"Ilegant Natives of Erin":

The Irish in Cheltenham 1801-1861

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ABSTRACT

A local study of the Irish in Cheltenham was conducted along the lines of the "mixed methods" paradigm suggested by Swift.[1] The Irish-born population, as recorded in the census of 1841, 1851 and 1861, was subjected to a biographical survey, and census data were obtained (from I-CeM) in order to allow the characteristics of the Irish in Cheltenham to be analysed statistically in the context of the wider demographic profile of the town. Topics investigated quantitatively include: population growth, migration levels, geographical distribution, occupations, socio-economic diversity, permanence/transience of residency, integration or segregation, and origins in Ireland.

The lived experiences of these people were then investigated further from a variety of thematic perspectives. Subjects considered qualitatively include: housing, community relations, alcohol and disorder, social mobility, religion, politics, and education. Incidents of Anti-Catholic sentiment and violence, enflamed by Francis Close's rabid evangelical rhetoric, are examined. The Great Famine and its effects, reaching even as far as Cheltenham, are discussed, as well as the response of the local Poor Law Guardians to the problem. An interesting conundrum relating to apparent, but unexplained, connections between members of the Cheltenham working-class Irish community and two of Feargus O'Connor's Chartist colonies is explored.

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[1] Roger Swift, *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1914 : Perspectives and Sources* (Historical Association, 1990), p.37.

Two very different groups of Irish people in Cheltenham were distinguished, from diametrically opposing ends of the socio-economic scale, one of extremely high status, the other of particularly low status. Cheltenham was identified as being highly unusual, possibly unique, in having roughly equal numbers of Irish-born people from these diverse social classes living in close proximity to one another. The characteristics of the low-status Irish were found to be very similar to those of working-class Irish people in other British cities, and, like the Irish in other places in South Wales and South-west England, they were predominantly from County Cork. The high-status Cheltenham Irish, who included numerous absentee landlords, on the other hand, hailed mostly from Dublin, Ulster and other parts of Ireland, and were more closely aligned with their British-born neighbours from similar backgrounds than with their working-class compatriots.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1.   Cheltenham and the Irish

On 29 April 1830, the *Cheltenham Chronicle* juxtaposed these two articles, without any obvious sense of irony or hypocrisy:

> THE CHELTENHAM SEASON.—The influx of visitors (including numerous families of the highest respectability,) during the past week, has been unusually great, and a considerable number of the principal lodging houses have been engaged for the whole of the summer.

> IRISH PAUPERS—For several weeks past this town has been so numerously infested by beggars from the sister island, that no less than nine were passed back to their native country by the Magistrates on Tuesday. We understand it is the intention of our parochial authorities to continue this practice, as the only remedy to a rapidly increasing Evil.[2]

Cheltenham was happy for people to visit the town – after all, its economy depended on it, as, indeed, it still does today, when the annual Cheltenham Festival at the racecourse alone is worth an estimated £274 million annually to local businesses, much of

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[2] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 29 Apr 1830, p.3 col.5.

that revenue coming in the form of euros from across the Irish Sea.[3] In 1849, Edward Cresy, Superintendent Inspector of the Board of Health, said of Cheltenham's economy: "There are no manufactures, and the great mass of the inhabitants depend upon the influx of visitors for their employment and support."[4] Nonetheless, clearly not everyone who visited the town was equally welcome: those of "the highest respectability" could expect a warm reception, while others were considered a "rapidly increasing Evil". Although the natives of the "sister isle" were singled out as a particular concern, in reality they contributed significantly to both these groups of visitors, desirable and undesirable, for, as Gwen Hart states: "From the comparatively early days of the Spa, Cheltenham seems to have had an attraction for the Irish, which continued through the nineteenth century". She quotes a rhyme from the period:

> The churchyard's so small and the Irish so many,
> they ought to be pickled and sent to Kilkenny.[5]

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[3] Finance in Society Research Institute, University of Gloucestershire, *University Study reveals value of Cheltenham Festival to Local Economy*, University of Gloucestershire, 2023, Mar 08 <https://www.glos.ac.uk/content/university-study-reveals-value-ofcheltenham-festival-to-local-economy/>.

