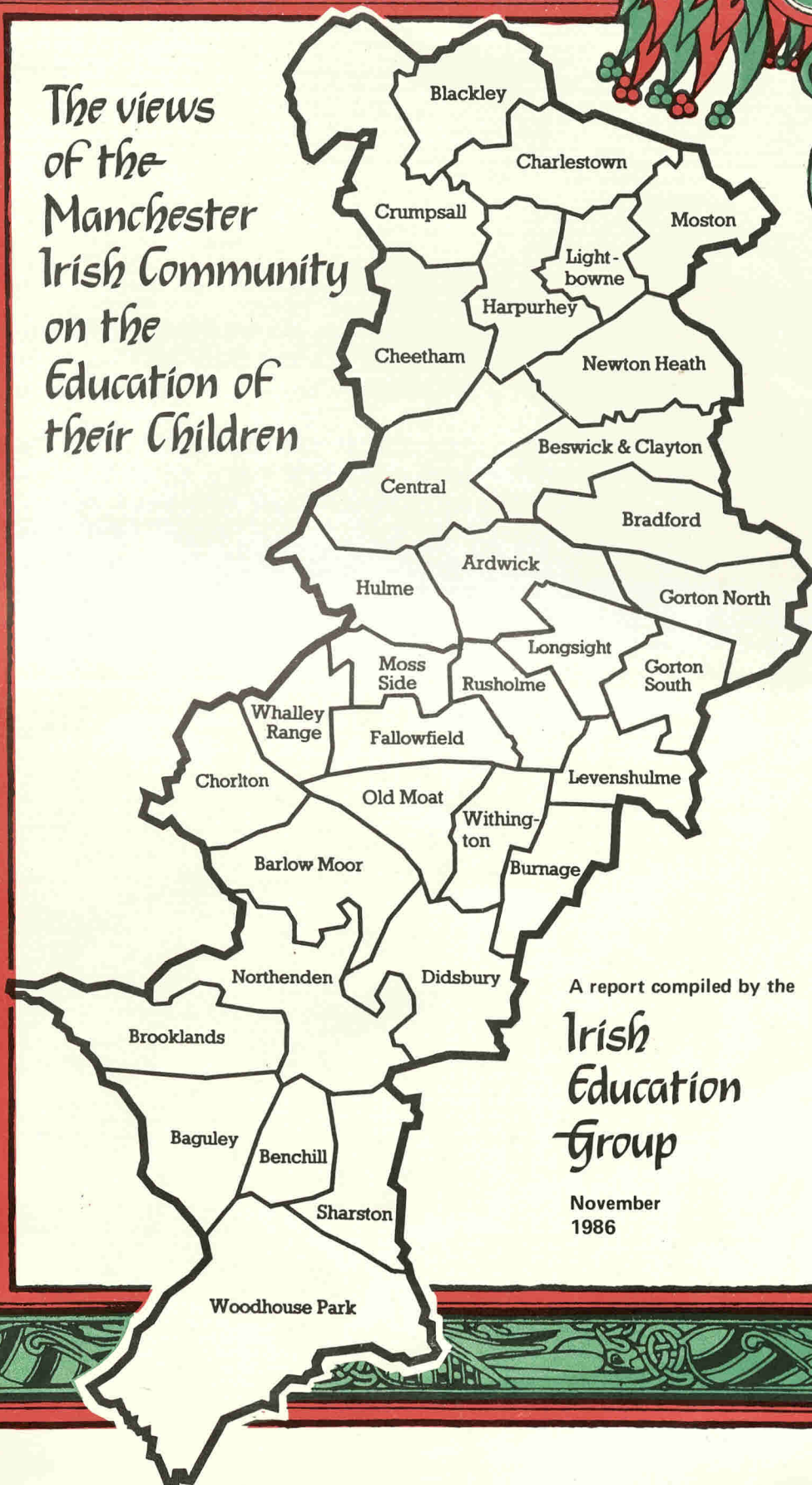


*The views
of the
Manchester
Irish Community
on the
Education of
their Children*



A report compiled by the
**Irish
Education
Group**

November
1986

The views of the Manchester Irish Community on the Education of their Children

Conducted in July/August, 1986.

In September, 1985, a public meeting was called to give the Irish community the opportunity to elect two representatives to the Manchester City Council Race Sub-Committee. These representatives resubmitted a report to the Council which included a section on Education.

In December, 1985 the Chief Education Officer, Mr. G. Hainsworth fully endorsed the view that "the struggle against Irish racism is part of the wider struggle against racism" and made a firm commitment to include an Irish dimension in the curriculum of the City's schools as part of the programme designed to counteract racism.

Following these moves the Irish Education Group was set up. People from across the community came together in this group to act upon the educational concerns of Irish people in Manchester. The IEG took as its first major task the identification of specific educational needs (if such existed) of children of Irish background. A survey of the opinions of their parents was launched. This report seeks to interpret the survey's findings.

