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Cover design by Jennifer McCaffrey and Nora McGillicuddy, Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick Institute of Technology. The cover incorporates the concepts of past, present and future, which is depicted, firstly by the use of the Buddhist symbol Aum. The idea is secondly represented by the illustrative heads looking in different directions. They symbolise the search for history by past, present and future historians.

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Foreword

This year the University of Limerick marks five decades of learning and scholarship. History was one of the subjects offered from the beginning at the National Institute for Higher Education (NIHE) and in the National College of Physical Education. The first historian employed at the NIHE was Brian Faloon, an expert on Russian and Eastern European history. He left his lectureship in 1997 just as the first denominated degree programme with history in its title was introduced. Since 2011, the Department of History has awarded its annual Faloon Prize to the best Final-Year Project in his memory. Included in the contributions in this year's *History Studies* is the prize-winner for 2020-1, Rachel Beck, who examines how Methodists adapted to the new Irish Free State in the 1920s.

The editor of this volume, Simon Salem, suggested that contributions on the theme of crises might inform submissions. As a result, many of the articles grapple with how individuals and groups attempted to navigate conflict, upheaval or uncertainty. Some crises dealt with here were inflicted by the state and developed over a long period, such as the treatment of German First World War veterans by the Nazi authorities in the 1930s, while others were prompted by poverty and destitution in the wake of the Great Famine in Ireland. Perhaps unwittingly, another theme that emerges in this year's journal is that which casts light on religion and religious groups. The publication of a Church of England clergyman's visit to the Vatican provides insights into the mid nineteenth-century debates about the relationship between Anglicans and the Catholic Church. Another deals with how Limerick's Anglicans and Methodists found common purpose in developing a social club in the same century, while the study of the adaption of Irish Methodists to the post-

1922 regime has already been mentioned. Each in their own way offer perspectives on how identities were shaped and formed, sometimes during moments of crisis.

If *History Studies* continues to attract the range and quality of submissions as are found in this volume, we can look forward to the journal's continued success. But success can only be sustained by the hard work and dedication of each year's editors. I would like to pay tribute to the editor for his work in generating interest in the theme and assembling the articles, and also to a former editor, Dr Maelle le Roux, for stepping in to bring the volume to publication. Lastly, I congratulate each of the contributors for preparing stimulating and engaging pieces of scholarship.

Dr David Fleming

Head, Department of History,

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Editorial

The theme selected for volume 23 was ‘responding to crisis’ and the excellent papers we publish here are varied reminders of how crisis so often shapes our history and how what people do in the face of crisis forms a very important part of understanding the past.

Most of the papers in this volume explore crisis points in Irish social history, but the volume opens with Sandra Fleischmann’s examination of people she terms ‘heroes in crisis’ – First World War German veterans with mental health issues whose lived experience did not fit the narrative of the Nazi government and whose subsequent treatment was harsh, but ‘legalised’. Next Robert Gullifer uses a microhistorical approach to examine the crisis in relations between the Catholic and Anglican churches in England in 1850. His reading of Canon George Townsend’s published journal skilfully sheds light on doctrinal issues which were of social and political significance in the early 1850s. Two Irish studies look at what it meant to be a Protestant in changing Irish society during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Craig Copley-Brown reviews the dynamics within Protestant male social networks through the lens of those living in Limerick in the century from 1813, whilst Rachel Beck sheds light on the specific experience of Methodists in the first decade of the Irish Free State. Both draw out the subtleties of response from those living through major social change. Extending this Irish perspective, Mary-Alice Wildasin looks at how and why many Irish Catholics chose Quebec as their emigration destination in response to the Great Famine, whilst Bríd O’Sullivan considers reaction to pre-marital pregnancy and illegitimacy in West Clare in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Thank you to all published here and my thanks go wholeheartedly to Dr David Fleming who offered me the chance to take on the role of editor, whilst also helping me out when the going got tough! Of course, these papers represent only a fraction of the historical issues that could have been chosen by potential writers and only some of the ideas many put up for discussion but which for one reason or another did not make it to publication this time. I also thank Dr Maelle Le Roux, a previous editor, and Rachel Beck, the incoming editor, who stepped in to help prepare this volume for publication.

Simon Salem

Heroes in crisis: the treatment of World War I veterans with mental health issues in Nazi Germany

Sandra Fleischmann

The First World War left the belligerent nations financially, structurally and demographically stressed. At least 8.5 million soldiers died during the conflict, around 20 million were wounded and approximately eight million returned with some form of disability, mental or physical.¹ Access to pensions, treatment and reintegration into post-war society became a matter of debate among politicians, medical professionals and the general public. Psychiatry and psychology held differing approaches towards returning veterans with mental illness, as did left-wing and right-wing parties, alternating between recognition and accusation of fraud of these men. Despite differing opinions regarding the validity of their claims, veterans with mental illness received comparatively good care in the Weimar Republic compared to their counterparts in other states like the United Kingdom.²

Such care did not receive universal support from the German population. In particular, parties of the far right such as the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP) or Nazi Party criticised the ‘coddling’ of veterans whom they perceived not as legitimately wounded but as faking an ailment in hope of cheating the state and thus the tax payer out of money. Mental illness was not seen as a legitimate cause for support but as a ‘hereditary weakness’ and, after 1933, increasingly subject to the eugenicist plans of the Nazis. This included so-called ‘Euthanasia’, a euphemism to obscure the systematic murder of persons with disability, mental or chronic illness.³

¹ Deborah Cohen, *The war come home, disabled veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914-1939* (Berkeley, 2001), pp 2-3.

² *Ibid.*, pp 5-6.

³ Phillip Rauh, ‘Von Verdun nach Grafeneck. Die psychisch kranken Veteranen des Ersten Weltkrieges als Opfer der nationalsozialistischen Krankenmordaktion T4’ in Babette Quinkert, Philipp Rauh and Ulrike Winkler (eds), *Krieg und Psychiatrie 1914-1950* (Göttingen, 2010), pp 47-8.

Already prior to 1933, Nazi ideology propagated that mental illnesses and disabilities were allegedly signs of weakness or biological inferiority which they wanted to eliminate through forced sterilisation and murder in order to create a mentally and physically healthy ‘*Volksgemeinschaft*’. In Nazi ideology, the *Volksgemeinschaft* was the proposed ideal of an ethnically and ideologically homogeneous, heterosexual, mentally and physically strong German society in which social hierarchies and economic inequalities were supposed to be non-existent. The Nazis’ social and legal policies were aimed at eliminating anyone in German society who did not fit into their concept of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.⁴

Simultaneously, they glorified wounded and disabled veterans as ‘First citizens of the Reich’,⁵ as those who had sacrificed their health in service to their country, even though they did not fit into the Nazi ideal of health and physical strength. The Party's demands for financial benefits for former front-fighters and public recognition of their service to Germany catered to the increasingly disillusioned war veterans during the 1930s.⁶ Due to these promises, the NSDAP received considerable support even from groups which the Nazis did not want to validate such as pension-receiving veterans with mental illness. In the elections of 1932 and 1933, the NSDAP received on average two percent higher voting results in places with a high concentration of veterans.⁷ The highly fragmented and inconsistent nature of Nazi ideology shows itself in their treatment.⁸ But how could veterans with mental illness be simultaneously heralded as heroes and demonised as leeches on the social system?

Scholarship has examined the situation of veterans with mental illness mostly from three perspectives: as part of a wider study of disability in twentieth-century Germany,⁹ as part of the group of veterans overall,¹⁰ and as victims of the Nazis’

⁴ Jonathan Lewy, ‘A biological threat or a social disease?: alcoholism and drug addiction in Nazi Germany’ in *Journal of European studies*, iii, 39 (2009), pp 373-4.

⁵ Nationalsozialistische Kriegsoferversorgung, ‘Deutsche Kriegsoferversorgung’ in *Monatsschrift der Frontsoldaten und Kriegshinterbliebenen der Nationalsozialistischen Kriegsoferversorgung (NSKOV)*, ii, 8 (1934).

⁶ Jason Crouthamel, *The Great War and German memory, society, politics and psychological trauma 1914-1945* (Liverpool, 2010), pp 157-8.

⁷ Christoph Koenig, ‘Loose cannons, war veterans and the erosion of democracy in Weimar Germany’ in *Competitive Advantage in the Global Economy Online Working Paper Series*, 497 (2020), p. 1.

⁸ Crouthamel, *The Great War*, pp 158-60.

⁹ Carol Poore, *Disability in twentieth-century German culture* (Ann Arbor, 2007).

¹⁰ David Gerber, *Disabled veterans in history* (Ann Arbor, 2012).

‘Euthanasia’.¹¹ In all instances veterans with mental illness are not the focal point of the assessment but treated as odd cases, often falling through the cracks of the respective methodologies. The study of veterans with mental illness in Nazi Germany calls for an examination of intersections and indeed conflict between different parts of Nazi ideology and the perception of these cracks in their seemingly all-encompassing ideology by the German public. A threefold approach is needed to examine how and why the Nazi regime treated veterans with mental illness as a group on the borderline between glorification and persecution. This article presents the legal, medical and ideological justifications of Nazi Germany regarding the changing treatment of veterans with mental illness. Analysis will show how the rhetoric used to justify the veterans’ treatment related to different and often contradictory parts of Nazi ideology. Possible underlying motivations for their highly contradictory treatment will be examined.

Debate about possible cost reductions for the state broke out in the crisis and inflation-ridden late Weimar Republic. This included debate about veterans’ pensions. The pension law of 1920 entitled wounded veterans not only to financial aid but also to therapy, further education and specially protected workplaces to ensure their reintegration into society. Support for mentally ill veterans had been particularly controversial in German society even before the crisis, as the number of applications for veteran pensions had quadrupled from around 5400 per year in 1924 to over 20,000 in 1930.¹² Criticism of the comparatively generous veteran pensions soared in parliament after mass unemployment (20 per cent of all Germans became unemployed by 1933) led to skyrocketing welfare costs.¹³

As a consequence, the conservative Brüning government cut veteran pensions by a third from 1929 to 1933. According to Whalen, 3.5 per cent of the over 800,000 pension recipients were left entirely without payments and those that still received support had to deal with considerable reductions in pay. Getting aid for late-onset illness

¹¹ Lawrence Zeidman, *Brain science under the Swastika, ethical violations, resistance, and victimization of neuroscientists in Nazi Europe* (Oxford, 2020).

¹² Crouthamel, *The Great War*, p. 160.

¹³ Cohen, *The war come home*, pp 95-6.

or disability related to war time injury became nearly impossible. The National Pensions Court decided against veterans' appeals in around 75 per cent of all cases after 1931.¹⁴

To protect veterans with disabilities from further budget cuts, the government issued the *Neurotikererlass* (neurotics decree) in 1929 which amended the 1920 law and protected veterans with mental illness from being taken off pension.¹⁵ But this was to provide virtually no protection after the Nazis rose to power in 1933. To fulfil their pre-election claim of lower social welfare expenses, they were eager to cut the pensions of veterans with disabilities. This was done through several changes in the existing 1920 law. In 1934, the Nazis abolished article 57 of the 1920 law, which stipulated that a considerable and lasting improvement in medical condition was needed to cease payment.¹⁶ They also abused article 65 which made it possible to discredit old diagnoses as misdiagnosis and have recipients re-classified without medical indication for re-assessment, in this case resulting in high numbers of veterans being declared non-eligible for support. This enabled the Nazis to cease payments without medical re-examination.¹⁷ In the second half of the 1930s, they also created a new legal basis to cease payments to veterans with mental illnesses.

The 1936 changes directly connected legislation with the Nazis' eugenicist policy. The amended pension law deprived veterans of their payments if they were suffering from illnesses falling under the *Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses* (Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring). Issued in 1934, the legislation mandated the forced sterilisation of Germans with illnesses such as epilepsy, schizophrenia, Chorea Huntington, certain birth irregularities, suffering from alcohol addiction and forms of blindness and deafness that were thought to be inheritable. Between 1934 and 1939, at least 350,000 Germans became victims of forced sterilisation.¹⁸ This also included veterans of the First World War.

¹⁴ Robert Weldon Whalen, *Bitter wounds, German victims of the Great War 1914-1939* (Ithaca, 1984), p. 171.

¹⁵ Stephanie Neuner, *Politik und psychiatrie, die staatliche Versorgung psychisch Kriegsbeschädigter in Deutschland 1920-1939* (Göttingen, 2011), pp 327-33.

¹⁶ Deutscher Reichstag, *Reichsversorgungsgesetz*, article 2, Abs. 57.

¹⁷ Neuner, *Politik und psychiatrie*, p. 233.

¹⁸ Susan Benedict and Linda Shields, *Nurses and midwives in Nazi Germany, the 'euthanasia programs'* (New York, 2014), p. 15.

The 1936 change further stated that those falling into the ambiguous category of ‘those whose entitlement to pensions enrages the public’ were ineligible to receive a veteran pension.¹⁹ Given the lack of clear definition this categorisation could include anyone the Nazi administration wanted to disqualify. Later, in 1939, the *Neurotikererlass* was abolished. This eliminated the 1929 protection of veterans with mental illnesses from pension cuts. Already in 1936, head civil servant Kurt Günther from the Reich Labour Ministry declared that ‘neuroses [did] not matter any more for the social welfare in the Reich’.²⁰

Pension law itself also underwent a thorough re-construction. The 1938 reform essentially meant a return to the 1906 Pension Law. Pensions were now paid according to the soldier’s rank and performance on the battlefield instead of their remaining ability to work. This further cemented the division between upper class officer corps, middle class non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and working class enlisted men. One aim of this legal change was to remove working class pension recipients, as the Nazis considered them to be especially prone to faking ailments and committing fraud.²¹ Additional payments due to injuries could only be collected if the injury occurred during combat and was recorded immediately afterwards. Mental health issues resulting from combat situations were explicitly excluded from the new pension law. It stated that ‘not counting as damages of the body are conditions that only manifest during examination or have psychological causes’.²²

The only additional payment veterans received under Nazi rule was the *Frontkämpferzulage* (additional pay for those fighting on the front) of 60 Reichsmark a year. Crouthamel concludes that the economic condition of veterans with disabilities thus declined steadily during the 1930s.²³ After the German invasion of Poland in 1939,

¹⁹ Reich Labour Minister regarding orders for implication of Art. 1, attachment 1, 10 Dec. 1936 (Bundesarchiv Berlin (BArch), R3901/10164, p. 2), quoted in: Neuner, *Politik und Psychiatrie*, p. 231; Deutscher Reichstag, ‘Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses’, article 1, in Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, ‘1000 Schlüsseldokumente zur deutschen Geschichte im 20. Jahrhundert’ (<https://www.1000dokumente.de/index.html?l=de>) (accessed 30 May 2022).

²⁰ Kurt Günther, *Sammlung und Auswertung ärztlicher Gutachten aus der Kriegsbeschädigtenversorgung (Reichsversorgung) über die Bedeutung äußerer Einflüsse für Entstehung u. Verlauf chronischer Leiden* (Leipzig, 1940), p. 29.

²¹ Crouthamel, *The Great War*, pp 132, 152.

²² Deutscher Reichstag, *Wehrmachtsfürsorge und -versorgungsgesetz (WFVG)* (1938), article 4, Abs. 1-2.

²³ Crouthamel, *The Great War*, pp 161-2.

payment of pensions was shifted from the Reich Labour Ministry to the High Command of the Wehrmacht whose pension policy has found little scrutiny in scholarship as of now.

The distribution of pensions between veterans with ties to Nazi organisations and those politically ambiguous or opposed to the Nazis is interesting and revealing. In particular, *Alte Kämpfer* (Old Guard), those affiliated with the NSDAP, Schutzstaffel (SS) or Sturmabteilung (SA) prior to 1933 were often met with more understanding and received pensions despite the reform of pension law. They had a powerful lobby, the NSKOV (National Socialist War Victim's Care) which pushed for pensions for *Alte Kämpfer* in case of mental illness. To accommodate the party's rhetoric that war did not cause mental illness but was a psychologically strengthening and healthy experience, the NSKOV argued that these men had shown bravery in battle and did not receive pensions for war-related injury. Instead, the mental illnesses of these men stemmed from assault suffered during street fights with Communists and abuse under the Weimar Republic's legal system and bureaucracy. Rather than their mental illness, their efforts for the NSDAP were seen as entitling them to pensions. By comparison, veterans who stressed that the mental toll war took on them rendered them disabled found hardly any support among examining psychiatrists and in the National Pensions Court, as their reports highlighted the horrors of war instead of glorifying the war experience as Nazi ideology demanded them to do.²⁴

This cronyism was only possible because of the cooperation of examining medical professionals. This meant disqualification of veterans with mental illness, but exemptions for their own party clientele needing support. German psychiatry shifted from its highly diverse range of opinions in the 1920s to an overwhelmingly uniform opinion under Nazi rule. Most of this '*Gleichschaltung*' (synchronisation) of the medical field took place during the 1930s.²⁵ Among cooperating psychiatrists, opportunism mixed with national conservative convictions and hope for funding that had not been granted by the Weimar government.²⁶

²⁴ Jason Crouthamel, "Hysterische Männer"? Traumatisierte Veteranen des Ersten Weltkrieges und ihr Kampf um Anerkennung im "Dritten Reich" in Babette Quinkert, Philipp Rauh and Ulrike Winkler (eds), *Krieg und Psychiatrie 1914-1950* (Göttingen, 2010), pp 30-40.

²⁵ Neuner, *Politik und psychiatrie*, pp 327-8, 330.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 210-2.

Until 1933, not only medical but also social and economic conditions of the applicant were taken into account when deciding about the payment of pensions. Pension courts decided on case-by-case basis and medical staff did not have the last say. This irked most psychiatrists who were opposed to pensions for veterans with mental illness and took offence in the pension court's disregard for their opinion.²⁷ Unlike the Weimaranian stance on pensions, Nazi ideology was compatible with the opinion held by most German clinical psychiatrists that saw wartime acquired mental illness as a personal 'weakness' of the patient and thus ineligible for pensions.²⁸

The Nazis considered veterans' mental illnesses either to be hereditary and thus ineligible for pensions or considered veterans with mental illness to be frauds to begin with, accusing them to be *arbeitsscheu* (opposed to work) and *asozial* (asocial). Further, a breakdown during combat was at odds with the Nazi concept of war as a mentally strengthening experience. Consequently, those who broke down under wartime stress were stigmatised as morally and genetically inferior and undeserving of being a member of the *Volksgemeinschaft* which also meant that they were not entitled to taxpayer support. The Nazis considered the collective of the *Volksgemeinschaft* to be of higher importance than individual rights to pension and social welfare. In order to push their convictions through, the Nazis enforced cooperation of the medical field, including that of psychiatry.

As early as 1933, the Nazis marginalised medical schools that did not agree with German clinical psychiatry, the field of medicine that was overwhelmingly opposed to pensions for mentally ill veterans from the start. This 'synchronisation' of medical personnel and opinions included cessation of funding, dismissal of medical professionals from their positions and taking away their medical licence, as well as the closing of clinics and practices.²⁹ One of the most affected fields was psychology. It stood in opposition to psychiatry in regard to veteran pensions as it saw mental illness as most often exogenously caused. Most opposing psychologists were forced to emigrate by 1938. The few psychologists who remained founded the *Neue Deutsche Seelenheilkunde* (New German Psychology) which based its teachings on racist and

²⁷ Neuner, *Politik und psychiatrie*, pp 327-9.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 256-7.

²⁹ Neuner, *Politik und psychiatrie*, pp 254-7, 329-30.

eugenicist beliefs in accordance with Nazi ideology, prioritising the interests of the Nazi collective over the patient's individual needs. They called for total self-reliance on the part of patients with mental illness and considered pensions to be the cause of mental illness rather than an aid, as they allegedly made patients easily exhausted and unwilling to work. This catered to the Nazi regime that aimed to reduce welfare costs and used the psychologists' and psychiatrists' argument to declare pensions the cause of mental illness rather than beneficial support.³⁰

These psychologists and psychiatrists declared that individuals unable to care for themselves were to be considered 'ballast existences', allegedly harming the autarky of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. According to Nazi ideology, they should thus be murdered for the 'benefit' of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Benedict stresses the importance of semantics in Nazi ideology as enabling mass murder through the slow dehumanisation of individuals in propaganda. The Nazis used dehumanising rhetoric, referring to their victims as 'empty husks' or 'life unworthy of living', and framed their murder as 'gentle death'.³¹

Stromberger finds that eugenicist ideas were readily embraced by the German population as they offered a 'justification' to murder those undermining the vision of German racial superiority perpetuated by the Nazis.³² The Nazis promoted eugenics not only to the medical profession but also to the wider population, for instance through propaganda movies like *Ich klage an* (I accuse) which propagates the murder of a woman with multiple sclerosis by her husband as 'merciful death'. The movie was hugely popular at the time of release and reflected prevalent German attitudes towards illness.³³ Among the victims of this eugenicist ideology were veterans with mental illness whose wartime experience collided with the Nazis' vision of war as heroic and mentally strengthening. Their mental illness was perceived as a sign of their 'genetic inferiority' that should be purged from the *Volksgemeinschaft*.

³⁰ Ibid., pp 210-2, 216-23.

³¹ J.T. Hughes, 'Neuropathology in Germany during World War II, Julius Hallervorden (1882-1965) and the Nazi programme of "Euthanasia"' in *Journal of Medical Biography*, xv, 2 (2007), pp 116-17.

³² Helge Stromberger, *Die Ärzte, die Schwestern, die SS und der Tod, Kärnten und das produzierte Sterben im NS-Staat* (Klagenfurt, 2002), p. 46.

³³ Erwin Leiser, *Nazi cinema* (New York, 1974), p. 69.

