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The Irish Population of London, 1900-14

Connections and Disconnections

A Thesis submitted to the Department of History in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Giulia ní Dhulchaointigh

2013

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Summary

This thesis examines Irish people in London from 1900 to 1914. The first part of this thesis examines Irish residential communities. Chapter 1 examines the Irish communities in Inner London by analysing Irish communities in three areas: Central London, the East End and Bermondsey, and Battersea. This chapter will show that the culture and economy of the local area in London where Irish communities existed had a strong influence on the life of Irish communities. Chapter 2 examines the factors that led to the formation of Irish communities in the suburbs of London. Suburban areas have not typically been thought of as important areas to examine in relation to Irish people's lives in Britain. This chapter will show that suburban London was an environment in which Irish people lived. The density of housing will be argued to have played a key role in determining whether Irish people formed Irish communities in these areas. Chapter 3 examines Irish-born domestic servants in London. Irish domestic servants were separated from other Irish residential communities through their pattern of work. In who they chose to work with Irishwomen formed a community themselves. These three chapters will establish the geography of Irish people in London. They will show that there were many forms of Irish residential communities and that the form these communities took owed a lot to the local environment in which they lived.

Having established the landscape of Irish people in London, Irish culture in London will be examined. Firstly, the Irish language in London will be examined to show that the two groups most interested in the Irish language in London in this period were separate from one another in origins and in where they lived in London. Chapter 5 will examine the music of Irish people in London. This chapter will focus on the performance of music to show the way that music connected Irish people. Although there was a shared repertoire of Irish music in London, this did not form the basis of a common bond between different groups of Irish people. Instead, like the Irish language, music was shared with those of similar origins.

The third part of this thesis focuses on Irish identity in London. The use of the word 'Irish' to define themselves brought Irish people of different countries of origins and social classes together. Chapter 6 will explore the influences on the ethnic identity of the children of Irish parents. The regeneration of Irish communities depended on the transfer of ethnic identity from parents to children. Parents will be argued to have been the major influence on the identity of a child. The power of outside organisations to influence the ethnic identity of a child will be argued to have been overestimated. Chapter 7 will consider how adult's conceptions of Irish identity influenced their perceptions of other Irish people in London. This chapter will show that for many 'Irish' included an implicit moral statement. Those values which society deemed good were incorporated into conceptions of Irishness and used to exclude some and promote others as worthy representatives of Irishness.

This thesis will show the broad experiences of Irish people in London during this period. The origins of immigrants in Ireland and the areas in London where Irish people lived are key considerations in understanding the diversity of this Irish population. 'Irish' may have been a term applied to a diverse population, but they understanding of that word and its implications were also diverse. There was no unity in this population.

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Abbreviations

B.L.	British Library
D.S.	Domestic Servant
I.R.B.	Irish Republican Brotherhood
G.A.A.	Gaelic Athletic Association
G.I.S.	Geographical Information System
L.C.C	London County Council
L.M.A.	London Metropolitan Archives
L.S.E.	London School of Economics
M.B.W.	Metropolitan Board of Works
N.L.I.	National Library of Ireland
U.I.L.	United Irish League

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Introduction

This thesis examines Irish people in London during the period 1900 to 1914. To examine the broad range of people encompassed in those terms, this thesis is structured around the connections and disconnections of Irish people to and from one another in London during this period. London attracted a diverse Irish population. Being Irish connected people to one another that otherwise had no contact in London. The physical size of London and the diversity of its Irish population dictated that there was not one tightly knit Irish community but instead several residential and cultural communities. The Irish population of London has been examined previously through the lens of Famine migrants.[1] Famine migration and the study of the years after it give one image of London's Irish population. However, when evidence of the Famine migrant generation has disappeared in terms of birthplace data from censuses, how we create a picture of London's Irish population must also change. The questions of who we regard as Irish and how to study a population diverse in birthplace, social class, age and residence are central to this study. Questions which other studies of Irish populations have left unexplored also inform the structure of this study. These relate mainly to the culture of Irishness, but also to the dispersal and survival of Irish communities.

To explore Irish people's lives in London, they first need to be situated there. Therefore the first three chapters of this thesis focus on the residential lives of Irish people in London. Living near other Irish people was a major factor in the number of interactions between Irish people. However, Irish people could not necessarily control whether they lived near other Irish people or not. Structural factors in London's economy will be argued to have been a disruptive force to some Irish communities in this period. In particular, urban renewal and suburbanisation affected certain areas and Irish communities during this period. The inclusion of domestic servants in examining the residential lives of Irish people is in recognition of the fact that they lived

[1]Lynn Hollen Lees, *Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London* (Manchester, 1979).

separately to the major areas of Irish populations and were distinct from those populations. For this reason although domestic service represented the largest employer of women, Irish domestic servants have been little studied.[2] Other occupations have not been studied in this way because they did not preclude living in an Irish area. Therefore those that worked in other occupations are studied in relation to their residence rather than their occupation.

Having established the places where Irish people lived their lives in London and the communities that formed between them, the culture of Irishness in London will be explored. The aim of this analysis is to explore not the culture itself necessarily, but how Irish people faced or interacted with the same or similar cultures. Irish language revival and native speakers co-existed at this time in London. Using the same language, they nevertheless were entirely distinct from one another in their origins and in the places where they lived and operated. In contrast, although music was performed in distinct spaces it frequently tied Irish people together through the use of the same repertoire. I have chosen to focus on the elements of culture which frequently took place in closed worlds of homes or club rooms. In structuring this analysis this way the things that outsiders have frequently identified as part of the cultural inheritance of Irish migrants and their descendants, for example crime and alienation from British society, do not form the major areas of analysis.[3]

Questions of identity frame the last two chapters of this thesis. All Irish parents faced the question of their children's ethnic identity and the influences on this are considered in chapter six. This was a highly individual process and whereas other trends can be seen along geographic patterns, this pattern, in so far as one can be identified, is at a household level. This thesis will argue that parents, rather than organisations which worked with children, were the primary influence on the development of their children's ethnic

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[2]An exception is Bronwen Walter's study of Irish domestic servants in London using the 1881 5% sample. (Walter, 'Strangers on the Inside: Irish Women Servants in England, 1881' in *Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol. 27 No. 2 (2009), pp 279-299.)

[3] David Fitzpatrick, 'The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland: Ireland Under the Union, II 1870-1921* (Oxford, 1996), pp 653-702.

identity. Finally, how Irish people's ethnic identity influenced their perceptions of other Irish people is considered. Although Irish people often had no connection with one another, the simple fact of having the same ethnic identity meant that they necessarily had to consider one another. Considerations of religiosity and class were major features of their perceptions of one another. These were articulated within a framework of Irishness.

Elements of this thesis take from and add to different historiographies. For example, chapters on domestic service and music add to labour history and the history of music. In including these areas and using their historiography the aim has not been to disassociate this thesis from the historiography of Irish people in Britain. Instead this thesis argues that the historiography of Irish in Britain should be broader. The two principal considerations in structuring this work were: firstly, the circumstances of London's Irish population; and secondly, the historiography of Irish people in Britain. To understand the reasons for the decisions taken in relation to structure an overview of the Irish population and its history in London is necessary. Following this the historiography of Irish in Britain is discussed.

*

Migration from Ireland to Britain in the nineteenth century followed logical regional patterns. Northern Ireland had particular links with Scotland, migrants from Leinster and Connacht both used the Dublin-Liverpool connection and scattered into the cities and towns of industrial Britain from there, and migrants from Munster were connected to southern England through trade routes.[4] From the seventeenth century immigrants with south Munster backgrounds were prominent in the poor Irish in England.[5] The trade links between south Munster and England contributed to this migration. In the early

[4]Fitzpatrick, 'A peculiar tramping people': the Irish in Britain, 1801-70', in Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland V, Ireland under the Union, I 1801-70*, pp. 627-8. Malcolm Smith and Donald M. MacRaild, 'The origins of the Irish in Northern England: An Isonymic Analysis of Data from the 1881 Census' in *Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2009), pp 152-77.
[5]David Dickson, *Old World Colony, Cork and South Munster 1630-1830* (Cork, 2005), p. 27.

nineteenth century these trade links had developed into competitive passenger routes. Competition was especially strong on the route between Cork and Bristol where free loaves of bread were offered as an inducement to travel with a particular company.[6] From Bristol migrants continued to London.[7] South Wales and Cork were also connected through trade in coal from south Wales to Cork, and the return cargo of people to south Wales. Given the employment opportunities available in south Wales, which were almost exclusively in heavy industry, it is logical to assume that women who travelled on this route migrated further in search of employment opportunities, possibly to London.[8]

The pattern implied by shipping routes is supported by census and anecdotal evidence of London. Lynn Lees found that of the 20% of her sample from the 1861 census, two-thirds were from Munster.[9] This was supported by her database of the 857 Irish-born people in London workhouses in 1871, where 70% of those who had a birthplace noted were from Munster. Lees also noted that 20 to 25% of those she studied were from eastern Leinster.[10] Jerome Farrell when examining those with Irish birthplaces in Hammersmith and Fulham in 1851 found the majority to be from Munster, in particular Limerick and Cork.[11] The reliability of this census evidence rests on presuming that the minority of Irish who were assigned county of birth as a well as a country of birth in the census are representative of the majority who were not assigned a county of birth. An avenue that could provide further evidence for those whose place of birth is not noted is surname analysis, which has been shown elsewhere to be a reliable indicator of general origins for Irish migrants in nineteenth century Britain.[12] This would require either the use of a random sample of the Irish-born population in London or a full database of those

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[6]Fitzpatrick, 'Irish in Britain, 1801-70', p. 626.
[7]Ibid., p. 627.
[8]Paul O'Leary, *Immigrants and Integration: the Irish in Wales, 1798-1922* (Cardiff, 2002), pp 29, 45.
[9] Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 51.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Jerome Farrell, 'The Irish in Hammersmith and Fulham in 1851' in *The Local Historian*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (1999), pp 66-75.
[12] Malcolm Smith and Donald M. MacRaild, 'The origins of the Irish in Northern England: An Isonymic Analysis of Data from the 1881 Census' in *Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2009), pp 152-77.

enumerated as Irish-born. This has not been attempted here as it would require significant collaboration with others. However, I regard the evidence from Lees and Farrell as well as the anecdotal evidence of the origins of Irish migrants in mid-nineteenth century London cited by Lees as compelling. Clearly all Irish migrants were not from Munster, however I believe all evidence to date points to the majority of mid-nineteenth century migrants to London originating there.

Within this regional pattern of migration, it has been argued that there was a change in the economic means of those emigrating in the 1820s and 1830s. In County Cork, large scale Catholic emigration began in the 1820s whereas prior to that the majority of emigrants were Protestant.[13] Economically, it is widely accepted that Famine emigrants were poorer than those who emigrated prior to the Famine. This can be seen in Cork in the proportion of migrants from east Cork prior to the Famine, shifting to west Cork during the Famine.[14] However, these patterns from Cork hide the destination of those emigrating. It is possible that poorer migrants continued to go to England, whilst those with relatively more means in terms of the links of chain migration as well as their own means emigrated to America. There were also distinct regional patterns in Cork between those who emigrated to North America and those that travelled to England. Figures from 1846-7 show that in west Cork those from inland parishes were more likely to travel to England, whereas those from peninsular parishes were more likely to travel to North America.[15]

Despite relative differences in means and regional shifts in emigration, the underlying pattern of poor migrants from Cork in particular and Munster in general finding their way to London was a pattern which did not change with the Famine. The extent to which Famine and post-Famine

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[13]Máiréad Nic Craith, *Malartú Teanga: An Ghaeilge i gCorcaigh sa Naoú hAois Déag* (Bremen, 1993), p. 10.
[14]Nic Craith, *Malartú Teanga*, p. 11.
[15]Patrick Hickey, *Famine in West Cork, The Mizen Peninsula Land and People, 1800-52* (Cork, 2002), p. 227.

migration to London represented continuity in geographical connection and chain migration has been an underdeveloped point in relation to both migration to London and other cities in Britain.

Although there had been an Irish presence in London prior to the nineteenth century, the nineteenth century marks the beginning of mass migration from Ireland. As Table I indicates, the period prior to 1841 is one for which there is little information available on the number of Irish-born in London. The figure of 14,000 is an under-representation of Irish-born as it measured just those in need of charity.[16] This figure though does represent at least an informed guess as the number of poor Irish. In contrast, the *Report on the State of the Irish in Great Britain* in 1836 provides only a vague estimate that the Irish-born population of London, 'is said to be as large as Liverpool or Manchester'.[17] The fact of the enormous increase in the quality of statistical information from 1841 onwards has the effect of presenting that date as a start date. Historically, this has been represented by the focus on the period after that date. This is understandable; however we should be wary of viewing Irish migration to London as being decisively changed by the Famine. We have little reliable information about the number of Irish migrants to London prior to 1841, and this in itself presents the second half of the nineteenth century as being one of enormous growth. Certainly, the numbers of Irish in London did increase, however the overall pattern of migration to London did not change. As Fitzpatrick has argued, migration from Ireland to Britain 'though accelerated by famine, was set in motion by the rapid development of urban industry in Britain and rural poverty in Ireland after the Napoleonic wars'.[18]

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[16]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 45.
[17]*Report on the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain* (1836), p. vii.
[18]Fitzpatrick, 'Irish in Britain, 1801-70', p. 627.

Table I: Number of Irish-born People in London[19]

	1814	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
Men				47,585	40,447	37,173	30,229	27,374	22,085
Women				59,292	50,724	43,605	36,236	32,837	29,600
Total	14,000	80,000	108, 348	106,877	91,171	80,778	66,465	60,211	51,685

Differing regional patterns of emigration from Ireland and the connection of particular cities and areas of Britain with Irish regions meant that regional Irish patterns were replicated in Britain. Nineteenth-century censuses show knowledge of Irish to have had a strong geographic pattern. Irish predominated increasingly from east to west. Although censuses in general and the nineteenth century Irish censuses in particular are a problematic source for gauging the language abilities of a population, they do show the regional pattern of decline in Irish.[20] In particular the problem with using the nineteenth century censuses as a source for the Irish language are that they under-represent the percentage of the population who were Irish language speakers. Karen P. Corrigan argues that the issue of the perceived status of Irish affected the proficiency reported: 'individuals preferred to claim that they were bilingual when they were actually Irish monoglots or that they were English-speakers at a time when they clearly must have been Irish-English bilinguals'.[21] That most came from a region where Irish predominated indicates that Irish and lack of fluency in English had a role in their settlement in London. Lynn Lees has noted that London 'journalists and clergymen noted the use of Irish by migrants when talking with each other'.[22] Similarly knowledge of Irish was a

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[19] Figures from: Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 45; *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Population tables. II. Ages, civil condition, occupations, and birth-place* [1691-I], pp 31-5; *Accounts and papers: Population (England and Wales)* 1863 [3221], p. 35; *Census of England and Wales, 1871: Population abstracts, Vol. III* [C.872], p. 24; *Census of England and Wales 1881, Vol. III*, (London, 1883) [C.3722], p. 20; *Census of England and Wales, 1891: Vol. III* (London, 1893-94) [C.7058], p. xxxiii; *Census of England and Wales. 1901: County of London* (London, 1902) [Cd. 875], p. 155; *Census of England and Wales, 1911: Vol. IX* (London, 1913) [Cd. 7017].

[20] For problems with the 1851 Irish language question see and language questions on censuses in general see: Nic Craith, *Malartú Teanga*, pp 69-74.

[21] Karen P. Corrigan, 'I gcuntas Dé múin Béarla do na leanbháin': eisimirce agus an Ghaeilge sa naoú aois déag' in Patrick O'Sullivan (ed.), *The Irish in the New Communities* (Leicester, 1992), p. 149.

[22] Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 189.

necessity for Protestant missionaries working amongst Irish in mid-nineteenth century London.[23] This, like poverty or illiteracy to which the survival of the Irish language coincided, was an effect of the regional origin of migrants and differentiated London from other cities in Britain. The regional origins of Irish migrants and evidence of the continued use of Irish in the city into this period combined with the general attitude to Irish in the literature dictated that the use of language by Irish people in this period had to be explored in this thesis.

As Table I shows, the number of Irish-born people in London reached a peak in 1851 and declined thereafter. Whereas in 1851 there were 108,348 Irish-born people in London, representing 4.6% of the population of London; by 1911 there were 51,685 Irish-born people in London representing just 1.1% of a city which had grown to include 4.5 million people. Yet the underlying fact, recognised in the 1851 census and of relevance to every census thereafter was that as the figures 'do not include the persons born here before 1841 of Irish parents, will not represent the whole of the Irish race in Great Britain'.[24] Lack of information about the number of Irish in London prior to 1841 prevents any reliable estimation of the size of the second generation. Estimates of the size of the second generation have relied on the availability of census statistics, particularly that of 1851, and in so doing hide the children of earlier migrants. Nevertheless, Lees's figures do have value as they provide a minimum size of the Irish population in London. She estimated that including the children born in London of Irish parents, the Irish population was at least 156,000 in 1851 and 178,000 for 1861.[25]

The ages of Irish-born men and women in London, Liverpool and Manchester from the 1911 census are shown in Graph 1. All three cities were remarkably similar in the breakdown of the Irish-born population by age. The main point of difference is the relatively dramatic difference in the percentage

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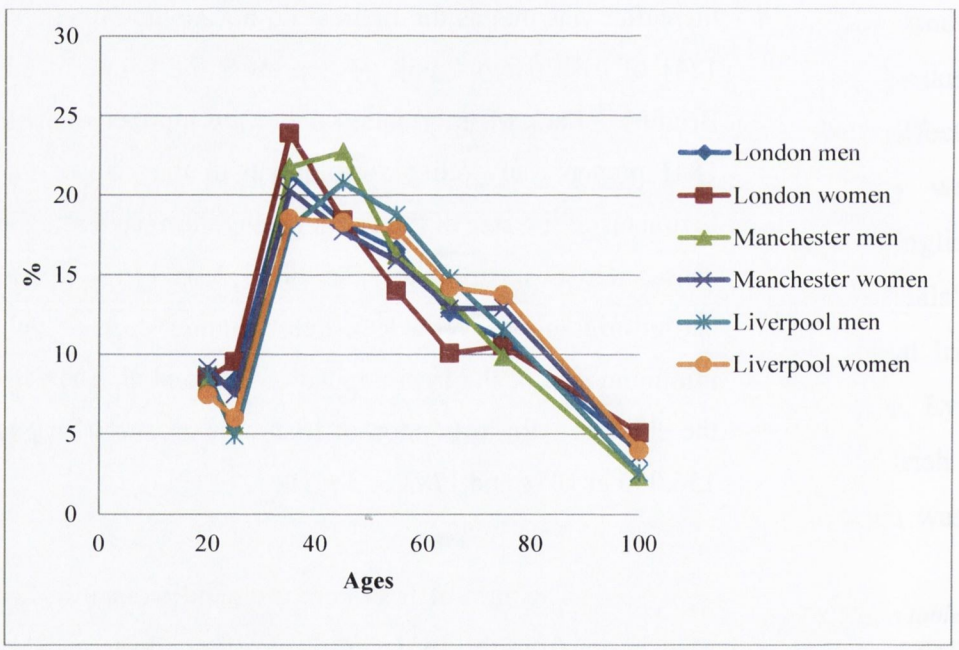
[23]Gilley, 'Protestant London, No Popery and the Irish Poor: II (1850-1860)' in *Recusant History*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Jan. 1971), pp 26-8.
[24]'Ages, civil condition, occupations, and birth-place, 1852-53', *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Population tables, II* [1691-I], p. cii.
[25]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, pp 46-8.

of young women in London as opposed to Manchester or Liverpool. This was likely due to the employment of Irishwomen as domestic servants in London. Whereas famine migrants to London included a high number of young adults and children, by 1911 a more regular pattern of migration was dominant where young people but not children emigrated.[26] The change in the pattern of migration and the reversion from crisis migration to the lasting pattern of Irish migration marks a major distinction between groups. 17% of Lees's sample of those who left Ireland between 1846 and 1851 were under the age of 15.[27] It also should make us aware of the famine cohort of child migrants and their lives. It is because the migration of family groups was not the dominant pattern of migration from Ireland that the experiences of this group have been relatively ignored.

Graph I: Ages of Irish-born men and women in three cities.[28]



There were more Irish-born women in London than Irish-born men. As Table I indicates a higher number of women over men, while a feature of all years where statistics are available, was greater in 1861 and 1871, when there

[26]Ibid., p. 49.
[27]Ibid.
[28] The ages in this chart should be read as representing age ranges: 20 indicates the number under 20, 25 indicates the number between 20 and 25, 35 indicates the number between 25 and 35 and so on. (*Census of England and Wales, 1911. Vol. IX: Birthplaces of persons*).

were roughly 10,000 more Irish women than men in London, than thereafter. In other areas a significant disparity in the number of women than men has been noted and the effect of this on the formation of Irish communities discussed.[29] However, in regard to London, the disparity in the numbers of men and women does not emerge as a major feature of Irish life. It is also true that where the disparity between men and women has been discussed it has been discussed in relation to there being a surplus of men over women.[30] In London the surplus of women was hidden by the fact that most Irish communities or neighbourhoods had a relatively equal division between men and women, or a surplus of men over women.[31] This was influenced by Irishwomen's work as domestic servants. This work removed them from areas where Irish people made up a significant percentage of the overall population and so give a false impression of the overall make-up of London's Irish population. The fundamental effect of this pattern of settlement and employment may have been in marriage patterns. Whereas Irish communities, which were relatively evenly balanced between men and women, could be isogamous, it was more likely that Irish-born domestic servants would have married men who were not Irish-born. To study Irish life fully in London, this female surplus must be included. For this reason Irish domestic servants are examined in detail in this thesis.

It is possible to intuit this occupation from the settlement patterns of women in London. It is much harder to establish the occupations of Irish men in London. While the work of Irish men in London docks has been noted,[32] especially in the light of Irish involvement in the Stevedores Union,[33] there are no figures to show whether anecdotal portraits of Irish workers in the docks[34] reflected reality. While the census would conceivably add to our

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[29]E.g. O'Leary, *Immigrants and Integration*, p. 253
[30]E.g. Frances Finnegan, *Poverty and Prejudice: A Study of Irish Immigrants in York, 1840-1875* (Cork, 1982), p. 88.
[31]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, pp 49-50.
[32]John Lovell, *Stevedores and Dockers: A Study of Trade Unionism in the Port of London, 1870-1914* (London, 1969), pp 57-8.
[33]M. McDermott, 'Irish Catholics and the British Labour movement; a study with particular reference to London 1918 to 1970' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Kent, 1978).
[34]E.g. Charles Booth, *Labour and Life of the People,* Vol. 1(London, c. 1890), pp 194, 533-5.

portrait of the occupations of Irish men, the nineteenth century census reports did not tabulate the numbers of Irish-born people employed in particular industries or occupations.[35] The detailed occupational tables produced in the census reports of the later nineteenth century, although an invaluable source are also rife with difficulties: for instance there are differences between censuses in the number of occupations listed, for example in 1871 the tables of occupation were reduced by two thirds.[36] Lees used her sample of the Irish population in several areas to compile tables of occupation, these, however, carry with them the same mix of industrial category and occupation that the census carried. For example, the number of Irish men and women employed in 'Food' or 'Transport' is given, however, the exact occupation which would provide a clue as to social class are not.[37] Other categories are easier to decipher: in 1861 in her sample, 17.8% of Irishmen were employed in the occupational group 'General Labour'.[38] It is clear that labouring occupations were the major employer of Irish men in the mid-nineteenth century.

The areas in which Irish migrants and their descendants formed a notable and cohesive minority were in 1851 the same areas that had attracted Irish migrants since at least the 1820s. These were: Holborn, St Giles in the Fields, Whitechapel and St Olave, Southwark.[39] Although there were Irish populations in other areas, it is these areas which contained the highest proportion of Irish to other residents. For example in Church Lane in St Giles in the Fields in 1841 40% of the inhabitants were born in Ireland. In 1848 judging from the figures of the Statistical Society of London investigation of the street, the percentage of the street occupied by 'Chiefly Irish' was 65%.[40]

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[35]Industry employed in and occupation were discrete areas of inquiry.
[36]W.A. Armstrong, 'The use of information about occupation' in E.A. Wrigley (ed.), *Nineteenth-century society: Essays in the use of quantitative methods for the study of social data* (London, 1972), p. 228.
[37]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 119.
[38]Ibid. Lees' choice of sample areas no doubt influences her statistics on occupations. For example, the number of Irishmen employed in London as 'Military and police' is probably underrepresented as barracks are not included in any of her sample areas.
[39]Francis Sheppard, *London 1808-1870: The Infernal Wen* (London, 1971), p. 6.
[40]Calculated from 'Abstract of Report of Committee, Report of a Committee of the Council of the Statistical Society of London...to investigate the State of Inhabitants and their Dwellings in Church Lane, St Giles's' in Richard Wall (ed.), *Slum Conditions in London and Dublin* (Farnborough, 1974), p. 18.

Areas such as these therefore attracted the attention of social and municipal investigators. As discussed above, the 1840s represented a huge increase in the number of migrants in a relatively short period of time. While it is true that Irish migrants were scattered all over London, the numbers migrating to certain areas and even particular streets represented a significant shock to those areas. This frequently led to non-Irish leaving those areas.[41]

The migration of the 1840s represented a distinct shock to London. This is clear in reports on the mortality of certain districts or in reports of agitation against employing Irish labour. However, while these offer a glimpse of brief periods of crisis they should not distract us from the overall pattern of the population of nineteenth century London and its expanding suburbs.[42] During the nineteenth century the population of London expanded from roughly one million to over four million.[43] Migrants were an essential part of this pattern of population growth. Growth in population was also facilitated by a decline in the death rate in London.[44] The greatest number of migrants to London came from elsewhere in England and Wales.[45] Of these, most originated in south and east England.[46] Indeed, it was this pattern of migration that caused a decrease in the mortality rate because the areas from which London drew most of its migrants developed immunity to the strains of illnesses common in London.[47]

Irish and other migrants who had travelled greater distances and had not developed immunity to the common diseases of London should be expected to have had a higher mortality rate than those migrants who came shorter distances. Although there were certainly other factors that led to a higher than average mortality rate amongst Irish, overcrowding for instance,

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[41]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 56.
[42]E.g. L.D. Schwarz, *London in the age of industrialisation; Entrepreneurs, labour force and living conditions, 1700-1850* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 166.
[43]Schwarz, *London in the age of industrialisation*, p. 126; Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 47.
[44]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 47; Schwarz, *London in the age of industrialisation*, p. 152; Sheppard, *London 1808-1870*, p. 2.
[45]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 47.
[46]Sheppard, *London 1808-1870*, p. 2.
[47]Schwarz, *London in the age of industrialisation*, p. 155.

immunity should be seen as at least a factor in the different experiences of Irish and other migrants to London.

The group of migrants most comparable to the Irish in London were Eastern European and Russian Jews who immigrated into London.[48] Large scale Eastern European Jewish migration to London began in the 1880s; by 1914 180,000 were living in London. This amounted to 80% of the overall Jewish population in Britain.[49] In London the prevalent pattern of employment for this population was in sweated industries either of clothes or furniture. Women, when employed, were employed in the manufacture of clothing.[50] Most of these operations were small scale and although there was some agitation for better conditions there was no trade union which lasted.[51] The continued supply of new immigrants provided cheap labour for these industries in the decades before World War I. Most of those who came in these waves of migration, if they did not continue their journey to North America, resided in the East End of London.

There are several interesting comparisons between Jewish and Irish migrants in London at this time. The first is in settlement: Irish settlement seems to have been more widely scattered than that of late-nineteenth century Jewish migration. While Englander has argued that this fact made Jews 'more exotic' to Booth's observers than Irish, it is difficult to decipher how much the difference in peak times of migration may have affected this.[52] It is in examining the experiences of both groups through the same processes rather

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[48]Matthew Frye Jacobson has used the word 'Yiddish' rather than 'Jewish' as a more concise and specific term for Yiddish-speaking Jews and to make a distinction between those Jews and others. While there is a clearer distinction it has not been adopted here largely due to the differences in Jewish populations in the United States and Britain. To a very great extent, Eastern European Jews were the Jewish population of Britain after 1880, those with other roots are generally distinguished by the term 'Anglo-Jews'. Nevertheless Jacobson's distinction should make us consider this population as a linguistic as well as a religious minority. (Jacobson, *Special Sorrows: the Diasporaic imagination of Irish, Polish, and Jewish Immigrants in the United States* (London, 2002), p. xv).

[49]Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain 1656-2000* (London, 2002), pp 127-30.

[50]Ibid., pp. 132-3.

[51]Ibid., pp. 136-42.

[52]David Englander, 'Booth's Jews: The Presentation of Jews and Judaism in *Life and Labour of the People in London*' in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Summer, 1989) p. 552.

than in the same years that most interesting comparisons emerge. Different times of peak migration necessarily meant that Irish community life in 1890 was different to that of the Jewish community; however in the process of migration and settlement there was much that was similar. Both East End Jews and Irish Catholics had a religion that differentiated them from the vast majority of Londoners. Both were also confronted with upper-class co-religionists who were not immigrants. This group had worked to gain acceptance of their religion as a respectable one. Neither English Jews nor Catholics were glad to have their work undone and their religion associated with working-class foreigners. Although there continued to be involvement between the two, neither Jews nor Irish accepted upper-class people of their own faith of English background as leaders of their community.

Both groups also used non-English languages. However, as well as comparisons there are also distinct contrasts in this respect. Jews were far more literate than Irish people; Yiddish theatre, newspapers and literature have no equivalent for Irish people in Irish.[53] This difference could be judged to emerge from differing patterns of educational attainment. Alternatively, greater residential concentration could have created a greater market for exclusive cultural forms. The effect of language shift in Ireland and attitudes and knowledge of English also differentiated Yiddish and Irish speakers in London.

The general trend in studies of the Irish in Britain has been to increasingly reference the variety of Irish experiences of life in Britain.[54] This has led to increased interest in the middle-class sections of Irish communities.[55] Undoubtedly, there were Irish people in London of all classes. It cannot truly be argued against that the vast majority in popular perception (as well as

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[53]E.g. William J. Fishman, *Morris Winchevsky's London Yiddish Newspaper: one hundred years in retrospect* (Oxford, 1985).

[54]For a critical reading of this see: Mary J. Hickman, 'Alternative historiographies of the Irish in Britain: a critique of the segregation/assimilation model' in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds), *The Irish in Victorian Britain: The Local Dimension* (Dublin, 1999), pp 236-54.

[55]E.g. John Belchem, 'Class, creed and country: the Irish middle class in Victorian Liverpool' in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds), *The Irish in Victorian Britain*, pp 190-212; R.F. Foster, '"An Irish Power in London": making it in the Victorian metropolis' in Fintan Cullen and R.F. Foster, *'Conquering England': Ireland in Victorian London* (London, 2005), pp 12-26.

reality) were working-class.[56] Working and middle-class are here defined in materialist terms: occupation is the main criteria used, while the household they lived in and where that household was situated are secondary criteria. Others have argued for accepting an individual's self-definition of their class as the best measure.[57] This is not done here because there are few accounts of this type of self-definition for this group in this period.

There is not a separate study in this thesis of middle-class Irish people in London. This is due to the fact that they were not a coherent group in London at this time. Instead of studying Irish people through their social class, people are studied through their connection with one another. In this way cross-class themes and connections could be explored. This also allowed for greater study of the interaction of those from different classes.

It is the culture of private homes and institutions which forms the greater part of the analysis of culture in this thesis. However there has been a far greater interest historically in public Irish culture. 'Public Irish culture' entails those who engaged with a wider London public and those in groups that were relatively exclusive but large, the Gaelic League for example. The change in intended audience or collaborators changed the nature of a gathering or work.

The most famous mid-nineteenth century Irish playwright to have major success in London was Dion Boucicault. His most famous plays are his three major Irish plays: *The Colleen Bawn*, *Arrah-na-Pogue* and *The Shaughraun*. The exclusion of nineteenth century artists from the 'new' canon of Irish theatre and music should not obscure the fact that these were popular representations of Irish drama in Dublin as well as London.[58] His plays were also routinely performed in America and at the end of his life he managed a

[56]Fitzpatrick, 'Irish in Britain, 1801-70', p. 628.
[57]Joanna Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain 1890-1960: Gender, Class and Ethnicity* (London, 1994), p. 4.
[58]Deirdre McFeely, *Dion Boucicault: Irish Identity on Stage* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 178.

drama school in New York.[59] Although he can certainly be said to have had major success in London, his internationalism limits the degree to which we can consider him London-Irish.

Like Boucicault, Charles Villiers Stanford's work has fallen out of favour, he is also more problematic than Boucicault in regard to his politics.[60] Stanford was an Irish unionist and although he used similar character types to Boucicault, such as the rebel hero, he banned performances of one of his best earning operas, *Shamus O'Brien,* from 1912 onwards on the grounds that 'it has sometimes led to a political misunderstanding.'[61] Historically it has been easier to categorise those who fit into the dominant nationalist narratives. Stanford despite the difficulties of categorisation was part of a London Irish set. He was a member of the Irish Literary Society, although he resigned over a statement by Yeats in opposition to the Boer War.[62] He remained involved with Irish cultural activities and groups in London; Stanford served on the committee of the Irish Folk Song Society as vice-president.[63] Irish culturally nationalist groups and their membership were more politically and socially diverse in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century than they were to become. Stanford represents an element of Irish London life that became alienated from the dominant politics of Irish London.

The Irish Literary Society was founded in 1891 to fulfil a broad culturally nationalist ethos in common with many other organisations at this time. It brought together many different individuals, but W.B. Yeats, who was a founder member of the Society, is most associated with it.[64] Yeats's status in the organisation is due in part to the importance of his work. It is also partially explained by his many arguments about the society's work and with other

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[59]Ibid., p. 176.
[60]Paul Rodmell, *Charles Villiers Stanford* (Aldershot, 2002), p. xvii.
[61]Rodmell, *Stanford*, pp 388-9.
[62]Rodmell, *Stanford*, p. 390.
[63]Jeremy Dibble, *Charles Villiers Stanford: Man and Musician* (Oxford, 2002), p. 368.
[64]Also founder members were Oscar Wilde, his mother and brother. (Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (London, 1987), p. 121.)

members.[65] Although clearly important as a meeting point for Irish intellectuals in London, the Irish Literary Society did not function as a coherent organisation in the same ways as others of this period, the Gaelic League for instance. Its efforts and output are dwarfed by the literary output of its members.[66] To describe it as influential on the work of its members is not altogether true. It is more correct to state that the influences of cultural nationalism were pervasive at this time, and are visible in the work of many Irish writers as well as an organisation formed between them.

A Gaelic League branch was established in London in 1896. John Hutchinson and Alan O'Day have argued for the central place of the London Gaelic League in not only Gaelic revival activities in Britain but the Gaelic revival generally.[67] The origins of the revival in London can be seen in earlier organisations and efforts particularly the Southwark Irish Literary Club which was founded in 1883. While intellectuals were a key group in its foundation, 'the driving force underpinning it came from the Irish-born Catholic lower intelligentsia, comprising minor civil servants, teachers and postal officials'.[68] The membership of the Gaelic League in London never reached the greater part of the Irish population of London; in 1906 its membership was 3000.[69]

O'Day and Hutchinson have argued that the ultimate reason for the decline of the Gaelic League in London prior to World War I was the fact that the centre of gravity of the movement was in Ireland and many London activists migrated to Ireland to continue the work of the revival.[70] However, this trend should be placed in the wider context of the declining importance of London as an Irish intellectual hub. If in the late nineteenth century the case could be made for London as 'The Irish Intellectual Capital', after 1900 'it was

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[65]Foster, *W.B. Yeats: A Life, I: The Apprentice Mage 1865-1914* (Oxford, 1997), pp 118-9.
[66]For a description of the type of lectures run by the Society and its predecessor see, Francis Fahy and Clare Hutton (ed.), 'Ireland in London' in Wayne K. Chapman and Warwick Gould (eds), *Yeats's Collaborations, Yeats Annual No. 15* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp 249-252.
[67]John Hutchinson and Alan O'Day, 'The Gaelic revival in London, 1900-22: limits of ethnic identity' in Swift and Gilley (eds), *The Irish in Victorian Britain*, p. 258.
[68]Ibid., p. 263.
[69]Ibid., p. 265.
[70]Ibid., p. 270.

clear that Dublin had become the focus for Irish cultural energy'.[71] The change in status between the two cities in this period altered the Irish cultural landscape of London as much as its political landscape. Not alone was there a change in the major centre of Irish intellectuals but those Irish who remained in London and were wedded to the economics of the London stage or publishing became relics of a different time.

Politics differed substantially from other public culture in that increasingly throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century it represented an avenue open to working-class men. In London Irishmen's participation in politics has been considered in two ways: participation in London local politics and English political parties and membership of Irish nationalist organisations. It has been widely accepted that Irishmen were not involved in politics in London in any way commensurate with their numbers in the population.[72] Lack of Irish involvement in politics in the nineteenth century was undoubtedly influenced by the limited numbers of Irish who were enfranchised. Irish voters were likely to be disqualified from voting by receipt of poor relief or frequent changes in residence.[73] Attempts to increase the number of Irish voters registered were frustrated: one branch of the Irish National League in London sent out 541 registration notices in 1886, however only 100 of the recipients could be traced.[74] Only in a few of the East End constituencies was the Irish electorate in the late nineteenth century reputed to be over 10%, and it never exceeded 20%.[75]

If attempts by Irish organisations met with very limited success, the attempts of English political parties at registering Irish voters seem to have been more frustrating. John Denvir regarded the efforts of the Liberal party

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[71]Foster, '"An Irish Power in London"', p. 24.
[72]Paul Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour: The Struggle for London 1885-1914* (London, 1967), pp 25-7; Alan O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism: Parnellite Involvement in British Politics 1880-86* (Dublin, 1977), pp 109-11; Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 235; Fitzpatrick, 'Irish in Britain, 1801-70', p. 654.
[73]Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour*, p. 26; O'Day, *English Face of Irish Nationalism*, pp 111-2; Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 237.
[74]O'Day, *English Face of Irish Nationalism*, p. 112.
[75]Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour*, p. 26.

agent at registration as ending in failure 'because he is so often taken for a School Board visitor, a broker's man, or some equally obnoxious individual.'[76] Irish voters were also regarded as being unreliable supporters, and O'Day regards this as the major reason that both Conservatives and Liberals failed to organise Irish voters in London.[77] Thompson similarly regards the Irish as 'the most unstable element in London politics'.[78] The conflicting impulses of protection of Catholic education, Home Rule and trade unionism suggested three different parties.[79] There were a few Irish politicians of note in late nineteenth century and early twentieth century London though, some emerged from the dock trade unions. However, in general London Irish involvement and influence in London politics was sparse.[80]

Irish nationalist and later republican activists committed to the use of physical force were active in Britain throughout this period. The most typical earlier nineteenth century Irish group in Britain were Ribbonmen. However this group was not a feature of London in the way that it was in northern English cities with an Irish population.[81] Later activity in the form of Fenianism certainly had a presence in London, however, its strength is difficult to ascertain.[82] The fact that Fenianism in London could disappear so readily post-1875 suggests that it did not have a large support base.[83] After that time the IRB in London acted largely as a fundraising division, sending money to Ireland for arms.[84]

The years between the height of Fenian activity in England and the resurgence in violent republican activity post-1916 saw IRB members dedicate themselves to the construction of an 'elaborate organizational façade'.[85] IRB

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[76]Quoted in Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour*, p. 27.
[77]O'Day, *English Face of Irish Nationalism*, p. 112.
[78]Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour*, p. 27.
[79]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 237.
[80]Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour*, p. 27.
[81]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, pp 222-3; Donald M. MacRaild, *Culture, Conflict and Migration: The Irish in Victorian Cumbria* (Liverpool, 1998), p. 10.
[82]Fitzpatrick, 'Irish in Britain, 1801-70', p. 656.
[83]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, pp 232-3.
[84]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 233.
[85]Peter Hart, *The IRA at War 1916-23* (Oxford, 2003), p. 147.

members had influence in organisations such as Sinn Féin, the Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association in London. The reality of these organisations in London, as elsewhere in Britain, was that a small number of men managed nearly all of them.[86] In London IRB members were among the cohort who managed Irish societies. When the IRA became active in London, it functioned entirely through the IRB, so that the terms were interchangeable there.[87] While the IRA in London were under constant surveillance, and the British feared threats of assassinations, apart from the murder of Sir Henry Wilson in 1922, the attacks launched by the London IRA and the IRA in other cities in Britain were largely attacks on property.[88] The first of these in London was an attack on two farms outside London causing £3,000 worth of damage. In April 1921 windows were broken in cities throughout Britain. Peter Hart argues that although the scale of the destruction was beyond the capacity of the IRA in Britain, its origins were in an IRA operation and its spread represents copy-cat activity.[89]

The Treaty split the Irish nationalist organisations in London as elsewhere; it marks the true end of organised violent Irish agitation in London during this time. Sir Henry Wilson's killing, although the most well-known of the activities of IRA members in London, should as Hart has convincingly argued, be regarded as 'an isolated, even desperate, act' carried out by Reggie Dunne and Joseph O'Sullivan alone.[90]

While individuals involved in political and violent campaigns in London merged somewhat in terms of personnel if not organisational structure in the 1916-23 period, the dominant pattern for the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was for the two to be separate. Indeed, the 'eminent practicality of the home rule movement in Britain tended to alienate

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[86]Hart, *IRA at War*, p. 147; Hutchinson and O'Day, 'The Gaelic Revival in London, 1900-22', p.270.
[87]Hart, *IRA at War*, p. 146.
[88]Ibid., p. 150.
[89]Ibid., pp 158-9.
[90]Hart, *IRA at War*, p. 162; For a detailed discussion of Wilson's murder see Hart, *IRA at War*, pp 194-223; Keith Jeffrey, *Field Marshall Sir Henry Wilson: an Irish soldier* (Oxford, 2006), pp 281-99.

sentimental Gaels'.[91] The extension of the franchise meant that Irish political organisations in the late-nineteenth century sought to engage with the political process through electoral politics rather than staging demonstrations or bombings.[92] Most towns and cities in Britain which had an Irish population had a Home Rule branch by the end of 1872.[93] In 1873 Britain was divided into six districts for the purposes of organising Home Rule activity with an executive over the divisional structure.[94] This organisation had very limited impact, in part due to absences in leadership and funding but also because of internal struggles.[95] In 1883, it was replaced by the Irish National League of Great Britain. While these organisations were founded on a political function, it was often their social activities which dominated.[96] The broadening of Irish nationalist activity to include culturally and economically nationalist activities were argued by Lynn Lees to represent the domestication of Irish nationalism in London.[97] However, as they involved many of the same personnel perhaps they represented the activity which would appeal most to the wider Irish population. The enlargement of cultural/political organisations to include women should be regarded as a more fundamental change than a change in emphasis from political to cultural or economic nationalism.[98]

The formation of the Irish Self Determination League (ISDL) in 1919 marked in many ways a continuation of the political activity of the past; the organisation did not openly advocate for a republic in part out of consideration of the presence within it of 'old home rulers'.[99] Where it differed from old Home Rule organisations was in its London orientation.[100] Following the Treaty the ISDL withered to include almost exclusively London members

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[91]Fitzpatrick, 'The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921', p. 677.
[92]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 233.
[93]O'Day, 'The Political Organization of the Irish in Britain, 1867-90' in Swift and Gilley (eds), *The Irish in Britain 1815-1939* (London, 1989), p. 193.
[94]Ibid, pp 193-4.
[95]Ibid, p. 203.
[96]O'Day, *English Face of Irish Nationalism*, p. 115.
[97]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 234.
[98]Paul O'Leary also emphasises the change that openness of Irish political organisations to women represented (O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration*, p. 300).
[99]Fitzpatrick, 'The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921', p. 685.
[100]Hutchinson and O'Day, 'The Gaelic revival in London, 1900-22; the limits of ethnic identity' in Swift and Gilley, *The Irish in the Victorian City*, p. 272.

and organisers.[101] Even with the greater emphasis on London in the ISDL in contrast to Home Rule associations, Irish political organisations remained minority interests amongst the Irish population in London. It is for this reason that an analysis of Irish nationalist political activity does not form a part of this thesis.

An organisation and culture which had a much broader reach was the Catholic Church in London. Although there are debates about the degree of Irish affiliation to the Catholic Church,[102] it is clear that most Irish in London were at least nominally Catholic.[103] Irish migration into London in the nineteenth century met a city whose Catholic structures were entirely unsuited to its needs. The number of Catholics in London had been growing from the mid-eighteenth century and by 1814 submissions to Propaganda Fide estimated that there were 50,000 Catholics in London.[104] London was also unique in England in the diversity of its Catholics. Embassy chapels, exempt from the Penal Laws, had a style of worship and ostentation unknown elsewhere in England. The priests retained by the embassies also worked with the wider Catholic population of London.[105] Lees and Fitzpatrick argue that Irish migration provided the impetus for reorganisation and revival of Catholicism in London.[106] While the two did occur somewhat concurrently, the reorganisation of Catholicism in London was also dependant to a very great degree on a wider religious revival in the 1840s, rather than solely on the logic of numbers that growing numbers of Irish Catholics provided.[107] This revival and the

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[101]Ibid., p. 273.
[102]Compare Sheridan Gilley's emphasis on the spirituality if not orthodox religiousity of poor Irish with Fielding's assertion of the secular basis for religious profession. Gilley, 'Roman Catholicism and the Irish in England' in Donald M. MacRaild (ed.), *The Great Irish Famine and Beyond: Irish migrants in Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Dublin, 2000), pp 147-167; Steven Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity: Irish Catholics in England, 1880-1939* (Buckingham, 1993), pp 29-58.
[103]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 179.
[104] Gilley, 'The Roman Catholic Mission to the Irish in London, 1840-60' in *Recusant History*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Oct. 1969), p. 124.
[105]Ibid, p. 125.
[106]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 173; Fitzpatrick, 'Irish in Britain, 1801-70', p. 651.
[107]Gilley, 'Catholic Mission to the Irish in London, 1840-69', p. 123.

establishment of new churches came too late for earlier migrants and their children who had been neglected in the first half of the nineteenth century.[108]

The organisation of Catholicism in London during this period also faced a major challenge in the language of migrants. In 1842 there were only five Irish-speaking priests in London.[109] This number was likely to have been wholly insufficient and impeded the work of Catholic priests. In 1852 the evangelical Protestant City Mission had seven Irish-speaking missionaries.[110] The pattern of religious worship in Ireland in the early nineteenth century matched that which migrants from Ireland practiced in London. Both were deficient in priests and churches.[111] The low level of participation common in Ireland was mirrored in London.[112] The 'leakage' from Catholicism was a constant matter of concern for clerics in nineteenth and twentieth century London and this sense of danger was also the force behind Catholic reaction to Evangelical missions.[113] Widespread weekly attendance never became the pattern amongst Irish Catholics in London, where Lees estimated that by 1902 just 30% of the Catholic population attended mass.[114]

The nineteenth and early twentieth century was a time of immense change to the landscape of Catholicism in London. The building of churches and the increase in the numbers of priests created a trajectory of increasing Irish Catholic participation in the weekly rituals of the church. There remained a wider culturally Catholic population whose religious or spiritual lives are difficult to know. Sheridan Gilley has argued that even in areas of low to non-existent attendance there remained a 'folk religion': the 'Irish populace grouped round the central court to be found in many a London rookery led the kind of semi-communal life which encourages a communal religion to take

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[108]Ibid., p. 125.
[109]Ibid., p. 141.
[110]Gilley, 'Protestant London, No Popery and the Irish Poor II (1850-60)', p. 26.
[111]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 166.
[112]Fitzpatrick, 'Irish in Britain, 1801-70', p. 652.
[113]Gilley, 'Protestant London, No Popery and the Irish Poor II (1850-60)', p. 36.
[114]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 182.

root and grow'.[115] Lees similarly suggests that patterns of low attendance give a false impression of affiliation to the church.[116] While throughout this period the church was engaged in social and religious work amongst poor Irish, the extent of its influence on that population is difficult to gauge. Certainly, there was both respect and fear of the priest.[117] The position of the Catholic church throughout this period in Irish lives in London is far from certain. Organisational improvements give an impression of a church which had finally managed to cater for its adherents in London by 1920. However, there were many on the margins or outside of this Catholicism, and it is their place in the narratives of religion and Irish lives in London that is most difficult to chart. While religion forms a major part of the analysis in this thesis, it is not examined in isolation through a chapter on the religious lives of Irish people in London. This decision was taken to reflect the fact that there is a substantial body of work on this subject already. It also reflects a decision to use religious records to examine other aspects of Irish life in London.

In terms of male culture, there are two institutions and activities, which though impossible to ignore, are also very difficult to estimate in terms of their importance to Irish men in London specifically. These are sport and public houses. Whereas the history of football in London can be told at an aggregate level, public houses and drinking culture remains quite elusive. Pubs and drinking culture have been studied through and with the history of temperance movements and arrests for drunkenness.[118] Lees stated that in the areas she studied 'Pubs lay virtually everywhere, occupying choice corner lots', but she examined Irish relationships to alcohol and public houses only in terms of drunkenness, violence and temperance campaigns.[119] Pub culture was not distinctive to Irish men, and Irish drinking habits in Britain 'conformed more closely to those of the British working class than the Irish peasantry'.[120]

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[115]Gilley, 'Catholic Mission to the Irish in London, 1840-69', p. 139.
[116]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 184.
[117]Gilley, 'Catholic Mission to the Irish in London, 1840-69', p. 140.
[118]E.g. Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815-1872* (London, 1971).
[119]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, pp 85, 155-7, 207-12.
[120]Fitzpatrick, 'Irish in Britain, 1801-70', p. 647.

The consumption of alcohol is generally taken as partly responsible for high rates of Irish criminality.[121] The historiography of the Irish in London and in Britain and their relationship to pubs and alcohol is very much in line with the historiography of the same subjects in Britain.

Pubs had transport, political and social roles in urban life. They were transport hubs in the early nineteenth century, and adapted to cater for suburban commuters in the later nineteenth century.[122] Publicans offered rooms free of charge for political and other meetings on the basis that they would profit on the drink sold to those attending the meeting.[123] In this respect Irish Catholics were in a slightly different position to the rest of the population of London. Whereas schools run by religious organisations were rarely open to working-class men's political meetings, Catholic schools and parish halls were used for this purpose. Although this was a right which was opposed by the Episcopal hierarchy, the detail at parish level indicates that it was a widespread practice for Irish political groups to meet in Catholic schools or halls. Pubs also had a social function. In London this function was becoming one largely found in working-class areas. Brian Harrison found 'almost an inverse relation between the number of on- and off-licences per head in any London area', whereas beer houses and public houses were found predominantly in working-class areas off-licences were predominantly in 'well-to-do suburbs'.[124]

The organisation and professionalization of sport, in particular football, during the nineteenth century was closely tied to working-class pub culture in its origins.[125] Cock-fighting and boxing were particularly popular sports in London pubs in the early and mid-nineteenth century.[126] However it was football which became the predominant sport of working-class men during

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[121]Donald M. MacRaild, *The Irish Diaspora in Britain, 1750-1939* (Basingstoke, 2011), p.168; Fitzpatrick, 'Irish in Britain, 1801-70', p. 647; Finnegan, *Poverty and Prejudice*, pp 143, 176.
[122]Brian Harrison, 'Pubs' in H.J. Dyos and Michael Wolff (eds), *The Victorian City; Images and Realities, Vol. 1* (London, 1973), pp 162-6.
[123]Ibid, pp 175-6.
[124]Ibid, p. 168.
[125]Judith Flanders, *Consuming Passions: Leisure and Pleasure in Victorian Britain* (London, 2007), pp 449-50.
[126]Tony Collins and Wray Vamplex, *Mud, Sweat and Beers: A Cultural History of Sport and Alcohol* (Oxford, 2002), pp 8-9.

the nineteenth century. The dominance of football as a spectator sport amongst working-class men presents a difficulty in how we conceive of the spectator and playing lives of Irish men in London. There is a distinct history of Irish sport in London during this period involving the GAA, camogie clubs, London Irish rugby and the various Irish cycling clubs. However these did not have the mass spectator appeal of the various football clubs that were founded in London during this time. Although we must logically accept Irish support for the football teams of London, there was no ethnic or sectarian divide in support for the professionalising football teams of late nineteenth and early twentieth century London.[127] Instead teams drew on the support of geographic areas, such as West Ham United, originally called Thames Ironworks, in the East End of London.[128] The professionalization of the game meant that gate receipts were of greater importance; the move of Arsenal from Woolwich, where it was founded by 1886 by workers at Woolwich Arsenal, to Highbury to take advantage of the better transport links which would increase spectators is indicative of this fact.[129] Like Liverpool, football teams in London were supported according to geography rather than sectarian loyalties.[130]

In their sporting entertainment Irishmen were part of a wider group and divided from one another by differing habits and sporting loyalties. The history of Irish male involvement with sports and public houses in London would need to be detailed enough to take account of the differences based on class and geography in the experiences of Irish men in London. This and the fact that both of these were predominantly male pursuits where it would be very difficult to isolate Irish participants is the reason why these subjects do not form major areas of research for this thesis.

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[127]Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford, 1990), p. 169.
[128]Flanders, *Consuming Passions*, p. 440.
[129]Ibid., p. 449.
[130]John Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse, the History of the Liverpool-Irish 1800-1939* (Liverpool, 2007), p. 242.

The literature on the Irish in London mirrors that in many ways of the Irish in Britain. The themes and subjects which form the major parts of this literature have their roots in the sources available to historians. This is not to argue that historians' predisposition to examine certain things as more important than others has not also played a part, for example the emphasis on male rather than female experience. The three major sources of historical material have been: religious archives, overwhelmingly Catholic diocesan, newspapers and official census and statistical reports such as those on crime. There have also been studies which relied primarily on oral history, but these have been confined to a recent period.[131] Liam Harte has argued for the interrogation of memoir and autobiography to a greater degree than has hitherto been attempted.[132] However, the availability of this material and its tendency to reflect already dominant narratives in the historiography indicates that while it can add new voices, it will not alter the landscape of the study of Irish in Britain significantly. The availability of source material influences the historical process at its most basic level. The use and re-use of sources in studies that seek to address different issues have also influenced historical debates.

Catholic records, both those held in diocesan archives and parish records, are some of the most plentiful and descriptive especially of early and mid-nineteenth century migrants, about whom there may be little other evidence. These records have been used in every area study of Irish in Britain. The existence of these sources has undoubtedly had an effect on the prominent role awarded to the study of Irish Catholicism in the study of Irish in Britain. However, the wide use of these sources, especially their use by those not primarily interested in the study of religion, has led to a key debate in the historiography. This debate is between those who argue for the importance of religion to the identity and experiences of Irish people in Britain and those who

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[131]Reginald R. Hall, 'Irish Music and Dance in London, 1870-1970: A Socio-Cultural History' (Ph.D., University of Sussex, 1994); Seán Sorohan, *Irish London During the Troubles* (Dublin, 2012).

[132]Liam Harte, *The Literature of the Irish in Britain: Autobiography and Memoir, 1725-2001* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp xxvi-xxi.

contend that while 'the Irish certainly considered themselves Catholic, this was largely a question of definition'.[133] Sheridan Gilley has argued the contrary position that there was 'a far greater degree of devotional commitment among Irish migrants than social historians have been willing to concede'.[134] All historians of Irish people in Britain have used these sources, and so all historians have to an extent examined religion. Some have argued that religion was not really of paramount importance: that 'most felt some sort of attachment to their Church, although this sentiment owed more to loyalties of family and national origin than doctrine.'[135] While religion may be argued to be a formative Irish experience in Britain, it is also true that its representation in the historiography is due to the fact that historians interested in Irish people's experiences in Britain have had to confront it because of their use of religious sources.

In this thesis, extensive use is made of Catholic records from the three dioceses which cover London: Westminster, Southwark and Brentwood. These records have been used to interrogate settlement patterns and community life, rather than examining the religious lives of Irish people in London. There are two major reasons why these sources have been used this way. Firstly, there have already been major investigations of Irish Catholicism in London.[136] Secondly, the rich material available in diocesan archives demands examination in ways other than simply for clues to the religious lives of the Irish population in London. For example, the references to Irish-speaking

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[133]Mary Heimann, 'Devotional stereotypes in English Catholicism, 1850-1914' in Frank Tallett and Nicholas Atkin (eds), *Catholicism in Britain and France since 1789* (London, 1996), pp. 13-27

[134] Swift, 'Identifying the Irish in Victorian Britain: Recent trends in Historiography', in Swift and Gilley (eds), *Irish identities in Victorian Britain* (Abingdon, 2011), p. 12.

[135]Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity*, p. 55.

[136] Gilley, 'Catholic Mission to the Irish in London', pp 123-46; Gilley, 'Protestant London, No-Popery and the Irish Poor, 1830-60 (Part I)' in *Recusant History*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Jan. 1970), pp 210-231; Gilley, 'Protestant London, No-Popery and the Irish Poor: II (1850-1860)', pp 21-46; Gilley, 'English Catholic Charity and the Irish Poor in London, Part I, 1700-1814' in *Recusant History*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Jan. 1972), pp 179-96; Gilley, 'English Catholic Charity and the Irish Poor in London: II (1840-70)' in *Recusant History*, Vol. 11, No. 5 (Apr. 1972), pp 253-70; Gilley, 'Vulgar Piety and the Brompton Oratory, 1850-60' in Swift and Gilley, *The Irish in the Victorian City* (London, 1985), pp 255-67; Alan Bartlett, 'The Churches of Bermondsey, 1880-1939' (University of Birmingham, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1987).

priests and Irish language services provide evidence for the Irish language in London.

The availability of religious sources has also influenced the way in which we define and measure the Irish population of a given area. The vast majority of studies use Catholic figures to estimate roughly the Irish population of an area when census figures are unhelpful.[137] This thesis uses these figures in largely the same way as others have. This is not done for London in general in this thesis because Catholicism was not confined to an Irish population as it was in other areas of Britain. Instead Catholic figures are used to estimate the size of Irish populations in areas which had an Irish community and an Irish parish structure. This limits the degree to which the entire Irish population of London is characterised as Catholic. The traditional criticism of using this measure is that it conceals Irish Protestant migrants.[138] There is no equivalent source for Irish Protestants. The fact that they were not a cohesive community in London has meant that they cannot be studied in the same way as Irish Catholic community life has been.

While statistics on the numbers of Catholics in the London-area are not used as a measure of the larger possible Irish population, it would be wrong to argue that those studied and imagined as part of an Irish community has not been influenced by the availability of material from Catholic diocesan and parish archives. Those who are made visible by others choice of research topics undoubtedly has an effect on the reality we expect to find. Although the diversity of London's Catholic population meant that in this period Catholic does not equate with Irish, it is harder to dispel the assumptions that Irish equates to Catholic. In this thesis the intent has been to regard Irish as a non-religious identity. However, in my research I found that in particular sets of Catholic churches, Irish was an identity that included a presumption of

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[137] E.g. O'Day, 'Irish Diaspora Politics in Perspective: The United Irish Leagues of Great Britain and America, 1900-15' in MacRaild, *The Great Irish Famine and Beyond*, pp 214-239; Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity*; Frank Neal, *Sectarian Violence, The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914: An aspect of Anglo-Irish history* (Manchester, 1991).

[138] Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse*, p. xii.

Catholicism.[139] In these areas, Irish life and identity when discussed is linked to the Catholic life of that area as the two were intertwined. In discussions of the wider Irish culture in London, in terms of music or the Irish language, Catholicism does not define or distinguish Irish people. Although Catholic meetings are discussed it is not argued that they formed the only or most important interactions of Irish people.

Catholic sources and the visibility of religion both to historians and contemporaries have meant that for historians of Irish people in Britain, Catholicism is inescapable. Irish people in London in this period were certainly not all Catholic, nor are they treated as such in this thesis. The definition of Irish adopted here, as explained above, has been not to treat Irish as equivalent to Irish-born. However, at times Irish-born people are more visible through statistics which rely on birth-place for example. In a similar way, the definition of the Irish population in London adopted here was not simply the Irish Catholic population. At times, however, it is the Irish Catholic population which have greater visibility than Irish Protestant or nonreligious Irish. This is particularly true of residential Irish communities. My analysis uses residential communities as just one example of the connection between Irish people. Through this approach the danger of seeing Irish and Catholic as synonyms is lessened.

Official sources of all types have been used extensively in the historiography of Irish people in Britain. In general, this has involved mining census reports for demographic information on Irish people most commonly in particular cities or counties in Britain,[140] but sometimes on an aggregate British level.[141] Sampling has also been used to examine census returns in a way that would not be possible if the entire Irish population of a certain district was examined. Lynn Lees did this for London using the 1851 and 1861 censuses;

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[139] In particular this was true of East End and Bermondsey Irish parishes discussed in Chapter 1.

[140] E.g. Neal, 'The Foundations of the Irish Settlement in Newcastle upon Tyne: The evidence in the 1851 Census' in MacRaild (ed.), *The Great Irish Famine and Beyond*, pp. 71-93.

[141] E.g. Fitzpatrick, 'Irish in Britain, 1801-70', pp 627-36, 658-9.

Bronwen Walter used the 1881 5% sample to investigate Irish domestic servants in London.[142] Sampling is not used in this thesis; instead a full database of Irish domestic servants was compiled. The small numbers involved in Walter's study indicated that tentative conclusions could be made firmer by more thorough investigation. Sampling has not been used to examine Irish communities in particular areas of London either; this decision was to take account of the fact that sampling would have relied on birthplace information. This would have presented a skewed sample in areas where the majority of the Irish population was not Irish-born.

Census returns have been used in this thesis. However, examination of these has been confined to the 1901 census. An examination of the 1911 census returns of particular groups of Irish people would undoubtedly provide an enormous wealth of material to add to that in this thesis. However, the release of digitised 1911 census returns came both too late and in a form which meant that they could not be used. This was in terms of fields that were searchable as well as in the arrangement at first not to provide access to an unlimited amount of records by subscription. The 1911 census represents a major area where this study could be extended in the future.

Another area whose study has been heavily influenced by the availability of statistics noting the birthplace of those arrested, charged and imprisoned has been crime.[143] To an extent this pattern of research also emerges from depictions of Irish communities in mid-nineteenth century Britain as criminal.[144] Research has sought to explain this characterisation and its reality, in statistics at least, but in so doing has allowed this to frame the research agenda. Crime is not examined in this thesis in part for this reason. It

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[142]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, pp 251-4; Walter, 'Irish Women Servants in England, 1881', pp 279-99.
[143] Swift, 'Crime and the Irish in nineteenth-century Britain' in Swift and Gilley (eds), *The Irish in Britain 1815-1939* (London, 1989), pp 163-83; Elizabeth Malcolm has sought to explore Irish institutionalisation in asylums rather than prisons, this provides a welcome interjection in the use of birthplace statistics about institutionalisation, whether prisons or otherwise. (Elizabeth Malcolm, '"A Most Miserable Looking Object": The Irish in English Asylums, 1850-1901, Migration Poverty and Prejudice' in Belchem and Tenfelde, Klaus (eds), *Irish and Polish Migration in Comparative Perspective* (Essen, 2003), pp 121-132.)
[144]Finnegan, *Poverty and Prejudice*, p. 132.

is also a consequence of prioritising the study of Irish culture which has been underexplored. It also reflects the fact that statistics relying on birthplace would not give an accurate reflection of the Irish population in London at this time.

The third major source of information on Irish people in Britain is newspapers. These have been less widely used than both official statistics and reports of various kinds and religious records, however they provide information which is lacking from other sources. A particular way that newspapers have been used has been in the study of Irish politics in Britain.[145] While newspapers have been used, there has been little research on Irish and Catholic newspapers in Britain.[146] The use of newspapers to study Irish people in Britain has relied on newspapers geared towards that population; in effect this has meant reliance on Irish and Catholic newspapers. Irish newspapers had a nationalist perspective and interest, whereas Catholic newspapers emphasised the Catholicism of an Irish population. Charles Diamond's stable of newspapers are the most prominent of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century period. Although from their titles his newspapers appear to provide a window into Irish life in many different areas of Britain, in practice most of his newspapers were local editions of either the London *Catholic Herald* or the *Glasgow Observer*.[147]

The availability of sources from religious archives, official statistics and newspapers has dictated to a great degree the subjects which have formed the main focus of studies of the Irish population of Britain. The period which has been most studied has also been influenced by available sources. The Famine period of immigration has been that most studied in relation to

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[145]E.g. O'Day, 'The Political organization of the Irish in Britain, 1867', pp 183-212; Keiko Inoue, 'Political Activity of the Irish in Britain, 1919-25' (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Dublin, 2007).
[146]Owen Dudley Edwards and Patricia J. Storey, 'The Irish Press in Victorian Britain' in Swift and Gilley (eds), *The Irish in the Victorian City* (London, 1985), pp 158-79.
[147]Ibid., p. 176.