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November
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Front Cover: City of Manchester Census Atlas, The City Planning Department,
Town Clerk's Stationery Department, Town Hall, Manchester, M60 2JT.,
Celtic Design Colouring Book, ED SIBBETT, JR.,
Dover Publications, Inc., New York.

The Sample Group

No register of the Irish Community in Manchester exists, so that pure random sampling was not possible. The aim of the distribution was to reach a representative cross-section of the target group by as many routes as possible. Some three thousand copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 587 replies came back by the deadline.

With the support of the Chief Education Officer, every one of the city's educational establishments received a copy of the questionnaire, with an invitation to take part. In addition a number of schools co-operated in publicising and distributing the forms. By this process schools, colleges, Community Education centres and playgroups were drawn into the sample. The Irish Centre, most of the 22 Irish Associations in Manchester and major cultural groups such as the Gaelic Athletic Association and Comhaltas (Irish Traditional Musicians) circulated copies to their members.

The opinions of Irish people attending such meetings as the City Council Open Meeting for the Irish Community, and ceilis and dances at Irish venues, were informally canvassed. The 34 members of the Irish Education Group sought out people who might not be exposed to popular sources. The questionnaire was also publicised on the local radio programme for the Irish. About one hundred of the replies resulted from door-to-door canvassing in areas of Irish residence.

The Questions

The questions were grouped to make possible a straightforward analysis. Some members of the Irish Education Group felt that the opinions of the clients of the system should be directly addressed. A number of interviews were therefore recorded with students having experience of life as pupils of Irish descent in Manchester classrooms. The interviews give something of the authentic voice of the Irish in their second-generation (see appendix 3).

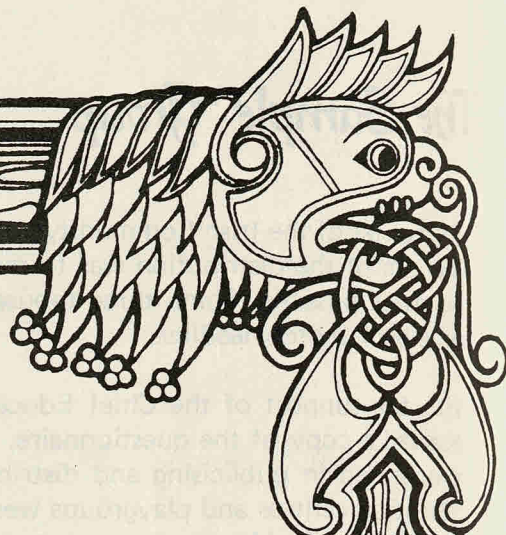
Three clusters of propositions were to be investigated:

- i) that children might benefit from learning about their own and other children's cultural backgrounds. In the case of children of Irish descent their schools might have overlooked this possibility;
- ii) that negative social attitudes and constructions of race might be acting against the interests of children of Irish descent in Manchester schools;
- iii) that parents might be concerned to remedy any such shortcomings and generally wanted a greater say in the education of their children.

Some questions in the survey sought specific indications of those aspects of Irish culture parents might wish to see schools develop.

If some of the assumptions underlying these propositions might be questioned, the existence of racism against the Irish Community cannot.

IRISH EDUCATION GROUP



THE VIEWS OF THE MANCHESTER IRISH COMMUNITY ON THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN

An *Irish Education Group* has been formed to assess the needs and wishes of the community with regard to Education in Manchester. The group is made up of interested people from all sections of the community and if you wish to join you are very welcome. By filling in this questionnaire you could help us accurately represent your needs to Manchester Education Committee.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Tom McAndrew (Chair)
14 Woodford Gardens
M20.

