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An analysis of data drawn from census enumerators' books for the years 1851, 1861 and 1871 shows that the Lancashire Irish were consistently more likely to live in multiple occupancy dwellings and in court housing than the non-Irish. Irish households were usually somewhat larger than non-Irish households because of larger nuclear families and a higher incidence of non-family members. But the most striking difference between the two communities was the high degree of overcrowding among the Irish. Estimates based on census data show that the actual numerical size of the Lancashire Irish community was at least 50-60% larger than the number of residents actually born in Ireland. Only in Liverpool and Widnes do there appear to have been identifiable 'Irish neighbourhoods', but other factors than a desire for residential segregation probably influenced their emergence. Irish males generally were on a lower occupational scale than the non-Irish and showed only a very sluggish upward mobility. Irishwomen were much on an occupational level with non-Irish women, but they were still firmly in the working class.

Irish immigration entailed social problems for urban Lancashire. Throughout 1846-71, and particularly during the late 1840s and early 1850s, the Irish were a substantial problem for boards of guardians in Liverpool, Manchester and Preston. Public health was an endemic problem in Lancashire, which the Irish severely aggravated during the late 1840s. Improvement of health standards was not helped by overcrowding among the Irish, but otherwise they were not considered a special detriment to the health of urban Lancashire. Disproportionately high levels of fighting, assault, drunkenness and petty offences made the Irish a serious crime problem for Lancashire's police forces.

Irish immigration greatly increased the number of Roman Catholics in Lancashire. Even though religious worship was largely neglected, Irish community life centred on the catholic church. The church's social dimension is evident in the rapidly expanded catholic school system which developed to meet the needs of thousands of catholic children in the Irish community. The church furnished a basis for Irish social organisation as well. Opposition to the Irish also focused on their religion. In particular, the sectarian brinkmanship of the revived Orange Order in Lancashire frequently raised intercommunal tensions during the mid-nineteenth century. This antagonism was probably the principal obstacle to the assimilation of the Irish into Lancashire community life.

During 1846-71 the Irish showed little inclination to participate in domestic British politics, on the national or local levels. The Irish Confederate movement of 1848, which temporarily allied with the English Chartists, attracted very little support among the Lancashire Irish. In contrast, the Fenian movement of the 1860s attracted wide support from Lancashire's Irish community. The IRB was originally intended as a military organisation to overthrow British rule in Ireland, but it developed a great social significance and helps to demonstrate the development of a coherent idea of social, cultural and national community among the Lancashire Irish. The IRB formed the organisational base from which the Lancashire Irish community was mobilised in support of the constitutional home rule movement of the later 1870s and 1880s.
The Irish in Lancashire, 1846-71: A social history

This thesis has been researched and written under the supervision of Professor T.W. Moody, University of Dublin, Trinity College. It has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university, and it is entirely my own work.

November 1974
William James Lowe
Acknowledgements

The large body of local source material incorporated in this study was collected with the assistance of reference and local history librarians throughout Lancashire. I wish to thank the staffs of the Oldham Local Interest Centre, the Harris Library in Preston, the St Helens Public Library, the Salford Central Library, and the Widnes Public Library. In particular, I would like to thank Ms Janet Smith at the Record Office of the Liverpool Central Library and the former Local History Librarian at the Manchester Central Library, Mr Christopher Makepeace, for all their patience and effort. I must also thank Mr R. Sharpe France, County Archivist at the Lancashire Record Office, and his staff, especially Mr J. Gordon Read, who translated a difficult Latin manuscript for me. I was also able to benefit from the advice of Mr Breandán Mac Giolla Choille and his staff at the State Paper Office, Dublin Castle, when gathering data for chapter 12.

Several other persons have left their mark on this research. Fr John Allen, Secretary to the Bishop of Salford, has been very kind in forwarding me information on catholic parishes in the Manchester area. The Geography Department of the University of Liverpool, in particular Professor Richard Lawton, H.D. Cutler and I.C. Taylor, have been very generous with their advice, facilities and hospitality.

A special word of appreciation must be reserved for John Haslett and June Ryan, Statistics Department, University of Dublin, who gave up a great deal of their time to carry out the computer programming for the statistical analysis in chapter 3. John Haslett's comments on the draft of chapter 3 were very helpful in improving my first effort at statistical analysis, and it has been very encouraging to work with someone to whom nothing seems impossible.

I must also thank my friends Bernadette Comerford and Emer O'Sullivan, who very kindly, and patiently, helped me with the last-minute proof-reading and typing of this thesis, as well as Dee Jones, who valiantly did most of the typing.

I would also like to thank my supervisor, Professor T.W. Moody, particularly for his comments on refining the presentation of this study and for allowing me to consult the typescript of his forthcoming Michael Davitt and Irish revolution. And finally, I wish to express my gratitude to my parents, without whose support, financial and otherwise, this research would not have been undertaken or completed.

W.J.L.
Abbreviations

BG - Board of Guardians
BT - Board of Trade
cttee - committee
ED - enumeration district
HLP - Harris Library, Preston
HC - Head Constable
HO - Home Office
hh - household
Insp Gen - Inspector General (RIC)
IHS - Irish Historical Studies
Lancs - Lancashire
LC - Lancashire Constabulary
LRO - Lancashire Record Office
Lpool - Liverpool
LCL - Liverpool Central Library
M/R - Manchester
M/RCL - Manchester Central Library
MOH - Medical Officer of Health
OLIC - Oldham Local Interest Centre
PRO - Public Record Office (London)
RIC - Royal Irish Constabulary
St H - St Helens
SCL - Salford Central Library
SPO - State Paper Office (Dublin)
Supt - Superintendent
Trans Hist Soc Lancs-Ches - Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire
WF - Widnes factor
WMB - Widnes Municipal Building
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Introduction

A very significant part of the population of Lancashire during the mid-nineteenth century was Irish-born. Even though the Irish were a very conspicuous minority in urban Lancashire, they have attracted very little attention in the past. Much is said about the Lancashire Irish, but very little is known about them. Two studies during the last decade have made some useful contributions, J. A. Jackson's The Irish in Britain (1963) is a major sociological study and contains very little detailed information on the Irish in Lancashire, or the Irish who have lived in Britain. More recently, Kevin O'Connor has produced a book, also entitled The Irish in Britain (1979), but although O'Connor provides some useful observations on Irish immigration into contemporary Britain, he has little to say about the nineteenth century.

A much more useful work was published by Richard M. Ireland in 1982, The Irish in Britain: a personal account of Irish nationalism, politics during the latter part of the nineteenth century. But when considered within the context of the social history of the Irish in Lancashire, Ireland's recollections provide some interesting ideas for further investigation. The study of the social history of the Irish in Lancashire is a neglected territory.

Several works not deal directly with the Lancashire Irish. James K. Morris's The Irish in modern Scotland: 1745-1914 and Oscar Handlin's Boston's Immigrants (revised edition, 1970) are examples of detailed research into the social history of immigrant communities. These studies furnish a good foundation to start from, as well as suggesting the types of questions which ought to be addressed. Stephen Sheehan's introduction introduces several innovative elements into the study of urban social history in The Other Bostonians (1973), but his work appeared too late to have any significant influence on the course of my research.
Introduction

A very significant part of the population of Lancashire during the mid-nineteenth century was Irish-born. Even though the Irish were a very conspicuous minority in urban Lancashire, they have attracted very little serious study. Much is said about the Lancashire Irish, but very little is known about them. Two studies during the last decade touch peripherally on the Lancashire Irish during 1846-71. J.A. Jackson's *The Irish in Britain* (1963) is a cursory sociological survey and contains very little detailed information on the Irish in Lancashire, or the Irish anywhere else in Britain. More recently, Kevin O'Connor has produced a book, also entitled *The Irish in Britain* (1972). But although O'Connor provides some useful observations on Irish immigration into contemporary Britain, he has little to say about the nineteenth century. A much more useful work was published by a Liverpool Irishman in 1892. John Denvir's *The Irish in Britain* is mainly a personal account of Irish nationalist politics during the later nineteenth century. But when considered with his autobiography (1914), Denvir's recollections provide some interesting leads for further investigation. Altogether, the social history of the Irish in Lancashire is largely unexplored territory.

Several works which do not deal directly with the Lancashire Irish have influenced my approach to the subject. J.E. Handley's *The Irish in modern Scotland* (1947) and Oscar Handlin's *Boston's immigrants* (revised edition, 1970) are examples of detailed research into the social history of immigrant communities. These studies furnish a good foundation to start from, as well as suggesting the types of questions which ought to be addressed. Stephen Thernstrom introduces several innovative elements into the study of urban social history in *The other Bostonians* (1973), but his work appeared too late to have any significant influence on the course of my research.
My approach to the Lancashire Irish is topical, and since the immigrants were seldom found outside of urban areas, it is based on a detailed examination of seven sample towns. Liverpool, Manchester-Salford, Oldham, Preston, St Helens and Widnes were chosen because of their varying population densities, industrial complexions and geographical locations. As we shall see in chapter 3, these seven towns contained more than 65% of all the Irish-born residents of Lancashire. So a close study of these towns will give us a good picture of Irish life throughout urban Lancashire. Seasonal agricultural labourers from Ireland are not included in this study because they usually did not settle in Lancashire.

The story of the Lancashire Irish is divided into four main sections. The first considers the social background of the Lancashire Irish, including general conditions in Ireland and Lancashire, as well as living conditions and the occupational position of the Irish during 1846-71. Part II turns to social problems generated in urban Lancashire by Irish immigration, in particular, poverty, health and crime. The next section encompasses community life among the Irish and takes in their relationship with the Catholic church, educational opportunities for children of Irish families, their social orientation and their relations with their English neighbours. The final chapters deal with political activity among the Lancashire Irish, which, during 1846-71, concerns two insurgent, nationalist movements, the Irish Confederates and the Irish Republican Brotherhood. All of these themes were components of the experience of Irish life in urban Lancashire.

The chronological endpoints of this study, 1846 and 1871, were chosen principally to encompass the precipitate emigrations from Ireland during the latter 1840s and to take advantage of available census enumerators' notebooks, which are only made public one hundred years after they are current.
I have drawn on a number of local, primary sources to fit the immigrant Irish into the Lancashire scene. Census enumerators' books have been employed extensively, as well as publications produced by municipal authorities and a great deal of manuscript material. Another valuable source has been the local press. Of course, too much reliance on newspaper reports has its disadvantages and press accounts are resorted to only when other sources do not exist, or when they are particularly appropriate as illustrative material. But press commentary is used much less sparingly because mid-nineteenth-century newspapers are one of the best sources for reflecting general moods in the various towns. Local newspapers give us an opportunity to see mid-Victorian Lancashire, and, in particular, the immigrant Irish, through the eyes of contemporaries, which is an important dimension of social history.

There are several subtopics of this study which are not discussed or are only partially developed. Some of these require major research projects, which are beyond the range of a postgraduate's income. Others, entailing much less work, cannot be explored because sources are not available or viable research techniques have yet to be devised. One of these topics involves the existence, or non-existence, of homogeneous Irish residential areas in Lancashire's towns. Census enumerators' books are a great help in this regard, but a method of approach, involving much more precise definitions than are presently in use, and an effective sampling technique must be worked out. Also, the method by which the population samples in chapter 3 were obtained, while providing enough data to reduce the margin of error to insignificance, is statistically amateurish. But these are two deficiencies I hope to remedy as soon as time allows.

An important way of assessing to what degree a minority is assimilated by the larger community is through marriage patterns. But there are several formidable obstacles to act-
ually accomplishing such a study. Principally, a great deal of detailed biographical material would have to be compiled for some hundreds of persons. For example, it would not be enough to look at a census book and see that an Irish-born man was married to an English-born woman. She may have been the daughter of an Irishman, and, therefore, the match would indicate marriage within the Irish community, rather than assimilation into the English community via matrimony. In short, the non-Irish-born members of the Irish community make this question one which is very difficult to approach, because unless they can be accurately accounted for, any study of marriage patterns will be handicapped by very misleading results. If pertinent personal information can be obtained without too much difficulty, over several generations, for large numbers of persons, such a project would have a good chance of success. But, once again, this is a subject I hope to tackle during future research.

Chapter 11, which discusses the Irish Confederate movement in Lancashire during 1848, suffers from historical impressionism, which is the result of almost total dependence on newspaper reports for primary material. The press reports help to outline a general picture, but many important details remain obscure. Police files and seized evidence would add a great deal of important data to this study, but both the Manchester-Salford and Liverpool-Bootle police authorities claim that no records from that period have survived. Since other police archives for the 1850s and 1860s do survive, it is hard to believe that there is nothing for 1848. Whatever was not purposefully disposed of has probably been misplaced in the recesses of large police stations, and I will continue to press my enquiries to gain access to them. Also, a careful search at the Public Record Office, London, may reveal Home Office files relating to the state of urban Lancashire during 1848. For the time being, chapter 11 should be regarded as a first instalment, the groundwork for a more comprehensive study.
Despite these few restrictions, a large amount of information is available for a study of the Lancashire Irish. Indeed, there is at times so much useful data available in the many interesting local sources that it may seem there is a surfeit of supporting information. Besides fully developing the theme under consideration, this extensive information helps to highlight local variations. The result is that a very detailed picture of Irish immigrant life in mid-nineteenth-century Lancashire can be reproduced. And the picture that emerges mirrors the great diversity and dissonance of urban-industrial existence.
The motivations behind emigration from Ireland are central to any understanding of the social history of the Lancashire Irish community. Socio-economic conditions in Ireland during 1846-71 can be reviewed concisely, but this certainly does not imply that the state of Ireland is an unimportant part of the story of the Lancashire Irish. The changes which took place in Irish society during the mid-nineteenth-century continued to affect the Lancashire Irish because one of the principal causes of these changes was emigration, which sent new Irish immigrants to the Northwest of England throughout 1846-71.

Ireland in the 1840s was beset by many extreme problems. During 1780-1845 Ireland experienced a rapid population increase. There was very little industry in the country and emigration had not yet become a popular solution to scarcity of agricultural employment. The pressure on the available arable land became intense by 1845. "Without industrialisation, a population increase as large as Ireland then experienced can only be borne by recourse to more and more intensive forms of agriculture". The support of a huge rural population was made possibly by the expansion of potato-growing.

The growing of potatoes is one of the most labour-intensive forms of agriculture known to man, and potatoes made the population increase possible, as the population increase made potato-growing necessary.

2. Ibid., p.91.
But the potato crop sometimes failed, as it did six times during 1815-45, which left thousands of families in great difficulties.  

Pressure of population on land and resources subjected the Irish to 'sufferings greater,... than the people of any other country in Europe have to sustain', and the system of land holding and leasing which prevailed during the first half of the nineteenth century made the situation worse. One element of this general land problem was the middleman system, by which a landlord leased his land to a third party who in turn sublet the land to tenant farmers. Landowners were ready to exchange an extremely uncertain income from a large number of poor and troublesome occupying tenants for a more secure return from a small number of co-operative and solvent middlemen.  

Increased population and a shift to tillage farming during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries led to intense subdivision of farms. Not only were middlemen subletting land, but farmers who were leasing land also subdivided their holdings among their children and other tenants. Subdivision was encouraged by the fact that potato cultivation required much less space than other crops that tenant farmers might raise to support their families. Subdivision of land reached its 'final stage' in the small plots of potato ground which farm labourers received instead of wages. So population continued to grow and the plots of ground on which families depended for subsistence became smaller, which left Ireland very vulnerable to disaster.

4. Report from Her Majesty's Commission of Inquiry into the state of the law and practice in respect to the occupation of land in Ireland /the Devon Commission/, p.12, H.C., 1845 (605), xix, 12  
5. Donnelly, op. cit., pp 5-6  
6. Ibid., p. 11
Not every landowner was content to allow this chaotic system to continue. The small, hopelessly uneconomic holdings were cultivated in a very primitive fashion, and generally land was not improved to enhance production and living standards. Fencing, drainage, fertilising and road-making were all neglected. The obstacles to such improvements were the middlemen, who rarely encouraged improvement of land, and the myriad of sub-tenants who did not have the capital for such ventures. Landowners were falling increasingly into financial difficulties during the 1830s and 1840s and they began to realise that middlemen and extreme subdivision of land were preventing the realisation of the full rental value of their land.\(^7\) Many landowners had put large tracts of their holdings into tillage to take advantage of high prices during the early nineteenth century, but it was becoming clear that greater profits were possible by turning land over to grazing. But middlemen and sub-lessees were totally inconsistent with grazing. The small farms were needed for consolidation into pastures, but very few of the tenant farmers or agricultural labourers, who held only a small plot for potato ground, if they held land at all, were needed on the larger farms. With no available land to move them to, and no industrial sector to absorb them, where were the tenant farmers to go? Sending tenant farmers and labourers to reclaim bog or mountain land or using them as hired labour on consolidated and improved estates did not prove practicable on a wide scale.\(^8\) Another alternative was for the landowner to offer financial assistance to help redundant tenants to emigrate to America, but this was very costly and few landlords had the resources to carry out assisted emigrations of significant numbers of people.\(^9\) 'By far the cheapest alternative open to landowners dedicated to consolidation was that of eviction.'\(^10\)

\(^7\) Ibid., pp 18-9
\(^8\) Ibid., p. 24
\(^9\) Ibid., p. 25
\(^10\) Ibid., p. 25
Evictions were as unpopular among landowners as among tenants because the ejected parties, and other tenants who feared similar dispossession, often retaliated violently against the landlord. But local opposition to land clearances and consolidation of holdings could be overcome if, for example, the landlord kept the land in his own hands until indignation diminished. Tenants liable to eviction were usually persuaded to leave peacefully by a few small concessions. Their arrears might be cancelled or they might receive a small cash payment. Unwanted tenants were often allowed freedom from a half-year's rent and given permission to take away the timber and thatch from their houses if they agreed to go quietly. These land clearances were proceeding very gradually. But the movement towards consolidated holdings and a smaller population resident on the land received an unexpected fillip when the potato crop failed in 1845. Hundreds of thousands of Irish tenant farmers and labourers were now faced with starvation. The widespread distress convinced most landlords that the primitive society based on small, underproductive tillage farms and potato cultivation had to be drastically reformed. If the extensive misery they saw in Ireland was not enough to make up landowner's minds, the rising poor rates, which severely strained their financial resources, won them over to rationalisation of their holdings. During 1846-52 thousands of families were forced from their homes. The departure of tenants was aided by the 'Gregory clause' of the parliamentary relief act of 1847, which stated that no person was eligible for poor relief, in the workhouse or outside it, who held more than a quarter-acre of land. 1849-50 were the peak years for ejectments, but they continued at a high level until the mid-1850s as consolidation for grazing continued. The encumbered estates act of 1849, which set up special machinery to help indebted landowners to sell off land, aided land clearance as the new landowners ejected redundant tenants in an effort to ensure that the land would be profitably employed.
The dispossessed and those who simply gave up their holdings in despair were largely unassimilable elsewhere in Ireland. They were forced to emigrate to America or to Britain. The disease, starvation and emigration resulting from the potato blight and the land clearances of the later 1840s caused in Ireland 'the most drastic population losses known to western society'.¹² In five years the population of Ireland declined by nearly 20%. Up to 1845 emigration had been the last resort for the poor Irish tenant farmer or agricultural labourer. But more and more people were choosing that alternative as a means of escaping hardship and poverty in Ireland. It has been said that poor people from agricultural backgrounds do not emigrate 'except under the spur of extreme necessity'. 'They do not migrate whenever it is to their economic interest, but only when they must.'¹³ The catalyst of the famine years relaxed remaining restraints which inhibited emigration. Hundreds of thousands of people made their way to the ports. Even though the immediate demographic effect of this mass-flight was very great, its psychological legacy may have been more profound. The traditional resistance to emigration, already.... weakening before the famine, had been still further broken down, and leaving the old country now came to be regarded as the most practical, if still unpalatable, alternative to dumb acquiescence in extreme poverty and insecurity at home.¹⁴

The principal group forced to leave their homes and to emigrate during the late 1840s and early 1850s 'belonged principally to the lower classes - among whom famine and disease, in all such calamitous visitations, ever make the greatest ravages'.¹⁵ The regions most affected by emigration during

¹² Solow, op. cit., p. 92
¹⁴ F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland since the famine (London 1973), p.44
¹⁵ Census of Ireland, 1851; Part IV: General Report, p. 16 H.C., 1856 (2134), xxxi, 16
1846-71, and by agrarian problems in general, were the provinces of Munster and Connaught. In 1841 Munster was the most populous province, with 2.4 million persons. The total in 1871 was only 1.4 million, a decrease of 42%. Connaught was believed to have 1.4 million inhabitants in 1841, but in 1871 this figure fell 39% to 850,000.

People continued to emigrate from Ireland after the mass exodus of 1846-55 in somewhat smaller numbers. But, during 1850-71, the country they left behind them was very different from that of 1845. The smaller population took a great deal of pressure off the available land. 'Where the population density was moderate and farms were of moderate size, the chances of a favourable economic adjustment were greatest.'

The picture of an Irish peasantry being rack-rented and kept in constant anxiety by the threat of eviction after the famine is exaggerated and very misleading. Indeed, Ireland was becoming increasingly prosperous during the several decades after the famine crisis. The value of agricultural production, particularly livestock, rose steadily after 1850 and the 'share of agricultural output enjoyed by the tenants increased dramatically during this period'. During the post famine years rent increases of 40% 'would have allowed landlords and tenants to share equally in increases of agricultural output'. But in fact rents only increases, on average, 12-20%.

The pattern of rent increases on Irish estates was not elastic and rents did not move up and down regularly as the value

18. Ibid., p. 48
of agricultural output fluctuated. Rent increases were, on
the whole, sporadic, occurred only once in twenty or thirty
years, and after the increase they remained stable for long
periods. 20

The landlords who are so often depicted as rapacious
oppressors of Irish farmers, squeezing every possible penny's
worth of rent from their tenants, in fact 'unambitiously pre-
ferred steady incomes, undiminished by arrears, to incomes
inflated by rent increases'. 21 Even though tenants were not
paying all they might have been paying, rents still caused
problems, mainly because the rent burden was unevenly dist-
ributed among tenants and tenant's incomes were sensitive to
changes in total agricultural output, of which rent was a
large proportion. 22 The renting system which was 'riddled
with inconsistencies', caused friction because tenants were
sensitive to any apparent threat to their new-found prosper-
ity. 23 'Prosperity and fear of dispossession are always bed-
fellows,' 24 This new type of insecurity illustrates that the
Ireland of 1850-71 had changed a great deal since 1845, when
subsistence had been the principal worry.

Evictions also became a much smaller problem after the
1850s. 25 But the large-scale evictions of the famine period
strained landlord and tenant relations throughout the period
1849-80 because 'the savagery and ruthlessness which caused
these clearances remained a living memory in Ireland'. 26
The threat of ejectment was an important technique in estate
management. 'An eviction process was a landlord's first step
in recovering overdue rent; it was designed for this purpose

20. Vaughan, op. cit., p. 48
21. Ibid., p. 11
22. Ibid., p. 61
23. Ibid., p. 61
24. Ibid., p. 62
25. Solow, op. cit., pp 155, 170
and not for the purpose of clearing away tenants. Threats of evictions were used to solve such estate problems as rent arrears, the removal of insolvent tenants, the enforcement of rent increases, the consolidation of holdings, disputes between tenants and bad farming by tenants. When the number of ejectments increased during the post-famine decades, the increase coincided with falls in the value of agricultural produce and the consequent rise in the amount of rent arrears. Since an eviction notice was more of a threat and means of controlling tenants, most tenant farmers in Ireland during 1850-71 could consider themselves secure in their holdings and their prosperity.

But there were surprisingly few advancements or innovations in Irish agriculture to increase production. The old ways of farming had become more profitable.

The value of agricultural production increased dramatically between the early 1850s and the mid-1870s, but the volume of output did not increase .... Irish farmers increased their incomes by responding to the market and not by producing more.

The principal handicap to greater productivity appears to have been poor methods of cultivation. It seemed Irish farmers were very tolerant of weeds. It is said that 'they had a lurking respect for these genuine children of the soil'. A certain complacence in the new prosperity was also a reason for agricultural stagnation. 'Since they were doing so well, it is unlikely that farmers felt the need to improve their incomes by investing in fancy farming.' Another reason for unadventurous agriculture was hesitant investment in the land by landlords or tenants. Tenants worried about compensation

27. Solow, op. cit., p.172
28. Vaughan, op. cit., p.172
29. Ibid., p.156
30. Ibid., pp 314-5
31. Ibid., p.316
32. Ibid., p.318
for improvements that they carried out because until 1870 the tenant right custom, which guaranteed payment for a tenants' interest in the land if he left the holding, was regularly practiced only in Ulster. But since rents were stable and the danger of eviction remote, tenants' fears of losing the value of their investments were largely unfounded. The large number of small holdings which still existed in post-famine Ireland and the nature of Irish agriculture discouraged landlords from making large capital outlays, but there was piecemeal, erratic investment which had some limited benefit. It has been said that a consequence of the Land Act of 1870, designed primarily to protect the tenants' investments, was the virtual cutting off of landlord investment in Irish agriculture. Landlord investment did not cease in 1870, but it did decrease from an unimpressive level. So even though Ireland was a more prosperous country, generally, in 1871, lack of agricultural innovation and the continued absence of industry still meant Ireland was a backward society. This backwardness was most visible in the west of Ireland, where a great deal of hardship continued to exist.

Ireland's prosperity after 1850 was attributable to a more rational distribution of land. But that distribution was only possible because of dramatic decreases in population through emigration. Emigration was continuing during 1850-71, but its intensity and character was not the same as the famine exodus. The land clearances of improving landowners and those resulting from sales of land in the Encumbered Estates Court,

33. Solow, op. cit., p. 36
34. Vaughan, op. cit., p. 121; Solow, op. cit., p. 84
35. Vaughan, op. cit., pp 117-8
36. Solow, op. cit., p. 86
37. Cormac Ó Gráda, 'The investment behaviour of Irish landlords 1850-75', typescript to be published in Agricultural History, p.18
as well as the physical depredations of the famine, had forced thousands of whole families to emigrate. When the pressure on land eased, so too did emigration. Also, families less often found it necessary to leave the country as entire units. But still there was emigration of younger sons and daughters of farmers, who could no longer count on a plot of potato ground to subsist on. Despite a higher level of prosperity, there was still a considerable number of Irish who could not be absorbed by the economy. Before 1845 they would have probably remained in Ireland in an impoverished state. In the post-famine period they left the country. Emigration was a safety-valve to ensure that population pressure on the land would not build up to the point where it jeopardised agricultural prosperity. The main premise for Irish prosperity, in the absence of industrialisation or improved agricultural methods, was emigration of excess population.

The alternatives for the prospective emigrant were America, Australia or Britain. Travel to America or Australia required more financial resources than many Irish people could hope to accumulate. Many travelled to Britain, simply because they did not have the money to go anywhere else. Those who were not particularly enthusiastic about permanent settlement in Britain could always console themselves with the hope and the ambition of saving enough money to re-emigrate to America or Australia. Some had friends or family already in British towns and could count on a roof until settling in. But the main attraction of Britain for the Irish seems simply to have been that it was there! Anywhere seemed preferable to staying where they were; and the glimmer of hope they perceived east of the Irish Sea contrasted decisively with the grimness of Ireland.

There were observers who tried to discourage the Irish from moving to urban Britain. A priest, Stephen Byrne, said the 'secret of success or failure' for the Irish emigrant was
to stay with farming because he knew it best, even though he
was not terribly successful at it. He recommended that the
Irish avoid cities, which meant avoiding Britain altogether,
where there was no place for them in agriculture. Abandon-
ing agriculture 'is, in most cases, the certain road to pov-
erty and dependence'. 38 And another man, who was very inter-
ested in Irish emigration, warned: 'Place your Irish labourer
or small farmer on the land and away from the great cities and
his success is assured.' 39 But hundreds of thousands of Irish-
men preferred the risk of 'poverty and dependence' in Britain,
where they saw at least some opportunity, to 'poverty and
dependence' in Ireland. The difference between the more cel-
brated and closely studied Irish emigrants who managed, by
their own resources or, less often, by assisted emigration,
to cross the Atlantic and the numerous body who went to
Britain is illustrated in an article by A.M. Sullivan, entit-
led 'An Irish colony in England'.

The class of emigrants, however, who have made England their
abiding place, differ widely from those who, having a few
pounds to spare, fly the land from want of tenant laws to
secure the fruits of their industry - these have been, com-
paratively speaking, comfortable, and are intelligent and in
some degree educated, and emigrate, in some measure, from
choice. The former .... are for the most part, those who at
home, were most wretched, and who emigrate from necessity;
poor people who, when the crowbar had levelled the sheeling,
had no home but the ditch side or the workhouse.

Sullivan expressed fears for emigrants in Britain.

Imagine such a people thrown suddenly amongst an English pop-
ulation .... The Irish peasant, to whom the advantages and the
vices of English civilisation are alike unknown, and the
Englishman, skilled in handicraft and rancid with the immor-
ality which abounds amongst the mining and manufacturing
classes in England. In their eyes, the Irishman's lack of

38. Stephen Byrne, Irish emigration to the United States....
Facts and reflections especially addressed to Irish people
intending to emigrate from their native land; and to those
living in the large cities of Great Britain and the United
States (New York, 1873), p.33

39. J.H. Tuke, 'Emigration from Ireland' in Contemporary Rev-
mechanical skill, and his utter ignorance of civilised wickedness are equally heinous, and equally brand him as inferior. To complete the antagonism, the Irishman's language is to them a foreign tongue, his religion is, in their eyes a jibe and a reproach. Everything tends to place him in the position of the bondsman and the serf. 40

Thousands of Irishmen found their way to Lancashire during 1846-71. What kind of place was Lancashire? And how did the Lancashire Irish fare?

40. The Nation, 16 Feb 1856
Chapter 2

Lancashire, 1846-71

Even though the Irish settled in all Lancashire's urban centres during the nineteenth century, this study considers their lives in seven sample towns throughout the county. An Irish immigrant's first experience of Lancashire was the port of Liverpool, the largest urban area in the northwest of England. During 1841-51 the population of the borough of Liverpool grew by almost 25%, and stood at 375,955 persons at the end of the decade. This steady increase continued during the next twenty years, and there were 443,938 persons in the borough in 1861 and 493,405 in 1871. Liverpool was the principal import and export centre for the northern cotton-textile industry, and, unlike southeast Lancashire, the most influential people of local society were merchants, rather than manufacturers - the Liverpool 'gentlemen' instead of the Manchester 'men'. A good reason for the small influence of industrialists was that even though Liverpool was a rapidly growing town during the nineteenth century, this growth was not a response to, nor did it bring with it, a growth of cotton-textile or heavier industries in the town. Most of the industries there were 'directly dependent on the port or - as in the very important case of the building industry - on the actual physical growth of the town itself'.

1. 'Service industry (trade, commerce, transport, etc) was the dominant element in the occupational structure'. Large numbers of unskilled labourers were needed to unload and load ships, move the freight from dockside to warehouse, and then to its ultimate destination. 2 There were other industries related to shipping and commerce, such as the construction of steam engines, the manufacture of chemicals for distilling,

1. B.D. White, A history of the corporation of Liverpool, 1835-1914 (Liverpool, 1951), p.3
the making of cables, sugar refining, and ship repairs. But no single one of these industries, or all of them considered together, dominated the Liverpool occupational scene in the same way that cotton did in Preston or alkali did in Widnes. Liverpool was a commercial and service centre based on its docks, warehouses and abundant unskilled labour. And this concentration of untrained, casual labour was a primary source of Liverpool's formidable social maladies.

Lancashire was, of course, best known for its extensive cotton industry. And the hub of that industry was Manchester. There were 242,983 people in the town in 1841, but this figure increased to 303,382 in 1851. The population within the municipal limits continued to expand to 338,722 in 1861 and 351,189 in 1871. Besides its numerous factories, Manchester, even during the 1830s, became famous for its extensive warehouses, which represented to some 'the essentials of Manchester's trade, the very reason for her existence'. The attendant engineering and transport industries, which served the mills and warehouses, not only for Manchester, but for the whole of southeast Lancashire, were also important to Manchester's trade. Its central position in northern industry also made Manchester an important financial and banking city. Large numbers of unskilled labourers were needed to tend the textile machinery, to handle raw cotton and finished cloth in the warehouses, to drive wagons and pull barrows, and to work in the construction trades.

The contiguous urban municipality of Salford lies on the west bank of a bend in the river Irwell, which forms its boundary with Manchester. The borough grew from 53,200 persons in 1841 to 63,850 in 1851. By 1861 the population was 102,449, and in 1871 it was 124,801. Even though there was a cotton industry, with accompanying engineering and transport trades,
in Salford, the town served mainly as a residential dormitory for workers in Manchester's factories, warehouses and workshops. Despite the division of municipal authority along the Irwell, Manchester-Salford must be considered a singly urban-industrial complex.

At the foot of the Pennines, to the northeast of Manchester-Salford, is the town of Oldham. Oldham shared in the general increase of population in the industrial north during 1841-71. During 1841-51 the population increased from 42,595 to 52,820. By 1861 this figure went up to 72,333, and in 1871 it was 82,629. Before 1850 Oldham was well known for the manufacture of hats and a well-established woollen trade. But by the 1840s these industries were falling behind the growth of the cotton mills. The expansion of industrialisation in southeast Lancashire encouraged the exploitation of coal deposits in the immediate neighbourhood of Oldham, and the number of persons in the town employed in and around the pits rose.  

Preston is about thirty miles north of both Liverpool and Manchester, on the river Ribble, and was the northern limit of significant Irish immigration into urban Lancashire during 1846-71. A town of great antiquity, Preston had almost 51,000 inhabitants in 1841 and 69,542 in 1851. The increase was moderate through 1861, when there were 82,985 people living in the borough, and by 1871 there were 85,427. Preston's industrial life was dominated by the cotton mills and their auxiliary trades. But the town also supported several iron and brass foundries, breweries and engineering works. And there were port facilities on the Ribble. Though Preston's industries were among the least expansive in Lancashire during the mid-nineteenth century, the town still offered opportunity for unskilled labour during 1846-71.

5. H. Bateson, A centenary history of Oldham (Oldham, 1949), pp 84-9
6. Farrer and Brownhill, op. cit., vii, 92
About a dozen miles to the east of Liverpool was the growing industrial centre at St Helens. The census of 1841 showed 17,849 persons in the district. But the area urbanised steadily from that point, and the population went up to 25,000, 28,000 and 45,000 in the three succeeding census years. The industrial character of St Helens was very composite. During the eighteenth century the availability of coal in the neighbourhood caused the construction of the Sankey Canal to transport it, connecting St Helens with the Mersey at Widnes. Easy access to coal and canal facilities (later supplemented by and then wholly replaced by a railway) brought the copper-smelting, brewing and glass-making industries to the town.

In the 1840s the alkali industry arrived, with its attendant, and pungent, problems. The growth of the town's industries, all requiring a great deal of fuel, led to a great expansion in coal production in the nearby pits. The period 1846-71 was one of growth and 'almost continuous prosperity' in St Helens. 7

Widnes in 1851 was still very much a rural community on the Mersey's Runcorn Gap, populated by only 3,200 people. Industry was virtually non-existent at Widnes. But in 1847 John Hutchinson arrived from St Helens to build the first alkali factory in the area, and the expansion of the industry after that date brought many immigrants to man it. The population doubled to 6,900 during 1851-61 and then more than doubled again in the next decade to 14,359. Widnes seemed the ideal place to situate a trade such as alkali-making. There was plenty of land available for factories, the Mersey, the Sankey Canal and the railways were convenient, and the westerly wind would blow chemical fumes over the surrounding marshes, minimising the possibility of claims for damages to crops and gardens. 8 By 1873 there were twenty chemical fact-

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ories at Widnes, as well as copper and iron works and a soap-making factory. Despite a trade slump during 1867-8, the town's industry continued to expand, as did its demand for labour. In the space of two decades a rural, riverside village was transformed into an important industrial complex.

This brief introduction to the seven towns included in this study shows the diversity of the growing industries in Liverpool, Manchester-Salford, Oldham, Preston, St Helens and Widnes. More unskilled labour was required than the indigenous birth rate could supply and there was plentiful employment opportunity for immigrants from small towns and rural areas of the northwest and from all over the United Kingdom, including Ireland. But there was another side to this economic and demographic growth. The feature of urban Lancashire which struck observers as strongly as did its factories was the state of the towns where they were located.

If the Irish who arrived every morning on Liverpool's docks during the mid-1840s were in a 'wretched' state, the quality of life in urban Lancashire was equally bad. Indeed, the ragged immigrants who, if they had little else in Ireland, were at least accustomed to fresh air and open space, might have asked themselves what it was in Lancashire they were trading their misery in Ireland for. The Liverpool of 1846 was described by its future Medical Officer of Health (MOH) as the 'most unhealthy town in England'. 9 Mortality, due to the crowded, insanitary environment of urban Lancashire, was very high, especially among infants, but in Liverpool 'the sources of the higher mortality of towns generally ... reach their maximum degree of intensity'. 10 All of Lancashire's urban districts were not Liverpools, but none could be called

9. First report on the state of large towns and populous districts, p.13, H.C., 1844 (572), xvii, 517
10. Ibid., p.14 /518/
ideal for human habitation. Particularly in the copious reports of parliamentary commissions investigating the state of Britain's large towns (1844-5), it is apparent that a Lancashire town was judged not by the degree of healthfulness or cleanliness prevailing, but by the greater or lesser degree of filth in which the working class lived.

A principal concern of all health observers was drainage. In towns such as Liverpool, Manchester and Preston, perhaps only certain main thoroughfares, or the streets of the wealthier residents, were properly sewered, while the densely populated working-class areas were only partially drained or ignored altogether. But many other problems contributed to the evils of town life. Few houses in working-class districts were built with interior, private toilet facilities. 'In one district of Manchester there were found to be only thirty-three necessaries for 7,095 persons, or one to 215 residents'.

It appears that throughout the courts of Liverpool, narrow passages open only at one end, with houses on both sides, the proportion of privies was generally about two to eighty persons. Privies were placed in the courts for the use of their inhabitants, but they were often resorted to by those living in houses facing the streets. Insufficient sewerage and connecting drains led to the formation of open cesspools, which received the discharges of the privies, as well as night-soil, ashes or trash from the neighbouring houses. A further impediment to sanitation is illustrated by Liverpool's health act of 1842, which contained a clause prohibiting the connection of water closets of privies to the public drains. The infrequency of the cleaning of the privies added to their all but unuseable state. Sometimes middens were kept as a source of additional income because they could be sold to farmers as manure, but this did not make the presence of these heaps any healthier. When nightmen did come to clean the cesspools they

11. Second report on the state of large towns, ..., p. 39, H.C., 1845 (602), xviii, 45
often carelessly damaged the privies. Friedrich Engels and Dr Lyon Playfair both noticed the lack of privacy of many of the privies due to the absence of doors. But Playfair was told that if doors were installed they would be 'broken up for firewood'.

Road sweeping and scavenging were usually restricted to principal thoroughfares, when they were attended to at all, and courts and alleys were excluded because they were considered private property and not the responsibility of public authorities. The inhabitants of the courts and alleys were expected to police their own trash and refuse, but this was seldom done.

A Liverpool builder named Holme had this to say in 1845:

I never hail anything with greater delight than I do a violent tempest, or a terrific thunderstorm, accompanied by heavy rains; for these are the only scavengers that thousands have had to cleanse away the impurities and the filth in which they live; or rather exist.

So in the narrow streets, alleys and courts of Lancashire's working-class areas there were the accumulated results of neglect and indifference. Stagnant pools, filled with refuse of every imaginable description, filthy, overflowing privies and heaps of decomposing animal and vegetable remains fouled the air with an awful stench, which was only a relatively harmless indication of the real dangers to health and property present in such a situation. And the neighbourhoods where these conditions were most in evidence were the most densely populated.

Some of Lancashire's larger towns had comparatively few alleyways and courts. And in just about all towns, with the important exception of Liverpool, most working-class families were able to inhabit separate cottages of from two to four rooms on two storeys. But all large towns had their poorer districts, characterised by disgusting courts, dank cellardwellings and overcrowding.

12. Ibid., p. 12, H.C., 1845 (610), xclii, 314
13. Ibid., p. 81 (602), 87
Most of the courts were very narrow and closed at both ends, a small, covered entrance or archway usually being its only opening to the street. Very few were open at even one end, and still fewer at both ends to admit a through draught of air. The piles of refuse almost floating on stagnant puddles, producing obnoxious odours and breeding disease, went uncleansed even by a breath of fresh air, which only made the miserable state of the courts and their inhabitants worse. A greater problem still were the inhabited cellars. 'The cellar habitations in Lancashire are generally dismal abodes, badly lighted, and worse ventilated. Many of them were originally designed for weaving shops, and were selected for this purpose on account of their dampness.'\textsuperscript{14} The combined figures of the borough surveyors at Liverpool estimated that over 92,000 persons lived in cellars facing the street, courts and court cellars, and only 24,000 of these people lived in street cellars.\textsuperscript{15} In other words, the surveyors believed there were over 68,000 people living in Liverpool's courts, perhaps 15-20,000 of these in cellars. Court cellars were the worst because the saturated earth in the narrow, ill-paved courtyards absorbed rainwater and liquid refuse which seeped out of ill-constructed cesspools, much of which found its way into the cellars by running in through doorways and windows or leaking right through the walls. Some cellars had back apartments used for sleeping, which were completely unventilated, while the front room, some at a depth of eight feet, often had only a doorway and sometimes a window to admit the foul air from the court. Playfair estimated in 1845 that besides Liverpool's 40,000 cellar-dwellers, there were 18,000 people in Manchester's 4,400 cellars and 2,500 in Preston's 600.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p.21 (610), 323
\textsuperscript{15} Report from the select ctee on buildings regulation and improvement of boroughs, p.134, H.C., 1842 (372), x, 302
\textsuperscript{16} Second report on the state of large towns, p.22 (610), 324
With the remarkable permeation of the external environment by dirt and moisture it might well be expected that the interiors of working-class houses were just as bad. Houses for the lower classes in Liverpool and Manchester were built, as a rule, back to back - buildings sharing a common back wall while at the same time sharing side walls. This practice prohibited a through draught necessary for proper ventilation and was universally condemned. The problem of ventilation was aggravated by the factory operatives who lived in the towns. Working daily in 65-85°F heat, and much higher temperatures in foundries, glass-works and chemical plants, made them very susceptible to chills caused by draughts, and they were accustomed to keeping windows shut and chimneys blocked up, which prevented proper ventilation. Sleeping rooms were especially foul because of the combined effects of overcrowding and lack of ventilation. When a family occupied a single house or cottage it was not uncommon to sublet one of the upper rooms, crowding the family into a single cubicle. Even families living in single rooms sometimes took in lodgers to supplement their incomes. In Preston, for example, it was found in the poorer working-class neighbourhoods that

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Persons Sleeping</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In one case 17 persons slept in the same bed.

The press of human beings was intensified by a substantial animal population, consisting mainly of pigs and dogs, but sometimes of cows and donkeys too. They augmented the amount of filth in the streets and courts and often lodged in their masters' houses, further fouling the dwellings. Pigsties were frequent sights in the dirty courts of Liverpool and Manchester, and Friedrich Engels reported seeing many stray pigs poking about the littered Manchester streets.

17. Ibid., p.24 (610), 326
Workers' houses were further polluted by corpses. In these dismal neighbourhoods death was very common. Funerals for the numerous deceased were usually held on Sundays to allow family and friends to attend without being absent from work. If a person died early in the week, he was generally buried the following Sunday. But if death occurred towards the end of the week, the funeral would be arranged for the Sunday next. So bodies were kept, usually unwashed (Edwin Chadwick reported that the Irish were the only ones among whom it was customary to wash corpses) and in very warm, humid rooms, for anywhere from six to ten days before burial. Chadwick gives this description of the situation.

With the upper classes, a corpse excites feelings of awe and respect; with the lower order, in these districts, it is often treated with as little ceremony as a carcase in a butcher's shop. Nothing can exceed their desire for an imposing funeral; nothing can exceed their efforts to obtain it; but the deceased's remains share none of the reverence which this anxiety for their becoming burial would seem to indicate. The inconsistency is entirely, or at least in great part, to be attributed to a single circumstance - that the body is never absent from their sight - eating, drinking or sleeping, it is still by their side; mixed up with all the ordinary functions of daily life, till it becomes as familiar to them as when it lived and moved in the family circle. From familiarity, it is a short step to desecration. The body, stretched out upon two chars, is pulled about by the children, made to serve as a resting-place for any article that is in the way, and it is not seldom the hiding place for the beer bottle or the gin if any visitor arrives inopportunely. 18

The retention of corpses inside workers' homes and the continued use of overcrowded cemeteries within heavily populated areas were both condemned by a select committee of the house of commons and by Chadwick (1842). Town graveyards of an acre or two were jammed with thousands of coffins, actually piled one upon another. Particularly in warm weather, the emanations from these places rose through the soil and polluted the

18. Edwin Chadwick, Report on the sanitary condition of the labouring population .... special inquiry into the practice of interment in towns, pp 45-6, H.C., 1843 (509), xii, 447-8
air. People in adjacent houses complained of never spending a healthy day since moving in near a graveyard. And persons in nearby cellars found the walls damp with the deadly fluid from the decaying bodies. This evil was only one more to be added to the collected sights and smells of environmental degeneration in Lancashire's towns in 1846.

Water was also a problem in working-class areas. Some houses were supplied, if intermittently, by pipes and taps, while many other households were compelled to use common taps in the street, or wells and springs. Water companies often supplied water only during certain hours on certain days, and people were forced to collect water in butts or cans which often became impure in the foul air of the houses and added to their dampness by any accidental spillage. Public wells and springs were often rendered unhealthy by the incomplete drainage which allowed stagnant, polluted water to seep down through the soil beneath the courts and streets. This lack of water aided the deterioration of personal hygiene among the working class.

The general habits of the poor with regard to cleanliness must not be compared to a high standard .... The present difficulty and the labour, after a hard day's work, of obtaining water, has a very great effect on their economy, their habits, and their health. The obstacles to the maintenance of domestic or personal cleanliness, which rapidly lower both the moral and physical condition of a whole population. 19

In 1845 Liverpool and Manchester were only supplied with water intermittently at low pressure, while Preston and Oldham had a 'natural system' of supply, which allowed the provision of water continuously, at high pressure, to houses where pipes were laid on. 20 Towns such as Liverpool and Manchester were distinguished for their filth, which was in part attributed to an insufficient and sporadic system of water supply. Lack of water at high pressure also prevented cleansing of drains and sewers, where they existed.

19. Second report on the state of large towns, p.46 (602), 52
20. Ibid., p.32 (610), 334
Manchester-Salford was plagued by very serious water pollution in the rivers and canals which flowed through and near them. These pestilential channels of stinking water caused disease in nearby houses. The smell of the rivers was accompanied by the coal smoke from stacks all over the area (and in all industrial towns), which Dickens's Mr Bounderby described as 'meat and drink .... the healthiest thing in the world in all respects, and particularly for the lungs'.

All these physical disabilities combined to make urban life in Lancashire unhealthy and greatly limited the lifespan of the workers. The average ages of death among the poorer classes were estimated at twenty years in Manchester and seventeen years in Liverpool. These low averages were due to very high rates of mortality among children below the age of five years, although this does not mean that older people were not harmed by the terrible conditions prevailing in urban Lancashire.

But there was one bright spot amid this gloomy scenery. Efforts were being made to transform town conditions, particularly in Liverpool and Manchester-Salford. Public health acts, backed by statutory compulsion, were coming into force in these towns. But by the time the first waves of Ireland's fugitives arrived in 1846 these efforts had done very little compared with the mighty task confronting Victorian society. In 1846 urban Lancashire was still squalid and unimproved. And new crowding in poorer neighbourhoods hampered ameliorative efforts, even setting them back. But the legislation was at least a start.

The physical state of urban Lancashire could not be transformed overnight, but it certainly did not remain static during 1846-71. Before looking at the changes and improvements which took place in Liverpool, Manchester-Salford, Oldham, Preston, St Helens and Widnes, the wider context in which progress was encouraged should be understood.
One of the principal reasons that Lancashire's towns were able to grow unplanned and degenerate to the deplorable level achieved by 1846 was that up until 1835 there were no effective local authorities to impose any sort of social regulation on the expanding urban districts. The old, self-appointed, self-perpetuating municipal corporations which existed in some towns (an urban area the size of Manchester was not incorporated until 1835) were either too powerless or too indifferent to take much interest in what shape the towns were taking or whether they were fit to live in. Only the corporation of Liverpool, the largest provincial population centre, showed any 'energy, dignity, integrity and public spirit'. But the limits of its effectiveness were demonstrated by the fact that Liverpool was still the 'most unhealthy town in England', despite the corporation's efforts. Where some authority over an urban district did exist there was usually a 'glaring maladjustment of jurisdictions and areas' among guardians of the poor, parish vestries, highway boards and corporations'. On the recommendation of a royal commission, a municipal corporations act came into effect in 1835, which all but did away with the old, oligarchical corporations.

In their stead, the whole body of adult male ratepayers of three years' standing, without distinction of politics, religion, or wealth, were in the last week of December 1835, freely electing responsible town councils, in whose hands, practically unrestrained, was placed the general government of the boroughs, the organisation of their police forces and street lighting, the management of their markets and harbours, the control of their corporate property, the authority to enact by-laws, and the power to levy a rate, unlimited in amount, on all the property occupiers.

This consolidating act provided the essential basis for effective local government in later decades.

23. Ibid., pp 748-9
Before 1846 specially empowered local authorities were instituted under local acts of parliament. During the century before 1835 a town could apply to parliament for permission to form a local improvement commission, to look after the paving and cleaning of streets, lighting and other regulations. Some of these commissions, such as Manchester's, were vigorous, but, altogether, their impact on urban life was slight because their vistas were severely limited and they rarely displayed real concern for guarding the public health. Their main concern seemed to be keeping principal thoroughfares passable, and they were often known as 'street commissioners' rather than as general town improvement bodies. Sewerage and draining were looked after by 'Commissioners of Sewers', who were brought into existence by an act of 1532. But urbanisation and industrialism all but negated their efforts by the 1830s and 1840s, and the new borough councils were applying for local acts to require builders to provide paving and draining on their sites, while the municipalities undertook extensive sewering projects in the streets.

The improvement commissioners never tried to get near the problem of planning streets. Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when towns were spreading out rapidly, there were no building regulations at all. Houses appeared randomly, generally disregarding the width of streets or access to air and light.

Every householder encroached on the thoroughfare by overhanging windows, swinging signs, doors opening outwards, cellar flaps habitually open, mounting blocks and flights of steps. 25

But the new town councils began enforcing local acts requiring minimum standards in the construction of new houses, as well as for habitation in existing houses. But even these

24. Webb, Statutory authorities, p.274
25. Ibid., p.236
improvements were the total responsibility of local bodies, who were in no way required to undertake such tasks, and there was no general standard to guide them when they did. This situation was remedied, and efforts to improve urban conditions revolutionised, by the public health act of 1848. Under this act towns could apply to be put under a local board of health, which would have nationally-approved, minimum guidelines for improvements. The local boards also became the surveyors of highways, bringing the supervision of the maintenance of proper paving, cleansing and sewering of the town's streets under the jurisdiction of a single office. Further acts were passed in the 1850s and 60s to expand the sphere of authority of local boards and borough councils for cleaning up and maintaining urban areas.

A person's life in Lancashire was also intimately influenced by his occupation. The type of job performed, the number of hours worked and the conditions in the place of work were all important. Mid-nineteenth century reformers were particularly concerned about the numerous women, adolescents and children who worked in factories. From 1833 it was illegal for any child less than nine years of age to work in a factory, and children between nine and thirteen years could work no more than eight hours in a day (see chapter 7). Young persons between thirteen and eighteen years of age and women could work no more than twelve hours in a day. Factory inspectors were appointed to enforce these regulations. In 1844 another act was passed which, despite considerable agitation for a ten hours' limit on factory hours for women and young people, limited work for the protected categories of operatives to twelve hours in a day, which had to be worked between 5.30 am and 8.30 pm. This act also provided regulations for fencing dangerous machinery and spinning shafts, and it prohibited the cleaning of machines while they were
in operation. To ensure enforcement, the factory inspectors' powers were broadened. Hours of work for women and young people were reduced to ten in a day in 1847, but many employers tried to evade the 1844 and 1847 acts by bringing in a 'relay system' to keep their mills in operation longer. To counter this an act of 1850 specified that protected operatives could only work in their ten hours during 6 am - 6 pm or 7 am - 7 pm, with 1½ hours allowed for meals, and that work on Saturdays should end at 2 pm. Even though men over eighteen years remained statutorily unprotected, they benefitted from the protection of women and children because it was hardly possible to run a mill with only the adult male hands in attendance, after the protected operatives went home.

The type of progress achieved during 1844-50 continued in 1853 when a 'normal day' was extended to children. The legal hours of work were reduced from eight to six and a half in a single day, or ten on three alternate days, and children could not work before 6 am or after 6 pm. During 1860-70 print, bleach, dye and finishing works were also brought under the factory acts. And in 1867 the definition of 'factory' was more broadly interpreted to include virtually all trades, even the small workshops and cottage industries, where 'excessive hours, insanitary conditions, overstrain and waste of life and power .... in their acutest form' existed.

Hours were still long, the work still tedious, and the factories were often oppressive to work in, but a quarter century of factory legislation did improve the Lancashire operative's condition, not only by shortening his hours, but by affording him protection from the worst forms of exploitation.

Legislation on the health and industrial fronts helped to improve the state of urban Lancashire during 1846-71. The improvement is not perceptible in mortality rates for the county as a whole until 1881.

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27. Annual reports of the registrar general of births, deaths and Marriages in England, 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881 (Library, Somerset House, London F21.5, 14, 24, 34, 44)
Table 1

Mortality in Lancashire, 1841-81

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>26 per 1,000</td>
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<td>1871</td>
<td>28 per 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>21.5 per 1,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

But a closer examination of changing conditions in Liverpool, Manchester-Salford, Oldham, Preston, St Helens and Widnes will be more revealing.

An Irishman who travelled to urban Lancashire in 1846, and still lived there in 1871, would notice that the environment was gradually improving, compared with the squalor and neglect of the 1840s. The change must be attributed to both a heightened awareness in middle-class circles of the need for local and national government action in maintaining a healthy atmosphere in urban areas, and to the much more vigorous efforts of local authorities to make large towns more habitable, which was a positive result of the new awareness. But there was still a long way to go in 1871 before Lancashire's towns would be suitably healthy places to live. The populations of already overcrowded urban districts continually increased during 1846-71, and the formidable challenges existing in the mid-40s did not remain at a constant level, but increased with the number of people and the age of the towns, making the job facing the revitalised local authorities larger. But a good deal of progress was made during the quarter-century 1846-71.

The centre of attention for the urban inquiries of the 1840s was Liverpool, which seemed to offer the best example of what was wrong with British towns. The Liverpool builder
Holmes pointed out to parliamentary investigators in 1845 the main areas where properly constituted authority was lacking to begin overcoming the town's staggering sanitary problems. The width of public thoroughfares was unregulated and chaotic; there was no minimum standard of construction; there was no regulation for the width and ventilation of courts and passages; there was inadequate provision of sewers and drains; the water supply was inadequate and impure; and there was no single authority to look after these problems and enforce regulations to alleviate them. This concise review of the basic problems facing any Lancashire town during the 1840s formed the core of Liverpool's local sanitary act of 1846, which also amended the provisions of the buildings regulation act of 1842 more strictly, setting out new minimum requirements for habitable cellars. But the borough council also assumed all the powers of the highway board, imposed paving and general sanitary rates, appointed a borough engineer and a medical officer of health (MOH), and obtained authority to lay pipes and provide water for the town. Armed with new powers, the health committee, the branch of the borough council given the responsibility for supervising sanitary improvements and enforcing the new regulations, did not look back after 1846. The borough appointed the United Kingdom's first MOH, Dr William Duncan, in 1847, and he immediately started a campaign to locate and close unhealthy cellar-dwellings. 5,000 cellars were closed for human occupancy and another 10,000 were registered, sometimes being cleaned by the health committee at the owner's expense. Powers over insanitary property, such as court and cellar dwellings, were considerably increased by an amending act of 1864. The local waterworks were purchased by the corporation in 1847 and new efforts were made to improve the volume, frequency and purity of the town's water supply.

28. B.D. White, History of Liverpool, p.38
29. Ibid., p.43
In 1854 the Health Committee noted the continued danger of overcrowded graveyards outside local churches and further burials within the borough were prohibited. During 1847-58 the committee supervised the construction of 146 miles of new sewers, and a provision in the 1846 act permitted the connecting of house drains to sewers, making possible the substitution of waterclosets for the numerous unhealthy privies and middens all over the town. And by 1860 the Health Committee adopted a general policy of refusing to approve plans for new buildings which did not contain waterclosets. The committee also took over the tasks of paving and cleansing the town's streets and collecting refuse, although the regular emptying of bins and ashpits did not begin until 1900. 30 The Liverpool authorities were helped in their efforts by the public health acts of 1848, 1858, 1872 and 1875, which provided for local health boards and gave guidelines and authority for constructive sanitary improvement, and by the consolidation of national agencies in the Local Government Board, 1871.

But even with all this activity, Liverpool left much to be desired. In 1848 the courts were still a tremendous problem.

Probably there is no contrivance by which the health of the town is so much depreciated as by the structural monstrosities called courts. A court, in the proper meaning of the term, is a yard belonging to a house or houses; the courts of Liverpool are passages not yards. If such things are to be allowed at all, they should be subject to the same regulations as streets, with this difference - that as they have in general only one open end, the area to be allowed for every inhabitant should be doubled. 31

The construction of courts was not prohibited until 1864, but by that time Liverpool had 3,073 courts, in which there were 17,825 houses and an estimated population of over 100,000. More than 1,000 courts remained in 1903, and the

30. Ibid., pp 53, 55
31. Liverpool Courier, 19 July 1848
last of them were not demolished until the 1960s. But despite continuing difficulties, such as the pestiferous courts, by 1860 there was found among the inhabitants of those courts 'a very strong public opinion in favour of cleanliness'. There were regulations in force to see that people kept the immediate vicinities of their homes, whether in courts or on streets, in a tolerable state of cleanliness. Inspectors were appointed to enforce these regulations, and they found the people very willing to fulfill the obligations. This 'improvement of Liverpool has been effected at scarcely any cost to the public beyond the wages of the inspectors...

In 1861 the MOH, Dr Duncan, assessed the progress made in the town since his appointment fourteen years before. Every house in Liverpool has a supply of water with the exception of court houses, many of which also have an independent supply, but with regard to which the rule is that a single tap in each court supplies all the houses in that court. You are probably aware that a few years ago the Town Council brought a new supply from a distance of more than thirty miles at a cost of about £1,500,000. This with three of the most productive wells formerly in use and still retained, yields about 14 millions gallons daily - about 30 gallons a head for every man, woman and child. It suffices for watering the street, flushing the sewers, washing the courts, etc., and supplying a large number of drinking fountains in the more densely peopled districts of the town.

With regard to drainage .... I believe I am near the truth in saying that since our sanitary act came into operation in 1847 about 180 miles of main sewers have been constructed and more than 40,000 houses have been drained into those sewers, in addition to which nearly every court in Liverpool has been drained - representing at least 12,000 houses more.

The inhabited houses at the late census were 66,000, and I estimate that the number of houses remaining undrained does not exceed one-fourth of the whole. The work is still going on at the rate of about 2,000 houses yearly in excess of the number of new houses erected.

33. Second report of the commission to inquire into the best mode of distributing the sewerage of towns, p.56, H.C., 1861 (2882), xxxiii, 518
34. Cited in W.M. Frazer, Duncan of Liverpool (London, 1947), pp 125-6
As Duncan himself emphasised, 'the work is still going on', and there was still plenty to be done. In 1868 there were many inhabited cellars, but the last of the inhabited court cellars were closed and all others were inspected to make sure that they complied with specifications set out in regulations of 1846, 1854 and 1864. Particularly in the poorer neighbourhoods, waterclosets were replacing privies to a 'very large extent' and unsatisfactory streets were continually being widened.35

An extensive inquiry was conducted into the state of Liverpool in 1870 by two doctors, E.A. Parkes and J.B. Sanderson. They found Liverpool 'well provided with sewers'.36 In the improved condition of the courts 'the work of the Corporation is seen at once'. Most courts were well-paved and drained, and many had stand-pipes for water supply. Galvanised rubbish bins were provided and were emptied by council scavengers. In some cases, walls and even whole buildings were pulled down for freer access of light and air. In every court Parkes and Sanderson visited the middens were gone, replaced by waterclosets.37 The water supply was fairly constant and they found it 'impossible' that people would not become more cleanly, since plentiful water was now 'brought to the very threshold, or into every house'.38 In fact, the reason water supply was not constant in 1870 was because the corporation found it difficult to keep up with consumption. During 1847-72 per capita water consumption increased by nearly 3½ times, while the population went up by about a quarter. This demand taxed Liverpool's water supply, but it was encouraging since it implied at least a marginally higher standard of personal

35. First report of the Royal Sanitary Commission, pp 122-4, H.C., 1868-9 (4218), xxxii, 422-4
37. Ibid., p.69
38. Ibid., p.71
hygiene. But there were still problems, most visible in the town's thousands of courts.

Besides the fact that 18,636 cellars were still inhabited in the borough, there was the strange circumstance that the town's streets 'contain the smallest proportion of houses'.

The space between the backs of houses of parallel streets is occupied by courts. In these courts, the houses are packed closely together with an ingenious economy of space which does credit to the builders, though Liverpool has little reason to be thankful for it.

The houses in the labyrinthine courts were usually of a one-room ground floor, a one-room second floor and attic variety. It was common for a family to occupy each of the three rooms above ground, and sometimes these individual rooms were sublet. Despite considerable advances in securing effective draining.

The house drains in many of the courts open into the cellars, and, as is well known, the traps are often in such bad condition from the improper treatment they receive from the inhabitants, that practically the house and sewer are in direct communication.

Other refuse was thrown into the cellars as well, contributing to an already considerable stench.

The people and the rooms they lived in were very dirty. 'How human beings could tolerate such a state of things would be incredible, if we did not know the deadening influence of custom.' Altogether, these influences made a Liverpool court house a very odorous place.

The causes of this foetid atmosphere are effluvia due to filth of the persons and clothes; the exhalations from the untrapped drains and wet, filthy floors of the cellars; the excretions of the skin and lungs, which are not removed by ventilation; the effluvia from fish and other food; and the dirt of the walls, floor and furniture, when there is any.

39. MOH, Report to the health cttee of the Borough of Liverpool, on the health of the town, 1871, (LCL, H352.4, HEA), p.55
40. Parkes and Sanderson, op. cit., p.62
41. Ibid., p.19
42. Ibid., p.64
And not surprisingly, diseases of the lungs appeared to be the chief cause of death in Liverpool.

Despite all the efforts of the Liverpool town council, and particularly the Health Committee and MOH, Liverpool remained nearly as unhealthy a place as it was in the 1840s. All that was done was not for nothing. But even if the streets and courts were cleaner than in 1846, they were not clean enough and were still too overcrowded in 1871. The continued high incidence of death and disease also showed the inability of mid-Victorian medicine to handle the prevention and treatment of disease, as well as the painfully slow amelioration of the 'careless, ignorant, and probably barbarous .... modes of life' of the Liverpool working class, which continued to deprive hundreds of young children of their chance at longevity, and contrasted poorly with the cleaner state of the external environs.  

Liverpool during 1846-71 has been discussed at some length because that town had the greatest obstacles to overcome, and it offers the best example of the kind of efforts Lancashire local authorities made to improve the urban environment. The Liverpool town council was the most vigorous in trying to reverse the deterioration of urban Lancashire (indeed, it could not afford not to be), but great efforts were being made and significant progress achieved in other Lancashire towns too.

A London journalist, A.B. Reach, left this account of his first sight of industrial southeast Lancashire in 1849. The traveller by railway is made aware of his approach to the great northern seats of industry by the dull, leaden-coloured sky, tainted by thousands of ever-smoking chimneys, which broods over the distance .... Canals, with freights of barges, intersect the country; and the rivers, if they be not locked and dammed back, and embellished with towing paths upon the banks, run turbid and thick - charged with the foulness of the hundred mills they have aided in their course ....

43. Parkes and Sanderson, op. cit., p.59
Presently the tall chimneys begin to figure conspicuously in the landscape; the country loses its fresh rurality of appearance; grass looks brown and dry, and foliage stunted and smutty. The roads and even the footpaths across the fields are black with coal dust. Factories and mills raise their dingy masses everywhere around. Ponderous wagons, heavily laden with bales or casks, go clashing along .... Between these vast establishments, a network of mean but regular streets, unpicturesque and unadorned .... and here and there, scattered amongst all this, great irregular, muddy spaces of waste ground, studded with black pools and swarming with dirty children.

Arriving in Manchester Reach noted that

There is a smokey brown sky overhead - smokey brown streets all around - long piles of warehouses, many of them with pillared and stately fronts - great grimy mills, the levitans of ugly architecture, with their smoke-pouring shafts. 44

But, as in Liverpool, he perceived 'an evident disposition to improvement'. 45

The working-class quarters surrounded the commercial centre of Manchester-Salford 'like a girdle, averaging a mile and a half in breadth .... beyond this girdle lives the upper and middle bourgeoisie .... in regularly laid out streets'. 46 It was the crowded districts inside this belt which created sanitary problems for the Manchester town authorities.

Even in 1861, too many of Manchester's back-to-back houses and courts were still in poor condition. Provision of privies was inadequate and the newer houses, though not built back-to-back, were still in a dangerous state because the privies and ashpits were too close to the houses and the back passages between rows of houses became quite filthy. 47

Life along the various waterways was made difficult by the

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44. A.B. Reach, Manchester and the textile districts in 1849, ed. C. Aspin (Helmshore Local History Society, 1972), pp 1-2
45. Ibid., p.10
47. Second report on sewerage, pp 50-5, 512-7
stench they generated, but Drs Southwood Smith and P.H. Holland concluded that 'the smell from the rivers at its worst is incomparably less sickening and oppressive than that in close courts ....'\(^{48}\) But progress was visible.

Within the last twenty years highly important and very extensive improvements have been made in the town of Manchester, particularly in the poorer districts. The proportion of larger and better constructed houses has increased; the number of cellar-dwellings has decreased and is progressively decreasing; an additional supply of good water has been obtained; many miles of streets have been paved and flagged, the surface of which used to be filthy mud; sewers have been extended through almost every street, and they are stated to be well constructed and in good order .... \(^{49}\)

But in 1868 there was still a long way to go. The new MOH, John Leigh, reminded the city council that 'Manchester has long had an unenviable reputation as one of the most unhealthy towns in the kingdom ....' Just as in Liverpool, 'diseases of the respiratory organs contribute largely to the mortality of Manchester ....'

The normal condition of the working man of middle age in Manchester is bronchitic, and all observations tend to establish the fact that an impure atmosphere increases enormously the tendency to consumption. Ozone is never found in the air of Manchester, whilst the solid particles constantly floating in the atmosphere from our factory chimneys and other sources, keep up a constant irritation in the air tubes, producing ultimately chronic bronchitis and emphysema of the lungs ....

Besides the omnipresent dangers of faulty ashpits, bad drainage and sewering, poor ventilation, Leigh found, just as Parkes and Sanderson did in Liverpool, that the health of the inhabitants of Manchester was injured by overcrowded houses, where there was little regard for personal cleanliness. Not enough working-class attention or resources were directed towards 'proper uses - the procuring of good food

\(^{48}\) Ibid., p.45 /507/
\(^{49}\) Ibid., p.47 /509/
and comfortable clothing, the means of cleanliness, both of house and person ....' 50

Manchester was a much better place in 1871 than it was in 1846. There were still physical problems such as bad sewering, courts and back-to-back houses to confront, but the Health Committee had got off to a good start during the preceding twenty-five years. As in Liverpool, the task of raising the personal living standards of the working classes was still formidable, but one thing a Mancunian never lacked was optimism.

Across the murky Irwell was the municipal borough of Salford. In 1849 A.B. Reach found that

Outlying portions of the borough of Salford are also very miserable, full of streets unpaved, undrained, strewn with offal and refuse, and pierced with airless culs-de-sac, rendered still more noisome by the quantities of ill-coloured clothes hung to dry from window to window. 51

Specific mention of just what the local authorities were doing to clean up Salford is scarce, since its neighbour to the east absorbed most of the attention of both contemporaries and subsequent historians. But we know the town was brought under the various national public health and amending acts during 1848-71 and that a nuisance committee of the borough council was operating in the 1840s, which by 1871 became the general health committee. As Reach pointed out, Salford was liable to lesser degrees of all the problems facing the larger urban districts, and even if the response of the council was not as dynamic as their Liverpool or Manchester counterparts', energy was exerted in the direction of improvement.

51. Reach, Manchester and the textile districts in 1849, p.3
Finance and effort, as in Liverpool and Manchester, went mainly into paving, draining, sewering and cleansing the streets and courts. But still in 1859

the privy nuisance is, in some respects, even worse in Salford than in Manchester. Houses are placed back to back and cellar dwellings are common in Salford. Houses are not often let in single room tenements and are rarely overcrowded, usually containing only the members of a single family. The sanitary arrangements in some of the more recently built houses, are quite satisfactory; those in some of the older streets, much the reverse. There are no waterclosets to the dwellings of the poorer classes, the soil from the privies being removed by the municipal authorities. 52

The council only assumed authority to regulate the laying out of streets and houses in the early 1860s, with the result that in 1865 buildings in the older, poorer districts were still

huddled together without regard to convenience or health. In these districts the streets are narrow and numerous passages, alleys and courts of cul-de-sacs, have been contrived, certainly to economise in space, but as certain to shut out light and air. The houses in many places are very old and dilapidated and altogether unfit for occupation. There are also many hundreds of back to back houses, with only a living room and bedroom each, with no yards and no conveniences, where ventilation is almost impossible and where decency, morals and health are in constant peril. 53

From Oldham the ubiquitous Reach reported in 1849 that

The visitor to Oldham will find it essentially a mean-looking, straggling town, built upon both sides and crowning the ridge of one of the outlying spurs which branch from the neighbouring 'backbone of England'. The whole place has a shabby, underdone look. The general appearance of the operatives' houses is filthy and smouldering. Airless little back streets and close, nasty courts are common; pieces of dismal waste ground - all covered with wreaths of mud and piles of blackened brick and rubbish - separate the mills, which are often

53. Ibid., p.13
of small dimensions and confined and crowded appearance. The shops cannot be complimented, the few hotels are no better than taverns, and altogether the place, to borrow a musical simile, seems far under concert pitch .... Another feature of the place was the quantity of dogs of all kinds which abounded - dog-races and dog-fights being both common among the lowest order of the inhabitants. 54 Despite its depressed appearance, Oldham had the advantage of a 'tolerably' good supply of water, piped in from the surrounding hills. 55 The responsibility for 'making exertions to improve the sanitary state of the worst districts of the town' fell to the Oldham poor law authorities, 56 who were constituted by the Registrar General only in 1849. Before that the whole place was run by a lackadaisical body of 'police commissioners', who presided over the degenera-
tion of the town into the state that Reach observed.

Few towns of similar extent are so urgently in want of local improvements, and a better system of municipal government than Oldham .... There are .... numerous .... streets in the town in a very discreditable condition; and in addition to this there is an utter want of really effective sanitary regulation. 57

The guardians of the poor and the new borough council, incorporated in 1849 as well, undertook the task of upgrading the 'underdone' appearance of the town's streets. A health committee was not formed until 1873. Their efforts seemed to only just keep pace with the steadily growing population. But besides the usual paving, sewering and cleansing of streets and courts, Oldham managed to almost completely eliminate cesspools, and to replace them with privies or waterclosets. But the water supply, which was the only sanitary strong point the town had during the 1840s, was sev-

54. Reach, op. cit., p.79
55. Ibid., p.80
56. Ibid., p.87
57. M/R Courier, 18 Feb 1846
erely overtaxed by population growth, and in 1869 it was 'anything but what it should be .... only barely adequate to the requirements of the place'.

Oldham in 1851 was a healthier place than Liverpool, Manchester, Preston or St Helens, despite being a bit 'under-done' and 'far below concert pitch', and it showed a steady improvement in each decade.

It was calculated in 1849 that the topography of Preston made it 'admirably' suited for good drainage. 'It is probable that no manufacturing town of equal size can boast so good a position or so many natural advantages.'

But notwithstanding the natural advantages of Preston, the condition of the dwellings of the lower classes have been but little attended to and in consequence of the inefficient sewerage, the scanty supply of water, (or rather the scanty application of a very copious supply) the unremoved collections of putrid animal and vegetable matter, and the general absence of the means of ordinary cleanliness, disease is engendered or aggravated, and the mortality materially increased.

The paving was 'seldom good' on the streets, and in the courts it was 'very bad and full of holes, or wanting altogether ....' Only one quarter of the public streets had covered drains and scavenging was done poorly, when it was done at all. The privies were in bad repair and 'invariably' connected to a large, open cesspool, which also served as an ashpit for any other household refuse. There was a custom of laying uncovered drains from houses and courts across footpaths, emptying into long, stagnant pools in roadside gutters. Courts and cellar-dwellings, formerly occupied by handloom weavers, were plentiful. There were also long,

58. Royal Sanitary Commission, 1869, p.217 /517/
59. G.T. Clark, Report to General Board of Health on sewerage, drainage, and supply of water, and the sanitary condition of the inhabitants of the borough of Preston (London, 1849), pp 4-5
60. Ibid., pp 16-7
narrow passages, lined with buildings, called wiends, leading from the main thoroughfare, Fishergate, down towards the Ribble. Several wiends remain in Preston and they are best experienced by the twentieth-century visitor on a wet, autumn evening. But

In all the modern parts of the town, and not unfrequently in those of more ancient date, the streets are of fair breadth and well laid out, the houses substantially built, though the rooms are often small; and in a considerable portion of the town, including even some of its meaner parts, there is a privy to every house.  61

Also, by 1871 the town had three large, attractive parks, Moor Park (1834), Avenham Park (1844) and Miller Park (1864). In 1850 Preston's Local Board of Health was established. Extensive paving and sewering projects were undertaken in 1852, and they were completed as a system in 1857.  62 The local waterworks were taken over by the board in 1853 and soon Preston had 'one of the best water supply systems in the kingdom'. Street cleaning was hired out by the borough council to provide contractors, who proved very unreliable. But the responsibility for cleansing the streets and emptying middens and ashpits was not assumed by the corporation until 1881. In 1858 it was still felt there were too many 'undrained, ill-ventilated' working-class dwellings, giving rise to a high incidence of lung ailments, and 'generally speaking, the most densely populated parts of the borough are the richest in these complaints.'  63 But

61. Ibid., p.16
62. A. Hewitson, History (from AD 705 to 1883), of Preston (Preston, 1883), pp 58-9
63. Report on the sewerage and private improvements executed in the borough of Preston with observations on the mortality of the same in Proceedings of the council, Borough of Preston, 1858-9 (HLP, Q352), pp 17-8
The careful attention which has been bestowed on the cleansing of the town, the destruction of its refuse, the disposal of its sewerage, the closing of insanitary property, the flagging of backyards and other similar matters has resulted in a gradual but continuous lowering of the death rate. 64

The industrialisation of St Helens was well advanced by the mid-1840s and local people began to realise that even though there was little overcrowding, the working-class neighbourhoods that were growing most rapidly were also the places where paving and draining were worst and filth most prevalent. There was also great difficulty with open cesspools and poorly placed privies. A local act established an improvement commission in 1845 to set 'certain minimum standards' of housing, drainage, sewering and cleansing, and to bring some semblence of effective local government to St Helens.65 This action was not taken at all too soon because by the early 1850s there was serious overcrowding in the small, two-storey houses of the town. There was 'little evidence of abject poverty or acute distress', but the housing shortage, along with insufficient water supply, bad drainage and unsatisfactory sewering, made life in St Helens difficult.66

The state of the St Helens environment was prejudiced by a further complication, which arose from the industrial character of the town. Besides smoke from glass works, smelters and chemical factories, there were the huge mounds of alkali waste around the town. Not only were they an eyesore, but the calcium sulphide from them was washed into local brooks, where it reacted with hydrochloric acid, producing rancid hydrogen sulphide gas ($\text{H}_2\text{S}$). The brooks and streams of the Sankey valley were turned yellow by the drainings from these waste heaps.67 It was not until 1864 that an alkali works regulation act came into effect, requiring that 95% of all the

64. H.W. Clemsha, A history of Preston in Amounderness (Manchester, 1912), p.255
65. Barker and Harris, St Helens, pp 300-4
66. Ibid., pp 415, 397-9
67. Ibid., p.353
hydrochloric acid produced in the chemical plants had to be condensed, with inspectors to enforce the regulations. But this did nothing to alleviate the smoke problem, nor did it remove a single heap of alkali waste.

In the face of all these difficulties, the improvement commissioners (who existed from 1845-68, when the town was incorporated) showed a determined effort to provide the town with efficient drainage and sewerage, as well as to maintain footpaths and roadways. And altogether 'the town was not particularly unhealthy by mid-nineteenth century standards'. But in 1869

The stench from the brook - "an open sepulchre of pestiferous odours" - was a perennial cause of complaint, and the ashpit privies, 6,000 of them within the borough limits in 1869, had become an abomination. Water closets were quite a novelty; only 250 houses had them at that date. In addition to such cloacal smells then common to all towns, St Helens had its own particular brand caused by the effluvia from decomposed alkali waste.

But the work of the improvement commissioners, and the borough council, contributed to a much healthier atmosphere in St Helens, in spite of the depredations of the alkali industry.

During 1850-65, when industrialisation arrived and expanded in Widnes, public administration in the town consisted of one of the old highway boards, which for all practical purposes was inert. Regulation of even 'the most meagre description and public amenities could scarcely be said to exist'. The rapid urbanisation of Widnes, as people migrated to the town during the 1850s, brought all the problems that other Lancashire towns had faced for generations. Besides

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68. St Helens Improvement Commissioners, Paving, sewerage and highway purposes ctee, 1845-68 (Town Clerk, St Helens Town Hall, minute books)
69. Barker and Harris, op. cit., p.404
70. Ibid., p.416
the need for paving, draining and sewerage of the new streets which were appearing on previously open country, the alkali industry, the cause of the growth of the town, brought its own problems. Just as at St Helens, large heaps of slushy, H₂S-reeking alkali waste began to take over the surrounding countryside. The danger to the public safety was increased by the fact that fires often ignited by spontaneous combustion, one of which burned for a year in one heap, producing irritating sulphur dioxide fumes. A new process cut sulphur waste by one half in 1861, but that still left Widnes with half a substantial problem, plus the accumulated waste of nearly fifteen years. There were complaints of injury to property, crops and livestock from the factory smoke. And up until 1866 the water supply for the town came from a well actually located within a chemical factory. It was found that the water contained excessive solid matter and was very 'hard'.

A public authority to deal with these compound urban problems, all brand new to the area, was badly needed. Under the public health acts of 1848 and 1858 the ratepayers were entitled to set up a local board of health. This was done at Widnes in 1865. In 1867 a Widnes improvement act was obtained and the local board took over the supplying of good water, as well as gas, for the town. The board also undertook the provision of sewers and the cleaning of streets and ashpits. In 1866 a health committee was created and an MOH was appointed for the town. But curiously, the health committee recommended the abolition of the MOH post after

72. D.W.F. Hardie, A history of the chemical industry in Widnes (Birmingham, 1950), pp 53-4
74. Ibid., p.29
76. Widnes, local board, minutes, 1865-72, 7 Aug 1866 (WMB, p.123)
only six months, which was done by the local board. 77

Widnes's problems were to increase during the rest of the century, as the proliferation of industry and the growth of population both intensified. Within a few decades of 1871, Widnes, still a small urban centre, usurped a position in peoples' minds once held by Liverpool. To many people Widnes was the 'dirtiest' town in England. But in 1871 there was still enough open space around the town to make it bearable.

Lancashire was associated with industrialism and urban squalor in 1846. In the succeeding twenty-five years local authorities made great efforts to pave, drain, sewer and clean the streets and courts; to provide pure water for domestic consumption; to condemn and close unhealthy properties, especially cellar-dwellings, court houses and back-to-back houses; to forbid the construction of potentially unhealthy habitations; to widen streets and courts; and generally to provide more public amenities. The accomplishments were considerable. Urban Lancashire was certainly a cleaner, healthier place in 1871. But despite all the physical and financial support for improvement, all Lancashire's towns were still plagued by the characteristic maladies of aging urban districts - dirt, poor housing, inadequate sanitary facilities and, above all, the ignorance of the working class, the principal inhabitants of the nineteenth century's 'inner cities'.

It was into this scene that thousands of Irish families immigrated during 1846-71.

77. Widnes, health cttee, minutes 1866-76, 18 Feb 1867 (WMB); Widnes, local board, minutes 1865-72 5 Mar 1867 (WMB, pp 161-2)
Before turning to more specific aspect of Irish immigrant life in Lancashire during the mid-nineteenth century it is important to examine their general living and occupational condition, the background against which subjects such as social problems and community life must be considered. Some of the questions this chapter addresses are: where in Ireland the Lancashire Irish came from; their distribution in Lancashire and the size of the Irish communities; Irish housing and household structure; and Irish occupational patterns. Besides illustrative material from contemporary and modern secondary sources, I have been able to draw on the census enumerators' notebooks from the years 1851, 1861 and 1871. These original census books tell us a great deal about life in urban Lancashire generally, and about the immigrant Irish.

The census enumerators' books which cover the towns of Liverpool, Manchester-Salford, Oldham, Preston, St Helens and Widnes contain a column for the birthplaces of the persons detailed. But the enumerators did not use any consistent method of supplying this information. Sometimes only the county where a person was born is given, but in other books there is more specific information. How much is known about a person's birthplace depended on how much the respondent volunteered and how much the enumerator asked for. In the case of the Irish in Lancashire the enumerators were still more general in their approach to birthplaces. It was very rare that an enumerator wrote anything more than Ireland in the birthplace column of an Irish person's census particulars. Occasionally more complete information was recorded, but this was usually when the Irish person's birthplace was a large town or city, such as Dublin, Belfast or Cork. County of birthplace appears much less frequently. The randomness of the
information-gathering procedures employed by the census enumerators, and the scant data they usually furnished about an Irish person's birthplace, make the enumerators' notebooks nearly useless for finding out anything specific about where in Ireland an Irishman was born. But still it is possible to derive some general information about the origins of the Irish in England from other sources.

The census of Ireland for 1851 tells us that the province of Munster, the most populous province up to the mid-nineteenth century, was providing a higher percentage of emigrants than Leinster and Connaught combined. 39.7% of the emigrants from Ireland were from Munster, 23.4% from Ulster and 22.9% and 13% from Leinster and Connaught, respectively. During 1860-71 Munster was still exporting the highest percentage of Irish emigrants, 39.6%. But these proportions are for all emigrants from Ireland, regardless of destination. Not until 1876 were statistics about specific destinations, as well as county of origin, compiled and published. Unfortunately, the published versions of these statistics only tell us about Irishmen who were emigrating to England and Wales, and not to particular places within England and Wales. A specimen of the form used at the ports shows that specific destinations were recorded, which means that an examination of these forms could tell us where an Irishman bound, for example, to Manchester came from in Ireland. But a search for the original forms at the State Paper Office, Dublin Castle, the Irish Public Record Office and the Customs House, Dublin, failed to reveal whether or not they have survived. Another problem with these statistics is that, at least for 1876 and 1877, they are probably overstatements. A letter from the Registrar General of Ireland, W.M. Burke, shows that up to 11 July 1877 'the passengers who leave

1. Port of Belfast. Return of all emigrants and passengers who left this port on board the 'Voltaic', bound for Lpool, 12 May 1877 (SPO, CSO RP, 1877/10717)
Ireland temporarily' were counted with permanent emigrants. But after 1877 these statistics should give us a reasonably accurate estimate of the origins of Irish emigrants to England and Wales.

With the exceptions of three years (1878, 1899 and 1900), Munster supplied the bulk of the Irish emigrants who went to England and Wales during the quarter-century 1876-1901. Ulster was usually a distant second. 112,302 emigrants were thought to have gone to England and Wales during those twenty-five years and 60,418 of them, 54%, were from Munster. Through all the fluctuations in the volume of Irish emigration to England and Wales during the last quarter of the nineteenth century Munster consistently exported the largest number, which is consistent with the pattern apparent in the census returns for 1851-71. So even though there is little direct evidence about where Lancashire Irishmen came from in Ireland, it is safe to assume that the southern half of Ireland was providing the largest numbers of emigrants. But it is so far impossible to determine where in England or Wales those Irishmen settled.

Information on the number of Irish persons living in Lancashire and their distribution among the various urban-industrial localities is much more accessible. According to the published census figures there were about 520,000 Irish-born persons living in England and Wales in 1851. 37% of those Irish-born persons (191,500) were resident in the county of Lancashire, which made the northwest's Irish community the most numerically significant in England. Besides the fact that plentiful employment was available in labouring jobs and the expanding factory complexes, Lancashire was attractive to emigrating Irishmen because it was the most accessible part of Great Britain. Most cross-Irish Sea steamship

2. W.M. Burke to Lord Lieutenant, 11 July 1877 (SPO, CSO RP, 1877/10717)
3. Emigration statistics for Ireland, 1876-1901, H.C., 1877-1902
services terminated in Lancashire's great port of Liverpool (see chapter 4). Lancashire maintained its dominance in Irish-born population throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.

Table 2

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<th>Year</th>
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<th>1861</th>
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<td>36.1</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Liverpool, Manchester-Salford, Oldham, Preston, St Helens and Widnes contained over 77% of Lancashire's Irish-born population in 1851. In 1861 and 1871 these seven towns had 75% and 67%, respectively, of the Irish-born persons living in Lancashire.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>83,813</td>
<td>83,949</td>
<td>76,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>46,000</td>
<td>52,000</td>
<td>34,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>7,178</td>
<td>9,191</td>
<td>9,238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>2,743</td>
<td>5,817</td>
<td>3,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>5,122</td>
<td>6,974</td>
<td>4,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>2,596</td>
<td>4,234</td>
<td>4,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>2,298</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4
Percentage of population of sample towns Irish-born, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of these figures require some explanation before we examine them more closely.

The published census statistics only provide the Irish-born populations of the municipal boroughs of Liverpool and Preston. But in 1851 and 1861 the Irish-born populations of the registration districts (coextensive with the poor law unions) of Manchester, Salford and Oldham are given. The registration districts extended beyond the municipal boundaries of Oldham and Salford, but it is probably safe to assume that relatively few Irish immigrants were residing beyond the municipal limits. So the Irish-born populations of the registration districts in 1851 and 1861 of Oldham and Salford have been used as the basis for all calculations in this study. For 1871, when the Irish-born populations of registration districts were not published, I counted up the Irish-born persons within the two boroughs by paging through the census enumerators' books, and the results tend to justify the assumption that there was very little difference between the Irish-born populations of the registration districts and the municipal boroughs in 1851 and 1861. The Irish-born populations of St Helens and Widnes were compiled in this way for all three census years. But the municipal borough of Manchester presents special problems. The published returns only give the Irish-
born population of the parliamentary borough of Manchester, which was larger than the municipal borough. Time forbade a head count of the Irish-born persons living in the borough of Manchester, but alternative figures are available. The number of Irish-born persons living in the parliamentary borough of Manchester is given in the published census returns for 1851, 1861 and 1871. The parliamentary limits contained more people than the municipal boundaries, but the number of Irish persons living in the parliamentary limits is probably a good indication of the number living in the municipal borough, so rounded versions of these figures are used here.

From tables 3 and 4 we can see that, not surprisingly, the entry port of Liverpool had the largest Irish-born population, as well as the highest proportion of Irish-born. The levelling-off of Irish emigration during the period is illustrated by the fact that the overall number of Irish-born within the seven towns decreased during 1851-71, except in Salford and St Helens, where steady but unspectacular rises took place, and in the developing town of Widnes, where the increase was much more significant. The proportion of Irish-born within the towns was generally declining by 1871, except at Widnes, which continued to attract immigrants. But there is another way of looking at the size of the Lancashire Irish community.

For the purposes of the census, the enumerators only counted those persons born in Ireland as being Irish. English-born children of Irish parents were listed as English. So, on this score alone, the published census figures on the sizes of the Irish communities of Lancashire are underestimates. To get closer to the truth about the size of the Irish community the non-Irish-born members have to be added to the number of Irish-born. But how can we determine the number of non-Irish-born Irish in Lancashire?
The Irish community of a Lancashire town was not simply the total of persons born in Ireland living there. Most children of Irish families who were born in England were certainly members of the Irish community; not only because of a blood relationship, but because they would identify themselves very closely with other Irish people. There were other persons who were related to the Irish by marriage or by friendship, and these too could be counted as part of the Irish community. The Irish in Lancashire shared certain experiences, attitudes and values, as well as nationality. But those who were born in England and identified and sympathised with Irish attitudes and values must be added to the Irish-born population to get an idea of the actual size of the Irish community. It is very difficult to state the true size of an Irish community with any precision because the definition of 'Irish community' is very subjective and arbitrary. Not every English-born child of an Irish family, or every Irish-born Irishman, would regard himself as 'Irish' and feel a close identification with Irish people. Likewise, there were undoubtedly some people who had no apparent blood or marital relationship with the Irish, yet identified very closely with them. One can only hope that these contrary and unenumerable persons balanced each other, but we will never know for certain. Still it is possible to make an estimate of how many persons actually comprised a Lancashire Irish community.

In the relatively small Merseyside town of Widnes I took a 100% sample of Irish households, as well as enumerating all Irish persons living in non-Irish households, in all three census years. Details of the sampling method will be given in a moment. An Irish household was defined as anywhere an Irish person was listed by the census enumerator as the household head. The total number of households and the number of Irish households in the other six towns is not known because the amount of time required to enumerate them in three
census years was prohibitive. But by using the complete information available for Widnes a factor can be derived, the Widnes factor, which can be applied to the Irish communities of the other six towns. The criteria I have set down for defining the Widnes factor are conservative and subjective, but even if the factor understates the matter, it still gives us a good idea of how large an Irish community in Lancashire might be. After all the relevant Widnes data was transferred to punch cards and computerised, the computer was instructed to consider all households where it found at least one other Irish-born person besides the head of the household in the nuclear family (wife and children), or in the extended family (relatives by blood or marriage of the household head). Households where there was only one Irish-born member were excluded in order to raise the minimum Irish influence in a household to at least two persons. The computer was then told to total up the non-Irish-born members of the nuclear and extended families in the selected households. This information considered with data on the total number of Irish-born in Widnes, in Irish households and elsewhere, provides the Widnes factor by which an Irish-born population can be multiplied in order to see what size the Irish community actually was. This is the formula which was employed.

Widnes factor (WF) = 1 + \frac{1}{R_{1W} + R_{2W}}

R_{1W} = \frac{\text{Total Irish} \text{(Non-Irish-born Irish)} \text{ in Widnes Irish households}}{\text{Non-Irish-born Irish} \text{ (hh)}}

R_{2W} = \frac{\text{Total Irish} \text{(non-Irish hhgs/Non-Irish-born Irish) Widnes}}{\text{Irish hhgs/Non-Irish-born Irish}}

In 1851 forty-eight of the fifty-one Irish households in Widnes were considered. In 1861 and 1871, 228 of 261 and 573 of 723 Irish households were selected, respectively. The Widnes factor equation for 1851 is
In 1851 at least 100 non-Irish-born Irish were discovered among an Irish-born population of 250. These non-Irish-born Irish will be referred to hereafter as the 'extra' Irish. The minimum Irish community in Widnes in 1851 was 350, a factor of 1.4 larger than the 250 Irish-born. This factor, the Widnes factor, is more simply expressed as

\[
WF = 1 + \frac{1}{150 \div 99 + 100 \div 99}
\]  

or

\[
WF = 1 + \frac{1}{1.52 + 1.0}
\]

For 1861 and 1871 the factors were 1.77 and 1.8, giving minimum Irish communities of 1,621 and 4,136, respectively, 77% and 80% greater than the population of Irish-born persons.

A similar procedure may, in principle, be applied to the other Lancashire towns, but there are some difficulties involved. We do not know what percentage of total households in a town were Irish households or the total number of extra Irish in those households. A possible solution to this problem of missing data would be to use the factors appropriate for Widnes, where the information is complete, in estimating the actual minimum Irish communities in the other six towns and appeal to the principle that the Irish communities in the other Lancashire towns would be of similar composition to that of Widnes. Alternatively we can flavour the Widnes-based factors as much as possible with the local characteristics of the other six towns. Even though we do not know the total number of 'extra' Irish, we can estimate, from sample data, the average number of 'extra' Irish per Irish-born member of an Irish household. Recalling that the full Widnes factor formula is written as

\[
WF = 1 + \frac{1}{R_{1W} + R_{2W}}
\]
we cannot determine the precise values of $R_1$ and $R_2$ for the 
other six towns from the available data. But we can estimate 
$R_1$ from the samples. $R_2$ remains unknown and unestimable. In 
the absence of this further information we will use $R_{2W}$ for 
$R_2$ in all of the six other towns. Since $R_1$ (for each indiv-
idual town) dominates $R_{2W}$, the resulting factor is strongly 
influenced by local conditions and represents a better approxi-
imation than is achieved by using the unmodified Widnes fac-
tor for all seven towns.

From the Widnes census data for 1851 we know that $R_{2W}$ is 
$\frac{100}{0.99}$, which is approximately equal to 1.0. The formula for find-
ing the minimum Irish community of Liverpool in 1851 is 

$$L_{pool} \text{ factor} = 1 + \frac{1}{1,442 + 1}$$

The Irish-born community of Liverpool in 1851, 83,813, can 
be multiplied by 1.4 to 117,338. $R_{2W}$ is equal to .39 and 
.46 in 1861 and 1871, respectively. Applying the modified 
Widnes factor to the Irish-born populations of the other six 
towns, the minimum Irish communities of those towns during 
1851-71 are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>1851 (WF)</th>
<th>1851 (WF)</th>
<th>1861 (WF)</th>
<th>1861 (WF)</th>
<th>1871 (WF)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>117,338</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>140,194</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>69,000</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>89,440</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>10,408</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>14,889</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>3,977</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>9,481</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>7,068</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>10,739</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>3,842</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>7,917</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1,621</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mid-Victorian census officials were content to look upon Irish communities as the number of persons born in Ireland, and most other people accepted this standard. But the Chief Constable of the Oldham borough police force did not feel constrained by the accepted criterion, indeed, he was probably totally unaware of them. For a reason not explained in the Chief Constable's annual reports or the watch committee minute books, the police supplied statistics on the Irish population of Oldham during 1859-71. The statistical return for 1861 is missing, but the figure for 1862 is available. It states that the police thought the Irish population of Oldham numbered 9,573. The estimate derived from using the Widnes factor, tempered by local characteristics, for the actual Irish population of Oldham in 1861 was 9,481. Obviously, the police recognised there were many more Irish in the town than only those born in Ireland, and their statement is an interesting, and encouraging, test of the standard devised for determining the sizes of Irish communities from census data. In 1871 the Oldham police enumerated some 8,000 Irish persons in Oldham. The Widnes factor computation, based on the census of 1871, shows an Irish community of nearly 7,000. But in a consideration where definition is subjective and imprecise, and since the policemen were making on-the-spot judgements of who could and could not be considered Irish, a discrepancy of 1,000 is not at all surprising. The 1871 Oldham figure also indicates that, as originally suspected, the Widnes factor calculations are conservative and underestimate the size of the Irish community. But still, the population figures obtained by using the Widnes factor do give us a good idea of the minimum size of a Lancashire Irish community, and they demonstrate very well that the actual size of an Irish community was considerably larger than the number of persons who were born in Ireland.

4. Oldham Borough Police, Criminal and miscellaneous statistical returns, 1859-71 (OLIC, LP75)
Another question which arises is that of population fluidity; that is, how many of the Irish persons enumerated in a Lancashire town, for example in 1851, were still resident there in 1861? We know that in 1851 only 44% of the Lancashire Irish-born, very few of whom would have entered the county by any other route than Liverpool, were living in that port town. The rest had spread out to other parts of Lancashire or to west Cumberland, Yorkshire and the north-east of England.\(^5\) We do not know how long after their arrival immigrants usually remained in Liverpool before setting off for other destinations. But a recent study of population movements in Boston, Massachusetts, by Stephen Thernstrom gives an idea of what the situation probably was in Liverpool.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Boston was drawing into it enormous numbers of newcomers ..., it was simultaneously exporting unusually large numbers of persons .... There was substantial out-migration within every occupational group, but it was the middle class ..., and especially upper-middle-class professionals and businessmen, that provided continuity in the community then. The lower an individual ranked on the occupational ladder, the smaller the likelihood that he would still be found in Boston by the next census taker a decade later; nearly half of the low-manual labourers living in the city in 1880 had left it by 1890; nearly two-thirds of the labourers of 1910 had departed by 1920.\(^6\)

So in a city which seemed to be characterised by demographic stability there was actually 'astonishing fluidity'.\(^7\)

Thernstrom has been able to use a very efficiently-kept set of city directory files as a cross-reference for his census book data, a source unavailable for Lancashire. But it is

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5. R. Lawton, 'Irish immigration to England and Wales in the mid-nineteenth century' in Irish Geography, iv, no.1 (1959), pp 44-5
7. Ibid., p.29
safely assumed that the most fluid of Lancashire's towns, demographically, was Liverpool, which is explained by the fact that it was an important port of arrival and departure. Other towns, such as Preston and Manchester-Salford, were probably more stable. Even though I have not attempted to examine this question in census enumerators' books or local directories, there are other indications that the urban population of Lancashire was less migratory than in American cities. Working-class people in English towns, as we will see in chapter 9, were very 'clubbable' and often put their social arrangements on formal bases in trade clubs and friendly societies. Such organisations implied a certain continuity of membership, and the absence of this continuity hindered the development of working-class organisations, such as trade unions, in America.⁸ One group which may stand out from this picture of relative population stability, if and when the subject of population fluidity in England is studied in a systematic manner, is the Irish.

Most Irishmen who arrived in Liverpool intending to settle in England, as distinct from those coming to Liverpool to re-embark for America or Australia, left the town soon after their arrival. But it is also probably true that Liverpool's Irish population was less fluid than Boston's. The most important question for the future historian-demographer of migration in the northwest of England will not be whether or not Liverpool had a high turnover rate, but how permanent was an Irishman at his second stop. Once again, social indicators go some way towards compensating for more substantive data. We will see in the third part of this study that Irish people living in Lancashire during 1846-71 rarely formed themselves into friendly societies or clubs the way that English working men did. Comparable social organisations within the Irish community were much more likely to be founded under the auspices of the catholic church, rather than by a

⁸ Ibid., pp 231-2
group of Irish working men organising themselves without any kind of patronage. This fact, besides being illustrative of the social utility of the catholic church, may be indicative of a lack of settlement among Irish immigrants, which made the continuity of membership necessary for an independent working-class organisation impossible.

An assumption which is popular among students of emigrants and immigration tends to look at working-class immigrants from rural backgrounds as ghetto-prone. It is often supposed that an immigrant group, such as the Irish, will huddle into a neighbourhood of miserable tenements and there stagnate, occupationally and socially, for a generation or two. Whether or not there were Irish 'ghettoes' in Lancashire will be discussed later in this chapter, but at this point it is useful to note one of the observations which Thernstrom makes about Boston.

No element of the working-class population was rooted in the city in the manner suggested by the ghetto hypothesis; large numbers of every group left Boston altogether within a relatively short period, and many of those who did remain soon moved from the inner-city neighbourhoods in which they first concentrated toward outlying areas of the city. 9

A detailed study will be necessary to determine whether or not this was true of the Lancashire Irish, but it points to somewhat greater mobility among the Irish in comparison to English working men. The "ghetto hypothesis" of immigrant groups is certainly called into question.

In constructing a picture of Irish immigrant life in Lancashire it is important to examine their general living standards. There is no shortage of contemporary commentary and description of working-class conditions, but, as useful as these accounts are for supplying general background informat-

9. Ibid., p.41
ion, they are lacking in detail and rarely tell us very much about how working-class people in English towns really lived. This illustrative material can be supplemented by census enumerator's books from the years 1851, 1861 and 1871, which give us much more specific information on mid-nineteenth urban life.

We saw in the last chapter that by the mid 1840s the physical environment of Lancashire's towns was abysmal. These conditions were not confined to the streets and outside walls of buildings, and they reflected the debased living conditions of most of the working class. During the first four decades of the nineteenth century there was a slight improvement in average material standards, but this small advance was achieved at the cost of greater perceived human privation. So even if people were 'better off' than their predecessors, the negligible improvement was suffered as a catastrophic experience of industrialisation and rapid urbanisation.¹⁰ Working people felt very little of the rise in average living standards.

In fifty years of the industrial revolution the working-class share of the national product had almost certainly fallen relative to the share of the property-owning and professional classes. The 'average' working man remained very close to subsistence level at a time when he was surrounded by the evidence of the increase of national wealth, much of it transparently the product of his own labour, and passing, by equally transparent means, into the hands of his employers. In psychological terms, this felt very much like a decline in standards. His own share in the 'benefits of economic progress' consisted of more potatoes, a few articles of cotton clothing for his family, soap and candles, some tea and sugar, and a great many articles in the Economic History Review.¹¹

Part of this deterioration of urban life was poor housing for working people. People living at little better than a subsistence level could not afford to pay a high rent for good housing, but the rapid growth of the urban population of Lancashire conspired against the construction of decent, inexpensive housing for those with small incomes, who made up the vast bulk of the urban population.

¹¹. Ibid., p.318
In these conditions it was not possible to build houses for poor people and make a profit out of it unless the greatest possible attention was paid both to cheapness of construction and to getting the maximum number of rooms on the smallest possible area. The result was that houses were laid out in narrow streets, they were low and ill-ventilated with many structural defects. 12

The problem of the shortage of inexpensive and healthy housing was aggravated by the fact that the existing inferior housing was often overcrowded.

The worst overcrowding was due, not so much to a general shortage of houses, as to the existence of a substantial part of the population whose poverty was so extreme as to prevent them from competing even for the inadequate accommodation which was normal for the working class at that time. 13

The 1840s were a particularly difficult period for many working-class families and sometimes numbers of working-class cottages were left unoccupied.

The pressure of the times is beginning to tell powerfully upon the occupation of the cottages and payment of rents. Families who occupied two houses, are now trying to save rent by joining at one. Sons and sons-in-law, fathers and mothers, are now pressing in with their respective relatives, and the consequence is that what we have long been unaccustomed to in Preston - empty cottages - is coming round again. One of the largest collectors of rents in Preston assures us that some time ago he had not the key to a single empty house, whereas at present his stock is fast accumulating. 14

Another serious industrial recession during the early 1860s would have a similar effect on Lancashire.

As we saw in the last chapter, from the mid-1840s municipal administrations were making efforts to reverse this situation, but progress was very slow. For example, there were still 22,000 'insanitary' houses in Liverpool in the mid-1860s. During the mid-nineteenth century the word 'insanitary' applied to houses built back to back or in

12. B.D. White, History of Liverpool, p.31
13. Ibid., p.32
14. Preston Guardian, 16 Jan 1847
courts, so that there was only a negligible increase in the number of officially insanitary houses after the mid-1840s, when public health and local improvement legislation forbade their construction. But rundown, badly constructed houses which were not built in courts or back to back were certainly insanitary, even if they did not receive an official designation. Local municipal administrations were supervising the demolition of dilapidated, unhealthy houses under improvement acts, and improved transport facilities made it possible for some wealthier people to remove to suburban areas, which left houses available for poorer families. But in 1871 poor housing for working people was still far too common.

A.B. Reach left a useful description of the working-class housing he found during his tour of southeast Lancashire in 1849.

The house of the Manchester operative, wherever it may be - in the old district or in the new - in Ancoats or Cheetham or Hulme - is uniformly a two-storey dwelling. Sometimes it is of fair dimensions, sometimes a line fourteen feet long would reach from the eaves to the ground. In the old localities there is, in all probability, a cellar beneath the house, sunk some four or five feet below the pavement, and occupied perhaps by a single poor old woman, or by a family, the heads of which are given to pretty regular alternation between their subterranean abode and the neighbouring wine-vaults. In the modern and improved quartiers, the cellar retires modestly out of sight and is put to a more legitimate use as a home for coals and lumber.

The interior layouts of working-class cottages varied somewhat.

The worst class of houses, not being cellars, commonly inhabited by the 'mill hands', consist each of two rooms, not a 'but-and-a-ben', but an above and a below, the stair to the former leading directly up from the latter, and the door of the ground floor parlour being also the door of the street. In some cases the higher storey is divided into two small bedrooms, but in the superior class of houses there are generally two small, but comfortable rooms on the ground floor, and two of the corresponding size above. The street door in these tenements opens into a narrow passage from which the

15. White, op. cit., p.137
16. Ibid., p. 137
17. A.B. Reach, Manchester and the textile districts in 1849, pp 3-4
stairs of the bedrooms also ascend. The window of the ground floor room, opening to the street, is always furnished with a pair of substantial outside shutters, and the threshold is elevated from the pavement.... 18

The rent for an entire house varied from 3s. to 5s. per week during the mid-nineteenth century, but part of a house, or an inferior house, may have cost 1s.9d. to 2s.9d. per week.19

Even detailed accounts such as this do not tell us everything we would like to know about working-class life during the mid-nineteenth century. The census enumerators' books will help fill out the picture.

Copious though the published census reports are, they provide very little information which would help us see how people lived, because most data is only presented in aggregate form. But much more information can be obtained from the census enumerators' original notebooks. Only books up to the census of 1871 are available for public inspection at present. So for this study of the Lancashire Irish during 1846-71 the enumerators' books for 1851, 1861 and 1871 have been used.

The Public Record Office, London, has transferred the books to microfilm, and many local libraries have purchased copies for their respective districts. Microfilm copies of the enumerators' books covering Liverpool, Manchester-Salford, Oldham, Preston, St Helens and Widnes for 1851, 1861 and 1871 are available in the local libraries of all these towns. The census forms the enumerators filled up in the three years were virtually identical. The name of each person, their relation to the head of the household, their sex, age, occupation and birthplace were recorded. This basic information can be analysed in a number of ways.

18. Ibid., p.4
The samples for this study were taken from all seven towns in each of the census years. In each town in each year I took a sample of Irish households, as well as a contrasting sample of non-Irish households, forty-two sample groups in all. The samples focus on individual households, the nuclear families, as well as extended family, lodgers, servants and visitors. The household was recognised by the census commissioners as the 'first, most intimate, and perhaps most important community'.

The head of the family supports and rules the family that occupies the house. 'Family', in the sense which it has acquired in England, may be considered the social unit of which parishes, towns, counties and the nation are composed.

The sampling technique by which the households comprising the forty-two groups were selected requires some elaboration. Studies involving the use of census enumerators' books usually focus on one town in one year because there are certain problems involved that make wider surveys difficult. The aggregate data available in the printed returns does not tell us either the number of households in a town, or how many of those households were Irish households (households where the household head was born in Ireland). This information is only obtainable by paging through all the census books for a particular town and counting the households, which is not a difficult task when dealing with a small town such as Widnes. But extensive urban districts such as Liverpool and Manchester-Salford represent much more formidable undertakings. Since the time I was able to allocate this project was limited, I had to rule out enumerating all the households and all the Irish households in seven towns in three census years. But I was able to devise an alternative method of obtaining my forty-two samples. In each of the seven towns, the number of

21. Ibid., p. xxxiv
Irish-born, the number of non-Irish-born and the average number of persons per inhabited house are easily obtainable from printed returns. So in each town in each year, with the exception of Widnes, I estimated the number of Irish households by arbitrarily dividing the number of Irish-born persons by the average number of persons per house. I then sampled 5% of the resulting figure. The non-Irish-born persons were grouped in the same fashion, and 1% of these synthetic households were sampled. The one exception to this apparently cavalier methodology was Widnes, which was a town small enough to allow consideration of 100% of the Irish households in each of the three census years. To obtain my control group of the non-Irish population of Widnes I divided the non-Irish population by the average number of persons per house in each year and sampled 5% of the quotient. This method is one certain to make sociologists and human geographers cringe, but, at this point, the information necessary for employing a better technique is lacking. As soon as time allows, I intend to fill in the missing data and adjust these samples accordingly.

But even though the method which has been used lacks statistical sophistication and is very arbitrary, too much importance should not be attached to its inadequacies, because it is only a way of deriving samples of sufficient size to give a broad picture of life in nineteenth-century Lancashire.

The actual sampling itself was a much simpler matter. All the census enumerators' books are paginated. A page is one opening, or two pages. I divided the total number of openings by the number of households required to make up a particular sample. For example, if there were 1,500 openings for a particular year in one of the towns and 150 households were needed for the sample, the first Irish (or non-Irish) household that appeared at every tenth opening would be considered. An Irish or non-Irish household does not necessarily appear at every tenth opening, but the difference
was made up by going to every eleventh page when the first run through had been completed. During the sampling, information was recorded on the number of households per house, the number of persons in each household, the number of persons in the nuclear and extended families, the number of servants and lodgers in the household, as well as the total number of persons resident in the house. Birthplaces and occupational data on individual members of the household were also collected. All the information was taken down digitally, and ages and occupations were grouped and coded. All the data was later transferred to punch cards and fed into a computer. The analysis of the data was carried out with the assistance of two members of the staff of the Statistics Department, University of Dublin. A very useful computer package was used in the analysis itself, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), developed at the University of Chicago, which produced reams of interesting cross-tabulations. What do the results of this statistical survey of over 9,000 Lancashire households (4,412 Irish and 4,738 non-Irish) tell us about mid-nineteenth century Lancashire, particularly the Irish?

The analysed census data will be presented under the main headings of general housing conditions, birthplaces and occupations. And, where it is appropriate, illustrative material from contemporary sources will be included.

'The possession of an entire house is, it is true, strongly desired by every Englishman; for it throws a sharp, well-defined circle round his family and hearth - the shrine of his sorrows, joys and meditations.' Did this generalisation apply to the Irish community of Lancashire during the mid-nineteenth century? Tables 6a and b show that the Irish were more likely to share houses than the non-Irish.

22. Census of Great Britain, 1851, p. xxxvi
Table 6a

Percentages of Irish hhs in multiple occupancy dwellings, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 family per house</th>
<th>2 families per house</th>
<th>3 families per house</th>
<th>4 or more families per house</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>1851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>92.3</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6b

Percentages of non-Irish hhs in multiple occupancy dwellings, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 family per house</th>
<th>2 families per house</th>
<th>3 families per house</th>
<th>4 or more families per house</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>1851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The overall percentages represent the percentage for all the households in the seven towns, equally weighted, so that an extraordinarily high or low figure which appears in a particular town, resulting from a very small number of households being considered, will not distort the picture in Lancashire generally in these breakdowns.

The low overall percentages for Irish families living in their own houses are deceptive because of the peculiar circumstances of Liverpool and Widnes. Liverpool was a port and the principal entry point for immigrants from Ireland, which makes it likely that new arrivals doubled up with Irish residents of the town while waiting to find their own housing; to emigrate to America or Australia; or to move inland. But a shortage of inexpensive housing was also responsible for the higher rates of multiple occupancy in Liverpool, which is evidenced by the relatively high rates of multiple occupancy among the non-Irish population. Widnes was a town which only began to industrialise and develop as an urban centre in 1847. Housing did not catch up with the numbers of families attracted to the town until the late 1850s. The principal immigrant group which was arriving in Widnes at the time was the Irish, and it was they who found it most difficult to find separate houses. The situation improved somewhat by 1861, but both the population of the town, and the Irish population, more than doubled during 1861-71, which strained the housing supply again. But in the other five towns usually two-thirds to three-quarters, and sometimes more, of the Irish families occupied their own houses, which meant that even with the problems of settling into a new environment, the Irish were not very much worse off than the native British in terms of multiple occupancy of houses. Looking at the mean number of households per house for Irish and non-Irish illustrates this point.
Table 7
Average number of hhs per house (Irish and non-Irish), 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851 Irish</th>
<th>1851 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1861 Irish</th>
<th>1861 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1871 Irish</th>
<th>1871 Non-Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng &amp; Wales</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was more multiple occupancy among the Irish than among the non-Irish in Lancashire, but both communities shared dwellings more often than people in England and Wales generally. These figures do not say that 'only the better off among the working class .... could afford to take a whole house to themselves'.


24. Ibid., p.48
Table 8

Average number of hhs per house (male and female), 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Non-Irish</td>
<td>Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But the census data shows that households headed by women, in both the Irish and non-Irish communities, were only slightly more likely to live in multiple occupancy dwellings than those headed by men. The difference between males and females, and between Irish and non-Irish was widest in 1851, by 1871 there was very little difference overall between male and female heads of households in their propensity to share housing with other families.

Before leaving the question of sharing of dwellings among the Irish, it is interesting to turn briefly to the families with whom the Irish shared their houses. In Widnes, which had one of the highest degrees of multiple occupancy, thirty-four of fifty-one Irish households lived in multiply occupied dwellings in 1851. But only seven of those households were sharing with other Irish families. So one-fifth of the Irish households of Widnes who shared dwellings, 14% of the Irish households of the town, did so with other Irish families. In
1861 fifty-two of sixty-five Irish households who lived in multiply occupied houses, 80%, lived with other Irish families. The percentage fell off to 64% in 1871. Overall, it appears that after 1851, when the supply of houses increased, if Irish families in Widnes shared a house with another family, they preferred to share it with other Irish people. Things were probably very much the same in the rest of urban Lancashire. But what we cannot know about this question is whether or not the decision of an Irish family to share a dwelling with other Irish people was primarily motivated by a preference for their own countrymen, or by the reluctance of the non-Irish community to cohabit with Irish immigrants. As we will see in chapter 10, the latter proposition probably was a very significant factor.

Unfortunately, the census enumerators' books do not describe the type or size of houses where people were living during 1851-71. Not until 1891 is the number of rooms included in the enumeration. But by looking at the address of a house we can know whether it is located in a street or in a court. Houses in courts were necessarily smaller than street houses, and they were generally inexpensive, inferior habitations. The census data tells us the percentage of Irish households that were living in courts.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Non-Irish</td>
<td>Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Irish were more likely to be found in courts than the native population, which indicates that they very often resorted to the most inexpensive housing available, particularly in Liverpool. A four-mile stretch along the Mersey at Liverpool contained 2,500 courts, which were all constructed before 1846 and were condemned as 'highly conducive to the persistent fostering of infectious diseases and to the high mortality which prevailed in Liverpool'. This very bad housing was said to be 'largely occupied by poor Irish'. But as Table 9 shows, court housing was very common in Liverpool, and many other people had to resort to it besides the Irish. Only in Manchester-Salford in 1851 were other significant numbers of Irish families to be found living in courts. The high percentages for St Helens, 1861, and Oldham, 1871, represent seven of thirty-six and four of thirty-six Irish households, respectively, and too much importance should not be attached to those percentages. But the overall averages show that even though the Irish were much more likely to find a home in a court than the non-Irish, the proportion of Irish in courts was declining during the mid-nineteenth century, as was the number of courts, except in Liverpool, where court dwellings continued to be a large part of the housing supply for the working class.

Houses in courts were bad enough with one family living in them, but the situation was aggravated by multiple occupancy, especially in Liverpool.

25. Farrer and Brownhill (ed.), The Victoria History of the county of Lancaster, ii, 322.
As might be expected, even though few families tried to share court dwellings in Lancashire, the Irish were more likely to do it than the non-Irish. But the number of families in a court house was smaller than in houses generally. Overall, the problem was not great outside Liverpool, which stands out with a fairly high degree of multiple occupancy in court houses. But this is indicative of a shortage of alternative housing for working people in that town.

There is another feature of urban housing in Lancashire that we cannot learn about in the census enumerators' books. We saw in the last chapter that a great problem in urban Lancashire was the large number of inhabited cellars. In a house occupied by more than one household, the census enumerator, except in a very few isolated cases, did not indicate whether or not a family lived in a cellar. But we know from contemporary commentary that the Irish had a reputation for occupying them because cellars were cheaper than accommodation in street or court houses. Liverpool had the most cellars, and the town council had begun clearing them of people and

### Table 10

Average number of hhs per court house, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851 Irish</th>
<th>1851 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1861 Irish</th>
<th>1861 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1871 Irish</th>
<th>1871 Non-Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
closing them in 1842. During the later 1840s the Irish immi-
grants, unable to squeeze into any other type of housing, 
broke into many of these cellars. But cellars were cleared 
as quickly as they were reoccupied (some 30,000 people were 
removed in 1847-8 alone), and since the ejectments were exe-
cuted without provision for alternative housing, the strain 
on the hard-pressed supply of working class housing, part-
icularly that in courts, was intensified. The principal 
group affected by this situation was the Irish community. 

Newer towns such as St Helens and Widnes did not have a 
cellar problem, but cellars were still common in the Manchester-
Salford area. And there, too, the Irish had a reputation as 
the likely occupants. A.B. Reach visited an Irish cellar 
dwelling in 1849.

The place was dark, except for the glare of a small fire. 
You could not stand without stooping in the room, which might 
be about twelve feet by eight. There were at least a dozen 
men, women and children on stools, or squatted on the stone 
floor, round the fire, and the heat and smells were oppressive. 
This not being a lodging cellar, the police had no control 
over the number of its inmates, who slept huddled on the 
stones, or on the masses of rags, shavings and straw which 
were littered about. There was nothing like a bedstead in the 
place. Farther back opened a second cellar, strewn with coals 
and splinters, bits of furze, and intermingled with rags and 
straw, lay two girls asleep in two corners. 27

Not all cellars were as bad as this, but very few could have 
been desireable habitations because they were never intended 
as homes. Unfortunately, the information available on Irish 
cellars is limited to description, and it is not possible to 
further illuminate the matter.

The make-up of Irish households in urban Lancashire is 
the next important question we must examine. A household 
need not consist simply of a household head, his wife and

26. E. Midwinter, Old Liverpool, p.97 
27. Reach, Manchester and the textile districts in 1849, 
pp 55-6
his children. Extended family, lodgers and servants might also be found living with a nuclear family. Irish households tended to be larger than non-Irish households in Lancashire during 1851-71.