The conservative and nationalist medical elite was eager to push the Nazis' claim that mental illness was hereditary rather than caused by exogenous events like war, onto social welfare and changed pension law accordingly. The Nazis aimed at creating a 'scientific' foundation for their eugenicist and racist ideology which German psychiatry and New German Psychology were willing to provide in exchange for financial funding and state support of their ethically questionable research. This 'scientification' of politics and politicisation of science created an effective alliance that aimed at pushing pension recipients with mental illness out of social welfare and German society as a whole.³⁴

As Schmuhl observes, the Nazi regime aimed at controlling 'birth and death, sexuality and reproduction, body and genetic dispositions' of its population.³⁵ To reach this goal, the Nazis made use of willing medical staff to create a German population that met their ideological demands. It becomes evident that the Nazis made medical science a tool of their political power and used it to exercise totalitarian control directed against those that did not fit or did not want to fit into their idea of a German state built on the concept of *Volksgemeinschaft*.³⁶

Consequently, the Nazis were keen on pushing veterans with mental illness out of the group of 'deserving' pension recipients. Mental illness caused by combat clashed vividly with the Nazis' concept of war as a healthy and character-building experience for men. Especially after the invasion of Poland, propaganda was keen on silencing any voices that did not present the front war experience as heroic. Veterans who raised awareness of the multifaceted horrors soldiers experienced during war were not what the Nazis wanted when planning further attacks on neighbouring countries.³⁷ An example of this type of criticism voiced by veterans with mental illness is the letter of veteran Konrad D. who wrote to the state secretary Lammers in Berlin in 1933:

[Hitler] calls us war victims 'heroes': but does one let the 'heroes' become impoverished and depr[iv]ed when they have sacrificed their last bit of strength? Or

³⁴ Neuner, *Politik und psychiatrie*, pp 256-7.

³⁵ Hans-Walter Schmuhl, 'Das "Dritte Reich" als biopolitische Entwicklungsdiktatur. Zur inneren Logik der nationalsozialistischen Genozidpolitik' in Margret Kampmeyer (ed.), *Tödliche Medizin, Rassenwahn im Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen, 2009), p.10.

³⁶ Benedict and Shields, *Nurses and midwives*, p. 23.

³⁷ Crouthamel, *The Great War*, p. 197.

should they just fling themselves on their swords and hand over their crisis, poverty and sickness to their children, for whom the state will also show no interest? ... I could not have volunteered for the war, nor could I expect my son to volunteer for another, if I knew I would have returned as a war victim to experience gratitude [sic] and defeat.³⁸

To silence Konrad D., the Reich Labour Ministry ordered doctors to declare him insane and constantly passed him from one office to the other in hopes of wearing him out. Finally, he was left with a meagre 48 Reichsmark unemployment support in 1935 instead of the officer's pension he fought for. It is unclear what happened to D. once the persecution of persons with mental illness and disabilities became harsher, as he left no further files. The threat to legally incapacitate him was a clear sign to other veterans that criticism of the regime hardly yielded success but most often resulted in repercussions.³⁹

By discrediting veterans with mental illness as 'asocial' and 'hereditarily inferior', the Nazis effectively silenced any protests by this group as unreliable and fraudulent. This also worked as a scare tactic to prevent other veterans from speaking up if they saw the punishment for any non-conformity with Nazi doctrine on war experience. This gradual disenfranchisement of the once heralded 'First citizens of the Reich' has to be embedded in the Nazi's ideological stance on war as a mentally strengthening experience which is exemplified in the *Frontkämpfermythos* (myth of the front fighter). The Nazis argued that soldiers who took leave due to mental illness left their post at the front and thus betrayed the other soldiers and by extension the entire *Volksgemeinschaft*, making them ineligible for social support by the German population.⁴⁰

As a consequence, disillusion grew among veterans with mental illness who had bought into the NSDAP's promises of better veteran care and the 'Thanks of the Fatherland' that they had found to be lacking in Weimar Germany. Ego documents from the mid-1930s to 1940s show that veterans with disabilities or mental illness were increasingly unhappy with the pension policy. Many appealed to courts for recognition,

³⁸ Konrad D. to Staatssekretär Dr. Lammers, 19 Mar. 1933 (BArch, R3901/Film 37011), quoted in: Crouthamel, *The Great War*, p. 199.

³⁹ Crouthamel, *The Great War*, p. 202.

⁴⁰ Neuner, *Politik und psychologie*, p. 203.

often highlighting their efforts during the war, but hardly had any success. Despite the growing disillusion with the *Frontkämpfermythos*, most veterans held on to the belief that bad administration and not Nazi ideology was responsible for the pension cuts.

An example would be Paul J., whose pension for psychological wounds had been cancelled in 1932 and whose appeal for a pension was again rejected in 1937. Following the rejection by the Berlin Welfare Office, he sought to present his case to Hitler in person. J. believed that the disenfranchisement of veterans with mental illness could not stem from the dictator he idolised as a fellow war veteran. In the letter sent to Hitler's chancellery, J. inquired: 'What would the Führer say if he knew about my case?' which sums up the stance most veterans affected by pension cuts held regarding the Nazis' welfare policy.⁴¹ Their belief in Hitler was apparently unshaken despite veterans' increasingly precarious situation and clear statements by the Nazis about their disregard for those having mentally illnesses, veterans or not.

While debate exists as to the degree to which the constant discredit these veterans received affected their self-image, it is clear that it lowered their social standing in German society.⁴² Fear emerged among veterans with mental illness when their diagnosis was declared to be a hereditary illness, as these often fell under the 'Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring'. This shift in legislation changed the disenfranchisement of veterans with mental illness from diminished social prestige and a precarious economic position to the existential threat of forced sterilisation and, after 1939, murder under the Nazis' 'Euthanasia' programmes.⁴³

The systematic murder of persons with disabilities, chronic or mental illness under the so-called 'Aktion T4' was the culmination of a long list of dehumanising and discriminating policies orchestrated by the Nazis. 'Aktion T4' was the systematic selection and murder of persons with mental illness or disabilities, living in institutions, at death camps like Hadamar. The murders took place between 1939 and 1941 and approximately 70,000 adults and 5,000 children were murdered.⁴⁴ The number of veterans among them remains unclear, as not all files exist. Officially, patients who had

⁴¹ Paul J. to Kanzlei des Führers, 17 Aug. 1938 (BArch, R3901/Film 37014), quoted in: Crouthamel, *The Great War*, pp 181-2.

⁴² Neuner, *Politik und psychologie*, p. 332

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp 332-3.

⁴⁴ Ernst Klee (ed.), *Dokumente zur 'Euthanasie'* (Frankfurt am Main, 1985), p. 232.

served in the military were exempt from this policy according to an order from Brandt, one of the leading organisers of the ‘Aktion T4’ programme: ‘In all cases of service during the wars, we have to let the matter rest. Persons who received military honours are not to be included in the Action to begin with’.⁴⁵

The report sheets that were completed in hospitals to determine if a patient was to be murdered specified whether the patient had served in either world war and if so, how they had performed and which wounds they had suffered.⁴⁶ Due to harsh criticism by high ranking clergymen, public debate about the murders and the recruitment of those tasked with ‘Aktion T4’ for the planning of the Holocaust, the programme was abandoned in 1941.⁴⁷

The systematic murder still continued but in decentralised form. This second phase of the murders has often been described by scholars as ‘regionalised Euthanasia’ or ‘wild Euthanasia’ as it did not follow a top-down order. This method shifted the killings from centralised hospitals to scattered places in order to obscure the fact that murders were taking place. The only exemption from this rule was Bavaria which issued a specific guideline for its ‘regionalised Euthanasia’ programme. In Bavarian mental hospitals, patients who were unable to work were set on *Hungerkost*, a diet that led to starvation within three months.⁴⁸ The order by the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior specified that patients that were ‘doing useful work, in ongoing therapy’, while ‘children that could be educated, war-disabled and those suffering from senile psychosis’ were exempt from the *Hungerkost*. They were given better food while the remaining patients were starved to death.⁴⁹ Again, war veterans were nominally exempt from this programme.

⁴⁵ Document from Mar. 10 (BArch, R96 I/2, points 1 and 2), quoted in: Crouthamel, “‘Hysterische Männer’”, pp 68-9.

⁴⁶ Klee, *Dokumente*, Questions 3 a-c in the 1941 sheet ‘Meldebogen’, p. 95.

⁴⁷ Uwe Dietrich Adam, ‘Diskussionsbeitrag’ in Eberhard Jäckel and Jürgen Rohwer (eds), *Der Mord an den Juden im zweiten Weltkrieg, Entschlussbildung und Verwirklichung* (Frankfurt am Main 1987), p. 7.

⁴⁸ Heinz Faulstich, *Hungersterben in der psychiatrie 1914-1949, mit einer topographie der NS-psychiatrie* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1997), pp 317-25.

⁴⁹ Aufstellung über Zusammensetzung und Kalorien der sog. A- und B-Kost (Staatsanwaltschaft b. d. Landgericht Nürnberg-Fürth II, Akte 2343 II), quoted in Hans-Ludwig Siemen, ‘Hungerkosterlass (30. Nov. 1942)’ in *Historisches Lexikon Bayerns*, 2021 (<https://www.historisches-lexikon-bayerns.de/Lexikon/Hungerkosterlass>) (accessed 9 May 2022).

Other forms of murder by medical personnel took place as well, for instance through electrocution or injection of barbiturates. Not only top-down eugenicist orders were responsible for murder but also doctors and medical personnel following Nazi ideology on their own accord. The voluntary cooperation of the German medical field in these murders is evident.⁵⁰ It might be argued that this eagerness was in part aided by the vehement propaganda distributed by the Nazis since their takeover of power but it also has to be noted that eugenicist ideology had already been prevalent in German society before 1933.

Still, the Nazi regime was again caught in an ideological conflict between their eugenicist ideas of a 'healthy *Volksgemeinschaft*' and their reverence for war veterans. Statistical evidence shows that the Nazis prioritised eugenicist plans over their idealisation of war veterans. Hinz-Wessels et.al. found that survival rates of veterans were not higher than those of other patients in mental hospitals. Deciding for survival were the patients' ability to work and quality of their work, short stay at the clinic and easiness of care, as well as ethnic background and religion. Eastern European and Jewish patients had little chance of survival. In their case, the division between 'Euthanasia' and genocide becomes difficult.⁵¹ Thus, despite the seeming protection of veterans in governmental orders, the evidence suggests that they were susceptible of murder.

The Nazi regime dealt with its own ideological inconsistencies in case of veterans with mental illness with a carrot and stick approach. Nazi Germany relied on a system that made access to welfare and social support conditional on politically and ideologically correct behaviour while it harshly punished those who did not or could not conform to its ideology's ideal of Germanness. In case of veterans this included all those unable or unwilling to hide the mental toll war took on them. Veterans had to serve the Third Reich as propagandist tools for the positive effects of war, even after their time as soldiers had ended. If they failed, or were unwilling to do so, they faced harsh repercussions. Preferential treatment of veterans, despite pre-election promises, was not given to them on the basis of their war-time service but their ability and

⁵⁰ Benedict and Shields, *Nurses and midwives*, pp 226-7.

⁵¹ Hinz-Wessels et al., 'Zur bürokratischen Abwicklung eines Massenmords, die "Euthanasie"-Aktion im Spiegel neuer Dokumente', in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, liii, 1 (2005), pp 93-95.

willingness to support the Nazis and propagate their ideology. Neither economic need nor medical condition but Nazi ideology defined who had a legitimate cause to be supported by the state. Only veterans who were productive, conformed to the political system and ‘racially worthy’ were entitled to pensions under Nazi rule. This excluded mentally ill veterans who were deemed ‘unwilling to work’ and thus ‘asocial’ and ‘enemies of the *Volksgemeinschaft*’. They contrasted with the otherwise idolised group of veterans entitled to financial support and a highly respected position in German society. This allowed the Nazis to connect two contradictory parts of their ideology which on the one hand praised veterans and on the other demonised mental illness.

Nazi ideology, reflected in its pension policy, aimed at the creation of an ideologically indoctrinated, economically productive population consisting only of mentally and physically healthy members of an ethnically homogenous *Volksgemeinschaft*. It enforced adherence to Nazi ideology among the German population by stirring up hatred within society against those excluded from the *Volksgemeinschaft* and igniting fear within it to become ostracised from its protection in case of non-adherence to Nazi ideology. The primacy of ideology determined access to health care, financial and social support in Nazi Germany. This approach was supported by legal and medical changes which overall created an increasingly precarious and potentially life-threatening situation for mentally ill veterans of the First World War.

The Canon and the pope: what can a one-man-and-his-wife mission to the Vatican tell us about the crisis in Anglican and Catholic relations in 1850?

Robert Gullifer

In January 1850, George Townsend, a Canon of Durham Cathedral, set out with his wife on a journey to Italy. In December 1850, he published his *Journal of a Tour in Italy*.¹ Townsend was a not untypical Anglican clergyman of his time. Something of a biblical scholar, broad-church, and establishment in outlook, he lived in ample comfort, and relative ‘retirement’ [seclusion] as he puts it, in the college of Canons in Durham. Like many of his well-heeled contemporaries, he was advised by his doctor to travel to a warmer climate on health grounds. But what makes his journey unusual is that he decided that its focus should be to seek an audience with the pope ‘to implore him ... to cause the reconsideration, in a free and general Synod, of the controversies of the past’.²

Following the microhistorical methodology of Carlo Ginzburg and Giovanni Levi, and as further elaborated by Francesca Trivellato, John-Paul Ghobrial and Jan de Vries, this article aims to show how Townsend’s *Journal* meets an arguably essential methodological criterion that ‘a valuable and potentially powerful microhistory sets out to address a problem, or challenge a thesis’.³ Further, as Filippo de Vivo has pointed out, a useful microhistorical method focuses ‘on that which is at first sight incomprehensible or strange ... because it indicates alterity, a gap between our mindset

¹ George Townsend, *Journal of a tour in Italy, in 1850: with an account of an interview with the pope, at the Vatican* (London, 1850).

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³ Jan de Vries, ‘Playing with scales: the global and the micro, the macro and the nano’, in J-P. Ghobrial (ed.), *Global History and Microhistory, Past and Present*, supplement 14 (2019), p. 36.

... and that which is revealed in the document'.⁴ So in response to sceptics of the microhistorical methodology of 'postmodernist historiography', who deem there has been too much preoccupation with leaves unrelated to the branches and trunk, this article argues that the alterity of the writings of a relatively obscure Anglican clergyman contributes to a more nuanced and diverse approach than traditional macro narratives of the events of 1850 allow.⁵ It will challenge the general assertion that there was a predictable deterioration in Anglican and Catholic relations in 1850, based on broadly political or religious 'party' lines.

This microhistorical methodology builds on these overarching criteria but differs from the approaches of Ginzburg and Levi. They have chiefly used microhistorical sources to give voice to inarticulate sections of society which have left few records, but nonetheless challenge the narrative of governmental archives. For this reason, with notable exceptions such as Noel Malcolm's *Agents of Empire*, microhistories have drawn less on the records of the well-connected because, more often than not, they reflect an existing macro narrative.⁶ However, although Canon Townsend is certainly articulate and well-connected, he represents the outlook of a particular class whose voice has been too broadly absorbed by historians into the grander narrative of 1850. But very much in the traditional spirit of microhistory, he is also a small individual willing to grapple with bigger structures and tell us about it.

Furthermore, this article advocates a methodology which has no obvious model in existing microhistorical literature, although it is derived from that which Ginzburg proposes in his article on Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes.⁷ By close textual analysis of an articulate source (for example one in which we can be sure that the nuances of language are significant), I will aim to show we can uncover a set of telling forensic clues which have been overlooked by others. An analysis of what Townsend chooses to tell us and, crucially, what he chooses *not* to tell us, together with inconsistencies and discrepancies in his text, will allow us to advance what John-Paul

⁴ Filippo de Vivo, 'Prospect or refuge? Microhistory, history on the large scale' in *Cultural and Social History*, 7 (2010), p. 39.

⁵ For historiographical application of this metaphor, see F.R. Ankersmit, 'Historiography and Postmodernism', in *History and Theory*, xxviii, 2 (1989), pp 149-50.

⁶ Noel Malcolm, *Agents of empire* (London, 2015), p. xx.

⁷ Carlo Ginzburg, and Anna Davin (transl.), 'Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes: clues and scientific method', *History Workshop*, 9 (1980), pp 5-36.

Ghobrial has called ‘microhistory’s characteristic subversion of the triumphalism of grand narratives’.⁸ It is worth noting that two facsimile copies of Townsend’s *Journal* have been recently published, one by Cambridge University Press in Britain and the other by a U.S. publisher. On their cover promotions, both acknowledge the cultural importance of the *Journal*; but there has never been any scholarly commentary on it.

1850 is widely documented as a tumultuous year for Anglican and Catholic relations. With military and diplomatic support from France and Austria, pope Pius IX returned to Rome in April 1850. He had been forced to flee from Rome in November 1848 following a republican revolution. Although there was an ambivalent response in Britain to the rise of Roman Catholic influence, following Catholic Emancipation in 1832 and the influx of Irish Catholic labourers in the later 1840s as a consequence of the Great Famine, the pope’s efforts at governmental reform in the years up to 1850 were much lauded by the British political establishment.⁹ The *realpolitik* of Catholicism in national life, together with a British imperial agenda to expedite a railway through the Papal States for easier access to the Mediterranean, paved the way for formal diplomatic relations with the papacy in 1848.¹⁰

But, by all accounts, republican revolution had concentrated the pope’s mind. Previous liberalism gave way to pronounced conservatism. On 29 September 1850, the pope announced plans for a Catholic hierarchy of bishops in England, causing a huge public outcry. Whilst there had always been a broad popular suspicion of Catholicism, the mood of the British establishment seemed to change dramatically. On 14 October, *The Times* declared that: ‘the pope and his advisers have mistaken our complete tolerance for indifference to their designs’.¹¹ In November, significantly on the eve of Guy Fawkes Night with all its anti-Catholic associations, the prime minister, Lord John Russell, wrote to the bishop of Durham: ‘I agree with you in considering “the late aggression of the pope upon our Protestantism” as “insolent and insidious”, and I

⁸ de Vries, ‘Playing with scales’, p. 23.

⁹ Saho Matsumoto-Best, *Britain and the papacy in the age of revolution, 1846-1851* (Woodbridge, 2013), p. 1.

¹⁰ *Hansard’s parliamentary debates*, third series., vol ci, cols 201-4 (17 Aug. 1848, Diplomatic Relations with the Court of Rome).

¹¹ Quoted in E.R. Norman, *Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England* (London, 1968), p. 55.

therefore feel as indignant as you can do upon the subject'.¹² The letter was made public in *The Times* on 7 November and the term 'papal aggression' became firmly part of national discourse and much subsequent historiography.

Consequently, the historiography of 1850 has largely concentrated on macro governmental reaction. Not enough attention has been paid to the ecclesiastical reaction of social and religious conservatives who were equally worried by in-fighting among Anglicans and a related fall-out which might benefit Catholicism. Certainly by 1850 the Church of England was in something of a crisis and lacked a united voice. The internal doctrinal divisions between low-church evangelicals and High-Church Tractarians were coming to a head, with concomitant anti-clericalism and a debate about spiritual authority in the Church. Above all, the settled and comfortable constitutional monopoly the Anglican Church had enjoyed since the sixteenth century had been shaken by the enfranchisement of non-conformists and Catholics in the earlier part of the century. W.J. Conybeare, writing in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1853 identified three 'parties' in mid-nineteenth-century Anglicanism: 'low' 'high', and 'broad'. But he recognised that 'on closer inspection, it is seen that each of these is again triply subdivided into sections which exemplify respectively the exaggeration, the stagnation, and the normal development of the principles which they severally claim to represent.'¹³ Building on this in his recent survey of the historiography of Anglican identities and parties, Andrew Atherstone notes how historians have shown that ecclesiastical opinions were often shaped by 'personality and social connexions as much as 'party' allegiance to a set of distinct doctrinal principles'.¹⁴

There is no doubt that responses to the events of 1850 are more complicated than simple division along doctrinal and denominational lines. This is where Townsend's *Journal*, as a microhistorical exemplar, can help us. More account needs to be taken of

¹² G.M. Young and W.D. Handcock, (eds), *English historical documents, 1833-1874* (London, 1956), p. 367.

¹³ W.J. Conybeare, *Church Parties: an essay*, repr. from *The Edinburgh Review* (London, 1864), p. 1.

¹⁴ Andrew Atherstone, 'Identities and Parties', in Mark Chapman, Sathianathan Clarke, and Martyn Percy (eds), *The Oxford book of Anglican studies*, pp 79-80 (published online Jul. 2016) (doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199218561.013.6); Peter Nockles, 'Church parties in the pre-tractarian Church of England 1750-1833: the "Orthodox"- some problems of definition and identity', in John Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor (eds), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: from toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993), pp 355-6.

a heady mixture of political and religious anxieties, on all sides, in which allegiances and objectives shifted nervously in a fast-changing world. As Saho Matsumoto-Best has observed: ‘few ... studies have attempted to put the “no-popery” movement in the context of the changing British perception of Pius IX over the previous four years, which saw him travel from being viewed as a benign anti-Austrian liberal and Italian nationalist to being characterised as a despotic enemy of Britain and threat to the queen’s sovereignty’.¹⁵

The most disarming aspect of Townsend’s *Journal* is the marked shift in tone between his account of meeting Pius XI in April 1850 and the ‘advertisement’ with which he prefaces the publication of his *Journal* in December 1850. Essentially, the ‘advertisement’ is an apologia for Townsend’s visit to the pope in the light of his September 1850 declaration of a Catholic hierarchy in England. Townsend denounces ‘the promulgation of the late unscriptural, absurd, and insolent bull ... dividing England into dioceses, as if it were either a heathen or a popish country.’¹⁶ Interestingly, Townsend uses the very same adjective (‘insolent’) as his neighbour and colleague, the bishop of Durham, had used in the latter’s correspondence with the prime minister. Townsend seems suddenly to have embraced the prevailing anti-papal mood, in contrast to his previous admiration for the personal simplicity and courtesy of Pius IX and the kindness with which he was received by Catholic dignitaries in Italy. And yet, in common with his class and the society around him, there is a predominant thread running through the whole *Journal* which makes his *volte-face* less surprising.

Obviously, we must test the prejudices and context of any source material. One of the questions we must ask ourselves in examining Townsend’s text is how far we believe the truth of his stated objectives in visiting the pope. He says (and note he emphasises this by using italics) ‘*I went in the pursuit of what I deemed a religious object, in the performance of what I considered a religious duty*’.¹⁷ He sets out his stall in spiritual terms, consistent with an instinctive ecumenical outlook. But other parts of his *Journal* suggest an additional subconscious concern. In explaining to the pope why he wanted a meeting, Townsend says that he ‘was grieved to see the prevalence of

¹⁵ Matsumoto-Best, *Britain and the papacy*, p. 2.

