and this is reproduced on page 31 of this "Report".
- In terms of BAIS (British Association for Irish Studies) the Workshop is an active participant in most areas, the Co-ordinator currently serving as Convence of the Adult Education Sub-Committee. This group is currently processing the replies to its Questionnaire designed to produce a database of information on the Irish Studies Ad. Ed. scene nationally. This will be published in 1991.

- One item of long-term significance in Leics. is the current planning for an Open College Network on the lines of those already established in other parts of the country (e.g. in Manchester). This Workshop has made a formal input to the planning group at County Hall and the situation looks promising for the accreditation of Irish Studies locally.
- our Irish Language Classes for both Beginners and Advanced continue to thrive, ably organised and delivered by Maureen Broderick, who recently won a BAIS Scholarship to the Oideas Gael Language Summer School at Glen Columbkille in the Donegal Gaeltacht. The language classes are supported financially by the College.

Finally, we wish to thank Soar Valley College for its continued support and Leicester City Council (Recreation & Arts Dept.) for its annual grant support - essential for the administration and cultural programmes Workshop.

We also wish to acknowledge the administrative advice and support from Mrs. Wendy Burke of the Colleges Resource Department.

BAIS (British Association for Irish Studies) is to be particularly thanked for its support for the annual conference.

Some Notable Early Manuscripts.

The Cathach
Possibly the earliest surviving Irish manuscript. Dates from the latter part of the 6th Century and has been associated with St.Colmcille. It is a portion of a psalm book wit; short introductory notes on each psalm; a little decoration on some of the initial letters. Now in the Roy. Irish Academy, though its 'shrine' is in the National Museum.

Book of Durrow
The first of the 'Irish' gospel books to feature any appreciable quantity of illumination (though only 11 pages out of 496 are decorated). Dates of between 664-675 have been suggested. There is controversy over whether it was a product of Iona, Lindisfarne, or Ireland. It was kept in the monastery of Durrow until the Reformation, and passed to Trinity College in the 17th century

Lindisfarne Cospels
Dated to C698, this gospel book remained with the Lindisfarne
community when they moved to Durham, and it passed to the British
Museum in the mid 18th century. An inscription attributes the
text to Eadfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne.

St Gall Gospels.

Dating from the 2nd half of the 8th century, this book is almost certainly Irish in origin, and was probably carried out to the St.Gall community by visiting Irish monks. Although the workmanship is less accomplished than that of the Lindisfarne Gospels, the designs and their composition foreshadow those in the Book of Kells.

Book of Kells
Probably the most famous of the Celtic manuscripts, there is no conclusive evidence regarding its provenance. One widely held theory is that work was commenced at the monastery of Iona, carried with the community when they fled to Kells in 804 AD, and completed there. This would date it to the late 8th or early 9th century. It was kept in the parish church of Kells until the Reformation, and passed to Trinity College in 1661.

Book of Dimma.

This book is unusual in that it known by the name of its scribe, rather than its place of origin. Records show that Dimma was a contemporary of St.Cronan, during the late 8th century, at the monastery of Roscrea, Co.Tipperary.

Stowe Missal This is the oldest surviving missal of the Celtic church, and is important because it shows the rituals that were then observed. It dates from c800 AD, and comes possibly from the monastery of Tallaght. In 1050 a silver case was commissioned by Donnchadh, son of Brian Boru. The manuscript and case disappeared, and was rediscovered in 1735 in the walls of Lackeen Castle, Tipperary. Both book and shrine are now in the Royal Irish Academy.

Book of Armagh (Liber Ardmachanus) [807 A.D.] This can claim to be the most important historical manuscript prior to the 12th century. Written in Latin, it comprises 3 main parts: documents relating to St.Patrick, a complete New Testament, and the Life of St.Martin by Sulpicius Severus. For centuries it was erroneously believed that the book was written by St.Patrick (hence the Irish title 'Canóin Pátraicc'). It is now known to have been written much later, by the scribe Ferdomnach; however the material relating to St.Patrick is of very great importance for the study of the early church.

Annals of Inisfallen
These are the oldest major collection of annals to survive, and are a key source for the history of Munster up to 1326. Entries up to 1092 are in the hand of a sinlgle scribe, and so it is probable that this is when the work commenced, though additions were made to it during the next 234 years.

Lebor Na hUidre (The Book of the Dun Cow) [cl106 A.D.] This manuscript is associated with the monastery of Clonmacnoise, and it was supposedly bound with the hide of a cow belonging to St.Ciarán, founder of that monastery. It is the oldest surviving manuscript written entirely in Irish, and is also the first of the composite books - anthologies of tales and sagas. It contains the earliest known version of the Tain Bo Cuailnge.

The Book of Leinster (Lebar Na Nuachongbala) [1152-1339] This contains one of the chief early collections of saga's and genealogies. It is not finely decorated, and was probably intended as a scholar's source book to be used in the production of fine manuscripts for rich patrons.