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average number of persons per hh, 1851-71</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>5.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>5.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>5.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>6.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>7.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>5.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>5.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The high figures for the Irish in Oldham and St Helens in 1851 resulted from samples of twenty-six and twenty-one, respectively, and probably overstate the size of households in those towns. But the high averages in Preston were consistent in the three census years. The average household size for the whole of England and Wales in the three censuses was 4.8, 4.5 and 4.5 persons. Lancashire households were much larger than was generally true in England, particularly Irish households.

Breaking down the data on the size of households by the sex of the household head produces some interesting results.
Table 12
Average number of persons per hh, by sex of hh head, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851 Irish</th>
<th></th>
<th>1861 Irish</th>
<th></th>
<th>1871 Irish</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>4.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>6.98</td>
<td>5.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>7.71</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.48</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In both communities male-headed households were significantly larger than female-headed households. One implication of the result is that the number of children in the nuclear family of a widow or a woman living without her husband would be curtailed. But it also says that female-headed households contained fewer extended family and other additional household members, a subject which will be considered shortly. But before turning to that, it is interesting to see if the size of a household influenced the choice of housing.

The average number of persons per household can be broken down by the type of house the family occupied; that is, into street houses and court houses.
Table 13
Average number of persons per hh in streets and courts, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>Non-Irish</th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>Non-Irish</th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>Non-Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>4.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>5.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.93</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>6.78</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>6.61</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>5.49</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>5.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Households in court dwellings were usually smaller than those living in larger street houses, but Irish court households were inclined to be larger than non-Irish count households, which points to a greater degree of overcrowding in courts among the Irish than among the rest of the population. But what was the composition of an Irish household?

The principal component of a household, of course, is the nuclear family, the wife and offspring of the head of the household. The Irish had a reputation, indeed they still retain it, for large nuclear families. But do the statistics obtained from the Lancashire census enumerators' books support this well-established assumption?
Table 14

Average number of persons per nuclear family, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Non-Irish</td>
<td>Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>5.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>4.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those expecting more dramatic results will be disappointed by these averages. Irish nuclear families were larger than non-Irish families, but only slightly. If the rates of infantile mortality among the Irish and non-Irish communities were known these figures might have to be altered. But we can be certain that if the average number of nuclear family members living and dead in Lancashire's towns was known, both sets of statistics would have to be adjusted upwards. Liverpool, with a high mortality rate, had among the smallest households in Lancashire.

The size of nuclear families headed by women was smaller than in male-headed nuclear families.
Table 15
Average number of persons per nuclear family, by male and female hh heads, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Irish M</th>
<th>Irish F</th>
<th>Non-Irish M</th>
<th>Non-Irish F</th>
<th>Irish M</th>
<th>Irish F</th>
<th>Non-Irish M</th>
<th>Non-Irish F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The one exceptional circumstance appears at St Helens in 1861, but in that year there was only one female-headed household in the sample of the Irish community, which explains the departure.

Families sharing dwellings with other families were smaller than those occupying single occupancy housing.

Table 16
Average number of persons per nuclear family in single and multiple hhs, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Irish M</th>
<th>Irish F</th>
<th>Non-Irish M</th>
<th>Non-Irish F</th>
<th>Irish M</th>
<th>Irish F</th>
<th>Non-Irish M</th>
<th>Non-Irish F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>4.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St H</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>5.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>4.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Irish nuclear families in single-family houses were larger than non-Irish nuclear families in similar accommodation. But there was much less variation between nuclear family sizes in multiple-household dwellings.

The next question we can consider in regard to household composition in urban Lancashire is whether or not the Irish were more likely to have extended family (aunts, uncles, grandparents, in-laws, etc) living with them than the non-Irish. Most households did not have extra-nuclear relations living with them.

Table 17
Percentage of hhs having extended family, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Non-Irish</td>
<td>Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-Irish households were consistently more likely to have extended family living with them than the Irish during 1851-71. The fastest growing Irish community, at Widnes, had the lowest incidence of extended family members living in Irish households after the strain on housing was eased during the 1850s. Michael Anderson acknowledges this situation in his study of Preston.
It was to be expected that migrants would be significantly less likely to be living with parents and also to be living with kin, since fewer of them would have had kin in Preston ... Many of those who were living with kin, moreover, may have lived in Preston for most of their lives, having come in with their parents and siblings many years before. 28.

But what Anderson's sample does not reveal is that during the mid-nineteenth century Preston had a higher degree of households sharing dwellings with extended family than was generally true in Lancashire. But the practice declined over twenty years in both communities, more slowly among the non-Irish. So from these figures it does not appear that the Irish generally brought extended kin with them when they emigrated to Lancashire or sent for them once they settled in somewhere. The non-Irish were more likely to do this. And even though the Irish were somewhat more likely to share housing than the non-Irish, they were less likely to share it with kin.

But were the Irish more likely to share a house with more numerous relatives when they did admit extended family?

Irish extended families were larger than non-Irish extended families, but the difference was not very great generally, which is consistent with the fact that Irish households were somewhat larger than non-Irish households. Households headed by a woman had extended family living in them more often than was true in male households, which implies that their earning power was needed to help make ends meet.
Table 19

Percentages of hhs having extended family (male and female hh heads), 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th></th>
<th>1861</th>
<th></th>
<th>1871</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Non-Irish</td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Non-Irish</td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Non-Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And, as we noticed in Table 17, the non-Irish were much more likely to have extended family than the non-Irish, particularly non-Irish females.

Single persons, and sometimes families who could not, or did not want to, maintain households of their own moved in with relatives or took lodgings. The census data shows that very few persons lived on their own as a household, among either the Irish or the non-Irish. We have seen that while many people did share dwellings with kin, most did not. More people took in lodgers, which indicates this practice was an important way of supplementing incomes in urban Lancashire, as well as a source of inexpensive housing for single migrants and young people living away from home. But were the Irish more likely to take in lodgers than the non-Irish?
Table 20

Percentage of hhs having lodgers, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Irish 1851</th>
<th>Non-Irish 1851</th>
<th>Irish 1861</th>
<th>Non-Irish 1861</th>
<th>Irish 1871</th>
<th>Non-Irish 1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures include a small group of persons returned in the census books as visitors, who defy definition because the length of their stay or their status in the household is not known. They have been included among lodgers because they were additions to the household, but their numbers are insignificant and they should not upset these percentages. The Irish were much more likely to take in lodgers than the non-Irish, particularly in the 1851 samples. This is not unusual. In 1851 many Irishmen were homeless and had to find lodgings before moving on or settling into a house. Irish immigration levelled off during 1851-71, but there still was a steady stream of Irish immigrants arriving in Lancashire who needed at least temporary accommodation. Also, the extra few pence a poor Irish family could gain by lodging their countrymen was very welcome. Undoubtedly, the taking in of lodgers among the Irish involved some charitable sentiment by earlier emigrants who felt they should not leave their compatriots without shelter. But the non-Irish were...

29. Anderson, Family structure, pp 45-6
by no means reluctant to take in lodgers. Some 25% of non-Irish households in Lancashire accommodated lodgers during the mid-nineteenth century, which shows that there were many people requiring lodgings at one time or another, and many persons disposed to offer them. The lodging capital of Lancashire was not the port of Liverpool, which had thousands of temporary residents each year, but Preston. Among both the Irish and non-Irish communities of Preston, lodgers were present consistently more often in households than was generally the case in Lancashire, except for the non-Irish in 1871. But the taking of lodgers was generally declining among both groups in 1871.

The average number of lodgers in Irish households which had them was usually larger than in comparable non-Irish households.

Table 21
Average number of lodgers per hh having them, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851 Irish</th>
<th>1851 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1861 Irish</th>
<th>1861 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1871 Irish</th>
<th>1871 Non-Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only were Irish people more inclined to take in lodgers than the rest of the Lancashire community, they also took in more lodgers than the non-Irish, which tied in with the fact that nuclear families were somewhat larger among the Irish,
helps to explain why Irish households were, on average, larger than non-Irish households. But the average number of lodgers taken in declined steadily during 1851-71, along with the proportion of Irish households prepared to accommodate them.

Women heading their own households took in lodgers much more often than did men.

Table 22
Percentages of hhs having lodgers (male and female hh heads), 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851 M</th>
<th>1851 F</th>
<th>1861 M</th>
<th>1861 F</th>
<th>1871 M</th>
<th>1871 F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The taking of lodgers was at a very high level in the Irish community in 1851, regardless of the sex of the household head, which indicates that many new arrivals in Lancashire found their earnings inadequate to maintain their families. Male-headed households having lodgers in the Irish community declined to roughly 30% in 1861 and 1871, but this was much higher than non-Irish male households. Non-Irish female household heads very often took in lodgers, but overall Irishwomen found themselves in the financial position necessitating lodgers more often. Even though a high percentage of
Lancashire households had to take lodgers to supplement wage earnings, the Irish, and particularly Irishwomen, were on a generally lower income level.

Some families found it necessary to bring domestic help into their households. Under this general heading of servants come all housekeepers, cooks and domestics. The practice was by no means restricted to middle-class families. Working-class lodging house keepers and people with large families would also engage help. The cost of retaining a household helper was not very great during the nineteenth century, but still it was out of the range of most people. Where did the Irish stand in relation to the rest of the community in this regard?

Table 23
Percentages of hhs having servants, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th></th>
<th>1861</th>
<th></th>
<th>1871</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Non-Irish</td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Non-Irish</td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Non-Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Irish households were much less likely to engage domestic help than the non-Irish. The incidence of servants declined in both communities over two decades, but to a greater extent among the Irish. Domestic help was particularly popular in St Helens in 1851 among the Irish and the non-Irish, but much less so in the other two census years. Altogether, very few Irish families had the means to engage servants.
But it might be expected that women heading households on their own would be more likely to bring in domestic help. The census data indicates that, except for the Irish community in 1871, women had the resources to engage household help less often than men.

Table 24
Percentages of hhs having servants (male and female hh heads), 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Non-Irish</td>
<td>Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Irish were much less likely to have servants than the non-Irish, but it was very rare that an Irishwoman could afford domestic help.

Before leaving the subject of additional members of urban households we can see how many families contained more than one category of extra member. For example, few households had both extended family and lodgers living in them.
Table 25
Percentages of hhs having extended family and lodgers, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851 Irish</th>
<th>1851 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1861 Irish</th>
<th>1861 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1871 Irish</th>
<th>1871 Non-Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Irish were much more likely to have more than one type of extra-nuclear family member living in their households, which once again points to the reason for larger household sizes.

So far, it does not appear that the Irish in Lancashire lived very differently than the rest of the community. But there was a feature of Irish life in Lancashire which was markedly out of line with general conditions. The Irish had a remarkable capacity for enduring overcrowded houses.
Table 26
Average number of persons per house, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>Non-Irish</th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>Non-Irish</th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>Non-Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>9.35</td>
<td>7.22</td>
<td>8.59</td>
<td>7.65</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>7.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>8.16</td>
<td>6.64</td>
<td>6.78</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>5.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>5.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>6.16</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>5.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>8.05</td>
<td>6.51</td>
<td>7.48</td>
<td>5.49</td>
<td>6.44</td>
<td>5.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>8.95</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>6.42</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>6.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>9.96</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>7.48</td>
<td>6.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>8.79</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>7.04</td>
<td>5.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancs</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng &amp; Wales</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the whole of 1851-71 urban Lancashire was significantly more crowded than the county as a whole, but no part of the urban population more so than the Irish. Crowding was worst for both communities in Liverpool, which always had a surfeit of urban problems, and Widnes, where population succeeded in outrunning housing supply during its industrial expansion. There was a gradual thinning out in housing during 1851-71, but by the latter date housing in urban Lancashire was still very crowded, especially among the Irish. Irish families were more likely to share dwellings with other families and had larger households than the non-Irish. When these two facts are considered separately they do not appear very striking overall. But the two factors together meant a higher incidence of overcrowding among the Irish than among the non-Irish. Overcrowding was most serious in the late 1840s and early 1850s, when the Irish were arriving in vast numbers and had difficulty in obtaining accommodation. One account describes how serious this situation became, particularly in Liverpool.
Houses of the lowest class were so crowded during this period that it was common to see every apartment of the dwelling occupied by several families, without a partition or curtain to separate them. Every tide floated in a new importation of Irish misery....

Thousands of newly-arrived immigrant Irish also meant that the non-Irish would have greater difficulty finding housing. Even though overcrowding was not solely an Irish problem, it was more of a problem for them than for the rest of the community.

Of course, houses occupied by more than one household were much more crowded than single-household dwellings.

Table 27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Non-Irish</td>
<td>Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S M</td>
<td>S M</td>
<td>S M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>6.49 12.5</td>
<td>5.75 10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>6.27 11.5</td>
<td>5.22 11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>5.42 10.6</td>
<td>5.71 9.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>8.36 12.5</td>
<td>5.3 13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>7.09 12.1</td>
<td>6.15 10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>7.83 15.7</td>
<td>6.63 14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>5.71 12.1</td>
<td>4.91 8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>6.45 12.1</td>
<td>5.57 10.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But Irish multiple-household dwellings were usually worse than those of the non-Irish, particularly in Liverpool. We cannot know exactly what type of houses were most likely to be overcrowded from the information given in the enumerators' books. But since, with few exceptions, housing for the working-class in Lancashire consisted of two-storey cottages of two large rooms, or four rooms half the size of two large rooms, perhaps with a habitable cellar underneath, we can assume that it was usually these which were being overcrowded,
rather than larger tenements. Only in Liverpool did people seriously overcrowd the smaller houses in courts, and the worst offenders were the Irish.

Table 28

Average number of persons per house (streets and courts), 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>Non-Irish</th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>Non-Irish</th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>Non-Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S C</td>
<td>S C</td>
<td>S C</td>
<td>S C</td>
<td>S C</td>
<td>S C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>9.49</td>
<td>8.81</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>8.32</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>6.71</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>6.91</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>6.01</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
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<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.52</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>9.96</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>8.91</td>
<td>8.05</td>
<td>6.73</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>7.17</td>
<td>7.73</td>
<td>7.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
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<td>5.75</td>
<td>7.0</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7.48</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.49</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.89</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>6.91</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>7.48</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
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<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>6.44</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
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<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>6.16</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The degree of overcrowding in courts was lessening by 1871, but the Irish still crowded courts more often and more densely than the non-Irish.

Even though households headed by women were more likely to share a house, that house would be less overcrowded after 1851.
Table 29

Average number of persons per house (males and females), 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Non-Irish</td>
<td>Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M F</td>
<td>M F</td>
<td>M F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
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<td>7.26 7.06</td>
<td>8.72 7.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>8.07 8.47</td>
<td>6.65 6.59</td>
<td>6.99 5.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>7.05 5.8</td>
<td>5.86 6.92</td>
<td>6.34 4.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>9.33 5.0</td>
<td>5.42 5.0</td>
<td>6.29 5.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>8.41 6.9</td>
<td>6.42 6.94</td>
<td>7.82 6.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>8.95 -</td>
<td>7.39 7.8</td>
<td>6.4  7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>10.1 8.33</td>
<td>5.3 5.5</td>
<td>6.78 4.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>8.82 8.69</td>
<td>6.65 6.79</td>
<td>7.59 6.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During 1851-61 Irish females were much more likely to live in an overcrowded house than the non-Irish, a situation which appears to have been reversed in 1871. But no matter how the data on the total number of persons living in a house is broken down, in an urban environment where crowded housing was a great problem, the Irish stood out as living in worse conditions than other people.

Census enumerators' books provide a great deal of useful information on living conditions in mid-nineteenth-century Lancashire, and they help us assess differences between the Irish community and their non-Irish neighbours. During 1851-71 Irish households were more often found sharing dwellings than the non-Irish, especially in Liverpool and Widnes where there were serious shortages of housing. But fewer Irish households shared their houses by 1871. The smaller, less expensive, and much less desirable, houses in the confined courts attracted a higher proportion of Irish families than
non-Irish families, but the number of courts and the percentage of Irish living in them decreased sharply during 1851-71, except in Liverpool where there was little alternative accommodation. On average, an Irish household was larger than a non-Irish one, which indicates both larger nuclear families and a higher incidence of added household members, such as extended family and lodgers. A higher proportion of non-Irish families had extended family living with them, but a significantly larger number of Irish households took in lodgers and, on average, took in a larger number of lodgers. There was a decrease in extra household members during 1851-71 in both communities, which led to generally smaller households by the end of the period. It should be kept in mind that in these areas the Irish were not very much different from their non-Irish neighbours. But this is not true respecting the numbers of persons living in an individual house. Lancashire, one of the most urbanised regions of the United Kingdom, had a high density of population per house. The Irish stood out as more overcrowded than the urban community generally; and even though the situation eased by 1871, they were still seriously overcrowded.

But census books provide us only with statistics. They do not comment or hypothesise on the conditions they help us reconstruct. Likewise, they cannot describe for us the houses the enumerations were carried out in, or tell us about the appearances of the persons who were counted. Were they living in a well-kept, well-furnished house, or in a filthy hovel? Were they clad in rags, or were they neatly dressed? We must turn to less precise descriptive material to attempt to answer these and other questions.

Irish living conditions in Lancashire had a certain notoriety during the mid-nineteenth century. A Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, remarked about the Liverpool Irish in 1861 that
Increased wages were earned, but from the absence of all artificial wants they are expended merely in animal indulgences. More and better food is used; spirits, tobacco, and beer are largely consumed; but the home is as filthy and dilapidated as ever. There is not much improvement either in the clothing, except that the children more commonly wear shoes. After an eight or ten years' residence the ties of neighbourhood and public opinion, broken by removal from Ireland, are in great part restored, and the moral condition of the family rises nearly to its former level. A large proportion, indeed, have sunk, irretrievably into profligacy and crime; but against this may be set the equally large number of those who acquire habits of saving, along with the means to save, invest their money in trade, take shops, become superintendents in warehouses, and in various ways struggle up into the middle classes of society.

This passage illustrates very well the problems entailed in the use of this sort of material. It is a generalisation which, while containing some truth, probably distorts Irish life in Liverpool by excessive negative emphasis. The drunkards, the brawlers and the ragged, of course, stood out in the urban community, but it is doubtful whether they could be considered representative of the immigrant Irish, or even, as Professor Shaw allows, half of it. For Liverpool's Medical Officer of Health, Dr Trench, the large number of Irish and other destitute immigrants promiscuously collected in certain squalid localities; filth and penury pent up in airless dwellings; frequent change of residence, scattering and receiving thereby the seeds of infectious diseases; the crowding of many families in single houses; the restricted superficial area of streets and blocks of buildings, the preponderance of narrow, ill-ventilated courts and alleys; the construction and position of middens and cesspools constituted a massive urban problem. But this litany of Liverpool's numerous difficulties tells more about the town's inferior and inadequate housing than about the Irish families who lived in it. Unfortunately, there is no third source.

31. G.F. Shaw, 'The Irish labourer in Liverpool' in Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (1861), pp 683-4
32. MOH, Report to the health committee of the Borough of Liverpool on the health of the town, 1863 (LCL, H.352.4.HEA), pp 7-8
between the bare, quantitative picture outlined in the cen-
sus enumerators' books and the florid, exaggerated townscape
painted by contemporary observers. So, in trying to catch a
further glimpse of town life among the Irish, we will have
to use the illustrative data carefully and selectively.

The most famous description of the Lancashire Irish came
from Friedrich Engels in 1844. Looking at the immigrants in
Manchester, it seemed to him that the Irish and squalor were
inseparable.

The poorer districts of Dublin are among the ugliest and most
revolting in the world. The national character of the Irish
is partly responsible for this. The Irish are less bound by
social convention than some of their neighbours and on occa-
sion actually seem to be happy in dirty surroundings. Since
thousands of Irish immigrants are to be found in every great
town of England and Scotland and since every slum quarter
gradually sinks into a state of squalor, it cannot be claimed
that the deplorable state of Dublin is unique. 33

The worst accommodation is good enough for them; they take
no trouble with regard to their clothes which hang in tatters;
they go barefoot. They live solely on potatoes and any money
left over from the purchase of potatoes goes on drink. Such
folk do not need high wages. The slums of all the big cities
swarm with Irish. One may depend upon seeing mainly Celtic
faces if ever one penetrates into a district which is particu-
larly noted for its filth and decay .... The majority of
cellar-dwellers are nearly always Irish in origin. 34

If this evidence was considered alone, as it all too
often is, it would be easy to conclude that only the Irish
were poor and only the Irish lived in rundown slums. In the
mid-1840s sanitation was no better in streets where English
workers lived than where Irishmen lived. The Irish, as a
group, were probably poorer than the native community and
they had to take advantage of the most inexpensive housing,
which was also the worst housing. But it is misleading to
say that they preferred squalid conditions to better condit-

33. F. Engels, The condition of the working class in England,
p.40
34. Ibid., p.105
ions. Coming from a cruder, underdeveloped, rural background, the Irish had different standards than the English and probably set their sights correspondingly lower. Only experience of town life, urban acculturation, would reverse this. Looking back to the census data, we see that the Irish were not very different from their neighbours except in overcrowding of dwellings. But even by contemporary standards, the rest of urban Lancashire was overcrowded too. Also, descriptions such as Engels's assume that the Irish lived in ghettos where no one born outside the Irish community would be allowed to, or would want to, reside. This again distorts the picture, as we shall see in the next part of this chapter. There were many poor, ragged English people in Lancashire's towns as well. So altogether, the fact that the Irish standard of living was probably generally pretty low is a relative proposition, because the rest of the urban community did not have things much better. Urban working people in Lancashire, and especially the Irish, were all victims of what has been called a 'poverty trap' where the 'combination and interaction of inadequate resources, poor surroundings and existing official machinery hinder or even defeat self-help'.\textsuperscript{35} The poorest of the Irish seem to exemplify the worst aspects of nineteenth-century urban life. But the information on which this conclusion is based is very imprecise and tentative.

We can know somewhat more about the dress of the Irish and how they kept their houses.

The vast majority of the workers are clad in rags. The material from which the workers' clothes are made is by no means ideal for its purpose. Linen and wool have practically disappeared from the wardrobes of both men and women, and have been replaced by cotton. Men's shirts are made of bleached or coloured cotton cloth. Women generally wear printed cottons .... Men's trousers are generally made either of fustian or some other heavy cotton cloth. Overcoats and

\textsuperscript{35} John Ardill, The Guardian, 7 May 1974
jackets are made from the same material .... The working classes have to do without .... extra protection, and indeed very seldom wear woollen clothing of any kind .... A very large number of workers, particularly the Irish, wear extremely ragged clothing, which is either incapable of being patched any more or has been so often patched in the past that the original colour can no longer be detected .... But the recent arrivals from Ireland hardly ever patch their clothes, except in the last resort, to stop them from falling apart. Usually an Irishman's ragged shirt can be seen protruding through the tears and holes in his jacket and trousers. 36

But their dress was one of the first things the Irish set about improving after their arrival in Lancashire, and this has been attributed to the example of their English neighbours.

In their dress and personal appearance the Irish usually made considerable improvement. This was noticed particularly in the schools and factories where the Irish children, after a short attendance, soon became indistinguishable in outward appearance from the others, however ragged and dirty they may have been at the beginning. 37

A.B. Reach visited these same working people in 1849 and found himself among swarms of mechanics and artisans in their distinguishing fustian - of factory operatives, in general undersized, sallow-looking men - and of factory girls, somewhat stunted and pale, but smart and active looking, with dingy dresses and dark shawls, speckled with flakes of cotton-wool, wreathed around their heads. 38

The observant Reach paid close attention to dress, but he noticed other things too. Men commonly wore 'blue striped shirts, trousers, and slippers, the women generally envelope themselves in coarse pinafores and loose jackets tying round

36. Engels, op. cit., pp 79-80
38. Reach, Manchester and the textile districts in 1849, p.2
They have an essentially greasy look, which makes me sometimes think that water would run off their skins as it does off a duck's back. In this respect the women are just as bad as the men .... it is very seldom that their feet see the interior of a tub, with plenty of hot water and soap. 40

This situation is attributable to a general lack of water in working-class houses at this time, a deficiency which was only gradually overcome during the succeeding twenty years. But even where bath facilities were provided, the working people 'absolutely declined making use of them, and, as a general rule, can with very great difficulty, if at all, be made to appreciate the advantages of clean skin and free pores'. 41

Reach examined the Mancunian operatives more closely still.

I do not remember seeing one male or female adult to whom I would apply the epithet of a 'stout' man or woman. There is certainly no superfluidity of flesh in the factories. When I say this, I do not by any means intend to insinuate that the people are unhealthy, or unnaturally lean; they are generally thin and spare, but not emaciated. By such occupation as is afforded in the various branches of the cotton spinning, much muscle cannot be expected to be developed .... They present no indication of what is called 'rude' health .... The hue of the skin is the least favourable characteristic. It is a tallowy-yellow. The faces which surround you in a factory are, for the most part, lively in character, but cadaverous and overspread by a sort of unpleasant greasy pallor. 42

Reach was very meticulous in compiling his accounts, but he made no distinctions between the Irish and the non-Irish, which probably means that by 1849 the Irish very closely resembled the rest of the community in personal appearance.

39. Ibid., p.15
40. Ibid., pp 15-6
41. Ibid., p.16
42. Ibid., pp 16-7
During the mid-1840s Engels found that the Irish were not very particular about how they decorated their homes.

The Irish are not used to furniture: a heap of straw and a few rags too tattered to wear in the day time suffice for bedding. The Irish need only a bare plank, a broken chair and an old chest for a table. All that the Irishwoman needs in her kitchen are a teapot, a few saucepans and coarse dishes. The kitchen also serves as the living room and bedroom. If an Irishman is short of fuel, everything within reach is thrown on the fire - chairs, door posts, skirting boards, shelves and floor boards, if they are still there. Why should an Irishman want anything more than the minimum accommodation? At home, in Ireland, he lived in a mud cabin where a single room sufficed for all purposes. In England, too, his family needs no more than one room. 43

Even if Engels's description is an exaggeration of the actual situation, it is probably true that in the early part of 1846-71 the Irish were less concerned with household fixtures than the more settled non-Irish. Their rural background had a great deal to do with this, but, also, the overcrowded houses would have little space for more than rudimentary furnishings anyway. Not every Irish working man left his house bare of furniture or threw what he had on the fire at the first opportunity. In 1849 A.B. Reach noticed that the superior class room seemed, by a sort of natural sequence, to attract the superior class furniture. A fair proportion of what was deal in Ancoats was mahogany in Hulme. Yet the people of Hulme get no higher wages than the people of Ancoats. The secret is that they live in better-built houses, and consequently take more pleasure and pride in their dwellings. 44

As long as Irish families lived in inferior, inexpensive housing they would be slow to improve the interiors of their homes.

The appearance and life style of working people had not changed much by 1870. Physical conditions were still generally poor.

43. Engels, op. cit., p.106
44. Ibid., pp 16-7
We have, then, a population who are living in houses originally badly planned, and very closely crowded together, and who are placed, partly by their own faults, partly by circumstances, in conditions which necessitate their breathing an atmosphere which is highly foetid from several causes .... The unhappy people seem to know none of the comforts, and few of the decencies of life, and widespread habits of drunkenness, and consequent want of food, aid their wretched homes in destroying their health. 45

There were still many working-class people who could not furnish their homes or clothe themselves properly.

We could not have believed that in any town in this country we could have gone into room after room and house after house, and have found in so many cases, literally, almost nothing but the bare walls, a heap of straw covered by dirty rags, and possibly the remains of a broken chair or table .... There were no cooking utensils of any kind, or only an old saucepan. The inmates then depended for the means of rudely cooking what food they could get (in our visits chiefly fish and bread) on a neighbours kindness .... it was evident many persons had no change of clothes. On pressing the enquiry as to how they washed, and what they did at night, we extracted from several that they occasionally washed their hands and faces at the tap, but seldom removed their clothes. In some cases, both of men and women, we made out that the clothes had not been removed for several weeks. In our visit at night, we sometimes found that the clothes had been partly removed, and were then drawn over the person .... The influence of such a mode of life as this on health in general, and, in particular, on the propagation of typhus and other contagious diseases in this way, need not be insisted on. 46

Amid this scene the 'especially' careless habits of the immigrant Irish were noticeable. 47

This material does not tell us everything we would like to know about how people actually lived in Lancashire during the mid-nineteenth century. If an inventory of possessions and a family portrait were included in the census enumerators' books, we would be better able to guage general living standards and compare them to those of the immigrant Irish. But this short account will add some substance to the census data.

45. Parkes and Sanderson, On the sanitary condition of Liverpool, p.68
46. Ibid., pp 65-6
47. Ibid., p.66
It is very often assumed that the Irish in urban Lancashire, and in any other urban area they emigrated to, were a very insular people who preferred to crowd into, and remain in, miserable districts in order to be near their countrymen. But was this, in fact, the case? Were the Irish ghetto-prone, or was their some other influence operating?

The general report on the census of England and Wales for 1861 states that the Irish 'abound in the large towns.... generally occupying particular streets and quarters'. 48 Liverpool certainly offers proof of this assertion. In 1851 a great many Irish were found crowded into the narrow streets and courts of the northern Scotland and Vauxhall wards, in the central Exchange ward and in the southern docks area and Toxteth Park. 49 'The three outstanding areas of Irish settlement are, therefore, the northern and southern dockland zones and the compact central area.' 50 There were also areas of lesser density of Irish inhabitants contiguous to these principal neighbourhoods and an extensive area of low Irish concentration is to be found in the southeast and peripheral areas of the parish /of Liverpool/ notably in Abercromby and Rodney wards, with their numerous middle-class residences, incongruent to the settlement of predominantly labouring Irish. 51

But does this 'spatial distinctiveness' of Irish neighbourhoods mean simply that the Liverpool Irish liked to live near to each other? The reassurance of the presence of

49. Lawton, 'Irish immigration to England and Wales in the mid-nineteenth century', pp 48-9
51. Ibid., pp 19-20
fellow countrymen certainly had some attractions for the immigrant Irish, but several other, possibly overriding, factors influenced an Irishman's decision to move into a court in the Scotland or Vauxhall ward.

Irish settlement in the parish /of Liverpool/ was closely related to the availability of inexpensive housing, which often was of poor quality .... It also reflected the economic ceiling under which the Irish laboured .... The concentration into areas of poor housing stock was, therefore, inevitable for the majority of the Irish, and their tendency to remain in the same districts where work was found plus the lack of social escalation in the following generations, perpetuated the Irish social area tradition. 52

The alleged 'lack of social escalation' will be considered when we discuss occupations, but the other points made in this summary deserve more immediate attention.

The districts where Irish 'social areas' were found were just behind Liverpool's docks. These were the first places the Irish came to when they arrived in Lancashire. The housing there was of very poor quality, but it was also very inexpensive. So it is not extraordinary that the Irish would move in there when they could. Many Liverpool Irishmen worked on the docks, loading and unloading cargoes, or in transport, and the inexpensive housing was convenient to this source of employment. To the more or less permanent residents from Ireland also must be added thousands of emigrants, waiting to travel to America or Australia, who lodged in the docks area while waiting to reembark. So even if the emigration from Ireland had not been of mass proportions, many Irish would have been found in the Liverpool docks region, as indeed there were prior to 1846. But the emigration turned into an exodus of very large proportions during the late 1840s and early 1850s. And when the Irish started tramping through the Scotland or Vauxhall wards with greater frequency, it followed

52. Ibid., p.44
that greater numbers would stay, which increased the Irish populations of these areas. As more immigrants followed, they found that the attractiveness of cheap housing and proximity to employment was enhanced by the presence of other Irishmen. Economic imperatives caused the Irish to move to the areas which became identified as Irish neighbourhoods, and these restraints preceded any positive inclination of the Irish to group together.

There is mention of Irish neighbourhoods in other Lancashire towns as well. The best known was Manchester's Little Ireland, off the Oxford Road in Deansgate. Unfortunately, the 1851 census enumerators' books for the neighbourhood were rendered unreadable by water damage and rats at the Public Record Office, so an examination of the area for that date is impossible. Most of the area was taken over by a railway and factories in the succeeding twenty years, but it does appear that the district was inhabited mainly by Irish during the early part of 1846-71. A visitor reported in 1853 that the 'inhabitants of this locality are for the most part Irish, but not entirely so'.\(^{53}\) Despite the lack of hard information about Little Ireland, this Irish neighbourhood can tell us something about the reputed Little Irelands of urban Lancashire. The reason that Little Ireland received any attention at all was not because of its Irish population, but because, from point of view of public health, it was in a bad state. Other bad neighbourhoods in Manchester were also investigated, and if Irish residents were found, this fact was remarked on and a reputation as an Irish colony was created.\(^{54}\) But when I went through all the Manchester census books in three census years, although not taking acc-

\(^{53}\) A.T.H. Waters, Report on the sanitary condition of certain parts of Manchester....1853 in Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association Reports, 1853-62 (M/RCL, 61406 ML Manch), p.10

\(^{54}\) Ibid., pp 7-8, 21
ount of Irish residence patterns in a systematic way, I noticed that though more Irish were living in the older districts, where housing was cheapest, they were generally dispersed throughout the town. No conspicuous Little Ireland was visible. The high concentration of Irish in some areas, which has been systematically shown to exist in Liverpool by John Flamson, was not a feature of Manchester. The Little Irelands that people thought they perceived were areas of poor housing and poor people which contained Irish residents as well as others. They were only Irish neighbourhoods in the sense that the Irish were very often poorly housed.

The Irish were found more often in certain parts of Oldham and Preston than in others, but, once again, this appears to be linked more closely to cheap housing than a desire to stick together. Salford and St Helens show no apparent clustering of Irish households in the census books. But Widnes bore a closer similarity to Liverpool. The census books for 1861 and 1871, when the number of Irish living in the town was more more significant than in 1851, show that even though the Irish were found all over the town, they concentrated in one principal area. During the mid-nineteenth century Widnes was divided into three residential areas, which were very distinctly separated by alkali works, railway lines and open space. The Irish totally dominated the middle area and spread out along the connecting roads to the northern area and into the upper streets of the southern area. But to say that this was a purposeful grouping by the Irish could be deceptive, because in a town as small as Widnes, the Irish would always be in close proximity to one another anyway.

But the fact that the dormitory areas were divided into dis-

56. Map of Widnes, c.1860 (LRO, PR 2897/16/1)
tinctive districts by moderate distances strongly suggests that Irish areas, formed in the same way as those in Liverpool, existed at Widnes.

The question of population fluidity, about which very little is known for Lancashire, would also have an important bearing on this discussion. If the Lancashire Irish tended to be migratory, then the proposition that their choice of residence was more strongly influenced by cheap housing than ethnic solidarity becomes much more formidable. Thernstrom points out that

A crucial characteristic of American city life in the classic era of heavy immigration was precisely that city dwellers in general, and poor people in particular, were highly transient, leaving a single faint imprint on the census schedule or the city directory files and then vanishing completely. 57

But an extensive analysis of census enumerators' books, and possibly local directories, will be necessary before the questions of population fluidity and Irish residence patterns can be resolved.

Still another possibility is suggested by Michael Anderson. 'It seems evident .... that some related persons did make positive efforts to live near one another, and to a remarkable extent succeeded. 58

Some bias in favour of residence near to parents and to the home in which one was brought up would be expected, even if attachments were minimal. Sons would seek homes near their work and friends, and also would be more likely to know about housing vacancies in the local area .... many, perhaps even a majority, of people did deliberately live near one or more kinsmen and many others probably tried to. This strongly suggests kinship was providing significant functions for them .... However imperfect, they were still the most important source of assistance that there was for the mass of the population. 59

57. Thernstrom, The other Bostonians, p.41
58. Anderson, Family structure, p.59
59. Ibid., pp 59-62
The family was as important an institution for the Irish as it was for the non-Irish. High proportions of Irish households in certain areas could be the result of Irish families staying near to each other, rather than simply compatriots staying close together. But more detailed research is necessary to test the significance of propinquity of kinsmen among the Lancashire Irish.

Altogether, it does not appear that the Irish tried to seal themselves off from the rest of the population by grouping themselves into particular, 'Irish' neighbourhoods. Even in Liverpool and Widnes, where there was a high degree of geographical concentration, other motives dictated the choice of residence. The desire to be near their countrymen cannot be altogether discounted. For some immigrants this was undoubtedly a higher priority than housing in their price range or near to employment, but how many such persons there were we will never know. More often the appeal of living near other Irishmen only became apparent after the decision to find an appropriately priced house was taken. Another unquantifiable influence is information filtering back to Ireland about the whereabouts of relatives and friends in Lancashire. This, of course, would involve people following other Irish people, but they were joining particular Irish households, not an Irish community. But once again, we cannot know who these people were or how many of them there were.

Except for Liverpool and Widnes, which were exceptional cases, it does not appear one can accurately talk about Irish neighbourhoods in Lancashire, if one is referring to a neighbourhood the Irish purposely took over for their own residence to the exclusion of non-Irish persons. The word ghetto certainly cannot be applied anywhere in Lancashire. Thernstrom found the same situation in Boston. 'There were indeed ghettos in Boston, if by that one merely means neighbourhoods with
strong clusterings of poor people from ethnic minorities. As in Lancashire, the existence of an Irish or Italian neighbourhood in Boston was more the result of a search for cheap housing than a search for other Irishmen or Italians. A social attachment might develop in an area where numerous Irishmen found themselves, but that was a by-product of the economic considerations which drove them there in the first place. The general absence of residential segregation among the Irish means that this obstacle to their assimilation into the larger Lancashire community was avoided. But that assimilation was hindered by other problems, as we shall see later in this chapter and in chapter 10.

Before turning to the types of occupations the Irish held in Lancashire, we can look briefly at the birthplaces of Irish household members. Members of Irish nuclear families, apart from the head of the household, were more likely to be born in England than in Ireland.

Table 30

Percentages of nuclear family in Irish hhs born in Ireland, England and elsewhere, 1851-71 (does not include hh head)

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<td>34.8</td>
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<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<td>38.7</td>
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<td>59.9</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>41.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

60. Thernstrom, op. cit., p.41
This indicates that most children in Irish households were English-born. The percentage of Irish-born nuclear family members declined over twenty years and shows that while during the 1840s and early 1850s emigration was affecting families, after that time the bulk of the emigrants were single people or young marrieds coming to Lancashire without families. But extended family living in Irish households were much more likely to be Irish-born than English-born during 1851-61. The levelling off of emigration from Ireland during the 1860s swung this figure in favour of the English-born by 1871.

Table 31
Percentages of extended families in Irish hhs born in Ireland, England and elsewhere, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ire.</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It makes sense that immediate relatives were usually Irish-born during the early part of the period. The one-third born in England were probably the English-born offspring of these immediate relatives and English-born in-laws from inside and outside the Irish community. The change after 1861 has important implications. It reflects that the Lancashire Irish community was increasingly English-born, but it also suggests that there was a higher degree of marriage with non-Irish-born
persons. Many of these non-Irish-born were probably English-born members of the Irish community. But there was probably greater intermarriage with the surrounding community as well. The extra members of an Irish household, the lodgers and servants, were also usually born in Ireland.

Table 32
Percentages of lodgers and servants in Irish hhs born in Ireland, England and elsewhere, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proportion of English-born increased during 1851-61, but remained static during the following decade. Lodgers, who made up the overwhelming body of this group, in Irish households were much more likely to be born in Ireland than anywhere else. This illustrates that lodgings in Irish households, besides being an added source of income for those already living in Lancashire, were an important source of inexpensive accommodation for new arrivals from Ireland and those immigrants living in Lancashire without families.
The final part of this chapter involves the important subject of occupational patterns among the Irish in Lancashire. Before examining the particular jobs that the Irish held during the mid-nineteenth century, a few remarks about the general industrial situation as it affected labour are appropriate.

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century industrialisation was drawing many rural migrants to English towns. 61

Migration is the prime mechanism by which the labour force is redistributed in response to shifts in the location of industry brought about by technological innovation, the discovery of new resources and other circumstances. A geographically rooted workforce unwilling to migrate to seize new employment opportunities can significantly retard productive growth. 62

Migration was certainly an important element in the expansion of industry in the northwest of England during the nineteenth century, and an important part of the migrant labour came from Ireland. Cornwall Lewis said in 1836 that the Irish were necessary for industrial growth in England because they were a mobile labour force able to go where they were needed. 63

This mobility had only developed widely in Ireland during the 1830s and 1840s. As we saw in chapter 1, Arthur Redford remarked that poor rural people, such as the small tenant farmers and agricultural labourers of Ireland, were more likely to be immobile 'except under the spur of extreme necessity'. 'They do not migrate whenever it is to their economic interest, but only when they must.' 64

The worsening socio-economic situation in Ireland during the 1820s-40s period was gradually

62. Thernstrom, The other Bostonians, p.228
63. Report on the state of the Irish poor in Great Britain, p. xxxvi, H.C., 1836 (40), xxxiv, 462
64. Redford, op. cit., p.95
breaking down reservations about removing from Ireland to settle in America or England, and emigration was on the increase. But the cataclysmic experience of the famine and clearances of the late 1840s dispelled the reluctance which remained, and emigration became an accepted economic alternative. Some migrated within Ireland to large towns and cities, but many more left the country.

When we consider the redundancy of a large part of the working classes in Ireland, and the low rate of wages even to those who find employment; and the comparatively high rates of wages in England and Scotland, and the continual and increasing demand for labour in the large towns; together with the facility of intercourse which exists between Ireland and Britain since the introduction of steam navigation, nothing seems more natural than that labourers should go from places where they are not wanted and wages are low, to places where they are wanted and wages are high.

The occupational experience of the immigrant Irish hardly made them appear as a group likely to enhance the development of industry in Lancashire. Very few Irish emigrants who arrived in Lancashire during 1846-71 had any industrial experience at all, and most had worked as agricultural labourers. This was still the case during the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s. During 1879-1901, when the occupations of Irish emigrants to England were recorded, on average, over 74% of the males described themselves as labourers. With limited experience such as this, what occupations did the Irish turn to in Lancashire during 1846-71?

The Irish had a reputation for being found mainly in the 'less attractive class of work' and in manual labouring jobs. The Irish were said to be engaged in work 'which Englishmen disliked because the work was dirty, disreputable, or other-

65. Lyons, Ireland since the famine, p.44
67. Emigration statistics for Ireland, 1879-1901, H.C., 1880-1902
wise undesirable'. The construction trades attracted many Irish labourers. A Liverpool Irishman, John Denvir, claimed that he 'never knew a bricklayers' labourer who was not an Irishman'. Improvements in transportation, such as road building, canal cutting, railway construction, harbour works, dock labour, also provided a source of 'hard manual employment for the Irish immigrants'. In general, it seemed that the Irish were found at the occupational bottom of most industries.

In most manufactures, as in outdoor work, the Irish supplied the lower grades of labour. In the Lancashire cotton industry, for instance, there were thousands of Irish workers, but they were rarely employed in the most highly paid processes, such as spinning. They were mostly to be found in the blowing rooms and the cardrooms.

But does the data available in the census enumerators' books support these generalisations?

For the purposes of this study all occupations in the sampled households were classified under thirty-four headings, based on the classifications of the census commissioners of 1871. Of course, hundreds of different occupations can be found in the census books, but to consider each separately sets up enormous difficulties for analysis. This examination will be more general, without sacrificing too much interesting detail. Twenty-nine of the headings are divided among four larger categories, professional, domestic, commercial and industrial. The remaining five headings are no occupation.

68. Redford, op. cit., p.154
70. Redford, op. cit., p.150
71. Ibid., p.151
72. Census of England and Wales, 1871: Population abstracts, iii, pp 419-20, H.C., 1873 [C.872/ lxxi, Pt.1
Figure 1

Occupations (percentages) of hh heads (males and females), 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851 Irish</th>
<th></th>
<th>1861 Irish</th>
<th></th>
<th>1871 Irish</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M F M F</td>
<td>M F M F</td>
<td>M F M F</td>
<td>M F M F</td>
<td>M F M F</td>
<td>M F M F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professions</td>
<td>.4 - .1.5</td>
<td>.2 - 1.4</td>
<td>.4 .7</td>
<td>.7 .20</td>
<td>.7 .20</td>
<td>.7 .20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>.1 - .3</td>
<td>.5 .2 .4</td>
<td>.2 .1 .1</td>
<td>.2 .1 .1</td>
<td>.2 .1 .1</td>
<td>.2 .1 .1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board/lodging</td>
<td>1.3 5.3 .5</td>
<td>6.9 .8</td>
<td>3.7 6.6 .2</td>
<td>3.4 4.7</td>
<td>1.0 3.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>service</td>
<td>.6 24.2</td>
<td>.3 24.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>.7 27.0</td>
<td>.5 19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>1.8 - 5.6</td>
<td>1.1 .3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>.8 4.8</td>
<td>3.1 1.4</td>
<td>.4 3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small business</td>
<td>7.9 2.1</td>
<td>9.6 11.6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.3 10.1</td>
<td>9.7 5.3</td>
<td>7.2 10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>8.9 - 9.9</td>
<td>.5 6.6</td>
<td>.8 12.8</td>
<td>.4 7.2</td>
<td>.7 11.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk/cashier</td>
<td>1.1 - 1.8</td>
<td>1.0 - 2.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawker</td>
<td>1.2 2.6</td>
<td>.5 .5</td>
<td>1.0 6.1</td>
<td>.8 - .4</td>
<td>4.0 .8</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messenger</td>
<td>.1 - .3</td>
<td>.1 - .3</td>
<td>.1 - .1</td>
<td>.1 - .1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisan</td>
<td>18.1 3.2</td>
<td>22.6 1.6</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>2.0 24.1</td>
<td>1.3 13.7</td>
<td>1.4 22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabric/dress</td>
<td>7.2 12.6</td>
<td>5.5 8.5</td>
<td>5.6 9.3</td>
<td>2.7 8.0</td>
<td>3.5 12.6</td>
<td>3.1 11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miner</td>
<td>- - 2.1</td>
<td>.2 - 1.8</td>
<td>.2 - .2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal, glass,</td>
<td>3.4 - 3.8</td>
<td>.2 5.4</td>
<td>.9 1.7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>earthenware</td>
<td>3.4 - 3.0</td>
<td>3.5 - 1.9</td>
<td>3.3 - 2.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>30.9 2.6</td>
<td>13.3 3.2</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>.4 13.4</td>
<td>.9 52.3</td>
<td>1.4 15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>5.5 6.3</td>
<td>12.9 8.5</td>
<td>5.0 5.3</td>
<td>10.4 9.7</td>
<td>1.9 4.0</td>
<td>8.3 6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton factory</td>
<td>5.5 6.3</td>
<td>12.9 8.5</td>
<td>5.0 5.3</td>
<td>10.4 9.7</td>
<td>1.9 4.0</td>
<td>8.3 6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory hand</td>
<td>.1 - .3</td>
<td>.5 1.8</td>
<td>.1 9.6</td>
<td>1.1 .5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No occupation</td>
<td>1.3 38.9</td>
<td>1.3 24.9</td>
<td>.9 27.2</td>
<td>.9 26.5</td>
<td>.8 38.3</td>
<td>1.2 26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensioner/</td>
<td>2.2 1.1</td>
<td>.8 4.8</td>
<td>1.3 .8</td>
<td>5.3 5.1</td>
<td>1.0 1.1</td>
<td>.7 3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anuitant</td>
<td>- - .5</td>
<td>- - .6</td>
<td>- - .1</td>
<td>- - .8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>- - - .5</td>
<td>- - .1</td>
<td>- - .2</td>
<td>- - .4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>- - -</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-Irish women did this type of work in roughly the same proportion, in the commercial sector there were only a tiny number of Irish businesses, and there were Irishmen and women running Irish businesses such as small shops, beerhouses and public houses. Liverpool offered a great deal of transport-related employment, and a significant number of Irishmen
farmers and agricultural labourers, pensioners and annuitants, industrial managers and unemployed. Most of the headings are self-explanatory, but several require some elaboration. Occupations which did not seem to fit conveniently into the other thirty-one groupings were put into general professional, general domestic and general commercial. Under learned professions come clergymen, solicitors, doctors, surgeons, druggists, 'literary persons', artists, musicians, actors and scientists. Transport takes in all those working on roads, railways, rivers, and includes warehousemen and porters. The heading artisans is probably the most vague, but it is a convenient way of describing those with a trade or skill, such as engineers, watchmakers, joiners, wheelwrights, carpenters, book binders, saddlers and shoemakers. Fabric and dress refers to tailors, seamstresses, drapers and the dwindling number of handloom weavers still working in their own shops or homes. The title metal, glass and earthenware applies mostly to light metal workers, glaziers and some workers in stone.

Heads of Irish households, all of whom were immigrants, were found in a wide variety of occupations in 1851 (see Figure 1) but they were concentrated in certain categories. Categories where there are only small percentages or blank spaces have been deleted from the figures. The Irish were almost totally unrepresented in the professional fields in 1851. Very few Irishmen show up in the domestic area, but many Irishwomen went into domestic service as housekeepers and charwomen, particularly in Liverpool and Manchester. Non-Irish women did this type of work in roughly the same proportion. In the commercial sector there were only a tiny number of Irish businessmen, but there were Irishmen and women running businesses such as small shops, beerhouses and public houses. Liverpool offered a great deal of transport-related employment, and a significant number of Irishmen

73. An occupational breakdown by individual town appears in the appendix.
found jobs as porters, wagon drivers and warehousemen. This type of work was to be had in Manchester's extensive warehouses as well, where some women also found employment. But the first heading where we find a very high percentage of Irish household heads, surprisingly, is under artisans. The overall 18% working at some trade among Irish males ostensibly compares well with the 23% of non-Irish males, but the non-Irish artisans were more evenly distributed over the county. The census books tell us very little about these artisans. A man returned as a skilled worker may have been employed in a factory; he may have worked on his own; he could have been a small master employing dozens of men; or he could have been a poor shoemaker. A large proportion of Irish artisans were shoemakers, which means that even though there were a good number of Irishmen who told the census enumerator that they had a trade, the Irish were on a lower occupational and income scale than non-Irish artisans. 'The number of Irish mechanics in Great Britain is inconsiderable, nor are those who follow handicraft trades remarkable for their skill.'

Irishwomen in Liverpool and Manchester worked as seamstresses and dressmakers, and a smaller proportion of Irishmen were tailors or weavers. But these were not occupations which promised steady incomes. A tailor or dressmaker only earned money when they had work, and since few worked in a shop of their own, most were dependent on local custom. A female household head was probably only supplementing her family's income by doing some work when she was able to find it. But a tailor probably lived on much more precarious means, which might explain why fewer non-Irish were found in this kind of work. Tailoring and dressmaking are examples of occupations an immigrant brought from Ireland and attempted to continue in the new home.

74. Report on the state of the Irish poor in Great Britain, 1836, p.vii
Surprisingly few Irish were returned as working in building trades or construction. But this is explained by the fact that most work of this sort was casual; and a man who worked on building sites would probably refer to himself as a labourer. The few who do appear under the construction heading were in the higher paid, more skilled areas of that industry. The highest percentages of male heads of Irish households appear as labourers. In Liverpool many of these men were dock workers. In Widnes and St Helens, with particularly high percentages of labourers among the Irish and the non-Irish, there were fewer opportunities for other types of work because the alkali and glassmaking industries required large numbers of manual labourers. In all seven towns large numbers of labourers were required in construction. A much higher proportion of Irishmen worked as labourers than non-Irish. This indicates that a much higher proportion of Irishmen depended on casual, irregular work at relatively low wages, a situation which often meant hardship during the winter months, when many jobs requiring casual, outdoor labour were not available. Only in Widnes and St Helens, where the industries requiring manual workers continued throughout the year, could labourers depend on year-round employment.

The cotton industry, and factory work generally, attracted somewhat more Irishwomen than men, but considering what an important part factories played in the economy of the northwest, the Irish seemed reluctant to work in mills, except in Manchester-Salford. Another marked difference between the Irish and the non-Irish is that it was extremely rare that a non-Irish woman heading a household would not seek a job of some description, even in towns such as Liverpool, St Helens and Widnes, where there was very little employment for women. For example, in Manchester-Salford, where there was a great demand for female labour in factories, Irishwomen heading households very often depended on the earnings of their fam-
ilies. Altogether, in 1851 the Irish were very much at the bottom of the occupational scale.

The picture in 1861 is much the same. The Irish impact on the professions and business life was still negligible. More Irishwomen were taking domestic jobs, the increase being much larger than that among non-Irish women. Roughly the same proportion of Irishmen claimed to have a skill of some kind, and there were still tailors and weavers struggling at a living, but fewer Irishwomen were seamstresses. The proportion of Irishmen working at unskilled labouring jobs showed a significant increase, and the factories were still not drawing in many Irish outside Manchester-Salford. Fewer Irishwomen heading households remained without an occupation, which probably explains the higher proportion in domestic work. There were several changes apparent in the 1871 census. The numbers of Irishmen with trades and those working at tailoring and weaving are on the decline. But the proportion of Irishmen depending on labouring jobs has increased to over half generally. This reflects the heavy weight attached to the 100% Widnes sample, where labouring was much less casual than in the rest of Lancashire. For the other towns the percentages of Irish male household heads working as labourers remained very static over twenty years. The only notable changes among Irishwomen are, once again, in domestic service and women with no occupation. There was a substantial decrease in the proportion of Irishwomen working as domestics and a corresponding rise in the number having no occupation.

The census data reveals a great deal about occupations among the immigrant Irish. For the most part, lacking training and capital, they were not found in the professions or in business, except in small enterprises. A declining number of men worked at trades, but these were of a very humble nature. Irish tailors, weavers and seamstresses found increasingly less incentive to stay in such unpredictable and
unremunerative occupations. The largest proportion of Irish-men were found in unskilled, low-paid, casual labour; and the majority of Irishwomen either worked in domestic serv-ice or had no occupation. Non-Irish women were also found mainly in these categories, but they were represented in a much wider range of other occupations than Irishwomen, includ-ing a significant percentage running small businesses. But even though Irish heads of households were found prin-cipally on the lower rungs of the occupation ladder, it would not be correct to classify them as a 'single-class community'.\textsuperscript{75} Irishmen were found in all occupations, includ-ing business and the professions, but they were most sig-nificant in labouring and less-skilled jobs. This is not surprising when their mainly rural-agricultural background, which did not have the slightest relevance in urban-industrial Lancashire, is taken into account.

A second look at the figures for the occupations of non-Irish household heads shows that there are greater similar-ities between the two communities than might at first be apparent. The non-Irish were also concentrated in labouring and industrial pursuits. Their distribution was more even, but still heavily on the semi-skilled and unskilled side. The professional and business classes were either a very small part of the population of urban Lancashire, or they were residing in large numbers in certain areas of the towns (which would understate their numerical significance in a gen-eral survey such as this) and outside municipal limits. The second proposition is probably correct and it tells us that the towns of Lancashire were inhabited overwhelmingly by working people. Among those working people were a large num-ber of Irishmen, who worked at jobs which required less skill and paid less than was true of the community generally. But here we have been dealing only with heads of households. There are many other members of the Irish community whose occupations must be considered.

\textsuperscript{75} Lawton, 'The population of Liverpool in the mid-nineteenth century', p.104
Many households had other members earning a wage besides the household head.

Table 33
Percentages of hhs having at least one other member of nuclear family earning (male and female hh heads), 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irish M</td>
<td>Irish F</td>
<td>Non-Irish M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>60.5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>60.3</td>
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<td>31.6</td>
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<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To have more than one person in a nuclear family working was very common in Lancashire, but much more common in households headed by women. The Irish and non-Irish communities showed great similarity in this regard, although households headed by Irishwomen had a higher incidence of other family members, that is children, working than those headed by non-Irish women. But this is not surprising because a higher proportion of Irishwomen heading households did not have occupations. The high degree of several members of a household earning shows that the wages of household heads did not go very far and had to be supplemented by other earnings to avoid extreme hardship.

76 Anderson, Family structure, pp 29-32
Families could avoid the worst results of low wages and malnutrition by choosing alternative forms of impoverishment: economising on living standards, sending mothers and children out to work, and forming combined households with relatives. 77

It is possible to examine more closely the family members who were bringing added income into the household.

Table 34

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851 Irish Non-Irish</th>
<th>1861 Irish Non-Irish</th>
<th>1871 Irish Non-Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lower figures in both the Irish and non-Irish communities in Liverpool, St Helens and Widnes reflects the lack of employment opportunity for women in those towns. But cotton-textiles and related industries made it possible for higher percentages of women to work in Manchester-Salford, Oldham and Preston. In 1851 an Irishman's wife was more likely to be working than wives in other households, but the situation was much more balanced in 1861. By 1871 Irish wives were less likely to be working than the non-Irish. This is prob-

77. Foster, Class struggle, p.96
ably an indication that a greater proportion of male heads of Irish households, if not in higher-paying jobs, were at least in more regular employment, which lessened the necessity for wives to go to work. Children also went to work in urban Lancashire. In this sample, children are defined as persons aged fifteen years and under.

Table 35
Percentages of hhs having children earning (male and female hh heads), 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Non-Irish</td>
<td>Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children were less likely to go to work than wives. There is little difference in this regard between the two communities, but non-Irish households were consistently more likely to send children to work. Only somewhat more than 10% of households had children at work, but, as is to be expected, households headed by women were more likely to send children to work than those headed by men. Besides these two categories, there were members of the nuclear family who were aged fifteen years and over and almost invariably earning a wage, which makes up the high percentages in Table 33.
Michael Anderson has commented on the high percentages of working mothers in Preston during the mid-nineteenth century, and its possible effects on the nuclear family.

In all, in the Preston sample, 26% of all wives living with their husbands worked. The effects of this work on the family, however, were considerably less than they might have been, both because many women (particularly those with children), worked at home, and because it was above all the younger wives and those with few or no children who were in employment at all. 78

There were still many children less than ten years of age whose mothers worked away from home, but there was little damage to family relationships as a result of this because 'only a minority of these children .... were left with hired nurses indifferent to their fate'. 'While the mother was probably the best and first choice as guardian, in her absence kin and close friends and neighbours were usually available as substitutes.'79 But the extent of this problem was much less in Liverpool, St Helens and Widnes, where there was little demand for female labour, than in the textile districts of southeast Lancashire and Preston. The incidence of young children working was much less than it had been during the 1830s and early 1840s, but still it was at a significant level. Greed or insensitiveness does not seem to have been a primary motive for sending children out to work. 'It is clear that they were sent to work because the family was so poor that their earnings were absolutely essential if the family was to continue to function at all as an effective unit.'80 Wage labour was, of course, difficult for young children, but 'where children suffered from neglect or overwork, this was more usually the result of ignorance, lack of foresight, or necessity than deliberate cruelty or exploitat-

78. Anderson, Family structure, p.71
79. Ibid., p.74
80. Ibid., p.75
So industrialisation does not appear to have been overly damaging to the fundamental social unit, the family. It was still the most vital and functional social institution, even though it had to adjust itself to the demands of urban-industrial life.

Some households were able to count on the earnings of extended family members.

Table 36
Percentages of hhs having at least one extended family member earning, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851 Irish</th>
<th>1851 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1861 Irish</th>
<th>1861 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1871 Irish</th>
<th>1871 Non-Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pool</td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>61.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>64.2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>78.4</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>53.8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Most Irish households containing extended family members could rely on at least one of them earning. Extended family in non-Irish households were significantly less likely to be bringing money into the household, which indicates a high proportion of elderly and young persons. The much higher proportion of Irish extended family earning shows that the practice of taking in extended family, though generally less common among the Irish, was a practical arrangement to make the generally lower incomes of the Irish go farther, as well as to provide accommodation for newly-arrived relatives.

81. Ibid., p.76
This analysis of census data concludes with a brief consideration of the occupations which members of nuclear families, apart from the household head, held during 1851-71. My sample only took account of the household head, and the first four members of the nuclear family who were returned as having an occupation of some description, which excludes very few working people. The analysis is broken down by the sex of the nuclear family members and by their ages, fifteen years of age and under being one age group and fifteen years and over being the other. Children were often returned as students, but they have been excluded from these tables and will be discussed in chapter 7. The percentages presented are totals for the seven towns because the large number of very small percentages and empty spaces do not warrant a breakdown by individual town. But still we can see some very interesting results. Figure 2 shows that among Irish male youths, fifteen years of age and under, there was a greater inclination to take employment in a factory than among the male household heads. In 1851 and 1861 high percentages of Irish youths were learning trades or already working as skilled labour. This proportion fell off in 1871 and was complimented by a steep rise in the number of youths working as labourers. Non-Irish boys were much more likely to go into factory work and much less likely to be working as labourers. Irish girls had fewer reservations about factory work than their elders. They went to work in factories in nearly the same proportion as non-Irish girls. So the low percentages of factory workers among Irish household heads are deceptive. Many other members of Irish families, particularly girls, worked in factories. In 1851 and 1861 Irish girls and non-Irish girls were found in domestic work in nearly identical proportions, but in 1871 significantly more Irish girls were housekeepers and servants, which shows that non-Irish girls were more widely distributed occupationally by that date. Irish and non-Irish youths were most often found working in factory jobs or light work, although Irish boys were more likely to be doing manual labour than non-Irish boys.
### Figure 3

**Occupations (percentages) of other members of nuclear family (adults), 1851-71**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>Non-Irish</th>
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<th>Non-Irish</th>
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<td>.6</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bites**

The table above represents the occupations of other members of nuclear family (adults) from 1851 to 1871. The occupations are divided into categories such as learned professions, teacher, board/lodging, merchant, small business, transport, clerk/cashier, hawker, messenger, artisan, fabric/dress, miner, metal, glass, earthenware, construction, labourer, cotton factory, factory hand, no occupation, pensioner/annuitant, manager, and unemployed. The percentages indicate the proportion of each occupation within the sample. The data shows that the occupations of Irish and Non-Irish individuals were comparable, with notable exceptions. Irish individuals were more likely to work in the cotton factory, while Non-Irish were more likely to work in the coal industry. The percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.
Figure 3 considers those fifteen years and older, who were adults in terms of employment during the mid-nineteenth century. Male adults in Irish households showed more diversity in their occupations than the Irish household heads. Particularly in 1851, they were much more inclined to take factory work. But this percentage declined over the next twenty years to a level on a par with household heads. Irish and non-Irish women worked in factories in roughly equal proportions up to 1861, but the number of Irishwomen working in mills fell to the level of Irish female household heads in 1871. It appears from this data that children from Irish families, especially girls, were much more likely to be found in factory work than the adults. The demand was much greater for boys and girls in the largely automated textile industry than for men, but Irishmen were probably reluctant to undertake the tedium of indoor factory work. Younger members of the Irish community had mainly grown up in an urban-industrial environment and had fewer objections to becoming part of the factory system.

Irish adults, as with the household heads, were very often found working as labourers. The proportion of labourers increased to 40% overall in 1871, which is a sign of continuing immigration of unskilled agricultural workers from Ireland, as well as a tendency for the Irish to be more heavily represented in rough, low-paid, manual work than in other occupations. But younger men were less likely to be labourers than their immigrant fathers. Some progress in business and the professions is visible, but young Irishmen, though doing better than the household heads, were still behind their non-Irish counterparts. They were also less well-represented in the trades.

An important group of adult nuclear family members was made up of wives, the vast majority of whom had no occupation.
Table 37
Percentages of wives having no occupation, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>84.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Irish</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>79.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In both communities it was usually the children and young adults of a household who helped the household head in earning money, rather than the wife. Young Irishwomen holding jobs most often did domestic service and factory work. Percentages of Irishwomen and non-Irish women in these occupations are very similar. Dressmaking was another common occupation, but Irishwomen were more likely to be involved in it than the non-Irish. Generally, while young males from Irish households were still at somewhat lower occupational levels than non-Irish males, Irishwomen showed great similarity with their non-Irish female neighbours.

Concluding this consideration, a few general remarks will be helpful. It is interesting to note that the Irish, either the immigrants or their English-born kinsmen, made virtually no impact on the Lancashire coalmining industry, which centred mainly around St Helens and Oldham. But there is little evidence to tell us whether the Irish were excluded from the industry by native miners or simply did not choose to enter it. Coalmining was very often a family industry, where miners hired their sons and relatives as helpers and heavers. The Irish would lack this family tradition, which would make it harder for them to get a start in the industry. But there is some evidence that English miners objected to the immigrant Irish (see chapter 10).

The very low percentages of unemployed persons throughout Lancashire suggests that Cornwall Lewis was correct in saying that there was work for all who wanted it in the ever-expanding industries of Lancashire. But the censuses only
reflect the fact that 1851, 1861 and 1871 were fairly prosperous times in England. Enumerations in 1847 or 1855 would reveal very different pictures. Indeed, if the 1861 census had been conducted several months later, the first redundancies in the textile industry caused by the cotton famine would be apparent. When times were good, everyone in Lancashire benefited, but hard times had similarly dynamic effects, especially on the very poor (see chapter 4). But since there was no sign that the Irish were extra labour, is there any reason to believe that their presence on the labour market caused wages to fall? Cornewall Lewis found that where the Irish were most numerous wages were highest. When wage cuts did take place, particularly during the 1840s, they were in response to market trends rather than greater numbers of cheap Irish labourers. It is true that Irishmen were often earning lower wages than English workers, but this was not due to the Irish undercutting the wage base. 'It rarely happens that when Irish are employed at the same kind of work as the native labourers .... there is any difference in the rate of wages paid to them.'82 Irishmen generally earned lower wages than Englishmen because they were more often working at the lowest-paid jobs. Sluggish increases in wages in the cotton industry have more to do with the large numbers of women and children, doing the same work as a man for less money, who were employed than with Irish immigration. It does not appear Irish immigration had any adverse effects on wage levels in Lancashire.

What do these statistics suggest about occupational advancement and social mobility among the Lancashire Irish? John Flamson describes a 'lack of social escalation' among second and third generation members of the Irish community of Liverpool. Thernstrom found that the occupational structure

82. Report on the state of the Irish poor in Great Britain, 1836, p.1x /435/
of Boston 'was remarkably fluid in one sense of the term, offering significant opportunities for self-advancement to a very substantial proportion of men who started work in menial, manual jobs'. But 'it was far from a perfectly open structure, if by that we mean one in which initial advantages count for nothing'.

For all the fluidity of the Boston occupational structure, the community, nonetheless, was one in which prior social advantages or disadvantages counted heavily. Men who started their careers in a high-status position were very likely to retain them; those who started at a lower level had good chances of moving upward a notch or two, but not to the highest level. The common move was not from rags to riches but from rags to respectability ....

There is no reason to believe that this description of Boston does not have great relevance in mid-nineteenth-century Lancashire. England did not offer the same range of opportunities open in America, but still there was upward mobility. As in Boston, the farther down the occupational scale a person started off, the slower and more arduous the ascent was likely to be. Thernstrom found that immigrants were at a significantly greater disadvantage than native-born persons.

Both immigrants and the native-born children of immigrants were far more likely to begin and to end their careers working with their hands and wearing blue collars. Not only did the foreign-born start more often at the bottom; they were less often upwardly mobile after their first job, and those who started well were more prone to lose their middle-class positions and end up in a manual job.

The second generation were better placed for achieving better occupations, but they still worked under the hindrance that they were more likely to start work at the manual level.

83. Thernstrom, *The other Bostonians*, p. 74
84. Ibid., p. 73
85. Ibid., p. 124
86. Ibid., pp 124-5
Immigrants to cities from other cities have a distinctly better chance of improving their occupational position because 'they do not bring with them the background handicaps that have classically been associated with country life'. But this applied to very few of the principally rural Irish who moved to Lancashire. The Lancashire Irish were most often found in labouring and unskilled jobs, which were the lowest paid. Their lack of industrial experience made them unsuited, in ability and temperament, for the higher grades of industrial employment. In this respect they resembled the Boston Irish. 'The Irish of Boston were highly distinctive in their inability to find jobs that offered security, prestige and financial rewards.' But even though the children of the immigrant Irish 'fared notably better' than their fathers, they did worse than native Americans or the second generations of other immigrant groups. The analysis of data on occupational patterns among the Irish in Lancashire shows that the situation was very similar to that of Boston. First-arrivals were likely to be unskilled labourers. Younger immigrants and the English-born Irish showed greater upward mobility than their fathers, but were still much more likely to start off as labourers or unskilled workers than the non-Irish. There was a tendency towards 'respectability', but it was very sluggish during 1846-71. As in Boston, there was a 'near absence of an Irish immigrant middle class' in Lancashire. But why were the Irish, particularly the English-born Irish, so bottom-heavy occupationally?

Thernstrom suggests several tests which can be applied to the Irish in urban Lancashire. Was there structural discrimination against the Irish? Did they encounter a 'no Irish need apply' attitude? I have found no evidence of this discrimination. Were handicaps resulting from their rural

87. Ibid., p.32
88. Ibid., p.132
89. Ibid., p.133
90. Ibid., pp 134-5
background, such as illiteracy, lack of vocational skills or unfamiliarity with urban life, decreasing their ability to compete in the labour market? Illiteracy was as much of a problem among the native working class as among the Irish, although the lack of skills did limit an Irishman's options. But this should have been less of a problem for the second generation. These disadvantages are only a partial explanation for occupational stagnation among the Lancashire Irish. Residential segregation may have been an influence in Liverpool, but since the Irish were not prone to 'ghettoising' themselves in Lancashire, or in Boston, it does not appear to have been a significant factor. The 'institutional completeness' of community life among the Irish is probably more important. We shall see in Part III that the Irish community, with the vital aid of the catholic church, was performing important social services in religion, education and recreation. The danger in such a situation is that members of an excessively inward-looking ethnic group 'may develop values that are deviant by the standards of the larger society, or, even if they hold the same values, they may not learn socially accepted methods of pursuing them'. ISBN. In other words, social standards may be defined internally and tend to perpetuate existing standards by lending them acceptance and approval. But even though Irish community life provided a broad and functional social focus, it was never so tightly organised or isolated for such a degree of introspection to develop.

The last test is that of differing cultural values, a much more nebulous and treacherous area. Were the immigrant Irish perhaps uninterested in the virtues which Horatio Alger extolled and unintrigued by material success during 1846-71? The Irish came from a society where subsistence was very often a struggle. To move to Lancashire and obtain manual labour

91. Ibid., p.167
at higher, steadier wages would seem like an occupational elevation, even if it was poverty by English standards. So perhaps many Irish immigrants in fact thought they had moved upward occupationally and were content in their new position because they were accustomed to lower standards of living. Also, the greater opportunities for employing women and children in Lancashire might make it seem unnecessary that the immigrant household head should exert himself more. The Ireland most immigrants came from during 1846-71 hardly exemplified the material advantages of adherence to the Protestant Ethic. Few Irishmen had experience of socio-economic conditions which would make such values as hard work towards upward social mobility seem relevant to them. The immigrants in Lancashire probably were little aware of such an outlook and consequently attached small importance to it. But their children became gradually more aware of the desireability of overcoming occupational and social disadvantages. But they were starting at the bottom and improvement might still leave them firmly in the working class.

Two other Irish cultural values probably slowed down their rise to 'respectability' by limiting the amount of capital they could accumulate. Of course, with such a large part of the Irish community receiving low wages there was little money to be saved. But the Irish also sent large amounts of money to Ireland to help their relatives still living there. Also, the Irish contributed large amounts to the expansion and maintenance of the edifice of the catholic church in Lancashire. These two practices were considerable drains on the generally meagre incomes of the Irish community, which used up funds that might have gone towards the opening of a small business or better education. Altogether, the lack of urban experience and marketable industrial skills, tied to cultural values which deemphasised
the importance of worldly success and absorbed a large portion of what funds there were available after the purchase of necessities, combined to severely limit the upward occupational-social mobility of the Lancashire Irish.

Briefly, some important features of Irish immigrant life in Lancashire emerge from this discussion. The aggregate population figures which appear in the published census reports understate the actual size of the Irish communities in the various towns of Lancashire by, at least, 40-80%. Irish families were more often found sharing dwellings with other families and in the cheaper court housing than their English neighbours. Somewhat larger nuclear families and a higher incidence of lodgers resident made Irish households larger than non-Irish households. But even though urban Lancashire was distinguished by a very high degree of overcrowding in working-class dwellings, the Irish were the most overcrowded part of the population. Except in Liverpool and Widnes, it does not appear that during 1846-71 there were homogeneous Irish residential areas in urban Lancashire. And the 'Irish neighbourhoods' of Liverpool and Widnes probably grew up for other reasons than an effort by the Irish to segregate themselves in distinctive areas. Most Irishmen heading households were employed in unskilled, low paid work and most Irishwomen who headed their own households worked in domestic services or did not have an occupation. Young men in Irish households were represented in a wider range of occupations than their fathers, but their occupational progress was slower than that of young men in non-Irish households. Irish girls were heavily represented in domestic services and factory work, which showed a great similarity with non-Irish girls. Generally, even though occupational progress is apparent, especially among second generation Irish, the Irish community during 1846-71 was overwhelmingly working-
class. Unaccustomed to urban-industrial life and having a cultural outlook more suited to a rural existence, assimilation through occupational advancement was a slow process for most Irishmen.
Part II

Social problems

Chapter 4

The Irish poor in Lancashire

Considering Irish immigration into Lancashire during the mid-nineteenth century in the context of social problems it might cause in the receiving community, it is important to determine to what extent the emigrants comprised an impoverished group requiring local public assistance. To measure the dimensions of the problem it is necessary both to see, if possible, the actual cost, in financial and human terms, of an Irish influx and what the Lancashire citizenry thought was being exacted.

The state of the Irish economy during the 1840s had a direct bearing on an immigration of Irish poor into England. During that decade Ireland was a country of numerous pressing problems. A largely rural population of over nine million persons struggled to exist on a restricted amount of arable land by a primitive, uneconomic agriculture. Pressure on land and land clearances were increasing emigration from Ireland during the first half of the nineteenth century, but the catalyst of the great famine of the latter 1840s accelerated this process. In 1853 this exodus from Ireland by hundreds of thousands of persons was attributed to a 'Providential design' because it helped decrease pauperism, strengthened civil and social order by reducing crime and increased the solvency of the 'landed proprietary'. But the effects of Irish immigration on urban Lancashire were not as 'Providential' as those of emigration were for Ireland. The people who left Ireland during the 1840s were of all types. But is is principally those who, otherwise penniless, spent nearly the whole of their resources to get across to England, and then became a burden on the ratepayers of Lancashire who will concern us here.

1. J. Locke, 'Ireland's recovery; or excessive emigration and its reparative agencies' in Transactions of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (1853), p.107
The story of Irish pauperism in Lancashire involves mainly the period 1846-51. After this date the number of Irishmen who might become chargeable, as well as the numbers of Irish immigrants entering Lancashire, levelled off and ceased to excite commentary in board of guardians' minute books or local newspapers. Statistics available for the Manchester union indicate there were many poor Irish relieved during 1851-71, but after the crisis of the latter 1840s the less pressing, but omnipresent, problem of the Irish poor no longer aroused much interest. So the problem of the Irish poor in Lancashire's towns centred mainly on the precipitous immigration in the wake of the great famine.

The main obstacle in the way of a prospective Irish emigrant removing to Lancashire, aside from a few shillings for a fare, was getting to a port from which a steamer sailed to Liverpool. But even this was not a great difficulty, because services were available between Liverpool and every significant Irish port. Even though Preston had port facilities on the River Ribble, there was no direct service to Ireland. But there were steamers to Belfast and Londonderry from the nearby port of Fleetwood. The reports of jammed steam packets landing at Liverpool show that many thousands of Irishmen were able to negotiate the journey between their former homes and a port, usually on foot.

The vast majority of the Irish who emigrated ended up in Liverpool, both because it was western Britain's principal port and because most travellers bound for America or Australia embarked from there. Most of the poor Irish made the nightly Ireland-Liverpool steam-packet journey as 'deckers'. The fare for a place on the deck of a steamer cost from two to five shillings during the 1840s, but even this minimal expense was

3. Ibid., p.224
exorbitant, in relation to the accommodation provided. The demand for deck space fluctuated so much that no room was reserved for deck passengers. Goods and livestock were loaded first and any remaining space was then allocated to the deckers. There was no protection of any kind from the weather and the press of passengers and cargo was often so great that there was 'standing room only' for a windy night on the Irish Sea. Sometimes in very bad weather deck passengers were allowed to occupy empty stables on the deck, and a woman in labour might be offered the comfort of the ship's boiler room. During 1846-51 the subject of Ireland-Liverpool steamers was given considerable public attention in Lancashire, particularly by the local boards of guardians, not only because of the inhuman conditions prevailing for 'deckers', but also because the steamers were the medium of Irish pauper immigration into Lancashire's towns.

Between 1849 and 1851 the Liverpool select vestry's board of guardians led a campaign for statutory regulation of the numbers of passengers permitted to travel on the Irish steamers. The need for control was accentuated by a steam-packet disaster in December 1848. The Londonderry, bound from Sligo, with 174 steerage passengers, ran into a storm. The unfortunate emigrants were made to go below and the hatches were secured above them for the duration of the storm. When the ship reached Liverpool seventy-two persons were dead from suffocation. There were fatalities on other voyages as well, but they were less spectacular than the Londonderry disaster. There was a statute of 1848 (11 and 12 Vict., c.81) which gave the Board of Trade the authority to issue seaworthiness certificates and, in some cases, to specify a maximum number of passengers which a vessel was permitted to carry. A copy of the certificate had to be displayed on the vessel, but the limitation of passengers was optional, and no specific references to the Irish Sea packets appeared in the act. In fact, the regulation was not intended to apply to ocean-going steamers at all and it was rarely used.

4. Lpool Mercury, 19 June 1849; M/R Guardian, 12 May 1847
5. Irvine, op.cit., p.233
6. Irvine, op.cit., pp 233-4
for that purpose. It was not used at all on ships based in Liverpool. The regulations were designed with inland and coastal ferries in mind only.\(^7\)

At the fortnightly meeting of the Liverpool select vestry on 17 April 1849, the agitation for passenger restrictions on the Irish steamers began with a proposal to memorialise the government on the need for legislation to ensure 'a proper provision for deck passengers, so as to secure that regard for their health and comfort which humanity would dictate'.\(^8\) Edward Rushton, a local magistrate, composed the letter. But this communication shows that the suffering of emigrants on crowded steamers was not the sole concern of the Liverpool authorities in trying to effect a reduction in the number of deck passengers travelling from Ireland. Very little was said about the steamers at all. But the effects of large scale Irish immigration on the town of Liverpool were discussed at some length. In fact, no clear relationship was cited between the crowded steamers and the 'half-naked and starving.... accumulation of misery in the crowded town of Liverpool'.\(^9\) The only mention of a possible connection was in the concluding statement when Rushton pointed out 'the great danger, moral as well as physical, which cannot but be generated by allowing the continued unchecked immigration of the most miserable of the Irish people into such towns as Liverpool'.

More to the point of the steamer problem was Captain H.M. Denham's report on passenger accommodation between Ireland and Liverpool, presented to the Board of Trade in May 1849. Denham was a career naval officer who conducted surveys of the coasts of Lancashire and Cumberland during the 1830s and 1840s.\(^10\) He personally investigated a dozen Irish steamers at Liverpool and travelled to Ireland and back. Measuring the actual space for passengers between cattle pens on the deck he found that it 'did not yield an area of more than one square yard to two persons

\(^7\) Ibid., p.253
\(^8\) Lpool Mercury, 20 Apr 1849
\(^9\) Lpool Mercury, 15 May 1849
\(^10\) A.S. Mountfield, 'Admiral Denham and the approaches to the port of Liverpool' in Trans Hist Soc Lancs-Ches, cv (1953), pp 123,134
with not enough tarpaulins to cover more than a fourth part, whilst the whole deck was afloat with animal mire....'

Asking the officers of these vessels how they could abide such a situation, Denham was told that it all lies with the agent, whose business and interest it is to cram the vessel and shove us off, litl'le thinking or caring about the night's anxiety we have to draw through so his freight looks well on getting home....The class of passengers called 'deckers' go to the offices where tickets are issued without limit, or even distinguishing one vessel from another. The consequence is they accumulate on the quay, ready for a rush to any vessel they take a fancy to, so that she belongs to the company the ticket hails from. It is in vain to call out to them to divide themselves with the other vessels also ready to start. We have no control nor any right to appeal to the police as the matter stands. We are at last obliged to draw the planks away, at all risks, to stop the rush on board.11

From the owners 'no acquiescence in regulations for humanity's sake is traceable or to be expected. Impunity is attached to the complained of system, because few deaths are recorded in its exercise, forgetting that human endurance can reach frightful heights without actually dying.' Inspecting some of the steamers just after their arrival in Liverpool, Denham found the scenes so deplorable that some of the men assigned to assist him had to excuse themselves from 'close inspections'. And he revealed that the fare paid for the transport of troops, which were never supposed to exceed 350 in a single vessel, and for whom the whole boat was given up, was very nearly the same paid by a poor Irish decker.

To remedy the situation Denham made a seven-point proposal for legislation, which helped illustrate what was lacking on the Irish steamers. He urged summer and winter passenger limits, the winter extending from 1 October to 30 May. The winter maximum would be one passenger per two tons of the vessel, and the summer rate would be one passenger per ton. A special area for deck passengers should be reserved away from the livestock, with a protective awning, sufficient benches, water closets and fresh water available. Cabins or steerage space, where no

livestock was kept, was needed for women and children with an
area of at least one square yard per person, adequate ventilation,
benches, 'secure' lamplighting, water closets, fresh water supply
and 'such separate accommodation to be equal to one third of the
number of passengers in the winter license'. Proper steerage
facilities, if the upper deck was unprotected, were desirable
and the passengers should be able to come up when they wanted
to. To make sure these regulations were observed, passenger-carrying licenses were to be re-issued every six months, subject
to inspection. And finally, all accidents were to be reported
immediately to the Board of Trade.

Captain Denham's report on the overcrowding of Liverpool-Ireland steamers was read at a meeting of the Board of Trade,
on 31 May 1849, Henry Labouchere, the president of the Board,
and the earl of Granville being present. But no action was taken
on any part of the report. Two weeks later the Board heard
the shipping interest's response to the Denham report, when
they received a statement from Liverpool steamship owners
expressing opposition to 'any parliamentary interference with
respect to passenger traffic' between Liverpool and Ireland.
But the Board did not reply to the letter, and on 31 July the
steamship owners asked for an interview with Labouchere, to
reinforce their demand for a totally laissez-faire attitude
on the part of the Board towards the Irish passenger traffic.
Once again the letter went unanswered by the Board. At this
same time the Liverpool board of guardians were asking other
local authorities in Lancashire and Yorkshire to write to the
Board of Trade in support of the regulations proposed in the
Denham report. On the day the Board read the shipowners'
second communication, nine other memorials from northern towns
were read on the subject of the Irish Sea steamers. The
Warrington sanitary committee sent a memorial in favour of
Denham's proposed regulations, asking the Board to limit the
numbers of passengers permitted to travel on the Irish steamers
'with as little delay as possible'.

12. Capt Denham to BT, 31 May (PRO, BT, minutes, BT 5/58, 1482 p.213)
13. BT, minutes, 16 June 1849 (PRO BT 5/58, 1679, p.246)
14. BT, minutes, 31 July 1849 (PRO BT 5/58, 2054, p.301)
The board acknowledged the Warrington letter by saying that the board had 'the subject under their consideration and hope shortly to be able to take measures for remedying the evils complained of'. Memorials to the same effect arrived from boards of guardians at Preston, Manchester and Prescot (who supervised St. Helens and Widnes), as well as those of Wakefield, York, Halifax, Rochdale and Bolton.

Even though the owners of the Irish steamers received no direct response to their request for a meeting with Labouchere, they did receive an answer to their objections to 'interference' with passenger traffic on 1st August 1849. The combined weight of Denham's report and the memorials from Lancashire and Yorkshire convinced Labouchere of the seriousness of the problem of 'deckers' on the Irish Sea steamers. The day after reading the northern memorials Labouchere ordered Captain Denham to visit the ports of Liverpool, Glasgow and Bristol to demand the existing certificates of all steamers employed in carrying passengers between those ports and Ireland; and insert therein the number of passengers which each is constructed to carry, according to the rules here enjoined.

Labouchere substituted executive for parliamentary 'interference' by using the Board of Trade's authority under the 1848 passenger act to limit the number of persons permitted to travel on passenger vessels. In this way he avoided a confrontation with the powerful shipping interest in the Commons, which would have been inevitable if he tried to secure new legislation. The seven regulations Labouchere signed were based on those proposed by Captain Denham.

1. The number of passengers to be carried by a paddle steamer, having no cargo on deck, shall be one passenger to every ton of the builders' tonnage.
2. The number to be carried by a paddle steamer, having cargo on deck, but none of it stowed abaft the paddle shaft, shall be one passenger to every registered ton.
3. The number to be carried when cargo (not live animals or poultry) is stowed abaft the paddle shaft, should be three passengers to every two square yards of clear space abaft the paddle shaft.
4. The number to be carried when live animals or poultry are stowed abaft the paddle shaft, shall be fixed with reference to the arrangement of the vessel and cargo, so as to provide, as nearly as possible, two square yards for every three passengers in a part of the vessel separate from the cattle and livestock.

15. Warrington sanitary cttee to BT, 31 July 1849 (PRO. BT, minutes, BT 5/58, 2092, p.306)
5. Screw steamers in which the deck passengers are allowed to go below and are accommodated with space on the lower deck for one-half their number, or on which the bulwarks are railed and a spare deck constructed so as to afford protection to the passengers on deck, shall be licensed to carry the same number of passengers in each case as paddle steamers.

6. Screw steamers on which these provisions are not made shall be licensed to carry only one passenger to every four tons of the registered tonnage.

7. The proportion of passengers to be carried in the months of November, December, January, February, and March shall be two-thirds the number allowed in the other months.

Even though Labouchere's regulations fell far short of fully enacting Denham's proposals, they went a long way towards limiting the number of passengers permitted on each vessel and drew an important distinction between summer and winter conditions. On 31 August 1849 Denham reported to the Board of Trade from Liverpool that he had 'completed the regulation certificates of all steam vessels trading with Ireland from this port...'

But the Liverpool Guardians were convinced that these regulations were not enough to curb overcrowding on ships from Ireland unless violations were prosecuted. In 1850 the Liverpool guardians noticed an increase in the number of Irish emigrants landing in the town, and in the number of steamers arriving overcrowded. This influx was attributed to "the clearance system" now going on in Ireland; the rambling disposition of the people, added to their known reluctance to enter the Irish union workhouses; and the present low rate of fare from Ireland.

The Liverpool guardians' finance committee authorised two relieving officers to make rigid enquiry whether and to what extent the regulations... for the accommodation of passengers in steamers arriving from Ireland are being carried out; also as to the apparent cause of the present influx of Irish vagrants into the town.

The problem was not with 'regular' steamers, which seemed generally to comply with the Board of Trade regulations, but with extra steamers, known as 'opposition' steamers, which were put into service...
service to handle increased emigration and did not have passenger limits specified on their seaworthiness certificates. These opposition boats were arriving with 2-400 passengers more on board than would be allowed under the Board of Trade regulations. Eight extra ships were operating from Dublin, Cork, Drogheda and Belfast. Fares from Ireland to Liverpool were down to two shillings per head, a decrease of 60% since 1847. Even though there was nothing that could be done to prosecute the owners of the 'opposition' steamers, the Liverpool guardians hoped to obstruct the renewal of licenses of overcrowded boats. During May 1850-February 1851 inspectors were posted at the Liverpool docks each morning to note overcrowded steamers, which were then reported to the Board of Trade. This activity bore fruit when the board instituted proceedings against the steamer owners in late 1850. The clerk of the Liverpool vestry was instructed to cooperate with the customs commissioners by producing the necessary evidence against the steamship companies. To strengthen their case, the guardians requested, and received from, the Preston board a return of the 'number of Irish poor relieved by them and with the amount of such relief, also the extent of the evil inflicted by the increase of rates of disease and mortality...' Even in 1851 the effort to control the number of Irishmen carried in the steamers was double edged - it was both humanitarian and an attempt to limit the number of rate-absorbing Irish poor entering Lancashire.

On 10 March 1851 there was an interesting exchange in the House of Commons. Labouchere was questioned on 'a subject of great importance, and one which had been noticed even by the press of foreign countries'. The question was about a child who died from exposure enroute from Cork to Liverpool, and the extremely low fares on steamers between England and Ireland, which allegedly included a package reduction for 1,000 or more inmates from Irish workhouses. The President of the Board

20. C.W. Williams to D. le Marchant, 15 June 1850 (PRO, BT papers, general dept, BT 1/478/2011)
21. Lpool finance cttee, minutes, May 1850-Feb 1851 (LCL, 353/SEL/3/3-4)
22. Lpool, finance cttee, minutes, 27 Dec 1850 (LCL, 353/SEL/3/4, p. 23)
23. Lpool BG to Preston BG, 14 Feb 1851 (LRO, Preston BG, minutes, PUT/1/14, pp 203-4)
of Trade answered that steamers were being carefully observed and that the Board 'had instituted several prosecutions'. He also alluded vaguely to the regulations in his passenger act of 1849 (12 & 13 Vict., c.33). But that statute stipulated that the passenger regulations it contained applied only to vessels leaving the United Kingdom for anywhere outside Europe. A further exception was made for all ships carrying the Royal Mail, which would effectively exclude all the Liverpool-Ireland steamers anyway. Similarly, Labouchere's passenger act of 1851 (14 Vict., c.1) makes no provision for regulating Irish Sea steamers. So the regulations for Irish steamers remained minimal and loosely enforced. But no more is heard about the problem during 1852-71, because the volume of Irish emigration declined to a level where the steamers were not nearly so crowded as they were during 1846-51.

But the fight to reduce the numbers of passengers arriving from Ireland on the Irish Sea steampackets was only a small sector of a much larger battle. The concern of local guardians of the poor over the crowding of vessels was occasioned by the experience of greater difficulties in the streets of the various towns themselves. Conditions on the steamers might only be a symptom of a greater problem, but it was a symptom which was fortifying the disease, making a cure more difficult. But what shape did this social malady assume in mid-Victorian Lancashire?

Liverpool was the major port of western Britain and the principal landing point for Irish immigrants to Britain. And the impact of the mass immigration of the late 1840s on the town was tremendous. In 1846 Liverpool was the only town in England which did not have a poor law union as such to oversee the relief of the local poor. A Liverpool union was established by the Poor Law Commission in 1841, but The title 'union' was a misnomer for Liverpool was the only 'union' in the country which consisted of a single parish, that is, it was in union with no one.  

24. Hansard 3, 1851 (cxiv, London, 1851), pp 1176-7  
27. Eric Midwinter, Old Liverpool, p.76
An act was passed in 1842 which modified the administration of the poor law in the town. The parochial select vestry was charged with managing poor relief and was "deemed to be a board of guardians" with all the rights and duties of such a board.28 The parish of Liverpool did not include the whole municipal borough. But about two thirds of the total population and about 85% of the borough's Irish-born lived within the parish, and came under the jurisdiction of its board of guardians. So the effects of Irish immigration on the parish of Liverpool, and the responses of the parish board of guardians, will be reliable indications of the situation in the municipal borough as a whole.

The first indications that Ireland's hardships were going to have their impact on Lancashire, via Liverpool, were apparent at the close of 1846, when the combined effects of hunger, destitution and cold weather left increased numbers of fugitive poor on Liverpool's docks each morning. Larger numbers of poor Irish entering the town were reflected in greatly augmented demands for relief. Already by 19 December 1846 the problem was serious enough for the board of guardians' finance committee to devote a special discussion to 'the great numbers of destitute poor daily coming from Ireland and becoming chargeable to the parish'.29 It was decided that a letter should be sent to the Poor Law Commissioners, the 'Bashaws of Somerset House', asking for government assistance to handle the 'burdens being cast upon the parish by the present influx of Irish poor'.30 It was also decided to start supplying soup to the poor. The memorial was duly sent to both the Poor Law Commissioners and the Home Office. The two replies were reported in mid-January 1847. The Home Office expressed 'regret that there should be so large an influx of paupers into Liverpool from Ireland', but Sir George Grey could see no way of preventing them coming over. The letter closed saying that there was no money available for the parish to subsidise the expenses of Irish destitution. This

28. Ibid., pp 78-9
29. Lpool, finance cttee, minutes, 19 Dec 1846 (LCL, 353SEL/3/6, p.77)
30. Lpool, finance cttee, minutes, 19 Dec 1846 (LCL, 353SEL/3/6, p.77)
discouraging news was followed by a novel communication from the Poor Law Commissioners. Acknowledging receipt of the guardians' request for funds, they said that they had also learned that the numbers of relief applications from the Irish in the borough were increasing daily. They wondered if the existing mode of relief was adequate to meet the task. The Liverpool board was advised to examine its relief system and make any alterations necessary to handle the emergency. The board promised to sanction 'any additional relieving officers who might be appointed to meet the circumstances of the case'. Summing up the two letters, the chairman of the Liverpool guardians commented: 'The board might go to any expense they pleased, but neither the government nor the Poor Law Commissioners would give them any money.'

Immigration continued steadily during the winter and spring of 1847. Poor Irish families became a common sight throughout the town. It was said that there could be no more Irish poor in the streets of Dublin. The prospects for Liverpool were summed up by the Liverpool Courier.

This influx of Irish poor has had several consequences of much importance over and above the principal one, which is the exaggeration of poor rates. Brought up all their lives with insufficient food, labouring, if not under actual disease created by want of sustenance, at least under the debility which that induces, the destitute peasantry of Ireland seek the ports of their own country, principally Cork, Waterford, Dublin and Drogheda. There they are met by the universal reply that they cannot be relieved... and the result is that Liverpool is made the receptacle for almost the entire vagrant poor who leave Ireland.

The article concluded saying that no town should be compelled to face such a calamity without government aid.

But the Liverpool guardians prepared to face thousands of Irish relief cases, along with the increased numbers of resident poor caused by the industrial recession, without any form of government help. Even though the board and the rate-payers could not relish the thought of dealing with thousands of Irish poor.

31. Liverpool Courier, 13 Jan 1847
32. Liverpool Courier, 27 Jan 1847
relief cases, as well as the numerous indigenous ones, they made every effort to be sure every person in need would be accommodated. Despite the enormous expense, the board of guardians were prepared to extend their services as far as was necessary to relieve destitution. The board would have preferred a government prohibition on immigration from Ireland and a substantial grant of extra money to meet the challenge of increased poverty. But when it was plain that neither of these things was forthcoming, they did not hesitate to take the responsibility upon themselves for doing whatever was necessary to handle the rapidly worsening problem of immigration of poor Irish. The result during the next four or five years was that a potentially chaotic situation was kept within bounds. Even if every needy Irish person in Liverpool did not benefit directly from the work of the board of guardians during the late 1840s, no one was denied relief. And during that very difficult period, when many people were hungry, no one in Liverpool starved.

The first three weeks of January 1847 brought an increase of 20,000 Irish relief cases. On 28 January 1847 the board of guardians borrowed twenty-four policemen from the watch committee to serve as assistant relieving officers. The board also assumed responsibility for paying the policemen's wages while they worked for them. Under these men twenty-four relief subdivisions were formed in areas of Liverpool where Irish immigrants were found. 'Practically, therefore, there were twenty-four divisions made in the town, within some one of which every pauper immigrant resided, and to every one of which an assistant relieving officer was attached... Each officer was to keep a strict daily record of the number of applicants and the amount of relief given so that the board 'might be in possession of exact knowledge of the progress of destitution'
amongst the Irish poor... Relief was distributed in bread and soup through a three-step system. Each applicant was first required to appear at his district station to request help. Next the district officer visited every applicant at the place where he was living to investigate his circumstances. The poor were then given tickets for bread and soup, which were redeemable at the relief station. Relief to the sick or infirm was given at their residence. The objects of this system were that in the vast crowd of immigrants, the chances should be diminished as much as possible of any person suffering from want remaining unheard of by the relieving officers; and secondly that attempts at imposture might receive every possible check.

January and February 1847 were the hardest months of that winter, with demands for aid from Irish poor becoming very numerous. But even though, by May, Alfred Austin, the poor law inspector, was able to report that applications from the Irish were down by two-thirds, the amount of relief actually given remained at a high level. The largest number of Irish relieved in a single day during January-May was 10,845, and the 'total number of separate individuals relieved in the same way' during 1 March-30 April was 22,226. Statistics for the first four months of 1847 showed that at least 144,112 Irish persons arrived at Liverpool, and by 13 April only 34,855, had re-emigrated to America or Australia. The daily average was 1,441 arrivals, the highest in a single day being 3,804.

Despite the good intentions of the Liverpool board of guardians, the inception of the new district relief system, and the issue of bread and soup tickets, made many potential applicants suspicious that the coupons were disguised passages back to Ireland. Alfred Austin wrote:

I had the opportunity of observing that in some instances the applicants refused to take the cards, regarding them apparently with a feeling of dread, and in many cases the refusal

36. Ibid., p.111 121/
37. Ibid., p.111 121/
38. Ibid., p.111 121/
39. Ibid., p.117 121/
40. Ibid., p.112 122/
41. Ibid., p.115 125/
was accompanied by the declaration that they preferred to die in Liverpool to being sent back to Ireland. The feeling of distrust in the intentions of the parochial officers, by the Irish paupers was so general as to deter many from applying for some days after the alterations for relief at the stations.

But the large numbers of Irish immigrant poor brought with them another problem for Liverpool, besides that of feeding them. Without any help from Ireland, typhus fever would have been a serious threat to Liverpool in 1847. But the disease was widespread in Ireland too, and the physical weakness of many emigrants made them very susceptible to it, if they had not contracted it already. The Irish did not cause a typhus epidemic, but they certainly contributed to its spread (see chapter 5). By April 1847 typhus was so extensive in Liverpool that the Home Office intervened in the town's behalf. A letter was addressed to the Constabulary Office, Dublin Castle, complaining that emigrants actually ill with typhus were allowed to travel to Liverpool unimpeded. The City of Dublin Steam Packet Co., The Dundalk Steam Packet Co. and police authorities in Newry, Belfast and Drogheda were contacted and asked to stop all sick emigrants leaving for Liverpool.

The replies received at Dublin Castle from steam packet companies, police superintendents, mayors and resident magistrates all expressed willingness to do whatever was possible to check the departure of sick persons, but they did not say just how this could be done. A Belfast resident magistrate claimed typhus, 'or other sickness', was not a problem among the 'respectable country people' emigrating from that port, and he found it unnecessary to appoint a medical officer to supervise emigrant departures. But at Drogheda, the mayor reported that 'fever is very prevalent in the town, and the immense influx of paupers from the west is increasing to an alarming extent'. Distinguishing sick from marginally healthier passengers seemed to the Dublin Company 'to be attended with great difficulties, if not wholly impracticable....

42. Ibid., p.123 /133/
43. HO to T.N. Redington, 12 Apr 1847 (SFO, RP, 1847/Z 5037)
44. W. Maloney, R.M. to T.N. Redington, 21 Apr 1847 (SFO, RP, 1847/Z 5037)
45. Jas. Matthews to T.N. Redington, 21 Apr 1847 (SFO, RP, 1847/Z 5037)
especially when the number of passengers of the lower order
now proceeding to Liverpool from the port ranges from 600 to
1,000 daily, few of whom near the vessel until within a short
time of her sailing'.

But this correspondence did produce a result. On 10 May
1847 the Dublin, Drogheda, Dundalk, and Newry steam packet
companies acted independently and announced self-imposed
regulations. Any vessel arriving from Ireland with sick
persons on board had to hoist a yellow flag and the sick be
removed to the lazarettos. Any steamer found carrying a
feverish passenger a second time would be quarantined.
and as such orders are incompatible with the necessary
discharge of cargoes and livestock, and the disembarking of
cabin passengers, and also persons intending to emigrate
from Liverpool

Notice is hereby given
That no deck passenger can be allowed on board or be taken
to Liverpool in any vessel... unless examined by some medical
officer... as to their freedom from fever; and also, that no
destitute persons who may not be able to support themselves
by their own labour, will be allowed to embark between the
above parts and Liverpool. On and after the 12th inst. the
deck fare will be 5s. each way.

But descriptions of conditions in Captain Denham's report,
1849, and items in the Mercury of May 1847, show that this
'effectual preventive to the wholesale exportation of paupers
from the sister kingdom to this port' was not in fact
enforced, and Irish arrivals, and the problems that came with
them, intensified.

By April 1847 The Times estimated that 60,000 Irish emigrants
had settled in Liverpool, or had gone into the interior of
Lancashire. 'Warrington, and other towns within a moderate
distance of Liverpool are crowded with them.' The condition
of Liverpool at this time was vividly described a few days later.

Hordes of Irish miserable, some of them on their way to
America, but the great majority destitute, famished, naked,
and dying, daily invade that city. The eruption of the northern

46. City of Dublin Co. to T.N. Redington, 21 Apr 1847
(SFO, RP, 1847/2 5037)
47. M/R Guardian, 12 May 1847
48. Lpool Mercury, 28 May 1847
49. Lpool Times, 10 May 1847
50. The Times, 14 Apr 1847
nations in Italy, the successive invasions of Saxons and Danes into our island, were tolerable events compared with the daily arrival of armies whose sole but terrible weapons are the famine and pestilence they suffer and convey. The season is not yet sufficiently advanced to reveal a tithe of the horrors that may possibly arise from this infliction. The sudden apparition of twenty French war steamers, followed by as many ships of the line, may be a less evil, less fatal, less destructive, less confounding, than the daily importation of thousands who cannot be driven from the shore or resisted at their landing; who introduce themselves into the heart of the city; who pay for food with famine, and for lodging with pestilence, and who throw their own infected and pestiferous carcasses into the thick of the unhappy besieged.

Smallpox, diarrhoea, dysentery and fever prevail, and there are about forty deaths a day. The present cold weather checks the progress of fever; but it is fearful to think of the probable increase, when winter at last gives way.... The town of Liverpool already, under the most favourable circumstances, is the most unhealthy in England, and therefore, it must be presumed, the least prepared for this trial.

Liverpool, the proudest boast of this country, and the very type of its commercial and manufacturing greatness, may shortly exhibit on a gigantic scale the miseries and abominations of Skibbereen.

Things were bad enough for the moderate Liverpool Mercury to lash out in a strongly-worded editorial.

The government and the parliament have not done their duty to this town. National provision ought instantly to have been made for the support of a burden now shamelessly allowed to fall chiefly on Liverpool; or the relief given in Ireland should have been accompanied by restrictions preventing persons not possessed of the visible means of livelihood from crowding into our courts and cellars, bringing misery, dirt, and disease amongst our own poor, impoverishing the ratepayers, and endangering the health of all classes. Many valuable lives have already been sacrificed amongst us, and those who have been instrumental in bringing pestilence here are morally, if not legally, guilty of murder.

But the Irish did not all remain in the prostrate borough of Liverpool. By July poor Irish were 'leaving Liverpool in shoals' for the interior of Britain in hopes of finding work; but many appeared too weak to undertake even small tasks. This dispersion of the immigrants was aided by the difficulty of finding lodgings in the crowded town which forced the great bulk of the Irish to quit Liverpool nearly immediately upon

51. The Times, 16 Apr 1847
52. Liverpool Mercury, 28 May 1847
53. The Times, 15 July 1847
their arrival....’54 But this did not mean that the strain had been lessened. In July 1847 the Select Vestry decided to step up the re-export of Irish paupers to Ireland. Since this could only be accomplished if the Irish applied for parochial relief, the Mercury appealed to the citizens of Liverpool to refrain from private almsgiving to force the Irish to move on, find work and support themselves, or apply to the parish offices for relief, when they could be sent back to Ireland. ‘To give a single penny, therefore, to an Irish beggar, after this day, is actually to pay him for stopping in Liverpool.’55 The public was assured that any person in need would be looked after. Referring a poor Irishman to the parish authorities was not to ‘refuse’ charity, but to ‘regulate’ it. During the last nine months of 1846, 4,335 Irish paupers were removed to Ireland at a cost to the Board of Guardians of £469. The policy of sending to Ireland as many Irish poor as possible had by December 1847 increased the annual total removed to 14,637, and pushed the cost up to £2,471.56 In November 1847 the people of Liverpool were once again solicited not to give charity to Irish beggars and reminded them that higher poor rates were imminent if this deterrent to an evil of ‘gigantic magnitude’ was not complied with. And significantly, there was included a message to ‘our brother editors in Ireland’, telling them they could do their poor countrymen a great service by ‘informing them that the hearts of the people of Liverpool are becoming actually steeled against all vagrants’.57 But when a select committee on poor removal was collecting evidence seven years later, one witness said that there was no ‘jealousy or dislike’ shown by the native population of Liverpool towards the Irish.

On the contrary, the greatest possible kindness has been shown, and I do not believe that anything could be more creditable to the labouring classes of that great town than their conduct towards the poor Irish under those circumstances. 58

1847 was certainly the peak of the Irish immigration crisis in Liverpool, but the problem of Irish poor was still serious

54. ‘Relief of Irish poor’, p.113
55. Liverpool Mercury, 16 July 1847
56. Liverpool Courier, 5 Jan 1848
57. Liverpool Mercury, 30 Nov 1847
58. Report from the select cttee on poor removal (cited hereafter as Cttee poor removal), p.61, H.C., 1854 (396), xvii, 763
during 1848-50. In February 1848 'distress in the streets' was described with hundreds of Irish poor unable to secure shelter or food and many 'committing offences against the law in order, avowedly, that they may be put into gaol'.

During November 1848-1849, 241,464 Irish persons arrived at Liverpool, some 82,000 of whom were 'apparently' paupers. Many others were waiting for passage overseas, but still great numbers of poor Irish remained in the borough, and 'thousands were still following in their train'.

The lowest number of people landing from Ireland during that year was in the week of 30 December, when 1,239 arrived, 332 of whom were recorded as paupers. But the week of 23 June 1849 brought 9,409, over 6,000 of whom were destitute.

The arrival figures for 1850-1 were higher, but somewhat fewer obvious paupers appeared on the docks. Up to 1853 there were still over 70,000 paupers among hundreds of thousands of arrivals from Ireland, but in 1854 the figure dropped markedly to 7,400 'apparent' paupers.

Table 38

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Paupers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>241,464</td>
<td>82,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
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<td>77,765</td>
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<td>1852</td>
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<td>78,422</td>
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<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>233,652</td>
<td>71,353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>158,807</td>
<td>7,425</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Under 'an act to amend the laws relating to the removal of the poor' of 1846 (9 & 10 Vict., c.66), any person residing in an English poor law union for less than five years, and who became chargeable to the board of guardians, was liable to be removed from that union back to the union he originally came from, his place of settlement. Widows, children under sixteen years of age and sick persons were exceptions, but able-bodied persons over sixteen, perhaps with families,

59. Liverpool Courier, 4 Feb 1848
60. Liverpool Courier, 15 Jan 1850; Weekly return of Irish landed at Liverpool during the year ended 17 Nov 1849 (PRO, HO 45/08/2674)
61. Weekly return of Irish landed at Liverpool during the year ended 17 Nov 1849 (PRO, HO 45/08/2674)
62. Cttee poor removal, p.593, 1605/
were eligible for removal. The Irish in English poor law unions were not mentioned specifically in this act, but they came within its provisions. Another amending act of 1861 (24 & 25 Vict., c 76) concerned only Irish removals. The residence requirement was reduced from five to three years and no Irishman could be removed from England to Ireland if the journey endangered his health. Another clause made it illegal for women or children below the age of fourteen to be removed during 1 October–31 March as deck passengers.

The Liverpool board of guardians thought that even if they could not stop the Irish coming to Liverpool, they could at least deter them from applying for relief with the threat of removal back to Ireland. This could cost two to five shillings for each person sent back, and there was nothing to prevent the person just removed from gathering a few shillings and boarding a steamer back to Liverpool the following night. But the Liverpool Board thought it was worth the expense. By spending money they hoped to save money in the long run. During 1846–53, 66,589 persons were removed from the parish of Liverpool, 62,881 of them were Irish, 94% of the total. 63

Table 39

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date 1</th>
<th>Date 2</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Irish</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>26 Dec 1845</td>
<td>25 Dec 1846</td>
<td>5,649</td>
<td>5,313</td>
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<td>25 Dec 1847</td>
<td>15,472</td>
<td>15,008</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 Dec 1847</td>
<td>25 Dec 1848</td>
<td>8,239</td>
<td>7,607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Dec 1848</td>
<td>25 Dec 1849</td>
<td>10,071</td>
<td>9,509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Dec 1849</td>
<td>25 Dec 1850</td>
<td>8,102</td>
<td>7,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Dec 1850</td>
<td>25 Dec 1851</td>
<td>8,232</td>
<td>7,808</td>
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<td>26 Dec 1851</td>
<td>25 Dec 1852</td>
<td>6,004</td>
<td>5,506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Dec 1852</td>
<td>25 Dec 1853</td>
<td>4,820</td>
<td>4,503</td>
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</table>

During 1849–53 the cost of removing Irishmen from Liverpool back to Ireland was £8,521. 64

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>£2,519</td>
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<tr>
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<td>£1,488</td>
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<td>1851</td>
<td>£1,931</td>
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<td>1852</td>
<td>£1,453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>£1,130</td>
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62. Cttee poor removal, p.593 /605/
63. Ibid., p.369 /381/
64. Returns of the number of Irish poor removed from the parish of Liverpool 1849–54, pp 1–3, H.C., 1854 (374), iv, 321–3
Even though the crisis of the massive famine emigration was passed, the Liverpool board of guardians found it necessary to remove large numbers of Irishmen to cut down their relief lists. But no more information on removals from Lancashire to Ireland is available beyond the mid-1850s, making it impossible to judge if they declined, increased or levelled off during 1855-71. But the expense of removals during 1846-53 was minute compared with the total burden on the Liverpool parish authorities that the Irish immigration of the late 1840s imposed.

The overall impact on Liverpool of the immigration of Irish poor during 1846-52 was summed up by the clerk of the select vestry.

The Irish immigration and fever crisis, besides the injury inflicted since repaired by the voluntary rate, and the irreparable injury sustained by the widows and families of so many parochial officers they cut off by the fever, cast upon the parish burdens exceeding £70,000! To meet this heavy requirement the ratepayers were called upon to one shilling in the pound, twice repeated, in addition to their ordinary contributions....the immigration of Irish pauperism into the parish, though in a greatly mitigated form, is silently, but systematically, going on, and will have to be vigilantly guarded against to prevent a repetition of the former disastrous consequences. 65

But the statistics for outdoor and workhouse relief in Liverpool, submitted to the select committee on poor removal in 1854, amplify this already alarming assessment. These are the only statistics for the parish of Liverpool available for the 1846-71 period, and they cover March 1844-March 1854.66

It should be pointed out that unlike census or police statistics, poor relief figures are often concerned with whole families, rather than individuals. So these statistics consider Irish parents and their English-born families. Even though the poor law of 1834 was supposed to limit the outdoor relief disbursed by local unions to the sick, leaving the workhouse as an uninviting alternative for the able-bodied, outdoor relief

65. General vestry, minutes 19 Apr 1852 (LCL, 353PAR/1/1/4, p.466)
66. Cttee poor removal, p.592 /604/
Figure 4

Liverpool Board of Guardians

Average number of paupers relieved weekly outdoors, 1844-54
Figure 5

Liverpool Board of Guardians

Percentages of average number of paupers relieved weekly outdoors who were Irish, 1844-54

Average percentage = 25.5
was 'judiciously winked at' by the Poor Law Commissioners, and later by the Poor Law Board, who 'prudently refrained from even attempting to abolish outdoor relief'.67

Particularly in London and the manufacturing districts, such as Lancashire, destitution among able-bodied men could not be attributed simply to laziness. Trade fluctuations and shipping problems, winter, and bad weather generally, could enforce widespread idleness along Liverpool's docks and on the town's building sites. In the cotton-textile towns of Lancashire periodic fluctuations in trade could put thousands out of employment, even if they were eager to work. And throughout urban Lancashire the large numbers of immigrants, from the rest of Britain and from Ireland, trying to find housing and work in a new environment, supplied additional applicants for relief while they settled in. The scattered poor-relief statistics which survive for the 1840s-1870s period show that usually over half the expenditure of boards of guardians went towards outdoor relief. The Liverpool statistics for 1844-54 bear this out. Most of the aid, to both the indigenous and the Irish poor, was given outside the workhouse.

During 1844-5 an average of 1,564 Irish persons received outdoor relief from the Liverpool board of guardians each week, less than 17% of the total (see Figures 4 and 5). By March 1846-March 1847 this number increased to over 3,000, but the percentage of the total dropped to 13.3%. The time greatest hardship for both native Liverpolitans and Irish immigrants was March 1847-March 1848, and the average number of Irish paupers relieved each week went over 26,000, more than 43% of the total. During the following twelve months the average numbers of total relief and Irish relief came down, with the Irish supplying almost 3,500 cases a week, 27% of the total. The average total number relieved during a week, and the average number of Irish relieved, declined very slowly during March 1848-March 1854. In fact, the figures were almost

67. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, English poor law history, Part II (London, 1929), i, 146-7
Liverpool Board of Guardians
Total number of paupers relieved in workhouse, 1844-54

Average percentage = 27.6
Liverpool Board of Guardians

Percentage of total paupers relieved in workhouse who were Irish
1844-54

Average percentage = 37.6
Figure 8
Liverpool District Provident Society
Number of families relieved during 1844-1853

[Graph showing the number of families relieved by the Liverpool District Provident Society from 1844 to 1853, with lines for total and Irish families.]
Figure 2

Liverpool District Provident Society

Percentage of families relieved which were Irish, 1844-53

The percentage of the average number of Irish families relieved decreased during 1846-47. However, the total number of families continued to increase significantly. By 1848, the total number given relief was over 13,000. Even though there was a slight reduction in the total number of Irish families relieved, the percentage remained high. The Irish in Liverpool, who were relatively new arrivals, were generally welcomed into the community. However, there was a steady increase of both the total number of Irish families and the number of Irish residents in the city. In each of the three years, the total number of Irish families increased. By 1848, the total number of Irish families was at its peak, with over 15,000. In the year 1850, 27% of those relieved by the Liverpool District Provident Society were Irish. This figure continued to increase until 1853. The Irish in Liverpool did not experience significant difficulties in entering the local workforce as they had been in other British cities. The Irish were welcomed into the community, and the Liverpool District Provident Society, a local charity group, played a significant role in providing support to the Irish families. In 1844, the society helped 1,000 Irish families, which represented 33% of all the families dealt with. The total families, and the Irish families, who were relieved, continued to increase.
static during those years. The average number of Irishmen relieved outdoors each week went down to 2,760 in 1853-4, which was considerably above the March 1844-March 1846 figures. The percentage of the average number of Irish persons relieved outdoors during 1848-54 remained steadily around 26-7%.

But Irishmen were also resorting to the workhouse in large numbers (see Figures 6 and 7). During March 1844-March 1845 almost 1,500 Irish were relieved in the workhouse, 26% of the total. Up to March 1847 the total number of Irishmen taken into the workhouse did not increase significantly, but, as with outdoor relief, the greatest problems were experienced during March 1847-March 1848. The total number given relief at the workhouse during 1847-8 went over 13,000, 3,800 of whom were Irish. But even though the number of Irish in the workhouse almost doubled, the percentage of the total who were Irish only went up three points, to 29%. The Irishmen taken into the workhouse went down to 2,600 during the next year, but from March 1849 there was a steady increase of both the total persons and Irish relieved there. In each of the three years 1851-4 the total number of Irishmen in the workhouse was above the 1847-8 figure, and by 1854 the total persons taken in was nearing the peak 13,000 of 1847-8. In the year March 1849-March 1850, 47% of those relieved at the Liverpool workhouse were Irish. This figure continued to increase until 1854, when it was 48.1%. The Irish in Liverpool did not appear as reluctant to enter the parish workhouse as they had been to go into those in the poor law unions in Ireland.

But the parish's board of guardians was not the only source of relief for Liverpool's poor. The sum total of aid to the immigrant Irish included the considerable contribution of the Liverpool District Provident Society, a local charity group (see Figures 8 and 9). In 1844 the society helped 9,500 Irish families, which represented 53% of all the families it dealt with. The total families, and the Irish families,
receiving relief from the society fell off by about half during 1845, but still the Irish were 59% of those requiring the society's assistance. In 1846 the number of Irish families on the society's lists leaped to 19,000, 64% of the total number for the whole town. Curiously, during the very hard year 1847 the total number and the number of Irish families fell off to near the 1846 level. But the Irish were still 56% of the society's business. The figures doubled in 1848 and then started to trail off, but the smallest proportion of the total number the Irish families comprised was 39%, in 1851. The average proportion of Irish families looked after by the District Provident Society during 1844-53 was 50.1%.

The cost of Irish relief in Liverpool during 1846-54 was extremely high. The select committee on poor removal reported that over £73,000 was spent on outdoor relief for the Irish. Their workhouse maintenance cost £39,600. These figures represented 28% and 40.5%, respectively, of the total indoor and workhouse relief bills for 1846-54. Overall, the Irish cost the parish of Liverpool, which received no government subsidies, over £112,600 in eight years, 31.4% of the total indoor and outdoor expenditure. In 1851 the Irish community was at least 31% of the total population of Liverpool. Even though the Irish were numerically disproportionate in the relief lists, the amount of money they absorbed was roughly proportionate to the size of the Irish community in the town. But the situation was still unequal, because few Irishmen were paying poor rates. This does not represent the total cost of Irish relief. The burden on the parish was mitigated to some degree by the work of the District Provident Society, which aided many thousands of families during the social and economic crises of the late 1840s. And there were many private acts of philanthropy which helped to keep at least some poor Irish immigrants from adding their names to already swollen relief lists. Liverpool's relief costs would have been high during the economic dislocation of the 1840s, even if there were no poor
Irish immigrants to contend with. But the landing of hundreds of thousands of poor Irish, some waiting to emigrate to America or Australia, and many others coming to Britain to make new homes, severely aggravated an already serious problem. In social and financial terms, the mass Irish immigration of the late 1840s had a devastating impact on Liverpool. But the energy of the parochial authorities and many private citizens prevented a grave crisis from becoming a disaster.