¹⁶ Townsend, *Journal*, p. iii.

¹⁷ Townsend, *Journal*, p. 11.

modern infidelity resulting from the disunion of believers'.¹⁸ But for Townsend, infidelity has a particular meaning. Earlier he asserts that 'A common danger ... from a common enemy - infidelity and socialism - threatens the churches of England, France, Germany, and Italy.'¹⁹ Time and again he mentions his concern at social and constitutional disorder. So, his mission to Pius IX is driven as much by political anxiety as religious idealism. For Townsend, a falling away from the Church will bring anarchy. In his view, revolutions and wars in Europe have not been properly contained by the Catholic Church compared with the 'mutual confidence, and national strength, which distinguishes and adorns anti-papal England'.²⁰ But in such a confident pronouncement, is Townsend seeking to convince himself, and his readers, of a settled state in England about which, in fact, he is beginning to have doubts? Christian Chartism, in particular, had begun to challenge the established church. For example, a leading Chartist, Ernest Jones, whose radical views were influenced by personal acquaintance with Marx and Engels, attacked both the Anglican and Catholic churches in a series of lectures between December 1850 and January 1851.²¹ Moreover, the religious census of 1851 confirmed fears that had been growing in previous years. Not only did the census reveal that only about 50 per cent of the population were Anglican,²² but that on the Sunday of the census, it was estimated that '7,261,032 people in England and Wales had attended public worship and 10,666,577 had not'.²³

In one sense, it is strange that Townsend should be appealing to the leader of a church he regards as corrupt to present a united front against the forces of social change. However, particularly in the years leading up to 1850, Pius IX had been seen by the British liberal establishment as a useful ally in keeping a balance of power in Europe, a powerful figure in helping Italy towards a settled constitution of the sort which reaffirmed social order. And it is clear that Townsend saw him in that spirit, but driven by a religious sincerity. A changing political and social order is somehow to be mitigated by a pan-Anglicanism, a sort of religious *pax Britannica*, in which he hoped

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 164.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 39.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 254.

²¹ Matsumoto-Best, *Britain and the Papacy*, p. 157.

²² Rowan Strong, 'Introduction' in Rowan Strong (ed.), *The Oxford history of Anglicanism, Vol. III* (Oxford, 2017), p. 6.

²³ K.S. Inglis, 'Patterns of religious worship in 1851', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xi, 1 (1960), p. 78.

the pope could be persuaded to join. Hence his later shock at Pius IX's sudden introduction of a parallel system of church government in England. It is a shock (and obvious personal embarrassment), reflected in the uncharacteristically intemperate language of Townsend's prefatory 'advertisement' which is clearly designed to deflect criticism of the premise of his Vatican visit.²⁴ The pope not only potentially challenges the British constitution, but is also potentially party to the sort of social unrest Townsend fears, especially in the Catholic Church's influence over incoming Irish labourers. So, it is hardly surprising that Townsend should end up condemning the pope's actions as a threat to 'modern constitutional liberty, and therefore to national happiness' or, perhaps more pertinently, to the settled social order of which he and his peers were so clearly beneficiaries.²⁵ And, conveniently, in espousing and fomenting an anti-papal cause, a conservative establishment could channel popular energy away from domestic political unrest.²⁶

But to stress Townsend's political agenda at the expense of his spiritual concern is to fall into the oversimplification of too much of the macro historiography of 1850. As we have seen, there is evidence to suggest that liberal, broad-church theology prevailed in Durham in the mid-1800s, even if overlaid by a social conservatism. As a biblical scholar, clearly well-versed in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, Townsend was steeped in the traditions of the primitive or early church. This was his constant assertion of common ground in most of his conversations with Catholic clergy and laity. It demonstrates an important point of dialogue between educated Anglicans and Catholics, where the battlelines were less fiercely drawn than might be supposed from popular polemic. Townsend frequently used the word 'Truth' (always capitalised) as the starting point for a united Christianity. But, as with many who claimed they understood a universal truth, the concept is essentially his truth, his vision, rather than something more objective. Nonetheless, however partisan the concept, it is indicative of a conscientious attempt to strive for moral high ground: something beyond the pettiness of 'party' concerns.

²⁴ 'The controversy is between ... good and evil.', Townsend, *Journal*, p. x.

²⁵ Townsend, *Journal*, p. iv.

²⁶ D.G. Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in mid-Victorian England* (Stanford, 1992), p. 235.

One of the more striking aspects of a close reading of the *Journal* is the realisation of just how misleading its title is. It is not so much a travel journal as a platform for Townsend's theological and political views. In describing a particular visit, he rarely missed an opportunity to make a lofty criticism of what he saw as Catholic superstition. But if Townsend was harsh on popular Catholicism, he reserved some of his most excoriating comments for Anglican converts to Catholicism. Underscoring much of his narrative is an innate fear of a subversive drift of Anglicans towards Rome, a fear which was even stronger in establishment circles than that which fed popular anti-Catholic sentiment.²⁷ For example, he thought himself under surveillance when he was followed by a priest whom he imagined was 'one of our late perverts' (Townsend is deliberately using a popular twist of the word 'convert' here).²⁸ And yet in another passage, typical of his ambivalence when passing judgement on people of his own social circle, he admitted that he could follow the example of a convert like 'Mr Overbeck ... a good man', except that his intellect would never allow him to overcome the evidence of scripture.²⁹

It is this complexity of competing spiritual, intellectual, cultural, and social responses which comes through most strongly in the *Journal*. Theological judgments are frequently clouded by cultural and social allegiances. Such seeming contradictions and discrepancies are telling clues about the response of the educated, intellectually liberal, upper classes towards the growing influence of the Catholic Church in England, to which most macro narratives of 1850 do not give enough emphasis.

First, there is no doubt that Townsend had a good opinion of his own social standing: he cannot resist moments of affected humility when drawing attention to other people's praise of him; nor does he expect to be thwarted in his desire to meet ambassadors, prelates, or princes. When Pius IX does not immediately offer him an exclusive second audience, his pique is obvious and he returns immediately to England. Second, Townsend often makes judgements about other people based on their appearance and importance. In a passage which betrays much about his values, Townsend recounts visiting the cathedral in Naples where he admires the 'fragrance of

²⁷ Matsumoto-Best, *Britain and the papacy*, pp 161-2.

²⁸ Townsend, *Journal*, p. 33.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

the incense' and is clearly very pleased to meet 'a very gentlemanly canon' with whom he finds he can converse in Latin.³⁰ Some of Townsend's anti-Catholic scruples evaporate when, at the canon's behest, he is allowed to handle some of the treasures of the sacristy. Equally his snobbery and curiosity overcome his scorn for superstition when the Italian canon issues a favoured invitation to the famous Neapolitan ceremony of the liquefaction of St Januarius's blood. There are touching moments of honesty, too, when earlier at another church in Rome Townsend admits he struggled to retain his rational, intellectual outlook when deeply moved by witnessing prayers for the dead. He admitted 'such a prayer was natural' and then checked himself 'but it was not scriptural'.³¹ In such textual focus, we glimpse something of Townsend's conflicted mind. Townsend was frequently conflicted not only because of his aesthetic sensitivity, but also by his almost overweening sense of social solidarity with the higher Catholic clergy in the face of possible revolutionary threat. He writes in most fawning terms to Cardinal Mai that 'we live ... in days when even kings are in exile, and the most eminent are subject to changes and revolution' and offers him 'a frugal but hospitable table at the College of Durham' should he ever need to escape hostile forces who might interrupt his 'prosperity'.³² The shared fear of social disorder is palpable. Indeed he was quite content to have passive members of the Catholic hierarchy in England on his terms, but the pope's formal restoration of bishops and cardinals is quite a different matter.

Linked with Townsend's social snobbery was his obsessive concern for orderliness in all areas of life. Disorder, discourtesy, and a degraded intellect threatened his whole Britannic outlook. He comments on the practice of spitting during church services as 'offensive to those who are habituated to the decencies of English worship' and contrasts the beauty of Italian art with 'the filth of the streets', although such a comment further betrays his social isolation from some of the degradation of English cities of the time.³³ His disdain in this respect is not limited to Catholic clergy or Italian laity. At one point he launched an extraordinary attack of the 'slanginess' of the

³⁰ Townsend, *Journal*, p. 201.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp 105-6.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 116.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp 95, 120.

language of some Americans he met. 'They have the same religion, and the same literature; and they ought, if possible, to uphold the same standard of language'.

The sheer awe and wonder Townsend felt on seeing St Peter's for the first time show us a greater aesthetic honesty in his narrative than we might at first have supposed. From a microhistorical perspective, it illustrates a more ecumenical Anglican and Catholic communality of belief in the spirituality of an ordered sacred space. Townsend calls it 'the wonderful St Peter's ... we frequently returned to visit and inspect it, and to meditate within its walls'.³⁴ Townsend chooses his words carefully: meditation is different from prayer.

In following microhistorical methodology of looking closely for the small clues which help build up a more precise bigger picture, we should not neglect the role of Mrs Townsend. First, in the tradition of travel journals, it is not surprising that Townsend mentions his wife (often very affectionately as 'Mrs T') as a travelling companion. Equally, it is not surprising that he always mentions when she is excluded from a monastery or meeting on account of her gender, so that he can highlight Catholic and Protestant differences. In fact, he frequently relishes the opportunity, rather discourteously by his standards, to poke fun at his hosts' attitude: 'I bade them to be careful to purify the place with incense, as two females, though by mistake, had presumptuously passed their threshold'.³⁵

But Mrs Townsend is no mute voice in the narrative of the *Journal*. It is clear that Townsend admires her robust character and rather clever, opportune, often slyly amusing, assertions of Protestantism. For the reader, these stand in contrast to his rather more leaden moments of theological pomposity and reminds readers of his sound Protestantism in more colourful terms. Townsend, and we as readers, cannot help but enjoy the moment when, as a woman, Mrs Townsend is told she is not allowed to handle sacred items and so then rejoins with her less than innocent assertion that her husband is a 'Canonico' and should be allowed to touch them. Perhaps because he is again too much enjoying the aesthetic and social experience, Townsend was disingenuous in his

³⁴ Townsend, *Journal*, p. 73.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

subsequent comment: ‘I could not contradict her; neither could I at that moment explain ... that the Church of England had its canonries as well as the Church of Rome’.³⁶

Mrs Townsend’s most prominent role in the tour was as a translator. Whilst Townsend was well-versed in classical languages, she was clearly an accomplished modern linguist, fluent in French and Italian. Townsend, to his increasing admiration, relies greatly upon her as the tour progresses since his anglicised pronunciation of Latin was often difficult for Italianate Latin speakers to understand. In contrast to her cold reception by some Catholic prelates, it is particularly noticeable that Townsend recounts how courteously she was received by the pope. Pius IX immediately recognised her role as an interlocutor, even though, as Townsend observed, it was probably the first time the pope had encountered a Protestant clergyman accompanied by his wife.

Above all, the *Journal* shows Mrs Townsend to be a spirited, intelligent, woman. Her presence suffuses not only the touristic elements of the *Journal*, but also the ecclesiastical encounters. In this, Townsend shows his core belief that the intellect is what cuts across religious, class or gender divisions. More of this outlook is revealed in an account of a dinner party at which the men and women do not separate after dining, as was the custom in England. ‘Why should it not be so in England?’ asks Townsend. ‘The conversation of well-educated women is as interesting, as useful, and as agreeable as that of well-educated men’.³⁷ In this *eccezionale-normale*, endorsement of the primacy of the intellect, regardless of other social conventions, we can begin to understand even more clearly the response of Townsend’s class to the events of 1850.³⁸ Educated debate must fight back against the gross rhetoric of despotism and populism.

In drawing together what the *Journal of a Tour in Italy* can add to our understanding of Anglican and Catholic relations in 1850, I want now to focus on the salient micro-moment in this microhistory: the actual meeting of Townsend and Pius IX. First, we should notice that, in his text, Townsend mostly refers to his ‘audience’ with the pope. By the time he publishes his *Journal*, the title page proclaims that he had

³⁶ Ibid., p. 202.

³⁷ Townsend, *Journal*, p. 241.

³⁸ Edoardo Grendi, ‘Ripensare la microstoria’, *Quaderni Storici*, xxix, 86 (1994), p. 544 uses the term to define what he sees as a significant aspect of a microhistorical source. Townsend is *normale* as a representative of his class and profession, but *eccezionale* in his views on gender roles.

an 'interview' with the pope: he needs to make clear to an 1850 anti-papal readership that he is not in thrall to the pope. Second, the original Latin and Italian of his conversation and documents use terminology which is dutifully respectful to the papacy: for example, 'Sancte Pater' or 'Santa Sede'. Rather than properly translating these as 'Holy Father' and 'Holy See', Townsend omits the first and translates the second as 'Court of Rome'. It is as if Townsend is making a distinction between the sensitivities of an inner scholarly circle and a wider reading public. And we have ample proof of his acute understanding of the nuances of language when he debates the pope's meaning of '*homines bonae voluntatis*'.³⁹

The substance of Townsend's conversation with the pope is, of course, his proposal that Pius IX should convene a General Council to combat 'modern Infidelity'. The pope's response is lukewarm and, perhaps because this might reflect on the innate futility of his mission, Townsend does not report the conversation in detail. But, equally, neither does he take the opportunity to expand critically on it, which is inconsistent with the usual premium he placed on intellectual debate. And there follows in the narrative a most unusual dramatisation in which Townsend described his voice as 'tremulous with emotion.' He continued: 'I spoke from the heart; and I believe that my words went, therefore, to the heart of the Pontiff ... tears came into his eyes and he declared with much animation - and I believed him - that he prayed earnestly to the Omnipotent that he might be honoured as the healer of the wounds of the Church'.⁴⁰ The terms of ecclesiastical reconciliation in the pope's prayer are ambiguous; but the tone of Townsend's narrative is surely designed to make us to believe in a potentially successful outcome to his enterprise.

The microhistory of the canon and the pope presents a credible challenge to conventional interpretations of the events of 1850. Embodying one of the principles of microhistory, it presents a response to significant societal change which, although individual, is also a representative voice that complements official narratives. Townsend's *Journal* gives us an insight into how the established Anglican clergy and their educated social circle, a distinctive class, related to the ecclesiastical and social changes of the day. It enables us to begin to shift the balance of historiography away

³⁹ Townsend, *Journal*, p. 168.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

from a traditional account of ‘top-down’, governmental response to ‘papal aggression’ with its associated narrative of populist ‘no popery’.

First, we can see that Townsend and his circle in Durham were representative of principled, scholarly clergy, zealous in their adherence to scriptural authority, but liberal in debate among their own class. Hence, we can see how the political expediency of the government towards the papacy was complemented ecclesiastically by an instinctively liberal, leisured, intellectual, if socially conservative, approach in the years leading up to 1850. Second, the micro clues of the mindset of Townsend’s *Journal* confirm how the considerable doctrinal anxiety sweeping the Anglican church meant that the established clergy began to develop an ambivalent attitude towards the papacy. On the one hand, they were concerned about Catholic proselytising in England; but on the other, rapprochement with the pope might be useful in establishing religious solidarity in the face of threats from dissent and secularism. Third, it is clear that for the clergy of Townsend’s outlook and class, religious fragmentation was seen as a threat to social order. As we have seen, clergy of Townsend’s standing led very comfortable lives and it is noticeable how connected Townsend wants to be with Catholic clergy of similar social standing. He wants to establish a social solidarity, based on a re-affirmation of his view of English constitutional liberty, in the face of the political changes he observes across Europe. But, of course, such social connectivity is unacceptable once a Catholic hierarchy is perceived to threaten social and constitutional order. Fourth, Townsend’s emphasis on the primacy of intellectual debate helps us to understand the approach of the educated classes towards the papacy until late 1850. And it explains their subsequent horror of an imposed Catholic hierarchy which seemed to encourage a threatening popular outrage, over which the establishment had then to try to take control.

Ultimately, Townsend’s *Journal* challenges traditional accounts of the events of 1850. Despite the fact he claims to be unique, Townsend is the voice of a distinctive social group. In terms which claimed the intellectual and moral high ground, theological and social abhorrence of the rhetoric of populist intolerance informed persistent establishment Anglican attempts to engage with the hope of Catholic reform. So, whilst ‘no popery’ had been a popular cry, the shock and disappointment at the pope’s introduction of an English Catholic hierarchy produced an arguably stronger backlash, as in Townsend’s prefatory ‘advertisement’, from those who thought their rational, privileged, positions would win the day. Suddenly, and frighteningly, the world was changing.

Forming identities: Protestant male sociability in Limerick, 1813-1923

Craig Copley Brown

The strength and social cohesiveness of a community are underpinning factors of its success and unity. This notion was at the core of Protestant society in Limerick during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The period between 1813 and 1923 was one of significant change and innovation in the way in which men, within their distinct denominations and communities, engaged socially with one another. The establishment and growth of social, academic and sporting organisations in Limerick, in cooperation with different religious denominations, changed the way in which the city's Protestant population maintained a sense of community, fellowship and belonging outside of the confines of their churches. Owing to the small Protestant population in Limerick, the survival of its cultural identity relied on its ability to stand apart from Roman Catholics in providing for the members of its own denomination. In a rapidly changing political environment, the survival of Protestant male sociability depended largely on a common sense of identity within its own ranks, which manifested itself as perhaps the greatest risk to its unity and future.

The term 'sociability' can broadly be defined as the qualities or means by which people engage socially with one another. In historical studies, the concept is used to examine the 'different forms of social relationships' that existed at a particular time, or within a particular group.¹ During the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Ireland was immersed in a complex landscape of political and religious turmoil. The complexities were numerous but two that stand out, are the fractious relationship that existed between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism; and the

¹ H. Ninomiya, 'Sociability in history' in N.J. Smelser and P.B. Baltes (eds), *The international encyclopaedia of the social & behavioural sciences* (Amsterdam, 2001), p. 14, 208-14, 212.

complex and differing relations within Protestantism itself.² While much attention has been given in recent publications to the place and experiences of Protestants in a newly independent Irish state, the sociability of Protestants in the context of greater national discussions has often been overlooked.³

The complexities of nineteenth-century Irish Protestant society arise, in part, from the notion that two ‘national identities’ existed on the island of Ireland: Protestant and Roman Catholic.⁴ Some scholars have investigated Protestant society in Ireland in a specific locality. Ian d’Alton, for example, has examined the case of Cork from 1812 to 1844. He makes the point that the view of the Anglo-Irish Protestant ascendancy from the earlier part of the nineteenth century, was weakened by 1845, and had been replaced with a specific political Protestantism, in which a creedal bond was used to create a new political identity.⁵ This is an intriguing, if not controversial, view of Protestant society, as it explicitly suggests that a new approach was adopted in place of the failing Protestant ascendancy. D’Alton draws on the work of Daniel Owen Madden, when he noted that Protestant society did not have the same ‘self-confidence’ as Roman Catholic society.⁶ This, he argued, was owing to the fact that Roman Catholics outnumbered Protestants in some southern areas by a factor of twenty to one.⁷ This notion of being outnumbered is an important one when considering the place in which Protestants found themselves in their relations with Roman Catholics in terms of their sociability. He argues, however, that a greater emphasis should be placed on the relations between Protestants within Irish society.⁸ D’Alton suggests that relations between Protestants of different denominations was an important factor in the transformation of social connections between people. This was especially so in light of the contemporary rejection of the elitism and political power of Protestant Ireland.⁹

The nineteenth century heralded a new age for Irish Protestant sociability with the emergence and growth of a distinct associational culture, and Limerick was no

² Ian d’Alton, *Protestant society and politics in Cork 1812-1844* (Cork, 1980), pp 224-6.

³ See Deirdre Nuttall, *Different and the same, a folk history of the Protestants of independent Ireland* (Dublin, 2020).

⁴ Sean J. Connolly, *Priests and people in pre-famine Ireland, 1780-1845* (New York, 1982), pp 6-13.

⁵ D’Alton, *Protestant society*, p. 225.

⁶ Daniel Owen Madden, *Ireland and its rulers: since 1829* (London, 1844), pp 4-5.

⁷ D’Alton, *Protestant society*, p. 225.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁹ *Ibid.*

exception to this. The growing sociability of Limerick Protestants at this time was influenced strongly by the different religious denominations present who supported the move for a more cohesive Protestant society, at a time and in a place where they were the minority (see fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Population of Limerick city and county by denomination, 1861-1911

		1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
City	Catholic	39,124	34,836	33,891	32,894	33,977	34,865
	Protestant	5,000	4,010	4,381	3,940	3,809	3,376
County	Catholic	166,604	147,389	137,574	117,895	104,704	101,502
	Protestant	6,097	5,096	4,393	3,788	3,144	2,959

Source: 'Religious denominations by counties and provinces, 1861-1911' in W.E. Vaughan and A.J. Fitzpatrick (eds) *Irish historical statistics: population, 1821-1971* (Dublin, 1978), pp 51-68.

The advance of Roman Catholic organisations in the county – such as the temperance movement under Father Theobald Mathew in the 1830s and the establishment of the Catholic Young Men's Society in 1849 – certainly left the Protestant population wanting in terms of maintaining its own identity in the form of social clubs and societies.¹⁰ While institutions like Freemasons existed and attracted a large number of Protestant members it could not be accurately defined as exclusively Protestant, or indeed Christian.¹¹ The eventual establishment of Protestant social clubs in response to Roman Catholic counterparts led to a period of religiously segregated sociability in Limerick. Ian d'Alton argued that nineteenth-century urban elite Protestant society was increasingly finding itself mirrored, socially and economically, by the growing Roman Catholic bourgeoisie.¹² He argued that this left elite Protestants with two choices: either to acknowledge the growing tide of political and social change and adapt accordingly; or reject and defend what it might have viewed as an historic

¹⁰ *Limerick Leader*, 9 Nov. 1985.

¹¹ Jessica Harland-Jacobs, 'All in the family: Freemasonry and the British empire in the mid-nineteenth century' in *Journal of British studies*, xlii (2003), 4, pp 464-467.