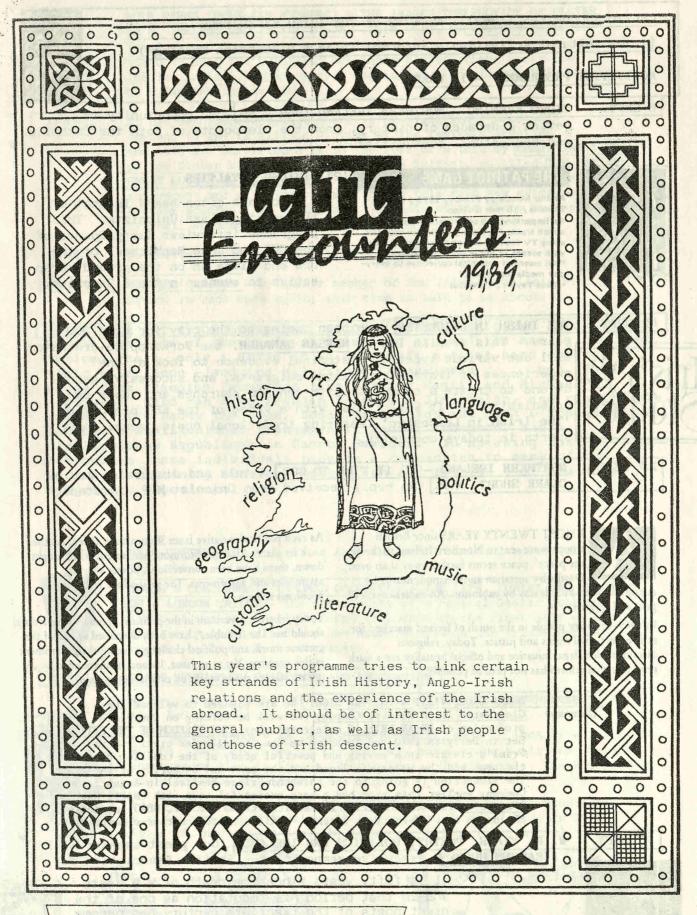
Seanchas Mar
This collection of legal tracts contains the most important surviving manuscripts of the Brehon Laws. These date back to the pre-Christian period, and were put into verse form to aid the work of memorising them. The laws were eventually written down by monastic scribes.

The Yellow Book of Lecan [1318-1592]. This is a compilation of at least 16 texts, which were only brought together in the seventeenth century. It comprises history, mythology, topographical and religious works. Much of it is associated with County Sligo.

The Annals of Ulster

These are regarded as the most trustworthy of all the early Irish annals. The principle scribe, Ruaidhrí Ó Luinín was careful to preserve exactly the wording of the original texts, whether in Irish or Latin, when copying; this makes the work invaluable to linguist and historian alike.

The Annals of the Four Masters [1632-1636]
The principal scholar of this work was Micheal O Cleirigh, a trained historian from a learned family. Together with 3 other Franciscan Brothers, he set about compiling the history of Ireland from the time of Cesair (who supposedly arrived in Ireland before The Flood) to 1616 A.D. This was partly to counteract the vehemently anti-Irish "Histories" which the Tudors





Irish Studies Workshop

Co-Ordinator: Messan J. Danaher, B.A., M.Ed., Soar Valley College, Glensagles Avenue, Leicester, LE4 7GI Tel (0533)669625/666377 Grant Aided by

Leicester & City Council

CELTIC ENCOUNTERS (1989) - ASPECTS OF THE IRISH EXPERIENCE

(Irish Cultural Activities - Informal Talks & Discussion Evenings)

ACTIVITIES PROGRAMME - 15 WEEKS

6 SEPT. VIDEO EVENING - NORTHERN IRELAND 1969 - 89 - an opportunity to review 2 decades of history, from the viewpoints of both the Catholic and Protestant communities.



THE PATRIOT GAME

Arthur MacCaig / France / 1978 / B&W / 93 mins / 16 mm & video

An important and controversial documentary which traces the history of the six counties using TV footage and photographs intercut with scenes of life in the North today.

"An essential polemical corrective to every-day media distortion."

-Paul Taylor , Time Out

(2) DIVIDED LOYALTIES

A voice not often heard is that of the working class Unionists. This programme interviews Gusty Spence of the UVF and John MacMichael of the UDA and gives an on the ground perspective to events in the 3 Counties.



THE IRISH IN LEICESTER have been coming to the city for over 200 years. This session led by NESSAN DANAHER, the Workshop Co-ordinator will use various types of historical evidence to look at the experiences of travellers, famine emigrants, and successive generations to create a community with schools, churches and their own organisations. It will finish with a video of the BBC production 'The Irish in Leicester' featuring traditional music, song, dance & sports in todays community.

20 SEPT. NORTHERN IRELAND - IS IT TIME TO GO? A talk and discussion led by CLARE SHORT, M.P. (No reply received from Unionist M.P. invited).



LMOST TWENTY YEARS since British troops were sent to Northern Ireland to 'keep the peace', peace seems further away than ever. Deaths by sectarian assassination, deaths by

Army shoot-to-kill, deaths by explosion. An endless cycle of pain and tragedy.

In 1969, ordinary people in the north of Ireland marched for self respect, civil rights and justice. Today, religious discrimination, legal injustice and official brutality are a stark reminder that reform has not proved possible. As each political intiative from Westminster failed, another took its place. After the Stormont parliament was brought down, there have been conventions, power sharing, assemblies and agreements. The prisons are full, but the problems remain.

Today, there is a vacuum in the political agenda where Ireland should be. The 'troubles', have been described as one of the greatest moral and political challenges facing the government in this country. Yet as an issue, Ireland is surrounded by an uneasy silence made worse by official censorship.

(Saturday)

DRAMA GROUP VISIT & THEATRE NIGHT. We are pleased to welcome the Gloucester Irish Theatre Company who will be putting on their new production of BRIAN FRIEL'S celebrated play 'THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY'. Set in Derry in 1970 and focusing on the struggle for civil rights, Friel's classic is a moving and powerful study of the conflict between the weak and the underprivileged and the power and authority of the state. The production is going to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August; the Company earlier this year had a very successful tour with Philip Rush's 'Famine'. Tickets are £2.00 for adults, £1.00 for OAP, UB40, students, children, etc. Bring your friends - this open to non-course members.

27 SEPT. W. B. YEATS: POETRY, POLITICS AND IRELAND. Our guest speaker will e EAMONN HUGHES, executive member of the British Association for



and in that period his reputation as one of the great poets of the twentieth century has become assured. However, he also has a reputation as a difficult poet. The purpose of this evening is to provide an introduction to the man, and to the period in which he lived, in order to provide some of the information necessary to an understanding of the poems.

4 OCT.



FOLK PARKS (OPEN-AIR MUSEUMS) & THE IMAGES THE PROVIDE OF ULSTER

IN N. IRELAND AND IN THE U.S.A. This talk, by STEPHEN MILLS of
the American Studies Centre at Keele University, will use slides and
video to pose the question: are these history theme parks the
genuine article, or are they a version of Disneyland? This should
be a fascinating evening!