[4] Edward Cresy, *Public Health Act … Report to the General Board of Health on a preliminary inquiry into … the sanitary condition of … the town of Cheltenham* (W. Clowes & Sons, 1849), p.8 <https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Public_Health_Act_Report_to_the_General/QjDTpSDxKWcC?hl=en>.

[5] Gwen Hart, *A History of Cheltenham* (Leicester University Press, 1965), p.203.; Regrettably, Hart does not cite her source, but the rhyme presumably pre-dates the opening of the New Burial Ground in 1831. It appears in a slightly different form, lampooning the medical profession, in a poem published in the *Cheltenham Looker-on,* 21 Sep 1833, no. 21, p.260.

As Hart goes on to explain, the Irish in Cheltenham included amongst their number several aristocrats, as well as many military men and East India Company officials, both active and retired.[6] Although the Irish-born population of Cheltenham never reached anything like the proportions, relative to overall size, of that of cities like London, Liverpool and Glasgow, the Irish certainly made their mark upon the town, in diverse ways. Yet, as the two newspaper articles quoted above reveal, it is impossible to treat the Cheltenham Irish as a single, homogenous group. In reality, they could not have been more heterogenous, comprising, in addition to the "respectable" visitors and residents already mentioned, many labourers, servants, washerwomen, street vendors and sex workers. This study explores the often contradictory characteristics and experiences of these varied groups of Irish people who made Cheltenham their home in the decades between 1801 and 1861, some briefly, others for generations.

1.2. Background: Cheltenham before 1800

John Leland, writing in the 1530s or 1540s, described Cheltenham as "a longe towne havynge a Market". Those words – emphasising the linear nature of the settlement, strung out along the High Street, and suggestive of an economy that had little remarkable to be said about it beyond the right to hold a market – would remain valid for another two hundred years at least.[7] A military survey from 1608 lists a wide variety of occupations, as might be expected from a rural market town, but none that implies that it had adopted any

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[6] Hart, pp.203-204.

[7] Hart, p.62.

form of specialism.[8] Unlike places such as Northampton (shoemaking) and Yeovil (gloving), Cheltenham never had any single trade or industry with which it was particularly associated or on which its economy significantly depended.

In 1712, the parish of Cheltenham was estimated as comprising 321 houses with a total population of around 1,500 people, while the surrounding villages that made up the Hundred of Cheltenham contributed a further 256 houses and 535 inhabitants.[9] Bishop Benson's survey in 1735 placed the total population at something over 3,120. However, the discovery of the mineral springs around 1718, and the development of the first spa and associated amenities by Henry Skillicorne in the 1730s and 1740s, began to attract visitors in considerable numbers to the town to bathe in, and drink, the Cheltenham waters. Between 1740 and 1749, Skillicorne's spa attracted an average of 566 subscribers per annum.[10] The popularity of the spa was boosted in 1788 when the ailing King George III preferred the Gloucestershire town over its rivals as a place to visit and seek alleviation of his malady. Perhaps because the trip was patently unsuccessful in curing the monarch, visitor numbers actually fell in 1789, before recovering in the following years. Nevertheless, while visitor numbers never approached the 10,000 persons who are thought to have journeyed to Bath

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[8] Alex Craven and Beth Hartland, eds, *The Victoria History of Gloucestershire: Cheltenham Before the Spa* (Institute of Historical Research, 2018), p.88.

[9] Sir Robert Atkyns, *The ancient and present state of Glocestershire* (London: 1712), pp.332-4. Quoted in Anthea Jones, *Cheltenham: A New History* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd., 2010), p.160.