¹² D'Alton, *Protestant society and politics*, pp 31-32.

and necessary ‘Protestant privilege’.¹³ Each of those impulses may be seen operating in mid nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Limerick. If these impulses were to bridge that divide, they met with a degree of opposition from both sides. Two prominent associations which engaged directly with the Protestant community in Limerick were the Limerick County Club, founded in 1813, and the Limerick Protestant Young Men’s Association, founded in 1853.

While the Limerick County Club was not a religious body or exclusively Protestant in membership, the majority of those who joined were Protestant.¹⁴ It therefore provides a good example of an early-nineteenth-century association: an exemplar of Protestant sociability.¹⁵ Its purpose was to function primarily as a ‘gentlemen’s club’, where men from Limerick’s gentry and upper classes met, drank, dined, and entertained. The County Club was similar in key respects with other clubs founded at the time such as the Kildare Street Club in Dublin. It occupied a grand clubhouse at 24 and 25 George Street in the centre of Limerick’s recently laid out Newtown Pery.¹⁶ In its foundation year, 1813, it had 150 members; this rose to almost 250 by 1818.¹⁷

This club differed greatly from later Protestant organisations in Limerick in that it lacked a specific denominational focus, although the little archival material that exists suggests that the vast majority of its members were indeed Protestant upper-class men.¹⁸ A rule book published in 1896 makes no mention of any formal religious affiliation, nor does it make provision for the inclusion or exclusion of any individual based on his religious denomination.¹⁹ The only clergyman who was involved in the club by 1896 was the Dean of Limerick, Thomas Bunbury.²⁰ The club boasted auspicious local names such as Barrington, Massy, Maunsell, FitzGerald, Westropp, Delmege, and Russell;

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ The location of the historic administrative archive of the club is now unknown; however, a number of items relating to its centenary celebrations and membership are extant.

¹⁵ ‘Rules and regulations for the government of The County Club, Limerick, with a list of members’ names, 1896’ (University of Limerick, Glucksman Library Special Collections and Archive, Leonard Collection, B/3646).

¹⁶ *The County Club, Limerick (founded 1813) a short history of a hundred years of club life* (Dublin, 1913) (University of Limerick, Glucksman Library Special Collections and Archive, Leonard Collection, B/3332).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ ‘Rules and regulations for the government of The County Club’ (University of Limerick, Glucksman Library Special Collections and Archive Leonard Collection, B/3646).

²⁰ Ibid.

each a well-known Protestant county, gentry or city merchant family, many of whom owned large country houses and estates.²¹ The club also boasted nobility such as the earls of Limerick and Dunraven as patrons as well as Lords Inchiquin, Clarina and Monteagle, each a member of the Established Church and each an owner of large tracts of land in Limerick or nearby counties.²² The idea of Protestant sociability as a part of an associational culture in this context was very much a class-based existence, with the upper-class membership of the County Club enjoying such prestige and status. A commemorative book published for the hundredth anniversary of the club in 1913 recorded that members could attend the clubhouse to avail of billiards and card games, or use the reading and writing rooms, the coffee room and adjoining dining hall where food and drink was served each afternoon and evening.²³

It is clear from the commemorative book that one aim of the club in those years was for its members to eat, drink, and be merry, with the committee providing a team of servants and attendants to meet the daily needs of members at mealtimes.²⁴ Minutes from a committee meeting in January 1815 recorded ‘that Mr Monsell be requested to choose a hogshead of the best Claret when in Dublin, and that two dozen Madeira, and four dozen Claret be got from Messrs. Studdert and Gabbett, the same as was provided at the dinner of yesterday.’²⁵ These pursuits were funded by membership subscriptions as well as donations. For example, in 1820 a syndicate of unnamed members paid for the construction of a theatre adjacent to the clubhouse, but the project failed, and the site was soon purchased, in trust, for the neighbouring Augustinian friars for £300.²⁶

At the end of the nineteenth century, the County Club witnessed the growth of other associations that fostered male sociability and, more critically for its own future, a move to disband. At a general meeting in 1896 a decision was taken by a majority of members to dissolve the club and ‘construct it on a new basis’.²⁷ What brought about

²¹ Ibid.

²² ‘Minutes of the proceedings of the Chapter of Saint Mary’s Cathedral, Limerick, 1801-1830, pertaining to tithes and tithe lands’ (St. Mary’s Cathedral, Limerick, archives).

²³ ‘Rules and regulations for the government of The County Club’ (University of Limerick, Glucksman Library Special Collections and Archives, Leonard Collection, B/3646).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ *Cork Examiner*, 14 Dec. 1896.

such a decision remains unclear. The move to dissolve and re-order might well reflect some of the anxieties then besetting a landed gentry increasingly under threat.²⁸

If upper-class Protestant men of the second half of the nineteenth century had a social space there in which to gather, there seemed to be few such spaces in existence for the working and lower-middle-classes. Although a number of Protestant charitable and educational organisations, such as the Limerick Protestant Orphan Society, and the Villiers Educational Trust were in existence, these had niche charitable interests, leaving an absence of exclusively social and recreational outlets for the majority of working and middle-class Protestant men in the city and county.²⁹ If this was a matter of concern to clergymen of the Church of Ireland, it did not appear to lead to any decisive intervention. They may, however, have been alarmed by the realisation that, by late 1852, a group of young Limerick Protestant non-conformists were meeting weekly, and laying the foundations for a Limerick branch of the London-based Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA).³⁰ In response, a small group of Church of Ireland clergymen came together and, having debated the issue, felt able to convene a public meeting on 5 April 1853 in the Leamy Institute in Hartstonge Street.³¹ This Institute was a popular meeting place for small societies such as the Limerick Literary and Scientific Society, and the Limerick Literary Institute.³² With the bishop of Limerick, William Higgin in the chair, the meeting of some 300 men formally agreed that a new association, the Limerick Protestant Young Men's Association (LPYMA), be formed. Unlike the County Club, the LPYMA would provide a readily accessible place for Protestant men of all classes, with membership fees within the reach of the working-class.³³

The inaugural meeting was a curiously orchestrated affair, with the clergymen present proposing and seconding the majority of motions put before the assembled supporters. The motion to formally establish the LPYMA was put by Richard Dickson,

²⁸ Nuttall, *Different and the same*, p. 10.

²⁹ Eamonn O'Flaherty, *The Irish historic town's atlas 21: Limerick* (Dublin, 2009) pp 51-3.

³⁰ *Limerick Chronicle*, 20 Apr. 1853.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 6 Apr. 1853.

³² *Limerick and Clare Examiner*, 27 Sep. 1851.

³³ 'Twentieth annual report of the Limerick Protestant Young Men's Association', 31 October 1873 (LPYMA, private archive, 97 O'Connell Street, Limerick, p. 3). Any references to the 'private archive' hereafter, refer to the collection held at its premises, 97 O'Connell Street, Limerick.

rector of Kilkeedy, and seconded by Thomas Westropp, rector of Ardcanny.³⁴ Their concerns focused broadly on the themes of religious education and self-preservation, voicing the conventional views of their congregations and their desire to establish a distinct social club for the young Protestant men of Limerick.³⁵ The meeting itself was chaired by the bishop, who, in his address, voiced his support for the establishment of such an institution under ‘the great principle of scriptural truth,’ noting that the group of supporters before him were ‘late to the field’ in their setting up of the association compared with similar efforts across the country.³⁶ This suggests that he viewed the foundation of the association as both emulating other Protestant organisations, and an attempt to balance the social scales with Roman Catholics. If some had feared that loyalty to the Church of Ireland might have weakened as a consequence of non-conformist action, they might have been reassured, at least for the time-being. Thus, a key aim of the LPYMA was to unite the small minorities of Protestants in Limerick into a larger, stronger body capable of withstanding the greater challenges posed by changing religious and political structures in Ireland.

The objective of the association as set out by its committee and members was to ‘provide suitable means and premises for the mental, moral, physical, and spiritual improvement of its members in the city of Limerick and its environs’.³⁷ The association drew members from all classes, including clergymen, merchants, office clerks, servicemen, officers, and labourers. One of the remarkable and contradictory realities of the association was that it permitted, and indeed encouraged the recruitment of women among its ranks, so long as they had a male relative who was already a member.³⁸ This membership, small in numbers, appears to have been ‘associate’ in nature, as women did not play an active role in the association until the 1930s.

The earliest surviving report pertaining to the LPYMA dates from 1873. By this time the association was based at 112 George Street and was maintaining, among other activities, a very well-established debating and literary class, choir, and bible study group, and had a total membership of 434.³⁹ From its foundation in 1853 until the 1870s,

³⁴ *Limerick Chronicle*, 6 Apr. 1853.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Limerick Chronicle*, 6 Apr. 1853.

³⁷ ‘Twentieth annual report’, p.3.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

the association placed literary and scriptural study at the fore of its objectives, realised through the provision of a large library and reading room. It provided a lengthy series of lectures and debates, which were organised each year on the topics of science, history, ecclesiology, theology, literature and geography.⁴⁰ The association's activities and membership grew through the 1860s and 1870s, with the committee eventually purchasing a Georgian townhouse at 97 George Street (since 1898, O'Connell Street) to serve as its permanent clubhouse and headquarters.⁴¹ The attitudes and interests of the Protestant community in Limerick in the 1870s, may have been reflected in the choice of books and magazines which were ordered for the library. Most of these appear to concern the study of geography, science, and history; topics which interested the members and were frequently chosen as debate and lecture themes at association gatherings.⁴² Examples of newspapers and periodicals ordered by members include, the *Irish Times*, the *Belfast News Letter*, the *Illustrated London News*, and the *Christian Treasury*.⁴³ Alvin Jackson has suggested that these particular types of reading materials clearly reflected the supporting relationship between the associations promoting them, the union of Great Britain and Ireland, and Empire.⁴⁴ The *Belfast News Letter*, for example, was the main conservative newspaper in the North at this time; the significance of its presence in Limerick pointing to the Association's political affiliations and interests.⁴⁵

The growth of the association continued up to the Great War, owing to the many soldiers based in the various barracks in Limerick availing of membership.⁴⁶ From viewing the papers and photographic archive of the LPYMA from the period of 1890 to 1920, one can clearly see the very strong influence of the military in the club and how it drastically changed its social and political ventures. Perhaps the greatest influence of the military at this time was the introduction and growing significance of sporting pursuits such as hockey, rugby, cricket, gymnastics, and tennis into the association.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 7.

⁴¹ Purchase of a new premises subscription circulars, 1875 (UL, Glucksman Library Special Collections and Archive, LPYMA, P23/168).

⁴² *Saunders' News-Letter*, 12 October 1861.

⁴³ 'Twentieth annual report', p. 8.

⁴⁴ Alvin Jackson, 'The origins, politics and culture of Irish unionism, c.1880-1916' in Thomas Bartlett (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Ireland volume IV, 1880 to the present* (Cambridge, 2018), p. 100.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 103.

⁴⁶ Fifty-seventh annual report of the Limerick Protestant Young Men's Association, 11 October 1910 (LPYMA private archive), pp 8-16.

Regimental drill sergeants were employed as instructors for the gymnastics class, and soldiers – both officers and other ranks – frequented the clubhouse in the evenings, to avail of the gymnasium, billiards room, and smoking lounge.⁴⁷

This opened the association to wider public view as hockey, cricket, and rugby teams representing the LPYMA travelled around the county and further for matches against similar associations including the YMCA and Catholic Institute. Such events might have seemed unthinkable in the earlier days of the Association.⁴⁸ This was an important turning point for Protestant sociability in Limerick; the pursuit of sport had begun to break down the barriers that had been in existence from the previous century. Perhaps, for the first time in the memory of that generation, both Protestants and Roman Catholics were meeting in an associational and social setting, albeit on opposite sides of the field.

It is important at this point to explore the place of politics within the LPYMA and the role it played in the social lives of Limerick's Protestants. Throughout the course of its existence, the LPYMA while being a strong supporter of the union with Great Britain, did not, in general, encourage political debates or party politics in determining the view or stance of the association on a particular issue. An example of this attitude was apparent in March 1893, when at the annual general meeting of the LPYMA, Joseph Fisher Bennis, a prominent Quaker and business man, tabled a motion 'to have the association record its protest to the introduction of the Government of Ireland Bill (second Home Rule Bill) by Mr Gladstone'.⁴⁹ The motion was immediately challenged by the chairman, Archibald Murray Jr., who was opposed to the introduction of politics into the association. Murray, who was a prominent local businessman and heir to the William Todd & Co. drapery business, served as President of the association over five consecutive decades.⁵⁰ This view appears to have been met with the general approval of those present, suggesting that the LPYMA was able to attract members from all political persuasions, and that in this sense, the association was rather open-minded and apolitical.⁵¹

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 9-13.

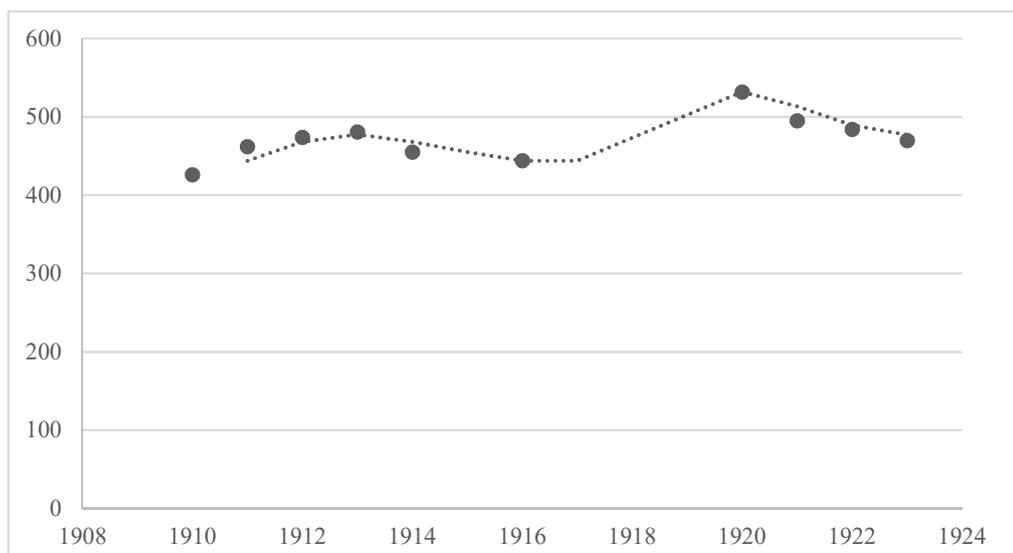
⁴⁹ *Cork Constitution*, 30 Mar. 1893.

⁵⁰ *Irish Independent*, 31 October 1927.

⁵¹ *Cork Constitution*, 30 Mar. 1893.

The presence of the military left a distinctive mark on both the operations and membership of the LPYMA. During the war years 1914-18, the association opened its doors to many thousands of soldiers to avail of its facilities, the total number of estimated visits being recorded at over half a million. Regular bazaars and fêtes were organised by the committee to raise funds for the War Supply Depot as well as the Prisoners of War fund.⁵² By 1913, the membership of the association was approximately 474: the depletion of men for the army resulted in a decrease to 455 by 1916 (see fig. 2).⁵³ In 1920, the total number of members stood at 532, the largest membership since the foundation of the association.⁵⁴ The reasons for this increase, while not outwardly stated in the annual reports, was most likely due to the continued presence of the military and the growth in popularity of the sporting branches of the association. During the war, the committee had also taken the decision to offer membership of the Association, free, to any Protestant soldiers stationed in the city; an offer which many took advantage of.⁵⁵

Fig. 2. Membership of the Limerick Protestant Young Men’s Association, 1910-24.



Source: Annual reports of the Limerick Protestant Young Men’s Association, 1908-1923 (LPYMA private archive). The dotted line indicates a predicted trend where no source material for the given year is available.

⁵² Limerick Protestant Young Men’s Association War Memorial pamphlet, Mar. 1919 (LPYMA, private archive).

⁵³ ‘Sixty-first annual report of the Limerick Protestant Young Men’s Association’, 13 Oct. 1914 (LPYMA, private archive), p. 8.

⁵⁴ ‘Sixty-seventh annual report of the Limerick Protestant Young Men’s Association’, 12 Oct. 1920 (LPYMA, private archive), p. 11.

⁵⁵ ‘Sixty-third annual report of the Limerick Protestant Young Men’s Association’, 1916 (LPYMA, private archive).

Protestant sociability in nineteenth-century Limerick was strongly influenced by the associational culture of the time. This, to an extent, was exemplified through the popularity and following of the LPYMA among young Protestant men. The relationship between sociability, identity, and associational culture has been described by R.V. Comerford as an underpinning factor in local, regional, and national, social and political movements.⁵⁶ In Limerick, it was clear that this was indeed the case. This was evident through the way in which some social activities like sport were ordered within the jurisdiction or confines of a club or association with either a religious or political complexion. It might be argued that these organisational structures were socially closed in the sense that they existed to serve one particular group, in this case, the Protestant community. But it might also serve as a point of contact with individuals who were not of that faith. In that sense – interacting with the outsider – these institutions may have seemed to operate at variance with their founding ideals, as, in the case of the LPYMA, when it met Roman Catholic clubs socially and on the sports field.⁵⁷ The history of the Association provides an opportunity to examine how this tension was resolved in practice.

By the 1880s, the issue of interdenominational relationships was proving problematic for the LPYMA. It led to debates and disagreements within the association, not least between those loyal to their respective Protestant denominations. Each in his own way was influenced not by any cultural or social difference, but by what he perceived as a difference in religious belief and practice. This particular fissure within Irish Protestantism is something that was seen not only in Limerick, but across the island and in Britain during the nineteenth century. In Limerick, it was most evident in relations between Methodism and Anglicanism.⁵⁸ Some very public examples of this particular division were reported frequently in local newspapers, making internal disputes at the LPYMA, scandalous public interest stories.

A clear manifestation of this division presented in the form of a bitter public stand-off between Church of Ireland and Methodist members of the association, both lay and ordained, at a general meeting held at the clubhouse on 4 March 1885, with the

⁵⁶ Jennifer Kelly and R.V. Comerford 'Introduction' in J. Kelly and R.V. Comerford (eds), *Associational culture in Ireland and abroad* (Dublin, 2010), p. 1.

⁵⁷ *Limerick Chronicle*, 6 Apr. 1853.

⁵⁸ Alvin Jackson, 'Unionist politics and Protestant society in Edwardian Ireland' in *The Historical Journal*, xxxiii, 4 (1990), pp 858-60.

Dean of Limerick in the chair.⁵⁹ This meeting stands as a particular juncture in the history of the LPYMA as it became apparent that a divisive split in the Association's ranks was forming with the potential to sunder its essential unity. Tensions between Anglicans and Methodists were not uncommon, with the latter often depicted by the Established Church as fanatical proselytisers who squarely challenged its stance on spiritual and liturgical matters.⁶⁰ Controversies over the validity of the Methodist communion with the Church of Ireland had also arisen, leaving its followers' convictions, in the eyes of the establishment, somewhere between Presbyterian and Anglican.⁶¹ The grievances which were brought to the meeting concerned use of the association's gymnasium and lecture hall, which were normally reserved for indoor sporting pursuits and larger general meetings. The allegation came in the form of a requisition to the chair signed by 'a number of members', who claimed that Methodist members had underhandedly used the hall not only for secular events such as concerts, but also for worship, prayer and bible study.⁶² These activities were characterised by Robert Gibson, the association librarian, a city butter merchant, as being an 'attack' on the Church of Ireland and 'its fundamental articles of faith; namely the establishment of bishops'. The allegation quickly led to heated debate, steered by clerical members, on what they regarded as recent 'proselytising' of Church of Ireland members by Methodist members:

The Rev. Dr. Crook, who received an enthusiastic reception from his Methodist brethren, and some hisses from another quarter of the room ... denied that the Hall was the sole and undivided property of that section of the Protestant religion known as the Church of Ireland, and ... denied ... the accusation that had been made against the Methodists of proselytising. The Rev. Mr. Nicholas, 'I overheard an observation made in this room of a highly disrespectful nature to my brethren ... The Rev. Canon Meredith said behind my ear that it was all a knavish trick.' (Uproar and laughter.) Cries of 'withdraw, withdraw!' The Rev. Canon Meredith here rose amid great noise and confusion, and in a vehement manner denied that he had used the words in the sense interpreted by the reverend gentleman.⁶³

⁵⁹ *Cork Examiner*, 5 Mar. 1885.

⁶⁰ David Hempton 'Methodism in Irish society, 1770-1830: Proxime Accessit for the Alexander Prize' in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, xxxvi (1986), pp 136-37.

⁶¹ Dudley Levistone Cooney, *The Methodists in Ireland: a short history* (Dublin, 2004), pp 58-9.

⁶² *Cork Examiner*, 5 Mar. 1885.

⁶³ *Cork Examiner*, 5 Mar. 1885.

This report of the fracas revealed fraught relationships that reflected not just the reality within the Association but within broader Limerick Protestantism. The involvement of clergymen from both denominations appears to have drawn association members into opposing camps. A distinguished historian of Irish Methodism, Dudley Levistone Cooney, has argued that while recreational clubs such as the LPYMA and the Epworth club in Dublin played an important part in the lives of Irish Methodists, neither had an obvious or readily defined collective outlook on Church life. The blurring may have stemmed in large part from the wide range of secular activities supported and promoted by such associations and in particular the occasional use of ‘secular’ spaces such as community halls, lecture theatres, and gymnasia for church services and meetings.⁶⁴ The association tried to adapt to these changing demands and circumstances. While agreements might be reached, and consensus hammered out, such responses depended on goodwill and the attitudes of those immediately involved. The looseness of such arrangements prompted the demand for something more formal and forced the association to amend its rules to make clear provision for the prohibition of exclusive gain by one denomination over another in its use of the clubhouse.⁶⁵ If Protestants were in a minority within a predominately Roman Catholic city and county, Methodists were a very small minority within the Protestant population (see fig. 3).

Fig. 3. Protestant population of Limerick by denomination, 1861-1911

	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
Church of Ireland	9,886	8,156	7,808	6,673	5,796	4,866
Presbyterian	566	434	405	426	431	983
Methodist	645	516	561	629	726	486
Total	11,097	9,106	8,774	7,728	6,953	6,335

Source: ‘Religious denominations by counties and provinces, 1861-1911’ in Vaughan and Fitzpatrick (eds), *Irish historical statistics*, pp 51-68.

