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The Making of a New Life: Irish Women in Manchester between 1950 and 1970.

By

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Contents.

Abstract.

This dissertation focuses on Irish women who emigrated to Manchester between 1950 and 1970. It draws on a wide range of secondary sources and the collection and interpretation of oral testimonies to explore Irish women's experiences. The study explores the extent of the outward flow from Ireland, the economic, social, religious and political reasons why women left Ireland and the relationship between Britain and Ireland. The study also looks at the social and cultural environment, the employment opportunities, and the housing conditions that Irish women entered into on their arrival in Britain, and the conclusion drawn from this study is that backed up by secondary sources, oral testimonies are a useful method for historical research.

Introduction.

The 1950s and 1980s saw two very large peaks of outward movement from the Irish Republic, which have often been called respectively, "second wave" and "third wave". In the 1950s, when my mother moved to Britain from Southern Ireland, the average flow out of Ireland was 40,000 people per year and in the late 1980s this figure was 27,000.[1] Most of these people were forced to emigrate through economic, social or political factors. They were thus obliged to come to terms with a new society, with many collecting together and forming a sense of culture through a sense of loss.[2] However, apart from J.A. Jackson's book The Irish in Britain in 1963[3] very little was written about Irish experiences in Britain until the 1980s. This omission altered when better-educated second-generation Irish born in Britain, as well as well-educated Irish immigrants became aware of the lack of information available and began to redress the balance.

My mother is Irish and my father was second-generation Irish and I grew up in Manchester, in an Irish community, and went to a Catholic school, where most of my friends had parents who were Irish. I have always had an interest in Irish history and throughout my life I have heard many rich, colourful stories from my mother, neighbours and friends about their experiences in Ireland and England, so I was amazed to discover that, even though emigration has become regarded as a

[1] Walter, Bronwen. A Study of the Existing Sources of Information and Analysis about Irish Emigrants and Irish Communities Abroad. (Cambridge: Anglia Polytechnic University, August 2002) p.3 taskforcestudy.doc.pdf http://www.gov.ie/iveagh/policy/taskforcestudy.pdf (07/11/2002)
[2] Hickman, Mary J. Dr. Differences, Boundaries, Community: The Irish in Britain p.1 & 4 http://www.zonezero.com/magazine/essays/distant/zdife2.html (09/02/2003)
[3] Jackson, John Archer. The Irish in Britain (Great Britain: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1963)

"...permanent, almost essential, feature of Irish life"[4], this movement is generally seen in male terms. "The destitute or adventurous male"[5] leaves his country, driven out through poverty or the prospect of economic improvement, his woman, a dependent, accompanying him or joining him later. In reality however, more women than men emigrated between 1871 and 1971.[6] Because of this I was surprised to find on further research that, although emigrant Irish women's experience in Britain is now being highlighted and researched, there is practically nothing written about post-Second World War immigrant Irish women in Manchester. This was surprising considering that Manchester had accumulated a large Irish community even before the influx of immigrants during and after the Great Famine, and has continued to attract Irish female immigrants right up to the present day.

This study attempts to remedy this omission. The first chapter will be deciphering, from the material that is available, the extent of emigration from Ireland to Britain. Chapter two explains why, in a time when women in the rest of Europe were experiencing relative post-war prosperity and modernity, Southern Ireland, in terms of law and culture, had more in common with a third world country, with many of its inhabitants seeking emigration as a way to escape its rule. It will also highlight government responses to emigration and explore the implications of laws and cultural restrictions for the women living in the country. Chapter three highlights the prejudices against the Irish which existed before 1950 and explores the consequences of this for women who emigrated to Britain. Chapter four and five looks at the work and cultural/social experiences of Irish immigrant women between 1950 and 1970.

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[4]Travers, Pauric. "'There was nothing for me there': Irish female emigration, 1922-71" in O'Sullivan, Patrick (Ed) The Irish World Wide. History, Heiratage, Identity. Volume 4. Irish Women and Irish Migration. (London: Leicester University Press, 1997) p.153

[5] ibid, p.146

[6] ibid, p.146

Both chapters consider whether or not these women were channelled and segregated into certain occupations and areas, and if so, whether this was through choice or through their own actions. All of this will be achieved, firstly, with the use of secondary sources and, secondly, with the use of oral testimonies.

Although I am aware that many traditional historians from a literate society are sceptical about the reliability and selectiveness of an unknown person's experiences as a relevant historical source, it should be stated that "...all history is at first oral."[7] Even so, many of these historians emphasise the possibility of deliberate lies from the interviewee, or argue that people can confuse their own recollections with what they have seen or heard about the event since. This could be true, although my experience mirrors that of T. Lummis,[8] in that the women I have spoken to, who, in some cases, may have forgotten recent events, can give detailed and clear accounts of their early lives and have, in effect, no real reason to fabricate or to tell falsehoods.

Generally, many of those who offer critiques believe in the Rankean method of history which favours written and official documents as their preferred form of investigation.[9] There is, though, selective memory in almost all 'contempory' documentation. Memory selection takes place directly after an experience, so even newspapers, Royal Commissions and letters undergo the "...selection process of memorizing."[10] It is only direct filming and recording that can give a true account of an event, and not always then, and if interwoven with other material in a large study,

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[7] Thompson, P. "Oral History and the Historian" in History Today (June 1983) p.25
[8] For more information see Lummis, T. Listening to History: The Authenticity of Oral History. (London: Hutchinson, 1987) p.118
[9] Prins, Gwyn. "Oral History" in Burke, P. (ed) New Perspectives on Historical Writing (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991) p.114
[10] Thompson, P. op cit. p.26

oral history can provide "...access for the first time to the experiences of social groups who were 'hidden from history', largely excluded from the documentary record, such as women and children, casual workers, the poor and deviant and, more generally, the unorganised."[11] It is argued that oral testimony is the only way of exploring some of the questions I wish to address in this study.

[11] ibid, p.26

Chapter 1.

Leaving Ireland Behind.

As the nearest country to Ireland, Britain has seen many Irish travellers arriving on its shores. As far back as A.D 1200, Irish settlement in Britain grew out of trading, with the ports attracting merchants and their families.[1] However, until the Census of 1841 there was no national count of the number of immigrants from Ireland. This Census showed that in 1825 there were 100,000 Irish immigrants in Lancashire, 35,000 of them in Manchester alone,[2] and even though Manchester had stopped being the preferred City for the Irish traveller by the 1950s, it still however, retains a strong Irish-born presence; in 1991, of the local population, there were 4.6 per-cent Irish-born and an estimated 9 per cent second generation living there.[3]

After 1929 Britain became the most popular destination for both male and female emigrants due to the low level of travel costs. Between 1926 and 1951 approximately 180,000 female emigrants moved to Britain from Ireland compared to just over 52,000 who went to the United States.[4] In the 1950s, as a consequence of political decisions relating to the status of Northern Ireland and demand for Irish labour, Irish immigrants were considered 'the same' as the British, and were excluded from the restrictive immigration legislation, which determines what groups are classed as 'ethnic'.[5] This has made it difficult to establish the exact number of emigrants to Britain, although the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance figures from 1956

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[1] Jackson, John Archer. op cit, p.6
[2] ibid, p.7
[3] Walter, Bronwen. Study of existing sources op cit, p.32
[4] Travers, Pauric. op cit, p.149
[5] Walter, Bronwen. Study of existing sources op cit, p.30

indicate that some 60,000 Irish workers entered Britain annually between 1951 and the 1960s.[6]

In addition, Irish Census reports show that between 1841 and 1961 the population as a whole in Ireland almost halved, and by the mid 1960s Southern Ireland contained only one third of the population as it did in 1841, with most of the emigrants, until the mid 1960s, moving from the six Counties of Cork, Mayo, Galway, Donegal and County Clare. However, Northern Ireland from 1891 has shown a steady increase in the population at every Census.[7] Even so there has been a continuous decline in the total population of Ireland from 8.2 million people in 1841 to only 4.2 million in 1961, with the average outflow in the 1950s being 40,000 people a year mainly from the 15-24 age groups.[8]

As a research topic, Irish males living in Britain had attracted a lot of interest. This is surprising considering that since 1921 Irish women have outnumbered Irish men living in this country, and with the influx of Irish women immigrants in the 1950s, Irish women became the single largest immigrant group to have moved to Britain in the past 150 years.[9] This dissertation aims to redress that balance in exploring the process and consequences for individual women of the migrant experience. The study explains why, Irish women felt the need to move away from the society they were born in, and seeks to explain how, in 1956, the Director of the Central Statistics Office could state that three out of five children born in Southern Ireland can be

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[6] Jackson, John Archer. op cit, p.14
[7] ibid, p.25-26
[8] Walter, Bronwen. Study of existing sources op cit, p.1-4
[9] Hickman, Mary J. Religion, Class and Identity (Ipswich, Suffolk: Ipswich Book Co Ltd, 1997) p.208

expected to emigrate.[10] It also asks why, in a period of a post-war boom in the rest of Europe, Ireland was experiencing mass unemployment and emigration with Irish policy makers allowing emigration to drain Ireland of most of its creative and productive population.[11]

[10] Jackson, John Archer. op cit, p.30
[11] Sales, Rosemary. Women divided, gender, religion and politics in Northern Ireland. (Chatham, Kent: Mackays of Chatham, 1997) p.27-29

Chapter 2.

The Reasons Why.