Tel: 061 445 6243

Les Hankin (Secretary)
3 Park Road
Cheadle

Tel: 061 491 2218

Total of completed questionnaires: 587

- (1) Are you satisfied with the general educational provision in Manchester? YES: 59% NO: 41%
- (2) Do you feel that a knowledge of their background would benefit children of Irish descent? YES: 84% NO: 16%
- (3) Do you feel that teaching should take more account of the cultural background of your children? YES: 80% NO: 16%
- (4) Do you feel that *all* children benefit from a knowledge of other cultural backgrounds? YES: 83% NO: 15%
- (5) Are you aware of any attempts to include aspects of Irish culture in their curriculum? YES: 20% NO: 72%
- (6) Have your children ever experienced anti-Irish feelings in school? YES: 40% NO: 57%
- (7) Do you feel that your children can talk openly of their Irish background in school? YES: 62% NO: 36%
- (8) Do you think that Manchester children have an accurate view of Ireland and the Irish? YES: 20% NO: 76%
- (9) Do the books and materials in your child's school give an accurate view of Ireland and the Irish? YES: 18% NO: 73%
- (10) Do you feel that children of Irish descent do as well educationally as other children? YES: 81% NO: 15%
- (11) Do you think that Manchester Education Committee should make provision in the following areas:
- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Books and Materials that reflect Irish cultural background | YES: 87% NO: 7% |
| Adult Irish Studies classes | YES: 71% NO: 22% |
| Irish Language classes in school | YES: 41% NO: 44% |
| Irish Language classes in the evening | YES: 64% NO: 21% |
| Irish Dance | YES: 76% NO: 11% |
| Irish Music | YES: 80% NO: 12% |
| Irish Games | YES: 79% NO: 12% |
- (12) If Manchester were to provide Irish Traditional music teachers which area would you like your children to follow or take up? (Please tick)
- | | |
|---------------|-----|
| Violin | 40% |
| Tin Whistle | 43% |
| Concert Flute | 25% |
| Accordion | 60% |
| Bodhra'n | 26% |
| Banjo | 28% |
| Harp | 30% |
- (13) If Manchester were to provide Irish Games tuition which area would you like your children to take up? (Please tick)
- | | |
|-----------------|-----|
| Gaelic Football | 64% |
| Hurling | 43% |
| Comogie | 43% |
| Hand Ball | 40% |
- (14) Do you feel strongly about having the Irish dimension represented in Manchester schools? YES: 75% NO: 25%
- (15) Have you any suggestions for improving the education of our children? Please use the space below to make them known.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

Conclusions

Most parents (59%) expressed themselves satisfied with the general educational provision in Manchester and felt that children of Irish descent did well by it, certainly as well as other children (81%). However, the general feeling emerged that the Irish background and culture were not being covered. 72% were unaware of any attempts to include aspects of Irish culture in the curriculum and 8% felt unable to answer this question.

Overwhelmingly, the respondents felt 'strongly' that the Irish dimension should be represented in Manchester schools (75%). Even more (84%) felt that a knowledge of their background would help children of Irish descent and that their teaching should take account of this (80%). All children were felt to benefit from a knowledge of their own and other children's backgrounds (83%). This is fully in keeping with Article 3 of the EEC Directive on the Education of the Children of Migrant Workers (1977) which requires member states to promote the teaching of the culture of children of migrant workers from another member state.

The importance parents placed in such teaching might be explained by the finding that a significant number of parents believed their children to have experienced anti-Irish feelings in school (40%). Slightly less felt that their children's Irish identity was suppressed (36%). There was no strong conviction that Manchester children held an accurate view of Ireland and the Irish or that they were well-served in seeing through the stereotypes attached to the Irish by the books and materials available to them in school. A subsequent survey of the most recent history texts in the Teachers' Centre Library revealed that the Irish do not apparently exist as a separate nation and that their presence is nowhere accounted for as a contributory strand in Britain's development. The disposition of children towards foreign countries has been clearly demonstrated to depend on their knowledge of them. In a recent study of children's attitudes, Ireland headed the list of countries not liked by Manchester pupils (1). A similar large-scale survey of Nottingham schoolchildren revealed the Irish to be the national group that was least liked. They were seen to be "violent and dull" (2).

The survey indicated specific areas which parents would like to see included within the educational provision. These included Irish Music (80%), Irish Games (79%) and Irish Dance (76%).

Recommendations

The Irish Education Group believes that the survey findings give a clear indication of the wishes of a wide cross-section of the Irish Community. In the light of the Council's decision to recognise the Irish as part of Manchester's multi-ethnic population, the following recommendations warrant an urgent response.

- 1) An Irish dimension should be included in Manchester's educational provision. This would entail the provision of books, materials and teaching packs that reflect Irish cultural background, Games, Music and Dance, at school and adult level. It would also require that funds be allocated to develop local materials and that an Irish Liaison Officer be named in the Education Department.*
- 2) It follows that In-Service training should be provided for workers in Education.*
- 3) The Irish should be recognised as a group subject to racism. Anti-Irish behaviour should clearly come under the City's policy on anti-racism. (For example, Anti-Irish jokes should not be acceptable).*
- 4) The Teachers' Centre and District Resource Centres should hold substantial and appropriate book stocks and materials and teaching packs. (North and East Area City Libraries are now working with the Irish Education Group to improve stocks in libraries).*
- 5) We recommend that the Council support the cultural initiatives emanating from the Irish Community. These include:*

The Irish World Heritage Centre and its efforts to provide a cultural focus for the Community (by means of an Archive/Library, Museum of Irish Achievement, and educational resource centre);

Irish Dance and Music classes;

The Gaelic Athletic Association's efforts to provide an all-weather pitch at Cheetham Hill and changing facilities at Hough End. This development would provide facilities in both the North and South of the City where none exist at present.