Irish people in Britain.[148] Reliance on official sources has meant that the period chosen has reflected the time when Irish people are most prominent in these statistics; this relies on the visibility of Irish people through their birthplace.[149] The dominance of the 'ethnic fade' thesis combined with this focus has meant that the late nineteenth century and in particular the twentieth century has been regarded as a time when the Irish population in most towns and cities had disappeared having been integrated into the majority population.[150] Swift has argued against this citing MacRaild's research in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as evidence that 'simple linear models of assimilation or integration, including the concept of "ethnic fade", are inadequate when applied to Irish migrant culture'.[151] This is part of the argument implicit in the period chosen for this thesis. Relying on birthplace information gives a false impression of the extent of the Irish population in any given area. In turn, it also gives the impression of the disappearance of an Irish population, with the death of Irish-born people. This has also been the growing conclusion in the wider literature on the Irish in Britain. MacRaild and Fielding's work in particular has self-consciously focused on the later nineteenth and early twentieth century as an argument for the presence and importance of Irish communities in that period.[152] In the period covered this work is part of a growing body of literature that recognises and seeks to understand Irish life in the second generation or decades after major waves of migration.

The distinction between Irish-born and 'ethnically Irish' is one that is clear in most studies as it is inherent in any statistics that are based on birthplace. Although there is widespread agreement that official statistics under represent the number of Irish people,[153] even in the mid-nineteenth century,

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[148]Swift, 'Historians and the Irish: Recent writings on the Irish in Nineteenth Century Britain' in MacRaild (ed.), *Great Irish Famine and Beyond*, p. 16.
[149]E.g. Finnegan, *Poverty and Prejudice*; Lees, *Exiles of Erin*; W.J. Lowe, *The Irish in mid-Victorian Lancashire: the shaping of a working-class community* (Berne, 1989).
[150]Paul O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration*, p. 312.
[151]Swift, 'Historians and the Irish', p. 26.
[152]MacRaild, *Culture, Conflict and Migration*; Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity*.
[153]E.g. Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, pp 46-8. An exception are Fitzpatrick's two chapters in the *New History of Ireland* (Vol. 5 and 6) which do not address the second generation as a part of the Irish population in Britain, and completes a sustained demographic portrait of 'the expatriate

there has been no clear consensus about how to deal with this issue. Most have attempted when possible to include second and third generation Irish people, even if they are necessarily excluded from statistical analysis using data from census reports. There have been differences of degrees in this approach: Frances Finnegan considered not only the children of Irish-born people to be part of an 'Irish community' but also their spouses.[154] Frank Neal considered children of Irish parents (both one and two) to be 'part of the Irish community'.[155] Mervyn Busteed's study considered only the children of two Irish parents to have been Irish.[156] Lynn Lees, while including this 'English-born children of Irish parents', acknowledged too that the 'extent to which second- and third-generation Irish acknowledged their ethnic ties remains to be established'.[157] The children of Irish parents could see themselves as Irish but be seen by their own parents as having or being a different Irishness.[158] The firm conclusion that is expressed in most studies is that a 'cultural thread' can link the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of immigrants to the identity and organisations of their ancestors.[159] However, this is an unpredictable connection.

The approach adopted here is broadly similar to that of Lees. This thesis does not consider there to have been one Irish community in London. Nor is it argued here that 'Irish', whether from birthplace or from descent, was a word that had a uniform meaning or association. This approach differs from that adopted in other studies in that it does not make a uniform distinction based on birthplace or parentage. Instead, this approach allows the consideration of individuals and groups based on their own identification through their communities and organisational associations. Although this thesis is based on studying a group of people who identified themselves with the

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Irish' alone with little reference to a possible wider community. Fitzpatrick, 'Irish in Britain, 1801-70', pp 623-60; Fitzpatrick, 'The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921', pp 653-703.

[154]Finnegan, *Poverty and Prejudice*, p. 1.

[155] Neal, 'The Foundations of the Irish Settlement in Newcastle upon Tyne', p. 75.

[156]Mervyn Busteed, 'Little Islands of Erin: Irish settlement and Identity in Mid-nineteenth century Manchester' in MacRaild (ed), *Great Irish Famine and Beyond*, p. 96.

[157]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, pp. 46-8.

[158]Sorohan, *Irish London*, p. 52.

[159]Jacobson, *Special Sorrows*, p. 5.

word 'Irish' this is not to argue that this was their only or most important identity. Gender, religious, occupational and class identities may have been more important, at certain times at least, than Irish identity. In looking at this Irish population, their common feature was an Irish identity. Therefore this identity has been favoured over other identities which were held by some Irish people in London.

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Having discussed the sources and definitions which provide the foundation for the study of Irish people in Britain I will now discuss some of the major areas which have been examined in that literature. Firstly geographical and settlement patterns will be discussed. Following this the related issue of anti-Irishness and sectarianism will be discussed. Politics and religion have formed the major areas of cultural analysis in studies of Irish in Britain; the debates and conclusions from the study of these areas will be addressed. Following this the broader cultural landscape of Irish people's lives in Britain will be explored, in particular in relation to music and language. The structure of analysis of this review of literature is mirrored in the thesis itself: firstly Irish people are situated in the places where they lived, only following this can an understanding of their relationships to shared culture and identity be examined.

Early studies of Irish populations in particular areas of Britain assumed that residential segregation was the general experience of Irish communities.[160] The change in the historiography has come about due in large part to Colin Pooley's robust refutation of the segregation thesis by examining residential patterns in detail.[161] Historians now emphasise 'clusters' of Irish people rather than segregated streets or neighbourhoods.[162] This, in some

[160]Finnegan, *Poverty and Prejudice*, p. 1.
[161]Colin Pooley, 'Segregation or Integration? The residential experience of the Irish in mid-Victorian Britain' in Swift and Gilley (eds), *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939*, p. 74.
[162] Neal, 'The Foundations of the Irish Settlement in Newcastle upon Tyne', p. 75; O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration*, p. 133.

respects, presents a challenge to the methodology of some studies. If the rationale behind a study is the examination of an Irish population who are assumed to have formed a community, the lack of an obvious residential base to that community means that further justification for studying them collectively must be provided. This thesis is not based on the assumption that there was an Irish community, only that there were Irish people in London, and that their Irishness connected them.

While there has been general agreement that suburbanisation dispersed the clusters that did exist,[163] there has been no study of Irish life in suburban Britain. The consensus of the lack of segregation in residential areas is accepted here. The disintegration of clusters is studied in detail in this thesis, as well as the linked phenomena in urban development of suburbanisation. Without residential segregation, we must question how there could be distinct Irish communal life in some areas but very little in others. We must also question how some communities survived and the factors that favoured their survival.

Similar to discussion of Irish segregation, early studies of Irish in Britain accepted widespread hostility to Irish immigrants as the norm. Although the presence of anti-Irishness has not been refuted, there have been efforts to emphasise the nuances of Irish experience. Donald MacRaild has argued that in Cumbria it was difficult to 'decipher anti-Irish from intra-Irish tension.'[164] Others have argued against using Liverpool as a model for Irish-English relations in Britain, as sectarianism was stronger there than elsewhere.[165] It is clear that anti-Irishness and anti-Catholicism were long-lasting and linked prejudices.[166] I have not studied these prejudices in themselves, or regarded them as of a major importance to the lives of all Irish people in London. Anti-Irish prejudice did not affect all Irish people equally,

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[163]E.g. Belchem, *Irish Catholic and Scouse*, p. 22; Fitzpatrick, 'The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921', p. 657.
[164]MacRaild, *Culture, Conflict and Migration*, p. 15.
[165]Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity*, p. 19.
[166]Busteed, 'Irish settlement and Identity in Mid-nineteenth century Manchester', pp 102-3.

and regarding it as an explanatory force in their lives, or studying them through the prejudices of others, would have unified a group which I have argued to have been diverse. It is also the case that while sectarian violence was common in other areas of Britain, it played a much smaller role in London.

There has long been an implicit acceptance of the importance of both (Irish nationalist) politics and religion to the lives of Irish people in Britain.[167] Alan O'Day in his work has refuted the idea that Irish populations in particular areas were capable of influencing British elections.[168] Nevertheless his work has continued to emphasise the importance of politics in the formation and description of ethnic groups.[169] While, as argued above, the study of politics has been founded on the availability of nineteenth century newspapers, the view as to its importance seems to be based on older themes in the historiography. Fitzpatrick, for example, could state that in Britain, 'The size and achievement of the home rule movement in Britain betokened rather low political vitality by comparison with other Irish emigrant populations'.[170] Nevertheless, he devoted considerable space to the history of Irish political organisations in Britain in the same essay.[171] The disjoint between the conclusions and the coverage given to political activity should make us question its inclusion in so many studies. Politics is not examined separately here. This is due to the literature which suggests its influence and membership were uniformly rather low. Where politics was important to local Irish communities it is examined in relation to them rather than in relation to the wider Home Rule organisation.

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[167]See for example MacRaild's assertion that religion and politics form along with ethnicity and gender the 'core aspects of Irish migrant culture'. (MacRaild, *The Irish Diaspora in Britain, 1750-1939*, p. 2).
[168]O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, 108-14.
[169]O'Day, 'A Conundrum of Irish Diasporic Identity: Mutative Ethnicity' in Swift and Gilley (eds), *Irish identities in Victorian Britain*, pp 195-6.
[170]Fitzpatrick, 'The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921', p. 680.
[171]Ibid, pp 673-87.

Religion has similarly been the focus or a major part of most studies of Irish in Britain.[172] While in general scholarly attention has focused on Catholicism there has been some work on Protestant migrants which have explored their experience of religion.[173] Early nineteenth century Catholic migrants were largely 'unchurched'.[174] As such although they increased the numbers of Catholics in Britain hugely, they are also likely to have brought down the percentage of Catholics attending weekly mass.[175] The Catholic church's role in the life of Irish communities has been seen from two perspectives: the first emphasises the priest and parish as social worker,[176] the second emphasises the religious nature of the church and priest's authority.[177] There has been detailed use of mass attendance statistics to argue both cases: the first argues that low mass attendance indicates a nominally Catholic population;[178] the second argues that low attendance shows that Irish migrants 'remained loyal to an older model of Irish Catholicism' which did not emphasise weekly attendance.[179] Even those who argue for the unimportance of religion in the lives of Irish people examine religion and figures for religious devotion in detail.

Cultural aspects of Irish lives in Britain outside of religious and political affiliation have received little attention.[180] The treatment of music and the Irish language are examined below, but Liam Harte has made a striking argument for the reconsideration of the literature of Irish migrants.[181] Whereas absences and biases in the study of music and the Irish language can be

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[172]E.g. Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity* which uses explores in detail mass attendance and general religiousity.
[173]E.g. Ian Meredith, 'Irish Migrants in the Scottish Episcopal Church in the Nineteenth Century' in Martin J. Mitchell (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Irish in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2008), pp 44-64; MacRaild, *Faith, Fraternity and Fighting: The Orange Order and Irish Migrants in Northern England, c. 1850-1920* (Liverpool, 2005).
[174] Gilley, 'Roman Catholicism and the Irish in England' in MacRaild (ed.), *Great Irish Famine and Beyond*, p. 158.
[175]Ibid., p. 154.
[176] Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity*, p. 38.
[177] Gerard Connolly, 'Little brother be at peace: the priest as holy man in the nineteenth century ghetto' in *Studies in Church History*, Vol. 19 (1982), pp 191-207.
[178] Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity*, pp. 49-55.
[179] Gilley, 'Roman Catholicism and the Irish in England', p. 154.
[180] E.g. Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity*.
[181] Harte, *Literature of the Irish in Britain.*

discussed, the absence in relation to Irish migrant literature is striking in its totality.

In general those that have written about Irish music in Britain have written from a perspective of scholarship of music and musical tradition. Those who have incorporated music into more general studies, such as Mervyn Busteed, have used music as a text and analysed it as such.[182] Busteed's study rests, as does that of Leon Litvack, on lyrics being 'an acceptable mechanism for what people want to say'.[183] This approach is problematic at best. This study uses performance rather than published music as its central concern. This allows a consideration of what people actually sang rather than what has survived. My approach also differs from that of previous works in not regarding songs as necessarily indicating the feelings of the singer.

An area which has received much more attention than popular ballads has been traditional Irish music.[184] The attention focused on traditional Irish music can be seen as having its roots in two impulses: the first is the interest of Irish music enthusiasts; the second is the desire to study an Irish aspect of Irish life in Britain which is unproblematically Irish. Irish traditional music and dance appear from the language of songs and the music itself to be 'other' to the popular music of urban England and Wales. What is taken to constitute 'Irish' music has been critiqued, especially in its disregard for domestic popular music, but has been the dominant definition in academic studies of the music of Irish migrants.[185] One sign of a possible broadening in outlook of future research was Seán Campbell's *Irish Blood, English Heart* which sought to assert the place of Irishness in the music of second generation Irish popular musicians.[186] The music of Irish people in English which followed the norms of English parlour-type music has been much less treated

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[182] Busteed, 'Irish settlement and Identity in Mid-nineteenth century Manchester', pp 94-127
[183]Leon B. Litvack, 'The psychology of song; the theology of hymn: songs and hymns of Irish migration' in O'Sullivan (ed.), *Religion and Identity* (London, 1996), p. 77.
[184]See Hall, 'Irish music and dance in London, 1890-1970'.
[185]John O'Flynn, *The Irishness of Irish Music* (Farnham, 2009), p. 200.
[186]Seán Campbell, *'Irish Blood, English Heart': Second-generation Irish Musicians in England* (Cork, 2011).

but is likely of more relevance to the greater part of Irish migrants and their descendants especially in the twentieth century. The continuing identification of Irish music outside Ireland as Irish traditional music has set the limits of academic discussion of migrants' music. My analysis of music seeks to move beyond these limits by defining Irish music as related to those performing it rather than the genre of music.

Work on the Irish language in Britain has focused almost entirely on Gaelic League-type efforts to teach the language to beginners. Most accounts give Irish as the first language of migrants to certain areas of Britain: south Wales, Manchester, York, London for example. Despite differences in local atmosphere and regional origins, all of these accounts give roughly the same treatment to the language of Irish migrants. The narrative is that Irish migrants were 'quick to abandon'[187] Irish or where there is dissenting evidence to this, that 'Irish speakers in Wales did not pass on the language to their children, and their native tongue died with them'.[188] In another case the observation of the first language of migrants is not discussed at all even in light of an analysis based on examining broadsheet ballads in English.[189]

The lack of consideration given to the language abilities and lives of migrants is in striking contrast to the view that emigration was instrumental in the decline of Irish in Ireland.[190] Not only is emigration argued to have altered beyond repair the demographics of the Irish language in Ireland, but it is also argued to have changed the mind-set around Irish. Karen P. Corrigan argues that rather than seeing migration as 'a force precipitating language loss, the exodus from the Irish Gaeltacht did not take place until after the Famine, by which time most of the inhabitants would already have been Irish-English

[187] Belchem, 'The Liverpool-Irish Enclave' in MacRaild (ed.), *Great Irish Famine and Beyond*, p. 131.
[188] O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration*, p. 226
[189] Busteed, 'Irish settlement and Identity in Mid-nineteenth century Manchester', p. 102.
[190] See Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost, *The Irish Language in Ireland: From Goídel to globalisation* (Abingdon, 2005), pp 100-1; Máiréad Nic Craith, *Malartú Teanga*, pp 8-13; Maureen Wall, 'The Decline of the Irish Language' in Brian Ó Cuív (ed.), *A View of the Irish Language* (Dublin, 1969), pp 86-7; Brian Ó Catháin, 'Malartú agus Bás Teanga' in Tadhg Ó hIfearnáin and Máire Ní Neachtain (eds), *An tSochtheangeolaíocht: Feidhm agus Tuarisc* (Dublin, 2012), p. 71.

bilinguals'.[191] She argues that the low status of Irish and the social pressures on Irish speakers to adapt were key issues in the decline of Irish in Ireland in the nineteenth century. This argument brings scholarship on the shift from Irish to English in Ireland into line with international research on language shift between a high status language and a low status one. However, it remains true that scholarship on Irish, while frequently alluding to emigration, has altogether less frequently sought to address the question of Irish language use amongst Irish emigrants. Corrigan in her article laments the lack of attention to the Irish language in the United States, a subject which she feels has been 'ignored by linguists and historians alike'.[192]

There have been several good treatments of the Irish language in the United States. Some focus on high profile people and organisations.[193] Other accounts have argued against the dominant theme of writing about Irish in America only in the period from 1880 to 1920.[194] According to this view the history of Irish in America should not be based on large movements or campaigns but rather concentrate on 'smaller things': the work and lives of individuals and small groups.[195] It is precisely the opposite history, of relatively large organisations and important people and their efforts at revival which have been most studied. There has also been a related and contemporary interest in the teaching of Irish in America. This interest in efforts at revival rather than history of those who spoke Irish has been the dominant one in Britain too.[196] Indeed, in general where the Irish language is treated at all in histories of Irish in Britain it is in regard to the Gaelic League.[197] An exception is Máiréad Nic Craith and Janet Leyland's short study of Irish in North West

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[191] Corrigan, 'Eisimirce agus an Ghaeilge sa naoú aois déag', p. 150.
[192] Ibid. p. 155.
[193] Fionnuala Uí Fhlannagáin, *Fíníní Mheiriceá agus An Ghaeilge* (Dublin, 2008); Úna Ni Bhroiméil, *Building Irish Identity in America, 1870-1915: The Gaelic Revival* (Dublin, 2003).
[194] Proinsias Mac Aonghusa, 'An Ghaeilge i Meiriceá' in Stiofán Ó hAnnracháin (ed.), *Go Meiriceá siar, Na Gaeil agus Meiriceá: Cnuasach Aistí* (Naas, 1979), p. 13.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Hutchinson and O'Day, 'The Gaelic Revival in London, 1900-22', pp 254-77; Donncha Ó Súilleabháin, *Conradh na Gaeilge i Londain* (Dublin, 1989).
[197] E.g. O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration*, p. 274.

England.[198] However, even that study focused on the language of nineteenth century migrants in a context of contemporary Irish language classes.[199] Whereas texts on Irish in Britain are littered with reference to 'language' as a non-linguistic phenomenon, the 'language of nationalism'[200] or 'ceremonial language'[201], there has been an absolute lack of consideration of the actual language of migrants. The fault of this could be argued to lie mainly in the absence of sources. However, there is also a real sense in which language, or the Irish language in particular, has not been thought of as important to the history of Irish migrants. This seems to echo the 'Great Silence' that Seán de Fréine critiqued in regard to the study of the decline of Irish in the nineteenth century.[202]

The culture of migrants, their music, language and literature, have been entirely underexplored given the extent of the literature which now exists on Irish people in Britain. Focusing on culture, in particular, music and language, was a decision dictated by the references in the source material. It was also informed by the lack of discussion of these things in the wider literature. In including these chapters it is argued that these are important aspects of Irish experience in London during this period. In a wider sense, these are also likely important aspects of Irish people's lives in Britain generally.

This thesis extends the current literature primarily through consideration of areas that have not been treated previously either in terms of Irish people in London or in Britain generally. The decision to examine music and the Irish language was explained above. Both represent additions to a historiography which has neglected these aspects of Irish lives. Neither areas represent absolute departures from the historiography of this subject. The

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[198] Máiréad Nic Craith and Janet Leyland, 'The Irish Language in Britain: A Case Study of North West England' in *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1997), pp 171-85.
[199] Ibid.
[200] MacRaild, *Faith, Fraternity and Fighting*, p. 296
[201] Mike Cronin and Daryl Adair, *The Wearing of the Green: A history of St Patrick's Day* (London, 2002), p. xxiv
[202] Seán de Fréine, *The Great Silence* (Dublin, 1966).

decision to examine the influences on children's ethnic identity is different. Where this has been studied previously it has relied on census data of recent date.[203] It is included here because in a population that were not necessarily defined by their birthplace, the continuation of an Irish community or identity was dependant on Irish identity being imbued in those who were not Irish-born. It is also an argument against the assumptions that underlie some of the statistical analysis of the size of the second generation Irish population in any given area.

The residential lives of Irish people in Britain have been explored in detail previously, where this thesis differs is in examining communities that disappeared alongside those that remained strong.[204] Through this approach the factors which led to the survival of Irish settlements and communities can be explored. The consideration of Irish domestic servants as an Irish residential community also differs substantially from how they have been examined previously. In particular the creation of a database of Irish-born women domestic servants and the mapping of this database adds substantially to our knowledge of Irish domestic servants' work in Britain.

The sources used in this thesis also extend the current research on Irish people in London. Some, which have been used previously, have been used here differently due to the availability of different technology. GIS, for example, was not available to earlier researchers. Some sources which have

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[203]Mary J. Hickman and Robert Moore, 'Changing and Claiming Ethnic Identities in the 1991 and 2001 Censuses', Institute for the Study of European Transformations (I.S.E.T.) Working Paper 20 (Sept. 2010); Hickman, 'Census Ethnic Categories and Second-Generation Identities: A Study of the Irish in England and Wales' in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 37 No. 1 (2011), pp 79-97.

[204] E.g. Walter, 'Ethnicity and Irish Residential Distribution' in *Transations of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1986), pp 131-46; Neal, 'The Foundations of the Irish Settlement in Newcastle upon Tyne', pp 71-93; John Foster, Muir Houston and Chris Madigan, 'Sectarianism, Segregation and Politics on Clydeside in the Later Nineteenth Century' in Mitchell (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Irish in Scotland*, pp 65-9.

been examined previously in connection with studies of other things, for example to study Irish Catholicism in London or housing reform in general, have been examined here to study other aspects of Irish life, or the Irish aspect of subjects which have received general treatment previously.

Both the structure and the period chosen here represent responses to the historiography. Both were also responses to the sources. The structure of the thesis is explained in more detail below. The period chosen here could be argued to be too short. Its deficiencies could be argued to be in not facilitating an examination of change in the lives of Irish people in London. It could also be argued to lead to a narrow study of Irish people in London noting facets which may have been of temporary rather than long-term importance. The period chosen is part of a growing literature on Irish experiences in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain. This literature also seeks to examine second-generation Irish people as a fundamental part of Irish communities.

It was not just the focus of earlier literature, however, that influenced this study, but the predominance of the choice of periods of thirty years. However, the period chosen here is distinct from those histories in confining itself to the years between 1900 and the First World War. This was a deliberate decision. The breadth of Irish experience in London demanded that to cover as many people's experiences as possible the period chosen had to be confined. There are also connections of Irish people to one another that are uniquely strong in this period: the Irish language revival movement, for example, never regains the support it had in this period. The study of music too in the way it is examined here was made possible because of the detailed examination of newspapers afforded by a short period. There is also a great deal of change in terms of the residential lives of Irish people and communities that can be examined. Change is not absent from this thesis; it is present for example in the growth and change of London's streets and in the popularity of the gramophone. Essentially this thesis seeks to argue against the tacit assumption of much of the literature that a longer period is necessarily more

informative. There are many ways in which a longer period is more constraining and for the study envisaged here a longer period would have constrained precisely the elements which most needed study. For these reasons these years have been chosen.

World War I defines the end of this period and the decision not to include consideration of the impact of the war or the experiences of Irish people in London during the war requires some explanation. The war affected Irish people in London differently according to gender, occupation, class and other distinctions. To study its impact or the lives of Irish people in London during the war would have required substantially more space than was available here. This represents a possible area for future research.

The choice of studying Irish people in London during this period came in part from the lack of studies on London generally and specifically for this period. It was also a self-conscious decision to study an area and a group of Irish people that were diverse. This allowed for a different approach than previous studies of a similar type had taken.

The structure of this thesis emerged in the light of the debates and focuses of other studies. It was also dictated by the lives of Irish people in London and the reflection of that in the sources. The structure focuses first on residential Irish communities to establish the spaces where Irish communities existed and did not exist. Then the connection of Irish people to one another in broader cultural terms rather than residential is explored. While common culture did connect Irish people, this ephemeral connection did not bridge the physical space between different groups of Irish people. Finally how people without any necessary link to one another besides being Irish perceived one another through their ethnic identity is examined.

The thesis begins with three chapters which consider the residential lives of Irish people in London. Establishing where people lived and who they

regularly interacted with is central to understanding how Irish people formed communities in London. It is also important to consider the outside forces which dictated whether communities existed or continued to exist. Chapter one examines Irish communities in Central London, the East End and Bermondsey, and Battersea. These areas have been chosen as they represented the largest centres of Irish communities in London at this time. The latter two communities were relatively strong, numerically as well as in terms of Irish activity; the communities in central London were at this time or slightly before it being decimated by clearances. Studying a community that was scattering is important not just as a contrast to those that survived but also to examine the lives of Irish people who become invisible once they were no longer members of an Irish community. The disruption of older communities was a function of when they were formed. This was not due to a generational weakening of ties between Irish people, rather, time of first settlement dictated the area and economy into which Irish people were drawn. Changes in one or both of these things, although in general they came together, had a consequent effect on the Irish community that existed in them. We must see Irish communities as fundamentally integrated in the areas where they lived. London was not one place and these communities, although they had some contact with one another, were autonomous. They depended on the work available locally; they formed their politics based on the politics of the local area. Of the many religious processions through particular Irish communities, all were crafted to the local area. Processions show the territory of belonging; Battersea has political processions, East London had religious ones. Both are significant of certain things about their local areas. No Irish community was independent of the area in which they lived. All reflected the ground beneath their feet in their actions.

The processes of change in Inner London were matched by change in suburban London. Inner and outer London are separated between two chapters because the changes affected them in different ways: outer London was expanding rapidly, in terms of population and area, while Inner London was losing population to those suburbs. Suburbanisation cannot only be

considered in its effects on inner city Irish communities. The lives of Irish people who left those communities must also be examined. Therefore chapter two examines Irish lives in suburban London. Different attractions led people with different aspirations to move to the suburbs of London. Low density housing, which incorporated in the physical environment the spread of population over a large area, dictated much of the lives of those that went to live there. The distance inherent in this type of design discouraged the formation of community. Although lines of houses built around the same time may appear similar and dictated similar things, there were differences between different suburban developments. The degree of density seems to have been a crucial factor in Irish community formation. There were also other factors, for example the type of work, which determined where people migrated from and whether there were likely to have been Irish.

The communities and households examined in chapters one and two present a view of Irish people in London as being composed of relatively equal proportions of men and women. Whereas this was substantially the case in the areas studied in chapters one and two it was not the case for London as a whole. The invisibility of women who lived outside Irish communities is due to their working in domestic service in London. Due to this fact and to represent the true composition of the Irish population in London chapter three examines Irish domestic servants. This analysis rests mainly on a database of all female Irish-born domestic servants compiled from the 1901 census which has been mapped using GIS. This chapter argues that domestic servants did form a kind of Irish community in London at this time. Their shared experiences of work in close proximity to one another and their role in drawing one another into domestic service often in the same household made this a community. In particular by entering the London labour market as outsiders, they set themselves apart from the general population of domestic servants. They chose to work in areas where higher wages and better conditions were offered. In being ostensibly isolated from the residential Irish communities in London they were not isolated from other Irish women. Indeed, many worked in Irish

households. This was another Irish world and one decidedly different from the typical image in the historiography of an Irish community.

Chapters one, two and three focus on the residential lives of Irish people. To address other links between Irish people, firstly their residential lives must be known. Having established where and with whom Irish people lived in London the possibility of cultural links between them can be examined and the impact of where they lived on how they interacted with one another can be explored. The impact of the residential lives of Irish people can be seen most clearly in the Irish language in London. This is examined in chapter four. The regional origin of nineteenth century Irish migrants to London indicates that at least some of these would have been Irish speakers. This is supported by the survival of the Irish language into the twentieth century in some of the areas in which they settled. In general language change is an intergenerational phenomenon. This is argued to have been the pattern of change amongst Irish speakers in London. There was also another group of Irish language speakers in London at this time. These were Gaelic League members and revivalists. The existence of native-Irish speakers and a revival movement which hardly interacted with them is indicative not only of the geographic distance which structured Irish interactions in London but also of social distance. It is in the examination of language, a means of communication, that the lack of communication between these groups of Irish people is most evident. This was a shared culture but it did not bring Irish people together across London. Instead, it was shared with those like them, both socially and geographically.

Cultural commonality is explored again in chapter 5. Music, in particular how it was shared by performance, forms the basis of this chapter. Following from the discussion of distance which militated against distinct groups of Irish people sharing spaces, this chapter addresses the particular spaces of distinct communities. It argues that there was a particular Irish repertoire which would have been familiar to Irish people in London. However, this did not alter the fact that Irish people enjoyed this music in distinct spaces. Three areas of performance are examined: the home, Irish or Catholic meetings

and the streets where marching bands played. In all three of these there was a strong sense of meaning to this music; however this was not necessarily the meaning explained in the lyrics of the song. The sense of knowing the repertoire and the references related to it were relatively exclusive to Irish people. Even the loudest music, that of marching bands, succeeded in attracting only those who knew their music to be their own, and so followed the band. Although its meaning could be relatively exclusive, the songs sung, in general, show that this was not an insular world musically. Songs from the stage, music hall or gramophone, found their way easily into the entertainments of all groups. The influence of London was more fundamental than that though and influenced the form these entertainments took. Accompanied singing indicates the influence of the middle-class parlour room type of English entertainment on those who might have been expected to have retained their musical culture to a greater degree.

This mix of styles and culture found in those meetings indicates that even the most insular seeming Irish communities were integrated in London life and open to its culture. This presents us with a group who were not culturally isolated from British society. If Irish people in London were not distinct residentially or culturally, how did they regenerate in Irish communities where inward migration from Ireland had ceased? The influences on the ethnic identity of children are considered in chapter six. Where chapters four and five considered cultural aspects of Irishness largely amongst adults, this chapter considers how people were formed as Irish people. This chapter will argue that while there has been more analysis on the motives of organisations to mould children, evidence of their desire does not necessarily indicate that they were successful. Conclusions in this chapter are necessarily tentative. This is an important area not least because statistical estimates of the size of the second generation Irish population in any area rests implicitly on the basis that Irish parents brought up Irish children. As this chapter shows this was not necessarily the case.

This consideration of children's ethnic identity and its formation is followed by a consideration of that of Irish adults' ethnic identity in London. Having established the geography of Irish communities in London and their discreteness in cultural output the way being Irish drew the diverse Irish population together needs examination. Chapter 7 examines how Irish adults' ethnic identity influenced their perceptions of other Irish people in London. Although Irish people in London did not necessarily share any unifying trait by virtue of being Irish, identifying themselves as Irish or being identified by others as Irish, made them consider one another. In these judgements it was not ideals of Irishness that were enforced, but that unrespectable behaviour was deemed unIrish. Societally approved behaviour was articulated as behaviour essential to Irishness and was placed in exactly those terms. Divisions between Irish people were often along class lines. The characteristics which were prized in working-class and middle-class groups were transferred to their consideration of their ethnicity. Those who either group did not want to have considered with them were argued to not be truly Irish if they did not possess whatever indefinable respectability which was deemed essential to Irishness. Religion and being born in Ireland were cross-class ways that Irish people used to define their ethnicity. The use of religion by Irish people here should be seen as in line with the positive societal view of religion in general, and religion as a controlling influence in the lives of working-class people in particular.

People's perceptions of one another and their use of ethnicity to essentialise the values of the society around them were most illustrative of their own identity. This chapter will show that as with music, language shift or the desire for a suburban lifestyle, Irish people shared the values and goals of the society around them. They articulated them differently at times and integrated them into a narrative of being Irish. Having to consider one another in their articulation of identity did distinguish them from others in London. It was this fact more than any other that Irish people had in common. Using the same word necessarily bound them together. Whereas in terms of every other facet of their lives Irish people, even of the same class, could be quite separate from one another, in this respect they were responsible to one another.

Through these seven chapters the lives of Irish people in London will be explored and the ways Irish people were connected to one another examined. There was not simply one Irish community in London. There was no occupation or area which typified the Irish experience. Irish people were part of the economy and growth of London itself. They worked as domestic servants in some areas, market porters, lawyers and stevedores in others. They were suburbanised, according to the areas and classes in which they lived. They sought people like them in London, not Irish people in general, but people of the particular class, background, politics or religion that resembled their own. There were cultural things they shared, but they shared them with those like and near them. Who they taught their children to be was decided partially within the framework of the parents' social world. However, it also depended on the dynamics of the household and the feelings and behaviour of the Irish parent in the household. Irish identity in adults was fundamental in how they judged other Irish people in London, indeed it was central in them having to make judgements at all. All Irish people in London were linked by the word and identity of 'Irish', and in defining themselves they had to come to terms with others who had that identity.

Chapter 1 - Irish Communities in Inner London

Irish people were most identifiable as being Irish when they formed a distinct residential group. This fact has meant and means that most frequently the type of Irish community examined is a geographic one.[1] This chapter is the first of three to address the residential lives of Irish people. In addressing the most typical Irish communities here and following this analysis with chapters which examine areas and people which are generally not treated in studies of Irish people in Britain, the overriding conclusion is the diversity of Irish communities and the strong impact of the local environment on the development of Irish communities. This chapter argues that Irish communities in different areas of London differed substantially. These differences were the result of different times of settlement, the local economy they entered and the culture of the area they settled in. A factor whose importance is impossible to evaluate is the effect of differing Irish origins on the settlement established. Early and mid-nineteenth century Irish immigrants were generally from Munster and those that came in the early twentieth century generally did not join any Irish geographic community. If they did, these did not rival, in size or cohesiveness, the communities already established. The three largest settlement areas in this period are: those of Central London, East and South London and Battersea. These areas were chosen primarily because of their size and profile. Within these districts there was not necessarily just one Irish community. They are grouped together by location as they were subject to similar pressures of the same local economy.

There is no attempt here to quantify the Irishness of these communities. Principally this is due to the fact that identity is immeasurable. It is taken that these are Irish communities because of their own group identification of themselves as such and also in others' recognition of them as Irish. The danger of this approach is that those who are not Irish, by whatever measure, are included in the analysis. Irish is and was, as is any ethnicity, a

[1] E.g. A city-defined study: John Belcham, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse: the history of the Liverpool-Irish, 1800-1939* (Liverpool, 2007) or a country-defined one: Helen Kelly, *Irish 'Ingleses' : the Irish immigrant experience in Argentina, 1840-1920* (Dublin, 2009).

relatively unpredictable term. It applies to people who do not necessarily have anything in common. This, I regard, as a strength of this approach as it integrates into the analysis those on the fringes of Irishness. For example, those who were regarded as unIrish by contemporaries or historians.

The first communities examined here are those in Central London. This analysis focuses mainly on the streets which were cleared in Holborn. The Irish settlement here had its origins in the late eighteenth century, although it was enlarged in the period of greatest migration in the middle of the nineteenth century. The population of this area was in decline from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards due to the increasing commercialisation of that area of London.[2] With the growing realisation that Irish communities were not necessarily geographically isolated or segregated, historians have begun focusing more on the institutional aspects of Irish community life to validate a study of Irish people in particular areas.[3] This has led those who wish to study Irish communities to justify their choice on the basis that there was a strong social network or support system between Irish people. Inherently this logic prizes those communities that were afforded stability. The disintegration or resilience of communities was not necessarily something dictated by the community itself. Irish people here were subject to the local economy. Changes in the local economy ultimately drove them from the area when the use of land in the area changed, just as it had earlier provided cheap housing and ready work at the markets.[4]

The second area studied is the East End and Bermondsey. These areas contained a number of distinct Irish settlements. They are considered together here, not because they had the same identity but because they were subject to the same or very similar local economies due to prevalence of dock

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[2] London County Council (henceforth L.C.C.), 'Housing Conditions in Metropolitan Boroughs (Dec. 1918-Jan.1919)', pp 52-57 (Holborn) (London Metropolitan Archives [henceforth L.M.A.] , L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/33).

[3] Louise Miskell, 'Irish Immigrants in Cornwall' in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds), *The Irish in Victorian Britain: The Local Dimension* (Dublin, 1999), pp 38-9.

[4] L.C.C., 'Housing Conditions in Metropolitan Boroughs (Dec. 1918-Jan.1919)', p. 117 (L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/33).

employment.[5] They also shared a common culture of annual religious processions as a celebration of their communities. The structural integrity of these communities was the strongest reason for the continuing identification of suburban migrants from these areas with their original place of origin.

The third area studied is Battersea, which contained two separate areas of Irish settlement. This was the only community which had a strong Irish political culture that was local to London rather than being focused on Ireland. The origins of this will be argued to be in the culture of Battersea itself which fostered a broad tent of left wing groups, including an Irish one. Battersea was also the last Irish settlement in London, formed mainly in the 1880s with steady growth since then. It developed differently partly because of this.

Fundamentally each of the communities in these areas developed differently because they were subject to local pressures, of overcrowding for instance, and local economies which differed from one another. Processions are a good way of interrogating the interaction of a community with the space around it. For this reason they are used as tools to analyse particular Irish communities who used them. There was no one pattern of Irish community development, even something such as the use of processions, which were widespread across London, differed in the most fundamental ways. These communities were on three different trajectories: timing dictated the place of settlement and the local areas dictated a large part of the culture that developed.

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[5] There is evidence of a general East End Irish identity which was promoted, among other things, through reciprocal arrangements for religious processions. For instance in 1904 the congregation at Wapping were exhorted to travel to the Commercial Road procession on the basis that 'they sent a large contingent last Sunday.' ('19 June 1904 Notices Read at Masses' (Catholic Diocese of Westminster Archives, ADW [Wapping], Wapping Notice Books, Vol. XV: 8 May 1904- 3 Nov 1907).

The historic heart of London had a steadily falling population for the fifty years prior to 1900.[6] It was an area changing from an industrial centre to one of business. The last people to leave in almost all areas where changes of land use were undertaken were the poor. Indeed, where houses lay empty as a result of the tenants being evicted in preparation for demolition, were areas where the 'very poor naturally gravitate'.[7] The process of 'improving an area' was a long one; planning for wider streets, objections from property owners, even selling the cleared land could take decades. Although investigators had long supposed that the poor had no ties to the vicinity, owned no houses and could subsist anywhere, they remained slow to leave the area. Irish people were amongst those displaced by demolitions. However, they were affected differently by clearances. Demolishing houses could not destroy someone's identity, but it was an effective way of scattering an ethnic community. There are undoubtedly many moral judgements which could be made about the planning process and its effects on the poor in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. We must be wary of making these judgements. The analysis below seeks to understand how communities that had existed for decades ceased to exist. There is more to be gained from understanding the effects of planning policy on the poor than focusing on the ideology of those in power.

Clearances were motivated by a desire to change the land use in particular areas. Other factors were also important, concerns over overcrowding and the link between overcrowding and disease are littered throughout the reports of the Housing of the Working Classes Committee of London County Council (L.C.C.). These were real concerns, as was the desire to see working class people living in better housing. However, the only long term solution that would be economically viable for the County Council was

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[6]Housing of the Working Classes Committee, 'Joint Report by the Medical Officer of Health, the Valuer, and the Housing Manager (1 May 1918)' (L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/33).

[7]Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London, Third Series: Religious Influences Vol. 4* (London, 1902), p. 144.

cheap housing built in the suburbs of London. This solution, at this time, did not quite fit the problem. There was movement of people from Inner London to the suburbs of London, but those displaced by clearances were not those moving.[8] Where they went is a question with no clear answer. Although there are fleeting glimpses of people from these sites in other areas, there was no way to re-unite a community built around courts and alleys that had been destroyed.

Irish communities in central London were some of the oldest surviving Irish communities in London. The establishment the late eighteenth century of St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Soho to cater for the 'poorest classes living in back streets and slums in the neighbourhood' marks, if not the beginning of settlement, then certainly, its increasing numbers.[9] The 1851 and 1861 censuses show this area as amongst the most heavily populated by Irish.[10] In 1851 the two districts of St. Giles and Holborn were home to just under 10% of the Irish-born population of London.[11] Lees, who chose this area as one of her five sample areas, found that 35% of the population in the area between Drury Lane and Great Wild Street were Irish.[12] Although this community had been disrupted by the changes in land use, Irish along with other foreign-born people were slower to move from central London.[13] The existence of this community is clear from census material. It is also clear from the evidence of particular land clearances, which is discussed in detail below, that this community although dislocated in part had not disappeared from this area. Age of first settlement makes this community, from birth-place measures difficult to identify, but looking at the historical evidence of Irish settlement in London the existence and importance of this community is clear. The age of settlement is irrelevant as a measure of ethnic identity; the number of generations removed

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[8] Anthony S. Wohl, *Eternal Slum: housing and social policy in Victorian London* (London 1977), pp xiv-xv.

9 Denis Evinson, *Catholic Churches of London* (Sheffield, 1998), p. 58.

[10] Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 57; *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Population Tables*, Vol. I, pp 31-5.

[11] St. Giles and Holborn contained 9.4% of the Irish-born population. (*Calculated from Census of Great Britain, 1851: Population Tables*, Vol. I, pp 31-5.)

[12] Lees, Exiles of Erin, p. 57-60.

[13] Ibid., p. 60.

from Ireland is not a reliable indicator of those who had an Irish identity. It certainly did not seem to affect others' identification of them as Irish. Where age mattered was in terms of housing stock and infrastructure. It mattered in terms of industries and changes of land use. Clare Market would be demolished in tandem with the building of a new street to accommodate increases in traffic.[14]

These were important communities in Irish London not because they were strong and vibrant; quite clearly at this time they were in the process of disintegrating. They were hardly present at all in most sources.[15] These Irish people living in courts and alleys, in overcrowded rooms on valuable land, become invisible. In studying Irish communities it is important to recognise that what can be seen as vibrancy or a strong ethnic identity can be functions of other things. Those Irish communities that disappeared are as important as those that shouted their allegiance. Community is what makes people visible; it is what marks Irish people out to outsiders: time and again they are near other Irish people. There is not always a choice; it was not possible for an entire community to re-form in this period in London. What was possible for nineteenth century migrants from Ireland – to live near people from their place of origin – was not possible for migrants from Central London, with no means, in early twentieth century London. By examining the community that existed before clearances, the method of clearance itself and finally what came afterwards for the site and the people, the mechanics of how a community can vanish will be explored. This will also show that it was a longer process than just destroying houses. Clearances took years, and years afterwards the slow scattering was still continuing. Although there is a focus here on the major clearance around the Drury Lane area, in particular Shelton Street, and the area around Clare Market, this was a larger process than government clearances. Land use in Central London was changing and most demolitions were not clearances forced by London County Council or earlier the Metropolitan Board

14 J.A. Yelling, *Slums and Slum Clearance in Victorian London* (London, 1986), p. 134.
[15] For instance, the diocesan archives which are so revealing of other areas track mainly the demise of the parish churches built to serve this community.

of Works, rather they were undertaken by private owners and as such have left no record.[16]

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Overcrowding was the central theme on which clearances worked. However, this was always 'a hazy concept'.[17] Charles Booth's influential work on poverty defined overcrowding as more than two persons per room, and this was sometimes the definition adopted by the L.C.C. This can be seen in L.C.C. reports in which the figures were given in the number of rooms built rather than the number of working-class homes or flats built or demolished, such as in Southwark 'there has been a considerable amount of reconstruction in the borough with the result that a net loss of over 1,170 working-class rooms has occurred'.[18] However, the legal standard was based on a measure of cubic space.[19] The emphasis on overcrowding was due in large part to the fact that other factors could not be so easily measured. At inquiries into proposed demolitions landlords argued that it was the character of the people living in their buildings rather than the buildings themselves or the number of people living in them that made the buildings insanitary. In Shelton Street, an objector to the proposed scheme argued that 'You may put them in marble and gold if you like but still you would not induce them to keep the place in a sanitary state'.[20] Although the insanitary nature of the buildings was frequently the argument there was no effective way to prove this; sometimes death rates for particular areas were cited, but these were often argued against simply by citing the bad character of the people.

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[16] Yelling, *Slums and Slum Clearance*, p. 149.
[17] Wohl, *Eternal Slum*, p. xiv.
[18] L.C.C., 'Housing Conditions in Metropolitan Boroughs (Dec. 1918-Jan. 1919)', p. 100 (L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/33).
[19] L.C.C., 'Housing development and Workmen's fares: report by the valuer to the housing of the working classes committee', p. 9 (L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/33).
[20] Metropolitan Board of Works (M.B.W.) 1884 'Shorthand writers notes of proceedings before inspector at local inquiry', p. 51(Shelton Street) [Pagination is separate for each inquiry in the same volume] [L.M.A., M.B.W. 1884).

Overcrowding was not just the condition of those on the fringes of society. In 1911 most working class people who lived in London, rather than its suburbs, lived in overcrowded rooms.[21] However, although most continued to live in rooms that could by any definition be regarded as overcrowded this did not mean that the Metropolitan Board of Works, later the London County Council (L.C.C.), local boroughs or private landowners did not significantly reduce the amount of working-class accommodation in certain areas of London. From 1861 to 1900 the population of the borough of Westminster declined by 100,000 owing to the fact that a

> considerable part of the borough has been rebuilt for commercial and industrial premises, offices, Government buildings, hotels, theatres, clubs and other premises, the changes being assisted by the carrying out of several important street improvements, railway works and the clearance of insanitary areas. In this way a large part of the old property occupied by persons of the working-class has been dealt with...[22]

London street improvements were hailed as important attempts to improve the stock of working-class housing whether by providing for lower density occupation or improving sanitation. However 'their effect always was to reduce the supply of working-class housing, either absolutely or in terms of the kind of houses which those turned out of doors by their operations could afford or wish to occupy'.[23] This was the case for the areas of Holborn and Southwark where clearances disrupted Irish communities. These disruptions are part of several stories; they were part of the diminishing population at the centre of London, they were also, though, the first modern Irish settled community in London to face systematic disruption. Although this disruption was more direct and all-encompassing than anything that faced Irish communities elsewhere in London during this period, it was a sign of the pattern of change which would affect every Irish community.

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[21] Wohl, *Eternal Slum*, pp xiv-xv.
[22] L.C.C., 'Housing Conditions in Metropolitan Boroughs (Dec. 1918-Jan. 1919)', p. 117 (L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/33).
[23] H.J. Dyos, 'The Slums of Victorian London' in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Sept., 1967), p. 35.

The area around Drury Lane was affected by two major clearance and rebuilding efforts: the demolition of Shelton Street and some of the surrounding area and the building of a street from Holborn to the Strand. The Shelton Street scheme was approved in 1887. The demolition seems to have been completed by the early 1890s, however, rebuilding of the area and the completion of the 'Artizan Dwellings' for that area were not completed until the mid-1890s. Owing to the fact that Shelton Street was the narrowest street in the area, it was 15 or 16 feet wide at its widest and no more than a footway at its narrowest, it was decided to amalgamate the bulk of its area and widen the two other streets. This area contained 108 houses or 406 rooms and had a population of 1,208.[24] The Holborn to Strand new street and the Clare Market clearance involved the displacement of 3,038 persons and contained roughly 160 houses with 1,450 working-class rooms.[25] This area (shown in Map 1.1a and 1.1b) was a maze of courts and alleys and demonstrates the haphazard way the area developed. These 'deadends and backwaters in the street plan' were the result of there being no general plan for the city when these streets and buildings were built and rebuilt.[26] This clearance and rebuilding was planned in the 1890s and carried out at the beginning of the 1900s. There were other clearances which affected Irish communities, Falcon Court in Southwark, for example. However, the effect of having two clearances and rebuilding schemes in a relatively small, densely populated area made these the most significant in terms of numbers and displacement for Irish people.

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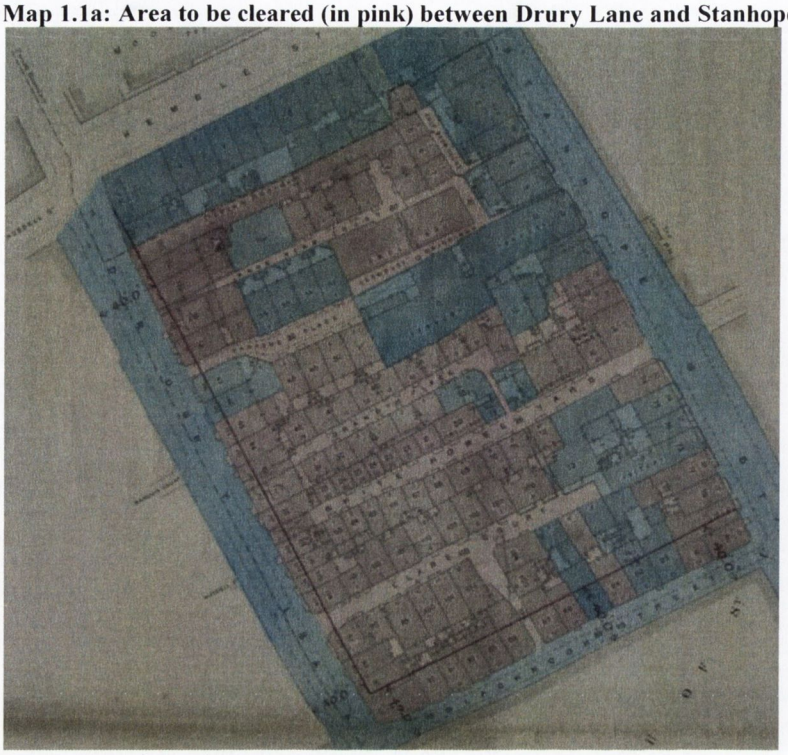
[24] L.C.C., 'Report of the housing of the working classes committee (6 Apr. 1891)', p. 1 (L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/3); L.C.C., 'Housing Conditions in Metropolitan Boroughs (Dec. 1918-Jan. 1919)', p. 55 (L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/33).

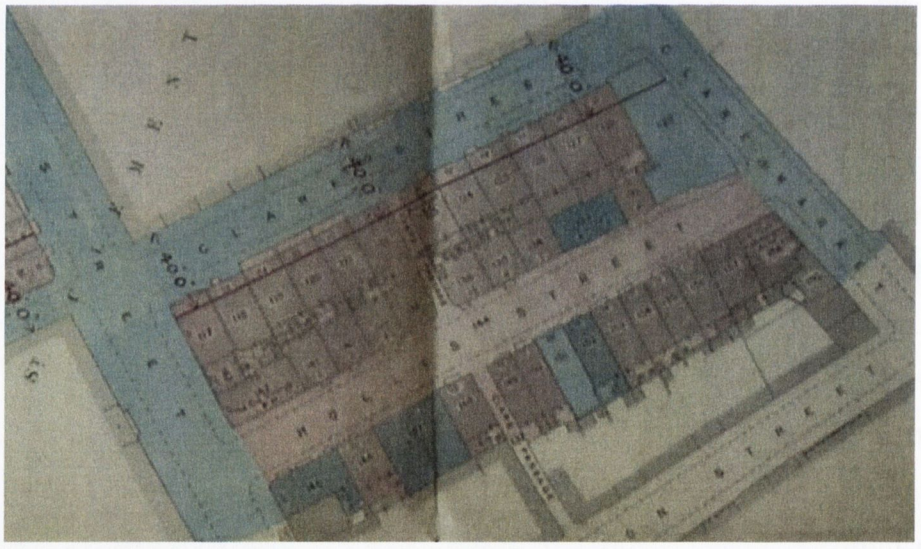
[25] L.C.C., 'Housing Conditions in Metropolitan Boroughs (Dec. 1918-Jan. 1919)', p. 116 (L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/33).

[26] Dyos, 'The Slums of Victorian London', p. 25.

Map 1.1a: Area to be cleared (in pink) between Drury Lane and Stanhope Street.[27]



Map 1.1b: Area to be cleared (in pink) around Clare Market.[28]



The displacement of such a large number of people and the fact of their having no obvious place to go meant that this was not a short process of

[27] L.C.C., 'Housing of the Working Classes Act Clare Market (Strand) Area 1895' (L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/3/3).
[28] Ibid.

one group of people moving in an ordered way from one street to one block of flats. This situation was dictated by the fact that the rehousing initiatives were in many cases designed not to appeal to them.[29] The result of this was that those that could stayed as long as they could in their houses, and then moved to a street nearby. The domino effect of the clearing of one street, which would result in more overcrowding for the surrounding area was a feature of most clearance schemes and is found here as well. The Shelton Street, Parker Street and Macklin Street area had been cleared before Booth began his notebooks of walks, however, he did publish the accounts of missionaries who had frequented the area.[30] The schemes in this area were some of the last large schemes before 1914; from 1900 the Council focused more on building suburban houses rather than dealing with inner city areas. The loss of the Progressive majority in London County Council in 1907 also brought an end to large building and demolition schemes.[31]

Most of the houses on Shelton Street itself were four storeys with most families occupying one room.[32] The houses on Parker Street seem to have been smaller, with some houses containing just four rooms, and also contained a number of common lodging houses, the population of which was described as of 'the most abandoned character'.[33] Descriptions of very poor streets, such as those cleared here, generally reference unbroken windows as the exception rather than the rule. Rats, fleas and bedbugs were common, so much so that apparently 'in hot weather they don't go to bed, but sit in their clothes in the least infested part of the room'.[34] The rooms themselves were sparsely furnished, a feature of lives that were peripatetic within a small area. Especially in these narrow courts and streets, where visitors were rare, a great deal of life was lived outdoors. The doors of houses were open to the street, and this often

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[29] See the testimony of Dr. Samuel Lovett at inquire into Shelton street. (M.B.W., 'Shorthand writers notes of proceedings before inspector at local inquiry', p. 91 (Shelton Street) (L.M.A., M.B.W. 1884)).
[30] Booth, *Labour and Life of the People*, Vol.2 (London, 1891), pp 46-82.
[31] J.A. Yelling, , 'L.C.C. Slum Clearance Policies, 1889-1907' in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, Vol. 7, No. 3 (1982), p. 292.
[32] Booth, *Labour and Life of the People*, Vol.2 (London, 1891), p. 47.
[33] Ibid., pp. 62-3.
[34] Ibid., p. 47

gave observers the impression of large household sizes. In reality, as Yelling has argued, this was due to the density of the population rather than larger than average households.[35]

Most houses had a yard at the back where a tap, toilet and dustbin were located.[36] These, according to inspectors, were frequently filthy. Whether this was blamed on the lack of ventilation due to taller buildings backing on to them, or simply the 'habits of the people', depended on the outlook of the inspector.[37] The smell from these yards and basements permeated the houses, and this was thought by the Medical Officer for the parish to be a cause of disease in the neighbourhood.[38] Other streets with houses back to back, which had their dustbins in the basement, were thought to have the same ills and it is hard to imagine an area as densely populated as this was, that could have adequate ventilation to meet medics' objections. Indeed most of the awful things in the area seem to have occurred due to the large number of people living in a small area. This overcrowding is most prevalent in official accounts of the smell, mess and number of people in the streets, and medics ascribed the prevalence of almost all 'preventable and catching diseases' to it.[39] The effects of overcrowding were felt by all: reading the depositions in Coroner's Courts for this time, it is noteworthy how many infants were suffocated while sleeping in a bed with three or four others.[40] In relation to the death of Edith Connors, who died at five months old, the doctor called to testify at her inquest reported that her death was 'due to suffocation. I do not think it right for a child of 5 months to be in same bed with others.'[41]

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[35] Yelling, *Slums and Slum Clearance,* p. 121.
[36] Booth, *Labour and Life of the People*, Vol. 2 (London, 1891), p. 48.
[37] M.B.W., 'Shorthand writers notes of proceedings before inspector at local inquiry', p. 100 (Shelton Street) (L.M.A., MBW 1884).
[38] Ibid. p. 39.
[39] 'Report on the Falcon Court area with some account of its surroundings', p. 5 (L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department LCC/HSG/GEN/2/3).
[40] Southwark and City of London inquest reports and depositions are held in London Metropolitan Archive (L.M.A., City of London Coroners' Court, CLA/041/IQ/04; L.M.A., Southwark Coroners' Court, CLA/042/IQ/02).
[41] Edith Connor [Inquest No. 145], City of London Coroner's Court Depositions July-Dec 1903 (L.M.A., City of London Coroner's Court, CLA/041/IQ/04/02/10).

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The people in the Shelton Street area were Irish Catholics and worked at a variety of low-paying jobs, frequently selling 'flowers, fruit, fowls or vegetables in the streets', while others worked as market-porters.[42] The population of the Clare Market area was similarly described: 'Roman Catholics of Irish nationality, born and bred in the neighbourhood', who worked as market porters or costermongers.[43] From the street by street description in Booth's work most seem to have worked as costermongers or flower sellers.[44] Flower sellers had to arrive at the market early to 'get the pick of the flowers which they can buy cheap'.[45] In many areas this trade seems to have been identified with Irish people, in the same way that Italians were identified with the ice cream trade in London.[46] These would have filled their barrows at some market and worked the rest of the day selling its contents. South of the Thames it was common to find the 'mess of paper and refuse littered about the streets', the remains of their barrows.[47] This work must also have contributed to the impression that others had of them as being a very mobile group of people. In one sense it does appear to have been true, they travelled out of their exact neighbourhoods to sell their goods but they were costermongers largely, it seems, because they lived close to what were becoming the historic markets of London.

There grew over this time a right to be re-housed in the area if tenants had work that required them to live nearby. For this reason, at the inquiry into Shelton Street, it was argued on behalf of the Metropolitan Board of Works that those who worked selling goods from barrows did 'not have any

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[42] Booth, *Labour and Life of the People*, Vol.2 (London, 1891), p. 47.
[43] Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London, Third Series: Religious Influences* Vol. 2 (London, 1902), p. 178.
[44] Booth, *Labour and Life of the People*, Vol.2 (London, 1891), pp 46-82.
[45] M.B.W., 'Shorthand writers notes of proceedings before inspector at local inquiry', p. 133 (Shelton Street) (L.M.A., M.B.W. 1884).
[46] Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London, Third Series: Religious Influences* Vol. 2 (London, 1902), p. 142.
[47] Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London, Third Series: Religious Influences* Vol. 4 (London, 1902), p. 10.

local work about the place'.[48] They were also argued to be a 'floating population' with no ties to the neighbourhood and as such would not need to be considered in the numbers to be re-housed.[49] There was a high degree of mobility between different streets in the same locality; however, this was mobility within a small radius rather than the city as a whole.[50] They were also regarded as an insanitary class with 'the most objectionable' habits which 'If you were to put them in a palace you would probably find stinks in that palace'.[51]

There is no doubt that many of those displaced from these streets lived an existence which was at the edge of society; some, for example, were ballad singers who 'sing in the street on wet days and get sympathy'.[52] It is possible to exist at the edge of society and still be at the centre of a community. They were part of an Irish community that was formed first in the early nineteenth century. The demolitions and displacement meant that Catholic Churches in Central London missed this population; St. Patrick's Church in Soho Square lamented in 1905 that 'The whole neighbourhood has changed'. They were unimpressed with the Italian and French people who moved into the district to work in hotels and restaurants: the Italians rarely attended apart from baptisms or marriages, while the French attended the French church in Leicester Square.[53] There had been a whole structure of community in this area, and it was easily swept away. The last remnants were the churches which were the only institutional elements of these communities; these were also the only immovable elements to them.

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[48] M.B.W., 'Shorthand writers notes of proceedings before inspector at local inquiry', p. 99 (Shelton Street) (L.M.A., M.B.W., MBW 1884).
[49] E.g. M.B.W., 'Shorthand writers notes of proceedings before inspector at local inquiry', p. 78 (Shelton Street) (L.M.A., M.B.W., MBW 1884).
[50] Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, pp 58-9.
[51] M.B.W., 'Shorthand writers notes of proceedings before inspector at local inquiry', pp. 102, 47 (Shelton Street) (L.M.A., M.B.W., MBW 1884).
[52] M.B.W., 'Shorthand writers notes of proceedings before inspector at local inquiry', p. 124 (Shelton Street) (L.M.A., M.B.W., MBW 1884).
[53] '1905 Visitation Return St. Patrick's Soho' (Catholic Diocese of Westminster Archives, AQB [St. Patrick's Soho]).

Outsiders who visited these areas described these people as rough, with drunkenness common.[54] Also common and abhorrent to the middle-class outsiders who visited the district, whether missionaries, doctors, or County Council officials, was the bad language of the people. Testimony was offered at the Shelton Street inquiry that: 'I went with a gentleman down there last week and there were some young women there, and their remarks quite shocked him although he was not a person easily affected.'[55] In these narrow, overcrowded courts, streets and alleys, middle-class outsiders of the type Booth used as informants felt particularly ill at ease. They noted 'Faces at windows of criminal type' and must have felt their every movement in those streets was being watched.[56] Those more at home with both the people and the area were less negative. The priest who served the people of Clare Market contradicted the account the police had given to Booth and said 'his people are not so savage as is made out; that they are very kind to one another'.[57] This is the fundamental contradiction in descriptions of places where it is difficult to tell whether the streets themselves, the houses, the overcrowding or the people were most objectionable. There were, as Yelling has noted, 'many links between attitudes to the poor and attitudes to slums'.[58] There are numerous sources for drunkenness or gambling but the rare sight of the words of the people themselves are in petitions begging for their houses not be demolished. We can say that most were Irish Catholic and often unfriendly to the Protestant missionaries who visited the district.[59] They were also recognisable as Irish Catholics to outsiders and had a group identity among themselves. They lived in the same type of communities that had first been formed in the early nineteenth century and intensified, briefly, in mid-century by further migration.

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[54] 'George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 2 [Strand and St Giles], District 3 [St James, Westminster, Soho, All Saints and Tottenham Court Road], District 4 [Clerkenwell and Gray's Inn]', pp 76-7 (London School of Economics (L.S.E.), Charles Booth Online Archive, B354).

[55] M.B.W., 'Shorthand writers notes of proceedings before inspector at local inquiry', p. 71-2 (Shelton Street) (L.C.C., M.B.W., MBW 1884).

[56] 'George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 2 [Strand and St Giles], District 3 [St James, Westminster, Soho, All Saints and Tottenham Court Road], District 4 [Clerkenwell and Gray's Inn]', p. 99 (L.S.E., Charles Booth Online Archive, B354).

[57] Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London, Third Series: Religious Influences*, Vol. 2 (London, 1902), p. 178.

[58] Yelling, *Slums and Redevelopment: Policy and Practice in England, 1918-45, with particular reference to London* (London, 1992), p. 10.

[59] Booth, *Labour and Life of the People*, Vol.2 (London, 1891), p. 48.

Those that lived there were at least second generation Irish, and they represented the community most distant from Ireland in terms of time of migration to survive into the twentieth century.

The nature of clearances was that the demolitions took place years before the promised working-class accommodation was built. The short term effect of most clearances was to increase the population of the area surrounding it and raise rents.[60] Where rents were already high, as in Central London, the result of high rents was more overcrowding, at least in the short term, as people could afford less space. Everything about working-class housing at the centre of London in this period was short-term. In the longer term there could be no future: 'it was impossible for working-class housing to compete with other interests for centrally located land'.[61] There was an inevitability to the demolition of the housing this community could afford, and Booth records it as such: 'Sometimes when their houses are pulled down they have to move but they won't of their own free will'.[62] Sometimes their houses were torn down, sometimes they were out of work, sometimes there were cold winters, this was the reality of day to day life for this community. Although most seem to have tried to remain in the area, the area could not accommodate all those displaced, even with more overcrowding.