As shown above, in the two decades after the War, large numbers of young men and women left Ireland to work in mainland Britain. This did not pass unnoticed. As early as 1948, the Government of the Irish Free State initiated an ambitious and wide-ranging inquiry into emigration and its implications for the country. The Commission for Emigration and Other Population Problems[1] interviewed a vast range of individuals and organisations along with many intending emigrants, and found that the fundamental cause of emigration was economic hardship, but that the decision to emigrate also "arose from an interplay of factors, social, political, economic and psychological".[2] The Commission confirmed that more women than men were emigrating, but concluded that not all emigration was bad; it was only an issue of concern if someone was forced to move, or if emigration contributed to a fall in population, as happened in the 1950s. The Irish Housewives' Association, however, argued that women were leaving Ireland because of their inferior status, poor living conditions on small farms, and the marriage bar.[3] It is this analysis which provides the starting point for this chapter. Attention is directed to the social, political, legal, and cultural elements of women's lives in post-War Ireland focusing, in particular, on the historical roots of gendered attitudes which the Irish Housewives' Association said disadvantaged women.

Most of Southern Ireland remained un-industrialised until the 1960s. Agriculture was the main source of employment and many people just managed to survive. Women

[1] This document is unavailable and will be for the foreseeable future.
[2] Travers, Pauric. op cit, p.150
[3] ibid, p.158-159

were openly discriminated against in education, employment and in the tax and welfare systems.[4] Unlike Britain and Northern Ireland, the Catholic Church had a political as well as a religious role and was enormously influential in the lives of many of these women and their families.

> Priests were like Gods. There was a rule that my father, everyone had to do it in the Parish, would have to take him turf for the fire...and he would read of the Altar if you hadn't brought that down and you had to pay so much to the priest...I know my Father's was 7 and 6 at the time. I think it was paid yearly the turf was yearly. They paid every Sunday when they went to Church but this was another thing...there was no such thing as you missed Church you didn't miss Church and you had to fast from the night before. If you were receiving Holy Communion you fasted, you couldn't eat or drink anything after 12 o'clock. A lot would faint in the Church because they were so weak, we had to walk three mile to church... You didn't know any different.[5]

> In the convent school I went to you did everything...religion was drummed into you...that was the main thing. Very, very harsh with religion they were... You had the Catechism every night...you had to learn that every night, pages of that every night...they had no influence over my [family]...they did over other families a lot of them were creeping up to the nuns you know that kind of thing but my parents weren't like that no...I never thought about having to go [to Mass] it was just part of my life...you just grew up with it.[6]

> The family I went to work for they were English people, an English Doctor, a rich Doctor...they weren't Catholics they were Church of England actually because when my father took me for my interview...she had already got a girl, so she told my father, she knew this house that I actually ended up in, that they were looking for somebody but couldn't get somebody because of their religion...nobody would let their daughters work there, they had to be Catholic you see. My father said, "That doesn't come into it as long as she's allowed to go to her own church." ...not alone did I go, they used to take me there and take me back.[7]

Due to this influence, the Church had an enormous say in the political running of Southern Ireland. Contraception was illegal until 1979, divorce was banned by the Constitution and abortion was a criminal act. Illegitimacy laws stigmatised both the

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[4] Beale, Jenny. "Women in Ireland, Voices of Change." In Campling, Jo. (ed) Women in Society A Feminist List. (Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire, London: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1986) p.xi &5

[5] Oral testimony Mrs D

[6] Oral testimony Mrs A

[7] Oral testimony Mrs D

mother and the child throughout their lives and neither an unmarried nor a separated mother was allowed to obtain any welfare payment to feed, clothe or house themselves or their children.[8] The marriage bar was not removed until 1973, so if a woman managed to find a husband,[9] she usually had to leave her employment and settle down to a life of hard farm-work.[10]

> My mother, before she married my father, she worked in the main hospital in Galway as a cook, she was the main cook there and then when she married my father then she was just a housewife as they were in them days...she had to give work up 'cause that's what everybody done in them years. They worked on the farm...when they got married they got married in to the land and in my mother's instance, she got married into the land which she had my father's parents to look after.[11]

> My mother, really, you didn't go out to work in them days. She did voluntary work for the neighbours in the village, if anybody was sick instead of sending for the Doctor they sent for my mother. She had no experience really, no medical experience but, she had a disposition...she liked helping people...they had their own butter and they made their own bread...and grew their own vegetables...they grew all that...they made their own clothes...my mother did sewing and knitting...she milked the cows...and made her own butter...an open fire we had, we didn't have a gas fire...that's where my mother cooked and everything like that on the open fire.[12]

Children were also obliged to help:

> I must have been about 12 or 13 when I started milking, I could milk perfectly well, there was no machinery in them days...and we used to skim the milk and send it to the creamery and we used to get money for that at the end of the month...we swept the kitchen, decorated, we had peat, we used to go on the place where the people cut it up for the fire.[13]

> You had to go out on the land and everything, it wasn't just the house, you had to go on the fields and you had to dig the stones and dig for the potatoes and sow the potatoes when you came home from school... I used to go to the fairs with my father, 3 o'clock in the morning take the cattle to the fairs to sell them to get some money 'cause that was the income we had...you'd go to school after, then

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[8] Beale, Jenny. op cit, p.3-4 & 10
[9] By the 1950s, one woman in four, and one man in three, was unmarried over the age of fifty-five. Travers, Pauric. op cit, p.151
[10] Beale, Jenny. op cit, p.3-4 &10
[11] Oral testimony Mrs D
[12] Oral testimony Mrs B
[13] Oral testimony Mrs B

> come home and you'd go to bed early that day...I was four or five when I started doing little bits, that's what everybody did.[14]

In trying to understand women's inferior status which, as can be seen, started from an early age in post-War Ireland, it is necessary to first look at Ireland's history prior to the Great Famine of 1845-1848. Jenny Beale has shown that, before 1845, the inheritance custom meant that farms were sub-divided for all the members in a family and thus, over several generations, the average size of a holding decreased until there were barely enough potatoes grown to support each plot holder's family. After the Famine, primogeniture became the norm; farmers tried to maintain a certain standard of living from generation to generation by keeping farms intact. As a consequence, though, only one son could inherit and his marriage became important for preserving his father's line. Arranged marriages became more common and ultimately evolved into economic transactions as a family's standard of living could only be maintained from the wife's dowry.[15]

The Famine also weakened women's economic position as the 1840s saw a dramatic drop in women's work as spinners of wool, cotton, and linen and with the shift from tillage to livestock in the countryside, women's work became less important and increasingly the dowry became emphasised as their economic contribution to the family. However, farmers were only able to provide one dowry and with only one son being able to inherit, there were large groups of men and women who, because they could find no place at home, and little work in a largely agricultural economy, were forced to emigrate.[16]

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[14] Oral testimony Mrs D
[15] Beale, Jenny. op cit, p.23-24
[16] ibid, p.23-24

Even so, the sons who remained in Ireland to inherit their family land often had to wait many years before they could call the farm their own. In post-famine farming families the father generally held the dominant position in the family deciding which son would inherit.

> The farm went down to the eldest son down along all the way, but the youngest of my immediate family, now my father, willed the farm to my younger brother 'cause my younger brother had bad health, he didn't go to school much he had very bad health when he was younger and spent much of his life in hospital, so he's there now.[17]

This son would generally leave his mother's sphere at the age of seven to enter his father's sphere of work and would remain a 'boy' until his father passed away or agreed to pass the farm to him, by which time he could be forty of fifty years of age. The 'boy' would also be unable to marry until he inherited the farm and with the growth of arranged marriages many of the bridegrooms would be at least ten years older than many of their brides.[18]

The young bride would then have to prove herself by working hard, and, above all, having children. A childless woman was considered an "...object of shame and derision"[19] and in some areas would be sent home to her family, with the husband passing the farm to another brother to allow him to marry and thus carry on the family name.[20]

Beale argues that the family was seen as the "key social unit"[21] for the small farm and continued to be up until the 1970s. Politicians and the Church argued that "...any

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[17] Oral testimony Mrs D
[18] Beale, Jenny. op cit, p.24-25
[19] ibid, p.27
[20] ibid, p.27-28
[21] ibid, p.6

threat to the Catholic family was seen as a threat to the stability of society as a whole".[22] They believed so strongly that a woman's place was in the home as a wife, mother and homemaker that it was written into the 1937 Constitution. Politicians introduced marriage bars into many occupations, and the state categorised all married women as dependents of their husbands so that they could not pay tax separately or claim welfare benefits in their own right. Also, because contraception was illegal, women had difficulty limiting their families and usually ending up as full-time mothers.[23]

In the absence of marriage there was little opportunity for a woman to support herself. Unemployment remained at an annual average of over seven per-cent per year throughout the 1950s; four or five times higher than in Britain.[24] The 1946 Census shows that, in Southern Ireland, ten per-cent of families had no member employed and in a high proportion of families containing several adults, only one member would be in employment and this was generally temporary and casual work with no job security. The Commission on Emigration and Population Problems highlighted that this was the case in every rural district, with many unskilled workers considering themselves lucky to be in employment for six or eight months a year.[25] In the case of women, the hours and conditions of jobs were inferior to those in England, and what jobs there were paid much less, especially for the unskilled or semi-skilled, than for similar work in England.[26] Liam Greenslade believes this suggests that emigration

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[22] ibid, p.7
[23] ibid, p.6-9
[24] Wichert, Sabine. Northern Ireland Since 1945 (Singapore: Longman Singapore Publishers (Pte) Ltd, 1995) p.61
[25] Jackson, John Archer. op cit, p.27
[26] ibid, p.27-29

was, generally, a forced act. He argues that this view is reinforced by the sharp decline in emigration during the 1970s when the Irish economy hit a boom phrase.[27]