⁶⁴ Levistone Cooney, *The Methodists in Ireland*, pp 90-2.

⁶⁵ *Cork Examiner*, 5 Mar. 1885.

While relations within the LPYMA were often uneasy, in comparison, a sense of mutual respect and amiableness existed between it and its Roman Catholic counterparts. These encounters tended to steer clear of matters of religion and politics, taking the form of sporting engagements, particularly for cricket and hockey matches. By the turn of the twentieth century, these inter club – inter denominational – encounters had become annual events, usually concluding with a convivial garden party at the Farranshone sports grounds.⁶⁶ Notwithstanding the difference in Church practice, theology and tradition, the Catholic Institute – the premier denominational sports club for Catholics – and the LPYMA had a great deal in common. Each had been founded by their respective Church leaders, and within the denominational parameter, each had a socially diverse membership; for many, the primary goal was clearly the promotion and enjoyment of sport. Furthermore, each association shared a common desire to fulfil the spiritual, educational, and physical betterment of their members. In that respect, the two associations had more in common than anything that might have divided them. Their sporting encounters tell of a shared and valued associational culture and sociability that transcended the strained boundaries of tradition, religion, and political ideology.

While these achievements succeeded in bringing Protestant men together to socialise in the same place, they also exposed a tension in inter-denominational relations. However, these disputes were dwarfed by the greater threat that existed with the growth of militant Irish nationalism in the early years of the twentieth century. The emergence of a strong anti-Protestant sentiment might have seemed to pose a particular threat to the continued fostering of male Protestant sociability at a time when Protestantism was seen as a remnant of the ‘colonial’ British presence in Ireland. What ultimately faced organisations like the LPYMA by the emergence of Irish independence, was the challenge of adapting both itself and its distinct sociability, to survive the uncertain future that lay ahead.

⁶⁶ Minute book of the LPYMA Lawn Tennis and Cricket Club 1909-1915 (LPYMA, private archive).

‘If you are Irish, you stay in Ireland’: Methodists and the Irish Free State, 1923-32

Rachel Beck

The majority of literature on Irish Protestants in the twentieth century – even the broad and nuanced recent work by Ida Milne and Ian d’Alton – tends to portray that group as constantly shrinking, preserving itself only by living apart from the Catholic majority.¹ As Daithí Ó Corráin has noted regarding the Church of Ireland, most studies of Irish Protestants focus excessively on their numerical decline and social isolation after independence.² The most contested debate pertaining to Protestants in twentieth-century Ireland concerns the reasons for their decline in population between 1911 and 1926, as evidenced by censuses.³ The debate over the disappearance of over 106,000 people from Ireland over fifteen years continues today, with neither side appearing to gain ground. The unrelenting focus on the Protestants who left marginalises those who chose to stay, and whose descendants continue to practise their faith and culture a century later. While it is true that this religious and cultural minority faced an existential crisis during and

¹ Ida Milne and Ian d’Alton, *Protestant and Irish: the minority’s search for a place in independent Ireland* (Cork, 2019).

² Daithí Ó Corráin, *Rendering to God and Caesar: the Irish churches and the two states in Ireland, 1949-73* (Manchester, 2006), p. 70.

³ One school of historians asserts that the struggle for independence, the activities of revolutionaries, anti-Protestant bigotry, and the establishment of a Gaelic Catholic state were the main factors behind the decline; see Donald H. Akenson, *Small differences: Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants, 1815-1922: an international perspective* (Kingston, 1988); Kurt Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic state: Ireland’s privileged minority* (Dublin, 1983); Robin Bury, *Buried lives: the Protestants of southern Ireland* (Dublin, 2017), and Peter Hart, *The IRA and its enemies: violence and community in Cork, 1916-1923* (Oxford, 1999). The other school argues that Irish Protestant populations had in fact peaked during the mid-nineteenth century and that non-sectarian factors such as land hunger and punishing informants were behind most Protestant murders; see Andy Bielenberg, ‘Exodus: the emigration of Southern Irish Protestants during the Irish War of Independence and the Civil War’ in *Past & Present*, 218 (2013), pp 199-233; David Fitzpatrick, ‘Protestant depopulation and the Irish revolution’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxviii (2013), pp 643-670; Dudley Levistone Cooney, ‘The people called Methodists: from the Irish Free State to the Irish Republic’ in *Dublin Historical Record*, lxviii (2015), pp 180-192; Enda Delaney, ‘The churches and Irish emigration to Britain, 1921-60’ in *Archivium Hibernicum*, lii (1998), pp 98-114; James S. Donnelly Jr., ‘Big house burnings in County Cork during the Irish Revolution, 1920-1’ in *Éire-Ireland*, xlvii (2012), pp 141-197, and Tim Wilson, ‘Ghost provinces, mislaid minorities: the experience of southern Ireland and Prussian Poland compared, 1918-23’ in *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, xiii (2002), pp 61-86.

after the fight for Irish independence, many chose to face it head-on and make the best of things. Those who stayed found that the crisis held hidden opportunities for Irish Protestants to make a place for themselves within the new paradigm. This article aims to broaden the historiography of Irish Protestantism by shifting the focus from those who disappeared to those who stayed behind. It will examine prospects for the Methodist community outside of Northern Ireland after the establishment of the Free State and demonstrate how it adapted to its new circumstances by shedding its British identity and forming close-knit ‘clusters’ in cities and towns. It will also show that Ireland after 1922 was not as unfriendly to Methodists as previous research has suggested.

There are two reasons why this study will focus on Methodists. Firstly, their circuit records are an invaluable resource. They allow for a close analysis of population movements in a given geographical area because the baptisms and weddings of each circuit’s churches were recorded in one central register. Secondly, studies of Irish Protestantism during and after the revolution often neglect the Methodist experience, sometimes blatantly. In his monograph on the subject, Kurt Bowen stated that he focused on Anglicans because by doing so ‘we are better able to grasp the essential and distinctive features of the southern minority’.⁴ This article aims to provide an alternative to this near-exclusive focus on Anglicans. It is hoped that it will shed new light on a population which has too often been neglected by historians, and demonstrate its determination to make its way in a changing socio-political landscape.

It must be noted, however, that this article does not intend to state that the movement of Methodists from isolated rural areas to towns and cities was a coherent, conscious strategy. Instead, it suggests that they came together gradually as a response to multiple crises: the increasing fragmentation of rural congregations, demographic decline, and the turmoil caused by the revolutionary period. By living closer together in urban areas, Methodists found safety in numbers and were able to consolidate their communities.

At first glance, the Irish Free State did not appear to hold much promise for anyone, let alone Protestants. The Civil War had proved to be at least as bloody and destructive as the Irish revolution against Britain; the death toll exceeded that of the

⁴ Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic state*, p. 13.

entire Anglo-Irish conflict from 1916 to 1921.⁵ The country had sustained considerable damage to property and infrastructure, and the bitterness generated by the conflict would linger for many years to come. In ten months, the new government, led by W.T. Cosgrave, executed more people than the British had in the previous six years.⁶ Emergency legislation and the suppression of dissidence continued after the war had ended.⁷ It is no wonder that contemporaries saw the Irish Free State as a bitter disappointment when compared to the idealism of the Easter Rising.⁸ Protestants faced unique challenges in the new state. From 1901 to 1911, the Methodist population of what would become Northern Ireland had grown substantially, while the southern Methodist population shrank, especially in the west and south.⁹ Partition did not affect the overall structure of the church; it remained a united Irish Christian body. However, the growth of Methodism in Northern Ireland, along with its contraction in the Free State, left southern families feeling ‘scattered and isolated’, as the *Christian Advocate* described Waterford Methodists in 1920.¹⁰ William J. Marshall, of the Home Mission Fund, identified the declining southern population and increasing Belfast population as two of the most serious problems facing the faith.¹¹ The Catholic Church was another source of anxiety for the Protestant minority. The end of the revolution gave the Catholic Church an opportunity to reassert its authority.¹² Its capacity for organisation allowed it to grow its influence in the social services, particularly in education, healthcare, and welfare.¹³ It also pushed for legislation which had an adverse impact on Protestant freedom of conscience, such as the ban on divorce. Another development which alienated many Protestants from the Irish Free State was the attempted Irish language revival. The possibility that Irish Protestants would feel threatened by the

⁵ David Fitzpatrick, *The two Irelands, 1912-1939* (Oxford, 1998), p. 125.

⁶ Charles Townshend, *Ireland: the twentieth century* (Oxford, 1998), p. 116.

⁷ Fitzpatrick, *The two Irelands*, p. 164.

⁸ Anne Dolan, ‘Politics, economy and society in the Irish Free State, 1922-1939’, in Thomas Bartlett (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Ireland, vol. IV: 1880 to the present* (Cambridge, 2018), pp 323-348 at p. 323.

⁹ ‘Census of 1901’ <<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/>> (accessed 25 Sep. 2020); ‘Census of 1911’ <<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/>> (accessed 25 Sep. 2020); ‘Census of 1911’ <<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/>> (accessed 25 Sep. 2020).

¹⁰ *Christian Advocate*, 1 Oct. 1920.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 22 Oct. 1920.

¹² Diarmuid Ferriter, *The transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (London, 2004), p. 331; Eugenio F. Biagini, ‘A challenge to partition’, *MHSI Bulletin*, xix, pp 18-19.

¹³ J. J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985: politics and society* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 91.

imposition of Irish was never considered.¹⁴ The requirement that civil servants be fluent in Irish eventually led to the Dunbar-Harrison controversy, where the nomination of a female Protestant librarian, recommended to the post of county librarian for Mayo by the Local Appointments Commission, was refused by the county council due to her lack of proficiency in Irish.¹⁵ (It should be noted that other factors, such as a desire on the behalf of local clergy to gain political capital, played a significant role in the controversy. Dunbar-Harrison was eventually relocated to the library of the Department of Defence in Dublin.¹⁶) Overall, considering the damage the Civil War caused, the Catholic Church's confidence and vitality, and the insistence on Irish-language proficiency in the civil service, one would be forgiven for judging post-independence Ireland to be a very cold house for Protestants.

It is important to note, though, that the citizens of the Irish Free State enjoyed a relatively painless civil war compared to other Europeans. It was shorter and much less bloody than the wars of other newly independent states, such as Finland, in the post-war period. The Irish government executed seventy-seven people; the Finnish government executed 8,300, while 9,000 more died in prison camps. The total death toll of the Finnish civil war stood at 25,000 people.¹⁷ When put into an international context, the Irish civil war turned out to be short, relatively non-lethal to the civilian population, and non-genocidal. Protestants were also set to benefit from the new state's policies. Cumann na nGaedhael (the pro-Treaty party formed after the split in Sinn Féin), enacted financial policies which prioritised the interests of big farmers and established businesses.¹⁸ Many southern Methodists – especially those living outside Dublin – were farmers, and they tended to be better off than their Catholic neighbours.¹⁹ Methodists were also overrepresented in the white-collar professions.²⁰ As well as being economically privileged by the new state, some Protestants, such as W.B. Yeats and Douglas Hyde, were able to become part of its political life in the Dáil and the Seanad.

¹⁴ Townshend, *Ireland*, p. 124.

¹⁵ Lee, *Ireland 1912-85*, p. 163.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 161-68.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

¹⁸ Ferriter, *The transformation of Ireland*, p. 314.

¹⁹ Marie Coleman, 'Demographic change in Longford's Methodist population, 1869-1926', *Bulletin of the Methodist Society of Ireland*, xxv (2020), pp 5-20 at p. 11.

²⁰ Townshend, *Ireland*, p. 126; David Fitzpatrick, 'The spectre of 'ethnic cleansing' in revolutionary Ireland', *MHSI Bulletin*, xviii (2013), p. 6.

An Antrim Methodist named Seán Lester became the Irish representative at the League of Nations, and was the organisation's last secretary-general.²¹ Protestants were consulted on the framing of legislation, and the Committee of Evil Literature, which laid the foundations for censorship in Ireland, included members of the Church of Ireland on its board.²² Finally, Cumann na nGaedhail was able to make Ireland a more temperate society than it had been under British rule. Chronic public inebriation was a perennial cause of concern for Methodists. In the Conferences which took place during the worst years of the Anglo-Irish conflict and the civil war, the church's temperance campaigns were sometimes given more attention than the violence and turmoil.²³ The Temperance League's work continued unimpeded during the worst periods of the War of Independence.²⁴ Due to reduced opening hours for pubs and the closure of loopholes in drunkenness laws, convictions for inebriation went from 15,339 in 1914 to 6862 in 1925. The indication that the new government agreed with them on the subject of alcohol would have reassured the Methodist community.

Another source of reassurance for Protestants in general was the government's conservatism. Civil servants employed before the War of Independence were allowed to remain in their positions. This eliminated the possibility of radical change in how the country was run.²⁵ It also signalled to the new state's Protestant population that British customs and ideas were not as unwanted in Ireland as the revolutionaries had made them out to be. Overall, it turned out that the Irish Free State was not so unwelcoming for Protestants as they had feared during the revolutionary period. For Methodists in particular, the new government's economic and social policies seemed designed to suit them.²⁶

This raises the question: how did southern Methodists cope with life in the Irish Free State, seeing as it was more accommodating than it first appeared? This can be answered by examining the reactions of Irish Protestants in general to the changes brought by independence. As Joseph Ruane and David Butler have pointed out, the British component of their identity was not ethnic or national, unlike the Irish

²¹ Fitzpatrick, *The two Irelands*, p. 150.

²² Ferriter, *The transformation of Ireland*, pp 340-41.

²³ See *Belfast Newsletter*, 16 Jun. 1921, 13 Jun. 1923.

²⁴ *Christian Advocate*, Sep. 19 1919.

²⁵ Fitzpatrick, *The two Irelands*, p. 157.

²⁶ Biagini, 'A challenge to partition', p. 17.

component.²⁷ Because they saw themselves as Irish, southern Protestants were able to relinquish their allegiance to Britain and accept the new state. Methodists were no different. In April 1923, Methodist representatives, including the Conference president, gave an address to the Governor-General of Ireland, T.M. Healy, stating that they supported self-government for Ireland and that they ‘deplore[d] the violence and crime ... that have resulted in such loss of life and destruction of property’.²⁸ This declaration shows that Methodists were prepared to abandon the anti-Home Rule position which they had held a decade earlier and accept the reality of the Irish Free State. Of course, there was no risk that the church would fall on the anti-Treaty side and declare itself an enemy of the new state – it had not wanted matters to arrive at the need for a treaty with Britain in the first place. In another incident, a Methodist minister stood up in church and said bluntly, ‘If you are Irish, you stay in Ireland, and you submit to the government that would be coming. If not, get out’.²⁹

Methodism was determined to survive in Ireland, and its adherents were practical about what survival meant. Loyalty may have been ‘part of the southern Protestant DNA’, but it did not always have to be directed at the British Crown.³⁰ However, the transition from subjects of the British empire to citizens of the Republic was not smooth. The suggestion that Roman Catholics were ‘the people’ and that Protestants were intrinsically foreign remained in the Irish psyche.³¹ As Anthony Smith has demonstrated, ceremonial rites cement the ideological status of a new nation; after 1923, the state’s celebrations and commemorations would depict Catholicism as the epitome of Irishness.³² Methodists also had to face the fact that the heyday of the mid-nineteenth century, with its religious revivals and dynamism, was long gone. One could argue that the demographic crisis shrinking congregations was a greater threat to the

²⁷ Joseph Ruane and David Butler, ‘Southern Irish Protestants: an example of de-ethnicisation?’, *Nations and Nationalism*, xiii (2007), pp 619-35 at pp 625-26.

²⁸ *Belfast Newsletter*, 18 Apr. 1923.

²⁹ Ruane and Butler, ‘Southern Irish Protestants’, p. 629.

³⁰ Ian d’Alton, ‘No country?’: Protestant ‘belongings’ in independent Ireland, 1922-49’, in Ian d’Alton and Ida Milne (eds.), *Protestant and Irish: the minority’s search for place in independent Ireland* (Cork, 2019), pp 19-33 at p. 20.

³¹ Joseph Ruane and David Butler, ‘Identity, difference and community in southern Irish Protestantism: the Protestants of West Cork’, *National Identities*, xi (2009), pp 73-86 at p. 76.

³² Anthony D. Smith, ‘The rites of nations: elites, masses, and the re-enactment of the ‘national past’ in Rachel Tsang and Eric Taylor Woods (eds.), *The cultural politics of nationalism and nation-building* (New York, 2014), pp 21-37 at p. 25.

faith in Ireland than the revolution. For example, the Longford Methodist population – once healthy and vibrant – had been declining precipitously since the beginning of the twentieth century, with an increasing rate of departure during the revolutionary period.³³ The existential challenges facing the denomination can be clearly seen in the collapse in baptisms in various circuits (see fig. 1).

One of the ways in which some Protestants coped was the mental construction of an alternative Irishness which did not rely on Catholicism.³⁴ This new understanding of identity began to develop during the 1920s, when independence went from being a worst-case scenario to the new reality.³⁵ As d’Alton has shown, many Protestants, although not all, created a kind of parallel universe where they lived in the ‘kingdom of Ireland’, which tracked the Irish Free State and occasionally parasitised it, but which was never part of it.³⁶ This mental strategy was accompanied by a physical relocation, begun before the revolution, wherein Protestants began to clump together for protection. The Methodist community is best-known for this, and arguably the most successful. The formation of these clusters is illustrated below by case-studies of the Methodists of the Cork-Kerry circuit and the Adare-Rathkeale circuit.

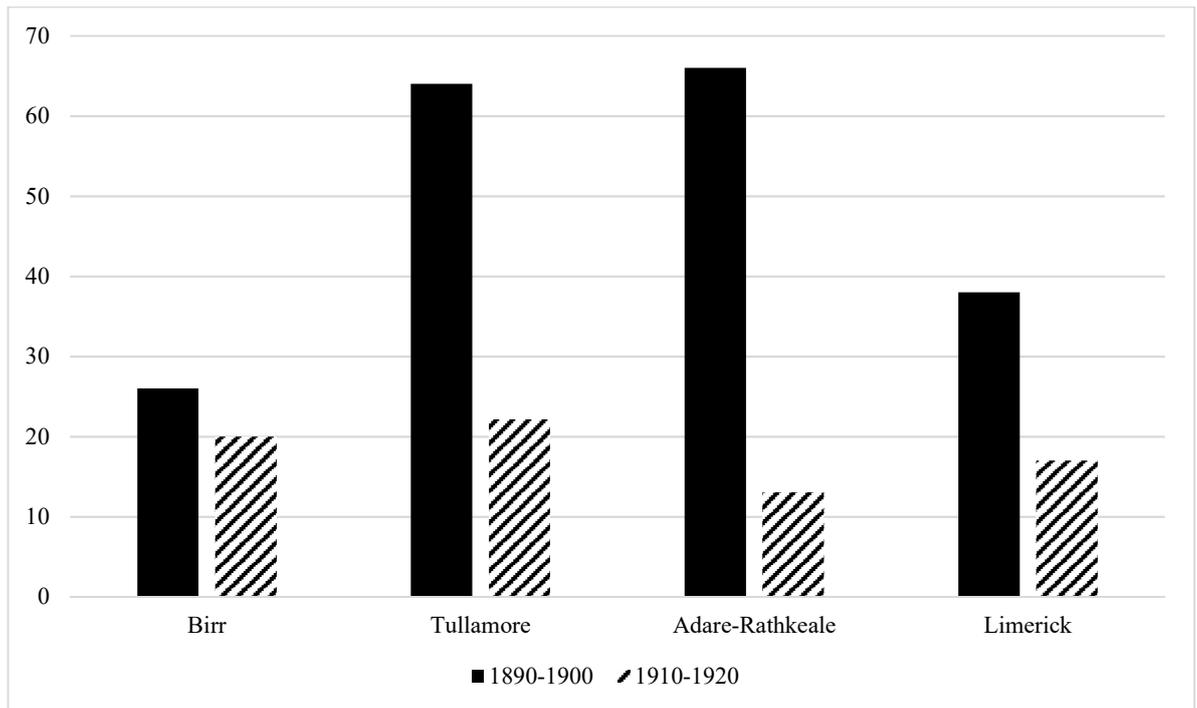
Fig. 1: Recorded baptisms in Birr, Tullamore, Adare-Rathkeale, and Limerick City between 1890 and 1900 and between 1910 and 1920.

³³ Coleman, ‘Demographic change’, p. 117.

³⁴ Ian d’Alton and Ida Milne, ‘Introduction: content and context’, in d’Alton and Milne (eds.), *Protestant and Irish: the minority’s search for place in independent Ireland* (Cork 2019), pp 1-18 at p. 16.

³⁵ Deirdre Nuttall, ‘Count us in, too: wanting to be heard in independent Ireland’, in Ian d’Alton and Ida Milne (eds.), *Protestant and Irish*, p. 86.

³⁶ d’Alton, ‘No country?’, p. 28.



Source: Adare-Rathkeale baptismal register, 1863-1918, Birr (Parsonstown) baptismal register, 1877-1920, and Tullamore baptismal register, 1830-1920, provided to the author by the MHSI; and the Limerick Wesleyan chapel baptismal register, 1830-2007, provided by the Rev. Stephen Hancock.

The Methodists of Cork and Kerry were some of the most beleaguered in the country during the War of Independence and the civil war. Anti-Treaty Republican power was centred in Munster.³⁷ The Republican government's control over the region broke down. There was a high rate of Protestant emigration from Cork during this period, although Fitzpatrick refutes the notion that this was a panic-driven exodus caused by IRA violence.³⁸ During the nineteenth century, there were over forty Methodist churches, chapels, schools, and meeting-halls in Co. Cork; today, there are fewer than ten. Many properties were sold for relative pittances during or after the revolution.³⁹ Cork and Kerry's remaining Methodists dealt with these stress factors by becoming much less dispersed; there was a significant consolidation of the Methodist population in Cork city from 1900 to 1925. This is illustrated by the mapped locations of births from 1890 to 1900 and from 1915 to 1925 (figs. 2 and 3).

³⁷ Fitzpatrick, *The two Irelands*, p. 128.

³⁸ Bielenberg, 'Exodus', p. 220; Fitzpatrick, 'The spectre of 'ethnic cleansing'', p. 59.