It is difficult to trace where they went next. Some can be traced to Fulham, where they are again found in Booth's police notebooks, where his police informants found that these migrants 'if they have not the same faces they have the same names as notorious characters in the Drury Lane and Wild House'.[63] There were gasworks in the area, but these people are not recorded as moving to work there. It is likely that they were forced from the courts around Drury Lane and found accommodation which few others would want to take

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[60] Wohl, *Eternal Slum*, p. 261.
[61] Ibid., p. 303.
[62] 'George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 2 [Strand and St Giles], District 3 [St James, Westminster, Soho, All Saints and Tottenham Court Road], District 4 [Clerkenwell and Gray's Inn]', p. 113 (L.S.E., Charles Booth Online Archive, B354).
[63] 'George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 28 [Kensington Town], District 29 [Fulham], District 30 [Hammersmith]', p. 223 (L.S.E., Charles Booth Online Archive, B361).

up. H.J. Dyos has argued that gasworks, along with other open sewers or a noxious fume emitting factory, contributed to creating slum conditions: overcrowded, badly maintained and insanitary housing occupied only by those who could afford nothing else.[64] The movement of Irish people from Central London to streets near gasworks in Fulham certainly supports this.

The immediate landing place for those displaced can be intuited, just as it was obvious to the priest associated with the Irish slums in Southwark that his flock 'will drift further East, clinging to the river side, and thus this church may be left high and dry'.[65] The slow demolition of the physical structures of the Irish community in London meant that this community could not be recreated elsewhere. Some would go one place, others a year or two later, would find room somewhere else. In losing the area they had grown up in, a whole community and support system disappeared. So too did the people who understood and belonged to the Irish Cockney identity of that place. What exactly became of these small pockets of people from this point on is impossible to know. Logically it seems small communities of an ethnic minority, already several generations distant and speaking the same language as the majority population would not continue to maintain a separate community. A small population cannot support a separate community life; in the sample areas of Lees' study she argued that there was 'neither geographic nor social assimilation'.[66] It is likely that forcing geographic integration also forced social integration especially with diminished numbers. We cannot say anything of their identity, of what remained strong or weak or changed, but they become harder to find in large measure because they were no longer in one large group.

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[64] Dyos, 'The Slums of Victorian London', p. 25.
[65] Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London, Third Series: Religious Influences*, Vol. 4 (London, 1902) p. 13.
[66] Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 63.

As well as regenerating the area, there was a statutory obligation to provide accommodation for at least some of those displaced. This obligation developed over time from one which provided for just a percentage of those displaced, at the time of the first Shelton Street scheme, to re-housing all those working class displaced although not necessarily on the site from where they were displaced. So although the Shelton Street area which was cleared had a population of 1,208 before clearance, the Metropolitan Board of Works proposed to build accommodation for just 550.[67] In 1905, after clearances, the working class population of this area was estimated to be 502.[68] This figure includes the roughly 340 persons who could be accommodated at the Common Lodging House built by the Board. The policy of the Metropolitan Board of Works had been not to build housing itself but rather to sell plots of land for the purpose of working class housing. At Shelton Street the plots of land designated for this purpose failed to be auctioned and so the Council decided to undertake the work itself.[69] By 1896 five buildings were being built which would accommodate 288 persons.[70] Just as in other areas and as was to happen to those displaced from nearby areas for the Clare Market and Holborn to Strand scheme, the accommodation provided was not occupied by those who had been displaced. There were many reasons for this: the rents were too high, the conditions of occupancy too strict and there was insufficient space for wheelbarrows. Beneath all of these, were the decisions made years before the buildings were even built that those displaced should not be maintained in the area, as was argued by the Metropolitan Board of Works at the Inquiry:

> All that those words [working class] mean is this that persons to be displaced for whom provision is to be made are to be bona fide labouring and working men getting their living by their labour and by their work in a place which should be their permanent home in

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[67] M.B.W., 'Shorthand writers notes of proceedings before inspector at local inquiry', p. 23 (Shelton Street) (L.M.A., M.B.W., MBW 1884).
[68] L.C.C., 'Insanitary areas before and after clearance (March 1905)', pp 18-19 [L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/4 Part 2)
[69] L.C.C., 'Report of the health and housing committee for the year ended 31st March 1893', [p. 2] (L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/3).
[70] L.C.C., 'Report of the public health and housing committee for the year ended 31st March 1896', [p. 1] (L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/3].

> the centre of their work, and that within a mile of the centre…I say there are not 50% of that class in this area.[71]

The buildings that were built were never envisaged to house the 'questionable characters' displaced. Indeed, at least some of the motivation for the Shelton Street scheme seems to have been to displace them.

The same story repeats itself with the Clare Market and Holborn to Strand scheme. Although there was a statutory obligation to provide accommodation for all those displaced, just 750 were to be re-housed in the district, while 1,500 were to be given accommodation at Millbank.[72] However, the buildings at Millbank were not suitable for those displaced: 'Large numbers however have visited the buildings [at Millbank] but say the distance is too great for them, that the rents are too high, and that there is no laundry accommodation provided'.[73] Most had been renting one room, and due to the layout of the new buildings and the Council restrictions, would have had to rent at least two. When the Millbank estate was officially opened by the King, just three people displaced from Clare Market were living there.[74] In some cases even when those displaced tried to live in the housing allocated the arrangement did not last long. This happened in the housing built in connection with the Falcon Court clearance when 'Seventeen of the families, comprising 41 persons displaced from the areas, removed directly into Cobbam buildings, but unfortunately, owing to their behaviour, it was found impossible to allow them to remain as tenants for any lengthy period.'[75]

The areas cleared were, despite the plans for 'Artizans' Dwellings', effectively cleared of the population that had lived there. Most were converted

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[71] M.B.W., 'Shorthand writers notes of proceedings before inspector at local inquiry', p. 462 (Shelton Street) (L.M.A., M.B.W., MBW 1884).
[72] Dirk Schubert and Anthony Sutcliffe, 'The 'Haussmannization' of London?: the planning and construction of Kingsway-Aldwych, 1889–1935' in *Planning Perspectives*, Vol. 11, Issue 2 (1996), p. 139.
[73] L.C.C., 'Valuer Report on Millbank Estate Re. Hogarth Buildings (5 July 1899)', [p. 1] [L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/3).
[74] *British Medical Journal*, 8 Nov. 1902, p. 1555.
[75] L.C.C., 'Report of the Housing of the Working classes committee year end 31st March 1902', p. 11 (L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/3).

to commercial use. In other areas of Westminster observers noted the same pattern: 'displacement of the poor, who were largely Irish or Cockney Irish. A better class are coming in but they are not Catholics.'[76] Large commercial buildings such as the bank and shop complex depicted in Maps 1.2 and 1.3 were built on newly widened streets.[77] The area was given a more efficient throughway of streets which benefitted increased traffic. Whether good or ill, all of these things were accomplished with the displacement of the local Irish population. As predicted by the Housing Committee, it did 'change the character of a large part of the area'.[78] We cannot know the likely outcome for these people had they not been scattered by government action. The fact of these people living in the places they did were not the effects of the modern industrial economy but rather 'historical persistence'.[79] They had first settled there and so their descendants continued to live there; the economy the first Irish migrants served had been shifting throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. Ultimately the result of this shift in the local economy and the use of land was that poor Irish communities ceased to live there.

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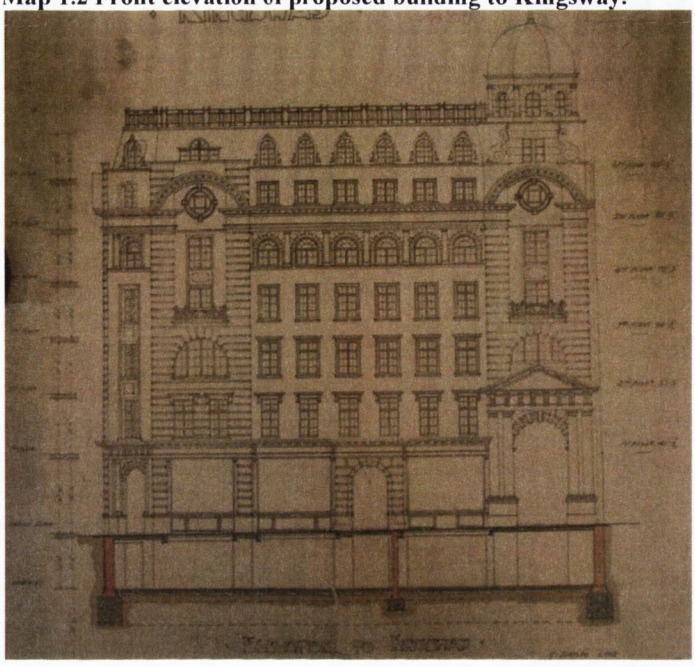
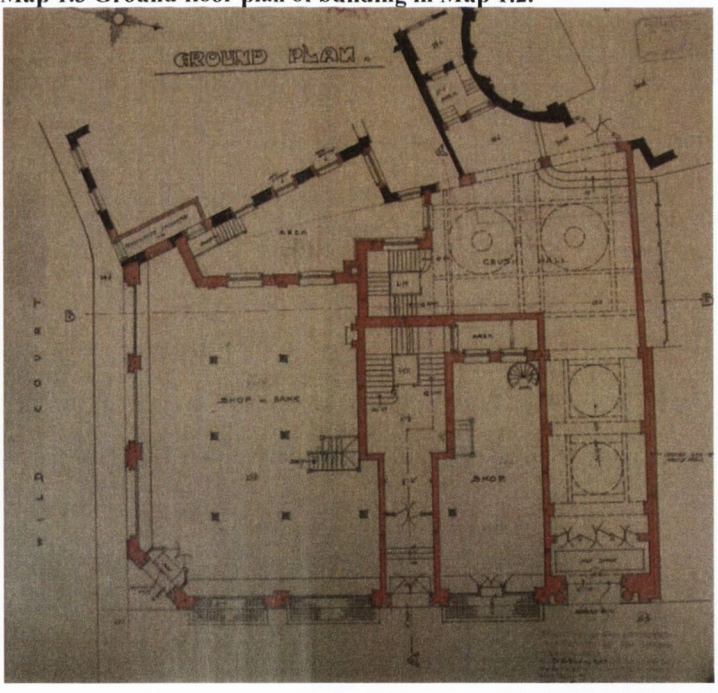
[76] Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London: Third series, Religious influences*, Vol. 3 (London, 1902), pp 84-5.
[77] 'Proposed Buildings, Kingsway', Plans for Buildings in Holborn and Westminster (L.M.A., L.C.C. Valuation Department, LCC/VA/DD/R32/01).
[78] L.C.C., 'Reports on the Housing of the Working Classes by the Medical Officer of Health and Surveyor (15 January 1901)' [L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/33).
[79] Yelling, *Slums and Slum Clearance*, p. 55.

Map 1.2 Front elevation of proposed building to Kingsway.[80]



Map 1.3 Ground floor plan of building in Map 1.2.[81]



[80] 'Proposed Buildings, Kingsway', Plans for Buildings in Holborn and Westminster (L.M.A., L.C.C. Valuation Department, LCC/VA/DD/R32/01).

[81] 'Proposed Buildings, Kingsway', Plans for Buildings in Holborn and Westminster (L.M.A., L.C.C. Valuation Department, LCC/VA/DD/R32/01).

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The changes in Central London predate and continue through the early twentieth century. The decisions made to order these two clearance schemes in particular were taken before this period begins. It is covered here both because these processes were never as quick as the dates on the first orders of eviction and because this was one of the oldest Irish communities that survived until the twentieth century in London. In these years the slow dispersal of its members is evident. Just as Irish communities did not behave differently to other poor migrants to cities in their settlement patterns, Irish communities would never be too different from one another either. However, there are differences, yet if we consider them to be ones of timeline and local economy rather than the nature of the community, a better understanding of the evolution of Irish communities can be gained. In the many reports and inquiries about clearances in Central London at this time, the clearest lack that emerges is the absence of any political power. People living there were also much more restricted in the public spaces they used than those in relatively newer Irish communities. The causes of this are to do with where the community existed, the commercial district that steadily encroached on it, the formation of the London County Council and the extension of the vote. Irish communities were captives to these changes. They were affected by them, but did not succeed in changing the processes that were underway, nor is it really possible to see another way for this community. They were in dreadful accommodation, overcrowded to a dangerous degree, in streets and courts whose layout was nonsensical. They were also in streets and courts at the centre of London, at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. The centre of London was no longer an industrial zone, or a market one; it was becoming a place for banks and shops, a place that needed to accommodate a significant amount of through traffic that could not navigate the warrens of streets.

The only possible method of continuation for this community was for them to be re-housed in one group. In reality most were not re-housed at all, and found their own accommodation elsewhere. Even here, where the Council

could be criticised most, there was an inevitability about the outcome. This population was well known for frequently moving short distances to other accommodation; that they had a similar reaction to being evicted for not paying rent as to eviction notices from official sources is understandable. The timeline is important in all of this, a community formed well before local government had begun to be influenced by the votes of non-property owners, was always well outside officialdom. There are no constraints on ethnic identity here, but London, the development of the city as organic as any organism, would always set its own limits. And communities which fell on the wrong side of these would always lose.

The East End and Bermondsey

In contrast to the shrinking population of Irish people in Central London, the East End of London had a much larger presence in the Irish worlds of London. In this period it was the largest and loudest group of Irish communities. It was also, in common with those at the centre of London, largely an invisible one by measure of birthplace in this period. By 1900, birthplace is not a useful measure of the number of Irish in this district as most were second or third generation. John A. Jackson argued that 'No one today could write about East London without mentioning the Irish and yet it would be difficult to say where their special contribution lies.'[82] Yet by focusing not on contribution but rather on the community itself its existence is obvious. The visibility of Irish people in this part of London is partly due to the fact that this was a group of communities. Although noise from the East End, both figurative and literal, can seem to be all coming from the same direction, in reality there were several separate marching bands, each tied to their church and people. The differences between them were slight: numbers, political activity and geographical cohesiveness but were important to those in this world.

[82] John A. Jackson, 'The Irish in East London' in *East London Paper,* Vol. 6, No. 2 (Dec. 1963), p. 11.

This was not a time of great change for this community, there were certainly signs of the impact of working-class suburbanisation; but there was no mass displacement and no major political movement either. This was a community at peace. Mirroring it across the Thames is Bermondsey. Both the East End communities and those in Bermondsey were formed largely post-Famine and received the largest influx of Irish people at that time. They were also both settled by people mainly from Munster. In both Bermondsey and the East End, Irish men, of first and subsequent generations, were found in waterside labour, and prominent in the trades union of the waterside trades. In neither was there an Irish political candidate. Certainly there were Irish politicians, but they ran as members of one of the political parties rather than as a member of an Irish political group. These were definitely poor people but compared to the poverty of Irish communities displaced in the centre of London they were much better off. Their trades had not begun to be obsolete, nor were their houses so dilapidated or situated on valuable land.

In some ways these communities seemed to own everything around them. They held raucous celebrations of their parishes; their priests were prominent on platforms of candidates for general and local elections. They did all of this, but the way they used space indicates the limits of their community. They were absolutely the masters of the streets they resided in and the area around their churches, but they did not venture further afield. They did not own the area between their relatively disparate communities. There were contradictions to this community that can only be explained by looking at when they were established. Ethnic identity or a strong ethnic community does not preclude a community disestablishing. To understand these communities, to understand how they lose and regain members it is important to see the streets they operated in. Following a description of what these communities consisted of, their use of public space will be explored. The characteristics of this Irish population will then be explored and finally what changed for the Irish people in the East End and Bermondsey during this time will be explained. These communities were not the same but they were more similar to one another than

to other Irish communities. They were part of one pattern of migration and their geographical location made them subject to similar local economies.

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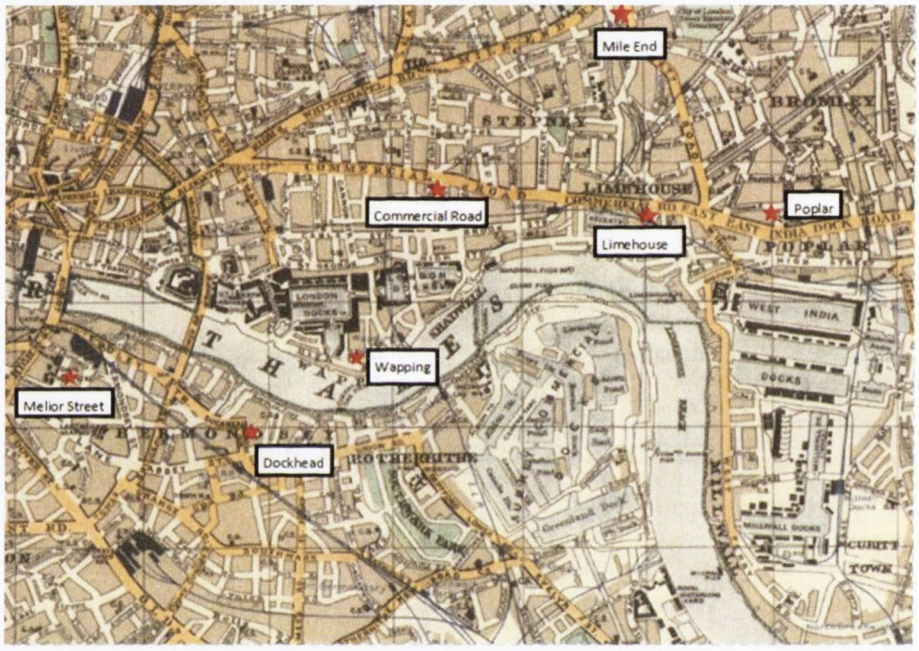
The Catholic Churches in these areas were defined areas with measured populations. There were five Catholic churches in the East End area, those of Commercial Road, Wapping, Limehouse, Poplar and Mile End. Bermondsey had two Catholic churches: Melior Street and Dockhead; the latter being more prominent. The location of these churches is shown in Map 1.4. The use of churches and church estimates of population is particularly useful in these areas as, by the early twentieth century, the majority of the Irish population were not Irish-born and as such have no visibility in official census figures. The Thames split the Catholic dioceses of London and as such the Bermondsey churches under the supervision of the Diocese of Southwark and those of the East End come under the Diocese of Westminster. Whereas there are figures for Visitation returns in the archives of the Diocese of Westminster, there are none for this period for Bermondsey in the Diocese of Southwark. Earlier figures and the finances of the Bermondsey churches do give an indication of their relative positions. The 1911 census indicates that there were just over 3,000 Irish-born people living in the two boroughs which encompassed most of the East End, Poplar and Stepney.[83] The boroughs of Bermondsey and Deptford had 1,724 Irish-born persons living there, again equally divided between men and women.[84] When these figures are compared with the figures from Catholic churches in 1911 the difference is striking; the combined total for the East End parishes was 16,905.[85] While there are no figures available for the Bermondsey churches for this period, slightly earlier

[83] 'Birthplaces of males and females enumerated in admin Counties County Boroughs etc. 1911', *Census of England and Wales Vol. IX Birthplaces* (London, 1913), pp 44-62 (Table 2).
[84] Ibid.
[85] Figure calculated from 1911 visitation returns for: St. Mary and St. Michael's, Commercial Rd.,; St. Patrick's Wapping.; Our Lady Immaculate, Limehouse,; St. Mary and St. Joseph's Poplar,; Guardian Angels, Mile End. (Catholic Diocese of Westminster Archives, MQ (Commercial Rd), PH (Wapping), LO (LImehouse), ET (Poplar), KV (Mile End)).

figures cite the two churches as serving a population of 10,000.[86] The vast majority of this population consisted, by 1900, of 'Cockney-born Irishmen'. The ramifications of this for others' perceptions and identity are dealt with below, but the major point in terms of numbers in these communities was the stability of these Irish settlements. Most Irish in these communities were born into them. It also meant that this community was of sufficient size that it could lose members and regenerate itself.

Map 1.4: Catholic Churches in Bermondsey and East London.



Some of these churches were also established especially to cater for the Irish population of the area. Bermondsey, for instance had a clause in the documents detailing the bequests in the late eighteenth century to provide for the church that specified that one of the priests there had to be able to speak Irish and English.[87] A century later, the Catholic Church at Limehouse was established 'for the benefit of the large Irish population.[88] The Irishness of these parishes was also indicated by the fact that non-Irish Catholics had distinct churches. German, Lithuanian and Polish Catholic churches existed in

[86] 'Scrutiny Paper Synod 1880 (Dockhead)', (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives, Bermondsey Dockhead 'pre-1900 and history'); 'Scrutiny Paper Synod 1890 (Melior Street)', (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives, Melior Street Box 2 '1900-').
[87] Bernard W. Kelly, *Historical Notes on English Catholic Missions* (London, 1907), p. 74.
[88] Ibid., p. 249.

the same area of East London as the churches with Irish parish structures examined below and served a distinct population from the churches on which I have focused.[89] Similarly in central London, Italians had a specific church which catered for them.[90] Due to the evidence on the foundation of some churches, the incidence within this area of other churches to cater for other ethnic groups and the Irish culture of these churches they are used here to show a pattern of Irish communities as it was these communities which they sought to serve.

Separated by the river, the population of Bermondsey had a distinct social life from the Irish population in the East End. The community of Wapping was also relatively isolated from other East End Irish communities and the life of the Irish community there appears to have been more self-contained than the other areas. This emerges in the relatively greater sectarian tensions there as well as in greater independence in union activity.[91] Wapping was also the community most isolated from the effects of both Jewish migration and demolitions. The only area which was affected by clearances was Melior Street where the clearance of the Falcon Court area was complained of by the priest at Melior Street in 1901 as undermining the financial position of the church.[92]

All East End parishes, bar Wapping, complained of a 'Jewish invasion' and Irish migration from the area to new suburbs.[93] In the long term this did not diminish the Irish population in East London, but in the short term the losses were dramatic. The visitation returns for these parishes for 1905 and 1911 show a decline of up to 36% in some parishes.[94] This decline in population due to migration to the suburbs was felt to some degree but, as Alan

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[89] Ibid., pp 76, 430; Evinson, *Catholic Churches of London*, pp 231-2.
[90] Kelly, *English Catholic Missions*, p. 207.
[91] Marc Brodie, *The Politics of the Poor: the East End of London* (Oxford, 2004), p. 194.
[92] Edmund Buckley to Bishop, 2 Jan. 1901 (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives, Melior Street Box 2 '1900-').
[93] *Catholic Herald*, 27 Mar. 1903.
[94] Commercial Road declined by 22%, Poplar 22.5% and Mile End 36%. The census for Limehouse was unreliable. Calculated from Visitation returns from Commercial Road, Poplar and Mile End (Catholic Diocese of Westminster Archives, MQ (Commercial Road), ET (Poplar), KV (Mile End))

Bartlett concluded in his study of the Churches of Bermondsey, the biggest shift in Catholic population did not occur until the 1930s.[95] Although different things affected the population of each community, Jewish migration affected some areas more than others; clearances affected Melior Street but not, in general, the other communities. They all faced some shifts in population, but none were destroyed by it. The lack of inward Irish migration also contributed to this stability. By 1900 these communities had built structures to accommodate their needs; there were parish halls, boxing clubs, and club rooms. Fundraisers in these areas were for additions to the infrastructure, for a new roof on the school or to repaint the church, not to build a church or schools as other areas were at this time.[96]

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The first religious procession in these areas was organised in Tower Hill in 1891.[97] From that date on parishes began organising their own processions; Dockhead was the last community in this district to begin holding an annual procession in 1907.[98] Other parishes across London also began to hold religious processions in this period. However, those in Bermondsey and the East End were of an entirely different order, involving not only the procession itself, which took a few hours, but a daylong celebration. Processions throughout this time followed much the same pattern. A circular route was generally followed which began and ended at the church on a Sunday afternoon in summer, finishing back at the church with a Sunday evening service, the rosary or Benediction. All confraternities active in the parish marched, as did the children from the local Catholic schools, particularly evident would be girls in white dresses. For the rest of the participants the dress code was that women were expected to wear hats, or some head covering; men

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[95] Alan Bennett Bartlett, 'The Churches of Bermondsey, 1880-1939' (University of Birmingham, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1987), p. 350.
[96] Compare with Walworth for instance which at this time used the same rooms as both church and school (Visitation Return 1898, Catholic Diocese of Southwark, Walworth). This situation would have been unimaginable, in this period, in such long established communities as those discussed here.
[97] *Catholic Herald*, 15 Sept. 1900.
[98] Bartlett, 'The Churches of Bermondsey, 1880-1939', p. 313.

were expected to take off their hats as a matter of respect while walking the route. The route to be walked was decorated, with houses along the way displaying devotional pictures or statues for those passing to see. At each notable one of these, or at street corners when feasible, the procession would stop and recite a decade of the rosary, or sing a particular hymn or prayer.[99] Throughout the procession hymns would be sung by the entire group, a 1926 programme gives a list of hymns to processionists and advises them: 'When not singing, the Processionists will say the Rosary or other prayers, either aloud or to themselves'.[100] In the Catholic world of the *Motu Proprio* which dictated that women could not sing in church choirs, this was probably a welcome egalitarian element in Catholic life.[101]

That the beginning of processions coincided with the increasing popularity of men's marching and pipe bands was not at all coincidental. Most parishes had a band, and this band would not only feature in the procession of that parish but travel to all the other processions in the area as well.[102] At their simplest, processions must have been a curious thing to watch pass. At their most ornate they were a large event for everyone living in the vicinity, especially with the addition of pipe bands. Dockhead seems to have had the most elaborate procession; it consisted not only of the guilds and confraternities of the parish but of scenes staged on the back of lorries.[103] Considering the huge numbers involved in confraternities they must have made an imposing statement even at their quietest. For instance, St. Mary and St. Michael's Commercial Road, had 1,000 members of the Sacred Heart Confraternity as well as 200 men in the League of the Cross, both groups marched in the procession.[104]

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[99] This general portrait is derived from newspaper reports of processions throughout this period.
[100] *SS Mary and Joseph Solemn Outdoor Procession Programme 13 June 1926* (London, 1926) (Tower Hamlets Library and Archive).
[101] *The Tablet*, 20 Feb. 1904.
[102] Parish bands are covered in more detail in Chapter 5.
[103] *Catholic Herald*, 3 Sept. 1910
[104] 1908 Visitation Return, St. Mary and St. Michael's Commercial Road (Catholic Diocese of Westminster, MQ (Commercial Road)).

An integral part of the day was the decoration of houses and the erection of private altars in these streets. The blessing of these altars by the parish priest, followed by the parish band continued until eleven or twelve at night; the priest had to bless the altars, as one of Alan Bartlett's interviewees remembered: 'And if you were the priest don't you dare miss our one. I'll be round after you: "I had an altar you didn't come round to see me." You know, there'd be an argument with him.'[105] Fierce rivalries could develop between streets as to whose altars the priest blessed first, resulting in an agreement by the 1920s that the priest would alternate yearly between the two streets in which he visited first.[106] One could wonder just how many rows had been caused previously for this aspect of the day of the procession to be one of the key remembrances from the day of someone who had helped the priest seventy years earlier. These were the animosities that existed within 'tight' communities which could be brought to the fore by a day spent solely in one another's company: the same series of events provoked Irish people around Cable Street in Stepney to necessitate police interference 'only during funeral wakes'.[107]

These processions also seem to have their roots in or mirror Irish pattern days.[108] Both events have an uncanny mix of idiosyncratic religious custom, specific territorial focus and more raucous elements of celebration. They resemble one another to a much greater degree than these processions resemble non-Catholic processions. It is not that those in London self-consciously sought to emulate the practices of rural Ireland but rather that these are what developed when it became safe to hold religious processions in that locality. The relative orthodoxy of these London processions may seem a sharp contrast to the pattern days in honour of saints of dubious origin; there were no ancient saints to honour in London, no wells, stones, hills or trees attached to

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[105] Bartlett, 'The Churches of Bermondsey, 1880-1939', p. 312.
[106] Interview with Fr. Michael Moriarty, 24 Apr. 1989 (B.L. Sound Archive, Reg Hall Archive, C903/144 C1 BD01-21).
[107] 'George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police and Publican District 7 [Mile End Old Town and Spitalfields], District 8 [Aldgate,St George's in the East, Shadwell], District 9 [Bethnal Green,North and South]', pp 12-13 (L.S.E., Charles Booth Online Archive, B351).
[108] E. Estyn Evans, *Irish Folk Ways* (London, 1988), pp 267-81.

them. That this community would consider a procession a desirable or normal way to celebrate is not surprising. As outlined below, processions were very common, for many different causes at this time; however that an outwardly religious day was a sort of festival focusing just on one area, does mirror the pattern days in Ireland. There were similar characteristics in the people, rural Munster to urban London and their descendants; this was how religion and community were celebrated. Although Lees contends in her work that 'the patterns, the pilgrimages, and the treks to holy wells – were not imported into London' it is probably more true to say that the saints that were attached to particular localities were not celebrated in London, nor were they celebrated in any other part of Ireland.[109] These saints were highly localised, that one would celebrate a feast day associated with a holy well at home, would likely have seemed ridiculous when not within reach of that same well. However, the type of celebration does seem to linger, and finds voice in more orthodox looking events. The reasons for this are hard to decipher: the long collective memories of these communities or perhaps the religious culture that existed there meant that they did not consider the religious and the raucous to be opposites.

Despite the public notice which these processions attracted, they were a private spectacle, in as much as an hour and half parade of people through any area could be.[110] Newspaper reports often provided long lists of streets, however, when these are mapped, they are generally tight routes through very specific areas. Wapping is the most extreme example of this, where a long list of streets are all within a certain radius of one another and the church, as shown in Map 1.5. The same route would then be followed year after year, and be familiar to those in the district. In 1904 in Wapping the route was changed in order to pass the Jubilee Buildings, model dwellings for the poor; presumably such decisions would have indicated a recent rise in the Catholic population of those buildings or the adjacent area.[111] The houses

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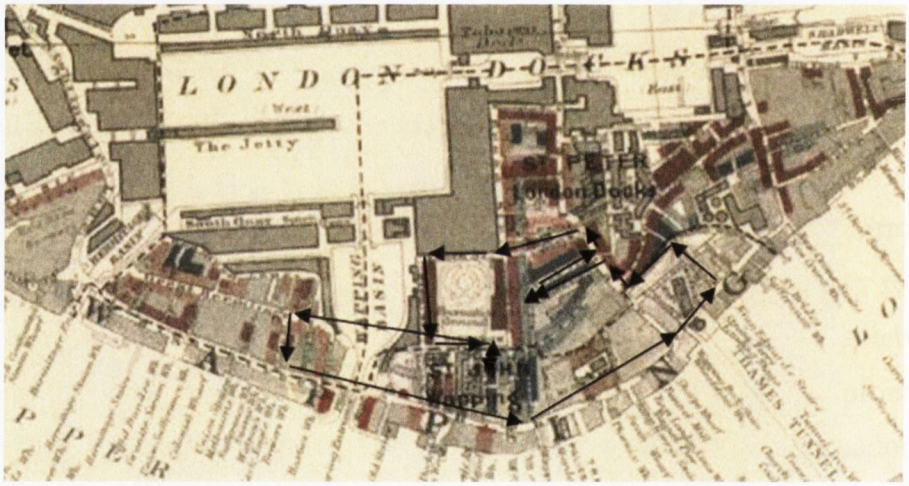
[109] Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 188.
[110] For Poplar Fr. Michael Moriarty remembers processions as an hour and a half long (B.L. Sound Archive, Reg Hall Archive, C903/144 C1 BD01-21).
[111] '12 June 1904 Notices Read at Masses' (Catholic Diocese of Westminster Archives, ADW [Wapping], Wapping Notice Books, Vol. XV: 8 May 1904- 3 Nov 1907).

decorated with 'flags and flowers surrounding sacred pictures,' must have clearly marked participant streets and houses from non-participants.[112] Street upon street which looked the same would then have been distinguished by a daylong festival in one, and nothing in the other. These divisions, which require a procession route for us to distinguish at this distance, were without question apparent to those living in those streets. It is not suggested here that all Irish people in East and South East London lived in streets that had others of Irish ethnicity, but rather that there were core streets that remained Irish, despite Jewish migration and rising migration to the suburbs. In these streets there was a public expression of Catholicism which was rarely seen in London in this period, whose roots seem at once particularly Irish and special to London.

Map 1.5: Procession at Wapping (June, 1901).[113]

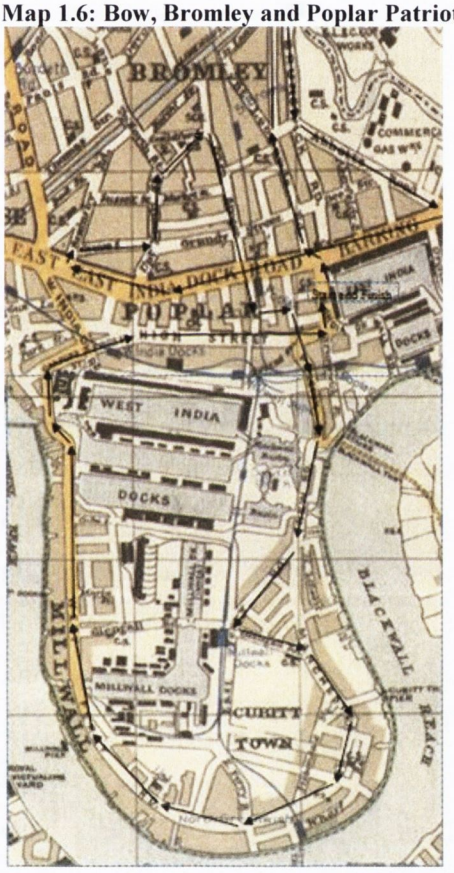


Parades and processions were not a uniquely Catholic phenomenon. The 'Patriotic Procession' held in June 1900 is an example of a secular one.[114] Processions were organised strictly within summer limits. Nothing could so destroy a day as rain: on one particularly rainy day in June when 'the veils and white dresses worn by the lady processionists got badly damaged'.[115] The Patriotic Procession, shown here in Map 1.6, was by the

[112] *Catholic Herald*, 20 Aug. 1901.
[113] *Catholic Herald*, 21 June 1901.
[114] *Official Program Bow, Bromley and Poplar Patriotic Procession and Carnival July 5th and 6th 1900* (Tower Hamlets Local Library and Archive).
[115] *Catholic Herald*, 13 June 1902.

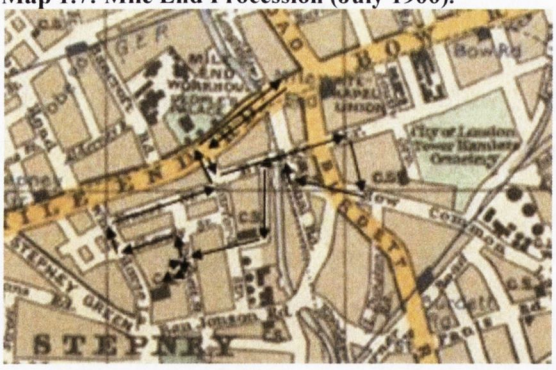
nature of the route obviously intended to encompass the entire district. The decision to walk around the Isle of Dogs is the most striking indication of this. Contrasting this with the Mile End procession, which took place a week previous to the Patriotic Procession, shown in Map 1.7, the latter procession seems closed in, as if somehow the circular route of the procession is intended to circle inwards on itself. Non-Catholic processions at this time show us some of the meaning attributed to them, the sense of ownership of streets, and the celebration that should touch every inch of the district.

Map 1.6: Bow, Bromley and Poplar Patriotic Procession.[116]



[116] *Official Program Bow, Bromley and Poplar Patriotic Procession and Carnival July 5th and 6th 1900* (Tower Hamlets Local Library and Archive).

Map 1.7: Mile End Procession (July 1900).[117]



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The main characteristic which defined this Irish community was the number of men employed at the docks. This was a pattern obvious to outsiders: 'Paddy enjoys more than his proportional share of dock work with its privileges and its miseries'.[118] Its miseries were plentiful; the medical journal, *The Lancet* reported in 1888 that over the course of five years' work on the docks more than half of workers were seriously injured.[119] There was strong Irish involvement in the Dock Labour Unions. In particular, the Stevedores Union was regarded as an 'Irishmen's union', up to 70% of stevedores were of Irish descent.[120] There was strong resentment on the docks against Irishmen who were regarded, justifiably it seems, as running 'closed shops'. Bartlett found in his oral history of religion in Bermondsey that 'All my Roman Catholic interviewees had worked, or had relatives who had worked "on the docks"'.[121] Similarly Stephen Hill in his work on the London Docks cited this anecdote from one of his interviewees in regard to a gang of labourers working a certain part of the docks: 'you had to be a green scarf to get in there. Anytime Father X (the local parish priest) found someone in trouble – you know the kiddies without clothes or the wife sick – he told the shipworker and

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[117] *Catholic Herald*, 6 July 1900.
[118] Booth, *Labour and life of the people*, Vol. 1 (London, c. 1890), p. 194.
[119] William J. Fishman, *East End 1888* (Nottingham, 1988), p. 25.
[120] M. McDermott, 'Irish Catholics and the British Labour movement; a study with particular reference to London 1918 to 1970' (University of Kent, Unpublished PhD thesis, 1978), p. 10-12.
[121] Bartlett, 'The Churches of Bermondsey, 1880-1939', p. 357.

that man got a couple of days work with the gang.'[122] The predominance of Irishmen in the best paid occupations in the docks means, as Marc Brodie has argued, that we cannot presume that Irish were poorer than their neighbours.[123]

Reliance on dock-work also made Irish communities vulnerable. In August 1911 a strike was fighting for an extra penny an hour and a longer time for dinner; all Irish waterside communities were keenly affected. In Bermondsey households were kept going by women working in the jam factories.[124] In Wapping in 1912 they had recourse to no such work and the children attending the Catholic schools all had to be fed.[125] Reliance on one industry was a dangerous pattern for an entire community.

It was dangerous work; the fundraising concerts speak eloquently of its perils. One such concert in Limehouse in aid of the widow and children of John Regan certainly testified to its risks: '[John Regan] lost his life under tragic circumstances whilst working as a stevedore in the docks. He has left a widow and five young children'.[126] There is here something of an echo of the pattern Hasia Diner noted about the occupations of Irishmen in America being frequently those with the highest rates of industrial accidents.[127] This work was jealously guarded by Irishmen for one another but it was a volatile thing: it was badly needed but its capacity to destroy was immense.

In contrast, Irishwomen were not defined by any one occupation in these communities. They were, however, renowned at times for drunkenness. Outsiders generally seem to have expected drunkenness of working-class Irishmen; however, women who drank were regarded by the same as a portent of doom. Temperance was the major campaign of every Catholic priest in

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[122] Stephen Hill, *The Dockers: class and tradition in London* (London, 1976), p. 19 quoted in Bartlett, 'The Churches of Bermondsey, 1880-1939', p. 357.
[123] Marc Brodie, *The Politics of the Poor: the East End of London* (Oxford, 2004), p. 195.
[124] *Catholic Herald*, 19 Aug. 1911.
[125] Ibid., 20 July 1912.
[126] Ibid., 20 June 1908.
[127] Hasia R. Diner, *Erin's Daughters in America: Irish immigrant women in the nineteenth century* (London, 1983), p. 41.

every one of these communities; Sunday congregations received sermons on the 'Home of the drunkard' where not only would the children be barefoot and in rags but 'no beautiful pictures of Jesus Mary and the saints of God ornamented their walls'.[128] Women were especially advised to 'Look at the nice tidy pretty girl who marries a drunkard. A few years later you would not know her. Beauty gone, all brightness gone, the tidy girl changed into a sloven and a slattern.'[129] These contrasts between the pleasant home of the teetotaler and the squalid home of the drunkard were a reflection of the rhetoric of the wider temperance movement.[130] The truth of all of these depictions is hard to estimate, certainly there were a great deal of public houses in these areas, and these, judging from the buildings they occupied and built, turned a sizeable profit.[131] Nevertheless there was such a gulf between the behaviour of working-class men and women and their places of recreation, of any ethnicity, and what middle-class people wished their behaviour to be, that the two could never be reconciled.[132]

The distance between the concerns of the middle-class and the behaviour of the working-class is expressed again in terms of the clothing worn, especially by women. Irishmen and women were known in these areas for eating and drinking well; their children were similarly described as ill-dressed but well-fed. This impression of 'sturdy children' contrasts to what emerges from Hasia Diner's account of food in Irish communities in America. Diner emphasised that Irish families had a negligent attitude to nutrition, especially in relation to their children; that they 'spent less on food than did

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[128] *The Universe*, 15 Jan. 1900.
[129] *Catholic Herald*, 7 Feb. 1902.
[130] Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815-1872* (London, 1971), p. 321.
[131] Scots Arms Public House and The Globe Public House, 'Wapping High Street, Redmead Lane, Stepney' and 'Wapping High Street, 019-021, 033, Stepney' (L.M.A., Valuation Department, LCC/VA/DD/78-9).
[132] The promotion of the home rather than the public house as a place for recreation in particular displayed ignorance of the quality of much working-class housing. (Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, pp 321-2.) The disjoint between middle-class expectations and working-class reality is discussed in more detail in relation to Irish people's views of one another in Chapter 7.

other equally poor residents of the same neighbourhoods'.[133] Booth criticised Irish families in the Bermondsey area for their prioritisation of food over appearance: 'the parents lack the pride that might sacrifice food to appearance.'[134] The simple fact restates itself: the attitude of Irish people in America was not the same as that of Irish people in London nor indeed did every poor Irish person share one view on food. It is likely though that the norms within the community, of being well fed rather than well dressed, for instance, were particular to particular communities. The lifestyle of Irish people in one area may not reflect that of Irish people in another. The Irish people here were part of an English working-class pattern whereby money spent on food absorbed half to two thirds of the household income.[135] Where the local economy was different, where food was cheap or calorific foods available cheaply Irish communities were likely to have behaved differently. These east and south London communities shared a similar local economy. The patterns of male employment led not only to support for certain political candidates but also to similar household economics. What made Irish communities different from non-Irish people in their areas was overwhelming employment of Irishmen as dockers, with this came a slightly altered household economy. This was felt primarily in bad years, when due to strike or a decrease in shipping, as happened in 1914 with the outbreak of war, 'abnormal distress' could be seen.[136]

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Although all of these communities were undergoing changes during this time all, bar the parish at Melior Street, which was most effected by clearances, remained relatively large Irish communities. Jewish migration and migration to the new working-class suburbs of north and south London took

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[133] Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish and Jewish foodways in the age of migration* (London, 2001), p. 123.
[134] Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London, Third Series: Religious Influences, Vol. 4* (London, 1902), p. 143.
[135] John Burnett, *A social history of housing, 1815-1985* (2nd ed., London, 1979), p. 147.
[136] *Catholic Herald*, 3 Oct. 1914.

away some members.[137] However, migration from the area did not weaken attachment to it. In this period, annual processions had become a central focus not only for those who lived in historic Irish areas in the East End but also for those that had moved from those areas to working-class suburbs; a man brought up in Poplar before the First World War recalled this function specifically: 'all the people who'd moved away from Poplar all came back for that day'.[138] The same was true of Bermondsey.[139] Even with migration there remained a strong identification with the particular area. That this was possible at all was due to the sheer size of most of these communities. Several thousand people could leave and yet the historic centre could remain vibrant. Unlike the Irish communities in Central London these could survive because they were not faced with either the systematic demolition of their housing or their work becoming obsolete. The psychological effect of the streets and houses being demolished and laid out completely differently cannot be disregarded either. Those who left Bermondsey could return and meet their neighbours again; for those who had nowhere to go back to, there was nowhere to meet others from that community.

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Structural continuity matters, we can see from other communities that without it there was not only no future for the community itself, but also no possibility of maintaining identification with that place. This is not to say that the Irish communities in Bermondsey and the East End were either lucky or unlucky but rather that they were different to Irish communities at the centre of London in concrete ways that were affected by their local economies. Time of settlement join Bermondsey and East End communities together but what dictates that they remained along a similar trajectory was the similarities in their local economies. Each community still maintained its separate identity, its feast days and parish priests. They were similar but we cannot think that they

[137] Migration to suburban areas from working-class Irish areas is discussed in Chapter 2.
[138] Interview with Jimmy O'Connor, 17 Jan. 1990 (B.L. Sound Archive, Reg Hall Archive, C903/430 C1).
[139] Bartlett, 'The Churches of Bermondsey, 1880-1939', p. 347.

were all the same. Any geographical distance for this period is significant also of separation. This was not social distance, for miles to be significant they do not have to separate the middle-class from working-class. The fact that there was not one massive community, but rather several smaller ones, means that those who seek, for instance, to write the history of the Irish there have been frequently frustrated.[140] Viewing certain areas as uniform has been a tool to draw attention to problem areas in cities.[141] East London is perhaps the best example of this, however, just as we cannot speak of one Irish experience in London, so there is not one experience of east and south London. Nor did those from these areas necessarily consider themselves to be united in anything other than all being working-class. Areas are an important way to break down cities, to make them more easily studied, but in examining an area its complexities are often lost. The differences between these communities may seem slight from this remove. The distinction between marching on the High Street as opposed to side streets or the blunt fact of a different parish priest were significant things and it would be oblivious of the significance of public space and of how significant certain priests were to ignore these.

The disparate nature of these communities can, to some extent, be held as partly responsible for the lack of Irish politics in these areas. Although Irishmen were politicians in many of these areas, they did not emerge from Irish political groups; instead, political ambition seems to have been filtered through union activity and thence to Socialist or Liberal clubs. This was the path taken by Jack Jones who was a district officer for the Gasworks from 1911-18, and ran as a Socialist candidate in the Poplar by-election of 1914.[142] That union activity was widespread before general enfranchisement is likely to be partly responsible for this. There also appears to have been a limit to Irishness in these areas. Public spaces, as shown above, were certainly used but whereas some streets could be effectively owned, most remained foreign territory. Irish people though poor in a relative sense cannot, as Marc Brodie

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[140] Jackson, 'The Irish in East London', p. 11.
[141] Yelling, *Slums and Slum Clearance*, p. 120.
[142] McDermott, 'Irish Catholics and the British Labour movement', p. 9; *Catholic Herald*, 21 Feb. 1914.

has argued, be judged to have been uniformly poorer than non-Irish people in these districts. They may even have been better off, especially as by 1900 they maintained control of the more lucrative work at the docks.[143] This occupational pattern did make them a distinct community with shared characteristics other than simply their ethnicity. This occupational pattern seems to have been a pattern of most Irish settlements of the nineteenth century. City centre settlements were associated with market work, in Bermondsey and the East End work on the docks drew numbers. In this period we can see a community that was certainly defined as Irish, and praised and scorned in these terms for being good Irish men and women or showing the 'sins of the forefather', but also one which was shaped by the locality in which they lived.[144] It was this combination, between the things they inherited and made their own – the processions – and the part of themselves formed by the streets where they lived – the cost of food, the availability of public houses. There was no one pattern for Irish communities because all were influenced by the area in which they lived.

Battersea

The most distinctive feature of the life of Irish people in Battersea was their strong political presence. This was evident in Irishmen elected from an Irish party to the local council. Irish candidates in this area ran under the banner of the United Irish League until 1907 then the Battersea Irish Democratic Association.[145] This change was likely brought about by the growing involvement of Irishmen in Battersea in local politics and their desire for independence from the relatively narrow focus of the United Irish League. No other Irish community in London had this pattern of political involvement. Other areas had United Irish League gatherings, but they did not have any involvement in local elections, apart from giving their backing to particular candidates. Battersea was entirely different as an Irish community from those

[143] Brodie, *The Politics of the Poor*, p. 195.
[144] Booth, *Labour and Life of the People* (London, 1889), p. 194.
[145] *Catholic Herald*, 26 Apr. 1907.

in central, east and south London. It was not of course just the Irish community in Battersea which distinguished it from other boroughs; Progressive political activity was the hallmark of Battersea at this time.[146] Irish people in Battersea were a smaller community, equivalent roughly to one of those in East London in this period. They were also relatively isolated from other Irish communities. Battersea did not have a culture of religious processions; it did, however, have a culture of Irish political processions. That this Irish community was different to others should not surprise; it is certainly not surprising in light of examinations of other communities. Not only did different communities in the same city behave differently, but they were different. There was certainly cooperation with other parts of London for marches and bands visited other bands but they were living different lives because they were living in different places. This is obvious, or should be; that London was not one place, that there was not one Irish community; these are the central facts that underpinned the existence of all Irish people in London at this time.

The fundamental differences between Battersea and the East End and Bermondsey were the time of settlement and the culture of the local areas. Firstly, the history of settlement and its development into this period will be discussed. Time of migration dictated that just as Irish people of certain decades of migration went to East and South London as a matter of course, and just as those of previous migrations had gone to Central London, Battersea attracted migrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was not struck by a wave of migration as Central or East London had been previously. Time and numbers made this a different community. They also gave it a different trajectory of development. This trajectory had a political element that was entirely different from Irish communities elsewhere in London and an analysis of this will form the second part of this section. Politics and the use of public space to further and celebrate political campaigns

[146] 'Progressive' and 'Moderate' were the two parties which fought London County Council elections at this time. They were loose groupings accommodating those who were broadly left-wing and in favour of local government spending and activity and conservatives who wanted less local government taxation and activity respectively. Jerry White, *London in the Twentieth Century: A City and its People* (London, 2001), p. 360.

show that Battersea was a place where Irish processions did not have a limit. There were certainly general routes, but not the tours of side streets that were found in other parts of London.

Firstly it is necessary to explain the placement of Battersea within a narrative of the development of Irish communities in Inner London. The late development of Battersea, and its relatively low population density could both be argued to make it, in this period, more a suburban area than an urban one. This is certainly true of some of the wards in the borough of Battersea. However, it was not true of those where Irish people lived in most numbers. The Nine Elms ward appears from the statistics of its population density to have had one of the lowest population densities of the borough of Battersea, it had a population density of 68 persons per acre in 1911.[147] Other wards in Battersea had a density of well over a hundred people per acre. However, these measures take no account of the area within a ward which was not used for housing. In this case from Map 1.8 it can be seen that Nine Elms had a significant acreage devoted to industry and that therefore the population density was much higher within the actual area where housing existed. Not all areas of Battersea were urban environments and certainly further south Battersea was suburban. However, for Irish people, who lived predominantly in two settlements in the north of the borough, Battersea was an urban area.

[147] L.C.C., 'Housing Conditions in Metropolitan Boroughs (Dec. 1918-Jan. 1919)', p. 1 (L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/33).

Map 1.8: Nine Elms Ward 1908. [148]

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There were two Irish settlements at Battersea, one in East Battersea, centred on the Nine Elms area, and the other in West Battersea close to Clapham Junction. Both were formed near major railway interchanges. The first Catholic church in West Battersea was a small iron church erected most likely in the 1870s. The growth of the community there demanded that a larger church be built, and this was opened in 1893.[149] The major growth in this area occurred in the 1880s when the Catholic population increased from 440 in 1879 to 1,500 in 1891.[150] The settlement in East Battersea originated at much the same time. The first church, at Battersea Park, was opened in 1869 and enlarged in 1879.[151] Church building was a long process and the opening was, in general, the start of a long road whereby the inside of the church would be

[148] 'Metropolitan Borough of Battersea, October 1908' (Battersea Local Library and Archive, D117/7).
[149] Evinson, *Catholic Churches of London*, pp 244-5.
[150] 'Scrutiny Paper Synod 1859 [dated 1879]' and 'Scrutiny Paper Synod 1891' (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archive, Battersea West).
[151] Evinson, *Catholic Churches of London*, pp 246-7.

decorated. In Battersea Park they were still fundraising for the decoration of the church in 1904.[152]

The archives for the Battersea Park church, serving the Nine Elms area, are much more sparse than those available for West Battersea. One of the most interesting documents in the archive box on Battersea Park is a list of the names of 242 Catholics living in Battersea. Although this document has been placed with Battersea Park, the addresses of those listed indicate that it relates to West Battersea. Battersea was different to the other areas studied in that both are in the same borough, Battersea, and so involved in the same campaigns in general and local elections. There was a unity of consciousness brought about by political involvement that other settlements, even those which were as near to one another as these two, did not have. Although there was a strong awareness of ward boundaries, and in any successful political group this should be expected, there was just one political group for the whole of Battersea. This can be contrasted with the pattern which emerged in the East End of many small struggling branches of the U.I.L. Two churches were necessary for this population, they would not walk the distance to the other church, however, when it came to politics, distance seems to have been less of an issue. Distance was a measure of desire as well as ability; an interest in politics could draw men from miles apart together in a way that Sunday morning mass could not. Churches are excellent markers of settlements for this reason, very few were willing to travel any distance to attend mass. In looking at churches we can tell where settlements were, but the organisations that these settlements fostered themselves speaks about the life within those communities and in this case the life between them.

North Battersea was an industrial quarter, and the building of railway interchanges there made this a place where work was available. This in itself would not have made it different from other Irish settlements. Where Battersea differed was in the origins of the Irish people who settled there. Although it is difficult to prove conclusively, it certainly seems that Battersea

[152] *Catholic Herald*, 6 May 1904.

never had a large Irish-born population. In 1900 it had an Irish-born population of 1,724. While this number is higher than the Irish population in other areas, in Bermondsey in 1911 the Irish-born population was 974, it should be expected to be higher given that those settling in Battersea did so largely in the 1880s rather than either pre or directly post-Famine.[153] Irish-born population tallies under-represent the Irish population of Battersea at a time when it should give a more accurate portrait of it. Although there is no way to quantify the Irish population in a broader sense, there is evidence that Battersea differed from early Irish settlements in areas of Central or East London in that a sizeable portion of those Irish who went to live there were not born in Ireland. This emerges distinctly from the list of 242 Catholics in Battersea dated c. 1873.[154] Tracing those that could be traced through the 1871 census reveals that most did have a parentage which was Irish, but that Battersea was not their first move in London. Second generation Irish, like Daniel Leahy, named in the 1873 list moved from inner city London, Southwark in his case, to Battersea.[155] Others came from further afield, the major Irish politician of this period, Thomas Brogan, in 1912-3 was the Mayor of Battersea, was born in Leeds and only settled in Battersea in his thirties to work at a candle factory.[156]

This pattern of settlement, of second generation rather than first generation (although the evidence is tentative) is compelling. Not least is the electoral evidence: in the Nine Elms ward alone Brogan won 1,200 votes topping the poll, but Irish candidates were also in second, third and fourth place.[157] This would have been impossible had the Irish population been around 1,724 in 1906. Marc Brodie's analysis of East End local government voting patterns strongly suggests that the Irish in Battersea would not have been enfranchised in these numbers. He found that those who had a vote were

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[153] 'Birthplaces of males and females enumerated in admin Counties County Boroughs etc. 1911', *Census of England and Wales Vol. IX Birthplaces* (London, 1913) pp 44-62 (Table 2).
[154] 'Number of Catholics married or otherwise residing at the addresses given below in the Parish of Battersea (as near as could be collected)' (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archive, Battersea Park). [Although these pages are in the Battersea Park box they clearly, from the addresses of those listed, relate to Battersea West].
[155] 1871 Census return for Daniel Leahy, 6 Smith's Building, St. Johns Southwark, London.
[156] *Catholic Herald*, 16 Nov. 1912.
[157] Ibid., 9 Nov. 1906.

those most regularly employed and who therefore could afford to be the 'principal tenant' or owner of their house.[158] Women could vote in local elections if they were the 'principal tenant' of their dwelling. [159] This was a hard condition for men to fulfil and seems to have effectively precluded most female heads of household from voting. Women earned less and were likely to have been widowed or deserted if they were head of household. Therefore the 826 Irish-born women who lived in Battersea in 1911 can be discounted as the major source of support for Irish candidates at local elections. As this leaves just 647 Irish-born men, not all of whom would have had the vote, and their adult children, again not all of whom would have had the vote, we must conclude that there was a larger Irish population here than is evident from census figures.

In general, Catholic census figures, as detailed above in relation to other communities, can give a fuller account of the Irish population; however, no visitation returns for this period survive, or were available, for Battersea. As such the *Religious Life of London* census of attendance at religious services across London in 1902-3 has been used here.[160] Bartlett estimates that just 20% of Irish people attended Easter Communion and as such this has been used as a rough guide to the general numbers, the final figure for the population served by the church at Battersea Park is just over 3,000, while that of Battersea West was roughly 3,400.[161] This method likely underestimates the true number, as those who did not fulfil any obligations whether every Sunday or for Easter Communion are absent. Collectively this would be a population rivalling that of the largest of the East End parishes. However, it is invisible in census figures because it never had a large Irish-born population. It was a mixed settlement between second generation Irish, born in London and elsewhere in England, and Irish-born people, and as such never has the numbers to make it visible at census level. The result of this has been that, because there is no

[158] Brodie, *The Politics of the Poor*, p. 48.
[159] Ibid., p. 69.
[160] Richard Mudie Smith (ed.), *The Religious Life of London* (London, 1904), p. 254.
[161] Bartlett, 'The Churches of Bermondsey, 1880-1939', p. 102.

obvious starting point where a huge Irish population can be seen, it has been ignored in studies of Irish people in London.

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The later settlement of Irish people and the political culture Battersea itself encouraged Irish political activism. The formation of Metropolitan Borough Councils in 1899, meant that within the first generation of Irish settlement at Battersea, and within the time when this was relatively compact there was an available local political route. It was also a political culture which was favourable to Irish political activity. Battersea was the area where the Progressive party were most left-wing in London, known as the 'Municipal Mecca'.[162] It was one of only four borough councils to build council accommodation on a large scale, and the poorest borough to undertake this.[163] Depots providing subsidised sterilised milk for infants, public baths, libraries, and health inspectors were all undertaken in Battersea during this time.[164] Irish politicians in the area were firmly Progressive at this time, as were the parish priests. The role of priests in local elections at this time is interesting as, owing to education issues on which Conservatives were more favourable to religious schools, many urged their congregations to vote for Moderate candidates.[165] Some indeed, such as Dean Ring in the Commercial Road parish in East London, campaigned with his five curates:

> They canvassed from door to door, they distributed the cards and posters of the Tory, they demanded that the window cards of the Liberal candidate should be removed, they issued on the eve of the poll a Tory handbill, on the day of the polling they even rode about in the Tory carriages and yet they were defeated.[166]

This presents a sharp contrast with Battersea where the parish priest of West Battersea was seconding motions to raise taxes locally to provide work

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[162] White, *London in the Twentieth Century*, p. 360.
[163] Wohl, *Eternal Slum*, p. 275.
[164] White, *London in the Twentieth Century*, pp 359-60.
[165] Hugh McLeod, *Religion and Society in England, 1850-1914* (Basingstoke, 1996), pp 91-4.
[166] *Catholic Herald*, 22 Jan. 1910.

for the unemployed.[167] It is impossible to establish why some boroughs vote one way and others another. It is likely though, that the Irish population here were influenced by the general voting pattern in Battersea which favoured Progressives. Irish people in general in London appear to have supported Progressives despite advice from the clergy to think of the question of who to vote for as 'in no sense a political one. It is a matter of vital religious import.'[168] Irish politicians were Progressives here and it was for this reason that one of them was elected as Mayor in 1912.[169] Irish candidates here were part of the broader family of Progressives and this broad family meant that they could have their own Irish organisation but also be a part of the majority. As such they were more powerful than boroughs in other parts of London where the vote was more unified.

The fact of this being a later settlement, relative to other areas in London, made the Irish population more geographically compact and this aided the election of candidates. Irish identity was not stronger here than elsewhere, or at least Irish identity was such an immeasurable thing, that it was different here than elsewhere. What made the Irish people in this area distinct was that their community had a local political edge that was not found elsewhere in London where there was a divide between Irish politics and local London politics. Elsewhere men were members of two organisations and these dealt with the separate realms. For instance, Fr. Higley of Limehouse was President of the local branch of the U.I.L. and the vice-president of the local Liberal and Radical Association.[170] In contrast, at the foundation of the Battersea Irishmen Democratic Association in 1907 it was stated that:

> Labour interests will always command our support, for while we intend to hold a watching brief for Irish interests, to uphold and

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[167] Ibid., 14 Dec. 1907.
[168] Ibid., 8 Jan. 1910.
[169] The mayoralty was held for one year. The Mayor elected in 1913 was also Irish (declaring 'the better part of him was Irish'), although historically he has been identified with early pan-African politics, as his father was West Indian. However, at this time in Battersea he was firmly identified with Irish as well as Labour politics. [See Sean Creighton, 'John Archer and the Politics of Labour in Battersea (1906-32)' in *Immigrants & Minorities* Vol. 28, No. 2/3 (July 2010), p. 187; *Catholic Herald*, 3 Jan. 1914].
[170] *Catholic Herald*, 14 Apr. 1905.

> proclaim the dignity of the Irish race, to inculcate among our own people the duties and responsibilities of citizenship our sympathies will naturally go out to those who have always been friends of Ireland viz. The English democracy.[171]

That this community was younger could be argued to mean that they were more likely than those communities composed of a majority that were second or third generation to vote along ethnic lines. However, the fact that Battersea continued to have Irish involvement in elections into the 1920s suggests that even if this was a factor it also set up a pattern of voting which was not easily disturbed.

The vibrancy of this scene and its difference in development can best be seen when comparing the processional culture of Battersea to other districts. In this period Battersea did not have a culture of religious processions. There was, however, a pipe band attached to one of the churches. Whereas in other areas these bands were used primarily for religious purposes,[172] in Battersea its uses seem to have been entirely political. For instance, this scene from the 1910 general election gives some sense of the character of Battersea's Irish processional culture:

> The members of Our Lady's congregation helped materially to obtain for Mr John Burns his great victory in Battersea. Every night the St. Joseph's Fife and Drum Band together with the pipers' band of the district UIL toured the locality, and after Mr Burns' victory escorted him from the Town Hall to the Prince's Head where he addressed the crowd.[173]

Bands were used in Battersea to remind voters of an election, to lead political speakers from outside the district from the train station to the place of a meeting and to celebrate election victories not just of Irish candidates but of general election candidates who had Irish support. While the bands were formed in connection with churches as they were in other areas, their purpose was political. That the politics of Battersea was firmly

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[171] *Catholic Herald*, 26 Apr. 1907.
[172] Reginald Richard Hall, 'Irish music and dance in London, 1890-1970: A Socio-Cultural History' (University of Sussex, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1994), pp 149-51.
[173] Ibid., 10 Dec. 1910.

Progressive made these marches, not inclusive (participants in them appear to have been solely Irish), but not exclusionary. After Burns' victory was announced in 1910, a 'procession was formed consisting of the Irish flag bearer, the bands, and Mr Burns carried on a shoulder chair, and proceeded through the chief roads of Battersea'. After the victory rally these bands and their followers marched to the Irish Committee rooms, receiving cheers, 'even women and children cheering for Ireland', as they passed the Battersea Labour League and Burns' campaign centre.[174] The make-up of these processions was often purely Irish, except on those occasions when trade union bands joined them. However, they seem to have been regarded in the same way that the many disparate elements of Progressive politics in Battersea were regarded. The loss of control over Battersea council to the Moderates in 1909, due in no small part to the factionalism of left wing groups, which fielded separate lists of candidates in that election, encouraged some Progressive groups to put aside some of this factionalism and they regained control in 1912.[175] The fact that there were quite a few elements to left wing politics in Battersea meant that the Irish were one more element of a wide spectrum of groups.

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The politics of Battersea is clearly suggestive of the influence of the local character of the area in the development of Irish settlements. While the urge to settle in one area clearly originated from economic motivations, what happened afterwards was dependant as much on the housing stock, the local economy, the traditional politics of the area and a hundred other factors. Battersea was different in its formation. Being a mixed community of Irish people from its origins has made it relatively invisible historically. However, this does not seem to have altered the nature of it in any way other than that while still a relatively compact settlement there was a local electoral outlet for them. Battersea is a strong case against the use of a binary system of assimilation versus segregation. Like Irish people in other parts of London,

[174] *Catholic Herald*, 22 Jan. 1910
[175] Sean Creighton, 'John Archer and the Politics of Labour in Battersea (1906-32)', p. 187.

different parts of their lives would perhaps have marked them as being one or the other; that is simply the complexity which came from everyday life. There are no measures we can employ to measure the Irishness of a community if we disregard the measure of birthplace as has been done here. Simply accepting the stated identity of groups allows us to consider them as they lived their lives without venturing to discern just how Irish they were.