- 6) We recommend that the Music Service assess their current capability to teach Irish traditional music. A case in point is the considerable demand for Accordion tuition (60%) evident from the Survey.*
- 7) We recommend that the Authority respond positively to schools and institutions who may wish to develop an Irish dimension in their curriculum.*

We feel that the above recommendations fall within Manchester's anti-racism policies. The acceptance of these proposals by the Council would have a number of benefits:

It would help counter anti-Irish racism, enable young people of Irish descent to understand their heritage and give all children a more accurate view of Ireland and the Irish. An Irish perspective would also give additional focus to anti-racist teaching and help young people of Irish descent to empathise with the Black Community in the continuing struggle against racism.

Aspects of the Present Day Irish Community in Manchester

The Irish Community is massively diverse, stretching from the homeless to an extensive middle class. 12% of Britain's doctors are of Irish origin (3) but the employment profile remains skewed towards unskilled labour (4). The Irish remain heavily massed in the inner city, in Longsight, Levenshulme, Moss Side and also in the suburb of Wythenshawe (CPD map 1985, appendix 2). The age profile of the Manchester Irish community appears to be somewhat younger than that for their compatriots in the country as a whole. A surge in migration has been reported, mostly of the young, placing such pressures on Irish welfare centres in Britain that the Irish Bishops have called upon their government to allocate funds to these centres (5).

The increasing vulnerability of groups of Irish people, overtaken by difficult times, has given urgency to community efforts to provide support. In Manchester, a drop-in centre run by Sister Rosaleen of the Order of the Cross and Passion, mobilising voluntary workers, has been set up with funds from the Irish Embassy. Among its pressing concerns are those to do with isolation (16% of Irish born males are single, against a 9% national average) and financial insecurity resulting from working lives spent on the 'lump' system in the building trade.

The most enduring Irish groupings in Manchester are those revolving around sports, music and place of origin as expressions of cultural identity and living tradition. There are now at least 15 County Associations in Manchester totalling more than two thousand members (6). The Irish are served by a large network of Catholic parish social clubs and by social centres at St. Brendan's at Chorlton and latterly at the ambitious new Irish World Heritage Centre. This has been heralded as the single most outstanding achievement of the Community of recent years and significantly is used by other groups, including the Chinese, West Indian and English.

The Gaelic Athletic Association

The GAA organises and controls the traditional Irish games of Gaelic Football, Hurling, Hand Ball and Comogie through a system of local clubs. "To many, Gaelic games are a magnificent monument, a lone witness to a more ancient but shattered culture" (7). There are now ten Gaelic Football teams in Manchester. The possibility of Council support through the designation of the Irish as an ethnic minority may help to develop the interests dear to the GAA through groups such as the Sports Council.

Gaelic Games in Manchester

from Paddy Johnson: Gaelic Association, Lancashire County Board

"Gaelic football and hurling have been played here in Manchester for over sixty years. (Both) were hit by the decline in emigration of the mid-seventies but in 1976 under-age football was introduced here. This venture has proved a tremendous success with a total of nine clubs running such teams at under-10, U12 through to U18 and U21 besides 2 adult teams at junior and senior levels. Manchester now has 10 teams. In the region of 1,500 people are involved, approximately 1,000 of whom are under-age players. League and Championship competitions are run and our season runs from March to November. All activity within each club is on a voluntary basis".

"Areas where Assistance is required

- 1) Having Gaelic games taught in primary schools would be a great benefit.
- 2) We need to provide adequate facilities (changing rooms/showers). We hire 2 pitches at Hough End on a 'game basis'. We are awaiting the result of a current application for an urban grant to build dressing rooms beside these pitches.
- 3) Alternatively if one of the local schools which are closing down were made available to us that would be a great benefit.
- 4) We recently held a full week-end coaching course at the Platt Lane complex. The Education Department covered the cost of hire. This proved to be of great benefit to those who took part".

Comhaltas Ceolteari Eireann (The Irish Musicians' Association)

The arts enjoyed most by the Manchester Irish appear to be those of traditional set dancing and music, including Ceili bands and concerts from Irish groups. Comhaltas has 5 local branches, notable for recruiting many young musicians from English stock.

Statement from Pat Sweeney, National Officer

"Our aims and objectives are the restoration and preservation of Irish music. There are 39 branches in Britain, 2 of which are in Manchester (the O'Carolan branch at St. Edward's old school, Thurloe Street, Rusholme; the St. Wilfrid's branch meeting at St. Wilfrid's Social Centre, Birchvale Close, Hulme, with a sub-branch in Levenshulme). Hundreds of children are introduced to music in this way, including many who are not Irish.

Music is taught on the tin whistle, violin, concert flute, piano and button accordions, bodhran, drums, concertina, banjo, piano and uilleann pipes. These instruments have to be purchased by the parents but, sometimes the branches have to help with the cost. Rents have to be paid for premises and teachers' expenses must necessarily be covered. Ceili, set-dancing and singing are also taught.

The branches receive no direct grants or money and all monies have to be raised by dances, draws, raffles, etc. Any assistance would be gratefully accepted.

The branches are expected to host the regional or all-Britain fleadh every 3 or 4 years and this is very expensive."