[10] Jones, pp.161-167.

each year, by 1802 over 2,000 people per annum were frequenting Cheltenham to take the waters.[11]

Volume 2 of John Wilkes's Universal British Directory, published in 1792, reveals that, even by that early date, Cheltenham had become a town with a disproportionate number of upper-class residents, with 32% being members of the gentry, many resident for only part of the year, having taken holiday homes in the town.[12] Moreover, a study of the entries in the directory suggests that Cheltenham was already developing an economy dependent on catering to its wealthier residents and their ailments. The people listed were engaged in the same kinds of occupations prominent in later census returns: bankers and attorneys to handle their financial and legal affairs; surgeons and physicians to treat their bodily afflictions; clergymen to attend to their spiritual needs; boarding school keepers to educate their children; plus many others to supply the necessary accommodation, sustenance, and entertainment in the form of jewellers, goldsmiths, theatre managers, food retailers, wine merchants, and manufacturers and retailers of clothing. No fewer than 42 people were listed as letting lodgings – nearly half as many as in the substantially larger city of Bath. Of course, this directory did not bother to mention the many lower-status people who must have continued in traditional trades, such as brewing and shoemaking, but who now found a new market for their wares in the form of the well-to-do folk who came to visit, and, increasingly, settle in, the town.

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[11] Thomas Frognall Dibdin, *The History of Cheltenham, and account of its environs* (Cheltenham: H. Ruff, 1803).

[12] Jones, p.187.

In 1801, Cheltenham, with a population of just over 3,000 (double that including the surrounding villages) was still a fraction of the size of its West Country rival, Bath, which boasted some 23,000 inhabitants at this date. But over the next 50 years, Cheltenham expanded faster than almost any other urban centre in the country, and by 1901 Cheltenham's population and Bath's were roughly equal in size. In the decades following the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Cheltenham experienced a building boom which in large measure made it the exemplar of Regency architecture it remains today. This construction bubble must have required significant amounts of skilled and unskilled labour, and no doubt many were drawn to the town to find employment in the building industry, though it must be admitted that evidence for this is hard to find in the historical record, and especially in later census returns, which date from after the bubble had burst. During these years, many Irish people came to Cheltenham, for diverse reasons, and this study attempts to shed light on their motivations and experiences while in the town.

1.3. Literature Review

Nearly 35 years ago, Roger Swift issued this appeal to researchers:

> there is a need for more local studies of the Irish in nineteenth-century Britain before many of the complex issues related to Irish migration and settlement can be resolved. Indeed, the definitive history of the Irish in Britain cannot be written until this has been achieved.[13]

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[13] Swift, *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1914*, p.37.

He then proceeded to propose a two-part model for such local studies of the topic. The first part would be a statistical survey, largely derived from the census:

> First, it is necessary to discover how many people born in Ireland were living locally by looking at the 1841 census, which also provides the opportunity to conduct a simple demographic study of the local Irish by determining where the Irish-born lived, by examining their familial and household structures, and by recording their occupations. Sophisticated work on this and later census schedules, particularly on a comparative basis, can indicate who the Irish were and how they lived, and how their experience changed in time.

The second part would build on the first to examine the subject from a number of thematic perspectives:

> Second, and using the census data as a base, it is possible for students to develop a more descriptive kind of community history by analysing and extracting information from the range of general and local sources deposited in local archives. These sources provide the basis for thematic studies of the social history of local Irish communities during the nineteenth century, notably in regard to public health, housing, poverty, employment, crime, education and religion.[14]

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[14] Ibid.