Battersea stands apart from other settlements in the use of processions, and in particular in the fact that there were no annual religious processions there. That Irish people in Battersea did not confine their processions to one day a year, and were not confined either to the area around the church might signal that they did not need a religious excuse to make them palatable to their neighbours. The origins of the culture of religious occasions that were celebrations of a particular place in similar occasions in Ireland might have some applicability here. The more mixed nature of the community – they were not all from Munster or even Ireland – may have meant that this was never part of the culture of the community and as such never developed. Instead a processional culture which could be compared to any secular group in London at this time, trade unions, for example, developed here. Battersea was the last major Irish settlement of the nineteenth century, yet it was both distant and different from the major communities of the east and south. The elements that dictated most strongly the type of Irish settlement that developed: housing stock, political culture and origins and timing of settlement are underlined here especially. There was no one type of Irish community, certainly no model of how an Irish community developed, outside of a general structure of migration theory. Different spaces begot different things, which would only be surprising if we expected London or Irish to be words with unitary definitions.

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There was no one pattern of Irish communities in London apart from their formation which was, in common with all poor migrants to cities, to settle in industrial areas with cheap housing. Once that condition had been

satisfied, the circumstances which drew migrants to an area could disappear, as happened in Central London. The most characteristic elements of Irish communities in each of these areas, disestablishment, religious processions and male occupations, and political participation are not perhaps so different from one another. Occupational uniformity can also be found in Central London, but their occupations were less regular. The structural forces – what kind of housing was available, what kind of developments occurred near the community – were all out of the control of the people living there. Simply surviving does not indicate strength and although there is certainly a relationship here to numbers it was not the most important one. Thousands could be cleared from areas; that thousands managed to stay or created political power for themselves is neither better nor worse. Each operated on the timeline of their community. The time of foundation was important, but not because we can track the disassociation of people from being Irish, rather because the time the community was first established can tell us where it was established. Where a community existed in London is key to understanding it. It was not that Irish communities did not share characteristics, they did, but they would also share characteristics with any poor migrant population.

The changes in Central London were well underway by 1900 and there had already been substantial depopulation of the central boroughs. In some areas Irish people were already gone; it is clear that in Central London there was not a future or indeed much of a present for Irish communities. That they did not grow and thrive, or even survive in this period is not the point, they demonstrated that communities can disappear. This in a sense, like much of the argument here, should be obvious: of course communities disappeared. However we rarely examine those that do disappear; nor are the mechanics of disintegration examined. The changes in Holborn were not part of a different story to the communities elsewhere in London that were surviving and beating tunes into the air. This will always be the story of time and place. Irish people reflected the facts of their lives in their communities. Their communities reflected their sense of identity, those with whom they chose to surround themselves; their communities also reflected what they worked at, what kind of

accommodation they lived in and the hundred other things that made Holborn different from Poplar. London was changing at this time too; Irish people were at no time in a static environment. Irish communities changed and adapted, and failed to adapt, entered politics, formed unions, formed processions; they did all of these things though within the limits of the place they lived. Suburbanisation was the major pattern of change in London at this time and Irish people were not insulated from it. There are no suburban equivalents to the vibrancy of the communities discussed in this chapter. To understand both the communities that did exist and those areas where there were no Irish communities, the places which had an Irish population but not an Irish community need to be studied.

Chapter 2 - Irish Communities and Experiences in the Suburbs of London

Irish communities in inner London differed from one another based on the local environment and when they were formed. Those in suburban London differed from one another on precisely the same lines. The difference of course was that whereas conditions in inner London favoured the formation of Irish communities in certain areas those in suburban London militated against them. There was very little of the vibrant communities seen in inner London. In some areas this is hard to understand; the people had many of the same characteristics as those in inner London, but lacked the Irish community life that existed there. Irish people are most noticeable in groups; there were few noticeable groups of Irish people in outer London. There were large numbers of Irish people in outer London, even large numbers in proximity to one another, but there was not the type of community organisation that existed in inner London. To a great degree the absence of a distinct community makes Irish people invisible. The temptation could be to ignore them because of this. To ignore suburbanisation or not to try and place Irish people in relation to it would be to ignore the dominant theme of urban development at this time.

The differences in experience between Irish people, or indeed, any sense of ethnic or other differences between those who moved to suburban areas, are utterly ignored in texts on suburban development. These have tended to focus more on the architectural features of houses and street planning, or the intersection of suburban development with railways than the lives of those in suburbs.[1] The architecture of suburban London was important, but its importance for Irish people was in how it dictated distance. Low density housing presented the major obstacle to the development of Irish communities in outer London. Compared to the treatment of Irish people in the previous chapter, this chapter presents a completely contrasting world. The discussion

[1] E.g.: H.J. Dyos, *Victorian Suburb: A Study of the Growth of Camberwell* (Leicester, 1966) or Alan A. Jackson, *Semi-detached London: suburban development, life and transport, 1900-39* (Didcot, 1991).

below uses statistics and conclusions based on patterns of migration to a much greater extent than that of the previous chapter. Asserting the place of Irish people within suburban environments is important in itself, these Irish people were as important in London as those who followed parish bands through narrow streets. There should be no hierarchy of attention. Those who make the most noise should not necessarily receive the most attention.

Suburbanisation has often been seen as the death of Irish identity and community in particular areas.[2] However within studies of Irish people in particular areas of Britain the reasons for the dearth of Irish communities or the lack of vibrant Irish communities outside areas of historic settlement have not been studied. The place of historic Irish communities in the history of Irish people in Britain is evident. Simply because those who moved away from the centre of London are more elusive does not mean that they should be ignored. Suburban development is the story of London's development, especially in this period, and Irish people were part of that development too. Adding an ethnic history to the general trends and figures which are well known provides context, not only to Irish people's movements, but for the spaces in the general histories of suburbanisation and suburbs. This analysis focuses on suburbs which show the range of experiences and those which had an Irish population rather than attempting to examine all suburbs of London. To show the effect of local environment on Irish people, the analysis here focuses on two distinct types of suburbs: industrial suburbs and residential suburbs. Focusing on industrial suburbs, in particular Barking and Canning Town, this analysis will show that the Irish population in these areas was drawn in pursuit of work and, in seeking this work, made up a significant occupational category of these towns. These towns demonstrate that Irish people in London at times migrated for different reasons than the general pattern of behaviour in part due to the male occupational profile of the Irish in East London.

Two areas of residential suburbs will then be examined. Firstly

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[2]E.g. David Fitzpatrick, 'The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921' in *New History of Ireland VI, Ireland under the union II, 1870-1921*, (Oxford, 1996), pp 657-8; Mike Cronin and Daryl Adair, *The Wearing of the Green: A history of St Patrick's Day* (London, 2002), p. 167; John Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse: the History of the Liverpool-Irish 1800-1939* (Liverpool, 2007), p. 22.

those of central south London are examined and, secondly, the working-class commuting areas of north and east London are discussed. South London in this period was defined by the migration of its inhabitants away from the river.[3] This creeping development gave these communities a different shape than those in other areas of London and also demonstrated, by the timing of Irish communities' arrival, the social class of its Irish inhabitants. Finally, commuter suburbs of north and east London will be examined. These areas match the stereotypical image of suburban living. This image highlights the qualities homeowners expressed through their choice of home, 'attachment to family life, to a smoothly run household, to privacy, convention moral rectitude'.[4] Although these have been the focus of most studies on suburban life, there remains a substantial gap in our knowledge about the lives of suburban residents. It is clear that, from the communities that Irish people left to live in suburbs that this was a more complex move than simply rejecting the lack of 'moral rectitude' of those around them. Women in particular, little considered in most accounts of London suburbs, had particular reasons to desire their own home. Irish people followed the trends of suburban development in these commuter towns, although they did so in general later than English people from the same areas.[5]

In examining these areas, in conjunction with the previous analysis of Irish communities in inner London, the residential lives of Irish people in London can be fully explored. Ultimately their lives in suburban London show that the landscape they migrated to dictated much of their ability to create or recreate Irish communities. Low density housing made non-residentially segregated population further away from one another. It made even those that were relatively residentially segregated further away from other streets of Irish people. There was no one type of Irish community; Irish people adapted to the

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[3]Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London, Third Series: Religious Influences* (London, 1902), Vol.4, p. 166.

[4] Andrew Saint and Julian Honer (ed.), *London Suburbs* (London, 1999), p. 93.

[5]Bartlett argues that this was due to Irish being poorer than non-Irish in Bermondsey. In places this explanation is likely true, but there is also a strong sense in my reading of Irish delayed movement to suburbs as having roots in the desire to remain with their ethnic community. (Alan Bennett Bartlett, 'The Churches of Bermondsey, 1880-1939' (University of Birmingham, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1987), p.350).

landscape around them. They were beholden to the economies of house building, of local industries, of train timetables; they could create their own world but only if those economies supported it.

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This chapter examines areas which were referred to collectively as 'suburbs'. At the time of their creation or growth they were regarded as one phenomenon. This was especially true of those concerned with housing in London, where all housing areas outside overcrowded Central London were deemed suburbs. Authorities did not distinguish between areas but simply argued for 'the necessity of inducing a large proportion of the industrial population of the crowded neighbourhoods to live in the suburbs'.[6] That the term suburbs remains employed by academics in relation to urban studies should not make us forget that as a guiding description, it has 'long past its analytical utility'.[7] In particular the implication of separation from the urban environment as well as the connotation of a mainly residential environment dependant on an urban environment is an oversimplification and generalisation of the economy of outer London. The economy of all areas deemed to have been suburbs in Edwardian London was not the same, nor was this a class issue or an issue in regard to the area where a town was or when it developed. What all of these areas had in common was what was noted by housing campaigners: that low density housing was provided and that this could reduce overcrowding in Central London.[8]

Modern theorists of urban growth see the term 'suburbs' as problematic as it presents a homogenised view of the social and economic make up of those areas. This is rarely a point considered in historical analyses of urban growth. For instance the term 'working-class suburb' is used to describe a type of housing development with long streets 'built up on both

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[6]London County Council (henceforth L.C.C.), 'New street from High Holborn to the Strand: Reports of the Improvements Committee', p. 8 (L.M.A., L.C.C. Valuation Department, LCC/VA/GEN/5/3).

[7] L.S. Bourne, 'Reinventing the suburbs: old myths and new realities' in Michael Pacione (ed.), *The City: Critical Concepts in the Social Sciences Vol. 2* (London, 2002), p. 259.

[8]E.g. L.C.C., 'Surveyors report on housing of working class (21 January 1904)', p. 9 [L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/33).

sides with continuous terraces of two storied houses on narrow frontages'.[9] The homogenous image that the term 'suburb' conjures makes it problematic. Although its use is unavoidable, an awareness of its connotations and limitations is necessary. There was a typical housing pattern, and this pattern of development had implications for socialising, however, we should not expect that the economies surrounding these long roads of terraced houses were the same. When we wonder at the lack of distinctive Irish communities we have to imagine the different spaces they inhabited, even if their houses were built on the same plans.

The growth in outer London towns in this period was immense. The 'outer ring' of London had in 1891 a population of 1,405,852, and this increased to 2,729,679 by 1911.[10] This increase is striking when compared with the population of the administrative county of London which, between 1901 and 1911, decreased slightly. The fact that it was a growth of low density housing meant that it was also a growth over an enormous area. The areas which in this period recorded the greatest increase in working-class accommodation were all, bar Croydon, east and north east of London.[11] The growth of train lines through these areas provided energy for growth, convincing developers to build houses and, more than simply enabling a male occupational pattern of commuting, enabled communication with London which aided development of industries as well as providing for the 'workmen's fares' commuters on some lines.[12]

The immense growth in many areas in this period makes this a history of an area and a life that was changing. There were also though areas that were practically settled at this time, areas perhaps not outside of the county of London, Peckham for instance. In the history of outer London development

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[9] *Victoria History of the County of Essex*, Vol. 5 (London, 1966), p.250.

[10] The area designated the 'outer ring' of London contained the entire county of Middlesex and parts of the counties of Surrey, Kent, Essex and Hertfordshire. ('Administrative County of London, Outer Ring and Greater London', *Census of England and Wales 1911, 'Vol. 1: Area, Families and Separate Occupiers, and Population'* (London, 1912[Cd. 6258]), p. 646 (Table 24).

[11] L.C.C., 'New working class accommodation 1911 (Jan. 1913)', p. 4 (L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/4 Part 3).

[12] Jackson, *Semi-detached London.*

there is no one time of growth. This period is a time of change, so, though, is every other decade in the nineteenth century that precedes it and the twentieth century that follows it. The general histories of suburban growth record the figures of enormous growth in previously small towns: 'Between 1851 and 1891 Willesden grew from 3,000 to 114,000, West Ham from 19,000 to 267,000 and Leyton from 5,000 to 98,000'.[13] Irish people were not proportionally reflected in those figures. In areas where Irish people were amongst the poorest, or had a distinctive occupational make-up, we should expect this to be brought out in the patterns of migration. Irish people had, in some areas, distinctive patterns of migration, or formed a distinct group of migrants. The general figures reflect the general reality; they can often obscure the particular realities of ethnic groups.

The immense growth of the population of the towns and villages surrounding London in the nineteenth and early twentieth century has never been viewed positively by those not involved in the process. Residents in the towns that were the subject of massive growth in population, such as the poet Kathleen Raine in Ilford, took a negative view not only of the massive development of their rural idyll but also of those who populated the newly built houses: 'the nameless nomads who swarmed into the new building estates which seemed to have arisen overnight, seemed to me then...something quite other than the humanity...'.[14] Historians, such as F.M.L. Thompson, have frequently prefaced their remarks in histories of suburbia by noting that 'it is not necessary to admire it in order to wish to understand how it happened'.[15] Miles of houses in a line, all the same, laid out with minimal garden, with indeed minimal imagination, do not provoke those who take an interest in architectural history to celebrate them. As Thompson argues above, the most he expected was for others to try and understand the rise of suburban towns. This antipathy, the view that life in one of a long row of terraced houses was

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[13] John Burnett, *A social history of housing, 1815-1985* (London, 1985), p. 164.
[14]Kathleen Raine, *Farewell Happy Fields: Memories of Childhood* (London, 1973), p.98.
[15] F.M.L. Thompson, 'Introduction the Rise of Suburbia' in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester, 1982), p. 23

'as dull a life as mankind ever tolerated' is ever-present in discussions of suburban life.[16]

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Thompson argued that whether it is liked or not, suburbia 'represented what a great many people wanted to live in'.[17] The 'natural reluctance' that John Burnett cited in explanation of the desire of people to remain with their community was that it provided a support system, that they did not want to find themselves in what Burnett termed an 'anonymous new suburb'.[18] This image of a suburb as necessarily anonymous is too bleak, but the fact remains that to move to new housing, relatively far from where they had been brought up, was an active decision which requires explanation. Thompson cites it as a move originating purely in desire for the ideal. This is persuasive, but only to an extent.

If we understand that this type of house and lifestyle represented what many people desired, we must also seek to understand those that were drawn to 'suburbs' that operated quite differently than the stereotype of commuters leaving every morning. The industrial suburbs of most interest for Irish people are those of Canning Town and Barking. These were the communities that formed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Although there were massive changes in especially working class housing in this period in outer East London, Irish migration to these areas did not begin with this development. Stratford had an Irish population from the late eighteenth century that were 'all of the working class from Ireland'.[19] However, newer settlements did not follow the historic pattern. The development of a suburban type of housing in the interim changed the nature of the communities that developed. This is evident in those that developed a mixed population, in Barking, for example, more so than in Canning Town, which was resolutely working class. It is evident to some degree in both, new

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[16] Walter Besant quoted in F.M.L. Thompson, 'Introduction the Rise of Suburbia', p. 3.
[17] Thompson, 'Introduction the Rise of Suburbia', p. 23.
[18] Burnett, *Social history of housing*, p. 151.
[19] 'Official Souvenir of the Opening and Blessing of the New Extension (Jan. 1932)', p. 16 (Catholic Diocese of Brentwood Archives, Stratford 'pre-1917').

industry brought a new population of workers, and this entailed new housing. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century this housing on previously green-field sites was of the suburban type of terraced single family houses rather than three or four storey houses. These Irish people were part of a historic pattern of migration, moving for work, however, given the time they moved, and given what work was available, they were also part of the suburbanisation of London. It is the mix of both patterns which dictated the types of communities that emerged.

Every district north of the Thames in the greater London area was, before 1917, part of the Diocese of Westminster. In 1893 a census was ordered of every parish; these list the names of Catholics, their addresses, their attendance at communion, mass and school, their employment and occasionally comments on their relationships such as whether they drank, earned a good wage, cohabited with a Protestant or had illegitimate children.[20] For the Diocese of Brentwood, which encompasses what was in 1917 the administrative county of Essex, the only two districts for which the census survives are for Barking and Canning Town. Canning Town grew rapidly in the late nineteenth century due to the opening of the railways through West Ham and the opening of the Royal Victoria Docks. As well as dock employment, manufacturing, particularly of chemicals, became a major industry there.[21] The Catholic population grew to service the industries and this is evident from the baptism figures for the Catholic Church in Canning Town: in 1871 there were just 57 baptisms, in 1891 there were 260 and in 1913 351 were baptised.[22] This was in spite of the fact that the area served by the Canning Town mission diminished with the opening of other Catholic churches in the area, such as those as Silvertown and Custom House in 1887 and 1895 respectively. This growth can also be seen in the number of parishioners the church estimated it had there: the 1893 mission recorded just under 4,000

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[20]'Canning Town Catholic Census 1893', 'Barking Catholic Census 1893' (Catholic Diocese of Brentwood Archives).

[21]*History of the County of Essex*, Vol. 6 (London, 1973), p. 79.

[22]Marilyn Johnson and Father Stewart Foster, *The Catholic Parish of St Margaret and All Saints Canning Town London E 16 1859-2009: An Historical Sketch of the Church, Convent and Schools* (2009), p. 23.

names, by 1917 there were over 8,000 in that parish, despite the parish becoming smaller geographically.[23]

If Canning Town was measured against the traditional depiction of what a suburban area looked like it would likely not meet the criteria. It was not that the development of this area, indeed all of West Ham, was not reliant on the building of a railway or that the major development of this area for housing had not occurred in the late nineteenth century. It was that Canning Town was also a district where the Irish people living there relied on the employment of ship, dock and gas work, similar to Irish people in the East End of London. However, it was a modern area, an area where despite the poverty of many of its inhabitants, its housing was modern. The earliest council houses built in the district, in the 1900s, took account of the fact that those intended to occupy them could not afford to rent a whole house and therefore built 'half houses' with a flat on each floor.[24] This housing together with the peak period of growth in this area differentiate it from East End districts to which it may appear similar in terms of male occupational patterns.

Barking, in contrast, fits more easily into the typical image of a suburb. In particular, its distance from inner London distinguished it from areas which had a similar occupational profile. It was also a more diverse area in terms of the classes that lived there than Canning Town. This was also a substantially smaller Irish community than was present at Canning Town, although numbers are difficult to estimate. In 1911 the average attendance at mass was just under 400, while the 1893 census provided the names of under 2,000 Catholics, or those who the priests felt should have been Catholics, in the district.[25] The streets in which Catholics lived were those typical of working-class suburbs in London and were also those occupied by employees of local industries, the poorest of inhabitants of Barking.[26]

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[23] Johnson and Foster, *Canning Town*, p. 21; 'Parish of St. Margaret's and All Saints Canning Town 1859-1959', p. 8 (Catholic Diocese of Brentwood Archives, Canning Town 'pre-1917').
[24] Jackson, *Semi-detached London,* p. 36.
[25]'Barking Catholic Census 1893' (Catholic Diocese of Brentwood Archives); Fr Stewart Foster, *The Catholic Parish of St Mary and St Ethelburga Barking A History* (2010), p. 42.
[26]Evidence of areas where Catholics lived from 'Barking Catholic Census 1893' (Catholic Diocese of Brentwood Archives); *Victoria History of the County of Essex*, Vol. 5, p. 237.

Both Canning Town and Barking had a pattern of employment that was not based on commuting to inner London. While the spread of railways was the driving force for development in both these areas it did not bring massive residential suburbs, or in the case of Barking, did not bring that alone. Instead the railways, the building boom in that part of London and the industrialisation of some areas of it, meant that there were those for whom life in a suburb differed substantially from the ideal of areas which 'still preserves that look of open country, fresh and unspoiled' and so provided people the opportunity to live 'surrounded with healthy air to live in healthy houses'.[27] In the case of Canning Town it is easy to understand why this was the case: it was too close to the river to appeal to anyone except the working class, who were drawn there by the expansion of the docks. Barking, in contrast was a more mixed development.

Through the 1893 Catholic censuses we can see that there was an Irish residential population in both of these areas. Fisher Street in Barking, for example, had at this time roughly forty-three residential houses on it, the vast majority of which were single family occupants; of the forty-three, eighteen were Irish Catholic households.[28] This street and the group of streets around it were described as the 'less genteel' area of Barking and the *History of the County of Essex* suggests that these were intended for those working in local industries.[29] The Irish populations in both Barking and Canning Town worked in the industries situated close to where they lived; work at sea, or in the docks were prevalent in Canning Town, while both Canning Town and Barking had a substantial population working as labourers (for an unspecified employer), and in gasworks.[30] This presents an Irish population which was substantially occupationally defined in both of these towns; in this way they were similar to

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[27] *Catholic Herald*, 14 May 1910; *Catholic Herald*, 7 July 1905.
[28] 1891 Census returns for Fisher Street, Barking Town; 'Barking Catholic Census 1893' (Catholic Diocese of Brentwood Archives).
[29] *Victoria History of the County of Essex*, Vol. 5, p. 237.
[30] Figures derived from analysis of 1893 Barking and Canning Town Catholic Censuses. The Canning Town census lists the occupation of 327 people with listed occupations, 18% worked at sea, 11% in the docks, 22% at gas works and 10% as labourers. In the Barking census 272 people's occupations are listed, the major occupations were: 7% farm labourers, 25% gas works, 29% labourers. (Catholic Diocese of Brentwood Archives, 'Canning Town Catholic Census 1893', 'Barking Catholic Census 1893').

those in the areas in inner London. Similar to work on the docks, Irishmen seem to have discriminated in favour of one another here as well, one parishioner's death in 1904 was mentioned mainly for this fact:

> for upwards of 30 years [he] held a position of trust in the Beckton gasworks...Many a poor Irish labourer fresh from the "old country" would have found things go very hard with him indeed were it not for the kindly mediation of Mr Keating in obtaining employment for him'.[31]

These areas and their Irish inhabitants were also distinct from Irish communities in inner London. For instance, these were not sites of major Irish political or community gatherings. Due to the differences in the housing provided, and the distances this enforced on those that lived in these districts we should expect less Irish communal activity but more than in areas where there was no occupational definition of Irish people. This is substantially the case: Canning Town had religious processions similar to those of East End parishes, including the same Irish Catholic symbols such as statues of St. Patrick.[32] However, it did not, in contrast to the East End, have even the pretence of wooing of Irish votes. Barking, a massive district as a parish which was slowly partitioned as other areas became large enough to support a priest, had a smaller Irish population and so was quieter. Nevertheless the relative residential compactness indicates that there was an Irish community life there, especially in Barking Town.

Canning Town had similar aspects of Irish life to Irish communities in the East End, a mark perhaps of the origins of parishioners as well as the fact that clergy were often moved between the East End parishes and so may have promoted the same events in each parish. This pattern of movement can be verified to an extent through tracing individuals mention in the Catholic census of 1893 in the census in 1891. The pattern of movement is most evident in children's birthplaces. Those mentioned in Canning Town in 1893 who can be traced to the same place in the 1891 census clearly indicate that their children, or at least their elder children were born in 'London' whereas later children

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[31] *Catholic Herald*, 2 Sept. 1904.
[32] *Catholic Herald*, 30 Aug. 1901.

were born in 'Canning Town' or 'West Ham'.[33] Priests also noted that Irish peolple moved to Canning Town from from East London: 'The hope of casual employment induces numbers of labourers to come into the district, and amongst them many Irishmen with their families.'[34]

Canning Town was also one of the few places where a Catholic procession was attacked during this period, when a 'grossly offensive remark [was] made by a young scoundrel' as the men of the parish passed in procession and led to a riot.[35] Processions were not common in outer or suburban London due to the fact that the Irish population was not heavily concentrated enough to 'own' certain areas. Even in the years where the procession passed off peacefully in Canning Town, the men of the parish 'kept vigil all night to see that the banners decorating the church were not tampered with'.[36] Without a residentially compact population, processions would always have to travel through areas where Irish people were not in the majority and would therefore be more prone to disruption. Even with the population as occupationally defined and relatively residentially concentrated as a result of their occupations as the Irish population in Canning Town was, low density housing did not promote the type of community life that higher density housing did. The most striking thing to note about Canning Town, as evidenced by their children's birthplaces, is that most had come a relatively short distance to live there. They had been brought up or spent a significant number of years by and large in the East End and with the processions they organised tried to establish the same sort of life in Canning Town. That they were not entirely successful indicates the strong impact of the built environment as a determinant of community.

The pattern of Irish men's occupations in East London dictated that those who moved to industrial suburbs, especially those which replicated industries in East London, were likely to be Irish. Suburbanisation did not

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[33] E.g.: James and Johanna Kenneally (1891 Census return, 8 Rivett St., Canning Town) or Emma Cunningham who was born in Stepney but whose youngest children were born in Canning Town (1891 Census return, 2 Rivett St., Canning Town).
[34] *Catholic Herald*, 9 Nov. 1907.
[35] Ibid., 15 July 1911.
[36] Ibid., 17 Aug. 1900.

affect the entire population in the same way, even if the same ideas or types of housing were filtering down, an ethnic population with a specific occupational make up had a different interaction with suburbanisation than others. Primarily this difference was expressed in the migration of Irish people to industrial suburbs. Barking and Canning Town, the only two districts where census evidence of the specifically Irish population is available proves the Irish population of East London to have been affected differently by suburbanisation. They did feel the effect of better housing and less overcrowding but they were also a strong counter-example to the oft cited dictum that the better off leave first or that the Essex suburbs were the preserve of the 'better off working class'.[37]

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The distinction H.J. Dyos drew between residential and industrial suburbs as a generalised separation highlights the entirely different experiences and economies of differing types of suburb.[38] Above the industrial suburbs in north east and east of London were examined. These had in common the fact that Irish people living there were predominantly found in certain types of work. Residential suburbs in contrast were much more diverse. This was to some degree a result of the creeping nature of suburbanisation throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The constant moves of better-off populations outwards into less densely populated areas created areas which do not easily fit into a dichotomy of suburban and urban London. This was a phenomenon especially prevalent in South London which was more undeveloped at the beginning of the period of suburbanisation and, as such, allowed for greater development of housing over successive decades. An example of this pattern was Walworth which developed from 1850 into a place with 'prosperous houses'.[39] That the Catholic population was not a large element of those who populated these types of houses in this area can be judged from the fact that the Catholic mission there did not open until 1890.

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[37]Henry Pelling, *Social Geography of British Elections, 1885-1910* (Hampshire, 1967), p. 23.
[38] Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, p. 21.
[39] David Waite, *English Martyrs Centenary 1890-1990: a brief history* (London, 1990), pp 9-10, (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives, Walworth).

The class of its parishioners can be judged from the fact that mass was held in one of the school rooms for at least a decade because the parish could not afford to build a church.[40] The number of Catholic churches built in South London during this period would indicate that Walworth was not abnormal in not having an Irish population until the later nineteenth century. Indeed, building new churches and schools in South London was a 'great strain on the resources at the disposal of the Bishop' at this time.[41]

That Irish people were part of later waves of migrants in South London is suggested by the patterns of church building. If we accept this even as a general truth, then examinations of voluntary moves to less densely populated areas change. Dyos has argued that to 'most middle-class Victorians, and to a rapidly growing proportion of the working classes, the suburb had a meaning which was little less than idyllic'.[42] However, this statement needs to be qualified for those who moved to already established areas which middle-class people were leaving. In particular an ethnic view of this process, and, especially of an Irish population which was overwhelmingly working class, should indicate that the elements of class inherent in the supposed ideal of the suburban life were not seamlessly transferred from upper to middle to working class. If we can say that for the middle classes the suburban ideal had some reality, green fields and fresh air, for example, we cannot easily say the same of working class movement to lower density housing. Nor was this a difference between commuting or living and working in the same area; all of these were primarily residential suburbs. There was a difference here between those who moved to working class suburbs, around Walthamstow, for example, and those, primarily in the south of London, who moved into areas being vacated by middle class residents. To classify suburbs in this way would not be a relevant division were it not for the fact that most Irish in this period were not middle class.[43] As such this division embraces the two different types of residential suburbs that were most common to Irish people. By examining each area of

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[40] Ibid.
[41] *Catholic Herald*, 15 July 1904.
[42] Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, p. 23.
[43] Fitzpatrick, 'The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921', p. 662-3.

development the limits of the ideal of suburban living to the reality of working class options is clear.

Fundamentally the desire to live in the suburbs was framed as a negative decision. Every description of the benefits of suburban life was in comparison to the supposed squalor of inner city London; 'fresher and healthier surroundings' were only so by an implicit acknowledgement that the city itself was unhealthy.[44] The origins of this, the distaste for the 'unhealthiness' of the city include a distaste for the population that were deemed most unclean: the working class. The suburban retreat as a mid-nineteenth century ideal was a retreat not just from the city, but the people of the city too. The slow escape from mixed areas, evident in the church members that Alan Bartlett studied in Bermondsey, found that those who were tied to the respectability of a church showed a 'natural desire to live in more respectable quarters'.[45] This pattern was replicated across south London: 'Southwark is moving to Walworth, Walworth to North Brixton and Stockwell, while the servant-keepers of outer South London go to Croydon and other places.'[46] If the middle class were constantly seeking a better environment, of people as well as their surroundings, what were the working class seeking? Booth writes that the working class people moving outward in south London did so because they were displaced by the 'construction of factories, new streets and railway widenings'.[47] In essence these moves were, at least in part, involuntary migration. It was not so much that they sought the suburban ideal but rather that they found housing where it was available. This was not the pattern everywhere, but it does seem to have been the dominant pattern in south London. Those cleared from insanitary areas generally sought accommodation as near as possible from the place where they had been displaced from; those moving outwards rather than simply east or west along the river were the

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[44] Anthony S. Wohl, *Eternal Slum, housing and social policy in Victorian London* (London 1977), p. 294.
[45] Bartlett, 'The Churches of Bermondsey, 1880-1939' (University of Birmingham, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1987), p. 292.
[46] Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London, Third Series: Religious Influences* (London, 1902), Vol.4, p. 166.
[47] Ibid. p. 163.

slightly better-off working class, the victims of improvement work other than those dealing with overcrowded housing.

Irish migration and community life in south London was distinct from other areas in the relatively small size of the area involved. The proximity of the areas migrants had left and also to the other suburban areas of inner south London was evident to those trying to fund Catholic churches in these areas. The decision of St. George's Cathedral to make admission entirely free had a negative effect on the attendances at Camberwell and no doubt other churches nearby. This decision was demonstrative of not just its own declining congregation and that its congregation was getting poorer but also that in south London a congregation could be gathered from those not strictly within the parish limits.[48] Similarly when there was a political disagreement between the United Irish League in Peckham and the head of the Franciscan mission there, the men involved in the dispute, found other churches to attend. Dinny O'Connell recalling that dispute remembered 'the men stopped going to mass, they went all over the place. I was taken to Walworth, Nunhead, Deptford'.[49] This ability to simply go to another church underlines the fundamental difference between the inner suburbs of south London and the more distant suburbs. They were not so distant from one another or the place that they had left. This created a broader community across south London but militated against the development of strong local communities.

Different reasons for moving had a significant impact on where exactly people moved. If the ideal was to escape to somewhere with the isolation of a suburb then those with the means to dream of it likely got it. In this case, where movement outwards was a result of lack of housing, while displacement did uproot communities there were also Irish communities formed in areas where they moved. United Irish League meetings, processions, schools and church activities were, if not as plentiful as they were in the East End, Battersea or Bermondsey, certainly more visible in south London than in

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[48] *Weekly Register*, 4 March 1893 (newspaper cutting) (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives, St. George's Cathedral 1914-33 [c. 1900-33]); 'Visitation 1897 (Camberwell)' (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives, Camberwell 1).

[49] Interview with Dinny O'Connell, 20 June 1996 (B.L. Sound Archive, Reg Hall Archive, C903/467 C1).

the outer suburbs. This of course could be a result of the greater poverty of these areas, and the greater density of the populations in these areas; Walworth in 1904 was described as 'one of the most densely populated in South London'.[50] This is certainly borne out by calculating its population density. The civil parish of St. Peter's Walworth had in 1901 the greatest population density of any of the Southwark parishes. Its population density, 191.47 (persons per acre) was immense compared to other areas. It had 7,644 occupied houses containing a population of 61,767.

Population density, of course, is dependent on the area considered and the small historic parishes of Southwark show the density of these fully built-up areas clearly. Other areas further to the south, such as Peckham, which had an area of 1,326 acres in 1901, had a much lower population density (10.26 per acre). However, the relatively large area encompassed by the District of Peckham (equivalent to the civil parish) contained a much greater area that was not built upon. It was undoubtedly a better off area: of the 13,610 inhabited houses in the district these were populated by an average of roughly seven people. This figure was only slightly higher in Walworth at 8.1.[51] Peckham was slightly further south, and it was slightly better off. The Irish population in Peckham certainly seem to have been middle class; this emerges in a letter in relation to mass times: 'Irish Medical men and various professional men find a 10 o'c. or 12 o'c. mass most convenient'.[52]

The differences everywhere were slight. All south London areas appear to have been relatively densely populated, or the houses that were built there were relatively densely populated. This was perhaps the effect that Booth observed, of the constant step of classes further south. Each only moved by a

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[50] *Catholic Herald*, 15 July 1904.

[51] Preceding figures calculated from those in, 'Registration County, Districts, and Sub-Districts, with their Constituent Civil Parishes, - Area; Houses and Population 1891 and 1901, and Separate Occupiers 1901', *Census of England and Wales: County of London, Area Houses and Population 1901*, pp 26-38 (Table 12). These figures differ from those H.J. Dyos calculated for Peckham (Dyos, *Victorian Suburb,* p. 57 (Table 57)). This is due to his use of a static acreage for the civil parishes of Camberwell from 1841 to 1911. The acreage of the civil parish of Peckham increased during this time, most likely to take account of the larger area that was being developed for housing.

[52] William O'Bolger to Archbishop [n.d. (1911)] (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives, Peckham).

few miles, and in the world of suburban moves distance was key. Relying on a train service dictated that only the relatively stable could afford to live in residential suburbs; distance from the centre intimated other things. They each moved to newer housing, with streets laid out logically. Simply moving south rather than east or west showed an agreement with the general trend of the city. The very poor, Irish and non-Irish, would cling to the riverside, all others, including Irish residents, abandoned it by degrees.

These short moves whether initiated by railway demolitions or the movement of others from the district, show an Irish population that were not outliers in suburbanisation in south London. Irish communities were formed in the areas slightly apart from central south London rather than in those poorer areas which saw more constant change over this period. Peckham was the scene of a vibrant Irish community from this time until after the Second World War, in the 1930s the new parish hall was opened with a céilí.[53] Gaelic League promoters in this area described a place with an 'Irish element that seldom goes near Central London'.[54] This most likely indicated people who never socialised in Central London rather than never went to work there. Despite the relatively short distances between different South London suburbs they were each self-contained from an Irish perspective. There were certainly those who travelled to other churches for mass out of political principle as in Peckham, or to avoid paying seat rents as in Camberwell.[55]

These were not the places that were described by suburban idealists, of green fields and clean air, they were crowded by houses built in terraces. This crowdedness allowed Irish communities to develop. This was certainly the case in Peckham and Camberwell. However, there was a difference between these two areas in what the community centred on. In Peckham the church was run by Franciscans and religious orders were at this time less likely to promote Irish activities, in consequence there seems to have been vibrant secular Irish activities. In Camberwell successive parish priests

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[53] Interview with Dinny O'Connell, 20 June 1996 (B.L. Sound Archive, Reg Hall Archive, C903/467 C1).
[54] *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 6 July 1901.
[55] Fr Rudolph to Bishop, 12 Dec. 1908 (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives, Peckham); 'Visitation 1897 (Camberwell)' (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives, Camberwell 1).

were Irish, and promoted Irish events. For example, Canon Murnane's first lecture to his parishioners was on Ireland, the previous parish priest had a dog which the parish history recalls was 'as Irish as his master'.[56] In what way these experiences differed from a non-Irish experience of moving out from south London is hard to gauge. Certainly Catholic attendance at church services was far higher, as a proportion of the total members of those religions, than those of the Protestant churches.[57] As these did not have a pattern of Irish residential segregation the draw of the parish church and schools created a community where otherwise there might have been none.

There is less information on south London suburban districts generally than about other areas. Partly this is a result of the fact that they do not easily fit into the pattern of following a railway line, or being associated with a particular class. Most did not satisfy even the bluntest of measures of suburbs of an appreciable distance between the city and the suburb. Dyos' survey of the borough of Camberwell puts into context the developments of various estates but tells little about the life of those that lived there; and certainly nothing at all about what Irish life there.[58] This is an ignored element of the histories of suburban London – the ignoring of Irish experiences here, indeed the maintenance of one narrative of suburban development precludes understanding the different experiences of groups within society.

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There are patterns and logics to suburban movement and the communities that emerged and did not emerge. Low density housing did not encourage community identity in a group of people that were residentially scattered. Neither did low density housing necessarily indicate that a community would be integrated. As in Barking, the predominance of Irish people in the poorest housing and their occupational homogeneity did cultivate community. Areas where there is no evidence of occupations predominated by

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[56] Charles Burke, *History of the Camberwell Catholic Mission 1860-1910* (London, n.d.), p. 16 (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives. Camberwell 2).
[57] Richard Mudie Smith (ed.), *The Religious Life of London* (London, 1904); Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, p. 57.
[58] Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*.

Irish people and hence, no residential segregation on the basis of work, provide an entirely different picture of what it was to be Irish. We should expect from the things that encourage ethnic community life that the lack of these things discourages it; this in effect is the case. It was not necessarily the case that those Irish people who lived in suburbs were not part of an Irish community, just that they did not have a residential one. In effect, what these lower density, male commuter areas are challenging us to think about is the characteristics of Irish people outside traditional Irish communities. They were less visible outside Irish communities; often this was because they continued to identify primarily with the community they were brought up in.

For those who did move to the places most considered in texts on suburban life with 'long terraces, standardised and depressingly dull to the eye', this choice seems often to have been deliberate.[59] Working-class suburbs such as Walthamstow, Leyton or Tottenham looked to outsiders to be the furthest extension of how dull suburban life could be; the ideal without any of the middle or upper class finance to back it up seemed hardly ideal at all. Yet this ideal of having your own house, the privacy which it suggested, was the aspiration of many working class Irish people, especially those who had regular employment. Mary Collins, born in Poplar before the First World War, was one such person, and her memory of deciding when to marry was intrinsically connected to where they would live: 'I said I wasn't going to live in a flat or rooms or that sort of thing, I definitely wanted a house.'[60] Women's lives in suburban houses were mysterious and private even to those that lived nearby. Kathleen Raine in Ilford could only remember the women who populated these houses hovering behind closed front gates 'keeping their lives hidden'.[61] The shock of wanting to keep a life hidden is most striking when compared to the places they had come from, in Mary Collins' case Poplar, where outsiders, sympathetic and voyeuristic could write treatises about their homes and judge their housekeeping and parenting. No other class needed protection from the world's judgement quite so much as working class women. It is perhaps not to

[59] Jackson, *Semi-detached London*, p. 22
[60] Interview with Mary Collins, 16 May 1989 (B.L. Sound Archive, Reg Hall Archive, C903/417).
[61] Raine, *Farewell Happy Fields*, p. 101.

be wondered at too much why they sought a patch of ground which was theirs alone.

There was also a willingness to leave the area where they had been brought up and certainly no angst over being separated from Irish communal life. This generally took place on marriage. In 1911 Bermondsey was mourning the loss of members of its Catholic Club as 'nearly all those who have recently entered the married state have left the parish'.[62] This was articulated as a life stage of the better-off working class, a sign of a good marriage even, and it was this reason which explains why it was never posed as a break from the community they were brought up in. That they returned for the annual parish procession is an indication that they still identified with that community.

The 'better off' working class residential suburbs of the north east were facilitated mainly by train and tram connections. These were later nineteenth century developments; Walthamstow was developed between 1870 and 1914.[63] Here too distance signified class, the north-east of Walthamstow continued to be middle class while the south and east were progressively poorer.[64] Building had slowed in Walthamstow by 1911, considering it had by that time a population of 124,580 and had been developed from the 1870s the population growth during those decades was immense.[65] The biggest area of suburban growth in the north east at this time was in East Ham which was mainly built between 1890 and 1910. In this area of London the timing of development is indicative of the class for which it was developed. Even with later development East Ham had already by 1911 surpassed the population of Walthamstow and houses continued to be built there at a greater rate than in Walthamstow.[66] The massive rapid increase in population is another factor which may have hampered the development of community activity in these

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[62] *Catholic Herald*, 16 Sept. 1911.
[63] *Victoria History of the County of Essex*, Vol. 6, p. 245.
[64] Ibid.
[65] L.C.C., 'New working class accommodation 1911 (Jan. 1913)', pp 14-15 (L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/4 Part 3).
[66] In 1911 the population of East Ham was 133,487; 1125 rooms were built in Walthamstow in 1911, 2989 were built in East Ham. (L.C.C., 'New working class accommodation 1911 (Jan. 1913)', pp 14-15 (L.M.A., L.C.C. Housing Department, LCC/HSG/GEN/2/4 Part 3)).

areas in this period. Certainly the Catholic missions in these areas struggled to serve their populations in parishes which were enormous and growing.

There is little information on Irish life in these kinds of suburbs which were mainly residential. Certainly Catholicism was very linked with Irishness in the same way as in many inner city communities. One of the new churches in Walthamstow opened in 1908 was named after St. Patrick and statues of St. Patrick seem to have been common in these suburban churches.[67] In Upton Park, a parish which was founded in 1911, the parish priest spent the 'first money he could spare on a statue of St. Patrick, to acknowledge his debt, so he said, to his Irish, half-Irish and Cockney-Irish helpers'.[68] The furthest suburbs seem to have had the least Irish life, these were perhaps stereotypically the middle class suburbs Sir Walter Besant deplored in 1909, where a life was lived 'without any society'.[69] The closer, to London the greater the community of Irish people there seems to have been. The parishioners of Upton Park, for instance in 1921, were protesting against 'our Church being used as a tool of the government' in relation to a pastoral letter regarding Ireland.[70] Whether this was a result of the particular class of Irish people in east London, that they were not mainly of the upper or middle class, or whether there was a suburban effect of quietness of life is difficult to gauge. In 1914, in the newer church in Walthamstow, Our lady of the Rosary and St. Patrick's, there was 1,675 Catholics, in the same year Upton Park had 1,884 Catholics, in a smaller area.[71] It was perhaps not the numbers but the distance, from the church and from one another that left outermost areas quiet in Irish terms.

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It was not necessarily true that only the historic centres of Irish populations could maintain an Irish community or population. Nor is it necessarily true that second or third generation Irish people were 'weaker' in

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[67] For instance at Upton Park.
[68] Fr Stewart Foster, *The Catholic Parish of Our Lady of Compassion Green Street Upton Park London E13 A History 1911-2011*, p. 9.
[69] Thompson, 'Introduction the Rise of Suburbia', p. 3.
[70] Foster, *Upton Park*, p. 19.
[71] Raymond Waters, *Our Lady of the Rosary and St Patrick 1908-2008* (London, 2008), p. 18, (Catholic Diocese of Brentwood Archives, Walthamstow St. Patrick's); Foster, *Upton Park*, p. 17.

their Irishness than those of the first generation. Suburbanisation is only predictable by generation in that generations coincided with the timing of massive expansion in London. More so than generations the built environment and its overlap with occupational segregation dictated the main forms a community took. Just as there was no one pattern for who left and when, there was no uniformity in the suburbs they went to live in, beyond a usual type of cheaply erected housing. The housing itself, rather than marking individuals free from society's intrusion, seemed to dictate the lives of their inhabitants.

In the industrial suburbs where Irishmen migrated with their families to work at gas works, docks and factories they do seem to have tried to bring the elements of the community they left to the place where they moved. In this and the similarity of their occupations, or the similarity of the low wages of their occupations, they found themselves in the same streets. They did not, however, find themselves in universally Irish streets. The difference in housing meant that they could only ever be partially successful at maintaining an Irish community, and it certainly pales in comparison to what they left behind. There were fewer people, spread over a greater area, of course it did not compare, politically, socially or organisationally to the kind of community that developed in an overcrowded area where Irish people predominated.

The residential suburbs that were populated by Irish people in this period were not homogenous either. In both south London and north and north-east London, the influence of the type of housing is evident. The creeping development of south London created a population of Irish people who knew and left places in succession. Slight differences in population density indicated slight differences in social class. Irish people followed this pattern: the poorest lived by the river, the richest the furthest south. The rest of the population who differed from one another by degrees lived accordingly on the north-south axis. Irish communities emerged mainly as the middle class fled those areas. The closeness of the areas they had left and to the different centres led to a South London network of Irish centres. There were strong Irish communities here but with a population more greatly dispersed there was nothing as vigorous as was found in areas of greater population density and ethnic segregation.

Those who left their communities in search of some element of the suburban ideal, or the elements that were attainable for them, leave the least trace in terms of community. Hiding behind impenetrable hall doors their lives are the most invisible. That they left, generally it seems on marriage, indicates a frustration but not with the people around them. The tales of dutifully returning former parishioners indicate that it was not a decision to cut all ties. Rather it seems to indicate the basic facts of limited housing and an increasing population. For those that had the means to acquire cheaper, better rooms it is unsurprising that they took it.

The terminology of urban expansion is limiting in itself. 'Suburb' and 'suburban' have little objective meaning. They apply to a trend, they do not indicate much beyond that they existed in the political or geographical 'outer' or 'extra-London' area. What they did share was modern housing built according to certain plans. Low density housing dictated the development and non-development of Irish communal life outside Central London. Occupational profile, particularly a distinct occupational profile from the general population of the same area, could promote Irish community life. The inverse had the opposite effect. The built environment of suburban London and the distance it created between people, was incapable of being taken over by any ethnicity. Houses were built in vast numbers very quickly and, even if most Irish people were not affected by suburbanisation until the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the sheer number of estates and towns built in this period dictated that it would always be a scattered migration. This was not a loss or a gain; this was simply the pattern of urban development. The losses in numbers to certain Irish communities show what should be obvious: historic Irish communities were not immune to the development of London.

The lives of Irish people here have been presented as being composed primarily of nuclear families. In both outer and inner London these family-based communities have predominated in my analysis. This is not a misrepresentation of those communities which have been studied. However, it would misrepresent the Irish population of London to suggest, as analysing these residential communities implicitly does, that Irish in London were

relatively evenly divided between men and women. This was not the case. There were more Irish women than men in London and their absence from stereotypical and other Irish communities needs to be addressed. Irish women were as prone as men to concentration in particular occupations, and the concentration of women in domestic service explains the invisibility of the surplus of Irish women over men in my examinations of Irish residential communities in inner and outer London. It is this group that will be analysed next.

Chapter 3 - Irish-born Domestic Servants

The previous chapter argued that to gain a true picture of Irish people in London areas outside of what are considered traditional Irish communities need to be examined. This chapter argues that simply considering the communities composed of relatively equal proportions of Irish men and women distorts the true picture. To understand the demographics of Irish people in London, the lives of those who do not appear in statistics drawn from Irish parishes need to be considered. 13% of Irish-born women in London in 1901 were enumerated as servants; 12% were working in private homes. These women are invisible when considering Irish residential communities. The task in this chapter is to make visible the lives of these women and argue that they represent an Irish community in London. They did not each just pass through a common occupation; they shared the experience of that occupation with one another. They followed one another into that work and sought to remain together in looking for work.

Domestic servants also embody the difficulty of studying a transient young migrant population. Irish-born minor civil servants in London present many of the same difficulties to analysis as domestic servants. They were not tied to one residential location, neither were their companions at that location fixed, their trajectory was too varied to have a general pattern. Young Irish migrants to London did not have the settled lives that fostered the type of community life studied earlier. All histories privilege the settled. The Irish domestic servants examined below are just one group in time. They would scatter by their own ambitions for their lives and by the changed opportunities for female employment. They shared this experience with one another; they built a community around one another. This was an important Irish experience of life in London in this period.

Domestic service is an occupation that is both easy and hard to write about: the presence of so many women in basement kitchens, can easily be used to characterise it as a hidden world. However, as much as their lives were lived in private houses, their work was not a hidden one. Working as a

domestic servant was normal for Irishwomen immigrating to London at this time. This was the largest employer of Irishwomen in London. And yet, so many women worked in domestic service that Irishwomen accounted for just 2% of all domestic servants in London in 1901. It is easy to hypothesise about elements of this employment: surely, for example, it was a lonely occupation seeing to the needs of a household, far from home. However, without data to support they offer only impressions. Much more is possible.

Digitisation of census returns made the compilation of a database of all female Irish-born domestic servants in London possible, and it is from this database that a Geographic Information Systems (G.I.S.) map of London was created.[1] The proximity of domestic servants to one another and their distance from the Irish communities examined in the two previous chapters renders their relationship to one another more important. Using this data a comprehensive portrait of Irish domestic servants in London can be produced. Facts such as age, marital status of domestic servants, and where they would have been most likely to work, could all have been taken from the general census report for London; but general reports offer only a general portrait. As with Irish people in suburban London we cannot assume that Irishwomen followed general trends in relation to domestic service. For a group that made up just 2% of the total, it could not be presumed to be accurate. Other data such as the exact occupation of women within domestic service, the difference in being a cook or a kitchenmaid, is not available from census reports. All of these things were elements of one life. Where that life was lived and not lived, in London and in Ireland, was important not alone to what experiences a woman was likely to have in domestic service, but also to the communities that women left because of the work that was available as a domestic servant in London.

My focus is not on the servant as an observer, and is not primarily based on the role she may have played in 'the construction of Englishness', as

[1]The total number of women included in this database is 4,419; 3817 were employed as domestic servants in family homes.

Bronwen Walter's study focused on; rather it is the experiences of the women themselves.[2] There are certainly clues as to when nationality is important; the most obvious ones come from other Irish people. These women formed an integral part of the population of Irish people in London: and this world was just as much the one of barristers and doctors as of labourers and charwomen.

Just as suburbanisation changed Irish communities in inner city London, domestic service work in Britain changed the landscape of communities in Ireland as well as those in London. As others have noted, many have discussed the emotion of female emigration in relation to the places they left, however the feelings women themselves are relatively obscure.[3] All of the women whose information is included in the figures used below were part of a very general pattern of emigration and employment but they also had lives that no figures could account for. For Maria Loughlin who was born in rural Carlow who was enumerated in Hammersmith in 1901, this was a change made no less epic by its ordinariness in this period.[4] It was similarly momentous for the one room cottage she left behind where in the same census her father was living alone, the last Loughlin in the townland.[5]

To explore the lives of these women in London, firstly the basic facts as provided by this database will be explored. Simple facts such as the average age, their exact occupation or where they were born are not just unknown quantities in this period for Irish servants but are unknown for all domestic servants. Providing these facts and integrating them with a consideration of the geography of Irish domestic servants in London, provided by G.I.S. maps, will give context to the entire scope of the life of not only Irish domestic servants at this time but all domestic servants in London at this time. Secondly the social lives of Irish domestic servants will be explored. By comparing maps of Irish domestic servants to censuses of religious attendance, it will be shown that Irishwomen provided huge numbers for Catholic churches

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[2] Bronwen Walter, 'Strangers on the Inside: Irish Women Servants in England, 1881' in *Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol. 27, No. 2, pp 279-99.
[3] Caitriona Clear, *Social Change and everyday life in Ireland, 1850-1922* (Manchester, 2007), p. 66.
[4] 1901 Census return 90 Sinclair Rd., Hammersmith.
[5] 1901 Census return Michael Loughlin, Adare, Co. Carlow.

in west London and that they were the majority of the congregation at early masses. Mass had more than a religious function for these women, and this social function as well as other pastimes of domestic servants will be discussed to illustrate that domestic service was not a life of constant work. Finally the households for which Irishwomen worked will be considered using a sample of one particular head of household occupation to show that while the desire to employ Irish servants seems to have been an important consideration for Irish households, it was of lesser importance to those that were not Irish. The statistical evidence available here allows much that was previously anecdotal to be clarified;[6] adding geographical information to this expands the uses of the information and allows for a consideration of geography that is not based on the lines of boroughs. The number of Irishwomen at work in London in domestic service was vast. They could be very different from one another. Ultimately that which made them most similar was the simple fact of not being from London and of being part of a chain of other Irishwomen in domestic service.

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The British census in 1901 recorded for domestic servants their address, age, marital status, occupation and place of birth as well as details of the household for which they worked. These categories are the most easily quantifiable information that emerges from this database. Yet the forms from which this information emerges are problematic. The details of domestic servants' lives were recorded by their employer. Even the designation 'servant' itself was subject to change from census to census.[7] The problems with the census form are most evident in terms of place of birth, as will be discussed below; however, it should also be remembered when examining other

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[6]For example Irishwomen's work as domestic servants in Britain has long been assumed but the numbers involved have been vague. See for instance, David Fitzpatrick, 'The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland, Vol. VI, Ireland Under the Union, II 1870-1921* (Oxford, 1996), p. 663; Steven Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity: Irish Catholics in England 1880-1939* (Buckingham, 1993), p. 25.

[7] For an analysis of the changing definition of 'servant' in nineteenth century censuses see, W.A. Armstrong, 'The use of information about occupation' in E. A. Wrigley (ed.), *Nineteenth-century Society: essays in the use of quantitative methods for the study of social data* (London, 1972), p. 245.

information such as age or name, which we have no reason to doubt, and yet could very easily be just as inaccurate. John Pink found, albeit in relation to earlier censuses, that the ages of young girls working in domestic service were incorrect when compared with their ages judged from baptismal records.[8] It is likely that the ages of some of the women in this database, particularly those under twenty were inflated, but the degree to which this is true is impossible to quantify. Although there is little chance of knowing the extent of this it is important to note that graphs and charts are only as solid as the data behind them, as the forms that were filled out describing these women in 1901.

This database includes only those who were enumerated as being born in Ireland. This was done primarily for ease of sorting. The fact that women working in domestic service were necessarily separated from their families rendered it impossible to include a broader definition of Irishwomen. This may appear to limit the scope of this database; however, there was a real difference between women born in the city and women who migrated there in terms of their desire to work as domestic servants.[9] This means that this does not have as distortive an effect as it might have in an occupation which was not so negatively viewed by urban women.

Catholic newspapers based in London are also used here as they were widely read by Irish people in London and also printed letters from and in relation to domestic servants.[10] Although there was a great difference in politics between these newspapers, from English Catholic Tory to Irish Catholic Nationalist, there was no great difference in their coverage of domestic servants. The most relevant items from these newspapers are letters from domestic servants themselves. These letters were mainly on two related topics: the difficulty of meeting men while working as a servant and the difficulty in finding a nearby early mass.

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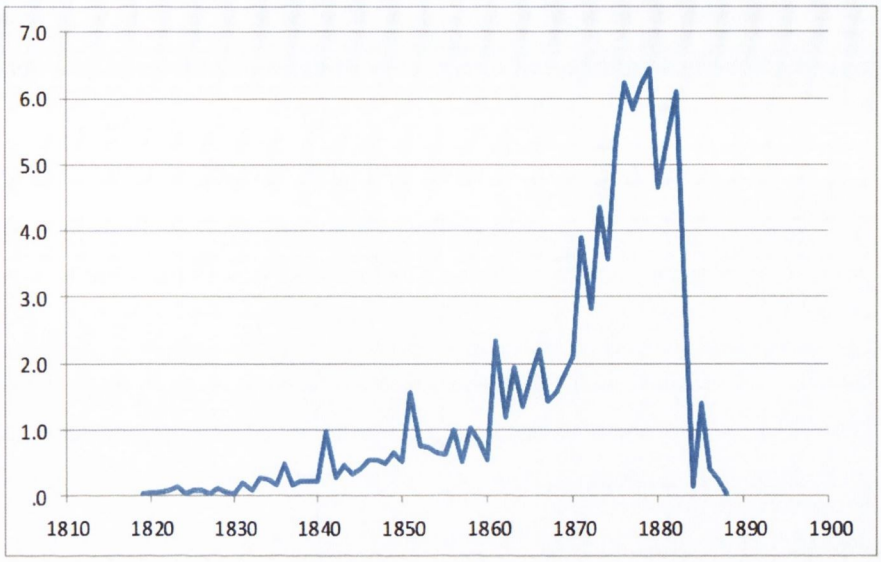
[8] John Pink, *Country Girls Preferred: Victorian Domestic Servants in the Suburbs* (Surbiton, 1998), p. 95 (Appendix F).
[9] Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity*, p. 25.
[10] These newspapers were: *The Universe*, *The Tablet*, and *Catholic Herald.*

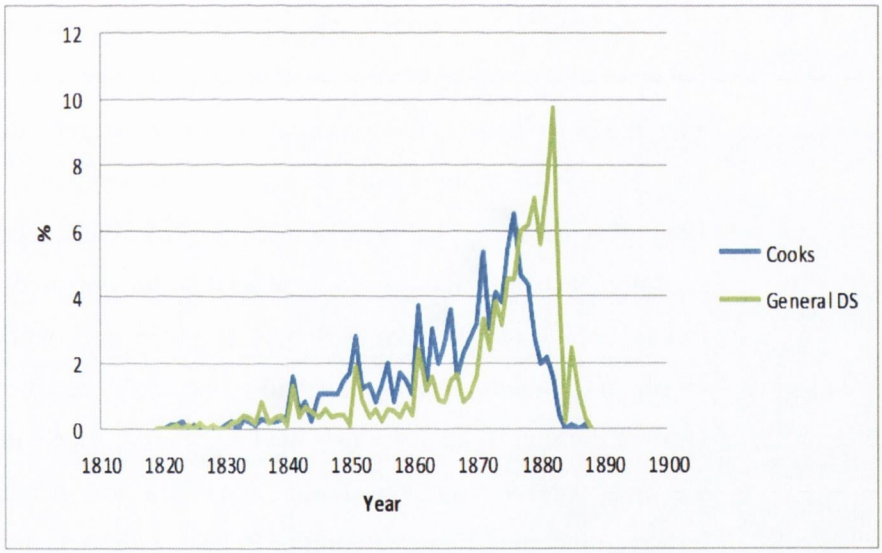
Irishwomen working as domestic servants in London represented a vast array of ages (Graph 3.1). The full spectrum of ages range from thirteen to eighty-two, however, most were reported as being in their twenties, born between 1871 and 1881. The eleven women born in Ireland between 1819 and 1823 who were working as domestic servants were much more likely than younger women to have been a cook, lady's maid or housekeeper. In contrast, the eleven girls who were reported as being thirteen or fourteen occupied a variety of the lower positions in households, between-girl or kitchenmaid in the larger households and general servant in those where they were either the sole servant or one of two. The difference in age between Irish domestic servants in different specific occupations is best shown by comparing ages of cooks and general servants (Graph 3.2). While women of any and all ages did undertake both occupations there were clear differences between the two: general domestic servants were much more likely to be younger. These distinctions in work done by women of different ages were also found in pay: the older a woman was the more she was paid.[11] This is undoubtedly strongly related to the role the domestic servant had in a household. The older a woman was the more likely it was that she would be in one of the top positions in a household. Nevertheless, most domestic servants were young, most did not remain as a domestic servant after the age of thirty, and those that were still working as domestic servants often left domestic service to marry and seem to have returned to it after being widowed or deserted.

[11] Charles Booth and Jesse Argyle, 'Household service, etc.' in Charles Booth (ed.), *Life and Labour of the People in London*, Vol. 8 (London, 1896), p. 222.

Graph 3.1: Ages of Irish Domestic Servants (% by year of birth)



Graph 3.2: Ages of Irish cooks and general domestic servants (% by year of birth)



A woman like Bridget Young, who at seventy-nine was working as a cook for a family of six, with two servants under her was not the norm, and yet her life was an extension of the prevalence and popularity of domestic work amongst Irishwomen.[12] Equally there existed in kitchens, girls like May Towers who at thirteen worked as a kitchenmaid in a small household of a widow and her son.[13] The cook in this household was Nellie Towers, aged

[12] 1901 Census return 130 Queen's Rd., Stoke Newington.
[13] 1901 Census return 18 Vereker Rd., Fulham.

twenty, born in Liverpool. The common last name is certainly suggestive of some familial relationship between the two, perhaps cousins. It is hard looking at the black, white and grey of census returns to know really what is contained within those records. May Towers is the youngest girl in the database, but she does not seem to have been that unusual in other ways. As will be explored below, there were many women who worked alongside someone who seems to have been a relation of some kind. It is impossible to know the circumstances of Bridget Young or May Towers' lives or to speculate at whether life had or would deal with each of them cruelly or well. They were outliers in terms of age but they suggest the bookends of a life story for at least some women in this database.

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The census form provides information on 'Where Born'. For those born in London a borough was given; a county was given for those born outside London in England. Most Irish domestic servants were simply recorded as being born in 'Ireland'; no county of birth was recorded. Of those who did give a county of birth Dublin and Cork predominated, 7.8% and 7.5% of Irishwomen reported being born in each respectively. This is an extraordinary predominance in a database where 65.3% did not give a birthplace beyond Ireland. MacRaild and Smith hypothesised, in their work on the Irish in the North of England, that Dublin and Cork could be overrepresented for two reasons: familiarity and through having a port.[14] These prospective reasons to the overrepresentation of Dublin and Cork are persuasive to an extent, however, the underrepresentation of Belfast, a city which would have been just as familiar as Dublin or Cork does necessitate some further discussion. Migratory patterns differed in different parts of the country: Ulster was connected to Scotland in a similar way in which Cork was associated with London and the south coast of England.[15] The use of the Irish language in London, explored in Chapter 4, is also indicative of this link to Munster. For

[14] Malcolm Smith and Donald M. MacRaild, 'The Origins of the Irish in Northern England: An Isonymic Analysis of Data from the 1881 Census' in *Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2009), pp 160-1.
[15] Ibid., p. 154

other counties there are two probable explanations for the predominance of Cork and Dublin: that familiarity led to Cork and Dublin being overrepresented, or that women from Dublin and Cork were more likely to work as domestic servants in London.

If women from Dublin and Cork were more likely to go to London what might the reasons have been? Ten years later than this database, in 1911, just 28% of domestic servants in Dublin were born there as compared to 70% of the general population of the city.[16] Historically urban-born women have for many reasons been unlikely to work as domestic servants in the city in which they were born. The general narrative of this has been that urban women did not want to work as domestic servants because of 'Their knowledge of job opportunities in the urban labour market, the proximity of friends and relations, and their prejudices against social subordination'.[17] Not all women from Cork or Dublin were from an urban background. However, from this data it can certainly be argued, that urban women were disinclined to work as domestic servants in their own city, but that this disinclination was not prominent or as prominent after migration. Without the knowledge of the local labour market or the close connection to family other objections were not as strong. Similarly employers had long favoured those not from the city as domestic servants. However, here again it seems that simply not being from London was sufficient to deem a servant not to have the distasteful habits of urban women. That domestic service has been looked at mainly in terms of one area, generally a city, has meant that the larger questions of urban or rural have been read largely as general rules, in fact they appear to have been general rules but applied city-specifically. In a different city, for both employers and women seeking work, things were different.

If we accept that this general breakdown of birthplaces is correct, and they are correct in the underrepresentation of Belfast, that Cork and Dublin did predominate, then redistributing those whose county of origin is 'Not

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[16] Mona Hearn, 'Life for Domestic Servants in Dublin, 1880-1920' in Maria Luddy and Cliona Murphy (eds.), *Women Surviving: Studies in Irish women's history in the 19th and 20th centuries* (Dublin, 1989), p. 150.

[17] Edward Higgs, 'Domestic Servants and Households in Victorian England' in *Social History*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (May, 1983), p. 208.

Known', according to the proportions for those counties which are known, we can estimate the totals for each county. Cork and Dublin are likely to be overrepresented through familiarity; however, even with this the percentage of women in domestic service from both Cork and Dublin was probably closer to 20% than 7%. That Irishwomen working in domestic service were not a random sample of the Irish population at the time should not surprise us; there are patterns of migration specific to certain areas all over Ireland. It is notable that these women did not just have domestic service in common, and that these ties of likely chain migration were influential in dictating employment.