An Coimisium Le Rinci Gaelacha (Irish Dancing Commission)

The Commission runs over 35 dance classes in the Manchester region, each with an average of 50 pupils. It attracts many 3rd generation Irish alongside children with no Irish connections.

The Gaelic Language

Gaelic has been offered in the City's adult evening classes but the take up has been disappointing. In the questionnaire results it was the least requested of schools, whereas some 64% sought such classes in the evenings, indicating a failure to communicate existing facilities.

Travellers

Travelling families form a separate, deprived group on the fringes of society, the rigour of whose living conditions is said to combine with low literacy levels to leave them highly vulnerable in health and social terms. They are said to be the only white-skinned community to suffer discrimination as widespread and acute as that directed to Black people. The percentage of the travellers in England of Irish descent has been put at 10% (8), but Dennis Binns, Head of the Manchester Travellers' School, believes the figure to be much higher, particularly in the North West as an area noted for its Irish contingent.

The Plowden Report characterised the children of Travellers as "probably the most severely deprived children in the country" whose potential abilities even when they attend school are stunted. There is also medical concern about the interference and discontinuities in their nutrition in these adverse environmental and social conditions. HMI have commented on the difficulties of providing educational continuity for these children (10). They are said to suffer a double racism, as Travellers and as Irish children. (11). Problems of living space, aggression on sites and official harassment undo much of the effort of the roving teachers and the schools the children are admitted to in Manchester. A management panel, formed in 1985, has secured extra teaching staff in schools admitting Travelling children and seeks to develop integration policies to encourage them to attend mainstream education.

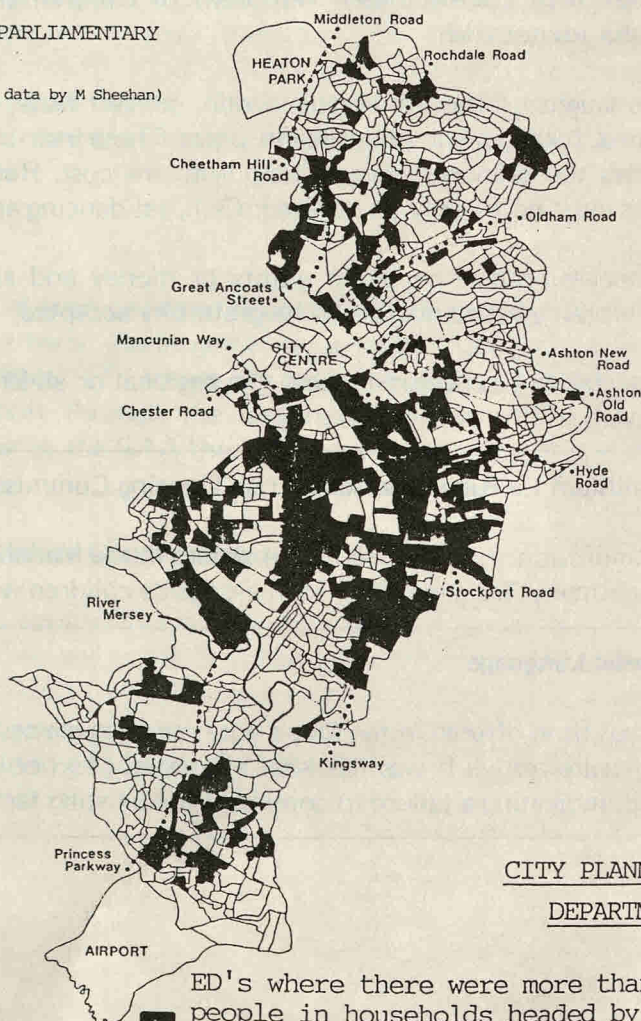
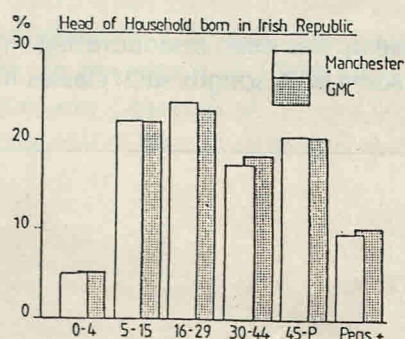
There appear to be few connections between the main Irish Community and the Travellers, except that they appear to have emerged through the same process which, from the time of Cromwell's conquest of Ireland (1650) uprooted thousands and turned vagrancy and migration into ways of life.

APPENDIX 2

NUMBERS OF FIRST GENERATION IRISH VOTERS BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY IN MANCHESTER (1981 Census)

Blackley:	2001 (from an analysis of census data by M Sheehan)
Manchester Central:	3843
Manchester Gorton:	4632
Withington:	3823
Wythenshawe:	2205

Age Structure by Birthplace of Head of Household.