Motives were not, however, always purely economic; after the War, young women were increasingly made aware of alternative opportunities and lifestyles overseas. The growth of the cinema highlighted a better and easier life for the emigrant. Also many emigrants returning from England, for a holiday to their home towns, had jobs and appeared 'grand' and 'sophisticated'. It is not surprising that many Irish women emigrated to England with the hope of better amenities, freedom from control, good wages and maybe the possibility of a husband.[28]

The 1955 Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems commented that many young people left Ireland without considering the option of staying. It believed that emigration was an "...established custom" in certain areas and people moved from the area were they lived to "...places where their friends and relations awaited them".[29] Although family ties were initially severed by emigration, it came eventually to be regarded, not as a breaking up of the family, but as a way of connecting them back together, something which is highlighted by the oral testimonies:

> My auntie and uncle came home and my cousin's a year younger, two years younger than me she came home and I came back to England with them.[30]
>
> My sister met me at Manchester Station.[31]

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[27] Greenslade, Liam. "White Skin, White Masks: Psychological Distress among the Irish in Britain" in O'Sullivan, Patrick (Ed) The Irish World Wide, History, Heritage, Identity, Volume 2. The Irish in the New Communities (London: Leicester University Press, 1997)
[28] Jackson, John Archer. op cit, p.27-29
[29] Walter, Bronwen. Study of existing sources op cit p.17
[30] Oral testimony Mrs D
[31] Oral testimony Mrs B

> My parents came over 1959, 1960. I was in Dublin about a year at that time or more...my three younger brothers they were still at school they had to go to school over here, our Bill was only fourteen he'd left school in Ireland but when he came over here he had to go back to school...my older brothers and sisters were already over here...my brother died, by then the children in the family that I was working with, they were growing up and the youngest one had started school...so I decided when my brother died, I decided I would come over here.[32]

Bronwen Walter argues that though emigration has been described as an "escape" from poverty, restrictive mores or family difficulties, she states that this could equally be described as "social exclusion" as a result of changing market structures or because of the socio-political climate in Ireland. Walter believes, for example, that groups such as gay men or lesbians or women pregnant outside of marriage are not counted for in the emigration flow because they were regarded as sinful.[33] A girl's "character" was seen as an important economic asset and the loss of her 'character' was regarded as a disgrace to herself and her family and there would be three options available for her. An unmarried woman who became pregnant would be either pushed into a "forced match,"[34] or:

> They were sent to Magdalene. Laundry. That's where they were sent if they got pregnant...they never got out of there a lot of them. They were just kept in there...a lot of them just disappeared, they were sent to this country some people who got into trouble, but they never knew if they had a family at home or anything like that 'cause they had disgraced the family. Well the priests would read it off the Altar. They would read of the Altar that so-and-so had disgraced them. They wouldn't be allowed back at home, they wouldn't accept them...a lot of them really were all so young, I mean you were never told the facts of life like today...the older people never spoke about anything like that, it was taboo actually...they were innocent girls and that...there was no way they were bad girls.[35]

In the face of such constraints it is not surprising that many women opted for emigration. It has even been suggested that emigration "...is a godsend to the

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[32] Oral testimony Mrs A
[33] Walter, Bronwen. Study of existing sources op cit, p.16-18 & 45
[34] Jackson, John Archer. op cit, p.32
[35] Oral testimony Mrs D

politicians. It is the great safety valve which prevents the emergence of a politically conscious working class".[36] With so many people emigrating to England, the attraction for others was immense and many of these people would send back part of their wages to their families which helped to maintain the small farm economy and the dowry system. In 1951, remittances amounted to ten million pounds and formed 2.5 per-cent of the total national income in Ireland.[37]

> I used to send a wage home every week to them at home. Most people my generation done that because they hadn't anything. I'd send parcels of clothes home and I used to also, at Christmas, I would buy the toys, I was Father Christmas without them knowing.[38]
>
> Sometimes I would send something back to my mother and father.[39]

Even so, the 'loss' of so many young women did become the cause of real concern for the Government of Southern Ireland. In 1947, Dr T.F O'Higgins wrote to the Weastmeath Independent, asking if anybody could "...contemplate a more serious national situation...(than) a steady outward flow of young women so that many parishes have not a single young girl left".[40] The Irish Times, after the preliminary Report of the 1956 Census disclosed that the population at 2.89 million was the lowest since Independence, commented: "...If the present trend continues Ireland will die, not in the remote unpredictable future, but quite soon."[41]

Between 1922 and 1958, successive Governments did consider schemes aimed at improving social conditions for women in Rural Ireland. One proposal was the promotion of earlier marriages with the promise of a state dowry; De Valera only

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[36] Jackson, John Archer. op cit, p.38
[37] ibid, p.38
[38] Oral testimony Mrs D
[39] Oral testimony Mrs C
[40] Cited in Travers, Pauric. op cit, p.154
[41] Bew, Paul. Hazelkorn, Ellen. Patterson, Henry. The Dynamics of Irish Politics (Worcester: Billings & Sons Ltd, 1989) p.204

gave this a polite acknowledgement though. By the 1950s, he had become disillusioned by the failure of his own scheme of Dower or Second Houses on farms which would be state subsidised. De Valera believed there was a direct link between emigration and late marriages, and he argued that this would encourage sons who had to postpone marriage until they inherited the family farm. An interdepartmental committee was established and the idea proved popular, but ultimately it failed because the Committee restricted the proposal to homes twice the size regarded by the Land Commission as an economic holding. This in reality excluded the neediest farmer that De Valera was most interested in. The idea was resurrected in 1951, but failed again due to an underestimation of financial implications and practical difficulties and it was strongly believed that two houses on one holding might lead to sub-division, which was strictly forbidden. J.F. Glynn, from Tipperary, argued that this idea would actually lower the marriage rates; he stated that with the older brother out of the way in a Dower House, there would be less pressure on younger sons to move out of the family home.[42] Opposition also arose from the general belief in many sectors of Ireland that emigration was invaluable to those who remained. They enjoyed a higher standard of living, with more available employment, which would have been impossible if migration was forcibly stopped.[43]

So, although people in authority were aware that emigration constituted a potentially serious problem, no-one actually successfully stopped the flow and some even believed that emigration was necessary for those who stayed behind and people continued to leave Ireland in the thousands. De Valera was not only fighting against

[42]Travers, Pauric. op cit, p.154-157
[43] Hazelkorn, Ellen. "We can't all live on a small island: the political economy of Irish migration" in O'Sullivan, Patrick. Volume 2 op cit, p.189

the Catholic Church's teachings and ideas but also against ingrained traditions that had been around for over a century.

The following chapter will be looking at what happened to those women who left when they arrived in Britain. It will be focusing, in particular on the relationship between Ireland and Britain, deciphering whether or not the actions and beliefs of past immigrants, had any bearing on their reception in Manchester.

Chapter 3.

Quest for a Better Life?

As shown above, from the 1950s to the 1970s, Irish women came to Britain in their thousands for a range of different reasons; all looking for employment and housing. Many of these women moved from rural areas, where there was a close-knit community, to Manchester, a big city where they knew very few people, or in some cases nobody. They experienced a climate that, it is argued, already had many fixed opinions about the Irish population, which was aggravated by IRA offensives. It is impossible to understand the future that faced many of these women, whether they were integrated or segregated into the Manchester society either by choice or not, without looking into the relationship between the Irish and the British. This chapter explains this history, at the reasons and outcomes of it, focusing on the consequences of it for post-World War Two Irish women immigrants in Manchester.

There are endless paradoxes and ironies in the relationship between the British and the Irish. Throughout the Nineteenth Century the Irish laboured on canals, roads, railways, in factories, fields and mines which strengthened the British economy. This, in turn, secured the British hold on Ireland. The Irish also, volunteered in considerable numbers to serve in the British Armed Forces, which helped keep a firm grip on other colonies obtained by Britain.[1] However, historically,[2] there has always been a deep struggle between the Irish and the English, with the English viewing the

[1] Herbert, Michael. The Wearing of the Green: A Political History of the Irish in Manchester (London: Irish in Britain Representation Group, 2001) p.5

[2] The history of Cromwell's suppression of Irish resistance in the 17th Century and the ensuing difficulties that have arisen from this is well documented and can be found in many British or Irish history books.