Though the Irish immigration was most visible and most damaging in the vulnerable port of Liverpool, its effects were felt by guardians of the poor in unions all over Lancashire. The cotton-textile town of Preston was feeling the combined effects of the 'hungry forties' very sharply. The trade recession involved 'short time, stoppage of mills, dear food, and a further deduction of ten percent/ from wages/'. Of the forty-six mills in Preston in May 1847, twenty-six were working full time, one worked five days, thirteen worked four days, one worked three days and five were shut down altogether, which put 720 persons out of work with little prospect of finding alternative employment. Hardship was so widespread that in December 1846 the Preston Soup Committee was formed, which began distributing soup to the 'really needy' at two local schools. But so many families were in need of food that there was often not enough soup for all who applied. It was necessary to maintain this service for seventeen months, until June 1848, when the soup kitchen was at last closed down. But seven months later another difficult winter compelled the committee to form itself once again to aid hungry factory hands. During its second term of operation the demand for the soup was 'far less eager than last winter, a gratifying proof of diminished distress among the poor'.

Into this already serious situation trudged hundreds of immigrants from Ireland. In May 1846 a good example of how Irish people arrived at Preston, and why they might choose to come, was

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69. W. Pilkinson, Then and now: Preston's progress for seventy years 1841 - 1911 (Preston, 1911), p.29
70. Preston Guardian, 8 May 1847
71. Preston Guardian, 26 Dec 1846
72. Preston Guardian, 2 Jan 1847
73. Preston Guardian, 10 June 1848
furnished by a case before the Preston board of guardians.

A twenty-two year old girl applied to the Preston board of guardians for removal to Ireland. She stated her father could only earn five or six pence a day as an agricultural labourer, and she only five pence for work in the fields. They lived on potatoes and milk. Finding it difficult to make a living at this rate in the general distress now so unhappily prevailing in her country, and thinking that if she could only get to the manufacturing districts of England, a more comfortable subsistence would fall to her lot, her father managed to scrape £1 together, with which she set off to Dublin, sailed thence to Liverpool, and then walked to Preston, having managed by thrift and occasional charity to save a few shillings out of a pound. Arrived in Preston, which she did three weeks ago, she tried her hand at factory work, but after a fortnight's experiment found to her great regret that she 'couldn't stand it'. Thus with her failure as a factory girl all her bright hopes had vanished and she was only anxious to return home.... The Board granted her application without hesitation, and as she left Mr. Marshall, with a laugh, in which the other guardians joined, said, in reference to the wages earned by the applicant's father, that were he an Irishman, and forced to work under such circumstances, he too would become a 'repealer' at once. 75

By December the immigration of Irish poor into Preston was causing concern. The Irish famine 'has already operated most injuriously upon the welfare of this country'. Part of a 'half-naked and half-famished' throng were entering the Lancashire districts, and it was feared that they would endanger already low wage levels by competing with the native workers for scarce employment.

In Preston, so great has been the number lately of applicants for relief that assistant overseers and relieving officers cannot satisfactorily get through their labours; and the prospect for the ratepayers is that of a great and alarming increase to their burdens.... 76

The bleak year 1847 opened with Irish beggars in Preston's streets becoming a more and more common sight. But this nuisance did have its lighter side. One Irishwoman went into a shop in Fishergate, Preston's principal thoroughfare, and was 'importunate in soliciting charity'. She was very persistent and finally the tradesman told her he had no small change to give, and she left. But within a few minutes she was back in the shop saying, with a polite curtsey: 'Please, sir, I can

75. Preston Guardian, 2 May 1846
76. Preston Chronicle, 24 Dec 1846
accommodate you with change now! But Preston's rate-paying sense of humour was wearing thin. The totals of persons given relief in the borough showed a 'startling increase' during the first quarter of 1847. The increase was attributed principally to 'Irish immigrants seeking a refuge in this country from the famine which prevails in their own'. If this rising expense was not enough to trouble the Preston guardians, a letter arrived in July 1847 from Alfred Austin, the assistant poor law commissioner, warning of a 'sudden increased demand for relief by the Irish warrants'. Austin recommended that the immigrants be removed back to Ireland 'on a large scale', as was being attempted at Liverpool. Even though there is no evidence of any 'sudden' influx of Irish, the hard economic conditions prevailing in England, plus the added charge of Irish immigration, forced the Preston guardians to expand their organisation to handle larger numbers of cases.

Despite the extra burden they constituted for the Preston community, hearts were not 'steeled' against the Irish poor, as was reportedly the case in Liverpool. An editorial appeared in January 1848 discussing the new neighbours.

That the Irish are not an idle race when out of their native land...is perfectly true.... They know and feel that among strangers they must rely on themselves alone, and they strive for the attainment of those comforts, which in their own country they deem will light upon them at some period, as a god-send.

The Irish were 'useful members of society' when they were abroad, but a good deal less vigorous at home because of their mood 'of a miser's heir, waiting for an inheritance which, nevertheless, may pass to another expectant'. But this left-handed compliment did not imply any complacency on the part of the guardians of the poor towards the Irish immigrant relief problem.

During 1849-51, as we have seen, the Preston board joined in the campaign to reduce poor rates by limiting the number of Irish allowed to travel to England. During that campaign a

77. Preston Guardian, 23 Jan 1847
78. Preston Chronicle, 15 May 1847
79. A. Austin to Preston BG, 20 July 1847 (LRO, Preston, BG, minutes, PUT/1/12, p.198)
80. Preston, BG, minutes, 2 Nov 1847 (LRO, PUT/1/13, up 37-8)
81. Preston Chronicle, 29 Jan 1848
return was compiled, at the request of the Liverpool vestry, of the Irish relieved during 1850. The total for the borough was moderate by Liverpool standards, 9,683 at a cost of £346. But this was a very alarming figure for Preston when it is considered that the minimum Irish community of Preston at the time was about 7,000 persons. This implies that a very large part of the Irish community was destitute during 1850. This figure had a considerable impact on the board of guardians, and a resolution was passed the same day that relieving officers would thereafter 'take all Irish vagrants that may apply to them for relief before the magistrates to be dealt with under the vagrants act, as the law directs'. But this did not rule out aid to 'deserving poor' in the Irish community of Preston.

The towns of Widnes and St Helens were situated in the Prescot poor law union, and both were separate districts within the union. But only sparse information about the possible ill-effects of Irish immigration on poor rates is available. The report of the poor law commissioners for 1847 contains a comparative return for poor relief to Irish immigrants in certain Lancashire unions. During the first quarter of 1846 only sixteen Irish persons received any relief from the Prescot union. But in the first quarter of 1847 the figure climbed to 2,211. For the whole 1846-71 period there is only one mention of the Irish as a particular problem in the board minute books. By July 1847 the number of Irish paupers, especially those ill with typhus, was large enough for the Prescot board to have to initiate a remedial procedure. All healthy Irish in the union workhouse were to be removed back to Ireland by the relieving officer and he 'or some other trustworthy person or persons should in all cases be sent to see them on board the packets'. But the lack of discussion of an Irish problem in either St Helens or Widnes during the time of the famine emigration, or for twenty years afterward, would indicate that the extent of Irish pauperism was not great enough to warrant any particular

82. Preston, BG, minutes, 18 Feb 1851 (LRO, FUT/1/15, p.210)
83. Preston, BG, minutes, 18 Feb 1851 (LRO, FUT/1/15, p.211)
84. Comparative number of Irish relieved in several unions in Lancashire.... in the March quarters of 1846 and 1847 in 'Relief of Irish poor', p.118/128/185. Prescot Wi, minutes, 22 July 1847 (LRO, FUT/1/3, p.311)
concern. One explanation for this is that the whole 1846-71 period was one of industrial expansion in both Widnes and St Helens, which meant that there was always plenty of employment available. Also neither town was linked with the cotton-textile industry in northern England, and they escaped the slumps which affected it periodically.

But there was a case at St Helens in 1847 which demonstrated another problem for guardians of the poor in Lancashire—some paupers were not as poor as they claimed. In April an Irishman appeared at the police station in St Helens asking for enough money to pay for a night's lodgings for him and his family. After a struggle, two of the officers searched him, and found in his pockets £1.6s.3d.; his wife had also 4d. in her pocket. He was committed to Kirkdale for fourteen days, and the magistrate ordered that during his imprisonment in gaol he should be maintained out of the money in his possession. 86 Cases of this sort were reported in the local press at Manchester, Preston and Liverpool too, especially during 1846-50.

The Oldham union was established in 1848, and, as with the guardians at Prescot, there is little evidence to suggest that poor Irishmen were any extraordinary burden on the ratepayers during the 1840s, or after. Demands for relief were heavy during 1848-50 because of 'the great distress arising from the depressed state of trade and the high price of food'. 87 But the immigration is not cited as a cause of greater demands for public aid, or even a contributory element. During 1850-71 the Oldham Irish were never mentioned by the board of guardians as any problem at all.

Only the annual published accounts of the Salford guardians, 1848-71, survive for that union. The Manchester press and the Salford Weekly News (from 1859) carried no mention of an Irish poor relief problem during 1846-71. But there is some evidence of an increased demand for relief among Salford's Irish.

86. Lpool Mercury, 30 Apr 1847
87. Oldham, BG, minutes, 6 Mar 1850 (DRO, FOU/1/1, pp 535-6)
The 1847 poor law commissioner's report shows that in the first quarter of 1846, 231 Irish were relieved in the Salford union. But in the first three months of 1847 it was 1,072. The annual union reports, first produced in 1848, show only the cost of Irish outdoor relief. Irishmen absorbed 15.6% of the relief given in 1848 and 10.3% in 1849, but from 1850 there is a steady decrease in both total expenditure and the percentage used for Irish relief.

By 1852 the yearly cost of maintaining poor Irish was only £7. From 1854-6 the statistics are for both Irish and Scots poor, most of whom would have been Irish anyway. But it is notable that during the difficult year 1855 Irish and Scots poor relief combined accounted for only 1.5% of the total amount spent. The cost of the Irish to the union had so diminished during the 1850s that statistics distinguishing Irish or Irish and Scots from the body of applicants for outdoor relief were discontinued from 1857. But next door in Manchester the story was very different.

There is a great deal of information on the problem of Irish pauperism in Manchester available in the half yearly published accounts of the Manchester board of guardians, 1851-71, the union's weekly minute books and in the account books for

88. Salford, BG, analysis of expenditure, 1848-56 (SCL, L342.0424 SAL)
outdoor relief, 1830-48. The city of Manchester also included the Chorlton union, but I have not found any information relating to it except half-yearly accounts that do not mention the Irish at all. Still the Manchester union figures would be a good indication of Irish relief throughout the city. There are statistics for the whole period of the famine immigration, making comparison of Irish and total poor relief possible. Once again, these statistics are for the Irish community as a whole, Irish-born parents and English-born dependents.

By early 1847 the first effects of distress in Ireland were being felt in Manchester. At the mid-January meeting of the Manchester guardians, attention was drawn to the increased numbers of relief cases during the early weeks of the year, 'and particularly those of the Irish'. Indeed, during the first three months the number of persons relieved by the board rose from 39,670 to 56,557. And even though the Manchester Guardian was optimistically reporting that 'notwithstanding the large influx of Irish paupers and mendicants into this town... they have scarcely at all applied to the board of this union', the numbers of Irish relieved went from 7,636 during the last quarter of 1846 to 17,174 for the first three months of 1847, representing 57% of the total increase. The Guardians acknowledged 'the high price of food, the inclement season of the year and the stagnation of trade' as major forces 'operating against the working classes', but the arrival of 'a population which had no ostensible means of subsistence' made matters much more grave. One of the guardians proposed that a soup kitchen be established to help the poor, but one of the others objected because he thought an offer of free soup would attract many more poor Irish, 'who were a most improvident people'. But a soup kitchen was already operating and the Manchester board was spared the expense of opening their own.

89. M/R Guardian, 23 Jan 1847
90. Township of M/R, Accounts of monies disbursed week by week to the poor by the churchwardens, Mar 1830-Aug 1848 (M/RCL, Archives Dept., M3/3/6B, 1846-8)
91. M/R Courier, 16 Jan 1847; 27 Jan 1847
But statistics and debates of the board of guardians did not tell the whole story of the difficulties of the Irish poor in Manchester during the winter months of 1847. Manchester's housing was little better prepared than Liverpool's to absorb the ragged immigrants, and the number of street corners where homeless Irish families were seen begging became 'painfully numerous'.

Most of those who besieged the soup kitchen were Irish, many of whom 'appeared to have made their way hither from Liverpool, in the hope of finding fewer competitors here than in that town in their claims on public charity'.

But some of the immigrants were worse off than others. Under the title 'Irish landlordism', an interesting portrait of a poor immigrant family is provided by the case of a widowed Irish woman and her six 'dreadfully emaciated' children.

According to the woman's statement it appears that her husband, who died three years since, had held on lease for the last seventeen years about three acres of land, the property of Mr. Nicolas Balfe, Castlereagh, County Roscommon, and which had been held by her husband's father and grandfather. The rent was £2.14s. per annum, and oats, flax, and potatoes, were grown upon the land; but in consequence of her husband's death, and the failure of the potato crop for the last two years, the widow got into arrears with her rent. What few goods she had were sold, one after the other, even to the bed she lay upon, in order to meet her current expenses. At length, she received a notice to quit, and an offer of 25s. for the purpose of conveying her and her family to England. She knew that the alternative was a summary process of eviction, so she was fain to accept the money, and come over to Manchester, hoping that a married sister who lived here might be able to do something for her. She came as we have stated, found her relatives living at No. 4 Hanton Street, Little Ireland, and dependant upon the soup kitchen for the means of subsistence.... three of her children at this time extremely ill from the effects of too plentiful a supply of food after long abstinence.

But things were to become still more serious during the spring of 1847. The continued slump in trade made the assimilation of the Irish into the labour force a slow process. In May only 98 of 177 mills in Manchester were running at full time, fifty-four were on short time and twenty-five were closed down, throwing 7,519 operatives out of work. The number of

92. M/R Courier, 16 Jan 1847
93. M/R Guardian, 23 Jan 1847
94. M/R Guardian, 3 Apr 1847
Manchester Board of Guardians
Outdoor relief, 1845-8
Figure 11
Manchester Board of Guardians
Irish outdoor relief, 1845-8

Figure 12
Manchester Board of Guardians
Cost of Irish outdoor relief, 1846-51
persons applying to the guardians for aid continued to rise and
the clerk of the Guardians wrote a year later that 'Irish
immigration last year was filling the union with Irish poor'.\textsuperscript{95}
By the end of the second quarter of 1847 the total of persons
given outdoor relief rose by over 35,000 and the number of Irish
by 16,000. The increase continued during the summer, but at a
lower rate, and finally began to decline during the autumn.
But the relief rolls reached new peaks during the first
quarter of 1848 (see Figure 10). The improved state of trade
in 1848 helped to decrease the number of people dependent on
the guardians, and by September the number of Irish relieved
in a three month period was down to 22,467. But during the
autumn of that year it rose to over 24,000 once again.\textsuperscript{96}

There were other calamities which could befall the Irish
in Manchester, besides inadequate housing, unemployment and
expensive food. On 9 May 1847 the crowded area off Oxford
Road, known as Little Ireland, was covered by five feet of
water from the filthy River Medlock, when some timber blocked
the floodgates. Even after the water had drained, the houses
were uninhabitable for some time and much property floated
away or was ruined, which made many Irish families dependent
on the union until they could get settled again.\textsuperscript{97}

A graph compiled by the board of guardians during the
early 1850s shows the expenses incurred by the union both for
the total outdoor relief and the amount given to the Irish
during 1846-51. The total cost of outdoor relief to the
Irish poor during those six years was £63,000 \textsuperscript{98} (see Figures
11 and 12).

There is a break in the statistics between 1848 and 1850
where the manuscript outdoor relief book stops and the half-
yearly printed returns begin. But other statistics for 1846-54
were submitted to the poor removal committee in 1854. They are
returns of the average amount of relief (indoor and outdoor)
\textsuperscript{96. Township of M/R, Accounts of monies disbursed, 1845-8 (M/RCL, Archives Dept., M3/3/6B)
97. Preston Guardian, 15 May 1847
98. M/R, BG, statistics, relating to outdoor relief, 1846-51, graph, N.D. (M/RCL, Archives Dept., M4/9/3)
Manchester Board of Guardians

Average number of persons relieved each week, 1846-54
(Families and individuals)

--- = families
----- = individuals

--- Figure 13 ---

Manchester Board of Guardians

Percentage of average number of persons relieved each week who were Irish, 1846-54

--- Figure 14 ---
given by the Manchester board of guardians each week, distinguishing Irish families from the total. Since the bases on which these figures were compiled were different from both the old outdoor relief book and the printed returns which commence in 1850, comparisons are not possible. But they do give a helpful picture of how much of a problem the Irish poor were for the Manchester board of guardians during the time of the famine emigration, and immediately after (see Figures 13 and 14). The statistics show a peak in the average number of Irish families relieved, outdoors and in the workhouse, in 1848, indicating that the main impact of Irish immigration, which hit Liverpool in 1847, was delayed by some months before it reached Manchester. During 1846–54 the percentage of the average total families relieved in Manchester each week who were Irish rose. The first peak was 1848, when the Irish were 34.5% of those relieved. The percentage hovered around thirty-four during 1849–51, but in 1852 it went up to 37.7%, higher than in 1848. The percentages for 1853–4 were not as high as in 1852, but were still above the 1848 level. In 1851 the minimum size of the Irish community of Manchester was around 69,000, about 22% of the total population. Even after the difficulties of the famine emigration subsided, the Irish were a disproportionate burden on the Manchester board of guardians.

The heavy immigration of poor Irish into Lancashire had a considerable impact on the major population centres of Liverpool, Manchester, and, to a lesser extent, Preston. The towns of Oldham, St Helens, Widnes and Salford (despite its proximity to Manchester) were affected to a smaller degree. Even though the latter 1840s, and 1847–8 particularly, would have been difficult and costly times for Lancashire's boards of guardians without the added problem of thousands of hungry and homeless Irish families, the Irish intensified the problem by up to 20%, as the statistics show at Manchester. The
situation of the Irish was more severe than that of the native working people, who, for the most part, were at least settled in the various towns. The Irish were a more complex problem. The immigrants who spread throughout Lancashire's industrial districts during 1846-51 had endured great hardships in Ireland and an uncomfortable night on the Irish Sea, and then usually walked to other towns if they managed to leave Liverpool. And wherever they decided to try to settle, there was a wearying search for housing and work. Besides being hungry, ragged and jobless the Irish were rootless and often friendless. So, amid all the poverty of the 'hungry forties', the Irish attracted considerable attention for being more ragged, hungrier, weaker and more utterly destitute than the native poor. Their notoriety as a social problem was enhanced by their relatively large numbers, in the streets and in the relief statistics.

The pressure of total and Irish poor relief eased considerably after 1850, but the problem of Irish pauperism did not disappear in Lancashire during 1850-71.

At Liverpool the arrival of poor Irish was a problem for most of the 1850s. During 1850-68 the police continued to compile statistics on the number of persons arriving from Ireland at Liverpool, as well as the number of those persons who were considered paupers. The totals of arrivals, which included those intending to re-emigrate, declined steadily during those sixteen years, as did the number of immigrant paupers. 100

Table 41

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Paupers</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2,881</td>
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<td>1856</td>
<td>86,207</td>
<td>1,998</td>
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<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>108,353</td>
<td>2,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>81,238</td>
<td>1,194</td>
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<td>76,003</td>
<td>509</td>
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<td>1860</td>
<td>75,359</td>
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<td>1861</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1862</td>
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<td>14</td>
</tr>
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<td>1864</td>
<td>67,877</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>37,596</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
These are the only statistics available for Liverpool after 1854, but it is possible to know something of the Irish poor there from other sources.

The winter of 1854-5 was very severe, meteorologically and economically, for the working classes of industrial Lancashire, which included most of the Irish and their families. Things were so bad by mid-February that a large scale bread riot broke out in the Scotland-Vauxhall area of Liverpool's north-side, where large numbers of Irish were resident. Many of the town's breadshops were looted before order could be restored and most of the blame was levelled at the Irish community. Another difficult winter set in during 1860-1 and Major Grieg, Liverpool's Head Constable, possibly looking back to the widespread disorder and damage of 1855, employed the police in distributing relief tickets for bread and soup from the District Provident Society. Grieg pointed out the advantages of such a practice.

It prevents the assembling of large parties in the streets, it reaches the really destitute cases, and the Head Constable has reason to know that it has created a kind feeling towards the police, showing the poor that they would much rather do them good than harm. 102

This experiment in Tory democracy was repeated the following winter. But again during the hard winter of 1866-7 another, smaller bread riot occurred in the Scotland Road, where the Irish were implicated once again. 103

Only once during 1851-71 did the Irish poor in Preston present a major problem. In the autumn of 1853 the factory operatives began organising to demand an increase and standardisation of wages paid by the millowners of the town. Wages were reduced by 10% twice during the 1840s and the workers demanded a restoration of half of the aggregate reduction. 104 Workers at one mill went out on strike until the owners should agree to their demands. The millowners feared an expansion of

100. Borough of Liverpool, Watch Cttee, Reports on Police establishment, and the state of crime with tabular returns 1863-8, (LCL, H352.2 WAT)
101. Lpool Mercury; Lpool Courier, 20 Feb 1855 (see chapter 6)
102. HC Grieg to watch cttee, 29 Jan 1861 (LCL, Head Constable's reports, 352FOL/2/4, p.269)
103. Lpool Mercury, 27 Jan 1867
104. A. Hewitson, History of Preston, p.178
the demands or a series of strikes, and the operatives at the affected mill were given the choice of returning to work or facing a general lockout. The workers persisted and the mills were shut down in October 1853. One observer produced an interesting analysis of the points of dispute.

The real question at issue in the Preston strike was not one of wages, but of property; not whether the operatives should have more or less money in exchange for their labour, but whether the masters should have the power of saying whom they would employ and on what terms; whether they should be masters within their own just provinces, viz. within the factories they had built, and among the men who received the money. Their cause was not that of capital against labour, but that of property against communism.... 105

Whether or not a Victorian red menace threatened Preston, 'the great lockout' was the 'costliest and most prolonged struggle which ever took place' between the town's employers and operatives. 106 The strike lasted from October 1853 until May 1854. 20-25,000 persons were put out of work, and their weekly earnings were withdrawn from circulation in the town's economy. Workers in other towns subscribed money for the Preston strikers, and those at Blackburn and Stockport were particularly generous. The strikers' executive spent more than £100,000 during the thirty-eight week strike to support the Preston operatives, and there is no mention in the minutes of the Preston board of guardians that the strike caused heavier demands for relief from the union. But despite this 'metallic sympathy' received by the operatives there was much poverty and suffering in Preston. Through the depression in general business which the lock-out caused, the town altogether was injured. Every department of trade was languid. A cloud of thick darkness, angry and ostensibly impenetrable, seemed to hang over the whole place. Small shopkeepers directly dependent upon the wages of the operatives were seriously affected. 107

By January 1854 the mill-owners of Preston were looking for ways to break the strike. The Preston Guardian noted an item in an Irish newspaper which advocated the importation of Irish labourers to 'remedy' the strike, because in the south of Ireland

105. H. Ashworth, The Preston strike: an inquiry into its causes and consequences (Manchester, 1854), pp 15-6
106. Hewitson, op.cit., p.178
107. Ibid., p.179
there could be found 'able-bodied men working at 8d. per day; strong, healthy women at 4d. per day'. But the **Guardian** discounted the proposal, feeling certain 'English manufacturers will think twice before they promote to any great extent the employment of Irish operatives'. But the owners betrayed the newspaper's trust, and in March 1854 they began bringing in labour from Scotland, the north counties and from Ireland. The arrival of the first trainload of Irish 'knobsticks' (1850s slang for 'scab') from Manchester alarmed the local constabulary and detachments of police were marched to the railway station to make certain there were no disturbances. Until the police arrived no one was waiting for the train. But the presence of large numbers of policemen attracted attention, and a crowd of over 2,000 onlookers had to be cleared from the streets. The sixty-two Irish who arrived were intercepted by delegates of the strikers and fifty-four of them were persuaded to return to Manchester. This first arrival was the beginning of a minor Irish immigration, and people were brought over from Belfast, some from the workhouse there, via Fleetwood. They presented a most melancholy sight, nearly all were destitute of shoes and stockings, and some were dressed in night caps. They included all ages; from the infant in arms, to females advanced in years, altogether a wretched specimen of what Irish famine had reduced the peasantry of that country to. 109

Those who were not influenced by the operatives' representatives were housed in a disused railway station, in mill-owners' cottages or in factory outbuildings.

A week later another batch of seventy-eight Irish were met at Fleetwood and persuaded to return to Belfast. 110 But others continued to enter the town. A group of thirty-five arrived from Manchester in a most disgustingly filthy condition. Their bedding, etc., swarmed with that species of loathsome vermin so obnoxious to cleanly housewives. 111

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108. **Preston Guardian**, 7 Jan 1854
109. **Preston Guardian**, 4 Mar 1854
110. **Preston Guardian**, 11 Mar 1854
111. **Preston Guardian**, 18 Mar 1854
Not all these 'miserable-looking specimens of humanity' were the sort of operative material the millowners had in mind when they sent their agents to recruit in Ireland. Some were sent back at their would-be employers' expense, but others were left in Preston in a much more sorry state. While the strike continued, and after its collapse in May 1854, many of the 'knobsticks' who were brought in to break the strike were turned out of their jobs and left to fend for themselves. This happened to English and Scots workers as well, but it appears that most of the cases before the board of guardians of persons victimised by Preston's labour troubles involved the Irish. An example of what might happen to unwanted immigrant labour is afforded by the case of two Irish boys who found themselves destitute after being brought over to break the strike.

They stated that some time ago they left the workhouse in Ireland under arrangement by the agent of Messrs Birley Brothers, who promised them employment to be paid at the rate of five to six shillings per week, while learning; that they were to have a fortnight's diet, and would be returned home if they did not like their situations. It appeared that up to Thursday they were employed at Messrs Swainson and Birley's....each had been furnished with a suit of clothes, on which their respective names were marked; that they were paid at the rate of eight pence per day, which they found insufficient to provide themselves with food, coals, candles, and pay for their washing; that on Thursday they were turned off their employment, their new suits of clothes stripped off them, and their old ones returned to them. The lads stated they wanted to return home to Ireland, but were at present destitute. 113

In June 1854 a letter from the Poor Law Board reached the Preston guardians with evidence that boys aged 14-15 years had been engaged in Irish workhouse to work in Preston during the strike, and that as soon as the strike ended they were thrown out of work and left to apply for relief. 114 But there was no discussion and no action taken on this information by the Preston guardians.

After the great strike little appears about the Irish as a problem for the board of guardians at Preston. But in

112. Preston Guardian, 1 Apr-3 June 1854
113. Preston Guardian, 1 Apr 1854
114. Poor Law Board to Preston, BG, 1 June 1854 (LRO, Preston, BG, minutes, PUT/I/18, p.149)
Manchester Board of Guardians
Outdoor Irish poor relief, 1850-70
Manchester Board of Guardians

Irish outdoor relief, 1845-8

Figure 16

The Manchester Board of Guardians discussed by the board which shows the cost of difficulties which Irish persons were officially removed from Preston and their passage paid through to Cork. But less than a month later they appeared again in Preston with an order from the Cork board claiming they were chargeable in England. The expense, not to mention the difficulties for the family, of shipping them twice across the Irish Sea must have been much greater than simply stating that temporary relief until they could settle in. The only other problem arose from Irishmen defrauding the relief system by claiming to be impoverished when they were not. The case in point was that of Patrick Conolly, who was improperly receiving 10s. 6d. per week for a single adult male and six children. The board of guardians published statistics on these figures which indicate the relative number of Irish persons receiving outdoor relief in each half-year from 1851-52. Using until 1860 these figures indicate the relative number of Irish persons receiving outdoor relief in each half-year from 1851-52. Using four deaths, the majority of whom were Irish, the number of deaths in the average number of Irish per week from 1851-52 to 1854-55 was rather low. In a weekly average, it appears that the peak average was 3,740 (see Figure 16). The average per week was at this level or higher more than half the time during 1850-70 for the Manchester Irish. The winter of 1857-8 saw the average rise to up to 6,740, more than the number 1847 figure. The worst effects of the cotton famine caused by the blockade of Confederate ports were

115. Preston, W., ed., Preston, 23 Dec 1856 (185, R/2/1/21, p.96).
116. Sir. Crook to Preston, 31 Jan 1856 (155, Preston, 96, minutes, R/2/1/21, p.109).
117. M.W., MD, Accounts of the supervising of the poor, 1851-71 (185, 186, 187).
1856 an interesting case was discussed by the board which shows the sort of difficulties an Irish family removed from Lancashire to Ireland might have to face. In November 1856 a family of four Irish persons were officially removed from Preston and their passage paid through to Cork. But less than a month later they appeared back in Preston with an order from the Cork board claiming they were chargeable in England. The expense, not to mention the difficulties for the family, of shipping them twice across the Irish Sea must have been much greater than simply giving them temporary relief until they could settle in. The only other problems arose from Irishmen defrauding the relief system by claiming to be impoverished when they were not. One case involved a Mr. Patrick Carney, who was 'improperly receiving relief' because he 'had five days work and his daughter earning seven shillings per week & had £10 in the bank'.

The Manchester board of guardians published statistics every six months during 1851-71, and up until 1870 these figures distinguish the average number of Irish persons receiving outdoor relief and its cost. From 1851 to 1859 the number of Irish and Scots persons taken into the workhouse, the great majority of whom were Irish, was also recorded. Figure 15 demonstrates that during 1850-70 the increases and declines in the average number of Irish relieved each week varied almost precisely the same way as total demand. The figures remained pretty steadily between 1-4,000 per week except for two periods. If the figures for 1845-8 are separated into half-yearly totals and divided by 26 to obtain a weekly average, it is apparent that the peak average during that period was reached in the summer of 1847, when the figure was 2,740 (see Figure 16). The average per week was at this level or higher more than half the time during 1850-70 for the Manchester Irish.

The winter of 1857-8 saw the average go up to 6,748, more than twice the summer 1847 figure. The worst effects of the cotton famine caused by the blockade of Confederate ports were

115. Preston, BG, minutes, 23 Dec 1856 (LRO, FUT/1/21, p.95)
116. Mr. Crook to Preston. BG, 7 Jan 1856 (LRO, Preston, BG, minutes, FUT/1/21, p.103)
117. M/R, BG, Accounts of the Guardians of the Poor, 1851-71 (M/RCL, 339.M7)
Manchester Board of Guardians
Outdoor relief, 1845-71

Percentage Irish

1845-6
1846
1847-8
1848
1849-50
1850-1
1851
1852
1853
1854-5
1855-6
1856-7
1857-8
1858-9
1859
1860
1861
1862
1863
1864-5
1865-6
1866-7
1867-8
1868-9
1869
1870-1
1871
Manchester Board of Guardians
Irish-Scott indoor relief, 1850-9
felt during 1862-4 in East Lancashire, and the average number 
of Irish on the outdoor relief lists climbed to a peak for 
the entire twenty-five year period of 13,157 during the winter 
of 1862-3. Both these upward jobs of the Irish relief graph 
coincided with particularly hard times for the Manchester 
community as a whole. The clerk of the guardians reported 
during the winter of 1854-5, a time which saw bread riots in 
Liverpool, that there were significant increases in the amount 
given to the poor because of a 'want of work by hand and power 
loom weavers, fustian cutters and Irish spade labourers'.

We saw in chapter 3 that slumps in the building trade, or 
in the cotton-textile industry would affect large numbers of 
Irish families in the Manchester area. But the average number 
of persons given outdoor relief, and the Irish average, only 
showed a slight increase for that winter.

But a more significant indication of the extent of an 
Irish pauper problem in Manchester during 1850-70 is the 
proportion of the total outdoor relief given to the Irish. 
At the censuses of 1851, 1861 and 1871 the Irish community 
of Manchester were, at a minimum, 22.7%, 26.4% and 17.3% of 
the city population, respectively. But during 1850-70 the 
returns show that the Irish were usually between 35 to 40% 
of the total outdoor relief recipients (see Figure 17). The 
average never fell below 32.6% and went as high as 52.6% in 
1857-8. As Figure 17 shows, the percentages were consistently 
above the average for 1847. The Irish remained a disproportione- 
ately large problem for the board of guardians at Manchester.

Most relief during this period, despite the intentions of 
the new poor law of 1834, was given outside the workhouse. But 
the returns for the total number of persons taken into the 
Manchester workhouse during 1850-9, and for the number of Scots 
and Irish admitted, are also very interesting. The total 
inhabitants of the workhouse varied a great deal, but the number 
of Scots and Irish remained very static (see Figure 18).

118. M/R, BG, weekly minute book, 18 Dec 1854 (M/RCL, Archives 
Dept, general administration of indoor and outdoor relief, M2/2/5)
Figure 17

Manchester Board of Guardians
Irish-Scott indoor relief, 1900-9

Percentage

Half-Year
The only increase of any significance was during 1854-5. And during the six months period 1857-8, which showed increases in Irish relief cases outside the workhouse, saw a decrease of Irish and Scottish workhouse inmates, which probably indicates easier access to outdoor relief during those winters. The total numbers admitted during these two winters increased sharply. But the percentage of the total made up by the immigrant groups were between 18-28% during 1851-9, rather disproportionately high (see Figure 19). The winter of 1854-5 was the peak percentage for the period, 28.3%, even though the increase in numbers was slight.

Lancashire's working people went through periods of great economic adversity in the 1840s and again, to a lesser extent, during the middle 1850s. Their difficulties were reflected in higher demands on the local guardians of the poor. But the greatest economic dislocation experienced in Lancashire during this time was the cotton famine, 1862-5. Abraham Lincoln's Anaconda strategy of strangling the economy of the insurgent Confederate States of America had the side effect of drastically reducing the amount of cotton imported to supply the mills of Lancashire. Thousands of operatives were laid off all over the county, and the loss of wages had the wider effect of despressing business generally. But the local guardians of the poor were spared the full impact of this distress by the work of national relief committees and numerous local cotton-famine relief groups. But demand for relief from the guardians did increase. There is little mention in any source of how the cotton famine affected Lancashire's Irish community. We have seen that many younger members of the Irish community, particularly girls, worked in the textile mills, and the cotton famine certainly had a direct effect on this source of income.

There was no cotton-textile industry to speak of in Liverpool, but this was where the effects of the cotton famine were first

119. For the full story of the Lancashire cotton famine see W. O. Henderson, The Lancashire cotton famine, 1861-5 (Manchester, 1934)
felt. Most of the raw cotton for Lancashire's factories arrived at Liverpool. Thousands of men, including a great many Irish, were employed as stevedores unloading cotton from ships, as porters to move it to warehouses, and in transporting it. Finished cotton products for export also went via Liverpool. But by the early summer of 1861, only a few months after Lincoln's imposition of a blockade, the amount of cotton arriving fell off significantly.

The effect of this decrease of cotton imports in 1861, to the extent of 375,668 bales, was to throw out of employment a great number of cotton porters and lumpers, who at once either fell into pauperism, or by crowding into other departments of the unskilled labour market helped to reduce to a minimum the earnings of their fellows. 120

If statistics for poor relief existed for Liverpool, this period would certainly show an increase in the number of those applying to the select vestry and a rise in the number of Irish dock labourers on the lists.

Some statistics survive to illustrate the effect that reduced cotton supplies had on the mill towns of southeast Lancashire and Preston. A return of January 1862 showed that the slump in trade cut right across the various industries of Salford. 121

Fifteen of twenty-nine cotton mills were running short time and three were stopped altogether. Eighteen of thirty-nine dye and printworks, three of six smallwares manufacturers, and twenty-two of fifty-seven miscellaneous factories were running on short time. Ten of the town's fourteen bleachworks were on short time and one was closed. Overall, eighty-three of the town's 237 factories were on short time and 4,825 persons were out of work, from a total labour force of 22,539. These figures were for the first year of the blockade. Things would get worse.

The Oldham police statistics for 1864 include a statement on the 'average state of employment of the operative classes, September 1863 - September 1864', when the worst of the cotton famine was passed. 122 During that year, on average, only fifty-seven of the town's 163 factories and workshops were

120. Borough of Liverpool, KCH, Report to the Health cttee, of the Borough of Liverpool on the health of the town, 1863 (LCL, H352.2 HBA), p.6
122. Oldham Borough Police, Criminal and miscellaneous statistical returns, 1864 (OLIC, LP75), pp 34-5
working full time, with a full staff, each month. A further sixty factories worked full time, but only with a reduced staff. An average of twenty-nine factories were on short time and eighteen others were shut down each month. 16,600 factory hands, out of a total of 26,500, worked full time, while 5,100 were unemployed.

A very complete picture of under employment and unemployment during the economic ups and downs of the cotton famine can be constructed from the police statistics of Preston, which cover the period October 1862 - June 1865. Although the total number of mills in Preston is not clearly indicated, the number of persons employed in them was thought to be around 27,500. During October 1862 - October 1863 the worst time was the week of 13 March 1863, when forty mills were shut down, throwing 14,990 workers out of work and 12,289 others onto short time. During that week only 145 factory hands were working full time.

The best time of that year for employment was the week of 2 October 1863, when only twenty-three mills were closed and 11,828 operatives worked full time. But still, over 10,000 people were out of work. During the following statistical year the peak for unemployment came on 1 January 1864, when twenty-seven mills were closed and over 12,000 factory workers were unemployed. At that time the number of operatives working full time was down to 1,411, and 13,941 were on short time. Six months later things looked better. On 30 July 1864 twenty-one mills were still shut down, but the number of unemployed was down to 8,533. 15,069 persons were working full time in the mills, the highest number since before October 1862. Three months later nine more mills had shut down, and by 29 October 1864, 11,314 people were out of work again, with another 6,546 on short time. But during November 1864 - June 1865 the cotton famine rapidly abated and by 24 June 1865, 20,752 hands were working full time regularly.

But for the working people living in any Lancashire town affected by the slump in the cotton trade, it made little difference whether or not they were directly employed in cotton-textile mills.

Industries directly connected with the cotton trade, transport, engineering and marketing, slowed down to the same degree as the cotton industry. And the loss of so much wage money, which would normally be circulating throughout the town's economy, depressed many other trades, particularly small shopkeepers who dealt principally with the working class. Lancashire, except in towns such as Widnes and St Helens, which were not connected to the northern textile industry at all, was deeply affected by the cotton shortage generally, and the Irish would have been affected as much as any other working class group.

The only specific reference to the Irish from any of the seven towns during the cotton famine appears in the Oldham annual police returns for 1863. The Chief Constable noted a large increase of empty dwellings, particularly those usually occupied by the Irish; many of these families are living together, for the purpose of saving rent and taxes.... 124

But in 1864, when it must have been much easier to write lengthy histories on short notice, R.A. Arnold reserved special comment for the Irish poor of Lancashire in his account of the cotton famine. Among the noble, patient Lancashire operatives he found a 'large population living in a condition never very much above the level of pauperism; while fortunately for itself, the law does not permit that it should fall below this standard'. 125 Arnold went on to say that

It is generally said of them that they are thriftless and improvident; that they do not possess that sober perseverance which is so marked a characteristic of the English operatives; that they have none of that stubborn pride which cherishes independence — though it be ragged and hungry — as the greatest of treasures. The history of the cotton famine does not contradict this view of their condition, for they, be it their fault or their misfortune, have always been the first to swell the relief-lists and the last to leave them. 126

Arnold cites no statistical evidence for this claim. But looking back to the Manchester returns for 1862-4 we see the Irish only applied for relief to the same degree as the British inhabitants, and, in fact, the proportion of Irish receiving outdoor relief

124. Oldham Borough Police, Criminal and miscellaneous statistical returns, 1863 (OLIC, LP75), p.v
126. Ibid., pp 350-1
decreased markedly during the cotton famine. Even if he offered no proof to support his sweeping indictment, he did at least explain what caused this Irish mendicancy, and that cause 'can only be ascribed to their religion'.

Their religion - differing far more from that of an educated and liberal Roman Catholic than does his faith from that of the Church of England - supresses that self-reliance which comes to most men who know themselves to be under God, the arbiters of their own destiny, and to whom the responsibility of their own opinion is a serious and educating influence. Rather than stimulating 'self-help', it encourages dependence upon others. 127

Other than this generalisation, there is no evidence that the Irish were any particular problem during the cotton famine, for the local guardians or for the voluntary relief committees.

During the late 1840s and early 1850s Irish immigrants were a very visible and particularly expensive problem in Lancashire, especially in Liverpool, Manchester and Preston, where the numbers of Irish people relieved, and the poor rates, rose alarmingly. Even though statistics for the Manchester union indicate that the average number of Irishmen relieved each week during 1850-70 was as high or higher than the average of the worst period of the 1840s more than half of the time, no complaints about, or criticisms of, the Irish as an outstanding poverty problem appear in guardians' records or local newspapers after the 1840s. But even if they did absorb poor-relief funds in amounts disproportionate to their numbers in the community, it is hard to say exactly why they should be a particular problem. The widespread dislocation of the famine period was one obvious cause of Irish destitution, a cause the Irish could do little to control. Unkind observers attributed the greater relative poverty among the Irish to other, congenital problems.

The facts as they regard Ireland have been made patent enough, and are accessible to everyone who chooses to search for them; and it would be far from libel on that very clamorous community to state that they are the poorest and the most wretched, so

127. Ibid., pp 351-2
are they the laziest people on the face of God's earth. Their extreme poverty is simply the natural result of extreme laziness. 128

The Irish would suffer with the rest of the community during trade recessions, which would force many of them away from financial self-support and onto the relief lists. But the percentage of total relief given to the Irish community between periods of economic difficulties show that this is not the only cause of Irish poverty. Certainly an immigrant group needs some time to settle, during which they may have to resort to public assistance to get along, and many new Irish immigrants were arriving in Lancashire constantly during 1850-71. Almost without exception the Irish immigrants were from a backward, rural background. For this reason it could take them longer to get used to urban life and industrial employment, which would often leave them penniless. But one thing is definite; the Irish were a considerable problem in Lancashire's poor law unions.

128. M/R Courier, 14 Oct 1846
Urban Lancashire was faced with enormous public health problems during the mid-nineteenth century; and when considering the immigrant Irish as a possible social problem in Lancashire's towns, the question of whether or not the Irish aggravated an already serious health situation must be examined.

Lancashire's most unhealthy town also had a very large Irish population. It was also the landing place for other Irishmen moving to the rest of northern England or waiting to travel to America and Australia. Already in 1846, the squalid environment of Liverpool's northern and central wards was legendary among urban sanitary reformers, and the town's civic leadership took vigorous steps to tackle the filth of the borough. But it was not only that the middle and upper classes of Liverpool found undrained, littered streets and courts unpleasant to look at or smell. It must, in fact, be admitted that fear for their own health was one at least of the principal motives which led substantial citizens to support the cause of sanitary reform... 1

Liverpool's health act of 1846 established a health committee and authorised the appointment of a borough health officer (MOH). But before the newly consolidated authority could even begin thinking about how to alleviate the considerable problems which already existed, new demographic strains began exerting themselves on Liverpool's overtaxed administrative structures.

In 1845 Dr William Duncan, who was appointed MOH for Liverpool in 1847, was well aware that disease and high rates of mortality were most prevalent where the population was densest, where the proportion of people living in courts and cellars was greatest, and where the proportion of street mileage sewered was least. Needless to say, these conditions all applied in the same districts –

1. B.D. White, History of Liverpool, p.40
those inhabited by the poorest sections and particularly by
the Irish immigrant poor. 2

Duncan subscribed to the most advanced theory on the spread of
disease which was then prevailing in medical circles, the
'miasmic' theory.

The idea was that 'poisonous exhalations' rose in the form of
gases from garbage, sewerage and filth to create a 'miasm',
or atmosphere, which carried diseases. 3

The dense population of the dirtiest parts of the town was the
root of the problem, and Duncan was determined to clean up
Liverpool so that 'poisonous exhalations' could not be generated.
But he did not seem too concerned with reducing the overcrowding.

The situation was further complicated for Duncan and his
assistants in 1846-7 by an especially virulent typhus epidemic
and a heavy immigration of poor and hungry Irishmen, who were
in an ideal physical state to succumb to the Liverpool typhus,
if they had not already contracted the disease in Ireland. Up
to this time typhus was known as 'gaol fever', but now it
changed its alias to 'Irish fever'. 4 Some observers during the
1840s, including Dr Duncan, were inclined to place a great deal
of the responsibility for Liverpool’s physical squalor and high
incidence of death and disease on the Irish community. James
Wood, surveyor for Liverpool’s northern districts, claimed in
1844 that: 'Fully three-fourths of the inhabitants of courts and
cellars are of the lowest description of Irish, whose habits
are so filthy and destitute of personal comfort as to entail
both misery and ill-health.' 5 Dr Duncan found an 'innate
indifference to filth' among the Irish 'who inhabited the
filthiest and worst-ventilated courts and cellars'. Compared
with the rest of the Liverpool working class, the Irish were
'the most apathetic about everything that befalls them'. 6

While their numbers, poverty and ignorance of even the
simplest hygiene certainly did nothing to diminish Liverpool’s
health problems, the Irish could not be blamed for the state
of the town they arrived in.

2. Ibid., p.38
3. E. Midwinter, Old Liverpool, pp 94-5
4. Ibid., p.38
5. Report from the select committee on buildings regulation
(sic) and improvement of boroughs, p.132, H.C., 1844 (572), x, 300
6. First report on the state of large towns and populous districts,
p.29, H.C., 1844 (572), xvii, 533
The Irish poor did not build the narrow streets nor the dirty courts, they did not leave the streets unswept, and had no responsibility for stinking middens left unemptied at their very doors, nor did they create the economic conditions which drove them across the channel, and in turn made life in Liverpool the burden it really was. 7

This does not mean that the Irish were not a public health hazard during the 1840s. But they must be viewed as only a part of a much larger environmental problem which arose from the unplanned, undrained, uncleaned streets of a town growing at a much greater rate than the scope of its sanitary services.

Duncan took up his post as MOH in January 1847 and found himself faced with a typhus epidemic, which was accompanied by many cases of the usual urban sicknesses, diarrhoea, dysentery, measles and smallpox. The district worst affected by the epidemic, which was estimated to have claimed 7,000 lives within the borough, 8 was the north end, particularly the Scotland and Vauxhall wards, where there was a large Irish population. 9 The borough and parish authorities showed great energy from the outset. Armed with a new health act, Duncan declared war on all inhabited cellars in courts and unhealthy cellars facing on streets, as a first step towards removing the causes of the diseases which were spreading rapidly through the town. The parish select vestry set up quarantine areas in Great Homer Street and Mount Pleasant and maintained a hospital ship in the Mersey to isolate the numerous typhus and dysentery cases, many of whom were Irish. 10 The extent of the diseases made these efforts seem belated and ineffective. But the health authorities did not give up. Dr Duncan told the story of his first year as MOH in his annual report for 1847, which had a great deal to say about the Irish.

As Duncan took up his duties in January 1847, he noticed that people were arriving in 'unusual numbers' from Ireland. By June 1847 he estimated that 300,000 Irish had landed in Liverpool, and he 'very moderately estimated that from 60,000 to 80,000 had located themselves amongst us, occupying every nook and

7. T. Burke, Catholic history of Liverpool (Liverpool, 1910), pp 82-3
8. Midwinter, op. cit., p.86
9. Ibid., p.96
10. Burke, op.cit., pp 86-7
and corner...! The desperate immigrants forced their way into 3,000 of the cellars Duncan had declared unfit for habitation, and in one case fifty or sixty of these destitute people were found in a house containing three or four small rooms, about twelve feet by ten; in more than one instance upwards of forty were found sleeping in a cellar.

With people in a weakened state living so close together, it is not surprising that typhus spread among the Irish community very quickly. The streets behind the docks, between the Scotland and Vauxhall Roads, became notorious because typhus 'had become more than usually prevalent' there, while other districts were not afflicted with any more than the usual number of typhus cases. This area was chiefly 'resorted to by the migratory Irish', and during January 1847 one-half of all the deaths from typhus in the borough occurred there. Duncan also found that the disease seemed only to affect the Irish people in the docks area, which indicated that many of the poor immigrants were already ill with typhus on their arrival or were in a much weaker and more susceptible state than their British neighbours. Seven-eighths of all the patients in the Liverpool Fever Hospital were Irish, and over 70% of those patients lived in the docks area between the Scotland and Vauxhall Roads. 'The majority of these had but recently arrived from Ireland.' By early summer 1847 the death rate from typhus was 2,000% above the average in earlier years. Without a large immigration of unhealthy Irishmen typhus would have been a problem in Liverpool, but thousands of hungry people from Ireland, packing already crowded quarters, made the problem much worse than it might otherwise have been.

The neighbourhood behind the docks on the north side of Liverpool was the area where people waiting to sail to America or Australia stayed. It was also the first stopover for those hoping to stay in Ireland, which explained the extreme overcrowding and easy spread of contagion. As the Irish made their way into the interior of the town, they took disease with
them and infected parts of Liverpool which had remained free of typhus up to that time. The northern wards of the borough had many Irish and a high number of typhus cases. But the worst hit were the Vauxhall and Exchange wards, where almost 'one-half of the deaths from fever, exclusive of those in the hospital, had occurred'. Typhus was not the only disease the health committee had to contend with. The urban Lancashire of the mid-nineteenth century never experienced a shortage of infectious disease, and the intensity of the typhus epidemic was in fact eclipsed by the spread of diarrhoea and dysentery in all the Irish neighbourhoods, which was attributed to the bad cabbages and turnips that formed the staple diet of many of the earliest Irish immigrants. Dysentery and diarrhoea actually caused a mortality among the Irish which was 50% above that caused by typhus. Four-fifths of the diarrhoea and dysentery deaths occurred in the Vauxhall-Exchange area and in the neighbouring Great George's ward, where many Irish lived. And if this was not enough, smallpox broke out in the 'densely peopled Irish districts... few, if any, of the children of the Irish immigrants having been vaccinated'.

Duncan found a direct relationship between the arrival of Irish immigrants and the spread of disease in Liverpool. Supposing, however, the number of immigrants now resident in Liverpool to be 50,000, which is probably nearer the truth; there would still remain an excess of deaths unaccounted for, which it would require a population of 150,000 to supply, at the ordinary rate of mortality. Had the entire population of Blackburn, Bolton, Bury, Chorley, Lancaster, Ormskirk, Prescot, Preston, Warrington and Wigan taken up their residence amongst us, they would not have increased the mortality of the town more than these Irish immigrants have done.

This exaggerated illustration of the effects of heavy Irish immigration on Liverpool shows that the Irish did cause a further deterioration in already abysmal levels of public health, particularly in their own neighbourhoods, during that period of exceptional Irish hardship in the 1840s. At one point in 1847, 38% of all the sick persons under the care of the health committee and parish medical officers were Irish. What

11. Ibid., p.86
little hospital accommodation was still available during the early summer months was quickly filled when typhoid fever also made its appearance in Liverpool. The extent of the various epidemics only began to slacken in the autumn of 1847 when the flow of Irish immigrants receded. Among some 21,000 persons who died in the borough of Liverpool during 1847, there were ten Catholic priests, a protestant minister, ten medical practitioners and 'a number of relieving officers' who died while trying to help the numerous sick and dying Irish immigrants. Duncan also regretted the loss of 'many hundred of the English residents, in comfortable circumstances, most of whom might have been still alive, had Liverpool not been converted for a time into a "City of the Plague" by the immigrant Irish who inundated the lower districts'.

To further emphasise the tragic effects of Irish immigration, if that were possible, Duncan compared the comfortable Rodney-Abercromby area with the disease-ridden Vauxhall ward, with its numerous Irish residents. He estimated that in Vauxhall one-seventh of the population died from disease during 1847, while in Rodney-Abercromby the figure was only one person in every twenty-eight. Death claimed 135 in every 1,000 persons in Vauxhall and only thirty-five in every 1,000 in Rodney-Abercromby. Typhus fever caused one death in every seventeen persons living in the Vauxhall ward, but only one in every 228 persons in Rodney-Abercromby. Other diseases, such as diarrhoea, dysentery, measles and smallpox, killed a further one person in every fifty-four in Vauxhall and only one in 318 in Rodney-Abercromby. Even allowing that Duncan's figures probably were not precise, they do show that even if the Irish were not the primary cause of disease, they lived in neighbourhoods which were unhealthy enough to make the spread of dangerous diseases among them more likely. Duncan himself was willing to admit that this was the case.

12. Borough of Liverpool, MGH, Report to the health ctee of the Borough of Liverpool, on the health of the town (other annual reports cited hereafter as Report), 1847 (MGH, H.352.4. HEA), pp5-9
13. Ibid., p.19
14. Ibid., pp 15-6
It must be remembered that the Irish districts were at the same time the worst-conditioned - containing the greatest number of filthy and ill-ventilated courts, damp and dirty cellars, and inferior lodging-houses. Had their population been English in place of Irish, and had no Irish famine occurred, their mortality must still have exceeded that of the other districts of the town, although of course in a diminished ratio.

But he still thought that Liverpool was turned into a "City of the Plague" by the immigrant Irish who inundated the lower districts.

That the excessive over-crowding of the miserable dwellings in the worst-conditioned districts by a host of the half-starved vagrants would inevitably produce the results which followed might have been predicted almost as confidently as an astronomer would foretell an eclipse. 15

Dr Duncan had little affection for his newly-arrived Irish neighbours, but it should not be surprising that he was inclined to be pretty harsh in his references towards them. Never again during the nineteenth century would the number of deaths in the town be as high as in 1847. Typhus, diarrhoea, dysentery, typhoid, measles, and a host of respiratory ailments were omnipresent in Liverpool, but on a lesser scale than in 1847. Duncan was going to have a particularly difficult time with typhus that year anyway, but thousands of ragged Irish, living in incredibly crowded conditions, turned a problem into a crisis.

No one in Liverpool was sorry to see the end of 1847, but the opening of 1848 seemed to promise more of the same.

At the commencement of this year three epidemics were in progress, - scarlatina in its early stage, influenza in its middle period, and the Irish fever in its decline.... 16

The scarlet fever and influenza epidemics did not raise the death-rate much above normal (which was still an appalling figure, even in terms of the 1840s) and the typhus epidemic was at last subsiding.

We may now pursue the Irish fever to its close. The deaths, which were sixty (in the borough) in the first week of January, declined to twenty-four by the last week of March, and to eleven (the average weekly mortality) by the end of May, - when the epidemic

15. Ibid., pp 17-8
16. MOH, Report, 1848, p.21
may be considered as having been extinguished, after an existence of seventeen months. 17

But there was still trouble ahead for the Liverpool health committee, the roots of which were found in India in 1846.

Asiatic cholera made its first appearance in the United Kingdom at Edinburgh in 1848. On 10 December an Irish family arrived in Liverpool from Scotland, and both parents and one of their children were found to be ill with cholera. They were quickly isolated and over a month passed before another case appeared.18

The first undoubted case of Liverpool origin occurred on the 16th February 1849 in a crowded Irish house in a court in Back Portland Street, the victim being a girl about fourteen years of age. 19

Any traveller from Scotland or another infected area could have introduced cholera into Liverpool, but since the first case appeared in an Irish family, and many Irish people were moving around Scotland and the north of England looking for a place to settle during the late 1840s, it was probably the Irish who brought the disease to the town. There is no mention in Duncan's reports of the Irish being particularly affected by cholera, but there can be little doubt that they suffered a good deal from it, since the northern and north-central wards of the town, where most of the Irish in the borough were found, were the wards with the highest number of deaths from the disease, Scotland, Vauxhall and Exchange wards accounted for more than 46% of deaths in the borough. 20

The epidemic was slow gathering momentum and its full ferocity was not felt until July, August and September, when 85% of the town's 5,200 cholera deaths took place. 21 Even though they probably brought cholera to Liverpool in the first place, the Irish were not blamed by Duncan or anyone else for the outbreak or spread of the disease. Its advent in the town was inevitable simply because it was a busy port and commercial centre, with numerous contacts with infected areas on the continent and in the British Isles. And it was only to be expected that cholera would be most prevalent in the filthiest

17.Ibid., pp 21-2
18.Ibid., Report, 1849, pp25-6
19. Ibid., p.30
20. Ibid., pp 31-2
21. Ibid., p.31
sections of the town, very often inhabited by the Irish. But unlike the typhus epidemic, where at times seven-eighths of all the reported cases were among the Irish, cholera was much more evenly spread out over the population of the entire borough, which is another indication that the Irish community was not solely responsible for the appearance of the disease and did not aggravate the situation to anything approaching the extent that it did in 1847.

By 1850 Liverpool's three-year health crisis had finally passed. There were still hundreds of thousands of persons arriving at the port from Ireland. But the less-wretched state of the new emigrants and the vigor of the health committee contributed to a much healthier atmosphere in Liverpool. The extraordinary exertions which had been made during the previous year by the officers of the Committee and by the extra staff employed in the sanitary inspection of the worst conditioned districts—aided by the reports to the Medical Officer of Health, by the parochial and dispensary medical officers and the house-to-house medical visitors—had placed the town in a better sanitary condition than it had ever previously perhaps enjoyed. The health of the town continued throughout this year in a most satisfactory state. 22 Improvement continued throughout the 1850s, but there was a seventeen-week interval in 1854 when cholera again visited the borough, killing 1,146 persons in predominantly working-class neighbourhoods. 23 This epidemic was much more limited in extent than the 1849 outbreak. And once again, the Irish were implicated as possible carriers of the disease.

We are forced to come to the conclusion that the 1854 outbreak was due to a fresh importation from the continent or from Ireland, perhaps earlier in July, and that the favourable weather in that month enabled the disease to spread rapidly amongst the population in the working-class districts of Liverpool. 24

During the 1850s the Irish ceased to be singled out for special mention as a menace to the public health of Liverpool, as the state of the immigrants and of the town itself steadily improved. Even though personal hygiene among the Irish, and among the working class generally, remained at a dismal level, they certainly

22. MOH, Report, 1850, p.49
24. Ibid., p.87
benefited from the drier, cleaner, airier streets and courts of the town. The town council, led by its health committee, enacted byelaws requiring more stringent minimum standards in the construction of new dwellings, to make certain that they were healthier than those built before. Baths and wash-houses were built for public use and large numbers of persons were removed from cellars and provided with healthy accommodation. Paving, draining, scavenging and water supply were all vastly improved during 1847-58. But in 1858 mortality, particularly in the northern wards, where many Irish lived, was still very high in Liverpool. The death rate per 1,000 of the population in that year was estimated to be 34.2 for the whole borough. But the rate per 1,000 in the Vauxhall ward was thought to be 36.5, and it was 35 next door in Exchange ward. But the populous Scotland ward, where there were many Irish, was actually below the borough average at 30.3 per 1,000. There was a marked improvement in 1859, when the borough rate fell to 28.7 in every 1,000. Exchange ward remained well over the borough total with a rate of 31.2 per 1,000, but both Scotland and Vauxhall wards were below the borough total with rates of 26.8 and 27.2 respectively. These figures cannot be accurate since the actual population of the borough could only be calculated with any degree of certainty once in every ten years, when the government conducted a census. But they do show that even though the Irish were most likely to be found in the least healthy quarters of Liverpool, their standard of health was rising along with the general standard of the borough.

Cholera again struck Liverpool during the summer of 1866. Its intensity was midway between the epidemics of 1849 and 1854, and it left 2,122 dead. Once again the Irish neighbourhoods were severely hit, particularly Vauxhall ward. The MOH reported that the death rate in that district was pushed up to 49.3 per 1,000, while he thought the rate for the entire borough went up to 41.7. The Irish received no special mention during

25. Ibid., pp 106-7
26. MOH, Report, 1858, p.10
27. MOH, Report, 1859, p.10
28. Midwinter, Old Liverpool, pp 85-6
29. MOH, Report, 1866, pp 3-4
the epidemic from the health committee. Although things improved generally by 1871, the MOH estimated death rates in the Scotland-Vauxhall area to still be at the high rates of 40.7 and 43.2, respectively. But since 1871 was a census enumeration year, we can check the MOH's calculations. 17,366 persons died during the year and the census enumerators found the population of the borough to be 493,405.

The MOH, Dr Trench, who was appointed after Duncan's death in 1863, reckoned the death rate to be 35.1 per 1,000,\(^{30}\) which is fairly accurate. As an appendix to the MOH's figures for 1871, it should be noted that the death rate for the Liverpool registration district, the central area of the borough where upwards of 85% of the Irish lived, was 38.5 per 1,000, somewhat higher than the borough as a whole.\(^{31}\) For 1871 the MOH had a preliminary census report to help him. But his figures for other years must be treated only as very general indicators.

After the crisis of 1847-9 things improved very steadily in Liverpool, even in the oldest, most densely populated parts of the town. But disease and high mortality continued to characterize the neighbourhoods at the north end of the borough, where many Irish lived, though at much lower levels than during the 1840s. 'In the Vauxhall, Scotland and Exchange wards mortality did not drop below thirty per thousand until the present century.'\(^{32}\) These neighbourhoods were the most unhealthy in the town before they were occupied by numerous Irish families and could only become more healthy as physical improvements were executed.

From about 1850 the Irish were no longer the health problem they were during the mass emigration of the famine years. The physical environment they lived in was a more serious problem than the Irish were because the personal standards of hygiene in both Irish and non-Irish working-class homes, which left much to be desired, could not be expected to rise before urban conditions improved.

During 1847-9, when thousands of starving, sickly Irish crowded into the most unhealthy districts of Liverpool, they greatly aggravated an already serious health situation. They

30. MOH, Report 1871, p. 8
31. Thirty-fourth annual report of the Register General of Births, Deaths and Marriages in England, 1871 (Somerset House, Library, F21.34.1)
constituted an enormous problem for the town’s health authorities and they incurred the resentment of both the health committee and the general public. But as conditions in Ireland and Liverpool improved during the 1850s, the Irish community in Liverpool ceased to be more of a health problem than any other part of the population, which showed that the late 1840s were exceptional years in both Ireland and Liverpool. During 1849-71 the Irish community was not singled out for condemnation as a threat to the public health. Housing was always in short supply and Irish families very frequently occupied houses in some of the oldest, dirtiest streets and courts of the town. Whenever an infection made its appearance in the town, it always spread farthest and most rapidly in just these areas, especially at the north end of the borough. The Irish did not build narrow, uncleaned streets and courts, lined with unventilated back-to-back houses for themselves. They had no predilection for living in the worst parts of the town. They took what they could get in the way of inexpensive housing. Whoever lived in places such as the Vauxhall ward would have suffered a high mortality rate. After the famine years of the late 1840s, when the Irish were as healthy as their working-class neighbours, it was the streets and houses they lived in that made up the principal public health problem in Liverpool. And this continued to be the case well into the twentieth century, as population increased and the town grew older.

But there is one other point to keep in mind when considering the Irish as a particular health problem. Any sort of communicable sickness spreads much more rapidly in crowded conditions. We saw in chapter 3 that the Irish were much more likely to be found in multiple occupancy housing and overcrowded their dwellings with extended family and lodgers to a greater degree that the non-Irish population. The practice of overcrowding their homes during 1846-71 made the Irish a particular health problem because it facilitated the proliferation of any contagious disease.

Manchester-Salford was Lancashire’s other great urban district, and it too had its share of public health problems, though not on the scale of Liverpool. And the area had many Irish immigrants.
too. Since the Manchester council did not establish a health committee or appoint an MOH until 1868, there is, unfortunately, no year by year account of the state of public health, as there is for Liverpool. But the Irish do come up in several discussions of health matters in Manchester during 1846-71.

Manchester had a building and sanitary regulations committee in the late 1840s, which took responsibility for public improvements 'to promote the general health and comfort of the inhabitants'. Reporting on efforts to enhance cottage dwellings 'situate in some of the most confined districts within the borough', the committee complained that in consequence of the overcrowded state of many of the ill-constructed dwellings of the poor, and the constant immigration of mendicants of the lowest class, and of filthy habits, and having no settled residence, the efforts made both by your committee, as well as by many of the well-disposed cottage owners and tenants, are, to a great extent, neutralised....

These 'mendicants of the lowest order' were the Irish. All the towns between Liverpool and Manchester helped to soften the Irish immigration blow for Manchester by absorbing some of their number before they could reach the great city of the industrial north. Also the thirty miles distance from Liverpool's docks slowed down those immigrants who did travel to Manchester, so that the health problems which plagued Liverpool were later in arriving in Manchester. While the typhus, or Irish fever, epidemic struck Liverpool in 1847, the disease did not spread beyond its 'normal' extent in Manchester until 1848, when Liverpool's epidemic was just ending. Even though the Irish did not appear in Manchester in anything near the numbers they did in Liverpool, many of those who came were still very weak from their ordeals in Ireland and the difficult journey to southeast Lancashire, or were actually ill with typhus. The rapid increase in cases of typhus and other diseases greatly alarmed the borough administration. The influx of sickly Irish, combined with 'the overcrowded and filthy state' of the neighbourhoods they would try to house themselves in, augmented Manchester's

health problems beyond the reach of the building and sanitary committee and the nuisance committee, as they were then organised. Manchester's difficulties were much less severe than Liverpool's, but had become serious enough to require special measures. The outbreak of cholera in the late summer of 1849 produced action, and Manchester's nuisance and sanitary committees were authorised to enforce the health act of 1848, as well as its amending act of 1849, 'for the more speedy removal of certain nuisances, and the prevention of contagious and epidemic diseases'. The health emergency precipitated by the additional problem of sickly Irish immigrants gave the impetus for much bolder action by the authorities responsible for public health in Manchester, and all efforts to remove the causes of disease were accelerated.

Manchester was spared serious epidemics during 1850-71. Even the cholera outbreaks of 1854 and 1866 passed the town by, which indicated Manchester was becoming steadily healthier, due to the efforts of the municipal authorities. And not once in twenty years was the Irish community mentioned in the reports of the buildings and sanitary regulations committee, the nuisance committee, or, after 1868, the MOH as a particular problem in public health matters. But criticism did appear in 1869 when the Royal Sanitary Commission was taking evidence. John Heron, Manchester Town Clerk, stated that:

The districts where the mortality in Manchester is greatest are two; one is chiefly occupied by what you may call the vicious classes, the haunts of thieves and prostitutes and all people of that class and there is another district which is mainly occupied by the Irish. No sanitary arrangements that can be made will to any very large extent, I believe, affect the condition of those classes - it is something that is beyond the reach of mere sanitary legislation.

Here the Irish are considered as among the worst possible citizens, from a health viewpoint. Heron later went on to say that overcrowding was a primary cause of unhealthy dwellings and high incidences of disease. But typically, overcrowding was

34. A. Redford, The history of local government in Manchester (London, 1940), ii, 150-1
most common in the oldest, most unhealthy areas. 'The overcrowding takes place chiefly in those districts which I have said are the most unhealthy, where the Irish population reside to a great extent.'\textsuperscript{36} The census data analysed in chapter 3 confirms the impression held by Heron, and many of his contemporaries, that the Irish more often lived in crowded conditions than their English neighbours.

In the town of Salford, there is little to indicate that the Irish prejudiced the health of the borough. Similarly with Liverpool and Manchester, the arrival of hundreds of Irish immigrants in 1848 helped to aggravate the typhus situation. A total of 460 persons were admitted to the Salford union's special fever hospital, 189 of these, 41% were Irish.

For the first two or three months after the hospital was opened the Irish cases were much more numerous than the English, but they gradually decreased, and the English cases predominated during the latter months.

But significantly, only fourteen of the fifty-six deaths attributed to 'Irish' fever occurred among the Irish. The higher rate of mortality among the English population of Salford, who accounted for the other 75% of the typhus deaths, was illustrated in this curiously-worded statement.

The rate of mortality of the aggregate number is one in eight, but it is more than double in the English compared with the Irish cases, the former being one in six, and the latter one in thirteen.\textsuperscript{37}

Salford's Irish-fever problem seems minute when contrasted with Liverpool's 7,000 deaths. But even though the English population bore the brunt of the disease, it was the additional Irish sick who spread the disease to epidemic proportions.

Nowhere else in the Salford borough council committee reports during 1846-71 are the Irish mentioned as a health problem. Salford's health problems centred on it being 'the classic slum',\textsuperscript{38} rather than on particular parts of the population. But the Irish aggravated the situation, particularly during

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., pp 139-40
\textsuperscript{37} Salford Union, Analysis of expenditure, 1848, (SCL, L342.0424 SAL), no pagination
\textsuperscript{38} The title of Robert Robert's, The classic slum: Salford life in the first quarter of the century, (Manchester, 1971)
1846-61, by overcrowding their dwellings to a greater extent than the non-Irish population of Salford.

Oldham, where public health services were almost wholly wanting, was probably, fortunate in receiving very few Irish immigrants during the late 1840s. But the Irish who did live there were seen as an obstacle to the creation of a healthy environment by A.B. Reach, who visited Oldham in 1849.

The poor-law authorities of Oldham are making exertions to improve the sanitary state of the worst districts of the town, but the Irish puzzle them excessively. 'No sooner do we try to make the houses a little decent and wholesome than the people leave them, and flock to other localities, to be driven thence with a like result.' Fever – the 'Irish fever' – that is the most malignant species of spotted typhus, frequently breaks out. 39

Even allowing for exaggeration in Reach's story of Irish families being chased around the town by cleanliness, it is still probably safe to say that living conditions for the Oldham Irish, particularly the recent famine arrivals, were among the worst in the town. But Reach does not say that the Irish caused bad neighbourhoods, only that they lived in them, probably because that sort of accommodation was the most readily available. He also does not mention the possibility that rents on improved properties were probably higher than for living in filth, which could force a poor Irish family trying to get settled into cheaper, less-healthy housing.

Remarkably, dingy Oldham only had thirty cholera cases in 1849. But Reach was able to explain Oldham's good fortune.

If the people resident in the dens I have described have, comparatively speaking, escaped the cholera, most certainly they owe more to their luck than their management. 40

The only time during the succeeding twenty years when the Irish were singled out as a danger to public health was in March 1855. A group of eighty-three persons, 'chiefly the lowest class of Irish', were summoned before the town's general purpose committee and fined for not maintaining their houses

39. A.B. Reach, Manchester and the textile districts in 1849, p.87
40. Ibid., p.87
in a condition consistent with byelaws enacted under the health act of 1848. In common with the whole southeast Lancashire region, Oldham escaped the cholera epidemics of 1854 and 1866. And altogether it does not appear the Irish caused any particular health problems in Oldham, aside from a somewhat higher incidence of typhus during 1848-9 and the usual overcrowding. The health of the town improved as the town council managed to clean up the streets.

The combined effects of industrial depression and a difficult winter in 1846-7 left Preston with serious typhus and scarlet fever epidemics, without the influence of the famine in Ireland. Though the poor law authorities were warned of a 'sudden increased' immigration of Irish in 1847, this 'sudden' influx never materialised. Irish immigrants only appeared occasionally and in small numbers. In July 1847 typhus appeared 'to be still on the increase in some parts of the town', which showed that Preston's streets provided excellent breeding grounds for the disease. Nowhere in Preston was typhus referred to as Irish fever, and the Irish population of the town was not held responsible for its outbreak and spread. But this did not mean the Irish were not subject to some criticism. It was often alleged that the Irish endangered their own health, and that of their neighbours, by keeping animals, particularly pigs, nearby or inside their homes in dirty, overcrowded neighbourhoods. The Preston Guardian tried to illustrate the intimacy that some local pigs enjoyed with their Irish masters.

The pig takes his meals with the rest of the family, whom, at best, he regards as his poor relatives. He sits down with the circle at the family board (often literally a board for a plate), and eats with them from the same dish, from which they usually select for him the largest potatoes. ... 44

As far back as 1836, George Cornewall Lewis alleged that the Irish introduced the practice of keeping pigs into urban Lancashire, which made their dwellings more unhealthy. 45

41. Oldham Chronicle, 17 Mar 1855
42. Preston Guardian, 30 Jan 1847
43. Preston Guardian, 24 July 1847
44. Preston Guardian, 25 Apr 1846
But Lancashire's towns contained persons from other rural areas of Scotland and England who would not worry about keeping pigs, or even donkeys, near their houses either. The most graphic description of relations between Irishman and pig in Lancashire is Friedrich Engels's.

The Irishman loves his pig as the Arab loves his horse. The only difference is that the Irishman sells his pig when it is fat enough for slaughter. The Irishman eats and sleeps with his pig, the children play with the pig, ride on its back and roll about in the filth with it. 46

The cholera of 1849 was only active for a few weeks in Preston and did not do too much damage, but a Report of the General Board of Health drawn up by C.T. Clark did not treat the town as leniently. 47 Besides a wide-ranging criticism of the usual dangers to public health in Preston, there was a section reserved for a discussion of the Irish areas of the western part of the town. He included a list of streets he inspected, some of which were marked in parentheses 'bad' or 'very bad'.

The places marked 'bad' and 'very bad' are occupied almost entirely by Irish; and I believe for more than one-half of the cases of fever sent out of the whole St. John's and St. George's districts go from those few streets and their neighbourhood; the chief cause of which I believe to be the intolerably overcrowded state of their houses, together with their great want of cleanliness. 48

This is the usual story. The Irish were commonly found in the worst areas of a town, where even an effort at personal cleanliness inside a house could easily be negated by the squalor of the external environment. In these areas diseases such as typhus were more likely to appear than in other, cleaner parts of the town, and, of course, the people living there would be the ones most likely to fall ill. The extraordinary tolerance of the Irish for overcrowding was another consideration, but it was generally recognised in Preston during 1849-71 that better public health and personal hygiene among the working class as a whole would not precede the physical improvement in the streets and courts.

47. G.T. Clark, Report of the General Board of Health, 1849
48. Ibid., p.11
for which there was a pressing need.

St Helens was still only a moderately-sized town in the latter 1840s, and there were 25,000 inhabitants in 1851. But it had the health problems common to all urban areas. When the local civic leaders obtained parliamentary authorisation to set up the St. Helens Improvement Commission in 1845, the town was largely undrained and rather dirty, though it was not overcrowded. It was realised that some areas were growing very rapidly and would soon be very crowded, as house construction lagged behind increase in population. The neighbourhoods which were growing fastest were the dirtiest too. They were also known for their large Irish populations. Effective local control would be needed to clean up the town and maintain it in as healthy a state as possible, and for this reason the improvement commission was set up. There was an outbreak of typhus in St Helens, which was most severe in the Greenbank area, where many Irish lived. The hospital beds at the Prescot union workhouse near St Helens were all filled with typhus patients by early June 1847 and the board of guardians gave up their board room as a fever hospital for the excess cases, which were being brought in mainly from the St Helens subdistrict.49 But fever never approached the proportions it assumed in Liverpool. Perhaps the typhus germs found the alkali-charged atmosphere of the town uncongenial.50 Aside from the fact that conditions in the crowded neighbourhoods caused enough concern to help instigate a move to obtain a local health authority in 1845, there is nothing to indicate the Irish were any special public health problem in St Helens during 1846-71.

By the 1860s the young town of Widnes was not very far behind its older neighbours in public health dangers. Besides alkali smoke and waste, streets which were only a few years old had become sources of disease. Widnes had a large Irish community and on any street where there was a problem Irish people were likely to be affected. As early as 1867, the health and sanitary

49. Prescot, BG, minutes, 3 June 1847 (LRO, PUT/I/3, p.193)
50. Barker and Harris, St Helens, p.300
committee of the Widnes local board was serving notices on property owners to pave, drain and sewer their holdings, to protect the health of the people living in their houses. But despite their efforts, typhus appeared in Cromwell Street in April 1868. Cromwell Street was inhabited almost entirely by Irish families and was a notoriously dirty street. Among other things, the property holders provided Cromwell Street with poor quality water, and finally in 1870 the residents complained to the health and sanitary committee. The owners were ordered to improve their land and buildings.

Widnes, a town with a large Irish community, offers a good example of how the state of even a new town can quickly degenerate when either the property owners or the local authorities do not act to maintain a minimum standard of physical amenities, such as paving, draining, sewer ing and road cleansing. The dirty state of a number of streets in the town was not a reflection on the inhabitants, whether they were Irish immigrants or Englishmen. Drainage and paving were neglected by the property owners and the builders from the outset, and at a time when they could not help but be aware of the importance of providing such minimum amenities. In fact, it was the complaints of just those people who were usually labelled as health hazards which secured improvements, which showed an encouraging level of concern for public health among working-class people. But the Widnes Irish prejudiced their own health, as well as the health of their neighbours, by severely overcrowding their dwellings.

But there was another aspect of public health which often concerned the Irish directly in Lancashire's large towns. This was the problem of common lodging houses. Lodging houses were very often singled out for condemnation as dangers to the health of towns in the sanitary inquiries of the 1870s because

51. Widnes, health cttee, minutes, 1866-76, 27 Feb 1867, 5 Feb 1868 (WMB)
52. Widnes, health cttee, minutes, 1866-76, 27 Feb 1868 (WMB)
53. Census of England and Wales, enumerators' books, 1871, (PRO, RG 10/3859, ED 12)
54. Widnes, health cttee, minutes, 1866-76, 1 Mar 1870 (WMB)
55. Widnes, local board, minutes, 1865-72, 9 Mar 1870 (WMB, p. 394)
of their overcrowded, ill-ventilated, filthy state. And the Irish were very often mentioned as the proprietors of these houses.

As usual, Liverpool had the largest number of lodging houses, many of which served emigrants waiting for passage to America or Australia. In his health report for 1847, Dr. Duncan stated that in the docks area between the Scotland and Vauxhall Roads, where typhus was most rampant, were located 'most of the lodging-houses resorted to by the migratory Irish'. And a very high proportion of the typhus cases from this neighbourhood came from among those 'residing in crowded lodging-houses'. As part of his general effort to improve the health of the town, Duncan launched a campaign to clean up and register the town's lodging houses, to prevent them becoming the fertile source of disease they could so easily be. Writing in early 1851, the MOH said that of the 620 houses registered as lodging houses, 249 were intended for receiving emigrants, while thirty or forty others 'occasionally accommodated' waiting emigrants. Fully nine-tenths of the keepers are Irish, and about twenty-nine percent are unable to write. Experience has shown that few of them can be depended on for carrying out the bye-laws unless closely watched. This is proved with respect to overcrowding, by the number of informations laid for that offence by the inspectors, which up to the end of 1849 amounted to thirty percent of the whole number of registered houses. The Irish lodging houses were also notorious for lack of proper ventilation, which often generated an unhealthy atmosphere in the warm, crowded buildings.

With respect to ventilation, alterations were required to be made in the windows in a majority of the cases, previous to registration; many of the windows not opening at all, or opening imperfectly; but I have repeatedly found on subsequent visits to such houses that the windows were again fastened - as by a nail driven in below the sash - so as not to admit of their opening. The bye-law requiring windows to be opened daily for a certain period is habitually neglected.

But as regulations and inspection became more stringent the lodging houses of the borough became better managed and

56. MOH, Report, 1847, pp 6-7
57. MOH, Report, 1850
healthier. In the decade 1850-60 the number registered increased by only sixty-seven to 687. But by 1863 the figure rose to 1,118, and to 1,278 in 1866. By 1871 it fell off to 1,104. After 1851 we do not know even roughly the proportion of keepers who were Irish. Drs Parkes and Sanderson, conducting their public health inquiry in 1871, stated that Liverpool's lodging houses were 'all ventilated and kept clean' and that they 'presented a considerable contrast' to some of the private dwellings found in courts and back streets.

The air was comparatively pure, and we saw the lowest kind of tramps sleeping in rooms far healthier and cleaner than the houses of dockyard and other labourers.

Manchester had far fewer lodging houses than Liverpool, but their bad condition did cause comment. In 1847 a survey was taken of 150 of the town's 260 lodging houses. They were 'chiefly occupied by Irish' and they were found to contain upwards of 1,800 inmates, or an average of thirteen to each house; the walls and floors very dirty, the rooms generally small and badly ventilated, the bedding and the clothing (if such rags deserve the name) in an extremely filthy state; and as might be expected, in several instances cases of fever and other infectious diseases existing in the midst of these densely-crowded and filthy dens.

In 1846 the police reported that there were 258 lodging houses in the borough, and 164 of these were considered to be in a bad state, particularly because they permitted the two sexes to sleep indiscriminantly together. In that year seventy-four houses were suppressed by the police as health hazards. By 1851 the number of lodging houses increased to 396, fifty-one being located in cellars. In 260 cases the sexes were still sleeping together, and thirty-six houses were ordered closed. The Irish ran 278, 70%, of the Manchester lodging houses in 1851. A decade later they were keeping 290 of 545 houses, 53% and in 1866, the last year the police enumerated Irish lodging-house keepers, they had 44% of the 440 houses. There were only

58. MOH, Report, 1861
59. MOH, Reports, 1863–6
60. MOH, Report, 1871
62. M/R Guardian, 12 May 1847
298 lodging houses in 1871, fewer than in 1851.63 No commentary is supplied about the state of the lodging houses, but the reason for the close police inspection was to make certain that they were maintained in a clean, healthy state.

One way to get an idea of what it was like to spend a night in a Victorian lodging house is to look at another set of statistics which the Manchester police compiled. During 1846-66 most rooms in lodging houses contained between three and ten beds, and usually about 8-9% of the houses had ten to sixteen beds in each room. But significantly, in 1871, when the number of houses was reduced, the average number of beds per room was less than two. Overall, the verdict on Manchester's lodging houses, many run by Irish people, is that there was continuous improvement during 1846-71.

Salford's lodging houses were put under regulation in the late 1840s. In 1852 the lodging house inspector reported that sixty-seven of the seventy-one houses were 'clean'. Four were in a 'dirty and improper state' and the inspector was proceeding 'to induce the lodging-house keepers to carry into effect the requirements' of the regulations.64 By 1861 there were fifty-one fewer lodging houses in the borough and 'the various lodging-house keepers have conducted their houses in conformity with the common lodging-house regulations'.65 By 1866 there were twenty-six lodging houses, and it was found that ventilation was sometimes being neglected, for which 'penalties were inflicted' by the magistrates.66 There were nineteen houses kept in the borough in 1871 and the inspector found their conditions 'considerably improved' and that the 'general health of the inmates' was 'good'.67 There were far fewer lodging houses in Salford than there were in Liverpool or Manchester, and they never developed into a problem. There is

63. Criminal and miscellaneous statistical returns of the Manchester police, 1846, 1851, 1861, 1866, 1871 (M/RCL, 352.2.M1)
64. Borough of Salford, 'Watch Cttee addenda' in Annual committee reports, 1849-52 (M/RCL, 352.042.89), 1852, pp 72-3
65. Borough of Salford, Annual proceedings of the several cttees, 1861, p.187
66. Borough of Salford, Annual proceedings, 1866, p.273
67. Borough of Salford, Annual proceedings, 1871, p.346
no mention of the Irish as forming a high proportion of the keepers.

In nearby Oldham, lodging houses were numerous around 1860, but gradually decreased in number during the succeeding ten years. From 183 in 1856, the number went up to 204 in 1859. The number declined until 1867 when there were only sixteen, but there was a sporadic increase to thirty-four in 1871. Even though there are no figures on how many of Oldham's lodging-house keepers were Irish, those houses which were kept by the Irish had a very poor reputation. In 1859 an Irishman named Patrick Connolly was brought before the Oldham petty sessions on charges of keeping an unregistered lodging house. Connolly's lodging 'house' turned out to be a one-room cellar. The lodging house inspector testified that he found in one bed Connolly and his wife, another woman and two children, all ill of small-pox, on the hearth were three women and a child without any bed. On one side of the hearth, on a door placed across a tub, was the body of a child that had died of small-pox. The beds had neither blankets nor sheets to them and the place was in a most filthy state. An anonymous Oldham pamphleteer wrote in 1866 that: 'If you see one house more dilapidated and miserable-looking than another, and an exceedingly offensive drain running close by, depend upon it that is a common lodging house.' Other distinguishing characteristics of these houses, which were so closely associated with the Irish, were that they were 'devoid of the slightest means of ventilation', which betrayed 'a perfect horror of fresh air among the inmates'. The smell was 'all but insupportable' and they were 'a compound of everything that is filthy and disgusting'. As usual, Oldham was far behind nearby Manchester-Salford, and even the Liverpool of 1847.

There is no evidence of a lodging-house problem in Preston during 1846-71, and they do not seem to have been common features in St Helens or Widnes.

68. Oldham Borough Police, Criminal and miscellaneous statistical returns, 1856 (M/RCL, P1597/2); 1859-71 (OLIC, LP75)
69. Oldham Chronicle, 14 May 1859
70. Dens of Oldham (Oldham, 1866) p.3
71. Ibid., pp3-4
Lodging houses were common in the working-class districts of urban Lancashire and many of them were run by the Irish. At one point Dr. Duncan thought that the Irish kept 90% of Liverpool's numerous lodging houses. The Manchester police returned statistics for fifteen years on the number of lodging houses run by Irish people because it was such a significant proportion, relative to the size of the Irish community there. But besides being closely associated with the Irish, lodging houses, especially during the 1840s, were notorious for being poorly managed, dirty and crowded. Indeed, healthy conditions could hardly be expected in a lodging 'house' which was actually located in a cellar. The worst of the bad, unhealthy lodging houses were those run by the Irish. Enforcement of new bye-laws to register and regulate lodging houses, to make sure they were kept clean, improved matters in Liverpool and Manchester-Salford, although less efficiently administered towns, such as Oldham, were far behind in this regard. During 1847-9 the run-down Irish lodging houses on Liverpool's north side were a major source of disease, and the sickly, transient condition of the patrons meant they were also ideal for helping to spread infection. Irish lodging houses improved as the regulations and inspections became stricter during the 1850s, but still they seemed to lag behind the rest in concern for ventilation and general cleanliness. Even under the new laws the common lodging houses were often permitted to be very crowded. A sick person entering a clean lodging house was still very capable of spreading infection in a crowded room, and the lodging houses remained a potential threat to health during 1850-71. The unhealthy state of Irish lodging houses, particularly in the late 1840s and early 1850s, was probably one of the greatest threats to Lancashire's health the Irish community presented during 1846-71.

The time when the Irish had the worst effect on the public health of Lancashire's towns was during 1847-9, when disease
was already very prevalent and many Irish immigrants arrived weak or ill with typhus. After that particular crisis of typhus and cholera passed, mortality continued to be very high in areas where the Irish were found, especially in Liverpool, Manchester-Salford, Oldham and Preston. Personal hygiene among the Irish immigrants was certainly not very sophisticated. In the Irish countryside they emigrated from, disease arising from dirty houses and poor hygiene was less of a danger and received little attention. But the English working class, generally, was not much better off. The houses the Irish rented were old, badly built, ill-provided with amenities and situated in unsewered, badly paved, littered streets. These conditions would hardly inspire a former poor tenant farmer to high standards of cleanliness. It is altogether unrealistic to expect high standards of domestic hygiene to come before a decent standard of housing and street maintenance. In 1849 A. B. Reach said as much when he pointed out that the factory hands and labourers who lived in the newer, cleaner, more open Hulme district of Manchester showed much more interest in cleanliness and good health than the people surrounded by decaying urbanism in Deansgate or Ancoats did. The Irish were certainly not an asset to the public health of Lancashire, but they could only be marginally worse than anyone else who would have been compelled to occupy the same houses, especially if they came from a region such as rural Scotland. As the physical environment improved, so did the personal habits of the Irish and the whole working class. But it was a painfully slow process. Urban public health could not improve until landlords and local authorities took the lead in keeping houses and streets clean and in good repair. By 1866 Liverpool, Manchester, Salford, Oldham, Preston, St Helens and Widnes were all covered by public health legislation.

The Irish lowered their own standards, and that of their neighbourhood, still further by the practice of overcrowding.

72. A.B. Reach, Manchester and the textile districts in 1849, pp 3-4
73. Return of all districts under the public health act, 1848 and Local government act, 1858, pp 2-5, H.C., 1866 (176), lx, 420-3
their houses. Another area where the Irish were definitely a real detriment to the health of the towns was in lodging houses. The Irish were well known for dirt, lack of ventilation and indiscriminate overcrowding in the lodging houses they kept. Disease spread easily enough in the crowded towns without being aided by such things as lodging cellars. The situation improved during the 1850s and 1860s to a great extent, but as Dr. Duncan pointed out, the Irish had the farthest to go and were the most dilatory in carrying out improvements, and constant supervision was often necessary. But altogether, the Irish were only one part of a much larger health problem. At times they aggravated it, but they were not its cause. Rather, they were usually the victims of rural ignorance and urban decay.
Chapter 6
The Irish and the law

In any examination of a particular group in an urban setting, an important consideration is how much of a problem they pose for local law enforcement agencies, and how the police respond to the group when problems arise. But before seeing to what extent the Irish represented a criminal problem, it would be useful to note some contemporary observations on urban crime in Lancashire during the mid-nineteenth century.

A particular concern among social commentators was crime among working-class children in the large towns. It is not surprising that children whose parents were often away working all day, and who did not attend schools regularly, should have plenty of time for playing in the streets and getting into trouble there. The problem was increased by the utter lack of access to parks or play areas during the period.\(^1\) But besides the 'want of good government at home, and of education at schools'\(^2\) in Lancashire's towns, another reason for a juvenile crime problem was an apparently wider definition of what was an offence. In 1851 the chief constable of the Salford borough police gave his view of the problem in a special report.

I know many children who daily wander about the streets in ragged clothes, committing moral and frequently criminal offences, and thus gradually becoming more depraved and vicious and who appear literally as outcasts and vagabonds unknown and uncared for...On Sundays, as well as on other days, many boys may be seen in the streets spinning tops, running hoops, playing at pitch and toss, and 'shinty', flying kites, and running races, and being guilty of other disorderly conduct equally as dangerous and annoying, of which respectable inhabitants have very much complained.\(^3\)

But there was a more serious side to youthful criminality than these annoyances. It was reported in 1853 that hundreds of poor children in urban Lancashire were being trained by Fagin-like parents and friends to be petty thieves.

1. Only Salford and Preston had parks within easy reach of working-class areas.
2. S. Neal, Special report on...juvenile delinquency (Salford, 1851), p.6
3. Ibid., p.6
The whole of these children are very dirty, ragged, and without covering for the head or feet. They must bring home a certain sum of value; whether obtained by selling, begging or stealing, is immaterial. Nothing comes amiss to them. Bits of iron, copper, brass, anything from the docks or warehouses; doormats, if left exposed; and hundreds of miscellaneous articles.... These boys, some of them only six or seven years of age, have their own markets in the several streets....where in some of the cellars, they dispose of their wares, and away out again to look for more. 4

Whether or not Artful Dodgers were being processed in the Lancashire slums, this illustration helps to demonstrate that petty crime by children was an ingredient of nineteenth century urban life.

The problem of urban crime was augmented by the presence in towns of large numbers of persons from rural backgrounds, including the Irish. The transition involved in a move from the country or small town to an urban centre in Lancashire was certain to have a bewildering effect on the migrant, especially when he found his former moral and social standards, which had been reinforced by a smaller community, could not be applied to the adventure of town life. J.J. Tobias in his Crime and industrial society in the nineteenth century claims that the bewilderment experienced by a rural immigrant must have been so great that many gave up trying to adjust to the requirements of the new environment and turned to what they thought would be an easier life by petty crime. 5 Illustrating this point, he says the English-born children of Irish immigrant families were the worst criminals because 'they reject the ideas and standards of their parents....and enthusiastically adopt those of the area in which they live'. 6 But this assertion that second generation Irish were 'often unusually prone to crime' is impossible to test, because nationality, as determined for the criminal statistics of the period, was based on birthplace rather than congenital, or blood relationships with preceding generations. For example, the son of Irish parents born in Liverpool would be returned simply as an Englishman, rather than as an Irishman born in England, and would be indistinguishable from other persons born in England.

4. Quoted in J. Kay, Condition and education of poor children.... (London, 1853), p.18; M/R Courier, 26 Feb 1846
6. Ibid., p.170
But there is evidence that the confusing experience of emigration from a rural society and immigration into an urban one did lead to criminality among the Irish and their children. The poor law inquiry of 1836 linked Irish children in large towns to every sort of petty theft, and in his annual report for 1848 John Clay, chaplain at the Preston House of Correction, talked about crime among the immigrants.

When these wretched people...settle in a town their children contribute largely to the hopeless class of young offenders. Had they remained in Ireland, probably in a rural district, and forming part of a population more or less scattered, ignorance, indolence, and begging might have constituted...the worst features of their character. But in a town such habits soon grow into more deplorable vices. In the most wretched and filthy localities parents and children herd together until an Irish colony is established. The boys and girls are sent out, systematically, to beg; but the temptations of a town, the thronged streets, the places of low amusement, the open doors of yards and dwellings, soon convert the little beggar into an adroit and bold thief.

But it should be remembered these same influences would be likely to effect an immigrant from England's agricultural areas or from rural Scotland too.

Contemporaries thought crime and criminals were becoming less violent. It is certainly true that crimes of violence were shown by the Lancashire police statistics to be of infrequent occurrence (excepting assaults, which were considered on the level of fights rather than serious crime) and to account for only a fraction of the charges against those apprehended each year. But that Lancashire Victorians did not think violence was characteristic of crime was demonstrated very forcefully by another case, which intimately involved the Irish immigrant community.

In 1863-4 the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), the Fenians, made their appearance in Lancashire. Not heavily burdened by political theory or ideology, the Fenian movement, which had been founded in 1858, aimed at liberating Ireland from British rule by force of arms with the aid of the large expatriate Irish communities in America and Great Britain.

7. Report on the state of the Irish poor in Great Britain, p.xx, H.C., 1836 (40), xxxiv, 446
9. Tobias, op. cit., p.122
Until September 1867 the British public were not overly worried about the Fenian threat in their midst and were even sometimes amused by their antics (see chapter 12).

But on 18 September 1867 two arrested Fenian leaders were freed from a prison van in Manchester by the local IRB, with help from other towns. During the successful rescue a police sergeant, who was guarding the prisoners, was shot and killed. Outrage at the shooting was universal throughout Lancashire and Britain. The affair was seen as a singular crime. The Preston Chronicle feared that: 'The lawlessness of the New World is now making its hateful presence felt in the cities of the Old World.'\[10\] British people found this sort of violence literally outlandish, a product of America. The Salford Weekly News complained that the Fenians 'have suddenly given our social life an appearance of "rowdism" which is quite foreign to us. Violence enough there always is amongst us; but then it is usually of our own kind, and this latter phase of brutality hardly strikes us as being genuinely British'.\[11\] Crime in Victorian England certainly was not non-violent, but the use of lethal force, particularly firearms, was considered very uncommon.

But the major problem facing the police in Lancashire was not unruly children, flustered immigrants or murderous Fenians. In his report for 1847 John Clay spoke about the causes of crime in Lancashire. According to Clay 'ignorance and irreligion..., idleness, parental neglect, desecration of the sabbath' were all problems, but 'predominating above' them all was drunkenness.\[12\] Again in 1858 he complained of the lack of sobriety among working men in Lancashire.

During my thirty-six years' chaplaincy it has been....my duty to urge....the ever present fact that the passion for intoxicating drink is the cause of almost all the crime and misery done or suffered by the working classes. The ignorance of the 'masses' is a great national sore, but their drunkenness is the greatest; it is at once the greatest national sore, the greatest national disgrace and the greatest national sin! 13

10. Preston Chronicle, 9 Nov 1867
11. Salford Weekly News, 5 Oct 1867
12. John Clay, Chaplain's report, 1847, p.17
13. John Clay, Chaplain's report, 1858, p.34
Each year the available police statistics show that more people were arrested for drunkenness or being drunk and disorderly than for any other offence. And sometimes the figure for drunkenness amounted to over one-half of the total apprehensions. But this does not mean all police forces were equally tough against drunkards. In 1875 the Liverpool watch committee reported that the reason the borough appeared statistically permeated with drunkenness was that the police supervision was more strict there than it was in other towns. Until 1857 the Manchester police seemed to show great forebearance towards drunks, and only a relatively small percentage of the yearly apprehensions represented drinking offences. In fact, during 1849-56 apprehensions for offences against the vagrant act exceeded the drunks brought in. But civic-minded Mancunians protested against this laxity, and from 1857 police persecution of drunkards became more intense (see Figure 20). Charges for drunkenness and drunk and disorderly still were 48% and 45% respectively of the apprehensions in 1881 and 1891 in Manchester. A new offence category existed in those years which shows that 61.5% of those arrested in 1881 and 59% of those taken in 1891 were drunk when arrested, regardless of whether or not intoxication was the ostensible reason for their apprehension.

The appreciation for drink in Lancashire's towns was promoted and sustained by abundant beerhouses and public houses. In 1846 there were 1,576 beer and public houses in Manchester, and in 1859 there were 2,112 for approximately 335,000 people. By 1871 there was a total of 2,387 for 351,000 inhabitants, or one for every 147 persons in the borough. During the spring of 1854 the Manchester and Salford Temperance Association sent a memorial to the Manchester watch committee on the need for more vigorous police action against drunkenness. To illustrate the seriousness of the problem the Association resolved to watch as many beer and public houses as possible on ten consecutive

15. Criminal and miscellaneous statistical returns of the Manchester police, 1846-71. (M/RCL, 352.2.MI)
16. Ibid., 1846, 1859, 1871
Sundays. Their findings were that 120,124 men, 71,609 women and 23,585 children, or 215,318 persons, entered these "dens" each Sunday, making an average of 149½ to each house, including fifty-four policemen on duty. ¹⁷

Drunkenness was a problem in other towns too, as Figure 21 shows. In 1863 there were 2,536 beer and public houses in Liverpool. The number increased to 2,694 in 1866, but fell to 2,448 in 1870. Throughout the period 1863–71, the only years for which statistics survive, the total of apprehensions for drunkenness was never less than 46% of all apprehensions, and reached a high of 62.6% (representing 20,287 arrests) in 1870. ¹⁸ Even in 1881 and 1891 crimes of drunkenness accounted for 49% and 45% respectively, of all apprehensions in Liverpool. 431 beerhouses and public houses were returned for the town of Preston in 1860. By 1869 these multiplied to 498. But the total was down to 464 in 1871. A substantial portion of police activity dealt with drunkenness in Preston too. Those taken into custody for drunkenness were usually over 40% of all those apprehended, and the number went as high as 46% in 1867.¹⁹ At Oldham there were 302 beer and public houses in 1856. This number grew to 421 in 1869 and dropped to 409 in 1871. Drunken offences never accounted for less than 24% of all offences during 1856–71 and were generally around 30–40% of all apprehensions. ²⁰ In 1883 drunkenness supplied 25% of all prisoners, a figure which decreased to 21.5% in 1891.

It does not appear that the major economic dislocations of the 1846–71 period contributed to any increase in crime. The Manchester police statistics show that the number of apprehensions actually declined during the recession of the late 1840s. Likewise, during the Lancashire cotton famine of 1862–5 Oldham's Chief Constable reported that it was

¹⁷. W. Gawthorpe to M/R watch cttee, 12 Oct 1854 (M/RCL, Archives Dept, watch cttee letter book, M/9/70/2/1)
¹⁸. Borough of Liverpool, Reports on the police establishment, and the state of crime with tabular returns, 1863–71. (LCL, H352.2)
²⁰. Borough of Oldham, Criminal and miscellaneous statistical returns 1856–71 (1856, M/RCL, P1597/2; 1859–71, OLIC, LP75)
a gratifying circumstance to be able to state that amid the gloom of distress now unequally pervading the town, not a single indictable crime can be traced to the class, who through want of employment, are stricken from comparative plenty to deprivation of many of the necessaries of life. Poverty has hitherto been considered a great temptation to crime. However true that may be as a general proposition, Oldham in its present crisis, affords no proof of its accuracy. 21

The Manchester returns show that the increase in the number of apprehensions during 1862-5 was quite small, while in Liverpool and Preston the figures fell.

The available annual criminal statistics for Manchester, Salford, Liverpool, Oldham and Preston during the years 1846-71 help to fit the Irish into this general picture of Victorian police problems. Although J.J. Tobias finds many other problems with nineteenth-century police statistics, the principal obstacle I encountered was that the returns for some years either were not compiled or do not survive. Only Manchester's statistics are complete for the whole period. The figures from Liverpool go from 1863 to 1871 and Preston's from 1860 to 1871, minus those for 1862. Returns for the Oldham police force, which was only established in 1848, 22 extend over the period 1856-71, but those for 1857, 1858, 1861, 1866, 1868 and 1870 are missing. And in Salford only figures for the brief period 1846-9 are available. St Helens and Widnes were policed by the Lancashire Constabulary, but I have been unable to locate any of the yearly statistical reports of that body at the Lancashire Record Office or Lancashire Constabulary Headquarters, Hutton, Preston. During 1858-69 the Lancashire Constabulary and the borough police forces of Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Preston and Salford submitted annual statistics to the Home Office. But for a reason unexplained in these returns, their totals for apprehensions are always higher than the locally printed returns. And there is no breakdown by nationality, which means they are of little help in supplementing the local returns. 23 Despite some unsightly gaps, the local police statistics are still very useful for examining

22. Lancs quarter sessions, 29 June 1848 (LRO, proceedings under the act for appointing county and district constables, 1840-51, QEC/1/
23. Police returns, 1858-69 (PRO, HO 63/vols. 1,3,5,7,9,11,13,15,17, 19,21,23)
the general level of Irish crime because the total number of arrests is listed along with a breakdown by nationality. Even with data missing, it is possible to see roughly where the Irish stood. Efforts to find comparable statistics for Birmingham and London were unsuccessful.

But finding the statistics is not the only problem in dealing with them. Besides enumerating apprehensions for different crimes, the criminal returns record the ages of those arrested, their employment status and their degree of education. J. J. Tobias cites contemporary testimony to the inaccuracy of these figures. In an age when birth certificates were a recent innovation, many people could only be roughly sure of the age they gave the police. There were also local reasons why a prisoner would give a falsified age when he was arrested; for instance, giving a lower age could keep you out of a gaol and place you in a reformatory instead. And in returning the degree of education some prisoners found it to their advantage to say that they could not read or write, even if they did have some skill in these matters, because they then would be put into literacy classes instead of prison work. A hindrance to comparing these statistics is that not all towns recorded the same information. For instance, the Liverpool police took the age and degree of education of prisoners, but not employment status or occupations, and Manchester listed all four. But even though Manchester's statistics were more comprehensive, they often were not able to account for every prisoner in every category. But all these strictrues certainly do not render the statistical reports utterly useless, as Tobias contends, because this incidental information about prisoners is the least important for a study which concentrates on Irish crime. More importantly, the total arrests, the total Irish arrests and even breakdowns of Irish apprehensions for particular crimes are returned, and these aggregate figures are pretty reliable.

As a final detail in the general picture of crime in Lancashire, 1846-71, it might be useful to see just what those least trustworthy categories of the police statistics have to say. They show that over a twenty-five year period 81% of those accounted for among apprehensions in Manchester were over twenty years of age. Similarly in Liverpool, 1863-71, 79% of those apprehended were over the age of 21. So it can be assumed that police work in Lancashire involved the adult population much more than it did children. The rate of unemployment among prisoners in Manchester, Salford and Oldham varied from time to time. But the returns for degree of education show similarities between towns. 37-41% in all the towns were completely uneducated, 50-60% were able to read and write imperfectly and 1-4% were able to read and write well. But Preston stood out, having 51% of its prisoners able to read and write well. It is interesting to note that during the 1881-91 period the percentage of persons arrested who could at least say they were imperfectly educated rose to 75-80% in Manchester, Oldham and Preston.

With these limitations, what can these statistics be used for? One way of viewing these annual figures for total apprehensions is that they are a measure of general police activity. But certainly they must be a general indicator of criminal activity too. Further, they can only be a general indicator, and not a definitive statement, because not everyone who committed a crime was caught by the police and not everyone who was apprehended committed a crime. This is one reason they cannot tell us everything about crime in the Irish community. But we are further hampered by the fact that members of the Irish community born in England were returned as Englishmen, even though they might consider themselves no less Irish for being born in England. So in studying statistics of Irish crime it must be remembered that they represent only part of the story, those who actually immigrated from Ireland. The level of criminality in the whole Irish community will always be higher than the statistics say because they represent a minimum
Figure 23

Crime levels
Manchester, 1846-91

Percentage

1846
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1871
1881
1891

Irish

English
of arrests in the Irish community. But despite all these problems, the criminal statistics provide a valuable, indeed the only, indication of how much of a crime problem the Irish were for Lancashire's urban policemen.

The period 1846-71 was one of steadily rising numbers of arrests in Manchester, and between 1865 and 1869 this rise became much steeper (see Figure 27). Where did the Irish stand in relation to the increase in the number of arrests, and, presumably, in the number of crimes? The number of Irish arrested each year did not rise as much or as sharply as the total apprehensions or the number of Englishmen taken into custody. But Figure 23 shows that the proportions of English and Irish arrested each year remained very static. Englishmen always accounted for between 65 and 75% of all those arrested, while the Irish were consistently between 22 and 30% of those arrested. So in Manchester during 1846-71 it can be generally said that the Irish-born constantly absorbed at least 25-30% of the police activity, while they only represented 9-12% of the total population of the city. In 1881, when the Irish-born persons were 7% of the population of Manchester, the Irish still were 17.5% of all apprehensions. By 1891 the percentage of people born in Ireland in Manchester decreased to 4.5%, but 13% of the arrests came from this dwindling group.

Statistics for the Salford Borough police force are so far available only for the four years 1846-9. The number of Englishmen apprehended was 76-77% of the total in all four years. The number of Irish persons arrested hovered around 19% of the total number. The Irish-born in Salford were roughly 10% of the population in 1851, which means the Salford Irish were one-fifth of the crime problem and only one-tenth of the population. But altogether, the Salford police thought their town was less criminally-inclined than their populous neighbour.

The borough of Salford being only divided from the City of Manchester by the River Irwell, the majority of offences recorded in these returns are committed by thieves residing

25. Borough of Salford, Annual police reports, 1846-9 in Proceedings of the several committees, 1846-9 (M/RCL, 352.042.S9)
Figure 24

Number of apprehensions
Liverpool, 1863-91

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Figure 25

Crime levels
Liverpool, 1863-91

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Figure 26

Number of apprehensions
Oldham, 1856-91

--- data incomplete
Crime levels
Oldham, 1856-71

In Liverpool, 1861-72, statistics show an initial decrease of total crime, but a rise in 1866 (see Figure 4). In 1866 the number of Englishmen arrested increased sharply. The number of Irish taken also showed an increase during 1867-8, when it became more gradual and finally decreased in 1871. But Figure 5 demonstrates that the percentage of Irish was decreased in that year and throughout the Irish crime rate. Numerous sentences from that time show that the Irish were a proportionally greater problem in Liverpool than in any of the other towns. Even towards the end of the century this was true. In 1861 24% of those arrested in Liverpool were Irish, whereas the percentage was 31% ten years later. The Irish-born were 17% and 7.5% of the population in those years.

In 1862 the Star of Bombay of the Roman Catholic division of Walton reported: 'Since the time of the Catholic Emancipation of 1829, there has been a great increase in the crime of the Irish. It is said that the circumstances which make the Irish criminal are not those that are peculiar to them, but are common to all classes. They are generally uneducated and poverty-stricken, but in the case of the Irish, the poverty is caused by the fact that they are aliens, and therefore have no chance of employment. It is also said that the crime of the Irish is due to the fact that they are not allowed to take part in the industrial life of the country.'

The Oldham Police Annual Reports for the years 1860 to 1870 indicate a decrease in crime from 1860, with a significant drop in 1863. However, the fluctuations are very closely related to the number of Irish arrested. Over the fifty-year period, the proportionate apprehensions of the Oldham and Districts, which included Manchester, increased gradually and inversely during these decades. But it can be said that the number of Irish contributed 30-50% of the prisoners, while the Irish-born contributed 10-30%.
in that city. 26

In Liverpool, 1863-71, the police statistics show an initial decrease of total apprehensions, but a firm increase from 1866 (see Figure 24). In 1866 the number of Englishmen arrested increased sharply. The number of Irish taken also showed an increase during 1867-9, when it became more gradual and finally decreased in 1871. But Figure 25 demonstrates that the percentage of Irish went down at a greater rate. It is remarkable that the Irish, constituting approximately 18% of the population of the borough in 1863, should account for almost one-half of all the apprehensions by the police during that year. But the magnitude of the Irish crime problem shrank from that time, with charges against Englishmen rising. But still the Irish were a proportionately greater problem in Liverpool than in any of the other towns. Even later in the century this was true. In 1881 24% of those arrested in Liverpool were Irish, and the percentage was 16 ten years later. The Irish-born were 12% and 7.5% of the population in those years.

In 1863 the Catholic chaplain of Walton gaol, Fr. Nugent, examined the reasons for a high crime rate among the Liverpool Irish. He decided that circumstances rather than choice make criminals. The bad social conditions which swamped the refugees from famine and their descendants, law-abiding enough at home and mostly from rural districts, placed them irrecovably down among the submerged tenth in the overcrowded slums of a town, depending on casual labour. Their escape from these conditions was seriously handicapped by their illiteracy. 27

The Oldham police statistics, though six years' returns are missing, begin in 1856 (see Figure 26). Total apprehensions decreased until 1860 when they began a general rise. Charges against Englishmen paralleled the fluctuations in total arrests very closely. The number of Irish men apprehended rose steadily over the fifteen year period, but at a much lower rate than did the number of English. The proportionate apprehension of both English and Irish varied greatly and inversely during 1856-71 (see Figure 27). But it can be said that the English usually contributed 60-70% of the prisoners, while the Irish-born usually made up 30-6%, in a town where they were about 8-9% of the

26. Borough of Salford, statement made to HM principal secretary of state, 1867 (PRO, Police statistics, England and Wales, HO 63/19)
27. J. Bennet, Father Nugent of Liverpool (Liverpool, 1949), pp 44-5
Figure 23

Number of apprehensions
Preston, 1860-91

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Figure 24

Crime levels
Preston, 1860-91

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Figure 30
Irish inmates
Kirkdale House of Correction, 1846-64

Irish inmates of the Preston House of Correction, 1846-54.
population.

In Preston, where the statistics begin in 1860, the number of arrests went up until 1868, when they started down and almost reached the 1860 level in 1871 (see Figure 28). The number of Englishmen brought in fluctuated the same way. Irish apprehensions increased slowly, but the increment represented a very small number and the 1871 figure was only forty-four persons above that of 1860. The percentage of English people arrested during 1860-71 in Preston remained steadily between 70 and 75% of the total number taken (see Figure 29). And the Irish were always between 23 and 28% of the total. In 1861 the Irish were only 8.4% of the population, and 5.4% in 1871. Roughly 4% of the population of Preston was Irish-born in 1881, but 27% of those arrested in that year were born in Ireland. In 1891 the Irish were still 26% of those arrested, while their ratio to the whole population fell to 3% of the whole.

Another way of examining crime among the Irish in Lancashire is through some surviving chaplain's reports from the Kirkdale (near Liverpool) and Preston Houses of Correction, which help supplement missing criminal statistics for those two towns. During 1848-64 the number of Irishmen incarcerated at Kirkdale was always at least a quarter of the total prisoners, and was nearly 40% in 1851 (see Figure 30). These figures, considered with the Liverpool police statistics which begin in 1863, show that a high level of Irish crime existed from the late 1840s in southwest Lancashire. But for the decade 1854-64 another interesting statistic was included in the chaplain's reports, which counted the number of English-born prisoners with Irish parents. 28 This figure varied much more than the one for Irish-born prisoners, but generally it showed that the non-Irish-born members of the Irish community, probably because of their lower age, were less likely to find themselves in gaol during the 1850s and 1860s than their Irish-born relatives.

The eight-year period, 1846-54, covered by the Preston reports shows that the percentage of Irishmen arrested and imprisoned in the neighbourhood of Preston was steadily rising.
until in 1854 Irish prisoners were nearly 25% of the gaol's population (see Figure 31). In 1860, when Preston's annual police statistics commence, the Irish were nearly 28% of all those arrested, and the figure never fell below 23% during the succeeding decade. Irish crime in the Preston area increased steadily through the 1840s and mid-1850s and stayed at a relatively high level from 1854.

From this general survey of Irish crime in Lancashire it is seen that in none of the four towns where enough statistics are available did the Irish immigrants ever account for less than 20% of all the arrests, and the figure often went much higher. In Salford the number also reached nearly 20% during 1846-9. If the number of their English-born children taken in were known the percentage of total apprehensions from among the Irish community would be even higher. Since they were never more than 28.7% (Liverpool, 1851) of the population in any of the towns, and usually 8-15%, it appears the Irish-born afforded problems for the Lancashire police disproportionate to their numbers. But though the number of Irish arrested each year generally increased with total apprehensions, the percentage of the Irish arrested each year usually remained, with the exception of Liverpool, between 20 and 30%. But even these figures are only the number of offences the Irish immigrants themselves were arrested for, and they describe a serious concern for Victorian policemen in Lancashire.

But just what were the offences the Irish were perpetrating that added up to such high numbers each year? The surviving police statistics show us that the serious crimes of murder, manslaughter, rape, shooting, wounding or stabbing, burglary and housebreaking, robbery and arson took up very little police time during the mid-nineteenth century.

29. John Clay, Chaplain's reports, 1846-54
Irish percentages of total arrests for assault
Manchester, 1846-91
This is explained by the numerous arrests in connection with the Fenian rescue of that year. In 1836, Georgeري said that even the Irish commit more crimes than an equal number of the same place... their crimes are not general.

It was in categories of less serious crime that the Irish compiled their totals. From the available statistics, it emerges that the offenses an Irishman was most likely to be arrested for were assault, drunkenness and drunk and disorderly, breach of the peace and rioting, maiming, damage, larceny.

The only exception is the high number of Irish, 43, arrested for murder at Manchester in 1867. But this is explained by the numerous arrests in connection with the Fenian rescue of that year. In 1836, George Cornwall Lewis said that even though the Irish 'commit more crimes than an equal number of natives of the same places....their crimes are not in general of a very dangerous character'.

Crimes against the person, committed after long premeditation and with unrelenting cruelty, by several persons, such as murders, nightly attacks on houses, beatings, vindictive rapes, etc., which are unhappily so frequent among the Irish in their own country, scarcely ever occur among them in Great Britain. And John Clay wrote of the Irish in 1849 that: 'It is creditable to these immigrants that, with their so greatly augmented numbers, there is not only no corresponding increase of more serious offences imputable to them, but a remarkable decrease.'

But there were several other crimes where the Irish were much more conspicuous.

It was in categories of less serious crime that the Irish compiled their totals. From the available statistics, it emerges that the offences an Irishman was most likely to be arrested for were assault, drunkenness and drunk and disorderly, breach of the peace and rioting, malicious and wilful damage, larceny and vagrancy. But these classes of offence should not be considered Irish crime, because they were the most common offences among the whole population of Lancashire, and the apprehensions for these offences were the vast bulk of police work each year. Statistics which separate the nationalities of those taken into custody for a particular offence are available only for Manchester, 1846-71, Salford, 1847-9, Oldham, 1864-71, and Liverpool, 1863-71.

Assaults, both on private citizens and police officers, were a major problem in urban Lancashire. Figure 32 shows that even though the Irish-born were never more than 13% of the entire population of Manchester, they generally were over 30% of those taken in for assaults on police officers. Irish quarters of Manchester were notoriously hazardous places for policemen.

In 1846 it was said of the Little Ireland area that

30. Report on the state of the Irish poor in Great Britain, p.xx, H.C., 1836 (40), xxxiv, 446
31. John Clay, Chaplain's report, 1849, p.6
Irish percentages of total apprehensions for assault
Liverpool, 1863–91

Assault common

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<tr>
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Assaults on police

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Even as the number of Irish-born persons had decreased to well under one-seventh of the population of the district, the number of arrests of Irish-born persons arrested for assaults on police remained virtually the same in 1863 and 1864, 18.8% and 18.9% which were disproportionate, but no improvement on 1846–71.

A breakdown of offences by birthplace for Salford is only available for 1847–9. In that year the assault and assault on police in Salford is a little brighter than in Manchester. 18.2% accounted for more than 50% of the assault on police, while in 1847 and 1848 the assault on police was roughly proportionate to the numbers of Irish-born persons in Salford, 12.5% and 11.5% respectively. In 1849, when the figures are broken down to 1850, it can be seen that the percentage of Irish-born persons in Salford was 10% of the total, but this shot up to 18% in 1850. The disparity in the number of Irish-born persons in Salford at this time is due to the fact that in 1849, 1850, 1851, and 1852, the number of Irish-born persons in Salford was much lower than in 1848.
We have not a worse district in this neighbourhood. Indeed there is seldom a week during which there is not a riot of some description, and the police constable is a bold man who dares to go alone there for any purpose, as spades, brickbats, and pokers would be sure to meet him at every turn. 32

And in 1856 the chief constable reported that in an Irish enclave in Deansgate, 'sometimes fights suddenly occur which the policeman on the beat is not able to suppress without first obtaining additional assistance, for in such instances the Irish almost invariably, for the time being, set aside their own differences and jointly resist and attack the police, unless they are in a body of sufficient strength to protect themselves'.33

Even after the number of Irish-born persons had declined to well under 10% of the population of the borough, that segment of the population still accounted for a disproportionate number of assaults, 18% in 1881 and 12.5% in 1891. The percentages of Irishmen arrested for assaults on policemen remained virtually the same in 1881 and 1891, 10.8% and 10.7% which were disproportionate, but an improvement on 1846-71.

A breakdown of offences by birthplace for Salford is only available for 1847-9. In the categories of assault and assaults on policemen the picture is a little brighter than in Manchester. During 1847-9 the Irish never accounted for more than 16% of the common assaults, which was in 1848. In 1847 and 1849 the percentages were roughly proportionate to the actual number of Irish-born in Salford, 12.5% and 11%, respectively. But they were worse when it came to assaulting policemen. In 1847 the figure was 16%, but this shot up to 32% in 1848. Even though the percentage was down to 25% in 1849, this was still far disproportionate to the number of Irish-born persons resident in Salford.

At Liverpool only once did the percentage of Irishmen in custody for assault dip below 34%, and in 1864 it went as high as 40% of the total (see Figure 33). But the number of Irishmen arrested for assaulting policemen steadily declined during the

32. M/R Courier, 18 Mar 1846
33. CC Willis to watch ctee, 28 Aug 1858 (M/RCL, Archives Dept, watch ctee, letterbooks, M/9/70/2/1)
Irish percentages of total apprehensions for assault
Oldham, 1864-71

Assault common

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Assaults on police

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The treatment of Liverpool policemen would suggest that even though from 1867 they were a smaller percentage of those arrested for assault, the Irish were still the majority in their community (see Figure 14a).