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Edward Higgs in his work on domestic servants has warned against looking at them solely in terms of relationships within the household rather than in terms of the work itself.[18] While the differences between particular jobs in domestic service, for example, cook or kitchenmaid, certainly did indicate a level of seniority within the household, they also inform us of past employment, of likely age and pay. Households were places of work and it is this that must be primary in any consideration of domestic service. The need to focus on work rather than perceptions is especially true in relation to Irish domestic servants. While the argument has been made that Irish domestic servants worked 'at the heart of English society and contributed to the social construction of Englishness', there remains a lack of understanding of the lives of Irish domestic servants themselves as opposed to their employers.[19] Bronwen Walter's study of Irish domestic servants styles them as 'Strangers on the Inside', yet we cannot assume Irish domestic servants were any more or less strange than the other women who migrated to London to work in domestic service.[20] It is likely that the preference that Irish households in London had for employing Irish servants made Irish servants less likely to be 'strange' to the houses in which they gained employment than English rural migrants to London. In 1901 31.5% of Irish servants in London worked for a household with at least one Irish member, 21% worked with another

[18] Ibid., p. 209.
[19] Walter, 'Irish Women Servants in England, 1881', p. 280.
[20] Ibid., pp 279-99.

Irishwoman, 23% of women who worked with other Irishwomen were working with someone of the same surname or county of birth.[21] Religion does sometimes occur as a positive or negative quality in a household from a domestic servant's perspective. However, there is little evidence that nationality was a major concern of servants looking for a good position. We see sometimes only the differences, nationality in this case, between domestic servants, rather than the fact that most did the same work.

If we accept that the work within a household could not vary too greatly, apart perhaps from those households which sent out laundry and those that did not, the main difference was in scale – between cleaning a very large house and a smaller one. These are differences which titles cannot greatly inform us about. The woman working as a general servant with no other servants would likely have had less detailed cleaning work to do. Housemaids could be employed in any household – the work they did probably differed substantially between those housemaids who were employed with a number of other servants and those who worked with just one other woman. Titles in domestic service are possible indicators of many things: age and pay principally, however, the largest categories housemaid or parlourmaids and general servants were so large and ill-defined as occupations that although they are useful as general indicators they should not be taken to always mean the same thing.

Although most domestic servants were recorded as having a particular occupation, kitchenmaid or housemaid for instance, all of these occupations are rendered as simply 'domestic servant (indoor)' in the general report on the census. As such the figures from this database cannot be compared with those of the general population of domestic servants in the same census. Below the geographical spread of particular domestic servant occupations across London will be used to gauge the degree to which Irish domestic servants differed from the general population of domestic servants.

[21] Although this does not conclusively indicate a familial relationship it does indicate at the very least some prior connection between the Irish servants in these households.

The seven occupations listed (Table 3.1) account for the occupations of 98% of Irish domestic servants. Rare occupations, such as Mother's Help or Stairmaid, were generally employed in particular domestic situations: where young children were part of the household or where the household had a large number of servants. Of the most common occupations three stand out: cook, general domestic servant and house or parlour-maid.[22] There is little written about the differences between different occupations within domestic service, however, although domestic servants can appear to have been a homogenous group – generally young and single, as argued above – relatively small differences in age often brought differences in particular occupation. The difference was often one of the size of household; working as a general domestic servant or as a housemaid could seem trivial, however, these were important distinctions when one was most likely to work alone and others were more likely to work with another woman in a wealthier household.

Table 3.1: Occupations of Irish Domestic Servants

Occupation	Number	%
Cook	966	24.8
Housekeeper	120	3.1
General DS	1230	31.6
Nurse	203	5.2
House/parlour maid	1105	28.4
Kitchenmaid	90	2.3
Lady's maid	103	2.6

The average age of Irish cooks was thirty-four.[23] Charles Booth's survey of London, using figures from 1894, cites cooks as having an average

[22] House or parlour maid is sometimes recorded as one role and sometimes as two, it is here recorded as one occupation.
[23] Graph 3.2.

age of 32.5.[24] Cooks generally worked in households where there were other servants.[25] Just over 90% of Irishwomen employed as cooks worked with at least one other servant. Generally in households where there were just two servants employed the other servant was a house or parlour-maid. In households with more servants a kitchenmaid was often employed to aid the cook. The kitchenmaid, in this situation, was the youngest servant in the household.[26] As noted above, age was an important distinction in seniority in a household and this was reflected in the wages of domestic servants.[27] Table 3.2 shows the results in age and wage terms from a Department of Labour returns for 678 domestic servants in 1894. Cooks were the most highly paid servants in most households; the only servants who were higher paid were lady's maids and housekeepers who were employed in much smaller numbers than cooks.

Table 3.2: Average Age and Wage of Servants (1894).[28]

	Average wages	Average age
General Servant	£15 10s	25.7
Housemaid	£16 10s	23.9
Cook	£21 18s	32.5

Irish cooks were the most likely of all Irish domestic servants to work for an Irish household. 20% of Irish cooks were employed by Irish households; this compares to 17% of house or parlour-maids and 15% of general domestic servants. Without comparable figures for the general population of servants, and the relatively compact geographical spread, examined below, of employment of Irish cooks, whether Irish women were over or under-represented as cooks is difficult to gauge. It is clear though that given the wide range of employers, the vast majority of whom were British, that there was no widespread discrimination.

Equally it is clear that a cook was a position that Irish households placed a value on being Irish. Margaret Burns, who worked as a cook for an

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[24] Booth and Argyle, 'Household service, etc.', p. 223.
[25] See Table 3.3.
[26] Booth and Argyle, 'Household service, etc.', p. 223.
[27] Ibid., p. 222.
[28] Adapted from Booth and Argyle, 'Household service, etc.', p. 223.

Irish barrister and his family, was, along with the governess, the only Irish servant in the household.[29] The family's butler was French; while the kitchen and housemaid were both born in London. This was a family where clearly the nationality of the servant had some role in their appointment. Quite possibly the choice of the governess was dictated by a preference for a Catholic.[30] If an Irish governess could provide a Catholic education; a French butler could provide some continental class to the house; what then did an Irish cook bring? It may have meant that Irishness was especially prized in a senior member of the household staff.

House and parlour-maids were the second most common occupation for Irish women and the most middling of all occupations. Most households which employed more than one servant had at least one servant in this role. The average age of Irish house and parlour-maid was twenty-six. House and parlour-maids were the most likely of the three most common occupations to work with another servant (Table 3.3). Just 5% of Irish house and parlour-maids worked alone in a household. In slightly larger households, two Irishwomen often found work together. For example, Mary Boland and Mary Maddin, both born in Ireland, worked as house and parlour-maids for an army officer and his family. Also employed were a cook and kitchenmaid.[31] This household does not seem to have had any Irish links and yet this was a place where two Irish women, of roughly the same age, 24 and 25, could find employment together. These larger households afforded camaraderie amongst servants; indeed certain households, such as that which Mary Boland and Mary Maddin worked for, may have encouraged friendship between their servants through their hiring practices. This seems to have been particularly the case in relation to house and parlour maids, roles which were roughly equivalent in rank.

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[29] 1901 Census return 16 Earls Court Sq., Kensington.
[30] The governess's name was Ellen Mary Tierney; she was born in Galway. In the Irish 1901 Census there are no Protestant Tierneys in Galway.
[31] 1901 Census return for 83 Cromwell Rd., Kensington.

Table 3.3: % in each occupation by total number of servants in household.

Total Servants	Cook (%)	General DS (%)	House/Parlour maid (%)
1	9.73	71.38	5.16
2	37.16	17.72	28.35
3	23.91	4.55	25.27
4	14.70	2.28	15.58
5	5.07	1.14	8.79
6	3.73	1.06	6.43
7	2.80	0.73	3.53
8	1.04	0.08	1.72
9	0.52	0.41	1.00
10+	1.35	0.65	4.17

General servant was the most common occupation for Irishwomen in domestic service in London. Indeed the role of general servant seems to have been the most common one in domestic service in general at this time; Mona Hearn estimated that 80% of domestic servants in Dublin in 1911 were general servants.[32] The average age of Irish general domestic servants was twenty-nine. As Graph 3.2, above, shows they had the greatest spread of women across all ages, from the very young to much older than the average; this results in a relatively high average age. This is counter-intuitive to some extent, general domestic servants were acknowledged to have the hardest lot of all domestic servants and it would make sense if they were the youngest servants. Age, or more probably, experience was directly related to pay. General servants were both older and younger than housemaids, and were regarded as holding multiple important responsibilities.[33] They were by far the most likely servants to be the sole servant in a household (Table 3.3).

It seems from the differences in ages between house and parlour-maids and general domestic servants that although there was some career ladder in domestic service which is evident in the average pay of domestic servants of different ages; general domestic servants were outside of this.

[32]Mona Hearn, *Below Stairs: Domestic Service Remembered in Dublin and Beyond 1880-1922* (Dublin, 1993), p. 9.
[33]Christine Terhune Henrick, *The Expert Maid-Servant*, (London, 1904), p. 52.

Housemaids were most likely to spend a short time as a domestic servant, whereas general domestic servants had longer working lives. It is likely that there was a class difference between those who began their working lives as general domestic servants and those who began working as a housemaid or parlour-maid. General domestic servants began paid employment as 'probably a girl of thirteen, with some small tradesman's wife as her mistress, just a step above her in the social scale', as was Fanny Greenaway who, at fourteen was a general domestic servant, the sole servant in the household for a bank cashier, his wife and their two children.[34] She would probably have worked in employment like this one until she married. If she was widowed she would re-enter this work, perhaps finding, as Ellen Cradley must have, that the ethnicity of the families she served had changed dramatically in the years she was absent from the workforce: a widow, Cradley who was sixty-eight, worked as the sole servant for Russian-born couple and their London-born children in the East End of London.[35]

General servants were considered to have the worst lot of domestic service. However, considering the likely differences in the households they worked for, their duties were dictated by the differences in scale of those households rather than in any major differences of work. Both general domestic servants and house or parlour-maids would have been at work by six or half-six in the morning and began their day lighting coal fires.[36] Households which did not have coal fires, often stated this explicitly when advertising for a servant, along with a litany of the other benefits of the household: 'Respectable girl wanted age 25 to 39 for house cleaning, in small household; no soaking, no washing, no coal fires (except kitchen)'.[37] A house which did not have coal fires would also have less dust and so eased the maids' duties in other ways. Carrying coal to the fires throughout the house and lighting them as needed was hard work, and the lack of fires must have eased the work of a housemaid or general servant considerably while also foreshadowing the diminishing need

[34] Ibid.; Census return 104 Albacoia Crescent, Lewisham.
[35] Census return 201 St. George St., St. George's in the East.
[36] Terhune Henrick, *The Expert Maid-Servant*, pp 56, 75; Frank Dawes, *Not in Front of the Servants: domestic service in England 1850-1939* (London, 1973), pp 18-19.
[37] *Catholic Herald*, 9 May 1902.

for the same number of servants. The table would then need to be set for breakfast and the breakfast would need to be cooked. Whereas the housemaid would have the cook to assist, the general servant aided the woman of the house. So the work of the house would have been accomplished in both situations with the variation being the role of members of the household in that work. The jokes of newspapers such as this one from *The Universe*, an Irish Catholic newspaper, mocked both the mistress and the servant, but in this case the most notable feature is the distance, in manners and work of this mistress:

> Mistress severely, 'If such a thing occurs again, Norah, I shall have to get another servant.'
> Norah: 'I wish yer would, there's easily enough work fer two of us.'[38]

In a household with just one servant, depending on its size and whether laundry was sent out or not, the servant was expected to be an aide to the woman of the house.[39] Without this help the work of most households would have been too great for one woman. Women simply did not stay in employment that curtailed their freedom or demanded more work than they thought fair. Mrs Layton, writing about a slightly earlier time details how she left her first employer:

> I left before I was seventeen because of an injustice...One day the grandmother asked me what I did on Sunday afternoons. I told her I went for a walk. Then she said, if that was so I might as well take the children with me. This I considered unfair as I had to take them out all week and then was expected to take them out with me on my free day.[40]

This account is interesting for several reasons but at this point the self-assuredness of a seventeen-year old in her first job is important to note. Demand for servants exceeded the supply, and therefore although a servant could leave and be sure of finding another household, the household that lost a servant would have more difficulty finding a suitable replacement.[41] There

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[38] *The Universe*, 15 Dec. 1900.
[39] Isabella Beeton, *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management* (London, 2000), p. 1003; Terhune Henrick, *The Expert Maid-Servant,* pp 53-5.
[40] Mrs Layton, 'Memories of Seventy Years' in Margaret Llewelyn Davies (ed.), *Life as we have known it* (London, 1977), p. 27.
[41] *The Servant Problem, an attempt at a solution by an experienced mistress* (London, 1899), p. 4.

were clearly understood conditions that domestic servants deemed acceptable and they were willing to negotiate to get these conditions or leave if they were not satisfied. Impressions of powerless and helpless young women never take this into account.[42] This is especially true from Irish sources who see the young women 'from innocent Ireland...compelled to come to London to earn their bread' as not only from 'innocent Ireland' but innocents themselves, in need of protection and advice.[43]

This image of innocent Irish girls forced to find work in very difficult surroundings is prevalent in Catholic sermons and episcopal pronouncements. However, the American vision of Irish servants as rebellious and boisterous housemaids seems closer to the truth than this innocent young woman depicted by clerics. Jokes such as this one, in a London-based Irish Catholic newspaper show something of the perception that Irish Catholics living in England had of Irish servants:

> Mistress: 'Woman alive! You have cooked the fowl I got for Sunday instead of the beef.'
> Servant: 'Shure oi didn't know it was the mate ye wanted for to-day'
> Mistress: 'You might have known I wanted the fowl on Sunday without my telling you.'
> Servant: 'Moight I, indade? Did yez expect ter get a moind reader fur five bob a wake'[44]

Although there was not a stereotype for Irish women servants in England in the same way that there was in America, when there were depictions of Irish servants some of the same themes do emerge – a straight talking, unworldly – but not innocent – woman.[45] This is something that is hard to see: accounts of domestic service are so strongly gendered, that frequently the societal constructs of gender are most apparent. This woman, a negotiator, with strong arms to carry coal, was fundamentally a worker. That these things could be, not unimportant, but of such importance that they are background noise to this woman's life is something unexplored. She cooked, she cleaned,

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[42]E.g. Beeton, *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management*, p. 1001; Dawes, *Not in Front of the Servants*, p. 85.
[43] *Catholic Herald*, 3 Aug. 1900.
[44] Ibid., 9 Feb. 1900.
[45] Andrew Urban, 'Irish Domestic Servants, 'Biddy' and Rebellion in the American Home, 1850–1900' in *Gender & History*, Vol.21, No.2 (August 2009), pp 263-86.

she left positions and took others, looking for better conditions and more wages: how else could we describe her but by the work she did: a domestic servant, someone who deserves to have their work noted. In the years she did this work, this was paramount.

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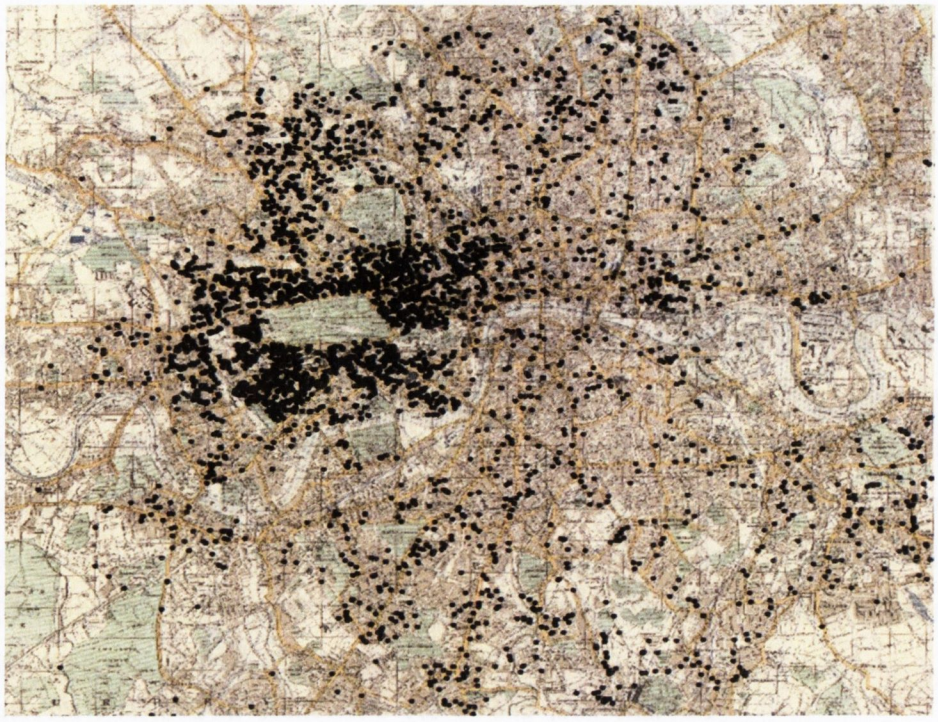
The differences between general domestic servants and other occupations as well as being material were also geographic. Irish domestic servants in London were heavily concentrated in West London (Map 3.1). 49% of Irish domestic servants in London worked in the boroughs of Kensington, Westminster, St. Marylebone and Paddington; over 20% of Irish domestic servants worked in Kensington alone. The corresponding figures for the general population of domestic servants were 35% and 12% respectively. Irish servants differed in this respect from the general population of domestic servants and, due to the differences in domestic service occupations across London which are explored below, this led to fewer Irish women working as general domestic servants. This is supported by Bronwen Walter's work, which examined a 5% sample of the 1881 British census; she concluded that Irish domestic servants were less likely than those servants who were not Irish to be the sole servant in a London household.[46]

[46] Walter, 'Strangers on the Inside: Irish Women Servants in England, 1881' in *Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol. 27, No. 2, p. 289.

Map 3.1: Irish Domestic Servants

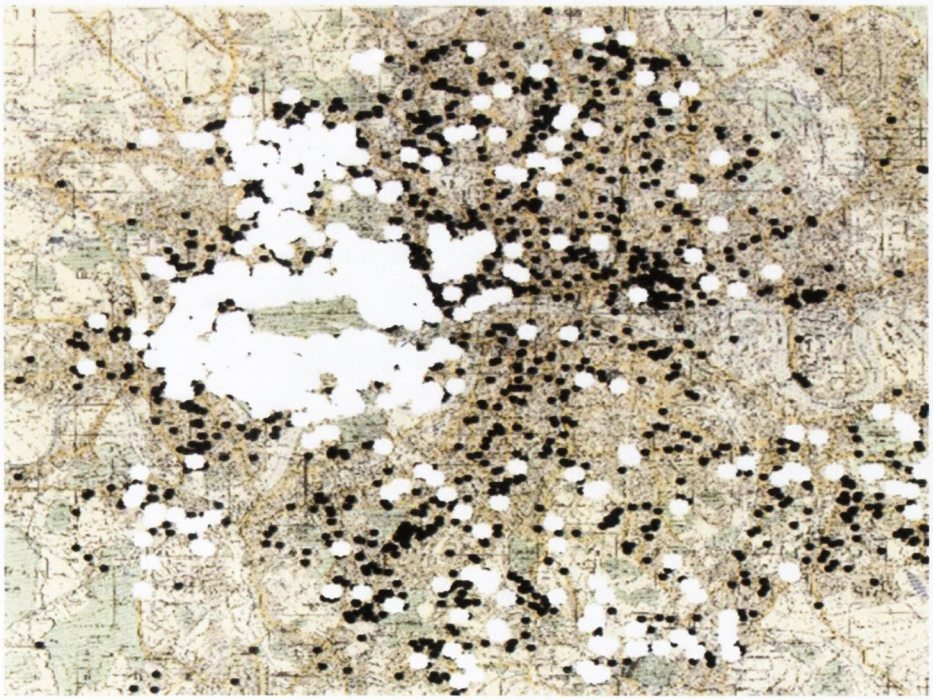


General domestic servants (shown in white in Map 3.2) had, compared with other occupations, a much more dispersed geographical pattern. These were the servants employed largely by households which could only afford one servant and as such, were employed much more evenly across London. There was no district that was homogenously well-off enough not to have those who could only afford one servant; there were very few areas where there were no servants at all employed. This contrasts with the next largest occupation, house and parlour-maids, who were noticeably more concentrated in West London (Map 3.3, house and parlour-maids in white). In Map 3.1 we can see that many domestic servants, especially in the west, lived quite near one another, often in the same streets. In the west of London, where it was much more common to have more than one servant, many worked with another Irishwoman. Although a similar pattern is evident with the distribution of general domestic servants (Map 3.2), their distribution being more even across London meant that they were, in certain areas, more isolated from other Irish servants. The other noticeable feature of Map 3.2 as compared to Map 3.3 is the second concentration of general servants in the East End which is not

present with house and parlour-maids: 89% of Irish domestic servants working in the borough of Stepney in the East End were working as general domestic servants.

Map 3.2: Irish general domestic servants (white), other Irish domestic servants (black).

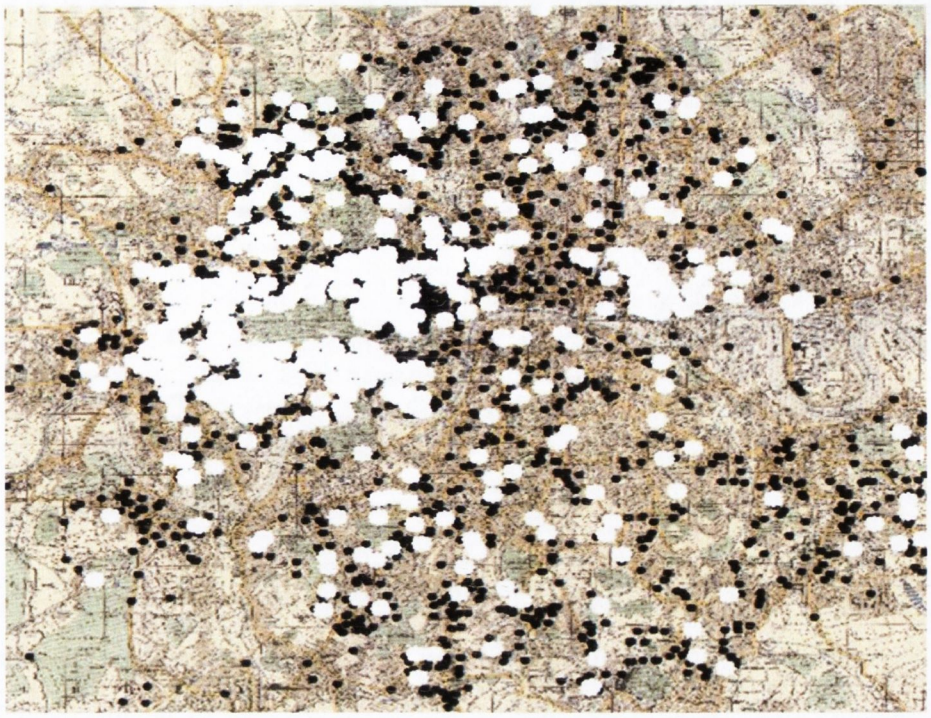
Map 3.3: Irish house and parlour-maids (white), other Irish domestic servants (black).



The concentration of Irish domestic servants in the west of London meant that there were not great disparities in the dispersion of differently aged Irish women across London. Nevertheless there was one big difference in the spread of Irishwomen across London. Map 3.4 shows Irishwomen born before 1860, aged forty-one and over in 1901. Map 3.5 shows those born after 1880, aged twenty-one and under (Map 3.5). Whereas both were heavily concentrated in the west of London, there was another concentration for older women in the east of London. There are three likely explanations: firstly that these women emigrated earlier and so followed an earlier settlement pattern, the Irishwomen who emigrated in the 1890s were no longer drawn to the East End; secondly, that they had settled there after marrying and found work there after being widowed; or thirdly, that households preferred younger servants and therefore older women found work in poorer homes. This last explanation can be discounted as the concentration of women over forty in Stepney is very much secondary to the high concentration found in every age group in the west of London, in particular in the boroughs of Kensington and Westminster. It is more likely to be the result of the historical settlement patterns of Irish people migrating to London.[47]

[47] The structure of Irish communities in East London is discussed more fully in Chapter 1.

Map 3.4: Irish domestic servants born before 1860 (white).



Map 3.5: Irish domestic servants born after 1880 (white).

There is some anecdotal evidence of different settlement patterns in London for people from different areas of the country; for instance, Pádraic Ó Conaire writing about London in 1907 describes a district (never named) but likely to have been in east London, 'a little Irish world', which was populated

by people from Munster.[48] Although, as explored above, most Irish domestic servants were not ascribed a county of birth in the census, by mapping those that were, especially those from Cork and Dublin whose numbers afford some analysis, it is clear that there was a particular difference between domestic servants from Cork and from Dublin even within the constraints of the majority working in the west of London. Maps of Cork (Map 3.6) and Dublin-born (Map 3.7) domestic servants in London show very similar pictures. The one area where there is a slight difference is in the greater number of Cork domestic servants in east London. There were twice as many women from Cork working in Stepney as women from Dublin.[49] This is likely due to Famine migration patterns especially as the age profile of Irish servants in Stepney was older than that of boroughs in the west of London. That older women and Cork women have the same patterns of concentration supports the thesis that Irish-born women in east London were older and more likely to be from Cork than elsewhere in Ireland. The inter-regional connections that MacRaild and Smith describe have an echo here on a more local basis.[50] Younger women, who came to London to work as domestic servants, were likely drawn to the expanding suburbs of London if they married than the historically Irish districts.[51] The causes of this should not be regarded as being related necessarily to a disjoint between young and old Irish women. It is more likely that their differences are due to the fact that suburban London provided cheaper housing and those that were not tied to a particular area must have been more likely to be drawn to areas where housing was available.

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[48] The effects of this migration, predominantly Cork and Kerry, to certain areas of London is discussed in Chapter 1 and 4; Pádraic Ó Conaire, *Deoraíocht* (Dublin, 1980; 1st edn. 1910), pp 89-90 (my translation).

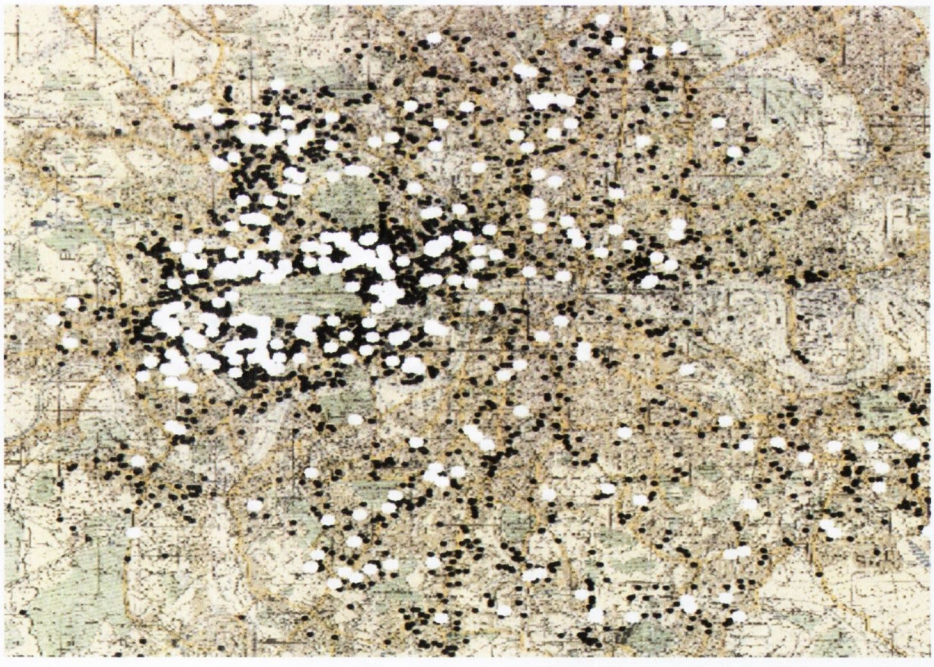
[49] 20 women from Cork and nine women from Dublin were working as domestic servants in Stepney. Nine women from Dublin

[50] Smith and MacRaild, 'The origins of the Irish in Northern England', pp 152-77.

[51] Changing patterns of Irish settlement and Irish communities in London are discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

Map 3.6: Irish domestic servants born in Cork (white).

Map 3.7: Irish domestic servants born in Dublin (white).



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As the above maps show, Irish domestic servants worked largely in the west of London. This produced a skewed geography of Irish people in

London: Irish-born women vastly outnumbered Irish-born men in boroughs in the west of London (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Irish-born population, % men and women in selected boroughs (1911).[52]

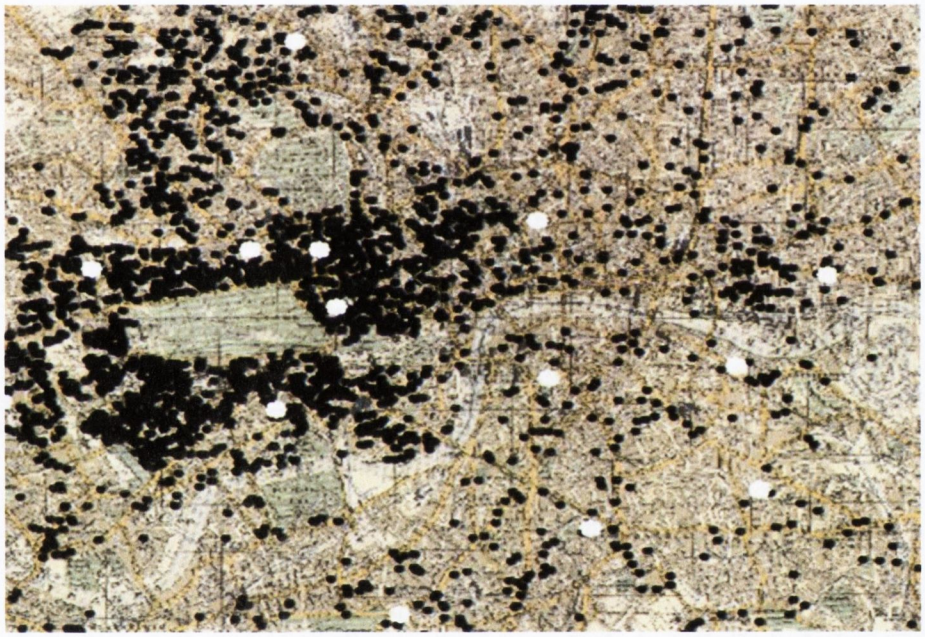
	Men %	Women %
Kensington	25.51	74.49
Hampstead	26.15	73.85
Paddington	31.13	68.87
St. Marylebone	32.08	67.92
Poplar	50.13	49.87
Deptford	50.27	49.73
Greenwich	50.83	49.17
West Ham	51.47	48.53
City of London	51.87	48.12

These figures lend weight to statistics from a *Daily News* survey of church attendance for all denominations across London undertaken in 1902 and 1903 which show a similar picture of female domination amongst Catholics in west London.[53] In this survey the *Daily News* surveyed church attendance in all churches in particular boroughs. What makes this survey much more accurate for Catholic attendance than previous surveys of church attendance was that all masses were surveyed rather than just one as had been the case with the *British Weekly* survey of 1886.[54] Map 3.8 shows those churches where more than 500 women attended morning mass. Map 3.9 shows those churches where more than 300 children attended.[55] The white spots on both maps indicate churches, while the black spots continue to represent domestic servants. Men's attendance is not mapped here as it was universally lower and no area had a high male attendance rate that was not mirrored in the number of children attending. Comparing Maps 3.8 and 3.9 and noting the areas where the two

[52] 'Birthplaces of males and females enumerated in admin. Counties County Boroughs etc. 1911', *Census of England and Wales Vol. IX Birthplaces (and ages and occupations of Foreigners)* (London, 1913), pp 44-62 (Table 2).
[53] Richard Mudie-Smith (ed.), *The Religious Life of London* (London, 1904).
[54] Mudie-Smith, 'The Methods and Lessons of the Census' in Mudie-Smith (ed.), *Religious Life of London,* p. 4.
[55] The lower figure for high level of attendance for children rather than adults is used as children attended in lower numbers than adults across London, therefore to show areas where there were a large number of children attending a lower cut-off point was used.

maps agree it is clear that the south and east London churches with large attendances were those with a large family attendance, and represent the institutions of settled communities. Women's attendance shows two distinct geographical patterns: in the west of London, areas where large numbers of Irishwomen worked as domestic servants and in the south and east where there were far fewer Irish domestic servants. The western pattern of women's mass attendance strongly suggests the influence of Irish domestic servants and domestic servants in general and is found at both Catholic and Church of England services.[56]

Map 3.8: Catholic Churches where more than 500 women attended on Sunday mornings.[57]



[56] Arthur Sherwell, 'The Problem of West London', in Mudie-Smith (ed.), *Religious Life of London,* p. 91.
[57] Figures from Mudie-Smith (ed.), *Religious Life of London.*

Map 3.9: Catholic churches where more than 300 children attended on Sunday mornings.[58]

The impact of Irish domestic servants on attendance at west London Catholic churches is strongly supported by the pattern of churches with a mass before eight in the morning. These churches are shown in Map 3.10. These early masses were disproportionately in the west of London. Early masses are an important indicator of those who had to work on Sundays and therefore had to attend mass before work. This was an issue which even the conservative Catholic newspaper, *The Tablet*, printed letters about. One servant complained about 'the old and infirm men who say their Mass so slowly that the communicant who must be back for breakfast at a certain time has to hurry out of the church'.[59] This same writer noted that 'unpunctuality in bringing up the breakfast ... often draws grave displeasure upon the poor Catholic girl'.[60] Early masses in the west of London catered for those women who could only attend early mass due to the demands of their work. As these churches were also those that were likely to offer a number of later masses, it is probable that at these early masses in particular the congregation was composed mainly of

[58] Figures from Mudie-Smith (ed.), *Religious Life of London*.
[59] *The Tablet*, 1 Aug. 1908.
[60] Ibid.

domestic servants.[61] These west London parishes were less likely than those churches in historic Irish centres to be social as well as religious hubs. Indeed Irish Catholics found the style of these parishes where 'services are of an ornate kind, the choir sometimes a string band, and the preacher if he does not exactly preach over our heads, is forever debating on "beliefs"' frequently not to their tastes.[62] Even if the churches themselves did not seek to build a community around them, their role in bringing domestic servants together makes them a community centre of sorts. The domestic servants who walked through quiet streets to these masses must have recognised one another as they were drawn firstly through those streets to the church and then scattered from the church.

Map 3.10: Catholic Churches with Sunday Mass before 8 a.m.[63]

The importance of Catholic churches to Irish Catholic servants was by no means particular to London. The Three Patrons Church in Dublin was reportedly built with the donations of servants and known as the 'servants' church'.[64] Catholic services were more than just a religious outlet for Irish domestic servants. It is clear from the way women write about mass and the

[61] See *The Catholic Directory* (London, 1903) for times of masses at all churches in London.
[62] *The Tablet*, 21 Nov. 1903.
[63] *The Catholic Directory* (London, 1903).
[64] Hearn, *Below Stairs*, p. 13.

lack of men or friendly men at mass, that they expected to meet a potential husband there. The fact that most Irish domestic servants lived in west London boroughs, where Catholic churches did not have vibrant Irish parish communities, curtailed this. Lacking a particular Irish community to join in the areas they worked, it is likely they attended ordinary dances or other events. It was this kind of non-Irish and non-Catholic socialising and marriages to non-Catholics which worried Irish Catholic clerical and lay observers at this time. Young Irish women were advised on meeting a man:

> 'Maid choosing man, remember this –
> You take his nature with his name,
> Ask, too, what his religion is,
> For yours will soon be the same.'[65]

Other Catholic observers blamed mixed marriages on the separation of men and women in Catholic organisations – 'perhaps if the separation of the sexes were not so marked in our confraternities, there might have been fewer mixed marriages'.[66] The simple fact seems to have been, judging from the occasional correspondence to Catholic newspapers in London on the subject, that young Irishwomen working as domestic servants in London found it difficult to meet young Irishmen. The reasons for this were much debated: Irishwomen thought men impolite, suffering from a 'lack of refinement' or preferring the company of women with free evenings.[67] Meanwhile, Irishmen complained that prohibitions on 'company keeping' meant that Irishmen sought the company of women who could spend time with them.[68] The rigours of employment as a domestic servant certainly did not help in bringing young Irishmen and women together, although Catholic men looking for a wife were advised to 'Go to the early Masses at Brompton Oratory, or to the Cathedral on a Sunday; see there are dozens of Catholic girls who are earning a living in service, learning and doing duties which are fitting them for home life'.[69] Given these facts, it is likely that Irish domestic servants were more likely than those living in areas with a strong Irish community to

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[65] *Catholic Herald*, 26 Jan. 1900.
[66] *The Tablet*, 1 Mar. 1902.
[67] *Catholic Herald*, 3 July 1909; *Catholic Herald*, 8 May 1909.
[68] Ibid., 11 Mar. 1911.
[69] Ibid., 24 Apr. 1909.

marry a non-Irishman. This probably accentuated their invisibility from Irish community life.

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Religious duties were not the only leisure activities available to domestic servants. Generally after the dinner things were cleared away, and the servant had eaten her own dinner, she had her day's work completed. In 1900 the *Catholic Herald* advising its readers on how to be a good mistress, portrayed the ideal Catholic household as a place where servants' 'kitchens and bedrooms are made comfortable and in many instances quite tasteful and pretty, due time is allowed for meals and when work is practically done for the day she allows them to read or sew as fancy dictates'.[70] These seem to have been the ideal pursuits – one mistress, in a polemic on the difficulties of finding good servants, detailed her efforts to make the servant's room more comfortable by putting a table in the room where 'servants stood their sewing machines and books'.[71]

There were many reasons why mistresses would have liked the young women in their households to enjoy needlework. They could fix their own uniforms and would undoubtedly be useful for minor repairs in the household. However, I have not read of any servants who list needlework as a favourite pastime. It may have been a regular pastime for many women but whether it was their preferred option is unknown. It was clearly a feature of the idealised housemaid though: a woman of such abstract and concrete qualities as 'respectable' with a fondness for needlework.

Reading was probably much more common as an indoor pastime. Mrs Layton explains that 'the servant next door lent me some trashy books that came out weekly'.[72] These cheap paperbacks provided entertainment for a huge number of domestic servants especially if passed from house to house. With the rise of literacy, and the high level of literacy in young Irish women, books

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[70] *Catholic Herald*, 13 Apr. 1900.
[71] *The Servant Problem: An Attempt at its Solution by an Experienced Mistress* (London, 1899), pp 165-6.
[72] Mrs Layton, 'Memories of Seventy Years', p. 27.

must have been a major entertainment of domestic servants, depending on what was encouraged and available within the household they worked in.

Apart from these indoor evening pastimes, servants had at least a half-day off a week.[73] There are few details of a typical afternoon or evening off for a domestic servant, although simply going for a walk with another servant was common, so too was involvement in organisations.[74] P.S. Ó hÉigeartaigh regarded domestic servants as one of the core groups who supported the Gaelic League in London in the 1900s along with junior clerks and junior civil servants.[75] Domestic servants cannot have been too different from others who joined the Gaelic League at this time and 'learned their "cúpla focail"...enjoyed the pastimes they created for themselves'.[76] Not being able to commit to a regular language class would not have differentiated them from most of those who joined the Gaelic League at this time.[77] It is certainly not hard to imagine that domestic servants would have formed a prominent group of participants given that 13% of Irish-born women in London were working as domestic servants in 1901 and that domestic servants were overwhelmingly young and single – as were most of the clerks and civil servants who became involved in the League. Indeed, given the dearth of Catholic social events in the west of London, the Gaelic League must have provided a welcome opportunity for young Irish men and women working in West London to meet.

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The households, to which Irish domestic servants hurried back to prepare the breakfast, were separate kingdoms to one another. Their diversity means that to look at this data on a household level, divisions need to be created. The occupation of the head of household was the best indicator of the wealth of the household. If there were a finite number of occupations, and each had an intrinsic wealth indicator, then certainly a statistical analysis of the

[73] Dawes, *Not in Front of the Servants*, p. 18; Board of Trade (Labour Department), 'Report by Miss Collet, on the money wages of indoor domestic servants' (London, 1899 [C.9346]), p. 30.
[74] See for example: Mrs Layton, 'Memories of Seventy Years', pp 1-56.
[75] P.S. Ó hÉigeartaigh, 'Cuimhní ar Éirinn na nGael i mBlianta Tosaigh an Chéid' in *Feasta,* (Márta, 1954), p. 7.
[76] Timothy McMahon, *The Grand Opportunity, the Gaelic revival and Irish society 1893-1910* (Syracuse, 2008), pp 217-18.
[77] Ibid.

occupations of the head of household would be beneficial.[78] However, the number of households which returned the same set of words meaning entirely different things makes this a difficult measure to use. For example: 'living on own means', is a set of words which is related to obviously wealthy households as well as those whose 'means' were likely to be the children's income.[79] For this reason just one group of householders are examined here. The decision to examine just one occupation was made in order not to treat all those with the same listed occupation as homogenous. Employers who were returned as members of the clergy were chosen for analysis. This group was chosen as it represented a discrete set of occupations as well as allowing an exploration of the impact of religion and nationality on domestic service.

Eighty-six Irish women worked for a clergyman of some denomination. The denominational breakdown (Table 3.5) shows that the most likely employer was a clergyman in the Church of England; ten of these households were Irish. Men such as Robert Elliot, born in Ireland, who from the birthplaces of his children appears to have been involved mainly in missionary work, employed three servants, a governess, a cook and a housemaid.[80] All three were Irish, two appear to have been sisters or cousins. In total thirty-one of these religious employers were Irish, or had an Irish member of the household, such as a curate in the parish; fifteen were Catholic while those remaining were mainly Church of England. While it is certainly true that the nationality of the servant must have been a large part of the decision to employ them; religious faith also appears to have been important. For instance, Delia Parkhill, who worked as a cook for a Church of England minister and his family, who were all born in Ireland, was almost certainly Protestant, as all Parkhills in the 1901 census in Ireland were.[81] The other two servants in the household, a nurse and a housemaid, were both born in London. As argued previously, having an Irish cook seems to have been important to

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[78]For a study of the problems with information in the 'Rank, Profession or Occupation' column of censuses see: W. A. Armstrong, 'The use of information about occupation', pp 191-311.
[79]For instance retired persons were in various censuses categorised as 'persons without specified occupations' or included with their previous occupation. (Armstrong, 'The use of information about occupation', pp. 245-6.)
[80] Census return for 27 Lunham Rd., Lambeth.
[81] Census return for 'Lamiston', Clapham (street not numbered).

this family, yet it was also appears to have been important that this Irishwoman be Protestant.

To British employers this was perhaps less important. This is clear from those servants whose religion can be identified. This is possible in general only for those with unusual names or those who gave a specific local place of birth. For example Margaret Lamphier, who worked for an English Wesleyan minister and his family was almost certainly Catholic.[82] Perhaps British employers were more likely to assume that an Irish woman was Catholic and so if they considered employing an Irishwoman would have seen her religion as a foregone conclusion. The importance of religion as a factor in employment was linked to the nationality of the employer. Religion does seem to have been a factor for Irish households but for non-Irish households it seems to have been, at the very least, of far lesser importance.

Table 3.5: Number of Irish-born servants working for clergy by religious denomination of head of household.

Denomination	No. of servants
Church of England	47
Catholic	27
Presbyterian	4
Unitarian	1
Wesleyan	1
Baptist	1
Church of Ireland	1
Jewish	2
Congregationalist	2

The households examined varied in the numbers of servants employed. The household in this group with the largest retinue of servants was Archbishop House, the home of Cardinal Vaughan. Nine servants, including two footmen were employed in this household, one Irishwoman among them. In general Catholic priests, or at least those who employed Irishwomen,

[82] Census return for 114 Downs Park Road, Hackney.

employed two servants, usually a cook and a housemaid. Church of England clergy were likely to employ slightly more servants, while the clergy of other Protestant denominations employed the least servants, employing on average just one servant.

The clergy present a slightly skewed version of the data in terms of nationality in that Irishwomen working for a clergyman of any denomination were twice as likely as women working for householders with another occupation to be employed by an Irish household.[83] This was not purely due to the number of Irish Catholic priests working in London. However, the over-representation of Irish employers amongst this group is not a misrepresentation of the general trend. Just 1.3% of the population of London were born in Ireland. Yet Irish households employed 17% of Irish domestic servants in London. Irish households had a preference for Irish servants, this could vary as demonstrated above between particular occupations, for instance as a cook or a governess, but it was a fact that this preference existed across all domestic service occupations. This was the most visible difference between Irish domestic servants and the general population of domestic servants.

The Irish employers of these women were not representative of the Irish population of London. Irish women were under-represented as domestic servants in the poorest areas of London; they were more likely to be found in households that could afford to employ more than one servant. In Kensington the borough where over 20% of Irish domestic servants worked, a borough where in 1911 just 25% of the Irish population were men, Irish people were divided between those who employed servants and those who worked as one.[84] Irish domestic servants, in general, lived outside of the traditional Irish settlement areas, but they were living at the centre of another Irish world. This was a largely professional world: 8.6% of Irish employers were doctors. Those Irish households in the east or south of London who were employing one general servant were most likely employing an English woman. This is an

[83] 17.2% of all Irish domestic servants worked for an Irish household; 36% of Irish domestic servants employed by clergy were employed by an Irish household.
[84] Birthplaces of males and females enumerated in admin. Counties County Boroughs etc. 1911', *Census of England and Wales Vol. IX Birthplaces (and ages and occupations of Foreigners)*, (London, 1913 [Cd. 7017]), pp 44-62 (Table 2).

element of domestic service that is utterly invisible using the data from this database and yet would present just as compelling a study in terms of the impact of ethnicity on domestic service.

Most Irishwomen did not work for Irish households; although they worked for people of many different nationalities their most likely employers were British. The other ethnic group for which a number of Irishwomen worked were Eastern European Jews.[85] It is easy to see the difficulties that may have arisen with this latter group in employing Irish women: linguistic, religious, food; the latter perhaps being the most important of all for a domestic servant. Yet Irish domestic servants' relationships to their British employers were probably just as nuanced, full of just as many potential misunderstandings as those with Russian and Polish Jews. Through sheer numbers though, these Irish-British interactions are normalised in a way that Irish-Jewish relationships in the East End are not.

Hasia Diner's work on Irishwomen in America has shown that Irishwomen were unique among those nations that migrated in large numbers in the nineteenth century in their willingness to work as domestic servants. Other ethnic groups, notably Italian and Jewish women, were averse to working outside the structure of family life.[86] This appears also to have been true of Russian and Polish-born women living in the East End. Just 2% of women born in either country were working as domestic servants in London at this time, compared to 13% of Irishwomen in London.[87] Diner's conclusion that 'Eastern European Jewish women also preferred either sweatshop work ... or the garment factory over domestic employment' also finds support here; 10% of Russian women and 11% of Polish women in London at this time were

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[85]Fielding considered this a sign of the low status of Irish domestic servants in Manchester, I disagree with this assessment. Rather I regard the presence of Irishwomen in Jewish homes as a sign of Irish willingness to work as domestic servants and a result of high numbers of Jewish and Irish people living in East London. (Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity*, p. 25).

[86] Hasia Diner, *Erin's Daughters in America: Irish immigrant women in the nineteenth century* (London, 1983) pp 82-3; An exception to this general pattern of Italian women's work was their work in Latin America: Donna Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas* (London, 2000), pp 75-6.

[87] Figures from 'Occupations and Country of Birth of Foreigners', *Census of England and Wales, 1901, County of London: Area, houses and population; also population classified by ages, condition as to marriage, occupations, birthplaces, and infirmities* (London, 1902 [Cd. 875]), p. 162 (Table 37a).

working as tailors.[88] Domestic service was better paid than most work available to women, especially work available to young women in the garment industry.[89] Irish women chose differently than other immigrant women. In choosing the better paid job, even if it entailed greater curtailment on personal freedom, rather than work which would keep them close to their ethnic community base in London they marked themselves as distinct. Irishwomen seem to have been happy to trade 'lack of liberty' as 'a necessary exchange for the greater comfort' provided by domestic service.[90]

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The final element which this database makes clear is that whilst often portrayed as a lonely occupation, the reality of domestic service seems to have often been quite different from this perception. 21% of Irishwomen in domestic service in London worked with another Irishwoman. In many cases these women seem to have been related to one another: for instance, Anne and Ellen Kelly were both from Wexford worked in the same household as lady's maid and cook respectively.[91] In other cases several women from the same county found employment in one household: this is the case for the three Irishwomen who were employed at 1 Russell Rd., in Kensington.[92] All were born in Wexford: two were in their forties while the other was twenty-two. This latter fact, the gap between the probable ages of migration, indicates a chain migration where women in positions could arrange a position for a neighbour or friend, or friend's daughter, from home. In this case none of the household which employed these women had any connection to Wexford or, indeed, Ireland; all were born in England. Women also looked for positions together by advertising their services jointly: 'Two friends want situation

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[88] Diner, *Erin's Daughters*, pp 82-3; Figures from 'Occupations and Country of Birth of Foreigners', *Census of England and Wales, 1901, County of London: Area, houses and population; also population classified by ages, condition as to marriage, occupations, birthplaces, and infirmities* (London, 1902 [Cd. 875]), p. 168 (Table 37a).
[89] Clara E. Collet, 'Women's Work' in Charles Booth (ed.), *Labour and Life of the People*, Vol. 1 (London, 1889), pp 406-81; Booth and Jesse Argyle, 'Household service, etc.', p. 217.
[90] C.V. Butler, *Domestic Service: An Enquiry by the Women's Industrial Council* (London, 1916), p. 15.
[91] 1901 Census return for 1 Bramham Gardens, Kensington.
[92] 1901 Census return for 1 Russell Road, Kensington.

together in gentleman's family as Housemaid and Parlourmaid respectively'.[93] In cases such as this, the census returns often have the appearance of two families: firstly the head of household and their family, and secondly the servants who often seem to form a sort of family themselves.

In such cases life for these two families could have seemed very separate and their different nationalities would only have served to accentuate that fact. Perhaps indeed this was the intent, although whether the distance between Irish and English was any greater than the distance between rich and poor Londoners is questionable. Irishwomen, over-represented in west London, could well have been favoured over those born in London; employers had a long history of preferring 'honest country girls' over those born in the city.[94] Equally, Irishwomen made definite choices to migrate to the west of London, where better paid positions were on offer, rather than the poorer boroughs in London and this process was perpetuated through chain migration.

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This database allows an exploration of the lives of Irish domestic servants in London at a particular point in time. The information it provides about 1901 is unparalleled, but it cannot show us what happened to those same domestic servants after it was taken. Women at this time, especially young single women, are very hard to trace from census to census. Most of the women in this census would have married. This work was part of a life story. It may not have even been the most important part. However, it was part of the narrative of so many women that it demands a history, a voice to even the most general of themes which made this part of their lives. It also needs examination in any consideration of Irish people in London. Domestic service was an important part of Irish life in London at this time. It was examined here as it provided a window into those who would otherwise not have appeared in this study. Living apart from Irish communities made them relatively invisible.

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[93] *Catholic Herald*, 6 July 1906.
[94] John Smail, 'Review [untitled]' in *International Labor and Working-Class History*, No. 52 (Fall, 1997), pp 200-01; Pink, *Country Girls Preferred.*

However, this did not make them any less part of the varied Irish life in London at this time.

Through the figures presented above, it is clear that the Irishwomen in domestic service shared a general profile: they were overwhelmingly young and single; they worked mainly in the west of London. Yet domestic service was not one story, no woman worked simply as a domestic servant: they were employed as housemaids and kitchenmaids and a myriad of other occupations. These occupations were meaningful to domestic servants at this time. They were made more so by the differences in age, pay and location between occupations. The London that Irishwomen working as domestic servants lived in 1901 was the same city that had vibrant Irish communities in certain areas. It was the same city, but it was to different places that Irishwomen were largely drawn. These distinctions shaped the distance, real and figurative between young Irishwomen and the older Irish communities.

In working outside of their family unit, in migrating seemingly alone, they were part of a broader chain of Irishwomen. They also found in many cases that there was family to be found in domestic service, in the company of a friend from home, a cousin or a sister. This was not necessarily a lonely occupation even if it was a confining one. For those who did not find company in the servants in their household, they could find it early on a Sunday when Irish domestic servants could hold their congress. This could seem pitiful time but domestic service was not, in general, a lifelong occupation. If Irishwomen were willing to make these personal sacrifices they must have valued elements of this type of employment.

Irishwomen in domestic service in Britain are, as Bronwen Walter found, 'much less visible' than their counterparts in the United States.[95] Their relative invisibility in mainstream works has its reasons: they did not form a large percentage of domestic servants. There were differences between Irishwomen and the general population of domestic servants. However, it is unclear how much of this was due to entering the labour market as a relatively

[95] Walter, 'Irish Women Servants in England, 1881', p. 279.

free agent rather than being tied a particular locality in London is hard to gauge. We must consider nationality and its effects, not simply as stereotypes that may have been inflicted upon an Irish population but also as a set of experiences that bound them together. Through their patterns of migration, they bound one another together; they choose to share these experiences with one another.

This chapter and those which preceded it have discussed types of residential communities and the connections and disconnections of Irish people in these residential settings. This is the foundation and setting for Irish interactions and connections around culture and identity which are discussed in the following chapters. The links between residence and cultural expression are more explicit in some things than others. They are particularly strong in relation to the Irish language in London and its pattern of survival and revival.

Chapter 4 - The Irish Language

The previous chapters have detailed the geography of Irish settlement in London. This chapter addresses the cultural rather than residential or occupational connection of Irish people to one another. The spaces and economies where Irish people lived in London dictated large elements of their lives. In particular it was argued to dictate the number and type of other Irish people with whom they came in contact. In exploring the cultural connections of Irish people to one another, this geographical portrait is fundamental. This is evident nowhere more than in the distinct Irish language communities of London. This chapter addresses through the language the connection and distance of Irish people to and from of one another.

There is an Irish language history in London, a history of linguistic changes and adaptions that will likely go forever unwritten for lack of concrete linguistic material to base it on. The changes in language are questions for linguists more than historians. This is not a history of the language but rather of those who spoke, understood and learned it; those that sought it out and those that inherited it. The language is relevant in the history of Irish people in London in this period, not by virtue of itself, but because people spoke and wanted to speak it. It was also a relatively exclusive knowledge. The avid group of Gaelic League enthusiasists might not have bypassed the attention of those who read Irish Catholic newspapers, but this knowledge was largely confined to Irish circles. Even more invisible as Irish-speakers were those descendants of Irish-speaking migrants to London.

This is a history of opposites. A language maintenance movement was relatively strong throughout this period. In contrast there were native speakers whose fortunes, while less known, were on a very different trajectory. Vernacular and post-vernacular Irish existed in the same place at the same time, yet they moved in different ways, amongst different people. They did not inhabit the same spaces. Typically, the success of language maintenance movements in migrant communities depends on the relationships between working class and middle class immigrants of the same nationality. Examining

the failure of Ukrainian, Russian, Hungarian and Croatian immigrants to maintain their native language on migration to America, Nathan Glazer found that earlier migration by the working class meant that later middle class arrivals felt superior to the established working class group and did not engage with their institutions.[1] In this period in London, the lines of the same story are clearly drawn. Language shift and maintenance existed in the same city but they very rarely touched one another. There were few greater demonstrations of the gulf between Irish people in London than that the language one group sought to learn ardently, with high levels of failure, was alive in districts of London which they had no interest in visiting.

The Irish language was fundamentally significant of different things to these different groups. Language at its simplest is a tool of communication. However, while Irish represented many things to the Irish Ireland movement it was never simply about whom they wanted to talk to. Revivalists already had a common language, English; they did not need another one. Irish was important to them: but for their own ends. Language alone did not divide Irish people in London. Speaking the same language, even a different language to English people, did not bring them together. Irish was important to both groups in different ways. It was part of the new cultural identity of one group; the purest form of Irishness. To those native to London in east and south London it was an inheritance.

The Irish language community in east and south London, formed in the nineteenth century was a group in the midst of a transition. Although there is sparse evidence, Irish was spoken past 1900, past even the deaths of most that were born in Ireland. Studies of other language shifts indicate that it is likely that there was a generational decline in ability to speak unless Irish was used with the children.[2] That this seems to have been the case for at least some households should indicate to us that this was a slow process, a process measured in generations rather than years. This process continued in this period.

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[1]Nathan Glazer, 'Process and problems of language maintenance: an integrative review' in Joshua Fishman (ed.), *Language loyalty in the United States* (London, 1966), p. 363.
[2]Ralph Fasold, *The Sociolinguistics of Society* (Oxford, 1984), p. 216.

Gaelic League enthusiasts differed in nearly every way from those Irish speakers that preceded them in London. Their knowledge was either hard-won, from nights in dull classrooms or, more frequently, not won at all but wanted. There is no doubt that many felt this desire deeply. However, this desire did not necessarily transfer to ability to learn the language. They were also hampered in this by the fact that most were absolute beginners; there was not a reservoir of knowledge in their pasts. Irish was further away for them, in terms both of their youth and their geographic ancestry.

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That there were Irish speaking communities in London in the nineteenth century is beyond doubt. What is not debated, but assumed, is that Irish died out among these migrants relatively quickly, and was not passed on to a second generation.[3] Lynn Hollen Lees, in her history of Irish migrants in Victorian London, concluded that 'Immediately upon entering the city, migrants abandoned a wide variety of cultural practices and communal rituals as well as the use of the Irish language.'[4] Evidence from Catholic sources and newspapers indicates that it was not quite as simple as migrants abandoning the language on entering the city in the mid-nineteenth century. The common trend for this type of language shift is that the first generation speak one language, the next are bilingual (to some degree), and their children speak only the dominant language.[5] It is this middle generation, which spoke or understood both Irish and English that have been ignored previously partly it seems because in their customs or manners they did not resemble what Irish speakers, those in Ireland, looked or sounded like.[6] These people are evasive historically owing to the fact that Irish was either a home language or a language that was

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[3]This is not an assumption peculiar to London and has been the dominant way that Irish has been written about in studies of Irish in Britain. For example see Paul O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration: the Irish in Wales, 1798-1922* (Cardiff, 2002), p. 226; John Belchem, 'The Liverpool-Irish Enclave' in Donald M. MacRaild (ed.), *Great Irish Famine and Beyond: Irish migrants in Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Dublin, 2000), pp 130-1.

[4] Lynn Hollen Lees, *Exiles of Erin: Irish migrants in Victorian London* (Manchester, 1979), p. 245.

[5] Fasold, *The Sociolinguistics of Society*, pp 216-17.

[6]See for example, Pádraic Ó Conaire's description of the descendants of Irish-speaking migrants in London in the early twentieth century: Ó Conaire, *Deoraíocht* (Dublin, 1980), p. 90.

used in a closed society. Irish was not a written language amongst these people; there are no newspapers or letters home that indicate their knowledge of the language. Others have used the syntax and spelling of written English, as well as their home townland, as indicators of native Irish speakers.[7] However this method is inappropriate for second generation children who were educated in English in London and were undoubtedly bilingual, and whose English was influenced by their peers in London as much as their family. In Ireland the lack of written evidence is compensated for by reliance on census data to establish roughly, given inconsistencies in the placement of the question on language in most nineteenth century censuses, the percentage of Irish speakers in Ireland.[8]

Information from census returns and reports is deficient again when we consider establishing the origins of migrants in Ireland and through their origins deduce what their likely language abilities were. All available evidence from the mid-nineteenth century when most migrants came to London indicates that people from Munster predominated in Irish communities formed in the nineteenth century.[9] These were not the only Irish migrants to London, but did probably form the majority. These people were forbearers of many in the communities that were by 1900 composed of mainly second and third generation Irish. It seems likely that the Munster bias noted by those studying Irish migrants in mid-nineteenth century London was a factor in the existence of Irish language speakers in London.

Karen Corrigan's analysis of Irish self-reporting of language ability for Irish-speaking areas in Ireland in the nineteenth century indicated that census reports underestimated both the number of Irish monoglots and

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[7] Gréagoir Ó Duill, 'Emigrant letters from the Donegal Gaeltacht' in Thomas W. Ihde (ed.), *The Irish Language in the United States: A Historical, Sociolinguistic, and Applied Linguistic Survey* (Westport, 1994), pp 57-67.

[8] Reg Hindley, *The Death of the Irish Language: a qualified obituary* (London, 1990), p. 15. Census statistics have also been used to establish the Welsh language ability of Irish migrants in Wales. (O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration: the Irish in Wales, 1798-1922* (Cardiff, 2002), p. 119).

[9] Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, pp 51-2; Jerome Farrell, 'The Irish in Hammersmith and Fulham in 1851' in *The Local Historian*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (1999), pp 66-75.

bilinguals.[10] While this leaves the nineteenth century decline of Irish use as relatively open in terms of pivotal decades, Máiréid Nic Craith's archival work on Cork suggested that the 1880s was the decade in which English became the norm for children.[11] This suggests that migrants from these areas to London had Irish. This is not disputed in the literature.[12] What is doubted is that Irish continued to be used in London amongst those migrants. The strength of Irish regional ties in London provides a strong argument for the continued use of Irish in those communities.

Second and third generation Irish people in Irish communities had a strong awareness of their parents' origins which was supported by the fact that many from the same area sought to live near one another. Dinny O'Connell could recall four men and their families from the same area in Kerry, one his father, who 'all lived in Peckham, all went to Peckham schools', and so retained strong friendships with one another.[13] Similarly others could recall the roots of their current friendships in older migrations: Molly Tiernan recalled 'well we've got a friend, Joe Maguire, well Maguire's grandmother came from Cork' which was the same origin as her grandparents.[14] These long term relationships, which grew out of close family and geographic links to particular families, prolonged identification with a county of origin in Ireland.

Obituaries provide anecdotal evidence of the presence of Irish language use in London, as frequently the deceased's knowledge of Irish is mentioned, for example: 'Born in Cork in 1839 he came to London at a very early age. He brought with him a good speaking and literary knowledge of his native language'.[15] If we accept that a knowledge of Irish must have been common, especially amongst those who immigrated sooner, and that they

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[10]Karen P. Corrigan, 'I gcuntas Dé múin Béarla do na leanbháin': eisimirce agus an Ghaeilge sa naoú aois déag' in Patrick O'Sullivan (ed.), *Irish in the New Communities* (Leicester, 1992), p. 149.

[11] Mairéad Nic Craith, *Malartú Teanga: An Ghaeilge i gCorcaigh sa Naoú hAois Déag* (Bremen, 1993), pp 38-40.

[12]Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, pp. 51-2; Sheridan Gilley, 'Protestant London, No Popery and the Irish Poor: II (1850-60)' in *Recusant History*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Jan. 1971), pp 26-8.

[13]Interview with Dinny O'Connell, 20 June 1996 (B.L. Sound Archive, Reg Hall Archive, C903/466 C1 Part 2)

[14] Interview with Jimmy O'Connor and Molly Tiernan, 17 January 1990 (B.L. Sound Archive, Reg Hall Collection, C903/430 C1).

[15] *Catholic Herald*, 4 Mar. 1904.

settled in, as Lees concludes, 'Irish colonies tucked into every corner of the metropolis' then surely we must allocate some role to Irish in these communities.[16] Where these communities were undisturbed, where families continued to have close relationships with others based on the origins of their grandparents, Irish was a living language past 1900.