Irish as potential traitors, believing that "...England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity".[3]

Manchester itself became important for the history of the Irish in Britain during the nineteenth Century. The Irish living in the city attracted the attention of prominent, early observers and became widely discussed, which set a tone and provided a stereotypical image of the Irish in Britain, which is prevalent even today. The Irish were described as "dirty", "thieves", "spongers", "violent", "idle", "artful" with no "independence, shame or propriety".[4]

M.A. Busteed explains that, with local Irish allied to the political climate,[5] many officials and commentators feared the Irish. He argues that the growth of the population led to a general dread that a revolution in Britain would begin in Manchester; which, with the timing and concentration of Irish immigration, led many local commentators to blame the Irish for their political troubles.[6]

The Irish were also singled out because of their religion. Catholicism has been identified as synonymous with the Irish since this era, with many Irish excluded, fundamentally because of their religion; however, this has ignored the Protestant Irish minority.[7] From the time of the Reformation in the 16th Century, Protestantism has been central to Britain's identity and has been defined as: "...a journey from

[3] O'Farrell, Patrick. England and Ireland since 1800 (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1975) p.79
[4] Busteed, Mervyn A. Hodgson, Robert I. Kennedy, Thomas F. "The Myth and Reality of Irish Migrants in mid-nineteenth-century Manchester: a preliminary study" in O'Sullivan, Patrick Volume 2 op cit, p.27-31
[5] This has been well documented, for a clear easy to read account of the main political movements in Manchester and the Irish involvement see Herbert, Michael. op cit,
[6] Busteed, Mervyn A. op cit, p.32.
[7] Walter, Bronwen. . Outsiders inside, Whiteness, place and Irish women. Gender, Racism, Ethnicity Series (London: Routledge, 2001) p.86

superstition and darkness into liberty and light".[8] This attitude was still prevalent in the 1950s and Mary Hickman argues that the Catholic Church and the British state tried to combat this through the scheme of incorporation. She argues that this was based on the strategy of denationalisation, not a process of assimilation or integration. Hickman uses the teaching strategies of Catholic schools to back up her argument. She argues their priority was for a person to be a good Catholic at the expense of their national identity, with schools containing textbooks that glorified England and were silent about Ireland unless it was as a problem to England.[9] Even so, in many cases, the 1950 to 1970 immigrants would pass on their Irish heritage to their children at home.

"Said to Frank that you looked Irish,
First time I set eyes on you,"
"Doesn't matter where your birth is."
"Irish blood is born in you."[10]

Harry Goulbourne however, believes that, whilst the Irish population had been discriminated against in the past, they had in time "...come to enjoy universal incorporation with the dominant group"[11] because of their "white" colour. He argues that post-World War II immigrant Caribbeans, Africans and Asians, who often had far more in common with native Britains, were distinguished as "racial" and "ethnic" because of their "colour". Ireland, Goulbourne believes, came eventually to be seen as part of Greater Britain, or more part of the British Isles than as a colony in the way that colonies were seen in other parts of the British world.[12]

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[8] Herbert, Michael. op cit, p.36
[9] Hickman, Mary. Differences op cit, p.2
[10] Dobbins, Marian D. Kathleen. Poem donated by The Irish Community Care, 289 Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester.
[11] Goulbourne, Harry. Black, Jeremy. (general ed) Race Relations in Britain since 1945 (Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire, London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998) p.23
[12] ibid, p.28-29

Mairtin Mac an Ghaill on the other hand argues, that with focusing on "colour", theorists of racism and ethnicity have denied anti-Irish discriminations, which have resulted in the Irish, Britain's largest immigrant group, being culturally invisible.[13] Bronwen Walter states that the Irish have forcibly been included with the British-born due to their "whiteness", resulting in Post-War Irish and British differences being submerged as "black/white" racism and prejudices have taken precedence.[14] The Irish in Britain Representation Group, (IBRG), argue that:

> Racism is a practice which assumes innate superiority by a dominant people or nation towards a subject or formerly subject people or nation and which also assumes the innate inferiority of the subject people. Racism can be seen as a system based on power relationships between the oppressor and oppressed groups... In Britain this racism is endemic and is interwoven into the culture, history and traditions of Britain.[15]

Walter states that the Irish have been represented as racially inferior since the twelfth Century and that these negative stereotypes have become so ingrained in British identity that they are no longer recognisable[16] and, in reality, their needs may be similar to those of other recognised "non-white" groups. She argues that there is an assumption by academics and the public that the Irish have unproblematically assimilated into the "white" population within a short space of time, with Britain only being disrupted by the arrival of black immigrants. Walter explains that this view has existed alongside longstanding rejection of Irish people as alien 'others' and argues that the post-1945 Irish immigrant was caught between these two images, which resulted in the denial of their migrant experience and cultural differences. She believes that in a country that only sees racism in terms of black/white differences,

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[13] Mac an Ghaill, Mairtin. "The Irish in Britain: the invisibility of ethnicity and anti-Irish racism" in Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies vol.26 no.1 (2000) p.141
[14] Walter, Bronwen Outsiders op cit, p.82
[15] The Irish in Britain Representation Group. Irish Perspectives on British Education. Report of a national conference London 13th October 1990. http://www.mossleybrow.demon.co.uk/irishpersp.html (09/02/2003) p.42
[16] Walter, Bronwen. Outsiders op cit, p.82

unacknowledged anti-Irish racism has taken a multitude of forms,[17] which can be seen though various different factors. One factor of discrimination is highlighted by the disproportionate number of recommendations, made by the British courts, in the 1950s and 1960s, for the deportation of Irish offenders for minor offences.[18]

Another form of discrimination which was commonplace during the 1950s and early 1960s were "No Blacks, No Irish, No dogs" signs. Mary Lennon highlights this when interviewing Una Cooper, who, after being evicted from her home, attempted to find further accommodation in London;

> I'd have read the local paper for adverts. I'd have gone to shop windows but always – 'No Coloured or Irish need apply'. It was houses to let, Flats to let, Rooms to let, but everyone of them 'No Irish or Coloured need apply'. So I thought, I'll present myself at their doors. But when they heard my accent some of them would say, 'It's gone'.[19]

However, none of the ladies questioned, in my interviews, ever came across any signs in Manchester, either when looking for accommodation or employment. Even so stereotypes of the Irish immigrant, which are developed due to ignorance, rumour, hearsay, propaganda and/or history, are still prevalent today. One of the main ways they have been transmitted from age-to-age is through jokes.

Jokes are short, humorous, oral narratives that may change according to the places they are told in or the uses to which they are put, however they can and do exist for thousands of years. Stereotypical Jokes describe the power relationship between the "native" and the "settler" and Irish 'jokes' are an example of this. The "thick paddy" stereotype prevalent in Irish 'jokes' was ubiquitous in the nineteenth Century, and

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[17] Walter, Bronwen. Study of existing sources op cit. p.30, 38 &41

[18] Holmes, Colin. A Tolerant Country? Immigrants, Refugees and Minorities in Britain (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1991) p.50

[19] Lennon, Mary. Mc Adam, Marie. O'Brien, Joanne. Across the water: Irish Women's Lives in Britain (London: Virago Press Ltd, 1988) p.142

with the continuous violent antipathy and justified hatred by the Irish, which reflected doubt, distrust and fear in the British, this stereotypical view of the Irish has never died out, being brought up-to-date from the 1950s by cartoons, t-shirts, mugs and the television programme 'The Comedians'. However, there is strong resistance from the British public and officials to define anti-Irish jokes as racist, and those who do, are likely to be told they have "no sense of humour" and become subjected to further ridicule.[20] Irish women themselves have mixed reactions to the Irish 'joke':

> I don't mind the jokes about the Irish on television. They don't bother me because they are so very exaggerated that I couldn't take offence, anyway. If I heard them told by somebody who was normally racially prejudiced, who I felt really meant it, then I certainly would be offended. But I'm not usually.[21]

> I have never let an 'Irish joke' go by. I'd never accept it.[22]

The cartoon of the "ape-like" Irishman[23] was re-introduced with extreme "ferocity" by the press at the outbreak of the "troubles" in Northern Ireland in 1968. As the conflict intensified, John Kirkaldy traced the change in newspaper images during the period 1968-1970. He argued:

> Here, in a slightly more sophisticated form, are many of the crudities of Victorian imagery which could easily have come from the pages of the same magazine a century or so before.[24]

However, there has been no recognised stereotype of "Bridget" to match the stereotype of "Paddy". Irish women are generally more invisible than Irish men in Britain and if they are recognised at all they are generally included in the stereotyped image of "Paddy". One Irish woman though, did become a victim of ridicule and

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[20] Jackson, John Archer. op cit, p.152-153. Walters, Bronwen. Outsiders op cit, p.39 &166. Holmes, Colin. Tolerant Country op cit, p.51. O'Sullivan, Patrick. "The Irish Joke" in O'Sullivan, Patrick The Irish World Wide History. History, Heritage, Identity Volume 3 The Creative Migrant. (London, Herndon: Leicester University Press, 1997) p.67 &69

[21] Lennon, Mary. op cit, p.153

[22] ibid, p.89

[23] This was current in the nineteenth Century. For more information see Curtis, L. Nothing but the same old story: the roots of anti-Irish racism. (Southern Ireland: Sasta, 1996) p.60-62

[24] Cited in Walter, Bronwen. Outsiders op cit, p.84

anti-Irish imagery in the British press; Bernadette Devlin, who became prominent as a newly elected Member of Parliament in 1969. Her views were generally ignored or presented as a joke, with Fleet Street refusing to perceive her in any other way than as a "swinging youth" in the then fashionable mini-skirt.[25] Even so, Bernadette Devlin was an exception, Irish women who emigrated to Britain between 1950 and 1970 normally preferred to remain in the background, especially, it is argued, after an IRA offensive.