Over the last 50 years, much has been written about Irish migration into Britain on a national scale.[15] Likewise, numerous studies of the Irish in different parts of Britain have been published, both before Swift made his appeal, and, particularly, in the decades since he wrote those words, many following his proposed model, either consciously or coincidentally. One pioneering example is Lynn H. Lees's work on Irish migrants to London, published in 1979.[16] More recent studies have considered this topic in respect of other major British cities, and various scholars have focused on particular localities, such as Colin Pooley and John Belchem's work on Liverpool; [17] John Werly and Mervyn Busteed's on

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[15] An excellent overview of the bibliography of the topic is the Bibliographical Essay included in Donald MacRaild, *Irish Migrants in Modern Britain, 1750-1922* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, 2006), pp.210-219.Important general works include: David Fitzpatrick, ''A Peculiar Tramping People': The Irish in Britain, 1801-70', in *A New History of Ireland: Ireland Under the Union. 1801-1870*, ed. by William E Vaughan, (Oxford University Press, 2010), Vol. 5, pp.623-660.; Graham Davis, *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1914* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1991).; Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, eds, *The Irish in Britain 1815-1939* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1989).

[16] Lynn H Lees, *Exiles of Erin : Irish Migrants in Victorian London* (Cornell University Press, 1979).

[17] Colin G Pooley, 'The residential segregation of migrant communities in mid-Victorian Liverpool', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 2 (1977).; Colin Pooley, 'Segregation or integration? The residential experience of the Irish in mid-Victorian Britain', in *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939*, ed. by Roger Swift, and Sheridan Gilley, (Pinter, 1989), pp.60-83.; Colin G. Pooley, 'Migrants and the Media in Nineteenth-Century Liverpool', *Local Population Studies*, 92 (1: 2014), 24-37. <https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/lpss/lps/2014/00000092/00000001/art00005>. John Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse: The History of the Liverpool-Irish, 1800-1940* (Liverpool University Press, 2007) doi:https://doi.org/10.3828/9781846311079.;

Manchester; [18] and Frank Neal's on Newcastle, Gateshead and the North-east.[19] However, Irish migration to the big cities accounted for less than half of such population movement.[20] Conversely, comparatively little has been written about the majority of Irish migrants, who settled in smaller urban centres or rural areas, though there are a few exceptions. John Herson has done considerable work on a small provincial market town with a relatively small Irish population in the form of his various studies of the Irish in Stafford.[21] Other towns and cities that have been considered include the ports through which many Munster Irish

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[18] Mervyn Busteed, 'Little Islands of Erin: Irish Settlement and Identity in Mid-Nineteenth Century Manchester', in *The Great Famine and Beyond: Irish Migrants in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. by Donald M. MacRaild, (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000), pp.94-127.; Mervyn Busteed, *Irish in Manchester c.1750-1921 : Resistance, Adaptation and Identity* (Manchester University Press, 2018).; John M Werly, 'The Irish in Manchester, 1832-49', *Irish Historical Studies*, 18 (71: March 1973), 345-358.

[19] Frank Neal, 'Irish settlement in the north-east and north-west of England in the mid-nineteenth century', in *The Irish in Victorian Britain: The Local Dimension*, ed. by Roger Swift, and Sheridan Gilley, (Dublin: Fourt Courts Press, 1999), pp.75-100.; Frank Neal, 'The Foundations of the Irish Settlement in Newcastle-upon-Tyne: The Evidence in the 1851 Census', in *The Great Famine and Beyond: Irish Migrants in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. by Donald M. MacRaild, (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000), pp.71-93.; Frank Neal, 'A Statistical Profile of the Irish Community in Gateshead – The Evidence of the 1851 Census', *Immigrants & Minorities*, 27 (1: 2009), 50-81. doi:10.1080/02619280902868899.

[20] John Herson, 'Irish migration and settlement in Victorian England : A small-town perspective', in *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939*, ed. by Roger Swift, and Sheridan Gilley, (Pinter, 1989), p.97.