It was the first generation of migrants, especially those that were monolingual, which were served by Irish language priests. At Dockhead Catholic Church the presence of an Irish speaking priest was written into its deeds early in the nineteenth century.[17] In the 1850s Protestant missionaries active in Bermondsey and central London found it necessary to have Irish.[18] In 1879 the Catholic Bishop of Southwark was warned against moving one priest unless he was replaced by another who was Irish.[19] These parishioners had earlier lobbied for the return of an Irish speaking priest to their parish as they 'cannot make their confession only in the tongue of their country' and 'felt like lost sheep' without a priest who could 'hear and understand them'.[20] These were likely first generation immigrants, and this is suggestive of their being monolingual. Often it is assumed that monolingual immigrants had to learn the majority language or did so very quickly after moving to London. However, sociolinguistic theory indicates that the most likely language shifts among migrant groups are intergenerational. Studies of language change amongst migrants frequently concentrate on the language abilities of second generation children for this reason.[21] There are indicators that into the 1900s, several decades after most had settled in London, there remained people who preferred to converse in Irish. That at least one of the outdoor collectors for the Catholic Church in St. Mary and St. Michael's Commercial Road was noted to be an

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[16] Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 58.
[17] Alan Bennett Bartlett, 'The Churches in Bermondsey, 1880-1939' (University of Birmingham, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1987), p. 62.
[18] Ibid., p. 107; Gilley, 'Protestant London, No Popery and the Irish Poor: II (1850-60) in *Recusant History*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Jan., 1971), pp 26-8.
[19] Bartlett, 'The Churches of Bermondsey', p. 98.
[20] Petition to Bishop of Southwark (n.d., [1860s]) (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives, Bermondsey Dockhead 'pre-1900 and history').
[21] David D Laitin, 'Migration and Language shift in urban India' in *International Journal of the Sociology of Language,* Issue 103 (Jan. 1993), pp 57-73.

Irish speaker suggests that this was an important knowledge to have if going from house to house collecting money.[22]

In other migrant communities religion represented a way to hold on to the language, however, this was generally not the case for Catholics. Members of national churches in America were more likely to continue services in their native language than Catholics who were immediately integrated into a larger faith group.[23] Mary Hickman has argued that the Church operated to strengthen migrants' Catholic identity but weaken their Irish identity.[24] In Britain communicating with Irish migrants seems to have been a common difficulty of clergy attempting to serve them at least in the mid-nineteenth century.[25] It is likely that the language abilities of clergy lagged behind the growing ability of their congregation in English. Lees is correct therefore in arguing that while the Church did make allowances for the continued use of Irish, they did not facilitate its transmission to the next generation whether through educating children in Irish or having the vernacular portions of mass said in Irish.[26] That the Church did not make these efforts, as the Catholic Church generally did not in relation to migrant groups, must be seen as placing it within the norms of language use. There was not a special need or desire to use Irish in religion; its use in a religious context rather reflects its use in everyday life.

It is likely that many who arrived in London speaking only Irish or with very limited English did learn or improve their English over their lifetime. However, if they ever changed their dominant language, the language they felt most comfortable speaking, is a more complex question. Logically it would seem that women, if they did not work outside the home, and lived in areas that were Irish strongholds, would have been slower to gain knowledge of English. Whatever the case in relatively tight-knit Irish communities those living outside those worlds, whose first language was Irish, were disadvantaged to a

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[22] *Catholic Herald*, 17 Oct. 1902.
[23] Glazer, 'Process and problems of language maintenance', p. 365.
[24] Mary J Hickman, 'Incorporating and denationalising the Irish in England: the role of the Catholic Church' in Patrick O'Sullivan (ed.), *Religion and Identity* (London, 1996), p. 206; See Chapter 8 for further discussion of this argument.
[25] E.g. James Moran, *Irish Birmingham: A History* (Liverpool, 2010), p. 69.
[26] Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, pp 189-90.

much greater degree. Francis Fahy recalled how his mother and father had moved to London in 1879, several years after he had taken a civil service position there. His parents were Irish speakers, while he was not, and his mother on her deathbed asked the priest attending to her 'Do you think they will understand me in Heaven?', a question which speaks of her frustration with the present more than anything else.[27] That Mrs Fahy felt this way, is at first glance hard to understand. Her son, with whom she lived, would go on to be the head of the Gaelic League in London, and was around this time involved in the precursor to the Gaelic League in London, the Southwark Irish Literary Club which held regular Gaelic nights. These were described later by an Irish policeman sent to observe proceedings discreetly as 'unique in that not one word of English was spoken the whole time.'[28]

However, Fahy himself admitted that he did not know Irish well, although most of his siblings did.[29] This can be regarded as an example of the language change 'tip' that Nancy Dorian catalogued. She found language change in two communities to have been characterised at a family level by a split in the capacities of children to speak the minority language. Younger children, even when there was no change in the language spoken by parents, were influenced by their older siblings who had been educated in the dominant language. As such they never developed the same fluency of their elder siblings in the minority language.[30] Fahy would most likely have been a receptive bilingual from childhood, having a good comprehension but little ability to speak it; and only developed his speaking ability when he developed an interest in revivalist groups.

Often the greatest distances can seem literal ones, from one side of London to the other, but here we see that time can make even bridging these distances irrelevant. Like Fr. Edward Murnane in Bermondsey who excused his lack of Irish by the fact that 'he had been born too soon' and continued that 'he

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[27] F.A. Fahy, 'Ireland in London', 12 March 1921 (N.L.I., MS 11,431).
[28] John Sweeney, *At Scotland Yard: Being the experience during twenty-seven years' service of John Sweeney*, Francis Richards (ed.) (London, 1904), pp 49-50.
[29] F.A. Fahy, 'Ireland in London', 12 March 1921 (N.L.I., MS 11,431).
[30] Nancy C. Dorian, 'Abrupt Transmission Failure in Obsolescing Languages: How Sudden the 'Tip' to the Dominant Language in Communities and Families?' in *Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society* (1986), pp 75-9.

had been born in Leinster, and there was less Irish spoken in Leinster twenty-five years ago than there now was in Bermondsey'.[31] Age was crucial here, especially for those who grew up in Ireland outside areas where Irish was the majority language. Without a larger community, and especially with the separation of family through migration, maintaining language knowledge in the second generation was very difficult.

In contrast, where native Irish speakers married and had children in London, they often did pass the language on to their children. Liam McCarthy, known as William or Bill to those who knew him as a councillor, prior to his involvement in the GAA and the Gaelic League was one such man.[32] Born in 1853, he was the first generation born in London, and was bilingual.[33] When we read about the factors that influence language shift: migration, industrialisation, school language, urbanisation, higher prestige, smaller population; it is instructive that all of these factors face the Irish speaking populations of the west of Ireland.[34] However, the context of the migrant family in Britain was different to that of families in Ireland. Lees doubted whether Irish 'was used much outside the homes of the first generation' and concluded that even the first generation cast the language aside relatively quickly on arriving in London.[35] This was certainly the pattern forming along the south west and west coasts of Ireland, however, emigration did change things: it provided for a nuclear family unit; it also provided certainty of the language needs of children and met those needs through their socialisation outside the home.[36]

Language shift or maintenance is difficult to predict; some communities maintain languages under the same pressures that cause others to shift to the majority language. The language shift from Irish to English

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[31] *Catholic Herald*, 15 Jan. 1904.
[32] Marcus de Burca, 'Liam MacCarthy', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*; Interview with Dinny O'Connell, 20 June 1996 (B.L. Sound Archive, Reg Hall Archive, C903/466 C1 Part 1).
[33] De Burca, 'Liam MacCarthy', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.
[34] Fasold, *The Sociolinguistics of Society*, p. 216.
[35] Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 189.
[36] Laitin found that parents' perceptions of children's likely language needs effected the languages they taught their children. (Laitin, 'Migration and Language shift in urban India', p. 70.)

amongst Irish-speaking migrants and their descendants was a slow process, or slower than is often presumed. For those living in older, relatively undisturbed, communities Irish was a part of that community life for as long as there were people who could speak and understand it. Michael Moriarty born in 1914 in Poplar when asked how he learned Irish replied: 'just picked it up. There was always the Irish element; the East End is full of them'.[37] This second generation, who were constantly worried about, may not have been as lost as many presumed: in an address to the Gaelic League in 1900 Fr. Michael Moloney described his work in Bermondsey where 'Gaelic is still a living tradition'.[38] Another priest working in Commercial Road wrote to *An Claidheamh Soluis* chastising them for an article bemoaning the lack of Irish language church services in London for St. Patrick's Day: 'we have had the vernacular portions of the evening service – Rosary, Sermon and Hymns in Irish twice each year, on Rosary Sunday and on the Sunday nearest the feast of St. Patrick'. These were services which, according to the priest, 'native speakers here look forward to'.[39] This was also the tradition in Wapping.[40]

We can know little about this world, this 'living tradition', except that it was there. We do not know in what spheres Irish was spoken, the gender differences in knowledge of Irish or whether men working in mainly Irish gangs at the docks used Irish. There is evidence to suggest that it was passed on to the second generation. Here again, we do not know what level of bilingualism this generation possessed, whether it was receptive bilingualism, comprehension but with little ability to communicate or full bilingualism, an equal knowledge and ability of both languages or some knowledge between receptive and fully bilingual. This community was in a state of transitional or unstable bilingualism. The majority language of this community became English, but this process of becoming was a long one, and it was a process in which the second and third generation were intimately involved.

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[37] Interview with Fr Michael Moriarty, 24 April 1989 (B.L. Sound Archive, C903/144 C1 BD01-21).
[38] *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 13 Oct. 1900.
[39] Ibid., 18 Mar. 1911.
[40] '12 March 1905 Notices Read at Masses' (Catholic Diocese of Westminster Archives, ADW [Wapping], Wapping Notice Books, Vol. XV: 8 May 1904- 3 Nov 1907).

The communities most likely to retain a minority language are those which are isolated socially or geographically. Irish people in early twentieth century London were neither. The Gaelic speaking fisherfolk that Nancy Dorian studied in East Sutherland in the north of Scotland provide a good example of language maintenance by social isolation: they were residentially and occupationally distinct from the non-fishing community, with marriages between the two communities very rare.[41] Language maintenance by geographic isolation is ably demonstrated by the west coast of Ireland. This urban group, whose parents had already been on the edge of a language shift in their native community, are a harder group to place in the literature of language change. It could be presumed that leaving a community, which was in the process of language change would cause an acceleration of change. We do not know what the pace of language change was in Ireland and so presuming acceleration extrapolates from information we lack. The lack of clear information of where exactly in Ireland migrants were from prevents a comparative examination of one community with the other. Even if this information were available such work would be difficult owing to the paucity of information in either Ireland or England on the language shift from Irish to English. There are many things which remain elusive. However, by acknowledging that Irish was part of this community life we can assert the simple truth that the landscape of origin was formative: for first generation Irish it was likely rural Munster, for their children the streets and people of east and south London, a community crafted by their parents. It also elucidates something of the more complex relationship between language and people, that a language cannot be cast aside or unlearnt. Whether outsiders heard it or not, that they had the language is enough to consider it living.

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Motivation is key in learning a language. It can also be regarded as a distillation of other desires: whatever motivates one to learn a language comes from the general life of that person. In London during these years and

[41] Dorian, 'Linguistic Lag as an Ethnic Marker' in *Language in Society*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Apr., 1980), p. 35.

especially at the beginning of this period, every person tangentially connected to Irish life in London was exposed to revivalists' ideas. There were broadly three different reactions to the revival: lack of interest, an interest that waned, and, the rarer, most written about, but least easily understood, people who became fluent in Irish entirely through classroom instruction. Of those who came across the Gaelic revival primarily through newspapers, many may have simply chosen to read the next item in the newspaper. Not getting involved is easy to explain, their motivations are easy to understand. Those who read the same articles and were persuaded to try are harder to understand. For those who came into contact with the Gaelic League, the organisation concerned with teaching Irish in London, through people they knew getting involved to some degree at least was much more certain. Even if people could be persuaded to enter the classroom, keeping them there was a challenge too great for the vast majority who joined the Gaelic League in this period.

Local schools established wherever it was felt there was a large enough Irish population to justify one were the main places of instruction. These often relied on significant Irish people within that locality, often a doctor or Catholic priest, to enthuse the local population and offer rooms for classes, generally in the local Catholic school but in one case at least in the local doctor's front room.[42] These local schools, established at special meetings where the enthusiasm of the local population at an evening of speeches and songs seemed great, failed to transfer to regular attendance at Irish classes. For example the Forest Gate School lamented that the problem was not one of insufficient members but rather that irregular attendance made running a language class impossible.[43] This was the great obstacle that those hoping to establish Irish as an ordinary language amongst Irish people in London faced: although it was run like other Irish nationalist organisations and attracted a similar membership, to be successful at its aim it needed to function entirely differently. If everyone who joined was to learn to speak Irish, then it had to be a fantastically binding commitment on membership, that they would attend the

[42] Art Ó Briain, 'Gaedhil thar Sáile: some notes on the history of the Gaelic league of London' in *Capuchin Annual* (1944), p. 122.
[43] *The Irishman*, Apr. 1912.

weekly class at the very least. The Gaelic League failed to impress this on its new members. In these local schools the enthusiasm of a few, when faced with the fact that most members did not actually have the desire to even attend regular language classes was inevitably worn down.

Most Irish communities in London were evangelised about the Irish language between 1900 and 1914. However, no area, bar Forest Gate, managed to sustain a local school for the entire length of this period. As the years passed there was a growing centralisation of Irish language work in London. Forest Gate remained the exception to this, but its exceptionalism demonstrated just why other local schools did not last. The membership of Forest Gate, in far-east London was aided by the physical distance from the centre of London and also by the ready population of Irish-born men working in the Customs Office there. Without the benefit of too great a physical distance for a regular commute for an evening class other localities simply could not compete with either the social life or range of classes available at the Central Branch.

The simple assumption by the Gaelic League in London that where there was an Irish community there would be the numbers to facilitate an Irish class was proved false time and time again. This was true even in this period regarded as 'the halcyon days of the Gaelic revival in London'.[44] Yet it was this consistent belief which underpinned much of the somewhat evangelical work of the Gaelic League in London at this time. The results of this work can be seen in the familiar cycle of reports in League newspapers: of the great enthusiasm of Irish people in some district, followed, seemingly inevitably, by a note such as this one: 'Camberwell has the reputation of having a very large Irish population but if this is so, its response to the various notices of the re-opening of the local Gaelic League school has been very poor'.[45]

Most areas in London with any Irish people were criticised in this way in this period. Local schools had the benefit of attracting those who could not afford, whether from lack of time, money or inclination, to attend evening

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[44] John Hutchinson and Alan O'Day, 'The Gaelic revival in London 1900-22 limits of ethnic identity' in Roger Swift, and Sheridan Gilley (eds), *The Irish in Victorian Britain: the local dimension* (Dublin, 1999), p. 265.
[45] *Inis Fáil*, Feb. 1910.

classes at the Central Branch of the Gaelic League in London. However, the struggle to maintain a school in a district where 'the novelty and much of the enthusiasm has disappeared' meant that the Gaelic League by 1911 saw the challenge not in opening local schools at special public meetings 'but by keeping that school open, and working even when there is little enthusiasm'.[46]

Local schools in attracting a greater range of learners necessitated the accommodation of a perpetual beginners' class necessitated by the irregular attendance at classes. Therefore it is not surprising that it could not satisfy those who sought more serious or advanced Irish learners. These people resorted to travelling into Central London for classes at 'The University' – The Gaelic League Central school.[47] John Hutchinson and Alan O'Day argue that the departure of 'the most enthusiastic London Gaelic Leaguers for Ireland to work in the revival there undermined the efforts to create an Irish language community in London'.[48] However, a greater factor and one that undermined the teaching of Irish in London earlier was the flight of dedicated Irish learners from settled Irish communities to the centre of London. Although the 'missionary work' of Gaelic revivalists did touch settled Irish communities, they seem to have been largely indifferent to it or dedicated to it in the same measure that they were to the United Irish League (U.I.L.) meetings. These meetings were seen as something to be attended occasionally, but not something that would occupy more than an occasional evening. Classes in areas where there were native Irish speakers never really took advantage of that fact, their songs were welcome at social evenings, but the class structure which was based on beginners' classes seems to have remained the same. There were attempts made to collect and record old Irish songs from these areas.[49] However, this work can be seen as embodying the larger attitude of the revival in London toward native speakers: they were a historical repository rather than a living community.

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[46] 'Tuarasgbháil na bliadhna Iúl 1911' (N.L.I., Art Ó Briain papers, MS 8433/40).
[47] *Inis Fáil*, Aug. 1908.
[48] Hutchinson and O'Day, 'The Gaelic revival in London, 1900-22', p. 270.
[49] Reginald Richard Hall, 'Irish Music and Dance in London, 1890-1970: A Socio-cultural History' (University of Sussex, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1994), p. 115.

A relatively complete membership list for the London Gaelic League can be recreated from notices published in *An Claidheamh Soluis* from the London Gaelic League which lists new members. From 1899-1902, 1,100 names are listed. A little less than half of these could be traced using the 1901 census. Most of the names are listed in the form of a title, an initial and surname. Those with most common names and those names which bear the twin traumas of popularity and a number of different spellings and misspellings, McCarthy, for example were especially difficult to trace. Based on this sample some impressions of the characteristics of Gaelic League members can be gathered. The vast majority of men and women who joined the Gaelic league in London from 1899-1902 were young and Irish-born. They lived all over London, but not predominantly in areas known for their Irish communities. For many becoming a member of the Gaelic League seems to have been the result of a chain reaction of friends joining because their friends had joined previously. One example of this pattern is a group of five young men all working in the civil service who lived together. They joined the Gaelic League one after another from February to April 1901.[50]

In this period many Irish people showed some interest in learning Irish. Although we know most about those that continued with this interest, attended classes or events with a regularity that made the features of their lives more apparent, by far the greater number expressed a fleeting interest. Any number of things could have dissuaded these people from continuing in the Gaelic League. Many seem to have been drawn in by friends or siblings, if everyone was joining the Gaelic League, then it is easy to see why others would be drawn to it; equally it is easy to see how they would lose interest. The membership list from 1899-1902 shows just this sort of chain reaction. One person in a lodging house joins, and others join in the following weeks and months. In Irish families all over London, across the social spectrum, one person joins, and their siblings follow. If long term Gaelic League members fell into certain categories, those who drifted into it with enthusiasm and left

[50] *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 2 Feb. 1901, 16 Feb. 1901, 6 Apr. 1901; 1901 Census returns for: Patrick Byrne, Patrick J. O'Doherty, John Keane, Michael O'Toole, Patrick Sheehan, 20 Colebrooke Row, Islington.

with little fanfare possessed no defining characteristic. They could be anyone, living anywhere in London. They define to a greater extent than anything else, that this fleeting moment attracted the broadest spectrum of Irish people in London.

Timothy McMahon's conclusion in regard to Gaelic League branches in Ireland holds here: 'When branch activities shifted from propagandist lectures or dances to classroom work, numbers dwindled'.[51] The fact that many seem to have joined simply because their friends already had, rather than having become convinced by League propaganda certainly aided in the membership having a high turnover. This diminution of numbers was also a symptom and a cause of the closing of local Gaelic League schools throughout London. In practice long term members, those that made the voyage into Central London, were of two groups: young Irish-born civil servants, clerks and professionals and English-born or long-term London resident men and women who travelled from where they lived to attend Irish classes.

Of the long term members of the League in London, young Irish-born civil servants and clerks were an especially notable group.[52] In general they had a different settlement pattern to the Irish people who had settled in London thirty to fifty years previously. Place of work and youth dictated that they lived close to central London. Their attraction to the Gaelic League seems to have been to a place where they could meet people similar to themselves, from similar backgrounds. Although many of these would have considered themselves and been considered by others to be dedicated Irish-Irelanders it is clear that Irish language studies were not necessarily a pivotal part of this identity. Indeed, in this they would have been very similar to most members of the Gaelic League at this time in any part of Ireland and that is telling in itself: that these men and women reflected the same values as the place they had left. Where London did influence their interaction with the Gaelic League was in the decision to go along to Gaelic League functions for years as it provided a place where they were sure to meet other young Irish people.

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[51] Timothy G. McMahon, *Grand Opportunity: The Gaelic Revival and Irish Society, 1893-1910* (Syracuse, 2008), p. 91.
[52] Hutchinson and O'Day, 'The Gaelic revival in London, 1900-22', p. 266.

The best example of this type of Gaelic League member, or the example that we know most about, is Michael Collins. Michael Collins joined the Gaelic League soon after arriving in London and 'attended all the dances, concerts and outings held under its auspices', the lack of mention to Irish classes here is telling.[53] Although certainly interested in 'Irish-Ireland' events, their role was primarily a social one. These young Irish-born civil servants, clerks and teachers who remained in the League largely for its social functions were joined by those who were settled in London and had first been a member of one of the local schools, but had left seeking more advanced or perhaps simply more reliable attendees as classmates. This social mix was not an entirely peaceful one.

Many young Irish people in London joined the League to seek out people similar to themselves; however, they were faced with those whose company they had never sought out and as the 1900s progressed these feelings on both sides became stronger.[54] To some extent this was a class issue. Joe Good wrote of the League in London 'The Gaelic Leaguers were quite a new experience for me, they were mainly civil servants and schoolteachers, a step up the social ladder from my usual associates'.[55] The Central Branch was considered by many to be 'superior and aristocratic', whilst replies to this sentiment considered 'The gulf between the working men and the clerk is caused by the working man's instinctive contempt for the clerk'.[56] For these young immigrants, especially those who were influenced by nationalist politics and probably saw a future for themselves in Ireland, seeing older migrants who were long settled in London must have challenged some of their life plans. For people who intended not to stay in London and intended for London not to change them, seeing those who mirrored them in their life's journey so far must have presented a challenge. These older migrants seemed to point to a future in suburban London, where the nationalism of their youth would be expressed in voting Labour or Liberal and attending occasional Irish political meetings.

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[53] 'Memo Sam Maguire' (N.L.I., Piaras Béaslaí Papers, MS 33929(14)).
[54] This can be seen by comparing the early years of *Inis Fáil* (1904-10) *The Irishman* (1910-1913) both London Gaelic League newspapers.
[55] Joe Good, *Enchanted by Dreams, the journal of a revolutionary*, ed. Maurice Good (Dingle, 1996), p. 8.
[56] *Inis Fáil*, Feb. 1910; *Inis Fáil*, Mar. 1910.

This divide, while not exactly matched by that between those who saw themselves as 'serious' learners and those who used the Gaelic League as a social outlet, certainly divided many along the same lines. Whilst there were those who saw the social side of Gaelic League activities as an excellent motivator, advising that the 'resultant enthusiasm is marvellous' if new members, if male were to 'introduce them to all the nice girls you know; if they are girls make them know all your men friends.' [57] Others worried 'How many members of Gaelic League in London really intend to learn Irish?' and railed against those who considered learning Irish 'a hobby'.[58]

This division although undoubtedly present from the start of the Gaelic League in London, or at least from the start of its popularity, was one which became more apparent over time. In the beginning most saw dances and other social activities as tools for enticing people to join the Gaelic League, but by 1910 the complaint of 'Too much movement, too little language' was widely held.[59] This heralded the general awakening to the fact that enthusiasm garnered by propaganda or an active social life could not rouse people to pass beyond a beginner's knowledge of Irish. As early as 1906 members were advised that to 'be good nationalists people must be self-sacrificing...Learning the language is not play'.[60]

These two groups of people: those for whom the language was a hobby and those who wanted to be absolutely fluent in Irish, were both equally attracted to the League, whether born in Ireland or not. That anyone would necessarily be attracted to Irish language classes should not be taken for granted, even if they were followed by 'further half an hour grinning like a Cheshire cat or gyrating around to the sound of music against better judgement'.[61] There were certainly other social outlets, even other overtly nationalist social outlets such as the GAA, Sinn Féin or the United Irish League. Catholic dances and social clubs provided another very Irish

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[57] Ibid., Oct. 1908.
[58] Ibid., June 1909.
[59] *The Irishman*, Dec. 1910.
[60] *Inis Fáil*, Sept. 1906.
[61] Ibid., Apr. 1907.

entertainment in certain areas. These did not require even the pretence of being a language learner.

The traditional explanation of the revival in London is that it came from the same motivation as that in Ireland: to 'resist incorporation into dominant metropolitan culture'.[62] Accepting this as a general motivation, it nevertheless fails to explain why some appeared to be irresistibly drawn to the Irish language and others could easily walk away. For all learners there were likely a dozen explanations of why they joined the League, leaving out eventual success at learning the language. For Irish-born civil servants and clerks the social aspect of the League was important, yet the language retained an importance in this social life even if most were not successful at learning it. There was in many a reticence about being in London; in their accounts there is often an antipathy not just to London, but to urban life in general and urban life in England in particular. P.S. O'Hegarty addressed this in his witness statement to the Bureau of Military History when, after describing the fun of the Gaelic League in London, he stated that 'The bread of exile was none the less bitter because it was sometimes easy and pleasant.'[63]

This antipathy toward cities mirrored general societal attitudes toward cities and those, especially working class, people who were associated with them.[64] Michael Collins' sister Johanna wrote describing his time in London that Collins' 'tastes and inclinations were for a country life – and he chafed against the restrains and restrictions of London existence'.[65] Often Gaelic League outings seemed to take the form of a religious retreat to the country, where the 'memory of green trees and fern after miles of baking brick would sustain the faith in the inhospitable city'.[66] That Collins himself seemed to relish the variety of Irish life in London, sport, politics and all the other social outlets suggests that this antipathy to city life was an admirable quality

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[62] Hutchinson and O'Day, 'The Gaelic revival in London, 1900-22', p. 255.
[63] Patrick S. O'Hegarty, Statement by Witness, 17 Dec. 1952, p. 9 (Military Archives, Bureau of Military History, W.S. 839).
[64] See Chapter 7 for discussion of the influence of this attitude on Irish people's perceptions of one another.
[65] 'Johanna Collins account of Michael Collins time in London' (N.L.I., Piaras Béaslaí papers, MS 33929 (19)).
[66] *Inis Fáil*, Aug. 1906.

that those who knew him wished to have associated with him. The alternative: that Collins enjoyed his time in London, and the opportunities, work and recreational that it provided him, did not fit easily into early biographies of him, but emerges clearly from Peter Hart's biography.[67] With others it is hard to estimate to what extent this feeling was real, or whether it was them reflecting the ideas of the time both in Ireland and England regarding cities – and the spiritual and temporal decline which they inflicted.

This opinion was widespread amongst those who frequented the Gaelic League in London in these years. Yet their behaviour should make us question the words that seem to have been borrowed from one another. Those outside this class in the Gaelic League did question whether the frequently offered strong principles clashed with their daily middle-class lives in London: complaining that, a 'civil service clerk of the League type draws between £70-£200 a year. For this sum he dutifully performs the work of His Majesty's British Government during a few hours of the day. At night he becomes an enthusiastic Irish-Irelander and hater of England'.[68] Perhaps even this clash was evident to themselves, and that this drove them to becomes more involved in Irish Ireland activities in London.

This desire, or at least claiming to have this desire to learn Irish, amongst young Irish-born civil servants is not strange in itself. However, when this was combined with the rhetoric on the 'daily peril of body and soul' of life London the desire to learn Irish should be seen in the context of that rhetoric.[69] The Irish language was an ideal means of demonstrating that however long one remained and enjoyed London, one was apart from it. This was not merely asserting their difference from the 'dominant metropolitan culture' but all metropolitan culture.[70] In particular the rural nature of the Irish language, or at least the Gaelic League ideal of it, at the time – both in vocabulary and geography[71] made it not only a mark of nationality but free from the

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[67] Peter Hart, *Mick: The Real Michael Collins* (London, 2005), pp 23-74.
[68] *Inis Fáil*, Apr. 1910.
[69] Ibid., June 1909.
[70] Hutchinson and O'Day, 'The Gaelic revival in London, 1900-22', p. 255.
[71] Philip O'Leary, *The Prose Literature of the Gaelic Revival, 1881-1921: ideology and innovation* (Pennsylvania, 1994).

degeneration thought to be so prevalent in cities.[72] Yet if living in a city could be an impetus to join the Gaelic League, once there, they behaved as most other Gaelic League members in Ireland did, and developed a limited grasp of Irish.

This notion of decline, especially in relation to men and masculinity in cities, was pervasive at this time and we cannot be too surprised that it influenced Gaelic League ideas.[73] What is notable is that it likely influenced those young Irishmen who moved to London to take civil service jobs to join the Gaelic League. Once they had come into contact with the 'missionary work' of the League these perceptions were strengthened and provided with a ready cure – as Ó Conchubhair remarks in relation to a London Gaelic League outing to Epping Forest: 'singing in Irish was enough to awaken the spirit of the Gael as a protective covering around this group of Gaels'.[74] To these people the Irish language – whether they succeeded or really wanted to succeed in learning it – was a 'protective covering' against the corruption of city life. It also seemed to act as a protection against the inference that by enjoying life in London, even if it was Irish-Ireland life in London, that city life had changed them.

Irish was for learners at this time in London as much a rhetorical device as a language. This may well account for the lack of desire by many seemingly enthusiastic Gaelic Leaguers to actually learn the language. There seems to have been little cause to motivate one to learn the language to any degree of fluency when it was not necessary for their purposes. They did not wish to speak to the poor in the west of Ireland nor even Irish people in the east and south of London; the language was more a signifier than a tool of communication, and any few words sufficed to tell those that cared to know that one was a true Gael.

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[72]Brian Ó Conchubhair argues convincingly for the strong influence of *fin de siècle* ideas generally on the early ideology of the Gaelic revival. (Brian Ó Conchubhair, *Fin de Siècle na Gaeilge: Darwin, An Athbheochan agus Smaointeoireacht na hEorpa* (Indreabhán, 2009)).
[73] Ó Conchubhair, *Fin de Siecle na Gaeilge,* pp 52-68.
[74] Ibid., p. 113 [my translation].

Those born outside Ireland to Irish parents had different backgrounds and different reasons for wanting to learn Irish. Although there were fewer people with this background involved in the Gaelic League compared to those born in Ireland, they formed a very dedicated group. For these people the appeal of the Gaelic League was less of a social one, and more an ethnic one.[75] To see what drew these people the antipathy of others within the Gaelic League to them is important. English-born Gaelic Leaguers were advised that their problem was that 'The will is there right enough, but the seeing eye and the feeling heart are lacking' due to the fact that 'their grown up thoughts have taken colour from their early surroundings'.[76] These insults did not seem to turn away some of the most ardent supporters, who argued that it was nature rather than socialisation which defined one's nationality, asking 'Can being born here alter our blood?'[77]

Learning Irish seems to have been a way of proving nationality, and also of saying that the city, the 'squalid London streets', could not change blood.[78] This conception of nationality or ethnicity as being a blood link was common to many at this time. Yet the fact that English-born Gaelic League members faced attacks on their Irishness from other Gaelic League members argues that there was also those that believed that Irishness was indicated by being born in Ireland. Certainly for those born in England, who were attracted to revivalist ideas, there seems to have been a greater need to prove their Irishness. Whether this was because of a need within themselves or from the attitude of others to them is difficult to gauge.

Despite the rhetoric of place of birth and education being unimportant if we examine why the relatively few long term English-born members of the Gaelic League seem to have been more successful at learning Irish the issue of their background in London is instrumental. Irish people with educational backgrounds in the middle or upper middle class in London had access to English, usually Catholic, secondary education. From this

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[75]Comparable to the appeal of a 'heritage language'.
[76] *Inis Fáil*, May 1907.
[77] *The Irishman*, Aug. 1911.
[78] *Inis Fáil*, May 1907.

background, they were able to draw on their knowledge of other European languages. They made comparisons between learning Irish and learning other languages, for example, one woman wondered why they had to bother putting on dances at all, but rather simply permit people 'to pursue their studies in the same way as they would assuredly in studying other European languages'.[79] The French used in letters between Gaelic League members in London is strongly suggestive of having school French, and that some fluency in it was quite normal.[80] Why they chose to write in French is not really of importance, although it certainly seems that they are creating a sphere of their lives where English was unacceptable. The major point here is that, having already been taught a second language, they had key advantage in motivational terms. They had already shown that they enjoyed learning languages. Therefore the fact that they became enthusiastic and fluent Irish speakers should not be as great a surprise to us, as it seems to have been for many who did not share their passion for languages in London at this time. The very resources that led many of those born in England to develop and pursue a love of languages, were made possible purely by the fact that they were English-born.

Although generalisations, these truths remain clear to a great degree for those in the Gaelic League in London at this time: being born into middle-class England allowed an education which ensured that they had experience of learning a second language to a good level before coming into contact with the Gaelic League; being born in England also seems to have cultivated a degree of insecurity about their ethnicity that they sought to cure by learning Irish. Considering the three elements which define a motivated student of a second language: he/she expends effort, possesses a strong desire to learn the language and enjoys learning languages, it is clear that those born in England who were attracted to the Gaelic League, which suggests a certain

[79] Ibid., Apr. 1907.
[80] E.g. Seán de Paor to Fionán Mac Coluim, 16 May 1910 (N.L.I., Fionán MacColuim papers, MS 24398 (5)).

hunt for ethnic assurance, had a clear lead on others who joined the Gaelic League in their capacity to learn Irish.[81]

Those who were born in Ireland but had long settled in London were caught in the middle of the antipathy between young Irish-born members and English-born members. As they were largely commuting to classes from suburban homes, they seem to have drifted out of the Gaelic League and learning Irish. Certainly they were not alone in this, the vast majority of those who joined the Gaelic League drifted similarly out of its reaches. Those who were most successful at learning Irish seem to have cultivated a separate sphere, where only Irish could be spoken, or at the very least not English. Those with fewer ties, a family, a house, seem to have been the most successful at this. Sociolinguistic studies point to this separate sphere for one language as a necessity for maintaining a minority language.[82] The reverse also seems to have been true: to build a vibrant community of Irish speakers, it was necessary to create a whole new community rather than build one amongst a geographic community. That the self-selected form of this new community was never geographic but relied instead on the freedom of people to travel to classes and evenings out made it a very modern language perpetuation society. It also made it a very middle class one. In effect it was relying on the very things that made minority language communities in modern urban environments disintegrate, that people were 'far too mobile, geographically and socially to maintain distinctive cultures.'[83]

That the exact factors that spelled the end for native Irish-speaking communities in London could promise reward for a movement of language learners, demonstrates not just the trajectory of the Irish language itself, but also the way social class set entirely different paths. The growth of London, and the trains and trams which facilitated it, brought benefits to a great spectrum of people, as long as one was not living in the proposed path of a

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[81] The acquisition of all non-mother tongue languages is referred to as second language acquisition irrespective of how many languages are involved; Robert C. Gardner, 'Integrative motivation and Second Language Acquisition' in Zoltan Dornyei and Richard Schmidt (eds), *Motivation and Second Language Acquisition* (Manoa, 2001), p. 6.

[82] Joshua A. Fishman, 'The Sociology of Language' in Pier Paolo Giglioli (ed.), *Language and Social Context: selected reading* (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 52.

[83] Glazer, 'Process and problems of language maintenance, p. 368.

railway track or widened road. However, the freedoms it granted were most available to those that were relatively free, to spend money, to move house, already.

The common thread of learning Irish in London was the assertion that location did not change who a person was; that blood, social life or language could neutralise the dangerous effects of city life. Location though, was central in this; it was the employment that drew young Irish men and women to London, where, surely unsurprisingly, they sought out one another. It was also a place where older Irish Catholic communities were self-sufficient in their identity, the few who did seek out the Irish identity put forward by the Gaelic League showed how far removed they perceived their original identity. Second language acquisition theory, provides a theory of an ideal self as a powerful motivator in language learning. This theory is that if knowing a language is part of an ideal self that one would like to become, then this will be a powerful motivator, in order to diminish the distance between the ideal and the actual self.[84] Clearly there were some born into Irish homes in London who wanted an ideal that necessitated quite a lot of work on their part. However, for most their 'ideal self' probably involved accomplishments to do with work and family rather than any insecurity about their ethnic identity.

Living in London changed every Irish person. No one entered without the preconceptions of their upbringing, thus the cockney-accented working men who frequented Gaelic League classrooms were considered a species apart by those who would have preferred if that space had remained theirs alone. They seem to have found, as they chanted in similar words that the city could not change their Gaelic blood that location, the distance between where they all worked and lived, mattered a great deal. This was, of course, partly a class issue, but class here was mixed with time spent in London, and divisions and prejudices were only hardened by the miles they had to travel to meet one another.

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[84] Zoltan Dornyei and Ema Ushiada, 'Motivation, language identities and the L2 Self: a theoretical overview' in Zoltan Dornyei and Ema Ushiada (eds), *Motivation, language identities and the L2 Self* (Bristol, 2009), p. 4.

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The one area where the revival and historic Irish areas did have a long term connection was in the teaching of Irish to children in working class Irish areas. This was due to the presence of teachers in Catholic schools and priests who actively encouraged the revival in their parishes and schools. For example, Fr. Twomey, whose obituary described that he 'was consumed with a zeal to bring back a knowledge of the old tongue' and organised Irish classes and dancing classes in his East End parish. The principal of the Catholic school in Wapping had a similar passion and the fruits of his teachings were in the frequent fundraising concerts, where the 'songs and dances will be by the school children, and without a single exception they will be Irish, and many of the songs will be in the language of St. Patrick'.[85] At the St Patrick's Day services in East London and Bermondsey a reliable feature throughout this period was the mention of the Irish language hymns sung by the local school children, such as in Bermondsey in 1911 where they were 'sung by the children of the Bermondsey Gaelic classes'.[86] This teaching, and the fact that it was not the brief winter of classes, but rather a much more systematised education in song and dance as well as language, should be regarded as extending by another generation knowledge of Irish. Like so many others involved in language, the extent of their knowledge of Irish is largely irrelevant, what matters historically, rather than linguistically, was that it was present. That it was made a part of the life of another generation.

Both learning and losing language are processes, and the factors affecting both were very similar in London. Neither happens as quickly as is often assumed. That it was not language we are describing but the people who speak it is key. It was not language death, but the death of native speakers which was happening in east and south London. Similarly it was not the language which created learners, but their own purposes which they imbued in the language. There is no knowing what a parent passes on to a child at home, or what sense of distance causes some to seek out the *terra firma* granted by a

[85] *Catholic Herald*, 23 Apr. 1910; *Catholic Herald*, 23 Nov. 1907
[86] Ibid., 25 Mar. 1911.

language. From one generation to the next life does change, for the civil servants as much as the market labourers and they adapted themselves to the world in which they lived. They carried with them the remnants of their upbringing, the city streets, the farmhouse, the prejudices and traditions. The mix of the two, their upbringing and the London of the early twentieth century, was elaborated in ten thousand choices: the pull of the language was but one. Those who had the language as part of their upbringing were faced with different choices to those who had not. With such a fundamental difference in origin, who could be surprised that their interest in the language was profoundly different?

Language was important here but it was also hugely demonstrative. It encapsulated the origins of second generation Irish and the things that were dear to their parents. First generation migrants sought to settle together. They could be sure then that they would understand one another and this was effortlessly passed on to the next generation. There must have been a large number of receptive bilinguals, silent understanders, who had perhaps never been spoken to directly in Irish but heard enough as a child to understand it. These formed a solid group whose knowledge was always under the surface. Those that learned Irish to some degree or another joined this group to a lesser degree. As they dropped out of Irish classes, moved to suburbs or were displaced by demolitions this group scattered. And this knowledge so reliant on someone to listen to dissipated, not slowly or quickly, not measured in years but by generations, by the passing of a generation. They were already scattering by 1914, but it would take many more years for the knowledge that suggested a whole world either of classes or parents and community to disappear. Just as their grandparents or parents could not write the language they spoke, these could not speak it.

The culture that was shared by Irish people in London but interacted with only in the specific Irish communities to which they belonged has a mirror in the music of Irish people in London. Performance and language learning discussed above have in common the need for a community. In the case of language this was necessary to teach and understand one another. Irish

musical performance in London seems to often have had this same impulse: the desire to perform in front of those who would understand. Music though was a wider currency than the Irish language and its ability to be exclusive in meaning while audible to all makes it important in consideration of the ways Irish people were linked to one another.

Chapter 5 - The Music of Irish people in London

Music is in some ways entirely a language of its own, just as evocative and eloquent as Irish or English. However, when lyrics are added it is also part of other languages. Its capacity to be understood and misunderstood in London was a result of lyrics in English. Irish language use in London has an exclusivity garnered by the simple fact that only Irish people could understand it. Music functions as a way of bringing people together, that much is clear from meeting reports. It also clearly does so in a way that seems relatively exclusive. Understanding the power of language to link Irish people, the clear role of music in gatherings of Irish people had to be examined as it raised questions over how Irish gatherings or music could be exclusive when their meaning was sung for all to hear.

Music is a form of entertainment. The eloquence of lyrics has often meant that when music and songs are considered historically they have been considered to be representations of the feelings of the singer. That there was an element of entertainment intrinsic to these performances, no matter the venue, is overlooked. Just as some songs called for the adoption of an accent or pronunciation, *Father O'Flynn,* for example, others called for the adoption of an emotion, such as *Green Isle of Erin.* There are many meanings that can be ascribed to performances, the principal one is not necessarily that a song represented the singer's feelings. We cannot judge migrant communities to have been pining for Ireland simply because those were lyrics of their party piece; it is not that simple. Only a very small minority of those who sang songs had actually written them. Emphasis must be placed on performance.

The spaces examined in this chapter, homes and small clubs, have not featured prominently in the histories of music largely because 'informal performance left very little recorded evidence and as is so often the case, the historian is forced to devote most space to better-documented formal activity.'[1] This is a big barrier; as with ethnic identity, we know least about the area which was probably most formative musically. For this reason, although most

[1]Dave Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840-1914* (Manchester, 1997), p. 171.

agree that the music in the home was the 'corner stone of popular musical life', and features strongly in accounts of childhood in Paul Thompson's Edwardian oral histories, it has been written about little for this period.[2]

Studies of music in Irish migrant communities have tended to focus on traditional Irish music, representations of Ireland or migration in the lyrics of songs.[3] Studies of this type, in general, have their origin in a curiosity about the music or the development or retention of musical traditions rather than about those making music. By taking an open approach and examining all music: the tunes hummed or whistled, the songs of known and unknown origin which occurred in lists of songs sung at meetings, a more complete idea of the musical tastes of the diverse Irish population in London can be gained. This approach also emerges from the critique of John O'Flynn in regard to what has been considered Irish music; his critique in particular was aimed at the disregard shown to modern Irish popular music but could also be applied to the popular music of this period.[4]

This was not an insular world, the songs that found their way into Irish meetings of every sort came from the music hall or the stage, others were popular in 'parlour rooms' throughout England, still others show the influence of American songs and gramophone records. Irish ballads are not necessarily those that originate in Ireland. *I'll take thee home again Kathleen* or *Kathleen Mavourneen*, are just two examples of songs that were considered Irish regardless of the origin of their composers. This broad sense of Irish, Irish not necessarily in origin but in theme, is the definition used here in relation to songs because it prevailed in this period.

Musical performance structures this analysis. It was performance rather than composing or practicing which demanded interaction with others and so it offers a chance to analyse the way people were connected to one

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[2] Ibid., p. 180; Paul Thompson, *The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society* (London, 1979).

[3] E.g Reginald R. Hall, 'Irish Music and Dance in London, 1870-1970: A Socio-Cultural History' (Ph.D., University of Sussex, 1994); Graeme Smith, 'My love is in America': migration and Irish music', in Simon Frith (ed.), *Popular Music: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies Vol. IV Music and Identity* (London, 2004), pp 164-82.

[4] John O'Flynn, *The Irishness of Irish Music* (Farnham, 2009), p. 200.

another through music. Four distinct areas are covered here: firstly, the music of the individual or family. This is an elusive area. However, it is clear that the trends of popular music evident elsewhere were mirrored in the home. Secondly, songs sung at meetings are examined. Religious and political clubs which had either an exclusively Irish membership or had a very high number of Irish members frequently ended their weekly or monthly meetings with a concert; this involved calling on members of the group to sing. In these meetings we can see the varied influences on the musical tastes of members. Thirdly, the music of Catholic worship is discussed. At this time the music that was used in Catholic churches was changing, the traditional hymns had lost favour and women were being excluded from choirs. The results of these efforts were mixed at best, but they do highlight the attachment of people to their songs of worship, and the gendered view of musicality itself in Irish Catholic life in London. Fourthly, the music of parochial bands is examined; these present the opposite end of a private-public spectrum to the privacy and relatively exclusive Irish organisations. Yet we can also see that, although the music was played to a wide audience, its pied piper charm was still relatively exclusive. Knowing the nuance of the music, the distinction between one tune and another, was an exclusive knowledge.

In the songs people sung to one another there were no clear messages. The fact that there was an Irish repertoire of ballads and an Irish Catholic repertoire of favourite hymns emerges strongly from this examination. The traditional ballads were certainly losing favour amongst those who were tired of hearing them but most knew them well. They knew them well enough to recognise the tune straight away. The preference of Irish congregations for nineteenth century hymns rather than the Gregorian chant being promoted by Westminster Cathedral and the Vatican shows some of the same stability of repertoire. The relative exclusivity of the Irish worlds examined here can be contrasted to the big St. Patrick's Day commercial concerts organised in a variety of venues in London annually. There were many differences between the world of the commercial concert and that of the more private informal entertainment but one of the most notable was the emphasis in those commercial concerts on the lyrics of songs. Frequently new versions of popular

Irish ballads were sung at these meetings, the most common one being *The Wearing of the Green*.[5] There was a much more economical communication at more private meetings and we must heed this. When the lyrics were well known enough it was not that the singer was necessarily trying to tell his audience his feelings. If musical performance can be regarded as communication what mainly seems to have been communicated was a sense of community or belonging.

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It is important to include those who just sang, who could not play an instrument, who are excluded in traditional histories of musical people. These people leave few marks, the songs they sang were not owned by them in any way other than by singing them, their music was made in private dwellings. To their families their songs, or rather their taste for Irish songs, were not forgotten. Nor would their families forget that simply making music set their Irish parent apart: one woman, when asked whether anyone in the family sang, remembered only that her 'Father whistled a great deal'.[6] The convention of the communal musical entertainment of meetings involving Irish people set Irish people apart. However, in their home lives they also seem to have been distinguished by the repertoire of songs that emerged from those Irish meetings.

It is relatively easy to see the importance of music in a communal setting, at concerts and political events, for example. However, the importance of music to the individual lives of Irish people in London, particularly those that were outside the traditional community, is harder to investigate. Music was a popular entertainment in most households in the Edwardian era; it would be strange not to find the same for Irish people. However, if singing places most Irish households in the same era as most other Londoners, their choice of song was an important distinguisher. Paul Thompson's oral history of Edwardian

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[5] *The Observer*, 18 Mar. 1900.

6 Interview with Anne Foley, 18, 19, 21 July 1969 (B.L. Sound Archive, Family Life and Work Experience before 1918, C707/72/1-5 C1).

society certainly bears this out.[7] The interviewers had as one of their fixed questions to ask every participant in the study whether there was music played or sung in the household. It emerges clearly in the accounts of children that grew up with Irish parents, but with no sense of having an Irish identity themselves, that the choice of songs was important to their parents: that they sang Irish songs. The exact origin of these songs, whether written in America, Britain or Ireland by emigrants or 'hack song-writers' does not seem to have mattered to those that sang them.[8]

Although distance may have been created within households when one member of the family had their own reserve of songs. Songs like *Father O'Flynn* or *Killarney* were sung across this period at Irish meetings of every sort; they were also sung and known by those that did not attend Irish meetings. Yet when they were not surrounded by other Irish people their party piece, which was typical at meetings all over London, was regarded as unusual. That the whole family had a sing-song, but 'Father used to like singing sort of Irish songs', should alert us that whatever little value we may place on a party piece, of the same songs sung at the same meetings year after year by people who seem clearly to have been singing the only song they could sing, the songs were consciously chosen.[9]

The lyrics were not necessarily key to this. The tunes themselves were important and understanding references to particular songs indicated fluency in this language. Anne Foley, from Bolton, remembered her father whistling and also recalled that her mother could judge his mood depending on what he was whistling.[10] Similarly Fr. Edward Murnane, parish priest in Bermondsey, when discussing how the Education Bill of 1908 enraged him, had only to mention that he 'found himself humming '98' for his listeners to gain some understanding of his outrage.[11] That he expressed emotion in these terms, in musical tunes, indicates to us how ingrained a sense of musical

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[7] Thompson, *The Edwardians*.
[8] Hall, 'Irish Music and Dance in London, 1870-1970', pp 67-8.
[9] Interview with Charles Mulligan, 4, 20, 21 Oct. 1971 (B.L. Sound Archive, Family Life and Work Experience before 1918, 1902 C707/257/1-4 C1)
[10] Ibid.
[11] *Catholic Herald*, 22 Feb. 1908

knowledge was. It also serves to remind us that even if outsiders heard the music, there were elements they would likely not understand. For the children of some Irish parents, their ability to hear the tunes of their parents but understand only that the tunes were Irish, shows in a particular way the distance implied by not knowing the language of music. The nuance of what was being said could be entirely lost. That her father was most likely to whistle when he was out of work was understood by Anne Foley, but it would not be surprising if he whistled a particular tune.[12] This relied heavily on being able to identify the tune and place it in the context of its subject to interpret the meaning correctly. Being able to interpret the whistler was reliant on familiarity with the Irish repertoire of songs. Irish people, seemingly regardless of whether they maintained relationships with an Irish community in London, understood a language of music that was hard to translate for those unfamiliar with it.

The individual Irish person's narrative serves as an important counterpoint to the more public Irish music, in all senses, delivered at meetings and concerts. The most important point is that the same songs, the same Irish songs, seem to have been popular everywhere, that people who could be supposed to have disappeared from Irish life had their own version of Irish life privately.[13] The narratives of migrant lives were more complex. Upbringing and nationality were not forgotten, and music was central to this memory, even if they did not feel the need to remember it with other Irish people. The person who hummed to themselves or sang to their children was as likely to have the same repertoire as those who attended U.I.L. functions. Music was a language that, once learnt, was difficult to stop speaking entirely.

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Meetings which were mostly composed of Irish people in London, no matter under what auspices they met, generally included a musical component. Indeed from the notices of meetings, Catholic or Irish political or

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[12] Interview with Anne Foley, 18, 19, 21 July 1969 (B.L. Sound Archive, Family Life and Work Experience before 1918, C707/72/1-5 C1).

[13] Mary J. Hickman and Bronwen Walter, 'Deconstructing Whiteness: Irish Women in Britain' in *Feminist Review*, No. 50, The Irish Issue: The British Question (Summer, 1995), pp 6-7.

political generally, singing accompanied on the piano seems to have been the main feature of meetings. It would be easy to just remark on the Irishness of these meetings but they also represent just how integrated this culture was into the general musical culture of London. Singing accompanied by piano represents the nineteenth century British middle class musical tradition. The stability of some communities from time of first settlement until 1900 would make it unsurprising if an alternative Irish version, in particular in relation to accompanied singing, had prevailed at least in some of these communities. That it did not, that these clubs had taken on the form of the parlour room, shows us the degree to which musical taste and form were open to change.[14] Even things which could be regarded as deeply personal, such as musical taste, or deeply connected to ethnicity were changeable, in the way that music was consumed if not in the passion for it.

Music in a general sense should be seen as a draw to meetings, temperance or political, which would not have attracted a large following otherwise. Although these meetings were not absolutely private, as household sing-alongs were, they were nevertheless relatively exclusive in drawing only Irish Catholics. This was true as much for the League of the Cross, a temperance organisation, as the U.I.L. This exclusivity was important in determining song choice, especially in regard to rebel songs which could be sung at these meetings without the danger of offending. However, in looking at the long lists of songs, the most notable conclusion is that, even at exclusively Irish meetings, the songs that were sung were not exclusively Irish. The world of London theatre and music was present at these meetings and shows us that for all the company people chose to keep, there was a vast world between integration and segregation. Most inhabited a musical world somewhere between Irish and non-Irish.

The range of songs sung at all of these meetings was enormous. In 1900 alone there were 329 different songs sung at meetings of Irish people that were reported in either *The Universe* or the *Catholic Herald* in London. The

[14] I am grateful to William Halpin, retired Head of Conservatory of Music and Drama, Dublin Institute of Technology (D.I.T.) for discussing this point with me.

enormous range of songs, especially the changing range of songs from year to year, renders it impossible to trace the origins of every song. Some songs have simply disappeared: having only the title, there are simply too many songs with *Daddy* as a title to establish which is referred to in a particular notice. There are many recitations that are similarly elusive. However, the broad trends are clear: the most popular songs are recognisable and relatively stable from year to year. Songs like *Kathleen Mavourneen* or *Father O'Flynn* remained very popular throughout this period, others would have been familiar but certainly lesser known. These were also songs that were popular outside of Irish circles; *Kathleen Mavourneen* was a 'drawing room favourite' in middle-class English homes throughout the nineteenth century.[15] The songs that remained popular throughout this period, those that did not change with the fashions, were the range of ballads associated with Ireland. Whether they were written in Ireland seems to have been of no importance, songs like *I'll take thee home again Kathleen*, which was American in origin, were accepted as Irish in the repertoire of Irish gatherings in London.[16]

These ballads remained present at most gatherings throughout this period because most people knew them. It is also likely that in the recurrence of certain songs at certain meetings we are not necessarily seeing the musical taste of the group. Instead, it is likely that some had an unchanging party piece and that this accounts for some of the unchanging repertoire at certain meetings. An example of this is *Steer by barque*, a song which is recorded in my notes only twice in this period, sung at League of the Cross meetings in South London in 1905 and again in 1908.[17] Although a name is associated with this song only once given the nature of the meeting and the location, the singer is likely the same in both instances. The singer in this case was William MacCarthy, who was prominent in the League of the Cross in South London and most widely known for his association with the GAA. Similarly the parish priest of Wapping, Fr. Beckley sang *Father O'Flynn* every year when called

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[15] Derek B. Scott, *The Singing Bourgeois: songs of the Victorian drawing room and parlour* (Aldershot, 2001), p. 100.
[16] Michael C. O'Laughlin, *An Illustrated History, Irish Songs, Singers and Sheet music: From Old Irish Airs to Tin Pan Alley*, Vol. 1 (Kansas City, 2010), p. 23.
[17] *Catholic Herald*, 21 Apr. 1905; *Catholic Herald*, 14 Mar. 1908.

upon at the annual parish outing. This was remembered by parishioners as 'adding to the merriment' of the outing.[18] It seems that his rendition of the same song, anywhere he was called upon to sing, was not at all unusual.[19] This stability or reluctance to learn a new song, must have led to a similar programme of songs in the same group meeting after meeting. It is also likely that those that only ever sang one song sang a song that was never out of place. A safe song at all of these meetings was an Irish song, even if this led to meetings where the 'menu was made up partly of items, otherwise passable but of the stalest kind wearisomely repeated'.[20] This group of people were surely responsible for maintaining Irish songs as prominent items at meetings throughout London and likely cause us to overestimate the draw of Irish songs for Irish people. The repetition of the same song 'wearisomely' should also make us hesitant to read meaning into the lyrics of the song.

The staid menu on offer at many Irish gatherings was most likely also responsible for the fact that young Irish people in this period were chastised for moving away from Irish ballads and instead purchasing gramophone records of 'such ineffably disgusting ghastlies as If the man in the moon were a coon'.[21] The young people in question regarded 'the old songs such as Killarney, Kathleen Mavourneen, Molly Bawn etc. as being too hackneyed to be palatable' and when pressed to sing Irish songs asked for advice as to Irish songs that would 'appeal to up to date audiences'.[22] Just as the structure in which music was performed or enjoyed had changed previous to this piano-accompanied singing, the choice of songs was also subject to change. There was also a generational change represented in musical tastes here, young people rejected the ballads of their parents as boring. We should be careful, however, in reading a switch in identity into this change in musical tastes. It seems rather to represent a common intergenerational tension.

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[18] Vincent Worley, *The Story of Catholic Wapping Compiled for the Centenary of St. Patrick's Parish* (London, n.d.), p. 41.
[19] Sir John Benn also recalled Fr. Beckley singing Father O'Flynn at his cottage (*Catholic Herald*, 28 Mar. 1908).
[20] F.A. Fahy, 'Ireland in London', 12 March 1921, p. 21, (N.L.I., MS 11,431).
[21] *Catholic Herald*, 5 Dec. 1908.
[22] Ibid., 9 Nov. 1912.

Not only did the wide availability of new music in London, whether from musicals, concerts or music halls provide new material for those that grew tired of the same songs, but the introduction and popularisation of gramophone records also added a new element to meetings. As well as introducing new songs, or unfamiliar and standardised renditions, they also disrupted the previous working of these types of meetings. Although singing remained popular and was mentioned alongside playing of the gramophone, there was a rise in using just the gramophone to entertain. This was the case at a U.I.L. meeting in Limehouse in 1911 where one member 'entertained the audience with selections on the gramophone'.[23] If expense made gramophones a strictly middle-class purchase at this time, as Derek B. Scott has argued, then the robust strength of organisations amongst Irish people in London meant that gramophones and the wider world of recorded music would have been made available to Irish people.[24] This broadening of the range of music with which Irish people were familiar did have displacing effect on the older, more typically Irish ballads but this effect differed from meeting to meeting. In terms of song selection, not all meetings were alike. The contrast between the League of the Cross and the U.I.L. is illustrative of this.

The fact that Irish songs had such an important place in the programme of U.I.L. meetings is perhaps to be expected. It was after all an Irish political organisation. The repertoire at their meetings is noticeable, not only for being more obviously Irish, but also for including rebel songs, such as *The Croppy Boy*. This may have been a result of the age profile of the U.I.L. in London; given the songs sung it is likely that U.I.L. members were older than the members of other organisations. However, it is also true that the U.I.L. was seen by members specifically as a place where their musical taste for 'an Irish military song may be heard without offending fellow Catholics'.[25] This was a major worry for those who contemplated the end of the U.I.L. in England if

[23] *East End News*, 17 Jan. 1911.
[24] Scott, *The Singing Bourgeois*, p. 205.
[25] *Catholic Herald*, 5 Nov. 1910.

Home Rule was granted and puts the later development of the Irish Self Determination League (I.S.D.L.), in some areas at least, in a different light.[26]

Dinny O'Connell remembered his time in the U.I.L. in Peckham prior to World War I almost solely in terms of musicians and music: 'my Dad was treasurer there, and Uncle was secretary, Pat Quigley, fella named Jack Brennan played the accordion, no it was the melodeon. Chap named Gallivan or Galvan ... he played the flutes. And Jo Maloney played the piano.'[27] That there is no mention of politics, Irish or local London, is instructive of the relative importance of music and politics to these meetings. The major row in Irish political circles in Peckham post-World War I when some former U.I.L. members sought to start a branch of the I.S.D.L. was who was to gain ownership of the piano that belonged to the U.I.L.[28] Music was not just of importance when the political world was relatively quiet. Music was important all the time, at every event. Even the space to sing rebel songs was important. When music had such a prominent role, when seeking a place where your choice of song was not offensive or aggressive but merely a song, we must consider whether people joined the U.I.L. and sang Irish songs, or sought out the U.I.L. because they wanted to sing rebel songs. These people were ridiculed by those in the Gaelic League in London: 'who though they perhaps sing national songs for five minutes during the week are becoming unconsciously but hopelessly anglicised'.[29] The point in this sentiment was that the lyrics sung should match the lives of those who sang them. If 'national songs' were sung, then the singer should surely be a nationalist. Choice of song probably did have some meaning, especially as most songs sung at U.I.L. meetings were Irish songs, however, this meaning was certainly more complex than simply a literal interpretation of sympathy with the lyrics of the songs they sung.

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[26] Ibid., 5 Nov. 1910.
[27] Interview with Dinny O'Connell, 20 June 1996 (B.L. Sound Archive, Reg Hall Archive, C903/466 C1).
[28] Ibid.
[29] Art Ó Briain, 'Speech undated on future of Gaelic Revival (1906/07?)' (N.L.I., Art Ó Briain Papers, MS 8461/29).

The League of the Cross, which met in groups associated with Catholic churches, had a more varied repertoire of songs at their meetings compared to that of the UIL. The fall out of fashion of traditional ballads is evident at these meetings. This organisation was founded by Cardinal Manning to appeal to Irish Catholics, its outward symbols, sashes and insignia were Irish in character. This situation was, by 1910, not entirely satisfactory to Westminster Cathedral who felt the organisation should appeal to the wider Catholic population.[30] In Haverstock Hill, parishioners complained that the parish priest had 'changed the character of the organisation because of its Irish nature'.[31] Given the evidence of notices published in newspapers about League of the Cross meetings, it is impossible to imagine that this action was not connected to music. This might be hard to imagine at first, from the notices one can judge that not all the songs were Irish, however, the character of the meetings themselves were. The notices of these meetings, which were often published in Catholic newspapers, illustrate the central importance of music to these meetings. This notice from April 1900 demonstrates this; without the music there would have been little that remained of the meeting:

> The Chairman opened the meeting with a brief address on the Total Abstinence question, and Bro. Fitzgerald submitted his report re the soirees given in the course of the past season. The following programme was then gone through: Mrs Madden, 'the wearin' of the green'; Bro Henefin, 'Life's experiences' Mrs Smith 'Don't be too hard on old Ireland' Mrs Egan 'Annie Laurie' Mr Shovell 'The rising of the moon'; Miss Katie Smith 'As your hair grows whiter' Mr JT O'Brien 'Ned and the publican' (recitation); Miss Katie Potter 'Kitty Farrell' Captain Smith 'John Bull and Co.'[32]

This was the general form these meetings seem to have taken, a short sermon, other business, and then singing. Recording the names of those who took the pledge to abstain from alcohol, which was the express purpose of these meetings, seems to have been of infinitely less importance to those that chronicled the happenings of these meetings than recording who sang and what songs they sang. It was not the songs they sang that necessarily marked these meetings as Irish, or not necessarily their songs, nor the colour of the sashes,

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[30] *Catholic Herald*, 3 Sept. 1910.
[31] Ibid., 9 Apr. 1910.
[32] Ibid., 6 Apr. 1900.

but some mix of people and the music they made, the music they wanted one another to hear.

The closing song demonstrates in a more precise way the character of the meetings. Sung by the whole meeting, it shows a truer measure of group identity than song titles or lyrics during the meeting. In general these League of the Cross meetings, like U.I.L. meetings, and nearly all dances and concerts run by Irish organisations, were closed with *God Save Ireland.* This song had a particular meaning which is suggested by its placement as the closing song. We should consider this song slightly differently from other songs because it was sung by the whole group, 'all heartily joined in'.[33] That it was no one's party piece gave it a communal role that other songs did not have. It was perhaps the singing of this anthem rather than *God Save the King* which most alarmed particular parish priests. If League of the Cross meetings showed a more varied repertoire, or more freedom in song choice than U.I.L. meetings, they were united in this one song. Irish songs were certainly more prominent at U.I.L. meetings but it would be wrong to consider this evidence of anything more than song choice, taste, habit or youth. In terms of defining identity, song choice during the meeting seems irrelevant. The most important thing was the tenor of the meetings, the freedom to sing the songs which would not have been to everyone's taste and even the expectation that this would form the bulk of the meeting.

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Music in Catholic churches was much more organised and regulated than music in other settings. During this period, the music of Catholic masses was the subject of controversy and efforts to reform it reached a peak. These reforms were brought into action by the pronouncement by Pope Pius X of *Tra Le Sollectudini* in 1903 which had at its centre a desire to return Catholic music to Gregorian chant and remove more modern styles of music from the mass.[34] Music in churches, it was felt, had too much of the world and,

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[33] Ibid., 28 Nov. 1908.
[34] T.E. Muir, *Roman Catholic Church Music in England, 1791-1914: A Handmaid of the Liturgy?* (Aldershot, 2008), p. 185.

in the mind of Pope Pius X, distracted the congregation from prayer by reminding them of the theatre.[35] A diocesan committee reported on how best to implement these guidelines in Westminster.[36] As well as declaring that 'Gregorian chant [is] preferred', a central part of this was that women were not to be included in choirs.[37] The annual visitations to parishes from both dioceses enforced this asking, ritually, 'Who forms the choir?', to which it seems the only adequate response was 'men and boys'.[38] The directive to exclude women from choirs appears to have been well observed, most choirs were composed of 'Catholic men and boys' in Visitation Returns. In contrast, the desire to have the Gregorian chant become the norm in Catholic churches, in London at least, appears to have been less successful.