In Oldham, 1864-71, even though from 1867 they were a smaller percentage of those arrested for assault, the Irish were still before the magistrates for a number of assaults disproportionate to the size of their community (see Figure 14a).

Oldham's police had much to fear from the Irish living in the town because that segment of the population regularly produced 35-50% of all assaults 14a, assailing policemen. Could this in 1868: it was back up to 40%.

The frequency of the Oldham police on occasions continually during the 1860s was too high to be consistently managing the tensions from the Irish living in the town. In 1860 a newspaper reported that of the 50% arrested for assaults in Oldham. It is very gratifying to find that only one of these classes of offender was an inhabitant of Oldham. The others were Irish troops and only casual patrolese. 15, 16. On 26th April 1864 the chief constable complained: 14a, 15.

M. Local Courier, 3 May 1860.
16. The Oldham Times, 23 February 1860 with the nationality of those apprehended for casual patrol assault.

M. Local Courier, 3 May 1860.
15. East Jackson to watch sties, 15 Feb 1860 (Oldham Town Hall, sties sties sties, A)
eight year period, from a high of 44% in 1863 down to 28% in 1870. It increased again in 1871 to 32%, which was an improvement over the years preceding 1870, but it still meant approximately 15% of the inhabitants were committing 31% of the assaults on policemen. Even though Irish-born persons were only 12% of Liverpool's population in 1881, 20% of the arrests for assault were from that group. But the percentage fell to a more appropriate 11% in 1891. Likewise, 19% of the assaults on policemen were committed by Irishmen in 1881. This figure went down to 10% in 1891.

The treatment a Liverpool policeman could expect from his numerous Irish neighbours is shown by a brief account from 1848.

An Irish row - On Wednesday night a serious disturbance took place in Waterloo Road, at the foot of Dutton Street, in which two or three police officers were injured; and one had his leg broken with his stick, which had been taken from him. 34

In Oldham, 1864-71, 35 even though from 1867 they were a smaller percentage of those arrested for assault, the Irish were still before the magistrates for a number of assaults disproportionate to the size of their community (see Figure 34). Oldham's police had much to fear from the Irish living in the borough because this 8-9% segment of the population regularly produced 35-50% of all those charged with assaulting policemen. Only once, in 1869, did the figure go below 30%, but by 1871 it was back up to 40.5%.

The frequency of Irish assaults on the Oldham constabulary during the 1850s was serious enough to provoke some revealing comments from the policemen. In 1850 a superintendent reported that of those arrested for assaulting policemen: 'It is very gratifying to state that only one of this class of offenders was an inhabitant of Oldham. The others were Irish tramps and only casual residents....'36 Again in 1856 the chief constable complained that

34. Liverpool Courier, 3 May 1848
35. The Oldham Police did not begin distinguishing the nationality of those apprehended for particular offences until 1864.
36. Supt Jackson to watch cttee, 13 Feb 1850 (Oldham Town Hall, watch cttee minutes, A)
Nineteen persons more have been brought before the magistrates this year than last for assaulting the constables in the execution of their duty; and in nearly every instance, the parties charged have either been Irishmen or non-residents of the town... 37

Still in 1859 the chief constable said it was 'much to be regretted, that, with few exceptions, the assaults on police are committed by low Irish people, who, here as elsewhere, evince little regard for peace and good order; frequently obstructing and assaulting the officers when called upon to suppress disorder'. 38

In 1854 a good example of how a Lancashire policeman might find himself in difficulties with his Irish neighbours occurred at Oldham.

A couple of Patlanders named Mahon and Kilmartin, were charged before the magistrates at petty sessions on Monday with having obstructed a constable in the discharge of his duty and Mahon was charged in addition with having assaulted a constable. It appeared that a number of Irishmen had been fighting at a late hour at night in Beaver Street. The row was apparently quite a promiscuous one, no individual having any one antagonist in particular, but each striking away with might and main at anyone whom accident or Providence threw in his way. In the prosecution of this interesting amusement they rendered a number of kitchen pokers available, and wielded them with a degree of energy and perseverance which was, considering the sultry state of the atmosphere, beyond all praise. A policeman Elliott, having interfered, Mahon struck him a terrific blow with a poker on the hat, which was cut completely through; but the reputation of Oldham for the manufacture of hats was fully sustained in this instance by the fact that the excellency of the head-dress effectually protected the kaput within from injury. 39

Though there was relatively little violence of a serious character among the Irish in Lancashire there was a great deal of violence just the same. In Manchester, Salford, Liverpool and Oldham, the surviving statistics tell us that the Irish communities consistently required a higher ratio of the police activity dealing with assaults than their relative size in those towns would merit. And the figures would be still higher if we could determine how many Irish born outside

37. Borough of Oldham, Statistical returns, 1856, p.2
38. Borough of Oldham, Statistical returns, 1859, p.iv
39. Oldham Chronicle, 29 July 1854
Figure 35

Manchester, 1746-91

Exceeding the price

Irish percentage of total apprehensions for murder and

Note
Irish percentages of total apprehensions for rioting and breach of the peace, Oldham, 1864–71

Figure 37

Liverpool, 1863–91
Ireland were apprehended for these offences.

This turbulent picture is given added detail by the returns for offences under breach of the peace and rioting. As Figure 35 will show, the yearly percentages of Irishmen arrested in Manchester for breaches of the peace or riot fluctuated very much during 1846-71. But all the dives and surges of the graph remain well above the level of the size of the Irish-born community in relation to the total inhabitants. Only in 1871 did the percentages fall to 11%, which was only a few points above the actual percentage of Irish-born in the entire city. Until 1861 the Irish were persistently 30-40% of those apprehended for breaches of the peace, and during 1856-9 the number went over 50% three times. The situation improved by 1881, when the Irish were 13% of the riot problem in Manchester. But the figure was 14% in 1891. The Irish were still disproportionately riotous. Riot situations the Manchester Irish might find themselves in varied from attempts to rescue comrades in custody, one of which resulted in the injuring of forty policemen,40 to attacks on the anti-catholic orator, and general troublemaker, William Murphy in 1868.41

In contiguous Salford the level of Irish disorder was lower, but rising. In 1847 the percentage of the total arrests for rioting and breach of the peace representing the Irish-born was 14.5%. It was up to 28% in 1848, but came down to 21% in 1849, which was still very high.

In Oldham the Irish were known to shatter the peace of the town very often (see Figure 36 ). In 1865 the percentage of Irish arrested for riot and breach of the peace was 14.3% of the total, but for the rest of the seven-year period covered by the statistics the figure was 33-45% of the total. In 1863 Irishmen made up 45% of all those arrested at Liverpool for riot or breaches of the peace, a figure far disproportionate to the number of Irish in the borough (see Figure 37 ). But there was a general decrease in the number of Irish arrested for those

40. M/R Courier, 11 May 1868
41. M/R City News, 12 Sept 1868; M/R Courier, 7 Sept 1868; The major disturbances involving some of the Manchester Irish in 1848 will be discussed in Chapter 11.
offences from that year, and the figure was 24% of the total in 1871. By 1881 the Irish-born were only about 18% of the riot and breach of the peace offenders, and in 1891, when Irish immigrants were 7.5% of the population, they were 9% of the arrests for rioting and breach of the peace. Things were quietening down in Liverpool by the end of the century.

Besides some serious confrontations with the local Orangemen, which will be discussed in chapter 10, there were several other occasions when the Irish in Liverpool were involved in particularly serious riots. The worst occurred during the difficult winter of 1855. On 19 February,

startling as the announcement may appear to some, it is no less the fact that the great majority of the flour and provision shops in this borough were either broken into and plundered, or the attempt made, in the face of day, and without the slightest exhibition of fear or secrecy on the part of the plunderers. The movement would seem to have been an organised one, and at an early hour yesterday morning large crowds of persons were assembled in Vauxhall Road, Scotland Road, and the neighbourhood. They consisted for the most part of females of the lowest class, youths familiarly known to the police, mixed up here and there with some of the more noted dock plunderers and 'ruffs'.

It did not appear that unemployed labourers, out of work because of the bad weather, participated in the riot. Shops throughout the Scotland-Vauxhall area were broken into and looted, and women were seen filling their aprons with flour. When the police arrived at one point the crowd dispersed and regrouped at another shop. The rioters started up Brownlow Hill and London Road, but they were forced back by the police. Beershops and restaurants were also visited by the rioters. Business life in the town stopped entirely and special constables and militia were brought out in strength. Sixty persons, mostly Irish, were arrested during the disturbance. 42

The Liverpool Mercury refrained from putting blame for the riot on the Irish community of the north end of the town, but the right-wing Courier was less reticent.

On Monday last one of the most disgraceful riots emanating

42. Liverpool Mercury, 20 Feb 1855
from the lower order of Roman Catholics....occurred in this town. That the attack was premeditated is beyond a doubt as it took place simultaneously in various parts of the town....And we are further justified in what may appear to be a harsh judgement from the fact that bread shops known to belong to Roman Catholics were respected. 43

The winter of 1867 was also very severe and brought the same problems that prevailed in 1855.

In no other town perhaps is a period of stormy or frosty weather accompanied with more hardship and suffering than in Liverpool. A large class of the inhabitants are engaged by their employers only from day to day; and as many of them are employed in out-door work, weather such as we have had for the past few weeks puts a stop to their labours. It is true that this class....earn good wages while at work. Whether from intemperance, improvidence, or some special cause, unfortunately, a large number of them are ill-prepared for a rainy day; they seem to oscillate between plenty and poverty; and if they are out of employment for a week, numbers of them are brought to actual pauperism. 44

On 18 January 1867 there was another disturbance, which emanated from hunger and destitution in Liverpool's north end. But unlike the rioting and plundering of shops which swept over the whole north-central part of the borough in 1855, this affair was localised to the Scotland Road area.

A good deal of disorder and excitement prevailed in the north end of the town, and in two or three instances small gangs of men went into bakers' shops insisting upon having bread, which was given to them. The police were quite on the alert, and two out of three alarms were of a very trifling nature. The only cause for uneasiness was at about 2 o'clock when a large assemblage of people collected in Scotland Road, which for a minute or two looked serious, the alarm being greatly promoted by the shopkeepers putting up their shutters in the whole of the neighbourhood. A large body of police were quickly on the ground. Four well-known roughs were apprehended, and quiet was restored....45

A disturbance of any scale in the Scotland Road area was certain to affect the numerous Irish living there, so many of whom were dependent on casual, outdoor labour. Liverpool got off lightly this time, but the Mercury warned that

43. *Lpool Courier*, 21 Feb 1855
44. *Lpool Mercury*, 19 Jan 1867
45. HC Grieg to watch cttce, 27 Jan 1867 (LCL, Head Constable's reports, 352POL/2/4, 94, p.122)
There is an axiom that the 'destiny of a people depends upon the way they are fed'. It is hoped that philanthropists will be alive to the truth of this.... 46

Another interesting sidelight to these two examples of bread rioting in Liverpool is the way it influenced the local Fenian movement, which was flourishing at the time of the 1867 disturbance. After the freeing of Kelly and Deasy at Manchester in September 1867, many plans were discussed among the IRB in Liverpool for liberating those who were on trial, and, later, those who were convicted of murder. Probably with the borough-wide chaos of 1855 in mind, a memory refreshed by the smaller incident in the Scotland Road ten months before, the Liverpool Fenians were aware that bread riots absorbed a tremendous amount of police strength. Some Fenians proposed to synchronise bread riots by the Irish communities of all the major towns of England and Scotland, so that military armories could be raided in the ensuing disorder. But this project, as most other Liverpool Fenian schemes, was never undertaken. 47

A final example of a particular type of riot situation which might confront the Liverpool police took place in 1864. The Irish journalist A. M. Sullivan gave a lecture at the Liverpool Concert Hall to collect funds for catholic charity. The meeting was described as 'a very uproarious one' and the police, under Inspector Carlisle, were called upon by the chairman of the meeting to 'put the laws in force'. 48 The Times alleged that there was a 'strong Fenian element in the audience' and that the disorder started because a rumour about police informers among the patrons went around the hall. The 'presence of a large body of police' confirmed the Times's impression that 'a very stormy meeting at least was expected'. 49 The police intervened and they ejected a few troublemakers from the hall to put a stop to the few fist-fights which broke out. Head Constable Grieg thought Carlisle's decision to interpose was 'premature' and 'indiscreet' because he allowed the police 'to mix with the audience' to restore order, 'taking, as it
were, the whole control of the meeting'. The action was much to be regretted, not from any result of that particular evening's proceedings, but because it establishes a dangerous precedent for the future.

Grieg instructed his police that upon all occasions of a religious or a political character they are not to go inside of the building during the meeting except when they are satisfied a breach of the peace has taken place, that they have nothing to do in preserving order inside, however loud and insulting the dissentients may be to each other....

This incident is a good illustration of how advanced the understanding of some Victorian policemen was. Grieg knew that the 'presence of a large body of police' at any gathering could easily have the unwanted result that they would heighten the expectation of trouble for those present, which would only raise tensions between the police and the audience. So Grieg wisely ordered a 'low profile' at public gatherings to be certain that the police did not cause the trouble they were supposed to prevent. His order also reflects that he could delineate between some shouting, accompanied by a few stray punches, and a riot. A little abuse and noise, which allowed to run its course would die out, could become a wild fracas if the police made a hasty attempt to intercede. Grieg was never anxious to anticipate too much trouble. He preferred to be certain a situation was serious before risking the consequences of police intervention. He best demonstrated this restraint when dealing with the local Fenians several years later. Especially with the considerable reputation of the Irish for riotous proclivities, amply sustained by the police statistics, Grieg's attitude shows imagination and a genuine concern for preserving the public peace.

Even though the police returns for Preston do not give the nationalities of those charged with breaches of the peace or rioting, there is evidence in other sources that the Irish in Preston were particularly inclined to uproar in the 1850s. There was a spate of wild faction fights during 1853-4, as Irishmen

50. Grieg to watch cttee, 15 Mar 1864 (LCL, Head Constable's reports, 352POL/2/3; 31, pp 34-5)
Manchester 1846-91
Initial percentages of total apprehensions for drunk and drunk and disorderly

Figure 19
from different streets challenged each other, and large crowds gathered to watch or participate in the competition. A policeman reporting from one of these contests said that 'brickends flew about like snowballs'. In August 1856 an argument, which started between Englishmen and Irishmen in a public house, led to six nights of Irish rioting.

Notwithstanding the vigilance and activity of the police great numbers of windows and doors were broken in several streets, and much personal injury was inflicted upon pedestrians, by stones, brickbats, for the rioters attacked indiscriminantly all who happened to come in their way.

At 4 o'clock one June morning in 1859 a crowd of Irishmen made a great deal of noise and attacked some workmen on their way to their jobs, injuring several very badly, even though there was no apparent reason for rioting or assaulting the labourers.

And, in common with other Lancashire towns, an Irish riot might stem from trying to retrieve apprehended compatriots from custody.

In close relation to the problems of assaults and breaches of the peace was that of drunkenness. We have already seen that drunkenness was the largest single problem the police in Lancashire had to handle in the mid-nineteenth century. And the Irish were a substantial part of that problem. In Manchester, where the police were fairly tolerant of drunks, the Irish regularly comprised 25-37% of the total drunkenness and drunk and disorderly problem (see Figure 38). The lowest the proportion ever went in a quarter of a century was 21.5% in 1847. Irishmen were 21% of the drunkards arrested in 1881, which still showed a wide disparity with the size of the Irish-born community in Manchester at that time. The percentage crept down to 16% in 1891, but this was also very high. Rather surprisingly, even though the percentages of Irishmen arrested for drunkenness and drunk and disorderly in Salford were around 19% of the total for 1847-9, this disproportion is not as wide as the

51. Preston Guardian, 11 June 1853; 10 June 1854
52. Preston Chronicle, 6 Sept 1856; Preston, riot deposition, 30 Aug 1856 (LRO, QJD/1/239)
53. Preston, riot deposition, 5 June 1859 (LRO, QJD/1/244)
54. Preston, riot deposition, 10 Oct 1856 (LRO, QJD/1/238)
Figure 39
Irish percentages of total apprehensions for drunk and disorderly

Liverpool, 1863-91

Figure 40

Oldham, 1864-71
Figure 42
Irish percentages of total apprehensions for malicious and wilful damage
Liverpool, 1863-91

Figure 43
Oldham, 1864-71
Manchester and Liverpool figures. The problem was of much greater magnitude in Liverpool (see Figure 39). The number of Irishmen arrested for drunkenness and drunk and disorderly each year was always around 40% of the total for the borough. From 1867 the figure began to decline, but in 1871 Irishmen were still 37% of the problem in Liverpool. Drunkenness was still the Irishman's greatest enemy in 1881. Almost 27% of the persons arrested for drunkenness and drunk and disorderly in Liverpool were Irish-born. The percentage was down to 18% in 1891, but this shows that the drink problem among the Irish immigrants was still acute. The percentage of Irish charged in Oldham for drunken offences during 1864-71 was never lower than 30%, and could be as high as 42% (see Figure 40). As bad as these figures appear, they are only part of the story, and it can be assumed that drunkenness in the Irish neighbourhoods of Lancashire was an even more serious problem than these statistics indicate.

In the categories of malicious and wilful damage to property, the Irish showed themselves once again particularly troublesome. The percentage of Irish charged with these offences in Manchester went beneath 26% of the total only five times in twenty-five years, and never went below 21% (see Figure 41). The number hovered between 28% and 36% of the total, but in 1856 it was 42%. In 1881 the percentage was below 20%, 19.7% which was still very high, but by 1891 the percentage of Irishmen fell off more encouragingly to 11%. In Salford, 1847-9, the proportion of Irishmen arrested for injury to property started off at a high 23% and then rose to 35% in 1849, the highest percentage of Irishmen arrested for any offence during the three-year period. The Irish were an even greater problem for the Liverpool police in this regard (see Figure 42). The figure was 44% in 1863 and increased to 47% in 1865-6. There was a general decrease in the percentage after 1866, but it never went under 30%, and in 1871 it was 35.5%. Even though the Irish were 20% of those arrested for damaging property in 1881, they were only 10% a decade later. In Oldham the Irish
Manchesters, 1846-91
Irish percentages of total apprentices for lace

Figure 1
Figure 45
Irish percentages of total apprehensions for larceny

Liverpool, 1863-91

Percentage

Figure 46
Oldham, 1864-71

Percentage

Irish
percentages of total apprehensions for larceny

Oldham, 1864-71

Percentage
were less inclined towards malicious and wilful damage to property than in Liverpool or Manchester, but they were still arrested for this charge in a proportion larger than their numbers within the borough (see Figure 43). Irish-born prisoners for malicious or wilful damage usually varied between 12-25% during 1864-71, but went up to 35% in 1867.

A case at Preston in 1847 shows a possible motivation behind an Irishman's inclination to damage property.

An Irish lad, named Peter Kilcorne, was charged with having broken a pane of glass in the shop window of Mr. Benson, corner of Avenham Street. This morning he threw a piece of brick at the window and after he had done it he made no attempt to escape. On Inspector Rigby coming up he coolly asked what he would 'stand' to know who had done it, and afterwards acknowledged he had done it himself.

When the boy was taken before the magistrate there was this exchange.

Magistrate: 'Why did you break this window?'
Lad: 'I wanted my breakfast.'
Magistrate: 'Have you ever broken any before?'
Lad: 'Yes, faith, I broke one in Blackburn, but they would not prosecute me there, so you see it's here I am.'

The enterprising young man was awarded thirty breakfasts. 55

Another perennial police problem in Lancashire was larceny, and in this case, too, a disproportionate number of Irishmen were involved. The Manchester statistics, 1846-71, show that for all classes of larceny the Irish were consistently between 20 and 25% of the total problem (see Figure 44). But the percentages fell to 12 and 8.5 in 1881 and 1891. Larceny of all descriptions among the Salford Irish showed a very encouraging decrease during 1847-9. The figure was 23% in 1847 and it fell to a nearly proportionate 13% in 1849.

Irish theft was 36% of all larceny charges in Liverpool in 1863 (see Figure 45). There was a gradual decline in the percentage, but in 1871 the Irish were still 25% of all those arrested in the borough for larceny. But the decline in the percentage of Irishmen arrested for larceny continued over the next twenty years. The number was still 19% in 1881, but it was 10.5% in 1891. In 1864-5 apprehensions of Irish-born persons

55. Preston Guardian, 11 Dec 1847
Figure 48
Irish percentages of total apprehensions for vagrancy

Liverpool, 1863-91

Figure 49

Oldham, 1864-71
for larceny in Oldham decreased from 31 to 26% of the total, which was still a high ratio, but the figure climbed rapidly until it was 42% in 1869 (see Figure 14). By 1871 32% of all those charged with larceny were Irish.

We saw in the example of the young man in Preston who broke the window to get a meal in gaol that it was sometimes suspected in Lancashire that the Irish committed minor crimes, such as petty larceny, in order to be rescued from extreme poverty. A letter to the Home Office from a Liverpool magistrate alleged that this was the case.

The truth is that the gaols, such as the gaol of the Borough of Liverpool, affords the wretched and unfortunate Irish better food, shelter and raiment, and more cleanliness than, it is to be feared, many of them ever experienced elsewhere; hence, it constantly happens that Irish vagrants, who have offered them the choice of being sent back to Ireland or to gaol in a great many cases desire to go to prison. 56

Finally, there is the problem of Irish vagrancy in Lancashire. Under the heading of vagrancy are included offences such as begging, loitering, prostitution and even being an 'incorrigible rogue'. Plenty of Irish vagrants were found in Manchester, and their numbers fluctuated between 23 and 33% of all those arrested for the various offences against the vagrant act (see Figure 47). The percentage went as high as 35 in 1853 and down to 19 in 1859. Vagrancy remained a problem even in a smaller Irish-born community. The Irish were 16% and 9% of the total arrests for vagrancy in 1881 and 1891. Vagrancy among the Salford Irish fell during the three years 1847-9, from 24% of all apprehensions for vagrant offences to 18% in 1849. The Irish were 36% of all the vagrants taken before the magistrates at Liverpool in 1864. There followed a steady reduction in the percentage of Irish taken in each year, until in 1871 they were only 20% (see Figure 46). But in 1881 the percentage was back to 24%. Some improvement was apparent in 1891, when the percentage was 17%. But in Oldham Irish vagrancy

56. Burke, Catholic history of Liverpool, p.89; Liverpool Mercury 15 May 1849.
Figure 50

Irish percentages of total apprehensions for prostitution
Manchester, 1846-91
Figure 51

Irish percentages of total apprehensions for prostitution
Oldham, 1856-91

Percentage

1856
1857
1858
1859
1860
1861
1862
1863
1864
1865
1866
1867
1868
1869
1870
1871
1872
1873
1874
1875
1876
1877
1878
1879
1880
1881
1882
1883
1884
increased from a roughly proportionate 9.6% in 1864 to 44% in 1871 (see Figure 49).

A corollary Irish vagrancy is prostitution among Irish women. Manchester's statistics on Irish women involved in prostitution are complete for the entire period 1846-71. Each of the sets available in Oldham also record the number of Irish prostitutes arrested each year (see Figure 50), but Liverpool distinguished Irish prostitutes from the borough total only in 1870-1. Over twenty-five years the number of Irish women arrested for prostitution was always a much higher proportion than the relative size of the Irish-born colony in Manchester. The percentage never fell below 21.5% and would usually be 28-36% of the total women arrested. In 1881 over 13% of the women arrested for prostitution were Irish, and the proportion increased to 15% in 1891. Irish prostitution in Oldham fell from 25 to 18% during 1856-60, but it then rose sharply until it was 46.5% of the total apprehensions in 1869. The number dropped to 26% of the total in 1871, but this was still disproportionately high. The Irish were supplying 48% of the prostitutes arrested at Oldham, in both 1883 and 1891, a worse proportion than in any year during 1856-71. Irishwomen were 46% of those taken in and charged with prostitution in Liverpool in 1870 and 28% in 1871. They were 24% of those arrested in 1881 and 19% in 1891, which were both still very high figures.

The last matter concerning Lancashire police statistics involves some figures from Widnes and some individual Irishmen who ended up on the wrong side of the law. Widnes was under the jurisdiction of the Lancashire Constabulary, and even though this body had no police authority over the town. Without the annual criminal statistics published by the Lancashire Constabulary it is impossible to get any idea of the general level of crime in Widnes (or in St Helens), or how much of a problem the Irish living there were. 

jurisdiction of the Lancashire Constabulary, a local board was established there in 1865, and even though this body had no police authority over the town. Without the annual criminal statistics published by the Lancashire Constabulary it is impossible to get any idea of the general level of crime in Widnes (or in St Helens), or how much of a problem the Irish living there were.
there were. But the charge book for the Prescot division of the Lancashire Constabulary, of which Widnes was a subdistrict, survives for the period 1848-52. Only the late and early weeks of 1848 and 1853, respectively, are in this book, and only the years 1849-52 will be considered. Widnes was still a small town during these years and only 131 persons were arrested and charged for offences there during 1849-52. Twenty-five of those people, 18%, were Irish. The nineteen Irish males arrested were all listed as labourers, and the five women had no occupations (one man was arrested twice for vagrancy during 1850). Thirteen of the Irish were totally uneducated, nine could read and write imperfectly, and three others were able to read only. Five of the Irish prisoners were between the ages of fifteen and twenty years, and the rest were twenty years and older. Ten of them were either unemployed when they were arrested, or had no fixed occupation. The charges against them show similarities with the statistics of other Lancashire towns. Four of the twenty-five were arrested for larceny, five for vagrancy, three for drunkenness, and four for assault. Uncharacteristically, five Irishmen were arrested for murder in December 1851 and January 1852 in connection with the same crime.

Examples of Widnes Irishmen charged with offences are the two Fay brothers, Michael and Bernard, both charged with a common crime among Lancashire Irishmen, assault. Michael was aged thirty-two and Bernard was forty. They came from Galway and both were working in Widnes as labourers. Neither was able to read or write.

As Widnes grew the number of offences rose. Even though there is little mention of a severe Irish crime problem at Widnes in the Widnes-Runcorn or St Helens newspapers during the 1850s and 1860s, the 'influx of Irish people provided the magistrates with plenty of work'. By 1876 there were fifty-seven public houses in Widnes, one to each 350 inhabitants, and drunkenness 'was a factor in the majority of the cases'.

57. LC, Prescot division, register of charges, 1848-53 (LRO, QEV/10)
58. Diggie, History of Widnes, p. 54
59. Ibid., p. 61
Profiles of other Irish offenders are available from the Manchester, Salford, Liverpool and Oldham statistics. They are only distinguishable from other persons charged if in a certain year only one person is arrested for a particular crime and he happens to be Irish. During 1846-71 thirty-four such cases are available from the Manchester statistics. Occupation and whether or not they were currently employed is not indicated for two of the cases, but twenty-two of the others were returned as labourers and seven were factory workers. One other was listed unemployed when arrested. None were children and twenty-eight were twenty years and older. Eighteen were imperfectly educated and the other sixteen had no knowledge of reading or writing at all. These thirty-two offenders included three with arson and one with stealing a dog.

There are two examples available in Salford, but Liverpool provides a more substantial offering. Even though much less information is provided about each person arrested, a very interesting and diverse collection of crime is represented. Two of the eighteen distinguishable Irish prisoners were between fifteen and twenty years of age and the rest were older. Nine of the eighteen were partially educated, seven were illiterate, and two could read and write well. The only category of offence, which has more than one person in it is that of 'incorrigible rogues', where there were five Irish persons. Murder, rape, arson, robbery, burglary and larceny are all represented by an Irish offender. There are also three offences committed against children, concealing a birth, child neglect and child abandonment. The two adolescent Irish offenders were guilty of sheep stealing and sacrilege.

Oldham's statistics isolate eight Irish persons from the 1864-71 period. Five of the eight were out of work when apprehended, four were imperfectly educated and the rest were illiterate. Two were arrested for larceny, one for manslaughter, one for arson, and another for house-breaking. There were also

60. Ibid., p.34
a brothel keeper and an embezzler among their number.

From all these examples from Widnes, Manchester, Liverpool and Oldham, we can see that the Irish prisoners were generally from the adult population. Ignorance and marginal literacy prevailed among them, and where occupation is given, most were returned simply as labourers. Unemployment was a common feature. But these figures tend to emphasise the Irish who were arrested for the most serious and violent offences. It would be, as we have seen, misleading to generalise on the type of offences Irishmen in Lancashire were arrested for from these examples because these crimes are distinguishable only because they occurred so infrequently.

The high level of minor crimes among the Irish community provided something besides headaches (often literally) for the Lancashire police. Amusing performances in police courts by Irish persons, accused of every sort of misdemeanor, often filled the police court column in local newspapers. Besides entertaining readers, these items served as a medium for demonstrating that the Irish were a particular criminal problem. But not every newspaper indulged in ridiculing the Irish in this way. It was usually a town's conservative paper which availed itself of this opportunity to lampoon Irish accents and ignorance of judicial procedures, although the Oldham Chronicle, which considered itself 'liberal', never missed a chance to pillory the Irish in this way. The leading liberal papers in Lancashire, the Liverpool Mercury and the Manchester Guardian, rarely singled out the Irish for mention in their coverage of cases before local magistrates' courts, and when they did, the stories were embellished with bigotry. The Manchester Courier and the Liverpool Courier defended conservative views, which could sometimes be very extreme. Neither paper had the slightest affection for the Irish and, particularly during the large-scale immigration of the latter 1840s, they were quick to parody their new neighbours. But during the 1850s and 1860s the appearance of amusing Irish court cases became much less frequent, as the novelty of very large Irish communities in Lancashire's towns wore off.
Here are a few examples of these court cases.

At the Borough Court on Wednesday, an elderly woman, a native of Ireland, was charged with having stolen a small piece of meat from a stall in the London Road. The prisoner was observed by a bystander on Tuesday afternoon to be looking with a longing eye at the contents of the stall, and when at length she summoned up courage to seize and thrust a piece of meat under her cloak, seeing that she was observed, she gave the man a wink, as if therewith to bribe him to silence; but it was lost upon him, for he at once gave her in charge to the police. The woman, who spoke in a strong Hibernian accent, said she came from Stockport, where she had a 'little wee bit spot' to herself and had come into Manchester to see her sister; that they had been having a little drop together, and she had 'got out of the way' with it; that her husband died last Christmas; that she had had a deal of trouble, and finally, with many protestations, promised if she should be forgiven this time, to go on her knees, and 'jine the teetotals'..... 61

On Wednesday, Mr. Rushton asked an Irish scavenger, who had come to give evidence in a case of assault, if he were present at the time it was committed. 'Yes, sir', said the Irishman, 'I am the man who was present afterwards' (laughter). He subsequently said the assailant ran back straightforward. 62

On Monday three women, not yet thoroughly acquainted with the routine of the police court, were put forward on the rather common charge of endeavouring to help themselves to a good joint for dinner without payment. They were all Irish, and on the case being proved, Mr. Rushton asked them what they had to say. The younger of the party, with a genuine brogue, and with the utmost simplicity of manner, at once exclaimed: 'Och, now, well sure, yer honour, it was me that tuk it; and as for these two women (her fellow prisoners), barrin' outside the market before we cum in, I never saw them in all my life, so I didn't. I don't know them from Adam down, no more than I know the back of my head, so I don't, yer honour.' But 'his honour' not being exactly of the same opinion, sentenced the trio to a month's confinement. 63

Some merriment was created in the police court on Thursday by an old Irishwoman, who applied for 'as much law' as their 'wurtchips' could give. She explained that some neighbours had broken the door of her house, and after this they broke her head. After a great deal of talk, she ultimately explained that she wanted a warrant for breaking the door, stating at the same time that she did not care much about the broken head. She volunteered to leave 'her enemies' to the bench, but must be sure to give them as much law as they could. 64

61. M/R Guardian, 6 Mar 1847 
62. Lpool Courier, 28 Oct 1846 
63. Lpool Courier, 21 Mar 1849 
64. Oldham Chronicle, 28 May 1864
These few samples are not very hilarious, but they do show what police court reporters looked for in recording them. Mocking the Irish accent was a favourite feature of these anecdotes. Also, the quaint simplicity of people from a rural environment was seldom overlooked, although this aspect was sometimes presented as the result of hereditary stupidity, rather than the consequence of an upbringing in agrarian surroundings (this subject, including other examples of Irish court cases, is considered more fully in chapter 10). But what is common to nearly every Irish-in-court story is that the offences the principal characters were in court to answer for were always very minor. So even if the Irish could be represented as an ignorant element, very inclined to crime, and very entertaining when apprehended, it could not be said that they were a particularly dangerous group.

Despite gaps in the police statistics, it is safe to conclude that besides the fact that the Irish were a general crime problem, a characteristic of the Irish districts in urban Lancashire during 1846-71 was violence of the faction fight and localised riot variety. This is borne out by the high percentages of Irish represented in the returns of those arrested for assault and breaches of the peace in Manchester, Salford, Liverpool, and Oldham, and portrayed by the Preston examples. Widespread excessive drinking, attended by fist-fights and other commotion would be another uninviting feature. Malicious damage, larceny of all classes and vagrancy were also at high levels among the Lancashire Irish. And all these disproportionate percentages are not even the whole story of Irish crime because English-born members of the Irish community are not included. But the statistics do reveal some encouraging signs. The Manchester figures for the number of Irish arrested under the seven classes of offence were all declining in 1871.
With the exception of assault, percentages of Irishmen apprehended in Liverpool, 1863-71, were going down during those eight years. But things in Oldham were not as optimistic in 1871. Assault, larceny, breach of the peace and riot and wilful damage were on the decline among the Irish there in 1871. But there were large increases in the percentages of Irishmen apprehended for drunkenness, assaults on policemen and vagrancy. Overall, the police statistics show that during 1846-71 the Irish were a very large problem in Lancashire, but the dimensions of the problem, though it remained formidable even in 1881-91, were shrinking by 1871.
Ireland and the Irish are always closely associated with the catholic church. But the intimate ties between the Irish and the church went further than the relations between a reverent people and a religious institution. Even though the catholic church had been a significant organisation on the national level in Ireland for many centuries, the overwhelming bulk of the Irish people only knew it on the local, indeed, personal, level, through the agency of the parish priest. Throughout this discussion, any reference to the 'church' will refer to the catholic church on the local level, the parish and the parish priest.

The catholic church, through its clergy, had, over a period of centuries, become an integral part of Irish society. In the face of the insecurities of agrarian life, always a feature of rural Ireland right up to the nineteenth century, it seemed that only the church offered any stability and constancy.

the Irishman believes that there is nothing permanent or certain in the world but his religion .... the Irish people exists in its church, there alone it is free; there alone it is sure of its rights; there it occupies the only ground that has never given way beneath its feet.  1

The penal laws against the practice of Roman Catholicism, which were not finally repealed until 1829, failed to shake the foundations of the Irish church, which had become a deep-rooted cul-

tural institution. The penal laws made the Irish identify still more closely with their priests because the legal disabili- ties were shared by the laity and the clergy together. If anything, the attempt to curtail the influence of the catho- lic church in Ireland by statute only enhanced the church's credibility with the Irish people. Also, the 'breakdown of ecclesiastical discipline and the depletion in the ranks of the hierarchy permitted the unhindered growth of a direct relationship between priest and people'.

There was sometimes opposition to the catholic clergy arising mainly out of the support of the local priesthood through 'voluntary' dues paid on occasions such as baptisms and marriages. But to call this opposition to the clergy 'anti-clericalism' would be to misapply the term. Firstly, the customary response in rural Ireland to what were locally judged to be excessive demands by landowners or clergy was resistance. Rural Irishmen generally subscribed to a tacitly acknowledged social-economic code which evolved informally through practice on the local level. If the priest encroached on what was accepted as just, he was resisted, despite his social and spiritual prominence. But objections to clerical demands in rural Ireland underlines the intimacy and interdependence of priest and people. Respected as he was, the priest was still looked upon as part of the community and was expected to observe its rules. Likewise, the priest was acutely aware of his dependence on the people and how that dependence brought him closer to them. When suggestions were made during the 1830s and 1840s that the catholic clergy in Ireland should receive a salary from the British government, the clergy and the laity, led by O'Connell, opposed the idea. 'The clergy realised that

2. J.A. Murphy, 'Priests and people in modern Irish history' in Christus Rex, xxiii, no. 4 (1969), p.236
the voluntary system was part of the bond between priest and people, though it might cause the bond to chafe at times.\(^3\)

The only direct contact most Irishmen ever had with the institution of the Roman Catholic church was in the person of the local priest. By the 1840s the clergy had consolidated the integral position in rural society that they earned over the previous three centuries.

Lack of education had placed most of the people in a position of peculiar dependence upon the priests. Inevitably, in these circumstances, clerical guidance exceeded religious affairs. It did so, particularly, in a society in which poverty, tradition, politics and the fact that some priests belonged to their class drew the clergy so close to the peasantry .... the strong farmers and urban middle classes, from whom the church drew most of its men, shared very many aspirations with the cottiers. The ordinary people in a parish usually regarded their priest as their shield against extraordinary injustice. In him they found, more or less, a focus for their inchoate purposes. He was the filter through which many ideas and a great deal of information reached them. He could both see and, to a certain extent, express their point of view. Conversely, he was used as a channel of communication with the people .... We may safely assume that in general and upon most questions the advice of the priest was valued: sometimes decisive .... Their attitude .... was the most important single element in contemporary public opinion. \(^4\)

Gustave de Beaumont thought that the catholic clergy was 'the most national body in Ireland; it belongs to the very heart of the country'. \(^5\) But the priests' active participation in community life endeared them most to the Irish.

Survey those immense lower classes in Ireland who bear at once all the charges and all the miseries of society, oppressed by the landlord, exhausted by taxation, plundered by the protestant minister, their ruin consummated by the agents of law. Who or what is their only support in such suffering? - the priest. - Who is it that gives advice in their enterprises, help in their reverses, relief in their distress? - the priest. - Who is it that bestows on them what is perhaps still more prec-

\(^3\) Ibld., p.245
\(^4\) Oliver MacDonagh, 'The Irish clergy and emigration during the famine' in IHS, v, no. 20, (Sept 1947), p.288
\(^5\) Beaumont, op. cit., ii, 85
ious, that consoling sympathy, that sustaining voice of sympathy, the tear of humanity so dear to the unfortunate? There is but one man in Ireland that mourns with the poor man, who has so much to mourn, and that man is the priest. 6

Besides being the spiritual leader and an understanding friend, the priest was often the mediator between the rural Irish and landlords or civil authorities. The priest's personal prestige was further advanced by the fact that he was one of the few educated persons in his parish. Altogether, his religious leadership and secular prominence gave the priest an authority in rural Ireland which was unrivalled by landlords, police or Dublin Castle. In fact it was claimed that the priests were the only authority the Irish respected. And the social primacy of the catholic clergy facilitated the exertion of their moral authority. But the priest was not simply held in awe by the Irish. He had earned their esteem by his commitment to the welfare of the community. His interventions on the behalf of his parishioners were out of a genuine concern for their welfare.

Those in Ireland who do not oppress the people, are accustomed to despise them. I found that the catholic clergy were the only persons in Ireland who loved the lower classes and spoke of them in terms of esteem and affection. This fact alone would explain the power of the priests in Ireland. 7

So by the time of the great famine of the 1840s the parish priest was well-established as the nucleus of the rural community.

The Irish church was strengthening its organisation, discipline and finances during the 1820s and 1830s and was in a strong position to lead what has been called the Irish 'devotional revolution' of the second half of the nineteenth century. 8 During the years preceding the famine less than 40%
of Irish catholics were attending mass. Shortages of priests, churches and seating in existing chapels made fuller attendance impossible. Since there had been relatively few clergy and chapels from the sixteenth century, a generally lax attitude towards the practice of religion prevailed in Ireland before the famine, which also contributed to the low proportion of church-goers. 'The prevalence of extraordinary religious devotion evidenced by extremely regular church attendance is a post-famine phenomenon.' The disastrous famine and epidemics of the 1840s produced a catharsis in Irish religious attitudes as a by-product.

The growing awareness of a sense of sin already apparent in the 1840s was certainly deepened as God's wrath was made manifest in a great natural disaster that destroyed and scattered his people. Psychologically and socially, therefore, the Irish people were ready for a great evangelical revival, while economically and organisationally the church was now correspondingly ready after the famine to meet their religious and emotional needs. 10

But the church filled another need too. Increasing anglicisation of all aspects of Irish life diluted the influence of the old Gaelic culture. Even in the national school system there was no instruction in Irish history, language or literature, which led to the accusation that the system was 'anti-national'. 11 Even though it would be an exaggeration to look at the church as surrogate culture, the church did afford a 'cultural heritage with which they could identify and be identified and through which they could identify with one another'. 12 By the end of the nineteenth century figures for attendance at mass in Ireland were over 90% of the catholic

9. Ibid., p.636; D.W. Miller, 'Irish catholicism and the great famine', unpublished typescript, pp 7, 8, 12
10. Larkin, op. cit., p.639
12. Larkin, op. cit., p.649
population. The long-standing social position of the parish priest; a somewhat more prosperous rural community; a new realisation of the importance of religious practice; and the close identity of the people with the church, which was intensified by the expansion of the church's edifice that took place after the famine, had all combined to make the Irish a more devout people than they were fifty years earlier. But during 1846-71 the Irish who arrived in Lancashire were part of the 'pre-famine generation of non-practicing catholics', who were not affected by the full impact of the 'devotional revolution'.

In the 1840s religion was not central to the lives of the working class living in large English towns. In 1844 Friedrich Engels wrote that it was generally agreed that 'the workers have no religion and do not go to church .... Among the mass of the working-class population, one nearly always finds an utter indifference to religion'. Horace Mann, who conducted the census of religious worship, reported in 1853 that 'it must be apparent that a sadly formidable portion of the English people are habitual neglectors of the public ordinances of religion'. Even though nearly all of them have a nominal connection with some creed and form of worship, and they are not necessarily irreligious .... their religion, when it exists, is passive not active.

An obvious reason for this absence of apparent piety was that working-class people in the large towns of England had other things to think about, and religious practice did not seem to have much relevance to their daily lives.

In a poor and ignorant community, where the necessaries of life are procured with difficulty, and where clothing may often be

13. Ibid., p.651
insufficient and money scarce, attendance at worship is less frequent 17

There were other reasons for this alienation from religion too. Seating in Victorian churches was divided into 'free' and 'appropriated' pews. The better-off parishioners paid for the seats they occupied, while other seats were reserved for poorer persons who could not afford the annual subscription for an 'appropriated' place. Many working-class persons did not like the idea of being 'separated as a class from the class above them' in the conspicuous free seating.

Working men, it is contended, cannot enter our religious structures without having pressed upon their notice some memento of inferiority. The existence of pews and the position of the free seats are, it is said, alone sufficient to deter them from our churches; and religion has thus come to be regarded as a purely middle-class propriety or luxury. 18

These percentages, compiled from the 1851 census of religious worship, show that 'appropriated' seating was prevalent in urban Lancashire.

Table 42

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>total church seating</th>
<th>catholic church seating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales</td>
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<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
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<td>52</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. Ibid., p.19
18. Census of religious worship, p.clix
The estrangement of the working class was also the result of a feeling that the middle classes showed an 'insufficient sympathy ... for the alleviation of their social burdens - poverty, disease, and ignorance'. Horace Mann urged that the influence of that broad line of demarcation which on week days separates the workman from his master cannot be effaced on Sundays by the mere removal of a physical barrier. The labouring myriads, it is argued, forming to themselves a world apart, have no desire to mingle, even though ostensibly on equal terms, with persons of a higher grade. Their tastes and habits are so wholly uncongenial with the views and customs of the higher orders, that they feel an insuperable aversion to an intermixture which would bring them under an intolerable, constraint. The same disposition, it is said, which hinders them from mixing in the scenes of recreation which the other classes favour, and induces their selection preferably of such amusements as can be exclusively confined to their own order, will for ever operate to hinder their attendance at religious services, unless such services can be devised as shall become exclusively their own.

Enough concern was felt over the widespread neglect of church attendance for a census of religious worship to be authorised for 1851. This census was a church-door affair where the ministers did the enumerating themselves, an obvious weakness in method. Even though the number of attendances recorded showed that 'a sadly formidable portion of the English people' neglected church attendance, the census did not distinguish those persons who attended services more than once that day, which means that the number of individual worshippers was smaller still. Further, the census counted only those who attended church on one particular Sunday. The religious worship census of 1851 does provide some fairly rel-

20. Census of religious worship, p.clix
iable information on numbers of places of worship and distribution of seating, but its findings on attendance at religious services can only be treated as the most general indices. Still, the census is another indication that there was a lack of religious fervour in urban-industrial England.

But the Irish community in England showed some differences from the urban community at large. Even after all the hardships of life in Ireland and removal to urban Britain, the catholic church continued to exert 'a powerful and pervading influence' on their lives. 'Indeed, their most striking characteristic is their unexampled religious fidelity .... the devotion of the Irish in England to their priests in all spiritual affairs has remained unaltered and unwavering....' This passage was written in 1880 by a prominent Irish nationalist and, of course, contains an element of propaganda. But even in 1856, it was said of the immigrant Irish that they were 'much more likely to forget their country than to forget their faith'. Engels conceded that the exceptions to the rule of religious apathy were 'a few of the older workers .... those wage-earners with one foot in the middle class camp' and the Irish. As we have seen, a lack of clergy and church accommodation, which induced a generally remiss attitude towards religious practice, meant that only 30-40% of Irish catholics attended mass regularly in their own country during the early 1840s. Why would things be so different for the Irish in England? The answer lies in a careful interpretation of statements about 'unexampled religious fidelity' among Irish emigrants.

The catholic church was something much more than the religion of the essentially god-fearing, if largely non-practicing, Irish people. Through the agency of its local clergy, the whole of the Irish community could easily feel isolated in the new surround.ing and the foreign speech. The medium of the indigenous tongue was never lost in the clutch of the Protestant community. Therefore, it was necessary for the enemy to take advantage of the difference in the medium to divide the emigrants.

the church evolved by the 1840s into an important social focus in the rural community. Of all aspects of their culture, the Irish identified most closely with their religion because it was the most visible and enduring. Also, the personal involvement of the local priest in the affairs of the community made the church an active, useful institution which could be relied on to work for the community's interests. But this social prominence of the church in the pre-famine Irish community had very little to do with the practice of religion. Certainly the parish priest was very interested in the spiritual welfare of his parishioners and urged them to attend mass and the sacraments. But the priest's concern for the community's physical well-being and his intercessions on its behalf were not contingent on a good turn-out at Sunday mass. Besides being its spiritual guardian, the priest was a part of the community and could never feel very distant from the problems of his parishioners. This is not to say that the practice of religion was unimportant in pre-famine Ireland. Where priest and edifice were available, attention to religious duties was taken more and more seriously during the 1830s and 1840s, and after the sociological and demographic shocks of the late 1840s and early 1850s interest in religious practice expanded very quickly. But the public exercise of religion was only one element of the total social significance of the catholic church in Ireland.

Emigrating from rural Ireland to urban Britain entailed a cultural shock. On first arriving in an English town the Irish immigrant could easily feel isolated in the new surroundings. The presence of many other Irish people in these towns made the transition easier. But the Irish brought something with them which prevented them from feeling the full impact of urban anomie. The hub of the immigrant community was still the church. The disappointment and alienation an
immigrant could encounter were offset to a degree by the presence of an institution which had time and again proved itself reliable. The church served a depressurising function and helped to ease the transition between the two social and environmental atmospheres. The security of an identity as an Irishman was an important psychological sustainer, and an integral part of that identity was Roman Catholicism. If an Irishman neglected its practice, he still found it important to claim the catholic religion as an indispensible part of his individual and national character.

A manifestation of how highly the Irish in England regarded the maintenance of the church as an institution is their generosity, both financially and with labour, in the erection of churches and schools.

From their scanty and precarious earnings they give largely and liberally to the service of their religion. They support our priests and build our churches. 24

So in this sense Irish catholics in England were in a different position from that of their protestant working-class neighbours. The Irish built many of the churches they would attend. Their churches and their services could very much be called 'theirs own', as Horace Mann had urged in 1853.

The Irish immigration increased the number of catholics in England by many tens of thousands. And since most of the Irish were working-class, the catholic church was more working-class in appearance than most protestant churches. When so large a body of adherents were working-class it was impossible for the clergy to remain aloof from them. This closer relationship of the catholic clergy with the working class was advanced by the presence of Irish priests who were accustomed to playing an active role in community affairs. Besides giving the church genuine working-class roots, the Irish immigration enhanced its position generally.

24. Ibid., p.483
It is broadly true that the churches and schools came into being mainly to provide for the Irish catholics. The large increase in the number of priests was likewise due chiefly to the Irish immigration. A great proportion of the priests came direct from Ireland ... to minister to their own in England. 25

So the Irish were an important factor in the expansion and consolidation of the institution of the catholic church in England. Just as in Ireland, the 'churches and schools became the chief centre of their life' because these structures were the physical evidence of a close cultural identity with the church. This identification was strengthened by the fact that the Irish built the schools and chapels with their own money and labour.

As in Ireland, the clergy was an important part of the Irish immigrant community.

Torn up by their roots, the priest was the last point of orientation with their old way of life. Literate but not far removed in social class, free from identification with English employers and authorities, sometimes knowing the Gaelic, the priest passed more frequently between England and Ireland, brought news of home and sometimes of relatives, could be entrusted with remittances, savings or messages. Hence it followed that the most enduring cultural tradition which the Irish peasantry brought - to the third and fourth generation - into England was that of a semi-feudal, nationalist church. 26

When looking at Irish catholics in Lancashire, it must be kept in mind that there was much more to the 'unexemplified religious fidelity' of the Irish than attendance at mass. The Irish were eager to identify themselves as catholics and were active in promoting the church's interests in England. The catholic parish continued to be at the centre of Irish-emigrant community life (see chapter 9). But, as information

26. Thompson, The making of the English working class, p.439
from the diocese of Liverpool will show, this 'unexampled' support for a church was only translated into regular religious practice by much less than half of its adherents. Although the Roman Catholic church was primarily intended to afford a way to eternal salvation, its social development in Ireland made the public practice of its rites less important to the 'pre-famine generation of non-practising Catholics' than having a basic unit of social organisation. Even though they had faith in a god and went to great lengths to support a church, and maintain its edifice, formal religious worship was secondary to the social reassurance the parochially-organised church offered to the Irish in England.

The northwest of England had a strong recusant tradition, but the heavy immigration of Catholics from Ireland during the 1840s and 1850s increased the numerical strength of the Catholic community there. Liverpool, the point of entry for almost all the Irish immigrants to the north of England, experienced a rapid rise in its Catholic population during 1846-65 as a result of the large numbers of Irishmen arriving in the town.

Up to 1845 six chapels were adequate to serve the town's Catholics. Some of these were 'churches' only in the widest meaning of the word, since some of them were actually rooms in stables or above shops. Two of the Liverpool chapels dated from the eighteenth century. St Mary's, serving the area south of the Vauxhall Road, was established in 1741, and St Peter's in Seel Street followed in 1788. St Patrick's in Toxteth Park was opened in 1827 and St Anthony's in 1833. The other pre-Irish famine chapels were St Annes, Edge Hill and St Vincent de Paul's, were both founded in 1843. 27

wake of the rapid increase in the number of catholics in Liverpool, nine other parishes were organised during 1845-72. 28

There were no statistics compiled during 1846-71 on the number of catholic and protestant Irishmen who emigrated to England. But there is one source available which confirms what is generally believed to be the case. During 1855-65 the Liverpool board of guardians kept a record of the religious affiliation of all the persons admitted to the workhouse. 29

A sample of Irish inmates taken from every tenth page of the ten volumes of workhouse registers shows that usually over 80% of the Irish persons whose religion could be ascertained were catholics. The figure was 79% during July 1857-February 1859 and 88% during April 1856-July 1857. Of course, this is a sample of only those Irish people who went into the workhouse and too much importance should not be attached to it. But it does bear out that the vast majority of Irish emigrants in Lancashire considered themselves Roman Catholics, which meant a great deal more work for the local catholic clergy.

As we have seen, many thousands of the emigrants who arrived at Liverpool during the great famine of the late 1840s were utterly destitute and, if not already ill when they left the steamers, they were very susceptible to any contagious disease. The Roman Catholic vicar apostolic for the northwest district, George Brown, complained in 1847 that the 'dreadful plague which the poor Irish have brought into our cities - they are immersed in starvation and squalor - has upset almost all that pertains to religion and the clergy'. 30 The twenty-four catholic clergymen in Liverpool in 1847, a year of very

28. Diocese of Liverpool, visitation returns, 1855, 1865 (LRO, RCLv); Farrer and Brownhill, op. cit., pp 51-2
29. Lpool, BG, workhouse registers, 1855-65 (LCL, annex, special collections, workhouse registers, A-Z, vols. 8-17)
30. Geo. Brown, relationem de statu religionis in hoc districtu Lancastriensi, 11 July 1847 (LRO, RCLv /translated by J. Gordon Read, _LRO/)
heavy immigration and savagely high mortality rates, were very active in attending to the physical and spiritual needs of their newly-acquired parishioners. 'Day and night they were with the people.' And this attention took its toll. Ten of the twenty-four priests died of typhus and eight others were ill with it. 'The strain on the surviving clergy was dreadful; hourly they faced death.' This selfless activity showed the immigrant Irish that the catholic clergy in urban Lancashire were as dependable as they were in Ireland. Once again they earned their place at the nucleus of the Irish community.

At his best the Roman Catholic priest to the poor of his own district was policeman, doctor, relieving officer, nuisances and school board inspector, as well as spiritual father. Even though urban-industrial Lancashire was a new world for the immigrant Irish, they were still able to maintain their cultural identity with the catholic church through the local priests. How this continued close relationship between the Irish immigrants and the catholic church developed socially will be discussed in chapter 9.

Abraham Hume calculated in 1858 that, since 'among the labouring population the number of Irish is just equal to the number of Roman Catholics, the protestants of Irish birth being exactly balanced by the Roman Catholics of English birth', and allowing for the fact that protestants 'preponderate' in the 'higher ranks of society', there were 99,000 catholics in Liverpool in 1858. But statistics compiled by the diocese of Liverpool, which was established in 1850, show that Hume's imaginative manipulations probably underestimated the size of the catholic community. The statistics for the diocese, which

31. J. Bennet, Father Nugent of Liverpool (Liverpool, 1949), pp 15-6
33. A. Hume, Condition of Liverpool (Liverpool, 1858), pp 14-5
included Liverpool, Preston, St Helens and Widnes, are not accompanied by any explanations about how they were compiled, but it is possible that local priests were asked to report on the number of persons in their parishes and the number of yearly baptisms. So at best, these statistics can only be treated as very crude indicators. The diocesan authorities thought there were 106,000 catholics in Liverpool in 1850. The diocesan figures at five-year intervals were:

Table 43

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of baptisms (Liverpool), 1850-70</th>
<th>Catholic population of Liverpool (deduced from baptisms), 1850-70</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850 . 5,306</td>
<td>1850 . 106,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855 . 6,020</td>
<td>1855 . 120,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860 . 6,011</td>
<td>1860 . 120,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865 . 7,535</td>
<td>1865 . 150,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870 . 6,877</td>
<td>1870 . 137,540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we consider that at least 85% of the 83,000 Irish-born persons in Liverpool were catholics in 1850 we can estimate that 70,500 of the Liverpool catholics were born in Ireland. An analysis of census data shows that the actual size of the Irish community, Irish-born and English-born, was at least 117,000 in 1851. Assuming conservatively that at least 85% of the Irish community of Liverpool were catholics, there were roughly 100,000 Irish catholics in Liverpool in 1851, which makes the 106,000 diocesan estimate appear too low. But it does show that catholicism in Liverpool was dominated by the Irish. In 1861 the Irish community had at least 140,000 mem-

34. Diocese of Liverpool, catholic population, 1850-70 (LRO, relatio status diocesis, 1847-96, RCLv)
bers, with at least 120,700 of them catholics. The diocese reckoned only 120,000 catholics in Liverpool altogether, which shows that their figures were underestimates. There were about 131,000 members of the Irish community in Liverpool in 1871, which meant that at least 114,000 of them were catholics. The diocesan estimate of 137,540 catholics in the borough seems more realistic than the 1850 or 1860 figures. The fact that the number of catholics in the town was observed to be steadily increasing up to 1865 is an indication of continued immigration from Ireland.

But were these thousands of Irish catholics practicing their religion in Lancashire more faithfully than they had in Ireland? George Brown remarked in 1847 that a great mass of the faithful come every week throughout the whole course of the year to confession and to the holy sacrament of the eucharist. These works of piety are being advanced much more frequently and with more devotion than before.

In fact, Brown was very pleased with religious practice in the Lancashire district.

It is of the greatest comfort to me to see what great strides the catholic religion has made throughout this whole district, and principally in the cities. This is manifestly clear from the new churches which already have been constructed or are at present being built; it is clear from the great increase of the faithful in all congregations. The evidence of this increase is the number of the baptised and of communicants at Easter time. 35

Brown certainly took an optimistic view of the advance of catholicism. But it is possible that this report does not consider the immigrant Irish as a permanent part of the catholic community of the northwest. Data which was collected eight years later puts Lancashire catholicism in a clearer perspective.

35. G. Brown, relationem de statu religionis in hoc districtu Lancastriensi, 11 July 1847 (LRO, RCLv)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission</th>
<th>Mixed Marriages</th>
<th>Easter Duty</th>
<th>Individually</th>
<th>Mass</th>
<th>Seats Families</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
<th>Catholic Attending</th>
<th>Children Apos-</th>
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<tr>
<td>Liverpool parishes, 1855, 1865</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>12,915</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>1,344</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>12,535</td>
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<tr>
<td>St Alban</td>
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<td>1855</td>
<td>6,260</td>
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<td>1865</td>
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<td>St Anne</td>
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<td>1865</td>
<td>853</td>
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<td>1865</td>
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<td>1,700</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>1,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>St Vincent</td>
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<td>1855</td>
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<tr>
<td>St Anthony</td>
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<td>1855</td>
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<td>1865</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 44
In 1855 and 1865 questionnaires, called visitation returns, were sent out to all the parishes, which were at that time known as missions, in the diocese of Liverpool. Besides providing general information about the physical establishment of the various missions, the questionnaires contained queries about church accommodation, number of parishioners and general religious practice. Not all the missions submitted returns in both years, and not all the questionnaires returned were answered fully, but we can get an idea of how the parishes looked to their priests. At the very best, the parish priests were only making rough estimates of most of the statistical data which they returned on religious practice. Also, it should be remembered that the total number of parishioners returned were not obligated to attend mass or perform the Easter duty because the aggregate figures include both the very young and the very old, who were not expected to attend to religious duties. So these numbers must be used very carefully in discussing the catholic faith among the Liverpool Irish. The statistics do not tell us anything specifically about Irish catholics. But since the Irish formed by far the largest percentage of the catholic community of the town, the general statistics will tell us a great deal about religious practice among them.

A quick look at the returns from the individual parishes in 1855 and 1865 shows that observance of religious duties varied in different parts of the town. Taking those missions where fairly complete information is available for both 1855 and 1865, we can see that the number of parishioners was increasing, which corresponds with the trend shown in the general diocesan estimates. The parish with the largest population was St Patrick's in Toxteth Park. The size of the churches, 36. Diocese of Lpool, visitation, 1855, 1865 (LRO, RCLv)
and the amount of seating, varied from the 280-seat school chapel of St Philip Neri (the Catholic Institute), to the 2,500-3,000-seats in St Patrick's church. The pastor of Our Lady of Reconciliation mission in the Scotland-Vauxhall area reported in 1855 that it was 'an impossibility for the greatest part of my flock to attend mass' because seating was so limited. But still he thought 48% of his parishioners were hearing mass regularly. Attendance at mass in 1855 showed great disparities around Liverpool, from 30% at Holy Cross to 72% at St Mary's. The mean figure for those missions returning statistics was about 48%. Even though his congregation was 'of a very migratory character', which indicated a very high proportion of Irish families, the parish priest of St Alban's estimated that 46% of the people living within the boundaries of his mission were attending mass. Ten years later the variance of attendance percentages submitted by the pastors was much less and the mean percentage came down to 43. But the diocesan officials were much less optimistic about attendance at mass than were the local priests. Figures for the total number of persons in Liverpool attending mass were compiled for the years 1864, 1866, 1868, 1869 and 1871 by the diocese of Liverpool. Comparing these statistics with the total catholic population of Liverpool, based on the figures of 1865 and 1870, we see that total attendance was thought to be only 34% in 1864, 35% in 1868 and 37.5% in 1871, all considerably below the calculations of the pastors in 1865. Indeed, the raw figures show that mass attendance during 1847-71 was very static. The statistics for 1847-9 and 1859 were 51,370 and 50,000, respectively.

37. Diocese of Lpool, attendance at mass, 1864-71 (LRO, relatio status dioecesis, 1847-96, RCLv)
38. T. Burke, The catholic history of Liverpool, pp 203-4
Even if we say that between 35% and 43% of the total Catholic population was attending mass in Liverpool during the mid-nineteenth century, these figures show that Catholics were somewhat more attentive to religious practice than other sects. But still, allowing for members of the Catholic community not bound to attend mass, both sets of figures show a widespread neglect of religious duties among Liverpool's Catholics, who were overwhelmingly Irish. The numbers themselves are not very reliable, but the proportion of the Catholic population that local priests and diocesan officials thought were going to mass regularly is the important point.

Catholics are also required to attend the sacraments of penance and holy communion each year during the Easter season. In 1855 ten Liverpool pastors thought 35% of their parishioners attended to their 'Easter duty'. Curiously, of those answering the question on the number of parishioners neglecting the Easter duty or falling away from the church, only one gave a realistic figure. The pastor of St Anne's, Edge Hill, reported that about 40% of his parishioners attended to their Easter duty, and 50% neglected it or fell away from religious practice altogether. The average of the other seven percentages of neglectors submitted was 24%, which leaves a gap which

young children and elderly persons could not possibly fill. In 1865 only five missions sent in statistics on fulfilment of Easter duties. St Francis Xavier and St Mary's showed high proportions of parishioners performing the Easter obligations, 62% and 54%, respectively, which brought the average up to 43%. But once again the diocesan office contradicted this optimistic picture. Using the diocesan population figures of 1865 as a base, the proportion of persons going to Easter confession and communion in Liverpool was about 29% in 1864 and only rose to roughly 32% in 1871. Even if the pastors were correct in their optimistic estimates, a large percentage of Liverpool catholics appeared to neglect their Easter duty. In 1865 the pastor of St Mary's, after reporting that 54% of his parishioners attended to the Easter duty, also stated that 'two in three' of those same parishioners neglected it or had fallen away from the church. His arithmetic was not very accurate, but he was taking a realistic view of those who were not coming to church. At St Patrick's and St Alban's, where compliance with Easter obligations were only 36% and 25%, the priests reckoned that only 13 and 18.5% were neglecting them. Clearly, the neglect was more widespread, as diocesan statistics will show. The number attending to the Easter duty during 1847-9 was 42,354. 

40. Burke, op. cit., pp 203-4
Table 46

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. fulfilling Easter obligation (Liverpool), 1864-71</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>43,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>39,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>46,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>44,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>43,442</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A particular fear of catholic churchmen in urban England was that catholics would abandon their faith through marrying non-catholics. The bishop's office of the Liverpool diocese directed in both 1855 and 1865 that questions about mixed marriages be included in the visitation survey. One stipulation for the church's blessing on a 'mixed' marriage was that any children born to the couple had to be raised as catholics. In 1855 Holy Cross mission reported that in 76% of the 112 mixed marriages known within the mission the children were being brought up as catholics, while in twelve such marriages the catholic had lapsed from the faith. At St Patrick's only 56% of the couples raised the children as catholics and 56% of the catholic partners lapsed. In St Vincent de Paul parish only 60% of the couples brought up their children in the catholic church, while 36% of the catholic parents fell away from the church. One-half of the couples in St Peter's passed on catholicism to their children. But at St Alban's, St Anne's and St Augustine's all the couples raised the children as practicing catholics. In 1865 fewer parishes sent in complete information on mixed marriages. Holy Cross reported that 98% of the mixed couples were bringing up the children as catholics. An improvement in favour of the church was also apparent at St Patrick's (69%), but the percentage at St Alban's fell to eighty-five (160 of 189), with 'many' catholic parents lapsing.
Most of the priests probably had difficulty obtaining reliable information about the results of mixed marriages, but these few statistics show that quite a few mixed marriages were being contracted by Liverpool catholics, and there was a problem with 'leakage' of the catholic partner and the children.

One of the only direct allusions to Liverpool's Irish catholics in the visitation returns comes under the heading of special feast days observed in the individual parishes. In only three of the twelve Liverpool parishes for which returns survive was St Patrick's day regarded as a special occasion. The three were St Patrick's in Toxteth Park, and St Augustine's and Our Lady of Reconciliation in the Scotland-Vauxhall district of Liverpool's north end, where many Irish families were found.

Preston was a 'strong centre of Roman Catholicism long before any large-scale Irish immigration into the town'. It was thought that one-third of Preston's population was catholic during the Victorian period. In 1846 there were already four catholic churches in the town. St Mary's and St Wilfrid's dated from the eighteenth century, while St Augustine's and St Ignatius's were opened in 1840 and 1837. St Walburge's church was built in 1854, and had the fourth highest spire in England. The Church of the English Martyrs was opened in 1867. A contemporary described Preston's catholic churches as 'capacious' and remarked that they were 'well-attended'.

A closer examination of the Preston missions is available in the diocese of Liverpool visitation returns for 1855 and 1865. St Augustine's provided seating for 1,300-1,500

41. K.M. Spencer, A social and economic geography of Preston, 1800-65, p. 22
42. H.W. Clemsha, A history of Preston in Amounderness (Manchester, 1912), p. 323
43. W. Dobson, The Story of Preston (Preston, 1882), pp 26-7
persons; St Walburge's for 2,000; and St Ignatius's for 1,200. After alterations in 1865, St Mary's and St Wilfrid's churches accommodated 2,200 persons; and the Church of the English Martyrs seated 750. The catholic population of Preston during 1850-70 was calculated as:

Table 47

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of baptisms (Preston), 1850-70</th>
<th>Catholic population of Preston (deduced from baptisms), 1850-70</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>1850 . 21,934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>989</td>
<td>1855 . 21,758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>1,280</td>
<td>1860 . 28,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>1,394</td>
<td>1865 . 30,668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>1,269</td>
<td>1870 . 27,918</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Irish-born population of Preston in 1851 was 5,122. Allowing that 85% of that number were catholic, Irish-born catholics accounted for only about 4,300 of roughly 22,000. From census data we know that there were at least 7,000 members of the Irish community in Preston. If 85% of them were catholics, 5,950, then the Irish catholic only accounted for less than 30% of the catholics in the town. There was an Irish community of about 11,000 in 1861, 9,350 of whom were probably catholics, which means the Irish community was 33% of the catholic population. There was an Irish community of 8,200 in 1871. If 6,970 of them were catholic, they were about one-quarter of the catholic population of the town. So even after adding on the non-Irish-born members of the Irish catholic community, most of Preston's catholics were English.

It was observed in 1882 that the catholic churches of Preston were 'well attended' on Sundays. And the parochial figures submitted for the visitations of 1855 and 1865 for

44. Hewitson, History of Preston, pp 512-3
attendance at mass were encouraging. The pastor in charge of St Wilfrid's and St Mary's churches, which were part of the same mission, thought that he had practically one hundred percent attendance in 1855. The mean attendance percentage for the three missions in the town that sent in returns was 63%, a high number accounted for by the 100% attendance alleged at St Wilfrid's-St Mary's. The mean for 1865, with only St Augustine's and St Walburge's sending completed returns, was still over 50%. The statistics on mass attendance collected by the bishop's office were somewhat less heartening than those submitted by the local priests, but still they showed that Preston's catholic community were more mindful of participation at mass than Liverpool's. In 1866 the diocesan figure was 43%, which rose to 52% in 1871.

Table 48

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>11,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>12,935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>14,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>13,949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>14,671</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It appears from the visitation returns that Preston's catholics were more scrupulous about their Easter duty too. In 1855 the pastor of St Wilfrid's-St Mary's added a 99% Easter communion record to his 100% mass attendance. The priests at St Augustine's and St Walburge's put the proportion at 40% and 42%. In 1865 the three responding missions reported that the Easter obligation was fulfilled by over 50% of the parishioners. The conservative diocesan statistics roughly confirm this.
Table 49

No. fulfilling Easter obligation (Preston), 1864-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>9,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>12,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>12,412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>13,953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>13,434</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1866 the diocesan figure for Preston was 41%, which rose to 50% in 1869, but fell off to 48% in 1871.

There were many marriages of catholics with non-catholics in Preston, but it appears that 'leakage' was not a great problem. The pastor of St Augustine's mission wrote in 1855 that

It rarely happens that the catholic party who has been marrried to a protestant in the catholic church leaves the catholic faith .... If the protestant party be the female, it usually results in her conversion; and when not converted she usually encourages the children to go to the catholic school and church. In cases when the protestant party is the male, conversion often follows; the children are usually brought up catholics; although opposition is sometimes made and even with disastrous results. When the parties are marrried at the protestant church, the chances are much greater against bringing up the children in the catholic faith, and there is some danger of the catholic party giving up the practice of religion; but apostasy is none. 45

But ten years later the same parish reported that in only 29% of mixed marriages were the children raised as catholics. Two-thirds of St Walburge's mixed couples were thought to be raising their children as catholics, but 'most' of the catholic partners had lapsed from the practice of catholicism. St Ignatius's had a 90% rate of raising the offspring of mixed marriages as catholics in 1865. But quite apart from

45. Diocese of Lpool, visitation, Preston, 1855 (LRO, RCLv)
the problem of leakage through marriage with non-catholics, the pastor of St Ignatius mission found the problem of lapsing very great among Preston's catholics in 1865. The problem was acute especially at the barracks .... The same difficulty exists with regard to a number of factory operatives and Irish who flit from one place to another as the cotton mills shut, or they get behind with their rent. 46

There is one other feature of this parochial survey of Preston which relates to Irish catholics. Only St Augustine's mission in 1865 celebrated St Patrick's day as a special liturgical feast, but St Augustine's served an area where very few Irish people lived. St Walburge's and St Ignatius's missions, where most of the town's Irish lived, did not pay special attention to the patron saint of Ireland. It may be significant that one of the two Irish priests assigned to Preston in 1865 was attached to St Augustine's.

The towns of Widnes and St Helens were also included in the diocese of Liverpool. The chapel at St Helens was called Lowe House and was established in 1793. The pastor estimated that there were 6,000 catholics in his jurisdiction in both 1855 and 1865. In 1851 the St Helens Irish community had at least 3,800 members, 3,230 of whom were most likely catholics. During the decade 1861-71 the Irish community remained at about the same size. So the priest's estimates of a parish of 6,000 persons in 1855 and 1865 must be an underestimate, but it does show that the Irish were a very significant portion of the St Helens catholic community.

Lowe House itself seated 1,800 persons and in 1862 a second mission church, Holy Cross, seating 1,500, was opened to serve the northern and western parts of the town. In both 1855 and 1865 the pastor at St Helens thought only 33% of

46. Diocese of Lpool, visitation, Preston, 1865 (LRO, RCLv)
his parishioners attended mass regularly. But he calculated that 36% looked after their Easter duty in 1855, a percentage which went up to fifty-one in 1865. About half the mixed couples in St Helens were raising their children as catholics. There was a mission at Widnes, St Bede's, from 1760, but it was not until 1847 that a church was consecrated, to replace a thatched cottage which had been in use. The parish priest at Widnes provided no statistics for the town's catholics in the visitation returns except that his church seated 330 persons. But it must have been a tight squeeze at the Sunday masses, because during 1851-61 the Irish catholic community alone was at least 1,400. A second church, St Mary's, was opened in 1862 to accommodate the heavy Irish immigration, but in 1871 there were at least 3,500 Irish catholics to take care of. And this does not even consider the English catholics in the town.

The diocesan authorities in Liverpool had general statistics for the parts of the diocese outside the borough limits of Liverpool, Preston and Wigan.

Table 50

Districts outside Liverpool, Preston and Wigan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Baptisms, 1850-70</th>
<th>Catholic population (deduced from baptisms), 1850-70</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>2,475</td>
<td>1850 . 61,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>2,982</td>
<td>1855 . 75,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>3,315</td>
<td>1860 . 82,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>3,934</td>
<td>1865 . 98,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>3,800</td>
<td>1870 . 95,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47. Diggle, A history of Widnes, p.23
48. Ibid., p.40
With these numbers it is possible to know something about attendance at mass in towns such as St Helens and Widnes during 1864-71. The bishop's office calculated that about 35% of the population of the diocese residing outside the three major urban centres were attending Sunday mass regularly. By 1868 the estimate was 38%, and it was 40% in 1871. Likewise, statistics on the performance of the Easter duty showed that 36.5% of the catholics were thought to be attending to it. The percentage increased to thirty-nine in 1869 and fell back to 38% in 1871. So the catholics living outside the three principal population centres of the diocese were more conscientious about religious practice than those living in Liverpool, but were not as reliable as the Preston catholics.

Table 51

Districts outside Liverpool, Preston and Wigan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance at mass, 1864-71</th>
<th>No. fulfilling Easter obligation, 1864-71</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1864 . 34,560</td>
<td>1864 . 35,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866 . 32,627</td>
<td>1866 . 33,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868 . 33,940</td>
<td>1868 . 34,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869 . 36,517</td>
<td>1869 . 37,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871 . 38,029</td>
<td>1871 . 35,751</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, the diocesan statistics include figures for the diocese as a whole.
Table 52

Diocese of Liverpool, 1850-70

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Baptisms</th>
<th>Catholic population (deduced from baptisms)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>9,275</td>
<td>199,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>10,555</td>
<td>230,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>11,250</td>
<td>245,423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>13,562</td>
<td>295,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>12,719</td>
<td>277,464</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the 1865 and 1870 population numbers as a base we see that, generally, attendance at mass improved throughout the diocese, from 34.5% of total catholics in 1864 to about 40% in 1871. Also, the discharging of the Easter obligations improved somewhat, from 32% in 1864 to 36% in 1871.

Table 53

Diocese of Liverpool, 1864-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Attendance at mass</th>
<th>Easter communicants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>101,756</td>
<td>94,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>101,886</td>
<td>89,161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>103,289</td>
<td>98,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>104,144</td>
<td>101,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>109,642</td>
<td>99,245</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These proportions indicated a move towards improvement in fidelity to religious practice among catholics in the diocese of Liverpool, but there was still a good deal of ground to make up. There were other hopeful signs for the diocesan authorities. During 1873-85 the aggregate numbers attending mass and discharging their Easter duty was showing a slow rise.
Table 54

Attendance at mass, diocese of Liverpool, 1873-85

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1873</th>
<th>1874</th>
<th>1875</th>
<th>1876</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1885</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>48,823</td>
<td>51,523</td>
<td>51,544</td>
<td>51,928</td>
<td>54,970</td>
<td>55,623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>14,312</td>
<td>15,069</td>
<td>15,224</td>
<td>16,172</td>
<td>16,395</td>
<td>17,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Helens</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>4,088</td>
<td>4,720</td>
<td>5,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105,119</td>
<td>109,331</td>
<td>111,239</td>
<td>118,928</td>
<td>128,856</td>
<td>138,262</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Easter communicants, diocese of Liverpool, 1873-85

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1873</th>
<th>1874</th>
<th>1875</th>
<th>1876</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1885</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>43,016</td>
<td>47,964</td>
<td>51,832</td>
<td>51,194</td>
<td>53,790</td>
<td>51,147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>13,989</td>
<td>13,960</td>
<td>14,260</td>
<td>15,026</td>
<td>17,234</td>
<td>17,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Helens</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>3,491</td>
<td>4,712</td>
<td>6,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98,135</td>
<td>105,690</td>
<td>111,743</td>
<td>116,615</td>
<td>128,879</td>
<td>135,054</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Efforts were made to impress on young Lancashire catholics the importance of the practice of religion. In all but one mission, St Augustine's in Liverpool, all children attending catholic schools were given special opportunities for attending mass and the sacraments regularly. But this training bore fruit very slowly, as the sluggish rise in percentages of attendants at mass shows.

The diocesan visitation returns provide the nationalities of the priests assigned to the responding missions. In 1855 nine of the thirty-two priests assigned to the towns of Liverpool, Preston, St Helens and Widnes were born in Ireland; and all nine were working in Liverpool. By 1865 the number of clergy in the four towns increased to forty-six. Eighteen of these were Irish, sixteen of whom were in Liverpool. The other

49. Diocese of Lpool, school returns, 1858, 1864 (LRO, schools religious examination and inspection returns, RCLv)
two were in Preston. The bulk of the clergy in Lancashire appears to have been English, but there were a few Belgian, French and Italian priests too. Had all the missions submitted returns more Irish priests might be revealed, but, altogether, it does not appear that Irish immigrant clergy had a very great impact on Lancashire except in Liverpool, where the Irish catholic community was most extensive. Even though relatively few of the catholic priests in Lancashire during the nineteenth century were Irish, the catholic clergy still occupied a central position in the Irish immigrant community. We shall see in chapters 9-12 that the clergy exerted this authority repeatedly during 1846-71 to head off any threat of an intercommunal confrontation arising from Irish exuberance or national differences between English and Irish. In sermons and pastoral letters they urged restraint on their Irish parishioners to prevent them from becoming embroiled in factional or sectarian feuds. Of course, the catholic church, in Ireland or England, was a basically conservative body which supported the authority of established institutions and opposed violence. But the fact that English priests probably could not sympathise totally with, for example, the national aspirations of the Irish Confederates or the Fenians would make him more inclined to anticipate and denounce any threat to the peace from the Irish community. But since a large part of the catholic population of England was from within the Irish community, particularly in Lancashire, future generations of English priests would be much closer to the Irish community in sympathies and background.

The summary statistics compiled for ascertaining the state of the diocese of Liverpool and the information contained in the visitation returns tell us a great deal about catholicism in Lancashire. But as interesting as it all is, it must be remembered that there is no way of judging the accuracy of the diocesan figures. Also, many parish priests were
probably overestimating or simply guessing at figures they quoted for attendance at mass and fulfilment of the Easter duty. These statistics tell us most when they are reduced to the proportions that the bishop's office or local priests thought were observing religious practice. At best, the statistics are very crude approximations which corroborate contemporary opinion that, even when allowance is made for children and elderly people who were not expected to participate in the public rites of the church, a large proportion of catholics in urban Lancashire, probably 30-40%, were neglecting religious practice. Liverpool's estimates were below those for the diocese as a whole or those for Preston, and this in spite of over a dozen catholic churches in the town. Liverpool's catholic community was overwhelmingly working-class Irish in composition and these figures reflect on their general attitude to the practice of religion. Preston showed the best percentages in the diocese. There the Irish made up a much smaller part of the catholic community, the majority being well-settled natives of the north of England. It cannot be conclusively proved, but it seems that Horace Mann was correct in surmising that working-class people, such as the vast majority of immigrant Irish catholics, were much less likely to feel religious responsibility than middle-class persons.

Unfortunately, there is very little information available on catholics in Manchester, Salford or Oldham, which were located in the diocese of Salford. There was a third diocese in Lancashire, the diocese of Lancaster, but there was little immigration to that part of the county during 1846-71. Fr John Allen, secretary to the present bishop of Salford, informs me that the diocesan offices have been moved several times during the last century, and in those removals archives relating to the period 1846-71 were lost. On the parochial level, visits to eight catholic churches in Manchester, Oldham and Salford
produced very little information of any kind. Since 1898 each parish has been required to keep a log-book of any significant events, but the only parish which has any records dating back to the 1846-71 period is St John's, Salford, which was the residence of the bishop of the diocese. St Wilfrid's, Hulme, also has a 'minute' book which contains references to events in the mid-nineteenth century, but it is undated and appears to be a twentieth-century production. From these scattered sources it is possible to know something about Irish catholics in Manchester, Salford and Oldham.

The period 1845-80, which saw large-scale Irish immigration into southeast Lancashire, was also a period of expanded building of catholic churches. 'During the years when Irish immigration was at its height, Salford diocese erected most of its churches.' Up to the 1830s Manchester had three catholic churches, St Chad's (1773), St Mary's (1794), and St Augustine's (1820). St Patrick's, Livesey Street, was established in 1832 specifically to accommodate the growing Irish community of Manchester. The parish was very large, 30,000 souls, and there were 1,500 baptisms each year. St Wilfrid's, in a still open part of Hulme, opened in 1842, and was followed by St Anne's, Crumpsall, in 1849. As with St Patrick's, Fr Allen says these three parishes were formed mainly to handle the larger numbers of catholics which resulted from the increase in Irish immigration during the 1840s.

Typhus fever spread to epidemic proportions during 1847-8, at the same time that large numbers of Irishmen were arriving in Manchester. St Wilfrid's parish log-book says that the epidemic among the Irish in the Hulme district of Manchester kept the two priests assigned to the parish 'occ-

51. R. Earley, Silver jubilee souvenir, St Patrick's Livesey Street (Manchester, 1961), no pagination
52. Ibid.
upied from morning to night in the sorrowful duty of admin-
istering the last sacraments to the dying'. Both priests
contracted typhus, but they recovered. A young curate at
St Patrick's, Fr E. Unsworth, contracted typhus while working
among sick Irish and died in 1847. Just as the priest's
active participation in community affairs helped him obtain a
special eminence among his parishioners in Ireland, the ded-
ication the catholic clergy in Manchester, and in other
Lancashire towns, exhibited in helping sick and destitute
Irish immigrants, brought them very close to the catholic
community of southeast Lancashire.

The very bad conditions in nineteenth-century Manchester them-
selves made for a close contact between clergy and people, for
the prevalence of disease necessitated the frequent visitations
of the clergy amongst them .... in visiting one sick or dying
person in a house inhabited by Irish, a priest must have come
into contact with many others .... 55

Certainly, the fact that parishioners of an urban catholic
mission lived in a much closer proximity to each other than
they would in rural Ireland made it easier for the priest to
circulate among them. The presence of the catholic clergy
in the immediate vicinity of neighbourhoods where Irish people
lived was an important social influence which helped the imm-
grants to adjust to their new urban surroundings. Even when
everything else looked completely different, they still could
look to the church for spiritual reinforcement and for a soc-
ial focus.

There are no diocesan or parochial records to tell us
anything about the practice of religion among catholics in
southeast Lancashire during 1846-71, not even some unreliable
statistics. But it is probably not unreasonable to say that

53. St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic church, minutes, 1847 (St
Wilfrid's presbytery, Hulme, M/R)
54. Earley, op. cit.
55. Brock, Irish immigrants in Manchester, part I, chapter 3, no pagination
the unrefined estimations made by the diocese of Liverpool are a fair indication that a large section of catholics in the Manchester area were not practicing their religion. Likewise, we do not know even roughly what size the catholic population of southeast Lancashire was during the mid-nineteenth century. But we can get an idea of the approximate size of the Irish catholic community of Manchester, Salford and Oldham. Assuming that at least 85% of the Irish-born communities of the three towns were catholics, the minimum catholic communities in three census years were as follows:

Table 55

Irish-born catholic population of southeast Lancs, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>39,565</td>
<td>38,409</td>
<td>24,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>6,101</td>
<td>7,812</td>
<td>7,852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>2,332</td>
<td>4,944</td>
<td>3,006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adding in non-Irish-born members of the Irish catholic community, the totals were:

Table 56

Total Irish catholic community, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>58,650</td>
<td>76,044</td>
<td>51,731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>8,847</td>
<td>12,655</td>
<td>13,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>3,380</td>
<td>8,059</td>
<td>5,922</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So there were many catholics around Manchester among the Irish community. One estimate states that there were about 92,950 Roman Catholics in Manchester-Salford in 1861. Adding the Irish
catholic communities for those two towns in 1861, 88,699, it is plain that even allowing for inaccuracies in this contemporary appraisal, the catholic population of southeast Lancashire was predominantly Irish.

The growth of the catholic population of southeast Lancashire due to the immigration of Irish catholics was reflected in the number of parishes established during the post-1840s period. During the twenty years preceding 1871, six parishes were added to Manchester's existing seven. Over in Salford, St John's parish, the diocesan cathedral parish, was only organised in 1848. The borough had this one parish to administer to a catholic community of at least 15,000 up to 1863, when St Peter's parish was created. Mt Carmel and St Joseph's were added in 1866 and 1871, respectively. Oldham's first catholic mission, St Mary's, was founded in 1839. This single church was inadequate and St Mary's, Failsworth, between Manchester and Oldham, took on some of the excess from 1845. The second parish in Oldham itself, St Patrick's, came into existence in 1858. Since the catholic population declined during the 1860s, no more missions were necessary to serve the borough. Altogether, ten new parishes were set up during the 1850s and 1860s in Manchester, Salford and Oldham to accommodate the larger Irish catholic population.

But it is not enough to look at the catholic church simply as a religious institution when considering it in its relation with the Irish. The size of the catholic population and the proportion of practicing members are important questions, but its social position among the Irish in urban Lancashire is an equally significant theme, which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 9.
The cultural primacy of the Catholic Church was not diminished among the Irish emigrants who went to Lancashire during the mid-nineteenth century. The immense influence the clergy had among the Irish Catholics was not the result of a 'psychological terror' brought about by threats of eternaldamnation.\textsuperscript{56} It is true that the moral authority of the clergy was formidable among the Irish and we shall see some examples of this in chapters 9-12. But it is an oversimplification to look at the central position of the clergy as the product of spiritual blackmail, the inevitable result of a relationship cemented by liberal doses of brimstone. The priest achieved his position by proving himself a temporal, as well as spiritual, leader. 'The priest was the only authority to whom the Irish labourers showed any deference.'\textsuperscript{57} Identifying so closely with their local parish, the Irish in Lancashire were prepared to support the priest and to build churches and schools with their own funds, and sometimes with their own hands. But while they were anxious to maintain their parishes, they often did not practice their religion, perhaps rarely visiting the churches they helped to build and support. It was not that the Irish overlooked church attendance when they emigrated during 1846-71. Up to that time attitudes towards religious practice were very relaxed in Ireland, so there was not really a tradition of ardent church-going in rural Ireland prior to 1850. The mid-nineteenth century emigrants represented a 'culture of poverty that had been in the making in Ireland since the late eighteenth century because of the pressure of population on the means of subsistence'.\textsuperscript{58} The socio-economic climate in the Ireland of 1800-50 was not conducive to the production of pious Roman Catholics. But after 1850 the 'culture of poverty was broken up in Ireland by emigration, and the new circumstances created by that break up allowed for the emergence of other values'.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{56} Thompson, Making of the English working class, p.438
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., p.438
\textsuperscript{58} Larkin, 'Devotional revolution', p.651
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., p.651
During 1850-85 there was no 'devotional revolution' among Irish catholics in Lancashire. Catholic statistics, though unreliable, exist only for the diocese of Liverpool. They tell very little about Irish catholics specifically, but since the Irish community was such a large part of the catholic population, the Liverpool figures give us a good idea of religious practice among the Irish. Although the population of Liverpool rose by 42.3% between 1861 and 1891, the percentage of attendances at mass remained remarkably static. It was estimated that church attendance among Liverpool catholics was around 40% of the total in 1891. But still, 'the Roman Catholics attended church more regularly than did the Anglicans'. It is probably safe to apply these generalisations about Liverpool catholics to Lancashire as whole. The Liverpool diocesan statistics show a slow rise in total attendance at Sunday mass, but there is no way of knowing whether the Irish immigrants, their descendants or the English catholics were contributing most to this increase.

Another important point to keep in mind while discussing Irish catholics in Lancashire during the mid-nineteenth century is that they dominated catholicism in the northwest of England. And it is not an overestimate to say that, because of their numerical preponderance, Irish catholics looked upon themselves, and were looked upon, as the vanguard of catholicism in England. When the first viable catholic newspaper for the northwest, the Lancashire Free Press, was started in 1859, its first leader paid special tribute to the foremost catholic community in the north of England. The Irish were 'that element which has formed the mainstay, the procreating power, and the propagandism of catholics in England'. So besides the tradition of close identification with the church,

61. Ibid., p.202
62. Lancs Free Press, 1 Oct 1859
as the premier national institution of Ireland, the attachment of the immigrant Irish with the church was strengthened by the fact that they were its principal representatives in the chiefly protestant north of England. But this close connection was manifest more in social and financial terms than in regular religious worship. But let us turn to another very important function of the Roman Catholic church in Lancashire, schooling.
Chapter 8

Education for the Lancashire Irish

One of the major problems confronting urban Lancashire society during the mid-nineteenth century was widespread ignorance and a lack of school facilities.

Both the demand for education and its supply are deficient. This amounts to saying (1) that the people do not desire light as they ought to do; and (2) that if they were to do so, it would be found that the lamps have not been placed at the darkest and most dangerous spots. 1

It was often pointed out that the lack of schooling among the working classes in large towns contributed to the brutalisation of that stratum of society. 'It is important to note that ignorance coincides to a great extent with crime and also with pauperism.' 2 Illiteracy also hindered the physical improvement of the urban environment and was a particular problem for towns such as Liverpool, which did not need any additional obstacles to amelioration. 'Thousands could not read the cellar-eviction orders, the midden-emptying application forms, the regulations posted in each lodging house and slaughter house and so on.' 3

In the mid-1860s there still was widespread ignorance. Reports of illiteracy in Ancoats, Manchester, were alarming because they linked ignorance with indifference to an unhealthy environment. At a house in the Oldham Road, where the weekly family income was 27s., a decent take-home sum at the time, there were ten children. Five of the children were eleven years of age and over and not one of them, or

2. Ibid., p.37
3. Midwinter, Old Liverpool, pp 112-3
their mother, was able to read. Two more depressing examples came from Irish neighbourhoods, one from Pott Street Court, Ancoats. Pott Street Court was "closed at both ends and it is approached through a passage about eight yards long and about thirty inches wide". 111 people lived in the court in 1861, sixty-two of whom were Irish-born. The population thinned out to sixty-six by 1871, thirty-two of them being Irish-born, and only two of the households in the court being non-Irish. The house visited had only two rooms, 'one up and one down', and it was 'filthy dirty'. Six children lived there, four over eleven years of age, one eight and one five, and the father was asked if he wanted to send his children to school. He answered in the negative because he wanted to send the five oldest ones out to work. The Newtown area was also known for its large Irish community, and there a Manchester-Salford Education Aid Society caller found a house in Dimity Street where an Irish shoemaker lived with his wife and seven children. The eldest child, fifteen years old, could read 'imperfectly', but no other member of the family had any schooling at all. The father declined a grant to help send his children to school 'on the grounds that they have no clothes'. The house was 'very filthy' and the shoemaker was working 'bare-footed and half-naked'. But the period 1845-71 was one of great improvement on the educational scene in Lancashire's towns, and in urban Britain generally.

Before 1871 there were only two publicly-owned schools in the whole of Great Britain, the North and South Corporation schools in Liverpool. All other schools were provided privately or, principally, under the auspices of the various religious denominations. The need for schooling among the growing numbers of urban children was recognised by the churches

4. John Riley to M/R-Salford Education Aid Society, 21 Dec 1865 (M/RCL, archives, reports on the homes of families in Ancoats, M98/293)
5. Census of England and Wales, M/R, 1861 (PRO, RG 9/2834, ED 37, pp 33-6)
6. Census of England and Wales, M/R, 1871 (PRO, RG 10/4033, ED 37, pp 51-3)
7. J. Stott to Mr Botherton, 26 Feb 1866 (M/RCL, archives, report on the homes of families in Ancoats, M98/297)
early in the nineteenth century. Although the middle classes could have their children instructed privately or in day schools, the working class relied chiefly on Sunday schools, when they relied on a school at all. All the churches supported Sunday schools locally, but many were run by individuals and secular groups. 'Unlike church attendance, going to Sunday school was definitely a mass experience.' The advantages of Sunday schools were that they were inexpensive to staff one day in the week; they did not require a permanent site; and they made it possible for scholars to work in factories during the week. The Sunday schools very often had little or nothing to do with religious instruction. Early in the nineteenth century they had been heavily weighted towards religious instruction, but by the 1830s they were almost 'entirely secular schools devoted to teaching reading, writing and accounts', even though they usually were connected to one of the religious denominations. Sometimes the teachers were knowledgeable and dedicated, but usually they were not very far ahead of their pupils. Very little was offered in most Sunday schools and the children learned very little, which they had difficulty retaining during the week. But it was one of the only alternatives working parents had if they wanted to provide a semblance of learning for their children.

During the first half of the nineteenth century 'dame' schools proliferated in large towns. These were private affairs, often run by elderly women who needed the few pence in fees the children would bring in. They were more useful to working-class parents as baby-sitting services than as schools, because children too young for factory work could be looked after during the day. The 'school' usually consisted of a single room, which could be located in a cellar. There was seldom any ventilation and very little to be learned from the 'teacher'.

8. Foster, Class struggle, p.215
9. Ibid., pp 215-6
In some of these schools no books were provided and the children depended upon the chance that one of them would bring a book from home. In the majority only one of two books were found. 10

There were also 'common day schools', which were of a better standard than dame schools, but 'still very little fitted to give a really useful education to the children of the lower classes'. 11 Most day school teachers had only slightly more ability than their dame school counterparts. Not surprisingly, the dame and common day schools were known as 'mock schooling', 12 and even though the number of better denominational schools was increasing during 1845-70, the 'mock' schools were slow to disappear. The financial circumstances of working-class parents encouraged mock schooling because they usually preferred a cheap dame school, where there was little to be learned, to a somewhat more expensive school, where their children would stand a better chance of acquiring some useful knowledge. 13 If they did not actually impede the cause of education for the urban working class, the 'mock' schools certainly did little to further it. But by the mid-1840s dame schools and common day schools were dwindling in number as denominational schools increased.

Mechanics institutes, where working people could go to hear lectures or consult books in the library, were established in many towns during 1820-50. But the 'great and fatal defect' of these institutions as a means of instruction for the working class was that the persons attending the lectures generally lacked the fundamental background needed to appreciate what was being said. The libraries and, where they existed, tutorial classes could not compensate for inadequate elementary

11. Quoted in Ibid., pp 218-9
13. Ibid., pp 142-3
learning. The availability of inexpensive newspapers is one incentive for people to learn to read and keep in practice. But up to the mid-1830s the working class could not even read newspapers regularly, because the stamp duty of 4d., the 'tax on knowledge', made newspapers luxury items. The duty was reduced to one penny in 1834 and not completely removed until 1855. But as illiteracy gradually declined there was a greater demand for books, which gave an impetus to the establishment of public libraries. Salford's library and museum opened in 1848 and Manchester's in 1852. The library at Liverpool opened in 1853, and St Helens and Preston had libraries before 1860. Wide circulation of inexpensive popular fiction and newspapers was another encouraging sign, because even if they did not particularly enhance the reader's intellect, reading as a pastime was catching on.

The year 1833 saw two acts of parliament aimed at making primary learning available to more children. Under the factory act of 1833 children under the age of nine were forbidden to work in mills or factories. Those between the ages of eight and thirteen were only allowed to work eight hours in a day, and they were required to attend school for at least two hours daily. An amending act of 1844 further limited working hours for the eight to thirteen age group to six and a half each day, and the whole shift had to be worked before or after dinner. The school attendance requirement was raised to three hours a day. This placed schooling for factory children on a better basis and encouraged the establishment of more schools because the public day schools could now be attended more conveniently by factory children. To comply with the act, some

15. Ibid., p.41
17. Ibid., p.322
millowners started schools in their factories. Some of these factory schools were good, but in general they were notorious for brief, sterile sessions conducted by teachers who were sometimes recruited among disabled or retiring employees who were no longer fit for other work. Even though factory inspectors preferred good schools to poor ones, they had no authority to criticise the type of education factory children received. 'Only the mere form of school attendance could be enforced.'20 Those children working in factories where a school was not provided on the premises were required to be enrolled in a school in the neighbourhood. Unfortunately, the private day schools and dame schools were recognised under the factory act as furnishing adequate schooling for working children. To many factory owners 'a school was a school, and that was the end of it'.21 But shortages of space in neighbourhood schools, the fact that factory children were only available for schooling during certain hours of the day and the often abysmal quality of the schools they attended meant that, effectively, most factory children received very little in the way of schooling.

Another major defect in the factory legislation was that it applied only to children employed in mills and factories. So in towns such as Liverpool, Widnes and St Helens, where there was very little employment of school-age children in industry, there was no statutory obligation for any child to attend school. Likewise, children who lived in Manchester, Preston or Oldham and did not work in a factory were not required to attend school. The factory legislation was double-edged, to limit childrens' working hours and to make learning available to more children. But by the 1860s 'it was becoming increasingly clear .... that the best factory act would be an education act, for if children were compelled to attend school, they could not go to work'. 

21. Lord, op. cit., p.143
The first government subsidies to aid schools began in 1833 with a grant, which became annual, of £20,000 for building schools in England and Wales. In the early years of this subsidy the treasury distributed the funds through the National and British and Foreign school societies. The National Society founded schools under the established church and the British and Foreign was undenominational. Although this grant was permissive, the treasury did outline some rules to be observed regarding this money.

The treasury laid it down that the building only of schoolrooms could be aided, that preference should be given to large towns and cities where the need was most pressing; and after inquiry whether existing charitable funds would not suffice for the purpose, grants would be made on the recommendation of one or the other of the two societies, provided that a given school was likely to be permanently maintained, that its private contributions would at least equal 'pound for pound' the amount of its grant, and that the school account would be audited... no child was compelled to attend, nor was the school subject to inspection by state officials. 23

The parliamentary grant increased to £30,000 in 1839 and by 1850 it was £125,000.24 In 1857 parliament was spending £663,435 annually on schools.25 During 1846-7 the Committee of Council supervising the disbursement of the yearly grant formulated trust deeds which could be adapted to National, British and Foreign, Wesleyan and Roman Catholic schools. From this time every school receiving government money was administered under one of these deeds, which required 'a considerable lay element in the managing committees; provision must be made for religious instruction and the schools must accept government inspection'.26

This relatively simple system of grants for denominational school building and maintenance was in operation until 1862 when a 'New Code' was introduced. The new scheme brought pay-

23. Adamson, op. cit., p. 34
24. Ibid., p. 146
25. Ibid., p. 202
26. Ibid., p. 146
ment by results to British schooling. A capitation grant was set, subject to a minimum 200 attendances in a year and successful examinations in the 3Rs. Children below the age of six years were not examined and their grant was payable on attendance. For examination purposes, the students were divided into six standards, for as many years at school, up to the age of twelve. One of the first obvious results of the 'New Code' was a reduction in the amount of public money spent on schools. In 1861 £813,441 was appropriated for elementary schools. By 1865 the figure fell to about £735,000. The 'New Code' reduced the cost of public support for education, but it also 'impoverished' the curriculum. A teacher's reputation and income depended on a high number of passes in the 3Rs and there was a great deal of often cruel concentration on work done by slow children. This resulted in a neglect of brighter children, and of creativity generally. But under the 1862 system there was no compulsion for local bodies to build schools or for children to attend those which existed. An act of 1870 went far towards remedying this situation.

The education act of 1870 (33 & 34 Vict., c.75), 'made schooling universal only in the sense that it was designed to provide sufficient schools everywhere within reach of all children between the ages of five and thirteen'. Wherever the Education Department, created in 1856, found a deficiency of school accommodation, it had the authority to order the election of a school board to provide enough places for every child who would not be taken care of in a religious school or privately. A voluntary system of private and denominational schools was allowed to coexist with the new public schools, but they were ineligible for any money derived from the local rates. Free schooling was provided only for the very poor and all other scholars had to pay a weekly fee. Individual

27. Ibid., pp 230-1
28. Ibid., pp 231-2
29. Ibid., p.356
school boards had the power to make school attendance mandatory for all children of the legal school age, but enforcement of obligatory attendance was optional. Since school capacity had to be expanded, obligatory school attendance for all children was not practicable in 1870. But enough schools existed in 1880 to allow the introduction of universal compulsory schooling. The education act of 1870 recognised that at that date, despite improvements during the previous twenty-five years, 'both the demand for education and its supply are deficient'.

The Roman Catholic Vicar Apostolic of the northwest, George Brown, had a favourable opinion of efforts to provide catholic schooling in Lancashire in 1847. I cannot praise enough all the clergy .... for the zeal, industry and self-denial with which they have striven (notwithstanding many hindrances arising partly from poverty, partly from the envy of heretics) to raise these schools of religion in which children of catholic parents may be brought up in the principles of the faith and good conduct, and thus be preserved safe from the false, low opinions of non-catholics. For this good and necessary task the lay people have given appropriate help to the priests, without which they could not have succeeded. At present, no mission or public chapel is without its neighbouring school, two, or at most three, excepted .... In the cities schools of this kind are abundant, especially in Liverpool, Manchester, Preston .... Missionary priests visit them almost every day .... 31

What was the situation in the individual towns of Lancashire during the mid-nineteenth century?

Liverpool was unique in Britain because from 1826 the corporation maintained two elementary schools, one for the north side of the town and another for the south. Each accommodated 200 pupils and up to 1842 catholic and protestant children went to school together. But protestant agitation against non-denominational education put an end to this unique

30. Ibid., pp 356-7
experiment. School facilities above the dame school level for children of Irish catholics had to be provided voluntarily by the catholic parishes in the towns. There was a great increase in the provision of denominational elementary schools among all religious groups during 1840-70 in Liverpool and many influential citizens thought that the problem of inadequate elementary school facilities was being solved through the expansion of the denominational system.\(^{32}\)

The catholics were the 'most active, as was perhaps natural, since they were starting almost from scratch'.\(^{33}\) The great activity behind the expansion of the catholic school system in Liverpool, and in Lancashire generally, had two motivations. First of all, catholics were anxious to provide their children with the bases of learning, the 3Rs. Irish catholics had great respect for learning. There was, of course, the casual hedge school custom in rural Ireland, but the national school system inaugurated in the 183Os, while making steady progress against illiteracy, also gave Ireland the experience of a formal national educational system, which the Irish took with them when they emigrated. Secondly, the catholic schools in Lancashire were intended to reinforce the catholic faith of the pupils by providing religious instruction. Besides the 3Rs, all catholic schools provided lessons on the tenets of the catholic religion, on weekdays for the regular pupils and on Sundays for those who could not be accommodated during the week. There is almost no specific mention of the Irish catholics in Liverpool, or those in any other town, in the available sources on education in Lancashire.

But, as we saw in chapter 7, catholics were such a dominating part of the catholic community all over urban Lancashire, with the exception of Preston, that we can assume that any general discussion of catholic education refers to the Irish directly.

\(^{32}\) White, History of Liverpool, p.141

\(^{33}\) Ibid., p.141
An account of the extension of catholic schools in urban Lancashire will tell us a great deal about the educational opportunities open to the children of the Irish during 1846-71.

The first indication of how far catholic education was progressing in Liverpool was supplied by Abraham Hume in 1853. He counted 8,193 places available in catholic schools. Hume also found that 'in general, the Roman Catholic schools are very well placed', which meant that catholics, particularly the Irish community, were able to make full use of the available accommodation. In this respect catholics were better off than other parts of the populace. In 1858 Hume estimated places were needed for 76,467 school children in Liverpool, 'but neither in the extent of accommodation nor in the position of it, is our supply equal to the demand'. Altogether, there were places for 44,797 children in Liverpool schools, and 10,663 of those places were provided in catholic schools. In percentage terms, there was accommodation for only 58% of the town's school-aged children in 1858, leaving over 40% of them with no places at all.

But when we take into account the very discouraging fact that in general the schools of the town are supplied in districts where they are less necessary and withheld from districts to which they are more necessary, these numbers change places. The smaller 42 percent, represents fully the practical supply of school accommodation; and the larger 58 percent, represents the deficiency, or the difference between demand and supply. The catholic schools which were being built during the 1850s to handle the increased catholic population were well situated to serve neighbourhoods where many catholics lived. The main problem with the catholic schools was that, although they were located in the right places, there were not enough of them for all the catholic children who needed schooling.

34. A. Hume, 'On the education of the poor in Liverpool' in Report of the twenty-third meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (1853), pp 103-6
35. Ibid., p.106
36. A. Hume, Condition of Liverpool (Liverpool, 1858), pp 18-9
The diocese of Liverpool took a great interest in educational matters and wanted to make sure that Catholic schools within its jurisdiction offered a good standard of schooling. In 1858 diocesan inspectors were sent around to the diocese's eighty-two missions to report on Catholic schools generally, and to examine the 12,000 students on their catechism. The inspectors visited fourteen parishes in Liverpool. 8,613 students were on the class lists in the town's mission schools, 4,086 boys and 4,527 girls. But this understates the total number of students attending Catholic schools because there were three other Catholic institutions not affiliated with particular parishes, St Thomas's, the Catholic Institute, Hope Street, and a school in Blackstock Street, which accommodated an additional 1,400 pupils. So Hume's estimate of Catholic schooling for 10,000 students appears to be pretty accurate.

The diocesan school returns contain, besides a class list, a summary of the numbers of scholars who attended on the day of the oral catechism examination.

Table 57

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Class list</th>
<th>Exam list</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Nicholas</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Joseph</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Francis X</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Patrick</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Vincent</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Peter</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Anne</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St George</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Elizabeth</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Anthony</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>1,046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Cross</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Augustine</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37. Diocese of Liverpool, school returns, Liverpool, 1858 (LRO, schools religious examination and inspection returns, RCLv)
Since attendance at school was not compulsory during this period, the number of daily attendances was often considerably below the number of scholars 'on the books'. Sometimes parents did not have enough money to pay the weekly school fees, while other parents lacked the interest in education to urge their children to attend their lessons regularly. So it is not surprising to see that large numbers of children were absent on the day of the inspector's visit. St Elizabeth's school for girls had all its twenty-four students present, while the schools of Saints Thomas and William at St Joseph's parish managed to show a surfeit of eighteen students above the enrolment.

The diocesan inspectors' visits to the various schools were only part of the diocesan survey of catholic schools. Questionnaires were distributed to the various schools to obtain more information about individual institutions. These forms requested the number of schools attached to a mission, whether or not they were under government inspection, as well as particulars on attendance at catechism lessons on Sundays and during the week. But not all of them were returned completed (see Table 58).

Even though they are not complete, some interesting facts about Liverpool catholic schools can be derived from these returns. Eleven of seventeen schools had at least one of their sections being inspected by the government and were receiving money from the annual parliamentary grant. Less than half of the schools accounted for in the diocesan inspection returns were using the pupil teacher scheme.

During the mid-nineteenth century training institutes for elementary school teachers were too few to produce enough qualified instructors to staff the country's schools. The shortage of teachers made schooling for all children under any general system, voluntary or otherwise, an impracticability. But a major step towards more widely distributed pop-
Table 58

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>No. schools</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>No. inspected</th>
<th>No. pupil teachers</th>
<th>No. at catechism &amp; school</th>
<th>No. at Exam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Nicholas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Joseph</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>424</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Francis X</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>470</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Patrick</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>614</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Vincent</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>314</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Peter</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>424</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Anne</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>242</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St George</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Elizabeth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Anthony</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>763</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>389</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Cross</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>541</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Augustine</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Helen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Thomas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackstock St.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>428</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Inst</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regular education was taken in 1846 when the Committee of Council, which apportioned the annual government grant, instituted the pupil-teacher system. Boys and girls thirteen years of age and over were apprenticed to headmasters and school managers for a period of five years if they showed an aptitude for teaching and passed an easy examination. Annual grants were paid to schoolmasters who instructed pupil teachers and additional small sums of money were given to masters 'distinguished by zeal and success'.

38. Adamson, *English education*, pp 143-4
student teachers sat a competitive examination to become Queen's Scholars, who were awarded £20-30 stipends tenable at a 'normal' school for three years. A 'normal' school was one where 'candidates for the officer of teacher in schools for the poorer classes may acquire the knowledge necessary to the exercise of their future profession'. The trainee teachers were also 'practiced in the most approved methods of religious and moral training and instruction'. Teaching certificates were conferred on those scholars who successfully completed the examination, but did not qualify for a Queen's scholarship. Teachers who were not instructed in a normal school were allowed to sit an Acting Teachers' Certificate examination, which gave the successful candidate a status equal to a trained Queen's scholar. In 1858 eighty-six pupil teachers were being trained in eight catholic schools in Liverpool to increase the number of qualified instructors available to extend catholic elementary schooling and to maintain a standard of quality.

From the diocesan inspectors' remarks on the 'character' of the catholic schools in Liverpool, it appears that the denominational elementary schooling available to Irish catholics and their families was generally of a high standard. There were thirty-four schools returned as being connected with seventeen catholic establishments in 1858. Of the twenty-six schools for which inspectors' comments are available, thirteen were described as 'good', ten as moderate or satisfactory and only three as deficient in any respect. One of the schools for which there are no inspection reports, the Catholic Institute, Hope Street, was a very good school accommodating about 100 students, who received an 'elementary English education plus Latin, Greek and drawing'.

39. Ibid., p.124
40. Ibid., p.144
41. Diocese of Liverpool, St Philip Neri mission, 1855 (LRO, visitation returns, RCLv)
Some of the other observations made by the catholic schools inspectors are interesting too. St Helen's school at Our Lady of Reconciliation mission was complimented because children of the 'poorest class' showed great 'ardour' in their studies, as was St Elizabeth's Institute for making instruction of an 'industrial character' available to the 'poorest' girls. But not all the remarks were so flattering. The children at St Nicholas's schools knew many words, but knowledge of their meaning was 'defective'. The responsibility for a situation like this lay with poorly-trained teachers, such as those at St George's school who were 'ignorant of our own language', a circumstance the pupil teacher system was helping gradually to reverse. One inspector also touched on the high rate of absenteeism, common in most schools during the mid-nineteenth century. There was only 'scanty' attendance at the girls' school at St Anne's, Edge Hill, because the school had no heating for the winter and a lack of ventilation made the building oppressively hot during the warm weather. So the fact that no child was required by statute to attend school unless he worked in a factory was not the only reason for poor attendance in elementary schools. Structural deficiencies in schools could make them undesirable places to be caught in for a whole day, which helped keep school attendances down.

There was one very peculiar section of the 1858 school inspection form which was circulated to all the catholic schools. It was directed at finding out if the children of the 'wealthy classes' were taught side by side with working-class children. In only one case, St George's girls' school, was the answer given as 'no'. For all the other Liverpool schools there was either an affirmative answer or none at all. Some parish priests commented that such a question did not arise in their local schools because all the children were poor. The question may have had some relevance in other parts
of the diocese, but in Liverpool, where so large a part of the catholic population was among the Irish community, the body of the church was basically working-class and the parish educational system was geared towards them rather than middle-class catholics.

Boys and girls in Liverpool's catholic schools were taught separately. The Irish Christian Brothers taught in St Patrick's, St Anthony's, St Nicholas's, St Mary's and St Vincent's boys schools and some of the girls' facilities were staffed by orders of teaching nuns, such as the Sisters of Notre Dame. We saw that only eleven missions, representing nineteen schools, were under government inspection in 1858. In two parishes, St Peter's and St Francis Xavier, one of three and one of two schools, respectively, were under inspection. One reason behind the reluctance of catholic schools to submit to government inspection, despite the incentive of a grant of government money, was that some religious orders, notably the Irish Christian Brothers, were opposed to state inspection and examination. Of the five schools mentioned above as being staffed by the Irish Christian Brothers, St Nicholas's, St Patrick's and St Vincent's were not government inspected. But it seems they were willing to compromise in some cases because the boys schools at St Anthony's and St Mary's were being inspected and received government money.

Even though not every Irish catholic child could be accommodated in Liverpool's catholic schools in 1858, the number of places in catholic schools was steadily increasing. It appears that the schools provided were generally of good quality, and a healthy number of pupil teachers were being trained. The government was inspecting about half the schools, but the diocesan office also carried out its own inspections, though not at as regular intervals as the government, to make

42. Burke, Catholic history of Liverpool, pp 69-70
certain a minimum standard was maintained in the schools. Also, catholic schools in Liverpool were located in places convenient to the neighbourhoods where most of the Irish lived. Catholic schools in Liverpool were built in response to increases in Irish immigration, which, of course, brought more catholics.

Another inspection was carried out by the diocese in 1864, but the returns were not as complete as those of 1858.

Table 59

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Class list</th>
<th>Exam list</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Nicholas</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Francis X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Patrick</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Vincent</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Anne</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Peter</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Joseph</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Anthony</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Cross</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Lady Rec</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Augustine</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annotations to this return indicate that at St Francis Xavier, St Peter's, St Joseph's and Our Lady of Reconciliation the inspectors only examined the infant boys. In the four schools where complete figures were available we can see that absenteeism was still a problem.

43. Diocese of Lpool, school returns, Lpool, 1864 (LRO, schools religious examination and inspection returns, RCLv)
The other returns show that St Elizabeth's Institute and the school in Blackstock Street were no longer open, and that St George's school failed to respond. Other information supplied by the thirteen missions includes:

Table 60

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Gov't Inspected</th>
<th>No. pupil teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Nicholas</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Joseph</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Francis X</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Patrick</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Vincent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Peter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Anne</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Anthony</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Cross</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Augustine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Lady Rec</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Thomas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the twenty-nine schools for which information was submitted, nineteen were under government inspection, the same number as 1858, and three of thirteen catholic establishments were still resisting the pupil teacher system. The eleven schools that did train student teachers had a total of eighty-five candidates among them, the same figure as in 1858. It is not possible to estimate the amount of school accommodation available to Liverpool's catholic community in 1864 from these returns. But there are inspectors' comments about the quality of education offered in the catholic schools. St Anne's girls'
schools were considered 'fair' or satisfactory institutions. St. Anne's boys were 'below the average' and St Peter's girls were 'not so good'. But two schools come in for special mention. St Francis Xavier's girls' school was rated 'excellent' and St Patrick's schools were 'the best in Liverpool'.

There was one respect where the catholic community was better off than the population of Liverpool as a whole. By 1871 there were five catholic secondary schools. For boys there was St Francis Xavier's College (1843), and the Catholic Institute (1851). Catholic girls could attend Bellerive Convent School (1844), Notre Dame High School (1853), and Notre Dame Collegiate School (1869). The catholics were also the first to establish a teachers' training college in the town at Mount Pleasant. This extension of catholic secondary schools reflects the fact that these schools were intended to provide recruits for the priesthood and to train teachers to maintain the wider system of catholic elementary education. Another unique educational step was taken by Liverpool's catholic community in 1866 when they started their own floating reformatory on the training ship Clarence.

Even though great advances in the provision of elementary school accommodation for all children were achieved by the late 1860s, there were still difficulties to overcome. A Liverpool MP, George Melly, said in the house of commons in 1869 that

There is no want of school accommodation; the disease lies deeper than this .... There are 15,991 vacant places in our existing schools, of which no fewer than 10,000 are in the schools intended for the working classes. Religious differences cannot be pleaded, for there is room for 6,000 in protestant schools, and for 3,000 young Roman Catholics. He estimated there were 40-50,000 children of school age not attending school, and 25-30,000 fo those children were 'in the

44. White, History of Liverpool, p.152
45. Ibid., p. 143
46. George Melly, MP, 'The uneducated children in our large towns' in Stray Leaves (Liverpool, 1870), iv, 7-8; also see Hansard, 3, cxciv (London, 1869), pp 1189-1207
streets of Liverpool .... learning nothing, if they be not learning habits of vagrancy, mendicancy and crime'. The only effective remedy Melly could recommend was a 'system of compulsory attendance and free municipal schools'. Forster's education act of 1870 provided for neither 'compulsory' nor 'free' elementary education, but it was an important step towards the introduction of both during the succeeding twenty years.

Since Liverpool was obviously lacking school places for all children between the ages of five and thirteen, a school board had to be formed in 1871 to supervise the take over of available schools and the construction of additional facilities. An effort was made to have the board reflect the religious composition of the town. Meetings were held among the various denominations and seven Anglicans, four Roman Catholics and four protestant nonconformists were selected for the board. Catholic communities all over England had worked hard during the preceding thirty years to provide schools for their children and by 1870 they had become the 'most ardent denominationalists'. Liverpool catholics did not like the fact that schools in receipt of parliamentary grants were now defined as 'public' schools by the new act. One group in particular, the Irish Christian Brothers, disliked government participation in elementary education so intensely that they withdrew from Liverpool's schools in 1870, rather than continue to teach under the system of government grants subject to inspection.

Many catholics feared that the act was designed to replace denominational education with non-denominational public schools. What was misunderstood was that Forster's education

47. Melly, Stray leaves, iv, 8
48. Ibid., p.7
49. J.A. Picton, Memorials of Liverpool: Historical and topographical (2nd ed., London, 1875), i, 536
51. Burke, Catholic history of Liverpool, p.192
act was intended only to supplement the religious schools to be certain that every school-age child had the opportunity to attend school. Indeed, the supposedly oppressive act allowed the continuation of the annual Education Department grants to denominational schools and had a special provision which preserved the right of any inspector 'other than one of Her Majesty's inspectors', such as those attached to the catholic diocese of Liverpool, to visit voluntary schools. The backbone of the British educational system in 1870 was still made up of the religiously affiliated schools.

Even though the work of the new Lancashire school boards falls outside the scope of this study, the Liverpool board provided some very useful information. One of the first acts of the newly-elected Liverpool school board was to have a census taken of school-age children and existing elementary-school accommodation. The enumeration was carried out by the borough police and the general picture was this.

Table 61

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Police educational census, Liverpool, 1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total accommodation required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total present provision in schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total attending adventure schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total accommodation required for children 3-5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total children 3-5 years of age not attending any school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total accommodation required for children 5-13 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total children 5-13 years of age not attending any school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If any urban area needed a school board to furnish public schools to supplement the denominational schools, it was certainly Liverpool, with its 32,500 deficit in school places.

52. Acts parl. U.K., 1870 (33 & 34 Vict., c.75), p.331
53. School board, Borough of Lpool, 'Police educational census, 1871' in Proceedings of the school board of Lpool, 1870-3 (LCL, H370 SCH), pp 162-3
There was a total of 138 elementary schools in Liverpool in 1871, eighty of which were 'public' schools because they were receiving state grants. Unfortunately, the police census does not break down the deficit by religious groupings. But the total seating provided in Liverpool's catholic schools is given.