³⁹ This information comes from the Index of Irish Methodist Churches, Chapels and Preaching Houses, available: <<https://methodisthistoryireland.org/index-of-irish-methodist-churches-2/>> (accessed 26 Nov. 2020).

During the 1890s, the Irish Methodist population was relatively healthy – the 1891 census reported the greatest number of Methodists ever recorded as residents of the state.⁴⁰ During this period, the Methodists of southwest Ireland were scattered in small clumps along the coastline. The biggest concentration of Methodist births was located in Bantry, possibly because there were several British army barracks located near to the town.⁴¹ There were also small Methodist communities in the seaside towns of Kinsale and Youghal. A couple of families lived in predominantly Gaelic-speaking areas of Cork and Kerry.

However, by the early twentieth century, most southwestern Methodist births were recorded in Cork city and the surrounding townlands; the communities in small coastline towns had all but vanished. This rapid urbanisation was in contrast with the general Irish trend, which saw towns stagnate until the 1960s.⁴² Therefore, the pattern of Methodists withdrawing from the countryside into a clustered urban community in Cork suggests an unconscious strategy for preserving their culture and personal safety in the wake of the revolution. This is reminiscent of Fitzpatrick’s assertion that IRA violence led, paradoxically, to defiance and strengthened communal solidarity among West Cork Methodists.⁴³ Drawing together into a close-knit urban community would also have aided in the creation of the mental ‘kingdom of Ireland’ discussed above.

⁴⁰ Shelagh B. Waddington, ‘Where were the Methodists?: a review of the distribution of Methodists between 1861 and 1911 in twenty-six counties’, in *MHSI Bulletin*, xviii, 34, pp 71-85 at p. 75.

⁴¹ Map of nineteenth-century barracks and ordnance stations in Ireland in Howard B. Clark, Jacinta Prunty and Mark Hennessey (eds.), *Surveying Ireland's past: multidisciplinary essays in honour of Anngret Simms* (Dublin, 2004), pp 479-534.

⁴² Patrick J. Duffy, ‘Trends in nineteenth- and twentieth-century settlement’, in Terence B. Barry (ed.), *A history of settlement in Ireland* (New York, 2000), pp 206-227; David Dickson, ‘Town and city’, in Eugenio F. Biagini and Mary E. Daly (eds.), *The Cambridge social history of modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017), pp 112-128 at p. 113.

⁴³ Fitzpatrick, ‘The spectre of ‘ethnic cleansing’’, p. 56.

Fig. 2: Map depicting the number of those baptised in Cork and Kerry's Methodist churches, 1890-1900. Each dot represents a single baptism.

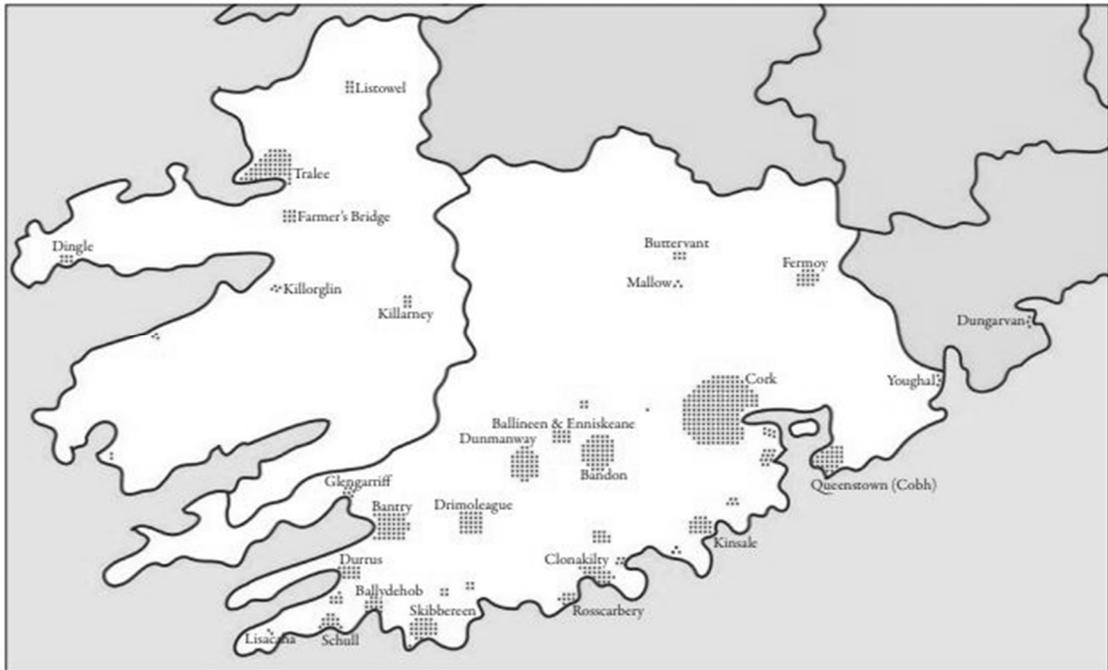
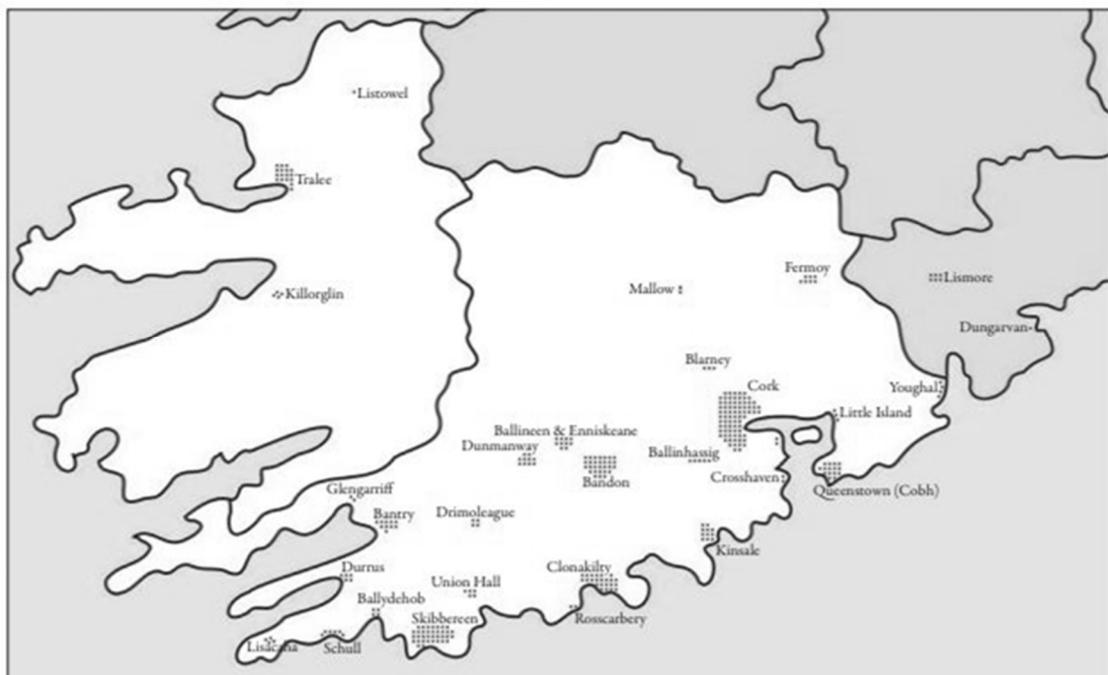


Fig. 3: Map depicting the number of those baptised in Cork and Kerry's Methodist churches, 1915-25.



Maps created using data from an Excel file provided by Charles Payne consolidating baptism registries of the Cork-Kerry circuit.

The Adare-Rathkeale circuit shows a similar pattern of rural withdrawal. The county of Limerick is historically significant for Methodists. John Wesley visited the city seventeen times, and the woman who helped bring Methodism to America, Barbara Heck, was born in Rathkeale.⁴⁴ The county was also a theatre of radical political activity and republican military operations during the War of Independence and the Civil War.⁴⁵ As in Cork, the Methodist population retreated into clusters for mutual support during the revolutionary period. This movement can be observed in the changes of locations of Methodist births from 1890 to 1900 and from 1910 to 1918 (see fig. 4).

As was the case in Cork, Methodists in Co. Limerick were more centralised during the 1910s than they had been in the 1890s. Even before the War of Independence, Limerick Methodists had been reduced in number and had begun to live in clusters in Adare and Rathkeale. This mirrored the movement from rural to urban areas seen in the Cork-Kerry circuit. It is unlikely that this was a deliberate strategy undertaken by the church or its adherents, although many circuits did reorganise themselves to cope with changing circumstances. In any case, conscious intent would be very difficult to prove. Instead, this paper suggests that several factors, such as the fear of sectarian violence, the fragmentation of rural Methodist communities due to demographic decline, the Gaelicisation of post-independence Ireland, and better economic opportunities in towns, influenced a significant contraction into urban clusters which was not evident in the wider Irish population. The case-study of Rathkeale and Adare further suggests the creation of physical ‘kingdoms of Ireland’ to complement the mental constructions proposed by d’Alton.⁴⁶ The Methodists who gravitated towards these important towns were able to form close-knit, like-minded communities, which would have aided in the preservation of their culture and faith.

⁴⁴ ‘Heck, Barbara (née Ruckle)’ in *A dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland*, available: <<https://dmbi.online/index.php?do=appentry&id=1304>> (accessed 10 Jan. 2021); ‘Limerick’ in *A dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland*, available: <<https://dmbi.online/index.php?do=appentry&id=1706>> (accessed 10 Jan. 2021).

⁴⁵ John O’Callaghan, *Revolutionary Limerick: the Republican campaign for independence in Limerick, 1913-1921* (Dublin, 2010), pp 5-6.

⁴⁶ d’Alton, ‘No country?’, p. 28.

Fig. 4: Map depicting the number of those baptised in the Adare-Rathkeale circuit, 1890-1900.

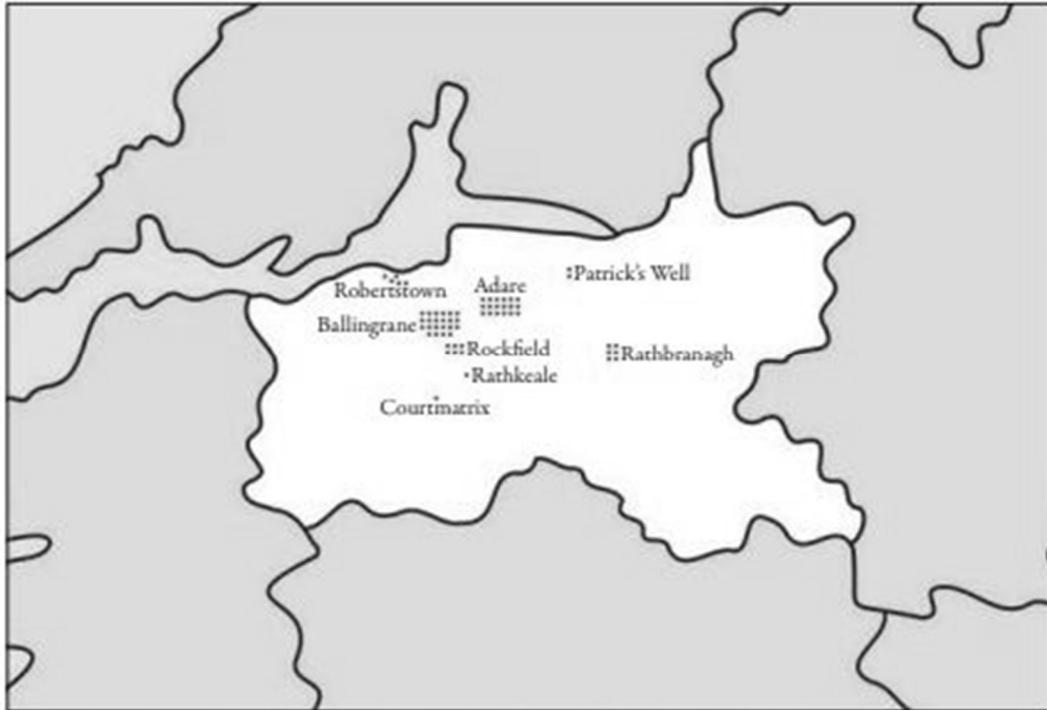


Fig. 5: Map depicting the addresses of those baptised in the Adare-Rathkeale circuit, 1910-18.



Maps was created using data from the Adare-Rathkeale circuit register of baptisms, 1863-1920, MHSI.

Life in post-independence Ireland may not have seemed promising for Methodists at first, due to the destruction wrought by the civil war, the repressive measures taken by the government to pacify anti-treaty forces, the influence of the Catholic Church, and the insistence on fluency in Irish for certain public positions. For many Methodists, the revolution which brought about the new Ireland had been a traumatic time and represented a genuine crisis. The Rev. James Alley described it as ‘one of the darkest and saddest periods in Irish history’, inaugurated by the ‘evil genius’ of a small band of extremists.⁴⁷ However, there were many hidden advantages for Methodists: the new government’s economic policies favouring agriculture and white-collar professionals benefited them, and government regulation of the drinks industry and public houses brought Irish society closer to temperance than it had ever been under British rule. Still, Methodists had to find ways of coping with the new paradigm. Their response was pragmatic, although they were not always conscious of their coping strategies. As was seen in the case studies of the Cork-Kerry and Limerick circuits, they moved out of rural areas into cities and towns to form consolidated Methodist communities, thus aiding in the creation of a parallel Ireland where the realities of the Gaelic Catholic state did not intrude. This helped Irish Methodists to develop resilience during the first decade of independence. This resilience allowed them to retain a presence in Ireland which remains evident today.

⁴⁷ James M. Alley, ‘Irish Methodism and political changes’, in Alexander McCrea (ed.), *Irish Methodism in the twentieth century* (Belfast, 1931), pp 9-24 at pp 11, 15.

Responding to crisis: famine migration from Ireland to Quebec, 1850-60

Mary-Alice Wildasin

Ireland has seen numerous periods of famine throughout its history, the most devastating of which was *an Gorta Mór*, or the Great Hunger, 1845-52 when a fungus, *Phytophthora Infestans*, more commonly known as potato blight, destroyed one of Ireland's main crops. Potatoes were a staple for more than half the population in Ireland at the time, providing as much nutritional value as corn, with a production cost of about two-thirds less.¹ A typical meal for a family of a tenant farmer or labourer would consist of potatoes with salt, cabbage and sometimes fish. Adult males would consume approximately fourteen pounds of potatoes a day, women and older children eating about eleven pounds a day and children under ten years of age eating up to five pounds. A typical family would consume roughly four tons of potatoes per year. Six tons of potatoes were generated from an acre of land, enough to feed a family and one pig (that would eat about two tons itself).² These statistics demonstrate how important the potato was to more than four million Irish people at the time. When potato crops failed in 1846 and 1847, it had a devastating effect on those who depended on it. People responded to the crisis by emigrating in vast numbers. It has been estimated that over 2.1 million or one-fourth of Ireland's pre-famine population, left the country. Kerby Miller argued that more people emigrated in eleven years than the previous two centuries.³ Following the Doran family from Summerslane, Callan, Co. Kilkenny, as a case study, this article examines how many Irish people escaped the famine, or its aftermath, by migrating to

¹ Cormac Ó Grada, *The great Irish Famine* (London, 1989), p. 11.

² Peter Grey, *The Irish Famine* (London, 1995), p. 34; John Walsh, *The Famine in the Kilkenny/Tipperary region: a history of the Callan workhouse and Poor Law Union, 1845-52* (Kilkenny, 1998), p. x.

³ Kerby Miller, 'Emigration to North America in the era of the Great Famine, 1845-1855' in J. Crowley, W. Smith and M. Murphy (eds) *Atlas of the great Irish Famine* (Cork, 2012), p. 214.

Quebec in Canada. It will seek to shed light on the reason for the choices the family made and their experience after arrival in their new environment.

Kinealy, in her study of the famine, writes that between 1841 and 1851, Ireland's population declined by 1,649,330 people with 1,289,133 of them migrating.⁴ Akenson states that between 1841 and 1851, 822,675 people emigrated to the United States of America and 329,321 emigrated to Canada.⁵ The most inexpensive fares were to Canada, as it was a British colony, at approximately five shillings, whereas to the United States the fares ran upwards to five pounds. Grace states that nearly one-third of known Irish immigrants to Quebec City were from Cork, Kilkenny, Limerick and Wexford.⁶ Thus, approximately one quarter of emigrants chose Canada.

In 1849 or 1850, the Dorans chose to emigrate. The exact reason may never be known. Life must have been difficult in rural Kilkenny and the thought of starting a new life in Canada may have been appealing. There were certain landlord-assisted migration schemes to assist would-be emigrants in their journey, however, there is no evidence of land-owning families, such as the Ormondes of Kilkenny providing such assistance. Emigration advertisements in newspapers highlighted when particular ships would be in port, the day of departure and what rations were provided (tea, sugar, bread, etc.), how to purchase tickets as well as length of trip.⁷

The Dorans might have seen and be tempted by such advertisements. There were many points of embarkation around the country including Dublin, Limerick, Cork, Queenstown, Waterford, New Ross and Belfast. Living in the south of Co. Kilkenny, they were not very far from Waterford so they might have departed from there. The choice of Canada may well have been driven by low price and easy access to a departure port. Nonetheless, the migration to Canada was long and often hazardous from exposure to disease or shipwreck. For example, in 1849, Jane White wrote to Eleanor Wallace of 'our long tedious journey ... we have had fever and smallpox on board ... we have had many fearful days in our long voyage it is eight weeks ... since we embarked in Belfast Lough ...'.⁸ The Dorans had a choice. They could stay in Ireland and continue a life of

⁴ Christine Kinealy, *The great calamity: the Irish Famine 1845-52* (2nd ed., Dublin, 2006), p. 305.

⁵ Donald Akenson, *The Irish diaspora a primer* (Belfast, 1996), p. 258.

⁶ Robert Grace, 'A demographic and social profile of Quebec City's Irish population, 1842-1861' in *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 23, 1 (2003), p. 61.

⁷ *Nenagh Guardian*, 11 Aug. 1849; *Dundalk Democrat*, 17 Aug. 1850

⁸ Jane White to Eleanor Wallace, 27 Jun. 1849 (PRONI D 1195/3/5; CMSIED 9112095).

poverty, or they could confront the unknowns of potential sickness and shipwreck for the chance of a new beginning.

So great was the concern about imported disease at Quebec, in 1832 an annex had been created on Grosse Isle, an island in the St. Lawrence River, some forty-eight kilometres north-east of the city, as a quarantine facility. In 1847, at the height of the Great Famine, the island once again became a quarantine destination for Irish immigrants who were arriving in Quebec, often with typhus, or ‘the fever,’ contracted on the voyage. The steam ships that were carrying the Irish became later known as ‘coffin ships’ as so many were dying on board during the passage. Approximately 10,000 were subsequently interred at the Grosse Isle Immigration Cemetery.⁹

Diseases of epic proportions were not new to Quebec. In 1832, there was a cholera epidemic, although it is unknown as to which ship was the source. On 20 May, the *Syria* departed from Liverpool with 241 passengers in steerage, of whom nine died of typhus at sea, while an additional forty quarantined at the Grosse Isle Hospital. The *Cork Examiner* stated that ‘in Montreal and Quebec ... accounts maintained that the deadly scourge was fearfully fatal’ as in Quebec ‘the number of deaths was sixty-one’ and ‘a complete panic exists’.¹⁰ *The Belfast Newsletter* reported that ‘cholera had decreased in New York ... however, had increased in Montreal, Quebec, and Toronto’.¹¹ Immigrants to British North America arriving from 1847 into the early 1850s would have to encounter and weigh up the risks posed by these diseases.

One reason, it seems, that Irish Catholics were attracted to Quebec is because it was already a predominantly Catholic city. By contrast, the United States did not grant Catholics full equal rights until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, while some states were much later in doing so.¹² The Irish commenced migration to Quebec in large numbers around 1813, towards the end of the Napoleonic Wars, although ‘the celebration of St Patrick’s day was recorded in the *Quebec Gazette* as early as 1765’.¹³ On arrival in Quebec, Irish Catholics had no English-speaking churches to attend, only French. Given the considerable number of new English-speaking Catholics in the city,

⁹ Memoriam Sheehy, ‘The Irish in Quebec’ in *The Canadian Catholic Historical Association Report*, 11 (1943), p. 42.

¹⁰ *Cork Examiner*, 13 Aug. 1849.

¹¹ *Belfast Newsletter*, 3 Aug. 1849.

¹² Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora*, p. 264.

¹³ Cecil Houston and William Smyth, *Irish emigration and Canadian settlement: patterns, links and letters* (Toronto, 1990), p. 211.

the need for an English-speaking Catholic Church became increasingly apparent. In 1832 St. Patrick's church was built, however it was not formally recognized as an English-speaking sanctuary until 1853 when it was constituted as the Congregation of the Catholics of Quebec.¹⁴ Conrad states 'that the anglicization of the northern half of North America in this period [1815-50], owing largely to immigration from Great Britain, is one of the most significant developments in the history of the British empire'.¹⁵ The historiography of Irish immigrants to Canada has focused primarily on Irish Protestants that migrated early in the nineteenth century. Irish Catholic migrants from 1813 to 1871 have been grouped with Protestants as one group of Irish immigrants. Whereas Irish Catholics mostly stayed within the confines of Quebec City, Protestants lived in other areas, such as Ontario, Hamilton and New Brunswick, and were primarily farming.

Irish Catholics in Quebec are an understudied group. Much of the current research has been done by Robert Grace, who argued that 'progressively more Catholics of more humble status from the west and south of the island began emigrating in numbers from around 1835. By the 1840s, the vast majority of emigrants were Catholic unskilled labourers and domestic servants' (see fig. 2).¹⁶

Fig. 1. Irish-born population of Quebec city, by denomination, 1842-61

	Protestants	Catholics	Total
1842†	1,733	3,290	5,023
1852	1,426	4,598	6,024*
1861	1,263	5,268	6,531

Source: 1842, 1852, 1861 manuscript censuses in Robert Grace, 'A demographic and social profile of Quebec City's Irish population, 1842-1861' in *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 23, 1 (2003), p. 64.