11 Oct.

It has been remarked that there is no significant monument in Ireland to the 1½ million victims of the famine/starvation of the 1840's. Our tribute is in the form of a talk by CHRISTINE KINEALY of the Ulster Historical Foundation in Belfast, entitled THE FAMINE:

GREAT HUNGER OR STARVATION? She will examine the role of the government and will incorporate in her talk much new evidence from archive sources. It will correct aspects of the story as explained by Cecil Woodham-Smith and later revisionist historians.

18 OCT. No meeting (half-term week in Leicester)

25 OCT. BERNARD CANAVAN - a founder member of the Irish in Britain History group, is back once again, this time to talk to us about:

IRISH EMIGRANT AUTOBIOGRAPHIES; RECORDS OF WORKING LIVES 1870-1970

Of the hundreds of thousands of Irish who crossed the sea in the last hundred years, only a dozen or so have left a first hand account of their experience — and the majority of those were men. They range from tramping labourers like Patrick Magill and Michael MacGowan, hard men like Brendan Behan and Jim Phelan, and respectable toilers like Paddy the Cope, Donal MacAmlaigh and John O'Donoghue and include a disillusioned Orangeman in Bonnar Thompson, and a disillusioned Republican in Connor Reardon. In speaking for themselves these individuals provide a corrective to many of the accounts written by others — both Irish and British — of the Irish emigrant s experience.

1 NOV. SEAN HUTTON, of the British Association for Irish Studies, will talk about:



TOMAS O CONCHUBHAIR (THOMAS O'CONNOR) - THE LIFE, POETRY AND POLITICS
OF A LONDON TAILOR - the rediscovery of a radical Gaelic poet who
lived & worked in the West End of London in the first half of the
Nineteenth century and who was associated with the Irish Confederates - allies of the Chartists.

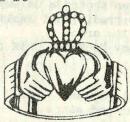
8 NOV. VIDEO EVENING ON EMIGRANTS AND EMIGRATION



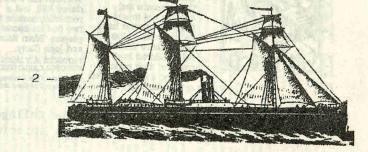
We are pleased to be able to show 2 films by PHILIP DONNELLAN, one-time BBC producer, now freelance.

- (1) THE IRISHMEN AN IMPRESSION OF EXILE. Made in 1965 this looks at the men who extended the motorway network and built the Victoria underground line in London (50 minutes). Unbelievably, the BBC felt it could not show this film!
- (2) PASSAGE WEST DREAM OF FREEDOM concerns a Belfast couple in a mixed marriage situation who emigrate to Canada. Made in 1974, it is of interest to English, Scots and Irish. (50 minutes)

EIRE 26









Playboy of the Western World. C4 presents the Druid Theatre Company's highly acclaimed production of J. M. Synge's black comedy set in Ireland at the turn of the century. Christy Mahon (Maeliosa Stafford) claims to have killed his father, an act which turns him into a hero. When his father is discovered to be still alive, Christy is totally discredited and the local community seeks revenge.





22 NOV. STONE HEADS AND SACRED GROVES

RELIGION AND RITUAL AMONG THE PRE-CHRISTIAN CELTS IN BRITAIN & IRELAND

The main sources for pre-Christian Celtic Religion are:

- Archaeological discoveries.
- 2. Classical Writings
- 3. Irish and Welsh Vernacular literature.

All these sources are ambiguous and sometimes downright misleading but taken together they enable us to build up a fascinating, if tentative, picture of ritual practices among our Celtic ancestors.

We are pleased to welcome SHELACH LEWIS (a freelance Archaeology lecturer)

29 NOV. WOMEN IN IRISH HISTORY



JO McGUIGAN; member of the workshop, will give an illustrated talk on the LADIES LAND LEAGUE and the IRISH

SUFFRAGETTES. This session (a follow up to last June's Women's Week Prog.) will offer options in the second half: both a discussion session and an opportunity to see the video of MOTHER IRELAND.

Mother Ireland explores the development and use of images and music which personify Ireland as a woman in Irish Culture and nationalism. Under the new censorship notice introduced by the British Government the programme will not now be seen on TV. This is the first programme to become banned under the legislation.

6 DEC. "PILLARS OF THE HOUSE - IRISH WOMEN POETS.

In the words of Katherine Tynan, "I am the pillar of the house, the keystome of the Art am I....."; CATHERINE BYRON, a member of the Workshop team will look at the way in which Irish women poets have emerged from the "back to the hearth" period of De Valera's mid-century Free State, and yet are wrestling still with the image of the house and their place within and without it in a way that is quite different from British women poets. We shall look at works by Medbh Mc Guckian, Eavan Boland, Anne Hartigan and others.

13 Dec. "THE CRACK" is a peculiarly Irish concept involving music, song, dance, humour, hospitality and wit. We have two films to open up this dimension.

(1) Over Here.



One million Irish-born adults live in Britain today. Over Here uses archive film to explain why so many lrish-born people live in Britain and records examples of the Irish tradition at work here. The film includes a Ceili in Newcastle where the musicians and dancers are mostly fourth generation Irish; an Irish music class in Luton where Englishborn children learn the music of their parents' country; a marathon Feis or stepdancing

competition in Brent, London; an interview with Lucy Fatr, a traditional fiddle player from Ballinakill, Co Galway who after 40 years, retains the distinctive style of her parish; the performance of a 'set' by Wexford Mummers in a London dance hall, and a recording session by two fine traditional players, Brian Rooney and John Carty. PRODUCER IMN BRUCE DIRECTOR CARLO GENER Associates Film Productions/RTS/Atts Council of Great Batain

(2) TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF THE WEST

Features Galway's best traditional musicians, singers & dancers.

Part 1; Galway City 1910-1980 contrasted, using early photographs and the original music of DE DANANN

Part 2; Music on the Western Ocean aboard a Galway hooker, the traditional sailing craft of the area.