At 11.15am on Saturday 15th June 1996, Manchester experienced the largest bomb explosion since World War Two, which was activated by the IRA. Councillor Pat Karney, described in the press as "...a leading figure in the city's Irish community," responded by saying, he hoped "...these cowardly bastards rot in hell".[26] Even so, as in the past, Irish public houses and clubs were attacked and petrol bombed with a common ethnic identity being reason enough to share guilt by association. IRA attacks have resulted in many Irish people living in Britain maintaining a low profile, which is highlighted by Mary Lennon when she interviewed Nancy Lyons who lives in London:

> When a bombing or anything like that happens I say, 'Thank God for supermarkets', because you don't have to speak, you don't have to ask for a loaf of bread. I do feel intimidated. I wouldn't want to get into a difficult situation, because I wouldn't know how I'd react. When I buy *The Irish Post* I fold it over when I am in the shop – and I like to buy it in an Indian shop. I notice myself doing all these things, very much so.[27]

The ladies interviewed in Manchester however, when asked if they had received any hostility from the public directly after an IRA bombing gave mixed reactions:

> I have never, never, felt anything from anybody personally no. But I've been ashamed. It's made me ashamed of being Irish...I was only talking about that to

[25] ibid, p.75 &86
[26] Herbert, Michael. op cit, p.189
[27] Lennon, Mary. op cit, p.175-176

my brothers a few weeks ago and they've never, as I said, they have never felt anything either...they live in Withington and they've never, the only thing I've ever felt when things like that have happened, I'm ashamed of being Irish.[28]

Oh yeah you do feel it yes. Well you get the feeling that neighbours and that are looking at you and talking about you and that you know, you did get that feeling. They didn't ignore me no, no, but I mean it's nothing to do really with the people here. We're all innocent people. It's just that you do feel it like.[29]

Once in the hospital I did...when Lord Mountbatton was shot, was killed. They said what are you doing in here today one of yours killed one of ours. She was my sister on the ward at the time...she was that type of person anyway.[30]

Whilst others felt hostility at other instances:

Not individually really. I would say really, it wasn't direct, it would be indirect if it happened, it wouldn't be like blunt in other words, it would be indirect. Well you can feel the atmosphere can't you? It was something you would say nothing about, it's not something you would talk about. In other words if you said something to me I wouldn't retaliate, if you know I mean, but I would feel it, I would feel sad...it's like a flower that would come up every year, it goes down and it comes up again the next year, so you've got to understand that, really, human being can be something similar to that you know they can go under and maybe a few months afterwards they forget about it and move on.... in the past you had nobody to stand up for you, you were alone everybody was alone that emigrated into this country at those times...there was no button to press at all, you took it and you had to get rid of it yourself...it was nothing to do with the IRA in them days[31]

I was looking for a house, a council house and I had Shawn and I was expecting Anne-Marie and I had to go down to the Town Hall. That's were the rent place was in Manchester...the woman that was trying to get me a place, oh, she hated the Irish. As soon as I opened my mouth you could see her face changing...she was that nasty...Bob and I were married and we'd been living up in Droylsden but the back wall of our house started falling down so we had to get out quick...we went to get a council house...she said, "Pick three places," I said, "Withington, Fallowfield, Rusholme around that area" – "Oh you can't get a house there who do you think you are, coming over here and thinking you can just walk into houses in nice areas."...eventually she gave us an offer, a third floor flat in Cheetham Hill...Bob said, "I'm not taking my wife and children in there," he said. "We're Catholics," he said, "and we'll probably have more children." You know what her reply was, "When you have thirteen or fourteen children," she said, "come back."[32]

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[28] Oral testimony. Mrs A
[29] Oral testimony. Mrs C
[30] Oral testimony. Mrs D
[31] Oral testimony. Mrs B
[32] Oral testimony Mrs A

With regard to religion, Walter argues that anti-Catholic attitudes were openly expressed between 1950 and 1970.[33] Even so, the Catholic faith still played a very important part in many Irish women's lives and was central to their identity, whether through choice or not. This is highlighted by two nurses who worked in Withington Hospital:

> The priest held sway over the Irish girls – there was a fanatical need for the Church.[34]

> Remember Father Murphy? He would come to anybody. He'd say 'Have you been on holiday?' 'No' was the sheepish reply. 'Well, we've not seen you in church?'[35]

All of the ladies interviewed for this essay still attended Mass on a regular basis and raised their children as Catholics. However, they have mixed views on how important the Church is in their lives:

> I wouldn't feel if something cropped up and I couldn't go – I wouldn't feel guilty because I know – my believe is, yeah go to Church that's one thing, but it doesn't stop there, I think if you do something good for somebody, that's a harder thing to do.[36]

> I never miss Church.[37]

> Over here it's different. Everybody in Ireland went to Church, everybody. If you didn't go to church you were the odd one out. Over here it's the other way round – you're the odd one out going to Church... it was just the way we were brought up you know we just went. When I look back now, when I think the Catholic religion when I was a child, it was too much ingrained into you, pushed at you, but you didn't see it then of course you just took it as normal. To me, now, religion is how you live your life it doesn't matter whether you are Catholic, Protestant or Buddhist... it doesn't matter what you are, it doesn't matter if you haven't got any religion, if you live a good life that's the way I look at it. That to me - it's just an accident that I'm a Catholic.[38]

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[33] Walter, Bronwen. Outsiders op cit, p.87
[34] Sim, Roger. Kitchen, Helen. More Than a Place of Healing: An Anthology of memories, Memorabilia and Anecdotes of Withington Hospital (St Mary's Hospital, Manchester: Hospital Arts, March 1999) p.70
[35] ibid, p.70
[36] Oral testimony Mrs D
[37] Oral testimony Mrs C
[38] Oral testimony Mrs A

Many Irish women, who came to Britain between 1950 and 1970, used the Church for socialising in the safety of their own Irish environment. There were also long-established Irish public houses, and, in addition, new clubs sprang up for dancing, to meet the social needs for the new immigrants, and to raise money for families of men killed or injured on building sites.[39] Also, centres were opened to help newcomers find work, accommodation and to give advice on any problems. However, none of these clubs were meant for the exclusive use of the Irish, but were also available to other groups,[40] a tradition which is continued even today by the Irish Community Care in Manchester.[41] The ladies interviewed for this essay in Manchester though, whilst generally sticking to Church activities and Irish clubs, where they formed friendships and relationships with other Irish immigrants or second-generation Irish, also made friends with British-born Mancunians and would socialise with them as well. Mrs C highlights this when asked if she found the British people friendly; "Not really but I found the Manchester people friendly."[42]

So as one can see, there has been a long history of prejudice and hostility between the Irish and the British, existing alongside a belief that the Irish have assimilated into British society. This history has been exacerbated through jokes, cartoons, television programmes, mugs, t-shirts as well as by IRA offensives. Even so, there have been many different arguments as to the degree this prejudice was emitted towards the Irish, as well as in what form. The Manchester Irish ladies felt this prejudice although they, as well as most Manchester-born Britons, were more interested in living and

[39] Herbert, Michael. op cit, p.133
[40] Manchester Evening News 'Great Day For The Shamrock'. June 7th 1960
[41] Irish Community Care continues all of the above and has offices all over Manchester. Their organisation caters for many different nationalities and will help anyone who asks. For more information see Irish Community Care http://www.iccmanchester.org.uk/index.php?id2=7 (07/11/2002)
[42] Oral testimony Mrs C

surviving, which is highlighted by the lack of 'No Irish' signs in Manchester. The hostility they felt was generally omitted from certain individuals or groups, which depended on immediate pressures or the political or social climate at the time. The 1950s to 1970s immigrant, Manchester ladies, in many instances would mix with the British, having to adapt to many of their customs. However they still generally retained their Irishness through the Church as well as by socialising with other immigrants.

The next chapter investigates employment for the Irish in Britain deciphering whether or not the Irish were channelled into certain occupations, focusing specifically on Irish women's employment in Manchester.

Chapter 4.

Discrimination or Acceptance?

From as early as the twelfth Century, the Irish have left their homes and moved to Manchester in search of work. As can be seen from the previous chapter many would enter Britain into a climate that was distrustful and hostile. However, the Irish still continued to cross the Irish Channel in search for employment. This chapter will look at the history of Irish employment in Manchester and Britain, at how the Irish working-class were channelled into certain occupations in the pre-War years and whether this had any bearing on the occupations of Irish women immigrants between 1950 and 1970.

In the nineteenth Century, Frederick Engels, a champion of the proletariat, accused the Irishmen living in Manchester of:

> ...competing with the Englishman, and gradually forcing the rate of wages...down to the Irishman's level...the Englishman who is still somewhat civilised, needs more than the Irishman who goes in rags, eats potatoes, and sleeps in a pig-sty...The Irish had nothing to lose at home, and much to gain in England; and from the time when it became known in Ireland that the east side of St. George's Channel offered steady work and good pay for strong arms, every year has brought armies of the Irish hither.[1]

This view was encouraged by the Government, who, Louis Kushnick argues, encouraged the white and English poor to adopt racism towards the Irish in order to procure a feeling of superiority in a hierarchical society. He believes that in this way the Government found a way to divide the majority. However, Kushnick states that this plan failed in Manchester, where militants were conscious of a need for solidarity

[1] Engels, Frederick. The Conditions of the Working Class in England (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1984) p.104 & 116

with the Irish working-class, and were therefore "willing to accept Irishmen among its leaders".[2]

Nineteenth Century textile employers however, did admit that the Irish did keep wages down due to wage cutting and blacklegging, although Jackson argues, this was due more to Irish innocence than malice. In reality, even the lowest wage in Britain was an improvement to the situation in Ireland and, by the 1830s, the Irish had exclusively certain manual jobs that the British were either unable to do or refused to do, in building or general labouring work or, for women, domestic occupations which all involved back-breaking work and long hours.[3]

Even so, the Irish were still being used as scapegoats well into the twentieth Century, which is clearly exemplified in a speech by H.D. Longbottom, the candidate for Protestant Democracy, in the General Election of 1931. He argued that, immigration from Ireland and the presence of the Irish-descent minority were responsible for high unemployment in Liverpool, as well as for the continued existence of slums and the city's high rates.[4] Some understanding of this sort of view was offered by one interviewee:

> There was the possibility that you could be disliked just because you are a foreigner...not meaningly. Lets face it really, if peoples over-powers you and they're coming in to your country and the peoples that have been born and reared here from generations back, and then you getting their job you can quite understand but then we were workers in them days...you couldn't go to the labour exchange and get money, you had to work for it.[5]

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[2] Kushnick, Louis. Race, Class & Struggle Essays on Racism and Inequality in Britain, the US and Western Europe (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1998) p.169. There has been a large debate over the extent the Irish played in Working Class movements. For more information see Jackson, John Archer. op cit, p.116. Gilley, Sheridan. "English Attitudes to the Irish in England 1780-1900" in Holmes, Colin. (ed) Immigrants and Minorities in British Society (Suffolk: Lavenham Press Ltd, 1978) p.85.
[3] Jackson, John Archer. op cit, p.93, 97 &117. Thompson, E.P. The Making of the English Working Class (London, Southampton: Camelot Press Ltd, 1963) p.431-434
[4] Holmes, Colin. Tolerant Country op cit p.29
[5] Oral testimony Mrs B

During the Second World War[6] however, with the need for extra workers, employers had no choice but to look towards the Irish, and a whole range of new opportunities opened up for many. Even though Southern Ireland remained neutral, it is estimated that around 100,000 workers came over from Ireland to work in Britain.[7] The Occupational Tables of the 1951 Census showed that, even though the majority of Irish-born women were in personal service, clerical and general manufacturing categories, a significant proportion were entering skilled occupations with 22.4 per-cent of these women entering professional occupations, mainly nursing or midwifery.[8] Mrs B explains what obtaining a job was like near the end of the Second World War:

> My older sister was expecting a baby and I came over to be with her...we had to have something to come back to and a friend of hers, my sister, she knew a friend that had a café, near the Cathedral in Manchester and I started to work there...you had to go to a job really if you know what I mean. I went to her and I had a passport to go to her...I found the British people at the time really - we were really – how can I put it, we were very willing to work even if the work was too much for us...we were glad to have to - I would say really that we were a race of people that were glad to be employed, to have money...if you didn't have a passport and if you didn't have a job to come to you wouldn't be allowed in. You had to report as well you couldn't go like straight to the job. You had to report to the local authority...they called it in them days the labour exchange...and they looked at your passport and that...You weren't like a citizen in other words. You were under restriction.[9]

Further, there was a reluctance to employ Irish-born women during World War Two, although many employers overcame this out of necessity, and were surprised "...when the negative stereotypes of Irish women ('dirt' and 'drunkenness') were not confirmed".[10]

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[6] July 1941, process of movement between England and Southern Ireland became formally organised and in 1944 during preparations for D-Day, both Governments prevented movement between the two countries. For more information see Holmes, Colin. Tolerant Country op cit p.40-41
[7] Herbert, Michael. op cit, p.126
[8] Jackson, John Archer. op cit, p.105-106
[9] Oral testimony Mrs B
[10] Cited in Walter, Bronwen. Outsiders op cit, p.88-89

In the 1950s, a recruitment drive by the British Government, gave Irish women the opportunity of training for jobs previously unavailable to them including social work, Civil Service, banks and transport, although Irish women still remained over-represented in many low-skilled occupations.[11] Most of these young Irish women who came were in the 15-24 age group and were leaving their homes and families for the first time; "I found it very strange at first, after living in the Country and that, well I hardly knew anybody but you soon made friends."[12] Many had few or no qualifications and they arrived to take jobs that they may have heard about or been promised, but, which, in reality did not exist. Many of these young Irish girls assumed, for example, that, once in Liverpool, they could take a taxi to Manchester or another City to work, but in fact they generally had insufficient funds and/or were inadequately prepared. Of a sample of girls interviewed between 1953 and 1956, one-fifth of them arrived with no work to go to, and of these, a small number were less than fifteen years old. The 'Liverpool Vigilance Society' tried to help these young girls by having a worker meet the boats to interview those who appeared "to need help". Even so, many of these young Irish girls were still vulnerable and it is difficult to ascertain how many turned to prostitution. Although most women will have gone into regular employment, a clinic for venereal diseases in London found that the Irish represented the majority of their patients until the heavy influx of West Indian girls and other 'coloured' girls entered Britain.[13] This sort of evidence has though to be regarded with caution, if the clinic was located in an immigrant area then it would hardly be surprising if most of those who attended were immigrants and, therefore,

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[11] O'Conner, Henrietta. Goodwin, John. Locating Irish Workers in the British Labour Force Survey Centre for Labour Market Studies, University of Leicester, Leicester hso1@le.ac.uk or jdg3@le.ac.uk (09/02/2003) p.7-8

[12] Oral testimony Mrs C

[13] Jackson, John Archer. op cit, p.68-69

does not necessarily say anything about moral behaviour relative to the rest of the population.

The majority of the young Irish girls who came to Manchester and the rest of Britain were drawn into two sections of the market force: the lower professions, teaching or nursing, or low-paid manual work which included cleaning or catering jobs.[14] For occupations such as nursing, many were recruited in Ireland and constituted a large part of the nursing staff, especially in Withington Hospital:

> When I started in Home two on that first day and met the tutors, I was the only English girl. The others were all from Southern Ireland, from the convents and I couldn't understand what they were saying because their accents were so strong. Many of the girls were already crying because they were homesick.[15]

These girls would leave their homes and enter a "family" at Withington Hospital. Student nurses lived together, ate together and were served meals by trained staff. Rules and regulations applied to all aspects of their lives and were implemented rigorously with almost a hint of cruelty, "...although the regime was generally perceived as having a maternalistic and benevolent intention,"[16]

> A Sister in Midwifery considered the bowl under the maternity bed was in the wrong position. I was dragged out of bed at 9am to put it right – after finishing work at 8! ... If you didn't put in for time off you didn't get it.[17]

Although many Irish nurses accepted these rules and regulations, which were consistent in hospitals throughout Britain, and enjoyed the socialising and camaraderie prevalent, some of them still reported being the object of racist attitudes. One nurse talked about how the English spoke to her:

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[14] Hickman, Mary J. Religion op cit, p.208
[15] Sim, Roger. op cit, p.70
[16] ibid, p.81
[17] ibid, p.81

> I had to listen to people telling me how thick and stupid the Irish were. I was always told – and made to feel – that I was different. The jokes on the telly and everywhere reinforced this negative attitude.[18]

Even so, in a survey conducted in the 1960s of hospitals in South Croydon, three separate matrons failed to number Irish employees among their immigrant staff.[19] Also the Manchester Irish ladies, when asked if they had been at the receiving end of prejudice at work, except with the one exception highlighted in the previous chapter, all replied in the negative. This highlights how many people had come to regard Irish women as British but also shows how negative attitudes could still be prevalent.

Most of the 1950-1970 Immigrants generally left Ireland and occupied work that was casual, non-unionised and often sub-contracted, giving the impression that Irish labour was entrenched as an "underclass of labour."[20]

> I worked part-time. I worked in the mill order place in Devenshire Street... office work...better than Ireland; wages wasn't very good in Ireland.[21]

> My first job was at the Manchester University. I was a waitress at Manchester University.[22]

For many, finding employment was a first priority:

> I arrived in Manchester at 8 o'clock I think it was, in the morning, and I went out looking for work, didn't go to bed, went out looking for work, and I started a job at John Myers ... that same day. I came home and I never forget how exhausted I was. I went straight to bed and I then got three jobs then. I wanted to do nursing but the money wasn't good.[23]

So as one can see, many young Irish girls came to Britain looking for work, for even the lowest wage in Britain was an improvement on the situation in Ireland, even during the twentieth Century. However, some of these innocent girls slipped through

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[18] Hickman, Mary J. Religion op cit, p.215
[19] Jackson, John Archer. op cit, p.108
[20] Hazelkorn, Ellen. op cit, p.180
[21] Oral testimony Mrs C
[22] Oral testimony Mrs A
[23] Oral testimony Mrs D

the net and had no option but to turn to selling their bodies for money. For the majority who did not, they generally went into either lower professional jobs or unskilled occupations. The nursing profession highlights how many of these girls went straight from the protection of the family into the protection of the hospital and the Matrons. However, the Irish Manchester ladies all occupied low-paid, un-skilled jobs at first, which reinforces the argument that, during 1950 to 1970, Irish occupations in Manchester, as well as in the rest of Britain, were stereotyped.

The next chapter will be looking at the housing situation for Irish immigrants. It will decipher whether or not the Irish were housed together, and if so whether this was through choice or by force.

Chapter 5.

Integration or Segregation?