Table 62

Catholic school accommodation, Liverpool, 1871

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Alban</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beacon Lane Industrial School</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Anthony</td>
<td>1,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St George's Industrial School</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Francis Xavier</td>
<td>885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys' Refuge Industrial School</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Augustine</td>
<td>1,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Helen</td>
<td>631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS Thomas and William</td>
<td>840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Bridget</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary</td>
<td>719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total places</td>
<td>15,212</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Catholic school accommodation increased by over 5,000 seats during 1858-71. Besides these institutions, there were still some dame schools, which by this time were aptly named 'adventure' schools. In earlier years it was said that most of the old women running Liverpool's dame schools

54. Midwinter, Old Liverpool, pp 116-7
55. Police educational census, pp 149-61
were Irish. By 1871 there were still ninety-nine adventure schools in Liverpool, eleven of which were considered catholic schools by the census takers. But a quick look at the names of the heads of these catholic dame schools indicates that they were run almost entirely by Irish people.

But these impressive seating statistics lose some of their force when actual attendance figures are set down alongside them.

Table 63

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Total Seating</th>
<th>Average school attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Alban</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Anthony</td>
<td>1,117</td>
<td>745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Francis Xavier</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Helen</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Anne</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS Thomas and William</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Pleasant Practicing</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Nicholas</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Cross</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Peter</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Carmel</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall

only 6,202 children were in attendance out of a total of not less than twenty thousand children between the ages of five and twelve, and out of at least fourteen thousand for whom accommodation had been provided. 57

Even though seating and schooling of good quality for most of Liverpool's catholic children was available in the twenty-two catholic schools in the borough, most children attended school only irregularly.

56. Midwinter, op. cit., p.117
57. Burke, Catholic history of Liverpool, p.190
Little or nothing is said about the Irish children, but since they made up a substantial portion of the Catholic children requiring schooling, knowing the general situation tells us a good deal about what was available for Irish Catholics during 1846-71. Of course, after 1871 school accommodation in either public or voluntary schools existed for every child in the borough, including every Irish child. But Irish children, in common with working-class children generally, were still not taking anything approaching full advantage of the opportunities which were available. It was another ten years before better attendance was achieved with an act to make it a statutory obligation.

The town of Preston, as we saw in chapter 7, was within the diocese of Liverpool and had a large Catholic population quite apart from the Irish community. And as elsewhere in urban England, 'much of the educational impetus came from schools backed by religious institutions'. One of Preston's historians, writing in 1882, claimed that all the Catholic churches in Preston were 'well supplied with school accommodation and large numbers of children are daily instructed by efficient teachers'.

By the 1850s Catholic schooling was well established in Preston. There had been a school connected with the mission of St Mary's and St Wilfrid's churches since 1814, which was for the instruction of infants, girls and boys up to the second standard. But by 1858 the four Catholic missions which then served Preston had a total of thirteen schools attached to them, seven for boys and six for infants and girls. The diocesan inspection returns for 1858 show that there were over 2,500 scholars on the class lists in the four parishes. But the numbers present at the inspector's catechism examination show that up to 40% of the student body could be absent from school on a particular day.

58. K.M. Spencer, A social and economic geography of Preston, 1800-65, p.157
59. Dobson, The story of proud Preston, p.27
60. Diocese of Lpool, school returns, Preston, 1858 (LRO, schools religious and inspection returns, RCLv)
Table 64

Class lists, Preston, 1858

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Exam list</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Augustine</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>540</td>
<td></td>
<td>153</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Wilfrid</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>585</td>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Ignatius</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>663</td>
<td></td>
<td>239</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Walburge</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>723</td>
<td></td>
<td>153</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The inspection returns also tell us that there was government inspection and pupil teaching on a greater scale than in Liverpool.

Table 65

School returns, Preston, 1858

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Girls-Total</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Infants</th>
<th>Gov't inspected</th>
<th>No. pupil teachers</th>
<th>No. at school &amp; catechism</th>
<th>No. at Exam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Augustine</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Wilfrid</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Ignatius</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Walburge</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ten of the town's thirteen catholic schools were under government inspection and receiving Education Department grants. There was also great interest in the pupil teacher system, forty-nine of whom were training in catholic schools in 1858. The Irish Christian Brothers, who were very strongly opposed to any government supervision or regulation in elementary education, did not teach in Preston's schools. St Wilfrid's, St Mary's, St Ignatius and St Walburge's parish schools were staffed by the Jesuits, and St Augustine's and, from 1871, the Church of the English Martyrs' schools, were taught by secular clergy.\(^61\) Neither of these groups appears to have been opposed to state aid to voluntary religious schools.

\(^61\). Dobson, op. cit., p.27
No distinctions were drawn in the classrooms of Preston's catholic schools between the children of poor families and those from better-off homes. The four parishes reported that all catholic children, regardless of class, were taught together. The pastor of St Walburge's parish, located on the western side of Preston, where many Irish families lived, said that class differences in his schools were not a problem because all the children attending them were poor. But all the other schools had a more diverse social class composition because of the numerous native catholics in the town.

The inspector's remarks on the general character of catholic education in Preston varied from school to school. St Augustine's schools were 'deserving of praise'; St Wilfrid's girls' school and St Ignatius's boys were 'very good'; and St Walburge's girls' school showed a 'wonderful' advancement. The schools for boys at St Walburge's were 'moderate' and the one at St Wilfrid's was showing an 'improvement'. Only the girls' school at St Ignatius's mission was described as 'unsatisfactory' in 1858. But altogether we can say that the standard of education offered in Preston's catholic schools was good.

The diocesan school inspection returns for 1864 show that the Preston parishes were consolidating their educational facilities into larger units. St Augustine's and St Wilfrid's parishes still had two schools each, but St Ignatius and St Walburge cut their schools down to two each. In the eight schools, almost 3,500 children were 'on the books', an increase of 1,000 in six years. But on catechism examination day one-third of the students on the class lists of the four parishes were not in school.

62. Diocese of Lpool, school returns, Preston, 1864 (LRO, schools religious and inspection returns, RCLv)
Table 66

Class lists, Preston, 1864

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Class list</th>
<th></th>
<th>Exam list</th>
<th></th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys Boys Girls Total</td>
<td>Boys Boys Girls Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Augustine</td>
<td>260 407</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>204 252</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Wilfrid</td>
<td>419 356</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>274 214</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Ignatius</td>
<td>452 634 1,086</td>
<td>345 461 806</td>
<td>280</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Walburge</td>
<td>439 508</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>251 324</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though 33% is still a high rate of absenteeism, the figure shows an improvement over 1858. But what makes it more encouraging still is that Preston was suffering economically from the cotton shortage caused by the war between the states in America. With many people on short time or out of work altogether, sixpence or ninepence for a weekly school fee could be too much for a working-class family to spare. But even at St Walburge's parish, where working class families, including a great many Irish, found themselves in difficulties during the hard times of the cotton famine, attendance on examination day was 61% of the class list. There was probably aid from a local relief committee to pay school fees or an abrogation of fee collections for hard-pressed parishioners for the duration of the cotton famine. Still these figures show that education was becoming an important priority for working-class people.

The other relevant statistics on the 1864 inspection forms for Preston were these:
Table 67

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls-Infants</th>
<th>Gov't inspected</th>
<th>No. pupil teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Augustine</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Wilfrid</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Ignatius</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Walburge</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questionnaire from St Augustine's was not completed properly, so we do not know for certain whether or not the two schools were visited by government inspectors. But since we know one of them was inspected in 1858, it is not unreasonable to say that at least one, and probably the other, were within the government grant scheme in 1864. The other six schools in the town were inspected. The space for the number of pupil teachers working in St Augustine's schools was also left blank, but all the other schools employed them, thirty-six in all. But even though the number of school seats increased; attendance appeared to be improving; and a minimum standard of education had to be maintained to satisfy government inspectors, the diocesan agent found much to be critical of in Preston's catholic schools in 1864. St Augustine's schools, which were 'deserving of praise' in 1858, slipped in the diocesan estimation to 'very good' for the junior classes and unsatisfactory for the higher forms. And St Walburge's was 'far from being a good school yet'. But St Wilfrid's was a 'good school' which had made 'great progress' in six years, and St Ignatius's schools were both rated as very good. So still it could be said in 1864 that catholic children had good schooling available at the parish schools.

During 1865-71 four more catholic schools were opened in Preston. A school was built adjoining St Mary's chapel in 1869, and was expanded again in 1874, which gave the schools
attached to the parish of St Wilfrid's-St Mary's a capacity of 500. Also, that mission opened a grammar school in 1865, which had fifty students. Another parish came into existence in 1867, the Church of the English Martyrs, and schools for boys and girls seating a total of 500 children were built in 1871. With this very steady expansion of school accommodation, of course, more catholic children, including catholic members of the Irish community, had a good quality education available to them. But no statistics, such as the Liverpool education census, are available to tell us even approximately how many catholic children of school age there were in Preston during the mid-nineteenth century or how many school-age children there were generally. We know that the question of selecting a school board did not arise until 1876. But it was decided to set up a school attendance committee instead of a formal school board because it would be able to sufficiently manage the work of local education ... more economically than a school board; and would, in addition, save the town from the denominational turmoil and rancour frequently, if not invariably, associated with the election of school board members.

No statistics on numbers of children or deficiencies of school places have come down to us.

There were many catholics in Preston during the mid-nineteenth century, including at least 8-10,000 members of the Irish community. An expanding catholic school system with a good academic rating was available to over 4,000 students by 1871.

63. A. Hewitson, History of Preston, pp 505-6
64. Ibid., pp 514-5
65. Ibid., p.446
The towns of St Helens and Widnes were the other two towns included in this study which were within the diocese of Liverpool. St Helens was distinguished by general literacy among the whole population during 1845-70. There were enough denominational schools to provide a 'basic grounding in the three Rs' for nearly the entire juvenile population. Accommodation was cramped, classes were very brief, and the teachers were themselves sometimes unable to spell .... It was a strict, harsh and painful regime, but it achieved its limited aim. The boys and girls were taught to read and write. 66

Adequate school accommodation for St Helens's children was not the only indication that a high proportion of the people were literate. The town's local newspapers, the first of which appeared in 1853, had a wide circulation, which 'reflects considerable credit on the town schools'. 67

At the close of the 1840s there was one catholic school in St Helens for 100 children at the Lowe House mission. But the number of school-age catholics rose as Irish immigration into the district increased, and by 1850 it was estimated that there were 1,500 catholic children requiring an education in the town. The Lowe House premises were soon expanded and by 1858 St Joseph's and Greenbank schools were open. It is hard to say how many children could take advantage of these schools because reports on their capacity are at considerable variance. Two sources say that the Lowe House schools had room for 1,100 scholars. 68 But the diocesan inspection returns for 1858 indicate that there were only 165 students on the class list and that the largest number attending school during the week and Sunday catechism lessons was 448. St Joseph's and Greenbank schools had ninety-one and 162 pupils 'on the books', respectively. 69 So even though the catholic school system at St

66. Barker and Harris, St Helens, p.387
68. Barker and Harris, op. cit., p.392; Elliott, op. cit., p.19
69. Diocese of Lpool, school returns, St Helens, 1858 (LRO, schools religious examination and inspection returns, RCLv)
Helens was expanding, most catholic children did not have places in catholic schools in 1858. But those children who were registered in the schools seem to have been more scrupulous about regular attendance than their counterparts in Liverpool and Preston.

Table 68

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Class list</th>
<th>Exam list</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowe House</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Joseph</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenbank</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The inspection returns are incomplete for Greenbank and St Joseph's, but some details about catholic education in St Helens can be derived. The six schools connected with Lowe House were under government inspection and seven pupil teachers were training there. And, as is easy to suppose, children from working-class families went to school with the children from more affluent homes because the catholic population was overwhelmingly working-class. But the most interesting part of the St Helens returns are the inspector's comments on the type of schooling offered in St Helens. The Lowe House schools were generally 'fair', although the boys' section was somewhat deficient. St Joseph's was rated as moderate and the inspector found 'little to say' at Greenbank. At its best, catholic education in St Helens was mediocre in 1858.

The inspection returns for 1864 contain even less data about catholic education in St Helens than those for 1858. All the class and examination lists were incomplete and are not worth reproducing. But the three schools at St Joseph's were participating in the Education Department grant programme,
as well as the five at Lowe House. Both the school complexes employed pupil teachers. Once again, these questions are not answered for the Greenbank school. But the diocesan inspector's observations show that the middling standard of catholic schooling at St Helens had deteriorated in six years. The girls at St Joseph's managed to remain 'fair', but the boys 'know little or nothing'. The visitor in 1858 could not find anything bad, but nothing good either, to say about academic standards at Greenbank. But in 1864 the school was 'very defective'. Lowe House, which was, on the whole, 'fair' in 1858, was also on the way down. The boys were still 'indifferent', but the girls were 'rather backward'. Up to the mid-1860s catholic education in St Helens was certainly not up to much, especially compared with the catholic schools of Liverpool and Preston. And if children were receiving a 'basic grounding in the three Rs' in them, it was only just barely.

There were several other catholic schools opened in St Helens before 1871. The Sisters of Notre Dame opened a secondary school for girls in 1858 to provide young women with 'every essential for a polite education', but this school was not opened with working-class Irish girls in mind. Holy Cross and Sacred Heart schools were built during 1865-71. Despite the dubious quality of the schooling students could expect from the catholic institutions, it appears that by 1871 nearly all the catholic children in the town, including the Irish, could find a place in a catholic school because the borough was not required to form a school board in 1871.

In the aggregate, the results of this church-dominated day school building were impressive. By 1870 there were more than 8,000 scholars on the registers and public elementary education costing a few pence per week was almost universal.

70. Diocese of Lpool, school returns, St Helens, 1864 (LRO, schools religious examination and inspection returns, RCLV)
71. Elliott, op. cit., p.19
72. Barker and Harris, op. cit., p.392
73. Ibid., p.393
At Widnes there was a National school, a schoolroom at Widnes dock, a grammar school and a Roman Catholic school at St Bede's mission. These four schools 'comprised the sum total of the educational facilities' for the 3,000 people of Widnes in 1846. The Catholic school, erected in 1823, was a thatched cottage, which was replaced by a larger building in 1852, in response to the increasing numbers of Catholic Irish who were arriving in the town to work in the newly-established chemical works. By 1858 there were only thirty students on the school's class list, but over 100 were receiving some sort of education during the week or at Sunday lessons. The school was visited by government inspectors, but there were no pupil teachers in 1858. The diocesan representative found the school to be only 'moderate' in quality. In 1863 there were eighty students at the school, instructed by two nuns and two pupil teachers in 'the three Rs and religion'. The diocesan inspection of 1864 shows that, besides the 118 children attending St Bede's school during the week or on Sundays, there were 208 children on the class list of another Catholic school at Widnes Dock, although only 118 of them turned up for the diocesan examination. Both schools were government inspected and Widnes Dock school was training one student teacher. The two pupil teachers who were working at the other school a year earlier were not present in 1864. The diocesan school visitor reserved any assessment of the type of education offered at St Bede's because a smallpox outbreak had cut attendance considerably. But he did not hesitate to say that Widnes Dock school was 'below average'. Sometime during 1864-70 the Widnes Dock school was closed.

74. Diggle, A history of Widnes, p.22
75. Diocese of Lpool, school returns, Widnes, 1858 (LRO, schools religious examination and inspection returns, RCLv)
76. Diggle, op. cit., p.38
77. Diocese of Lpool, school returns, Widnes, 1864 (LRO, schools religious examination and inspection returns, RCLv)
78. Diggle, op. cit., p.39
Two other catholic schools were opened in Widnes during 1865-73, St Marie's, affiliated with a church which was built in 1862, and St Patrick's. But despite these efforts, and those of the other denominations, the town needed a school board by 1874 to provide schooling for those children who had no places in the religious schools. An educational census taken in 1878 revealed that in a town of some 20,000 inhabitants, there were still 1,000 children not attending school at all. A decade later 1,300 children were not in school, in spite of the fact that attendance was compulsory at the time. The problem of elementary education for all children in Widnes had not been solved two decades after Forster's act. And since the Irish community probably made up 25-30% of the total population, the vast majority of whom were catholics, this state of affairs could not but affect Irish catholic children.

Looking briefly at the catholic schools available to Irish children throughout the diocese of Liverpool, we see that in 1858 eighty-two parishes supported eighty-six schools. Forty-four of the schools were rated as good, twenty-eight as moderate and fourteen as deficient in some way. So generally, 89% of the schools in the diocese were offering at the very least a satisfactory elementary education. Many of the schools the inspectors listed as unsatisfactory were also receiving parliamentary grants, which means they must have satisfied the government's minimum requirements. This probably means that the diocesan inspectors were judging catholic schools by stricter standards than the government. If this is the case, even the poorer quality schools, such as those in St Helens and Widnes, were probably offering a fairly good schooling to catholic children, by the standards of the time. So the main problem with the catholic schools available to Irish children during 1846-71 was that there were not enough of them to accommodate a growing catholic community.

79. Ibid., p.68
80. Ibid., p.77
Even though there is little specific mention of the Irish part of the catholic community of the diocese of Liverpool in any source which deals with the subject of schools, it was the significant increase in the number of catholics resident in Lancashire, caused by the immigration of thousands of Irish families, as well as a greater interest in popular elementary schools, which caused the expansion of the catholic school system during 1846-71. Children from Irish families were the principal beneficiaries of this extension of educational facilities, particularly in towns such as Liverpool, St Helens and Widnes. But when there was a shortage of places in catholic schools during the pre-1871 period, as there was in Liverpool and Widnes, the Irish also suffered from the deficiency. Great progress was made during 1846-71 in providing school places for catholic children so that all could have at least a fundamental literacy, but the voluntary religious system was simply not able to handle the task.

The southeast Lancashire towns of Manchester, Salford and Oldham were part of the catholic diocese of Salford. From the limited sources available to us, it does not appear that there was too much interest in the extension of catholic elementary education in the Manchester-Salford area before 1845, both because catholics formed a relatively small part of the population and working-class people were generally phlegmatic towards education for their children. But a gradual shift in attitude towards the provision of catholic schools is apparent from the mid-1830s. For example, St Patrick's parish, Livesey Street, which was founded especially to look after the growing Irish community of Manchester, opened a girls' school and a Sunday school in 1836. But it was not until 1845 that a school for boys was built. 81 There

81. R. Earley, Silver jubilee souvenir, St Patrick's, Livesey Street (Manchester, 1961), no pagination
were several other schools too, but no sense of urgency is evident until after 1847-8, when the catholic population was augmented significantly by the arrival of thousands of Irish families. The presence of a large number of catholic children requiring elementary schooling; the popular importance attached to the building of voluntary, denominationally-backed schools; the inception of the expanded government grant and inspection scheme; and the reorganisation of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in 1850 were all elements contributing to the greater concern shown for increasing catholic school accommodation in Manchester-Salford.

There is no information on catholic schooling in Manchester before 1852. But in that year a parliamentary committee heard evidence on schools in the area. John Bright was a member of that committee and at one stage he asked Rev Charles Rickson, a Manchester Anglican clergyman, about the 'great addition to the population of Manchester by the immigration from Ireland'. He wanted to know how many of the whole number of those that are not at school, speaking of the children of the working classes that you would hope to see in attendance, are cases of children of Irish families; or speaking according to sect, of the Roman Catholic persuasion .... ?

Rickson cited the case of Little Ireland in Deansgate, 'almost an Irish Roman Catholic colony', and said that he found 'a very much larger proportion of children at school than in almost any other district of the same size'. Richard Cobden inquired if Rickson was referring to Sunday schools, but he was told that this high proportion was attending weekday schools. This seemed a curious circumstance to Bright since that portion of the working population of Manchester which is Irish and Roman Catholic is generally supposed to be, in outward circumstances, as to employment and wages, in an inferior position to the rest of the working population.

Rickson pointed out that poor children of catholic families, who could not afford the full weekly fee, were allowed to
pay reduced amounts or were admitted without charge. But also, 'the Roman Catholics are making greater efforts to support their schools and charities than any other body of christians' in the town. 82

In 1852 there were eight catholic schools with places for 3,500 students serving Manchester. Attendance was only about 2,900, but the 600 empty seats would do very little to help the 15,000 catholic children it was thought needed schooling. 83 It was also estimated that over 900 catholic children were attending dame and common day schools. To make up the deficit and to remove demand for 'mock' schooling, all Manchester's catholic schools expanded their facilities during the next nine years, which provided an additional 2,000 places. At the time, 1861, it was thought that catholics made up about 20% of the Manchester-Salford population, so there was still much work to be done. 84 It was estimated in 1861 that in Manchester-Salford there were nearly 42,000 scholars, which meant there was only one student in every eleven persons of the population. 85 Information for seven Manchester schools was obtained in 1863 which showed there was still a considerable shortage of school places. 86

82. Report from the select ccttee on Manchester and Salford education, pp 55-6, H.C., 1852 (499), xi, 65-6
84. Whalley, op. cit., p.308
85. Mr Botherton, children attending schools in M/R-Salford, N.D. (M/RCL, archives, M/R-Salford Education Aid Society, M98/303)
86. Whalley, op. cit., p.327
Table 69

Catholic schools, Manchester, 1863

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Probable No. of school-age children</th>
<th>School Accommodation</th>
<th>Deficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Alban</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Aloysius</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Ann</td>
<td>1,070</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Joseph</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Patrick</td>
<td>2,250</td>
<td>1,436</td>
<td>814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Wilfrid</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>1,114</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the very least, 2,500 children were without a place in school in only the parishes for which figures were obtainable. St Chad's and St Augustine's, both large parishes with many Irish residents, were not included. By 1872 two more schools, Holy Name and St William's, were also open. But the available school places were not all occupied. Even the small weekly fees were prohibitive for many families. Special arrangements were often made for poor children, but since the schools needed the fees to stay solvent, dispensations were too few. But there was an organisation trying to help overcome this difficulty.

The Manchester and Salford Education Aid Society was formed in 1864 'for the purpose of assisting poor parents to educate their children'. There were 103 schools on the society's list, roughly 90% of the schools in the Manchester-Salford area, 'and these schools are of every religious denomination'. Even though some school managers declined to allow children supported by the society's grants into their schools, 'fearing, probably, that the children of the poorest classes might injure the morale of their schools if admitted', by June 1865 the organisation was disbursing grants for over
9,300 children. Just over a year later there were 21,000 school grants current, but only 9,500 children were actually using them to attend schools. By December 1867 the number of grants fell off to 8,500, but there were 7,700 children attending lessons, a better percentage. The reasons why people declined grants or did not use them were that often the children have not shoes or clothing in which they can go to school .... a second reason for non-attendance is that the parents are often unable or possibly, in some cases, unwilling, to pay that portion of their fees left unpaid by the society .... a third cause is the indifference of parents .... Perhaps a fourth reason is that some schoolmasters or school managers do not care to have many of the children we send, and therefore do not take sufficient interest in bringing them into school, or in retaining them when there. Where the object is to make a high-class school, or to achieve a commercial success, this can be understood ....

So despite voluntary efforts, there were still enormous difficulties to overcome before it would be possible to persuade all children to attend school. In a speech before parliament in 1869 it was asserted that there are in Manchester, as appears from the returns of the Registrar General, 75,667 children of school age of whom less than half are at school and less than a quarter at work, and there cannot be less than from 20,000 to 25,000 who are living the life of the streets.

In 1871 Manchester was required to form a school board and the public schools were accommodating 25,000 children by 1881.

The other municipal division in the greater Manchester urban district was the adjoining borough of Salford. The first figures on elementary schools appear in 1851. Altogether there were forty-six schools with space for 12,500 children in Salford.

87. Proportion of attendance of children sent to school by the Education Aid Society, 1864-7, N.D. (MRCL, archives, M/R-Salford Education Aid Society, M98/267, 271, 287)
88. First report of M/R-Salford Education Aid Society, 1865 (M/RCL, archives, M98/138)
89. G. Melly, iv, p.8
90. Simon, A century of city government, p.242
The borough was divided into three wards and in two of them there were no catholic schools for poor children. But in St Stephen's ward there was one catholic school with seating for 700 pupils. An average of only 300 children attended weekday classes, but the school was filled for Sunday lessons. On an average weekday, 4,600 children were in Salford's elementary schools, a figure which doubled on Sundays. And despite the small number of children attending Salford's schools, there were 7,200 surplus weekday seats, 260 of them in the catholic school. But during the following twenty years there was a great expansion in voluntary elementary school facilities in the Salford area.

Table 71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total schools</th>
<th>Average attendance</th>
<th>Catholic Schools</th>
<th>Average Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16,354</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>19,192</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>19,192</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2,375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

91. S. Neal, Special report on the state of juvenile education and delinquency in the Borough of Salford (Salford, 1851), pp 7-10  
92. Ibid., pp 11-2  
93. Report from the select ctee on M/R-Salford education, pp 30-1, H.C., 1852 (499), xi, 40-1  
In 1851 there was only St John's catholic school, which had spaces for 700 scholars and an average attendance of only 400. 96 St John's parish, which included the bishop's residence and the cathedral, added another school, but in 1861 there were still only 700 children attending catholic elementary schools in Salford. By 1863 it was estimated that there was still a deficiency of 700 places for catholic children in Salford, 97 but the addition of four schools in a decade very nearly eliminated the deficit. But the rest of the Salford was not so fortunate. In 1871 a school board was elected to start making up the deficiency.

The only catholic parish in southeast Lancashire where I was able to locate a parish log-book for the mid-nineteenth century was St John's, Salford. There are two books surviving which cover the years 1860-4 and 1869-72. 98 The contents are announcements made at Sunday mass, and besides other information, they tell us something about how catholic schools were built and maintained a century ago. Once a school was in operation it was maintained from its fees, government grants and voluntary contributions. But the initial opening of a school required a substantial capital outlay which could not be met from meagre parish or diocesan funds. So the money

95. Ibid., pp 126, 129, 130
96. Whalley, op. cit., p.295
97. Ibid., p.327
98. St John's Roman Catholic Cathedral, log books, 1860-4, 1869-72 (Cathedral House, 250 Chapel Street, Salford 3)
to purchase land, renovate an existing building or erect a new structure had to come from the parishioners, who were, throughout Lancashire, basically working-class. They were not asked to pay a contribution in a large sum, but were asked to pledge a certain amount to be defrayed on a fortnightly or monthly basis. Announcements were made at Sunday mass to remind subscribers that a portion of their donation was due. In the Salford area at the end of each summer there was a series of 'charity sermons', where extra collections were taken to aid the local schools. 99

For example, St John's parish purchased the old Salford workhouse site in 1860 for £1,500, with the intention of starting another school and building a new church. Money to offset the primary expenditure and to furnish the schools was collected from pledges over a period of two years and day and evening schools for boys, girls and infants, as well as a Sunday school, were opened in January 1863, 'in order to give a catholic education to many children .... who now either grow up in ignorance or are sent to schools in which their faith is weakened or lost'. 100

Night schools had become an important feature of the southeast Lancashire educational scheme because of the large numbers of factory operatives of all ages who found it difficult or impossible to attend school during the day. The Manchester-Salford night classes were said to be efficient and well attended. 101

St John's log-books also tell us something more about catholic schooling. Catholic schools in Salford were kept open three evenings a week.

100. St John's log-book, 1860-4, 27 Jan 1861; 11 June 1863; 16 Feb 1862
101. Whalley, op. cit., p.323
The children of nine years of age and upwards who do not frequent the day schools are expected to attend instructions which are given in the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings by the Xaverian Brothers and by the nuns from half-past seven o'clock until nine o'clock. 102

And there was another course on the same three evenings for 'boys and young men' which cost 3s. for the full course or 2d. per week. 103

The log-book of 1860-4 covers the period of the cotton famine in Lancashire and shows how some catholic schools responded to the serious unemployment problem. Even though weekly fees for catholic education were low, the economic recession of the early sixties made it impossible for parents to spare even small sums for sending their children to school. Salford's catholic clergy and the Salford Relief Committee, one of many local organisations formed to aid unemployed and under-employed factory operatives during the cotton famine, wanted to prevent a worsening of an already serious school attendance situation. Fees in catholic schools were waived wherever possible.

We earnestly beg of the parents to send their children to the school. If some parents through want of work cannot possibly afford the school-fees they can apply to the priest of the respective district who will give them a school ticket until such time that they can pay the school fees themselves.

Extra night classes were started and young men and women were 'exhorted' to attend them. 104 The local relief committee was also paying school fees for parents who could not afford them. 105 Sewing classes for factory girls and women were a favourite remedy for idle time among cotton famine relief committees throughout Lancashire. St John's parish also participated in one of these projects.

102. St John's log-book, 1860-4, 13 Jan 1861
103. St John's log-book, 1860-4, 8 Sept 1861
In order to alleviate the present distress, the Relief Committee of the borough encourages the establishment of sewing classes for unemployed factory operatives. We are happy to inform you that a sewing class will be opened ... in the Young Men's Catholic Association room adjoining the cathedral, and that every girl who attends this class will receive a weekly allowance from the relief committee. Any girl who wishes to be admitted into this class should first apply for a ticket of admission from the clerk of the relief committee at the town hall. 106

Parishioners who escaped the worst effects of the cotton famine were also asked to help the sewing classes. This work of charity may be promoted by any of the following ways, viz., by sending materials for clothing, by purchasing any of the articles that are made up at the schools, by giving a weekly contribution towards defraying the current expenses; by any of the ladies of the congregation assisting in the conducting of the schools. 107

So if Salford was in any way representative of catholic parishes in Lancashire, there was much more to catholic education than catechism and the 3Rs. There was a genuine effort to serve the catholic communities social, as well as educational and religious, needs.

By 1870 the main problem facing the managers of catholic schools in Salford was not a shortage of school accommodation, but underattendance, a shortage of pupils. We are much grieved to see that after all the expenditure and exertions that have been made to bring the schools to the highest point of efficiency there are still many catholic parents who allow their children to run about the streets and grow up in ignorance and vice. 108

But this was a problem facing all nineteenth-century school administrators in England and it would be nearly a generation, even with school boards and compulsory attendance, before this difficulty was largely overcome.

The town of Oldham did not have a very large catholic population up to the mid-1840s. A catholic Sunday school had been organised in 1833, but a mission, St Mary's, was

106. St John's log-book, 1860-4, 5 Oct 1862
108. St John's log-book, 1869-72, 24 Apr 1870
not formed until 1839. A day school was opened in hired premises in 1841, where there was seating for 450 children. But 'owing to the great increase in the catholic population' after 1846 this school soon became too small to take care of all the catholic children who needed schooling. £4,000 was raised among the local catholics and a new school was built in 1859, which seated 850 students. St Mary's school 'ranked among the finest in Lancashire and was considered a "model" school'. In 1862 a second school, St Patrick's, was opened, which accommodated 350 students. Still, in 1863 it was reckoned that there were 300 catholic children in Oldham who did not have a place in a school. But an effort to rectify this shortage was made in 1868 when more land was acquired and a new parish school built. Since the catholic population never became very large in Oldham during 1846-71, the catholic education situation was under control by the time the Oldham School board was elected in 1871. But there was still a general deficiency in the town. There were 18,095 children of school age in the borough in 1871, but only 10,000 of them were receiving any schooling at all. A school-building programme was instituted, but the various schemes 'became obsolescent before they could become implemented'. So compared with the general population, the catholic community of Oldham, including some 5,400 Irish catholics, were well-served with schools in 1871.

Looking generally at the catholic schools available to the children of Irish immigrant families in southeast Lancashire, there are some assessments to take into account. The quality of the education available in catholic elementary schools in the diocese of Salford was found to be good.

109. Whalley, op. cit., p. 287
110. T. Curley, The catholic history of Oldham (East Yorks, 1911), p. 48
111. Ibid., p. 52
112. Whalley, op. cit., pp 309, 328
113. Ibid., p. 328
114. Ibid., p. 309
It has to be admitted that the catholic schools of the Salford diocese, in spite of the disadvantages under which their promoters laboured, more than held their own, and frequently earned the sincere, unprejudiced praises of the government inspectors. 116

One difficulty for catholic school managers in southeast Lancashire was securing the services of qualified teachers because they were only able to offer salaries which were lower than the average payment made to teachers elsewhere in England, which made it difficult to attract and retain good teachers. 117 Even though the quality of instruction did vary, the schools conducted by teaching monks and nuns were 'uniformly good'. The Sisters of Notre Dame, the Presentation Sisters, the Sisters of Loretto and the Irish Christian Brothers taught at schools in Manchester. The Xaverian brothers taught the boys' schools in Salford, and the girls were instructed by the Faithful Companions of Jesus order of nuns. 118 Besides bringing extra revenue, the government inspection system was also a way of maintaining a standard of quality. By 1868 only about half of the schools in the diocese of Salford were being inspected, but all those in the town of Salford were visited. 119 But many of the uninspected schools were on a par, educationally and structurally, with the inspected schools. 120 As in Liverpool, the Irish Christian Brothers, who had taught at St Patrick's boys school since 1845, refused to be inspected, even though the girls' and infants schools were being inspected. 121 But during the 1860s the number of inspected schools 'tended to increase'.

116. Whalley, op. cit., pp 319-20
117. Ibid., pp 324-5
118. St John's log-book, 1860-4, 13 Jan 1861; 11 Jan 1863
119. Whalley, op. cit., p.322; St John's log-book, 1860-4, 16 Nov 1862
120. Ibid., p.322
121. R. Earley, op. cit., no pagination
Catholic parishes in towns such as Oldham and Salford were managing to provide adequate accommodation for catholic children by 1871. But the much larger urban district of Manchester still lagged behind in school provision for catholic children, a problem aggravated by continuing immigration of Irish catholic families. One estimate claimed that 6-7,000 catholic children in the diocese, mainly in Manchester, 'do not, at present, receive any catholic education whatever'.

But by the standards of a town such as Liverpool, Manchester was very well provided with catholic schools. By 1870 the school inspectors were acknowledging that Manchester and Salford catholic schools 'could not anywhere be surpassed for efficiency'. And this good quality education was available even though it was claimed that there was yet another special problem: that 'the English will not attend school with the Irish, or the Irish with the English'.

But there is no evidence that there was ethnic friction in catholic schools in Lancashire.

In closing this consideration of education for Irish children in Lancashire it is interesting to consult data on children attending school which is available in census enumerators' books for the years 1851, 1861 and 1871. Samples taken from both the Irish and non-Irish sectors of the populations of Liverpool, Manchester-Salford, Oldham, Preston, St Helens and Widnes in all three census years indicate the following:

122. St John's log-book, 1860-4, 19 Feb 1871
123. Simon, A century of city government, p.230
124. Ibid., p.230
Table 72

Percentages of Irish households having at least one student, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lpool</th>
<th>M/R</th>
<th>Salford</th>
<th>Oldham</th>
<th>Preston</th>
<th>St Helens</th>
<th>Widnes</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>36.1</td>
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<td>1871</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>34.5</td>
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<td>22.2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages of non-Irish households having at least one student, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lpool</th>
<th>M/R</th>
<th>Salford</th>
<th>Oldham</th>
<th>Preston</th>
<th>St Helens</th>
<th>Widnes</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But these percentages cannot be employed uncritically. Firstly, not every household had a school-age child living in it. For instance, overall, 21.5% and 24.5% of Irish and non-Irish households, respectively, can be effectively eliminated from consideration because they contain either one or two persons only. Also, if a child worked in a cotton mill and attended school for a few hours a day or only went to Sunday school, he would be returned as a factory hand rather than as a student. Also, there is the unknown factor which represents the number of scholars who were not otherwise employed, but were not listed as students either. So altogether, census enumerators' books are not a very reliable source for determining the extent of elementary education during the mid-nineteenth century among the Irish or in the community at large. The significance of an analysis of this data must be regarded as inconclusive. Still it is interesting to note that the total percentages indicate that non-Irish households were marginally more likely to contain a student than the Irish. But if we had more information this picture could change.
Even though the Irish community made up a very large proportion of the Catholic population of Lancashire during 1846-71, there is very little special mention of this numerous group with regard to such an important subject as Catholic education. But it probably is not a coincidence that the massive Irish immigration of the 1840s and 1850s, which increased the number of Catholics in Lancashire significantly, at a time when new importance was assigned to the expansion of voluntary Catholic schools. Catholic schools were hopelessly inadequate in the 1840s and 1850s to handle the extra burdens imposed by immigration of Irish Catholics. But by the 1860s great progress was made in school construction with the invaluable help of donations from Catholic working men, many thousands of whom were Irish. By 1871, when the new school boards were organising themselves, only the large towns of Liverpool and Manchester were unable to accommodate nearly all Catholic scholars in denominational elementary schools. But great advances had been made in those two centres and they only lagged behind because they had such large Irish Catholic populations. Altogether, Irish Catholic children had an extensive and efficient voluntary school system to serve them by 1871.

But even where school accommodation existed, it was not always possible to fill all the places with students. Poverty and indifference were obstacles as formidable as shortage of school places to the spread of literacy, since many families either lacked funds for fees or sufficient motivation to send their children to school. Even though there were still these difficulties to overcome, the Irish community of Lancashire was fortunate in having an active, functional institution, the Catholic church, through its local clergy, working on its behalf. By the time of Forster's education act of 1870, the greatest problem facing Catholic education, shortage of schools, had been largely overcome by
a persistent effort which was led by the clergy. The Irish community benefitted a great deal from this progress made in the provision of places for catholic children in parish schools during the mid-nineteenth century.
Chapter 9

Irish social organisation in Lancashire

Members of the Irish community in Lancashire did not spend all their time at work, in school or at home. When the workday or lessons ended in the evening, or at midday on Saturdays, there was time to pass which could be spent in the company of other people, time for social life. But what sort of social arrangements existed generally in urban Lancashire? And, more particularly, how did that very gregarious group, the Irish immigrant community, socialise?

By the 1840s the British working class had already become - as it was to remain for a hundred years - perhaps the most 'clubbable' working class in Europe. The facility with which English working men formed societies in the early nineteenth century is formidable... It seems at times that half a dozen working men could scarcely sit in a room together without appointing a chairman. 1

The favourite place for informal gathering was, of course, the public house. The English public house was well-established as a 'trading centre and meeting place and a "home from home" for working men' in rural districts and in the towns. 2 Access to parks or any kind of open country was very restricted during the mid-nineteenth century, especially in towns such as Liverpool and Manchester. So besides being a convenient and convivial place to meet with friends and acquaintances, the urban public house also offered a welcome respite from the overcrowded and unhealthy housing conditions so many town dwellers had to endure.

But the most obvious attraction of nineteenth-century public houses and beershops was the availability of beer, wine and spirits. And as we saw in chapter 6, the numerous public

1. E.P. Thompson, The making of the English working class, pp 672-3
houses and beershops that proliferated in the growing English towns, while encouraging a social life for working people, also produced a social by-product - drunkenness. The single greatest problem Lancashire's policemen faced during the mid-nineteenth century was drunkenness. But the cause of drunkenness was not simply that drink was easily had in public houses. Industrialisation and urbanisation exerted strains on those who lived in factory towns. Many persons from rural areas of the United Kingdom, including Ireland, came to Lancashire's towns. Accustomed to working in the open air, they often found labouring or factory work in towns very tedious. Also living conditions were a step down from rural life, and both these influences could lead to heavy drinking. But even for someone who never knew anything but an urban existence, living in a town such as Liverpool could be oppressive and frustrating, and it was very easy to turn to drink to ease the tension. But most of the people patronising public houses were not drunks. Rather, they were persons looking for fellowship, and a public house was the most likely place in which to find it.

But by the 1840s there were other alternatives for informal socialising beyond the doors of the public house. Despite rapid urbanisation, towns such as Preston, St Helens, Widnes and Oldham were still surrounded by open country during the mid-nineteenth century, and it was not difficult for working people to get out of the towns for a Sunday walk. The extension of railway services made day excursions to the seaside or into the country possible too. Many country pastimes were carried on in the towns. 'Pigeon-flying, prize-fighting and footracing continued unabated' as popular amusements right up to the 1870s in towns such as St Helens. Urban people still showed 'a great zest for life and did not allow any opportunity for enjoyment to pass by - not even a public hanging'.

Popular music halls were also making their appearance in large towns, and at Manchester, which had a reputation as a 'decidedly musical place', there were regular Monday night

3. Barker and Harris, St Helens, p.313
4. Ibid., p.314
concerts 'for the operative classes'.

I visited it the other night. The musical attractions, to be sure, were rather mild - a small organ, a piano, an amateur chorus of some thirty voices, assisted by a few professors of only local celebrity. But the programme comprised selections from Handel, Meyerbeer, Rossini and Bishop; and if these were at the best only respectably performed, they were listened to with the most reverent silence, and then applauded to the echo by an assemblage of between two and three thousand working men and women, who had respectively paid their threepence for admission, and who took up nearly the entire area of the Free Trade Hall. 5

But the most popular sort of casual congeniality was still thriving in Lancashire's towns. Even in the grim setting of working-class neighbourhoods,

Every evening after mill hours these streets, deserted as they are except at meal times during the day, present a scene of very considerable quiet enjoyment. The people all appear to be on the best terms with each other, and laugh and gossip from window to window, and door to door. The women, in particular, are fond of sitting in groups upon their thresholds sewing and knitting; the children sprawl about beside them. Amid all the grime and dinginess of the place, there is no lack of homely comforts, good health and good spirits. 6

So there was plenty of informal social life in urban Lancashire for working people.

But the 'clubbable' English working men often put their social relations on a more formal and organised basis. Most often they formed themselves into friendly societies, which along with the public house were 'labour's mass institutions'. 7 'The friendly society was the one social institution that touched the adult lives of a near majority of the working population.' 8 The friendly societies served a dual purpose. They provided opportunities for members to gather in a local public house to drink and talk at fortnightly or monthly meetings. And they offered a useful social insurance scheme. Friendly society members contributed to a common fund, part of which each could claim in the event of illness or death in their family. Ratepayers during the early nineteenth century looked upon friendly societies as 'useful organisations for lowering the poor rate' because they were the 'pioneers' of the self-help

5. Reach, Manchester and the cotton districts in 1849, p. 57
6. Ibid., p. 8
7. Foster, Class struggle, p. 220
8. Ibid., p. 216; Anderson, Family structure, p. 138
movement among working men. And during the whole 1815-75 period their numbers far outnumbered those belonging to trade unions or cooperative societies. Friendly societies only succeeded because of the 'energy and determination' of their membership and were an important way in which 'those without political power sought to protect themselves in an increasingly industrialised society'. Many clubs operated on the county and regional levels, and some were national societies.

Even though the financial benefits were very limited, the insurance against misfortune was an attractive feature of the friendly societies. But working men were also very interested in the clubs' social activities. Most friendly societies met in public houses, which advanced the importance of that already long-established community centre. The local public house was usually the only suitable place where a number of men could gather, 'and it also seems that the innkeepers themselves did much to promote the formation of clubs meeting on the premises with an eye to the business which would result'. The ostensible reason for holding meetings was so that the club's receiver could collect the members' subscriptions. But the end of official business 'did not necessarily mean an end to the revelry'. A club or lodge was often permitted to meet in a room in a public house free of charge provided that they purchased at least a certain quantity of drink, which might be paid for from club funds or by a supplementary collection.

One reason that English working men were 'clubbable' during the mid-nineteenth century was the tradition of working-class solidarity and awareness of common interest which developed during the widespread labour agitations of the first half of the nineteenth century. We shall see in chapter 10 that this broadly-based, but fragile, unity among working men declined from the mid-1840s. This disintegration of working-class awareness emphasises the significance of the friendly societies; 'as institutions the friendly societies actually survived, during a period when so much else did not'.

10. Anderson, op. cit., pp 138-9
11. Gosden, op. cit., p.115; Foster op. cit., p.217
12. Gosden, op. cit., p.117
13. Ibid., p.117
It is also significant that they remained exclusively organisations of, and for, working people. Despite periods of great financial difficulty, they never resorted to outside help; they remained free of the otherwise pervasive influence of the clerical establishment and the tradesmen petty bourgeoisie. 14

There was another type of mutual insurance organisation in English towns, which 'thrived more fully in Lancashire than in most parts of the country'. They were known as collecting or burial societies and their appeal 'seems to have rested upon the dread of working people for the pauper funeral of the nineteenth century'. 15 Those who were unable to pay premiums for insurance against both sickness and death often joined a friendly society which limited itself to providing insurance against funeral expenses. Even in the 1870s, there were some burial societies which insured against sickness, as well as death, but most did not. There were usually house to house subscription collections on a regular basis, and the larger societies bore a close resemblance to industrial assurance companies. 16 The house to house collection eliminated the social aspect of the other friendly societies from the burial clubs' function and consequently did very little to bring working people together, except, of course, at funerals.

Another important working-class organisation which had a great deal of significance socially was the trade union movement, which shall be discussed in detail at the end of the chapter.

There were many diverse social activities open to working people in urban Lancashire during the mid-nineteenth century. But where, if anywhere, did the Irish community fit into this picture? In no way were the Irish immigrants who arrived in Lancashire during 1846-71 simply English people who lived on the other side of the Irish Sea. Their background was very different from that of both urban and rural people in England. Obvious cultural and national differences between the immigrant Irish and the native community were further accentuated by the fact that the preponderance of the Irish were Roman Catholics.

14. Foster, Class struggle, pp 217-8
15. Gosden, op. cit., p.58
16. Ibid., pp 58-9
The Lancashire Irish seemed to many contemporaries to be uninterested in the English way of life. Socially, they organised along lines familiar to them from their homeland, which heightened their awareness of being a separate cultural and national group within the general population of Lancashire. This awareness was maintained by fresh arrivals from Ireland during 1846-71. What social alternatives did the Irish have within their community during the mid-nineteenth century?

The public house was a favourite convergence for Irish immigrants because it 'afforded an easy and cheap means of escape from the nightmare of conditions' in the crowded working-class neighbourhoods and was 'the poor man's club, where the Irish could meet their friends and hear read the latest news of home'. Irish newspapers, such as the Nation, which were too expensive for most people to buy regularly, were often read out in public houses. But the attractive 'brightness and warmth' of the public houses and beershops caused a serious problem in the Irish community, an alarming prevalence of intemperance. As we saw in chapter 6, a disproportionately large part of the widespread problem of drunkenness in urban Lancashire was in the Irish community. But serious efforts were made under the auspices of the catholic church to check this very grave situation. During the mid-1840s Fr Mathew, the Irish 'apostle of temperance', visited Lancashire and administered the pledge of total abstinence from intoxicating drink to many thousands of persons. It appears that while the initial enthusiasm lasted, business in public houses did show a decline. But it was not long before trade was brisk again. An Irish Roman Catholic Temperance Association was founded at Manchester in 1846 and well-attended weekly meetings were held. But this organisation dropped from sight very quickly. A priest who was very active in the Liverpool Irish community, Fr James

17. M.E. Brock, Irish immigrants in Manchester, no pagination
18. J. Bennet, Fr Nugent of Liverpool, p.104
19. Ibid., p.105
20. M/R Courier, 15 July 1846
Nugent, also tried to combat drunkenness among the Irish. Continuous preaching against excessive drinking did not seem sufficient to improve things on Liverpool's north side, so on St Patrick's day 1865 Nugent and some 'other gentlemen' acting upon the principle that the attractions of the gin shop can only be counteracted by attractions of some other kind... engaged Bevington Hall, in which, on two nights of the week, Monday and Saturdays, musical and other entertainments will be given, seasoned with lectures and addresses upon subjects most likely to be interesting and beneficial to the class they are intended to reach.

Fr Nugent also hoped to start a savings bank and 'other agencies of moral, and social improvement', but the project was short-lived. A more successful venture was undertaken seven years later when Fr Nugent founded a Catholic Total Abstinence League of the Cross. The first person to take the abstinence pledge was John Denvir, a man we shall meet again. But despite attempts such as these to introduce social alternatives to public houses for the Irish, drunkenness remained a grave problem among them right up to the end of the nineteenth century.

The Irish did not confine themselves to the casual social life of public houses, and, as their British neighbours did, they organised themselves into more formal associations. Although there is very little known about them, there were versions of the agrarian secret societies, which proliferated in Ireland during the first half of the nineteenth century, among the Lancashire Irish. These secret fraternities were usually known by a title which included the word Hibernian. They were ostensibly formed out of a desire to provide self-defence for the Irish catholic community, but they were more probably the by-product of the custom of organisation among Irishmen which went back well into the eighteenth century. The Lancashire Hibernian societies, which were most visible during 1846-50, probably contained men from the whiteboy tradition and from the more formalised ribbon lodges of Ireland. The loosely structured agrarian groups usually called whiteboys, after their practice of wearing white shirts in order to identify each other in

21. Lpool Mercury, 18 Mar 1865
22. Bennet, op. cit., pp 107-8
darkness, were organised on a very local basis in Ireland to protect the agricultural labourer and small tenant farmer from victimization under the landlord system. Sometimes a crude oath was involved. Their aim was to 'keep the actual occupant in the possession of his land and in general to regulate the relation of landlord and tenant for the benefit of the latter'.

They did not aim at destroying the existing land system. 'Instead they sought to enforce a code of good conduct within the terms of reference of the existing tenurial system. They pursued a limited, concrete, pragmatic programme.'

When the agrarian equilibrium between tenant and landowners was upset, for example, by a rent increase or ejectment, the local agrarian executive, dormant as long as the tacitly understood land code was not violated, was activated and the offending party might find a threatening notice tacked to his door, several of his cattle houghed or a bullet whistling past his ear. Basically, 'the whiteboys' operations may be said to have been confined to agrarian outrages, for the redress of grievances'.

The ribbonmen had their origins in the Defender movement of Ulster, which was a vaguely federated, defensive league directed against militant protestantism. A formal oath was involved in obtaining membership. One florid account claims that ribbonism was established 'for the protection of the catholic peasantry; as a bodyguard for the catholic priest, and for the deliverance of Ireland from the heel of the oppressor'. But the original purpose in founding ribbon lodges was to counter protestant belligerence and injustice. The ribbonmen were more formally organised than the whiteboys, but the pretension that there was a national network of lodges directed by a central

23. T.F. McGrath, History of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (Cleveland, Ohio, 1898), p.45
committee was 'largely based on the fertile imaginations of informers intent on earning their rewards'. But though the ribbonmen originated in sectarian Ulster strife at the turn of the nineteenth century, the land question almost immediately became their prime concern. Of course, as most landlords were protestant and most tenants catholic, such disputes could always be represented as essentially sectarian, but so predominantly economic were the issues involved that the term ribbonism soon came to be applied generically to all agrarian unrest, even where the victims were catholics. So even though the ribbonmen were originally intended as defenders of catholicism, maintenance of the tenant farmer's and agricultural labourer's position on the land was a more immediate concern.

But for a former ribbonman or whiteboy living in Lancashire the land question had been resolved. Still some of them organised into secret Hibernian societies. Protection of agrarian rights or defence against physical attack were not issues in urban Lancashire and it appears that the Hibernians organised themselves mainly around catholicism. During the early years of mass Irish immigration into Lancashire, before a parish oriented social life could evolve, the Hibernians probably provided a valuable social outlet for newly-arrived Irishmen. Particularly in Liverpool, as we shall see, they were the organisers of St Patrick's day celebrations and sometimes they organised bands to play at Irish social functions. For the most part they tried to stay out of the public eye and after 1850 they drop from view almost entirely. John Denvir, a Liverpool Irishman, recalled that the Lancashire Hibernians opposed the Fenian movement because their fanatical catholicism was offended by the IRB's non-sectarian republicanism. But it is said that the Hibernians retained part of the social utility they had in rural Ireland. An 'Irish brother' who landed in Lancashire friendless and jobless could expect help from the local Hibernians. But likewise, the Irish stranger in Lancashire might be victimised by the Hibernians' introspection.

27. Lee, op. cit., p.27
28. Ibid., p.26
29. John Denvir, The Irish in Britain, p.131
30. Bergin, op. cit., p.31
More than one poor fellow coming fresh from Ireland to work at the Liverpool docks, and expecting to be at least civilly treated by his fellow-workmen – who were, and are, most of his own nationality – has found himself cruelly deceived. If he did not know the grip or the password, the heaviest part of the work could, somehow, be thrown upon him, while occasionally he would receive bodily injury. 31

It also has been claimed that the secret Hibernian societies in England 'helped to strengthen radical and chartist organisations in northern England', 32 but there is no evidence that this was the case in Lancashire. Indeed, the evidence which exists suggests that the Hibernian associations kept their distance from any such involvements. But there were darker motives than the 'defence of the faith' assigned to the Hibernians in England. 33

In a report to the Home Office dated January 1863 it was alleged that ribbon societies existed 'in nearly all the large towns of England and Scotland where Irishmen are congregated – London, perhaps, excepted'. Newcastle on Tyne was the British headquarters of the ribbon lodges. These Hibernian societies sometimes organised 'nominally for sick and burial purposes', but in fact had more sinister designs, which even went as far as planning murders which took place in Ireland. 34

Between these lodges and those existing in Ireland, delegates pass periodically to and fro, attending quarterly meetings at some given place either in this country /Ireland/, or in England or Scotland, (never twice consecutively in the same place), their expenses being paid out of the general fund created by contributions paid by the members of this unlawful confederacy to the parish masters of their respective lodges, who in the great majority of cases are publicans. The subscription is usually one shilling per man per month. The different lodges in England are so many safe harbours for culprits who have committed murder or other serious crimes in this country /Ireland/; where they are not only protected, but are certain of obtaining employment in the neighbourhood of such lodges. Hence one of the main difficulties in being able to trace offenders against the laws.... 35

31. Denvir, op. cit., p.131
33. Bergin, op. cit., p.85
34. Report of CC, Staffordshire Constabulary, Feb 1865 (SPO, RP, 1865/208)
35. W. Browning to HO, 2 Jan 1863 (SPO, RP, 1864/284)
It is extremely unlikely that anything so elaborate existed among the northern England Hibernians. These documents should be interpreted as meaning that the Hibernian societies were more popular in Newcastle than elsewhere, or the author might have been actually writing about the Fenian movement, which he confused with the whiteboy-ribbon societies.

The ribbonmen in Ireland and America eventually became the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), 'essentially a catholic society....for the defence of the faith in Ireland'. The AOH registered themselves in Ireland as the Ancient Order of Hibernians Benefit Society in 1896, but they seem to have all but vanished in Great Britain by that date. 36 The peak of their influence was in the 1840s and early 1850s, but after that period they declined into insignificance.

There were also mutual insurance groups, to provide security against the expenses of illness and death, but they had their social relevance too. The Head Constable of Liverpool's police force reported in 1865 that there were many of these clubs in the neighbourhoods of the north side of the town and that they were organised specifically to serve the Irish. 37 That meetings of these clubs provided at least one type of social outlet is illustrated by an account of one which took place in 1865 at Liverpool.

Last evening, one of the most uproarious and disgraceful meetings perhaps ever held in this town took place in the Oddfellows Hall, in connection with the St Patrick's Sick and Burial Society. Even though Fr Nugent was present, along with clergymen representing branches of the society in other Lancashire towns, the meeting was characterised by shouting, fist-fights and 'indescribable disorder', as arguments over who should be admitted to the meeting broke out all around the hall.

During the meeting the hall resembled a heated furnace, and at the close of the turbulent proceedings there was a wholesale rush to the public houses in the neighbourhood to quench the thirst which excessive heat had produced. 38

36. Bergin, op. cit., p.85
37. HC Grieg to Watch Cttee, 26 Sept 1865 (LCL, Head Constable's reports, 352POL/2/3, no. 170, pp 209-10)
38. Lpool Mercury, 9 Aug 1865
From the scant evidence which survives, it appears there were very few Irish friendly societies organised on the same basis as other clubs in England, that is, with regular meetings for subscription payments and perhaps other social activities. The indexes of the Registry of Friendly Societies for Lancashire do not reveal a single obviously Irish club which deposited their rules with the Registry up to 1875.\(^{39}\) Most of the Irish clubs were collecting societies organised on a very local basis. Their main function was to provide insurance against funeral expenses, and their socialising role was not very great. They provided social insurance rather than a social life. But the meagre social life which burial clubs could offer the Irish community was more than compensated for by other organisations.

An important feature of English working-class organisations was their independence of any sort of patronage. As we saw, working-class friendly societies or trade associations were only as successful as their members made them. The only principle that they required on which to base their organisation was a common desire for fraternity to protect themselves from economic adversity; to broaden their social vistas; and to further their industrial aims. The Anglican and dissenting churches did little to foster organisation among English workers and, as social focii, the churches had very little importance. But it is in just this respect that the immigrant Irish showed a distinct difference from their British neighbours. Most of the organisations started by them and for them during the mid-nineteenth century were under the patronage of the Catholic church. In fact, the only major organisation of Lancashire Irishmen during 1846-71 that was established without church approval or support was the Irish Republican Brotherhood. But a discussion of that group and its social function must wait till chapter 12.

39. Registry of Friendly Societies, Lancashire, 1774-1875 (PRO, Indexes to rules and amendments, series 1, F.S.2)
There had been a catholic club in Liverpool since 1844, which was intended to further catholic charity and to defend catholic interests politically. But the Catholic Club was an organisation of middle-class catholics, and it had little relevance, socially or otherwise, for the vast body of the Liverpool Irish, although prominent figures in the Irish community, such as John Denvir, were members. One of its principal acts was to set up a night shelter for homeless children of all religions. Another of Fr Nugent's projects was the foundation of the Catholic Institute in Hope Street, Liverpool. It opened in 1853 and Nugent hoped it would quickly become a 'centre of catholic life'. It never achieved that status, but besides a very good day school for boys, there were public reading rooms and lectures. There were also catholic benevolent associations in Lancashire. One of these was established at Liverpool in 1810 to collect funds to help the sick poor. The funds collected were distributed to each catholic clergyman in the town every month, 'according to the funds which the treasurer has at his disposal'. It appears that there was a strong Irish element in the membership of the Catholic Benevolent Society because when the lodges held processions 'flags, banners and green sashes' were displayed. But it was remarked with particular reference to the Irish that

Considering the large proportion of the population of Liverpool who profess the catholic faith, the small number of annual subscribers to the Catholic Benevolent Society excites surprise. There was an organisation in Preston which more closely resembled English friendly societies. It was called the United Order of Catholic Brethren and claimed a membership of over 1,500. The society was established to 'offset the influence of the Orangemen', who had been gaining strength in the town since 1851. But unlike other friendly societies in England, the United Order was mainly religious in character. Its first rule placed the society 'under the special patronage of the Blessed Virgin' and special daily prayers were recommended to help achieve the conversion of England.

40. Bennet, Fr Nugent of Liverpool, pp 40-1
41. Ibid., pp 24-6
42. Porcupine, 2 Mar 1867
43. Supt Ride to HC Grieg, 6 June 1864 (LCL, Head Constable's reports, 352POL/2/3, no. 133, p.161)
44. Porcupine, 2 Mar 1867
But organisations such as Liverpool's Catholic Club or Preston's Order of Catholic Brethren were not the kind of organisations which would provide a social life for very many Irish Catholics. As in Ireland, the main nucleus of Irish social life was the Catholic parish. During the year various social affairs were arranged on the parish level throughout urban Lancashire. But just the fact that Irish people, even if only 40% of them, came to mass on Sundays and sent their children to local Catholic school, helped them to get to know each other better. This informal socialising was supplemented by parish organisations, usually known as guilds or confraternities. In 1847 the Catholic Vicar apostolic of the Lancashire district wrote that

There is hardly a chapel to be found in which there is not some pious confraternity; in the majority there are two. It is evident from experience that these societies have much conduced to the piety of the faithful and to the strengthening and increasing of their devotion. The confraternities which seem most to appeal to the faithful are those which pertain to the holy eucharist and the honour of Blessed Mary ever virgin. Everywhere that these confraternities have been set up the devotion of the people has instantly begun to increase and be set ablaze. 46

The diocese of Liverpool visitation returns show that by 1865 every parish in Liverpool, Preston, St Helens and Widnes had a guild of some description connected with it. 47 The most notable of these parish organisations was the Catholic Young Men's Society. This movement was introduced into Lancashire by Dean O'Brien of Limerick in 1854. The objects of the society were 'mutual improvement, and the extension of the spirit of religion and brotherly love'. 48 The essential rule of the society was at least monthly attendance at holy communion. The Society's branches hoped to provide the 'means for training its members in habits of regularity, discipline, obedience, and manly Christian piety'. 49 The 'means' the Society adopted were 'prayer, frequentation of the sacraments, public lectures, private classes, a library and a reading room'.

46. Geo. Brown, relationem de statu religionis in hoc districtu Lancastriensi, 11 July 1847 (LRO, RCLv)
47. Diocese of Lpool, visitation returns, 1865 (LRO, RCLv)
49. T. Burke, Catholic history of Liverpool, pp 124-5
A social and intellectual side could be developed inside each separate society, suited to the rank and characters of its members, which served as an antidote to outside temptations, and carried on under the banner of the church, minimised the possibility of any weakening of their faith. 50

But besides being a way of using social life to maintain the influence of the catholic religion, the Catholic Young Men's Societies were 'the first attempts to bring together all classes of catholics on the common ground of unity of faith'. 51 The monthly gatherings were addressed by prominent local catholics, who 'but for these societies would have had few opportunities of coming into contact with the labouring Irish population'. 52

Eight Liverpool parishes had branches of the Young Men's Society in 1862, with a total enrolled membership of over 2,500, although only about 1,500 attended the weekly meetings. Seven of the branches had reading rooms which were open during the evenings, and six had lending libraries, with a total collection of 1,800 books. All the societies sponsored public lectures, concerts and dramatic presentations, and two offered evening instruction in the 3Rs. But all the Catholic Young Men's Societies in Liverpool also offered another facility which was their main similarity with secular clubs. All the eight parochial societies had burial funds and five of them had sick funds. Two branches had provident, or savings, funds, and St Nicholas's, Fr Nugent's parish, even had a building society. 53

So the Catholic Young Men's Society did much more than strengthen the religious fidelity of the members. The reading rooms, lectures and concerts were all intended to bring young working men together, most of whom were from the Irish community. And the protection from financial difficulties brought on by sickness and death was also part of their general programme. The Catholic Young Men's Society did offer a genuinely attractive social alternative to the public houses and street corners.

50. Catholic Young Men's Society, op. cit., p.31
51. Burke, op. cit., p.125
52. Ibid., p.125
53. Catholic Young Men's Society, op. cit., pp 20-2
Even though we know there were parochial organisations at Preston and Widnes, we do not know if they were branches of the Catholic Young Men's Society because they did not report at the 1861 conference. But the branch established at St Helens in 1859 had 100 members, a library of 400 volumes, frequent lectures and a sick club. The St Helens branch was so successful that a large hall, accommodating 400 persons, was being built. 54 Manchester, Salford and Oldham all had their branches of the Young Men's Society. Three of Manchester's parishes had branches, with 700 members, 400 of whom could be expected to turn up at weekly meetings. St Wilfrid's branch in Hulme was only getting started in 1862. The other two societies had reading rooms and lending libraries with a total of 600 volumes. Lectures and amusements such as concerts were organised and, during the winter months, lessons in subjects 'for mutual improvement' were conducted by the members themselves. There was a burial fund and a savings fund as well. At St Augustine's a total abstinence guild was 'making rapid progress'. Even though there were only three branches in such a large city as Manchester, membership was increasing rapidly through energetic canvassing by the members. 55

The parish log-books available for St John's parish in Salford tell us something about other parochial groups an Irish catholic in Lancashire could join. Besides the Catholic Young Men's Society, who went to mass and communion together each month, 56 there was also a Confraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel for women, as well as a women's guild, both of which met regularly to receive communion and recite prayers together. 57 The Catholic Young Men's Society had a thriving branch at Oldham who organised themselves 'to put down sin and falsehood, to extend virtue, intelligence, truth and brotherly love, and implant a love of the holy catholic church'. The membership

54. Ibid., p.24
55. Ibid., p.20
56. St John's log-book, 1860-4, 28 Apr 1861 (Catherdral House, Salford)
57. St John's log-book, 1860-4, 9 June 1861
reached 'several hundreds' by the mid-1860s and the society was regarded as one of the most prominent institutions of the borough, but its vitality gradually declined from that highpoint. From this it can be seen that the Lancashire Irish did have very well organised social institutions based on their local catholic parishes, as well as many casual contacts. This gave them an Irish social life in Lancashire. But integration with the native community was proceeding, if 'only gradually', simply because Lancashire-born Irish were more English than their parents.59

Another interesting way of looking at Irish social life in Lancashire during the mid-nineteenth century is to see how they celebrated St Patrick's day, which was one of the most important occasions on the Irish national calendar. It was traditionally a day of expression of national pride and socialising among the Irish. The most prominent Irish community in Lancashire was in Liverpool, and it was the exceptional circumstance during the mid-nineteenth century when St Patrick's day was not celebrated with some kind of public social event. A favourite way of commemorating the patron saint of Ireland in Liverpool during the 1840s was a procession. In 1846 the Liverpool Repeal Association sponsored a procession of 1,000 to 1,500 Irishmen. There was some apprehension that a public display of this kind would lead to sectarian disturbances in the town and the local catholic clergy recommended to all parishioners that they forego any public demonstrations of national sentiment. The magistrates issued a notice which reminded the Irish that there was 'a disposable force at command to prevent any breach of the peace', but there was no trouble of any sort when the procession took place.60 That evening a St Patrick's day dinner was held at the Royal Liver Theatre. About 200 persons attended and the scene was recorded by the Tory Liverpool Courier.

53. T. Curley, The catholic history of Oldham, p.51; Foster, Class struggle, p.245
59. Brock, Irish immigrants in Manchester, Pt.I, chapter 1, no pagination.
60. Lpool Courier, 18 Mar 1846
At the top of the centre table, immediately behind the president, was stationed the harper, who played upon a real Irish harp; but the music he drew forth, to our ears, was anything but soft, pleasing or soothing. The man himself is as jolly a looking soul as you could meet with. Notwithstanding the Nation newspaper had recommended that the harper should be habited in a high conical cap and a long scarlet cloak, and that he should wear a long white beard, our harper of last night, although he had a white beard and hair, and it might be said his face radiated - for it was tremendously red, either from paint or some other cause - wore upon his head a crown of brillants, and was dressed in a sort of dirty, yellow-coloured cloak, edged with green, and a collar somewhat after the fashion of our ancient stagecoachmen, edged with the same vernal colour - in fact, he looked like a king of tragedy in a good humour - but contrary to the custom both of tragic heroes, and of, so far as we are acquainted, with the dress of ancient Irish harpers, upon his nose were perched a huge pair of spectacles, which combined with the capers he cut in 'stricking the lyre', gave him a most peculiar and serio-comic appearance; but after all, we must do him the justice to say that his efforts were greatly admired.

Again in 1847 the catholic clergy asked that no processions be held on St Patrick's day in Liverpool. But the Hibernian societies announced their intention to hold a procession to St Anne's church in Edge Hill, where they would attend a high mass. Use of the church was made contingent on the Hibernians' march being called off, a condition they agreed to. But on 17 March there was procession of men 'gaily dressed, with sashes, rosettes, etc.' part of the way to the church. Even though it was 'but a miserable affair, consisting only of about one hundred and seventy persons, exclusive of four bands of music, numbering sixty-two persons in all', the Hibernians were breaking faith with their bishop in acting contrary to the express desire of their pastors, and in opposition to the wishes of the magistrates and people of Liverpool.

But in the view of the Liverpool Mercury, the Hibernians were guilty of much more than being less than completely honest with the catholic clergy.

In opposition to the earnest entreaties of the catholic bishop of this district, and the clergymen of the town, St Patrick's day was celebrated on Wednesday last by a public procession - at a time when a large number of the people of Ireland are plunged into the deepest distress by poverty, famine and fever, and when the resources of the benevolent people of England and America are taxed to the utmost in endeavouring to mitigate the evils attending this dreadful state of things. Hundreds of pounds, which could have otherwise been so desirably appropriated, have been wasted in the geegaw tomfooleries of a procession.
St Patrick's day 1848 passed over very quietly in Liverpool, even though there was agitation in Lancashire by the Irish Confederate movement, which shall be discussed more fully in chapter 11, and the Chartists, who were trying to enlist Irish emigrant support by espousing the Confederates' national aspirations. Troops were present to stifle any Confederate uprising, but there were no processions or social gatherings that year at all. The only procession in 1849 passed in front of the local magistrates.

On Monday /19 March/ some forty unmistakable specimens of the genus homo... were placed in the dock on the very innocent charge of 'drowning their shamrock', and afterwards becoming uproarious, or, as the police office parlance has it, 'drunk and disorderly'. They were severally fined 5s., which they paid with the resignation of martyrs to the 'good ould cause' - drunkenness. But things were much livelier in Liverpool the following year.

Some excitement was caused when the Liverpool Hibernians announced a St Patrick's day procession. A counter-placard, allegedly issued by the Orangemen called upon the magistrates to ban the procession or face the possibility of the Orangemen breaking it up. The local Orange Order claimed to have no part in the production of the notice, but there was reason to suspect that it was the production of the Hibernian Societies and that it was put out for the purpose of causing the magistrates to give them the services of a body of police, and thus add the countenance of the ruling powers of the town to their otherwise contemptible procession.

The Courier found the Hibernians' 1850 production, which proceeded without interference, less than impressive. The procession was accompanied by a few bands of music and decorated with some bits of dirty silk, hung on poles, called 'colours'. The exhibitioners might have submitted these things to the washing-tub with advantage, as they would have looked a trifle better had they been clean. These 'colours' bore pictures, such as they were. One had the big beggarman, Daniel O'Connell, upon it, with a face like a pancake, stuck with raisins, and sprinkled with ginger. Another bore upon its surface 'Sarsfield the brave', who looked very like a man going through a dancing lesson, and near him was the portrait of a dog.

61. Lpool Courier, 18 Mar 1846
62. Lpool Mercury, supplement, 19 Mar 1847
63. Lpool Courier, 22 Mar 1848
64. Lpool Courier, 21 Mar 1849
which might have passed for a donkey. These and similar absurd devices formed the staple of the decorations. A meaner-looking procession has never been seen within the town of Liverpool. 65

The last of the Hibernians' St Patrick's day processions took place in 1851. Despite heavy rain

a very large number of the Hibernian societies mustered, and the men, for the most part, were well and respectably dressed, many of them wearing rich green silk scarves, tastefully trimmed and decorated. They perambulated the principal streets of the town, headed by the banners of the respective societies to which they belonged, accompanied by some ten or a dozen bands of music, and followed by troops of children and idlers, to such an extent that the streets in many instances were blocked up, and business almost suspended save in the public houses, at which there were frequent calls by the parties forming the procession and following it. So far as the procession was concerned, it passed off quietly, and the parties, on the whole, were well-conducted, but it was pitiful to see a number of well-clad men, and women too, drenched to the skin, walking, in many instances, up to their ankles in gutter, for no purpose of utility. In the neighbourhood of St James's Street many drunken riots occurred during the day. 66

Interest in the nationalistic ostentation of the St Patrick's day procession diminished a great deal during 1851-2, and on 17 March of the latter year no procession was held. The decision not to hold a procession was probably influenced by a resurgence of the Orange Order and serious sectarian disturbances which occurred the summer before. During the remainder of the nineteenth century there were no more public St Patrick's day demonstrations on the streets of Liverpool. The main reason for this was that all processions where it was 'intended to exhibit party badges or do anything calculated to create a breach of the peace' were banned from November 1852 because of the fear of widespread intercommunal rioting between Irish and Orangemen. 67 But even if partisan demonstrations had not been illegal, they probably would have died off very quickly anyway. The sponsors of the processions, the Hibernian societies, declined into insignificance as a social force from 1850 and this removed the principal impetus from the organisation of nationalist processions on St Patrick's day. Social life for the Irish

65. Lpool Courier, 20 Mar 1850
66. Lpool Mercury, 18 Mar 1851
67. Orders of the watch cttee to the Head Constable, 27 Nov 1852 (LCL, 352POL/1/3)
community was sufficiently developed by the early 1850s so that a parade of a small group of enthusiasts with green sashes and patriotic banners was not necessary to remind people to identify with their national group. Also, the size of the Irish community in Liverpool was so great, at least 118,000 out of 375,000 persons, that the native population did not need to be reminded of their presence or their cultural identity.

During the next twenty years St Patrick's day was commemorated very quietly in Liverpool. Dinners and soirees were held in schools and concert halls around the town. These functions were never attended by more than a few thousand persons altogether, which means that the vast majority of the Irish community engaged in private socialising, if they celebrated St Patrick's day at all. But this does not mean that the emigrant community in Lancashire lost interest in Irish nationalism after 1851. We shall see that the Irish Republican Brotherhood had an extensive organisation in Lancashire. And during the Irish land agitation and home rule movement of the 1880s the Irish National Land League and, later, the Irish National League found a great deal of active support in the north of England. But this was organised political activity, and the Irish community supported the cause with funds and votes, which were worth infinitely more than pointless processions of a few hundred persons.

We saw in chapter 6 that during the second half of the nineteenth century the Irish were a disproportionately large part of the Liverpool constabulary's drunkenness problem. It would be easy to assume that St Patrick's day in Liverpool was characterised by police courts full of inebriated Hibernians and the streets echoing with sentimental ballads, punches and breaking glass. But after 1851 that side of St Patrick's day socialising was eclipsed by a general tranquility. The police never had extra work on St Patrick's day during 1852-71 in Liverpool or elsewhere in Lancashire, and on occasion 17 March was 'exceptionally quiet', even compared with an ordinary day.  

68. Liverpool Courier, 18 Mar 1869
Those who attended the organised concerts and dinners on St Patrick's day heard Irish music and poetry, an occasional speech and went through several toasts, the health of the pope often being proposed before that of the queen. 69 These entertainments were organised by groups such as the Catholic Club, the Irish Patriotic Society, the Catholic Young Men's Society and, during the early 1860s, the National Brotherhood of St Patrick. In 1858 a prominent local Irish solicitor, John Yates, attended one of these soirées at the Concert Hall in Lord Nelson Street and made a sensible speech in the course of which he congratulated the audience upon the great social progress which had of late years been made amongst Irishmen. He contrasted the happy manner in which St Patrick's day was celebrated that night in Liverpool with the way in which it was celebrated twenty years ago, when most disgraceful scenes took place. 70

Several years later the Liverpool magazine Porcupine also took up this theme. St Patrick's day 1861 was celebrated this time after a very much more civilised fashion than in Liverpool used to be the habit. There were no heads broken, and no police interference was needed. The feast this time was preferred to the fray....We have some fault to find with our Irish friends in Liverpool. Nothing could be in worse taste than the foolery of drinking the Pope's health before the Queen's....we were otherwise rather pleased with the Irish demonstrations in Liverpool. The eloquence was not of a very exalted character; but then it was not nearly so nonsensical as usual. We discovered no allusions to pikes; we do not recollect having heard ourselves stigmatised as the bloody Saxon....71

Porcupine's reference to the popular Irish custom of drinking the health of the pope before that of the queen illustrates the paramount social importance of the catholic church in the Irish community. In terms of nationality, the Irish did not regard the British monarch as their 'own'. But during the mid-nineteenth century the Irish, whether in Ireland or Britain, did not have a prominent Irish personality, much less a royal dynasty, to identify with and turn to for national leadership. But they did have a very important national institution in the catholic church. And that institution had a world-wide leader, who was, therefore, the spiritual leader of every Irish catholic, the pope. In the absence of a

69. Lpool Courier, 19 Mar 1859
70. Lpool Courier, 20 Mar 1858
71. Porcupine, 30 Mar 1861
national figure, the Irish substituted their foremost national institution, the church. The church could claim a near monopoly of Irish national allegiance, until the advent of Fenianism.

But the absence of wild scenes in the streets and ultra-nationalist rhetoric in local auditoriums and school halls does not mean that there was no sentimental or national feeling associated with St Patrick's day in Liverpool during the 1860s. Besides the romantic ballads and speeches, the Irish catholic press, which was based in Liverpool at this time, also gave expression to what were widely shared sympathies in the Irish community. A St Patrick's day editorial in the *Lancashire Free Press* in 1860 began with a 'Hurrah for old Ireland' and called for home rule and general reform in Ireland. The *Free Press's* successor, the *Northern Press*, the following year reminded its readers of that love for our native land, the fire of which burns or smoulders in every bosom, never shows itself in a form more distinterested, or more calculated to awaken sympathy, excite admiration, and command respect than when universally manifested in the fraternal and christianly virtuous celebration of the day annually set apart to celebrate the festival of the national saint. No matter how widely dispersed may be the natives of a country, in whose calendar stands the glorious name of a patron saint, the return of that saint's day concentrates their thoughts upon home....

And even though drunkenness had not been a problem on St Patrick's day for a decade, Lancashire Irishmen were reminded that 'the shamrock can now be drowned in the font within the chapel door'.

During 1867-8, when the influence of the Liverpool Irish republican Brotherhood was at its height, St Patrick's day was quieter than usual. The efforts of the local catholic clergy were largely responsible for this. In 1867, when a major Fenian uprising was apprehended by the police (see chapter 12), the celebrations were confined to the chapels, where sermons on St Patrick were delivered. The following year the Irish community of Liverpool were asked by their parish priests to

73. *Northern Press*, 16 Mar 1861
74. *Lpool Courier*, 18 Mar 1867
refrain from any public display of national sentiment. As in many previous years, there were no such demonstrations and a circus and a soirée were organised at the Concert Hall for entertainment. The Courier remarked that the commemoration was all very peaceful and 'rational'. So during the Fenian agitation, when it would have been very easy to poison British opinion against the immigrant Irish communities, the Irish did nothing on their national day to provoke discord. But after 1868, even the organised dinners and concerts died out. Social gatherings to celebrate St Patrick's day became much more localised as groups or acquaintances gathered for private parties. On St Patrick's day 1870 'the streets where the great mass of the Irish population reside presented their ordinary appearance'. And it was reported from the Liverpool police court in 1871 that 'there was no noticeable feature of the court in connection with St Patrick's day'. Although St Patrick's day remained an important day in the emigrant Irishman's social calendar, it seemed progressively less necessary during 1846-71 to demonstrate it publicly. The Irish, as a community, were feeling more at home in Liverpool and the reassurance of nationalist demonstrations was not needed. The maintenance of national identification could be safely relegated to the personal level by 1871.

From the point of view of numbers, the Liverpool Irish community was the largest in Lancashire and it was easier for them to maintain a tradition of St Patrick's day celebrations. But elsewhere in the county, where the concentration of Irish immigrants was less dense, there is a difference in the way St Patrick's day was kept. At Manchester in 1846 St Patrick's day was very quiet, by Liverpool standards.

Yesterday was St Patrick's day, and we may add, a day heretofore looked upon by the police with fear and trembling, devoted as it generally has been by the lower order of Irish to hard drinking and the most riotous exhibitions in honour of the patron saint of 'Ould Ireland'. Fortunately for the peace of

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75. Liverpool Courier, 18 Mar 1867
76. Liverpool Mercury, 18 Mar 1870
77. Liverpool Mercury, 20 Mar 1871
the borough... the day passed over without the slightest outbreak or manifestation, excepting perhaps a procession composed of some ninety or a hundred ragged individuals calling themselves the 'Hibernian Society', and whose appearance would have shamed even the redoubtable John Falstaff himself. After parading a short time, these representatives of the 'finest paisantry' in the world, separated to their homes, content with the honour they had paid St Patrick, but regretting the absence of their accustomed supply of good potheen punch, with which, in days of yore, they were want to be regaled at every calling place. 78

But during 1847-71 there is no mention of any special St Patrick's day celebrations of any kind in Manchester, which shows that the commemoration of this important Irish anniversary devolved to the personal level much more quickly there than it did in Liverpool.

When the Oldham Irish celebrated St Patrick's day at all, they contented themselves with small, quiet affairs, although during 1868-70 Irish music and dancing were put on at an organised soirée at the local Cooperative Hall. 79 Even though the Irish community of Oldham was never very enthusiastic about formal celebrations, the St Patrick's day 'Drunk and Disorderlies' were still being listed in the local newspapers. 80

The Runcorn Gap town of Widnes was also a very quiet place on St Patrick's day and in 1867 'there was not a single case of drunkenness to be tried by the magistrates', even though many Irish families were living in the neighbourhood. 81

Preston's Irish community was never very large during 1846-71, but St Patrick's day attracted a great deal of attention in the local press. On 17 March 1851 there was no public demonstration among the natives of the 'Green Isle', their members being few compared with their countrymen in Liverpool and Manchester. The day, however, passed not over without some brawls and sprees among the natives in Canal Street and Hope Street. 82

St Patrick's day became so quiet during the 1850s that it is not until 1860 that any notice of it is taken again. In that year, 17 March passed 'without any of the displays of Donnybrookism' often associated with it. Indeed 'there was nothing to distinguish it from an ordinary Saturday'. The remarkable tranquility of 1860 was attributed to a measure instituted by the clergy of one of the catholic parishes of Preston.

78. M/R Courier, 18 Mar 1846
79. Oldham Standard, 19 Mar 1870
They issued a printed paper, which bound the holder of it to entire abstinence from intoxicating liquor for three days in honour of St Patrick. Upwards of one thousand of these were distributed, and their effect was exceedingly beneficial.... 83

The abstinence pledge was administered again the following year. Special masses and novenas were held to commemorate St Patrick's anniversary and once again the town was very quiet on 17 March. 'Altogether, the people of Preston may congratulate themselves on the headway temperance is making against the "drowning of the shamrock". 84 It seems that the St Patrick's day abstinence pledge and church services were regular features right up to the end of the 1860s. 85 But from 1863 small social gatherings also began to become popular among the Preston Irish. In particular, St Patrick's lodge of the United Order of Catholic Brethren always held a dinner which was followed by music and dancing. These affairs were always of a 'loyal and convivial character'. 86 By 1870-1 there was little evidence of St Patrick's day celebrating among Preston's Irish community, which shows that Irish social life in Preston was sufficiently diversified by that time so that 17 March did not hold the same social significance that it once did. 87

St Patrick's day was never a very important date for socialising among the Irish at St Helens. But the catholic clergy of that town also made an effort in 1871 to influence the social life of their Irish parishioners. Even though celebrations of 17 March had been entirely confined to the private level during the preceding quarter-century, there was some anxiety about how far these celebrations went. It was announced that a mission was to be held at the main catholic chapel in the town, Lowe House, 'the crowning act' of which was 'the honouring of the festival of the Apostle of Ireland by a solemn triduum'. There is an opportunity for the Irish residents of St Helens to do real honour to their patron saint, and we trust they will be found celebrating the occasion like men who know what was St Patrick's mission on earth. 88

80. Oldham Standard, 26 Mar 1870
81. Runcorn Observer, 23 Mar 1867
82. Preston Guardian, 22 Mar 1851
83. Preston Guardian, 24 Mar 1860
84. Preston Guardian, 23 Mar 1861
85. Preston Guardian, 20 Mar 1869
86. Preston Guardian, 21 Mar 1863
87. Preston Guardian, 19 Mar 1870; Preston Pilot, 22 Mar 1871
Likewise at Salford, where there was no indication that St Patrick's day was one of wild celebrations and busy policemen, the clergy proposed a 'Truce of God' in 1870 and 1871. A high mass was offered on St Patrick's morning and special sermons on St Patrick were preached. All those adhering to the truce obtained a plenary indulgence if they received holy communion on St Patrick's day, and if they abstained from alcoholic drinks, 'except one glass at meal times', from midday of St Patrick's day until noon of the following day, a further 300 days indulgence was granted. Even though the importance of St Patrick's day as an occasion for national revelry among the Lancashire Irish had declined a great deal by the 1860s, the examples of Preston, St Helens and Salford illustrate, first of all, how close the relationship was between the catholic clergy and Irish social life, and, secondly, how the clergy used a traditional celebration to strengthen their influence over the social behaviour of their Irish parishioners.

Outside Liverpool with its large Irish community, the public celebration of St Patrick's day by processions, dinners and concerts quickly lost prominence among the Lancashire Irish during the mid-nineteenth century. And even in Liverpool, there this brand of nationalism survived the longest, St Patrick's day was not being kept by the late 1860s. The Irish community was settled enough by 1871 that private celebrations were enough of a national expression for them. That they did not feel compelled to demonstrate their nationalism ostentatiously is certainly a mark of communal self-confidence and of assimilation into the larger Lancashire community. By the late 1860s the catholic church paid more attention to St Patrick's day than any other organisation which was a way of emphasising and maintaining the intimate bond between religion and Irish social life.

Another important manifestation of social organisation in a particular community is the emergence of a medium of public

88. St Helens Newspaper, 18 Mar 1871
89. St John's log-book, 1869-72, 13 Mar 1870; 12 Mar 1871
expression, for instance, a newspaper. Interest in such a scheme among the Lancashire Irish dates back to the early 1850s when an 'aggregate meeting' of the catholics of Liverpool was held at the Concert Hall 'to unite in measures for establishing, on a firm basis, a journal which shall be devoted to the promotion of catholic purposes, and the defence of catholic rights and interests'. 90

The apparent result of this meeting was the foundation of a publication called the Catholic Citizen, which was mentioned during a St Patrick's day programme in 1852. 91 But its life was very short and no copies of it survive in Lancashire or in the newspaper library of the British Museum at Colindale. The next mention of a newspaper being produced by the Irish community of Lancashire appears in 1856.

The first number of a new weekly newspaper, called the Liverpool Catholic Guardian, was published on Saturday (15 March), making the third organ which that body have started in that town within a little more than two months. 92.

There is no indication of whether these three newspapers coexisted or were successive failures. No copies of any of them exist and they all three disappeared very quickly. But even though the attempt to found a newspaper miscarried during the 1850s, these early endeavours do illustrate an important feature of the Irish press in Lancashire. Without exception these initial ventures, as well as later successful papers, were closely identified with the catholic church, even though the content centred on Ireland and the Irish community in England. The promoters and contributors were all Irish. This relationship between the Irish press and the church shows very clearly that the adjectives Irish and catholic were considered inseparable by the Lancashire Irish and, as we shall see in the next chapter, by their British neighbours. One reason for this was that the Irish were such a large proportion of the catholics in Lancashire and the social connection between the church and the Irish was so intimate that it was unthinkable that the Irish press in Lancashire was not the catholic press at the same time.

90. Lpool Courier, 16 July 1851
91. Lpool Mercury, 19 Mar 1852
92. The Times, 17 Mar 1856
The first number of what became a lasting Irish newspaper appeared on 1 October 1859 and it was called the Lancashire Free Press. The editor was Stephen J. Meany, who was a former journalist with the Dublin Freeman's Journal and several Liverpool newspapers. In his first editorial Meany spelled out the mission of his new paper.

The want of a catholic journal in Liverpool and the great towns of Lancashire has been long felt and deplored. All attempts at establishing a catholic journal in the county have hitherto proved failures. The Lancashire Free Press will honestly and fearlessly vindicate catholic interests at home and abroad; all questions of local and general importance shall be discussed on the broadest grounds, and with calmness and forebearance to those who may dissent from its views - the triumph of its principles shall be sought to be obtained only by appealing to the understanding, the reason, and the moral feelings of its readers. 93

But the predominating position of the Irish among Lancashire catholics was not overlooked.

The Lancashire Free Press would but ill discharge this, its preliminary task, if it failed to refer to that element which has formed the mainstay, the procreating power, and the propagandism of catholicism in England. To the Irish race throughout Lancashire - throughout England - we say that for them, and the 'old land' from whence they came, we ever wield a ready and willing pen. Our highest ambition is to see the representatives in this country of one of the oldest and noblest of the races of mankind, worthy of the country that gave them birth, worthy too of the privileges which, as British subjects, they enjoy. We would have them now, as ever, steeped in Irish memories, mindful and cherishing of that national sentiment which forms their distinctive characteristic. This is noble and manly; for he who forgets his religion, and turn renegade to God. But as Irishmen in England, they have duties to perform towards her, and these are easier and more agreeable, inasmuch as they are totally inconsistent with anything but their duty to their own country. Ireland has hitherto suffered through her emigrants. Let the care of the future be on their part to prove that they are equally worthy of their native and adopted countries, and that in their intelligent, orderly and industrious interpretation of citizenhood in that land of their sojourn they best show their love and manifest their respect for that of their birth. 94

93. Lancs Free Press, 1 Oct 1859
94. Lancs Free Press, 1 Oct 1859
These remarks make it very plain that the principal audience of the catholic Lancashire Free Press was the large Irish community in the towns of the north of England. If this statement of moderate, even respectable, Irish nationalism was not enough to remove any fears the catholic hierarchy or the local authorities had about the Free Press becoming the voice of radical social and political change, the editor further qualified the paper's political stance. Catholics in religion, liberals in politics, we have no novel doctrines to preach or propound, no extreme political dogmas or theories to startle the world with. We will be advanced, but not extreme, in our views. Order, next to religion, is the principle we hold most in reverence. 95

The Lancashire Free Press had all the makings of a successful and influential journal of the Lancashire Irish. But its life was short. Its last issue appeared on 31 March 1860, and in June of that year the Free Press was replaced by the Northern Press and Liverpool General Advertiser. 96 The change of name was necessary to avoid responsibility for debts incurred by S.J. Meany. Besides serious financial obligations, the Free Press, under Meany’s editorship, developed what was to the local catholic clergy an even greater problem. Anti-clerical references were making the odd appearance in the Free Press, but the removal of Meany solved that difficulty. 97 It seems that Meany was very much less than trustworthy. The first edition of the Northern Press regretted that the Free Press's financial difficulties and final failure have become a scandal....The catholic body do not altogether come out of the transaction with clean hands. If their want of public spirit and united action have left an opening for every rash speculator and self-constituted representative, they have no one to blame but themselves. 98

Before he became a Dublin journalist, Meany was active in the Young Ireland movement of the late 1840s, but it was alleged that he 'sold' his comrades in 1848. 99 After the

95. Lancs Free Press, 1 Oct 1859
96. Northern Press, 9 June 1860
97. Bennet, Fr Nugent of Liverpool, p.70
98. Ibid., pp 70-1
99. Lpool Courier, 4 Dec 1866
collapse of the Free Press Meany became sub-editor of the Liverpool Daily Post for a short time and then moved his operations to London. His business sense showed no sign of improving and in 1862 he was convicted of swindling in London. Meany was denounced all over England and Ireland as treacherous. Finding the atmosphere in the British Isles adverse to further enterprises, Meany set off to make his way in America, where his reputation was not known. While there he took a 'prominent part' in the Fenian movement and returned to Liverpool in November 1866. The Liverpool police had not forgotten him and he was interviewed by two detectives immediately he stepped off the ship from New York.

He declared to them that he had no connection with Fenianism since 15 May last, having got disgusted with his treatment. He added that he had been appointed correspondent in Liverpool to the New York Herald. The Head Constable thought Meany's words were to be 'much doubted' and his movements were 'closely watched'.

A fortnight later the former editor of the highly-principled Lancashire Free Press was arrested in London and charged with treason. His activities in Ohio and Michigan during 1863-4, where he organised 1,500 Fenian volunteers, were well-known to the British authorities. Meany achieved greater notoriety at the Fenian convention in Philadelphia and he was famous for 'very violent speeches' against the British. He was also active among the New York Fenians and acted as James Stephens's secretary for a time. It is not revealed whether or not he returned to England on Fenian business or to spend funds he managed to pilfer from the movement's treasury, but when he tried to ingratiate himself with his old associates in Liverpool he was kept at arms length by them all. 'They see him playing his traitor's game.' After his arrest by the RIC in London he was taken directly to Dublin, and on 16 February 1867 he was convicted of treason and sentenced to fifteen years

100. Bennet, op. cit., p.70
101. Lpool Courier, 4 Dec 1866
102. H-Grieg to Watch cttee, 19 Nov 1866 (LCL, Head Constable's reports, 352POL/2/4, no.50, pp 65-6)
103. Lpool Courier, 3 Dec 1866
104. Lpool Courier, 4 Dec 1866
penal servitude.  

Treason certainly seems to have been Meany's business, but his friends suffered more from his perfidy than Her Majesty's government ever did. Still, the moving force behind the Irish press in Lancashire during the 1860s-1880s period, John Denvir, was able to keep Meany in high regard.  

Perhaps the Northern Press was right. If the Lancashire Irish allowed themselves to be used by a 'rash speculator and self-constituted representative', they had 'no one to blame but themselves'.

But the lesson of Meany's editorship was learned well. Apart from a problem of declining circulation during the mid-1860s, the Irish catholic press in Lancashire was established on a firmer basis from 1860. To avoid any patronage problems, the Northern Press declared itself independent even of the liberals in politics.

We begin life without being fettered to any party, and our course will be one of free and independent action, claiming for religion and our people liberty and justice, in common with our fellow citizens.

The Northern Press had the additional advantage that it had the support of the local clergy, which the Free Press did not. Respectability was the keynote of the first number of the Northern Press to dispel the bad feeling generated by the Meany incident.

We shall aim at producing a first-class commercial and family paper, written by men of mark and experience. The wants and tastes of the great mass of catholics are intimately known to us, and the poor man will find our journal an instructive and pleasant companion to his humble fireside.

But the new editors did not forget who the majority of their readers would be. 'We are one in feeling and blood with the Irish race. Their interests are ours; for Irish and catholic are to us the same.'

105. St Helens Standard, 23 Feb 1867
107. Northern Press, 9 June 1860
108. Bennet, op. cit., p.71
109. Northern Press, 9 June 1860
110. Northern Press, 9 June 1860
But even more important than these considerations was the actual content of a Lancashire catholic newspaper. And in this regard the formats of the Free Press and the Northern Press were almost identical. Of course, world, national, local and business news received some prominence, but a great deal of space was devoted to coverage of local Irish and catholic social functions and affairs in Ireland. There was also a section for 'Catholic Intelligence' from Britain, Ireland and all over the world. Irish poetry and ballads appeared every week, as well as reviews of books on Irish subjects and pieces on some aspect of Irish history, culture or politics. A feature of the Free Press, which was discontinued in the Northern Press, was a column called 'Conquests of Catholicity', where converts to the catholic religion were listed. The very first Free Press contained an article entitled 'Ireland and the Irish' which demanded Irish independence. The Northern Press was also consistent in its support for home rule in Ireland, but, unlike the Free Press, it defended the cause of the pope against the Italian nationalists, which was not the most popular position in the England of the early 1860s. The Northern Press called for funds and volunteers to help the pope to resist republicanism. Both papers were effectively the organs of the Irish catholic community of Lancashire, but the Free Press was more Irish than catholic, while the Northern Press was more catholic than Irish. But certainly the Northern Press supported the sentiment expressed in a Free Press editorial addressed 'to the Irish people in England'. The Free Press is intended to aid the instruction and amusement of your youth, and the intellectual advancement of your manhood....Our chief object is to diffuse throughout this land a healthy Irish and catholic spirit. 111

The Northern Press also made it a point to publicise districts in Ireland where economic distress was acute and encouraged the Irish community in Lancashire to contribute funds for emergency relief. The Northern Press survived until 1869,

111. Lancs Free Press, 8 Oct 1859
although no copies remain for the period 1863-8. In that year it became the *Catholic Times*.\textsuperscript{112}

By the late 1860s Fr Nugent was supervising the production of the Lancashire catholic press. But his 'right hand' was the manager and acting editor, John Denvir.\textsuperscript{113} Denvir was a prominent Irish catholic who lived most of his life in Liverpool. He was always active in all catholic and Irish affairs in the town and he was the first superintendent of Fr Nugent's Refuge for homeless boys. During the 1860s he was involved in the Fenian movement (see chapter 12), and he became the first general secretary of the Irish National League of Great Britain in the mid-1880s. Denvir was very interested in establishing the Irish catholic press on a substantial base and when he joined the *Catholic Times* he was for a long time literally the staff of the office. Week by week he did the reporting, set up the copy, read the proofs, wrote the notes, often the editorials, canvassed for advertisements, sold the paper over the counter, and wheeled the parcels to the station.\textsuperscript{114}

The layout of the *Catholic Times* was the same as the *Free Press* and the *Northern Press*. But to emphasise the close association between the Irish press and the catholic church the *Catholic Times* was emblazoned with the papal arms by 1870. Also, increased coverage was given to local Irish affairs, and a special supplement might appear to recount special occasions, such as St Patrick's day festivities throughout the north of England and Ireland.\textsuperscript{115} Denvir was anxious that the Irish catholic newspaper should be available to the widest possible audience. The *Free Press* and *Northern Press* sold for 3d. until 1862, when the price was lowered to 2d. But this was not enough for Denvir, and he brought the price down to 1d., which guaranteed that it was within the means of every Irish catholic in Lancashire.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{112} Bennet, op. cit., p.71
\item \textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p.72
\item \textsuperscript{114} Cited in ibid., p.73
\item \textsuperscript{115} *Catholic Times*, 19 Mar 1870
\end{itemize}
The Liverpool Irish catholic press was, generally, very respectable by contemporary journalistic standards. Coverage of world and national current affairs was good and its editorial commentary, though decidedly pro-Irish and pro-liberal, was always temperate. Even though the paper was established mainly for the Irish, its moderate, tolerant tone meant that it could speak for English, as well as Irish, catholics on religious matters. Nothing to arouse any kind of sectarian or national animosities appeared in its columns. In 1859 the Free Press even called upon the 'Orange Irish' in England to unite with their catholic brothers in Ireland's best interests.116 But any reader would have little trouble discerning that the Free Press, the Northern Press and the Catholic Times were intended primarily for the Irish. While general news coverage was presented in a journalistic style as good as that in any local newspaper, when it came to the special features included especially for Irish consumption, there was a noticeable change in tone. The appearance of sentimental ballads and poems and romanticised adaptations of stories from Irish history and folklore did set the Irish catholic press apart from its secular competitors. And as is to be expected, there was much more extensive coverage of church news and local Irish affairs, which were usually well presented. Altogether, the Irish catholic press in Lancashire was of good quality. But in a sense the Irish catholic press was redundant.

Lancashire had many excellent journals, such as the Manchester Guardian, the Liverpool Mercury, the Preston Chronicle and the Preston Guardian, and even those more partisan papers, for instance the Liverpool Courier and the Manchester Courier, became more moderate by the 1870s and provided perfectly good coverage of current affairs. Information on church and Irish community affairs could have been disseminated more cheaply in a smaller catholic

116. Lancs Free Press, 22 Oct 1859
newsheet, rather than in a fully-fledged newspaper. But the decision to organise a regular weekly newspaper went beyond simply financial considerations. As the Irish community established itself in urban Lancashire during the 1850s they found themselves under attack in some local journals, both as Irish and as catholics. So there was a feeling that there was a need for a newspaper in which Irish and catholic interests could be defended, because, as we shall see in chapter 10, the adjectives catholic and Irish were regarded as synonymous by both the Irish community and the native population. Also, the Irish community enjoyed the ballads and stories and the coverage of local occurrences in Ireland that would seem to be too unimportant or parochial for the English local or national newspapers to publish. And as they became more settled, Irish communal pride demanded nothing less than a reputable newspaper to speak to them and for them. Likewise, since the church was regarded as the most important Irish national institution, and was also a dynamic social influence, only a newspaper which looked and sounded as good as any other could represent it. An inexpensive tabloid or newsheet would not have satisfied a community which could no longer be regarded, and certainly did not regard itself, as a collection of poor, ignorant families. That the Irish were interested in maintaining a newspaper at all was a sign of increased prosperity and a gradual assimilation into the Lancashire social scene. Even though they had established themselves and were steadily integrating, they still wanted to maintain their identity as a unique social group within the larger community. And a respectable newspaper was a good ostensible way of presenting that identity in a favourable light. So even though Lancashire abounded with good newspapers, it was necessary for Irish catholics to have an organ they could call their own.
There is one other curious point about the Irish catholic press in Lancashire. It does not appear that any attempt was made to start an Irish newspaper in any other Lancashire town except Liverpool during the mid-nineteenth century. Not even in towns where a large part of the population counted itself among the Irish community, such as Manchester-Salford and Widnes, were journals of any kind founded. There was an interesting situation in St Helens where an avowed Irish nationalist, B.A. Dromgoole, became the local newspaper magnate with his St Helens Newspaper. But the St Helens Public Library has not preserved any copies of it, and only numbers for the years 1869-71 are available at the British Museum Newspaper Library at Colindale. Although he did give considerable space to Irish social events when they occurred, the general character of his newspaper was nothing like the Catholic Times. It was virtually indistinguishable from other Lancashire liberal newspapers. Sympathetic coverage of St Helens catholic and Irish affairs is the only clue to Dromgoole's nationalism, except for advertisements such as this:

'God save Ireland' - Flag of Ireland note paper with a green flag, with the national emblem and emblazoned with verse selected from the national poets, one penny a sheet at Dromgoole's Public Hall, 17 and 19 Liverpool Road, St Helens, and 28 Waterloo Road, Widnes. 117

Unfortunately, his commentary on the Fenian movement has not survived.

Liverpool, of course, had the largest Irish population in the county, but that is not enough to explain its initiative in starting an Irish catholic press. As well as a large number of Irishmen, Liverpool had some very highly motivated Irish too. Stephen Meany's energies were expendable. But J.G. Plunkett, who took over the Free Press in 1860, Fr Nugent, who had a great interest in the Irish community, and John Denvir, who was never far away from any Irish or catholic function from Fenians to abstinence pledges, were interested enough to sustain the Northern Press until

117. St Helens Newspaper, 17 July 1869
it was firmly on its feet in the late 1860s. But it should not be thought that the success of the Irish catholic press was wholly dependent on men such as these. Printing newspapers every week was pointless if they were not purchased. And although no circulation figures are available, it is plain that Irish, and English, catholics throughout Lancashire and other parts of the north of England bought the Northern Press and the Catholic Times regularly. So the response to the initiative was as important as the initiative itself. Supporting an Irish catholic newspaper was as vital as publishing it.

From the available evidence, it does not appear that newspapers published in Ireland had a very large circulation in Lancashire. But after 1859 the Lancashire catholic press filled this gap by reproducing items from Irish journals and giving wider treatment to Irish affairs generally.

A final aspect of the Irish press once again involves John Denvir. In about 1870 I had started a printing and publishing business in Liverpool, and commenced to realise what I had long projected as a useful work for Ireland. This was the issue of my 'Irish Library', consisting chiefly of penny books of biographies, stories, songs and stirring episodes of Irish history. 118 From 105 Byrom Street in Liverpool he produced 'Denvir's penny illustrated Irish Library of history, poetry, biography and fiction'. Most of the components of the 'Irish library' at the National Library of Ireland are undated, but they were available in volumes containing twelve numbers that cost one shilling. The titles of some of these pamphlets give a pretty good idea of their contents: The Catalpa: The story of the rescue of the military Fenians compiled from the stirring narrative of John Breslin, the Irish American newspapers and other sources (Irish Library, vol.iii, no.27 N.D.); Poems for the Irish people (N.D.); Denvir's Irish reciter (N.D.); The penny catechism of Irish history (1882); and The life of Pope Pius IX: With all the stirring episodes of his stirring career (N.D.). Denvir's efforts were 'commended in the

118. Denvir, Life story, p.137
highest terms by the Most Rev Dr Duggan, Mr Parnell, Miss Parnell, Mr Michael Davitt, and the Irish press'. In the early 1880s he branched out from ballads and history to Denvir's Penny National Irish Almanac. The information a Lancashire Irishman could have at his fingertips from Denvir's almanac were postal rates, a calendar, census and general religious statistics, the names of the Irish Roman Catholic hierarchy, a list of Irish MPs, Irish agricultural statistics, and figures on the Irish-speaking population of Ireland. The almanac also contained short articles on 'Impossible rents', 'The plan of campaign', 'Facts about Ulster' and 'The Bogey of Orangeism'.

Some of the advertisements are more interesting to the modern reader than the sentimental tales drawn loosely from Irish history. Steamship companies offering passages to America advertised regularly in Denvir's publications, as did local Irish traders.

Mr & Mrs McEvoy
32 Brownlow Hill, Liverpool
Have always in stock a large selection of ladies' and gentlemen's left-off clothing of superior quality and fashion, which will be offered at most reasonable prices. Ladies and gentlemen, having good fashionable garments to dispose of will receive highest prices in the city.

As late as the early 1900s Denvir was still producing a 'monthly Irish library' from 61 Fleet Street, London. An example of one of his later booklets was Denvir's book of Irish songs and recitations (London, N.D.). Some of the selections were: 'A rifle and a vote', 'Dear little shamrock', 'God save Ireland' (in Irish), 'Paddies evermore', 'Wearing of the green' and 'Where the grass grows green'. This collection received enthusiastic compliments from leading Irish nationalists, but it is difficult to know if their praise was for the maudlin contents or for Denvir himself, in appreciation for a half-century's work for Irish nationalist aspirations. Besides his 'penny' collection he also published a history of Irish immigration into Great Britain up to 1892.

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119. Denvir's penny national Irish almanac (Liverpool, 1884), cover
120. Denvir's penny national Irish almanac (Liverpool, 1889)
121. Denvir's penny national Irish almanac, 1884
122. Denvir, The Irish in Britain
a memoir of his work (legal and extra-legal) for Irish causes and a novel entitled *Olaf the Dane; or the curse of Columbkille: A supernatural story* (Dublin, 1907). Even though John Denvir's private publishing career falls outside the scope of this study, it is interesting to see the later efforts of a Lancashire Irishman who took mass media seriously as a way of uniting Irish communities in England.

John Denvir also affords a good example of the two-sided relationship of the Irish with the Catholic church and clergy. Even though the church did not have a more ardent adherent and exponent among Catholic laymen in England than Denvir, his relationship with the church could never be described as one of subservience to it, particularly when Irish politics were involved. As we shall see, he was active in the Fenian movement in 1860s, which the English hierarchy condemned, and did not allow a close working relationship and friendship inhibit him from opposing such an imposing clerical figure as Fr Nugent of Liverpool. Denvir's support for the church as a national institution stopped at the point where it seemed that the church's agents, the clergy, turned anti-national.

A special meeting of the Irish National Land League was held in Dublin in June 1880 and was addressed by a delegate from the Liverpool branch, John Denvir. He came to 'consult with the executive of the League as to the most efficacious means to be adopted to discountenance the scheme of emigration originated by the Rev Fr Nugent'. He alluded to Fr Nugent's project for sending 50 families from the West of Ireland to America. He wished the League to so inform the Irish public opinion upon the subject that it would soon become understood by every patriotic Irishman that no one but an enemy of his country would subscribe money for such a scheme (hear, hear).

The Land League executive voted to

*Strongly condemn the attempt now being made under the direction of the Rev Fr Nugent, of Liverpool, to promote and encourage the emigration of our people, and we urgently*

123. Denvir, *Life story*
call upon all true friends of Ireland to discourage by
every means in their power this scheme as one calculated
to bring about the depopulation so much desired by land-
lordism and the British government, and to inflict a
grievous and a permanent injury on our country. 124

This very strong attack on a priest who took such a great
interest in the welfare of the Irish people, in Britain
and in Ireland, was not anti-clericalism on Denvir's part.
He still felt as close to his religion as ever he did.
But his allegiance, especially in temporal matters, was far
from unquestioning.

A final aspect of social organisation among the Lanca-
shire Irish which must be examined is the question of
participation in the trade union movement during the
mid-nineteenth century. By the 1840s there was a very
real 'consciousness of the identity of interests between
working men of the most diverse occupations and levels of
attainment which was embodied in many institutional forms'. 125
This awareness of common interests developed during the first
four decades of the nineteenth century as a result of rapid
industrialisation and working-class agitation for industrial
and political change. But equally, it was the 'consequence
of the response to working-class strength of the middle
class', 126 which was opposition and legislative, and sometimes
military, suppression. 127 We have seen that two of the
'institutional forms' this working-class identity assumed
were the public house and the friendly society, 'labour's
typical mass institutions'. 128 But the trade union movement
was important too.

During 1846-71 the unions were not organised in the same
way as they are today. Many employers opposed unionisation
and for the first quarter of the nineteenth century they
were illegal under the combination acts, as threats to civil

124. The Nation, 12 June 1880
125. Thompson, The making of the English working class, p.807
126. Ibid., p.807
127. See Foster, Class struggle, pp 212-4
128. Ibid. p.220
order. Another problem was localism, which remained very strong well into the mid-nineteenth century and impeded the wider development of trade unionism.

The generation after the repeal of the Combination Acts was the predominance of combinations of a limited and localised type. In all the ups and downs of utopian socialism, general unionism, cooperative production, and chartism, it was the small trade societies and clubs which survived. Membership was usually confined to artisans who served a seven-year apprenticeship, but in the trades where there were no longer apprenticeships some other qualification, such as the length of work experience, might be substituted to limit membership. A Manchester Irishman, John Doherty, saw in 1829 that 'small trade societies and clubs' left most of the workers in the cotton industry and all the general labourers without any organisation to represent them. His 'general union', founded in 1830, was called the National Association for the Protection of Labour and though it made initial gains in Lancashire and Yorkshire, it was defunct by 1832. By the 1860s and 1870s there were cotton unions which were very local. The Association of Cotton Spinners was a vaguely federated organisation for skilled cotton workers, and there were weavers' amalgamations in some places which were open to textile workers generally. But it was the early 1870s before general workers began to organise themselves 'in imitation of the artisans', and it was not until the 1880s that unions of unskilled workers were established on a durable basis. During the post-1870 period several Irishmen made their mark in the general workers' movement. Patrick Kenney founded the General Amalgamated Labourers Union in 1872; Will Thorn, a Marxist, organised 20,000 of his fellow gas workers in 1889; and James Sexton of Liverpool was secretary of the National Union of Dock Labourers during the 1890s.

129. H.M. Pelling, A history of British trade unionism, (Harmondsworth, 1969), pp 13, 31
130. Ibid., p.54
131. Ibid., p.35
132. Ibid., pp 37-8
133. Ibid., p.78
134. Ibid., p.79
135. Ibid., p.90
136. Ibid., p.35
137. Ibid., p.97
138. Ibid., p.101
From this brief survey it appears that the Irish made very little impact, as a group, on English trade unionism during the mid-nineteenth century. The obvious reason for this was that with trade unionism consisting mainly of local clubs for workers with a skill during 1846-71, the Irish, who were most often to be found as general labourers or working in occupations which were not organised (see chapter 3), were outside the scope of the movement as it then existed. Certainly individual Irishmen who had a skill or perhaps worked in a cotton mill which had a weavers' association found their way into union ranks and even became prominent members. But we do not know how many of these there were. It was only during the 1880s and 1890s, when nationally organised unions for unskilled and general workers began to form, that trade unionism had any real relevance for the body of the Irish community. But there were other reasons, besides want of a skill, which kept the Irish outside the labour movement. The Irish were a people with a different background, an historical tradition of hostility to the English, and a different religion. All these, especially the last, led to disunity and mutual suspicion in the working class and added to the difficulty of organising it. 139

This may seem to be an oversimplification, but, as we shall see in the next chapter, there definitely was a great deal of ill-feeling towards the Irish community in Lancashire, which was a consequence of the erosion of the feeling of awareness and solidarity among working men that had evolved over a period of forty years.

Working-class unity gradually disintegrated during the 1840s and by mid-century the repeated frustration of workers' political and industrial aims and what has been called 'liberalisation' in industry produced a 'new subdivided (or pluralist), labour community'. 140 The introduction of a workers' hierarchy into mills and factories created 'sectional' differences between different grades of workers, which made organisation more difficult. 141 Indeed the development of trade unionism during the mid-nineteenth century reflects these divisions between working men.

139. White, History of Liverpool, p. 4
140. Foster, Class struggle, p. 238
141. See Ibid., pp 212-4
Skilled workers were able to organise, but they offered no leaderships or fraternity to the general workers, who were generally late starters in forming unions. Another industrial shift during the 1870s and 1880s once again 'tended to reduce the differential of skill and to demand large numbers of semi-skilled workers'. This shift diminished sectional distances between workers, and there was a resurgence of wider working-class unity, characterised by the emergence of general workers' unions, the 'new unionism'. But during 1846-71, when working-class unity was strictly localised and trade-centric, the Irish community, with whom, as we shall see in chapter II, there was a broad feeling of solidarity in 1848, was looked upon as a threat. This discussion will be continued in the next chapter.

Another reason for the weakness of trade unionism in the Irish community was the attitude of the catholic clergy. Even though there were relatively few Irishmen working in organised trades, there were some Irish artisans joining unions in the early 1830s. The clergy was alarmed at Irish immigrants aligning themselves with the radical English labour movement and, following Daniel O'Connell's lead, they condemned trade unionism. But since the actual numbers of potential trade unionists in the Irish community, during this period, was small, the attitude of O'Connell and the clergy served more to alienate the Irish from the mass labour movement, known generically as Chartism, than to turn them against local trade unions (see chapter II).

There were a few labour disputes during the late 1840s and early 1850s which involved the Irish directly. As we saw in chapter 4, during the Preston cotton mill strike of 1853-4 the owners attempted to bring in Irish 'knobsticks' to break the strike. But they were unsuccessful, because even Irishmen fresh from a Dublin or Belfast workhouse, with no experience of industrial life at all, were able to understand the operatives' representatives, and most of them were dissuaded from taking strike-breaking jobs. This is

142. Pelling, op. cit., pp 89-90
the only example I have found of Irish labourers being used as blacklegs in Lancashire during 1846-71, which indicates the practice was very uncommon. The other examples come from Liverpool's dockland.

Many Irishmen worked on the docks as stevedores and porters. For a week during mid-March 1848 large numbers of dockers met in the Liverpool Exchange to organise a protest against the introduction of a new method of unloading vessels. The dock workers claimed that the unloading of vessels had been placed in the hands of a few persons, who made a profit by driving hard bargains with the porters, giving, for instance, 2s. a day out of 3s. 6d. allowed by the owners of the cargoes, and when the regular workmen refused these wages, employing youths and young men without families to do the work.

But it does not appear that the dockers' protest was of any avail, because the dock committee only resolved to take action against master porters and publicans who paid dockers in public houses. Chartist-types were reported in Liverpool and police and special constables were in readiness to deal with any trouble they might provoke among the dockers. But there was no trouble of any kind and the dock workers acquiesced in the new system. 144

The Liverpool dockers showed more determination in 1853. On 6 June, 5,000 labourers came out on strike to demand a rise in wages from 3s. 6d. per day to 4s. To put forward their demands with a single voice, the dockers formed an 'association' and there were reports of intimidation against those dockers willing to work for 3s. 6d. per day. But whether or not there was intimidation, every docker was on strike and there was 'not a ship at work in the port'. 145 The Times warned that

In the meantime much inconvenience and misery is being caused by the movement - inconvenience to the trade of port, which threatens to become partially stagnated, and misery to the families of the men, who, having little or nothing to support them in idleness, will have to starve their children so long as the strike continues. 146

144. Liverpool Courier, 15 Mar 1848
145. The Times, 9 June 1853
146. The Times, 9 June 1853
But the dockers were not to be so easily deterred and within less than a week several employers raised the daily wage to 4s. Most of the merchants were determined to resist the dockers' demands. The Liverpool Chamber of Commerce even passed a resolution opposing any rise in wages for dock labourers. But

The Cotton Porters' Association have published a counter placard in which they state their determination to use every 'constitutional means' to obtain the required price of 4s. a day; and they call upon 'their fellow workmen to remain true to themselves'. If they do not return to work speedily, means will be taken by the mercantile bodies to introduce other labourers into the town. 147

This last threat seems to have broken the resolve of many dockers. Within days they were back at work. The Operative Porters' Association was kept in existence, and the press was told that the strike was over only 'for the present'. 'They had yielded now, but they were still determined to obtain their legal rights, and the employers would have to give way next time.'148 That 'next time' was far in the future and the Operative Porters' Association soon vanished from the Liverpool dock scene. The whole eight-day confrontation had been completely peaceful and the Head Constable reported to the watch committee:

It must be a gratifying circumstance to the committee to know that during the strikes which took place amongst the cotton porters, dock labourers and others, at whose meetings large numbers assembled, that there was no breach of the public peace; every care being taken to meet whatever might have occurred. 149

These two examples show that even though there was a basic awareness of the possibilities of united industrial action among Irish labourers, and unskilled workers generally, during the mid-nineteenth century, it would take the development of a coherent and durable labour movement before that awareness could be translated into real industrial and social power.

147. The Times, 11 June 1853
148. The Times, 17 June 1853
149. HC Grieg to watch cctee, annual report of the head constable to watch cctee for 1853, 1 Apr 1854 (LCL, annex, watch cctee minutes, 352MINWAT/1/6, p.331)
Besides strictly casual socialising in public houses or their local streets, the Lancashire Irish developed a diverse social organisation during 1846-71. Unlike their English counterparts, Irish social organisation was developed around the Irish central, socio-national institution, the catholic church. This focal position enhanced the church's already formidable prestige with the emigrant Irish and strengthened its authority with them. There were some Irish organisations which were not under the direct patronage of the church, such as the Hibernian societies and some of the sick and burial clubs. But they were still very catholic bodies. St Patrick's day was an important day of national expression for the Lancashire Irish, but it was only in the early part of 1846-71 that they felt it necessary to enunciate national pride through the ostentation of processions. And even then, the processions were limited to Liverpool. The Irish community of Lancashire was supporting a successful journal by 1860, which served as a medium for both Irish national and Irish catholic opinion. But it was not until much later in the nineteenth century that trade unionism became relevant to the mass of the Irish immigrant community.
Chapter 10

The Irish and their Lancashire neighbours

The last feature of Irish community life in urban Lancashire we shall look at is their relations with the native population during the mid-nineteenth century. How were the immigrant Irish regarded? Were they resented? And if they were, what shape did that resentment take? Was hostility returned by the Irish? And did intercommunal tensions ever go beyond sarcastic jokes and insults to violence? Answering these questions is very difficult, but there are sources available which will help us to discern some of the elements which compose good or poor community relations. One source in particular, local newspapers, prove especially useful, because they are very responsive to popular thinking in Lancashire towns and reflect various moods very well.