[21] Ibid. Also: John Herson, 'Migration, 'community' or integration? Irish families in Victorian Stafford', in *The Irish in Victorian Britain: The Local Dimension*, ed. by Roger Swift, and Sheridan Gilley, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), pp.156-189.; John Herson, 'Stafford's Irish Families the Overall Picture.', in *Divergent Paths: Family Histories of Irish Emigrants in Britain, 1820–1920*, ed. by John Herson, (Manchester University Press, 2015), pp.59–77 doi:https://doi.org/10.7765/9780719098338.00010.

entered south-western Britain, namely Bristol and Newport, as well as York, examined by Frances Finnegan.[22] A rare example of a study of Irish migration into a rural area would be Solar and Smith's work on Hertfordshire.[23] One place of particular significance in the context of this study, because of its comparable recent history and - indeed, rivalry with - Cheltenham, is Bath, which has been the subject of extensive work by Graham Davis.[24]

1.4.   Rationale, Methodology and Sources

It is reasonable to ask, given what has already been produced, why a study of the Irish in Cheltenham is necessary. After all, the Irish population of Cheltenham was never

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[22] David Large, 'The Irish in Bristol in 1851: A Census Enumeration', in *The Irish in the Victorian City*, ed. by Roger Swift, and Sheridan Gilley, (Croom Helm, 1985), pp.32-46.; Chris Williams, ''Decorous and Creditable': The Irish in Newport', in *Irish Migrants in Modern Wales*, ed. by Paul O'Leary, (Liverpool: Liverpool Scholarship Online, 2004), pp.54-82 doi:10.5949/UPO9781846313356.; Frances Finnegan, 'The Irish in York', in *The Irish in the Victorian City*, ed. by Roger Swift, and Sheridan Gilley, (Croom Helm, 1985), pp.47-63.

[23] Peter M Solar and Malcolm T Smith, 'Background migration: the Irish (and other strangers) in mid-Victorian Hertfordshire', *Local Population Studies* (Spring 2009), 44-62. <http://www.localpopulationstudies.org.uk/PDF/LPS82/LPS%2082%20final.pdf> [accessed 23 Apr 2023].

[24] Graham Davis, 'Social Decline and Slum Conditions: Irish Migrants in Bath's History', *Bath History*, VIII (n.d.), 134-147. <https://historyofbath.org/images/BathHistory/Vol%2008%20-%2006.%20Davis%20-%20Social%20Decline%20and%20Slum%20Conditions%20-%20Irish%20Migrants%20in%20Bath's%20History.pdf> [accessed 23 Apr 2023].; Graham Davis, *Bath as Spa and Bath as Slum: the Social History of a Victorian City* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009).; Graham Davis, ''The Scum of Bath': The Victorian Poor', in *Conflict and Community in Southern England*, ed. by Barry Stapleton, (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1992), pp.183-198.

particularly large, compared with that of cities such as Liverpool, Glasgow or London. Nonetheless, three arguments in favour of such a project can be adduced.

Firstly, it is hoped that this study of the Irish in Cheltenham will extend our understanding of the topic in respect of the relatively neglected question of Irish migration into smaller urban and more rural parts of the country. As discussed above, most previous work on this subject has focused on the larger cities, despite the fact they became home to less than half of all Irish migrants to Britain.

Secondly, Cheltenham's particular historical background make it, at first glance, a somewhat surprising destination for Irish migrants to choose. Starting out as a small market town, the success of the spa turned Cheltenham into a burgeoning fashionable playground to rival Bath, akin first to a cross between Las Vegas and St Tropez, and then later to a retirement home for the servants of the Empire. This bequeathed the town a peculiar socio-economic structure and cultural status that endures to this day in its slightly comical reputation as the genteel and stuffy home of retired colonels. As the quote from Cresy cited above implies, unlike Bath, Cheltenham in the 19th century was almost entirely dependent on the leisure economy. Davis argues that Bath "should […] be recognised as an industrial city. In terms of size, it ranked with many medium-sized industrial towns and its population was too large to be sustained merely by seasonal trade."[25] Cheltenham, in contrast, could in no way be described as "industrial" at this period. This study explores how Irish-born people fitted into such a place, and no comparable previous work is known.