Notes: † Estimated number of Protestants and Catholics derived from the published total of Irish natives (5,023) divided by each group's relative proportion as encountered in the manuscript census of 1842 (i.e., 65.5 percent Catholic, 34.5 percent Protestant).

* Religion unavailable in eleven cases. Total Irish-born population is 6,035.

¹⁴ Sheehy, 'The Irish in Quebec', p. 46.

¹⁵ Margaret Conrad, *A concise history of Canada*, (New York, 2012), p. 107.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

Table 2: Occupational structure of Irish-born household heads in Quebec City, by denomination (per cent), 1842, 1852, 1861

	Protestants			Catholics		
	1842	1852	1861	1842	1852	1861
Merchants	1	5.1	7.7	0.8	1.5	1.7
Clerical	13.6	18.5	23.5	11.7	14.7	16.2
Skilled	38.2	34.3	28.5	26.3	24.9	19.9
Semiskilled	8	9.3	12.7	8.9	13.7	15.9
Unskilled	25.2	18	14.2	40.1	28.8	31.5
Residual	14	14.8	13.4	12.2	16.4	14.8
Total	301	411	417	728	1,150	1,504

Source: Robert Grace, 'A demographic and social profile of Quebec City's Irish population, 1842-1861' in *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 23, 1 (2003), p. 68.

During the process of migrating from Ireland, several children became orphaned as some parents did not survive the journey. Although many had lost both parents, some of those termed 'orphaned' had a living parent, but who were unable to care for them due to illness or were too poor to do so and had abandoned them.¹⁷ A plethora of orphaned Irish children were taken in by Catholic French-Canadians, often through the assistance of the Catholic church. The church was quite insistent that once children were adopted that they take their 'new parents' surname in order to help assimilate to their new society. However, one little girl said her mother had requested that she keep her Irish name as a remembrance of her family and heritage. This was agreed to by the adoptive mother. From that point forward it was commonplace for the orphans to keep their given names and identities. This created quite a camaraderie between the Irish and the French-Canadians. Although orphans were not only taken in by French-Canadian families,

¹⁷ Patrick Donovan, 'Irish Famine Orphans in Canada' in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, (14 Nov. 2016), (<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/irish-famine-orphans-in-canada>) (accessed 13 Jul. 2020).

many were sent to live with relatives already in Canada or the United States, or with other Irish families, as with the Doran children.

The Doran family came from the townland of Summerslane, in the Coolaghmore parish, in Co. Kilkenny. Family lore indicated that Patrick Doran had sailed from Ireland to Canada, with two or three brothers and their father. The father died on the journey and was ‘buried’ at sea. There was no mention of the mother or any sisters. There was no recollection of where the family landed in Canada.¹⁸ In fact, Patrick was one of seven children born to Timothy Doran and Margaret (Peg) *née* Walsh, who had been married in Callan in 1833.¹⁹ From their marriage were born Mary in 1835, Anty (Ann) in 1837, William in 1839, Patt (Patrick) in 1841, John in 1844, Cath (Catherine) in 1846, and Johanna in 1849.²⁰

The family migrated at some date between the youngest child, Johanna’s baptism in 1849 and her death in Quebec in July 1850.²¹ The father, Timothy, had not been buried at sea as he died within a year of his arrival and was interred on 1 January 1851 at the *Basilique Notre-Dame* in Quebec.²² Neither interment record gives a cause of death. It may be that they had contracted one of the diseases common on such ship journeys. As discussed previously, both typhus and cholera were rampant in North America at the time. Neither burial was at St Patrick’s Church. This could be because the family was not yet established in a particular parish when the deaths occurred.

No interment record acknowledged Margaret Walsh as being deceased, however, in the 1851 census of Canada East, Canada West, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, there is no Margaret Walsh, or Margaret Doran, recorded.²³ Evidence appears to suggest that Margaret was on the voyage to Canada with the family and lived in Quebec,

¹⁸ Danielle Doran, ‘Welcome Home, from Coolagh to Maine’ in J. Kennedy (ed.), *Callan 800 (1270-2007) History and Heritage Companion Volume* (Naas, 2013), p. 276.

¹⁹ Enterrement (Burial) record of Timothy Doran, 1 Feb. 1851 (Institut Drouin, Microfilms du registre d’état Civil du Québec, Parish of Québec (Cathédrale Notre-Dame) #1600a); Marriage record of Tim Doran and Margaret Walsh, Callan, Kilkenny, 23 Jan. 1834 (NLI, Callan Baptismal Registers, 1655-1915).

²⁰ Baptism records of Mary Doran, 22 Jan. 1835; Baptism record of Anty Doran, 9 Feb. 1837; Baptism record of William Doran, 6 Nov. 1839; Baptism record of Pat Doran, 12 Sep. 1841; Baptism record of John Doran, 24 Jul. 1844; Baptism record of Cath Doran, 5 Jul. 1846; Baptism record of Johanna Doran, 17 May 1849 (NLI, Callan Baptism Registers, 1655-1915).

²¹ Enterrement (burial) record of Johanna Doran, 17 Jul. 1850 (Institut Drouin, Microfilms du registre d’état Civil du Québec, Parish of Québec (Cathédrale Notre-Dame) #1600a).

²² Enterrement (Burial) record of Timothy Doran, 1 Feb. 1851 (Institut Drouin, Microfilms du registre d’état Civil du Québec, Parish of Québec (Cathédrale Notre-Dame) #1600a).

²³ Not all of the 1851 Census of Canada East, Canada West, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have survived, so this database does not contain a complete representation of the above areas.

even for a short time. Timothy's burial record states that he was the 'husband of Margaret Walsh'.²⁴ On both Ann's and William's marriage records their parents, Timothy and Margaret (both deceased) were 'of Quebec.'²⁵ Given that Timothy was deceased and the children are listed as living with other families, a number scenarios can be posited for Margaret. If she had migrated, she may have died soon after arrival, leaving no burial record. Alternatively, she might have been admitted to an institution as she alone could not care for five young children. Another possibility is that Margaret, together with Ann and Catherine, went elsewhere as they are not recorded in the 1851 census in Quebec.²⁶

With Timothy dead, and no records of Margaret in Quebec City, four of the Doran children were considered orphans. The four were listed in the 1851 census living on Champlain Street, Quebec City with other Irish Catholic families. Champlain Street ran parallel alongside the St. Lawrence River, in the Diamond Harbour district. There were 310 census returns for households on this street. Most inhabitants were Irish and Catholic. Of a sample of twenty households, eighteen were Catholic, two were Protestant and all twenty heads of households were born in Ireland. Some of the occupations from this sample include boat builder, timber tower, labourer, butcher, sawyer, clerk and joiner. The census forms and responses were in English, not French, as in other parts of the French-speaking city. Mary Doran, then aged sixteen, was listed as a servant, while her brother John Doran, aged seven, was recorded as an orphan and in school. Both were living with the twenty-four-year-old John Wallace, a timber tower originally from Co. Wexford, his twenty-one-year-old wife, Catherine and the couple's only daughter, Catherine.²⁷ The eldest brother, William Doran, aged twelve, was recorded as an orphan, living with Nicholas Haberlin, a forty-year-old labourer originally from Kilkenny, and his wife Mary. The Haberlins had two children, Alice and John, both born in Quebec. Also, in the household were kinspeople Robert Haberlin,

²⁴ Enterrement (Burial) record of Timothy Doran, 1 Feb. 1851 (Institut Drouin, Microfilms du registre d'état Civil du Québec, Parish of Québec (Cathédrale Notre-Dame) #1600a).

²⁵ Marriage record of Ann Doran and Michael Irwin, 31 Oct. 1871 (Institut Drouin, Microfilms du registre d'état Civil du Québec, Parish of Montréal (Saint-Patrick) #1153c); Marriage record of William Doran and Caroline Worrell, 20 Nov. 1871 (Institut Drouin, Microfilms du registre d'état Civil du Québec, Parish of Quebec (Saint Patrick) #1659a).

²⁶ Not all of the 1851 Census of Canada East, Canada West, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have survived, so this database does not contain a complete representation of the above areas.

²⁷ Census record of Mary Doran and John Doran, 1851 (Library and Archives Canada, Census of 1851 (Canada East, Canada West, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia).

a twenty-two-year-old labourer, and Ellen Haberlin a twenty-three-year-old servant, visiting from Albany, New York.²⁸

The ten-year-old Patrick Doran, had been an apprentice and was living with James Ferguson, a boat builder and owner of a boat shop, and his wife Anastasia, both aged twenty-seven and from Ireland. The Fergusons had two children, Margaret, aged five and John, aged two, both born in Quebec. Also, in the household were the twenty-seven-year-old William Forrest, born in Quebec, a boat builder; ten-year-old apprentice Peter Fitzgerald, born in Quebec; and twenty-year-old Honora Reily, a servant from Ireland. All eight people in the house were recorded as Catholic.²⁹

On 20 November 1871, William Doran married Caroline Worrell at St Patrick's Church.³⁰ In the record it states the 'Archbishop of Quebec has granted them a dispensation of two publications'³¹ however, it does not state what the dispensations are for. Both are of age and from Quebec.³² Could it be that Caroline was protestant and not allowed to marry in the Catholic Church? On 16 March 1873, a daughter, Caroline Margaret was baptized from the marriage, also recorded at St Patrick's Church. When, in November 1892, she married Albert William Thom, a Protestant, she was granted a dispensation.³³ Aged nineteen, and considered a minor, she also required a second dispensation from the bishop. On 29 April 1898, William, aged fifty-eight, was interred in the cemetery of St. Patrick's Church.³⁴ Albert and Carrie (Caroline) are listed in the 1901 census of Canada in *Saint-Pierre* Ward of Quebec, with two children, John, aged seven and Amy, aged three, as well as two aunts, Honorah Walsh, aged sixty-seven and Mary Doran, aged seventy.³⁵ Mary Doran died 8 August 1912 and is also buried at St Patrick's Church. Of the five Doran children that went to Canada, William and Mary settled permanently in Quebec City and were members of St Patrick's Church. Ann

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Marriage record of William Doran and Caroline Worrell, 20 Nov. 1871 (Institut Drouin, Microfilms du registre d'état Civil du Québec, Parish of Quebec (Saint Patrick) #1659a).

³¹ Ibid.

³² Baptismal record of Caroline M. Doran, 15 Mar. 1873 (Institut Drouin, Microfilms du registre d'état Civil du Québec, Parish of Quebec (Saint Patrick) #1659a).

³³ Marriage record of Albert Thom and Carrie Doran, 21 Nov. 1892 (Institut Drouin, Microfilms du registre d'état Civil du Québec, Parish of Quebec (Saint Patrick) #1660a).

³⁴ Burial record of William Doran, 27 Apr. 1898 (Institut Drouin, Microfilms du registre d'état Civil du Québec, Parish of Quebec (Saint Patrick) #1661a).

³⁵ Census record of Mary Doran, 1901 (Library and Archives Canada, Census of Canada, 1901, Quebec, z000165061).

(Anty) continued her journey settling in Montreal, Canada.³⁶ Two of the siblings, Patrick³⁷ and John³⁸ continued on to Bangor, Maine in the United States, where they worked, had families and are buried.

There is no question that a famine is a moment of crisis. In following the Dorans' footsteps at the time of the Great Famine, their response to crisis, like many other Irish families, was migration. If they stayed in Ireland, life would have been short: to leave their homeland, the chance of survival was greater, although not without great challenges. This article has argued that emigrants from southern and eastern Ireland were likely to be attracted to Quebec as a destination because transport links were accessible and cheap. They may have been further encouraged by the fact that an Irish Catholic community had been present there since the end of the Napoleonic Wars and was reaching a size at which it could offer significant support. Yet, once there, the hold of Catholicism lessened as integration with other English-speakers and Protestants resulted in the development of social relationships and ultimately marriages amongst first generation arrivals. The Dorans therefore provide an example of a family emerging from one crisis as migrants and orphans to find opportunities with other families in a city that seemed to offer opportunities.

³⁶ Marriage record of Ann Doran and Michael Irwin, 31 Oct. 1871 (Institut Drouin, Microfilms du registre d'état Civil du Québec, Parish of Montréal (Saint-Patrick) #1153c).

³⁷ U.S. City Directory of Bangor, Maine (Bangor, 1867).

³⁸ Bangor City Directories, *1877-78 Bangor and Brewer City Directory* (Boston, 1878), p. 58.

Responding to crisis: community, family and individual responses to pre-marital pregnancy and illegitimacy in west Clare in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries

Bríd O’Sullivan

The term crisis is by definition, ‘a time of great danger, difficulty or doubt, when problems must be solved or important decisions must be made, a time when a problem, a bad situation or an illness, is at its worst point’.¹ Conceptions of crisis are more often considered as large-scale world or countrywide changes. This paper explores how individuals, their families and their small rural communities responded to the personal crisis of pregnancy before marriage. Set within the rural tenant-farmer class community of west Clare, this article examines the varied experiences of unmarried mothers, their children, families, and the communities they lived in, as they responded to the personal, economic and social crisis of illegitimacy and unmarried pregnancy.² Drawing on Catholic parish records, census returns and civil registration of births, deaths and marriages, it outlines their different responses to such crises, which varied over time, within each family, parish and individual. This article contributes to the understanding and perceptions of illegitimacy in post-famine Ireland, by moving away from solely quantitative national research methods most commonly associated with its historiography, while also using qualitative local research, through individual and family-life course analysis.

¹ ‘Crisis’ in *Cambridge Dictionary* (www.dictionary.cambridge.org/english/crisis) (accessed 21 Jul. 2021).

² The terms ‘unmarried mother’ and ‘illegitimate’ are used in this article based on their contemporary writing and usage.

Historically, illegitimacy has been viewed as a deviation from the sexual and social norms of a society, with pre-marital birth levels correlating to its economic fortunes, primarily within an urban, industrial demographic.³ However, narrowing the focus to one parish in rural west Clare, where the community was solely occupied with farming, land and family, with no overt differences in the strata of this demographic, allows the case study to concern itself with the individual rather than differences in circumstance. A micro rather than a macro approach enables a socio-historical narrative, from community, to family and to the individual, which facilitates an intimate examination beyond demographic indicators favoured by economic and demographic historians. A comparative analysis with sample parishes in the west Clare geographical area, of similar size and demographic structure, affords consideration of correlations and regional differences. A study of Kilrush town parish registers examines data on illegitimacy levels from the nearest and largest urban setting in west Clare, which maintained a workhouse. The parish of Carrigaholt, encompassing the geographical areas of Moyarta, Carrigaholt and Kilballyowen and their townlands, is situated on the Loop Head Peninsula, the westernmost point of Co. Clare. Carrigaholt lies just over ten kilometres from the seaside town of Kilkee and approximately twenty kilometres from the large market town of Kilrush. The peninsula is bounded on the northwest by steep cliffs falling to the Atlantic Ocean, and on the southeast by the river Shannon, stretching westward to the ocean. The peninsula is approximately thirty kilometres long and five kilometres in breadth. Overwhelmingly rural, its boundaries encompass the civil parishes of Kilballyowen and Moyarta and the Catholic parishes of Carrigaholt and Cross, amalgamated in 1878 from the single larger Catholic parish of Carrigaholt which previously existed. It reaches to the boundaries of the parishes of Kilkee and Kilrush.

Without focusing on the ‘stigma’ of illegitimacy, or indeed the usual representation of illegitimacy as a ‘stain’ on society, the emphasis will be on the individual, the family and the society in which they lived and the differing responses that were available to them. These responses comprise varied reactions including infanticide and abandonment. How did some families respond to this illegitimacy? Some children were brought up by their grandparents, others were reared by their

³ William Paul Gray, ‘A social history of illegitimacy in Ireland from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century’ (Unpublished doctoral thesis, Queen’s University, Belfast, 2000).

mothers within the larger family structure. Some children were described in census returns as ‘visitors’ or ‘servants’. Some mothers and their babies just simply disappeared. Any discussion of illegitimacy in Ireland will necessitate acknowledgement of the harsh and corrupt treatment of women who found themselves pregnant and unmarried and also requires recognition of their children.

Irish illegitimacy rates dominate its historiography. Guinnane states that illegitimacy in nineteenth-century Ireland was rare, a fact mostly due to concealment, under reporting and emigration.⁴ The rates were most definitely also skewed by abandonment, infanticide, concealment before marriage and unreported deaths soon after birth. Comparisons with other European countries show ‘Ireland’s extra-marital fertility as low as its marital fertility was high’, and they ‘conformed to the patterns typical elsewhere, higher in cities than in rural areas’.⁵ Connolly used a selection of Catholic parish registers to investigate illegitimacy in the early nineteenth century. He found that illegitimacy was relatively rare in Ireland in that period, however, his use solely of Catholic parish records must have been hampered by anomalies in record keeping, such as non-baptism of illegitimate children, the status of illegitimacy or indeed legitimacy not being noted on a parish register and neglectful and uneven record keeping.⁶ Connell asserted in his study of illegitimacy, that in Co. Clare it was rarely the unwed daughters of farmers who were likely to become pregnant, but instead, it was promiscuous servants, those in service, vagrants and prostitutes, those who were removed from the constraint of parents and family.⁷ He maintained that social and economic pressures, particularly the peasant’s devotion to the church and the priest, prevented the ‘production’ of illegitimate children.⁸ Arensberg and Kimball studied Co. Clare at a later time but it was a barely changed community in societal norms. Their identification of ‘the match’ being the saviour of decency, as served ‘the social purposes and repairs the damage, though it removes none of the stain upon ones local reputation’, and they acknowledged that many small farmers married in this way without a loss of

⁴ Timothy W. Guinnane, *The vanishing Irish: households, migration, and the rural economy in Ireland, 1850-1914* (Princeton, 1997), pp 258-60.

⁵ Guinnane, *The vanishing Irish*, p. 259.

⁶ S. J. Connolly, ‘Illegitimacy and pre-nuptial pregnancy in Ireland before 1864: the evidence of some Catholic parish registers’ in *Irish Economic and Social History*, vi (1979), pp 5-23.

⁷ K. H. Connell, *Irish peasant society: four historical essays* (Oxford, 1968), pp 94-5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 85-6.

respectability.⁹ Gray's work on the social history of illegitimacy acknowledges that illegitimacy is a far broader and more complex behaviour shaped by well documented social forces, and against a backdrop of social change, which can in turn prompt detail of the lives of those women it affected. This will deepen our understanding of those women and their responses to the situations they found themselves in.¹⁰

Transcripts of baptismal entries for Roman Catholic parishes in west Clare reveal extensive data about illegitimacy in the area. The evidence from the parish registers used in this study intimates that illegitimacy was far higher than could be suspected of a small rural parish. Between 1853 and 1862, Carrigaholt parish registered just five baptisms of illegitimate children. Each of those baptisms saw the child recorded as 'illegitimate' or 'bastard' by the priest, but unusually, each entry also named the father of the child, and given his surname. There are no matching marriages to indicate a quick marriage during pregnancy or even soon after birth.¹¹ Either it was blatantly obvious who the father of each child was, or in some way the information was obtained by the priest for the baptismal register. It is hard to accept that in each case the father of the child was so easily identifiable. In another year, 1863, seven illegitimate baptisms were recorded in the parish, all recorded by Rev Fr Patrick White. All seven baptisms were recorded in the last quarter of the year, between September and December. Fr White had been at the parish for a number of years but his response to illegitimacy in 1863 was extraordinary. The seven children baptised that year were all female and all were given unusual names for the time and the geographical area. These names were intended to mark them out as illegitimate within their community. Four children were named Sibella¹², two were named Barbara¹³ and one was baptised with the name Chastity.¹⁴ In each of these baptismal entries no father was named and the child was given their mother's surname. The name Sibella continued to be used intermittently within Carrigaholt parish for a female illegitimate child born throughout the 1860s. Sibella stood out among the more usual Mary, Margaret or Bridget names within this

⁹ Conrad M. Arensberg & Solon T. Kimball, *Family and community in Ireland* (Cambridge, 1968), p. 205.

¹⁰ Gray, 'A social history'.

¹¹ Baptisms, 8 Feb. 1853-17 Mar. 1878 (NLI, Register for the Catholic parish of Carrigaholt, 1852-78).

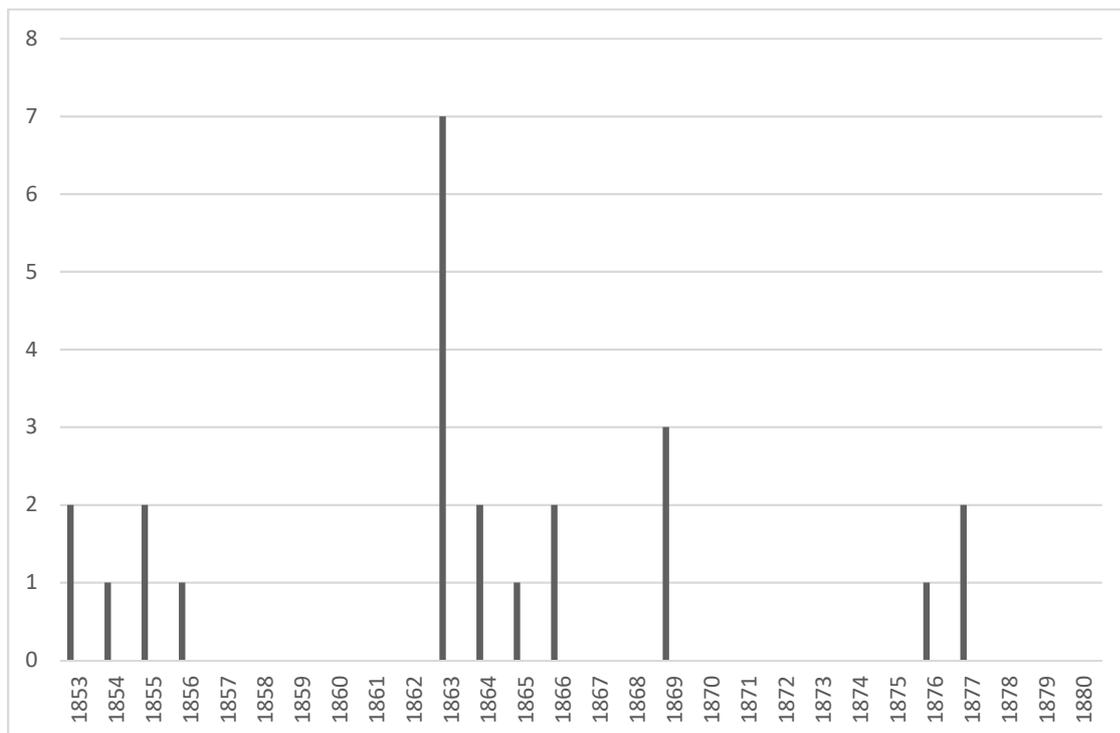
¹² Also spelled Sibilla, or Sybilla in Carrigaholt parish records.