During the late 1840s, when hundreds of thousands of hungry, ragged Irish were arriving in Lancashire, pushing up poor rates and aggravating an already severe public health problem, there was very little objection to the Irish influx on national or ethnic grounds. As we saw in chapter 4, local authorities, particularly in Liverpool, were very vocal in their opposition to the unrestricted immigration of impoverished Irish people into the county. But these protests very rarely contained any trace of bigotry or national enmity. Town councils and boards of guardians complained about a large physical and financial burden which was overtaxing the rudimentary social service structure that was undergoing modernisation at that time. And we saw in chapters 4 and 5 that, in physical and money terms, the mass Irish immigration of the late 1840s did give them a real problem to complain about. But the problem was regarded as a demographic one, rather than as the manifestation of
any inherent trait of the Irish people. So on the one occasion when the Irish immigrants stood out as a material threat to the urban population of Lancashire, very little intercommunal tension was generated. There could be several reasons for this.

First of all, even though it was mainly working-class people who suffered from the shortage of housing and the increased incidence of disease brought on by the precipitate ingress of Irish, it was principally the middle class who paid the costs of social dislocation in higher rates, and middle-class people would be more inclined to dissociate themselves from overt bigotry than to denounce the Irish as lazy, rate-soaking vagrants. And from a business viewpoint, the immigration represented a reserve of labour that was necessary for industrial expansion. So even if rates for the middle classes rose initially, once the immigration levelled off and the Irish spread out to different parts of the northwest and started to settle in they would provide hands for factories, labourers for building sites and custom for shopkeepers.

But middle-class people did not have to live in the areas of inferior, low-cost housing the thousands of destitute Irish had to resort to. Why was there not an outcry from the indigenous working people who felt the impact of this demographic disaster directly? As tens of thousands of Irish families were arriving during 1847-8, Lancashire was experiencing its third economic recession in less than six years. Prices of basic commodities were high and there was widespread short-time working and unemployment. So it can be argued that working people were more concerned with immediate worries than with the immigration of still less fortunate people from Ireland. I have found no evidence of anxiety that the Irish would flood the labour market and depress wages. There were wage cuts in Lancashire at the time of the heavy Irish immigration of the 1840s, but they were related to declining profits, not to the availability of cheap Irish labour that would make English workers uncompetitive unless they settled for diminished wages. But there was another reason why English workers would not discriminate, as a group, against the Irish.
We saw in the preceding chapter that during the first forty years of the nineteenth century an awareness of common interest developed among English working men, which was embodied in the appearance of workers' organisations and institutions such as friendly societies and trade unions. Broadly based but diverse political movements, such as Chartism, also grew from this same sensibility to the identity of interests among working men. The evolution of a workers' identity as fellow members of the 'productive classes' seemed to set working men apart from 'those of other classes'. So, far from excluding the Irish, the English workers often identified very closely with them. Rather than invaders, the Irish were looked upon as victims of social and economic dispossession, caused by the same system that political groups such as the Chartists were agitating against in England. During the 1830s and 1840s chartists were consistent in demanding social and political justice for Ireland, and in 1848 there was an attempt by the chartists of the north of England to align themselves still more closely with the Irish emigrant community (see chapter 11). Up to the 1840s Lancashire working men would look upon the presence of a large expatriate Irish community as a political problem that could only be solved by radical change at Westminster, not as a result of economic, ethnic or religious aggression by the Irish. In fact, it was hoped that the Lancashire Irish would identify closely with the social and political aspirations of their English fellows, which would further enhance solidarity among working men. But before that kind of dynamic unity among Englishmen, and between Englishmen and Irishmen, could be achieved the situation changed.

This account may seem to exaggerate or idealise the extent and depth of fraternity among English working men and their sympathy with the Irish in Britain and the Irish in Ireland. But what cannot be disputed is that during the 1830s and 1840s there was a definite consciousness of common interests among English workers which they perceived were

1. Thompson, The making of the English working class, p.807
best safeguarded by unity. This consciousness cannot be called ideological, but it did spawn the Chartist movement, which commanded very wide popular support, as well as numerous local agitations. And until this consciousness was weakened by the repeated frustration of the workers' demands and changes within industry, and in the absence of a political irritant such as Fenianism, there was little or no anti-Irish or internecine factionalism in Lancashire of any description.

The greater importance attached to distinctions between various grades of workers within industry, a general weariness of apparently endless and fruitless agitation and the return of economic prosperity all helped to dissipate the Chartist movement and the remains of working-class unity on anything but a very localised level after 1848. This dilution of the broad feeling of common interest left urban Lancashire with a 'new subdivided (or pluralist), labour community'. And within a few years there were serious divisions within the working class, one of the widest being between Englishmen and Irishmen. But why should things have changed so quickly? Why would people who were willing to take to the streets to protest against the arrest and conviction of John Mitchel in 1848 resent their Irish neighbours in the 1850s? Any discussion of why people do or do not get along with one another is certain to be vague and very complex, but in this particular case we have at least a starting point.

The consciousness of unity of interest, although widely shared by early Victorian working men, did not go deep enough to alter fundamentally their perceptions of what those interests were. Workers united to change the way in which the existing socio-political system affected them, not to change the system itself. They demanded a more equitable 'piece of the action', but they did not try to redirect that action. A view of united agitation leading to the inception of an alternative system which would

2. Foster, *Class struggle*, p.238
treat all people more equally was held only by a very small minority. So, while the ardour for unity in defence of a of a common interest faded during the late 1840s, the desire to get the most from the system did not. The emphasis was on personal gain and security within the system, rather than the advancement of a whole class. There seemed to be more to gain from compliance than resistance. English working men were still very 'clubbable', but within a very much more restricted orbit. But whatever remained of the consciousness of shared interests existed only in a localised form, in trade clubs and friendly societies. The dynamic of that consciousness had been lost. A wrong against one worker was no longer a wrong against an entire class. And in this atmosphere it was possible for working men to perceive not potential allies, but potential threats to their welfare and security within their own social stratum. One of these threats was the Irish. But exactly why does one group turn against another group who would ostensibly seem to be their comrades; why factionalism rather than fraternity?

Whatever the causes of anti-Irish feeling, it certainly did exist in mid-nineteenth-century Lancashire. A very perceptive observer on the contemporary scene was George Cornewall Lewis, and he had an idea of the two motivating principles behind what he called the 'party spirit', which the crude understanding of common interests among working men had not changed.

The one is the separating principle, which induces men to distrust, to fear, to hate, to threaten, to use force against their fellows; the other is the combining principle, which induces them, for the sake of security, to form an association with their fellows, having its peculiar name and distinctive marks: the one is the principle which binds a man to his party, the other is that which repels him from all who are not of his party. In general, the intensity of one of these feelings also increases the intensity of the other. The more strongly a man is attached to his party, the greater is his dislike of his opponents; the more vehemently a man hates the adverse party, the more closely does he cling to his own.

Despite these basic traits, Lewis was hopeful for mankind,
because 'one of the chief elements in the progress of civilisation is the extension of men's sympathies to a more numerous body of their fellows, the enlargement of their party'. Even an early Victorian social commentator was able to see that in certain situation a group maintained its own unity by opposing a common adversary, whether that adversary was an actual threat or not. This comes very close to saying that 'nothing brings a group of people closer together than hating someone else', but there is certainly some truth in such an oversimplification. Common opposition to someone or something strengthens identity within a group. Personal and regional differences may be submerged within a national opposition to, for example, communism, even though very little is actually known about the nature of the supposed threat. English working men became aware of their common condition and interests through opposition to the more oppressive features of nineteenth-century industrial society. When that national movement faltered and disintegrated, the reassurance of common identity was sought on the local level. But since the economy was in a general upswing during the late 1840s and early 1850s, and working men were becoming gradually more comfortable, the urban-industrial system ceased to be the object of opposition. Other targets had to be found. A popular 'out-group' chosen to receive English working-class antipathy and derision during the mid-nineteenth century was the Irish community. And the Lancashire town where hostility towards the Irish became evident first was the one with the largest Irish population, Liverpool.

The awareness of a need for unity among English working men during the first half of the nineteenth century was perhaps spread too widely to be durable, and Liverpool affords a good example of a town where these bonds were thinner than in most places. As we saw in chapter 8, in 1842 sectarian rivalries caused the ending of the practice of admitting children of all denominations into the Liverpool corporation's two elementary schools. Even though attendance at church services, particularly among working men, was largely neglected, there was a very strong identity of Liverpool
people with their respective religious sects. Militant, though non-practicing, protestantism was particularly strong. The weekly magazine Porcupine remarked on the town's curious interpretation of the New Testament.

'Fighting like devils for conciliation, and hating each other for the love of God'... The peculiar hatred which Christians feel to Christians - that sharp, consuming, femininely-fierce hatred - burns nowhere so devouringly as it does in our religious town. Whatever distress or disease or danger may afflict us, the wrangling of the sects rages uncontrolled, furious, blind, like the quarrelling of the wretches huddled together on the raft, with the Medusa going down beside them .... Now it may be Mr Porcupine's want of the true saving grace, but he really cannot see any religion in all this sort of thing. He sees on the one hand, the evidence of a sincere but ghastly fanaticism.... He sees, on the other hand, the coarsest manifestations of man's rudest passions and hates...4

It seemed in 1848 that there was a delayed response to the immigration of thousands of poor Irish families into Liverpool.

One of the worst results of the present depressed times....is the growing feeling of animosity between the English and the Irish portion of our humbler townsmen, a feeling which we call upon all our fellow citizens to cooperate in allaying.

Certainly the Irish heightened competition for jobs in Liverpool during the late 1840s, and even though this situation was temporary, caused by the fact that Liverpool was the entry point of the vast majority of Irish immigrants into Britain, it could not help but arouse English working-class resentment.

Day after day we hear complaints, and we receive letters fraught with hostile expressions against Irish workmen residing here....Appeals have reached us calling upon employers to give work to Englishmen only, so long as any are to be found unemployed.4a

The activities of the Irish Confederate clubs sometimes added to the antagonistic feelings of the native people.

Here is an example of a complaint about a couple of Irish workmen.

4. Porcupine, 10 Mar 1866
Sir,
We as a body of Church Men wish to inform you that we have fully determined to do away with all Roman Catholics from all Employes in this town. We now give you notice to turn out those too Romans on or before Saturday Next or Certainly we shall do Either you or yours a Private Injury. But we hope that you will receive this. For we have fully determined to gain hower object either by Fair or foul.

Even though this notice was signed 'True Orangemen', it probably had nothing to do with that body. But we shall see later in this chapter that the Orange Order did a great deal to poison the atmosphere between the Irish and the English during the 1850s and 1860s. The Liverpool Mercury always went out of its way to oppose the build-up of sectarian bitterness in 'our religious town'.

This sort of thing must be checked by the liberal-minded of every sect and party in the town... It must never be forgotten that there are thousands of loyal, peaceable, and industrious Irishmen and their families in this town... They contribute to the general welfare... All idea of conspiring against the Irish because they are Irish, or against Catholics because they are Catholics, is to be deprecated as wicked and, indeed, foolish.

But appeals like this were totally inadequate to check the growth of sectarian tension in Liverpool.

The passage quoted above about dismissing Irish workmen is the only expression of anti-Irish prejudice going as far as the 'no Irish need apply' attitude that immigrants encountered in the northeastern United States. It does not appear that the Irish were excluded from employment or housing in Lancashire on account of objections to their nationality. Landlords would let cheap accommodation to anyone who would pay for it, and Irish workers were required to fill places as industry expanded. The difference between an Irishman in Lancashire and an Irish immigrant in a north American coastal city was that the Lancashire Irishman was not surplus labour. He was integral to industrial growth.

The focus of English dislike for the immigrant Irish was not so much national or ethnic as religious. This does not mean that catholicism, Irish or English, was in any way a threat to English culture or institutions during the mid-nineteenth century. But there remained a large reserve of anti-catholic feeling in Victorian England, and the trait
which set the Irish apart from the English even more so than language, culture or background was their close identification with the catholic church. The church formed the centre of Irish social life and was looked upon as their primary national institution. We saw in chapter 7 that the Lancashire Irish looked upon themselves, and were looked upon by the native community, as the vanguard of the catholic religion in the northwest of England and the principal repositories of its doctrines. English working men needed a reason to despise the Irish community and their religion proved the easiest handle to grasp, because the Irish identified themselves so closely with the church, as the embodiment of their national heritage, and anti-catholic sentiment was still easily excited in England. Particularly in the conservative press, it was not very often that the word Irish appeared without the term Roman Catholic when the local Irish were being referred to. And when local catholics were being denounced by some local preacher or militant protestant lecturer, the words catholic and Irish became interchangeable. To Englishmen who needed an antagonist to combine against, the catholic religion of the Irish epitomised their objectionableness as an alien group.

Before looking at particular organisations and occasions which incited intercommunal discord we can consider the subject of opposition to the Lancashire Irish generally. In Liverpool, where hundreds of thousands of Irish landed during 1846-71, the Irish certainly did put a strain on the unskilled labour market during the late 1840s and early 1850s. There is no evidence that their presence in such numbers depressed wages for labourers on the docks, building sites and road gangs, but it probably impeded their rising and made unskilled work harder to find. But the situation, aggravated by a shortage of low-priced accommodation, affected Irishmen as much as it did Englishmen and it encouraged them to re-emigrate to America, Australia, or to move elsewhere in the north of England. But this situation, on top of the issue of religious differences, helped to intensify anti-Irish bitterness. By

5. Lpool Mercury, 11 Aug 1848
the middle 1860s the Liverpool Mercury thought things were improving, but still it felt constrained to assure the English population that the Irish were, far from being undesirable aliens, good, useful neighbours.

In former times, when work was excessively scarce in England, when wages were lower, and when those violent national prejudices existed, which, happily, have now in a great measure died away, there was frequently a very bad feeling between the English and the Irish inhabitants of the large towns of England and Scotland. But this feeling has almost entirely disappeared during the last ten or twelve years, partly owing to the prevalence of better wages and more abundant employment both for English and Irish labourers in England, and partly owing to a great increase of intelligence, and a great subsidence of national prejudice amongst the people of both countries. An Irishman settled in England has now just as good a chance of getting on in his particular walk of life as any Englishman can have. He has nothing to complain of except the same difficulties which all men, whether Englishmen or Irishmen, have to contend with in making their way in the world....One of the greatest benefits which the Irish people derive from the union with England is that the markets for skilled talent are just as much open to them as they are to the people of England. 6

As well-intentioned as the Mercury's effort was, the assessment of inter-communal harmony was, as we shall see, much too optimistic. In the twenty years since the first mass arrival of Irish immigrants in Lancashire a great deal of enmity had been generated and it had far from spent its energy by the 1870s. A few examples will help illustrate the different forms Irish-English antipathies assumed in mid-nineteenth-century Lancashire.

In 1846 Rev Hugh Stowell, a popular anti-catholic fulminator, addressed the annual meeting of the Manchester and Salford Protestant and Reformation Society on the subject of the proposed Roman Catholic relief bill 'for the further repeal of enactments imposing pains and penalties upon Her Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects on account of their religion'. Citing the example of the Irish catholics in Manchester's Little Ireland district, Stowell warned that the 'Roman Catholic spirit was still as grasping as ever'. If the bill was passed it would remove 'what little protection

6. Liverpool Mercury, 18 Mar 1867
there was against the exhibition of bold, glaring idolatry,
and....'

we shall have a procession of the host go passing up and down
the streets of Manchester, and the poor deluded creatures fall-
ing down before it, and an idolatry as dark as that of Juggernaut
would be permitted.

The elaborate rituals of the catholic faith were favourite
targets of its detractors and Stowell did not let the rites
of Ash Wednesday, as practiced in Little Ireland, escape his
ridicule. As far as Stowell could see,

Popery was as proselytising as ever. And popery still held
its devotees in a state of superstition. They had on Wednesday
last, been burning the palm branches....the ashes were put into
water, and the poor deprived people, believing there was
something of a charm in the water, crowded in such numbers
to receive of it, if it were but a drop from the sprinklings
of the priest. He did not blame the Roman Catholics who thus
crowded to be sprinkled, but he did hold up to scorn and con-
tempt those priests who thus brought them together to get a
dish of water filled with black ashes, which had no more
efficacy than the water of the black Medlock which ran near
the chapel. 7

But efforts to dissuade the Lancashire Irish from catholic-
ism were not limited to militants such as Hugh Stowell. Various
Church of England and dissenting groups were formed to convert
the Irish to protestantism by a milder brand of persuasion.
One of these groups was The Church of England Association
for providing Ministration and Instruction for the Irish
Romanists of Manchester and Salford. The association appears
only to have been active during the middle and later 1850s and
it was supported by annual subscriptions from businessmen, but
I have not found any press reports on any of their activities. 8
But an organisation such as this at least shows that there
were people very willing to be tolerant towards the Irish,
on religious and national lines. But the crudest forms of
opposition to the Irish still made their appearance in
Lancashire as late as the 1860s. Some of the colliers who
lived in St Helens 'frequently picked quarrels with the Irish
when they met face to face', and in 1868 a group of miners
'armed with that formidable implement of their craft, the pick',

7. M/R Courier, 4 Mar 1846
8. C.C. Worsley to Church of England Association, 20 Apr 1857,
13 Apr 1858, 5 Mar 1859 (M/RCL, archives, M35/9/7/44-6)
attacked an Irish area of the town. The miners' incursion caused the Irish 'to rally in self-defence, brandishing pots and pans and various other blunt instruments'. 'Even in 1868 the Irish were still looked upon as intruders, to be kept in their place.'

In many English minds the Irish were regarded as a strange or undesirable immigrant group. The various facets of this image are well represented in the inevitable jokes and stories which began to appear about them in the Lancashire press. Not every Lancashire newspaper berated the Irish. The Manchester Guardian, the Oldham Standard, Porcupine (Liverpool), the Preston Chronicle, the St Helens newspapers and the Salford Weekly News did not make it their practice to ridicule the Irish in their towns. Even when many Irish names appeared in the police court columns for drunkenness, assaults and petty theft, these papers very rarely mentioned the fact that an offender was Irish. And when some event obviously involving the Irish was reported, it was very rare that they would garnish their accounts with deprecatory remarks or quips about them. It was usually a town's conservative paper that poked fun at the Irish, and the Liverpool Courier and the Manchester Courier took up the task with considerable relish, particularly during the 1840s and early 1850s. But it was not always the Tories in a town who vented their spleens by maligning the Irish. The Oldham Chronicle, which professed to represent liberal views, never missed an opportunity to abuse the Irish. The Preston Guardian, another liberal journal, never took up an anti-Irish stance or deviated from a strictly moderate tone, but still included Irish jokes as a regular feature of its varieties column up to 1867. By 1871 the novelty of having a large Irish population to bear the brunt of jokes and sketches had worn off and journalistic standards had risen, so that stories and comments at the expense of the Irish were a rare occurrence. But at that time the image of the Lancashire Irish had already been created. But what were the principal characteristics of this reputation?

9. Barker and Harris, St Helens, p.282
The three main elements of the Irish reputation in Lancashire were ignorance, quaint simplicity and intractability. Each characteristic was emphasised by mocking Irish speech and mannerisms. A few examples taken from the Lancashire press will show how these traits were imputed to the Irish. Many English people thought an Irishman's mind was peculiarly obtuse, impervious to anything but the most rudimentary intelligence.

An Irishwoman called at an oilman's the other day and asked for a quart of vinegar. It was measured out, and she put it in a gallon jug. She then asked for another quart to be put into the same vessel. 'And why not ask for a half a gallon and have done with it?' said the oilman. 'Och! Bless your little bit of a soul', answered she, 'its for two persons.'

An Irishman who was lately denouncing the rapid increase of suicides in the United Kingdom, declared that they never could be put down until they were rendered capital offences, punishable by death.

An Irish cook, hearing the lady of the house at dinner ask her husband to bring Dombey and Son with him when he came to tea, laid two extra plates on the supper table for the supposed visitors.

An Irish porter was shutting up a shop one rainy evening not so long since, when he took off his coat while putting up the shutters. When asked why he went out in his shirt sleeves all in the rain, 'Sure', says he, 'don't I want a dry coat to go home in.'

In contrast to their urban-industrial surroundings, the Irish often seemed picturesque and simple because of their rural mannerisms and the way they spoke. Newspapers very often illustrated the quaintness of the Irish.

An Irishwoman, who keeps a small stall in the vicinity of Covent Garden, was asked the other day by a gentleman purchasing some fruit how trade was; when she replied, 'Och, yer honour, I'm shure it's bad enough; it's myself thinkin' of givin' it up and goin' over to the famine.'

'Good morning, Dennis', said I, meeting my old acquaintance, the Hibernian whom I had once read a lecture to upon appearance, 'you have at last, I perceive, displayed some taste in the purchase of a hat.' 'Thru for you, sir, sure it has a crown any how, but look at them brogues, sir, ain't they illigant?' To this I assented and observed that his coat seemed to fit him 'too much'. 'Och!' said he in a confidential

10. Preston Guardian, 18 Apr 1846
11. Preston Guardian, 2 May 1846
12. Preston Guardian, 15 Apr 1848
13. Preston Guardian, 23 Mar 1867
14. Preston Guardian, 1 May 1847
manner, 'there's nothin' surprising in that, sure I wasn't there when I was measured for it.' 15

An Irish jury, commiserating the case of a poor woman who was charged with a trifling theft, agreed to the following verdict - 'Not guilty, but we hope she won't do so again' 16

An Irishman tells of a fight in which there was but one whole nose left in the crowd, 'and that belonged to the tay kettle'. 17

Lastly, the Irish were regarded as very difficult to deal with in almost every way. Their well-known ignorance was made more annoying by their truculent stubbornness and their general counter-suggestiveness. This obstinacy also showed in their predilection for arguing, fighting and excessive drinking.

Paddy in trouble - An outraged Milesian of the Connaught breed appeared at the Borough Court yesterday to make application for a summons under the following laughable circumstances, although we have little doubt poor Paddy saw nothing to laugh about. From his statement to Mr Maude it appeared that some time on Thursday he was in the butchers' market in Bridge Street, and, whilst looking about, he spied two cow tails. Struck with their illigant appearance, Paddy resolved to have a treat in the shape of a drop of oxtail soup, and for this purpose went to enquire the price. He was informed by the butcher that he might have them for 2d. each, but although disposed for once to treat himself to a luxury, he would not give the price asked, but offered 3d. for the two; this the butcher would not accept, consequently Paddy walked away. He had scarcely got out of the market when, unable to leave such a dainty brace of tails behind him, he again returned to try and coax the butcher into compliance with the offer. Instead of striking a bargain, however, poor Paddy got struck himself, the butcher, to use the Irishmen's own words, 'bating him with the cow tails until the blood run out of his ear-hole'. For this he appealed to the law, but was induced by Mr Maude to let the matter drop .... thinking that both parties were to blame in the matter. 18

Of course, this does not mean Irishmen in Lancashire, or anywhere else, were in fact generally slow-witted, home-spun and refractory. There were certainly Irish immigrants

15. Liverpool Mercury, 11 Aug 1846
16. Preston Guardian, 12 July 1856
17. Preston Guardian, 11 July 1857
18. M/R Courier, 21 Feb 1846
who were very ignorant, most of them were very quaint and some others were probably difficult to handle. But this press image is basically what English people wanted to think about their Irish neighbours, an amplification of isolated traits in individual Irishmen applied to the Irish community as a whole. A segment of the population, the Irish, had been singled out as a source of entertainment and as objects of dislike. To reinforce this image, jokes and stories which depicted them as urban harlequins circulated in Lancashire's towns and in the press. But this reputation was a gross exaggeration of reality. The Irish lacked the experience of an urban or industrial background, but this was not a sign of stupidity. Their mannerisms and speech differed from the native English; but what else could be expected? And only very few Irishmen ever distinguished themselves by inordinate intractability. True, crimes involving fighting and drunkenness were at high levels among the Irish. But this is the only point where fact and reputation nearly coincide. If an exaggerated press image and few insulting jokes were the only discrimination the Irish had to put up with, they might have felt closer to the English community and integrated faster. But there were several events during 1850-71 which strengthened anti-Irish prejudices and put the Lancashire Irish on the defensive.

The 'papal aggression' of 1850 unleashed a wave of rhetorical and journalistic hysteria which showed that among a largely non-practicing population powerful emotions could be excited in the name of religion. Pope Pius IX re-established the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Britain in a pastoral which was read in all catholic churches on 17 October 1850. It was reproduced in the press all over the country and then the uproar began. The atmosphere of indignance and injured
national pride spread quickly to Westminster. The prime minister, John Russell, remarked in his letter to the bishop of Durham that the pope's encroachment on 'our protestantism' was 'insolent and insidious'. Quite in step with the agitated state of the national mind, Russell continued his denunciation.

There is an assumption of power in all the documents which have come from Rome; a pretension of supremacy over the realm of England, and a claim to sole and individual sway, which is inconsistent with the Queen's supremacy, with the rights of our bishops and clergy, and with the spiritual independence of the nation ....

Even though the sovereignty of the United Kingdom was not affected in the smallest way by an internal reorganisation of the catholic church, Russell's distorted assessment of the situation was a 'true representation of sentiments of an overwhelming majority of the public'. The press also were quick to add a helping hand to stirring the pot of sectarian bitterness by joining in the clamour raging against the 'blight of popery', which most certainly would decimate the spiritual and political body of England when the thirteen new catholic dioceses were organised.

A look at the predominating editorial theme in the Lancashire press during October-December 1850 will give a good idea of the prevailing mood and the depth of aversion for the catholic church. The Courier was the conservative journal of Liverpool, that very 'religious' town. In its first edition after the publication of the papal letter the Courier's editorial declared that we maintain that the creation of a cardinal archbishop of Westminster, and the nomination of district bishops over the land, with titles of honour and conditions of precedence, is itself an invasion of the royal authority, and a

20. Ibid., p.183
flagrant attack upon the constitution of 1688. The functions of a Roman Catholic archbishop of Westminster are, moreover, necessarily in direct opposition to the supremacy of the crown and the safety of the constitution. We have that confidence in the people of England that we feel certain they will not for a moment tolerate this insidious assumption of power by the church of Rome .... 21

But not every paper succumbed to the current national excitement. One of these was the Liverpool Mercury.

Roman Catholicism is in England a great political anachronism. It is as unsuited to the tastes, feelings, habits, thoughts, and prejudices of a majority of Englishmen, as it is utterly irreconcilable with the form of our government. In the existing condition of the country, however, we see no objections to the pope appointing as many bishops as he chooses to watch over his flock.

In other words,

the pope has only formally inducted a system of government which had previously a veritable existence, and that the mere mapping out of England into sees can have no effect in altering the faith of the people. 22

The Mercury felt obliged to reiterate its advocacy of tolerance a week later.

The English, individually the bravest of mankind, are, as a nation, most wonderfully prone to take alarm. The history of English national cowardice would fill a book .... If we were to reckon up the multitude of threatenings, each warranted to swallow up any constitution in existence, the wonder would be that we exist at all. Wilkesism and Lord George Gordonism - Huntites and Luddites - Emancipationists and Reformers - and, greatest of all, the Free Trade hydra of the present year of grace 1850, have each in turn been the bugbear to this vexed and unquiet island .... The last of these forces is, all things considered, one of the most curious. The Roman Catholic population of these kingdoms belongs, at least on this side of St George's channel, to the most orderly and inoffensive section of the population. 23

But the Mercury's advice was largely ignored in Liverpool and the commotion continued. Anti-popery meetings were organised by both protestant clergymen and laymen, where speeches

21. Lpool Courier, 23 Oct 1850
23. Lpool Mercury, 1 Nov 1850
of a very 'interesting and truly protestant character' were heard.24 One of these meetings was held on 20 November 1850 'for the purpose of addressing the Queen in reference to the late papal encroachment on her prerogative'. The meeting 'excited the greatest public interest' during the days before 20 November.

An impudent exhortation to the catholics of the town was issued in the morning, calling upon them to go early and pack the building 'if they did not wish their rights to be trampled upon and their religion to be insulted'. Irishmen and English protestants attended the meeting. The speakers were cheered by the English and groaned and hissed by the Irish. A local catholic priest tried to explain the pope's initiative to the assembly, but the Courier described his effort as 'a total failure'.

There was no argument, no imagination, no originality, no eloquence, nor even common sense about it. It was a mass of verbiage and twaddle .... when he sat down the general remark was, 'What a damaging speech this is to his own cause!' 25

But even though tempers were frayed at the meeting, there was no trouble of any kind between the rival communities during or after the assembly.

The catholic response to the deluge of hostile rhetoric was muted all over England. This was true in Liverpool too, despite its huge Irish catholic population. Catholics, led by the clergy, perceived that, as long as protestant ire stopped well short of physical violence or the imposition of legal disabilities, there was no point to further irritating protestant opinion with a too vocal defence of their position. The government's rejoinder to the pope's pastoral was a piece of legislation to buttress the supremacy of the British crown and protect the purity of the constitution.

The ecclesiastical titles act of 1851 was unenforced, a duck

24. Lpool Courier, 4 Dec 1850; 6 Nov 1850; 11 Dec 1850
25. Lpool Courier, 27 Nov 1850
that was born lame, and had about as much effect on the security of Great Britain as the pope's restoration of the hierarchy. Even if the act did nothing to injure the actual position of catholics or the new bishops, it did assuage angry protestants. Despite its discriminatory clauses, catholics raised very little opposition to its passage. In Liverpool, where more than 100,000 catholics lived, there was only one insignificant meeting held to express opposition to the bill. There was little comment when the act was quietly repealed in 1871 (34 & 35 Vict., c.53).

Indignation at the 'popish usurpation' in Lancashire was not limited to Liverpool. In Manchester the conservative Courier took the lead.

We think that the time has arrived for an uncompromising and unwavering hostility to the twofold design of Romanising England and dividing (at the very least dividing), with the sovereign the allegiance of the English people .... The question is a national one and must be dealt with by the nation's rulers ....

nothing short of the most determined and uncompromising action on the part of the present government will quell the strong indignation at the recent act of the pope which possesses the whole country. Nothing but an anti-popish ministry can stand for six months ....

But the Manchester Guardian disputed this attitude.

Amidst the universal excitement caused by the recent Roman Catholic appointments in England, it is to be feared that the most important bearing of the question will fall short of its due attention. We allude to the political effect of the recent innovation .... It may well be that the protestant pulpit should seize this opportunity to inveigh against the errors of popery in accents louder than usual; but with such subjects the press has nothing to do; and we hope and expect that before parliament meets politicians of all classes will have returned to their normal state of mind, and will cease to import into this discussion considerations with thich they cannot advantageously concern themselves. We believe that, in the course of a very few weeks, the great principle of liberty of conscience, which has been in-

26. Lpool Courier, 12 Mar 1851
27. M/R Courier, 26 Oct 1850
28. M/R Courier, 2 Nov 1850
advertently violated of late by some liberal men, will have been fully restored to its acknowledged supremacy ....

While the Guardian had no particular affection for the catholic church or its teachings and thought that the restoration of the hierarchy was a clumsy undiplomatic job, We do not consider Roman Catholic priests a whit more formidable when called bishops and cardinals, than when they are known by humbler titles .... 29

Manchester also experienced a profusion of anti-popery meetings during the several weeks after the restoration of the catholic hierarchy, including a 'Great Protestant Meeting' at the Free Trade Hall on 22 November. 30 But the profile kept by the local catholics was even less obtrusive than those of Liverpool. Not a single catholic demonstration of any kind is recorded. Salford and Oldham did not have their own local newspapers in 1850, but the anti-catholic movement in the two towns was reported in the Manchester papers. A crowded meeting in a Salford church was addressed by Hugh Stowell on 'Popery and the aggression of the pope', where the catholic church was shown to be 'a church materialised, a Christ superseded, and a pope and a hierarchy set up in their stead'. At Oldham a 'protestant meeting' was organised to adopt a petition to the Queen on the 'papal aggression', but the memorial could not be signed that evening because of a disturbance at the close of the meeting, caused 'by a small party who came from a distance, and were opposed to the objects of the meeting'. 31 Further meetings were held on 25 and 26 November and they were well-attended. 32

The town of Preston presented an interesting contrast to the sectarian furore which raged in Liverpool and south-east Lancashire. The conservative Preston Pilot voiced its

29. M/R Guardian, 23 Nov 1850
30. M/R Courier, 30 Nov 1850
31. M/R Courier, 23 Nov 1850
32. M/R Courier, 30 Nov 1850
opposition to the diocesan renovation, but in very mild
terms. The Pilot concluded that the established church
was 'equal, and more than equal to the task that the
current of events has called upon her to begin'. 33 The
Preston Chronicle saw little to worry about in the establish-
ment of catholic dioceses, and even some reason for optimism.

This proceeding of the pope has caused much discussion in
the press, and much consternation in Exeter Hall; indeed,
scarcely more surprise and indignation could have been exp-
ressed if he had issued a bull for the superseding of Dr
Sumner as primate, and nominating the cardinal-archbishop
to the see of Canterbury. In this indignation there appears
to be a vast amount of well-meant but mis-directed zeal;
and whatever annoyance or chagrin may be felt by sincere
protestants at this evident step in advance of the Romish
church, we do not see that there is anything in the meas-
ure that need call for the interposition of the civil powers
as is now prayed for.

As the Chronicle saw it, giving the existing catholic vicars
apostolic the title bishop changed nothing.

As regards their position in their own church, they are now
recognised just as much bishops as they will be under the
late papal rescript. They are 'my lorded' by their flocks;
they perform episcopal rites .... In the new arrangements
they will do no more .... They will be more under English,
and less under Italian, influence; but that will be esteemed,
by catholic and protestant alike, a change for the better. 34

The Preston Guardian elaborated on the same theme.

For ourselves, we are inclined to think that this papal bull,
when fairly taken by the horns, will turn out an infinitely
less formidable monster than our London contemporaries have
represented it. Adhering to the principle which we have
always recognised, that every denomination of Christians
has a perfect right to arrange its own ecclesiastical con-
stitution as it thinks fit, providing that no encroachment
is made upon the rights of others, we cannot but dissent
from the proposal to bring our government into conflict
with the pope on this question.

The new catholic bishops in England were not usurping a
single right or prerogative from the established church or
the government.

Our present object is simply to vindicate the right of the
pope, as the head of the catholic church, to rearrange at

33. Preston Pilot, 26 Oct 1850
34. Preston Chronicle, 26 Oct 1850
pleasure the duties, departments, and dignities of his own episcopal subjects. To the rulers of every other denomination we would grant the same latitude. 35

It took longer to organise meetings to denounce the aggression of the pope in Preston than it did in most places. The first did not take place until 3 December, and on that occasion 1,150 nonconformists gathered to 'express their sentiments on the recent appointment of a papal hierarchy in this country'. As subdued as this meeting was, compared with similar gatherings in Liverpool and Manchester, the Preston Guardian reminded the denouncers of the pope that

We think it was Dr Johnson who laid down this rule to men who were preparing to fume and fret about any matter - 'Just think how simple and ridiculous this affair will appear twelve months hence.' 36

A meeting held on 15 December passed a resolution which said that those present were 'much obliged to the pope for arousing the protestant energies of the people of England'. 37 But there was very little agitation beyond these two meetings.

Even though the Irish were the most conspicuous Roman Catholic group in the community, the anti-papal campaign in the wake of the restoration of the English hierarchy was not directed at them in any way, in Lancashire or in England generally. But the reason for discussing this subject at such length is to provide the background for one important by-product of the anti-popery belligerence that was generated during 1850-1. A hint of what was to come was circulated in the press during early December 1850. 38

To the Orangemen of Great Britain and Ireland

Orangemen! Let the hand of God be acknowledged here; you are now found true, watchful, and wise; your confederation, al-

35. Preston Guardian, 26 Oct 1850
36. Preston Guardian, 7 Dec 1850
37. Preston Guardian, 7 Dec 1850
38. M/R Courier, 7 Dec 1850
ways justifiable under the unhappy necessities of Ireland, is now more needed than ever for the safety of England's empire and the honour of England's throne. Let, then, order and unity be faithfully cultivated by use. Let everything be done honestly and in conformity to law and loyalty. Let us not imperil our institution by anything which would be unworthy of honest and trustful men.

Enniskillen, G.M.

The Orange Order had never totally disappeared from the Lancashire scene after the ban of 1836, but its slow recovery received a useful fillip from the intense protestant feeling current in 1850.

The Orange Order was founded in Ireland at the close of the eighteenth century as a 'means of upholding the dominant position of the protestant peasantry in Ulster'. The organisation was founded in response to the Defender movement of Irish catholics in the northern counties of Ireland and was ostensibly intended to stand by protestantism and the British crown. Although it was certainly a politically motivated institution, discussion 'was never to become the main activity of the Orange movement. Armed demonstrations and street fights were better suited to the temperament of Orangemen.' Orangeism made its appearance in England early in the nineteenth century. It was conveyed at first by British regiments serving in Ireland, and it found fertile ground in urban Lancashire, particularly the Manchester area. These English lodges began as clubs of ex-soldiers, but after a while civilian members began to join. They more closely resembled protestant friendly societies than militant, politically-motivated groups.

40. Ibid., p.144
41. Ibid., p.151
living in England probably joined as well, but it appears that the Orange Order in England had a mainly English membership. Enough lodges were in existence in 1808 to justify the establishment of an English grand lodge at Manchester. By 1822 'Orangeism had taken root in most industrial areas in Britain and in a substantial number of military units'. Not many middle-or upper-class Englishmen were prepared to associate themselves with the growing Orange movement, but the brief fraternisation of the Duke of York with the society enhanced its repute somewhat. But generally, the Orange Lodges in England were merely a series of miscellaneous clubs calling themselves loyalists, and hostile to catholics. No government, whig or tory, regarded Orangeism with anything but suspicion.

Fearing that its influence had grown too great, the government banned the Orange Order in 1836. Although lodges continued to exist on an informal basis, the Grand Lodge of Ireland was not re-established formally until 1846. Records of the Orange Order in England prior to 1876 are practically nonexistent, but the present Grand Master of the Grand Orange Lodge of England, at Liverpool, Mr R.G. Roberts, states that the 'reconstruction' of the Orange Order in England began at roughly the same time as the reconstitution of the Grand Lodge of Ireland. The revived movement was particularly vibrant in Lancashire, and Orangeism's centre of gravity shifted from Manchester to Liverpool. Before very long every Lancashire town of any size had Orange Lodges. They were not an affluent organisation, but they were far from destitute and the regular meetings of the various lodges were usually held in the room of a public house,

43. Senior, Orangeism, 1795-1836, p.144
44. Ibid., p.175
45. Ibid., p.176
46. Ibid., p.284
47. Senior, 'The early Orange Order', p.43
which could not be owned by the master of the lodge. After 1850 the revitalised institution grew quickly in numbers.  

Some idea of the nature of the Orange Order in Lancashire can be obtained from the organisation's rule book. The first section of the Orangemen's Laws and ordinances explains the 'objects of the Orange institution'.

This institution is formed by protestants desiring to the utmost of their power to support and defend Her Majesty Queen Victoria, the protestant religion, the laws of the country, the succession to the throne in Her Majesty's illustrious house, being protestants, as well as for the defence of their own persons and property, and the maintenance of the public peace ....  

The 'general qualifications' for membership in the Orange Order appear very exacting in print. An Orangeman should have a sincere love and veneration for his Almighty Maker, a firm and steadfast faith in the Saviour of the world .... He should cultivate truth and justice, brotherly kindness and charity, devotion and piety, concord and unity, loyalty and obedience to the laws. His disposition should be gentle and compassionate, his behaviour kind and courteous; he should love the society of the good and avoid the company of the evil; he should honour and diligently read the holy scriptures, and make them the rule of his faith and practice; he should love, uphold, and defend the protestant religion, and sincerely desire and endeavour to propagate its doctrines and precepts; he should strenuously oppose and protect against the errors and dangerous doctrines of the church of Rome - he should by all lawful means resist the ascendancy of that church, its encroachments, and the extension of its powers, but he should abstain from all uncharitable words, actions, or feelings towards his Roman Catholic brethren; he should never take the name of God in vain, but abstain from all cursing, swearing, and profane language and use all opportunities of discouraging those shameful practices in others; his conduct should be marked by wisdom and prudence, honesty and temperance and sobriety. The glory of God and love of man, the honour of his sovereign and the good of his country, should be the motives of his exertions.  

48. This information was obtained during an interview with the Grand Master of the Grand Orange Lodge of England, R.G. Roberts, Grand Secretary, J. Gwilliams, and Director of Ceremonies, John Walters at the Orange Hall, South Hill Road, Dingle, Liverpool, on 16 Oct 1972.  

49. Grand Protestant Association of Loyal Orangemen of Great Britain, Laws and ordinances (Manchester, 1852), p.5  

50. Ibid., pp 5-6
In principle, an Orangeman was an altogether sterling character.

There was no limit on the number of brethren who could join the Orange Order. Admission of members was 'not regulated by any other tests than their religion, character and principles'. Once a candidate convinced his prospective lodge that he possessed the several virtues comprising the general code of conduct for Orangemen he was subject to the society's 'general rules'. One of these regulations stipulated that

No person who at any time has been a Roman Catholic can be admitted into the Association, except by reading his recantation in a protestant church, and an unanimous vote of the Grand Lodge of Great Britain, accompanied by testimonials of character, and a certificate of his having been duly elected in the Lodge in which he was proposed, transmitted through the Grand Secretary of his province.

This is how the Orangemen wished to present themselves. Judging from their own high-principled list of general qualifications, one would expect an organisation of moderate, respectable, loyal protestant gentlemen. What was the Lancashire Orange Order in fact?

In sharp contrast to their own statements of tolerance and peaceful intentions, it has been said that the Orangemen 'flourished on discord and violence'. And their performance in Lancashire during 1850-71 shows that this statement is more accurate than the fanciful image the Orangemen fashioned for themselves in their Laws and ordinances. From the mid-1840s there was increasing disunity among working men which left the Irish community more isolated than it might have been. Their most objectionable national characteristic was their adherence to catholicism. The uproar against the pope and the catholic church in 1850 aroused a great deal of militant protestantism and the Orange Order presented a good agency for expressing these

51. Ibid., p.7
52. Ibid., p.7
53. Senior, Orangeism, 1795-1836, p.148
feelings. From 1850-1 a significant increase in the membership, activity and power of the Orange Order is apparent in Lancashire.

An important question about the Orange Order in Lancashire concerns its membership. Unfortunately, no information survives to tell us anything about the number of members there were in the Orange Order or who they were during 1846-71. Certainly, some Ulster protestants living in Lancashire continued their affiliation with the Orange Order in local lodges. But the overwhelming part of the membership seems to have been drawn from among Englishmen. During the 1840s and 1850s the adherents were almost all working-class, but as we shall see, by the 1860s there were some middle- and upper-class Orangemen. The English movement never attained the social respectability it achieved in Ireland, but it remained an important organisation in Lancashire up to the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Why did Lancashire working men join the Orange Order? An obvious reason is what George Cornewall Lewis called the 'combining principle', which induced men 'for the sake of security, to form an association with their fellows, having its peculiar name and distinctive marks'. Also, by the end of the 1840s, when thousands of Irish families were settling in Lancashire, the underdeveloped awareness of unity of interests among working men was falling apart. The immigrant Irish were not regarded as fellow workers, but, at best, as strangers, or, at worst, as a threat. Fear and resentment were certainly felt by some English workers towards the Irish and these feelings could be conveniently expressed in a militant group which espoused popular sentiments such as opposition to catholics and anyone suspected of disloyalty to the crown and constitution. The Irish certainly fit the bill as a group to be opposed. A regrettable corollary of Lewis's 'combining principle' is that

54. Ibid., p.156
the more strongly a man is attached to his party, the
greater is his dislike of his opponents; the more vehem-
ently a man hates the adverse party, the more closely he
clings to his own.

The Orangemen were a group who needed an enemy, and the
Irish community, being catholic, foreign and having a trad-
ition of resistance to the authority of the British crown,
seemed tailor-made for the role. Had there been no Irish
community in Lancashire the Orangemen would have had to
find another adversary in order to maintain an atmosphere
of 'discord and violence', because without those ingred-
ients the decline of Orangeism was 'inevitable'.\textsuperscript{55} The
movement grew and became very aggressive, periodically
strengthened by a dose of 'discord and violence'. Orangeism
became the principal source of the animosity which poisoned
intercommunal relations during 1846-71.

The existence of a society such as the Orange Order
alone was enough to create unease between the Irish and
the English in Lancashire. And public demonstrations by
the Orangemen increased the possibilities of an open con-
frontation between the two communities. The place where
there was the greatest danger of an eruption of sectarian
unrest was Liverpool, where there was the largest Irish
community and the heaviest concentration of Orangemen.
Even after the movement was disbanded in 1836, a restrained
Orange tradition was maintained in Liverpool. They received
little public attention and they commemorated their anniv-
ersaries with quiet dinners up to 1846. In that year, the
beginning of the reconstruction of the movement in Lancashire,
there was a small procession on the twelfth of July through
Liverpool to Wavertree and back again. Afterwards the var-
ious lodges separated for their individual dinners, where
speeches were heard and 'loyal' toasts proposed. It seemed

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p.148
that the day would pass quietly until the evening came. The Liverpool Courier thought that the occurrences of that night provided a good picture of 'Irish bravery'.

On Monday evening, after the Orangemen's procession, a number of Irish Romanists (men and women), assembled in the neighbourhood of Shaw's Brow for the purpose of assaulting any Orangeman on whom they could lay their hands. One instance we observed. A young man was walking in the neighbourhood, wearing an orange ribbon, when three men assailed him from behind, knocked him down, and kicked him when down; and, as soon as the police appeared, they ran away.

The episode gave the Courier a welcome opportunity to denounce the Liverpool Irish.

When at school we read in Goldsmith's History of England that the Irish were a 'brave, generous people', and, in the simplicity of youth, we thought it was true; but when we saw, as we did on Monday evening, three men strike one from behind, kick him when down, and run away from the police, we said Goldsmith told lies, or the Irish character has sadly depreciated; for a 'brave, generous' man would never act in this way.

The reason the Irish beat up the Orangeman was, of course, linked inextricably to their religion.

The Romish priesthood exercises a far greater power over their people than the protestant clergy. Their people are ready to do or are ready to forbear at the bidding of the priest. Through the assumed power of absolution they can control and direct their people according to their own will—to be and to do just what they dictate. Why, then, was such an unprovoked outrage committed? The answer is plain. They keep their people in ignorance, and teach them that all other churches are but assemblies of heretics; and their people, not knowing any better, think to serve the cause of religion by taking a mean advantage of a man of different opinions to themselves. We have only to ask where lies the sin? With the people, who are ignorant, or with the priest, who does not, because he dare not, enlighten them. 56

The trouble was not serious in 1846, but it was trouble all the same and was a harbinger of things to come. The twelfth of July generally passed off quietly during 1847-9, with only occasional verbal friction between the Irish and

56. Liverpool Courier, 15 July 1846
the Orangemen. The Mercury picked up a rumour which claimed that at a general meeting of lodge representatives from all over Liverpool an Orangeman had congratulated his brothers 'not only on the death of Mr O'Connell, but on the decease of the five Roman Catholic Priests of this town, who have perished in the discharge of their duty to the sick poor'. But it was not until 1850 that the situation took a serious turn to the grim side. An Orange procession was allowed to take place without interference on 12 July 1850. As usual, the Orange lodges dispersed to public houses around the borough for commemorative dinners. A group of Irish gathered outside one of these taverns in Chadwick Street, and the police arrived to prevent the Irish provoking trouble with the banqueting Orangemen. But before the Irish could cause any problems, they were dispersed by gunfire from an upstairs window of the public house, which wounded four of them, including a small boy. There was no rioting or other disorder in Liverpool after this incident, but the tensions were carried over to the following summer and were intensified by the controversy over the restoration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in October 1850.

There was evidence of possible trouble even before the twelfth of July arrived in 1851. Liverpool's Head Constable, M.M. Dowling, reported to the watch committee that in consequence of a memorial which was forwarded to Sir George Grey by a man named McEvoy, an Irish labourer, stating that the Orangemen of Liverpool had forwarded funds to those of their order in Ireland with a view to their coming over to Liverpool to swell the ranks of the procession and that they were coming in great numbers, armed for the occasion, and that in a house which he could point out there were arms secreted, etc. Dowling ordered 'every possible enquiry to be made' and was satisfied that 'there was no truth whatever in the statement.

57. Lpool Mercury, 11 June 1847
58. Lpool Courier, 17 July 1850
made by McEvoy'. It turned out that McEvoy was involved in the shooting incident in Chadwick Street the previous July and when he appeared before the magistrates to give evidence about the shooting his story was 'so wild and contrary to facts proved by others as to cause considerable excitement in the court'. During an interview with Dowling, McEvoy said he knew nothing of the supposed Orangemen's plot 'but what he had heard'. The following day he reappeared in Dowling's office with three other Irishmen 'who could only speak to having heard some women talk of six-guns, but could not tell the house they were in'. Since the Head Constable was accustomed to hearing 'idle tales' from the 'opposite party' prior to any partisan demonstration, he 'felt assured that there was no truth in these and replied to Sir George Grey accordingly'. But there would be enough trouble among the resident population on the twelfth to keep the police busy without the additional problem of imported Orangemen from Belfast.

The disturbances began early on the morning of 14 July 1851, the day the Orangemen chose to hold their procession. At 9AM the Orangemen began to assemble at the statue of George III in the London Road. Each lodge as it arrived from some distant part of the town, displaying orange-coloured flags, scarves, etc. This display no doubt gave offence and caused great excitement among the Irish catholic population, and most of them being at their daily work in or near the docks, they moved up towards the London Road. Arrived there they came in contact with a lodge of Orangemen who were about to join in the procession and many blows were exchanged and some stones thrown in a contest which it appears lasted not more than one or two minutes. This short fracas was ended by a charge of a dozen Orangemen with sabres who dispersed the Irish for a short time. The police were not present at this stage to prevent a collision of the groups because even though

59. HC Dowling to Watch cttee, 25 July 1851 (LCL, annex, watch cttee, minutes, 252MIN/WAT/1/5, pp 371-2)
60. HC Dowling to Watch cttee, 25 July 1851 (LCL, annex, watch cttee, minutes, 352MIN/WAT/1/5, p.371)
61. Lpool Courier, 16 July 1851
It was formerly thought desirable to send a body of police to walk with these party processions .... that practice has been long discontinued, as it was considered in some degree sanctioning the proceedings and the presence of the police on these occasions has been avoided until required by some appearance of violence.

A special unit of police had been detailed to remain ready to intervene if trouble broke out during the Orange procession and Dowling ordered them to proceed to the London Road. As the 2,000 Orangemen began their parade, Dowling and the police marched close in the rear of the procession, so as to be ready in case of an attack. In this way the procession continued to move through the South Division of the town, surrounded by an immense mob which was kept in awe by the presence of the police. 62

Individual Orangemen were engaged in fist-fights all along the route of their procession by the Irish and, despite the presence of the police, several gunshots were discharged from the Orange ranks, 'which had only the effect of irritating the rabble'. Before the end of the procession at 2 PM more than 100 persons had been arrested in connection with the opposition to the procession. 63

When the procession ended back in the London Road during the early afternoon the Orangemen broke up for their lodge dinners, and crowds of Irish who had been following them for five hours gradually dispersed. At 5 PM, 9 PM and midnight the Head Constable reported that the town was peaceful. 64 But there was one very serious incident earlier in the evening.

It appears that at a quarter to 4 o'clock in the afternoon a number of persons had assembled in front of Pyecrofts public house in Scotland Road, where the members of an Orange lodge were dining, and in the absence of the police, who were patrolling the streets in small bodies, an Irish Catholic received a wound in the inner part of his thigh and

62. HC Dowling to Watch ctt, 25 July 1851 (LCL, annex, watch ctt, minutes, 352MIN/WAT/1/5, p.371-2)
63. Lpool Courier, 16 July 1851
64. HC Dowling to Watch ctt, 25 July 1851 (LCL, annex, watch ctt, minutes, 352MIN/WAT/1/5, p.373)
several blows on the head .... The man who was wounded died on the evening of the 16th. 65

The seriousness of the disturbances and the loss of life on 14 July showed that intercommunal antagonisms in Liverpool were no small matter. The Courier again attacked the Irish community.

Monday last will long be remembered in Liverpool as presenting scenes of the most disgraceful outrage and bloodthirsty ferocity on the part of the lower order of the Irish inhabitants which have occurred for many years .... It proves that toleration forms no part of their creed; that absolute supremacy is what they aim at, and that they are prepared to exterminate, by brute violence, everything and everybody that stands in the way of their attaining it. It proves that they do not know the meaning of English justice and fair play; for while they, as Irishmen, were allowed unmolested to march through the streets, contrary to the wishes of the authorities, they forcibly interfere to prevent Orangemen, loyal subjects of the crown and faithful adherents to the principles of the constitution, exercising the same privilege.

But in its account of the violence of 14 July, the Courier hit upon the principal reason for the trouble.

In no preceding year has there been anything like such a numerous assemblage of the body of Orangemen - recent events which undisguisedly set forth the determination of the pope to govern in protestant England having aroused a feeling of deep indignation among the Orangemen, whose loyalty and devotion to the crown dates from no recent period, and requires no advocacy .... 66

The anti-papal agitation of 1850-1 had increased the appeal of the Orange Order for those who needed an out-group, such as the Irish to oppose.

The Liverpool Mercury took the view that any procession, and especially a sectarian one, was puerile and wasteful.

Processions, whatever their character, are costly pageants, interesting to childhood and to adolescence, but a nuisance or an absurdity to men of sense. Gee-gaws, showy trumpery, dazzling colours, bad music and meretricious ornaments captivate the senses of the half-savage, and in any country they will attract a multitude of uneducated sightlovers .... when these exhibitions are the offspring of political and

65. HC Dowling to Watch cttee, 25 July 1851 (LCL, annex, watch cttee, minutes, 352MIN/WAT/1/5, pp 373-4)
66. Lpool Courier, 16 July 1851
religious partisanship of the fiercest kind .... they become a social evil of such magnitude as to demand the interposition of the law .... If the two factions could only consent to leave each other, on St Patrick's day and the Boyne battle anniversary, in undisputed possession of the mutual right to make fools of themselves, the community at large would willingly tolerate the annoyance and the nuisance rather than resort to the ungracious act of curbing the liberty of the citizen. 67

The events of 14 July 1851 amply demonstrated to the Liverpool police authorities the gravity of the degeneration of intercommunal relations during the preceding five years. Also, the very destructive Stockport riots of 1852 added further emphasis. During the following year steps were taken to prevent the outbreak of sectarian violence in the town. In August 1851 the watch committee appointed a subcommittee to find out if it was necessary to frame 'a regulation to prohibit police constables from being members of societies of a political or party character'. 68 Even though the subcommittee report does not survive, it is evident that it considered the number of borough policemen having political affiliations likely to prejudice the equitable performance of their duties large enough to justify the introduction of an additional regulation into the policemen's Conditions of service.

No person will be admitted into the Liverpool Police Force who is a member of any political or party society or be permitted to become a member of any such society after joining the police force. 69

But the local authorities did not stop here in their efforts to avert sectarian disorder. The general election of 1852 caused the Orangemen to postpone their annual procession until 12 August, Derry Apprentice Boys day. The Head Constable wanted to avoid any recurrence of trouble, and he

67. Lpool Mercury, 18 July 1851
68. Lpool, watch cctee, minutes, 9 Aug 1851 (LCL, annex, 352MIN/WAT/1/5, p.382
69. Lpool, watch cctee, minutes, 30 Aug 1851 (LCL, annex, 352MIN/WAT/1/5, pp 390-1)
swore a deposition before a magistrate that any Orange procession would lead to a breach of the peace. The proclamation banning the march was posted throughout the borough of Liverpool on 11 August. 70 Despite the threat of police suppression, some of the Orangemen were determined to walk on 12 August.

They met in various parts of the town, decorated with their orange scarves, ribands, etc. Their numbers, however, were prevented from augmenting by the excellent disposition of the police, who, armed and mounted, and assisted by a steadily descending rain, speedily dispersed them .... A few of the leaders were locked up for a short time, but were released on their promising to go home like 'good boys'. Had it not been for the prompt measures adopted by the authorities, a serious collision between the processionists and the Irish Roman Catholic residents would have been unavoidable. 71

The determination of militant groups, such as the Orangemen, to endanger the public peace by staging public demonstrations finally decided the authorities not to permit any more factional or sectarian processions within the borough limits. In November 1852 the watch committee ordered that the Head Constable on receiving information of any procession being about to take place in which it is intended to exhibit party badges or do anything calculated to create a breach of the peace to adopt measures for preventing the same from taking place. 72

So the partisan tensions aroused by the presence of a large Irish community in Liverpool caused the prohibition of all political or religious demonstrations in the borough.

The test, of course, came during the following summer. As the twelfth of July approached, the Orangemen let it be known that they intended to celebrate the day with a procession through Liverpool. The watch committee countered this announcement by ordering the police 'to put down any

70. HC Grieg to Watch ctttee, 9 Dec 1867 (LCL, Head Constable's reports, 352POL/2/5, no.43, pp 41-3)
71. The Times, 13 Aug 1852
72. Watch ctttee to HC, 27 Nov 1852 (LCL, Orders of watch ctttee, 352POL/1/3)
such display, and a proclamation has been issued by his
worship /the mayor/ to that effect'. Early on the morn-
ing of the twelfth 'nearly the whole of the police force were
on the move, and disposed in such a way as to be made avail-
able, should their services be required to check any attempt
to violate the order of the authorities'. But the Orangemen's
threat turned out to be bravado. There was a procession out-
side the borough limits in the Otterspool-Mossley Hill area,
but it disbanded before returning to Liverpool police jurisdic-
tion. The lodges attended their annual dinners with the
usual toasting and speech-making, and all was peaceful. A
month later there was a battle of several hundred Irish and
Orangemen in Albert Street, Toxteth Park, where stones,
bottles, knives and pitchforks were used. Seven Irishmen
were arrested, but there were no overt repercussions as a
result of the fight, although it certainly did not improve
each side's opinion of the other. In 1854 and 1855 it
seemed that the ban on demonstrations was having a benefic-
ial effect on intercommunal relations. There were no rep-
ports of Orange activity of any sort during either year. The
Orangemen were probably meeting for their anniversary dinners,
but no new sectarian tensions were generated during this time.

At this point it is important to add that with the abate-
ment of the antagonisms between the Irish and the Liverpool
Orangemen in the mid 1850s also came a diminishing sensitiv-
ity to the affrontery of the Orangemen on the part of the
Irish. This is an indication that the Irish were indeed
settling down in Liverpool. They felt more comfortable and
self-assured as a community and did not feel threatened by
every jibe and gesture of the Orange Order. During 1846-71,
even though Orange parades could be considered blatantly pro-

73. Liverpool Mercury, 12 July 1853
74. Liverpool Mercury, 15 July 1853
75. Liverpool Courier, 13 Aug 1853
vocative merely in their occurrence, because they were so obviously directed at the Irish community, it was the Irish who took the initiative in fomenting the actual sectarian violence. Besides insecurity in their new home, this hypersensitivity also showed a lack of community solidarity and confidence, because all the incidents were unorganised, localised actions. As the thousands of families arrived in the late 1840s, their poverty and their lack of urban-industrial experience prevented a unified Irish community emerging immediately. This point is illustrated by the small following of the Irish Confederate clubs in 1848 (see chapter II). But by the 1850s the Irish were getting used to urban-industrial life and were aware of their numerical strength, and could feel less alien and more secure. The decrease in defensiveness is apparent in the cessation of the public St Patrick's day processions, which died out before the ban on partisan demonstrations came into effect in 1852. And most of all, the Irish were not as defensive towards the harassments of the Orangemen. There is no evidence linking the two things, but the decline in influence of the militant Hibernian societies may also have helped to cool Irish feelings. Another important influence on the Irish attitude was the catholic clergy's consistent appeals for tolerance and non-violence. The social authority the clergy had accumulated, in Ireland and in Lancashire, made it easier for them to exert the moral authority necessary to keep the Irish community restrained and non-aggressive. But this improvement in Irish self-confidence and the reduction of their aggression towards opposing groups did not entirely obviate the problem of sectarian bitterness during 1856-71.

In 1856 the Liverpool Orangemen brought back the practice of holding processions to commemorate the battle of the Boyne. But they observed the letter, though not the spirit,
of the ban on factional parades within the borough by holding the procession itself just outside the borough limits in the township of Wavertree. The Liverpool police patrolled the town's boundaries to prevent the Orangemen making any incursion into the borough, but none was attempted. After the procession the Orangemen furled their banners, removed any Orange sashes or other insignia, returned to Liverpool separately, and went to their respective lodge dinners. 76 No Orange procession was reported in 1857, but the Liverpool Orangemen attended a special sermon at St John's church. 77 The following year between 8,000 and 10,000 persons participated in an Orange procession that skirted the borough boundaries from West Derby to Dingle, on the Mersey, which passed off peacefully. But that evening about 400 Orangemen and their families met in a school room off the Scotland Road on the north end of the town. Many Irish people lived in the area and a large crowd of them collected around the school where the Orangemen were holding their entertainment. No trouble broke out between the rival groups, but a police detachment sent to make sure that there was no Orange-Irish collision found itself in a riot with the local Irish, during which a great many stones were thrown and several policemen seriously injured. 78 A march from Dingle to the Old Swan, in West Derby, was planned for 1857, but rumours of an ambush by Liverpool Irishmen led to the procession terminating in Wavertree. About 4,000 persons joined in the procession.

The manner in which the whole of the persons connected directly or indirectly with the proceedings conducted themselves was highly creditable to the members of the order, and an undeniable proof that the principles of Orangeism are not antagonistic to the tolerant and peaceful government of this country, and a triumphant refutation of the charge that Orangemen are aggressive, intolerant and fanatical. 79

76. Lpool Courier, 16 July 1856
77. Lpool Courier, 15 July 1857
78. Lpool Courier, 14 July 1858
79. Lpool Courier, 13 July 1859
It did seem that the Orangemen were taking care not to provoke any kind of sectarian trouble, but efforts were being made on the other side too. For example, in 1859 an Irish priest, Fr Callaghan, died in Liverpool. The Catholic Young Men's Society planned a public funeral procession and notified the Head Constable, Major Grieg, that it would be routed through the centre of the town. It had been tacitly understood that funerals were excepted from the 1852 prohibition on public demonstrations, as long as they were not turned into partisan displays. But the police were apprehensive about the possibilities of trouble and the whole force was placed on special alert from 11 AM until 7 PM on the day of the funeral.\(^80\) The procession started off with 3,000 marchers, 2,000 of them were members of the Catholic Young Men's Society and were identifiable because they wore 'bands and scarves'. As the funeral proceeded many onlookers joined in and the number of mourners swelled to nearly 12,000, which made it the largest demonstration to take place in Liverpool for many years. The 300 policemen who were stationed along the route of the procession were not required, as the funeral passed off quietly.\(^81\) Even though there was no trouble, Major Grieg thought that such a large religious demonstration was a dangerous precedent and he visited Bishop Goss, bishop of the diocese of Liverpool, to express this view.

The bishop had not been notified of the procession until he read about it in the newspapers the day after it occurred. But he expressed himself most favourable to the views of the Head Constable as to the danger of party processions, and as an instance said that he had been solicited to lay the found-

80. HC Grieg to Watch cttee, 4 Apr 1859 (LCL, Head Constable's reports, 352POL/2/1, p.99)
81. Lpool Daily Post, 4 Apr 1859
ation stone of a chapel in Great Crosshall Street on St Patrick's day, which he had refused to do, on the ground that the celebration of St Patrick's day and the twelfth of July had in days gone by been productive of riot and bloodshed, and that he would not in his own person in any way revive what he had condemned in others.

The bishop always did his best to avert the remotest chance of trouble at catholic processions or ceremonies and always 'showed every disposition to assist the authorities'.

Proof of this statement lies in the fact that during 1860-71 there was only one occasion when Irish catholics attempted a major demonstration, December 1867 (see chapter 12), but the catholic clergy did everything in their power to prevent it taking place, and the police made certain that it could not be organised.

Things continued to be generally peaceful between the communities during the early 1860s. At the Orange procession through West Derby in 1860 each lodge 'displayed a grand banner, besides numerous smaller flags, inscribed with various loyal, patriotic and protestant mottoes', and later that evening the usual dinners were held. No processions or dinners of any sort were reported on 12 July 1861, but this is probably explained by the fact that 250 Orangemen attended a funeral for an important member on 14 July. In July 1862 the Orangemen removed their celebrations from the Liverpool area entirely by making a railway excursion to a seaside resort. The practice of holding processions in West Derby or Wavertree and then returning to the borough for private dinners continued up to 1865, and trouble with the Irish community was avoided.

82. HC Grieg to Watch cctee, 4 Apr 1859 (LCL, Head Constable's reports, 352POL/2/1, p.99)
83. Lpool Courier, 14 July 1860
84. Lpool Courier, 15 July 1861
85. Lpool Courier, 16 July 1862
86. Lpool Mercury, 13 July 1863; Lpool Courier, 13 July 1864, 13 July 1865
In the mid-1860s the Orange lodges still held their meetings and special functions in public houses. By 1865 it seemed to the leadership that the Orange movement had become much too numerous and powerful to be still resorting to public houses for separate lodge meetings and dinners. In an effort to more closely unify the various Liverpool lodges and to break the connection with the public houses, a social was held in the Concert Hall in March 1865 to inaugurate a fund-raising campaign to finance the construction of a hall that all the town's lodges could use for meetings, and where gatherings and social functions involving Liverpool Orangemen generally could be held. Besides the convenience of having a meeting place of their own, the leadership of the Orange movement in Liverpool were probably thinking that an Orange Hall would enhance the respectability of the organisation. But by 1871 not enough money had been collected to put up the building, which shows that even though the movement had grown in numbers and influence during the previous twenty years, it still had not attracted enough of the type of members who had the resources and disposition to contribute towards the maintenance of the edifice of the Orange institution. In this respect the working-class Irish Catholics and the working-class English Orangemen differed. The absence of any edifice among Orangemen contrasted with the schools and churches the Irish working men put their own money and labour into during the mid-nineteenth century. The Orangemen were not unique among English workers because the friendly society or trade union with a permanent office or meeting hall of its own was the exception, and most met in public houses. But the Catholic parish in Lancashire, as in Ireland, provided a social focus for the immigrant Irish, complete with edifice. For example, the first action a chapter of the Catholic Young Men's Society took was to secure a room in the parish school or hall, or to rent a place where members could assemble. Much more so than the Orange move-

87. Lpool Courier, 15 Mar 1865
ment or friendly societies, the catholic church was a visible social institution in urban Lancashire.

But despite their efforts at unity and respectability, the former aggressiveness of the Orangemen seemed to be returning by 1866. On 12 July 1866, 2,500 Liverpool Orangemen journeyed by rail to Wigan to take part in a large demonstration there. There was no trouble in Wigan. In 1867 the Liverpool Orangemen celebrated the twelfth of July in the town of St Helens. The Orange Order, prior to 1867, had not been very significant in St Helens, but in April of that year there were signs of increased vitality in the local movement. On 22 April a 'grand Orange and protestant soiree' was held at the St Helens town hall under the auspices of the 'amalgamated lodges of Orangemen' in the St Helens area. About 400 people attended the affair, among them representatives of the Liverpool and Warrington Orange lodges. The pope and all his works were vociferously denounced by the speakers, and before the meeting closed with the national anthem, it was proposed that a new united protestant organisation be set up to prosecute the struggle against popery more vigorously. The new protestant society never came into existence, but arrangements were made for other Lancashire Orangemen to join the St Helens district lodges for a large procession through the town on 12 July. When the anniversary arrived, Orangemen from Liverpool, Manchester, Wigan and other towns walked in the St Helens Orange procession. The marchers encountered opposition from the town's Irish community almost immediately. Along the whole route mud and stones were flung at the Orangemen and scuffles broke out between small groups of men. The whole affair quickly degenerated into a prolonged hand to hand battle and numerous deep cuts and head wounds were sustained by both sides. Even after the Orangemen aban-

88. *Lpool Courier*, 13 July 1866
89. *St Helens Standard*, 27 Apr 1867
doned their parade and separated, they were continually assaulted by the Irish. The small St Helens Lancashire Constabulary office did not have enough police to put a stop to the fighting, but by nightfall they had managed to round up thirty Irishmen who had participated in the rioting. The final act of a long day belonged to the Liverpool Orangemen. When they were retreating to their train to return to Liverpool, they were followed by jeering Irishmen. As the train was leaving the platform, a number of pistol shots were fired at the Irish, but no one was hit. It appears that this was the only public demonstration of Orangemen in St Helens during the whole of 1846-71, something the Lancashire Constabulary were thankful for.

Back in Liverpool, a dinner for all the Orange Lodges of the town was held in St George's Hall, Lime Street. St George's Hall, completed in 1854, was originally intended to house the South Lancashire Assizes, but a large hall and a concert room were included. St George's has been described as 'the finest neo-classical building in Europe' and has always been a great focus of civic pride for the people of Liverpool. So even though the Orange Order still did not have a hall of its own, the move from a number of public houses to St George's Hall accomplished two of the aims an Orange Hall would have achieved. On the twelfth of July, the most important day of the year for the Orangemen, the Liverpool lodges could publicly present themselves as a single united movement. And holding their social functions in the prestigious St George's Hall during 1867-81 added the right touch of respectability to the movement which, as we shall see, attracted a greater number of middle-class members and made the formal reconstitution of the institution possible in 1876. But the central location of St George's Hall and its proximity to the Scotland, Vauxhall and Exchange

90. Liverpool Courier, 16 July 1867
91. George Chandler, An illustrated history of Liverpool (Liverpool, 1972), p.10
wards, where many Irish lived, brought its problems. While the Orangemen and their guests were arriving for their banquet, a number of Irish 'roughs' gathered outside. The usually cautious Head Constable Grieg was apprehensive that since the Orangemen's disposition had been darkened in St Helens, trouble of the magnitude of 1851 might erupt outside Liverpool's municipal showpiece, and he ordered the police to disperse the crowd of Irish which had assembled. This precaution taken, there was no more Orange-Irish trouble that day.  

The Liverpool Orangemen were on the road for the third consecutive year on 12 July 1868, walking in a procession in the neighbouring Merseyside town of Birkenhead. But memories of 1851 were rekindled by the appearance very early in the morning of groups of Orangemen wearing lilies and Orange sashes in all the main streets of the town. The display of the obnoxious Orange insignia in some of the lower streets of the town led to a few fights; but the interference of the police during the day prevented any serious collision. As night approached, however, things assumed a somewhat alarming aspect. Scotland Road, Marybone, Byron Street, and other thoroughfares in the locality were thronged with thousands of excited Irishmen and Irishwomen. The Irish felt they had been provoked far enough to attack cabs and omnibuses carrying Orangemen, and pedestrians wearing Orange badges were assaulted. Reinforced police patrols kept things from getting completely out of hand and there were few injuries. One 'prominent Orangeman' was found swaying along the Scotland Road waving a sword, expounding on the social and religious defects of the Irish and trying to pick a fight. He was disarmed by a passing police constable before he could find an opponent. Besides the considerable activity in the streets, the usual dinners and balls were held where many loyal, protestant toasts were drunk and all things catholic and liberal denounced. The police court was crowded with Orangemen charged with being drunk and disorderly the following day.

92. Lpool Courier, 16 July 1867
93. Lpool Mercury, 14 July 1868
A full-scale tumult had been avoided, but Head Constable Grieg was well aware that the revived militancy of the Orangemen, along with the resentment of the activities of the Fenian movement, had initiated a new polarity between the Orangemen and the Irish community which signalled a marked deterioration in community relations during 1866-8. Grieg's worst fears were confirmed a month before the twelfth of July 1869. During mid-June the Head Constable was told that all the yellow ribbon and tassels in a large draper's shop had been purchased by some working men and that it was planned to invite the Birkenhead Orange lodges to a twelfth of July meeting in a field within the Liverpool town limits. The gathering was to be preceded by a procession from St George's Hall in which everyone would wear 'party badges and emblems'. The Orangemen also issued a public statement through the Courier which indicated the route of the procession. Major Grieg, looking back to the disorder of 1868, immediately swore a deposition before the magistrates which declared that the intended march would cause a breach of the peace. The parade was banned. The action of the authorities was enough to deter the Orangemen from attempting to walk within the borough. On 8 July the Orangemen announced that, as had been customary since 1853, they would hold their procession outside the borough limits. Being bound to respect the servants of the crown, on the national and local levels, the Orangemen could not be found, as an organisation, in violation of the law.

Grieg did not think that legal sanctions against the Orangemen were enough to guarantee peace in Liverpool on 12 July 1869. He also visited Bishop Goss, the Roman Catholic bishop, who issued a pastoral to catholics in the town on 9 July.

94. Lpool Courier, 12 June 1869
95. HC Grieg to watch cttee, 14 June 1869 (LCL, Head Constable's reports, 352POL/2/5, no.241, pp 245-6)
96. HC Grieg to watch cttee, 8 July 1869 (LCL, Head Constable's reports, 352POL/2/5, no.255, pp 268-9)
Should, then, any demonstration be made upon the 12th of July - no matter how irritating or galling it may be - we beseech you, by the love we bear you, and we command you by the authority which we hold from God, that you refrain from making any counter-demonstrations, and that you abstain from strife which may only tend to bloodshed. Keep to your homes; avoid the places where such unseemly exhibitions may occur; shun the company of those who may be rash and excited. Keep from the public houses, and all assemblies where topics of an exciting nature may be discussed; and while you give an example of forebearance, give also an example of a love of peace and hatred of discord. 97

Either the bishop's warning was unnecessary or, in fact, clerical control over the Irish catholics of Liverpool was as powerful as the Orangemen feared, because there was no trouble of any kind on 12 July in Liverpool. But this pastoral letter illustrates that besides the fact that the catholic church wielded enormous influence with its adherents, it stood very much on the side of law and order. Rather than a force seeking to disrupt and subvert the government of the United Kingdom, the catholic church was a conservative influence which identified much more closely with the preservation of the established socio-political constitution than with its subversion or destruction.

Even though the Orangemen announced that they intended to celebrate 'the glorious twelfth of July' 1869 'on a much more extensive scale than has been the custom in recent years', there was little improvement on the pageants of former years.

The displays which took place yesterday were, in fact, intended as demonstrations against the Irish Church (disestablishment) Bill, and as such, every effort was apparently made to render them as imposing and popular as possible. As popular demonstrations, however, they were failures. As processions they had some pretence at show by reason of the number of lodges taking part in them and the extensive display of banners and orange-coloured silk, etc.

97. HC Grieg to watch cttee, 9 July 1869, (LCL, Head Constable's reports, 352POL/2/5, no.260, pp 278-9)
By the late 1860s the movement had grown so large that St George's Hall was not large enough to accommodate all the Orangemen and their guests, and after their walk the traditional dinners and concerts were held in St George's and other halls around the town, with no threat of violence from the Irish community.

The communal situation was being kept cool, but the fragile peace was in continual danger of being shattered. And this danger was increased by the steady growth of Orangeism. Most of the followers of the Orange movement were working-class people, but the greatly increased space in Liverpool newspapers given to descriptions of Orange celebrations contain accounts of spectators crowding outside St George's Hall on 12 July to watch the arrival of elegant coaches in which rode splendidly-dressed local notables. Even though Orangeism owed its existence and vitality to 'discord and violence', the movement was too important by the late 1860s to be scorned completely by middle-class men. The overwhelming body of the organisation was still made up of working men, but even a once-yearly appearance at an Orange function by merchants, town councillors or aristocrats was enough to tacitly signify a degree of recognition of the movement which was of great value to the Orangemen in terms of prestige and power. But the liberal establishment of Liverpool refused to cave in to the atmosphere of implicit approval. Reporting on the Orange procession of 1870, the Liverpool Mercury said:

Orangeism may or may not be a very excellent organisation; but why the institution, or many of its members, should devote the 12th of July to the consuming of drink, wearing of yellow favours, shouting out their protestantism, causing a general disturbance in the town, and insulting their catholic neighbours is difficult of explanation, more especially as the Orangemen profess to be so eminently pious. It may be that the 'glorious twelfth' is regarded somewhat in the light of a safety valve for the escape of pent-up ultra-protestant enthusiasm.

98. Liverpool Mercury, 13 July 1869
The usual procession was held outside the eastern and southern boundaries of Liverpool and many spectators and supporters turned out to watch it. When the Orangemen returned to the town there were a few 'scrimmages', but except for skirmishing between groups of 'Orange' and 'Green' children, the police, who were on extra duty, had no added troubles other than drunken Orangemen. This tranquillity prevailed despite Orangemen parading the streets with sashes and whole streets being decorated with Orange banners, in contravention of the regulation of 1852. 99 'Altogether, a fair summary of the "glorious anniversary" would be - much heat, dust, dirt and drink.' 100 Even though the Orangemen affected to be a loyal and reputable organisation, with especial attachment to protestantism and the crown, and were able to attract some upper-class patronage and support, their movement was still intimately associated with drunkenness and incitement to sectarian disaffection.

The scenes on 12 July during the previous few years prompted the Catholic Times to deviate from its usual policy of strict moderation and tolerance in 1870. The great festival of St William III was observed with special devotion - and drunkenness - by the Liverpool Orangemen. As early as Sunday indications of the approaching commemoration were supplied in the number of orange lilies visible in buttonholes and the hundreds of drunken apprentices staggering through the streets .... The eve of the 'glorious twelfth' was spent in becoming bestiality. The low beer-houses throughout the town did a roaring trade, and something much stronger than the Boyne water was imbibed, the revellers, long after midnight, making the night hideous with their cries.

The Catholic Times elaborated on the Orangemen's adventures in the taverns of Liverpool. During the Orange procession there was a regulation that

'the committee of each district stands at each public house on the route until their district has passed.' The Orangemen,

99. Lpool Courier, 13 July 1870
100. Lpool Mercury, 13 July 1870
however, had taken precautions against this rule. Bottles and flasks passed freely in the ranks and worse than all, the committee-men took advantage of their official position at the 'publics' to stand (in a vulgar sense) for each other. 101

These excerpts from the Catholic Times illustrate how things had changed in Liverpool in twenty years. The condescending tone and the sardonic humour are very reminiscent of the journalistic style that the Liverpool Courier would reserve for an amusing account of a St Patrick's day entertainment or an Irishman's appearance before the magistrates. This certainly does not mean that the immigrant Irish had risen above drunkenness and violence. The police statistics show that these and related offences were serious problems among the Irish right up to the end of the century. But excessive drinking, national chauvinism and violence were not promoted under the guise of an organisation. The feeling of certainty and unity among the Irish and the pacifying influence of the catholic church made them very non-belligerent as a group. Examples of drunkenness, fighting or bigotry among the Irish, not difficult to find, are all of individuals rather than groups. So, in a sense, roles had been reversed by 1870. As a group, the Irish had become more settled and less contentious during 1851-70. But the Orangemen, though pretty aggressive during the 1840s and early 1850s, after a peaceful decade, summoned up new strength from the mid-1860s and became more provocative and virulent than they had ever been. Increasingly, the twelfth of July celebrations, called for the ostensible reason of demonstrative loyalty to the queen, country and protestantism, resembled excuses for large numbers of English working men to indulge themselves in heavy drinking and boisterous behaviour aimed at antagonising the Irish community. The growth of this brand of organised rowdyism, while not causing disorders on 101. Catholic Times, 16 July 1870
the scale of 1851, strained intercommunal relations and kept the Irish and Orange elements of the population estranged from each other at a time when gradual integration of the immigrant Irish was taking place.

Community relations were not helped in 1871, when early on the morning of 12 July the cross was torn off the roof of a Roman Catholic chapel in Kirkdale. The chapel had recently been purchased from the Presbyterians and it was known that some of the more extreme members of the Orange Order resented this transaction. The Mercury censured protestant fanaticism again.

The historian who undertakes the task of describing the religious peculiarities of the present age will be considerably puzzled when he comes to deal with the class of religionists who style themselves Orangemen and whose prophet was Dutch William. They claim to be protestants of the purest type, yet the conduct of many of these would disgrace pagans, and their rancourous bigotry and disorderly conduct is condemned by all who have any regard for civil order and religious liberty.

A procession marched through West Derby.

There were the usual displays of insignia and banners. The illustrations on some of the banners were of an exceedingly miscellaneous description, and ranged from William of Orange crossing the Boyne to Moses striking the rock.

Despite the provocation of the vandalism at the Kirkdale chapel, only a few minor fights broke out during the day and the banquet at St George's Hall and the 'loyal demonstrations' held in other places were not disturbed. Still, the Mercury pointed out that when the Orangemen celebrated the twelfth of July in 'their peculiar fashion', 'on that day there is more drunkenness, disorder, and ribaldry displayed in the streets of Liverpool than on any other day of the year - St Patrick's day not excepted'.

This long chronicle of the resurgence and activities of the Liverpool Orangemen and their effect on intercommunal relations is presented because the Orangemen were most num-

102. Lpool Mercury, 13 July 1871
erous in Liverpool and it is one of the only complete accounts of their movement during 1846-71 available for Lancashire. Also, the development of Orangeism in Liverpool during the mid-nineteenth century is an interesting study in community relations. Liverpool had the largest Irish community in Lancashire and the most Orangemen, which gave it the greatest potential for sectarian discord. The Orangemen's celebrations each year during July always caused tensions, but only in 1850-1, 1853 and 1868 did the situation degenerate to serious violence. During 1846-51 the newly-arrived Irish were the instigators of the trouble. But after a truce from the mid-fifties to the mid-sixties the Orangemen, who were rapidly gaining in numerical strength, became very ostentatious and did not shrink from taunting the Irish community on the twelfth of July. But the peace of the town was rarely broken by anything more than small fist-fights. The milder disposition of the Irish community generally and the intervention of the catholic clergy on behalf of civil order were two reasons why the Orangemen did not succeed in fomenting serious disturbances.

The upsurge in Orange militancy from 1867 may have been partly a response to the growth of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the Fenians, but there is very little evidence to corroborate a connection between the two developments. If Orangemen had attempted to move against Fenians in the Irish community during 1866-8 an extremely grave situation would have arisen because the Fenians themselves were an organised, underground military group. They possessed a modest but dangerous armoury and several of the local volunteer companies, who were armed by the government, were heavily infiltrated by Fenians (see chapter 12). Either such an action was not contemplated by the Orangemen, or they appreciated the probable consequences of civil strife of that magnitude. But
the disestablishment of the Irish church in 1869 was an important boost to Orangeism.\textsuperscript{103} Even though the danger of civil war did not loom over Liverpool, the acerbity and bellicosity of the Orangemen helped bring the Liverpool Irish together and retarded assimilation at least temporarily by alienating them further. The single greatest detrimental factor in intercommunal relations in Liverpool during 1846-71 was the Orange Order.

There were Orangemen elsewhere in Lancashire too, but not in nearly the same concentration as in Liverpool. The first mention of Orangeism in Manchester, up to 1836 'the stronghold of the movement',\textsuperscript{104} does not appear until July 1848. Lodge no. 224 held a banquet during which a great number of loyal toasts were drunk, including one to brotherly love for all.\textsuperscript{105} It appears that the Manchester lodges were content to hold quiet dinners on the twelfth of July, if they assembled at all, rather than processions or other demonstrations, because no mention of Manchester Orangeism is recorded in the press during the whole of 1849-69. Not even the conservative Manchester Courier carried any account of their activities. And the re-establishment of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in 1850 does not appear to have enhanced their appeal at all, as it did in other places. A twelfth of July dinner was reported in 1869,\textsuperscript{106} but it was not until 1870 that a procession was held. 800 marchers, representing fifty Manchester-Salford lodges, paraded through the two towns and received 'considerable interest'. There was some hissing by Irishmen in Salford and a few punches were thrown, but otherwise all was peaceful.\textsuperscript{107} The following year 2,000 Orangemen from Manchester-Salford and other towns walked with

\textsuperscript{103} H. Senior, Orangeism, 1795-1836, p.151
\textsuperscript{104} H. Senior, 'The early Orange Order, 1795-1870', p.45
\textsuperscript{105} M/R Courier, 15 July 1848
\textsuperscript{106} M/R City News, 17 July 1869
\textsuperscript{107} M/R City News, 16 July 1870
their full regalia through Manchester and Salford. There was a brief scuffle involving pro- and anti-Orange factory girls in Salford, but it was broken up 'discreetly' by the Salford police. At a banquet that evening Mr Gladstone was credited with having given an impetus to Orange feeling in the country by his jesuitical and popish measures, and with being the leader of the Fenians and the Red Republicans who attacked the church; and he was denounced as no patriot, no Englishman, no protestant and as a dis-grace to the country. 108

Orangeism did not have anything approaching the same effect on community relations in Manchester-Salford that it did in Liverpool. One reason for this might be the prevalence of non-conformist denominations in the area and their greater tradition of religious tolerance. Here we are reminded of the difference between the Liverpool gentleman and the Manchester man. Liverpudlians were 'more likely to be tory and Anglican and engaged in mercantile pursuits' while a Mancunian was 'liberal, a free trader, dissenter and industrialist'. 109 Since anti-catholicism was central to the Orangeman's credo, he might have little support among liberal dissenters, particularly in a town known for its lack of sectarian friction. But in Liverpool, where one can get the impression that even working men regarded themselves as high-church, sectarianism found root more easily. Altogether, Orangeism had a negligible effect on community relations in Manchester-Salford, and Irish-English conflicts were very rare. But we shall see at the end of this chapter that Manchester was not exempt from sectarian troubles.

In Oldham, only a few miles away from Manchester-Salford, it was a different story. In the 1830s and early forties Orangeism in Oldham, where there was a very high level of awareness of working-class common interest, was looked upon as 'little more than a joke, made up entirely of flunkeys, fore-

108. M/R Courier, 17 July 1871
men and mill managers'. But during the 1850s 'there was a rapid expansion of activity'. A small dinner was held in an Oldham tavern on 12 July 1848, where a number of toasts were proposed. The movement drops from sight again until 1850 when lodges nos. 2, 5, 111, 191 and 244 met for what is described as their 'usual' anniversary dinners. They were not active during the controversy over the restoration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy or immediately after, but by 1855 'there were already at least eleven lodges and in the following years a small fortune appears to have been spent on anti-catholic literature and lectures'. Despite this expansion, the Orange movement did not attract much attention in the Oldham or Manchester newspapers, except for a notice of twelfth of July dinners being held in 1863. Around the mid-1860s 'the Orange Order seems to have achieved a fair stranglehold over the colliery labour force'. They marched in the Manchester-Salford procession of 1871, but, otherwise, there is very little mention of Orange activity, in an organisational capacity. But we shall see in the next section that the spread of Orangeism in Oldham was symptomatic of the damage done to working-class unity and intercommunal relations during 1850-71.

Although Widnes would spawn Orange lodges at a later date, there is no evidence of any Orange organisation in the area in the St Helens, Warrington or Liverpool newspapers for 1846-60. Likewise, the Widnes and Runcorn local press for 1860-71 contains no mention of Orangemen in the neighbourhood. Of course, Widnes was a 'new' town during 1846-71 and the vast bulk of the population had migrated to the town within one generation. This made for a great div-

110. Foster, Class struggle, p.219
111. Ibid., p.219
112. M/R Courier, 19 July 1848
113. M/R Courier, 20 July 1850
114. Foster, op. cit., p.219
115. M/R Courier, 18 July 1863
116. Foster, op. cit., p.219
117. Runcorn Observer, 1860-8; Runcorn and Widnes Guardian, 1869-71; Runcorn and Widnes Examiner, 1870-1
ersity of people, including a large Irish community. The town was perhaps too new for sectarian animosities to manifest themselves.

At first glance, Preston seems a very unlikely town for Orangeism to grow in. Catholicism, Anglicanism and nonconformity each claimed about one-third of the population and the town was notable for cordial relations between the different sects, despite theological differences. We saw earlier that the local press was not influenced by the emotive campaign against the reestablishment of the Catholic hierarchy and that very little militant Protestantism was roused to denounce the pope and Catholicism. Preston was as well known as Oldham as a centre for radical working-class activity right up to 1842. Enthusiasm had waned by 1848 (see chapter 11), but it sparked again in 1853-4 during the Great Lock Out (see chapter 4). But awareness of common concern had dwindled enough that the muted response given to the 'no popery' campaign of 1850-1 in Preston was enough to reawaken the never-too-powerful Orange movement. There is no mention of any Orange activity at all during 1846-50. But in July 1851 this notice appeared in the Preston Chronicle.

On Monday evening last, the members of the Protestant Association of Loyal Orangemen, to the number of seventy, met at Mr R. Hutchin's, the Holy Lamb Inn, and sat down to a repast in celebration of their anniversary .... The usual loyal toasts having been proposed and responded to, addresses on the subject of Orangeism were delivered by various parties present. The proceedings were also interspersed by characteristic songs, and altogether a pleasant and gratifying evening was spent. 118

The twelfth of July was celebrated very peacefully in various Preston public houses and school rooms each year during the next two decades with the exception of 1863, when the town was experiencing the worst of the cotton famine of 1861-5. It certainly seemed that Preston afforded an

118. Preston Chronicle, 19 July 1851
example of moderate, tolerant Orangemen who could coexist quite amicably with a large catholic population. The Irish community likewise refrained from any demonstration of hostility towards the Orangemen. They were in no way threatened by Preston Orangeism and there was no provocation to aggressive behaviour. One local Orangemen alleged that he was beaten up by a group of Irish 'ribbonmen', but this had no repercussions and was a totally isolated incident. Preston Orangeism seemed unobjectionable to the catholics and liberals of the town. The conservative Preston Pilot, reporting a twelfth of July dinner, commented that 'the association, we are glad to hear, is progressing in the Preston district in a very satisfactory manner'. Of course, the standard Orange rhetoric was to be heard at Orange meetings, but it lacked the bitterness that propelled it in Liverpool. A local Anglican curate addressed the Orangemen on the subject of the pope in 1857.

There seemed a resolution and determination upon the part of the infatuated Church of Rome to trample under foot our freedom .... we saw it patent and stereotyped in the world's history, that wheresoever papacy was dominant, there distress and misery followed in her train, and on the other hand, wherever evangelical protestantism had had sway, there prosperity had ever been sown broad cast through the land. Besides behaving in a thoroughly respectable manner, the Preston Orangemen displayed genuine public spirit. For example, in 1862-3, when distress caused by the depression in the cotton industry was widespread in Preston, the Orangemen cancelled any plans for celebrations. It could be that their own resources did not allow for the usual modest dinner, but they ostensibly refused to celebrate while so many of their neighbours were experiencing such hardship. This points to a

119. Preston Guardian, 5 July 1851
120. Preston Pilot, 22 July 1854
121. Preston Pilot, 18 July 1857
retention of consciousness of basic working-class fraternity in Preston, actually being fostered by an ordinarily factious, divisive organisation. When the Preston Orangemen held their first procession in 1864, they took their demonstration out of the town altogether.

Saturday was a gala day with the Loyal Orangemen of Preston and their friends. An excursion to Longbridge having been planned and executed, about six hundred of the members and friends left Preston by train. At Longbridge railway terminus a procession was formed, at the head of which was a band engaged for the day. Orange flags and banners floated in the breeze, Orangemen donned their scarves, and the procession marched through the village. Nothing could surpass the order and decorum which prevailed, and the procession presented a respectable appearance.

After a few speeches
The national anthem was then sung, the procession reformed, and the large assemblage proceeded through the village to the railway. Not a single untoward circumstance occurred to mar the harmony and innocent hilarity of the day. 122

The difference between this outing and the 'dust, dirt and drink' of the Liverpool processions could not be greater. The quiet dinners and the sober, 'innocent hilarity' of a day-trip make the Preston Orangemen sound more like a well-mannered, respectable friendly society than a group that thrived on 'discord and violence'. Preston Orangeism seemed to be strengthened by tolerance and fellowship. During 1865-71 the twelfth of July was distinguished from another summer's day only by the same restrained functions. Not once during 1851-71 was the twelfth of July in Preston associated with drunkenness or any sort of disorder. The Preston Orangemen must have been a completely different breed from their brethren in Liverpool. But appearances are deceiving.

122. Preston Guardian, 13 July 1864
There was another occasion, besides the twelfth of July, when intercommunal tensions could become visible. In Preston, and in southeast Lancashire, Whitsuntide, the week following Pentecost Sunday, was an important period of civic festivities. Processions and various social events were held, particularly on Whit Monday. Nowhere in Lancashire was Whitsuntide looked forward to as much as it was in Preston. On Whit Monday 1846 the public houses of the town were trimmed with banners and bunting for the dinners to be held by various local clubs. The different religious denominations held separate processions of their school children. But catholic, protestant and secular guilds and societies all joined in a single procession through the town, accompanied by a dozen bands and watched by 'thousands' of spectators. A great deal of effort was put into making the procession an impressive local spectacle. The catholic organisations walking in the procession included the Roman Catholic Female Society, who were all in white dresses, the Grand United Catholic Brethren of the Blackburn Unity and the guilds of St Wilfrid's and St Augustine's parishes. A distinctively Irish influence was apparent in the displays of two of these groups. The United Catholic Brethren all wore identical green scarves and St Augustine's guild sported a large green banner. After the processions there was a circus, tea parties and dinners. Inexpensive railway excursions were also available. The day was completely peaceful and a very brotherly atmosphere pervaded the town. It was genuinely a community day when all could join in the various celebrations. There was no hint of sectarian enmity.

Whit Monday was not always a merry occasion and a constant standard of grandeur could not be maintained. In 1847 the Preston Guardian regretted that

123. Preston Guardian, 6 June 1846
our report of the Whitsuntide festivities this year must be much less copious, bouyant, and congratulatory than on any former year. Our readers will at once anticipate the reason of this, knowing as they must - many of them from sorrowful experience - how incompatible the present depression of trade and the prevalence of want is with festive ceremonies and popular rejoicings. The little savings which at this season in former years were expended upon finery or devoted to recreation, have this year been absorbed by wants more stern, urgent, and imperative; to wit, the calls of hunger. 124

But still the day was characterised by calm and sectarian harmony. Whit Monday 1851 showed no bruises from the anti-catholic agitation of several months earlier and the former pomp was restored to the occasion. 125 The Preston Guardian reported in 1852 that

The police report not a single casualty, and no one instance of disorderly conduct coming under their notice during the whole day - very gratifying testimony to the holiday habits of our industrial community. 126

This pacific, amicable atmosphere dominated Whitsuntide, and community life generally, in Preston right up to 1864.

During the week prior to Whitsuntide 1864 the Orangemen announced that they intended to hold a procession on Whit Monday. This announcement probably would not have caused any apprehension if the starting time was not the same as that for the catholic guild procession and the route very close to that of the catholics. It was rumoured that there would be 'a collision between the devotees of the Prince of Orange and some of the Roman Catholics' and this 'induced many persons to assemble in those parts where the antagonistic orders were most likely to display their party feelings'. On this usually peaceful, enjoyable day everyone seemed to be asking: 'Is there going to be a row?' Since it was a very long time since the Orangemen had staged any kind of public demonstration in Preston and

124. Preston Guardian, 29 May 1847
125. Preston Guardian, 14 June 1851
126. Preston Guardian, 5 June 1852
as the leaders of that order had chosen the same time for a display of their party prestige as the Roman Catholics, it seemed to be evident in the estimation of the sanguine and the nervous that they meant mischief.

This unprecedented situation seemed grave enough for the local catholic clergy to intervene. On Whit Sunday a notice directed at the Preston Irish was posted in front of the town's five catholic churches.

The catholic clergy most earnestly request all catholics on Whit Monday to keep away from those streets and parts of the town through which the Orange procession will pass during the time of their passing. They also ask as a particular and personal favour to abstain from taking the slightest notice of any banners, colours, or tunes and most carefully to abstain from any breach of the peace. Catholics, if they remain quiet, have nothing to fear....

The homilies in the catholic churches also revolved around the theme of maintenance of the public grace.

The area in the centre of Preston was very crowded on Whit Monday in anticipation of the Orangemen's march. The procession consisted of between 600 and 700 men, including small delegations from other Lancashire towns, and the Preston Artillery Band, out of uniform and not playing instruments belonging to the corps, supplied the music. The procession 'had not a very imposing appearance'. When it reached the Friargate-Canal Street-Hope Street district, where many Irish families were resident, 'fears of a disturbance were entertained, but nothing took place to ruffle the harmony and peace of the procession'. The Orangemen made one attempt at provocation. When the Orangemen passed the street where the catholic guilds were assembling the artillery band struck up a tune called 'Boyne Water'. 'But the catholics took no notice of this ridiculous display of party music - they treated it with the silent contempt which it merited, and allowed the Orangemen to pass on in quietness.'

127. Preston Chronicle, 21 May 1864
128. Preston Guardian, 18 May 1864
After the procession the Orangemen were addressed by a 'celebrated Orange fulminator', E. Harper, who was surprisingly 'moderate in the enunciation of his ideas'. A large dinner was held for the marchers in the Corn Exchange assembly room and 'congratulatory addresses were delivered on the peaceful manner in which their first demonstration in this town had passed off'.

The Orangemen continued their exercise in sectarian brinksmanship the following year. 1,200 Orangemen walked, 500 more than the year before. The procession met the catholics at the end of Park Road, and it was feared that there might be some little disturbance; but the Orangemen waited until the streets were sufficiently clear before they proceeded on their journey. But there were several incidents further along the route. At one point, an Irishmen seized an Orangeman's flag, but 'it was recovered immediately'. In another street two drunken women jeered the procession and one of them struck an Orangeman on the head. Before this episode could become more serious the pugnacious tippler was taken to the police station. 400 members of seven local lodges walked in 1866. 'The procession was deemed by many as one of the best of the day, and the order that was kept amongst those marching went far to obtain the approbation of the spectators.'

But enough tension was engendered by Whitsuntide 1867 for a more alarming incident to occur. While passing through an Irish neighbourhood near the centre of Preston the Orangemen's band played the annoying air 'Boyne Water'. This excited the 'national spirit' of two young Irishmen who took a 'run punch' at the lambeg drum, but the police 'soon put a stop to any lengthy display of vindictiveness, and the two were marched to the police station'. Insignificant as this quarrel seems,

129. Preston Chronicle, 21 May 1864
130. Preston Chronicle, 10 June 1865
131. Preston Guardian, 23 May 1866; Preston Chronicle, 26 May 1866
132. Preston Chronicle, 15 June 1867; Preston Guardian, 6 June 1868
The incident created a good deal of alarm in the neighbourhood, and the shopkeepers were in a state of considerable excitement, as they expected there was about to be a riot, and one of them, who keeps a provision shop, had his shutters run up at once. 133

On Whit Monday 1868 the Orangemen held the now usual march through central Preston and then heard a sermon which stressed the virtues of protestantism without overtly maligning catholicism. 134 The whole day was free of sectarian friction and it did not appear that any extreme emotions were stirred among the Orangemen. But some shouting from the Orange ranks during the parade left a bad impression on some Irishmen, which was added to the resentment slowly built up since the Orange processions began in 1864.

For several years past the Orange procession at Whitsuntide, the playing of party tunes such as 'Boyne Water', and the display of sashes and favours of their favourite colour, have given considerable offence and umbrage to the Irish inhabitants of the town, and this feeling has of course been most manifest in those localities where persons of that nationality usually take up their quarters .... On Monday last, while the Orangemen were marching through the town, and in particular when they met the Roman Catholics, there were shouts such as those used by Mr Murphy and his partisans, and cries of 'How Often?' were several times heard. The Roman Catholics, we have it on the best authority, behaved in a most orderly and peaceable manner, and took no notice of the taunts and innuendoes that were thrown out against them, and everything, therefore, passed off peaceably on Monday.

The influence of William Murphy, a violent anti-catholic lecturer, shall be discussed shortly. But on Whit Tuesday 1868, as a result of the teasing of Whit Monday, the man who did most of the shouting was hit on the back by a seven-pound brick, which was thrown by an Irishman. No response came from the Orangemen that day, but there was trouble on Wednesday.

Just after 8 pm on Wednesday evening

a number of young men and women, whether members of the Orange body or not we cannot say, but certainly displaying Orange colours, went down Milton Street, shouting some party

133. Preston Guardian, 12 June 1867
134. Preston Guardian, 3 June 1868
cries. Those living in the street, who are with three exceptions Irish, were incensed by this, and came out of their houses with such weapons as they could first lay hold of - pokers, rolling-pins, sticks, etc. - and drove them out of the street.

The 'English party' collected some more recruits and returned to the offensive, but by this time Milton Street was full of angry Irishmen. A fight followed and several Englishmen received serious head wounds from the effects of the improvised Irish armoury. A few gunshots were heard but no one was hit. By the time the police arrived the riot was over and a catholic priest was convincing the last of the Irish to go to their homes. The police dispersed the remaining people and the affair was at an end, although rumours of return visits by the Orangemen kept the police on the alert for the rest of the week. Preston's worst intercommunal incident of the mid-nineteenth century had not been allowed to get out of control, but still it was observed that the police were 'ineffectual in a riot'. 'They generally manage to patch up the peace after it has been well broken; but we want them to take good initiatory measures.'

Feuding of this kind was of recent origins in Preston, where tolerance between sects had been the rule for so long. The Chronicle was especially annoyed at the way Whitsuntide was marred by sectarian rivalry. There has been a fine outburst of brotherly love this week, in a classic region of Preston, unknown to us before yesterday, called 'Paddy's Rookery'.... The scenes which have taken place have been termed 'party riots'; but they have really amounted to a low, and vulgar, and savage religious antagonism - a great effervescence of rowdyism, forced up from something worse than a pagan conception of Christianity. It is the strangest thing in the world that men fight the fiercest about religion; and it is one of the oddest things known, that those who practice its precepts the least quarrel over them the most. There is no love so genial as the religious; and so malevolent as that which comes out of creeds.

135. Preston Guardian, 6 June 1868
136. Preston Chronicle, 6 June 1868
The Chronicle had no reservations about placing blame for the pent-up tensions and the riot on the Orangemen. The condemnation included a good description of the intentions of the Orangemen during the previous four years.

We blame certain sections of the blatant and fighting Orangemen for giving the offence - for making themselves into a nuisance, for exposing their fanaticism by a ridiculous and aggravating exhibition of party ribbons, and, in reality, for striking the first blow .... We are sorry that there are these professing our protestant religion, and making a great fume about its virtues, who are so thoroughly malicious and intolerant as to forget the first principles of our faith .... The Irish would never have troubled the Orangemen if the latter had kept away and attended to their own business; but the Orangemen had a mission of mischief to fulfil, and a party spirit to gratify .... It is also certain that from the first a stupid Orange fanaticism has done its best to colour up and give particular tone to the Whitsuntide demonstration which has been made. Orangemen know well enough that the ribbon display they make at Whitsuntide involves an insult to the opposite party .... They also know that the playing of party tunes, which they sanctioned last Whitsuntide, to the disturbance of the public peace, and which they - at least - winked at in some quarters this year, can add nothing to either plain friendship or Christian harmony. They have no right to make offensive party displays during public anniversaries. 137

The residents of Milton Street were reproved for 'noticing the men who came down to the "Rookery" for the express purpose of annoying them', and allowing themselves to be provoked to violence. In short, it seemed very odd that people who loved the divine things of Christianity should prove their affection by doing 'their best to break each others' heads'.

There was no recurrence of the 'Battle of Paddy's Rookery' during 1868-71. After their procession on Whit Monday 1869 the Orangemen heard a caustic attack on the catholic church during their annual sermon. A Dr Foley from Cashel, 'describing himself as "an important man"', journeyed to Preston to remind the Orangemen that the progress of catholicism was 'the result of ignorance, self-interest, fraud and

137. Preston Chronicle, 6 June 1868
crime; and he opposed it because he knew it had been, and was calculated still to be, the bane of truth and freedom in every land’. He ended his exhortation by urging the Preston Orangemen not to 'fail to have before them the fact that God had not lighted that candle (protestantism), to extinguish it under the cruel hoof of the church of Rome'.

Perhaps the previous year's minor foray into sectarian violence was sufficient to vent Orange hatreds, because the 'important' Dr Foley's invective did not rouse protestant passions enough to initiate another crusade to convert Paddy's Rookery.

Nothing at all extraordinary happened during Whitsuntide 1870, but an accident during the procession of catholic school children in 1871 illustrates the amount of distrust which had been introduced into intercommunal relations by the Orangemen's reversion to anti-catholic-anti-Irish militancy during the 1860s. After six hundred Orangemen from nineteen lodges finished their procession without interference there was an alarming incident involving an omnibus. The catholic children were passing along Friargate and the bus, travelling along an intersecting street, was slow pulling up. The bus was stopped 'by a number of Irishmen and women who apparently though it was going to drive through the catholic procession'. The driver was badly beaten up and had to be rescued by the police. Even though no wider disturbance resulted, this happening is important because it shows how easily tempers could flare by 1871. If the bus had had trouble slowing down near a denominational procession a decade earlier, no one would have suspected it might be an act of sectarian belligerence. But the thinly-disguised anti-Irish bigotry of the Whitsuntide Orange processions dissipated Preston's atmosphere of communal harmony which had been exhibited best on Whit Monday. By 1871 the Irish comm-

138. Preston Guardian, 19 May 1869
139. Preston Chronicle, 3 June 1871
had been made to feel defensive. The 'discord and violence' necessary for the expansion of Orangeism (nineteen lodges in 1871), had found their way into Preston.

Large whitweek demonstrations were also held in Manchester-Salford. The churches held separate processions, but there was usually no trouble of any kind during 1846-71. The relative weakness of the Orange Order in the district up to the end of the 1860s may be one reason for this tranquility. The only Whitsuntide incident involving the Irish that in any way threatened sectarian disorders occurred in 1857. A procession of catholic children was passing down the Oldham Road, in an area where many Irish families lived. An omnibus driver attempted to take his vehicle through the procession. Some adults walking with the children grabbed hold of the horses' bridles to stop them. The driver responded by whipping the horses to move forward. He was given a good beating himself by angry parents, and every window in his bus was broken as the passengers hurried out. The police had to rescue the driver from a shop where he was hiding from the mob. A police escort accompanied the catholic children in 1858, and the pastor of St Wilfrid's, Hulme, Canon L. Toole, wrote to the watch committee on behalf of 'the catholic clergy of Manchester and Salford' to express our sense of the kindness of the gentlemen of the watch committee'. It had been a day of unhindered enjoyment to the children. Many of the older amongst them expressed their thankfulness to the authorities for the comfort and pleasure which they enjoyed, in freedom from the usual interruptions.

Whitwalks were held each year by Salford's catholic school children, but there is no record of trouble during

140. M/R Courier, 6 June 1857
141. L. Toole to watch cttee, 2 June 1858 (M/RCL, annex, watch cttee, draft minutes, M9/70/1/1)
Apart from the bus incident in 1857, whitweek in Manchester-Salford was not an occasion when friction developed between religious groups. But this was not so in Oldham.

Traditionally, Oldham's whitweek celebrations were times when 'dirt, squalor and rags seemed to have got a holiday'. But during the 1850s the Whit Friday processions of school children became 'the focus for sectarian rivalry'. The catholics of Oldham, the principal part of whom were Irish, looked upon Whit Friday as one on which they must collect together as many people as possible, and they always succeed in organising a very large procession, composed not merely of scholars and teachers, but of anyone, young or old, that will join them. Perhaps all other denominations exert themselves so as to show a respectable number at Whitsuntide, but no other party beats up for the recruits like the Romanists. The 'liberal' Oldham Chronicle never missed an opportunity to slip in a jibe at the Irish in the town. Their big scholars are very numerous, and if they were really to subject them to school discipline and tuition, the Roman catholics ought to be the most intelligent portion of our population, instead of the most ignorant. This remark is indicative of the edgy atmosphere which existed in Oldham at Whitsuntide 1861. From early in the morning of Whit Friday it seemed that there was some reason to apprehend 'unpleasantness'. As if the sectarian tensions were not enough, the internecine variety was added by the Irish. A group of local musicians who called themselves the Irish Band usually led the catholic school procession. But in 1861 Fr Conway, the catholic priest who organised the procession, decided to engage Oldham's borough band for Whit Friday. The Irish Band took this decision very badly and Fr Conway applied to the Chief Constable for a small police escort, 'for

143. Oldham Chronicle, 6 June 1857
144. Foster, Class struggle, p.245
fear of some unpleasantness from the offended amour propre of the Irish Band'.

The presence of the Irish Band in the streets, dressed in their everyday garb and entirely unattached, with their instruments giving forth a furious volume of discordant sounds, the very echo of which seemed to breathe anger, unmuted slights, and vengeance, seemed to render the greatest precaution necessary.

The trouble that erupted was not an Irish faction fight, but a confrontation between English and Irish. The event pointed to as the cause of the friction, which had been aggravated by the Irish Band, was a near collision of school processions.

When the catholic procession approached the Market Place, led by a police constable, there was already a large crowd of people there watching the Anglican children.

Hearing the band accompanying the catholic procession approach, the people turned to see them, many in the crush breaking through the rear portion of the church processionists. The police officer, no doubt unaware of the procession ahead, assisted in making a passage for the catholics to pass through.

The policeman did not realise he was clearing a channel through the rear ranks of the Anglican procession. Temper rose because protestants 'resented the apparent action of the catholics forcing a passage through their ranks'. For a few moments 'the greatest confusion prevailed'. The police were able to prevent an outbreak of rioting on that day, but the two communities had been inflamed by the incident involving the school processions. After the streets emptied there were continued noisy altercations between individuals, 'the English threatening to drive the Irish out of the town, and the Irish in turn boasting that they would have all Oldham to themselves'.

On Saturday

A few bickerings took place amongst English and Irish women whilst engaged in marketing....and in the evening several encounters took place betwixt different sections of men in various localities. They were, however, confined to somewhat warm discussion of the right and wrong of the matter - a question which it need hardly be said was uniformly decided in accordance with the religious leanings and 'nationality' of the disputants.

145. Oldham Chronicle, 25 May 1861
146. T. Curley, The catholic history of Oldham (East Yorks, 1911), pp 57-8
147. Oldham Chronicle, 25 May 1861
148. Oldham Chronicle, 1 June 1861
But the ill-feeling which had been brought out on Whit Friday did not subside during the weekend. Groups of men held meetings in Tommyfield, a popular gathering place near the town, to discuss the papists' 'aggression'. 'It required no great prophetic gift to foresee that a crisis was near at hand.'

On the evening of 6 June a crowd estimated at 'some thousands' attacked the catholic chapel in Shaw Street. Before the police arrived serious damage was done. When the police did come up, they had great difficulty in dispersing the crowd because 'all respect for the law seemed nearly to have vanished'. The mob tried the Shaw Street church again the following night, but this time the police were there ahead of them, reinforced by special constables, and further damage to the chapel was prevented. But the huge crowd, said by an observer to number more than 10,000, managed to break windows in St Patrick's church in Union Street before the police could arrive. This final dispersal put an end to the rioting. Anti-Irish feeling had been able to vent itself in the damaging of the catholic churches and the atmosphere started to cool down. During the trouble the Irish community kept itself out of sight and did not retaliate.

What was behind the animosity that led to the attacks on the churches? Why should Englishmen in Oldham, where, to judge from the history of the 1830s and 1840s, one would expect to find intercommunal fraternity, dislike the Irish so intensely? The Oldham Chronicle claimed that for 'some time past the feeling of antipathy between the English and the Irish has been increasing in intensity'. The sentiment had found particular champions in the 'young of both nations'. Cornwall Lewis's 'combining principle' seemed to be at work.

The clan spirit has been powerfully aroused among them, and for some days past crowds of English boys have been perambulating the town, insulting and, in some cases, maltreating any Irish people they meet. Another element in the build-up of hostility was the so-called 'liberal' attitude of the Chronicle itself. Somehow, the...
Chronicle could state in one paragraph that Protestant as we are from education, from sympathy, and from conviction, we fully agree with that toleration which has been extended to the Roman Catholics. We do not recognise the right of even an overwhelming majority to interfere with the modes of worship of any man; and it is our boast that protestantism gives every man the right and enjoins him upon the sacred duty of exercising his private judgement.

But in the paragraph which followed this one the Chronicle did its best to characterise the Irish as thoroughly undesirable and depraved neighbours.

At the same time, it is no use to hide from ourselves the fact that there is a considerable amount of danger of a certain kind from the rapid influx of the Irish element amongst us, and particularly in our large towns. It is ignorant and turbulent; and the misfortune is that it does not appear to have any very great amount of adaptability. It remains rude and barbarous in the midst of our civilisation. It takes a low position, and there is considerable danger that at length the Irish element, in all its wild turbulence, will constitute amongst us a sort of helotry, the existence of which will become a very serious question to deal with. Except some improvement should take place in this respect, we cannot help fearing that the Irish, who were once termed by one of our leading statesmen 'aliens in blood, language, and in religion', will voluntarily occupy a position of mere serfs in England, the hewers of wood and the drawers of water, with an antagonistic feeling to their masters more dangerous because more turbulent than that nourished by the American slaves to their owners. 151

In trying to explain anti-Irish bigotry it is necessary to go beyond the increase in the size of the Irish community of Oldham. As we saw in chapter 3, the Irish community had roughly 3,900 members in 1851, 7% of the total population of the borough, and 10,500 in 1861, 14.5%. Even though the size of the Irish community had more than doubled in that decade, the augmenting of Oldham's Irish population was significant during 1846-51 as well; and instead of riots 'the late 1840s saw at least a measure of Anglo-Irish political solidarity and individual Irishmen taking quite a prominent part in working-class leadership'. 152 The timing of the riots, 1861, is probably a more significant way of explaining the causes of the disturbances.

151. Oldham Chronicle, 8 June 1861
152. Foster, Class struggle, p.244
Less than two months before whitweek 1861 the war between the states in America broke out. Part of Abraham Lincoln's continental strategy for defeating the Confederate States of America involved a blockade of all maritime communications from the southern ports. Besides limiting incoming supplies, the blockade interdicted the export of the south's principal-cash-earning commodity, cotton. A major market for American cotton was the textile industry of northern England. Disruption of cotton supplies could bring the textile industry to a virtual halt, and as we saw in chapter 4, unemployment and short-time working were widespread in Lancashire during 1861-5. The first effects of the blockade of the cotton ports had not reached Lancashire by June 1861, but the spectre of industrial dislocation was very plain even then. A serious depression would cut across all 'sections' of the industrial working class. Anticipating short time and short wages could cause tension among both English and Irish working men because 'unemployment meant a decisive threat to the existing standards of both groups'. Depression in industry made the Irish appear as aliens in competition for work. But this outburst of sectarian trouble at Oldham was unique in the cotton-textile regions of Lancashire during the cotton famine, and as the economic situation became more serious, it was plain that Irish competition for jobs had nothing to do with the onset of depression.

Turning to a final contributing cause of the anti-Irish rioting takes us into a more obscure area where we try to describe just why one group will discriminate against another. Cornwall Lewis tells us that people combine for security, which will make similar people not within the group seem like greater threats than they really are. Competition from the immigrant Irish for work and housing could certainly make Englishmen feel materially threatened, but this was not a very significant problem during 1846-71. The Irish were necessary for the thousands of unskilled jobs that had to be filled

153. Ibid., pp 45-6
to permit industry in the northwest to expand. The Irish were often numerous in poor relief lists, but this threatened the resources of mainly middle-class ratepayers, not of working men. Also, the Irish were usually responsible for a high percentage of urban crime, but aggressive, violent crimes usually occurred within their own community. During 1846-50 the Irish contributed to the decline of public health standards, but after that date they do not appear to have been a particular source of disease. And the Irish community was usually non-aggressive, as a group, towards the English. The only Englishmen singled out for physical attack by the Irish were the Orange-men, who deliberately provoked the Irish response. But there was no belligerence shown to the bulk of the English public. In terms of the security of English working men, in its widest sense, the immigrant Irish were not a threat. So why should there still be hatred?

Dislike of the Lancashire Irish was a convenient way of releasing tensions caused by other things. During the first forty years of the nineteenth century, even though material standards had advanced somewhat, working people felt that their living standards, as well as the quality of the urban-industrial environment generally, were actually deteriorating. What might seem to be progress in some quarters was a 'catastrophic experience' for many working men and women. The source of these frustrations and anxieties was clear to working men during that period. Industrialisation, which heralded progress in some areas and prosperity for some men, gave working men only subsistence wages, long hours and poor housing. Gradual urbanisation had been with Englishmen for a long time, but the industrial revolution, the increased intensification of capital and labour in clusters of factories and workshops, surrounded by dormitory areas, accelerated urbanisation until it far outstripped the primitive social services of the time and made the 'freeborn' Englishman feel much less free than had been. Industrialisation, regulated only by market trends, caused

154. Thompson, Making of the English Working Class, p.318
this devaluation in the quality of town life, and it was against this enemy and its political and social appendages that working men campaigned all over England up to 1848. During 1800-48, the generations of workers who were active had witnessed the change in the total socio-economic environment. They thought that there had been better times to compare the contemporary present with. But by the late 1840s and early 1850s the bulk of town dwellers had lived knowing nothing else but a congested, hectic urban existence. They were well used to it, but still there were anxieties and frustrations that required an outlet. The first target of working men during 1800-48 was the system which allowed urban-industrialism to burden them physically and mentally. The causes of tensions were less obvious to later generations of English workers and they turned on anything strange or alien. And the Irish were considered strange enough and were numerous enough to serve as conspicuous objects for release.

The religion of the Irish seemed to give the greatest offence to English neighbours disposed to intolerance. We saw in Oldham and Preston that the occasions for sectarian provocation were the denominational whitweek processions. This has been referred to as the 'religious embodiment of racial attitudes'. The social organisation of the objectionable Irish centred on the church and this gave the English opposition a religious flavour, even though religion had very little to do with it. No single cause can be isolated to explain bigotry, but this discussion will help to suggest some probable ingredients which combined to produce anti-Irish feeling in Oldham, and elsewhere in Lancashire, during the 1850s and 1860s.

Before leaving Oldham, it should be mentioned that in 1866 a group of Englishmen, who had been drinking in a local beerhouse, attempted to disrupt the catholic WhitSunday procession, but the police were prepared for such an emergency, and were able to prevent a confrontation. But in the late 1860s yet another influence that would damage intercommunal relations appeared in southeast Lancashire.

155. Foster, Class struggle, p.245
156. Curley, Catholic history of Oldham, p.68
In July 1867 Head Constable Grieg at Liverpool reported to the watch committee that the 'contraversialist', William Murphy, who had stirred up a great deal of sectarian feeling in Birmingham, was visiting Birkenhead for a week of lecturing. Grieg was keeping a close watch on events across the Mersey in case sectarian rioting broke out there and spread to Liverpool. He assured the watch committee that if trouble started in Birkenhead all points in Liverpool would be secured before any police assistance was sent across the river. But who was this formidable man who could cause so much excitement?