(Tony MacMahon, RTE (Cinegael

1979)

15 DEC. CHRISTMAS PARTY in the College Lounge (licensed) 8.00pm - 12.00 (FRIDAY) Buffet and traditional entertainment: music, song and dance.



re-print of article first published in 'The Irish Post' on 23 June 1990

AS ALL OUR children, teachers and parents know, the education service in Britain is trying to establish the new National Curriculum: a set programme, with certain basic compulsory aspects, together with some elements of choice. Last autumn, the committee responsible for developing the new history syllabus made its interim report and we here in the Irish Studies Workshop at Soar Valley College responded thus:

"We wish to place on record that we consider the interim report to be a most positive document ... and we urge the committee to maintain their view in the face of pressure in favour of a more fact-based and Anglo-centric perspective ... there are worthwhile Irishrelated components in the interim report and we hope that these will be supported, maintained and developed further

Happily, the newly released final report justifies our optimism and now is the time for our community to get to grips with the great opportunities presented. Recent news reports have let the public know that Margaret Thatcher and John McGregor, the Education Minister, are trying to preserve an old-fashioned fact-based syllabus based not so much on British (never mind European and world aspects) but on English history.

The purpose of this article is to give the facts to the Irish community in Britain about why this is relevant to us today and especially to future generations of schoolchildren and students. At last the Irish in Britain have the opportunity to learn about and actively promote their own history and cultural heritage within mainstream education. How often have we heard middle-aged and elderly Irish parents bemoaning the fact that their offspring are either ignorant about their background - and in some cases become ashamed of it to the point of denying their Irishness!

When you've read the information below, you might like to consider how you can, as a positive concerned parent (or teacher!) ensure that your son's or daughter's school responds positively to the opportunities presented. There are some suggestions to follow. In our view, this is the best opportunity we've ever had as a community to place ourselves firmly on the formal educational agenda in this country. Let's ensure that we make the most of it by supporting this final report in as many positive ways as possible.

We're going to look at what is on offer in terms of topics; to what age groups; and how it can be resourced.

There is so much change in education at the moment that even the teachers are in daneer of becoming confused, so to help parents with the new jargon, the information below is worth looking at before you read further. It tells how the school year groups are now described for purposes of introducing the new National Curriculum.

Key stage (abbreviated to KS) means main sections of syllabus	New description — year is abbreviated to Y	Age of majority of pupils at end of school year
KSI	YI and Y2	Age 6 and 7
KS2	Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6	Age 8, 9, 10 and 11
KS3	Y7, Y8 and Y9	Age 12, 13 and 14
KS4	Y10 and Y11	Age 15 and 16
Post 16 — this is no longer compulsory education	Y 12 and Y13	Age 17 and 18

Whilst we're on the heavy stuff, we might as well deal with a few other common abbreviations which we'll use in this article: HSU = a history study unit (SDHSi) = a school designed HSU); NC = National Curriculum, PESC = Political, Economic, technological and scientific. Social and religious: Cultural and aesthetic. (Each programme of ends in the key stages 2-4 has these same four dimensions) AT = Attained targets (or mintl learning objectives).

What is available to our vounesters? The easiest way to look at this is by starting with the youngest age group and working towards the oldest students, but, before looking at the actual details, let's look at the intentions of the final report on history from the particular viewpoint of the Irish in Britain. The document clearly acknowledges that, among other groups, the Celtic migration added further languages to the amalgam we call Britain, It also clearly acknowledges migration within Britain and ethnic and religious grouping in Britain. It goes on to remark that the NC will provide a clear opportunity to move in the direction of recognising that British experience is not simply that of the English, and that "essential elements of Welsh, Scottish and Irish history have therefore been included in the programmes of study".

The report aids firmly: "The bedrock British component of the NC history course is therefore to be guaranteed as follows: (i): by including adequate and clear reference to some of the major episodes, figures and trends in English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish histury. (ii) by illustrating major elements of Boush history, where appropriate, by exampics drawn from English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish history, and (iii): by doing justice to the rich diversity of the political, economic, social and cultural history of the British Isles, offering comparative examples from the whole of the British Isies where these serve to enhance historical understanding, such as a response to the challenge of the Reformation or the different pace and experience of industrialisation"

(For the purposes of this article, the writer is deliberately avoiding getting into a debate about what constitutes "Britain" and the "British Isles". Some people fussed when the British Association for Irish Studies called itself by that name; such a debate can easily become sterile; the important thing is the breakthrough as far as what children can learn

It would appear from analysing the history report that there is the potential for developing an Irish dimension at every key stage - should one wish to. The opportunities are especially numerous in terms of KS3 (for 12-14-year-olds) and also KS4 (15-16-yearolds). Pernaps it would be sensible to look at what might be done first at primary level and then in secondary education

Primary age pupils will be involved at KS1 (for 6 and 7-yearolds) and at KS2 (8-11-year-olds). The youngest group will consider such questions as "who an 1?" and where and when am 17" They will also look at their family history in the context of the last fifty years. Local history, ceremonies and anniversaries could be studies. All of these permit some simple examinstion of the backgrounds of the children and their parents. Visual history, such as listening to grandnarents, is encouraged as part of this learning process.