The reform of church music met with some lay support, for instance those who doubted 'whether some of the music employed in our churches is altogether appropriate to divine worship.'[39] In contrast, the removal of congregational singing and women from choirs was not favoured by the laity. Women in particular disagreed publicly with these pronouncements, complaining that 'we are the more musical as well as more numerous body of churchgoers in these lands, and notably the more pious section.'[40] Although this was the measure to which there was more opposition it was more fully carried out than the change in style of music in churches. Adopting Gregorian chant was too much for most churches. In England the campaign to change the music of Catholic churches produced 'only mixed success'.[41] Nevertheless the constant questioning of diocesan enquiries of 'Have you a list of the Westminster List of Music? Is all music used at Mass included therein or in the

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[35] Ibid., p. 186.
[36] 'Summary of the decisions of the Diocesan Commission on Ecclesiastical music 1904' (Catholic Diocese of Westminster, Papers of Archbishop Bourne, Bo 1/87). Any indication of an official response from the Diocese of Southwark is elusive, there appears to be no music file or even collection of appropriate hymns. Nor is there any indication of content within Archbishop Amigo's papers.
[37] 'Summary of the decisions of the Diocesan Commission on Ecclesiastical music 1904' (Catholic Diocese of Westminster Archives, Papers of Archbishop Bourne, Bo 1/87).
[38] E.g. '1911 Visitation Return, Commercial Road' (Catholic Diocese of Westminster Archives, MQ (Commercial Road)).
[39] *Catholic Herald*, 6 May 1904.
[40] *The Tablet*, 20 Feb. 1904.
[41] Muir, *Roman Catholic Church Music in England*, p. 246.

appendixes therein?' seem to have produced a change in the hymns used in some churches at least, but there was no wholesale move to using chant.[42]

Although hymns have been elsewhere argued to be 'an acceptable mechanism for the expression of what people want to say', considering them as broadly similar to other songs is not satisfactory. The congregation themselves did not choose the hymns and therefore using them as expressions of lay people's feelings is, at best, problematic.[43] Vernacular hymns remained very popular in London Catholic life in this period despite restrictions which were placed on Catholic hymns. The most popular appear to have been a mix of traditional English and Irish Catholic hymns. *Faith of our fathers* was a constant, even translated into Irish for St. Patrick's Day in Dockhead in 1901.[44] Hymns to Mary and St. Patrick were also popular, often sung in processions at times of year when there was no devotional reason for singing those hymns. These often seem to reflect a similar style of devotion, for example *Hail Queen of Heaven* and *Hail Glorious Saint Patrick* were frequently sung one after the other. Litvack has argued that *Hail Glorious Saint Patrick* represented both attachment to Ireland and sorrow at being 'now exiles'.[45] I argue that placing too much emphasis on the words is unwise. However these hymns do represent devotion to Saint Patrick and Mary as well as a devotion to the nineteenth century hymns. These hymns were well known; it was this fact which was responsible for their use in outdoor processions. The outdoor singing in processions, and at meetings on which these impressions are based, allowed freedom from what was becoming the regimented music for mass. As noted above, these measures were not entirely successful, the genuine affection of the laity and priests for traditional Irish and English Catholic hymns must be regarded as being responsible for this. It was not that the processions discussed below were orchestrated to provide a place for hymns to be sung, there was always League of the Cross meetings, but rather, that the chant that was the

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[42] '1911 Visitation Return, Commercial Road' (Catholic Diocese of Westminster Archives, MQ (Commercial Road)).
[43] Leon B. Litvack, 'The psychology of song; the theology of hymn: songs and hymns of Irish migration' in Patrick O'Sullivan (ed.), *Religion and Identity* (Leicester, 1996), p. 77.
[44] 'Lá Féile Phádraic St. Patrick's Day 1901' (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives, Bermondsey Dockhead).
[45] Litvack, 'Songs and hymns of Irish migration', p. 80.

preferred music of the Hierarchy could not displace the musical culture that had already developed.

That changing the music of worship was less successful than changing the gender of those who performed it is surprising. The desire to change the composition of choirs implicitly suggests a desire to change some of the gendered culture surrounding musicality. Changing the composition of choirs must have hurt those involved. When we see the entire congregation in processions, detailed below, their noise and hymns make more sense. Part of the reasoning may have been to provide space for the entire congregation to sing together. Although in the short term ridding Catholic choirs of women could be said to have been successful, in the longer term this and other measures could only have limited success. This was especially the case with the proposals to limit the use of the organ as envisaged by Pope Pius X.[46] All other instruments were precluded from churches, and even the organ was to be used only to accompany the choir.[47] However, the organ seems to have remained central to music in London. The Diocese of Westminster clarified that the exclusion of women from choirs did not apply to the playing of the organ, which could be played by a woman 'where the services of a man cannot be obtained'.[48] The inclusion of this clause reads as practically an exemption clause. That this clause was written indicates that women were already prominent as organists in Catholic Churches.

This of course should not greatly surprise us as the piano was already thought of as a feminine instrument. Pianos had by this period become a staple in middle-class homes.[49] By 1910 there was estimated to be one piano for every ten or twenty of the population of England and Wales.[50] As with gramophones, expense should not be taken to dictate that working class people did not have access to pianos. However, quite often they were found in the clubroom, as above in the U.I.L. in Peckham. Piano playing was, along with

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[46] Muir, *Roman Catholic Church Music in England*, pp 185-6.
[47] Ibid.
[48] 'Summary of the decisions of the Diocesan Commission on Ecclesiastical music 1904' (Catholic Diocese of Westminster Archives, Papers of Archbishop Bourne, Bo 1/87).
[49] Geoffrey Self, *Light Music in Britain since 1870: A Survey* (Aldershot, 1988), p. 65.
[50] Russell, *Popular music in England*, p. 5.

choral singing, regarded as the chief musical activity associated with women.[51] This can be seen at Irish gatherings. Agnes MacHale, for instance, was prominent at Gaelic League gatherings in this period as the director of the choir and the accompanist at concerts.[52] At all of the gatherings studied above the pianist named was female.[53] This role, in Irish clubs, as in general English life, was reserved for women. The club life of Irish people can seem very insular at times, even given the wide selection of ballads chosen, but the norms of Edwardian life in England were present even in those clubrooms. Not even papal decrees could alter what had become the reality of life in England: the piano, and it seems by extension, the organ, were for women.

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The loudest music that emanated from Irish people in London was from the parish bands which marched and played throughout Irish communities in London at this time.[54] These bands were the most widely known and some of the most public music of Irish London; for this reason it is not surprising to find that they are also the most well treated historically particularly in Reginald Hall's study of Irish music in London.[55] Hall is correct in associating these mainly with the religious processions, however, their role was much larger than that, and showed some of the symbiosis between music and people.[56] If looked upon as just a processional occasion one could imagine that it was the bands following the people, but that the inverse seems to have been the case in other settings suggests that music had a special power to bring people away. Even in the loudest music there were secret meanings, bereft of words the music that otherwise would only be safely sung in Irish political meetings was heard in the public streets. In this, London can be contrasted to other areas of Britain which had a greater sectarian musical culture. Liverpool County Council had by 1912 made efforts to preclude the playing of certain tunes in relation to Irish

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[51] Ibid., p. 12.
[52] *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 21 Sept. 1907.
[53] E.g. Miss O'Neill at the U.I.L. in South Islington [*Catholic Herald*, 1 Jan. 1904].
[54] Parish bands role in local processions from a non-music perspective is examined in Chapter 1.
[55] Hall, 'Irish Music and Dance in London, 1890-1970', pp 149-80.
[56] Battersea was the exception to the involvement of bands in religious processions. Political and religious processions are discussed more fully in Inner London.

and anti-Irish meetings.[57] In Northern England, Orange Order pipe bands had a similar culture of sectarian music.[58] Whereas Catholic processions were protested against in London by anti-Catholic protestors, it never developed into a more nuanced sectarianism where just a tune could incite a riot. This probably had its roots in the regional origins of migrants to London as compared to those of Northern England. The music played marching around streets in London was more likely to be objected to on the basis of noise rather than the music itself.

These bands were formed around parish churches and were thus bound to have a strong role in the life of the Irish Catholic community in which they lived. Although when processions first began to be held in Irish communities in London parish bands did not exist the two became linked very quickly. Parish bands formed to serve their local procession also travelled to march in other processions. During these processions the bands would generally play hymns, reserving secular songs for later in the evening when the priest 'accompanied by the parish band and the choir, visited the principal altars' which had been erected in the district.[59] Music, in the form of congregational singing and by fife and drum and brass bands, was an essential part of these occasions. The presence of several bands from neighbouring areas made these processions very loud affairs, and it seems that part of the rationale of the organisation of the procession was precisely to be as loud as possible.

Certainly where parish bands were used in non-religious settings this seems to have been key to their role. In 1906 following the announcement of the election of the five Irish candidates to Battersea Town Council the Battersea Irish Band formed a procession and, to the tune of *Brian Boru*, marched around two kilometres back to the Nine Elms Division from which they were elected.[60] This does not seem that striking, until we consider that the result was not announced until after midnight. The point of the band was not

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[57] *Special Report from the Select Committee on Local Legislation together with the Proceedings of the Committee* (London, 1912 [347]), p. iii.
[58] Donald M. MacRaild, *Faith, Fraternity and Fighting: The Orange Order and Irish Migrants in Northern England, c. 1850-1920* (Liverpool, 2005), p. 168.
[59] *Catholic Herald*, 26 June 1909.
[60] Ibid., 9 Nov. 1906.

just to celebrate amongst those who were interested waiting outside the town hall; it was also to announce to the rest of Battersea that their candidates had been successful. Music in this sense was acting as a herald proclaiming the good news; the choice of *Brian Boru* underlined to the people in their beds that the good news was Irish good news.

There were times when music was played to call people to something, such as to attract people from their homes to an outdoor meeting of some kind. This was often the case during a parish mission. This happened in Commercial Road in 1906 when the parish priest organised for the band and temperance confraternity to tour the parish before the evening service, in his own words, 'to wake up any lazy Catholics who were staying away from the mission'.[61] This was quite a common use of parish bands, and was used for political meetings as well as religious ones. The role of bands was to draw people out into the street to some meeting. Bands in these instances had the role of a sort of pied piper.

Sometimes the function of a band was obvious. At other times there seems to have been confusion as to what purpose the band was to play. There are instances where the crowd followed the band without any clear sense of where the band was going. In one instance during mass in the hopfields in Kent, where many Irish people worked during the harvest, the priest complained about the parish band from Wapping which had gone to the hopfields for the day and 'that just as Mass was about to begin at Wateringbury the band marched past our mission tent and drew away a large body of Catholic hop pickers. I can assert without hesitation that this band was responsible for about three hundred Catholic hop-pickers losing Mass last Sunday'.[62] In another instance '[s]uch was the enthusiasm stirred up' at the close of a Gaelic League concert that 'nearly the whole audience formed itself into a procession behind the pipers and marched out into the Strand and down Fleet Street, as far as Ludgate Circus, stepping boldly out to the tune of "The wearing of the

[61] Ibid., 16 Mar. 1906.
[62] Ibid., 25 Sept. 1909.

green"'.[63] These spontaneous displays of emotion, the urge simply to follow the music, are indicative of the strong hold that music had over people and also a recognition of the particular tunes that these bands played.

Popular band Irish tunes, which were instantly recognisable to Irish people, effortlessly attracted the audience they wanted. *The Wearing of the Green* particularly remained very popular throughout this period. It was frequently mentioned as the tune of marching bands returning to their district from playing in large processions, such as when the Battersea Irish Pipers and the East Battersea Fife and Drum band were returning from the Eucharistic Congress procession in Central London and were 'vociferously cheered' by the crowds dispersing after the procession.[64] More local religious processions often had several bands from neighbouring districts, who played on their way there and on their return: 'the visiting bands marched home late at night, playing all the way…proud elated and the worse for drink'.[65] These may have mirrored the Orange Order bands on 12 July marches in Northern England which MacRaild described as 'an untalented lot, making more noise than music.'[66] The London Irish bands were certainly marching a fine line between quite an exclusive celebration, in that those that took part were all Irish Catholics, and a much broader one, broadcast to everyone within earshot. The feeling of ownership over territory that processions represented can also be seen in the music occupying the air around them.

That this music could be heard by all, but understood differently is testament to the knowledge required to understand musical references completely. Few who had not grown up with this music could have hoped to recognise the tune of drunken pipers, even if they were to guess the group to which they belonged. Tunes were not inflammatory in London in the way that they were in areas where sectarianism was more widespread. In Liverpool in 1912, the County Council sought and gained the entitlement to ban

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[63] Ibid., 23 Mar. 1906.
[64] *Catholic Herald*, 19 Sept. 1908.
[65] Hall, 'Irish Music and Dance in London, 1890-1970', p. 154.
[66] MacRaild, *Faith, Fraternity and Fighting*, p. 173.

'inflammatory music'.[67] One of the cited songs was *The Boys of Wexford*, and it is noteworthy that this is a tune not at all uncommon amongst London marching bands. In one instance it was played to a crowd of thousands who had gathered at a train station to bid farewell to a curate who was returning to Ireland having worked in London for some years.[68] The tune alone was regarded as incendiary in Liverpool, whereas in London, it was sung by thousands at a train station on an otherwise ordinary day and provoked no complaints.

Context changes the meaning of most things. The same music could mean different things to different people. People who had the same party piece did not necessarily share anything else. Groups of people who were moved by the same music did not necessarily share anything either. The singular concept of 'the Irish' in England is divided time and again. Knowing the different geographical origins in Ireland of Irish immigrants to London and Northern England, the origins of the differences in their uses of music are clear. However, although there were differences in local context, within London as well as in Britain more widely, there was an Irish repertoire that was common to all. The airs of these songs were older than the scattering of Irish people and, no matter the words, remained evocative.[69] The same airs had different meanings in different places. Meanings should not be ascribed to groups simply because of the lyrics of their popular songs, the airs might tell a more constant story than the fashions of lyrics. The tunes alone meant something for these parish bands and those that could not resist the temptation to follow them. There was little need for words.

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Music was intrinsic to the lives of Irish people in London. There was variety in their musical tastes of course, and these tastes did not necessarily follow their politics. Francis Fahy, the president of the Gaelic

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[67] *Special Report from the Select Committee on Local Legislation together with the Proceedings of the Committee* (London, 1912 [347]), p. iii.
[68] *Catholic Herald*, 10 Mar. 1905.
[69] I am grateful to William Halpin, retired Head of Conservatory of Music and Drama, Dublin Institute of Technology (D.I.T.) for discussing this point with me.

League in London during some of this period, recalled fondly his first years in London where '[t]he Theatres were my unfailing amusement' or how 'a series of cheap shilling nights at Covent Garden' had allowed him to go to the opera.[70] Others could be tired of the same ballads night after night, but still feel the sentiments evoked in those ballads. Others still could love those ballads but feel little for the politics of nationalism. Songs could be more than their words, or were not reducible to their words. Their importance was that they were valued within communities, no matter their origin. Some certainly worried that young people did not sing the old ballads, but there were many more who happily sang songs imported from America or the London stage.

Music was and is a broad category of expression, yet when we find people singing together, singing for one another, the message seems to have been more than the words could communicate. Having the same taste, knowing the same songs and wanting to sing for others, communicated belonging. Knowing this repertoire and the tunes and jokes that went along with it also provided the necessary basis for understanding others; the allusions to songs, the humming of a tune to convey some mood, these were all readily understood by those who frequented temperance and Irish political meetings in London. When we see these tunes piped loudly we should not assume that the noise dictated that this was not just as exclusive a code.

A different repertoire was repeated in churches and religious processions. The hymns the congregation preferred could not be altered by fiat. Nor indeed did Irish groups differ from others in London in the paths open to women and men. Westminster Cathedral may have preferred if men and boys alone could be persuaded to sing, and they were successful in this; but they could never change how an interest in choir singing or piano playing was viewed. Irish groups did not so much perpetuate these gender divisions as live within them. Their songs may have been different but the reality of their lives, how their lives were shaped at their most basic by their sex, did not distinguish between Irish and English.

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[70] F.A. Fahy, 'Ireland in London', 12 March 1921, (N.L.I., MS 11,431).

The relationship of people to this marching music, the ability of bands to pull people from their houses to walk behind them is a striking feature of this period. It can be compared as a gathering tool to the ringing of the church bell but its reach was beyond that of a simple notification. All may have heard it but who answered or followed was determined by the music. Most who heard *The Wearing of the Green* would have known the origin of the band; they would not, however, have felt compelled to follow the band or applaud them. At times we look for geographical segregation to know if there remained an Irish identity, we wonder at assimilation, and imagine the slow decline of Irish identity, yet we have left no account for the ways a community can be drawn together. People were drawn together in informal ways. They were brought together by the songs they knew and sung at home, even if they did not venture to Catholic or Irish political meetings. Hearing these songs played loudly in the street, we can understand that some felt an attraction to not only the music but the community it represented.

Context is everything, and if we can only wonder at the attraction of singing and particular songs, we can know that they had an enormous power. This power was not, patently so, in their heartfelt lyrics, and examining them from that point of view misses the many people who had grown tired of hearing the same ballads. That bands breathed new life into staid ballads cannot be doubted; that just the tune was enough is testament to their long popularity as party pieces as well as the longer history of the tune itself. There were great differences amongst Irish people in London, but there was a common music amongst Irish people in London, these old ballads were ones that were familiar to all. It was not necessarily a common Irish music but rather a mix of new and old of Irish and English and American songs. Music was a language unto itself here, and it was heard in homes, in clubs and out on the streets. It was perhaps the only thing which showed clearly the legacy of the common origins, in musical taste, knowledge and habits, of the disparate Irish people in London.

Music and language connected Irish people together but did not force them to have contact with one another. Irish culture gave Irish people

something to enjoy with people like themselves. Ethnic identity was both more individual and collective than this. The next two chapters discuss both these impulses in Irish identity. The first looks at the influences on the formation of Irish identity in children. The second looks at the way Irish identity influenced Irish people's perceptions of one another in London. Ethnic identity is the foundation of the communities and relationships discussed previously. In the communities that Irish people formed it was so fundamental so as to be background noise. In the individual intergenerational interactions and in the broader interactions of Irish people from different backgrounds with one another the question of Irish identity emerges explicitly.

Chapter 6: Influences on the ethnic identity of the children of Irish parents

The mix of songs and the style of performance at Irish meetings in London indicate that Irish people in London were not culturally isolated. Neither were Irish people residentially separate from non-Irish in London. Despite these facts there were Irish communities composed mainly of second and third generation Irish in London. The transfer of Irish ethnicity to the children of Irish parents was crucial in the regeneration of these communities. This chapter seeks to question the influences on the ethnic identity of children of Irish parents. This chapter does not set out a statistical analysis of the likely Irish population of London at this time by using average number of children or rates of exogamy or isogamy. Instead it offers a critique of the assumptions that have underpinned the statistical analysis of Irish populations outside Ireland.[1] This is not an argument against doing that type of statistical analysis, of measuring populations and exogamy for example, rather it suggests that analysis of the transmission of identity needs to be part of this discourse.[2] This chapter argues that parental involvement was important in determining ethnic identity of children. While this involvement is not argued to have been necessarily predictive, it did dwarf that of organisations which worked with children.

The word and concept of 'ethnicity' rather than 'nation' or 'race' is used here. This has been the general practice amongst historians.[3] There are, however, reasons why 'race' is the more historically accurate term. There has been some debate on the correctness of the term 'race' when applied to nineteenth and twentieth century Irish migrants.[4] Although, there can be no

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[1]E.g. Frank Neal, 'The Foundations of the Irish Settlement in Newcastle upon Tyne: The evidence in the 1851 Census' in Donald M. MacRaild (ed.), *The Great Irish Famine and Beyond: Irish migrants in Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 71-93.

[2]Frances Finnegan, *Poverty and Prejudice: A Study of Irish Immigrants in York, 1840-1875* (Cork, 1982), pp. 70-1.

[3] E.g. Tanja Bueltmann, *Scottish Ethnicity and the Making of New Zealand Society, 1850-1930* (Edinburgh, 2011);

[4]L. Perry Curtis, Jr., *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Newton Abbot, 1971); Sheridan Gilley, 'English Attitudes to the Irish in England, 1789-1900' in Colin Holmes

argument that 'race' was the term that was most commonly used to describe the mass of Irish people in nineteenth century Britain there have been arguments about its use. Sheridan Gilley has argued that 'race' when used in Victorian England 'often meant no more than "people" or "nation"'.[5] De Nie has argued persuasively against this view regarding it as 'ahistorical and anachronistic' to dismiss the use of the concept of 'race' in nineteenth century.[6] In current usage 'race' tends to be used to express a biological determinism: it is a matter of descent and focuses primarily on physical appearance; in contrast 'ethnicity' tends to be used as a marker of culture rather than simply physical appearance.[7] Ethnicity is used here because its current usage best captures the cultural rather than biological identity discussed here.

Childhood is recognised as a key period in the formation of ethnic identity.[8] Yet the focus of studies on identity has frequently addressed the children of migrants as adults: examining for example their experiences of work or educational outcomes.[9] To examine the influences on the ethnic identity of children is not to argue that these were successful: that a child who attended a particular youth group grew up to assert a particular identity due to the influence of that youth group. The children of Irish people were a part of the Irish population of London. However, the examination of their lives must rest on slightly different sources than those of adults. It is from adults that we receive accounts of their childhoods; they are written about in newspapers but there is never a sense of children's own views in that coverage. The period examined in this chapter is broader and less defined than that examined elsewhere in this thesis. This is to take account of childhood narratives around

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(ed.), *Immigrants and Minorities in British Society* (London, 1978), pp. 81-111; R.F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch; Connections in Irish and English History* (London, 1995).

[5] Gilley, 'English Attitudes to the Irish in England, 1789-1900', p. 94.

[6] Michael de Nie, 'Britannia's Sick Sister: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882' in Neil McCaw, *Writing Irishness in Nineteenth-Century British Culture* (Aldershot, 2004), p. 174; See also Kathrin Levitan on this point, especially in relation to conceptions of race within Britain and Ireland (Levitan, *A Cultural History of the British Census: Envisioning the Multitude in the Nineteenth Century* (2011), pp. 147-77).

[7] Werner Sollors, 'Ethnicity and Race' in David Theo Goldberg and John Solomos, *A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies* (Oxford, 2002), p. 101.

[8] Cynthia Garcia Coll and Amy Kerivan Marks, *Immigrant Stories: Ethnicity and Academics in Middle Childhood* (Oxford, 2009), p. 7.

[9] Caitríona Ni Laoire, Fina Carpena-Méndez, Naoimi Tyrrell and Allen White, *Childhood and Migration in Europe: Portraits of Mobility, Identity and Belonging in Contemporary Ireland* (Farnham, 2011), pp. 4-5.

this time and also in recognition that childhood and adolescence are periods that are defined individually and are not limited by decades. This chapter examines various organisations and their activities to show that while identity is a difficult subject to make firm conclusions on, that we should be sceptical of the claims of organisations that worked with children in terms of their influence on the ethnic identity of children.

Organisations outside the home have traditionally been examined for their role in shaping children's identities.[10] Schools and youth clubs had well documented contact with children. Their role is examined here because of that contact and not on the presumption that they were necessarily successful. There is much more information on those outside the family who sought to influence children's identity, whether ethnic, gender or religious. This has led to their role in identity formation being overestimated whilst that of parents has been relatively ignored. Most that sought to work with children, especially working class children, at this time did so to save or 'rescue' those children for or from something.[11] This was no different for Irish organisations or children. Some sought to save them for the Church, others from the streets and others still for the Irish nation. For this reason historians have been critical of their attempts to influence children.[12] Although this derives partially from the condescension of organisations and churches towards children and their families, it also has a root in our view of what constitutes natural education or influence and unnatural or improper influence. Parents are seen as natural educators whereas others are regarded cynically. The correct type of influence is regarded here as an ethical question and is not addressed. Instead the focus is on the effect of organisations on children's ethnic identity. Organisations and clubs such as the Catholic schools, youth groups and Gaelic League type

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[10] E.g. Richard A. Voeltz, '...A Good Jew and a Good Englishman': The Jewish Lads' Brigade, 1894-1922' in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Jan., 1988), pp 119-127.

[11] David Rubinstein, 'Socialization and the London School Board 1870-1904: aims, methods and public opinion' in Phillip McCann (ed.), *Popular Education and Socialization in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1977), p. 231.

[12] Mary J. Hickman has been most critical of the Catholic Church in this regard (Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity: The State, the Catholic Church and the Education of the Irish in Britain* (Aldershot, 1995)).

classes, will be argued to have been broadly secondary in identity formation.[13] Their biggest contribution was in segregating children along ethnic lines, rather than the content they aimed to teach to children.[14]

Parents were crucial as the primary way in which children were marked as being Irish or even possibly Irish. The influence of parents on the children of Irish has been shown in recent studies which examined the ethnic identity of the children of Irish born people in Britain.[15] There have also been arguments in different outcomes of children's ethnic identity between the children of Irish mothers and those of Irish fathers.[16] It is clear that what happened within families was formative, and determined to a large extent the number of self-described Irish people in London. This process within families is not examined here due to the dearth of evidence on the subject. Psychologists and social scientists have relied on interviews and census data respectively; there is no equivalent set of sources which would allow this subject to be examined in a systematic way for this period.

Parents provided the primary context for children to understand their world. Fundamentally by questioning how a child became Irish in London we are interrogating generational transfer. It would be tempting to see this from the point of view of first, second and third generations and regard each as signifying a drift from Irish identity. The literature on Irish people in Britain in general sees generations as being important signifiers, not only of Irish links

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[13] These organisations were chosen because of their visibility in the period.

[14] Steven Fielding reached a similar conclusion in regard to the Catholic Church in Manchester (Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity: Irish Catholics in England, 1880-1939* (Buckingham, 1993), p. 64).

[15] Hickman, 'Census Ethnic Categories and Second-Generation Identities: A Study of the Irish in England and Wales' in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (2011), pp 79-97.

[16] Seán Sorohan, *Irish London During The Troubles* (Dublin, 2012), p. 36. The differing levels of social mobility in the later twentieth century between Irish men and women has its roots in the occupational patterns of both groups, with many Irish women in Britain working as teachers or nurses; the majority of Irish men were working in skilled and unskilled manual labour. The differing occupational trends between the late twentieth century and the early twentieth century limit the degree to which the findings in relation to the difference in identity between the children of Irish men and Irish women can be applied to this period. (Michael P. Hornsby-Smith and Angela Dale, 'The Assimilation of Irish Immigrants in England' in *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Dec., 1988), pp. 519-44).

but also of British perceptions of Irish.[17] In essence the major problem with a strictly generational view is that it relies on distance from Ireland to characterise distance from being Irish. The two, as argued below, were not necessarily equivalent and for this reason generations while possibly informative are not used as markers here. The reality was more complex. Irish life began not necessarily in a place of birth but in childhood, and it is that beginning which must be examined and understood.

Historically Irish Catholics who married non-Catholics were deemed to have been in 'mixed marriages'. Particularly after the *Ne Temere* decree these marriages came under more scrutiny and were to be discouraged by Catholic priests. However, the statistics on marriages from the parishes show that official discouragement did not seem to deter such marriages. In 1909 the priest at Canning Town, writing to his Bishop, indicated that of the 1,786 families in his parish, 902 were mixed marriages.[18] The meaning of this terminology is clear in historical context – mixed indicated the marriage of partners of two different religions. However it is not a term without problems. That we should privilege religion over other factors, place of birth for instance, is disputable. The marriages of people from different classes or from different areas of London could be argued to have been just as 'mixed' as those of people from the same area of different religions. The divide here is between Catholics of Irish extraction, those that called themselves Irish Catholics, Catholic Irish, Cockney Irish or any of the linked terms and those who did not belong to that Irish world. In essence the description mixed here applies to the marriage of people of different ethnicities. This description has been criticised when applied to the children of such marriages: 'it implies that we're *mixed* up', however, it is used here to refer to those marriages involving Irish people

[17] See for example Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity*, p. 2; David Fitzpatrick, 'The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland: Ireland Under the Union, II 1870-1921* (Oxford, 1996), p. 655.

[18] Thomas Maloney to Archbishop , no date c. 1909 (Catholic Diocese of Brentwood Archives, Canning Town 'pre-1917').

to non-Irish people.[19] This is done primarily because the term was, in this period, unavoidable.

There is an important distinction between categorising some marriages as mixed and categorising children as such. The concept of 'hybridity' is not used here because of the implications of two 'pure' or unhybrid groups of people.[20] The same issues arise with describing children as 'mixed'. Both terms appeal to a sense of groups with 'absolute boundaries' between them.[21] Whereas marriages or relationships are described below as mixed, children are not described in this way. We have evidence neither of the diversity of the background of children from mixed marriages or the uniformity of the background of those who grew up with two parents of the same ostensible ethnicity.

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Organisations that focused on children were similar in many respects to those which worked amongst adults. However, adults and children's organisations differed in the amount of access children's organisations had to children. This was particularly true in education. Children were also seen as more malleable than adults. Schools and youth organisations of various types all sought to create something out of the child: the good Catholic, the strong young man, the respectable young woman. These had a particular ethos of changing children, of moulding them to be better. Children had long, important relationships with these organisations and they represent one of the most important places outside the home where the institutionalisation of ethnic identity comes into play. If these organisations did not promote an Irish identity, or if 'Irish' was regarded as negative or entirely ignored, then this may have had an effect on the identity formation of the young people who came into contact with them. Similarly if these organisations and institutions promoted an Irish identity, whether as 'Irish' being good, or simply as a matter of fact that

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[19] Sultana Choudhry, *Multifaceted Identity of Interethnic Young People: Chameleon Identities* (Farnham, 2010), p. 6.
[20] Clare Alexander, 'Diaspora and Hybridity' in Patricia Hill Collins and John Solomos (ed), *The SAGE Handbook of Race and Ethnic Studies* (London, 2010), p. 504.
[21] Ibid.

the children in its care were Irish, then this may also have had an effect on the children. Primarily the organisations and schools examined here are analysed because they provide examples of exclusionary organisations: they were limited to Catholics or Irish people. Outside of these Irish or Catholic organisations attitudes must be assumed to have been more varied, while it is by no means certain that others within schools or activity groups would be negative towards Irishness, ignoring ethnicity may have had some effect on the development of ethnicity.

By 1900 the school leaving age was 14.[22] Schools at this time in London were separated between those run by religious institutions and those run by the state, called Board schools. Those run by the London School Board had greater funding, smaller classes and better buildings than, in general, those run solely from the donations of parents. The political lobbying over funding for Catholic schools has been well explored,[23] the culture of the schools has been less explored. The general assumption where it is mentioned is that '[Catholic] schools didn't attempt to preserve or create Irish national culture except on St. Patrick's Day.'[24] Mary Hickman explored this best in relation to the reasoning behind the promotion of Catholic schools and argued convincingly that the rationale of the Church Hierarchy for the promotion of Catholic schools in the nineteenth century was to make poor Irish Catholics 'respectable citizens and devout Catholics' and to rid them of the characteristic which made them inherently unrespectable, their ethnicity.[25] The emphasis in her work on Catholic schools was, though, almost entirely on the approach of the Hierarchy and the curriculum generally, which differed little from other schools other than in its religious teaching.[26] The absence of any teaching in

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[22]Paul Thompson, *The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society* (London, 1979), p. 71.
[23] John Cashman, 'The 1906 Education Bill: Catholic Peers and Irish Nationalists' in *Recusant History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Oct. 1987) pp. 422-40; V. Alan McClelland, 'Bourne, Norfolk and the Irish Parliamentarians: Roman Catholics and the Education Bill of 1906' in *Recusant History*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Oct. 1996), pp 228-57.
[24] Gilley, 'The years of Equipoise 1892-1943' in V. Alan McClelland and Michael Hodgetts (eds), *From Without the Flaminian Gate: 150 years of Roman Catholicism in England and Wales 1850-2000* (London, 1999), p. 27.
[25]Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity*, p. 180.
[26] Ibid., p. 176.

relation to Ireland in the curriculum is clear, but how absent it was from the teaching is much more unclear.

Senior Catholic figures did think of schools this way and certainly seem to have thought of Boys' Brigades in the same way. However, the nature of Catholic schools in certain areas in London which had an Irish staff, Irish children and an Irish parish priest indicates that it was a more complex story than the will of Bishops being directly applied to change the ethnicity of children.[27] When modern studies have shown parents have only a limited ability to pass on their ethnicity to their children,[28] we must be suspicious of awarding too much of a role to those who do not actually spend time with children. There was certainly an intent on the part of the Catholic Hierarchy to 'civilise' the poor Irish they found in their diocese. This was also the motive of almost every outside observer who showed distaste mainly for the Irish element of Irish Catholics' lives. However the effectiveness of lay or clerical outsiders cannot be taken for granted. Living in a society where their religion was praised and their ethnicity often criticised, implicitly or explicitly, must certainly be argued to have had some effect. However, the effect of outsiders' opinions and prejudices were felt primarily in later adolescence or early adulthood, when the social interactions of an individual were wider, rather than childhood.

Despite the Catholic Hierarchy's views, Catholic schools in certain areas of London through isolating Irish Catholic children promoted the group identity of those children. That Catholic schools were attended primarily by Irish children was, especially in some areas, a fact of life. In Wapping, for instance, the children at the schools were described as 'all genuine little Celts'.[29] This emerged most strongly when some Catholic schools objected to the celebration of Empire Day. Empire Day, which began in 1904, involved organised 'veneration of the flag' followed by lessons which 'centred on the teaching of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race and its civilizing mission, the empire story (replete with myths and heroes), and the vast geographical

[27] See Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity*, p. 64.
[28] Hickman, 'Census Ethnic Categories and Second-Generation Identities', p. 85.
[29] *Catholic Herald*, 27 Oct. 1905.

extent of the British empire.'[30] Priests and local Irish politicians in London objected to all the elements of the day. They viewed it, not inaccurately, as 'compelling the pupils to sing Imperialist songs and salute the British flag'.[31] This was offensive primarily because 'The sight of the Union Jack is enough sometimes to enkindle a spirit of rebellion even amongst the little ones'.[32] A motion to celebrate Empire Day in Battersea County Council was defeated largely by the Irishmen in that body.[33]

Catholic Schools were run on a parish by parish basis, the bishop had power, but the fact of the schools being supported primarily by house to house collections amongst Catholics and supervised by the local parish priest meant that they were more likely to reflect the opinions of the locality.[34] Catholic schools in areas where the Catholic population was entirely Irish were served by Irish teachers. This was the case in St. Patrick's schools in Waterloo where the priest in charge could boast that 'We in our schools, served by eight sterling Irish teachers, have 300 of the sweetest little Irish children one could ever see, being brought up to despise soupers, and to love their religion.'[35] This mix could be taken to support Hickman's argument about the denationalisation of Irish children through education, that they took in a population of Irish children and emphasised to them only their Catholicism. However, placing all of these children in schools together simply by virtue of their ethnicity, synonymous in many areas in London at this time with their religion, and providing Irish teachers for them should make us question whether the distinction between religion and ethnicity was as strong as has been argued. There are no testimonies from teachers in Catholic schools in London from this

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[30] Jim English, 'Empire Day in Britain 1904-58' in *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 49 No. 1 (Mar. 2006), pp 248-49.
[31] *Catholic Herald*, 13 March 1909.
[32] Ibid., 17 May 1907.
[33] Ibid., 6 Mar. 1909.
[34] There were changes to the law regarding funding of Catholic schools during this time: from 1902 Catholic schools received a grant. However, they continued to receive most funding from house to house collections. (Percy Alden, 'The Problem of East London' in R. Mudie Smith (ed.), *The Religious Life of London* (London, 1904), p. 38; Gilley, 'The years of Equipoise 1892-1943', p. 27)
[35] 'St. Patrick's (R.C.) School vs. St. Patrick's Benevolent Society, 12 Sept. 1906' (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives, Waterloo).

period, but Mary Collins who was born in 1911 in East London and taught in Limehouse remembered the Catholic school as:

> The whole school were of Irish extraction, mainly Irish extraction, London-Irish you might call them...and that was the picture for most [Catholic] schools in the East End. So a lot of the teaching that was done was, although the curriculum was followed and that, but a lot of the teaching that was done was done because we were Irish teachers...[36]

The blunt evidence of Irish names, for example, Theresa Dempsey, Catherine McCarthy, Margaret McQuirk, all teachers at Melior Street Schools, would indicate that the phenomenon of Irish teachers predominating in Catholic schools was widespread.[37] Even if the curriculum was followed, creating this exclusive Irish environment formed its own message about who the children were and what community they were part of. As ethnic identity, at its simplest, 'is an intergroup concept, for an ethnic group is so defined because it is recognized as socially different from some other existing group', it is difficult to argue that these schools did not perpetuate an Irish Catholic identity, even if their influence was limited.[38] They accentuated the divisions which children might already have seen in the world around them from their early childhood and provided a completely segregated environment where the only adults the children had contact with were from the same background.

Complaints that these Catholic schools 'contained little reference to Ireland' are not ahistorical.[39] There were complaints made in Liverpool that 'though the vast majority of the children in the Catholic schools of Liverpool are of Irish parentage, they are taught practically nothing about Ireland.'[40] Similarly in London the Southwark Junior Irish Literary Club was founded in 1881 to counteract the fact that '90% of the children born of Irish parents in London were growing up to be Irish in name only'. A fact which 'the English

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[36] Interview with Mary Collins, 16 May 1989 (B.L. Sound Archive, Reg Hall Archive, C903/417).
[37] 'Melior St Schools Visitation 21 Feb. 1897' (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives, Bermondsey Melior St. Box 2 '1900-').
[38] Marjorie R. Fallows, *Irish Americans: Identity and Assimilation* (New Jersey, 1979), p. 5.
[39] Hickman, 'Incorporating and denationalising the Irish in England: the role of the Catholic Church' in Patrick O'Sullivan (ed.), *Religion and Identity* (London, 1996), p. 210.
[40] *Catholic Herald*, 13 April 1912.

school and playmate did not help'.[41] Nationalist accounts accentuate the importance of teaching children about Ireland; however, how important Ireland was to a London Irish identity is unclear. Considering ethnic identity as primarily a function of a group identity, that group in London was often primarily a geographical one based wherever they were living. It did not seem to always reflect a tie to Ireland so much as to Irish people; something the playwright Des Dillon enunciated about his identity: 'I'm Irish – but Coatbridge [outside Glasgow] is my Ireland'.[42]

If some priests were certain that 'the nursery to the church was the schoolroom', then others were equally sure that 'the nursery of Irish nationality in Battersea' was their schools.[43] Indeed, it is not at all contradictory that both could have been true. The schools certainly seem to have been decorated in a way that implied that theirs was an Irish Catholic identity, such as in Plumstead where a statue of 'Saint Patrick in the familiar attitude of imparting his episcopal blessing, presides over the boys' department.'[44] Catholic schools were the schoolroom of Irish children and everything followed from that fact; Irish nationalism or Irish Catholicism were impossible without their feeling Irish first. Schools, like parents, were only one of the possible influences that children encountered. Schools, also like parents, were not separate from society. The prejudices that exist in society generally have been shown to be important in classrooms; this has been most studied in regard to gender and gender differentiation in schools.[45] When schools were populated by people from the same background, it is impossible to conceive that they did not bring with them the prejudices of the Irish society they emerged from. That Catholic schools in London in this period certainly seem to have been exclusively Irish in many areas where there was an Irish community, and also appear to have

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[41] Francis Fahy and Clare Hutton (ed.), 'Francis Fahy's Ireland in London – Reminiscences' in Wayne K. Chapman and Warwick Gould (eds.), *Yeats's Collaborations, Yeats Annual*, No. 15 (Basingstoke, 2002), p. 247.
[42] *Irish Times*, 20 Feb. 2010.
[43] *Catholic Herald*, 26 June 1909; *Catholic Herald*, 13 Mar. 1909.
[44] Ibid., 4 Sept. 1909.
[45] Paul Croll and Diana Moses, 'Sex roles in the Primary Classroom' in Colin Rogers and Peter Kutnick (eds), *The Social Psychology of the Primary School* (London 1990), pp 190-211.

employed an exclusively Irish teaching staff can only have helped to foster an atmosphere of division of Irish from non-Irish.

Identity is such a complex thing we cannot say with any certainty what was influential or not for children claiming an Irish or Catholic identity or both. What we can say is that these schools certainly reinforced an Irish community's separateness and while not teaching about Ireland per se certainly had an Irish Catholic emphasis.[46] This was just one aspect of the children's lives, and others have argued that the influence of schools on working-class children in this period has been overestimated.[47] In providing an institutional aspect to Irish identity Catholic schools must be regarded as important in that they facilitated the creation of a separate world for Irish children. This was a world where parents, priests and teachers were all Irish. The effect of this on a child: that every authority figure had and promoted, or modelled, the same identity cannot be stated. We must assert that it did occur and as such had some capacity to influence ethnic identity formation. The children may not have known the myths and legends of Ireland, but they learned that they were not English, that the school would have a day's holiday rather than raise the Union Jack for Empire Day.[48]

Unlike education, extra-curricular activities such as sports or youth clubs did not have a mandatory basis, and as such they had to appeal to children and adolescents based on what they found attractive. Youth clubs or organisations, like teachers, had things they aimed to accomplish; however, unlike teachers, they were utterly dependant on the child, and to a lesser extent, the parent's goodwill. This makes some organisations that emerged in Irish areas in London in this period hard to understand. Boys' Brigades in general have been understood through the lens of the 'Christian soldier', and the Catholic Boys' Brigade has been included with other boys' brigades in these

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[46]Similar conclusions have been made in terms of nineteenth century Wales, Liverpool and York, and 1950s and 1960s London: Paul O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration: the Irish in Wales, 1798-1922* (Cardiff, 2002), p. 240; John Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse, the History of the Liverpool-Irish 1800-1939* (Liverpool, 2007), p. 18; Finnegan, *Poverty and Prejudice*, pp 122-6; Sorohan, *Irish London*, pp 105-7.

[47] David Cannadine, Jenny Keating and Nicola Sheldon, *The Right Kind of History: Teaching the Past in Twentieth-Century England* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 56-7.

[48] *Catholic Herald*, 17 May 1907.

considerations although 'little [is] known' about it specifically.[49] The reasons why little has been known about the Catholic Boys' Brigade are hard to understand, there is substantial material from it in the archives of the Diocese of Southwark. It was started in 1896 by Fr. Segesser in Bermondsey to entice boys that had left school but were too young for the temperance movement to remain with the church. There was opposition to it from Irish nationalists, but this opposition does not seem to have dampened its progress across London.[50] The founding of the Boy Scouts and its openness to denominationally exclusive groups meant that the scouts received support from the Diocese of Westminster and groups were founded in that diocese.[51] This did not indicate that the Boys' Brigades ceased to exist in the Diocese of Westminster, rather it signalled the diversification of youth movements. This lack of strict loyalty to the Catholic Boys' Brigade in Westminster was likely influenced by the fact that it was based in the Diocese of Southwark and the two dioceses had a difficult relationship at high levels.[52]

Like all Boys' Brigades the First World War not only disrupted their activities but raised questions about the purpose of their movement.[53] Some brigades of the movement wanted greater contact with the army, however, those in Irish areas resisted this.[54] In 1914 'the officers and chaplains of the four East End companies of the Brigade (Bow Common, Barking, Commercial Road, and Leyton) had unanimously agreed to maintain the old ideals and rules of the brigade movement, and they would not accept recognition by the Territorial Association'.[55] It was suspended at the outbreak of the World War I and never revived.[56]

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[49] John Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society: British youth movements 1883-1940* (London, 1977), p. 43.
[50] E.g. At Catholic League of South London (*The Tablet*, 19 Oct. 1901).
[51] E.g. Baden Powell to Archbishop Bourne, Feb. 1910 (Catholic Diocese of Westminster Archives, Archbishop Bourne Papers, Bo. 1/21).
[52] The differences between Archbishop Bourne and Amigo emerged starkly later on in connection with the Irish independence movement, see Gilley, 'The years of Equipoise 1892-1943', pp 21-62.
[53] Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, pp 22-43.
[54] *Catholic Herald*, 4 Apr. 1914.
[55] Ibid., 18 Apr. 1914.
[56] Unsigned [Fr. Segesser?] to Canon Westlake, 14 March 1936 (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives, Catholic Boys' Brigade [Box 3]).

Of course, Boys' Brigades were not the only clubs formed to appeal to young people in Catholic parishes. Boxing clubs, night classes in various things, confraternities and girls' clubs all formed part of parish life at various times. Most of these efforts focused on young men. This was similar to the activities of other Christian denominations at this time.[57] The feeling that 'women are religious naturally, men are not' was the pervasive one, and Catholic clergy and the clergy of other denominations sought to convince boys through secular attractions to remain in contact with the church.[58] Gender identity is formed mainly from toddler to pre-school age, gender stereotypes are then developed, at first rigidly and then more flexibly around age seven or eight.[59] By adolescence these young men and women had essentially already learned the pattern of behaviour expected of them in regard to religion by virtue of their gender. That Irish children had absorbed this is not surprising, what is notable is that segregated youth environments provided another place where ethnic gender roles could have been supported.

People of different ethnicities often display differences in gender roles, even if these are differences in emphasis.[60] Irish Catholic groups for young people fit into the general gender norms of the period in the activities they promoted to try and attract young people. While boys were provided with Boys' Brigade activities, 'girls were just as well treated for they were taught singing, dress making, cookery, physical exercises and other interesting and useful subjects'.[61] As to what made a child Irish, the word itself likely had different meanings for boys and girls. What it was to be an Irish girl was different to what it was to be an Irish boy and this very clear separation while certainly clear in homes was made a fact by separation of boys from girls in

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[57] Alan Bennett Bartlett, 'The Churches of Bermondsey, 1880-1939' (University of Birmingham, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1987), p. 164.
[58] Interview with Mary Collins, 16 May 1989 (B.L. Sound Archive, Reg Hall Archive, C903/417).
[59] Carol Lynn Martin and Diane Ruble, 'Children's Search for Gender Cues: Cognitive Perspectives on Gender Development' in *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Apr., 2004), p. 68.
[60] Differences between Irish, Italian and white Anglo women see: Andrew M. Greeley and William C. McGready, 'The Transmission of Cultural Heritages: The Case of the Irish and the Italians' in Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (eds), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (London, 1976), pp 222-25
[61] *The Universe*, 7 April 1900.

these activities designed to attract adolescents. In essence they were teaching Irish boys and girls how to be men and women; in actuality with Irish priests and instructors and Irish children it seems, similar to Catholic schools, that these post-school activities operated in the same world along the same principles.

The national or ethnic identities of boys has been worried over and analysed to a much greater extent than that of girls.[62] The examination of boys' organisations could be argued to be a perpetuation of historical stereotype. The focus here represents the fact that just because stereotypes or perceptions were not based on objective fact does not mean that they did not have real consequences. The consequence of a perception that boys' ethnicity, health and well-being was more important, or more at risk and therefore more important, was a focus of organisational attention on them. It is this fact which necessitates treatment of them.

All of these religious Brigades, of which the Catholic Boys' Brigade was just one, had military trappings, the use of drill and the wearing of uniforms, even using real guns for drill was not unknown.[63] The Jewish Lads' Brigade could be argued to be most comparable to the Catholic one; it was run by upper-class Anglo-Jews keen 'to create out of Russian and Polish immigrant Jewish boys Anglo-Jewish sportsmen who were integrated into British society.'[64] There were certainly the same sentiments of changing boys into real men: 'turning them from hobbldehoys and street corner loafers to trim, erect, cleanly specimens of budding manhood.'[65] It would be easy to regard the Catholic Boys' Brigade as a scheme of upper class Catholics to turn poor Irish Catholics into something which did not embarrass their religion. The truth though seems more complex. The Catholic Boys' Brigade was supported by upper class Catholics but it did not begin there, its beginnings were in the poor parish of Bermondsey where priests were trying to find a way to entice the

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[62] E.g. See Paul Wilkinson, 'English Youth Movements, 1908-30' in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Apr., 1969), pp 3-23, which analyses only boys' organisations.
[63] At Walworth the Catholic Boys' Brigade in 1902 were excited that 'Rifles have obtained at last and since last Whitsuntide the lads are able to drill with them.' (*Catholic Herald*, 26 Dec. 1902).
[64] Voeltz, 'The Jewish Lads' Brigade, 1894-1922', p. 126.
[65] *Catholic Herald*, 16 May 1902.

boys that had left school to remain in contact with the church and in organising activities 'drill proved to be the feature that attracted the boys the most'.[66] Organising a brigade also ensured that they did not join one of the Protestant brigades. In order to do this 'military drill, organisation and discipline, which are found to attract the boys very readily' were put in place.[67] The drill that boys did was mirrored in girls' activities at this time; girls' activities are not though regarded as being harbingers of militarism.[68]

Drill as physical education for boys and girls had a long history in English schools.[69] Even those Irish nationalists who objected to brigades of any type for children did not criticise the use of drill stating, when criticising the brigades, that 'I am not decrying the use of drill and gymnastics'.[70] We cannot only look at the Catholic Boys' Brigade through the lens of the militarism that was to follow.

The objections from Irish politicians and some priests to the boys' brigades, although generally not those in the parishes where there were large working class Irish populations, was that the Brigade served as a recruiting agent for the British army. More balanced opponents of the Brigades stated less controversially, 'There is nothing sinful or iniquitous per se in joining the Army, but Irish parents who have no wish to see their children following such a life have a right to ask that they shall not be misled in this manner.'[71] At the heart of these fears was that the brigade was trying to make Irish boys English. The brigades sought to put boys in closer contact with the Catholic church and espoused a religious exclusivity which promoted identification purely with their own community of Catholics which were exclusively Irish. The effectiveness of any of these militarised-looking youth organisations, an unknown quantity, can be contrasted with the attention paid to them. All Brigades founded in the 1890s for boys are regarded as being the embodiment

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[66] *The Universe*, 23 June 1900.
[67] 'The Catholic Boys Brigade A Paper by The Rev. F. Segesser delivered at Catholic Conference Liverpool (July 1903)' (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives, Catholic Boys Brigade [Box 3]).
[68] E.g. The Girls' Club at Guardian Angels Mile End. (*Catholic Herald*, 22 Feb. 1901).
[69] J.S. Hurt, 'Drill, Discipline and the Elementary School Ethos', pp 165-91.
[70] *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 6 Oct. 1906.
[71] *Catholic Herald*, 16 May 1902.

of the 'link between muscular Christianity and the spirit of patriotism'.[72] Taken purely on this basis, they could be regarded as promoting an English identity. However, viewing the Catholic Boys' Brigades as entirely different from any other youth group formed in connection with a Catholic church purely because of its uniform ignores the other aspects of the Brigade like the 'Social Club', with facilities for 'bagatelle, ping-pong, draughts, chess, cards etc.', which were often essential to these brigades.[73] Leaving aside the general effectiveness of all brigades, the Catholic Boys' Brigade was never going to be anything but limited in its ability to change or affect at all the ethnicities of teenage boys simply because that was neither its objective nor the result of its activities. The activities of the Boys' Brigade seem more likely to have influenced boys' perceptions of gender roles than their ethnic identity. This is not to argue that 'Irish' was the most important part of their identity. Rather the effectiveness of the brigade at influencing ethnic identity should be regarded critically.

The only organised youth activity which operated solely on the premise of promoting and supporting children's Irish identity were those run from the Gaelic League and the United Irish League (U.I.L.).[74] These classes taught children Irish culture, focusing on language, music, dance and history. The emphasis was primarily on Ireland in these classes; one organiser wrote that 'We see that a knowledge of Ireland touches the imagination of the child and kindles the love of Irish which was latent in its little heart.'[75] These classes did not exist evenly all over London, and were found with the same irregularity that Gaelic League branches were found.[76] The irregularity of their placement in London dictates that they be considered slightly differently to other organisations which focused attention mainly on poor children. Poor children were frequently the subjects of outsiders' desire to 'save' or 'improve' them; middle-class children, roughly defined as the children of those who were not

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[72] Hugh McLeod, *Religion and Society in England 1850-1914* (Basingstoke, 1996), p. 153.
[73] 'The Catholic Boys Brigade A Paper by The Rev. F. Segesser delivered at Catholic Conference Liverpool (July 1903)' (Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives, Catholic Boys Brigade [Box 3]).
[74] Southwark Junior Irish Literary Club could be seen as a precursor to both these organisations. See Fahy and Hutton (ed.), 'Francis Fahy's "Ireland in London – Reminiscences" (1921)', pp 247-8.
[75] *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 20 Oct. 1906.
[76] For adult Gaelic League classes and organisation see Chapter 4.

poor, were not. They were not teaching the same children who entered boys' brigades; nor were they teaching children which Catholic social workers sought to save from the 'vice and wretchedness of the streets'.[77] This is demonstrated in the placement of classes in London. Gaelic League children's classes had, apart from the classes in central London, one main centre throughout this period in Kensington.

Teaching Irish culture, history and language were overtly designed to maintain children's Irish identity. There were frequent plays, variety show type performances, prize givings and day trips to the country: making it in outward activities similar to very many other children's clubs of this time. However, it was different because of its explicit focus on influencing the ethnic identity of children. The aim was not so much to make children Irish but to make them Irish Irelanders. Ireland was important to the Gaelic League in a way it was not to other organisations which sought to teach or entertain Irish children. This in effect made a place the reason for group identity. Placing so much value in Ireland rather than in an Irish identity centred around the place they actually lived may have made this identity more abstract and easier to shed as they left their weekly class. Making the object of lessons centre on a country rather than a collection of people could have also made it a more alienating identity to possess in London. Without a community outside classes to enforce this identity, tacitly or otherwise, there would always be the prospect of children learning to adapt their identity to fit into particular contexts. Of course this is a process of growing up, however, the particular adaption process: learning that this Irish Ireland identity was only shared with those at classes or friends of their parents must have enforced that it was not for the other parts of their lives.

Teachers at these classes were hopeful that 'as the years go on and the struggle grows thicker around us many of them wil [sic] give a good account of themselves in the services of Eire'.[78] Some of children in these classes did go on to be involved in Irish republican activity; notable examples

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[77] *Catholic Herald*, 30 Mar. 1900.
[78] *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 20 Oct. 1906.

were the Nunan brothers who attended children's classes taught by Art Ó Briain in Kensington.[79] Both Ernie and John/Seán travelled to Ireland to take part in the Easter Rising.[80] Ó Briain's own political life means that his involvement with these children could be argued to have been influential in their later political choices. He became one of the central figures in Irish republican activity in London in the 1920s.[81] Gaelic League classes can be regarded as the organisation which most promoted an Ireland-based identity outside the home. Whether this promotion had any effect is hard to decipher. The Nunan brothers had a home atmosphere which was likely to have already taught them similar things, their father was a well-known Irish musician, and was involved in the Gaelic League.[82] Seán Nunan in his Bureau of Military History Witness Statement considered his involvement in Irish organisations from childhood on as a progression that was natural due to his parents' politics, rather than a result of indoctrination from childhood Gaelic League classes:

> Both were intensely national – of Fenian stock – and took an active part in Irish movements in London, from the Land League to the Rising in 1916. It was no wonder, therefore, that I also took a deep interest in all things Irish.[83]

There is a temptation with all organisations to see their members as strict adherents to the ideology developed by their leaders. The ideas of prominent figures are readily accessible whereas those of the membership are frequently mysterious. This has led to the Gaelic League being characterised by its leaders' ideas rather than the reality of its members' lives.[84] To understand its relationship to children in London we must see it as inherently different from Catholic youth organisations which did not require parental involvement, were organised on the basis of a pre-existing community, and had little or no fee attached to children's participation. The Gaelic League should likely be

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[79] See children's prize winners list: *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 11 June 1904.
[80] Michael Kennedy, 'Seán Nunan', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.
[81] 'Art O'Brien, AP O'Brien, Art Ó Briain (1872-1949)' in Diarmuid Breathnach and Máire Ní Mhurchú, *Beathaisnéis: 1882-1982* [Vol. 2] (Dublin, 1990), p. 71.
[82] Reginald Richard Hall, 'Irish music and dance in London, 1890-1970: A Socio-Cultural History' (University of Sussex, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1994), p. 117.
[83] Seán Nunan, Statement by Witness, 24 Nov. 1958, p.1 (Military Archives, Bureau of Military History, W.S. 1,744).
[84] Timothy G. McMahon, *Grand opportunity: the Gaelic revival and Irish society, 1893-1910* (Syracuse, 2008) challenges much of the previous work and promotes the role of the membership.

considered as more comparable to piano lessons rather than community-based children's groups. Parental involvement, in wanting this kind of extra-curricular education for their children, was key in children attending at all. These parents were, through the activities they sent their children to, encouraging an identity which was likely the same as their own. Conversely not living somewhere where an ethnic identity was supported by a community outside the home may have made this Irish identity clearly being taught to children more changeable.

How society perceives a child, or what others perceive their identity to be, is important in the development of their ethnic identity. This has mainly been written about regarding physical appearance.[85] Irish children, as others have argued were not different in appearance to English children,[86] and this fact may have led them not to differentiate themselves from the English community around them. Without a residential community that would place children within it, children without the more fixed identities of adults would have been more likely to respond to the societal view of them as English, and 'pass' as such at times. At other times, in situations when they were with their parents, or in their parents' world, they were Irish.

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Ethnic identity is an inherited identity. Although children may not identify themselves as Irish, whether from conscious or unconscious choice, the choice in itself is only available to those who have an Irish forbearer. The role of parents has always been a relatively mysterious one. It is not at all clear that being the children of Irish parents identified themselves as Irish. Irish people in London were not isolated from non-Irish people around them. This was true of where they lived and who they worked with; it was also true of the relationships they formed. Large Irish communities can often give the impression of being impenetrable. The reality was different. In the Commercial Road parish in 1911, 22% of the marriages performed in the Catholic church in

[85] Choudhry, *Multifaceted Identity*, pp 174-7.
[86] Gilley argues that for this reason Irish should not be considered as a race. (Gilley, 'English Attitudes to the Irish in England, 1789-1900', pp 90-2.

that year were mixed marriages.[87] This excluded all of those who, because of difficulties the church presented to marrying non-Catholics, chose to marry in a registry office or a Protestant church. Mixed marriages were criticised heavily by Catholic priests at this time, but it seems their criticisms had no, or very little, effect. One reason they were so heavily criticised was the fear that the children would not be brought up as Catholics and indeed in many parishes this does seem to have been the case. The priest at Canning Town could even count all the children lost: 'The Census shows that 422 children that ought to be Catholics have been baptised in the Protestant Church. These are the children of mixed marriages.'[88] Many children brought up this way did have a sense of Irish identity, others had none.

Although we can state that the home was an important place in the development of an ethnic identity, we cannot quantify its influence. We must also consider its influence in broader terms than just teaching Irish identity. Home could also be the place where the children of Irish parents were taught that they were not Irish. Parents were primary educators, and even if we acknowledge that their role cannot be generalised to be fundamental in all cases, by providing a background of Irish identity and encouraging or discouraging the child's identity as Irish, they shaped the child's entry to a wider world. By speaking the language of Irish ethnicity, having the name, knowing the music or being Catholic, it allowed children the possibility of Irish identity.

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Ethnic identity is at the core of all examinations of Irish people who were not migrants. How a child became Irish, if we cast aside theories of blood, is a question that related to every community of Irish people outside Ireland. In casting aside the theory that ethnic identity is a genetic inheritance it is clear that it is learned in some way. There were many things that could have affected children's ethnic identity. We know most about the organisations that

[87] '1911 Visitation Return, Commercial Road' (Catholic Diocese of Westminster Archives, MQ (Commercial Road)).
[88] Thomas Maloney to Bishop, 12 May 1911 (Catholic Diocese of Brentwood Archives, Canning Town 'pre-1917').

tried to mould children as Irish, English, just Catholic or purely Irish Ireland. As with music and language, the world of the home was instrumental, and it remains the place about which the least information is available. Parents were sometimes united in their thoughts on ethnicity; regarding their children as full inheritors of everything they could pass on, from their music, for example, to the ethnic basis of that music. Other households, even perhaps most households with an Irish member, had a much more subtle view of the ethnic identity of their children.

The many organisations which have been ascribed a key role in identity formation seem to have depended primarily on the separation of Irish Catholic children and thus underlined both that they were different from non-Irish, and the community that existed around these organisations. Irish schools were not self-consciously created, but the combination of Irish community, Irish children, Irish teachers and Irish priests does seem to have led to a distinct educational environment which has been unrecognised largely because it was not formalised in a curriculum. The same is true to much lesser extents for other organisations either Catholic or Irish nationalist orientated. There is no evidence that these were as influential as their supporters or detractors deemed them to be in terms of children's ethnic identity. While Gaelic League groups made efforts to promote an Irish Ireland ideology, it is difficult to separate its impact from that of parents who sent their children to those classes. As an organisation it relied on removing children from their residential community, its impact would always be limited in terms of shaping children's ethnic identities without parental support. What happened in the home was hard to reverse, and although outside organisations were more outspoken in their desire to change or mould children this does not mean that they were more successful.

There are no absolutes in ethnic identity formation; childhood is a pivotal time but identity is not an equation where one group of factors gives one identity and a different set a different identity. However, even if we can never know what exactly determined someone's ethnic identity, we can see the factors which influenced it. We know that those who called themselves 'Irish'

were not simply those that were born in Ireland. We also know that many who had a parental link to Ireland never called themselves Irish; Archbishop Bourne, whose mother was Irish, is perhaps the most high profile one of this time. We must conclude that some were taught, consciously or unconsciously, to be Irish in a way that other children were not. To the question of what made a child Irish, the intentions of the parents will always be the most mysterious component. Organisations had reasons for engaging with children, they had things they hoped to achieve. Parents have left no such lists of objectives. Children learned the prejudices and preferences of the communities and homes into which they were born. Parents, a residential community of Irish people, and Catholic schools seems to have been the most reliable pathway for children to claim Irish identity. Out of this pattern Irish identity was sustained, outside of it there was greater diversity in identities.

This pathway to Irish identity was the background of some of those considered in the next chapter. Their formation, being London-born, was crucial to how some Irish people perceived them. As adults they were forced to interact with the wider world of Irishness in London. Although ethnic identity could be formed in childhood, adult interactions had the capacity to explain just what they thought they had learned growing up. In assessing others, what is most evident is the clues it provides as to how they viewed themselves and how they wished others to view them.

Chapter 7 - Irish People's Perceptions of One Another

Previous chapters have emphasised the differences and distance between different groups of Irish people in London. There was diversity too in the ethnic identity of children of Irish parents. This was in many senses an atomised world. What brought the different cultural and residential communities of Irish people together was their Irishness. These contacts were not so much in their engagement in the same institutions or organisations but in considering one another as representations of Irishness.

A result of the focus on studying 'the Irish' as a singular group in particular areas has been that differences between Irish people have been obscured. Although there has been some recognition that 'It is not even appropriate to speak of the London Irish as a single entity', these remarks presage studies that do not seek to elaborate on this insight.[1] While relationships and perceptions between Ireland and England and Irish people and English people have been explored to some extent, how Irish people outside Ireland perceived each other has not been studied to the same degree.[2] Even those studies which sought to clarify that there was more than one type of Irish person – Roy Foster's examination of Irish middle class people in London for example – sought to untangle their relationship to England rather than their relationship to other Irish people in London.[3] Irish people throughout this thesis have been treated as a varied group who did not, necessarily, share with one another anything other than the label Irish. Their use of that label in their interactions with one another will now be considered.

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[1] John Hutchinson and Alan O'Day, 'The Gaelic revival in London 1900-22 limits of ethnic identity' in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds), *The Irish in Victorian Britain: the local dimension* (Dublin, 1999), p. 258.

[2] E.g. L. Perry Curtis Jr., *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (London, 1997); J.M. Feheney, 'Delinquency among Irish Catholic Children in Victorian London' in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 92 (Nov., 1983), pp 319-29.

[3] R.F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch: Connections in Irish and English History* (London, 1993), pp 281-305.

Having nothing in common except an ethnicity cast people together even if they did not have any contact with one another socially; the fact of having the same word attached to them meant that they had to consider one another. Just as the judgements of the Catholic Hierarchy were a mix of 'Religious, class and national motivations', so too were those of Irish people upon one another.[4] The prejudices dominant within society were dominant in how Irish people made judgements. Being grouped together to outsiders made people anxious to police their ethnic identity. If there were some with whom they were embarrassed to be considered, they could be argued to be disregarded as not Irish. If they could not be argued to be not truly Irish some attempt could be made to improve them. There were many formulations that arise to police others' Irishness: 'west-Briton', differentiating between 'Irish-born Irishmen' and others are some of the most common in this period in London. These distinctions had their root in the speaker's attempts to define their own ethnicity. Those with lives distant from one another were necessarily more likely to judge one another on matters of appearance. Those who assert a certain identity have an investment in maintaining the status of that identity. These were not easy things, nor are they questions for which there are readily available answers, but they did preoccupy Irish people in London.