Murphy was an Irishman who indulged himself and made his living by giving 'lectures' that denounced the Irish and catholicism in the most abrasive possible terms. Even though Murphy's vituperations were very similar to the type of rhetoric heard at Orangemen's twelfth of July dinners, he had no official connection with Orangeism. His was freelance sectarianism. In the summer of 1867 his lectures touched off riots in Birmingham, and in 1868 he caused more serious disturbances at Ashton, Stalybridge, Dukinfield, Bury and Rochdale, the worst being at Ashton, where a great deal of damage was done. His orations were accompanied by the brandishing of pistols, and at Ashton he fired several shots through a window to underline a particular point. His speeches inflamed protestant fanaticism and angered the Irish. The Manchester City News was uncertain about the amorphous reasons behind ethnic hatreds, but was able to pinpoint the immediate cause of trouble in Lancashire during 1868.

Whatever intricacy may characterise the remoter causes of the Ashton outrages, the proximate causes are very clear. They are largely due to a somewhat ignoble personage....It seems to be his/Murphy's/ ridiculous but still dangerous vocation to insist on his catholic and excitable fellow-countrymen in England treading on the tail of his coat. That particular

158. HC Grieg to Watch cctee, 30 July 1867 (LCL, Head Constable's reports, 352POL/2/4, 179, pp 228-9)
159. J. O'Dea, The story of the old faith in Manchester (Manchester, 1910), p.22
battleground (we mean the tail of his coat) appears to be insufficient to cover the moral nakedness of its proprietor. The consequence is that Murphy is rather offensive to public decency. 161

This was the man who came to Manchester in 1868.

Early in September Murphy arrived in Manchester with several of his confederates. He intended to deliver a series of his inflammatory lectures in a hall which was only thirty yards from St Wilfrid's catholic school in Hulme. The magistrates met Manchester's Chief Constable, Captain Palin, and decided to prohibit the lectures because they would endanger the peace of the town. Captain Palin was at Manchester Victoria station to meet Murphy and arrested him on the spot. Murphy was carrying a revolver, cartridges and a 'knuckleduster' when arrested and he was locked for the night. He appeared before the magistrates the following morning and tried to defend his right to lecture by saying that trouble only started when the Irish attacked him during or after one of his lectures. The police contended that there was trouble everywhere Murphy went, and that in order to prevent disorder in Manchester his lectures should be banned. A policeman testified that even though Murphy's first speaking engagement was cancelled because of his being in gaol, a large number of persons turned up in Hulme for it anyway. The crowd was in a very exciteable mood, but the police were able to prevent any outbreaks of violence. Another large crowd of people could be seen near St Wilfrid's catholic church nearby. These people were probably one of the groups that guarded catholic churches and schools in Manchester-Salford during Murphy's visit. The churches were looked after each night by bands of enthusiastic, determined young Irishmen who were prepared to take the law into their own hands and mete out scant justice to any Murphyite horde assailing the fanes of their religion. 162

160. Ibid., pp 187-8
161. M/R City News, 16 May 1868
162. O'Dea, op. cit., p.186
Without a public utterance from Murphy a tense atmosphere was pervading Manchester, and the magistrates did not accept his story about attacks from the Irish. Murphy was bound over to keep the peace, but ended up back in his cell because his advisors thought that if he paid the sureties the question of his right to lecture on explosive topics would be settled adversely. But after a day or two in gaol Murphy decided that he had had enough and paid up the sureties. On his release from gaol he announced that he would be a conservative parliamentary candidate for Manchester in the coming general election. But he was never officially declared a conservative candidate.

Strange though it may seem, the magistrates' decision not to allow Murphy to hold his lectures touched off a lively debate over whether or not his civil liberties had been violated. The Manchester Courier lamented that Mancunian liberalism was in a 'parlous condition' when a speaker such as Murphy had his right to free speech denied. Agreeing that Murphy's style was 'coarse and violent in the extreme', the Courier thought that

At the same time, Murphy has as good a right to disseminate his views as an 'iconoclast' has to deliver his orations.... The executive have acted, but of the illegal character of their action there can be little doubt....Murphy has his faults.... however roughly and violently he may do his work, he is uniformly the advocate of the throne and the constitution, and is - unlike some at least of his adversaries - strenuously adverse to revolutionary movements.  

But the Manchester Guardian was pleased that Murphy had been prevented from speaking and destroying the public peace with sectarian rioting. The Guardian's leader ended by pointing out that liberal-sounding conservatives who defended Murphy's right to freedom of expression were misapplying their liberal ideas.

163. M/R City News, 5 Sept 1868
164. M/R Courier, 3 Sept 1868
165. M/R City News, 5 Sept 1868
166. M/R Courier, 8 Sept 1868
167. M/R Guardian, 5 Sept 1868
When Murphy left gaol on 3 September he made it plain that he intended to continue his anti-catholic campaign in the guise of a parliamentary candidate. The City News called for 'forebearance and self-restraint' from Murphy and reminded the Irish that it would be well if the party which deems itself outraged by such oratory as Mr Murphy indulges in would remember that the best refutation of an opponent is to let him alone - severely. 168

To further his career at Westminster, Murphy organised an open air meeting for 5 September. As the meeting of over 4,000 people was assembling, a crowd of local Irishmen assaulted the speaker's platform. They were said to be armed with stones, clubs, 'hammers, pokers and pistols', but only the stones were in evidence when the speaker's platform was emptied by a barrage. Fortunately for Murphy, he had not arrived at the meeting by this time. Murphy's followers counter-attacked and drove the Irish back up the road. A wild brawl ensued in which several Irishmen were arrested and some policemen injured. The police were able to separate the combatants and the meeting resumed. Murphy himself arrived and spoke on the need for 'more wages' for workmen. All convents should be inspected by the government and there would be no more grants to educate 'a foreign priesthood' at Maynooth when Murphy was elected to parliament. 'William, Prince of Orange' was the only motto that Murphy had or needed. To close his meeting Murphy called for cheers for the Queen and King Billy and groans for the pope. After the meeting there were more fights and arrests. 169 There were other minor disturbances the following day as well, and the number of Irishmen in custody rose to forty. 170

The trouble never escalated into serious sectarian rioting, but it did give the Courier an opportunity to demonstrate its dislike of the Irish.

168. M/R City News, 12 Sept 1868
169. M/R City News, 12 Sept 1868
170. M/R Courier, 7 Sept 1868
That the attack itself was the work of Irishmen no one who reads the accounts of it can seriously doubt for an instant. A thorough English row is a matter of very rare occurrence, but when such a thing does take place it is carried on after a rather different fashion. The Englishman hustles his adversary, strikes him with his fists, and sometimes kicks him. Irishmen, on the other hand, do none of these things, preferring to pelt their enemy with heavy stones from a safe distance, or when forced into close quarters, relying upon sticks, hatchets, hammers or any other convenient weapons rather than upon those of nature's providing.

The Courier also alleged that the Irishmen who attacked Murphy's meeting were and organised by Fenians. A known Fenian, John Nolan, was involved in the fights, but this is probably the extent of Fenian involvement. The Guardian disagreed with this analysis of Manchester's sectarian troubles. In an ordinary way it is common and just to say that the aggressor must be held responsible for the scandal and mischief of a quarrel. Trying the present question by that test, it will not be denied that the resort to violence was commenced on Saturday by the Irish or Catholics.... But it would be unjust not to see that the real commencement of aggression was at an earlier stage, Mr Murphy's so-called lectures being the declared continuation of a series of public insults which he has for a long time been heaping on the faith and morals of the most susceptible and quarrelsome section of the population.

There would have been no disturbances if Murphy's well-known reputation for incitement and violence had not preceded him to Manchester. His arrival in Manchester to speak in a neighbourhood where many Irish families lived, armed with a revolver, was provocation in itself, without delivering the lectures which the magistrates banned.

The commotion of 5-6 September did not finish Murphy's Manchester career, but the novelty of his presence certainly wore off quickly. He held another open air meeting on 12 September where only a very small number of people were really interested in what he was saying. The rest were there from curiosity or to heckle. Murphy was repeatedly interrupted by a group of Irishmen who stood in front of the platform and he retorted by calling them Fenians. But he managed to make his principal points. First of all, he told his audience that the 'great question for you and me is this - whether we shall have popery or protestantism in England'. As he denounced
the catholic clergy of Ireland, he pointed out that mass had been celebrated in Manchester for the three Fenians who were hanged the previous November (see chapter 12). At this point the Irish interrupted him and he roared out, to great cheering: 'Britons shall never be slaves.' He ended with a brief statistical analysis of English social problems. Our gaols are filled with papists; our workhouses have not many protestants in them. We inspect our madhouses; but I want to inspect the greatest madhouses of all - the nunneries (cheers). 173

There was no trouble as the meeting ended and Murphy drops from sight in southeast Lancashire. He appears briefly again in Yorkshire, 174 but disappears as a public personage after that. But after two decades of intercommunal peace, Murphy left sectarian hatred in Manchester. The following summer the Manchester Orangemen began to reassert themselves.

Murphy never visited Oldham, but his presence in Lancashire alone was sufficient to cause trouble there. After the riots at Ashton, the Chronicle censured Murphy for his incitements, but added characteristically that his conduct would be wholly contemptible 'were it not for the issues which it is calculated to bring about'. 175 Several months later the Chronicle accused Murphy of trying to 'revive' Orangeism in urban Britain in order to foment disorder. 176 Even though Murphy did not visit Oldham, it was plain to the Chronicle that sectarian feuding in other central or southeast Lancashire towns would be enough to provoke trouble in Oldham.

One Saturday evening late in May 1868 a group of drunken Irishmen beat up a lamplighter, who was attached to the borough police force. The following Monday rumours were going around about reprisals against the 'Fenians' and 'papists' and large numbers of people were gathering in the market place and in Tommyfield. These signs of preparations put the Irish

171. M/R Courier, 8 Sept 1868
172. M/R Guardian, 8 Sept 1868
173. M/R City News, 19 Sept 1868
175. Oldham Chronicle, 25 Jan 1868
176. Oldham Chronicle, 16 May 1868
on edge, particularly when it was said that Murphy himself was on his way to Oldham. On 25 May the rioting started. 177 Both St Mary's and St Patrick's catholic chapels were attacked, as well as a few Irish residences. The crowd numbered more than 1,000, armed with stones. Quick responses by the police kept damage to a minimum. The Oldham watch committee held a special meeting to 'consider what steps should be taken for the preservation of the peace'. On 26 and 27 May, 200 special constables were sworn in to aid the regular police. 178 Other rumours about Irish reinforcements from Manchester were unfounded, but contributed to the tense atmosphere and kept the unrest alive for three more nights. But the police and specials made certain that there were no serious injuries and little damage. 179

The Oldham Standard remarked that the bad feeling that has been but too apparently existing between the English and the Irish in this town for some time past has produced, if not serious, at least rather alarming, results during the last few days. 180

A fortnight earlier the Chronicle had been eager to point out why Murphy would never turn Oldham into an Ashton. It may be fearlessly asserted that in few towns of the same extent is there as little of serious crime, or a greater respect for law and order. The agitator finds little congenial soil in Oldham. His weeds do not spring up very readily. They are overpowered by better growths. During the serious sufferings of that terrible period, the cotton famine, no place was more orderly and resigned than Oldham. 181

But after the Murphy-inspired disturbances the Chronicle humbled itself and admitted that 'we have not advanced beyond the limits of Rowdyism'. Some consolation was found in the fact that the riots were relatively minor and involved mainly young people and the 'boy element', who were 'easily aroused by the prospect of any kind of mischief'. As far as the Chronicle could see there was little doubt about the 'real causes of the tumults of the borough'. Murphy's 'ignorant and malevolent clamour' was one reason. But to that had to be added 'the national hatred of the atrocities of Fenianism,

177. Oldham Chronicle, 30 May 1868
178. Report, Oldham watch cttee, 26 May 1868 (Oldham Town Hall, minute book I); Denis Taylor, 999 and all that: The story of the Oldham County Borough Police Force (Oldham 1968), pp 85-6
179. Oldham Chronicle, 30 May 1868
180. Oldham Chronicle, 30 May 1868
and the rooted dislike which the operative classes generally entertain towards the Irish in England'. The Chronicle welcomed an opportunity to express its own 'rooted dislike' for the Irish community. The primary cause of the Oldham disorder was the 'bad and violent conduct of the Irish themselves'.

For some time past, in spite of all warnings, the Irish in Oldham have manifested a spirit of bravado which people, indignant at the recent attitude of Fenianism, were not likely to endure with equanimity.

Particularly irritating were the spontaneous marches by a 'party of noisy musicians', the Irish band. Attempting to close the editorial on an impartial note the Chronicle admonished the anti-Irish rioters.

The riot on Monday arose from the manner in which the Irish assaulted the police. But we by no means say that as a justification of it. When policemen are assaulted the law provides a proper remedy. It was so in this instance. If any Irishman assaults the police, the magistrates are the parties to deal with him and to punish him. It is no excuse for riot that the Irish have broken the law, and for the English lads to rise in hundreds and break the windows of a miserable-looking Roman Catholic chapel is silly as well as criminal and barbarous. 182

It was feared that the Whitsuntide processions would be the occasion for more rioting, but they passed off quietly. In fact, there was no more sectarian trouble in Oldham from Orangemen, protestant fulminators or Whit Friday trouble-makers during 1868-71. But quite a lot of bad feeling between the Irish and non-Irish communities had already been stimulated during the 1850s and 1860s.

During the first five years of 1846-71 very little anti-Irish sentiment was exhibited in Lancashire, except in one or two right-wing journals, even though it was the time of a massive, ragged immigration from Ireland. The low level of hostility towards the Irish can probably be best explained by the fact that a widespread awareness of common interest had grown among working men of many diverse occupations during the first forty years of the nineteenth century. As long as

181. Oldham Chronicle, 16 May 1868
182. Oldham Chronicle, 30 May 1868
this awareness of fraternity remained vital, working men would hesitate to turn against other working men, English or Irish, to resolve material difficulties or vent frustrations brought on by the hardships of a life in a nineteenth-century town. This cognisance of basic unity weakened by the late 1840s and was only apparent on rare occasions in Lancashire during the 1850s and 1860s. So instead of pointing to a socio-political system which might explain their problems, a way of releasing tension was to make a very visible minority the object of displeasure— the Irish. By the late 1860s considerable anti-Irish sentiment existed particularly in Liverpool, Oldham and Preston, with growing hostility in the Manchester-Salford area.

Manifestations of anti-Irish prejudice rarely took on the 'no Irish need apply' flavour of New York or Boston. Most people in Lancashire were probably indifferent to their Irish neighbours and offered them no opposition, although they probably regarded the Irish as a somewhat inferior 'race' in intellect and culture. Even though the adjective 'racial' is not appropriate for describing differences between the English and the immigrant Irish, in the parlance of the mid-nineteenth century such dissimilarities were treated as 'racial' rather than as cultural or national. An important influence on the formation of these popular attitudes towards the Irish community in Lancashire was the local press. Newspapers created a simplistic, stereotyped Irishman who conformed to what people wanted to think about a whole national group. And when the press was not in open opposition to the Irish community, it rarely went farther than being fair towards it. In the absence of a general liberal-minded defence of the Irish, it was easy for most people to accept the characterisations of the Irish presented in police court reports and Irish jokes. Specific manifestations of anti-Irish feeling were provided by small groups. The Orangemen, especially in Liverpool and Preston, were consistent in directing their loyal, protestant demonstrations at the Irish, who were catholic and associated
with disloyalty to British authority. On only one occasion, Preston, 1868, did an Orange-inspired mob ever attack an Irish neighbourhood. But the Orangemen repeatedly pushed the situation to the brink of outright provocation and there was always tension, and sometimes violence, between English and Irish whenever the Orangemen demonstrated. Religious festivals, such as Whitsuntide, were other opportunities for Orangemen and protestant bigots to taunt the Irish, who made up such a high proportion of the catholics of Lancashire. And the appearance of anti-catholic cum anti-Irish agitators such as William Murphy could start trouble even when Whitsuntide and Orange parades were out of season. The amount of overt anti-catholic opinion in Lancashire was never terribly great during the whole of 1846-71, when considered altogether. But when there was not open hostility to the Irish there was a low opinion of them and a feeling that they were a 'race' apart from Englishmen, which alienated two communities of working people from each other.

In concluding this very important part of the story of the Lancashire Irish, a brief discussion of some of the conclusions arrived at in these last four chapters will help answer some question about whether or not the immigrant Irish were assimilating into the larger urban community during 1846-71. Trying to measure social assimilability and assimilation of immigrant minorities in contemporary urban society is an extremely difficult assignment, and examining the question as an historical proposition multiplies the intricacies. Although it is impossible to obtain appropriate data to investigate social integration in quantitative terms, some useful indicators are available.

In this and earlier chapters we have seen the emergence of circumstances which would seem likely to impede the absorption of the Irish into the wider community. The Roman Catholic religion of the overwhelming majority of the Lancashire Irish did not, in itself, preclude increased social contact and cordial relations with English people or
the adoption of an urban English life style among the members of the Irish community. But the 'alien' catholic religion of the Irish became a focal point for anti-Irish feeling and this sectarianism became the principal expression of dislike for the immigrants. Stephen Thernstrom found that separate, denominational school systems in Boston helped to segregate and alienate various parts of the city's population from each other. In Lancashire during the mid-nineteenth century separate, denominational education was the only alternative that the vast majority of people had for their children's schooling. There is no direct evidence that separate schools did any overt damage to the prospects of Irish absorption into Lancashire community life, but denominationally segregated schools did nothing to enhance communication and understanding between the English and their immigrant neighbours.

A detailed statistical study of whether or not Irishmen and women married outside their religious group, would be a great help in providing a body of data on Irish integration into Lancashire urban society. The large amounts of information required for large numbers of persons, over several generations, as well as the need for the development of a viable research technique, has so far prevented such a study being carried out (see Introduction, p.3). But we know that the catholic church opposed marriages between catholics and members of other sects. The church did its best to discourage 'mixed' marriages by imposing liturgical sanctions on such unions. Since the church was a very powerful influence in the Irish community, it is possible that it was able to deter many of those disposed to marrying outside the church from doing so. But we saw in chapter 7 that attitudes among the Lancashire Irish towards religious practice were very relaxed and it may be that this ecclesiastical stricture against marrying non-catholics had less effect than it would have had in a community more scrupulous.

183. Thernstrom, The other Bostonians, p.174
about observing the letter of church law. Altogether, it appears that religious differences, most obviously through separate, denominational schooling, to some extent impeded the assimilation of the immigrant Irish.

The Lancashire Irish community developed an internal social life centred on its principal national institution, the catholic church. A self-sufficing social orientation within a rigid, ethnic circumscription would certainly make social integration unlikely. But even though intracommunity social relations among the Irish were very important, that social life was never so inflexible and all-embracing as to prohibit the kind of latitude that would allow intercommunity social intercourse on a personal basis. Irish social organisation was much less a problem than religious differences.

But a much greater impediment to the development of smooth intercommunity relations that would foster easy assimilation of an immigrant group was the widespread antipathy, on national and religious grounds (one in the same to an Irishman), to the Irish in urban Lancashire. The most outspoken antagonsism came from protestant fanatics, particularly the Orangemen. But anti-Irish sentiments were disseminated through more discreet agencies than extremist protestant lectures and Orange processions, particularly in the local press. Such obvious anti-Irish feeling, whatever its more obscure causes, was certainly calculated to produce defensiveness and distrust in the Irish community. Probably only relatively few Englishmen had an intense dislike of Irishmen, but the influence of anti-Irish enthusiasts, such as William Murphy, because it was so vocal, had a disproportionately injurious effect on the Irish and often made intercommunal relations very tense, which could only obstruct any general understanding and acceptance of each other between the English and the Irish.

So far it would seem that the prospects for full assimilation of Irish immigrants into Lancashire community life during the mid-nineteenth century were not very encouraging. But there are several reasons for being more optimistic. We have seen in chapter 3 that only in Liverpool and Widnes
does it appear that residential segregation among the Irish might have been a hindrance to assimilation. Even in Liverpool and Widnes, where most of the Irish community was found resident in specific areas, there is no conclusive evidence which says that distinctive residential areas were necessarily an obstacle to intercommunal communication and assimilation. But as in the case of separate schooling, Little Irelands did little to promote integration. Residential patterns among the Irish elsewhere in Lancashire showed far more diversity and must be discounted as serious barriers to social contact between Irish and English. Also, as the size of Irish communities, and town populations generally, increased with the arrival of new immigrants and the addition of second and third generation non-Irish-born persons, it was less and less possible, even among a group with a strong propensity towards overcrowding of dwellings, for the Irish community to maintain ethnic residential areas. Later generations were forced out of the old neighbourhoods by lack of living space or by the desire to achieve a better standard of housing. Even where relatively homogeneous Irish neighbourhoods did exist they could only temporarily slow down assimilation.

A final consideration shows that, in very practical terms, the Irish could not afford to segregate themselves socially from the larger Lancashire community. The census book analysis in chapter 3 reveals the absence of an Irish middle class in Lancashire. Few Irishmen were professionals or owners of commercial property. This means that the Irish were dependent on the English community for their livelihoods. Irishmen had to be employed by and work with Englishmen. An entrenched attitude in the Irish community opposed to contact with the English would endanger their chances of being incorporated into the economic structure of industrial Lancashire. We saw in chapter 3 that this was not the case. Even if they were in a generally humble position in the occupational hierarchy, they were very much a part of it.
This basic element of dependence on the English community for employment guaranteed that there would be at least the minimal disposition on the part of the Irish to cooperate and become part of Lancashire community life. And the fact that there was work for everyone who came to Lancashire shows that, though they might complain about them, the English community was very willing to absorb the Irish into the work force to maintain industrial growth.

It seems that the Irish in Lancashire adopted English life style in dress and domestic habits fairly quickly after immigrating, which removed a possible obstacle to assimilation. The larger numbers of second and third generation non-Irish-born members of the Irish community also reduced differences between the English and Irish communities to a minimum as distance from the experience of immigration increased. Altogether, considering the negative and positive sides of the question of assimilation, it appears that, as the Irish and non-Irish parts of the population grew more accustomed to each other and realised their interdependence, the Lancashire Irish gradually became an integral part of the larger urban-industrial community.
Political activity among the Lancashire Irish during 1846-71 centred principally on two movements, the Irish Confederates of the late 1840s and the Irish Republican Brotherhood during the 1860s. The anti-corn law agitation of 1840-6 and Daniel O'Connell's movement to achieve the repeal of the legislative union of Ireland and Britain had considerable Irish support in Lancashire. But these movements fall largely outside the scope of this study, because the corn laws were repealed in 1846 and O'Connell's Repeal Association, as well as O'Connell himself, had lost momentum and support by 1846. The death of O'Connell in the spring of 1847 brought an end to the Lancashire repeal movement and left the Irish community there without an outstanding national leader or a dynamic constitutional movement to support in the name of Irish nationalism.

The restricted franchise qualifications excluded the non-property-owning working class from voting and curtailed their impact on national and local politics during the mid-nineteenth century. This non-voting population included the overwhelmingly working-class Irish community. Not having a vote and being newcomers to England, the Irish generally did not identify with English politics, in the towns where they lived or at Westminster. Even though they had, with few exceptions, left Ireland permanently, they still found Irish affairs more relevant and interesting than English political issues. The Irishman who made himself prominent in local political circles was the exception and would be a middle-class professional or trader. John Denvir of Liverpool would
certainly have noted any Irish participation in Lancashire politics during 1846-71, but nothing appears in his history of Irish immigration into Britain (1892), or in his autobiography (1914) to suggest any such activity. Irish support for the so-called independent Irish party of the 1850s was passive in Lancashire; and only one Irishman stands out in local Lancashire politics, A.B. Dromgoole, the St Helens newspaper proprietor (see chapter 9). Irish interest and participation in constitutional, moral force politics languished for three decades until the mid-1870s, when an expanded franchise and a strong leadership made the Lancashire Irish community an impressive political organisation. But, as with the repeal agitation of the 1840s, the Lancashire Irish mobilised themselves politically on Irish issues during the 1870s and 1880s, not English domestic issues.

But the absence of a forceful constitutional movement during 1846-71 did not preclude the possibility of Lancashire Irishmen engaging in nationalist politics. Some were attracted to the Irish Confederate movement during 1847-8, after the decline of O'Connell's movement. Unfortunately, while we know something about the Lancashire Confederates in their dealings with the English Chartists, the lack of access to local police files makes our knowledge of the Lancashire Confederate movement itself sketchy and incomplete. A more popular Irish political organisation was the Irish Republican Brotherhood of the 1860s and the availability of police files in Lancashire, Dublin and London make it possible to produce a good profile of that group.
Chapter II

The Irish Confederates and the Chartists

Any discussion of the Irish Confederate movement in Lancashire focuses on the year 1848 and is set against the background of the British Chartist movement, 'the first great working-class movement in the history of the world'. The Irish Confederation was the creation of the Young Ireland movement within O'Connell's Repeal Association, who became impatient with 'the Liberator's' moderation and seceded from his organisation. The Confederates were constitutionalists, but they were intransigent nationalists who wanted more vigorous steps towards Irish independence than O'Connell was prepared to take. They remained basically non-violent and would only sanction recourse to arms as a last resort. The loosely-organised Confederation had sister bodies in Liverpool and Manchester-Salford. The activities of these Lancashire Confederates brought them the most attention during the brief period February-August 1848, after which the organisation disappeared. The Confederates' six months of activity coincided with the last surge of working-class enthusiasm for the Chartist movement. 'Urban distress at home and urban revolution abroad alike seemed to help the Chartist revival.' The Chartists and Confederates were distinct political groups, but an understanding of Chartism is essential before the role of the Confederates in Lancashire during 1848 can become clear.

Britain's rapid industrialisation-urbanisation during the first half of the nineteenth century was a dismaying experience for working people accustomed to smaller towns or rural life.

2. Lyons, Ireland since the famine, pp 106-7
3. Ward, op.cit., p.199
The concentration of large numbers of people at work and at home was producing and provoking new social attitudes. In place of the old hierarchy of interlocking pyramids of 'orders', 'ranks' and 'stations' there gradually developed the notion and vocabulary of 'classes', differentiated by economic interests rather than hereditary caste. Inevitably, this change of outlook occurred with varying speed and intensity in different trades and districts. But it was becoming a fact of life with potentially vast results on social and political attitudes. 4

The self-propelled development of industry, which created a working 'class' to man it, went on unregulated and seemed to promise workers only subsistence wages and poor living conditions. The multifaced political movement which aligned itself under the convenient generic of Chartism was the attempt of the working-class to gain some control over the way the new urban-industrial society affected their lives by winning a fair share of political power.

Probably Chartism's most distinctive quality was its heterogenous composition; and during the 1830s and 1840s Chartism 'held an umbrella over a host of causes'. Varying local and regional influences and experiences brought working people into the Chartist fold. 'Chartism was never a monolithic movement.' Current industrial conditions and distress, of course, had an important affect on Chartism's aims and tactics. But there was a strong element of traditionalism involved too.

4. Ibid., p. 46; Donald Read, 'Chartism in Manchester' in Asa Briggs (ed.), Chartist studies (London, 1959), pp 40-1
Chartism's boundaries were moulded by a real or alleged past as well as by a myriad of complaints about the present and a host of dreams for the future. As a result, the Chartist empire was vast. Its sun for a time flickered over millions of working people. 5

Chartism centred mainly on the winning of equal political rights for all British subjects, a demand embodied in a six-point charter which was presented to parliament three times (1839, 1842, 1848). But working men in the cotton districts of Lancashire were less concerned with memorials to parliament than with the alleviation of immediate grievances. The growth of Chartism in Lancashire during the 1830s was rooted in a 'bitter industrial experience and above all on the glaring class divisions between masters and operatives'. Lancashire had a tradition of working-class radicalism which dated from the early years of the nineteenth century. The spirit of Luddism, trade unionism and Peterloo had been reinvigorated during the 1830s by campaigns to improve industrial conditions, to oppose the new poor law and to complain against worsening unemployment and hardship in the later years of the decade. This long opposition to socio-economic liberalism was the backdrop to Chartism in the northwest of England. 6 Despite Chartism's failure to achieve its minimum political demands, Lancashire working men remained very loyal to the movement during the early 1840s because the Charter gave them a focus for hope and united action. 7

Indeed, hope and honest belief remained Chartism's only real strength. . . . The most impressive and moving aspect of Chartist history was that, despite all its charlatans, cowards and crooks, the movement retained the devoted loyalty of so many working men. At the heart of this support lay Chartism's social concern for northern workers. 8

Chartism's inability to achieve any of its ever-changing goals was due to local variations in emphasis and a badly

8. Ward, op.cit., p.170
divided leadership. After the presentation of the second charter in 1842 and serious rioting in many northern towns, caused by the hardships brought by a continuing industrial recession, Chartism went into a decline. Arrests of many leaders, and internecine feuding among those who remained outside of gaol, as well as a steady improvement in the economic situation sapped much of Chartism's support after 1842. "The all-important economic stimulus to Chartism had been removed. Chartism was the creed of hard times...." 10

The movement remained in the doldrums until 1847, when another economic slump inspired renewed discontent among working men, which was led by one of the most formidable of all the Chartist leaders, who since 1842 had been 'free to organise Chartism to his taste', Feargus O'Connor. 11

O'Connor is an important personality to consider in trying to fit in Lancashire Irish into the political scene of the 1840s.

Feargus O'Connor was a protestant landowner from Co. Cork and came from a family which was 'Irish, revolutionary and believed itself to be royal'. 12 Even though O'Connor was a landowner, he always identified closely with radicalism and supported rural and urban working people in their demands for social justice. At a Cork reform meeting in 1831 he publicly announced his support for universal suffrage, annual parliaments, the ballot and the repeal of the Irish union with Britain. 13 He was elected to parliament in 1832 'as the representative of the Roman Catholic peasantry' and several years later became involved in agitation against the new English poor law. 14 O'Connor's ego was all but insatiable and his liking for enthusiastic applause made him an incurable public speaker who would say nearly anything to please a crowd, whether he meant it or not. But beneath the excited words there was a 'serious political purpose'. 'O'Connor sincerely, if simply, believed in the need for repeal of the

10. Donald Read, op. cit., p. 56
11. Ward, op. cit., p. 170
13. Ibid., p. 26
14. Ibid., p. 31; Ward, op. cit., p. 69
Irish union and later in the need for achievement of the Chartist six points. He easily found his way into the Chartist agitation and became the most popular figure to the working people of the north of England. To achieve radical change in both England and Ireland, O'Connor hoped to be the master link between Irish and English working men, which would forge an alliance of irresistible strength. In particular, he hoped to enlist the support of the Irish living in England for English working-class demands.

Other leaders during the 1830s and early 1840s tried to excite interest in the unity of working-class Englishmen and Irishmen in the pursuit of change in Ireland and England. But Ireland and the Irish 'did not arouse many English proletarian passions'. Sympathy for the Irish was sometimes over-ridden by suspicions that they were wage-depressing blacklegs. So altogether, 'talk of working-class collaboration between English and Irish workers was to cut little ice'. Still, the Chartist leadership consistently advocated the Irish cause. Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, O'Connor never lost hope in the possibility of the Irish in England, English working men and Irish tenant farmers and labourers in Ireland joining in a massive agitation for reform. But this hope was never to be achieved. For one thing, Daniel O'Connell, the Liberator, detested anything to do with Feargus O'Connor, as he did all things very radical, and this early opposition obliterated O'Connor's influence in Ireland and severely limited it among the Irish in England.

The breach with O'Connell forced O'Connor to become, during the Chartist years now approaching, almost exclusively an English political leader. Yet O'Connor's persistent dream throughout these years was to be an Irish leader also. Later, when O'Connor and Chartism were in full swing, O'Connor offered to bury the hatchet and support O'Connell's repeal agitation. But O'Connell would not relent in his opposition.

15. Read and Glasgow, op. cit., p.130
16. Ibid., p.49
17. Ward, op. cit., p.65
18. Ibid., p.26
19. Read and Glasgow, op. cit., p.49
20. Ibid., p.50
to O'Connor, and when O'Connor and Bronterre O'Brien joined a branch of the Repeal Association he made sure they were expelled. O'Connell also went out of his way to prevent Irishmen in England from supporting Chartism, not only because of his personal dislike for the leadership, but because he feared that a popular working-class movement such as Chartism threatened the 'groundworks of the social state - the protection of property and the institutions of the country'. The influential catholic clergy, who supported O'Connell and distrusted Chartism, also urged the Irish to oppose O'Connor and the Chartists. So rather than supporting a movement designed to defend their interests, as well as those of English working men, O'Connell's Irish supporters were sometimes found disrupting Chartist meetings. In the absence of any significant Irish immigrant support, the principal Irish influence on English Chartism during 1839-47 was Fergus O'Connor. But in 1847 the appearance of a new Irish political alignment, the Irish Confederates, once again raised O'Connor's hopes of uniting Irish and English working men in a single movement for a radical change.

Liverpool with its large Irish population and the principal point of communication with Ireland, had an active Irish Confederate club. The Liverpool Confederates came to prominence in Liverpool during early April 1848, following the February insurrection in Paris and the apparent fulfilment of O'Connor's long-held dream of an Irish-Chartist alliance at Manchester on St. Patrick's day 1848, which shall be discussed later in this chapter. The third Chartist petition was due to be presented in London on 10 April, and the local Irish Confederates organised a meeting at the Liverpool Music Hall, Bold Street, on 7 April in support of

23. Treble, op.cit., pp 48-9
24. Ward, op.cit., p.154; Read and Glasgow, op.cit., p.93; Treble, op.cit., pp 54-5
the Chartist demands and the Irish nationalist cause. The meeting was addressed by Mathew Somers, a Confederate, and Dr Lawrence Reynolds, an Irish Chartist and Confederate supporter. Both speakers urged that Englishmen and Irishmen should unite in an armed insurrection to establish an English republic and an independent Ireland, which caused a great deal of excitement among the audience. Another meeting of 3,000 persons was held in Queen Square on 10 April to coincide with the large London demonstration, where Dr. Reynolds spoke in favour of the people's charter and abolition of the Irish union with Britain. It seemed Reynolds had been able to generate a good deal of enthusiasm and he hoped to maintain it by calling another meeting for 12 April. But the Chartist meeting announced at the close of the last assembly of that class of politicians for last evening proved a failure. But a few hundred idle vagabonds attended, and not even one speaker was present to relieve the nausea of the public mind. The vigilance of the authorities did not slumber, however.

Reynolds had better luck on 14 April at the Music Hall, where he advised his listeners to prepare for a battle that he was certain was imminent. He also did some advertising for cut-price weaponry, available through him. The largest meeting of all was held during the following week and was attended by an estimated 10,000 persons on the shore of the Mersey Estuary. The size of the demonstration worried the police, but Reynolds advocated Irish freedom in moderate tones and the gathering dispersed peacefully. On 25 April Michael Doheny and John Mitchel, 'two of the sword, pike and rifle gentry from the sister country', arrived in Liverpool from Dublin to address meetings in Lancashire. A meeting was immediately announced by placard for that same evening in a hall in Newington Square. 'Short as the notice was, Newington was crowded with the lower classes of Irish for an hour before the time appointed for commencing the proceedings.'

25. The Times, 10 Apr 1848
26. Lpool Mercury, 11 Apr 1848
27. The Times, 14 Apr 1848
28. Lpool Mercury, 18 Apr 1848
29. The Times, 22 Apr 1848
The Newington hall was too small for the numbers who gathered to hear the Confederate leaders. The meeting was adjourned to Queen Square, where an audience of 'hundreds' gathered. 'Doheny's speech was in the usual strain of violence and republicanism.'

He repeatedly called upon the people to arm, arm, arm, and he counselled the buying of pikes and rifles. He said that a man walked the streets more proudly, and could enforce his requests more firmly, when he carried a rifle in his hand; and when he had a memorial to present to the Queen, or a petition to the House of Commons, the possession of rifles caused the memorial or petition to have considerably greater weight.

Dr Reynolds, 'of short-sword-for-sevenpence notoriety', also made a few brief remarks. John Mitchel did not attend the meeting because he had returned to Dublin. There was only one other Confederate meeting of any importance held in Liverpool after that of 25 April. On 11 June Dr Reynolds addressed a peaceful meeting on a beach near Bootle.

Since all these meetings were held under the auspices of the Irish Confederates, it is interesting to note that only at Doheny's 25 April meeting was there any mention of the audience being mainly Irish. Chartism had never been a very potent force in Liverpool, but still it had some support there. From March 1848, Confederates and Chartists were sharing platforms and advocating each other's causes, and it is reasonable to suppose that remaining English Chartist supporters in Liverpool would attend Confederate demonstrations, especially since no Chartist-led demonstrations were held during this time in the town. The fact that the leading Chartist in the town, Dr Reynolds, had taken up the Confederate cause makes this supposition seem more likely. Press notices of Confederate gatherings usually described them as 'Chartist-Repeal' meetings, which indicates attendance by Englishmen and Irishmen together. So it appears that

30. Lpool Courier, 26 Apr 1848
31. The Times, 12 June 1848
what support the Confederates were able to muster in Liverpool was drawn from both the English and Irish communities.

We have seen that the Liverpool Confederates regularly spoke in favour of armed rebellion, and that Dr 'Short-sword-for-sevenpence' Reynolds offered to stock the revolutionary armory. The details of Reynolds's operation came to public notice in a curious way. Reynolds, described in the press as a 'Chartist ironmonger', went to the local magistrates court, and addressing Mr. Rushton, said he had a complaint to make against four policemen and an inspector for having entered and taken possession of his shop, and thereby to put a stop to his business.

Reynolds claimed that he kept an ironmonger's shop in Leeds Street and that the police officers remained in his shop for nearly five hours. The police 'would not state by whose authority they were acting'. When asked by the magistrate what sort of ironmongery he was engaged in, Reynolds told him 'small swords, etc.'.

The police officers stated that they thought that there was going to be a disturbance in front of Reynolds's shop because the Doctor had appeared at his door with a sword in his hand. Reynolds had twenty-six dozen of this 'species of knife'. He had announced the price of the sword, 7d., to those who were gathering outside, and when asked what it could be used for he answered: 'Their use is to cut bacon, or anything you like.' The policemen added that Reynolds offered pistols and blunderbusses at 7s. and guns with bayonets for 15s. The police had to clear the mob which had gathered because many residents of the area had become alarmed. The magistrate reprimanded the policemen for overstepping their authority by occupying Reynolds's shop, but said that he understood that it was a 'matter of extenuation' that involved a blatant revolutionary. Rushton then severely condemned Reynolds and all like him.32 Reynolds had won his

32. Lpool Courier, 26 Apr 1848
complaint against the police; and the decision apparently lent tacit legality to Reynold's efforts to arm the working class of Lancashire.

There were other weapons in circulation among radicals in Liverpool.

Yesterday two specimens of the pikes recommended for use by the physical-force repealers of Ireland were shown at the Exchange newsroom. One of them is a blade about a foot long, apparently made of well-tempered steel. The other is of a similar shape, with the addition of a hook, which might be applied in certain cases where a thrust from the pike would not be available. Both are dangerous-looking weapons, and much more likely to do injury than the 6½d. cutlasses of the Chartist ironmonger Reynolds. 33

After the appearance of these weapons there was no apparent Chartist-Confederate activity in Liverpool for some weeks. But several supporters achieved a brief notoriety. One 'rough-looking' man was charged in May 1848 with drunkenness and threatening violence. He had, it appeared, when tipsy, taken an unaccountable offence at a neighbour, and pursued him into his house with a sword, threatening to cut him down. He struck the weapon (one of the sugar-cane cutters vended by Dr Reynolds) at the door, when it splintered into three pieces. 34

Another Confederate sympathiser was arrested for being drunk and disorderly and shouting: 'Hurrah for Smith O'Brien and repeal!' The magistrate told him that 'Mr Smith O'Brien has made a great fool of himself, and so have you. Go away, and don't come here again.' 35 But the lack of obvious activity did not mean that something was not going on, and the authorities were keeping a close watch on this covert movement.

The openness of the physical-force Confederates and Chartists in their threats of violent insurrection to secure their aims had made it easy for local and government authorities to monitor their activities. Indeed, Reynold's sword manufactory was hardly a secret business. But the failure of the April Chartist demonstration in London, which the

33. *Lpool Mercury*, 28 Apr 1848
34. *Lpool Courier*, 17 May 1848
35. *Lpool Courier*, 28 June 1848
Confederates supported, convinced certain elements of both groups that more careful planning for a rebellion was needed. A plot was hatched, the details of which remain obscure, for a Chartist-Confederate rising in the north of England, organised chiefly from Manchester. It appears that the Confederates were more heavily involved than the Chartists, and at Liverpool the rising was an entirely Confederate affair. At first, the date for a rising was set for 12 June, but it was put back to 15 August. The organisation of this rebellion was never very formidable, but the government moved against the Liverpool Confederates in late July.

On 22 July a man named Joseph Cuddy, who was a lodger in Dr Reynold's house, was arrested for possession of pikes. Cuddy freely admitted responsibility for the pikes and said that he acted as salesman for Reynolds. He thought that there was nothing illegal in selling the weapons because of the implicitly favourable result of Reynold's court action the previous April. Cuddy added that he had no idea of what the pikes were intended for and thought that they were too large for use in a rebellion. Another man, James O'Brien, was also arrested for possession of pikes, a gun and some ammunition. A letter was also seized, which was of such nature as to more than confirm the evidence of the officers. The letter contained important intelligence as to the movements of the repealers in other towns in this country, and whilst it will be of use in evidence against the prisoners, it will, at the same time, be the means of giving timely warning elsewhere.

It was also stated that O'Brien had been seen hawking 'treasonable prints'. Cuddy was committed to trial for treasonable conspiracy a fortnight later, but O'Brien was released on bail while further evidence was collected. He too was committed to trial a week later, when he was charged with making a seditious speech which advocated violence to secure the freedom of John Mitchel and Ireland.

36. Read and Glasgow, Fearghus O'Connor, pp 137-8
37. Liverpool Courier, 26 July 1848
38. Liverpool Courier, 16 Aug 1848
39. Liverpool Courier, 23 Aug 1848
The police could not locate Dr Reynolds anywhere in Liverpool. Some months later it was learned that when Reynolds heard that a warrant had been issued for his arrest he made his way to Swansea, via Birkenhead and Birmingham, and then sailed to New York.40

The arrest of Cuddy, O’Brien and several other men caused considerable excitement in Liverpool. It was reported that the town authorities had 'good reason' to believe that a rebellion was 'intended', in connection with the insurrectionary movements in Ireland'. The Liverpool Courier gave its interpretation of the nature of the plot. It is well known to the authorities that clubs for the purpose of arming an organisation are fast forming in various parts of the town, and that nightly meetings are held at which the most seditious language is used and the most treasonable objects avowed. The idea entertained by the promoters of these clubs is, we believe, that by rising in Liverpool, Glasgow and other places, whenever a rebellion breaks out in Ireland, troops, instead of being sent across the water, will be kept at home to put down disturbances, and thus the forces of the government in Ireland will be considerably weakened. It is stated that here clubs to the number of fifty have been established; that they number one hundred men each. The subscription of each member is one shilling a week. The money is spent in the purchase of firearms. 41

In an attempt to dampen the ardour of would-be revolutionaries, the Courier gave up a great deal of space to an account of the considerable security precautions which had been taken in the town, including the news that the Liverpool police were undergoing intensive training with firearms and cutlasses, on orders from the Home Office. Annoyed and fatigued by extra drill and extra duty, they have arrived at the state of mind when they will prove formidable opponents, if at once let loose upon a rebellious mob. Their hearts are in their work, and they seem determined, at all hazards, to protect the peace of the town, and the safety of the unoffending and orderly inhabitants.

The police force was being expanded from 800 to 1,300 men, and during 28 July-31 August, 329 extra constables were

40. Liverpool Courier, 15 Nov 1848
41. Liverpool Courier, 26 July 1848
appointed. 700 army pensioners, 20,000 special constables and a military force, backed by artillery, were held in reserve. 1,000 dock workers were armed to defend shipping in the port and all public buildings were guarded night and day. A 'body of men who have been much misrepresented and unjustly aspersed', the Orangemen, who were more accustomed to disturbing the peace than preserving it, called a meeting and offered their assistance to the local authorities 'in maintaining order in the town'. The Courier assured its readers that any uprising 'must result in the discomfiture of the ruffians who dare attempt to set the law at defiance'.

Despite these extensive precautions, some Liverpudlians were convinced that they would only be secure from the designs of the bloodthirsty Irish Confederates if the coercion legislation which applied to Ireland was extended to include Liverpool. Several leading citizens sent off a petition to the Home Office requesting a Liverpool coercion act.

Your petitioners, deeply sensible to the urgent necessity of such a measure as being applicable to the present melancholy condition of that portion of Her Majesty's dominions, do, nevertheless, feel that Liverpool, from its contiguity to Ireland, and containing, as it does, in its population so large a proportion of Irish, who are known to sympathise with the disaffected in their own country, ought to be included; and it having been ascertained that they are already organised in clubs and arming, your petitioners, therefore humbly pray that your honourable house will extend to this important seaport town a similar measure, accompanied with that permanent military protection which has been so long afforded to the other large and important towns of the United Kingdom.

But the government was unconvinced of the need for a coercion (Liverpool) act.

The most alarming occurrence of the last week in July had nothing to do with a bloody insurrection of Confederate firebrands. On 29 July, 500 Liverpool dock labourers were dismissed from their jobs because they refused to be sworn.

42. Lpool, watch cttee, minutes, 28 July-31 Aug 1848 (LCL, MIN/WAT/1/4, pp 483-506)
43. Lpool Courier, 26 July 1848
44. Lpool Courier, 26 July 1848
in as special constables. It is not stated whether or not the men were Irish, but since many Irishmen, who would be reluctant to act as specials against other Irishmen, worked along Liverpool's docks, most of them were probably Irish. It was feared that unemployed labourers would start trouble and police and military were held in readiness to disperse them. There were no disturbances, and some of the men agreed to become specials in order to regain their jobs. 45

Otherwise, the town was very quiet. During August the police made more arrests and seized more arms. On 11 August the police found 500 of Reynold's 'cane-cutters' in a cellar beneath a public house in Atherton Street. 46 Later in the month a Dr. Murphy was arrested because in his house was found a large memorandum book, containing minutes of the club meetings, directions, etc. In a clock case a musket was discovered. Further search led to the finding of a pike head, a placard calling the people to organise, etc. Murphy was also committed for trial. 47

There was no rioting or bloodshed in 1848, despite some efforts at organising a rising by some militant leaders of the Irish Confederate movement. One reason that an outbreak did not occur was the excessively tight security provided by the police and military. But, more importantly, a rebellion requires numerous participants if it is to be anything more than idle conspiracy. Militant leaders must have someone to lead. Such support was absent in Liverpool, as it was in Ireland, because people, and particularly Irish immigrants, had many other problems to occupy their minds and too many other uses to put their money towards. In 1848 the Lancashire Irish, and most Englishmen, were interested in reform, but not in rebellion.

The trials of the Liverpool Confederates took place at the South Lancashire Assizes, Liverpool, in December 1848. Ten men, including Cuddy, O'Brien and Murphy, were indicted on

45. Liverpool Courier, 2 Aug 1848
46. Preston Guardian, 12 Aug 1848
47. Liverpool Courier, 23 Aug 1848
nine counts of conspiracy.

The general charge was, that the prisoners conspired to send arms to Ireland, to be used in the breach of the peace, and opposing the execution of the laws for the purpose of insurrection and tumult; that they did so aid the conspiracy by sending the said arms, and that they incited them to raise an insurrection in England, for the purpose of obstructing the execution of the law.

All ten accused pleaded not guilty. Nine of them were convicted. Cuddy was imprisoned for a year on good behaviour for a further year. O'Brien was sent to gaol for six months and Murphy for three months. Four other Confederates were sentenced to two years in prison and two years good behaviour. These sentences, and Cuddy's, were most severe because they had actually incited people to armed rebellion against the queen at various meetings. After the completion of the trials, the Irish Confederates in Liverpool broke up entirely.

Widnes and St Helens were virtually untouched by either Chartist or the Irish Confederates. Chartism was most likely to catch on in older centres of dying industries or in new 'single-industry' towns. But it had little appeal in new industrial centres with diverse economies, such as St Helens. Widnes's first alkali plant was not even in full operation in 1848, and its transformation into an urban-industrial district was only beginning, so Chartism found little support there. But to be on the safe side, the Lancashire Constabulary, who patrolled the Widnes-St Helens area, were ordered to be in 'readiness to assemble at such time and place as may be deemed expedient should their services be required to aid in the preservation of the peace'. There was no threat of trouble in either town in 1848.

Preston had gained a reputation as a centre of working-class militance during the 1830s and early 1840s, but

48. *Liverpool Courier*, 13 Dec 1848
49. *Liverpool Courier*, 20 Dec 1848
50. *Liverpool Mercury*, 12 Dec 1848
51. Asa Briggs, 'The local background of Chartism', p. 3
52. LC, general order book, 9 June 1848 (LRO, FLA, vol.2, 1817, p. 157)
enthusiasm had flagged by 1848. Occasional Chartist speakers came to lecture, but the Confederates never made an appearance in Preston. The Chartist speakers who came to Preston were heavily influenced by Feargus O'Connor and usually expressed sympathy with the Irish nationalist movement. After the Chartist-Conference alliance of March 1848 one speaker told a large Preston audience that he was glad to find that the working classes of England and Ireland were forgetting their former foolish, factious feeling, and were uniting together. The Irish had said, 'If you will go with us for "Ireland for the Irish", we will go with you for the Charter'.

But all the meetings were peaceful and there were no disturbances or evidence of a plot to foment rebellion among the Irish or the English. Preston was so quiet that in May 1848 a 'dutiful and loyal' address was sent to the Queen by the town council to offer 'heartly congratulations upon the peaceable and satisfactory issue of the wicked attempts recently made by disaffected men to excite your Majesty's subjects to acts of treason and sedition'. Her Majesty was assured that even though all Europe was engulfed by red revolution, 'from whose contagious spirit even these favoured realms have not been entirely exempted',

the inhabitants of Preston have, through a long continued season of severe commercial depression and distress, remained laudably true and peaceful. Public order and loyalty have been preserved, not by measures of coercion or intimidation, but by a deeply-rooted reverence and affection towards your Majesty...

Despite the 'laudably' good disposition of the Preston working class, the council thought it necessary to ban an open-air meeting planned for 15 June. Another meeting was held in a hall the following day and one of the speakers remarked that he 'entirely sympathised with John Mitchel,'
for whom three cheers were given. This was the extent of radicalism in Preston in 1848. But the most active part of Lancashire during 1848 was southeast Lancashire.

Several months of vigorous political activity and intermittent violence began in southeast Lancashire in March 1848. On the morning of 9 March 'a little Irishman, whose name we have not learned, but who was dressed in a blue frock coat, and a blue cap, having a military appearance', addressed a crowd of more than 1,000 persons in New Cross, Manchester, and led them on a procession through various streets of Ancoats. The crowd stopped in front of a mill and called for the factory hands to come out to join them. When none of the hands came out, a few panes of glass were broken and they moved on. The Irishman again addressed his followers on the banks of the Rochdale Canal. He told the crowd that he wanted them to form another procession 'for the purpose of showing the middle classes that they, in all their proceedings, were peacable and respectable'. But his appeal for peace was not enhanced when he called for three cheers for the French republic (heartily responded to), and told the crowd that 'it only wanted the Irish to stir, and it would not be six hours work for them'. The response to this was: 'Turn out the mills!' The Irishman convinced them that they should form a procession to the mills, 'but that no damage should be done'. At this point the crowd had dwindled to about 400, mainly 'lads of from fifteen to twenty years of age'. At Kennedy's mill, Ancoats, the hands did not join the crowd, but, rather, organised a defence of their factory. They received a barrage of stones from the Irishman's followers and many windows were broken. There were scuffles between attacking and defending operatives. At this point the police arrived and charged the crowd. More stones were thrown and eight persons were arrested. The little Irishman

56. Preston Guardian, 17 June 1848
vanished. It was rumoured that the 'lads and vagabonds' who caused the riot would regroup at Stephenson Square, but all remained quiet after the arrests. 57

The 9 March disturbance had not been serious, but the police in southeast Lancashire were put on their guard. The Lancashire Constabulary was ordered to be ready to respond to emergency situations and divisional superintendents had to submit lists of such respectable and trusty persons as may be able and willing to act as special or local constables in their respective townships or districts should it be deemed advisable to concentrate the police constables for the better preservation of the peace or the repression of disorders. 58

The Lancashire Constabulary also tried to limit the dangers of gunsmiths' premises being looted. Superintendents are hereby directed to suggest to all gunsmiths and other persons dealing in firearms within their respective divisions the propriety of, for the present, detaching the locks from all guns or stocks from the barrels, and depositing them in separate places for safety. 59

The Salford watch committee decided extra police were necessary to guard against the Manchester disturbances spilling over into the neighbouring borough, and all the lamplighters and firemen were sworn in as special constables. The committee also approved the appointment of fifty temporary police constables. 60 But it seemed that the minor Manchester outbreak was an isolated incident and the Manchester Guardian complimented the local workers for showing 'the very best spirit on this occasion'.

Considering the great privations which many of them have recently endured, their patience and good disposition do them infinite credit, and will not be forgotten by their employers. 61

Several days later a new phase of the working-class agitation was inaugurated in Manchester's Free Trade Hall.

57. M&R Courier, 11 Mar 1848
60. Salford, watch cttee, minutes, 1847-8, 9 Mar 1848 (SCL, typescript, p.4)
61. M&R Guardian, 11 Mar 1848
In early 1848, a leading Dublin Confederate, John Mitchel, became convinced that a social revolution was necessary in Ireland, as well as national independence. But his new militancy was not supported by the rest of the Confederate leadership and he withdrew from the Council of the Confederation. He started his own newspaper and began to advocate an armed insurrection to establish an Irish republic and smash Irish landlordism. The French revolution of February 1848 led the rest of the Confederate leadership to acknowledge armed rebellion as a possibility and the ranks of the Irish Confederates began to close. An important result of this swing towards physical force was a rapprochement with the Chartist movement. Mitchel in particular was attracted to a Chartist-Confederate 'policy of cooperation based on the self-interest of both parties'. It appeared that the apparently unbridgeable gap between English Chartism and Irish nationalism had at last narrowed. Even before Mitchel finished his arrangements with the Chartists, local Confederates and Chartists, especially at Manchester, were making arrangements for joint action.

On St Patrick's day a meeting was organised at the Manchester Free Trade Hall to formally announce the union of the Chartist and Confederate causes. A placard was posted around the town by the 'turbulent natives of the sister isle'. Whatever may have been the original intention of our Irish fellow-citizens, it would be futile to attempt to say, but the appearance of large placards on the walls ere the riotous proceedings of last week terminated announced plainly enough the intention of some amongst them not to let so favourable a period of public excitement pass by without making an attempt to get up a repeal demonstration.

The placard announced 'about as choice a lot of political firebrands from Ireland as have ever yet crossed the channel' as speakers. William Smith O'Brien, Fearghus O'Connor, John Martin, Patrick O'Higgins, John Mitchel and Thomas F. Meagher

62. Lyons, Ireland since the famine, p.109
63. Treble, 'Attitudes of the Irish immigrants towards Chartism', p.65
64. Ibid., p.66
were all to attend. Police precautions were taken against a St Patrick's day disturbance. The authorities found they had an unexpected ally, the catholic clergy. A placard from the catholic priests of Manchester-Salford was extensively posted throughout both towns. In an address to the 'Irish catholics residing in the city of Manchester and the borough of Salford', the clergy assured their parishioners that it was 'far from our wish to interfere in party politics', but we are anxious to prevent our flocks in any way becoming parties to a movement having a tendency to lead to a breach of the peace, or likely to annoy the well-disposed portion of our fellow citizens. We, therefore, earnestly implore all catholics to refrain, for the present, from taking part in any procession or promiscuous meeting where large bodies of men assemble. Our religion teaches us to obey the law, and to respect the civil authorities, and it would be sinful for any person to take part in proceedings which the law prohibits, or which the authorities pronounce to be illegal....

The combined effects of the clergy's pastoral and the obvious preparedness of the local police to deal swiftly with any trouble made 17 March 1848 the most peaceful St. Patrick's day for many years. The meeting at the Free Trade Hall was attended by 8,000 persons and several resolutions were passed. Only Michael Doheny and Thomas F. Meagher attended with Feargus O'Connor. Ireland's right to self-government was asserted; the act of union was condemned as 'criminal'; unity of Irishmen, Englishmen, catholics and protestants was called for to achieve Ireland's freedom; and a congratulatory address was sent to the French people. Altogether, this meeting of incendiaries was very peaceful and orderly.65

Two days later Feargus O'Connor appeared with Irish Confederate speakers, including John Mitchel, Michael Doheny and Patrick O'Higgins, at an outdoor meeting of 20,000 persons at Oldham Edge. 400 special constables and six magistrates waited at the Oldham town hall in case they were needed, but

65. M/R Courier, 18 Mar 1848
the large meeting was perfectly peaceful. Michael Doheny stressed the unity of the Irish and English working classes. Why should the English and the Irish be apart? What interest had they separated from each other?... There was no distinction between people - Celts and Saxons had a right to the same liberty, and by God's blessing and their own union they should have it.

Doheny warned the British government that 'this was a time of freedom throughout the world, that crowns were crumbling and despots falling, and that this is a day for Irish freedom and for English Chartist'. O'Connor added that the English-Irish alliance would help to remove 'the iron hoof of despotism off the privileges of the English and Irish people'. The meeting closed with the unanimous carrying of a resolution introduced by Daniel Donovan, a Manchester Confederate.

We believe the legislative union between England and Ireland was brought about by fraud, bribery, intimidation, and corruption, and that it has been the cause of starvation, misery and death; and, therefore, we are of opinion that the time has now come when that union ought to be repealed; and we hereby, therefore, pledge ourselves to assist our Irish brethren in the accomplishment of that desirable object. 66

The Manchester authorities thought the Chartist-Confederate alliance might lead to trouble on 10 April, the day of the presentation of the third charter in London. For the benefit of 'the timid, but more especially for those thoughtless people, who not unfrequently, on occasions of popular excitement, run headlong into acts of insubordination and danger', the police publicised their preparations for possible violence. The police force was increased to 1,000 men, 12,000 specials had been appointed and the military was standing by. 3,000 of the specials made up an 'elite' Town Hall Guard for preventing crowds reforming after the police had dispersed them. 67 But these extensive precautions proved unnecessary, as the whole of southeast Lancashire remained peaceful.

66. M/R Courier, 22 Mar 1848
67. M/R Courier, 8 Apr 1848
Meetings continued to be held in Manchester-Salford and Oldham after 10 April, where Irish-English solidarity was stressed. At the Manchester People's Institute on 17 April, George Archdeacon, destined to be an important leader of the Irish Republican Brotherhood in Lancashire, told an audience of Englishmen that 'when the people of Ireland had achieved their own liberty, which, thank heaven, was not far distant, they would assist the people of England to get theirs (cheers)'. On 11 April a meeting of 1,500 persons assembled at the City Music Hall 'in order to sympathise with those Irish patriots, W.S. O'Brien, MP, T.F. Meagher, and John Mitchel, in the present prosecution about to be carried on by the government against them'. A defence fund was started to defray legal expense, the proceeds of which were to be remitted to the 'Council of the Irish Confederation, to be applied to the service of the prosecuted'. But all the brave talk and threatening resolutions did not make the unity of the Irish and English any more of a reality than it had been before the St Patrick's day meeting. John Mitchel and his supporters were only one part of the Irish movement, and even they had not adopted Chartist principles. The alliance with O'Connor and Chartism was only an expedient and any vitality the union had came from the enthusiasm of O'Connor and his followers. The Irish Confederates found Chartism offensive enough, but they were still less prepared to accept O'Connor's leadership. After the failure of the London demonstration the alliance gradually disintegrated.

As we saw in Liverpool, the more extreme elements among the Lancashire Confederates were trying to organise an armed rising in the Manchester area for the summer of 1848. There was more Chartist involvement in the plot around Manchester.

68. M/R Courier, 12 Apr 1848; 19 Apr 1848; 22 Apr 1848; 29 Apr 1848;
10 May 1848; 20 May, 1848
69. M/R Courier, 19 Apr 1848
70. M/R Courier, 12 Apr 1848
71. Read and Glasgow, Fearagus O'Connor, p.130; O'Higgins, 'Irish influence on the Chartist movement', pp 91-2
72. Read and Glasgow, op.cit., p.130; Treble, op.cit., p.67
than there was in Liverpool. Pikes and swords were available in southeast Lancashire for use in this insurrection. The Manchester Courier came into possession of one of these weapons and seized a welcome opportunity to berate the Irish.

Until very recently the only noticeable articles of import to this country from Ireland consisted of pigs, eggs, poultry, and butter, and now and then a sheaf of bogtrotters, of whom, heaven knows, we stood little in need. Latterly, however, the industry of the country has found a new channel, in the manufacture of offensive weapons, and to a specimen of native industry in this manufacture our attention has been called. A Friend of ours has sent us a veritable Irish pike, one of the 'real Mitchel pattern', imported into this country as a sample of what can be accomplished by the hitherto supposed unskilful Irish. The weapon in question is of Dublin manufacture, and, for the kind, no doubt an effective one; and we may add, for the inspection of the curious in such matters, it will remain some days on view at our office. 73

A shop similar to Dr Reynolds's Liverpool enterprise was opened in mid-May on the Rochdale Road in Manchester by a man named Downey. Crude cutlasses and two-foot pike heads were on sale. 'The opening of Downey's shop created a considerable sensation in the neighbourhood.'74 But the authorities were confident enough not to have to move against Downey.

John Mitchel was convicted of treason and sentenced to fourteen years transportation in May 1848. The response in southeast Lancashire was swift and vocal. 15,000 persons gathered on 23 May at Oldham to hear the verdict on Mitchel and express their continued support.75 7,000 Irish Confederates and others met in Stevenson Square on 29 May to 'hurl defiance at the hell-born and bloodthirsty enemies of John Mitchel, and to express their determination to avenge the wrongs they have done him'. The 300 members of the 'Mitchel Club' entered the square in procession and were loudly applauded. George Archdeacon, 'Secretary to the Irish Confederates in this city', was the principal speaker.76 The meeting was so successful that Archdeacon hoped to organise another for 31 May in Stevenson Square. Placards were sent to all neighbouring towns to encourage protesters to converge on Manchester in a

73. M/R Courier, 10 May 1848
74. Denver, The Irish in Britain, pp 139-40
75. M/R Courier, 27 May 1848
76. M/R Courier, 31 May 1848
massive demonstration.

This proved too much for the Manchester police. The meeting was banned by the Mayor and the organisers were warned not to attempt to hold it. The authorities were not only concerned about 'disaffected' groups arriving from all over the northwest. A fortnight earlier the Courier expressed fears of disturbances which had nothing to do with Ireland, John Mitchel or Irish Confederates.

We are compelled to the conclusion that serious fears may justly be entertained for the public peace of the borough.... On all sides we find and hear tell of suffering, privation, and deep wretchedness, aggravated in many, very many instances by fever or low, lingering, wasting sickness, which makes its abiding place in the miserable homes of the poor and wretched, clinging with death-like tenacity to the rags in which they are shrouded. 78

Never, perhaps, within the memory of men has this town been in such a state of awful and overwhelming destitution. In some districts, and we speak not lightly, the condition of the poor is horrible; and instances of poverty, wretchedness, and suffering have come to our own knowledge which may well make humanity shudder. 79

The effects of the severe industrial slump of 1847-8 were still being felt by working people in Lancashire, and the conviction of John Mitchel could offer a convenient excuse for releasing the tensions built up by destitution. The police were very worried in May 1848.

Notices of the banning of the meetings were sent to every town within a twenty-mile radius of Manchester in an effort to prevent demonstrators coming on 31 May. Archdeacon answered with an address to all 'Irishmen and democrats within twenty miles of Manchester', which called upon supporters of the Confederates and the Charter to ignore the ban.

Need we remind you of the Free Trade Hall, of Oldham Edge, of one hundred subsequent places of assembly, where you met in your tens of thousands, and declared solemnly, before a

77. M/R Courier, 31 May, 1848
78. M/R Courier, 15 May 1848
79. M/R Courier, 22 May 1848
witnessing God, that if any brother in unhappy Ireland was struck foully down you would have a just retribution?.... Attend, then, in your thousands. Let all labour cease for one day at least.... 80

The magistrates and police met throughout 30 May to prepare for the worst. The military was alerted, army pensioners were called up and the Town Hall Guard was ordered to scout the streets from early on 31 May. All roads were watched and arrangements were made with constabularies in other towns to send couriers to Manchester if any movements from their towns were seen.

By the time the Courier reaches the hands of its readers, the authorities will be prepared to cope successfully with, and to put down, even the most formidable attempt which seditious folly may urge. 81

Only at Oldham was there any apparent determination to support the Manchester demonstration. On the evening of 30 May, 7-8,000 persons assembled in an open space near the town, Tommyfield, and declared their intention to defy the ban on the Manchester meeting. It was decided to assemble at 5 AM the following morning for a march to Manchester. During the meeting two Lancashire Constabulary officers were beaten up. 82

The entire security force of police and specials assembled in Manchester at 5 AM on 31 May. All the regular police were armed with cutlasses. Everything was peaceful until 11 AM, when a detective scout from Oldham reported the approach of 5,000 men, 'many having pikes and firearms'. Troops in the Manchester and Salford barracks were alerted and sixty armed Manchester and Lancashire Constabulary policemen stationed themselves across the Manchester-Oldham road. When the Oldham marchers arrived at the cordon the police refused to allow them to pass, and they withdrew to Failsworth to hold a meeting. Immediately the Oldham demonstration left, 1,000 marchers
approached the police line from the Manchester side. They were led by a shoemaker called Flynn, who had been prominent at Chartist-Confederate meetings in Salford. The crowd 'brandished pikes and sticks'. Flynn told the police that his group wished to pass on to join the Oldhamers at Failsworth. He was told that armed persons would not be allowed through. 'They approached peaceably and the pikes and sticks seemed to have vanished.' But a few moments earlier a mounted special had his horse piked and was hit on the head by a stone. One man was arrested for possession of a pike and the rest were allowed to go to Failsworth. Shortly after the Manchester protesters marched off, a troop of cavalry passed the police barrier on their way to disperse the Failsworth gathering. For some reason the cavalry could not locate the meeting and returned to Manchester without making contact. When the Manchester marchers returned from Failsworth that evening eight men were arrested for possession of pikes, and a number of heavy sticks were seized as well. 83

The Manchester police kept the site of the proposed monster meeting, Stevenson Square, occupied all day. A procession of about 500 persons approached the square from the direction of Ancoats, but the police presence induced them to turn back. Placards were circulated announcing that the meeting was adjourned to Failsworth, but there was no apparent general movement of demonstrators towards Oldham. A steady rain helped to keep people off the streets. At around 6 PM the military withdrew to barracks and the police began to relax. But at 6.30 the factories began to empty and before long 20,000 persons had gathered in the streets leading into Stevenson Square. The crowd began pulling up paving stones and they pelted the police in the square. The authorities ordered the police to clear the streets, which was accomplished by a series of baton charges. Disturbances continued in the Ancoats and New Cross areas as rioters demanded that the Chartist leaders and George Archdeacon be lynched as traitors

83. M/R Courier, 3 June 1848
to the working-class cause for backing down in the face of police resistance. Early the next morning a procession of 200 protesters from Stockport was turned back at the Manchester borough limits. A few supporters from Ashton-under-Lyne and Stalybridge entered the town on both days. There were a few disturbances in New Cross on the evening of 1 June, but these were not serious. Several persons were arrested on both nights for having arms or disturbing the peace. Major trouble had been averted in Manchester.

Oldham experienced much more serious violence. Demonstrators began reassembling in Tommyfield at about 5 AM on 31 May to march on Manchester. At 6 AM they went through the town to stop the mills which had started working. At least a dozen factories were entered and the hands turned out. The plugs of the boilers were drawn in most of them. The marchers reassembled in Tommyfield at 9 AM to prepare for their advance on Manchester. A man called Edward McCabe was heard to advise those going to Manchester 'to take something with you to protect yourself in case you are attacked'.

After their failure to enter Manchester the Oldhamers were seen 'returning very much cooled down by the drenching rain and by the measure of success they had met with at Manchester'. That evening two leaders were arrested. McCabe was charged with inciting the crowd to march on Manchester and possession of a pike. A fellow named Benson had been seen by several policemen leading crowds to turn out mills. He had been very distinguishable because 'he had with him a long willow stick, the upper part painted green with a small green ribbon at the top'. Benson claimed that

84. M/R Courier, 3 June 1848
85. M/R Courier, 3 June 1848
86. Oldham, riot deposition, 2 June 1848 (LRO, QJD/1/214-5)
87. Oldham, riot deposition, 2 June 1848 (LRO, QJD/1/214)
88. M/R Courier, 3 June 1848
89. Oldham, riot deposition, 2 June 1848 (LRO, QJD/1/214)
I bought the stick on Monday for a halfpenny. I painted it on Monday evening. I went fishing on Tuesday. I was going to fish on Wednesday morning, but I was turned back by four persons and compelled to go with the crowd.

But the police were unimpressed by this story and he was charged with 'heading a number of persons going to different mills and causing a deal of damage to be done'.

The failure of the Manchester demonstration convinced the Manchester Guardian that there was really no disposition on the part of Englishmen or of Irishmen - at least in any sufficient numbers to become in any way formidable - to run their heads either against the bayonets of the military, or the equally hard and sharp provisions of the law.

The Guardian was probably correct in its assessment. But the disturbances which did occur at Oldham and Manchester tell us something about the people involved. Even though the Stevenson Square demonstration was called to protest against the conviction of John Mitchel, relatively few of the persons who turned out seem to have been Irish. Certainly, some of the protesters took Chartist-Confederate entente seriously, but for most of the others Mitchel's conviction in Dublin was only a convenient pretext for expressing political militancy or frustration with economic hardship. The Manchester and Oldham protests were mainly English affairs and were less the product of Anglo-Irish proletarian solidarity than an opportunity to defy the Establishment. But the Mitchel demonstration and the continued fraternisation of Chartists and Confederates did show that some progress towards Anglo-Irish working-class unity had been achieved. As we saw in chapter 10, the fragile unity quickly disintegrated after the excitement of 1848 died down.

A certain degree of tension was maintained by the Confederates during June and July. Lancashire Constabulary officers were reminded to keep an eye out for 'tumultuous assemblages'.

90. Oldham, riot deposition, 2 June 1848 (LRO, QJD/1/215)
91. M/R Guardian, 3 June 1848
and 'persons and places of meeting of those who, by their language and actions, may incite or attempt to incite the populace to violence or infringements of the law'. A Chartist-Confederate meeting was called for 12 June in Stevenson Square, but the authorities banned it. The demonstrators did not attempt to defy the ban. There were fears of more demonstrations in late July when a large number of Manchester Confederate supporters marched in military order to an open space at Cheetham Hill, 'apparently for the purpose of exhibiting their strength and discipline'. Even though the Confederates were not armed, police reserves and military units were called out to prevent trouble. But by 10 PM it was obvious that no aggression was intended by the Confederates and the military returned to their barracks. It is supposed that this demonstration has been made with a view of testing the organisation of the clubs, and that, having succeeded so well, it will be followed by others in different parts of the town, perhaps not equally peaceable.

This demonstration worried the town authorities a great deal. Two days later a notice marked 'private and confidential' was sent to mill and property owners throughout Manchester to warn them of what appeared to be an impending Confederate insurrection. Since the Confederates 'openly declare that it is their intention in case of any disturbance to create great confusion by attempting the destruction of mills and other property by fire', all property owners were asked to take measures for securing their own premises. All possible police protection was promised and employers were asked to use all the influence in your power with your hands in dissuading them from joining any assemblies in the streets and in apprising them of the injury done to the interest of the working classes by the present insane conduct of the clubs.

On 14 August the Manchester police received information that Chartists and Confederates were planning an uprising in

92. LC, general order book, 6 June 1848 (LRO, PLA, vol.2, 1816, pp 156-7)
93. M/R Courier, 14 June 1848
94. M/R Guardian, 26 July 1848
95. Notice of impending disturbance by the Irish Confederates to mill and property owners, 27 July 1848 (M/RCL, MSC, F 323.2)
the Manchester-Oldham area very shortly. This is the shadowy north of England plot mentioned earlier. A concerted operation was organised by the police and military on 15 August, and nine Confederates were arrested.36 Thirty-seven other Confederates and Chartists were picked up during the following week, including George Archdeacon. But all had to be released on bail or recognisance until proper charges could be brought against them. Then as many as possible were reapprehended. When they were rounded up for committal to trial, Archdeacon had disappeared.97 The police prepared to deal with any demonstrations to protest against the arrests, but none materialised.

The confidence which Englishmen habitually feel in the stability of their institutions, and in the power of the authorities, local and general, to preserve the peace and repress disorder was never, perhaps, so strikingly evinced as in this neighbourhood during the last few days. 98

A group of seventy armed 'youths and men' set off from Oldham to free the Manchester prisoners. But they had not gone very far when 'they began to entertain some doubts as to the probability of their being quite strong enough to take this city....They quietly retraced their steps and dispersed to their own homes.'99

On 22 August the absent Archdeacon and forty-five other men were charged with conspiring together to incite diverse of Her Majesty's subjects to commit insurrections, riots, tumults, unlawful assemblies, and breaches of the peace, and to arm themselves for the purpose of thereby carrying on the said insurrections.... and obstructing by force the execution of the laws of the realm. 100

At the December South Lancashire Assizes twenty-eight of the original forty-six political prisoners from Manchester were tried on the conspiracy charge. The rest had been discharged for lack of evidence or had jumped bail. Ten were convicted

96. M/R Courier, 16 Aug 1848
97. Preston Guardian, 26 Aug 1848
98. M/R Guardian, 19 Aug 1848
99. M/R Guardian, 19 Aug 1848
100. Lpool Courier, 23 Aug 1848
and given sentences of from six months to one year in prison. The remaining eighteen were discharged 'wholesale'.

This account of Lancashire Confederate activity, in conjunction with the Chartist movement, during 1848 tells us very little about the internal organisation or membership of the various Confederate clubs in Liverpool and Manchester. But this is an inherent disadvantage of reliance on press reports for information about a political group. Only if, or when, police intelligence files and documents that were seized from the Confederates are available will we be able to put together a more detailed account of the Irish Confederate movement in Lancashire. But from the limited sources which are available we can know something about the Lancashire Confederates.

The Irish community remained largely aloof from the movement. For one thing, the distrust had been ingrained by O'Connell and the clergy that probably made many Irishmen suspicious of the militant Young Irelanders who abandoned the Liberator and organised the Irish Confederation. The sin of the Confederates would be compounded by their fraternisation with the English Chartists. Further, the Irish community of Lancashire was receiving many new members during 1847-8, as the multiple catastrophe of the famine sent thousands of emigrants from Ireland. These people were, for the most part, very poor, if not utterly destitute, and had more immediate worries than political activity for achieving an English republic and Irish independence. Many other Irishmen, not as badly off as the newly-arrived famine immigrants, as well as the vast majority of English working men, simply lacked any compelling interest in the aims of Chartism and the Irish Confederation in 1848, and were reluctant to become involved.

101. _Liverpool Courier_, 29 Dec 1848
in unpromising political agitation. Most of those Irishmen who were ardent supporters of the Confederation seem to have been middle-class professionals (three doctors were listed among the Liverpool Confederate leadership), or more prosperous skilled workers. Only such persons would be able to afford the time for the political agitation or planning an insurrection. This general indifference towards the Confederates is best shown by the absence of protest against arrests of Confederate organisers at Liverpool and Manchester and the collapse of the organisation after those arrests.

The small body of active, regular support for the Confederates indicates that its organisation was too loose to inspire much loyalty or energy. The Confederates must also have been operating on very restricted financial resources, which would hamper legal and extra-legal activity. Indeed, the movement was only able to gain any foothold in areas of particularly large Irish communities, Liverpool and Manchester-Salford, which shows that the Confederates depended on large population centres to increase the likelihood of recruiting even a moderately-sized membership. Most Lancashire towns, even a large town such as Preston, never supported a Confederate club at all. There was undoubtedly sympathy for the ultimate goals of the Confederates among Irishmen throughout urban Lancashire, but this was rarely translated into active support. The few successes the Confederates achieved during 1848, such as the meeting at the Free Trade Hall on St. Patrick's day, the Oldham Edge demonstration and some of the larger Liverpool meetings, were only possible because of English Chartist support. Irish Confederate audiences would have been very small without English working men. Altogether, the impact of the Irish Confederate movement, as an attractive political alternative, had only a limited impact on the Irish community of Lancashire.

102. Denvir, The Irish in Britain, pp 141-2
103. Treble, 'Attitudes of Irish immigrants towards Chartist', p.6
Chapter 12

Fenianism

A very important feature of Irish immigrant life in Lancashire during the quarter-century 1846–71 was the growth of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the Fenians, during the 1860s. The movement was significant in Lancashire's towns because of the extent of its influence on the Irish communities there and the impact it had on local public opinion. A detailed study of Lancashire Fenianism is made possible by the availability of various local sources. The richest records come from the Liverpool borough police, who were confronted with the most extensive IRB organisation in the north of England. Liverpool police reports for the period 1865–9 contain a day to day account of Fenian activity, which was compiled from the observations of Liverpool and Royal Irish Constabulary police officers, as well as the statements of numerous Fenian informers. Police letter books and watch committee minute books are available for other Lancashire towns. This local material is supplemented by the various RIC files on Fenianism, Home Office records and local newspapers.

The IRB, founded in 1858, was a secret, oathbound society constituted to organise and arm Irishmen for a war of independence against Great Britain. The Fenians were a physical force organisation who scorned political, non-violent agitation.

The founders of Fenianism drew the conclusion from Irish history... that England would never concede self-government to force of argument, but only to the argument of force, and that therefore parliamentary politics were futile and demoralising. They took the justice of Ireland's claim to independence
for granted and they concentrated their efforts on preparing to win independence by rebellion. 1

The single aim of the movement was an independent Irish republic, but the nature of that republic was never defined by any social or political program. Social questions were considered quite secondary to the principal task of ousting the British by force. The calamitous state of Irish society during the 1840s and early 1850s, with its severe agrarian difficulties and heavy emigrations, seemed to them testimony enough, since they blamed British misrule for these problems. To the IRB the key to socio-economic improvement was independence. And the key to independence was an armed rising.

The membership of the IRB was basically working-class. This fact combined with the continental-styled, cell system of organisation left them open to the accusation of being communists. It is true that some Fenians, such as John O'Mahony and James Stephens, did have connections with Marx's first international. But Marx found them 'doubtful' acquisitions and nothing ever developed from the association. Despite its working-class composition, the idea behind the IRB was simply nationalism. 'It was essentially a separatist, but not a doctrinaire republican movement.' 2 Their physical and fiscal energies were directed to training and arming the membership to defend the organisation and, ultimately, to effect a successful rebellion. There was never very much importance attached to the evolution of any sort of socio-political consciousness of the nature of their struggle. There never was a little green book of the thoughts of Chief Centre James Stephens to help them address political questions. The main political significance of the Fenian movement lay in the consequences of their successful war for independence and not in the movement towards that goal.

2. T.W. Moody, Michael Davitt and Irish revolution, 1846-82 (typescript), p.50
Much support for the movement emanated from the large expatriate Irish communities in America and Britain. The Fenians' organ, The Irish People, is said to have created the movement in Britain and various delegates made trips to British towns to propagate the organisation among the emigrants during the early and mid-1860s. They found Lancashire, with its hundreds of thousands of Irish residents and their English-born families, particularly fertile ground for the development of the conspiracy, especially Liverpool and Manchester-Salford.

The way was prepared for the introduction of the IRB into urban Lancashire by another Irish nationalist organisation, the National Brotherhood of St Patrick. The National Brotherhood was launched in Liverpool in July 1861, on the occasion of a fund-raising meeting for the funeral of Terence Bellew McManus, a prominent Irish nationalist of the Confederation days who had died in America. At the initial meeting it was stated that the National Brotherhood was established to secure the national independence of Ireland, whether by parliamentary agitation or other means remained to be shown; but it was also its object to establish reading and lecture rooms and other places for the use of Irishmen, where nationality could be disseminated.

Within a year the National Brotherhood was under attack from the Catholic church as a subversive organisation. 'The National Brotherhood is reputed to be the cover of a secret combination - bound by obligations accursed of God, and aiming at objects destructive of society.' The President General of the Catholic Young Men's Society, Monsignor R.B. O'Brien, was emphatic in his opposition to the National Brotherhood.

I do not think we should accept as members of the Young Men's societies any member of the National Brotherhood; and I am equally decided that if any member of our organisation has joined them, he should be requested to select between the two societies.

4. Northern Press, 20 July 1861
5. Northern Press, 15 Mar 1862
The National Brotherhood of St. Patrick was founded avowedly for 'the promotion of cordial union, based on devotion to the independence of our common country, amongst Irishmen of every creed and class'. The Brotherhood operated publicly and there were no oaths. They had the same ultimate goal as the Fenians, but their relationship to them is not clear, making it difficult to say whether it was a parallel political organisation or a front for the IRB. But the evidence seems to indicate that it was initially a separate organisation which was soon absorbed by the Fenians as a public outlet. At Liverpool the Brotherhood of St Patrick's activities were mainly social; and tea parties and balls were held on such occasions as St Patrick's day and new year's eve during 1863-4. The Liverpool National Brotherhood was headed by George Archdeacon, who had been the Secretary of the Irish Confederate movement at Manchester in 1848. Archdeacon later became the first Fenian head centre for Liverpool, which meant that the two bodies could not have been very far apart. The long-time resident of Liverpool and Fenian, John Denvir, said that the National Brotherhood was the chief means of recruiting volunteers for the IRB. So it seems that the Liverpool National Brotherhood came to an early accommodation with the Fenians. But it must have ceased to function independently fairly soon because after 1864 there is no mention of the National Brotherhood in the Liverpool press or police records.

In Preston there was a branch of the National Brotherhood, but it was continuously condemned from Roman Catholic pulpits throughout the town. In 1863 one priest went so far as to claim that thousands of Irishmen here and in Ireland were sworn, after going to America to return and wade knee deep in English blood.

6. Mementos of National Brotherhood, 1863-4 (SP0, Fenian briefs, no.10)
7. J. Denvir, The Irish in Britain, pp 178-9
These 'infidel republicans and bloodthirsty men' were warned that they would 'soon have English bullets in their brains'. The over-zealous remarks of this clergyman indicate that the National Brotherhood was being confused with ribbon lodges, who were reputed to swear very angry oaths. There was no reason to think (the members of the National Brotherhood were interested in wading in anybody's blood, but the sermon had the opposite effect to what the priest hoped.

Well, so badly was this taken that contrary the lecturer's intentions, even the Old Irelanders - the O'Connellites - and moderates all left the chapel in disgust and crowded the Brotherhood rooms at night.

But still the Preston members were 'determined to give him no shadow of reason to proceed with his vile charge, which they indignantly disavow'. But ten months later the Preston National Brotherhood was declining, and 'altho' there are a great many Irishmen in this town, the good men and true are very scarce..... After this the National Brotherhood of St Patrick in Preston drops from sight altogether.

But the story of the Manchester branch of the National Brotherhood is the most interesting. This section was completely independent of the Fenians. In 1863 the Brotherhood 'existed under the most determined opposition' of one of the local clergy. They were 'openly denounced by him at first, and he has done all that lay in his power since to crush us'. At one point there were fifty adherents, but in a single week this number was reduced to twelve, 'in consequence of a mission of the holy fathers here....' The founder of the Manchester organisation, Neil Walsh, died suddenly by drowning. A priest told another member in the confessional that they all 'would never have a good day's fortune and that it was the vengeance of God that fell on Neil Walsh for starting the Brotherhood against his will.....' By spring 1864 it was

9. H. Malloy to J.P. McDonnell, 21 June 1864 (SPO, Fenian briefs, no. 84)
10. P. Walsh to C. Dolan, 15 Sept 1863 (SPO, Fenian briefs, no.24)
reported the National Brotherhood had 'decreased rapidly in numbers, there being only a few of the most stern men now together'. But the reasons for this decline were very revealing.

It was not for want of energy or patriotism that the branch has decreased so low....A certain class of Irish nationalists, not members of the league, but others of more advanced politics came in among us. They first told us that they would give us all the aid and cooperation to extend the Brotherhood in the town. We worked together till we became pretty strong and every week we were increasing when they seceded from us and enticed the best part of our members away. They told us that they consider the brotherhood the great obstacle to their progress and the sooner it is dissolved the better. They are therefore determined to use all means in their power to break us up. 11

The Fenians, those of 'more advanced politics', had gained the ascendancy over the Brotherhood of St Patrick in Manchester after using it to get themselves started. So weakened was the National Brotherhood branch that it took a second place to the branch in nearby Oldham, which was much more vigorous, in spite of the usual problems with the local clergy, 12 and had 'more resources to work the district'. 13 But the Manchester Fenians also found the Oldham National Brotherhood a hindrance to their development and 'fall it must'. They boasted this threat to the head of what remained of the Manchester National Brotherhood, who immediately sent off a letter to the Oldham section to warn them against 'visitors from Manchester' bringing 'advanced politics'. But even though the story is not very clear, it seems that the Oldham National Brotherhood were not at all adverse to the intrusion of men of 'advanced politics'. A Fenian delegate was received at Oldham and Walsh's letter of warning was turned over to him. When the Manchester Fenian head centre saw the letter, Walsh was threatened 'with their vengeance for doing my duty'. 14 The Fenian victory over the National Brotherhood in Manchester was complete and no further reference to it in

11. P. Walsh to J.P. McDonnell, 10 May 1864 (SPO, Fenian briefs, No. 24)
12. J. Leonard to J.P. McDonnell, 15 June 1864 (SPO, Fenian briefs, no.60)
southeast Lancashire appears in any source.

These examples show that the branches of the National Brotherhood in the various Lancashire urban areas varied a great deal in their relationship with the Fenian movement. In Liverpool the two organisations were always close and became one movement by 1864-5. At Preston the National Brotherhood withered from lack of interest, while the more independent branch in Manchester had to be infiltrated and destroyed by the IRB. But the National Brotherhood of St Patrick helped to pave the way for the foundation of a large, broadly based organisation in Lancashire during the 1860s.

Unlike the Irish Confederate movement, Fenianism had wide support throughout urban Lancashire during the 1860s. But the branches in the larger population centres were the most active. There were Fenians in the St Helens-Widnes area, but they never became very powerful. The first evidence of Fenianism in Widnes turned up among documents seized by the Liverpool police in September 1866. It was a letter to a Mr A. Davis from a Mr. John Jones. Jones was an alias for John Francis McAuliffe, and if he showed little imagination in his choice of aliases, we shall see later that he more than compensated for it in other ways.

McAuliffe had been giving lectures in the Widnes neighbourhood to win support for the IRB among the growing Irish community there.

I am happy to tell you that affairs in this town have turned out more favourable than I anticipated. So great is the impression I made on the minds of these cold people that they are going to get up another lecture on Monday week....The thing merely paid the expenses, but the next will no doubt clear 20 pounds....My next lecture will make 50 to 100 converts here.

There were already some ardent supporters of the movement in Widnes, who were 'impatiently and anxiously waiting the great event', and McAuliffe was 'perfectly satisfied that we will
have many friends here in the course of a little time'. The local press noted that McAuliffe was 'very busy in this district, Widnes especially' during this time. He told his Liverpool contact that he would be moving on and asked him to 'recommend me to as many as you possibly can at St Helens, as I think I shall be able to send you something nice from there towards the support of the boys'. He closed his letter by reminding his friend to 'caution all our friends as to who they mingle with'. As we shall see, this warning was more significant than McAuliffe himself realised. All that is known about McAuliffe's activities in St Helens is that he gave at least one lecture, where B.A. Dromgoole, the local newspaper magnate and avowed Irish nationalist, acted as chairman.

During the succeeding year Fenianism in the Widnes-St Helens area was not of a very formidable character. One alleged Fenian was found in a drunken stupor in St Helens by a police officer and brought before a magistrate. At the hearing, it emerged that when the patriot was awakened by the constable he shouted that he was a Fenian 'and would kill the lot of them (laughter)'. Another drunken Irishman, who was arrested in Widnes, was found to have a bond for fifty dollars, 'payable six months after the establishment of the Irish republic'. But still he had to find 10s. to pay his fine. Despite the potential for a more energetic movement in the Widnes-St Helens neighbourhood, Fenianism in the area was of a very mild variety.

Preston also had a low-key Fenian organisation among its Irish population. The Fenians hoped to enlist Irish-Americans with military experience gained during the war between the states to lead an army which would liberate Ireland from British rule. In September 1865 'several of them [American

15. HC Grieg to Watch cttee, 13 Sept 1866 (LCL, Reports of Head Constable, 352FOL/2/4/cited hereafter as Reports 4, etc./, 16,p.30
16. Runcorn Observer, 23 Nov 1867
17. Grieg to Watch cttee, 13 Sept 1866 (Reports 4, 16, p.30)
18. St Helens Standard, 16 Feb 1867
19. St Helens Standard, 23 Feb 1867
20. St Helens Standard, 23 Mar 1867
officers have made their appearance in this town', but it was unclear whether or not they were 'part of the expected Hibernico-American contingent'. But the presence of a few American officers did not seem to encourage the growth of an active Fenian branch in Preston, and nothing more is heard of the organisation in the town for more than a year. But in mid-December 1866 it was feared that the 'poison of Fenianism' was spreading to the towns of northern Lancashire. 'Preston is mentioned as one of the towns wherein it has found footing.' Fenian agents were reported to have arrived in Preston from Liverpool, and they had 'induced several Irishmen, some in a pretty good position, and one or two shopkeepers, to join the Fenian brotherhood'. Private meetings were held 'for the purpose of maturing Fenian plans'. It appears that the Fenians were in fact trying to establish a stronger section in Preston at this time.

From at least December 1866, the Royal Irish Constabulary had stationed a detective in Preston to keep an eye on what was thought to be a potential Fenian staging centre. In January 1867 the detective, HC John Egan, reported that Fenians were trying to infiltrate Preston's military garrison. At two 'Fenian haunts' in the town the IRB oath was being administered to Irish soldiers. After one swearing-in the 'whole party commenced drinking, singing Fenian songs and drinking Fenian toasts'. But Egan was not very worried about the Preston organisation because the local police had all the activists under surveillance. A few weeks later it seemed that Fenianism in Preston had passed its zenith and was 'everyday quietly declining here'. But Egan had 'reason to think that I am suspected or known by people here' and he requested that he be withdrawn. The Inspector General of the RIC apparently saw little reason to maintain a detective in a town where there was so little Fenian activity, and Egan was recalled.

21. Preston Guardian, 23 Sept 1865
22. Preston Guardian, 15 Dec 1866
23. HC Egan to Insp Gen, 7 Jan 1867 (SPO, F papers, F2304)
24. HC Egan to Insp Gen, 8 Jan 1867 (SPO, F papers, 23040)
25. HC Egan to Insp Gen, 21 Jan 1867 (SPO, F papers, F2304)
Fenians were first found in southeast Lancashire in March 1864. 'A party has arrived in this quarter, and is now briefly engaged in administering an illegal oath to the parties who are likely to be brought within his influence.' The catholic clergy of the area were urged to be on the lookout for 'wolves who are prowling among their flocks'. Evidence of Fenian influence was detected in the decision of several Irish persons brought before the Oldham County Court to refuse to take the oath against making false statements, which 'leads to the belief that one phase of the Fenian movement is the refusal to be sworn in an English court of justice'. The Fenians were also trying to organise themselves in Manchester itself during 1865-6. The Manchester area was suspected as a major centre of Fenian activity, and the RIC had stationed HC Thomas Welby there to monitor any developments in the town. John Gleeson, an Irish foreman in an engineering works, had a grinder at the works 'sharpening what he first thought was a long knife, which was about two feet long'. When the grinder found out that Gleeson was 'the moving pivot here amongst the Fenians', and that he was in fact finishing swords or bayonets, he refused to do any more. Money was being collected for the support of the IRB organisation. 'The collections are even paid in the public streets when they happen to meet. No names are taken down.' But unlike the Fenian sympathisers in Widnes, St Helens and Preston, there were signs of militancy among the Manchester IRB. James Stephens, the Chief Organiser of the Irish Republic (COIR), had been promising a rising for December 1866. When the insurrection did not take place, 'vows of vengeance' were made against Stephens, 'and unless he comes and fights too, they say, his life must be taken'. These threats of action never

27. Lpool Courier, 25 Sept 1865
28. HC Welby to Insp Gen, 30 Dec 1866 (SP0, F papers, F2185)
gave way to anything more serious in southeast Lancashire up to 1867. But the main focus of Lancashire Fenianism during 1865-6 was Liverpool.

Police authorities in Dublin early recognised the potential importance of Liverpool in the growth of the transatlantically-organised IRB. Liverpool was the principal port of the United Kingdom for marine communications with both Ireland and America, and with its large Irish community it could constitute a valuable staging area for Fenian actions directed at destroying British authority in Ireland. Only nine months after the organisation of the Fenian brotherhood began on a large scale in 1858, the Inspector General of the Royal Irish Constabulary was receiving regular reports from his detectives in Liverpool. HC McHale was sent to Liverpool in 1858 to report on the influence of ‘secret societies’ among the substantial numbers of Irishmen who made up another nineteenth-century Atlantic migration, those who returned to the United Kingdom because they found America ‘not so good for working people as it used to be’.29 Ship watching at Liverpool continued to be an occupation of the RIC detectives stationed there during the whole of 1858-71, and the indexes to the Chief Secretary’s registered papers, Dublin Castle, indicate that reports were submitted very regularly during 1858-67, although only six of these reports on re-emigrants survive.30 But from these few pieces there was nothing to be derived on the Fenian movement in Liverpool or anywhere else.

Between December 1858 and September 1865 there is no evidence in the RIC or Liverpool police records that Fenianism was considered any sort of problem in Liverpool. But in 1865 McHale reported that he believed that the Liverpool Fenians had ‘enrolled a good many members, this is, however, confined to the lower classes’. And he added that he did not think there was a ‘respectable Irishman of business who is not
opposed to them'. Talking with some returned emigrants from America he detected a very strong feeling of enmity amongst all classes of the Irish against the British government, that the emigration caused by the sufferings, deaths, and hardships during the voyage, the disappointments and heart-burnings at the other side, are all laid to the charge of the government /sic/.

McHale ended this report by saying that he was shadowing the Liverpool head centre, George Archdeacon, and that Major J.J. Grieg, the Head Constable of the Liverpool borough police, was 'fully alive' to the danger of Fenianism and was taking 'active steps to meet any emergency'. Five days later Head Constables McHale and Clear, RIC, arrested George Archdeacon, the 'leader in chief' of the Liverpool Fenians, who was 'engaged in every uneasy movements in Ireland or elsewhere since 1848', on a warrant from Dublin, charging him with high treason. This event signalled the beginning of diligent activity by the Liverpool constabulary in investigating and combating Fenianism, which was described in the Head Constable's daily reports during the succeeding four years.

But the police account of Liverpool Fenianism opened on a curious note. Major Grieg first wrote about the local Fenians on 26 September 1865, in response to a message from the Home Office on the subject. Major Grieg, who was described only a week before as 'fully alive' to Liverpool Fenianism, complained that his town was being unfairly 'represented as the great hotbed of such persons'. Grieg caused the most diligent inquiry to be made by his most intelligent officers and found the allegation that there might be 'a good many members' of the IRB in Liverpool 'entirely without the smallest foundation'. It was Grieg's 'thorough conviction that there is no ground for thinking that there is any Fenian organisation in Liverpool ....' But Grieg might have mistaken the lack of overt Fenian

31. HC McHale to Insp Gen, 18 Sept 1865 (SFO, Police Reports, Fenianism, 1864-5, no. 729)
32. Liverpool Courier, 25 Sept 1865; Grieg to Watch cttee, 26 Sept 1866 (Reports 3, 170, p. 240)
33. Grieg to Watch cttee, 26 Sept 1865 (Reports 3, 170, pp 209-10)
activity for the absence of an organisation. During the remainder of 1865 and the first weeks of 1866 Grieg's policemen investigated four reports from Whitehall about the arrival of American Fenian couriers, important meetings and the rumour that James Stephens was hiding in a Liverpool lodging house. But all these probes 'ended in nothing', further strengthening Grieg's belief that there was no Fenian problem in his town.34 Writing to the mayor of Liverpool, Grieg felt 'justified in repeating that it is still his conviction there is not the smallest ground for any alarm'. He also thought it would be counter-productive to take any 'open precautionary measures', because it would only draw attention to the matter.35

But Grieg went on to point out why he believed that Fenianism could not take hold in Liverpool.

It is many months since there was so much general employment for the labouring classes, both in town and docks, as there is at the present time. Owing to the mildness of the season not any of the outdoor trades has been suspended, and work of every description is abundant.

So it was an attitude in some official quarters that working-class people did not revolt in the name of a principle, such as the independence of Ireland, but only when driven by actual physical deprivation. It could also be inferred from the tone of this passage that it was thought that, if there was plenty of work, people had less time for conspiring in the snug of a public house. But Grieg badly misjudged the situation. He did not consider another pivotal side of Liverpool Fenianism. The organisation in Liverpool was composed of emigrant Irishmen and their families who were living in Britain because it was impossible or undesirable to continue to live in Ireland. And the difficulties of life in Ireland were often attributed to the misrule of the British administration and the indifference of Westminster.

34. Grieg to Watch ctte, 27 Jan 1866 (Reports 3, p.268)
35. Grieg to Mayor of Liverpool, 22 Jan 1866 (Reports 3, pp 265-6)
Even if the Liverpool Irish were able to make a better living, they still had memories of the hardships which drove them to England in the first place. They did not look at themselves as people who left a good life for a better life, but as people who fled a hard life. It was not at all surprising that the Liverpool Irish were inclined towards sympathy with the IRB. Also, Fenianism was to provide an important social focus.

Nine days after Grieg submitted his assessment of the failure of the Liverpool IRB to gain a foothold among the emigrant community, The Times produced an item indicating that the abundance of work at the Liverpool docks, which was supposed to be the spearhead of the socio-economic deterrent to the spread of Fenianism, was in fact bringing Fenians and potential recruits together. There was not 'the slightest doubt a great number of labourers have become tainted with Fenian principles and that several cases are known in which the Fenian oath has been administered'. 36 It seemed that everybody was aware of a rapidly expanding Fenian network except the Liverpool police. 37 During January-July 1866 there is no report of any police enquiries or actions regarding the IRB. Yet the press reported in March 1866 that a large Fenian fund-raising gathering was held in Liverpool where £800 was collected to aid Fenians in penal servitude. 38 During July-October the Liverpool police and the RIC detectives helped the Home Office try to keep track of Fenians arrested in Ireland under the Habeus Corpus Suspension Act and released on condition that they left Ireland immediately. But of sixteen men reported on their way to Liverpool the police could find no trace. 39

The police did not become aware of the actual proportions of Liverpool Fenianism until a Fenian informer, the first of many, began making statements. Even though no RIC reports

36. The Times, 31 Jan 1866 37. Warrington Guardian, 10 Feb 1866
38. Warrington Guardian, 3 Mar 1866
39. Grieg to Watch ctttee, July-Oct 1866 (Reports 3-4)
from Liverpool survive for the year September 1865-September 1866, the detectives posted there were taking a greater interest in the growing Fenian organisation than the local police were. And it is significant that the first Fenian informant went to the residence of HC Michael Clear, RIC, to make his first statement, rather than to the borough police. The Irish detectives made themselves known among the Liverpool Fenians, not only to intimidate them by obvious surveillance, but also to let potential informers know where to go with information. It never worried the RIC men or the Liverpool detectives that their identities were well known among the Fenians because they preferred to rely on informers rather than undercover police agents.

The first turncoat was Peter Oakes, a former lieutenant in the United States Army who was commissioned a Fenian officer by John O'Mahony in February 1866. He was first sent to Ireland and then to Mr Beecher, the Fenian paymaster for Liverpool, at Lambert's Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, which remained a prominent Fenian rendezvous during the succeeding year. There were other men, besides Oakes, in Liverpool at four other addresses who were 'paid Fenian officers, sent over by O'Mahony, and served formerly as officers in the United States Army'. Three of these were Michael O'Brien, John Corydon and Timothy Deasy, men to become very significant figures in the story of Fenianism in the northwest of England during the following year.

Oakes told Clear in an interview that the Fenian head centre for Liverpool was Arthur Anderson and that when the rising occurred in Ireland, 'the men in England and Scotland belonging to the organisation are to burn the principal towns of both countries' to divert British attention and resources from the main battleground. He added that there was a 'large quantity of combustibles' for burning Liverpool hidden in a

40. HC Clear to Stewart Wood, 3 Sept 1866 (PRO, HO 45/03/7799/188)
house in Salisbury Street. Oakes concluded his statement by renouncing his Fenian oath, asking that his identity be kept confidential, and that he be given enough money to go to Canada. 41

Clear immediately sent the information to Major Grieg, and a police expedition set out to search the house in Salisbury Street. Just as Oakes said, they found a small closet in the garret, which the landlady said was used as a store for hardware by a 'dealer from Sheffield' called Brooks. Inside were three tubs filled with water, in which were fifty-five jars of some liquid substance, varying in size from half a pint to half a gallon. Two police officers were sent to the Liverpool Apothecaries Hall with one of the jars for a professional analysis. But on their arrival some of the liquid leaked out and set fire to an office, and 'severely burnt Constable Scaiffe's hands and clothes and he is now lying at home severely injured'. The Fenians could claim their first British police casualty. Serious injury to several other officers was narrowly averted while the rest of the jars were being removed when 'one of the jars got broken and the contents blazed up....' 42

Even the incredulous Major Grieg now had to acknowledge that not only was there a Fenian organisation in Liverpool, but that they were also in possession of a formidable weapon. But it was a few days before the police knew just how dangerous the Fenian fire actually was. Three jars were sent out for analysis to the Royal Institution, Colouitt Street, and it was found the liquid seized was a solution of phosphorous in bi-sulphide of carbon. It volatizes very rapidly at ordinary temperature and when its vapour is mixed with air and a light applied it inflames with a slight explosion. Its vapour is poisonous....Ignition

41. P. Oakes to HC Clear, 4 Sept 1866 (Reports 4, 8, pp 8-11)
42. Grieg to Watch cttee, 7 Sept 1866 (Reports 4, 8, pp 10-3)
takes place most rapidly when a moderate amount of liquid is used, when it is spread over a considerable surface and air has free access. In an enclosed space, if much liquid be used, no ignition takes place, but the air becomes charged with bisulphide of carbon, and if a light be introduced an explosion ensues and dense fumes given off during the combustion of this liquid render it still more dangerous by preventing access to the flames. So far as I am aware, there is no legitimate use for such a liquid as this. It can be prepared with the utmost facility, nothing more being necessary than to put phosphorous into a bottle of bisulphide of carbon and shake it occasionally.

After the discovery of the Fenian fire the Liverpool police began paying special attention to the Fenian gathering places mentioned by the informer Oakes, as well as those suspected by the RIC detectives, and they were on the alert for any sign of IRB activity throughout the borough. Three days later the extra vigilance yielded a shipment of twelve Fenian revolvers and ammunition on their way to Ireland.

Soon after, Superintendent Ride, with the RIC detectives McHale, Meagher and Clear, interviewed Oakes again. They established that the public house of Austin Gibbons, Richmond Row, a Fenian private whose wife headed the Liverpool ladies' fund-raising committee for the families of imprisoned Fenians, was the principal meeting place for Liverpool's Fenians. Money was paid out there for the support of the American officers waiting to be called to Ireland to help lead the expected rising. Captains and majors were in receipt of £2.10-15. per week and lieutenant colonels and colonels received somewhat more. Oakes was an IRB captain, but he was not receiving enough to support himself, which was probably the main reason he decided to turn informer. Very little money was arriving from America 'to support those who are waiting to take command when the anticipated rising takes place.... consequently they are almost starving'. Scarcity of funds caused

43. E. Davies to Grieg, 11 Sept 1866 (Reports 4, 13, pp 18-9)
44. Grieg to Watch cttee, 10 Sept 1866 (Reports 4, 11, pp 15-6)
a decline in activity and
at present the agitation is kept more alive by the persons
who have come from America than any other cause and these
persons are interested in keeping up a certain amount of
agitation in Liverpool as their only means of subsistence. 45
The money itself came by special courier, when it came at all,
from a Fenian agent in Paris, who until August 1866 had been
John Mitchel. Oakes also pointed out that several of the
American officers, including himself, were in debt to Gibbons
for 'board, lodging and drink ad libitum'. None of these men
were organisers, but only 'waiting to take command at the
rising ....' Two days before, a captain named John Corydon
read a letter from America to some American officers at
Gibbon's, which was designed to raise their spirits by
promising an IRB rising in Ireland for the end of November 1866.

But if a rebellion actually broke out in Ireland,
the organisation in Liverpool and other parts will confine
their operatives to England exclusively, their intention
being to burn and destroy the shipping and other property
in the principal cities.

To achieve this Oakes believed the Fenians could call on
15,000 men in Liverpool alone, which shows that the organisation,
sworn members and sympathisers, was extensive. The situation
was still more dangerous because Fenians had penetrated at
least one of the local volunteer units, the 64th Lancashire
Rifle Volunteers (LRV), also called the Irish Brigade. Besides
the money trickling in from America via Paris, 'contributions
are made by the working men in this and other principal towns
throughout the country for the support of the organisation'. 46

Oakes provided the police with a very good profile of the
extent and workings of the IRB organisation in Liverpool, which
Major Grieg and the RIC detectives were to use as a basis for
their work in investigating and combatting Fenianism during
the succeeding five years. In the light of Oakes's information

45. F. Williamson to R. Kayne, 15 Sept 1866 (PRO, HO 75/05/7730/120)
46. F. Oakes to Supt Reid, 11 Oct 1866 (Reports 4, 14, pp 19-20)
Grieg decided that it would be best to act against the Liverpool Fenians before they became aware that there was an informer outlining the entire movement for the authorities. The morning after Oakes made his statement, Grieg obtained search warrants for Gibbons's house, and four others in Lord Nelson Street, London Road, Blackstone Street and Hughes Street. In five simultaneous police raids very little was discovered. At Lambert's beerhouse, Lord Nelson Street, 'seven or eight men were found, whose appearance was that of what is called "Irish Yankees". They were dirty and repulsive looking.' All the police discovered were copies of two Irish rebel ballads ('The Irish Fontenoy' and 'That damned green flag again'), twenty-five new haversacks and some letters in which Fenian names figured. At London Road, Blackstone Street and Hughes Street there were found six military handbooks published in New York and a copy of the Horse Guard's Field exercises, 1862. But more significant was that at all five places members of the 64th LRV (Irish Brigade) were present.

At Gibbons's, the 'principal rendezvous' for Liverpool Fenians, only a pencil drawing of a Yankee soldier, on which was written 'Peter Oakes', was found. But also scribbled on the portrait was 'damned scoundrel'. Oakes was no longer any use to the police and on 15 September the informer sailed for America to lose himself, with the aid of £10 provided by the Irish government. Altogether the concerted raids of 12 September produced very little, but they demonstrated to the Liverpool Fenians that the police could obtain reliable information and were prepared to be vigorous against them. And no sooner had Grieg lost one informant than he gained another who had still more important tales to tell.

On 21 September Major Grieg spoke with 'John Joseph Corydon, alias John Joseph Carr ....whose appearance is of that

47. Grieg to Watch cttee, 13 Sept 1866 (Reports 4, 15, pp 25-7)
48. F. Williamson to R. Mayne, 15 Sept 1866 (PRO, HO, 45/03/7799/120)
style called the Irish Yankee, of poor appearance in every way.' Corydon told Grieg he would find a shipment of arms and Fenian fire in a warehouse in School Lane, Hanover Street.\textsuperscript{49} The Liverpool and Irish police acted on the story immediately and discovered a cart leaving a warehouse in School Lane. Four men walked behind the cart, one of whom soon separated from the rest. The police arrested the other three in Chaucer Street. The fourth, Michael O'Brien, was seized in Gibbons's public house later that evening. In the cart the police found two large plate glass packing cases containing forty-seven rifles, of both British and American manufacture, many bearing the marks of various volunteer units, and thirty-eight bayonets. In three smaller cases were 800 sticks of pure phosphorous, which would produce a large supply of Fenian fire. The cases were marked 'Glass with care' and were addressed to John Brookes, the hardware dealer from Sheffield whose cache of Fenian fire was taken in Salisbury Street two weeks before.\textsuperscript{50} The Liverpool Courier said the arms seizure 'caused more alarm amongst the brotherhood in the town than any event of the past twelve months'. The Courier also marvelled at how quickly news moved through Fenian circles.

On Saturday it was resolved to be more cautious in future.... All former signs were abolished, and one new general sign adopted. This sign was so rapidly propagated that it was used and recognised on Sunday amongst the Brethren.\textsuperscript{51}

But the story of this arms raid ended happily for all involved. The four arrested Fenians were committed to trial at the December South Lancashire assizes.\textsuperscript{52} But at their one day trial all four were acquitted because the jury was not convinced that they knew the rifles they were accused of possessing illegally were government arms, the property of the Queen.\textsuperscript{53} It appears from this verdict that there

\textsuperscript{49} Grieg to Watch cttee, 22 Sept 1866 (Reports 4, 28, p.37)  
\textsuperscript{50} Grieg to Watch cttee, 22 Sept 1866 (Reports 4, 28, p.37)  
\textsuperscript{51} Liverpool Courier, 26 Sept 1866  
\textsuperscript{52} Liverpool Courier, 26 Sept 1866  
\textsuperscript{53} Liverpool Courier, 18 Dec 1866
was nothing legally to prevent Fenians having weapons so long as they were not stolen, from the British Army for instance, or used against the crown. And if they did not get a conviction, what did the Liverpool authorities receive from this to make them happy? In February 1867 they were able to sell the 800 sticks of phosphorous back to its manufacturer for £18.  

The man who originally tipped off the police about the arms, John Corydon was born in Washington, D.C. and lived in New York from the age of fourteen. He was not an Irishman. When the war between the states broke out in 1861 he enlisted in the 63rd New York Volunteers as a medical officer and was with the Army of the Potomac for the next four years. While in the federal army he was first introduced to the Fenian movement and took his oath in 1862. After the war he was among 'a select number' who were sent to Ireland by John O'Mahony in summer 1865. In Dublin Corydon was directly subordinate to James Stephens and his 'adjutant general, Colonel Kelly', who told him to 'remain quiet until the expected rising took place'. Corydon claimed that he had 'two or three interviews with Stephens in South Anne Street. In those interviews he invariably spoke of the rising.' When Stephens was arrested, Beecher, paymaster for the American officers, ordered Corydon and about forty others to go to Liverpool. Corydon arrived in Liverpool in April, 1866, and he went to live in Austin Gibbons's public house. His orders were to remain in Liverpool until he was needed in Ireland once again. While in Liverpool, Corydon was to be paid £5 per week, but he never received that much. During one week he received half-pay, but usually less at very irregular intervals, and 'for some short time past there has been no pay at all'. Corydon said he was in debt £7 to Gibbons and

54. Grieg to Watch cttee, 16 Feb 1867 (Reports 4, 115, p.153); Orders of watch cttee to the Head Constable, 19 Feb 1867 (LKL, 352/POL/1/8)
if he could not raise the money to pay up he felt he would probably have to leave there. The police considered having an informer at Liverpool's 'principal rendezvous' too important to lose, and Corydon was given £7 to square his debts.

Four days after his first statement Corydon had another meeting with Superintendent Ride, two of the Irish officers and a London detective. This time his information was more general in character. Gibbons's public house was most likely to be frequented by local Fenians on weekends. The head centre, Arthur Anderson, was there at least once every week. Occasional pep-talks arrived in letters from America to say that Stephens was on his way with 'men and means'. Many of the 64th LRV came to Gibbons's to hear these messages and Corydon estimated that three quarters of that volunteer company were Fenians. Many American officers had grown impatient and returned to the States. But from what Corydon could see 'there is as much determination as ever there was to carry out the movement, but there is certainly a falling off in the funds ...' Even though resources were limited, the Liverpool Fenians still intended to use their Fenian fire to destroy the shipping first....Men were to be told off to use this stuff, so many to each dock. This was to be done two days prior to the rising in Ireland. Indeed, London and the principal towns of England were to be destroyed. Corydon supported Oakes's estimate that there were 12-15,000 Fenians in Liverpool to do the job. He finished the interview saying that he would refuse to appear in court, since he was much more useful in his spying role. Superintendent Ride described Corydon as 'thoroughly posted' on all matters connected with Fenianism and told the informer that if he continued to provide 'useful information' money would be 'no object'.

55. Supt Ride to Grieg, 26 Sept 1866 (Reports 4, 37, pp 42-3)
During September-November 1866 Corydon had nothing to say about the Liverpool IRB. But RIC detective McHale submitted an appraisal of how far Fenianism pervaded the Irish community, based on his experience in Liverpool since 1858.

I find the great majority of Irish labourers in this town, London, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds and Newcastle, as well as those residing in towns of less note through this country; if not actually enrolled members of the brotherhood, are strongly impressed with the spirit of Fenianism, and there is another class of the Irish resident in this country, who are in comfortable and easy circumstances...and who have the strongest sympathy with the movement, and altho' not enrolled members would, I am quite certain, give active cooperation if it so happened that there was a rising, or any attempt at rebellion in Ireland. There are also numerous young Irishmen...who are Fenians. Many of them joined volunteer corps in order to acquire a knowledge of drill and military movements, for the express purpose of using it in the Fenian cause....

It appeared that the police were facing a movement with considerable support on all levels of Irish emigrant society.

In mid-November 1866 another informer made himself known to Major Grieg. He was John Wilson, who had been helping the Dublin Metropolitan Police earlier in the year. While directing the arrests of his Dublin confreres, he was suspected of informing and he asked to be arrested. He was lodged in Mountjoy for two weeks and was sent to Liverpool in July 1866. He was one of the released Fenians Grieg was asked to watch for, but who could not be found. Wilson was not a sworn Fenian, but he managed to attend a meeting of fifty centres at the home of William Power Pitt Street, his fortnight in prison being credentials enough. The Fenians appeared 'more confident than ever' that there would be a rising by December 1866. A sergeant in the 64th LRV told the meeting that as soon as there was a rising in Ireland the volunteers' arms and ammunition would be captured by the Fenians in the ranks and 'every man of the brigade

56. HC McHale to Insp Gen, 18 Oct 1866 (PRO, HO, 45/03/7799/135)
57. Grieg to Watch cttee, 26 July 1866 (Reports 3, 291, p.342)
would be true'. There were Fenians in all the other Liverpool volunteer companies too. The Fenians' strength in the town was considerable because there was scarcely an Irishman in Liverpool who is not a sympathiser in the movement, whilst many are sworn members of the brotherhood and contribute money according to their means, some one shilling, others half a crown a week.

Money for supporting the organisation was also being raised through beerhouse raffles for such prizes as watches. 58

But despite police vigilance, the Fenians were able to carry on their work of organising and arming for the rising. On 23 November 1866 Grieg received a telegram from London telling him that a shipment of eighty Enfield rifles was seized on board a steamer at Queenstown, which had picked up its cargo in Liverpool. 59 This was very annoying news for the Liverpool police and they increased their surveillance of all legal arms consignments and any suspicious cargoes which passed through the port. But bluster from America promising a rising by Christmas time, the recent discoveries of Fenian weaponry and 'rumours as to the intentions of "Fenians" by fire, or otherwise' had Liverpool's public mind in an 'uneasy state' by the end of November 1866. Grieg was very sceptical that the Fenians would ever try anything, but he did increase patrols in the town and along the docks and made arrangements to concentrate police reinforcements quickly in the event a disturbance did occur. 60 And there did seem to be something to worry about.

John Wilson brought in another report about a meeting of fifty local centres across the Mersey in Birkenhead, where financial arrangements were discussed. 61 But this apparent renewed enthusiasm was dampened by another success for Major Grieg's policemen. Two Fenian couriers who arrived from America via Liverpool were arrested at Drogheda, through

58. Grieg to Watch cttee, 19 Nov 1866 (Reports 4, 51, pp 66-7)
59. Grieg to Watch cttee, 23 Nov 1866 (Reports 4, 53, p 69)
60. Grieg to Watch cttee, 23 Nov-12 Dec (Reports 4, 53, 65, 68, pp 69, 90, 96)
61. Grieg to Watch cttee, 28 Nov 1866 (Reports 4, 57, pp 76-8)
Liverpool police–RIC cooperation. One of the men left a chest in Liverpool which the police were able to track down. It contained three revolvers, ammunition, various other accessories and a bowie knife. But two other things made this a unique Fenian cargo. There was also a green Fenian uniform, consisting of coat, vest, trousers and a cap sporting a gold harp. Some Fenians intended to rise in style. The other find demonstrated that there was no lack of imagination in Fenian ranks. An eighteen inch diagram of a 'machine to be constructed apparently upon the principle of the needle gun' was on its way to Ireland, but there was no indication that the Fenians planned to mass produce a secret weapon. At any rate Major Grieg robbed them of their blueprint.

Wilson brought news that Centre William Power's house in Pitt Street was a central depot for Fenian gun-running. Grieg immediately dispatched a detective squad to watch the house and try to secure another arrest, but they were able to turn up nothing. But a few days later another informer made himself known to the Head Constable and the Liverpool police embarked on probably their most unusual Fenian adventure.

On 4 December 1866 Detective Kehoe received this letter.