There were three main areas in Manchester where Irish immigrants settled during the nineteenth Century; 'Little Ireland', which was situated just off Oxford Road, with around four thousand people living there, the Ancoats district on the Eastern side of town and the district to the North East known as 'New Town' or 'Irish Town' which housed "...over 20,000 people huddled into cramped houses and cellar dwellings."[1] Many of the Irish who lived in these parts were from the bottom part of the social scale and had probably only recently moved to Manchester. During the cholera outbreak in the 1830s, 'Little Ireland' caught the attention of the prominent social commentator J.P. Kay-Shuttleworth:

> This unhealthy spot lies so low that the chimneys of its houses, some of them three stories high, are little above the road. About two hundred of these habitations are crowded together in an extremely narrow space, and are inhabited by the lowest Irish. Most of these houses have also cellars, whose floor is scarcely elevated above the level of water flowing in the Medlock. The soughs are destroyed, or out of repair: and these narrow abodes are in consequence always damp, and on the slightest rise in the river, which is a frequent occurrence, are flooded to the depth of several inches...It is surrounded on every side by some of the largest factories of the town, whose chimneys vomit forth dense clouds of smoke, which hang heavy over this insalubrious region.[2]

This report led to Irish women being despised for the perceived lack of their domestic skills, by those who linked cleanliness to virtue. This stereotyped image remained intact into the twentieth Century. The 1950s Irish working-class home was still considered 'dirty' and 'overcrowded' with too many children, even though many Irish women valued homemaking and child rearing over a career.[3]

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[1] Sheehan, Michael. "Manchester's Irish Story Part One." in The Irish Post, February 25th, 1989. Donated by Irish Community Care op cit. Busteed, Mervyn. op cit, p.28

[2] Kay-Shuttleworth, J.P. The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester Second Edition (Ireland: Irish University Press, 1971) p.21-22

[3] Walter, Bronwen. Outsiders op cit, p.88, 208-209

Patrick O'Farrell argues however, that, during the nineteenth Century, the Irish took pride in what the English saw as their degradation. He believes that, even in Britain the Irish interpreted their slums as "...preserving the virtuous life."[4] This has not gone unchallenged. Mervyn Busteed points out that very few streets were exclusively Irish or non-Irish and the inhabitants of cellar-dwellings, the worst accommodation, were markedly non-Irish. He argues that some Irish, especially immigrants from before the Great Famine, moved up the social ladder and were "...dispersed throughout the urban structure."[5]

In reality, what gave many nineteenth Century commentators the impression that the Irish lived in dirty and overcrowded homes, was the fact that many Irish immigrants who were already living in Britain, would save a portion of their wage to send for another relative to come over the Irish Channel, until all the members of a family were reunited in Britain. New immigrants would usually move into the homes of the already settled Irish immigrant and it was generally the woman's position to initiate the newcomer into the traditions and ways of the host society.[6] This did not stop in the nineteenth Century:

> I went to stay with them [her parents] and then I got my own place. They lived in Upper-Brook Street which is in Chorlton-Cum-Hardy. I moved in with them they had a flat there so I moved in with them 'till I got my own place...Nelson Street down by the Holy Name...they moved out of the flat and they got a house in Weymouth Street and I moved in with them again because there was more room...my brother was here and he got them the flat to come over to...you always knew somebody. If you were in Ireland and you wanted to come over to England, you always knew somebody.[7]

> My sister had come back and her husband was in the British Army with that War...and they bought a house in Manchester...I moved in with my sister.[8]

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[4] O'Farrell, Patrick. England op cit, p.55
[5] Busteed, Mervyn. op cit, p.34 & 46
[6] Jackson, John Archer. op cit, p.114
[7] Oral testimony Mrs A
[8] Oral testimony Mrs B

> I got married in Ireland and came here two weeks later. He was living with his brother and his wife and they got us a flat right away...My brother stayed with me for a while when he came and that.[9]

For those who did not have family, moving to a strange city and country could be very difficult:

> I found my way to Mountjoy Square where we had to spend the night and although it looked a lovely hotel, we the emigrants, were sent to the basement and there must have been about 150 of us all sleeping in a long cellar, two and three to a bed. I'll never forget it as long as I live.[10]

> I always feel bad about the lads who never married. It must be a lonely old life. They came from big loving families & their mammies did everything. They grafted hard, most of them were in digs. They'd come home soaking wet from work, to a shared bedroom with no way to dry the clothes. On they'd go the next morning still wet, no wonder they are all sick or dead, sure the poor things didn't stand a chance.[11]

Many of the Irish immigrants would inhabit areas that already had a high percentage of Irish living there, which was important to them for their settlement and for retaining their identity:

> We rallied round & looked after each other. Stuck in this alien land without your family, we were mainly naïve, country people leaving our homes for the first time. You'd be rotten with the homesickness, the other Irish made it bearable, we gave each other hope.[12]

> There was more Irish people around that area [Holy Name Church] and around Greenheys and all along there...I suppose they did stick together you know, there was a lot of Irish people around Ancoats and places like that. I suppose they did stick together.[13]

> I've lovely memories of Moss-Side, especially Alexandra Road. There was a shop there that sold bacon ribs and you only had to walk near it to hear a variety of Irish accents.[14]

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[9] Oral testimony Mrs C
[10] Interview material collected by Irish Community Care for exhibition in Manchester Central Library. Will be known by I/V.ICC in future.
[11] I/V.ICC
[12] I/V.ICC
[13] Oral testimony Mrs A
[14] I/V.ICC

> I lived in Moss-Side where a lot of the Irish lived in those days. I loved the Manchester people, they were so warm. There was a great community around Denmark Road market.[15]

However, it was not just the Irish who settled into these particular areas, there would also be other immigrant groups:

> In Old Trafford...there was quite a lot of Irish there...Black people, different people really, there was Black people living next door to us and they were lovely.[16]

> You'd go down Town; you know where the Infirmary is now, down there. And there was nothing but really big houses...and they had them full of lodgers, that's where they came. There was Scottish people as well there was always a mixture, and there was a lot of people in Great Ancoats street...there was a lot of big houses there...there was big factories there...and mills...there was an awful lot of Italian people. They, very much so like the Irish had emigrated into this, the Italian people had emigrated into here.[17]

> All around the Holy Name down to Denmark Road and Moss Lane East every third house was Irish.[18]

> All along Cheetham Hill Road, were rows of terraced houses. Lots of Irish & lots of Jewish lived side by side, we all got along together. There were differences between us but we shared a common bond, we were both displaced people in a foreign land.[19]

Many of these houses were compulsory brought after 1960 by the Government:

> They'd pulled down the house in Weymouth Street – compulsory purchase to build the Universities. They pulled all the houses down... 1970.[20]

> We got married 1965...his sister was going back to Ireland...they couldn't sell the house because it was coming down for demolition so we rented the house off them until it came down.[21]

Many of these houses had very limited furnishings:

> There was no central heating and there was no carpets in the houses, there was just cheap floor covering, you were very well off if you had that floor covering and that went for the British people as well.[22]

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[15] I/V.ICC
[16] Oral testimony Mrs D
[17] Oral testimony Mrs B
[18] I/V.ICC
[19] I/V.ICC
[20] Oral testimony Mrs A
[21] Oral testimony Mrs D
[22] Oral Testimony Mrs B

With many immigrants housed together, overcrowded, overworked, sending money home as well as not eating as well as they did in Ireland,[23] there was a worry by many in the Government and medical professions about the spreading of tuberculosis (TB), especially among young Irish girls, who had emigrated to Britain free from the disease on entry.[24] They were more vulnerable to the infection than the English, who "were ravaged by this disease, mainly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and have, as a result, acquired some immunity."[25] In the North-West region, the number of Irish who occupied beds specifically for the treatment of TB, was one in nine, compared to one in seven for London-born people.[26] Both the Irish and the British governments tried to combat this disease through the use of x-rays and tests with B.C.G. and by examining the Irish through mass radiography.[27] Even so, TB continued to ravage the Irish and they remained the highest minority group affected by tuberculosis until 1961.[28]

So as one can see, Irish immigrants' homes, dating back to the 19th Century, were construed as dirty and overcrowded. Of course these concepts are relative. In any case money was often short because women were concentrated in low paid jobs and Irish families/individuals assisted each other by sending money home and helping new migrants with their fares, accommodation, and initiation into the British society. The Irish, like other immigrant groups, tended to congregate together, to maintain their roots, for safety, and because they were displaced people. The fact that many of

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[23] Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) Fifth series-Volume 544 House of Commons Official Report Session 1955-56 Compromising Period From 18th-28th July 1955. (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1955) 27th July 1955 p.1310
[24] ibid, 25 July 1955 p.806
[25] ibid, 27th July 1955 p.1308
[26] ibid, p.1310-1311
[27] ibid, p.1318
[28] ibid, Session 1961-62 Comprising Period From 11th-21st December 1961. 11th December 1961

their homes were ultimately compulsory bought in slum clearance programmes, highlights the fact that many of them were living in terrible conditions that probably many British-born would have refused to live in anyway. Diseases were rife and although the Government did become aware of it and tried to tackle it, not enough was done and many Irish died of TB, caused and exacerbated, by their living conditions.

Conclusion.

Ireland, in the 1950s, was similar to a third world country. Religious, political, cultural, legal and social factors of the time combined to ensure that women were treated as second-class citizens. Although the Irish Government was aware of the outward flow of people from its country, and tried certain, unworkable remedies to stop it, many people believed that emigration from Ireland was economically necessary for the welfare of those who remained behind. The women who entered Britain, left behind everything that was familiar, and had to adapt to and learn, the new customs and traditions of their host society, whilst still attempting to maintain their own cultural practices through Irish clubs and pubs. Many were reunited with kin who had gone before, which would have eased the transition. For those entering the Country alone, however, it could be a scary and daunting prospect, and some women had to turn to prostitution to support themselves.

Manchester, itself, had been one of the British cities favoured by Irish immigrants since the twelfth Century. But despite this longstanding relationship, many of the stereotyped, negative, images of the Irish people emerged from this city. The negative construction of Irish identity which was shaped in the nineteenth Century, persisted into the twentieth and it has been argued by some historians that as a consequence, Irish immigrant women faced discrimination with regard to occupation, religion, housing, education, as well as being affected by the general belief that they occupied homes that were 'dirty' and 'overcrowded'. Other historians, however, believe that the post-War Irish immigrant was accepted into British society because of his/her "white" colour, with many of the prevailing prejudices being directed towards Black people.