The rules of the society in which they lived were pre-eminent in their perceptions of other Irish people in London. No quality was promoted as Irish or disregarded as unIrish which did not fall within the behaviour that was promoted and respected by society at large. It is argued here that while frequently the public Irish discourse emphasised the Irishness of particular traits or habits, each could equally be regarded as falling within the behaviour prized by society at large. To argue this, this discussion will focus firstly on the how different classes considered their ethnicity and sought to police it. This is done on the basis that class was a factor in how Irish people saw one another. In particular those of middle class backgrounds were highly aware of the behaviour of Irish working class people in London. While middle class Irish people were often preoccupied with their working class equivalents, the reverse

[4] Mary J. Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity: The State, the Catholic Church and the Education of the Irish in Britain* (Aldershot, 1995), p. 161.

was not true. This is not to state that the same values were not at play, rather it is that these values were reflected in the persons who were promoted as role models of Irishness. The role of the priest in working class Irish communities combined in one figure the respectability of a certain social position with belonging in that community.

The second element of the analysis below will focus on religion and place of birth, two factors that were prominent in the perception of Irish people of one another across classes. Religion is explored not as related to particular priests or in terms of practice, but rather in a wider sense of identification with the word 'Catholic'. The strong identification between Irish and Catholic is argued to be partially explained by the fact that religious people in general place emphasis on their religion when explaining their ethnicity.[5] It was also a product of a society which respected the power of religion over, in particular, poor people. Where someone was born, in general identified superficially through their accent, was a prejudice which could be said to have originated with Irish Ireland ideology, which emphasised the purity of Ireland. However, it was more complex than that and represented the internalisation of a discourse of the evils of a city. The behaviour society valued and scorned was ever-present in the interactions of Irish people. In such a large city where Irish people lived in diverse environments being cast together through their ethnicity was their fundamental connection to one another.

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The wider societal perceptions of Irish people in London dictated the vision of what it was to be Irish, negative or positive, that transferred to Irish people living in the same city. The notebooks of Charles Booth's investigations into poverty in London provide an excellent source for this as they include the remarks of clergy and policemen as well as those of social investigators.[6] In essence the prevalent view of English social investigators and the policemen and clergy they interviewed was that Irish working class people

[5]Richard D. Alba, *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America* (London, 1990), p. 101.

[6] Police notebooks are digitised and available from the London School of Economics [http://booth.lse.ac.uk].

in London represented the lowest element of working class life. There are frequent notes in the notebooks of remarks such as, 'The roughest and poorest are the Irish'.[7] Frequently too this explanation of the social profile of Irish people is not given, instead the word 'Irish' seems to imply all of these things.[8] The qualities associated with Irishmen were drunkenness and fighting. Irishwomen had, from the evidence of the notebooks, a reputation for drunkenness and being poorly dressed: 'barely covered by a shawl, frayed skirt, bareheaded'.[9]

These complaints were likely felt to some degree in regard to all working class women, however, from the notebooks there does appear to have been a particular awareness of Irishwomen. Phrases such as 'evil looking' or 'rough Irish look' are frequently associated with women who they presumed to be Irish.[10] These perceptions of the inherent 'roughness' of the Irish population are not just the verbatim recordings in the notebooks, they are distilled in the text of Booth's works as well, where 'the evil of a growing Irish population' is noted.[11] These are not presented here as necessarily representative, they were, however, prevalent in the early twentieth century to at least some degree amongst the English middle class in London. There have been disagreements whether anti-Irish prejudice originated in a sectarian,[12] racial[13] or a combination of these factors and class or economic ones.[14] In different areas of Britain and in different periods no doubt one or other factor predominated. The

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[7] 'George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 28 [Kensington Town], District 29 [Fulham], District 30 [Hammersmith]', p. 239 (L.S.E., Charles Booth Online Archive, B361).
[8] E.g. 'George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police and Publican District 7 [Mile End Old Town and Spitalfields], District 8 [Aldgate, St George's in the East, Shadwell], District 9 [Bethnal Green, North and South], District 10 [Bethnal Green East], District 11 [Poplar and Limehouse]', pp 214-15 (L.S.E., Charles Booth Online Archive, B350).
[9] George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 28 [Kensington Town], District 29 [Fulham], District 30 [Hammersmith]', p. 131 (L.S.E., Charles Booth Online Archive, B361).
[10] '[Arthur L. Baxter's ?]Notebook: Police District 24 [St John Westminster], District 25 [St Margaret and Belgrave], District 26 [Chelsea], District 27 [Brompton]', p. 133 (L.S.E., Charles Booth Online Archive, B362); 'George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 33 [St James Bermondsey and Rotherhithe], District 45 [Deptford], p. 97 (L.S.E., Charles Booth Online Archive, B367).
[11] Charles Booth, *Labour and Life of the People* (London, 1889), Vol. 1, p. 194.
[12] Donald M. MacRaild, *Culture, Conflict and Migration: the Irish in Victorian Cumbria* (Liverpool, 1998), p. 11.
[13] Curtis, *Apes and Angels*.
[14] Frances Finnegan, *Poverty and Prejudice: A Study of Irish Immigrants in York, 1840-1875* (Cork, 1982), p. 166; Frank Neal, *Sectarian Violence, The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914: An aspect of Anglo-Irish history* (Manchester, 1991), p. 32.

analysis below sees anti-Irishness in London in this period as originating in class and racial/ethnic prejudice.

A prevalent image of the Catholic church and priests in relation to Irish people was their role as a restraining force on the lives of the Irish poor in London: 'from day to day, these poor people are greatly helped by their connection with the Church; restrained, controlled and blessed in their rough lives by its care'.[15] Priests were noted generally only when there was some anecdote on their ability to control their parishioners, such as Fr. Lawless, who was noted by an observer in the notebooks to be 'a wonderful man, he can stop a row where the police are of no use at all.'[16] There was widespread admiration for this supposed ability of Catholic priests to exert physical control over the otherwise assumed to be uncontrollable Irish:

> a Congregationalist minister told us that it was in one of these poor Irish quarters that he first realized the power of the Catholic church. 'The priest', he reported, 'would not hesitate to go into a public house, lug a man out by the scruff of the neck, and cane him in the street.' 'The Romans,' he added, 'are a real influence for good amongst the lowest class.''[17]

The perceived Irish need for physical control underlines the general themes of their image: rough, uncontrollable, lacking all respectability in dress and habits. There was here a typical, of the period, middle class disdain for the habits of the working class; added to this was a prejudice about the particular evil of the poor Irish. This opinion seems the natural result of adding an ethnic stereotype to an already low opinion of the working class.

The attitudes of Irish middle class people in London were clearly influenced by many of the same values as those of the English middle class. Values of sobriety and respectability, in terms of dress, habits and religion, were prevalent in London; these were reflected in the interactions of Irish people. In general how Irish people differed from English in this respect was in

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[15] Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London: Third Series Religious Influences* (London, 1902), Vol. 2, p. 40.

[16] 'George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 11 [Poplar and Limehouse], District 12 [Bow and Bromley] and District 13 [South Hackney and Hackney]', pp 96-7 (L.S.E., Charles Booth Online Archive, B346).

[17] Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London: Third Series Religious Influences* (London, 1902), Vol. 7, p. 244.

their attitude towards the Irishness of working class people. Whereas being Irish was regarded as a fundamental way of understanding the behaviour of the Irish working class for English observers, the facts of the lives of the Irish working class in London seemed to make them un-Irish for Irish middle class observers. A priest lecturing a congregation in Canning Town could tell them:

> 'there are two Irelands of which one is Irish and the other not... [un-Irish Ireland] is Ireland at the back of the public house, the Ireland of the London music-hall, Ireland of the political bosses, wirepullers and jeremydiddlers, the Ireland of Paddy drunk and never sober.'[18]

The natural outcome of this attempt to equate 'good' qualities with the essential characteristics of Irish people was to convince those whose lives conspicuously did not meet these qualifications to give up their vices. This was particularly true in regard to alcohol. Although the London Catholic temperance movement originated from the Hierarchy of the Church, it was a cause strongly supported in London by middle class people on the fringes of working class districts. The rhetoric of these meetings laid particular emphasis on removing 'the one great stain of the glorious traditions of their beloved land'.[19] The strongest sentiment at these meetings was not a desire to remove drunkenness to improve the morality of Irish people in general. Instead the focus was nearly always on not providing 'cause for one more Saxon gibe'.[20] The vision of Irishness propagated was one predicated on the outside perspective of English people. Poor Irish people, as they formed the basis of English people's views of what was typically Irish, needed to be improved. This was put in terms of being a better Irish person: the best Irish person in all of this was one with the virtues of the middle class. They were told that the reason nationalist politics had not been successful was drunkenness amongst Irishmen: 'If every Irishman in England had been a sober man Home Rule would long ago have been granted to Ireland'.[21]

That 'true' Irishmen were not drunkards was the theme of these writings and those that had succumbed to the temptations of the city, had to be

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[18] *Catholic Herald*, 16 Mar. 1906.
[19] Ibid., 24 Jan. 1902.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid., 6 May 1904.

improved so as not to spoil the reputation of the rest. The importance of where they were was fundamental to the fact that they felt the need to address the basis of 'Saxon gibes' – without the gaze of English people the habits of poor Irish people would not have been so offensive. Some attempted to exclude those that they did not wish to be associated with from being Irish. The more common response, especially from those involved with Catholic organisations, was to try and improve poor Irish people in London, morally rather than economically or otherwise. In doing this they hoped to improve the reputation of Irish people generally. Disowning Irish working class people in London, or claiming that they were not really Irish was only successfully performed by those who attached greater conditions to Irishness. For those involved in the mainstream organisations of Irish Catholic life whether political or religious, the wide variety of people drawn to these organisations ensured that the group mentality that these engendered encouraged improvement of others. Broad Catholic organisations and Irish organisations, the United Irish League, for example, which professed that everyone regardless of class should join, necessarily had a tenet of belief that all Irish people should be united. If all were intrinsically linked then they could not be disregarded, they had to be improved.

There were some who promoted or adopted an exclusionary identity based implicitly on class lines. This could be regarded as a mainly Gaelic League type mentality, however, it was more complex and not as narrowly focused than that.[22] The Gaelic League did promote a divisive view of Irish people on the basis of language, dividing the Irish people in two: 'good Gaelgóirí and the big crowd of West-Britons that are only Irish one day a year.'[23] The distinction drawn here was clearly between those who spoke Irish, or were part of the Gaelic League at least, and those who had no interest in it. This, in a sense, was no different to deeming other behaviour 'un-Irish'; if some could deem music halls un-Irish, there was no reason for others not to come up with their own formula for defining their identity. The difference

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[22] John Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse: The History of the Liverpool-Irish, 1800-1939* (Liverpool, 2007), p. 209.

[23] Seaghán Ó Catháin to Fionán Mac Coluim, 27 Jan. 1903 (N.L.I., Fionán Mac Coluim papers, MS 24 393) [my translation].

between those that had generic middle class ideas of respectability and crafted their ideas of their ethnicity around such ideas, and those who came up with ideas outside of those that were the societal norm was that the latter group felt less bound by society's expectations in other ways. If society was already mistaken in how it defined Irish people, being born in Ireland or being of Irish descent for instance, then disregarding those definitions was necessarily an exclusionary process. The fact of having to disregard the societal definition of Irish meant that this redefinition would only ever be the pursuit of a small minority. In Ireland, this could be viewed as a way of excluding those who did feel British in some way, in London though, this was almost always used as a critique of the Irish working class in London. As examined in relation to language, these critiques had little effect on working class Irish people either in terms of enticing them to join the movement or making them rethink their ethnicity.

Like most efforts to define identity, these were more illustrative of the lives and outlook of those that engaged with it rather than those theorised about. It showed in Irish Irelanders a desire to make themselves secure in their identity by removing from consideration all those who lacked the qualities they deemed crucial. If the central aspect of Irish identity was the Irish language and the majority of Irish people in London had no interest in it, then excluding those people as not really Irish made that identity stronger as there was no dissent within it.

This might appear not to be a cross-class issue but the reality of those involved in taking language classes at the Gaelic League rather than simply attending social events, was that it was almost entirely middle class.[24] P.S. Ó hÉigeartaigh's view of domestic servants forming a crucial component of the Gaelic League's membership appears from my research to have involved their involvement in social activities rather than long-term language classes.[25] Those within the Gaelic League even noticed this, and placed the blame on

[24] Impression on the basis of database of traceable members from 1899-1902; Hutchinson and O'Day, 'The Gaelic revival in London 1900-22', p. 263.
[25] P.S. Ó hÉigeartaigh, 'Cuimhní ar Éirinn na nGael i mBlianta Tosaigh an Chéid' in *Feasta,* (Márta, 1954), p. 7.

several issues depending on their attitude, working men worked too hard to have an interest in the language, they were hopelessly denationalised, or that they held themselves aloof from interacting with clerks.[26] In defining an identity, in regarding those that had no interest in Irish as non-Irish, the only class that were wholly disregarded in London were the working class. That this identity gave nominal status to poor people in the west of Ireland is not of particular relevance to the situation in London.

This idealisation of the west of Ireland peasant by those in London was not confined to those in Irish Ireland movements. A mirror of it can be seen in others of the time: the 'Irish village' at the 1908 Anglo-French exhibition probably represents how widespread curiosity about 'exotic' rural peasants was.[27] Remarks in the London Irish Gaelic League newspapers on the 'Irish village' reported favourably on the exhibit, noting the appearance of one of the fishermen brought over for the exhibit whose 'eyes are a dreamy, childish blue, and their melancholy dignity is brightened now and then by a sudden smile'.[28] That Irish Irelanders mirrored the mainstream English attitude to 'native' villages is illustrative of the fact that, although they viewed the preconditions of Irish identity differently, their general attitudes were shaped by the society in which they lived.[29]

This exclusionary attitude was not confined to Irish Irelanders but they were the best exemplars of the way people's perceptions of themselves and their ideal version of themselves could be exclusionary when used as a defining characteristic of ethnicity. These exclusions were against those whose 'accent is mainly the worst Cockney' and yet were the 'children and grandchildren of more or less respectable Irish parents'.[30] The definition and exclusion by Irish Irelanders was different in rationale but no different in other ways to the manner in which those that wished for their ethnicity to speak to

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[26] See for example: *The Peasant and Irish Ireland*, 30 Mar. 1907; *Inis Fáil*, July 1907; *Inis Fáil*, Mar. 1910.
[27] Stephanie Rains, 'Colleens, Cottages and Kraals: The Politics of 'Native' Village Exhibits' in *History Ireland*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Mar./Apr., 2011), pp 30-3.
[28] *Inis Fáil*, 30 May 1908.
[29] For British attitudes to 'native' village exhibits see: Sadiah Qureshi, *Peoples in Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London, 2011).
[30] *Catholic Herald*, 15 June 1900.

their morality or respectability redefined it. This was justified in a desire to remove those that did not have the qualities they wished people to associate with them. That this was mainly a fruitless endeavour except to those of the same mind was irrelevant. The gaze of English people was important in determining that Irish working class people were frequently in London the epitome of Irish people. The society in which Irish people existed in London provided the norms; when defining their own identity they did so, not to change them, but to make their identity not abhorrent to those norms. Ultimately exclusion and improvement were both indications that Irish middle class people in London were deeply affected by the societal norms of London. This rhetoric was put in a variety of ways, however, the fact remained that if to be Irish was to be associated with good, and if the poor could not be good, a challenge was posed to the identity of middle class Irish people.

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In contrast to middle class Irish attitudes those of Irish working class people were much more settled in their definitions of identity. However there was the same desire to create hierarchies of Irishness; the compliment of being a 'true Irishman' was that which was most relied upon in newspapers with large Irish working class readerships to assert the superior attributes of those being written about.[31] The truest Irishness in working class Irish areas was to be good. Although there was an awareness of the weaknesses of Irish people: that 'Drink was a special temptation to the Irishman' was an accepted sentiment at temperance and even political meetings of working class Irish people, this was not the definition of Irishness for them.[32] Being in relatively tight communities and having a strong occupational identity in many places meant that the negativity associated with Irish people by English middle class commentators was not influential in how they defined themselves. This 'constant association of Irish Catholics with all the vices of the lower classes: idleness, gambling, drinking, sexual immorality, coarse language' could never be as influential to those who were much further away, in every sense, from

[31] *The Tablet*, 4 Nov. 1905.
[32] *Catholic Herald*, 22 Feb 1908.

those who were writing these pieces.[33] While these features of life amongst working class people were railed against by priests and prominent politicians from Irish working class communities they were not regarded as the true representation of Irishness. Instead, this position was offered most often to the priests of those communities.

The interplay of religion and respectability with Irish identity is considered below, however, the role of priests is related here as much to their being the most prominent member of these communities than especially to their being spiritually respected. This role was predicated on having the status granted by their position, yet so much of what followed from that position was not related to religion. G.P. Connolly has argued that to consider priests as wholly secular operators is to ignore that most of their power originated from respect for their spiritual position.[34] Equally, to ignore the effect of their ethnicity is to ignore another large element of the relationship between priest and people. Non-Irish priests were never easily accepted in working class Irish communities in London, and indeed those that were held in high esteem were appreciated because they respected and were subservient to the Irishness of the parish. Fr. Beckley, in his obituary, was praised for his

> deep sympathy with the national aspirations of the Irish people and his appreciation of the fidelity of the race to Faith and Fatherland were shown on numerous occasions, and were the secret of the reverence and love which he inspired in the people of St. Patrick's Wapping.[35]

It cannot be questioned that in exalting these men they were, in effect, regarding them as the most acceptable face of their community. This respect, no matter the reality of curates' vices in the parish priest's eyes, was, as Alan Bartlett has suggested, 'earned, not simply expected'.[36] Bartlett regarded the poverty of their lifestyle as inherent to why Catholic priests were

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[33] Ben Gidley, *The Proletarian Other: Charles Booth and the politics of representation* (London, 2000), p. 16.

[34] G.P. Connolly, 'Little brother be at peace: the priest as Holy Man in the nineteenth century ghetto' in W.P. Shiels, *The Church and Healing* (Oxford, 1982), p. 191.

[35] *Catholic Herald*, 28 Mar. 1908.

[36] For complaints an example of the misbehaviour of curates see 'Confidential Notes on my Assistant Priests', c. 1897-1904 (Catholic Diocese of Brentwood Archives, Walthamstow St. George's 'to 1950'); Alan Bennett Bartlett, 'The Churches of Bermondsey, 1880-1939' (University of Birmingham, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1987), p. 350.

so respected.[37] Combining poverty with holiness and, in general, a prominent role in the local Irish political organisation meant that priests, while living on means not dissimilar to the poor, had the hallmarks of respectability which were impossible for other working class people to achieve. The marks of respectable poverty, old clothes, were key to their respect in the community. This showed how charitable they were, that they did not spend money on themselves but instead donated it to others in their community. The respect garnered by their religious role fed into their public profile as involved in Irish and political organisations affiliated with Irish people in those communities. As such they were members of Liberal and Radical as well as Irish political clubs. These characteristics combined middle class hallmarks of respectability with those relevant to working class Irish communities.

The most respected people in a community, they performed in many cases a role of enforcer, attempting to stop people drinking or fighting. Fr. Staunton in Bermondsey was recorded in obituaries as patrolling the streets 'armed with a blackthorn and became the terror of all drunkards in the neighbourhood'.[38] Simply seeing Fr. Murnane coming had 'a remarkable effect on the most turbulent of spirits; for fights would cease, sullen murmurs die away'.[39] Not all priests had this role, and it was not one that necessarily attached itself to being a priest in a certain area. This was respect granted as well as a role assumed. The most striking thing about all of these prominent priests and the way they were written about in working class Irish communities was the linking of two terms: of being the 'true Irishman' with the role of 'true father'.[40] That the priest was respected or considered to be the best representative of a community because of his religious status is something easy to see, however, his gender was an equally fundamental element. The role of a respectable public figure being confined to men in this period meant that all the embodiments of how Irish people in public life should behave were male.

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[37] Bartlett, 'The Churches of Bermondsey, 1880-1939', pp 350-1.
[38] *Catholic Herald*, 8 Mar. 1913.
[39] *Catholic Bulletin*, Jan. 1937 (Vol. XXVIII No. 1).
[40] *Catholic Herald*, 11 May 1906.

Imagining Irishness as a value statement in addition to one of ethnicity: representing the core ideals of goodness as well as 'a warm supporter of the Irish cause' made this working class ethnicity similar to that of the middle class.[41] It is not uncommon to regard the particular ethnic group that an individual forms a part of as superior to others. Using priests as representatives of ethnicity was something not found in middle class London Irish circles to the degree that it was in working class ones. That there were already acceptable figures, established middle class professionals, to take these roles amongst middle class groups must be regarded as one of the reasons for this. It certainly seems that to have some degree of respectability was necessary to be good, even in working class communities. This could only be gained by being slightly different, not necessarily in economic terms but in terms of status and middle class morality. To have this role in any of these communities it was also necessary to be part of that community. There were no outsiders regarded as the best example of Irishness and although generalised societal praise for the ideals of the better off filtered down to those in very different economic positions, regard for those better off was not present here. Instead, it was the code of conduct of society, the recognition that drinking, fighting or having children outside of marriage, all things very common in Irish communities in London, were things that should not be associated with Irishness. These were marks of poverty, and poverty was not inherent to being Irish.

The presence of community created different contexts for middle class and working class Irish people to consider their ethnicity. While middle class people could worry about poor migrants casting them in bad light, something which also happened in the Jewish community in London at this time, working class communities did not have that anxiety.[42] John Belchem has argued that an Irish middle class was an 'important influence over less fortunate fellow-migrants, they were to superimpose a wider "invented" affiliation upon traditional and instinctive sub-national loyalties.'[43] It must be

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[41] *The Tablet,* 4 Nov. 1905.
[42] Susan L. Tananbaum, 'Philanthropy and Identity: Gender and Ethnicity in London' in *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Summer, 1997), pp 937-61.
[43] Belchem, 'Class, creed and country: the Irish middle class in Victorian Liverpool' in Swift and Gilley (eds), *The Irish in Victorian Britain*, p. 191.

argued though that rather than necessarily regarding the Irish middle class as the key people in building an Irish ethnic identity, it can equally be argued that Irish working class people did not need others to interpret their ethnicity for them. Nor did Irish middle class people have a role in transmuting English class-specific values. Those values were ever present in the society at large and it cannot be assumed that the Irish working class needed anyone to interpret them for them.

There was no specifically Irish morality or code of conduct, what there was and what was presented as such, was largely the same as that of English society generally. The main difference in how the majority of Irish middle and working class people considered their ethnic identity, was that the middle class felt it necessary to consider the Irish working class as that was the image that had become prevalent for 'Irish'. However, if they felt the need to change them or their habits, they did not actually have many interactions with them. Hidden by words, which are spelled and sound the same, were distinct peoples. They did not rely on one another to mediate the society in which they lived; they all lived in that society and took a great deal from it. The word 'Irish' may have expressed having some background of Irish heritage, but the meaning that attached to it amongst Irish people themselves in London also had definite elements particular to class and not entirely distinguishable from the general class narratives of British society at this time.

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Although class divisions had huge significance in who people included when they considered their group identity there were elements in Irish identity in London which had a cross-class basis. These, in general, were the elements which were used to exclude people from Irish identity, define its limits or most important characteristics. The two which are considered below are religion and place of birth. The significance of having some elements of an ethnic identity which go beyond the ethics of the time are important, not covered here are music and language which are treated more fully elsewhere.[44]

[44] See Chapters 3 and 4.

This is not to argue that they were not significant to some conceptions of Irish identity, but rather that the role of music and language were more complex and less generalised in experience than to be considered simply in relation to ethnic identity. Religion and place of birth were both relatively common and cross class ways that Irish people used to categorise one another and were both inextricably entwined with perceptions of others' Irish identity in London.

The above consideration of priests removed them to some degree from the consideration of religion generally. Catholicism as a generalised measure of Irish identity was different to how priests were respected in certain communities. Frequently Catholicism was linked with being Irish, and the measure of Irishness was the performance of that Catholicism. Rhetoric such as 'we are Irish and we have the faith' drew an inextricable link between one and the other.[45] This was a bond that drew people together but it also had the power to be used to exclude people. It is also a tie that we must interrogate, despite its seeming ordinariness from its ever presence in Irish newspapers and the narratives of life in Irish communities. The reliance, in this thesis and in other works, on Catholic sources must be regarded as something which inherently gives privilege to the opinions of clerics and churchgoing lay people. Those who obviously valued religion attempted to enforce conformity to that religion by placing emphasis on its link to the ethnicity of those that were likely members. There is no attempt made here to measure religiosity; those who never attended but sent their children to Catholic schools and contributed to the door to door collections may have had very different relationships to faith than those who were members of confraternities, but we cannot assume one was more attached and the other less. Faith is not the question here; rather it is the relationship to the word 'Catholic', to the strings of phrases, such as 'loyal to faith and fatherland', that occupied so much space in the rhetoric of Irishness in London. The viewpoint considered here is, from the sources available, a Catholic one. It relies principally on those who considered faith an essential part of Irishness, those that had the contrary view are not considered in large part because it is a view almost entirely absent from the sources.

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[45] *The Universe*, 2 June 1900.

One source of information on those who regarded religion as unimportant to Irishness are those children of Irish fathers who did not themselves feel Irish; these often remembered their fathers as having no interest in religion. Yet this child's vision of an adult's religion may not be entirely accurate. The remembrance that 'father wasn't a bit interested in religion at all' might well be a child's misunderstanding, especially when their father insisted on the child not joining the Protestant boys' group or being buried from the Catholic church.[46] The power of respectability and the linking of religion with this meant that denigrating religion publicly, for Irish Catholics especially, was not done. Day to day expressions of indifference, not baptising children or getting married in the church, can be read a number of ways but not necessarily as disavowal of a connection between Irishness and Catholicism. As part of public dialogue between Irish people, being Catholic, especially as opposed to Protestant, was considered by many as a key element in defining their Irishness. It is these views of Irish people on one another and the role of religious affiliation in measuring ethnicity that is discussed rather than the articles of faith or attempts to measure devotion.

The respectability that religion granted people was integral in the high place some attached to it within their own group identities. Although, as argued above, this had an interclass basis, it was also something which surpassed class when used specifically in relation to religion. East End Irish people from this time distinguished in their memories between those who stayed with the church and 'those who drifted away [and] became coarse'.[47] That this 'drift' was typified by the same man as 'they fall away from the church and they fall away from Irish organisations' indicates that the link was more than one of just being respectable.[48] Those who had nothing to do with anything Catholic or Irish organisations were considered 'coarse'. This was not due to a lack of respectability on their part so much as that those who did not take part in the tenets of ethnicity had to be worse than those that did. If there

[46] Interview with Charles Mulligan, 4, 20, 21 Oct. 1971 (B.L. Sound Archive, Family Life and Work Experience before 1918, C707/257/1-4 C1); Interview with Anne Foley, 18, 19, 21 July 1969 (B.L. Sound Archive, Family Life and Work Experience before 1918, C707/72/1-5 C1)
[47] Interview with Jimmy O'Connor, 17 Jan. 1990 (B.L. Sound Archive, Reg Hall Archive, C903/430 C1).
[48] Ibid.

was no judgement attached to any of the rituals of community, then being inside or outside of them did not matter. This was not just something that priests used to attract a congregation; this was the genuine feeling of parishioners, a defining way of entering their ethnic identity.

That religious identity was important for religious people is perhaps not that surprising a conclusion. It is not by any means self-evident that Irish people were outliers in relation to the place of religion in self-identity. Religious people have elsewhere been shown to emphasise their religion in describing their ethnicity.[49] However, there is a very real sense in which even accepting this fact, Irish people tended in great numbers to come to one through the other or to have one mediated through the other. Mary Collins spoke of her father in this way: 'my father was a grand Irishman, but he always said, I'm a Catholic first because without being a Catholic I couldn't have my Irish nationality.'[50] Religion was primary; his ethnicity came through his religion rather than being separate to it. Equally it is true that for those that felt a strong bond of ethnic identity, religion was mediated through this, that religion became another aspect of that nationality just like language, for example. Although there is a distinction here between self-definition, the man who thought himself Catholic first and Irish second, and the use of Catholicism as a benchmark to judge others' ethnicity, it is one of degree. That which informed an individual's definitions of ethnicity, by definition a group identity, informed their judgements on other members of that group.

Using religion as a method of judging others' Irishness was, in part at least, a tool for measuring others' respectability. While people may have made pronouncements that 'If he saw a countryman of his who had lost his faith, he thought very little of his nationality' the emphasis was on public perception of religion: those who did not fall under the spell of some sort of controlling mechanism always seem to have been the subject of suspicion. Religion and priests with this role – the priest with the blackthorn stick or interrupting fights by wading in himself – were the reality, as much as the

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[49] Alba, *Ethnic Identity*, p. 101.
[50] Interview with Mary Collins, 16 May 1989 (B.L. Sound Archive, Reg Hall Archive, C903/417).

admired perception of English observers.[51] Striking in this was how much the need for control was an accepted message throughout Irish people in London. Those who described irreligious Irish as 'coarse', or those who thought little of the Irishness of those not connected to the church, were all promoting the same message that without religion lives were rough. Only with religion could people obtain the sort of goodness that was the base level of Irishness. Merely having this connection, not necessarily a connection of weekly or even monthly attendance at services, but being part of the larger definition of the congregation, asserted to outsiders that there was some controlling influence in a person's life.

The constant utterance of 'faith and fatherland' was more common in areas where the priest had a strong role as the model of Irishness. The reasons for the prominence of the priest, explored above, applied mainly to working class communities. The combination of Irish and Catholic as identities inextricably linked was more common in working class communities. There was no one model of Irishness, and different groups came up with their own formulas of in-behaviour and out-behaviour. There were themes though, and that of being Catholic as a factor in being Irish, was a strong theme amongst Irish people in London, but it was one unevenly scattered. It is one which was felt most strongly by those that were religious, or who were forced by convention of residential community to feel a bond to Catholicism. Yet the general approval of religion within society, even perhaps the rare occurrences of anti-Catholic feeling in London, means that we cannot consider the role of being Catholic as apart from the society in which it existed. Greater sectarianism may have led to more entrenched ethnic identities,[52] but societal approval seems to have added being Catholic as one of the many ways of being Irish. It is hardly surprising that religious people had a religious identity, but the larger picture of the rhetoric of 'faith and fatherland' is one whose importance can be overestimated. Its importance has been overestimated in

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[51] E.g. Fr. Staunton in Bermondsey (*Catholic Herald*, 8 March 1913); 'George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 11 [Poplar and Limehouse], District 12 [Bow and Bromley] and District 13 [South Hackney and Hackney]', pp 96-7 (L.S.E., Charles Booth Online Archive, B346).

[52] London could be contrasted in this regard with Liverpool, where ethnic and sectarian loyalties were of long-term importance. Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse*.

particular by histories which have Irish loyalty to 'faith and fatherland' as justification of a research agenda which gives religion and nationalist politics a pre-eminent place in the lives of Irish people in Britain.[53] At a rhetorical level this phrase was certainly a useful device for dismissing some as unIrish. However, we must always be careful to temper the degree to which it had any actual basis in religion, as opposed to generalised societal measures of acceptability or 'roughness'. Irish people looking at other Irish people saw differences between one another and when the vast majority were Catholic, to at least a nominal degree, it is not surprising that one of the ways they used to differentiate and understand a personal as well as a group identity was in terms of religion.

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Something which often appears to be a stark difference between different Irish people regardless of class was whether they were born in Ireland or not. This was a difference which was often cited by some of those in the Gaelic League movement in London who believed that 'People born and reared out of Ireland cannot serve her as her own children can.'[54] However, the pervasiveness of the idea that being born in Ireland was different to being born in England and that identity reflected this was a theme across all classes. Irishness, if conceived of primarily as a fact of birth and only secondarily of inheritance, was strongest in those born and bred in Ireland and weakened over subsequent generations. This can be seen best in Pádraic Ó Conaire's depiction of Irish people in an unnamed area of London that was probably the East End of London:

> These people [the first generation] kept the characteristics and habits and language of their race. Their children kept the characteristics, but lost the language and most of the habits. Their

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[53] Donald M. MacRaild makes this explicit (MacRaild, *The Irish Diaspora in Britain, 1750-1939* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 2), others have simply taken this emphasis as natural, for example see David Fitzpatrick's coverage of both religion and politics in his two essays on the Irish in Britain in the *New History of Ireland*: Fitzpatrick, '"A peculiar tramping people': the Irish in Britain, 1801-70' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland V, Ireland under the Union, I 1801-70* (Oxford, 1989), pp 627-8; 'The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921' in Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland Vol VI: Ireland Under The Union, II 1870-1921* (Oxford, 1996), pp 653-702.

[54] *Inis Fáil*, May 1907.

> children's children lost the language and the habits, and most of the characteristics. The characteristics of the Gael they did not lose, were only the bad ones.[55]

It is not uncommon to find this idea in texts of this time especially in relation to migration to the city.[56] However, its prevalence in historical work is something that should be challenged. Distinguishing between those of the first and subsequent generations is not a practice which should be unchallenged. Studies which use birthplace as a measure of Irishness inherently distinguish between those that were born in Ireland from others.[57] Without some justification, this is not a logic which is sustainable. Whether ideas of 'ethnic fade' were right or wrong is not the focus of this argument.[58] The focus of this analysis is on the perception of difference rather than its reality.

This was not generally a way that non-Irish people distinguished between Irish people, rather it was something which Irish people alone noticed. One priest in the East End of London was remembered in his obituaries as having had 'the honour of being born, as he always proudly boasted, in Ireland.'[59] That he had moved to London as an infant seems to have made it more important for him to assert that although accent or childhood did not distinguish him, being born in Ireland was special.[60] Others would 'cultivate the Irish accent', or deliberately mislead people to believe that they had been born in Ireland.[61] Being born in Ireland carried a status unrelated to the attempts of some within the Gaelic League to assert their superiority. In places where the Gaelic League did not cause more than a whisper there remained a pride in having been born in Ireland. The pride that many felt in their origins

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[55] Pádraic Ó Conaire, *Deoraíocht* (Dublin, 1980), p. 90 [my translation].
[56] Philip O'Leary, *The Prose Literature of the Gaelic Revival, 1881-1921: Ideology and Innovation* (Pennsylvania, 1994), pp 401-57.
[57] To a strong degree this is a result of the use of census and other official sources where people are sorted by birthplace.
[58] Paul O'Leary in his study of Irish in Wales has argued that 'ethnic fade' affected the Irish population in Wales. In contrast, Belchem has argued against seeing this as the inevitable fate of immigrant communities. (O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration: the Irish in Wales, 1798-1922* (Cardiff, 2002), p. 312; Belchem, 'Irish and Polish Migration: Some Preliminary Comparative Analysis' in Belchem and Klaus Tenfelde (eds), *Irish and Polish Migration in Comparative Perspective* (Essen, 2003), p. 12).
[59] *Catholic Herald*, 17 Oct. 1902.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Interview with Jimmy O'Connor and Molly Tiernan, 17 Jan. 1990 (B.L. Sound Archive, Reg Hall Archive, C903/429 Part 1).

was related to the status that they attained through it. The effect of this status within the Irish community was noted by those who lacked an Irish accent that 'noticed especially at Irish dances and socials that if you do not happen to speak with a brogue you get the "cold shoulder"'.[62] Others resented the fact that although they had been educated in the particularly Irish world of Catholic schools, the fact that their teachers did not encourage them to maintain their accent was used against them in Irish circles.[63] This was not solely a London phenomenon. Catholic priests in Lancashire were reported to have adopted Irish accents to 'make themselves more acceptable to their congregations'.[64]

The Gaelic League idea, promulgated not in Ireland, but most strongly in migrant communities, reflected the use of Gaelic League rhetoric to express something that was a wider prejudice. Having an Irish accent, being born in Ireland, expressed obviously that a person was not from London; that they did not belong there. In a society where the city was associated with roughness, where clean air and clean people were to be found moving further and further away from the centre, those who bore the marks of the city were likely associated with the same 'roughness' as the streets around them. This phenomenon was widespread in connection with domestic servants, and has been explored elsewhere in its effect on Irishwomen's employment prospects as servants.[65] The wider implication of this prejudice seems to have been adopted by Irish people and added to by some who placed it within a narrative of degeneration. Even those who wrote about how good London's Irish people were did so within a framework of the evil influence of the city and made Irish people exceptions to the general rule of the city begetting degenerates:

> Judging from the specimens of manhood and womanhood of the Irish race I saw at this overflowing meeting, I should say there is none of that degeneracy we so often find in a population settled in a large city for several generations. They are all, or nearly all, sons and daughters of toil, but they looked bright and happy, and a credit to the land they have sprung from.[66]

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[62] *Catholic Herald*, 13 Oct. 1910.
[63] Ibid., 12 Nov. 1910.
[64] Gilley, 'English Catholic Attitudes to Irish Catholics' in Swift and Gilley (eds), *Irish Identities in Victorian Britain* (London, 2011), p. 102.
[65] See Chapter 3.
[66] *Catholic Herald*, 18 Mar. 1904.

This was not an Irish narrative or not uniquely so. Brian Ó Conchubhair has argued the degree to which it was a Europe-wide phenomenon, and that the Gaelic League and associated organisations, were influenced heavily by it.[67] Without the influence of the Gaelic League the influence of those ideas of degeneracy would still have existed in Irish communities and been influential in Irish people's judgements of themselves and other Irish people. This could be argued to be a cypher for distinction based on class if time of arrival was connected to social class and there were differences in decades between times of arrival of members of distinct social classes. However, in general here it was not place of birth that was extrapolated from but accent, and loss or retention of accent was a highly individualised process. Father Michael Moriarty could remember of his mother that 'my mother never lost hers...a lot of people couldn't understand her. All the years and years she spent in England, they couldn't understand her.'[68] Others' accents changed over their years in England, so much so that whether or not they were born in Ireland or not became a subject of debate after their death.[69] The facts of how people spoke is not the issue, it is how others perceived them. Irish people placed how others spoke into a societal narrative of the city and distinguished accordingly.

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Those who identified or were identified by others as Irish in London were not homogenous. They did not necessarily have anything in common, beyond that one word 'Irish', which could signify any level of contact or identification with Ireland. Being cast together by outsiders made them mindful of one another. Ethnicity, of course, was not wholly reliant on others' perception of difference; its origins, while relatively obscure, must be regarded as being to a strong degree in the home. However, for adults the limited contact between different social groups and the stereotypes in English society about Irish people, made Irish middle class people aware of the

[67] Brian Ó Conchobair, *Fin de Siecle na Gaeilge: Darwin, an athbheochan agus smaointeoireacht na hEorpa* (Indreabhán, 2009), p. 66.
[68] Interview with Fr Michael Moriarty, 24 April 1989 (B.L. Sound Archive, Reg Hall Archive, C903/144 C1 BD01-21 Part 2).
[69] *Catholic Herald*, 24 Oct. 1902.

negative connotations to being Irish in London. The causes of the negative stereotypes were felt to have originated, correctly, with Irish working class people. This made a group that could otherwise have been ignored worthy of attention. If other Irish people did not challenge people's perception of themselves or how they would like others to perceive them they did not generally talk about them at all. Class was inherent to the dialogue of exclusion and improvement that surrounded middle class definitions of ethnic identity. The values of society, the qualities deemed 'good', had a strong cross-class basis. The emphasis on religion, should be taken as at least partially belonging within this. Irish people did not exist outside society; a lot of the rhetoric associated with being Irish in this period could be equally applied to being English. The city and its evils and the roughness of city people, are things that have often been looked at from an Irish perspective to have been purely the product of bucolic revivalist propaganda or an antipathy to the hallmarks of modernity.[70] This was not the case.

The identities that Irish people wanted and promoted were always bound up with the society in which they lived. The things that were particular to Irish identity, such as language or music, were not generally those things which formed any part of the rhetoric in judging others' Irishness. Instead the measures seem to have been taken directly from societally appropriate behaviour. For those who had a claim to Irishness, most often those deemed by others to be unIrish were those who did not show outward conformity to at least some of the ideas of respectability. The slightest hint of religion could redeem a person in another's eyes. It provided an outward signal to the world that no matter the other aspects of their lives, religion at least could control them. Self-definition of ethnicity was highly individualised. In contrast, their judgements of others shows the way societal patterns of acceptable behaviour could become ingrained and reformulated to apply to their own cause. In all of this, in the uncertain ground that is discussion of identity, the only certain thing is that the values of society at large were not different to the values of Irish people in London. To a large degree these values dictated how they perceived

[70] E.g. Tom Garvin, 'Irish Separatism and Fear of the Modern, 1890-1914' in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 97 (May, 1986), pp 67-81

other Irish people. Irish people in the communities they formed and the culture they shared between them took a great deal from the values of the society in which they lived.

Conclusion

The Irish population of London was more diverse than that of any other area of Britain. In order to analyse this group it was necessary to examine them through the structure of their connection and disconnection to and from one another. In this way those who were members of Irish communities and those who were not could both be included. This structure also allowed me to take account of non-residential communities in London and the wider cultural and ethnic context of Irish relationships. The fundamental way Irish people were connected to one another was through being members of Irish residential communities. Beginning this thesis with three chapters which examined Irish communities in residential terms allowed me to chart the geography of Irish settlement in London. An understanding of this was necessary to appreciate that while Irish people shared a common culture, they did not necessarily share it with one another. In order to understand the rhetoric around ethnic identity, it needed to be established that there were concrete things that were part of Irish identity in London. Consideration of music and the Irish language also showed the influence of Irish people's background on their culture and how that culture was maintained and was changed in London.

Having examined the residential and cultural components of Irish communities the more indistinct issue of Irish identity could be discussed. Generational transfer of music and language also provided a basis for understanding the formation of children's ethnic identity. Understanding how and who influenced the ethnic identity of the children of Irish parents was necessary to understand how Irish communities, whether residential or not, could continue to exist. These second and third generation immigrants were part of the Irish population of London. They were also a key reason that there were such divisions in conceptions of the Irish population in London. Fundamentally the individual's own identity guided Irish people's perceptions of one another. Establishing the distinct communities of Irish people in London through a study of residential communities allowed a consideration of how this separation affected their view of one another. In their definition and

redefinition of Irishness the most evident fact is the influence of London. London influenced not just where Irish people lived and hence who they met, but also the language they spoke and how they entertained one another. Fundamentally it also influenced their image of themselves and from this their perception of others.

The structure adopted here is unusual in the historiography of the Irish in Britain. There are three reasons for this difference from the mainstream historiography: firstly, London had a more diverse Irish population than other large cities in Britain and therefore needed a different approach that took account of this diversity; secondly, the period chosen demanded an examination which was not centred on information revealed from birthplace returns in official sources and thirdly, the historiography as it currently stands lacked any consideration of elements which in my research I found to be integral to Irish experiences in London during this period.

The decision to study Irish people in London was informed by the gap in the historiography of Irish in Britain on Irish experiences in London. This is a problem because it affects whether general surveys of Irish life in Britain can be said to reflect the case of London. London was the largest centre for Irish migrants in the south, yet general treatments of Irish experience were drawn from an historiography which focused predominantly on northern English cities.[1] These cities drew migrants from different regions in Ireland and had different industries and economies. As such this historiography could not necessarily be said to speak to Irish experience in London. This made the gap

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[1] Donald M. MacRaild, *Faith, Fraternity and Fighting: The Orange Order and Irish Migrants in Northern England, c. 1850-1920* (Liverpool, 2005); John Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse, the History of the Liverpool-Irish 1800-1939* (Liverpool, 2007); Mervyn Busteed, 'Little Islands of Erin: Irish settlement and Identity in Mid-nineteenth century Manchester' in MacRaild (ed.), *The Great Irish Famine and Beyond: Irish migrants in Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Dublin, 2000), pp 94-127; Martha Kanya-Forstner, 'Defining Womanhood: Irish Women and the Catholic Church in Victorian Liverpool' in MacRaild (ed.), *Great Irish Famine and Beyond*, pp 168-188; Frank Neal, *Sectarian Violence, The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914: An aspect of Anglo-Irish history* (Manchester, 1991); Steven Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity: Irish Catholics in England 1800-1939* (Buckingham, 1993); Frances Finnegan, *Poverty and Prejudice: A Study of Irish Immigrants in York, 1840-1875* (Cork, 1982).

in the historiography more important and it was this gap that this thesis has addressed.

The period chosen for analysis reflected a concern with the traditional historiography which has focused on first generation migrants in mid-Victorian Britain. It also represents an argument for the framing of shorter periods in which to study Irish people in particular areas outside Ireland. The core structure of this thesis was formed around its period. Analysis of music, for example, relied on detailed examination of newspapers; detailed consideration of Irish-born domestic servants was possible because the years considered were restricted. This detailed approach also facilitated a consideration of gradual change within this period and allowed an understanding of the mechanics of those changes.

The conclusions of this thesis challenge and add to the historiography in a number of ways. The structure of this study differs markedly from that of others in this broad area. This is the principal challenge which this thesis makes to the historiography as it stands. This does not just relate to the need to give a larger space to Irish culture. There are much more fundamental criticisms and questions that we must make of the historiography as it stands. There needs to be an examination of how the availability of birthplace information from official sources has dictated the structure of so many studies and whether this has a distortive effect on our image of Irish migrants. Examinations of crime, for instance, need to be considered in terms of whether they are part of a representative Irish experience, or whether the focus on it has been led largely from the availability of abundant statistics and court reports. This is not to argue that we should not address unusual or particular trends which may not apply to the larger Irish population. Rather, it is to suggest that in histories which seek to treat the general population of Irish people in a given area we need to be mindful of the general Irish population rather than the unusual.

Birthplace statistics drawn from censuses may give an accurate portrait of the Irish population of a given area, however in the far greater number of instances they do not. The use of these statistics for the period

immediately post-Famine could be seen as less problematic than their use in the period covered by this thesis. However, in acknowledging that Irish migration did not begin with the Famine, we must seek to accommodate within our studies the second generation migrants who do not feature in the birthplace statistics which begin in 1841. If we are to examine the Irish population as most studies seek to, rather than an Irish-born population, this is a fundamental problem which we must address.

In conceiving the period and people that were to be studied, there was a conscious decision not to begin the study with a comprehensive demographic portrait of Irish-born people in London. Even if it was possible to include some extrapolation on the number of second-generation based on average number of children or rates of exogamous marriages this would still colour the analysis that followed. This thesis began with the view that all Irish people, whether Irish-born or not, had an equal right to their identity and an equal place in historical study of Irish in Britain. The structure and methodology needed to reflect this view.

In terms of Irish residential communities which were composed mainly of families, this thesis has argued that there is not one pattern of Irish community formation or survival. The culture and economy of local areas had an immense impact on more than just the livelihoods of those in the area. Irish people in London had to fit into the larger political and social landscapes in which they lived. The greatest differentiation between areas was in suburban developments which through their low density housing discouraged Irish communal life.

Frequently in works on Irish communities, suburbanisation is held to have been responsible for the death or decline of particular communities.[2] However, there is rarely any examination of Irish interaction with suburbanisation. It is analysed instead as it affected particular inner city communities. The assumption has been that once Irish people left those communities they ceased to matter. Suburbanisation had to form part of this

[2] E.g. Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse*, p. 22.

thesis because it was a process of which Irish people were part. It needed an examination from the perspective of migrants from the inner city, as opposed to the effects of suburbanisation on historic Irish communities.

Women's experiences have been relatively ill-treated in regard to the study of Irish people in Britain generally.[3] Yet it was not for this reason that domestic servants were treated here separately. A residential community-only perspective would miss entirely the particular economic geography of London. Domestic servants were living separately to the Irish communities in London. There were so many of them and they were so intertwined that they dictated that to accurately portray the geography of Irish community in London they would need to be included. The proportion of Irishwomen working as domestic servants was probably particular to London in that London had a higher demand for domestic servants than other areas of Britain. For this reason the inclusion of domestic servants is not a result of their invisibility in studies of other areas of Britain. London presents a particular case where this type study was necessary.

Where their inclusion does challenge the orthodoxy of the historiography is in the fact that they were a temporary community. The age profile of these women showed that the vast majority were not long-term domestic servants. This was a transient community. The short period chosen allowed me to consider in detail the women who were in domestic service in 1901 on the basis that they were a community then rather than on any assumption that they were at the beginning of a long career. It is understandable that the settled have been privileged over the unsettled; nevertheless there should be some understanding of this privilege. Addressing this fact is, however, probably only possible in a study which focuses on a relatively short period of time.

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[3] There are more studies of mid-twentieth century women migrants than migrants in this and earlier periods. For example: Mary Lennon, Marie McAdam and Joanne O'Brien, *Across the Water: Irish women's lives in Britain* (London, 1988); Louise Ryan, 'Migrant Women, Social Networks and Motherhood: The Experiences of Irish Nurses in Britain' in *Sociology*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Apr., 2007), pp 295-312.

The Irish language has been mentioned in passing rather than studied in relation to Irish people in Britain. Where it has been studied it has been the Gaelic League and its efforts that has been analysed. We cannot and should not ignore the linguistic origins of migrants. Nor can we presume that the language disappeared on migration, especially considering evidence of clustered Irish settlement. Irish was important to Irish people in London in this period. In placing it as a major area of analysis this thesis challenges the orthodoxy that Irish was forgotten by migrants soon after migration. Placing the experiences of the Gaelic League in the context of vernacular users of Irish also challenges the primacy of the Gaelic League in considerations of Irish.

The music of Irish in Britain has not been studied previously in the way that it has been here. In part this relates to narrow definitions of Irish music that have been adopted by previous researchers. It is also due to the fact that where music has been considered it has been musicians or composers who have formed the central part of analysis. The performance of popular music has not been treated at all previously in relation to Irish people in Britain. The consideration of music here was source-led. It was the main social entertainment of this period. For this reason its absence from other studies of Irish lives and communities is particularly hard to understand.

Both music and the Irish language have been considered differently in this thesis to how they have been studied previously. Both have been treated so little, and with such little care to move past generalisations that almost any analysis of these topics for Irish people in Britain would be innovative. This is due to the fact that Irish politics and Catholicism have formed the major areas of research of Irish culture. By not making these two areas the subjects of chapters and instead considering language and music in their place, my argument is that these are areas as important to considerations of Irish life in Britain as religion or politics.

This thesis, through examining two sets of possible influences, argues for the greater role of parents in deciding the ethnic identity of children. In the historiography there is little to contradict this argument. This utter lack of attention is alarming when so many studies of Irish outside Ireland have

generally taken a broad view of what constituted the Irish population and therefore included the second generation. Yet, there has been very little consideration of the formation of the ethnic identity of the second generation. These are issues that studies on a similar subject to this thesis need to address. We cannot simply make assumptions about the ethnic identity of children of Irish parents. Even when concrete answers are unavailable, this subject demands attention because it underlies so much of the historiography of migrant populations.

This thesis argues that not only was there diversity in the Irish population of London but that they had diverse views on Irish identity. 'Irish' did not have one meaning, but it was a persistent identity. In defining themselves, people also looked to others and used their sense of themselves, including their ethnic identity to judge particularly those that shared their identity. Being Irish placed people within the same context who would never have been considered similar otherwise. Interactions between Irish people were not filled with less prejudice than those between Irish and English. These prejudices can tell us more about Irish identity than rhetoric. Irish identity was inherently about being tied to others; these judgements on others' Irishness were intrinsic in having that identity.

This thesis in its examination of this group of people answers some of the questions that have been asked about them. For instance, a rationale behind the disintegration of communities has been put forward, and so too has an examination of the lack of Irish community in suburban areas. There are questions, however, that are raised by the analysis of this thesis. There is a need for much greater information on Irish people in nineteenth century London. For comparative purposes this relates primarily to Irish in later nineteenth century London. In terms of the origins of Irish communities the settlement patterns and experiences of Irish in London, an examination of the early nineteenth century would likely provide invaluable context. This thesis examines aspects of Irish lives which have not been addressed in other studies of Irish in particular areas of Britain. Through this it argues that the particular subjects chosen for analysis represent important areas of Irish lives in early

twentieth century London. It also questions what has been the traditional approach to this kind of study. There is a need, for example, for studies which encompass a much broader range of Irish organisational and community experience than just religious and political elements. We also need to question why we study certain things and not others, and where our sense of the relative importance of people and experiences comes from. For example, are women not treated in detail because there is a lack of sources, or is our consideration of what is important essentially gendered? While there has been criticism of the theoretical framework of Irish migrants' interaction with English society,[4] the fundamental structure and themes of studies the Irish population of areas in Britain has not been interrogated and criticised enough.

There are areas related to this thesis which would benefit from further study. Examination of the 1911 census would prove a valuable comparison to that of 1901. In particular it would provide a comparison to the work in regard to Irish domestic servants based on the 1901 census. Nineteenth century censuses would also provide context for the position of Irishwomen in domestic service in 1901. Without this, it is impossible to know whether Irish women's pattern of work in 1901 was a constant pattern of Irish work as domestic servants or whether this situation changed over the course of the later nineteenth century. The regional variation in migration to Britain and its influence on the Irish language indicates that a study comparing two cities which received large numbers of Irish-speaking migrants would be beneficial. While Wales is the obvious choice as migrants came along the same shipping routes, a city with a different regional origin in Ireland might prove more interesting. Manchester or York would provide an interesting comparative study in this respect. The musical repertoire of Irish in other cities would also provide an interesting comparison to that discussed here. In particular, the influence of the stage on the music of Irish people could be known more fully if a comparative study of London and another British city was undertaken. There is a need for much more information on the formation of Irish identity in

[4] Mary J. Hickman, 'Alternative Historiographies of the Irish in Britain: a critique of the segregation/assimilation model', in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds), *The Irish in Victorian Britain: the local dimension* (Dublin, 1999), pp 236-253.

a historical context. Further research in this area would examine in much greater detail memoir and oral history evidence than was possible here. To allow for the greatest number of narratives it would also be beneficial to consider it in a larger area than just one city. Analysis of the lives of Irish people in London during World War I would also yield much of interest. In particular, the use of military enlistment records which state appearance and give indications as to health would allow a type of study which is not possible with other records. An effect of the broad scope of this study, and the short period chosen is that it raises questions about the lives of this group before and after this period. In doing this, it shows that there remains much work that could be done.

The structure and subjects in this thesis are innovative. In adopting the structure and concerns found here this thesis adds to and challenges the traditional historiography of Irish people in Britain. Much more is possible than has traditionally been attempted. It is quite possible that in many ways London was atypical of Irish experience in Britain. While this could be argued in terms of employment or language, in terms of the important aspects of community or background I do not believe that London was atypical. In arguing for the diversity of Irish populations, as most studies have done, we must look too to diversify the concerns of those who study Irish people outside Ireland. We cannot accept a diverse Irish population, and seek to examine them using the same subjects and concerns as were used to examine the supposedly homogenous working class Irish population of early studies. We need to remember that background, interaction with other Irish people and the social and economic landscape of the cities where Irish lived are intrinsically connected in the lives of Irish migrants of every generation. A concern with all three should be fundamental to this type of study.

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Catholic Diocese of Brentwood Archives

Parish Records

[This diocese was formed in 1917 from the Diocese of Westminster, the material for parishes started before that date is uneven between parishes].

Walthamstow St. George's to 1950.

Walthamstow St. Patrick to 1969.

Ilford SS Peter and Paul.

Stratford pre-1917.

Canning Town pre-1917.

Leyton.

Tilbury.

Non-Parish records

Canning Town census of Catholic population 1893. [These are copies of originals held by the Diocese of Westminster, these are the only two to survive in the area of the Diocese of Brentwood].

Barking census of Catholic population 1893.

Biographical notes on priests in the Brentwood Diocese.

Catholic Diocese of Southwark Archives

Parish Records

[The parish name is the reference for these files. Some boxes have an internal chronological order, others do not. Where there is more than one box relating to a parish, the name on the box has been given.]

Bermondsey Melior St. Box 1 1850-1900.

Bermondsey Melior St. Box 2 1900-.

Bermondsey Dockhead 'pre-1900 and history'.

Bermondsey Dockhead 'Visitations and Returns'.

Battersea Park.

Battersea West.

Camberwell I.

Camberwell II.

Peckham.

St. George's Cathedral Box 4 'Old deeds Church and School' [there are a large number of boxes of material relating to St. George's Cathedral, some are numbered others are not].

St. George's Cathedral 'before 1900'.

St. George's Cathedral 1914-33 [1900-33].

Walworth.

Waterloo.

Non-Parish

[These have no cataloguing system, I have given the name on the outside of the box]

Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Also Southwark Record and Shield Editors.

Catholic Boys Brigade (3 boxes).

Hop-pickers' mission.

Catholic Diocese of Westminster Archives

Archbishop Bourne Papers.

Parish Records:

(These have a two or three letter reference code which refers to a box, I have indicated the files most relevant within boxes).

MQ SS. Mary and Michael's Commercial Road: Visitation Returns.

ADW St. Patrick's Church, Wapping: Notice Books.

PH St. Patrick's Church, Wapping: Visitation Returns; Parish Magazine 1937.

LO Our Lady Immaculate Limehouse: Correspondence, Visitation Returns.

ET SS. Mary and Joseph's, Poplar: Visitation Returns.

KV Guardian Angels Mile End: Visitation Returns.

HR: Kentish Town Our Lady Help of Christians: Visitation Returns.

HV: St. Thomas of Canterbury, Fulham: Visitation Returns.

AQB St. Patrick's Soho: A short Account of ST. Patrick's Soho Sq.; Visitation Returns.

AAE Holy Ghost and St. Stephen Catholic Church: Visitation Returns.

London Metropolitan Archives:

London County Council Housing Department:

LCC/HSG/GEN/2/2, Miscellaneous printed reports (to 1913).

LCC/HSG/GEN/2/3, Miscellaneous printed reports includes Reports of the Committee on the Housing of the Working Classes.

LCC/HSG/GEN/2/4, Box of five parts: parts 1-3 relevant: Housing of the working classes in Liverpool, Manchester and the suburbs of London; Insanitary areas before and after clearance; New Working Class Accommodation 1911.

LCC/HSG/GEN/2/33, Miscellaneous printed reports.

LCC/HSG/GEN/2/11-15, Sub-Committee of the committee of the Housing of the Working Classes (Re. Whitecross St. enquiry).

LCC/HSG/GEN/2/18, A Remedy for overcrowding in London.

LCC/HSG/GEN/3/3, Plans for Housing under the Housing of the Working Classes Act.

London County Council Valuation Department:

LCC/VA/GEN/2/55, Holborn to Strand and Clare Market Scheme and papers.

LCC/VA/GEN/5/3, New street from High Holborn to the Strand, Reports of the Improvements Committee.

LCC/VA/GEN/5/4, Henry Clarke, London Street improvements (with maps).

LCC/VA/GEN/5/10, Improved road facilities necessary for Millwall (pamphlet).

LCC/VA/DD files are Architects' Drawings. There are multiple drawings in every catalogue reference, they are sometimes in a roll (indicated by a number prefixed by 'R') and sometimes in large flat map files. I have indicated the drawing(s) that were relevant.

LCC/VA/DD/227, Fox Court (Holborn) proposed artizans' dwellings.

LCC/VA/DD/R12, Goldsmith's Row shops, Shoreditch.

LCC/VA/DD/R32, Plan for shops and banks on Kingsway with front facing Wild Court.

LCC/VA/DD/R243-5, Public houses in Dockhead.

LCC/VA/DD/R261, Plans for Rebuilding Strand (1929).

LCC/VA/DD/R171, Kemble Street shop (1909).

LCC/VA/DD/78-9, Public House Wapping High Street.

Metropolitan Board of Works:

MBW 1882 [numbers relate to volume numbers not dates] Shorthand Writers' Notes of Proceedings before Inspector at Local Inquiries.

MBW 1884 Shorthand writers' Notes of Proceedings before Inspector at Local Inquiry.

City of London Coroners' Court:

CLA/041/IQ/04/01/002 1902 City of London inquests.

CLA/041/IQ/04/01/03 1903 City of London inquests.

CLA/041/IQ/04/02/09 Jan-June 1903 Depositions from Coroners' Court.

CLA/041/IQ/04/02/10 July-Dec 1903 Depositions from Coroners' Court.

Southwark Coroners' Court:

CLA/042/IQ/02/02/003 July-Dec. 1902 Depositions from Coroners' Court.

CLA/042/IQ/02/02/006 Jan-June 1904 Depositions from Coroners' Court.

CLA/042/IQ/02/02/010 Jan-June 1906 Depositions from Coroners' Court.

Benevolent Society of St. Patrick:

ACC 2895/1 Annual Reports.

London School of Economics

Charles Booth Online Archive (http://booth.lse.ac.uk)

Police Notebooks:

B346: George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 11 [Poplar and Limehouse], District 12 [Bow and Bromley] and District 13 [South Hackney and Hackney].

B350 George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police and Publican District 7 [Mile End Old Town and Spitalfields], District 8 [Aldgate, St George's in the East, Shadwell], District 9 [Bethnal Green, North and South], District 10 [Bethnal Green East], District 11 [Poplar and Limehouse].

B351 George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police and Publican District 7 [Mile End Old Town and Spitalfields], District 8 [Aldgate,St George's in the East, Shadwell], District 9 [Bethnal Green,North and South]

B352 George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 5 [Old Street, Finsbury and Shoreditch], District 6 [Hoxton and Haggerston], District 9 [Bethnal Green, North and South].

B353 George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 4 [Clerkenwell and Grays' Inn], District 5 [Old Street, Finsbury and Shoreditch], District 14 [West Hackney and South East Islington], District 15 [South West Islington].

B354 George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 2 [Strand and St Giles], District 3 [St James, Westminster, Soho, All Saints and Tottenham Court Road], District 4 [Clerkenwell and Gray's Inn].

B355 George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 2 [Strand and St Giles], District 3 [St James, Westminster, Soho, All Saints and Tottenham Court Road], District 9 [Bethnal Green, North and South], District 22 [Cavendish Square and St John's Paddington],District 23 [St Mary Paddington and Kensal Town].

B357 Police District 18 [Somers Town and Camden Town], District 20 [Hampstead], District 21 [Marylebone (Christchurch to St John)].

B358 Police Contributors include [George E. Arkell], George H. Duckworth, Ernest Aves, [Arthur L. Baxter] District 18 [Somers Town and Camden Town], District 21 [Marylebone(Christchurch to St John)], District 22 [Cavendish Square andSt John's Paddington], District 28 [Kensington Town].

B359 George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 23 [St Mary Paddington and Kensal Town], District 28 [Kensington Town], District 30 [Hammersmith].

B361 George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 28 [Kensington Town], District 29 [Fulham], District 30 [Hammersmith].

B362 [Arthur L. Baxter's ?]Notebook: Police District 24 [St John Westminster], District 25 [St Margaret and Belgrave], District 26 [Chelsea], District 27 [Brompton].

B363 George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 31 [Lambeth and St Saviour's Southwark], District 34 [Lambeth and Kennington].

B364 Ernest Aves' Notebook: Police District 32 [Trinity Newington and St Mary Bermondsey].

B365 George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 32 [Trinity Newington and St Mary Bermondsey], District 33 [St James Bermondsey and Rotherhithe], District 34 [Lambeth and Kennington],District 35 [Kennington (2nd) and Brixton], District 41 [St Peter Walworth and St Mary Newington], District 42 [St George Camberwell], District 45 [Deptford].

B367 George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 33 [St James Bermondsey and Rotherhithe], District 45 [Deptford].

B370 [Arthur Baxter's]Notebook: Police District 35 [Kennington (2nd) and Brixton], District 39 [Wandsworth and Putney], District 40 [Streatham, Norwood and Dulwich], District 43 [Camberwell].

B371 George E. Arkell and George H. Duckworth's Notebook: Police District 46 [Greenwich], District 48 [Woolwich] [Publishedin 3rd series - Religious Influences. Vol 1 - 6. Conclusion. Vol 17] [Interviews by George E. Arkell pp 1 - 103 and interviews by George H. Duckworth pp 104 - 249].
B373 Ernest Aves' Notebook: Police District 35 [Kennington (2nd) and Brixton], District 42 [St George Camberwell], District 43 [Camberwell], District 44 [Peckham], District 45 [Deptford], District 47 [Sydenham, Lewisham, Eltham and Lee].

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