Sir,

I can point out the house where Stephens, the COIR, is hid at the present moment in Liverpool. He will remain till Friday. I made three attempts to reach the detective office today, but was watched and my life would be in danger if I was discovered, as I am already suspected. The writer asked that receipt of the note be acknowledged in the Liverpool Daily Post and signed himself simply 'Alro'. The police put a notice in the afternoon Post for Alro and next morning a second letter appeared with Alro's conditions for divulging Stephens's Liverpool residence. He asked for

62. Insp Horn to Grieg, 26 Nov 1866 (Reports 4, 54, p.73)
63. Grieg to Watch cttee, 28 Nov 1866 (Reports 4, 55, pp 74-5)
64. Supt Ride to Grieg, 1 Dec 1866 (Reports 4, 63-4, pp 88-90)
£1,000 and complete anonymity. He again asked the police to signify their agreement in that day's Post. The police complied and on 6 December the last Alro letter arrived.

Sir,

You will find him at Dr. Wark's house, Hill Street [Toxteth] Park. Caution must be used in approaching the place as his friends are on the lookout. In case of danger Stephens is to go to the house of a man named Hutchinson.... a perambulator manufacturer near St. Patrick's chapel.... If the matter is settled to your satisfaction I will call upon you when it is blown over.

Yours truly,
'Alro'

Since writing the above I have learnt that Hutchinson possesses a skeleton key which opens the vaults beneath St Patrick's chapel, where Stephens will be conveyed in case of urgent need. There is a coffin made with a ventilating apparatus for his concealment there. I have it for a fact that arms are concealed in Wark's, and that there are more in Hutchinson's.... If you succeed, make it appear, if possible, that the discovery was made accidentally and not from information received.

Yours truly,
'Alro'

Grieg obtained search warrants for the houses of Wark and Hutchinson, but the police did not find James Stephens or any sign of Fenian activities in either place. And they did not examine coffins beneath St. Patrick's. In fact Stephens was still in New York, where his role as Fenian in chief was being sealed in another coffin, fashioned from Fenian impatience for action. Major Grieg's reports on Fenianism always carry the tone of someone who is never surprised at anything. And the negative results of the search for Stephens evoked a characteristic remark.

It had been the opinion of the police all along that such would be the case, but the Head Constable did not feel justified in not acting where there was the most remote chance of the information turning out to be true. 65

65. Grieg to Watch cttee, 7 Dec (Reports 4, 66, pp 91-4)
So 'Alro' evaporated as suddenly as he appeared, along with Major Grieg's chance for the really big Fenian catch.

During 12-19 December the police carried out searches of six suspected Fenian rendezvous and arms stores, but came across nothing at all suspicious. But reports continued to come in of a Christmas insurrection in Liverpool. A music hall owner from the Scotland Road brought Grieg the news that the brotherhood in and around Liverpool musters between 20 and 30,000 strong, that they have been told off in squads and their plans are, on a given night between Christmas and New Year's night, to fire the town and thereby draw the attention of the police to the fires, take possession of the barracks and volunteer stores, arms, etc., cut the telegraph wires, break up the rails upon the different lines, rifle the banks, etc. 66

Corydon, who had been 'again and again in communication' with both the Liverpool police and the RIC detectives, brought word to HC Meagher on 27 December that a rising was imminent, but both Meagher and Grieg discounted the story because nothing extraordinary was detected at the Fenian meeting places, which 'are well known to the police and frequently visited by them, and the parties themselves must be aware that they are known'. Grieg was certain his overt and covert intelligence system would warn him in time to prevent any projected Fenian uprising. And this confidence was proved to be justified six weeks later. But, as Grieg reiterated many times in his reports, he was not taking unnecessary risks, especially since the IRB had access to a very dangerous weapon, the Fenian fire. Police patrols were strengthened and special arrangements were made to secure the volunteer arms and ammunition in the event of an emergency. 67

But the police did not confine themselves to watching the Fenians. During 27 December - 5 January they made five searches, two of which produced illicit arms. An Irish ex-

66. Supt Ride to Grieg, 15 Dec 1866 (Reports 4, 72, pp 100-1)
67. Grieg to Watch cttee, 27 Dec 1866 (Reports 4, 77, pp 105-7)
volunteer from London was found to have his musket 'by mistake' and was arrested for illegal possession of government arms. But at Park Lane railway station two cases bound for Dublin were found to contain seventeen revolvers. There was no Fenian rising that Christmas. Perhaps the vigilant police surveillance discouraged them, or the talk of a rising was only whistling in the dark of organisational decline to keep flagging spirits up.

The month of January 1867 and the early part of February was an extremely quiet period among the Liverpool IRB. Corydon had nothing to sell and the only informant to come forward was a brothel keeper who suspected there were Fenians conspiring in her street. But the police disregarded her story altogether. By 9 February the Liverpool Courier was able to announce the 'Death and Burial of Fenianism'. But a few days later the same paper complained that only the other day we were assured that the Fenian movement had collapsed entirely. Now, however, we are told that it is cropping up at our own doors....

On the evening of 10 February 1867 Corydon contacted Superintendent Ride to say he had attended a meeting of Liverpool Fenians where it was resolved to raid the military arsenal at Chester Castle the following day.

After possessing themselves of the arms they will proceed by rail to Holyhead or someplace near where two ships are to be ready to convey the men and arms to Ireland, two special trains are engaged for the purpose....Should they succeed in seizing the arms they will cut the telegraph wires and pull up the rails so as to elude pursuit.

Several Fenian centres, including Captain McCafferty, who planned the operation, were already at Chester. Besides the Liverpool Fenians, 200 men from Birkenhead were expected

68. Grieg to Watch cttee, 3 Jan 1867 (Reports 4, 84, pp 110-11)
69. Grieg to Watch cttee, 27 Dec 1866 (Reports 4, 76, pp 103-4)
70. Grieg to Watch cttee, 15 Jan 1867 (Reports 4, 92, p.120)
71. Liverpool Courier, 9 Feb 1867
72. Liverpool Courier, 12 Feb 1867
as well as men from other towns of Lancashire and the north of England. The Fenians based their hopes of success on surprise and the fact that

A portion of the troops now in Chester are Fenians and they have admitted some of the men of the organisation, knowing them to be Fenians, and have shown them through the place. 73

Ride brought this intelligence to the Head Constable, who, even though he found the Fenian plan 'incredible', 'did not venture entirely to ignore it'. Ride was sent off to Chester immediately to alert the authorities there. At Chester, early on the morning of 11 February, the police notified the commander of the company of the 54th regiment stationed at the Castle, as well as the commander of the 6th Chester Rifle Volunteers, the Cheshire County Constabulary, the Cheshire militia and the army pensioners, of the intended raid. At 2.30 AM, while the police and military hastened to organise, 'a party of about 30 men of suspicious character' arrived by rail from Manchester. At 3.00 AM the police reported two strange men pacing the railway station platform, as if standing guard, while 20 other men were observed in the waiting room engaged in 'close conversation'.

At 8.50 AM seventy more strangers appeared and they continued to arrive by nearly every train from Birkenhead, Liverpool, Warrington, Manchester, Leeds, Halifax, and other places until 8.10 PM when their numbers were about 1,300. Several dozen men left Preston for Chester; 74 'a large number of Irishmen' went from the Widnes area; 75 and seventy Oldham Irishmen, 'presumed to belong to the brotherhood', booked for Chester on 11 February. The Oldham Fenians had received money from the organisation to cover their rail fare to Chester. But since they were expecting to travel to Ireland after the raid on the Chester armoury, they did not have enough money for their return fare and had to walk back to Oldham after the failure of the raid. 76 The same

73. Supt Ride to Grieg, 11 Feb 1867 (Reports 4, 107, pp 139-40)
74. HC McHale to Insp Gen, 11 Feb 1867 (SFO, F papers, F2440)
75. Buncorn Observer, 16 Feb 1867
76. Oldham Chronicle, 16 Feb 1867
thing happened to twenty Fenians from Leeds, 'some of them being compelled to pawn their coats and boots on the way'.

During the morning of 11 February, 200 Chester volunteers and 300 private citizens were sworn in as special constables, and at 12.45 PM another company of the 54th regiment arrived to bolster the Castle garrison. The Chief Constable at Chester also telegraphed to Major Grieg for 200 policemen to help protect the town. But Grieg turned down the request because 'the very causes which are alarming them were to be guarded against here'.

But Grieg's reluctance to send aid was more than compensated for by the arrival of 500 Guards by special express from London. Extra troops continued to enter the town during 12 February. The manager of the railway station was enlisted to inform the police during the whole day of new Fenian arrivals. This display of deterrent capability was enough to discourage any attempt at action by the Fenians.

In the early part of Tuesday it was ascertained that the strangers had been gradually withdrawing from the town in batches varying from 10 to 20 to 30 men, marching towards Birkenhead, Warrington and Manchester.

But some Fenians returned northwards lighter than they came.

A large quantity of ball cartridge (some in packages, others loose), revolver cartridges and revolver bullets, percussion caps and two haversacks with green bonds have since been found in various places adjacent to the railway station & apparently thrown away to avoid detection...6 pocket pistols, all loaded, and a formidable dagger were taken out of the canal...

Corydon later told HC McHale that most of the Fenians who travelled to Chester to take part in the operation were armed with revolvers.

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77. Salford Weekly News, 23 Feb 1867
78. Chester, watch cttee, minutes, 11 Feb 1867 (Chester Record Office, CCB/16)
79. Grieg to watch cttee, 12 Feb 1867 (Reports 4, 109, pp 145-6)
80. Chester, city council files, 13 Feb 1867 (Chester Record Office, CF15/5)
81. Report of the arrangements made by the magistrates of.... Chester...to prevent the threatened outbreak of Fenians, Wm. Johnson to HO, 16 Feb 1867 (PRO, HO 45/05/7799/180)
82. McHale to Insp Gen, 12 Feb 1867 (SPo, F papers, F2441)
But some of the raiders were either reluctant to give up hope that an attack could still be executed, or were left in Chester without the money to leave, expecting a free train and boat excursion to Ireland via Holyhead, because on the Saturday after the attempt was to have been made there were still some of the men hanging about Chester. During the whole affair only one Fenian, John F. McAuliffe, was taken into custody at Chester on suspicion. 83 He was held for a fortnight and released, but he will appear again. After the failure of the Chester raid some Fenians tried to go to Ireland, but they were all arrested in Dublin.

The Chester police authorities congratulated themselves on frustrating the Fenian plans. 84 But what did it all look like to the Fenians? Corydon continued to talk to Superintendent Ride and gave an account of his own activities with the Fenians on 11 February. That morning he met seven American officers at the Liverpool landing stage and they all travelled to Chester, arriving at about noon. The plan was that they should proceed to a pre-arranged meeting place to wait for the order to begin the raid. But they were met by Austin Gibbons, the former public house owner, who told them that 'the thing was sold' and that there was 'a traitor in the camp'. They should go back to Liverpool to prevent any more Fenians coming down to Chester. Corydon also revealed more details of the raid plan itself.

It was intended to go to the Castle on Monday night, when the soldiers would give permission to the parties to go in. Burke has been there upon several occasions within the last two months and has been shown through the various parts of the castle, and from information which he received both from the centres in Manchester and the Fenians elsewhere he knew that several of the soldiers of the 54th were Fenians. So the Fenian leaders did not intend an 'attack' at all. They were to be quietly admitted to the Castle after dark.

83. Wm. Johnson to HO, 16 Feb 1867 (PRO, HO 45/63/7799/180)
84. Chester city council files, 13 Feb 1867 (Chester Record Office, CPR15/5)
85. Supt Ride to Grieg, 14 Feb 1867 (Reports 4, 111, p 147-8)
Plan of the proposed improvements at the Castle of Chester
to overwhelm the small garrison, and then help themselves to the armoury.

Barring the intervention of an informer, did the Fenian plan to seize arms have any chance of success? As the map shows, the part of Chester Castle the Fenians were interested in was that in the upper left called the Higher Ward, the old castle itself. The front gate could only be approached by crossing a wide parade ground, the Esplanade, on which the army barracks faced. The low terrain on the other three sides of the Castle increased the height of the walls. Even if some of the sentries were collaborators it was unlikely that 1,200 Fenians could approach the Castle's front gate without being detected by the soldiers in the barracks, which they had to pass, or by a reliable guard at the front gate or on the wall. And armed only with some revolvers, an assault on the steep walls or across the parade ground was out of the question, since a relatively few soldiers had only to close the gate and keep the attackers at a distance with rifle and perhaps even artillery fire. But in the wall directly opposite the front gate of the Castle is a passage which goes down through the back wall and leads to a door at ground level outside. This entrance to the Castle is not mentioned by Corydon, but with darkness coming early on a February night, the Fenian soldiers inside the Castle need only leave this back door open to admit their marauding comrades. It would take a long time to bring over 1,000 men up through a narrow stairway, but enough men to overcome the guard and secure the barracks could enter quickly enough by this route not to lose the advantage of surprise, and then admit the rest of the raiders by the main gate. The Fenian plan to seize the arms seems workable. They had the cover of an early nightfall, help from inside the

86. Plan of the proposed improvements at the castle of Chester, c. 1820 (Chester Public Library, in collection of drawings by Thomas Harrison, architect)
Castle and a way of entering unobserved. It very well might have worked. And if their only aim was to seize arms, they very well might have succeeded.

But even if Corydon had not betrayed the plan, other things went wrong which would have prejudiced their chances of success. The raid was to take place on the night of 11 February. But participants were arriving in large groups as early as 2.30 AM of that day. On arrival they remained together, which was certain to arouse local suspicions. Too many came too early and made themselves too conspicuous. Still it was possible that the Castle raid could be executed. But the Fenians intended more than just visiting the Castle. Actually seizing the arms was the easy part of their project.

Direct from their one-night-stand at the Castle, the plan was to travel to Holyhead and then to Ireland. But between the Castle and the railway station resided the great bulk of the citizenry of Chester. 1,200 Fenians laden with rifles, ammunition and perhaps even artillery would certainly attract attention, and probably resistance. And even if they reached the railway station, would they be able to commandeer a train for Holyhead and then a vessel for Ireland? Corydon claimed there were trains and two steamers arranged to convey the Fenians to Ireland, but this is unlikely. The IRB organisation certainly did not have the money to charter trains and steamships; and even if they did, who would do business with characters like them? The most likely outcome of a successful arms seizure is 1,200 Fenians, armed with all kinds of formidable weapons, raising havoc in Chester and then trying to march to Holyhead. And if it became necessary to use their new arms against police or military; how many, besides the American officers and ex-British servicemen, would know what to do with the guns? There would be little time for training. It is very possible the Fenians could have seized a large quantity of arms at Chester, but the rest of their
plan can only be described as hopeless. Corydon made sure that the IRB defeat was total.

But in another sense, the Fenians scored a considerable organisational success. That there was an arms raid planned for somewhere was general knowledge among the Fenians for several weeks prior to 11 February, but it was not until the night of 10 February that the actual date and place were known. Telegraph messages were sent that evening to the head centres of towns throughout Lancashire and the north of England. Intra-Fenian communications in these towns must have been efficiently arranged because within hours of the telegrams being sent the first elements of the Fenian raiding party were arriving in Chester. Even The Times conceded that

We must certainly give the Fenians credit for having formed a bold plan, and for having put it into execution with considerable promptitude. If it had not been for the inevitable traitor, there is too much reason to fear they would have had at least a partial success. 87

Though the Chester plan could not be carried out, the Fenians demonstrated that their command structure was perfected to the point where orders could be transmitted rapidly over considerable distances and throughout populous urban districts and a large force concentrated on very short notice.

In the wake of the Chester attempt Liverpool was in great excitement.

Newspaper reports of the affair are read with an avidity surprising, and many people can hardly realise the fact that the old city of Chester was in such danger. 88 Liverpool newspapers and magazines produced disparate responses to the abortive raid. Though the gravity of the threat was not lost on Liverpolitans, there was still an inclination not to take the Fenians altogether seriously. Cool-headed, practical people might laugh at such a quixotic undertaking; but it should be remembered that the brotherhood are more

87. The Times, 13 Feb 1867
88. HC McHale to Insp Gen, 13 Feb 1867 (SFO, F papers, F2386)
noted for their daring than for their discretion, and that they would not hesitate about entering upon a desperate scheme which might appear absurd or incomprehensible to most people. Besides, reflection will show that the plan of attacking Chester Castle, although savouring of madness, had some method in it. 89

The Liverpool Daily Post asked: 'A hoax or a reality in Chester; which? 90 There were people who thought the military measures taken at Chester were superfluous, but even though It seems almost ludicrous—looking at things after the event—that military precautions should be taken against outbreaks of the brethren...still they are indispensable....Certain journals ridicule the whole affair and make merry of the fool's errand of the soldiers. For our part we think the peace and safety of the city was cheaply purchased by a journey of 500 fusiliers from London. 91

But the most interesting comment on the military precautions came from the London correspondent of the Liverpool magazine Porcupine.

Men are asking here why Liverpool could not send troops, as well as Fenians, to Chester. There are barracks in Rupert Lane. Where are the soldiers? Have you got as many as fifty men—a Chester fifty—to guard the second city in the kingdom? 92

Other Lancashire newspapers produced similar commentary. The Preston Chronicle said that

Nothing can more effectively show the utter absurdity of the movement in favour of the Irish republic than the proceedings of the Fenians....The alarm caused at Chester and the rising in rebellion at Killarney /13 February 1867/ are parts of a scheme, not to overturn British authority, but to practice on Irish credulity.

The Chronicle even insisted that the leaders of the IRB kept the British government informed of all their plans 'in order that they may be frustrated, and they themselves may thereby be furnished with that excuse for inaction which they are in search of'. 93 The Manchester Guardian warned that even though 'the first feelings provoked by the

89. Lpool Mercury, 13 Feb 1867
90. Lpool Daily Post, 13 Feb 1867
91. Lpool Courier, 14 Feb 1867
92. Porcupine, 16 Feb 1867
93. Preston Chronicle, 23 Feb 1867
discovery of the Chester plan are scorn and indignation, the next should be a determination to profit by the wholesome lesson of vigilance which it teaches. Characteristically, the Oldham Chronicle remarked that the only tangible grounds which those have who poke fun and fling sarcasm on the Chester danger consists of the utter absurdity of the movement. We at once grant that the idea of taking and holding Chester Castle is too monstrous even for Irish credulity to entertain....

But the foiling of the Chester plan did not diminish Fenian activity in Liverpool. Fenians from other northern towns stayed in Liverpool waiting to go to Ireland and many meetings were held at Pullins's public house, Birchfield Street. Members of the brotherhood were extremely angry over the presence of the informer, whom they were as yet unable to identify. And both Corydon and the police on regular patrol reported a great deal of movement among the Fenians. All the bustle revolved around plans to send men to Ireland to take part in the rising. The American Fenians, including Corydon, were to be sent in small groups to several Irish ports, and they were to go 'without making a show on the boats'. Even though plans for the insurrection in Ireland were well advanced, as far as Corydon knew, it was 'not the intention of the organisation to do anything in Liverpool'. He also said that the head centre for Liverpool, Arthur Anderson, had been deposed for being drunk for two days during the preparations for the Chester raid and for failing to account for money he received on behalf of the brotherhood. By this time the Fenian organisation was mature enough to suffer from corruption. The following day Corydon was leaving for Ireland and since it was the last report he would give the Liverpool police, he asked that when he was finished helping the RIC in Ireland he be given enough money by the government 'to go to some distant country and become a respectable member of

94. M/R Guardian, 12 Feb 1867
95. Oldham Chronicle, 16 Feb 1867
96. Supt Ride to Grieg, 14 Feb 1867 (Reports 4, 111, pp 148-9)
society'. Superintendent Ride assured him he would be looked after. After his departure for Dublin, Corydon did not provide any more information for the Liverpool police.  

But less than a week later the information gap was filled by a person who 'keeps one of the principal rendezvous for Fenians in this town'. Throughout reports on his statements his name is not given and he is referred to only as 'the party'. He said various Fenian generals were in Liverpool en route to Ireland. But during the next year there were frequent assertions by informers that ranking Fenians were on their way to, or already in, Liverpool, which the police were never able to verify. Saying an important Fenian personage from America was present was probably just another way of keeping up morale. The party also said that a number of Liverpool Fenians were in Ireland at the time, but this is not likely. Lastly he produced a letter from a John Griffin in Dublin which read:

> Things are going on very well here, but the horse was bad and did not run according to promise, but he is expected to run on Saturday or Monday.

The 'horse' referred to the rising of March 1867; and even when he did run he fell down. A couple of days later the party claimed that

> In Ireland they are determined to strike a blow next week. They were to have done it today, but it has been put back until next week.

There were still men in Liverpool from America and other British towns 'anxious to get away to Ireland' to help 'strike a blow' and the lack of funds for their support left some of them 'very hard up'. But as far as he could tell, no action was planned in Liverpool.

Nothing on the Fenians was reported for over two weeks and then the party reappeared with startling news. There were Fenian plans for firing the shipping in the port.

97. Supt Ride to Grieg, 15 Feb 1867 (Reports 4, 114, pp 150-2)
98. Supt Ride to Grieg, 21 Feb 1867 (Reports 4, 120, pp 156-7)
99. Supt Ride to Grieg, 23 Feb 1867 (Reports 4, 121, pp 158-9)
on 16 March, after which 'there would be a general fight in the town'. They also hoped to seize all the Irish Sea steam packets. He believed that many of the seamen employed on the vessels 'if not actually sworn Fenians, are sympathisers'. He went on to say that nearly all the Irish labouring class in Liverpool are Fenians, numbering many thousands....' That same day Grieg received an anonymous letter warning against an attempt to destroy Liverpool's shipping by fire, which was 'to a certain extent a confirmation of the foregoing information by the informer as regards Liverpool'. The object of this plan was to prevent any more troops going to Ireland by creating a fiery diversion in Liverpool. There was considerable activity in Fenian circles and meetings were held where it was resolved that 'something should be done this week for Ireland'. So important were these discussions considered by the Fenians that they even changed their meeting places to avoid police detection. Instead of going only to public houses and beerhouses where the proprietor was friendly, they went into any establishment 'where they can find a room in which they can converse without interruption'. 'At the dinner hour along the line of docks, a good deal is talked about amongst the labourers of the present state of things.'

Even though the attack on the Castle at Chester had been prevented, that experience gave the Liverpool police an idea of how dangerous the Fenians could be and how much damage they could cause, especially with a weapon as destructive as Fenian fire. On the strength of the information he had, as well as the obvious signs of Fenian activity, Grieg felt that there was good reason to suspect a St Patrick's day uprising in Liverpool.

100. Ride to Grieg, 12 Mar 1867 (Reports 4, 126, pp 166-7)
101. Ride to Grieg, 13 Mar 1867 (Reports 4, 129, pp 168-9)
The police made no public statements during the week before 17 March, but the local press were soon aware that something was going on. Under the heading 'Fenian alarm in Liverpool' the Courier said:

The police authorities and officials appear to have been frightened or 'scared' into the belief that a Fenian rising was contemplated in Liverpool on St Patrick's day in the morning.

Despite the obvious measures for security, there was a 'state of uneasiness' in the town. Richard Nixon's press secretary could not be more tight-lipped than the Liverpool police were that week, and the Courier complained that

The police officials, by dint of unexampled reticence and other normal qualities, fully sustained their reputation as masters of equivogue, as nothing definite in the way of information could be gleaned from Major Grieg nor any of his subordinates. 102

But even though they could get nothing from the police, the Courier was able to reconstruct the situation from other sources.

The Fenian, or liquid fire, is to be used in firing large warehouses near the riverside and ships and steamers in dock; and confusion being thus created, attacks are to be made on the volunteer stores and gunsmiths' shops, and arms seized. The Fenians being thus armed, are to help themselves to the contents of the banks, and whatever other damage they may take a fancy to, and then be conveyed in steamers which are either to be in readiness for the occasion or seized in the port - to Ireland, there to land and keep alive the flame of rebellion.

Both the Courier and the Mercury strongly criticised the police for withholding information and denounced alarmism and unnecessary preparations to repel a Fenian attack. 103

After the alert passed Grieg, typically, wrote to the watch committee that he really never believed that any large body of men would show, but the great apprehension on my mind was that a number of men, disposing themselves in small parties might set fire to shipping, of warehouse property, not only for the sake of destruction, but to draw the police to these points, and whilst so engaged

102. Liverpool Courier, 15 Mar 1867
103. Liverpool Courier, 16 Mar 1867; Mercury, 18 Mar 1867
make a general attack on property in the town. 104

From 12 March Grieg began making arrangements with the other authorities of the town and the military to handle any Fenian action. Grieg hoped to call on the local volunteers to help preserve order. As far back as 1862 he had proposed employing the volunteers as special constables 'in their civil capacity', since the War Office prohibited their aiding the civil power as volunteers. He found that ordinary working men could not be depended on and were difficult to organise as specials. He preferred men who were already organised and susceptible to discipline. 105

But after five years the question was still unresolved and Grieg was able to make no arrangements with the volunteer commander. But even if he had made an arrangement, there was the additional problem that since 1865 the Liverpool volunteer companies were infiltrated by the IRB, whom they would be expected to fight against.

All the heads of public departments in Liverpool were alerted, as were owners and agents of the various shipping, gas and railway companies.

In order that they might take such precautions as they thought proper, suggesting the employment of confidential, trustworthy persons to be observant in preference far to any great outward show of force.

Gunsmiths were warned to secure their shops. Vulnerable volunteer stores were removed to more defensible places, and arrangements were made with the army pensioners to guard them. Three companies of regular infantry were brought from Manchester. Dock police, gate men and watermen were organised for swift responses to any firing of shipping along the docks, and HM Customs officers secured their building with an armed force which included night patrols. Municipal employees such as sanitation men and borough engineers were employed as guards

104. Grieg to Mayor, 19 Mar 1867 (Reports 4, 130, p.178)
105. Grieg to watch cttee, 18 Feb 1862 (Reports 2, pp 109-11)
at public buildings and as extra firemen. Just to be certain
that the town was secure, an arrangement was made with the
Captain of HMS Donegal, in the Mersey Estuary, for landing
300 royal marines if Grieg signalled him. But all these
preventives, along with extra duty by the police force, were
either unnecessary or did in fact deter a Fenian attack because
Saturday and Sunday [St. Patrick's day] passed over most
quietly, and I now feel satisfied in reporting to your
worship that the excitement and anxiety in the public mind
have greatly if not entirely subsided. 106

He did not mention that the preparations themselves caused
all the 'excitement and anxiety' in the public mind.

The police in several other towns were also apprehensive
of possible Fenian disturbances on St. Patrick's day. In the
Widnes district, the police were on the alert and the volunteers'
arms were placed under guard. 'Not the slightest incident
occurred to create alarm, except it might be the presence
of several mysterious-looking strangers in the streets.' 107

There was 'considerable excitement' at St. Helens, 'owing to
a rumour of an expected rising of the Fenians, who are con-
sidered to be very strong there'. The local volunteers pro-
vided extra security for the various armouries and 'the town
on Saturday evening was remarkably quiet, there being fewer
cases at the police office than has been known for some years
on a St. Patrick's eve'. 108 Preston, which had a very weak
Fenian organisation, was also very quiet. 'In the popular
mind, St. Patrick is mainly celebrated for "driving the
venomous reptiles out of Ireland"....Fenians, like snakes,
will not thrive very long in the country. '109 In Manchester
it is very evident that the Fenian sentiment is at a discount
in this commercial and eminently sensible city. Even if this
were not so, the precautions that have been taken by Captain
Palin (one of the most perceptive and quietly-energetic of
chief constables) would have sufficed to discourage any Fenian
ardour. 110

106. Grieg to Mayor, 19 Mar 1867 (Reports 4, 130, pp 178-83)
107. Runcorn Observer, 23 Mar 1867
108.Wirral Courier, 18 Mar 1867
109. Preston Guardian, 20 Mar 1867
110. Manchester Courier, 18 Mar 1867
When the museum, library and park committee of the Salford borough council heard the rumours of a Fenian rising, they sent a request to the watch committee for a police guard, 'day and night', on the library and museum building. But it seems unlikely that the museum would have been a primary Fenian target. Altogether, whether or not the Lancashire Fenians had planned a St Patrick's day rising, the extensive police precautions made its execution impossible.

After Chester and the abysmal failure of the March rising in Ireland the Fenian movement in Liverpool slumped badly. There was not a single report during 18 March - 7 June, 1867. In June the Dublin Metropolitan Police warned Major Grieg that attempts were being made to revive the movement in Liverpool. Enquiries and observations were made, but the police could neither trace nor hear of any revival of the organisation of the brotherhood in Liverpool. At the various places, known as the Fenian rendezvous there was not a person in the house, except the landlady. The only news to emerge from these investigations was that the Fenians were determined to kill Corydon, which surprised nobody. But later in June HC McHale, RIC, received a telegram from Queenstown which said that three Fenian emissaries from New York were en route to Liverpool to resuscitate the movement there. One was a Colonel Murphy. The three were kept under watch by the police during the one night they spent in Liverpool, but none of the them behaved at all suspiciously. The three separated in Liverpool, two going to Paris and Murphy to Dumfries in Scotland. Grieg wired the Chief Constable in Dumfries to keep an eye on Murphy. But when the Colonel arrived in Scotland he was immediately arrested. The local police wired to Grieg to find out what they should do with him. Grieg replied that he should be kept under observation, not arrested, and Murphy was freed.

Half a century later, John Denvir recalled that

111. Salford, watch c'tee, minutes, 1866-8, 25 Mar 1867 (SCL, typescript, p.8)  
112. Insp Horn to Grieg, 7 June 1867 (Reports 4, 159, pp 209-10)  
113. Horn to Grieg, 17 June 1867 (Reports 4, 161, pp 211-2)  
114. HC McHale to Insp Gen, 22 June (SFO, Police & crime records,
At this time the organisation of the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood in Great Britain had been placed in the hands of three of the Irish American officers, Captain Murpny, who had charge in Scotland, Colonel Richard Burke in the Southern part of England, and Captain Edward O'Meagher Condon in the northern counties. 116

So it appears that the Fenian head centre for Scotland slipped through not only the fingers of Major Grieg, but of the Scottish police too.

During the whole summer of 1867 the police could not find any Fenian activity in Liverpool.

From all the information the head constable is able to obtain, there does not appear to be any movement amongst these persons...there is an entire absence of any appearance of organisation.... 117

But behind the apparent inactivity of the Lancashire Fenians during the summer of 1867 was an effort to re-organise the movement throughout the British Isles. James Stephens had been deposed as the Chief Centre of the movement in late 1866, and the failures at Chester in February and in Ireland during March convinced his self-appointed successor, Colonel Thomas J. Kelly, that the IRB structure needed urgent renovation. Kelly called a convention at Manchester sometime during the mid-summer of 1867, where he was confirmed as Chief Executive of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. 118 After the convention Kelly kept his headquarters at Manchester and started working on ways of improving the Fenian organisation. Manchester appears to have remained the headquarters of the movement for some years afterward. But on 11 September Kelly and an aid, Captain Timothy Deasy, were arrested by the Manchester police. Seven days later they were rescued from a prison van in Hyde Road which was taking them from the Manchester court house to the New Bailey prison in Salford. During the Fenian rescue a

115. Grieg to Watch cttee, 22 June 1867 (Reports 4, 165-7, n 214-17)
116. Denvir, Life story, p. 95
117. Grieg to Watch cttee, 24 Sept 1867 (Reports 4, 185, p.235)
police officer, Sergeant Brett, was shot and killed.\(^n\) In a wild chase after the breaking of the van, and during the following week, over thirty Irishmen were arrested. But Kelly and Deasy were never recaptured.

The killing of Sergeant Brett deeply shocked people all over Lancashire, and throughout Britain. We saw in chapter 6 that it was a widely held, but unrealistic, belief in British governing circles that their countrymen were, on the whole, peaceful and law-abiding people.\(^a\) Living under this misconception made the death of Sergeant Brett seem an even greater outrage. The press responded vociferously to the Manchester rescue.

It is evident, in the first place, that the importance of the Fenian conspiracy has been seriously underrated.... Leniency has been tried already....even the ringleaders in the rising of last winter have been relieved from the extreme penalty of the law....all this gentleness has proved ineffectual, for rather it has served simply to encourage the rebels in their evil habits. Now, however, the time for gentleness has passed away.\(^b\)

While the Fenian movement is fondly supposed by some people to be extinct, it breaks out with atrocious violence at our own doors....It is when we find that, in our own industrious and outwardly peaceful cities, widespread political conspiracy can be organised with perfect secrecy and carried into execution....that the real strain upon our credulity begins.... It may be that we shall yet have reason to regret the magnanimous leniency shown in sparing the lives of all the Fenian leaders who were convicted in the spring of this year.\(^c\)

Hyde Road, Manchester, has been the scene of an outrage such as is happily of rare occurrence in this kingdom. Englishmen are so much accustomed to hold constituted authority in respect, that a sudden and murderous breach of universal usage is never contemplated....Captain Palin, unlike Major Grieg, seems to have held Fenians and Fenianism in too low estimation. He did not appreciate the violence and recklessness of the Irish Americans.... \(^d\)

\(^{n}\) 'Report of the mayor to the council of the city of Manchester, as to the recent Fenian outrage' in Manchester Council Proceedings, 1866-7 (M/RCL, 352,042 M22), pp 306-7; Captain Palin to R. Neill, 10 Oct. 1867 (M/RCL, Archives Dept, watch cttee, letter books, M70/2/3)

\(^{a}\) Norman PicCord, 'The Fenians and public opinion in Great Britain' in M. Harmon (ed.), Fenians and Fenianism (Dublin, 1968), p.40
The murderous Fenian outrage at Manchester shows that it is not safe to consider the Fenian conspiracy as entirely at an end...there are too many knaves interested in keeping up the delusion, and too many fools willing to supply them with the means of doing so, for the undertaking to collapse altogether and at once. 124

From all quarters the unanimous verdict respecting it seems to be that a more scandalous violation of the public peace, a more outrageous defiance of the law, or a more reckless, cold-blooded sacrifice of human life was never perpetrated. 125

It is nothing less than cool deliberate murder, and we shall be greatly mistaken if the assassins do not find a very stern verdict pronounced against them by our countrymen. The day of forbearance is past. Mercy has been shown, and we see the result. The same amiable mistake will not be repeated again. 126

The Preston Chronicle warned that continued Fenian violence could lead to English employers and working men refusing to have anything to do with the Irish. Shut out Irish people from the labour markets of England because of the apprehension and the alarm that the Manchester outrage has roused in the breasts of the employers of labour, and the wretchedness of a wretched nation will be immeasurably increased. 127

But even though there was a great deal of revulsion towards Fenianism, and especially Fenian violence, the Manchester rescue never fomented a severe backlash of English opinion which endangered the position of the Irish in Lancashire.

Within weeks of the rescue of Kelly and Deasy, five men, Allen, Larkin, O'Brien, Condon and Maguire, had been tried for the murder of Sergeant Brett. They were convicted and sentenced to death on 1 November 1867. The execution was set for 23 November. The Manchester Courier was confident that by 'a decisive example, Irish and Irish-American adventurers will receive an unmistakeable warning'. 128 The Manchester Fenians, probably because they were still hiding Colonel Kelly, kept themselves very quiet indeed during the trial and after.

125. Selford Weekly News, 21 Sept 1867
126. Oldham Chronicle, 21 Sept 1867
127. Preston Chronicle, 23 Sept 1867
128. M/R Courier, 2 Nov 1867
But Fenians elsewhere in Lancashire were not as intimidated by the 'unmistakeable example' of the Manchester trials as the Courier would have liked. And where overt Fenian activity was not found, suspicious citizens perceived evidence of conspiracy in any stranger or untoward happening. For example, the day after the Manchester rescue a man on his way to Preston noticed that a fellow-passenger in his railway carriage had a Fenian 'demeanour'. The man was handed over to the police in Preston and sent to Manchester. 129 The Salford police were put on their guard in late September by information that some Liverpool Fenians were on their way to Manchester to free the prisoners captured after the attack on the prison van. 130 But this was a false alarm. The Chief Constable of the Lancashire Constabulary found that Fenian head centres in various towns were communicating regularly with persons in Manchester, 'generally women'. He advised Captain Palin at Manchester to make arrangements with the telegraph offices to be informed if suspicious messages were sent to 'any person who is not in the habit of receiving telegrams'. An example of a suspected Fenian message was: 'Don't come the goods are delayed.' 131

Everyone in Lancashire was watching for Kelly and Deasy during October-November 1867, and the police were flooded with reports of their suspected hideouts from helpful citizens. On 30 September 'the various localities occupied by the Irish' in Oldham were searched by the police when it was discovered that Kelly had had his post forwarded to the Oldham post office since the previous winter. The postmaster identified a photograph of Kelly as the man who collected the letters. But Kelly had not resumed his residence in Oldham after his escape from the prison van. 132 A week later a police constable observed:

129. Preston Guardian, 21 Sept 1867
130. Salford, watch c'ttee., minutes, 1866-8, 23 Sept 1867 (SCL, typescript, pp 16-7)
131. LC, general order book, 2nd series, 21 Nov 1867 (LRO, PLA, vol. 2)
132. Oldham Chronicle, 5 October 1867
a secret drilling session of about forty men outside Oldham, 'after midnight'. By the time he could return to the scene with reinforcements the men had disappeared, but a 'strict watch' was being kept on the movements of the 4-500 Oldham Fenians.133 The watchful residents of Salford thought they saw Kelly and Deasy all over the town during early October. The Chief Constable, Captain Sylvester, executed a series of 'minute' searches in all the neighbourhoods where they were reported to be hiding, but the police could not find a trace of Fenian activity or the escaped leaders.134 In Preston an 'alarming' Fenian communication was found in one of the principal streets, which warned that the Lancashire Fenians would swiftly and ruthlessly avenge any hangings in Manchester.

The fate of Allen and Co. is sealed, and so is the fate of Manchester and the neighbouring towns; and I hope you have made all preparations in Preston.... Fire all the public places as near as possible. We'll let the devils see and know what Fenianism is before we have done. Only confide to those you know are true to our cause. I suppose you have plenty of arms and ammunition. If not, storm the depots. You have any number of men.... We'll warm the ______ up, you'll see.

But it was thought that the letter was a hoax by a Fenian sympathiser, since the organisation in the town was entirely too weak to effect an attack such as the one prescribed in the letter.135 The powerful organisation in Liverpool remained the hub of Fenian activity during the autumn of 1867.

After a very quiet summer, it was nearly a week after the Manchester rescue before the first Fenian informer since the previous March made a statement to the Liverpool police. He was a tailor who employed a Fenian. Besides naming a few public houses where Fenians held meetings, he said that the British IRB was steadily declining until Kelly and Deasy arrived to start reorganising and rebuilding confidence, 'since which time it has improved both in members and money'. On 15-6 Sept-

134. Salford, watch cttee, minutes, 1866-8, 7 Oct 1867 (SCL, typescript, p.19)
135. Preston Guardian, 23 Nov 1867
ember meetings were held throughout Liverpool Fenian circles to sanction and help to finance the Manchester rescue. As usual, he was able to report a Fenian plan of action, which called for a 'simultaneous rising in this country and in Ireland....', and there was 'hardly a Fenian in Liverpool who has not arms'.

The very same day a 'sworn Fenian' who lived at Liverpool's chief Fenian meeting-place, Rossiter's beerhouse in Adlington St, visited Grieg at his office. He revealed that the head centre for Liverpool, James Chambers, was a participant in the attack on the prison van in Manchester. There was a great deal of discussion and collecting of money throughout Liverpool for rescuing the Fenians arrested for their part in the attack. Possible responses to any executions were also discussed.

It is under deliberation that should Allen be hung, to set fire to the shipping and warehouses here and also in Manchester the day he is executed.

And once again the figure of 20,000 Fenians in the Liverpool area emerged, there being 200 centres with nine nines each.

In the wake of the Manchester affair there was a spate of rumours in Liverpool about the fugitives Kelly and Deasy trying to make their escape from the port. The stories ranged from the pair trying to go to Ireland as harvestmen, 'one having a hump on his back', to a more traditional journey by packing crate or even a trip on a 'slow sailing ship' to Montevideo. The police were watchful for any attempt to smuggle Kelly and Deasy out of the country, and they investigated many of the Kelly and Deasy sightings throughout the town. Just to be certain, they even opened coffins at railway stations.

The freeing of Kelly and Deasy at Manchester gave a 'fresh

136. Grieg to watch cttee, 24 Sept 1867 (Reports 4, 199, pp 256-8)
137. One of those arrested at Manchester was Mike O'Brien, who was arrested a year earlier at Liverpool for illegal possession of gov't arms. Liverpool and RIC officers went to Manchester and recognised him at a court hearing. When O'Brien saw the officers he 'evidently recognised the officers as old acquaintances' because 'he changed colour' when he saw them.
impulse to the Fenian movement' in Liverpool and this worried the usually imperturbable Grieg. A few days after the Manchester raid, telegrams from the Home Office were sent to several Lancashire police forces informing them that revolvers were available for arming policemen from the military stores at Chester, if the commanding officers thought firearms were necessary to the security of their towns. At that time Grieg declined to arm his men, 'always considering that precautionary measures are better than weapons'. But a week later he asked the mayor to requisition fifty revolvers, 'not to arm the police with them at present, but to be ready ....when the result of the trial of Allen is known or put into execution'. Besides these acquisitions, the Liverpool police possessed a considerable arsenal. There were 104 carbines with bayonets and 1300 cutlasses. In addition, wooden truncheons were issued to the police. To make sure that all these weapons could be put to good use, constables began practising with revolvers and carbines. And a plan was devised where the army pensioners would be called out to form the nucleus of the armed policemen in case of a major disturbance. The shooting of Sergeant Brett at Manchester convinced even the sceptical Grieg that the Fenians could be extremely dangerous, and the precautions he took in autumn 1867 were much more extensive than those he took in anticipation of a Fenian attack the previous St Patrick's day.

But Grieg's anti-Fenian measures included more than just a heavily armed police force. Fenian haunts were constantly visited by 'strong bodies of detectives' to remind those present that the police were on their guard. During the previous year Grieg learned the best weapon against the IRB were informers, who could let the police know of Fenian intentions in advance so that they would be easier to counter.

138. Grieg to Watch cttee, 24 Sept 1867 (Reports 4, 200, pp 259-63)
139. Grieg to Watch cttee, 30 Sept 1867 (Reports 4, 208, p 271)
140. Grieg to Watch cttee, 21 Sept 1867 (Reports 4, 197, pp 253-4)
141. Grieg to R. Mayne, 3 Sept 1867 (Reports 4, 208, p. 271)
142. Grieg to Watch cttee, 11 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 223, pp 291-2)
143. Grieg to Watch cttee, 1 Oct, 15 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 212, p. 273)
and contain. But information from informers did cost money, which was supplied by Sir Richard Mayne, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. Either money went much further during the mid-1860s or Fenian informants placed a small value on their lives, because during the year September 1866-September 1867 Major Grieg paid out only somewhat more than £10, and this included instalments to big spenders like Corydon. But Grieg requested and received £20 to satisfy the next year's turncoats. But for the amount and character of the information the police obtained through the frugal disbursement of this fund, it has to be said that they had a real bargain. And with the excitement among the Liverpool Fenians after the Manchester rescue, the informers would continue to have plenty to disclose.

The 'sworn Fenian' informer, also called 'No. 1', was providing almost daily accounts of the numerous Fenian meetings and discussions throughout Liverpool. Some of the conversations he repeated help to illustrate the temperament of some of the leading Fenians. All the talk centred on what the brotherhood should do to help the Manchester prisoners and what they would do if Allen and any others were to be hanged. Plots to send armed Liverpool Fenians to Manchester to intimidate or liquidate witnesses against the accursed raiders were contrived, but no intimidators or liquidators were ever dispatched. It does not seem that even the Fenians took this sort of talk seriously, well aware that there was little they could to to interfere with the proceedings at the Manchester courthouse. So in the same

144. Grieg to Watch cttee, 1 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 211, p. 271)
145. Grieg to Watch cttee, 11 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 223, p. 289)
146. Grieg to R. Mayne, 27 Sept 1867 (Reports 4, 203, p. 266)
147. Grieg to R. Mayne, 30 Sept 1867 (Reports 4, 208, p. 271)
conversations they also talked about what would happen in the more likely eventuality that Allen and perhaps others were executed. A centre called Hurley decided that a Fenian firing squad should be posted beneath the scaffold to shoot Allen in the trap, rather than let the British have the satisfaction of causing his death. But no matter how Allen died, 'Liverpool will be in a blaze, this is almost the daily talk amongst them'. It is curious that during the whole of September-November 1867, while various Fenian exploits in Manchester and Liverpool were sketched and carefully forgotten, men called upon to carry out these daring plans frequently excused themselves on the grounds that they were married and had a family to think about. But they were always ready to encourage young, single men to martyr themselves for the cause.

The infiltration of the local volunteers, particularly the 64th LRV (Irish Brigade), continued. The centre Hurley, a member of the 64th, was asked by informer No. 1: 'How is it, Hurley, that you being a centre in Liverpool are wearing the English uniform?' 'Damn it, man,' he replied, 'half of us in the brigade are only learning our drill, that we may fight against disciplined men.' No. 1 believed at least half the Irish Brigade were Fenians. But in mid-October Hurley and three other Fenians were dismissed from the 64th because of the information that the 'sworn Fenian' gave, arousing suspicions that there must be an informer at Rossiter's beerhouse. The IRB had some other problems too.

James Chambers was confirmed permanent head centre for Liverpool in early October, but 'doubts were expressed as to the fitness of Chambers for the post'. That he was neither trusted not very popular was demonstrated by an exchange at a meeting of centres which took place around a beerhouse table.

148. Grieg to Watch cttee, 7 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 217, pp 275-9)
149. Grieg to Watch cttee, 19 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 228, pp 299-300)
150. Grieg to Watch cttee, 7 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 217, p. 275)
The new head centre announced that the only news he had for them was that he should continue to organise and collect money. A man called Duffy irritably shouted at Chambers: 'We are long enough listening to this sort of thing!' As a peace offering, Chambers told the gathering that there were 130 rifles hidden in Liverpool for a rising, but this only elicited more remarks of impatience to put the weaponry to use. There was also the matter of a fund instituted by the Fenians the previous March to pay for passages to Liverpool of those men released from custody in Ireland. Chambers was in charge of the collection. A man called Brophy, for whom money was donated, demanded that Chambers account for his share, threatening to bring forward the contributors to confront the new head centre. Chambers became very angry and said that Brophy was lying because the money had been sent away. Duffy finally interposed and pushed Brophy back into his chair.\textsuperscript{151} Fenian meetings were not always devoted to the formulation of exciting schemes, nor was the movement free from internecine quarrelling and distrust. And there were men who grew tired of endless conspiring with no prospect of action and became impatient with the leadership. But despite these differences, the Liverpool movement never split into opposing factions. They were able to remain united around their ultimate goal, the liberation of Ireland.

But the loose lips of the Liverpool Fenians fashioned a weapon that Grieg could use against them. Within a week of the Manchester rescue Chambers was named by informer No. 1 as a participant. Grieg was reluctant to expose his talkative confidant on the witness stand and arranged for two police officers and several eye witnesses from Manchester to come to Liverpool to identify and arrest Chambers. On the evening of 11 October No. 1 was able to keep Chambers at 'the place',

\textsuperscript{151} Grieg to Watch cttee, 8 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 218, pp 279-81)
Fenian jargon for Rossiter's, Adlington Street, 'by plying him with drink', which gave the police time to corner him. Six Fenians, including No. 1, were taken into custody and the Manchester witnesses identified Chambers as playing a prominent role in the attack on the prison van. Two of the men were freed immediately and the other four, including No. 1 and Brophy, were sent to Manchester by rail the same night. One of those detained with Chambers was persuaded to give information and the Liverpool police dubbed him 'No. 2', though RIC reports reveal that his name was James Nolan. All but Chambers and Brophy were discharged by the Manchester magistrate the following morning, but these two were among a number liberated on 7 November at Manchester, when the prosecution withdrew the murder charge against them.

Just as the police hoped, Chambers's arrest 'produced great consternation among those frequenting the place....' And just as after the Manchester rescue, glib pledges were made about going to Manchester to swear that Chambers was in Liverpool at the time of the raid. Several women did go to Manchester, but do not appear to have attempted to swear for Chambers. Nolan, the new informer, claimed that the Fenians were wary of the police and informers and switched their meeting place to another house near 'the place'. And he predicted that there would be yet another Manchester rescue if there were Fenian convictions for the September attack. Amid the bravado and adventurous plans to free the forty Manchester prisoners was an idea to attack Her Majesty the Queen at Edinburgh. They intend, if possible, to destroy the castle. Should the guard be too cautious they will waylay Her Majesty and shoot her. A message was sent to the Home Office immediately, so that precautions could be taken. It seems that there was some such design current among the Lancashire Fenians because

152. Grieg to Watch cctee, 8 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 220, pp 284-7); HC Meagher to Insp Gen, 12 Oct 1867 (SFO, RF, 1867/18196)
153. Liverpool Courier, 8 Nov 1867
154. Grieg to Watch cctee, 15 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 224, pp 292-3)
155. Grieg to Watch cctee, 30 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 243, p. 318)
three days earlier the Home Office received a report from Manchester about a plan to kidnap the Queen, to be 'kept as a hostage for the Fenian prisoners'. The police in Scotland took special care to prevent the Fenians dabbling in regicide and no attempt was made on the Queen. The Fenians were very short of weapons and without them royal kidnappings and attacks on Manchester were impossible. A plan was under consideration to stage-manage simultaneous bread riots in major towns of England and Scotland so that armouries could be raided in the confusion, but this, like all the other notions of this period of Liverpool Fenianism, came to nothing.

In late October Grieg acquired two more informers. One was James Fitzpatrick who lived in the house of Joseph Gavin, who was the Liverpool head centre replacing Chambers. He named four Fenian meeting-places and claimed that there was a lot of talk about setting fire to shipping and warehouses in Liverpool, which was confirmed by Nolan. The other new informer, called the 'fresh informer', spoke of meetings held to raise money to send witnesses to Manchester to testify on Chambers's behalf, but he had little other news. But from what Grieg could gather from all his sources the arrest of Chambers greatly disturbed the Liverpool IRB, who are of opinion that someone amongst them must be giving information to the police, and they are in consequence each afraid of the other.

In fact Grieg had not one person, but four giving information at the same time. This number was reduced to three when Nolan was found trying to stowaway on a steamer for America. He was turned over to the RIC.

156. Grieg to Watch cttee, 15 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 224, p. 293)
157. Grieg to Watch cttee, 17 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 226, p. 297)
158. Capt Palin to Mayor Neill, 14 Oct 1867 (PRO, HO 45/05/7799/75)
159. Grieg to Watch cttee, 17 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 226, p. 297)
160. Insp Carlisle to Supt Kehoe, 21 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 229, pp 301-
162. Grieg to T.A. Larcom, 28 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 241, p. 313)
But even though the Head Constable was confident that he was on top of the Fenians, he was not one to take chances. During 29 October–13 November he made arrangements similar to those of the previous St Patrick's day with the local military and the Royal Navy. Grieg estimated that the Liverpool police would be supported in an emergency by 900 regular troops, with artillery.\(^{163}\) And for a time it seemed that support might be required, because No. 1 reported that 'the place' was very busy with Fenians. A man named McAuliffe, 'a very dangerous member of the Fenian organisation', was trying to recruit a five-man team to attempt to rescue Allen or shoot him before he could be hanged. Raffles were being held to gather as much money as possible.\(^{164}\) But McAuliffe's plans for a grand effort at Manchester were shortlived.

John Francis McAuliffe called himself a lecturer and, as we saw earlier, he collected money for the Fenian movement, and himself, by travelling around the northwest speaking on 'the wrongs of Ireland'. 'His dress and appearance are those of a Roman Catholic priest.' In the handbills he distributed before his lectures, he described himself as 'Knight of the Holy Roman Empire, ex-commander of the Papal Brigade, and formerly in the US Federal service'.\(^{165}\) He was in Chester for the attempted raid on the arsenal and was the only person arrested there.\(^{166}\) He was released after a fortnight and dropped from sight until 20 September 1867, when he was listed among the prisoners held at Manchester in connection with the rescue of Kelly and Deasy.\(^{167}\) McAuliffe claimed that he was visiting Manchester on 18 September 'to meet a lady friend', but he was arrested while strolling past Manchester Police Court. He was apparently ignorant of the plan to free Kelly and Deasy.\(^{168}\) No evidence could be produced against him and he was discharged.\(^{169}\) McAuliffe went to Liverpool to organise

\(^{163}\) Mayor to Grieg, 13 Nov 1867 (Reports 5, 10, p.13)
\(^{164}\) Grieg to Watch ctte, 30 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 243, pp 318-20)
\(^{165}\) St Helens Standard, 16 Feb 1867
\(^{166}\) Lpool Courier, 24 Sept 1867
\(^{167}\) Lpool Courier, 20 Sept 1867
\(^{168}\) Lpool Courier, 7 Oct 1867
\(^{169}\) Lpool Courier, 14 Oct 1867
another rescue and was said by other Fenians to be 'doing more harm than half a dozen centres' to the organisation there. On 1 November Major Grieg received his strangest letter since corresponding with 'Alro' a year earlier.  

Sir,  
Since my liberation at Manchester, over the late outrage, the Fenians are under the impression that I got out by giving information to the Crown, but I did not. They have, however, twice attempted to, or rather planned my assassination, but I baffled their efforts. Consequently I am now determined to give all the information I can about the whole organisation & in total, break it up in England & almost smother it in all other countries. I came here to try and seclude myself for a while, but I am under the impression that they have traced me to this district, and are in several places looking out for me. But when I have turned round upon them, they may rest confident the Fenian organisation is no more, because there is not another man in Europe who knows the working position of the whole affair in England but myself. In a word, I'll smash up the whole affair. Come and see me as soon as possible. I don't like to venture out fearing they would see me. I want to put the authorities on top of them through the different towns through England unawares /sic/.  

J. F. McAuliffe.

McAuliffe overestimated his own importance, but Grieg still wanted to interview him. Inspector Carlisle was sent to Campbell Street, but there he found that McAuliffe had already turned himself in to the Lancashire Constabulary at the Old Swan Station around the corner, 'in a great hurry'. When Carlisle tried to see McAuliffe the county police refused to allow him, despite the letter to Grieg, because the ex-Fenian was in a very excited state of mind. The Liverpool police
obtained a court order from a county magistrate to allow them to see the greatest Fenian smasher in Europe, but by the time they returned to the Old Swan, McAuliffe had been moved elsewhere. No record of where he went or what he said survives and the Liverpool police were never able to talk to him. He did mutter something about a few guns and a lot of Fenian fire in Liverpool, that was all. It seems that he was considered mad and his information, if there was any, was disregarded, or what he had to say was not very important. The Fenians were very much the same after what he thought would be his historic betrayal.  

After the McAuliffe incident it was almost three weeks before Grieg made another entry in his reports about Liverpool Fenianism. It is strange that no informers made statements and the police could find no Fenian activity worth mentioning during this month because at that time the 'Manchester martyrs' were waiting in their cells at the New Bailey to be executed on 23 November. If the Fenians seriously intended any response, this should have been a very busy period for them. On 21 November No. 1, the sworn Fenian, turned up to say that with the Manchester hangings two days off there was much talk among the Liverpool IRB of doing their 'duty', which meant using their stores of Fenian fire to destroy the port's shipping. A visiting centre from Manchester said that if Allen and the others were hung, as many of the cabinet as could be caught would certainly be fixed, that Hardy's /Home Secretary/ life would not be worth two pence.

He also made arrangements with the returned Chambers to communicate by telegraph if the Manchester Fenians were executed, so that the Liverpool brotherhood could immediately take reprisals against the town. But despite all the talk of assassinations of ministers and the burning of Liverpool

172. Grieg to Watch cttce, 1 Nov 1867 (Reports 5, 1 pp 1-4)
The men who frequent 'the place' are strongly of opinion that Allen and the others will not be executed. Just to be sure, Major Grieg made arrangements with all the Liverpool telegraph offices to be on the lookout for any messages from Manchester 'in figures'.

On the Thursday and Friday before 23 November all the Fenians who promised to do their 'duty' made themselves very scarce, and few people were found in the usual Fenian 'haunts'. Most of them probably thought that whatever happened at Manchester, it would be better for them to be out of the reach of the Liverpool police.

In Manchester, Maguire was freed and Condon's sentence was commuted to a prison term. But three men, Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien, still faced hanging on 23 November. Despite the universal outrage at the killing of Brett in September, by November there was a considerable body of opinion which favoured commutation of the death sentences on the three Fenians. But most leaned, though often reluctantly, towards condoning the execution.

The gallows never was a good teacher, but the gallows appear to be the only emphatic institution available in this most tragic and lamentable instance, and we would most gladly deliver the community of Manchester, if it were possible, from the horror of the expiation which we fear is almost inevitably impending.

In our judgement, it would be an act of criminal weakness to spare the lives of men who have shed innocent blood in the prosecution of an enterprise which aggravates the guilt of the murder itself.

With the execution of a few, and the imprisonment for life of the rest of the Fenian conspirators, a blow is likely to be struck at the cause of Fenianism.

The Liverpool Courier condemned 'maudlin humanity' generally.

173. Grieg to Watch ctee, 21 Nov 1867 (Reports 5, 18, pp 20-2)
174. Grieg to Watch ctee, 22 Nov 1867 (Reports 5, 19, pp 23-5)
175. M/R City News, 2 Nov 1867
176. The Times, 4 Nov 1867
177. Preston Chronicle, 9 Nov 1867
178. Liverpool Courier, 9 Nov 1867
But it is refreshing to see that, in a country with a traditional fondness for public hangings, there was support for commutation of the sentence on the Manchester Fenians and abolition of capital punishment.

Those who hold to the principal that it would be both proper and expedient to abolish capital punishment — and we are of that number — could on this, as on every other occasion of a like kind, approach the throne and appeal for mercy without hesitation. 179

If our government, by discriminating in the execution of the sentences, will prevent a sense of 'martyrdom' arising in the cause of the condemned, these trials, we hope, will go far towards ending Fenianism. 180

As our last word, in the face of the scaffold, prior to its using, we would say we are convinced that these hangings can be no cure for Fenianism....it is more than ever necessary to turn attention to Ireland, and deal with Fenianism in more rational and more effective methods there. 181

The most interesting of the editorials in favour of commutation was that in the magazine Porcupine.

It is absurd to argue that an act of mercy will be construed into an admission of weakness on the part of our rulers; and if the latter are magnanimous, they will boldly show their contempt for such an undignified supposition, and refuse to sanction a deed which will disgrace the reign of Queen Victoria....there is still room to hope that Calcraft's /the bungling hangman/ hands will not be laid upon men who are, after all, widely removed from criminals in the ordinary acceptation of the word. 182

But these sentiments, including the argument that Allen, Larkin and O'Brien were in prison for a political, rather than a criminal, offence, were overridden.

Even among those prepared to see the three Fenians hanged for the killing of Sergeant Brett, there was an effort to make certain that the Irish population of Lancashire was not held generally responsible for the actions of the IRB. A Manchester city councilman complimented the 'successful efforts of the

179. Preston Guardian, 20 Nov 1867
180. Salford Weekly News, 9 Nov 1867
181. Salford Weekly News, 23 Nov 1867
182. Porcupine, 23 Nov 1867
Irish to adapt and assimilate into British society'. He further emphasised that 'most Irishmen were peaceful and lawabiding and that Fenian and Irishman are two terms not to be confounded'.\(^{183}\) The Liverpool Mercury was certain that 'Fenianism, in its worst form of violence and outrage, has made little progress amongst the Irish population resident in England'.

By far the most serious danger which the Fenian organisation and the crime suggested by its authors could have produced in England would have been to excite feelings of jealousy and hatred between the English people and the Irish population residing amongst them.\(^{184}\) Even though the shooting of Sergeant Brett caused intense resentment throughout Lancashire, and many people felt that the hanging of the Manchester Fenians was necessary, anti-Fenian opinion was never allowed to become any kind of anti-Irish pogrom. But the Manchester rescue did little to improve intercommunal relations.

As 23 November drew closer, it became increasingly clear that Allen, Larkin and O'Brien would probably be hanged. The police in southeast Lancashire prepared for a major security operation to deter any last minute rescue attempt at the execution and to prevent any desperate Fenian reprisals. Two months earlier the Home Office had circulated a request to all the chief constables of Lancashire to watch their local Fenians more carefully and to assign such a number of discreet men in his force as shall... seem advisable, whose sole business shall be, for the present, to watch the Irish population, and to report to you any information they may obtain of suspicious movements or persons....\(^{185}\) Besides keeping a closer watch on known Fenians, the Manchester, Salford, Oldham and Lancashire constabularies were armed with revolvers by the War Office.\(^{186}\) Salford and Oldham, in

\(^{183}\) M/R Courier, 26 Sept 1867

\(^{184}\) Liverpool Mercury, 26 Nov 1867

\(^{185}\) J. Ferguson to Chief constables of England, Scotland and Wales, 28 Sept 1867 (PRO, HO 45/03/7799/26)

\(^{186}\) Oldham, watch cttee, minutes, 2 Oct 1867 (Oldham Town Hall, book 1); Salford, watch cttee, minutes, 1866-8, 30 Sept 1867 (SCL, typescript, pp 17-8); Proceedings of the County Constabulary cttee, 17 Oct 1867 (LRO, O8/2/3)
particular, became very security-conscious. The Oldham magistrates thought that 'the present number of the police force is insufficient for the protection of the town and its inhabitants'. The attack on the prison van at Manchester convinced the economy-minded Oldham watch committee that it was 'expedient that the borough police force should be increased to the government standard'. Twenty cutlasses were also purchased for the police. 187 But there was opposition to an increase in the size of the police force, which was voiced principally by the Oldham Chronicle. 188 New appointments were never made and 100 special constables were sworn instead. 189

Even though the Manchester police were on extra duty, they seemed able to cope with the additional responsibilities. But in Salford, where the executions were to actually take place, the Chief Constable was worried that he did not have the manpower to provide adequate security for the town. He wrote to the Home Office to obtain some sort of help.

As the occasion giving rise to these special services is not one of local, but of national importance, it is thought that the government should provide such additional number of police constables in Salford as may be necessary to meet the exigencies of the case, or recoup the police authority of the borough the extraordinary expenses that must necessarily be incurred in relation to the extraordinary duties imposed upon the authority. 190

The Home Office replied that it could offer no assistance, but if the civil forces proved 'insufficient to repress disorders', the military would be available. The Home Office also recommended the swearing of special constables. 191 The watch committee decided that at least 400 police officers and 1,000 special constables would be necessary at the execution, and the chief constable was ordered to apply to the Lancashire Constabulary and other police forces for 300 additional policemen. 192 Major Grieg was approached, but 'considering the wants of the town' he 'reluctantly declined to accede to the
request'. Oldham was asked to send twenty men to Salford for 23 November, which was almost half the police force. The watch committee agreed to send the men, providing that the Chief Constable brought them back as soon as possible. But the local justices of the peace became very nervous and asked the watch committee to keep the police in Oldham. The committee did not feel that they could back down from their engagement, but they ordered the Chief Constable to remain in the borough, to soothe the nerves of the justices.

The Salford chief constable had 'much difficulty' in securing policemen from other towns, but on 23 November he was able to assemble men from Manchester, Blackburn, Leeds, Oldham and the Lancashire Constabulary, as well as 2,000 Salford specials. Troops were stationed near the New Bailey prison, where the execution was to be carried out. As an added precaution, letters were sent to the railway companies asking them not to run special trains to bring people to the execution, and the mayors of a number of towns in the vicinity were asked to publish notices requesting the inhabitants of their towns not to attend the execution.

As we have seen, the Liverpool police were well-prepared for any trouble the local Fenians might cause, and the Preston police were equipped with revolvers during the autumn of 1867. The Lancashire Constabulary post at St Helens was furnished with fifteen revolvers during the Fenian emergency. The county constabulary's Prescot division, which included Widnes, was issued ten revolvers. But the greatest danger in that area was thought to be Widnes, where five of the revolvers were sent. The police in Lancashire were ready for any move that the Fenians might try to make.

192. Salford, watch cttee, minutes, 1866-8, 15 Nov 1867 (SCL, typescript, 2.23)
193. Grieg to Watch cttee, 19 Nov 1867 (Reports 5, 15, p.18)
194. Oldham, watch cttee, minutes, 18 Nov 1867 (Oldham Town Hall, book I)
195. Oldham, watch cttee, minutes, 21 Nov 1867 (Oldham Town Hall, book I)
On Saturday, 23 November, when Allen, Larkin and O'Brien were hanged in Salford, Lancashire was quiet. In Manchester, 'the utmost regularity prevailed throughout the town'. Still it was said that the Lancashire Irish are nearly frantic with indignation with the government for the steps it has taken in regard to the execution of these three heroes, as they call them, and it is said amongst them that the Fenians will have life for life. 199 But such talk was only bravado. The execution stunned the entire Lancashire Irish community, and especially the members of the Fenian brotherhood, who were forced to acknowledge the government's determination to deal very harshly with the movement, if that was necessary to suppress it. After the Manchester executions many leading Fenians curtailed their activities with the brotherhood or fled to America. The impact of 23 November 1867 significantly cooled Fenian ardour in Lancashire, and the movement assumed a different character during 1868-71.

But in the weeks immediately after the execution the Lancashire Irish demonstrated their continued sympathy with the Fenian movement. On the day after the execution many Irishmen gathered in the Ancoats area of Manchester and spent the afternoon 'discussing the events of the proceeding two months'. Later they were led by a fife and drum band, playing the Dead March, in a 'decorous' procession to the homes of Allen and Larkin. 'They were respectably dressed and very well behaved.' By the time the procession dispersed there were nearly 10,000 participants. 200 A week later another procession, in files of six and one and a half miles in length, took place from Stephenson Square in Manchester to the New Bailey prison in Salford. 'It was principally composed of the Irish working class of men, women and boys, but a good many seemingly...
respectable people were also amongst them.' The procession took place against the advice of the Roman Catholic clergy of Manchester-Salford. Twenty-five Irishmen travelled from Oldham to join the march. Local opinion was very tolerant of the two large demonstrations, but there were signs of possible trouble when the Irish proposed a third procession for Sunday, 8 December. The Manchester Orangemen planned a counter-demonstration to express sympathy for the family of Sergeant Brett. The Irish decided not to push things too far and neither procession took place. A much more tense situation developed in Liverpool.

A procession committee, which had no apparent link with the IRB, though the Fenians undoubtedly supported it, planned a funeral procession in memory of the three men hanged in Manchester. The committee first planned to hold the march on 1 December, but Major Grieg banned it under a watch committee order of November 1852. We have seen that in 1851 clashes between Orangemen and the local Irish on the twelfth of July resulted in a killing. The following year the Liverpool Watch Committee, in accordance with a magistrate's decision, ordered

the Head Constable, on receiving information of any procession being about to take place in which it is intended to exhibit party badges or do anything calculated to create a breach of the peace, to adopt measures for preventing the same from taking place.

From that date no partisan displays of any kind, including Orange or St Patrick's day processions, were allowed in Liverpool. But the first banning of the Fenian sympathy procession did not deter the committee and they called for another march two weeks later, 15 December, when 'Irishmen and Irishwomen of Liverpool and surrounding towns' were called on to wear a piece of crepe, tied up with green ribbon. Grieg

201. HC Welby to Insp Gen, 1 Dec 1867 (SPO, F papers, F5076)
202. Oldham Chronicle, 7 Dec 1867
203. M/R Courier, 9 Dec 1867
204. Grieg to Watch cttee, 3 Dec 1867 (Reports 5, 24, p.28)
205. Orders of watch cttee to the Head Constable, 27 Nov 1852 (LCL, 352POL/1/3)
seized upon the ribbon and crepe as a 'party badge' and the magistrates banned the second demonstration too, saying that it was 'most certainly calculated to lead to a serious breach of the peace', because if the police did not prevent it, the Orangemen would.

Besides detailing a body of police to disperse any demonstration before it had a chance to assemble, the police called upon the Roman Catholic clergy of Liverpool to exhort their parishioners to stay away from any processions. The diocese of Liverpool condemned membership or sympathy with the Fenian movement officially in February 1866. On 8 December and 15 December the Sunday homilies included condemnations of the proposed march and renewed denunciations of Fenianism and anything connected with it. And on 12 December Bishop Goss, of the diocese of Liverpool, issued a pastoral calling on the Irish to abstain from demonstrating the following Sunday. The mayor of Liverpool interviewed leaders of the Orangemen and assured them that the police would take all necessary measures to prevent the Fenian funeral procession, and impressed on them that any vigilante activity on their part would only make things more difficult. On 12 December a proclamation was published ordering all Liverpool Orangemen to abandon any plans of intervention unless called upon to aid the authorities as special constables. With the proclamation and the considerable public opinion against the march, the organisers rerouted it so that it would take place outside the borough limits. But the Lancashire county magistrates banned it there too.

When 15 December arrived the Liverpool police were prepared for all eventualities. Since the proposed march was to pass near the Liverpool borough boundaries, 300 Lancashire county

206. Preston Guardian, 14 Feb 1866
207. Grieg to Watch cttee, 9 Dec 1867 (Reports 5, 29, pp 30–2)
208. Lpool Courier, 12 Dec 1867
209. Lpool Courier, 10 Dec 1867
210. Lpool Courier, 12 Dec 1867
constables were on duty, 30 of them carrying revolvers. 211 Many people were milling around the assembly areas of Shiel Road and Stanley Road, but the police kept them moving during the whole day and no procession could be formed. 212

On 13 December 1867 an attempt was made to rescue Richard O'Sullivan Burke, who had organised the Manchester rescue, from Clerkenwell prison, London. The Fenians tried to blow a hole in the prison wall, but instead they killed and injured over 100 persons in the surrounding neighbourhood. Such a thing, coming so close on the Manchester rescue, caused a great deal of resentment throughout Britain. The Clerkenwell blast made Irishmen have second thoughts about the IRB or at least made them careful to be discreet in their support. RIC detective in Manchester observed 'persons whom I knew to be wearing crepe on their hats in mourning for the men lately executed here, to take it off when they heard of the outrage lately committed in London'. 213

The Fenian organisation itself was going through a bad time. After a month of no reports an investigation of known Fenian haunts in Liverpool revealed very few members around, and Grieg did 'not think that the organisation is gaining any ground here'. In fact it was losing ground because the leaders were doing their best to become obscure or get away. Already Head Centre Chambers, in whom there was 'more confidence reposed .... than any other man' a month earlier, 214 was on his way to America. 215 A few days later another check was made and 'all was unusually quiet, and no appearance of any meetings'. 216 Two weeks later the police could not find a single Fenian. Public houses where they used to congregate began to close down for want of custom. 217 The only Fenian activity the Liverpool police were able to locate.

211. LC, general order book, 13 Dec 1867 (LRO, FLA, vol.4, 5166, p.247)
212. Liverpool Courier, 6 Dec 1867
213. HC Welby to Insp Gen, 24 Dec 1867 (SFO, F papers, F5076)
214. Grieg to Watch cttee, 21 Nov 1867 (Reports 5, 18, p. 21)
215. Grieg to Watch cttee, 23 Dec 1867 (Reports 5, 36, p.36)
216. Grieg to Watch cttee, 30 Dec 1867 (Reports 5, 39, p.38)
217. Grieg to Watch cttee, 13 Jan 1868 (Reports 5, 48, p.49)
in the first month of 1868 was within their own ranks. Two Irish policemen who were 'undoubtedly Fenian sympathisers, if not actually members of the brotherhood' were 'called upon to resign at once, and were thus spared the disgrace of dismissal'.

In mid-February 1868 Major Grieg prepared a special report on the Fenian movement in Liverpool for the Home Office. The drift of the report was that Liverpool Fenianism was finally declining.

The Fenian movement in this town, so far as is known to the police, is fast dying out...... although there is a large section of this community who are Irish Roman Catholics, and many of them no doubt sympathisers with the movement, there are no prominent Fenians here.

Grieg also enclosed a return of 'names, residences, and places of meeting of all known Fenians'. He listed twenty three names and addresses, twenty-one of which were beer or public houses. At fifteen of these places the Fenians were no longer to be seen. Nine of the owners had given up the trade for lack of business. Austin Gibbons and Patrick Mullins, at whose houses people such as Oakes, Corydon, Michael O'Brien once stayed, were both in America. The beerhouse of Miles Lambert on Lord Nelson Street, another 'great rendezvous for the American section' that sheltered the paymaster Beecher Timothy Deasy and Richard Burke, was under new management. At the other eight places the number of Fenian patrons was much diminished and Rossiter's, 'the place', was at the point of closing down. Fenianism was 'most certainly on its last legs' in Liverpool. Grieg thought that he had won at last. He was both right and wrong in his estimate.

During 1865-7 the most important influence on Lancashire Feniansim, particularly in Liverpool, was what Grieg called

218. Preston Guardian, 29 Jan 1868
219. Grieg to HO, 11 Feb 1868 (Reports 5, 57, pp 55-7)
220. Grieg to watch cttee, 13 Feb 1868 (Reports 5, 58, pp 58-9)
the American section. Not only was the Fenian organisational scheme worked out in America during the late 1850s and early '60s, but Irish-Americans with military experience were despatched to Ireland and Britain to take command of the Fenian army when the rising to make Ireland independent finally took place. In the early days of the movement the 'American section' determined not only the IRB's organisation, but its direction. During 1865-7 the emphasis was on preparations for a major military campaign. The Irish American officers provided the hard core to guide this process. Their aim was military and only ultimately political, and they gave little consideration to even such questions as what the basic premises of the Irish republic 'virtually established' would be when it was actually established. So the tone of the Lancashire IRB was dominantly military, with little room for politics. Interest and morale were maintained among the brotherhood by the very presence of the 'Irish Yankees', who were in Lancashire for no other reason than to take part in a rebellion; and by meetings where the latest strategy was announced, funds collected for arms and relevant news from America or Ireland read. For over two years the Lancashire Fenians were repeatedly told that the rising was imminent and that they were only waiting for orders, money, arms or generals from America for preparations to be complete. But this sometimes led to expressions of impatience among the more adventurous members. Men cannot be expected to live in a constant state of excitement and expectation without some realisation of promises. The rejection of the idea that a rising was almost always impending was one influence that altered the character of Liverpool Fenianism.

Besides a military organisation, with a military orientation and objective, Lancashire Fenianism was an important social focus for the Irish community living there. Gatherings under the auspices of conspiracy were also regular
opportunities for Irishmen to get together. The fact that almost all the meetings were held in public houses added to an atmosphere of conviviality, which during 1865-7 existed alongside the more serious atmosphere of building an army to take on the British. A Fenian meeting was a chance to be with other Irish immigrants, as well as a forum for plotting the violent overthrow of British rule in Ireland. Irishmen could talk with like-minded persons about exciting plans, some of which might even be put into execution. The organisation allowed the Irish to maintain a feeling of relevance in the affairs of their homeland and helped to support the feeling of national identity and unity in the Irish community. A Fenian felt important. But the American section and the more devoted Lancashire Fenians were not as interested in whether or not their conferees appreciated their own worth or were able to see each other often in agreeable circumstances as they were in the graver task of military operations against the British. The police reports show that this more serious side of the movement received the greatest attention during 1865-7, both because of the presence of Fenian notables and enthusiasts, such as those in the American section, and because it did seem possible to effect a rising.

But after the failures of the Chester raid and the March 1867 rising in Ireland the influence of the American section and other 'hards' was cut down by arrests, executions and hasty exits to America. There was less planning and less heady talk. After the Manchester rescue there was hardly an 'Irish Yankee' to be found in Fenian circles and determined Fenians such as Chambers emigrated or minimised their roles in the movement. This process was aided by the decline in the vigour of the movement in America. The Lancashire leadership was opened up to new faces. It became a movement of the Irish in Britain. There were still activists such as
Michael Davitt and Arthur Forrester in the northwest, but the complexion of the movement was generally more tame. They continued to meet, swear oaths and do some planning, but it was all very low-key compared with previous years. The IRB remained the largest Irish club in Lancashire and continued to have a great social importance. Organisation continued to reassure the Irish and Fenianism was still very much the thing to do. From 1868 the social significance of the Lancashire IRB outweighed its military or political importance. But in the 1870s the groundwork of the underground Fenian organisation, as weak as it was in many ways, provided a useful foundation for launching a dynamic political movement for Irish home rule. Even if its tone had changed, the organisation, strengthened by its social importance, remained basically in tact. The Fenian movement of active preparations for violence against the crown, lead by hard-line nationalists, was 'most certainly on its last legs' in early 1868, as Major Grieg said. But a less militant, though still extensive IRB continued to exist. Fenianism was not dead, only somewhat different in appearance.

Even though the police felt there was little to fear from the Fenians in 1868, they were wary of anything remotely calculated to strengthen the movement. In April 1868 Dublin Castle decided to release former Liverpool head centre Arthur Anderson, one of those Liverpool Fenians arrested in Dublin after the Chester raid, from custody, on the understanding he travelled immediately to America. To do that he had to go to Liverpool first. RIC head constable Meagher advised against sending Anderson through Liverpool because it would be extremely dangerous to allow this man to return to Liverpool, as Fenianism is almost a 'dead letter' here: And if a man of Anderson's antecedents was allowed to mix among his class here, there is no doubt he would revive the conspiracy for his own personal interests if for no other purpose. 221

221. HC Meagher to Insp Gen, 1868 (SPO, Fenian papers, R3141)
But Anderson was permitted to travel through Liverpool and he did not try to contact his former brethren, perhaps because he fell out with them a year earlier. To the police it still appeared that the end of Fenianism was at hand. But a few weeks later a man called only the 'young' Fenian came to Grieg with inside information on the movement. Grieg was forced to acknowledge the disagreeable fact that there was still a Fenian organisation to keep track of.

The young man told of a meeting of centres at a pub in Regent Street 'convened for the purpose of removing any doubts from the minds of the centres here of the existence of the supreme council'. At the gathering a member of the recently consolidated supreme council, Arthur Forrester, spoke about a meeting which was held a month before. Representatives from each of the principal towns in the three kingdoms attended the meeting. It was resolved to send out a man to America for the purpose of seeing the leaders of the two parties there and endeavor to effect, if possible, a reconciliation between them. Should he, however, fail in doing this, his instructions were to ascertain which party would afford the most material support (arms and ammunition) to the home sections and whichever party would do this he was to act in concert with and inform them that they were the party the home sections would recognise, and them only.

The representative sent to America was Fr. Patrick Lavelle, the 'patriot priest', who departed earlier in April. To finance the journey a levy of 1d. per member was made.

The 'young' Fenian also revealed why the movement appeared to the police to be disintegrating. After two years of constant police harassment the Fenians finally abandoned the practice of meeting only in friendly public houses and beer shops. They started going to houses where the owners would not know who they were. So since December 1867 the police had lost track of the Fenians. The Liverpool Fenians deliberately tried to throw off the police and largely succeeded in doing so.

222. HC Meagher to Insp Gen, 29 July 1868 (SPO, Fenian papers R3141)
The body of the IRB believe that the authorities are of opinion that Fenianism is dying out, but the organisation is steadily progressing and meetings are held in various places.

The new informer also named quite a few centres and pointed out that 'there are two centres in Fr. Nugent's office, Yale Street, John Short and Deenvir: Short is a centre'. The Denvir was John Denvir, who was, as we have seen, a prominent Irish Catholic. Both Bishop Goss in Liverpool and Bishop Turner in Salford had unreservedly condemned Fenianism, and the local clergy took every opportunity to dissuade their parishioners from sympathy with the movement. So it might seem odd that someone as close to the Catholic church as Denvir would be inclined to join the IRB. But he took his oath in 1866, 'apparently without any sense of conflicting loyalties'. 'John Denvir's Fenianism... was not of the militant kind', but still he joined the IRB. Denvir illustrates the social appeal of Fenianism. Despite its failure as a military organisation, the IRB developed a social attraction strong enough to overcome the censure of the Catholic church. Most Lancashire Irishmen had little difficulty in reconciling an attachment to both bodies. The church and the IRB were not in competition for the loyalties of the Lancashire Irish. Particularly in Liverpool, membership in the IRB became a requisite social credential for anyone aspiring to leadership in the Irish community.

During 1869 police investigations of Fenian meetings and meeting places continued. In August an informer led the police to a gathering of some seventy men at a public house in Jackson Street. They certainly were better dressed and appeared much more intelligent than those who were usually met with at the Fenian haunts some time ago. About 30 or 40 of them had a military appearance, being well set up, with moustaches, etc. There

223. Grieg to Watch cttee, 23 Apr 1868 (Reports 5, 83, pp 78-81)
224. Preston Guardian, 14 Feb. 1866; Salford Weekly News 12 Oct 1866
225. Moody, Michael Davitt, p 55
226. Grieg to Watch cttee, 3 May 1869 (Reports 5, 227, p 229-30)
were also 20 men downstairs. They all seemed confused when the officers entered.

When the detectives left the house, without interfering with the men, the informer told them that the men were centres from other towns.\textsuperscript{227} Enquiries made at the pub the following day revealed that the landlady did not know who the men were and she agreed to notify the police if any more meetings were to be held at her house.

There are no further reports from the Liverpool police or the RIC until November 1869. The police were watching beer and public houses where Fenians were known to meet. After two years of relative quiet the police detected increased activities among the Liverpool brotherhood. Head Constable Murphy, RIC, had an informer who often communicated by letter. This person reported that one reason for the renewed vigour of the movement was the formation of a new special section, a rescue circle.

That means in the event of any leader being arrested, this body, composed of 36 of the best and smartest soldiers, who will die to a man to rescue the prisoners. They are to face every danger. The Manchester affair is well improved on.

This is the last mention of a 'rescue circle', but there was a considerable effort to gather funds to arm the movement through raffles 'under assumed charitable forms'.\textsuperscript{229} At about the same time Major Grieg gained another informer, who had been a Fenian until two months earlier. He was a member of the 8th Lancashire Rifle Volunteers and said that it is a condition of admission into the organisation that each member shall, if not one already, become a volunteer, the object being to have a body of drilled men.

The informer told his centre he wanted to join the Irish Brigade, but the centre said that it was better he did not since 'there was already a sufficient number in the corps'.

The Fenians had infiltrated at least three other local volunteer

\textsuperscript{227} Insp Carlisle to Grieg, 2 Aug 1869 (Reports 5, 267, pp 281-3)
\textsuperscript{228} Insp Carlisle to Grieg, 3 Aug 1869 (Reports 5, 270, pp 285-8)
\textsuperscript{229} HC Murphy to Insp Gen, 1 Nov 1869 (SPO, Fenian papers, R4846)
companies too. This informant also hit upon the recent fund raising activities among the members. In Liverpool-Birkenhead there were sixteen circles of 'several thousands members'. 'Each member contributes, if well and in work, threepence a week, and a penny a month; if out of work or unwell they do not contribute.' Any money that the Fenians collected was invested in the tools of the Fenian trade. "There is war material in Liverpool, consisting of rifles, sword-bayonets, and ten-chambered revolvers." But most significantly, he named five Fenian rendezvous previously unknown to the RIC or the Liverpool police.  

All five 'haunts' were visited the same night and it was found that none of the landlords knew the character of the meetings that were held in their houses and all agreed to cooperate with the police. It was found that raffles were being conducted to raise money for 'charitable' causes. But unfortunately this is the last Liverpool police report on the IRB which is available, since the following volume, covering November 1869-August 1872, is missing. When the series resumes in 1872 there is no further mention of the Fenian movement. But the story continues in the RIC records. On 24 November HC Murphry reported that the Fenian leaders in this country are very busy of late' and he requested an extra detective so he could keep up with all the surveillance needed. The same day he wrote about observing through a window a meeting of about 40 Fenians in a public house. Speeches were made & the speakers applauded. He saw from the street one man in the act of speaking and flaunting a green flag attached to a stick at the same time....The meeting was held on the eve of the anniversary of the Manchester executions. The Fenians always were fond of talking. But the collection of money for arms continued.

230. Grie~ to Watch ctttee, 9 Nov 1869 (Reports 5, 303, pp 324-7)
231. Grie~ to Watch ctttee, 9 Nov 1869 (Reports 5, 303, pp 326-31)
232. HC Murphry to Insp Gen, 24 Nov 1869 (SFO, Fenian papers, R5018)
There seems to be an ardent and earnest desire on the part of Fenian agents to accumulate funds for the purpose of arms. The weekly subscriptions of members are increased from 3d. to 6d. per week. Raffles are set on foot for the same object. Pressure is brought to bear on the members attached to circles to purchase tickets & to prevail on their friends & acquaintances for to purchase them also. 

Besides money, the Fenians received another boost. O'Donovan Rossa, though in prison, was elected to a seat at Westminster for Tipperary. This infused a fresh spirit into the Fenian mind here. There seems to be no doubt but it is a stimulus to their cause and will advance it to a certain extent.

But this excitement was brief. In mid-December 1869, the police in Liverpool registered another important success. It was reported to the RIC at Dublin Castle that 'Forrester is expected to return to Liverpool this week for the purpose of reorganising the various circles'. Arthur Forrester was the man who addressed the meeting of centres at Liverpool in the spring of 1868 and he was the 'organiser and arms agent of the IRB in the north of England'. On his arrival in Liverpool he was arrested in a cafe in William Brown Street.

He was found to have six revolvers in his possession. Forrester was clearly an important catch for Major Grieg, but the prosecution pulled its punches at the court hearing, in order to conceal the identity of the informer who set up the arrest. Forrester was let off with being bound over to keep the peace for a year.

But Forrester's arrest brought forward another significant figure of Lancashire Fenianism, Michael Davitt. It appears that after Forrester's arrest 'Davitt (sic) has replaced Forrester in the work of reorganisation in the north of England'. Davitt had 'done incalculable mischief by his unwearied and practical inculcation of Fenian principles'. He had been devoting a 'good deal of his time to Liverpool during Forrester's remand and detention in prison for the perfection of satisfactory bail'. 

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233. HC Murphy to Insp Gen, 27 Nov 1869 (SFO, Fenian papers, R5038)
234. HC Murphy to Insp Gen, 28 Nov 1869 (SFO, Fenian papers, R5076)
235. R. Anderson to Insp Gen, 14 Dec 1869 (SFO, RP 1877/9309)
236. A complete account of the Forrester affair appears in T.W. Moody's forthcoming Michael Davitt, p.62
Liverpool gave the police the opportunity to bring him under closer surveillance, and a few months later Davitt was arrested in London for gun-running.

Although RIC reports from Liverpool continued until the winter of 1871, the arrest of Forrester was the last important Fenian caper in that town. Other reports only mention gatherings of Fenians and sympathisers in public houses around the town, some of which possessed a 'magnetic attraction' for Fenian types. But Fenianism had not died elsewhere in Lancashire after December 1867. In fact, the centre of gravity of Lancashire Fenianism had shifted to southeast Lancashire.

In Preston, where the Fenian movement had never been very strong, there was still the remains of an organisation in 1868, 'and the movements and actions of those individuals have been closely and narrowly watched' by the police. Similar to the Liverpool Fenians, there were meetings held in particular public houses, which were made to appear as 'social gatherings, or for the purpose of raffling or dancing' when the police were present. In January 1868 there were 'a number of suspicious characters in the town, whose appearance and style of dress favour the idea that they belong to the class who are the prime movers in, and promoters of, Fenian schemes and plans'. One proof that there were still active Fenians in Preston was that persons from whom money would be likely to be procured [for the movement/ have been recently 'hard up', to all appearances, and although in the receipt of their ordinary wages, seem to have a secret drain upon their resources. This, of course, is most perceptible amongst those who have been accustomed to spend their money in dissipation, and their usual haunts have been in a certain measure deserted for some time past. But the police kept a list of names and residences of persons with 'proclivities in that direction'.

237. HC Meagher to Insp Gen, 28 Jan 1870 (SPO, RP, 1877/9309)
238. HC Meagher to Insp Gen, 17 May 1870 (SPO, RP, 1877/9309)
239. HC Meagher to Insp Gen, 3 June 1870 (SPO, RP, 1877/9309)
240. HC Meagher to Insp Gen, 9 May 1870 (SPO, RP, 1877/9309)
241. Preston Guardian, 1 Jan 1868
committee authorised an expansion of the police force to cope with any Fenian problems.242

With the Manchester rescue and the Clerkenwell explosion still in the recent past, 'from every town and village almost in the kingdom we have rumours of suspected Fenian outrages, and it would be odd if Preston .... were exempt from these alarms'. On 5 January 1868 four Irishmen were seen near the gaol with 'a small bottle, from which a pipe was protruding'. The police increased their patrols, but nothing happened. That same evening an Irishman named Richard Brady was found looking over the wall of the Preston gasworks. He was arrested. He said he had only just arrived in Preston from Manchester and was looking for a place to sleep, but he was remanded in custody.243 A case could not be made against him, and he was released a few days later.244 Five suspicious Irishmen, who were seen 'in the company of Fenian sympathisers', were arrested on 8 March, but they were also released.245 After this very minor incident the Preston Fenians absorbed much less police attention and dropped from sight entirely.

After comparing the 'quaint form of Fenianism' to Luddism, the Oldham Chronicle warned its readers 'against any excess of panic and terror' in the face of rumours of an imminent attack on the volunteers' arsenal and widespread Fenian incendiary.246 But Oldham was still standing when the next issue of the Chronicle appeared. During 1868-71 the Oldham Fenians kept well out of the public eye and no longer took up much police time.

Ever since Colonel Kelly's convention during the summer of 1867, Manchester had been the headquarters of the entire Fenian organisation, in the British Isles and in America.247 Even though the movement in Manchester-Salford was not as

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242. Preston Guardian, 4 Jan 1868
243. Preston Guardian, 8 Jan 1868
244. Preston Guardian, 11 Jan 1868
245. Preston Guardian, 11 Mar 1868
246. Oldham Chronicle, 28 Dec 1868
numerous as it was in Liverpool, reports of activity continued to come in from the RIC detective stationed there after the November 1867 executions. In early December 1867, HC Welby wrote from Manchester that notwithstanding the apparent quietness of the Fenians here.... I am of opinion that they were never more determined in their wickedness than now. I was told that it was a calm before a storm. Of course, they cannot do much harm here, but can privately destroy property and commit other outrages.

Welby also found a great deal of resentment among the Manchester Irish towards police detectives, 'particularly the Irish ones'. Welby himself was threatened in public houses and greeted in the streets with shouts of 'There goes the Fenian hunter' and 'The bloody orange villain'. But even though the police were keeping a close watch on the movement, Welby thought the movement was growing in strength in Manchester-Salford.

It is almost impossible to describe the change that has taken place in persons whom I hitherto considered to be loyal subjects, and this has all at once taken place since the execution of the three convicts in this city. I do not think that there is 1,000 out of 150,000 Irish catholics in this district, loyal. I have no doubt but the Fenians will be better aided in money matters now in this district than they have ever been before. 247

A fortnight later Welby reported an informer's story about a Fenian plot to blow up the Salford gasworks. 249 In consequence of Welby's informing the Salford police, an Irish soldier stationed in Manchester was placed under arrest, ostensibly for 'communicating with persons known to be connected with the Fenian movement in this city'. Welby had it 'on private information' that the soldier had mined the drains in the barracks yard, which was contiguous to the gasworks. 'His friends from outside were ready to attack the gasworks when the explosion in the barrack yard would take

247. Grieg to Watch cttee, 26 Oct 1867 (Reports 4, 240, p.311); Supt Ryan to Insp Gen, 15 Oct 1867 (SFO, RP,1867/18458)
248. HC Welby to Insp Gen, 3 Dec 1867 (SFO, F papers F5076)
249. Welby to Insp Gen, 19 Dec 1867 (SFO, F papers, F5076)
place.' The full story had not been made public and was 'kept private by the military authorities'. After the gasworks incident the Fenians in Manchester were very discreet in their activities. The next report which survives is dated August 1869. Welby told the Inspector General of the RIC that 'the only sign of Fenianism that was known here for some time worth reporting' was harassment of an unsympathetic Irish publican. 'I would say that Fenianism in this district was as if it were dead, except in feeling. They sing their Irish songs, and, in separating, all in a chorus will cry out "God save Ireland".'

But the Fenians in the neighbourhood were still organising and arming. In mid-September 1869, Welby wrote that a Salford Fenian had been shot.

The injured man, with some of his companions, Fenians, were showing off how well they could use their revolvers against their enemies, when one of them accidentally shot Ryan.... Sympathy with the movement remained strong among the Irish community in Manchester-Salford. At the end of November 1869 Welby noted that mass was celebrated, 'without comment', for the 'Manchester Martyrs', Allen, Larkin and O'Brien, at St Patrick's church, Livesey Street. The 'Manchester Martyrs' are still commemorated at St. Patrick's during November of every year. In December 1869, the IRB sponsored a ball which was 'held with the greatest possible Fenian success, as far as numbers, many being obliged to return for the want of room'. Despite this activity an informer told Welby that the Fenians have not the slightest idea at present to cause the government any serious trouble, because they are not prepared, but will wait and prepare until an opportunity occurs.

250. Welby to Insp Gen, 24 Dec 1867 (SFO, F papers, R5076)
251. Welby to Insp Gen, 26 Aug 1869 (SFO, Fenian papers R4579)
252. Welby to Insp Gen, 20 Sept 1869 (SFO, Fenian papers, R4579)
253. Welby to Insp Gen, 17 Sept 1869 (SFO, Fenian papers, R4572)
254. Welby to Insp Gen, 22 Nov 1869 (SFO, Fenian papers, R4985)
255. Welby to Insp Gen, 1 Dec 1869 (SFO, Fenian papers, R5119)
There were at least seven drilling places in the area and the informer was storing two rifles with bayonets.

The Fenians were never more strong in numbers than they are at present, particularly in the small towns adjoining here. The truth is the police, generally speaking, will take no notice of them. They will not expend money upon such duty Captain Palin [Manchester Chief Constable], of course, always excepted, and the only exception so far as I know — except myself. 256

But even though Welby's informant was not aware of any military operations, the Fenian command, based on Manchester, had other ideas.

A week before Christmas 1869, the commander of the troops in the Manchester and Salford barracks received a telegram from the War Office which warned of Fenian plans to attack the Salford barracks to seize 800 rifles. The military took precautions 'with great promptitude' and no attempt on the barracks was made. Curiously, the police in Manchester and Salford were not informed about the alleged Chester-style attack. 257 The police claimed publicly that no raid had been planned by the IRB.

Their information of the movements of the Fenians in this district shows that they are in no position to attempt any enterprise of the kind, and that there is no ground whatever for any uneasiness respecting them. 258

But during the following week HC Murphy in Liverpool reported that a Fenian meeting was held there, which was attended by Michael Davitt and Bernard Denvir, John Denvir's brother, for the 'purpose of consulting over the treachery of the Salford raid, and how treachery will be best managed here'. 259

Clearly, a major operation was planned, probably by Davitt and Forrester, for the Manchester-Salford IRB, but the endemic lack of security, as well as Forrester's arrest in Liverpool, foiled the attempt.

The Manchester Fenians quietened down during the first months of 1870. But the arrest of Davitt in London caused

256. Welby to Insp Gen, 16 Dec 1869 (SPO, Fenian papers, R5286)
259. HC Murphy to Insp Gen, 5 Jan 1870 (SPO, Fenian papers, R5438)
renewed activity. Welby reported that drilling was kept up and dues were promptly paid. A meeting of centres was called, where Davitt was censured for 'indiscretion', but funds were allocated for his defence. Arthur Forrester, who had been in Manchester since being released by the Liverpool authorities, sent a note to the meeting, which said that 'perhaps it might be his last communication'. He was worried about being implicated with Davitt's gun-running. His letter was 'cheered and hissed'. 'It was Forrester who recommended Davitt as his own successor.' Welby wrote a month later that

the Fenians in every part of this district, since the arrest of Davitt, were very active in drilling until last week, when it was all at once stopped, and since then there was not a move amongst them until Wednesday night last, when many of them met at Hegarty's without, however, transacting any business....

Forrester was keeping his whereabouts secret from police and Fenians alike, but he 'hurriedly came to Hegarty's and shook hands with all the Fenians present and made off'. Another meeting was held a week later to settle a dispute between two sections which involved money and a few revolvers. It was announced at the meeting that a new section was being organised,

to be composed of young men who never took the Fenian oath until Sunday night last....This section will, it is expected, be about fifty young men. It will be a great addition to the funds. 263

Welby continued to report from Manchester during the early 1870s, but after June 1870 there was nothing significant to report. But this does not mean that Fenianism died out. Indeed, the determination of the Fenians to keep their organisation alive, even if military companies were out of the

260. Welby to Insp Gen, 14 May 1870 (SPO, Fenian papers, R6474)
261. Welby to Insp Gen, 28 June 1870 (SPO, Rp, 1877/9309)
262. Welby to Insp Gen, 17 June 1870 (SPO, Rp, 1877/9309)
263. Welby to Insp Gen, 28 June 1870 (SPO, Rp, 1877/9309)
question, was as strong as it had ever been. The resolve of the Manchester Fenians, and Lancashire Fenians generally, to keep the organisational structure of the IRB intact was well expressed at a Fenian gathering in 1870.

When those Fenian officials were about parting, one of them said if all the world denounced Fenianism that he for one would not. At this time all of them stood up, swearing that they should be the last to give up....Immediately after this, in a subdued tone, and when separating, all, as if with one voice, said, 'God save Ireland'. 264

During the second half of the 1860s Fenianism was a very significant influence throughout urban Lancashire. The IRB was strongest in the large population centres of Liverpool and Manchester-Salford, but there were Fenian circles in every town. Liverpool had by far the largest organisation throughout 1865-71, and most Fenian activity centred on the Liverpool neighbourhood up to 1868. During 1868-9 the most active sections were found in Manchester-Salford, which reflects the influence of the Fenian supreme council, which had its headquarters there, and the more determined leaders, such as Michael Davitt and Arthur Forrester.

After the sobering experience of the Manchester executions, the movement's overt activities were severely curtailed, so much so that the few operations which were planned by the militant Manchester leaders stand out from the generally low profile in the rest of Lancashire. But even though active preparations for a rising were almost entirely set aside, the Fenians continued to command a large body of support among the Lancashire Irish. The executions of November 1867 impressed upon the Fenians the impracticality of effecting a rebellion, but the movement was still as popular as it had been, and perhaps more so. This demonstrates that the IRB was an important social focus which provided a medium for...
for national expression and community identity. It did
not supplant the catholic church as a primary socio-national
institution, but, rather the IRB existed alongside the church.
Few Irishmen viewed Fenianism and the church as incompatible.
Also, the turn from militancy after 1867 probably enhanced the
appeal of the IRB among those less interested in armed struggle
than in expanding the social, cultural and national base of
the Lancashire Irish community. The Manchester executions,
instead of alienating the Lancashire Irish from the IRB, seem
to have strengthened community feelings among them, which helped
the Lancashire IRB to maintain a formidable, if fairly harmless,
organisation. In 1871 the Fenians in Lancashire had fewer
hard-line nationalists among them and less money than they
had in 1866-7, but they still could claim a large membership
and the general sympathy of the Irish community.

The Fenians had a tremendous impact on local public opinion
in 1867 because of their military operations, the Chester raid
and the Manchester rescue, which made them appear to be a
ruthless collection of urban terrorists. But despite their
enormous potential for causing havoc in English towns, the
Fenians showed little interest in urban guerrilla warfare. Their
military planning was dominated by the building of a field army,
and guerrilla tactics were discussed only incidentally and
with little conviction. They bore no particular grudge against
the British people and they lacked a desire to avenge Irish
grievances by attacking British civilians and their property.
Their conflict was with the government, represented by the
British army, and it was on those lines that the Fenians wanted
to fight. The Fenians were not bloodthirsty assassins; and
when there was violence and bloodshed, such as during the
Manchester rescue and at Clerkenwell, it was due more to
ineptitude than wickedness. No one was sorrier than the Fenians
directly involved in those incidents. Indeed, after the violence
of the last quarter of 1867, the Fenians, with the exception of
a few young leaders, turned from military preparations and
emphasised their social dimension. The Lancashire IRB became
more of a nationalist friendly society than a subversive conspiracy. But in the mid-1870s the IRB membership furnished an organisational foundation on which the constitutional home rule movement was built. Oaths continued to be sworn, meetings were held, but after more than a decade of a barren military outlook, the Fenians finally added political activity to their programme and achieved much greater success.
Conclusion

The social history of urban-industrial existence cannot be condensed into a few succinct, easily-remembered generalisations. The several general topics discussed in this study demonstrate that the interaction of diverse elements contributed to the whole experience of mid-Victorian town life. Attempts to sum up urban living too conveniently can engender inadequate and misleading oversimplifications. Likewise, it is difficult to produce a homogeneous, tightly-patterned picture of any particular part of the urban population. The Irish in Lancashire during the quarter-century 1846-71 cannot be described in two or three sentences, but some conclusions, if at times subjective and tentative, can be reviewed.

In the first part of this study we examined a quantitative breakdown of census data on the general domestic lives of the Lancashire Irish. The results of this wide-ranging analysis show that in most ways, with usually only marginal differences, the Irish lived in very similar fashion to English residents of urban Lancashire. Irish households were more likely to be found sharing a dwelling with one or more other households than their non-Irish neighbours, and that the Irish tried to house themselves as inexpensively as possible is demonstrated by the fact that Irish families were more likely to live in cheaper court dwellings than English families. This situation is in part due to the shortage of alternate cheap housing in Liverpool, but it still indicates that the incomes of many Irish households could not meet the rent for slightly more expensive, less crowded accommodation. Irish households were usually larger than non-Irish households, which was the consequence of larger nuclear families and a higher incidence of additional, non-family household members residing as lodgers.
Even though these were differences between the Irish and the non-Irish, they were not great differences. But one thing that certainly did set the Irish apart from the rest of the people of urban Lancashire was their tolerance of extreme overcrowding of houses, which was another way of reducing the cost of rent per household.

Census enumerators' books can also be used to make estimates of the actual numerical size of the Irish community (Irish-born and non-Irish-born) in Lancashire. Using data on household structure from a 100% sample of Irish households in Widnes during 1851-71 to derive a factor which can be adjusted and applied to the whole of Lancashire, it emerges that the total Irish community of/ Lancashire town was usually at least 50%-60% larger than the number of Irish-born persons recorded in the published census reports. This numerical strength made the Irish a significant and conspicuous minority in urban Lancashire.

A census study of occupations in Irish households shows that the Irish were generally firmly rooted in the working class. On a comparative basis, Irish males were on a lower occupational level than non-Irish males and their upward occupational movement was noticeably slower. But occupational tendencies among female members of the Irish community closely paralleled those among non-Irish females. This similarity highlights the fact that employment opportunities for women generally were very circumscribed and prevented the development of wide occupational differentials between individual women or groups of women. Males had a wider choice of occupations, but the alternatives for Irishmen were limited by a lack of urban experience and industrial skills, which left them mainly in labouring and unskilled jobs. Few Irishmen brought capital with them that could be put into a business, and given the generally menial nature of their jobs and wages, it would take a long time to accumulate such capital. It appears that most Irishmen in Lancashire retained the cultural outlook that had been moulded by life in rural Ireland, which hindered the
adoption of values which would urge them to strive for occupational advancement. There was progress, especially among the younger generations of the Irish community, but it was very slow.

Irish immigration also involved social problems for urban Lancashire. During the famine crisis of the 1840s and early 1850s, the Irish were a very serious poor relief problem in Manchester, Preston and, particularly, the entry port of Liverpool. The dislocation caused by conditions in Ireland left thousands of Irish families destitute when they arrived in Lancashire and they were forced to resort to poor relief until they could find housing and employment. Statistics for the Manchester board of guardians show that the Irish continued to be a substantial portion of those relieved during the 1850s and 1860s. Even though there are no statistics after the mid-1850s for Liverpool, the Irish probably continued to be a large part of the relief problem there. This situation is indicative of two circumstances. First, it shows that immigration from Ireland, though at a lower level than the torrent of the famine period, was continuing. These immigrants from an underdeveloped, rural background needed time to settle in and acclimatise themselves to the demands of urban life. During this transitional period public assistance through local boards of guardians might be necessary. Secondly, since such a large proportion of the male members of the Irish community worked in casual labouring jobs, they were often likely to find themselves temporarily out of work, particularly during the winter months, with no financial support to fall back on except that of the local board of guardians.

It does not appear that the Irish were considered a serious detriment to public health in Lancashire's towns after the 1840s. The poor physical condition of many immigrants during the famine left them very susceptible to disease, especially typhus, and their large numbers helped to spread infection throughout Liverpool and, to lesser extents, in other
towns. But during the 1850s and 1860s the Irish did not stand out as threats to health, probably because there was little importance attached to personal hygiene and domestic habits among the working class generally. The wider distribution of water for domestic consumption was slowly helping to reverse this problem. The notoriously low standard of Irish lodging houses and the often severe overcrowding of Irish dwellings were two areas where the Irish were particular causes of concern to public health officers. But the Irish were only a part of a generally bad health situation which, for example in 1847, they sometimes aggravated. Health among the Irish, or any other part of the working-class population, would be slow to improve until local authorities were able to renovate the urban environment. The Irish certainly contributed to the public health problem, but they were not its cause.

Crime was one area where the Lancashire Irish caused a disproportionately large and very noticeable social problem. Irish crime consisted almost entirely of fights, assaults, breaches of the peace, vagrancy and, most glaringly, drunkenness. These offences were the ones most prevalent among the rest of the working-class population as well. The tedium of industrial employment and the strain of overcrowded, sub-standard living conditions, as well as the proliferation of public houses and beershops, created an atmosphere very conducive to widespread excessive drinking. Drunkenness was commonly a factor in the brawls and assaults which so frequently took place in working-class neighbourhoods. The Irish stand out as a disproportionately large part of this general problem, which shows that they had particular difficulty in adjusting to urban-industrial life. This adjustment involved conformity to social rules, formally embodied in laws, which often seemed irrelevant to working-class life, and especially to the Irish immigrants, who came from a very different society. Second and third generation Irish seem to have been more law-abiding, but the police statistics show that Irish-born persons
continued to be a severe problem right up to the end of the nineteenth century.

At the centre of community life in Ireland stood the catholic church. Irishmen looked upon the church as much more than a religious body. The church had proved itself a very useful social institution in Ireland and it continued to hold the allegiance of the Irish when they moved to Lancashire. Although the Lancashire Irish did a great deal to extend and maintain the edifice of the catholic church, surviving statistics compiled by the diocese of Liverpool indicate that most of the immigrants were very nonchalant in their attitude towards performing the religious duties required by the church. But the church continued to give the Irish community a basic focus for social organisation in Lancashire. Since denominational schooling was the only educational alternative available to working-class children, the church expanded its school facilities to meet the demands of a much larger catholic community, which was a by-product of Irish immigration. Not every child of an Irish catholic household could be accommodated in a catholic school in 1871, but most Irish children could expect admission and a good standard of schooling. The social dimension of the catholic church in Lancashire stretched to other areas of urban life too.

English working men had their friendly societies and trade clubs to turn to for formal social organisation. The catholic parish in urban Lancashire offered similar social facilities, with the difference that the English clubs were independent of patronage while formal organisations among the Irish usually existed under the auspices, or at least with the approval, of the catholic church. This close involvement of the church in Irish social life is demonstrated in the development of the Irish-catholic press in Lancashire. In the words of the Northern Press: 'Irish and catholic are to us the same.' During 1846-71 the trade union movement had little relevance for the Lancashire Irish, socially or industrially. Clerical opposition to the growth of radical trade organisations in the 1830s and early 1840s was part of the explanation for Irish non-involvement. But more important was the fact that only
a very few Irishmen worked in organiseable trades during the mid-nineteenth century.

Even though the late 1840s saw the arrival of thousands of destitute Irish families, very little anti-Irish feeling was apparent among English working men during that time. During the first forty years of the nineteenth century a widespread awareness of unity of interests developed among the members of the rising urban-industrial labour force. As late as 1848 there were Englishmen hopeful that the immigrant Irish would include themselves in a mass working-class movement. But by 1848 the broad consciousness of working-class common purpose was weakening, and its decline coincided with the growth of a greater degree of anti-Irish feeling. The controversy surrounding the 'papal aggression' of 1850-1 generated an atmosphere in which anti-catholic-anti-Irish sentiments could spread very easily. The Lancashire local press, perhaps at times unwittingly, helped to foster the diffusion of anti-Irish opinion by creating an unflattering, simplistic media image of the immigrant Irish. But the growth of militant Orangeism probably did the most to increase intercommunal tensions. Particularly in Liverpool and Preston, the Orangemen frequently strained intercommunal relations with provocative sectarianism which gave way to intermittent violence. Southeast Lancashire was largely free of overt English-Irish animosity up to 1868. Even the condemnation of the local Fenians stopped well-short of denouncing them as Irishmen. But in 1868 William Murphy did his best to stir sectarian passions among both Englishmen and Irishmen in the Manchester area.

At this point the question of assimilation becomes important. Religious differences between the Irish and their English neighbours, institutionalised in separate, denominational schooling, which limited contact and understanding between Irish and non-Irish children, seem to have hindered the absorption of the Irish into Lancashire community life.
But these impediments to assimilation were to a large extent offset by several positive factors. The Irish usually did not live in ethnic residential clusters, and where there were readily identifiable Irish neighbourhoods, they were being steadily broken up by the increase of second and third generation Irish community members. This same rise of later generations in the Irish community also helped to reduce differences between the English and the Irish because their experience consisted wholly of urban-industrial life. Finally, the interdependent employer-worker relationship between English and Irish implied a willingness to cooperate on both sides. Despite obstacles, it was not impossible for members of the Irish community to become part of the larger community socially, as well as occupationally. But the acceptance and absorption of the Irish was generally very gradual.

The Irish community did not become a force in British domestic politics, locally or nationally, during 1846-71. The restrictive franchise set limits on effective participation, and the Irish community remained generally aloof from British domestic issues. When the Irish were active at all, it was to further Irish political causes. The Irish Confederate movement in Lancashire during 1848 did not attract very much active support from the immigrants. Since the Confederates had split with O'Connell, this probably made many Lancashire Irishmen wary of joining them. Also, so many of the Lancashire Irish were impoverished by the famine crisis in Ireland and industrial recession in England that they could hardly be expected to become a very potent political force. The Confederates tried to augment their political influence by forming a temporary alliance with Feargus O'Connor and the English Chartists. But this may have alienated Irish opinion still further because O'Connell and the catholic clergy had instilled a great deal of distrust of radicalism generally, and of Chartism in particular, among the Lancashire Irish during the 1830s and early 1840s. The Irish Confederates failed to mobilise the Irish community of Lancashire in support of Irish independence in 1848.
The Fenians were much more successful than the Irish Confederates in winning active support for their movement among the Lancashire Irish. During 1865-7, led by the 'American section', the Fenians concentrated on military planning and managed to execute two military operations in 1867. But equally important for the Irish community was the simultaneous development of Fenianism's social function. When the military side of Fenianism declined after November 1867, the social side gained strength. Besides stimulating the sense of identity among Irishmen, Fenianism enabled the Irish community to broaden its social organisation.

Further, it appears that Fenianism in Lancashire enabled the Irish to give coherent expression to the idea of a community, which grew out of a common cultural and national background and the shared experience of immigration. The awareness of community was only nascent among the immigrants in 1848, which helped to prevent the emergence of a strong political movement. But urban-industrial culturation and the development of a community life centred on the catholic church, the primary Irish national institution, encouraged greater self-confidence among the Irish. An important manifestation of this growing confidence was the establishment of a durable Irish catholic press at Liverpool in 1859. The sectarian tensions aroused by the Orangemen were another, though negative, inducement to community feeling among the Irish by causing defensiveness. By the mid-1860s the Irish were ready for Fenianism. Fenianism did not supplant the church as a social and national focus for the immigrant Irish. The church remained an integral part of community life because of its utility as a nucleus for social organisation. But Fenianism demonstrated that while the church was important, its prominence in community life was not the ultimate affirmation of Irish community feeling. Fenianism added the assurance of national identity to this social awareness of community. Lancashire Fenianism was the expression of a social, cultural and national community.
APPENDIX

The following six figures contain the information on occupations of heads of households summarised in Figure 1 (chapter 1), broken down by individual town for the census years 1851, 1861 and 1871.
### Occupations (percentages) of Irish hh heads (males and females), 1851

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Occupations (percentages) of Irish hh heads (males and females), 1861

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Occupations (percentages) of non-Irish hh heads (males and females), 1861

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Occupations (percentages) of Irish hh heads (males and females), 1871

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Figure 6

Occupations (percentages) of non-Irish hh heads (males and females), 1871

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*Note: Percentages may not add up due to rounding.*
Bibliography

A. Sources

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2. Parliamentary papers and government publications
3. Publications by local authorities and organisations
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2. General works
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Appendix B

1. Sample sizes for census analysis

The numbers of households sampled in the two groups of data (Irish and Non-Irish), according to the method described in chapter 3, pp 69-72, for the seven towns in each of the three census years are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>1851 Irish</th>
<th>1851 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1861 Irish</th>
<th>1861 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1871 Irish</th>
<th>1871 Non-Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>1146</td>
<td>1212</td>
<td>1519</td>
<td>1592</td>
<td>1746</td>
<td>1934</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 6-9, 11-17, 19-20, 22-35, found in chapter 3, and Table 72 (p.336) of chapter 8 were compiled from the full samples of both principal data groups. Likewise, Figure 1 and the six figures in Appendix A result from a consideration of all the heads of the households in these sample groups.

Several tables in chapter 3 did not require the consideration of the entire samples. The numbers of households selected in these tables are as follows:

Table 5 (p.61)

Size of Irish communities, 1851-71
(Number of Irish households having at least two Irish-born family members)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>573</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 10 (p.79)
**Average number of households per court house, 1851-71**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851 Irish</th>
<th>1851 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1861 Irish</th>
<th>1861 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1871 Irish</th>
<th>1871 Non-Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Tables 18 (p.88) & 36 (p.129)
**Average number of extended family members in households having them**

**Percentages of households having at least one extended family member earning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851 Irish</th>
<th>1851 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1861 Irish</th>
<th>1861 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1871 Irish</th>
<th>1871 Non-Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 21 (p.91)
**Average number of lodgers per household having them, 1851-71**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851 Irish</th>
<th>1851 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1861 Irish</th>
<th>1861 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1871 Irish</th>
<th>1871 Non-Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>449</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 37 (p.132)
Percentages of wives having no occupation, 1851-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851 Irish</th>
<th>1851 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1861 Irish</th>
<th>1861 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1871 Irish</th>
<th>1871 Non-Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lpool</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/R</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St H</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widnes</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>1206</td>
<td>1275</td>
<td>1377</td>
<td>1528</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures 2 (preceding p.130) and 3 (preceding p.131) consider individuals from all the households of both sample groups who were employed in the occupations listed. The numbers of persons included are as follows:

Figure 2
Occupations (percentages) of other members of nuclear family (youths)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851 Irish</th>
<th>1851 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1861 Irish</th>
<th>1861 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1871 Irish</th>
<th>1871 Non-Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3
Occupations (percentages) of other members of nuclear family (adults)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1851 Irish</th>
<th>1851 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1861 Irish</th>
<th>1861 Non-Irish</th>
<th>1871 Irish</th>
<th>1871 Non-Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>1180</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>1633</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>1722</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The larger numbers of females than males in Figure 3 are explained by the fact that all wives were considered, whether they were actually employed or not.

2. Analysis

The census data that appears in chapter 3 was analysed by the University of Dublin's IBM 360/44 computer. The framework for this analysis was provided by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS*). SPSS is specifically designed to offer a comprehensive and flexible format for the analysis of the kinds of data used in the social sciences. It is particularly useful for the social historian who is working with census data because the package affords a convenient and readily comprehensible labelling system for variables, and is specially adapted to handle the analysis of subgroups of sample data.

The two basic SPSS programmes applied to the Lancashire census data in this study were crosstabulations and breakdowns. The crosstab programme yields tables encompassing two or more different categories of data and can control for up to eight variables in one table.

An example of a table deriving from a programme controlling for several variables is Table 9 on page 77, which shows percentages of households living in court houses among the Irish and non-Irish. The actual instructions to the computer, clarified, of course, by certain specific directions, read simply: CROSSTABS SAMPLE BY HHTYPE BY TOWN BY YEAR. For SAMPLE read Irish and non-Irish households; and for HHTYPE read streets or courts. Breakdowns are used to find means and variances for a variety of subcategories. For instance, Table 14 on page 84, which represents the numbers of persons in Irish and non-Irish nuclear families, results from this programme: BREAKDOWN NONUCFAM BY SAMPLE BY TOWN BY YEAR. For NONUCFAM read number in nuclear family.

At this stage of analysis formal statistical tests have not been applied to the census data.
The absence of archival material from the catholic diocese of Salford for the mid-nineteenth century leaves an imbalance on the side of the better-documented diocese of Liverpool in the discussion of the Irish and catholicism in chapter 7. Fr John Allen, Secretary to the present bishop of Salford and an avid student of Lancashire catholicism, points out that the several removals of the diocesan chancery during the last century have unfortunately resulted in the loss or misplacement of all records relating to the diocese during the mid-nineteenth century (see pp 280-1). Greatly assisted by Fr Allen's cooperation, which included a letter of introduction to the pastors of the parishes of Manchester, Salford and Oldham, I attempted to redress the imbalance of available material between the two diocese by examining relevant parochial sources in southeast Lancashire. Since 1898 parishes in the Salford diocese have been required to keep a log of local events (see p. 281). It was hoped that some parishes might have preserved such a record for earlier years. Letters were addressed to the parishes of the three towns that were in existence during 1846-71, and, when possible, I visited some of these presbyteries personally (Log-books were not required in the diocese of Liverpool and limited time for field work ruled out undertaking a parish-by-parish inquiry into possible local sources there). This search uncovered only a manuscript history of St Wilfrid's parish, Hulme, and an incomplete series of Sunday announcements at St John's cathedral parish, Salford (p. 281). At the other parishes the resident clergy claimed to be unaware of the existence of such material. It did not appear that I was being obstructed in my research in any way. More probably, the changeover in parochial personnel during the years has left the current clergy in ignorance of possible resources for studying the nineteenth-century history of their parishes.
Unfortunately, limited financial resources prevented the investigation of parochial baptism, death and marriage registers at this stage of research. But it is a source that I hope to return to as part of a more detailed study of Irish residential patterns and social assimilation (see Introduction, pp 3–4 and chapter 10, pp 469–70). It is hoped that the search for old parish registers in the dioceses of Liverpool and Salford might also reveal some other long-forgotten sources for the study of Lancashire catholicism.