¹³ Barbara is a Greek name meaning 'foreign' or 'strange'.

¹⁴ Baptisms 8 Feb. 1853-17 Mar. 1878 (NLI, Register for the Catholic parish of Carrigaholt, 1852-78, CPR.19/0769/02485/01).

parish and its negative connotations would have ensured the child and her mother did not forget their immorality.¹⁵ However, only one person with the name Sibella was recorded in the civil registry within the district electoral division of Kilrush, of which Carrigaholt was part. That child was born in 1864 and her birth name was registered as Sybilla H.¹⁶ It is likely therefore that those children, whom Fr White baptised and named, were given alternatives by those registering their births. There are no records of illegitimate births in the Carrigaholt registers. 1857 to 1862, 1867, 1868 and 1870 to 1875 all recorded zero illegitimate baptisms.¹⁷ The anomaly of 1863, where seven illegitimate baptisms in four months casts doubt on the accuracy of the parish registers and can lead to a hypothesis of far higher rates of illegitimacy in each year which were not recorded (see fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Baptisms of illegitimate children in the parish of Carrigaholt, 1853-80.



Source: National Library of Ireland, Baptismal registers for the Catholic parish of Carrigaholt, 1852-81.

¹⁵ The name is derived from Sibylla, Queen of Jerusalem (c.1160-1190) who was haunted by disaster and blinded by love.

¹⁶ Birth certificate of Sybilla H., Kilrush District Electoral Division (DED), 14 Aug. 1864 (General Registrar Office (GRO), Dublin, Civil Registration Records, 8395861/90).

¹⁷ Baptisms 8 Feb. 1853-17 Mar. 1878 (NLI, Register for the Catholic parish of Carrigaholt, 1852-78).

Comparing parish entries also exposes certain anomalies (see fig. 2). In comparison to other nearby parishes, Carrigaholt had a higher rate of illegitimacy, second to Kilrush, the largest town in West Clare, a market town with a busy port and a workhouse. The parish of Knockerra, east of Kilrush and of a similar demographic and size to Carrigaholt, recorded just four illegitimate baptisms between 1859 and 1880. In the same time period, Carrigaholt recorded eighteen. Killard parish which incorporates townlands such as Doonbeg, to the north east of Kilkee and west of Kilrush, recorded zero illegitimate baptisms between 1855 and 1880. Surprisingly, Kilkee parish, in the eleven years between 1869 and 1880 recorded just nine illegitimate baptisms, despite it being a busy town parish with rural hinterland.¹⁸

In fact, Peter Gray found that Kilkee had ‘a bustling prostitution trade’, a fact which he attributes to the high illegitimacy rate within the Kilrush workhouse.¹⁹ Kilrush parish baptismal entries clarify if the illegitimate child was from the workhouse or if they were born somewhere else. Gray notes that Ennis which also had a workhouse recorded just one of its 131 illegitimacies as born at the workhouse between 1850 and 1865.²⁰ From 1850 to 1875, Kilrush catholic baptisms recorded 274 illegitimate children of which 169 were born to workhouse inmates (see fig. 3).²¹

¹⁸ Registers for the parish of Carrigaholt (NLI, Catholic Parish Registers, 1852-81); Registers for the parish of Killard (NLI, Catholic Parish Registers, 1852-81); Registers for the parish of Kilkee (NLI, Catholic Parish Registers, 1852-81); Registers for the parish of Knockerra (NLI, Catholic Parish Registers, 1852-81).

¹⁹ Gray, *A social history*, p. 180.

²⁰ Ibid.

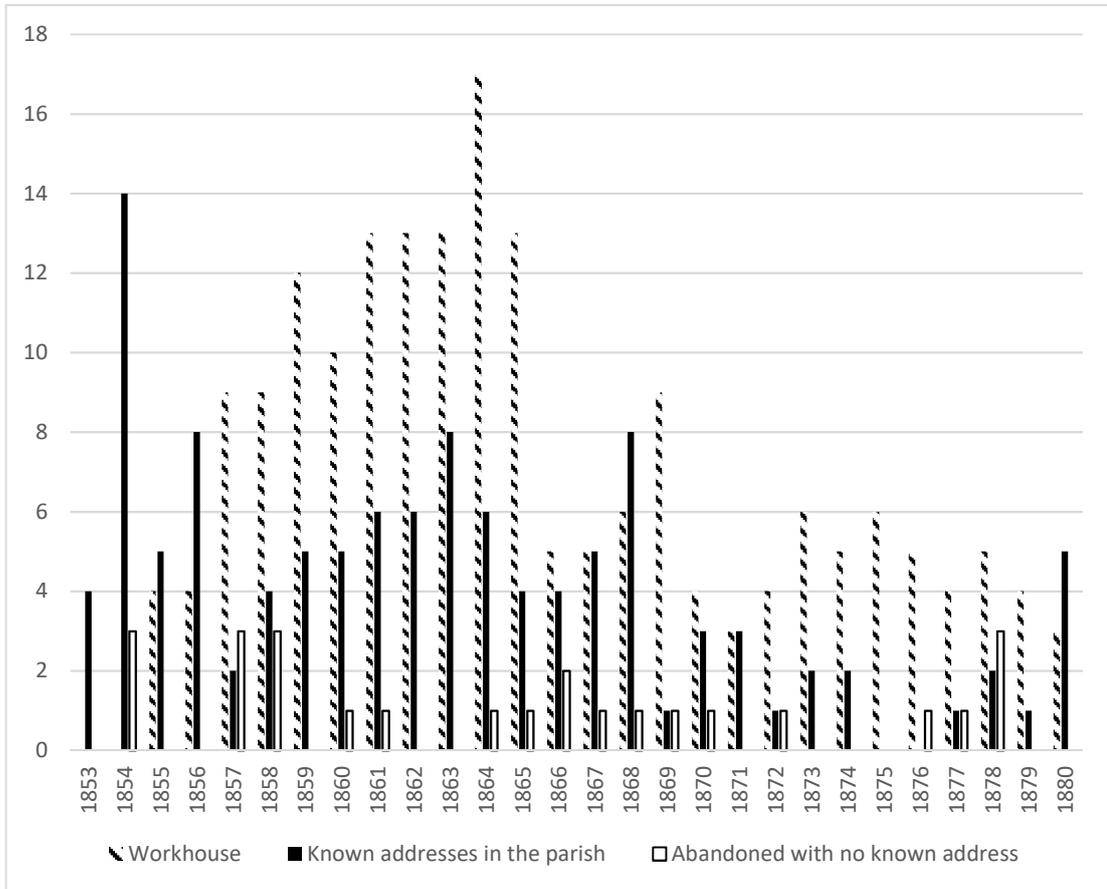
²¹ Ibid.

Fig. 2. Illegitimate baptisms in Carrigaholt, Killard, Kilrush, Knockerra and Kilkee parishes, 1853-80.

	Carrigaholt	Killard	Kilrush	Knockerra	Kilkee
1853	2	-	4		
1854	-	-	14		
1855	2	-	9		
1856	1	-	12		
1857	-	-	11		
1858	-	-	13		
1859	-	-	17	-	
1860	-	-	15	-	
1861	-	-	19	-	
1862	-	-	19	-	
1863	7	-	21	-	
1864	2	-	23	-	
1865	1	-	17	-	
1866	2	-	9	-	
1867	-	-	10	-	
1868	-	-	14	-	
1869	3	-	10	-	-
1870	-	-	7	1	1
1871	-	-	3	-	-
1872	-	-	5	1	1
1873	-	-	8	-	1
1874	-	-	7	-	-
1875	-	-	6	1	1
1876	1	-	5	-	1
1877	2	-	5	1	-
1878	-	-	7	-	1
1879	-	-	5	-	3
1880	-	-	8	-	-

Source: National Library of Ireland, Baptism registers for the Catholic parishes of Carrigaholt, Killard, Kilrush, Knockerra and Kilkee, 1852-81.

Fig: 3: Number of baptisms of illegitimate children, Kiltrush Parish, by residence and those abandoned in the vicinity, 1853-1880.



Source: National Library of Ireland, Register for the Catholic parish of Kiltrush, 1827-81.

One of the harshest responses to illegitimacy was abandonment of the baby, whether by the mother, her family, or the father. The ‘lucky’ children abandoned were those who were found, and known as ‘foundlings’. When they were found they were brought to the workhouse in Kiltrush and from then on tracing them is near impossible. However, some children were named by the community where they were found, leading to some noticeable birth registration entries. A male child, found abandoned in Kilkee in September 1889 was named John ‘Lucky’.²² Sabastian ‘Circular’ was found in June

²² Birth certificate of John Lucky, Kiltrush DED, 2 Sep. 1889 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 11114676/417).

1866 in Kilkee, most likely on the Circular Road in the town.²³ Likewise civil registration surnames of some foundlings allude to the places they were found, such as Sophia 'Fielding'. Sophia had been found deserted at Carnanes on 8 November 1870 by Michael Brew.²⁴ Carnanes lies just outside Kilrush on the Kilkee road, near the workhouse, so the chances of finding Sophia before she died of exposure were high. She died on the 31 December of debility of two days, with her age estimated at three months old.²⁵ Bridget 'Hill' was approximately ten days old when she was found exposed at Wattle Hill in Kildysert on 11 September 1884.²⁶ The Kilrush parish baptismal records show that between 1864 and 1878, thirteen foundlings were brought to the parish church to be baptised.

The most drastic response to a crisis pregnancy was infanticide. It was not uncommon in west Clare. Infanticide was prompted by the societal forces of a deep community and familial moral code, centred on the protection of the reputation of the woman and her family.²⁷ Infanticide was also triggered by cruelty, panic and encouragement by others. In fact, the most common method of disposing of a baby was in a river or the ocean. Many infant bodies were found on the Loop Head Peninsula, washed up by the river Shannon and the sea. In December 1908, a male infant's body was washed up on the shore of the Shannon at Querrin. The child was approximately one week old, and his death was 'as a result of violence before being put in the water'.²⁸ It is of course impossible to prove the exact location of his disposal. Living so rurally allowed a certain amount of privacy for concealment. Deaths of babies were also caused by abandonment in isolated places, where they died from exposure and a want of necessary care and attention. In April 1917, a coroner's inquest was held on the remains of a baby less than six weeks old, who had been found in a box buried in the earth in

²³ Birth certificate of Sabastian Circular, Kilrush DED, 13 Jun. 1866 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 2292906/427).

²⁴ Birth certificate of Sophia Unknown, Kilrush DED, 8 Nov. 1870 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 7778324/112).

²⁵ Death certificate of Sophia Fielding, Kilrush DED, 31 Dec. 1871 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 7251383/352).

²⁶ Birth certificate of Bridget Hill, Kildysart DED, 11 Sep. 1884 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 10636609/258).

²⁷ J. Kelly, 'Infanticide in eighteenth-century Ireland' in *Irish Economic and Social History*, xix (1992), p. 7.

²⁸ Birth certificate of Unknown Unknown, Kilrush DED, 17 Dec. 1908 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 5017705/355).

the townland of Dough, half a mile from Kilkee. The medical evidence failed to show the cause of death as it had occurred ‘years ago’.²⁹ The decomposed body of a female baby was found on 26 March 1917, in Kilmihil graveyard. The child was approximately one month old and had died as a result of asphyxia.³⁰ Not all were well hidden. In February 1906, the body of a female child, just seven months in gestation, was found in a laneway off busy Toler Street in Kilrush. Medical testimony found that she had ‘died from exposure and want of proper and necessary care and attention at birth’.³¹ It would be impossible to estimate the number of babies who met their end in this manner. For every child found there were many more not found, on land, in the sea and at the bottom of rivers.

Post-Famine demographic changes in Ireland typically resulted in the stem-family, described by Shimizu who deliberated on the elements of its members and inheritance, as

first, the members of the family would consist of a married couple and their children, and second, the child designated by the father as the heir would form a new family with the dowry from the partner and the matchmaking system, and the first couple and the young couple living under one roof would complete the typical stem family within the stem family system, and due to the one-heir norm from the 1850s onwards, the possibility for the children marrying later becomes very high... the power of the older couple is prolonged, and the heir cannot marry until the said power is forfeited or transferred.³²

In late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century rural Ireland, the main questions were nearly always, who will run the farm and who will care for elderly parents?³³ The life stage of each household was considerably important as to how the children of that family either contributed to the household, or left it. Illegitimacy and pre-marital pregnancy threatened the rural family system, and the majority of families responded in varying ways to protect their interests. Arensberg and Kimball maintained that in the case of a young woman’s character,

²⁹ Death certificate of Unknown Unknown, Kilrush DED, 13 Apr. 1917 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 5578692/13).

³⁰ Birth certificate of Unknown Unknown, Kilrush DED, 26 Mar. 1917 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 5566847/72).

³¹ Birth certificate of Unknown Unknown, Kilrush DED, 25 Feb. 1906 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 4827581/214).

³² Y. Shimizu, *Studies of post-1841 Irish family structures* (Osaka, 2016), p. 4.

³³ Guinnane, *The vanishing Irish*, p. 158.

sexual orientation is inseparable from social role. Sexual repute and status are identical ... the young woman's "character" is her full status as a social being because the familistic system is such that sexual activity, no less than economic, is completely integrated with one's role in social life. Consequently her sexual conduct is no concern of hers alone. [Illegitimacy] upsets the pattern of family and community life by overthrowing the possibility of an orderly change in farm succession.³⁴

Yet the evidence from the Loop Head Peninsula suggests a tolerance of illegitimacy if it allowed farm succession to be achieved. There are quite a few examples of a farmer's daughter having an illegitimate child, waiting a few years and then in some cases having another child illegitimately and then upon the death of her father, marrying the father of her children. Many of those who had illegitimate children in this locality waited for the death of their parents (or parent) in order to marry.³⁵ In the case of Thomas M. born to Mary M. on 7 April 1873 in the townland of Clouncuneen, Mary was thirty-seven years old when she gave birth to Thomas and it was another five years before she married her neighbour, also Thomas M., in 1878. Both Thomas and Mary only married upon the death of both their fathers in 1875. In fact, Thomas was not their first child, as Mary had given birth to another son named Michael in 1869, four years previous to the birth of Thomas. She also gave birth to a third illegitimate son, John, in 1877.³⁶ The civil registration for the birth of Michael, names his father as Thomas M. who we can realistically conclude was also Thomas' father. The 1901 census named Thomas as John's father.

Fathers were identified in the majority of illegitimate births in Carrigaholt and further west to Kilballyowen and Kilbaha. This occurred upon the marriage of the illegitimate child, naming their father on their marriage certificate and in some cases using the father's surname at this stage of their life. One of the best examples of this practice brings us back to the children baptised in Carrigaholt by Fr White and named Sibella in 1863. Bridget D. from the townland of Moveen, brought her daughter to be baptised in Carrigaholt in October 1863, and she was given the name Sibella D.³⁷

³⁴ C. Arensberg, S. Kimball, *Family and community in Ireland*, p. 208.

³⁵ Names have been abbreviated in order to protect some identities especially if there are known descendants of the subject and it is strongly suspected that the family are not aware of this birth.

³⁶ Birth certificate of Thomas M., Kilrush DED, 7 Apr. 1873 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 8715131/261); Marriage certificate of Thomas M. and Mary M., Kilrush DED, 11 Feb. 1878 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 2624278/139); Birth certificate of Michael M., Kilrush DED, 21 Apr. 1869 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 7770558/136); Birth certificate of John M., Kilrush DED, 28 Nov. 1877 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 11202948/131).

³⁷ Baptism of Sibella D., Carrigaholt, 12 Oct. 1863 (NLI, Catholic Parish Registers, 1852-81)

Thereafter, because they did not use her official name, it was impossible to trace the child. That is, until Bridget died in 1933 at the age of ninety eight and her grandchild was the witness on her death certificate, thereby leading us to Sibella D., now known as Mary H., the grandchild's mother.³⁸ When Mary H. married in 1891 she was using a different surname to her mother who had never married and on her marriage certificate she named her father, a man who had left for America many years previously.³⁹ There are also instances of quick and almost panicked marriages being performed after the birth of an illegitimate child. It is impossible, in retrospect, to know if the pregnancy had been concealed up to the point of birth, if a new match was quickly arranged, or if the father of the child was tracked down and obliged to marry the mother of his child.

One example is Annie N. who gave birth to a male child on 23 December 1907.⁴⁰ The child lived for two hours before he died of general debility.⁴¹ Six weeks later on 18 February 1908, Annie married Thomas M, the son of an agricultural labourer from Annie's neighbouring townland.⁴² Annie was nineteen years old when she gave birth to her son and twenty when she married. Her new husband was forty-two. Annie and Thomas went on to have twelve more children through the course of their long marriage. There were stark differences in the life stories of the women in Kilrush, where farm inheritance and succession issues did not complicate the narrative. Anne E. had two illegitimate children in Kilrush. John, born June 1870, in Stable Lane in the town and Mary, born March 1873, at the workhouse.⁴³ Anne died of senility in Kilrush workhouse in October 1917, age seventy-six, a spinster, with her occupation described as a 'charwoman'.⁴⁴ Anne does not seem to have had any family in Kilrush and even though there was no death registered for either of her children, they did not stay with Anne as

³⁸ Death certificate of Bridget D., Kilrush DED, 2 Mar. 1933 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 2423208/67).

³⁹ Marriage certificate of Mary L. And John H., Kilrush DED, 10 Dec. 1891 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 2161150/14).

⁴⁰ Birth certificate of Unknown N., Kilrush DED, 23 Dec. 1907 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 522097/148).

⁴¹ Death certificate of Unknown N., Kilrush DED, 23 Dec. 1907 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 4965879/378).

⁴² Marriage certificate of Annie N. And Thomas M., Kilrush DED, 18 Feb. 1908 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 1877874/233).

⁴³ Birth certificate of John E., Kilrush DED, 17 Jun. 1870 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 7540376/9);

Birth certificate of Mary E., Kilrush DED, 7 Mar. 1873 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 10675292/212).

⁴⁴ Death certificate of Anne E., Kilrush DED, 3 October 1917 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 5596351/329).

she was the only person of her surname living in Kilrush up to the middle of the twentieth century. Anne lived a precarious existence with many instances of her being in court for withholding possession of her tenement dwellings in various locations in Kilrush town.⁴⁵ Anne also became involved in altercations with officers of the Kilrush workhouse. In January 1873, Anne, then seven months pregnant with Mary, assaulted John Kelly, a relieving officer, by hitting him with stones, an act which had apparently occurred frequently.⁴⁶ In 1891, Anne accused Carroll Daly, another relieving officer, of assault.⁴⁷ She never appeared any time she was summoned to court.

Another example from Kilrush town is Lena N., a child born in August 1916. Confusingly Lena was described as, 'the illegitimate child of a married woman' on her birth certificate.⁴⁸ Her mother was Bridget N., who in 1916 was a married woman with at least six children. When Bridget married her husband in October 1901, she was at least five months pregnant with her first child.⁴⁹ Lena did not survive, dying in January 1917 of bronchitis.⁵⁰ At the time of her conception and birth, Bridget's husband was one of the many Kilrush men who had enlisted in the army, and was serving with the Royal Garrison Artillery in France.⁵¹ When he returned home at the end of the war, the family moved to Limerick.

In contrast to the accepted views on Irish illegitimacy and non-marital sex, which argue that illegitimacy was anormal in Irish society, illegitimate birth rates in west Clare were very high, and the responses to these births varied very much by location, age, family status and time period.⁵² As Guinnane states, 'the unmarried Irish were either remarkably chaste or remarkably careful when not chaste ... the impression

⁴⁵ Anne E., Defendant, Petty Session Court Registers, Ireland, Co. Clare, Kilrush, (National Archives of Ireland (NAI), Court Service Petty Sessions (CSPS) 1/5861/45).

⁴⁶ Anne E., Defendant, Petty Session Court Registers, Ireland, Co. Clare, Kilrush, (NAI, CSPS 1/5842/49).

⁴⁷ Anne E., Complainant, Petty Session Court Registers, Ireland, Co. Clare, Kilrush, (NAI, CSPS 1/5867/288).

⁴⁸ Birth certificate of Lena N., Kilrush DED, 27 Aug. 1916 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 1377222/34).

⁴⁹ Marriage certificate of Patrick N. and Bridget L., Kilrush DED, 20 October 1901 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 2499281/132); Birth certificate of Patrick N., Kilrush DED, 12 Mar. 1902 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 7211841/404).

⁵⁰ Death certificate of Lena N., Kilrush DED, 21 Jan. 1917 (GRO, Civil Registration Records, 5556769/210).

⁵¹ Discharge papers of Patrick N., Service number 280980 Royal Garrison Artillery, 23 Feb. 1919 (Western Front Association, London, World War I Pension Ledgers and Index Cards, 1914-1923, Reference 583/13MN, Document Number 13/MN/No830).

⁵² Connell, *Irish peasant society*, p. 119.

of chastity outside marriage may be a bit exaggerated'.⁵³ This study has its failings. It does not take account of children conceived before a marriage but born after that marriage, and as such will never give a complete picture of illegitimacy from this region. Likewise, it does not take account of children born to mothers who may have migrated when pregnant. It will never be possible to account for every pre-marital birth as not every child or mother can be found. Some births were not registered, while not every child was baptised. A definitive profile of illegitimacy and unmarried mothers will never be achieved anywhere while secrets were kept. It also must be acknowledged that the parish registers used in this study were solely Roman Catholic, in order to reflect the overwhelmingly majority of the population. The illegitimate, unlike the legitimate, are never always found and likewise, the 'celibate' were in fact not always celibate.

⁵³ Guinnane, *The vanishing Irish*, p. 259.

Contributors

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