CITY PLANNING
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ED's where there were more than 30 people in households headed by a person born in the Irish Republic

Interviews Accompanying the Survey

The subjects, as pupils past and present of Manchester's education system, of Irish descent, were chosen from the 14–18 age range, to give articulate impressions of the social organisation and curriculum content of their schools as they stand now. All those interviewed came from different schools.

Significantly a majority had covered the Northern Ireland issue, either in history or in general studies lessons. Most felt that here their teachers had been more balanced than dogmatic, although a few felt that particular cultural standpoints had been conveyed by justifying colonisation, by emphasising the need for control in the North.

The majority interviewed were able to highlight offensive literature which depicted the Irish as drunkards or buffoons.

Whilst some argued that their home and leisure activities were structured around Irishness so that they had no problem with their sense of identity, others felt they would have been more secure and "acceptable" if the curriculum had incorporated an Irish dimension.

Everyone interviewed had experienced anti-Irish feelings of some nature. This is at odds with the perceptions of parents, in the survey, 57% of whom were unaware of such incidents. Nearly all those interviewed said that such feelings had made them more determined to manifest their Irish identity.

INTERVIEWS of "pupils who have experienced or are currently experiencing life as a pupil of Irish descent in Manchester classrooms", conducted for the Irish Education Group by Brid Dooley, July 1986.

(1) Do you consider yourself to be an ethnic minority?

"Within the immediate proximity no, because there are a lot of Irish in the whole of Manchester, but within the country, yes".

"We're definitely a minority because of being in a predominantly Protestant country".

"Yes, because the Irish are a minority . . . and we've got different cultures that aren't always accepted".

"I don't because only one of my parents is Irish and she's not brought me up to believe in her Irish beliefs so I just feel at ease with other people".

"We're different aren't we? What we do in our spare time. With being Irish. . . your parents like you to do what they did, right?

"No, there's quite a few of us and I don't (see us as) a persecuted minority".

(2) Are the concepts of your culture and cultural identity reflected in the social organisation of your school or in the content-curriculum (history, general studies, literature, Religion, sport, etc.)

IF YES: Is a balanced view held to or a particular cultural standpoint taken?

"Not at all. The only bit we did was about the troubles in Northern Ireland and how they came about . . . The books certainly did try and justify the English point of view but my teacher tried to balance it out with his own opinions . . . But they didn't really influence me because I knew quite a lot about the history of N. Ireland . . . from my parents, books, newspapers, etc., not just English, but Irish papers. (*Do you think you were prejudiced before you entered the lessons?*) "I'm prejudiced towards the Catholics in N. Ireland because you can sort of relate to them, but we weren't allowed to be one-sided in our work because it was all being marked by English examiners, so you had to be careful".

"At school they weren't reflected at all, but recently, at college, as part of a General Studies course, yes . . . It was given from a balanced view because the teacher gave the situation as an IRA man and then as an English Protestant".
"I had an Irish teacher and an English teacher who did half and half, so I saw both sides".

"We didn't do any subjects or games related to Ireland which I would like to have done. This was a disadvantage because you should know about the countries that surround you and we should all know about each other so that when problems arise we can help".

"Our history lessons were really up-to-date. We went right back to the beginning, not just the contemporary issues. We didn't actually get a balanced view. Our teacher was really English. He was trying to justify why the English had this presence in Ireland and he portrayed the Irish as barbaric . . . that they needed someone there because if they didn't, they wouldn't be able to control themselves. They'd be fighting and tearing each other to bits. (indistinct). The Catholics started fighting, he'd say the people can't get on so what the hell's the point of trying to make a reunion". *(So he sort of made it acceptable to the English within your history class?)*. "Yeah! That really got on my nerves, because anti-Irish feelings were bad enough but when he goes on, My God."

(3) Did you find any aspects of your curriculum offensive (literature for example)?

"Not really offensive because they missed out on the Irish culture altogether . . . except the kids around you saying Irish jokes . . . You got called thick because you were Irish . . . We did one particular (play) about the workers and there was an Irish labourer and he was made fun of because he was . . . supposedly thick".

"If ever there was a stupid person he would always be an Irishman. Not so much now. I think it has been taken out of the curriculum".

"In literature the Irish were represented as backward".

"I didn't actually find anything offensive because we didn't actually do anything that could have portrayed the Irish more favourably. We didn't do any of the books like Joyce or Behan. I found that very offensive, come to think of it, not actually something that we did but that we didn't do".

"Going on about English troops I found a bit offensive . . . It happens all the time so I don't take that much notice".

(4) If your curriculum were to cater for your particular minority group would it have made a valuable contribution to your identity/security?

"Not really because . . . (when) it was ignored . . . within the home when you were brought up in that sort of atmosphere you tended to cherish it more because you were losing out in school when you didn't get to learn much about it. I certainly didn't lose my identity because my home is built around it and all my relatives are Irish, but I can see how some people would not know anything through not learning of it in school".

"I think what's lacking now is that people don't know about the culture, not just of our group but mostly the Africans, Indians and everything and therefore, because they don't know it and because you behave differently and have different cultural activities, they think you're different. To make sense of this they have to call you".