There are further opportunities to develop the Irish dimension at KS2 (for 8-11-year-olds). Without detailing the four main HSUs. Irish-related topics mentioned are: Celtic Christianity; Celtic missionaries in England, St. Patrick and St. Columba; Celtic Christian culture, place names and languages; stories from the Vikings in Ireland (and Scotland); Protestants and Catholics c 1600; Irish urban settlement in Victorian Britain' Irish immigration to Britain and emigration from Ireland: life in Britain c 1930-80 - this mentions ethnic patterns and could include the Irish experience in pre-war work, for example. (There are various interesting autobiographies by Irish migrants dealing with the 1950s onwards, such as Donall Mac Amhlaigh's: there is also the recent Virago Press book on women migrants, Across the Water)

In Soar Valley College, all of our first years (11-year-olds) aiready do an eight-week module on The Celuc Way of Life, which covers the origins and settlement patterns of the Celts, their political organisation, home life, work, leisure and beliefs. We use a textbook, titled as above, first published by O'Brien Press in Dublin in 1976 (and still in print) This is a well researched and attractively produced book, and very reason-

ably priced if bought in class sets. Our second years do a history/archaeology module, comparing Viking York (Yorvic) with Viking Dublin. At first, we had very little material to go on, so we wrote to Professor F. X. Martin at University College, Dublin, who kindly sent us a huge pack of his own materials on the excavations carried out at Wood Ouav in Dublin. We compare the differing attitudes to heritage questions held by the respective local councils in Dublin and York at the time the sites were being uncovered. There is plenty of material on Viking York available, and O'Bnen Press also produce a useful book called Viking Settlements and Medieval Dublin

We are unusual at Soar Valley in that we offer archaeology as a subiect at GCSE level; what is relevant to this discussion is the fact that colleagues incorporate a study of certain Irish archaeological monuments, notably Newgrange and the passage graves of the River Boyne, and excavation at Knowth and Dowth. There are useful slides and film strips which we obtained

from Ireland, as well as handy short guides and worksheets from the National Museum and Public Record Office in Dublin Some of this work could perhaps be incorporated into KS3, which follows. is there anything for secondary-

age pupils? The answer to this has to be a resounding yes - there is a great deal of positive potential for an Irish dimension here There are two approaches at KS3: There are four compulsory care units to start with. Three of the four topics offer possibilities; one of the three is particularly pregnant. Strongbow and the Normans in Ireland are mentioned in the Medieval Realms, 1066-1500 unit; popular protest in Ireland and Irish immigration occur as topics in the unit entitled Expansion, trade and industry: Britain 1750 to 1990

By far the greatest potential in care units however lies in the care unit called The Making of the United Kingdom, c 1500-1750. This covers: the Anglo-Irish relationship throughout the period; the distribution of wealth from land in Ireland; religious tensions throughout the region in the period: the Ulster Plantation, the 1641 Rising. Cromwell and the massacres of Drogheda and Wexford; the 1688-90 period

(it should be noted that the report differentiales between 'essential" information and "exemplacy" information. The latter is only for the guidance of teachers and may or may not be used in the leaching; the point surely is that teachers can use it if they see fit. For this reason we have not separated the topics out into "essential" and "exemplary" sections)

Teachers at this stage can also choose four optional topics from a list of forty. One of these is entitled HSU number 19 - Culture and Society in Ireland up to the early 20th Century. There is obviously a tremendous amount here to work at and one would probably have to be selective. The novel aspect we feel is the fact that Gaelic culture is on the agenda as "essential information". At last the great modern subcultures of the Irish in Britain can come out of the educational closet. "Irish national culture in Gaelic and English" and "Gaelic traditions in music, sport and dance as part of Irish nationalism" give the green light to making a lot more feiseanna, fleadhanna cheoil and ceilithe for our young people.

To see these cultural manifestations being publicly flagged up as part of the curriculum gives a sharper edge to the ethnic, social and psychological identity of the second-generation Irish in Britain Indeed, this is the time surely for national and local branches of Comhaltas, the GAA, Conradh na Gaeilge and similar cultural bodies to write to the authors of the report to express agreement and satisfaction with these new dimensions on offer It is presumably wise to let the authorities know that the community has read the renort and is reacting in a supportive manner especially bearing in mind what

was said earlier about Anglo-centric attitudes to history teaching in certain nowerful quarters

With regard to the last two years of compulsory education for our children (KS4 for 15-16-year-olds) there is a discernible Irish dimension in HSII number 32 Britain in the 20th Century, one of the two compulsory core units for the age group. Aspects covered include: Irish nationalism 1906-14; Home



NESSAN DANAHER is coordinator of the Irish Studies Workshop at Soar Valley College, Leicester; a member of the executive of the British Association for Irish Studies; and an honorary fellow of the Irish Studies Institute, University of Liverpool.

Electrical Control

Rule and Ulster; economic depression and its effects in Northern Ire-1929-39; immigration 1960-69 (Ireland is not mentioned here, but could be); civil rights in Ulster and troop deployment 1960. 69: the permissive society, abortion laws reform and the "nill

There is some valuable scope here as far as post-1900 concerns

It should also be borne in mind that as well as history, there is. presumably, some scope for Irish writing in terms of the "English" National Curriculum proposals (novels, plays, poetry). Further-more, the NC lays much stress on what is termed PSE, which denotes personal and social education. This is not so much the subject, but rather an awareness within the peneral curriculum, and it concerns itself with such issues as racism migration, moral and ethnical standards citizenship civil rights and so on. Again, the suggestion is that it could provide scope for developing Irish dimensions as part of a general debate within PSF

liow are we going to get things moving? If the task seems dauniing, remember that the 1980s has been a decade of rapid development in Irish dimensions in British education. Admittedly it is disjointed in the sense that developments depend on informed and committed individuals and institutions, but a lot has been happening at all levels: primary, secondary, higher and adult/community, Various institutions have been active and continue to be so (Soar Valley College's Irish Studies Workshop, the Irish Studies Centre at North London Polytechnic, the Irish Studies-Institute at the University of Liverpool and Strawberry Hill). There is now a range of local, well-organised pressure groups who also provide programmes (the Manchester Irish Education Group, the new Brad-ford group, the Wolverhampton Irish Cultural Association).

What can teachers do? From the teachers' viewpoint, there has been a rapid (if unco-ordinated):browth in INSET (in-service training). Since 1984 there have been numerous courses in places such as Brent, Haringey, Islington, Kens-ington, Leicester, Coventry, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Oxford, Liverpool, Hastings, Bradford, Leeds and Manchester.