Although all of the Irish ladies I spoke to, have, at one time or another, experienced hostility from Manchester-born people, this was generally generated by individuals or groups depending on the social or political climate at the time, rather than being a continuous event. Most of them dealt with it by, so far as possible, ignoring it; they were more concerned with the day-to-day details of their lives, and are clearly grateful for the chances they have obtained here.

Because of the large Irish community that already existed in Manchester and the lack of 'No Irish' signs that were ubiquitous in other cities, as well as with the ease with which many found employment, it could be assumed that the Irish, by the 1950s, had been integrated into the Manchester society, and prejudice against them was not overt. Even so, many of the immigrants interviewed were still treated as second-class citizens; initially entering low-paid, unskilled occupations. Although it could be argued that this was due to the education and training that they had received in Ireland, and also, it was similar to the experiences of British-born working-class girls and women.

Religion was also a major factor that generated hostility and set the Irish and the British apart during the nineteenth Century and, it is argued, after 1950. However, all of the ladies interviewed, still continued their Faith and not one of them spoke about hostility felt from the British with regard to this issue. Although now, many of them believe it is more important to perform a kind act than to worship blindly.

With regard to housing, many ladies, at first, moved into accommodation in areas that were predominately populated by different minority groups, which gave them a sense

of belonging and home. Many of these houses were demolished after 1960, which highlights the condition that they must have been in. Health factors consequent upon poor living conditions, as well as from overwork and bad nutrition, became a matter of concern for many in authority, and although this issue was debated on numerous occasions by the Government, nothing successful was ever achieved, and many Irish immigrant ladies lost their lives to tuberculosis.

In reference to the use of oral testimonies, without them, the experiences and conditions that many of these ladies faced in Ireland and Britain would remain unknown. Not only did it bring history to life, it also highlighted and emphasised the excitement, apprehension, hard work, loneliness and the sense of community forged in a foreign country, as well as the determination of all of the women interviewed to succeed in their life choices. This small study recognises the contribution each made and continues to make to their chosen society.

Appendix 1.

Mrs A – Joan Lewer.
Tape Summary.

000 Emigrated 1963/65 – job in Dublin – family already here.
051 Lived in Wexford.
066 Father's occupation – farmer – small farm.
070 Mother work on farm.
084 Seven brother and sisters – Joan was fifth.
097 Rural area.
105 Jobs in the home – not many – considered delicate – youngest girl – children in family.
169 Education – Convent school - very religious and very strict.
280 Religious influence on family - none.
299 Attended Mass every week.
312 Boyfriends – great freedom.
325 Socialising in Ireland – in houses.
351 Dating – go to dances in houses.
365 Arranged marriages – not heard of them.
373 Childless mothers sent home in disgrace – never heard about it.
382 Unmarried mothers – seen as disgrace.
449 Family jobs in Ireland – blackberry picking – seven onwards.
465 Emigration - aged 19.
468 Work in Dublin - nanny.
474 Work in hometown - nanny.
484 Life in Dublin – better paid – eight children in Joan's care.
605 Family moved to Manchester – 1959/1960.
630 Joan moves to Manchester – brother died, children grown up.
642 Living arrangements in Manchester – Chorlton-Cum Hardy with family – then Nelson Street and then Weymouth Street.
665 Community – Chorlton – not Irish.
695 Holy Name Church – large Irish community.
683 Brother already living in Chorlton.
710 Socialising – Irish clubs at first – British as well.
747 First job in Manchester – made friends with everybody, all nationalities - waitress at Manchester University.
782 Prejudice from Housing.
967 Husband English.
972 Prejudice from Housing.
1009 Met husband in Pub.
1019 Pubs in Ireland – only enter with mother or father.
1040 Pubs in Britain.
1041 No prejudice marrying husband.
1048 Men in Ireland – engaged – did not work out.
1054 Religion in Britain and Ireland - never forced by family only by nuns.
1042 Protestants going to Church in Ireland.
1157 Personal view on religion – when young too ingrained – living a good life more important.
1184 IRA – ashamed – no prejudice.

1222 No fighting in Southern Ireland.
1245 British took land off family – not bitter.
1330 Black and Tans – Grandma's stories
1348 Never planned on staying in Britain.

Appendix 2.

Mrs B – Nora Kenny.
Tape Summary.

000	Late 1940s came to Manchester.
012	Came from West County – poor County.
023	Family – two brothers and two sisters – Nora was youngest.
035	Travelling.
044	Farm.
050	Father Farmer – Mother voluntary work.
085	In Britain – blackout - buses.
125	House in Ireland.
129	Mother's voluntary work.
132	Mother's work on farm.
166	Nora's work – milking – aged 12 or 13 and mother's work.
302	Education – National School – religious – very strict.
321	Aunt emigrated to America then Brothers and sisters.
334	War in Northern Ireland.
358	Family coming to England – canvassed during War.
414	Nora moves in with sister - Stretford.
422	Conscripted Irish – to repair Manchester after War - living in Stretford.
439	No job in Ireland.
442	16 and a half – Nora came Manchester – sister pregnant.
446	Met husband 1949.
452	Work in Britain – Café near Cathedral.
470	Irish willing workers.
494	Had to report to Labour Exchange.
511	Houses – no central heating or carpets.
532	Irish not segregated - mixed with other nationalities.
551	Great Ancoats Street – mixed communities – big factories and mills.
560	St Michael's – mainly Italian people.
572	St Michael's School – willed to homeless.
580	Homeless – people that fell by the wayside – all nationalities.
596	Could be disliked for being a foreigner.
612	Racism – not direct – indirect.
664	Irish History taught in Schools – before her time.
689	Family fighting in the War.
702	IRA hostility – none.
736	Work for homeless after retiring and husband's death.
797	Irish Community Care and their work.
921	Planned on staying in Manchester.

Appendix 3.

Mrs C - Alice Egan.
Tape Summary.

000 lived in Southern Ireland
012 Family – eldest – one brother and one sister.
019 Job – worked in an office for 13 and half years.
026 Father – gardener Mother - housewife.
034 Home – council cottage – three bedrooms.
051 Alice's job – look after brother.
063 Education – Country school and National school.
080 Religion not important.
083 Technical school – 13 and half – learnt typing.
103 Work in an office – started before 16 – left Ireland when 29 – got married.
121 met husband at dance
131 Husband already working in Manchester - railway work.
145 courting – six years.
167 Many men had emigrated.
180 Arranged marriages – heard about them – not much.
192 Childless woman disgraced – never heard about.
196 Unmarried mothers – seen as a disgrace.
215 Aged 29 emigrated – after marriage.
222 Flat right away – Victoria Park.
229 Irish community.
230 Not mix much – just with neighbours – Irish.
244 Married three years – had children.
252 Husband's death – four years ago.
255 Ferry journey – awful.
275 Found Britain strange – knew no-one.
287 Manchester people friendly.
291 Worked part-time – Mill order place – office work – better paid than Ireland.
305 Never any prejudice.
312 Sent money back to Ireland sometimes.
323 Might go to pictures – not really socialise – husband quiet man.
337 Children at school – made friends.
347 Religion – not as friendly in Ireland as they are in Manchester– no interference.
406 Children not attend Church now.
418 IRA – could feel hostility from neighbours.
439 Planned on staying in Manchester.
446 Brother came over – helped him.
463 Irish Community Care work as a volunteer – husband not involved.
538 Came to Manchester 1962.

Appendix 4.

Mrs D - Cathy Cunningham.
Tape Summary.

000 Came from Southern Ireland.
012 Eldest of ten – five girls and five boys.
025 Father's occupation – farmer.
028 Mother – before marriage was head cook in Hospital – married - gave up job – married into land.
047 Mother had to look after father's parents – all shared three bedroom house.
062 Farm inherited – willed down to younger brother.
076 Parents death.
086 Jobs around the house in Ireland – working on land – going to the Fair to sell cattle – aged 4-5 started helping.
129 Work in Galway – nanny – three children.
136 Wanted to work in Manchester – aunt and uncle living in Manchester already.
146 Arrival in Manchester – got job same day.
158 Worked in three jobs – wanted nursing – money not good.
168 Sent money back to Ireland every week.
180 Wages not well paid in Ireland.
194 Socialising – cousin's friends – Irish and second-generation Irish.
200 Stayed with Aunt and Uncle in Reddish.
202 Community – second-generation Irish and English.
220 Emigrated 1961/62.
225 Education - Religious school.
266 First job in Galway – nanny – Church of England family – faced prejudice for not being Catholic – aged 16.
314 Hard work - had electric cooker – used to open fire – culture change – own room.
337 Did not socialise much – very little time off – couple of hours a week.
357 If socialised - maybe couple of dances.
363 Arranged marriages – husband's parents were.
373 Unmarried mothers – seen as disgrace – innocent girls.
430 Emigrated aged 18.
448 Ferry journey – exciting – all new.
456 Prejudice in Hospital after Lord Mountbatton was killed.
470 Nursing career after children born.
492 Met Husband – Astoria – was Irish.
505 Rented house Old Trafford – until demolition – mixed community – Black people lived next door.
526 Socialised with all nationalities.
538 Priests in Ireland like Gods – rules of the Church.
581 Views on Religion – better to do some good for somebody.
606 Hospital work – work around husband's job and children – shift work.
639 Never wanted to go back to Ireland.

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