"It would have given the other people who didn't know much, more to go on to make an opinion".

"It's wise that everybody should know where their parents are from and about them".

"With our group not being catered for, you know, knowing nothing about it, it didn't do anything for our identity within the school. If we'd done a bit about our Irish culture we could have been more proud of saying 'We're Irish'. But there wasn't that chance to let people know where you were from. We did a bit about the Africans because there were a lot of Africans in our school where I come from. But we didn't do anything about the Irish".

(5) Have you ever experienced anti-Irish feelings in school from your teachers/peer group?

(IF YES, what was the nature of these and what in your opinion caused them? Was there any period in the year that heightened these feelings (such as IRA bombing campaign, news coverage/documentaries on the Northern Ireland condition?)

"Just silly things . . . but not to a great extent . . . because I went to schools that were Catholic.

"Media, always getting a one-sided view of N. Ireland so you get seen as barbarians. They all say that the English rule Ireland and 'We're there keeping the peace, the English Army'. . . Whenever there was a big IRA campaign in England. . . If it was in Ireland, everyone tend(ed) to ignore it. (My reaction was) defending, bringing up the old arguments that they're only fighting for what is theirs.

(Would that not encourage more anti-Irish feelings if you were defending what is seen as a terrorist group?)

"You get called and everything but you tend to set people thinking about it and they ask you questions then rather than taking it all at face value".

"During the marching season in Ireland when a bomb was planted, because they couldn't attack the IRA, because you were the nearest Irish they knew they'd attack you. If there was a documentary, whatever happened on that you'd get a lot of feedback from it. And also on St. Patrick's or any day like that when you manifest your Irishness, wear your green or whatever, you'd get stick".

"I don't think a lot of the teachers know much about the Irish culture themselves and therefore, they don't teach from an unbiased standpoint . . . It's hard to make other people change their opinions".

"I've never experienced any (anti-Irish feelings) because people don't class me as Irish. I don't have an Irish name, but I've noticed that other people with Irish names like Murphy, well as soon as they hear that name, they put them down. The way people are brought up in England, with jokes and newspapers, they automatically get the impression that the Irish are inferior".

"Oh aye, yeah. All the time. You get these jokes about Mickey. They just hear you've got an Irish name I don't think it's really meant to be offensive. It's just people. For something to say. They've got to crack a joke, have a skit or something. And I think it's also that the English seem to think they're a superior race. I mean look at them. They're everywhere. Colonisation in India, the Falklands and everywhere. They have to prove it you see. So they knock down these ethnic minority groups but not just us you know. The Pakistanis and Afro-Caribbeans.

(What causes this sort of feeling?)

"Ah, you just switch on the telly. You see the Comedians? Also I think a lot of people read them Tabloid papers like the Sun and the Star and they've done nothing about Equal Opportunities. It's all in there, the jokes about the Irish. They're always 'knocking' jokes . . . even the people that are high up make jokes about the Irish. What really sickens me is that people with Irish names, they make jokes about the Irish . . . They're showing themselves up aren't they? They're cutting out jokes about the blacks and that because they can get done for that. I don't think the Irish are recognised as an ethnic minority, therefore they stick to the Irish. In a lot of clubs now, if there's black people going in they don't like it. They look in the audience and they see (them) but you can't really recognise Irish people. That's the trouble. There's no barrier with the language and there's no particular 'ideal type' for the Irish. So they can't think 'Oh, I'd better be careful here'".

"They come on top of you because they realise you're Irish and say 'Oh, there was an IRA bombing on the News last night. You're Irish aren't you? It's the likes of you from the IRA'. That gets me down. I don't agree with the IRA, but I agree with their cause, reunification of Ireland. I don't agree with their actions, bombing innocent people and that. It's one country isn't it? I mean, if the Irish came over here and they invaded England, what would the English do about it? They invade every country going don't they? It's bad enough them going into another country, but when they try and force their culture on you, that's worse".

"Not a lot of people know that I'm Irish so I don't see the point in getting involved, sticking my neck out. It only gets me into bother doesn't it?"

(6) Have such feelings prevented you from manifesting your Irish identity

"Not at all. They've encouraged me to do so . . ."

"I think I've grown in confidence now so I'd like to get up and . . . educate them that don't know about the Irish. If I ever get called any negative names I stand up and say my piece. It doesn't prevent me from saying anything".

"If anything it makes me defend it. You get into arguments. It makes people more aware that I am Irish".

"No way, no. They all knew I was Irish so I couldn't really deny it. Some people say to me now when I speak 'Are you Irish?' just from some of the things I say. Perhaps if I was a bit shy I would, but I'm confident, see. Also people know that if they call the Irish in front of me they know what they'll get".

I don't make it obvious that I've got Irish connections so these feelings don't make any difference".

(7) Do your peers/teachers have an accurate view of Ireland and the Irish?