Most of these are ongoing; some produce regular and informative reports. (For example, we have had to reprint all our reports since we first started in 1984; they are available free of charge, we request only postage.) As part of our intraining sessions we will issue full lists of names and addresses of the organisations listed above and offer customer-led INSET courses in schools colleges and I FAs We can offer consultancy sessions, for advice and for reviewing our Irish Studies Resources Centre which has over 6 000 items in fiction and non-fiction for all ages, audio visuals, posters and so on. We regularly service requests for aid and dvice

Crucial to developments nationally is BAIS - the British Association for Irish Studies (currently based in London, on 071-439 3043) which organises the JEP (Joint Education Programme) for expanding Irish Studies at all levels jointly with the Liverpool Institute. BAIS will answer enquiries on all aspects of this development and it has three sub-committees of equal significance, which deal with higher education, further, adult and community education, compulsory

education (junior and secondary). The really big sponsorship money has, to date, gone into the universities - and this is laudable (e.g. Liverpool produced the new A and A/S levels in Irish Studies). However, it remains true that most children in this country still do not continue after sixteen - and perhans some enlightened monsors may consider moving away: from putting all their fundings into tertiary (or higher) education - and etart to direct meaningful amounts to the compulsory sector, where all of the voungeters in the education system will benefit from a sample of the Irish dimension.

Are there published resources to call on? The answer is most definitely yes. There is a wide range of material, covering all topics; some of it obviously has to be looked for from Irish sources, Again, extensive bibliographies are available, as are free catalogues from the Irish publishers who are constantly updating their distribution facilities

Under LMS flocal financial management of schools) interested colleges can pool ideas and share expensive resources. We can't all take our children on school trips to Ireland, so use the local museum's section on Celtic Britain and the Iron Age; use your county PRO to find material on Irish communities in Britain. We know teachers need readily available material; some is already there, and specific projects prisingly, we found that Irish historelated to the proposals outlined above are already being commissigned by publishers here. News of these will no doubt follow

There is a thriving Catholic Archives Society and The History of the Irish in Britain -- A Bibliography is crucial. BAIS has published detailed lists of teaching and academic personnel with relevant expertise. Currently, moves are afoot not only to maintain teacher inset in this area but to expand it and co-ordinate it regionally. Keep an eye on The Irish Post for details - after all. The Irish Post has been the main, indeed the only, supportive channel that reaches the parts

other journals cannot reach! What can parents do? These days, schools are being made more accountable to their clients - both students and parents. You can sensibly pressurise your governing school's curriculum, ask searching questions on parents' evenings and open evenings; ask what your multicultural service is doing for an Irish dimension. If you have the resources, offer to sponsor the relevant section of the curriculum.

Although the foregoing is not aimed specifically at Catholic schools, many if not most of the children of Irish descent are still educated in this milieu. It is generally accepted that the economic contribution of the Irish community to the building of today's Catholic infrastructure of schools colleges and churches was essential and central to that process. It would be easy to assume that an Irish dimension is already catered for in Catholic education; this assumption would be unsafe. A reading of the Catholic Media Office's 1984 report on Learning from Diversity - A Challenge for Catholic Education, contextualised the Irish against the general multicultural/anti-racist debate and concluded, whilst speaking of Roman Catholic educational institutions:

"Only two of the fifty primary and secondary schools we visited had less than ten per cent of pupils of Irish origin while the vast majority had between twenty and fifty per cent of children from Irish backgrounds. We met one teacher who was attempting to raise awareness of Irish issues by objecting to Irish jokes made by pupils and staff. At another school, a sixth form girl passionately defended her Irishness, which she said was

ignored unless a scapegoat was needed, for example when the IRA was in the news. In general, however, it would be fair to say that the headteacher who commented, 'My parents were Irish, but I don't set much store by it', spoke for the prevailing attitude.

"We encountered almost no evidence of the use of Irish literature. music or drama in the curriculum of either primary or secondary schools. Although the 'Irish question' had been discussed in social studies lessons in some schools, this was generally in the context of violence in Northern Ireland. Surry was rarely taught. We encountered some reluctance to deal with Irish issues herause of political controversy surrounding Northern Ireland ...

"In our opinion an argument can be put forward to show that Irish culture provides a valuable source which should have a place alongside others in any attempt to broad en the educational experience."

As the saying has it, "you can take the horse to water, but you can't make it drink". The trough it there and there's plenty of water - do everything in your power to encourage the horse! In fact, at our annual national conference in February 1989, Bishop McGuinness (diocese of Nottingham and East Midlands) was present and was most supportive - as indeed was the local Roman Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace Farlier this year the bishon's photograph was in our local paper; he was playing the fiddle whilst some youngsters were dancing in their costumes. This is good public relations and should give others the confidence to build further

This serves as a reminder tha the history document points to the relationship between history and the rest of the school curriculum We have already mentioned PSF and multicultural education. There are other possibilities. Celtic Iron Age craftsmanship, of all sorts, could be looked at in terms of design and technology. The report notes that music and dance are "insufficiently exploited as an historical source", and goes on to mention the social functions of dances such as jigs and reels. Women in Irish history could be related to a cross-curricular initiative on gender equality (equal opportunities). With an imaginauve approach, there are numerous opportunities for development