"I don't think many people do have an accurate view, if they haven't experienced it themselves. My teachers probably had a better view because they could question what was in the news, but children tended to think that the news was always right. I certainly thought that for a good number of years when I was at school".

(What could be done to eradicate these views?)

"More education on groups within Ireland expressing their views on what it is like to live in Ireland".

"I think it's because the main particular view they get from the News. Every time they see the News all they ever see is the situation in N. Ireland so they think we're way backward, always fighting each other all the time. I don't blame them for that view."

(What could you do to eradicate that view?)

"In the education system, giving a balanced view, more Irish teachers introduced into schools".

"We didn't do much about the Irish in school so I don't really know what my teachers' views were".

"No chance. They just associate violence. They say 'You are going to Ireland on your holiday. . . Aren't you afraid you'll get bombed or anything like that? They don't understand that it's a minority of Ireland that's in conflict. I think it's prevented a lot of English people from going. They just get their ideas from their parents and if your parents are stereotypes or biased on everything you're bound to convey this to your children. 'That stupid Irish git, drinking all night on the potheen, that sort of thing'".

"The education system has done nothing. There are still things in the curriculum that I find offensive. They do about the slavery in Africa. I'm not just talking from my cultural standpoint. We've been left out of the curriculum. You know history lessons, that's an ideal opportunity to do the history of Ireland with the English going over there and everything. There's nothing".

"Teachers should be sensitised to all cultures so pupils will know more about them. . ."

(8) Do you feel as an ethnic minority that you were disadvantaged in the education system (by way of exam bias, alien curriculum, teacher expectations, negative labelling for example)?

"Not at all, not in my school anyway".

"In so far as our culture wasn't catered for, yes. . . . If there was an exam on this we would have done better".

"It tends to make Irish pupils negative about their education because they feel that people don't understand them. . . In circumstances like these you don't enjoy school as much. When other pupils tend to call you you lose interest in school".

"Yeah. Some of the teachers would hear your Irish name . . . and be wary of giving you too hard work. I think I could have been put in higher streams if I wasn't Irish. They didn't encourage us to do well because of who we were. You didn't expect yourself to do well (so) you became lazy. It became a self-fulfilling prophecy."

(9) Have you ever suffered from an identity crisis, not knowing if you were English or Irish (such as when subjected to English culture at school and Irish at home)?

"Definitely because at home I tend to think of myself as Irish but when I'm in school I still see myself as Irish but you can't associated with the English people there, but when you go to Ireland that's when you miss out. They all see you as English."

"Like if you have to write down your nationality you don't know what to write because you don't feel English because you know you're different and yet you can't write Irish because you're born in England and you don't feel Irish either because you're different from them because of your accent, the way you were brought up. You're from the city life, they're from the country life, whatever".

"Especially when you're younger this becomes confusing because you're a British citizen at school but your parents class you and expect you to be Irish".

"Being born in Ireland I consider myself Irish but I know I'm not. Although I've done some cultural activities they've been prevented, or closing down and that. I didn't get totally immersed in cultural activities. Sometimes I do feel daft. I don't know what I am."

"I don't think there's that much different between Irish and English cultures".

(10) Have you ever had any negative feedback from your peers/teachers as a result of any cultural activities?

"I used to do Irish dancing when I was younger and they all laughed at me. My brothers that did Gaelic football got called and laughed at because they would pick it up with the hands".

"They know it's different from their game and because it is associated with Irishness. . . . Also playing Irish music. Predominantly because these are Irish activities, not because there's anything wrong with them, they get mocked. They can't make sense of it, you see".

"Your parents tend to introduce you to Irish dancing and things where other children of the same age have different hobbies. They don't understand what you're doing and it tends to keep them at a distance".

"(Irish dancing) isn't my scene. My younger brothers and sisters, they've been called when they go. 'What's Irish dancing? What do you, dance on your head?'. It's jealousy really. What have the English got culture-wise. They've only got Morris-dancing. No-one's interested. The English, on a Sunday, they're content to wash the car. They've no religion to go to. They've no cultural activities that I can see".

"I've never had negative feedback because most of the teachers don't know I'm Irish".

(11) If you have an Irish name has this ever caused problems?

"All the time. The spelling is terrible. I don't know anyone who can spell my name. It's embarrassing (in the classroom) when you have to repeat yourself three or four times".

"I've never had so much difficulty in all my life. You sort of feel cheeky having to correct the teacher. Everyone sort of looks at you every time it comes up. Sometimes they don't know if you're a girl or a boy. What annoys me is the teachers don't make the effort to pronounce it correctly".

"To me it's part of my Irish heritage and I ain't ashamed of it. At least I'm not another Tracy or Joanna. I'm proud of my name. But it causes problems sometimes. When you're going for a job interview. It puts them off ringing you up because you've got an odd name."

"I've had people say 'Is that your real name?'. People in class just refer to me by my second name which isn't that out of the ordinary."

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