So we would argue that this is the best opportunity the Irish community in Britain has ever had to feature formally on the educational agenda. Whatever your own social religious or political background. whether you're pro or antirevisionist history, why not seize the opportunity and get stuck in? Make a start by writing to express your approval of the History Final Report to the History or Humanities Advisers (Inspectors in your LEA, to teacher and multicultural centres, and to individual schools

olished in The Joseph Post on 23 June 1990

ACHESON, Alex; Irish Studies student, Soar Valley College BARRON, Tony; Irish Studies student, Soar Valley College BOND, Paddy; Four Provinces Bookshop, London BOND, Steve; Loxley College, Sheffield BOOTH, Stuart; Wolverhampton Irish Cultural Association BRADY, Dr. Ciaran; Lecturer in Modern History, Trinity College, Dublin BRESLIN, Tony; Watford, London BRETT, Francis; Waltham Forest Multi-Cultural Development Service, Walthamstow BRODERICK, Maureen, Irish Language Teacher, Soar Valley College BROWNE, Stephen: Hidden Ireland Productions Ltd. (Audio-Visuals), Meath. BYRON, Catherine; Irish Studies Teacher, Soar Valley College CASSIN, Walter: Student, Manchester Irish Education Group CHARLESON, Robert; Farnworth, Bolton, Lancs. CLEMENTS, Angela; Student, Didsbury, Manchester CLEMENTS, Rose; MIEG & Irish Community Care, Manchester COMMONS, Rose; Gaelic League, Manchester CONCANNON, Kieron: Warwick CRO GHAN, P.C: Burton - u -Nebswood, Staffs DANAHER, Maureen; junior school, teacher, Leics. LEA DANAHER, Nessan: Co-ord, Irish Studies Workshop & BAIS National Executive DARBEY, Sarah; Moss Side, Manchester NiDHUBHLAIN, Filimine; Handsworth Wood; Birmingham DIAMOND, Peter: Irish Society, Huddersfield Polytechnic S.U. DINEEN, Chris; Irish Society, Huddersfield Polytechnic S.U. DOWSE, Maire: Peterborough DOWSE, Patrina; Bretton Woods Community College, Peterborough DUFFY, Pat; Co-ordinator, Wolverhampton Irish Cultural Association FALAHEE, Eddie; Brooklyn College, Great Barr, Birmingham FARRELL, Brendan; photo-journalist, 'The Irish Post' community media FINN, Vin; Irish Studies Group, Merseyside FLANAGAN, Ann; Irish Studies student, Bournville College, Birmingham FLYNN, Joe; Co-ord, Manchester Irish Education Group FLYNN, Martin; Irish dimensions, Birmingham Public Libraries FREER, Anne; Leicester College of Adult Education; ESL Teacher GARVEN, Maggie; Head of History, Soar Valley College, Leicester GOODBY, John; Lecturer, School of English, Leeds University; BAIS HURFORD. Gerald; Beds. Multi-Cultural Staff Dev. Proj; Barnfield College, Luton HUTTON, Sean; Executive Director BAIS, London JOYNT, Geoffrey: Irish Studies student, Soar Valley College KERSHAW, Monica; Irish Studies student, Soar Valley College KINEALY, Christine Dr; Administrator, Ulster Historical Foundation, Belfast LILLIS, Theresa; Sheffield LINEHAN, Deirdre; Northampton LINT, Kevin; Irish Language Student, Leicester McGUIGAN, Jo: Sec. Irish Studies Workshop, Soar Valley College McLAUGHLIN, Frank, Fr; P.P. Mother of God Church, Leicester McMANUS, Veronica, Sr; Sacred Heart Convent, Nottingham McVEIGH, Karen; Slough, Berks. MAGUIRE, Marie: Worker, Irish in Greenwich Project, South London MILLS. Ion: Oldcastle Books, Herts; Irish publishers agent MILLS, Stephen; University of Keele Lect; Gov. of Hednesford School, Staffs MORGAN, Seamus; student, Manchester Irish Education Group MORTON, Alan: Edge Hill H.E. College, Ormskirk, Lancs. MUNRO, Maine; Chislehurst, Kent MUNRO, Roderick; Chislehurst, Kent O'BROLCHAIN, Caoimhghin; Sunderland, Tyne & Wear O'CONCHUBHAIR, Seamus; Rotherham, South Yorks

O'CONCHUIR, Padraig: East Ham, London

O'NEILL, Jane; Long Road 6th Form College, Cambridge 1990 - 7th Annual National Conference - ATTENDANCE LIST PERKINS, Tony; Irish Society, Huddersfield Polytechnic S.U. PILKINGTON, Lionel, Dr: English Dept., Sheffield City Polytechnic PURDIE, Bob, Dr; Ruskin College, Oxford; BAIS Nat. Exectv. QUIERY, Greg: Co-ord, Irish Studies in Merseyside/Open College Federation RELF, James; Irish Language student, Leicester SCRAGG, Teresa: Birmingham Public Libraries SKERRETT, Peter; Irish in Britain Rep. Group, Coventry STAGG, Ellen; Wigston FE College, Leicester SWIFT, Roger; AIB Lecturer, Irish Studies Inst; Univ. of Liverpool SYLT, Eric; Community Vice-Principal, Soar Valley College TA AFFE, Fr. J.A. OMI; Irish Welfare & Info. Centre, Plunkett House, Birmingham. THOMPSON, Kate; Irish Language Teacher, Coventry, BAIS Nat. Exectv. TRAYNOR, Sean; Childrens' Author, London TWOHIG, Marie (nee O'Reilly), Irish in Greenwich Project, S. London WALSH, Delia: Bethnal Green, London WALLWORK, Janet; MIEG; John Rylands Library, Man. University WARRENER, Mary: Irish Studies Student, Soar Valley college WATKINS, Derek; Community Tutor, Soar Valley College WATSON, Seosamh; Irish Language Lecturer, Univ. College, Dublin WOOD, Margaret; Palmers Green, London WOODHURST; Ad. Ed. Dept., Newark Tech. College, Notts.

LATE ENROLMENTS

MAWER, Ms. Claire

HOGG, Mary, Chislehurst, Kent McCAULEY, Jim; Strawberry Hill, St. Marys College, Dept. of Sociology CASSIDY, Mary; Inter-Cult. Support Service, Rugby LEA McNAMARA, Siobhan; student, Bristol Polytechnic LONG. Thomas: Bishopston, Bristol DUNLEAVY, John; Oxford FLOOD, Aidan; Swiss Cottage Library, Borough of Camden WALTER, Dr. Bronwen; Anglia H.E. College, Cambridge O'HARA, Jim; Irish Stds/Strawberry Hill; BAIS Nat. Executive HOLT, Clare; GCSE History Student, Soar Valley College MISTRY, Manisha: " " " " " TANNA, Krita: " " DOWNEY, Tony; History Dept., St. Philips 6th Form College, Birmingham DUDDY, Rose; Leicester Branch, Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eirean UiNEILL, Siobhan; BAIS, Irish Lang. Adult Education Teacher RODGER, David; Ealing, London MOORE, Maurice: Irish in Britain Rep. Group, Coventry HICKMAN, Mary; Dir. Irish Studies Centre, N. London Polytechnic HUGHES, Eamonn; BAIS Nat. Exec; Ed. of BAIS 'Newsletter' MASEBO, Liz; Irish Studies Student at N. London Poly. MASEBO, Phil; Irish Studies enthusiast, London DIRRANE, Ronan; Sec. Irish Social Centre, Nottingham Mac An MHAOIR, Seamus; Conradh na Gaeilge, Birmingham CONWAY, Seamus; 11 110 11 LYNCH, Denise; SAVAGE, Stephen; Chair, The Irish Club, Eaton Square, London COLEMAN, Michael; PRO, Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eirean, Leicester COLEMAN, Seamus; Principal Officer, Combaltas Ceoltoiri Eirean, Britain COOK, Mr. P; Leicester, Comhaltas Ceoltoio Eireen O'SHEA , Maire; Coventry Irish in Britain Rep. Group O'KEEFE, Nora; Northampton FE College DUFFY, Mr. Michael CAWEN, Bob. Mr. REILLY, C. Ms. WALL, Mr. Richard WOLSTENHOLME, A.T. FINNEGAN, Mrs. BIRTILL, Tony; Liverpool SMITH. Mr. P SHILLETTO, Yvonne, Ms. HOSWELL, Mr.

OBLI, Ms. Ranjit Kaur

From: Final Report: National Curriculum - History Working Group (DES April 1990)

Key Stage 3, Option HSU 19. p. 70 - 71

Culture and society in Ireland up to early C20th

Purpose

Historically the people of Ireland have shared many common experiences with other peoples of the British Isles, but there has also been much in Irish history that has been very distinctive. A long sweep of Irish history has, therefore, been chosen with the primary purpose of bringing out distinctive elements in Irish culture and society.

Links

This HSU runs parallel to, and so has links with, all the British HSUs in this key stage.

Focus

The focus should be on social and cultural themes: Irish culture from the Celtic 'Golden Age' onwards, together with the particular contributions of the various communities who settled in Ireland later. The political aspects of this HSU should be treated as a framework within which Irish culture and society can be studied.

This HSU contributes in the following ways to the development of historical understanding and skills, to be assessed through the attainment targets:

Teachers can help pupils to acquire some understanding of change and continuity over long periods of time including the survival of the Irish language, and the rapid social and economic changes of particular periods of Irish history such as in the C19th, a time when 'thange' and 'progress' were by no means identical (AT1). This HSU supplies excellent material for demonstrating the different interpretations of particular events by different writers, for example, of the Celtic 'Golden Age'; the battle of the Boyne; and the Irish famine (AT2). Teachers can encourage pupils to use art, architecture and archaeology as well as literature as sources of historical evidence (AT3). When organising and expressing the results of historical study of the period, teachers can encourage pupils to employ the correct use of some of the concepts listed below and of historical and technical terms such as 'Gaclic', 'plantation', 'Pale', etc and to be precise in the distinctive use of particular terms such as Northern Ireland and Ulster (AT4).

Concepts Culture; 'Golden Age'; Ascendancy; Migration; Famine; Nationalism; Agrarian; Emancipation.

Political	Economic, technological and scientific	Social and religious	Cultural and aesthetic	
Essential information	Essential information	Essential information	Essential information	
The peoples of Ireland: the Celts, Vikings, English, Scots. Political institutions, government and sovereignry: Unrest and protest.	1 Land ownership, use and settlement before the English. 2 Results of English settlement on use and ownership of land. Plantations. 3 Towns, trade and industry. 4 Demography; hunger: Irish links with USA and Britain. 5 Emergence of land-owning peasantry.	1. Celtic Christianity. 2. Viking towns, 'Old' Norman settlers; 'New' Plantation English – the Anglo-Irish. Scots in Ulster. 3. Religious divisions.	1 Celtic 'Golden Age': 2 Culture of the Anglo-Irish C18th tC20th. 3 Gaelic culture. 4 Irish national culture in Gaelic and English.	
Exemplary information 3. Celtic technol. Vibinar and haute of	Exemplary information	Exemplary information	Exemplary information	

Celtic Ireland. I ikings and battle of Clontarf, 1014. Normans, 1168 to 1172. Elizabethan conquest, 1565 to 1603. Cromwell, 1649 to 1650. William III, 1688

- 2 The High Kings . Brian Born'. English crown and rule. Irish Parliament. Union of 1801
- 3 Rising of 1641 Wolfe Tone, 1798. Agrarian protest, Parnell and Home Rule, Easter, 1916. Partition, 1922. Eamon de
- I Lords and peasants under the hish kings
- 2 Norman manorial system. The Pale. Elizabethans and land confiscation. Scots
- 3 L'ikings and trade. Woollen doth industry and the 1699 Act. Growth of Cork, Dublin, Belfast, Industry in Ulster
- 4 C19th pressure on land; population. Potate famine 1845/6; emigration.
- 5 Land Purchase Acts

1 St Patrick, Irish monasticism, St. Columba to Iona, 563.

- 2 Dublin, Cork. Anglo-Irish society. Medieval monasticism and churches.
- 3 The Reformation, Roman Catholics and the Penal Laws. Preshyterian Ulster. O'Cannell and Catholic emancipation.

- 1 Sculpture, crosses, illuminated manuscripts: Book of Kells. Jewellery; metalwork.
- 2 Architecture Dublin, Art and literature - Swift, Burke, Shaw, Wilde.
- 3 C17th Gaclie poetry. Irish songs. Gaelic traditions in music, sport and dance as part of Irish nationalism.
- 4 WB Yeats. James Joyce, J M Synge. Gaelie League.