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[25] Davis, *Bath as Spa and Bath as Slum*, p.54.

Finally, this project has also endeavoured to address some significant lacunae in the historiography of Cheltenham. Previous studies of the town have concerned themselves almost exclusively with the high-status visitors and residents, while the working-class population – the overwhelming majority, those who made the lifestyle of the wealthy possible – has been largely overlooked. As Simpson says:

> there is always an underside to any period of rapid change. As the town grew, it needed a constant influx of people to service its newfound growth: domestic servants, builders and other craftspeople, wheel-chairmen, laundresses, apprentices, and others.[26]

The Irish are mentioned only insofar as they form part of the élite group. For example, while Hart does discuss the town's popularity with the Irish, it is solely in the context of its role as a pleasure resort and the "eminent Irish" who settled in it.[27] More recent studies are similarly guilty of discussing Cheltenham's expansion largely in terms of the built environment, not population movement.[28] The Victoria County History volume covering Cheltenham is currently under preparation but the team has indicated no work

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[26] John Simpson, ed, *Managing Poverty: Cheltenham Settlement Examinations and Removal Orders, 1831-1852* (Bristol: The Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, 2020), p.xv.

[27] Hart, pp.203-204 .

[28] eg Jones, p.246.; Sue Rowbottom and Jill Waller, *Cheltenham: A History* (Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 2004).

specifically on the Irish population is planned.[29] Cheltenham Local History Society has published an annual research journal since 1983, but a search of topics covered did not locate any work on migration to the town in general, let alone the Irish specifically.[30]

In its methodology, this study of the Irish in Cheltenham deliberately adopts Swift's paradigm as its inspiration, taking a two-part "mixed methods" approach along the lines he proposed. A quantitative survey of the 1841, 1851 and 1861 censuses first examines the Irish-born people who were resident in Cheltenham at those dates, and considers questions such as the districts they inhabited, the occupations they pursued, and the nature of their accommodation and residency.[31] This is then expanded and enriched using various archival sources to consider a number of qualitative questions, some suggested by Swift, as well as others that seem of particular relevance to the topic in relation to Cheltenham.

Swift's paradigm is not without its problems. Any project that works with the decennial 19th-century census returns must confront the fact that they only provide a snapshot of the population of a place on a particular day at ten-yearly intervals from 1841 onwards. In relation to the Irish, the census tells us nothing, directly at least, about the situation before 1841, or the years between censuses, or throughout the rest of each census year. It is undoubtedly true that many Irish-born people will have visited Cheltenham for

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[29] Details of the project can be found at https://www.history.ac.uk/research/victoria-county-history/county-histories-progress/gloucestershire/cheltenham-and-district

[30] https://cheltlocalhistory.org.uk/publications/the-journal/

[31] It is unclear why Swift proposed the use of the 1841 census specifically, given its considerable limitations, other perhaps than simply because it was the earliest detailed census available to us.

one reason or another, and perhaps even lived here for several years, during those periods. Some will have made their mark and left considerable evidence of their presence, others none at all. Furthermore, given the nature of Cheltenham as a resort town, plus the fact that what non-leisure economy Cheltenham retained involved some degree of agricultural activity (eg market gardening), the census, taken in the spring or early summer, may well overlook seasonal patterns of migration into, or out of, the town. Nevertheless, the census remains overwhelmingly our best source for this type of study, and the date range selected here (1801-1861) has been chosen largely because it spans the first three detailed sets of returns (1841, 1851, 1861), as well as the earlier censuses (1801-1831) for which statistical summaries are available, while also encompassing the main period of Cheltenham's expansion, the primary wave of Irish migration into the town, and the Great Famine.

When proceeding to the second phase of Swift's model, the lack of qualitative sources presents a challenge when attempting to bring the past to life. We have no diaries or letters which might give us the voices of the individual, low-status Irish migrants. Literacy rates were low, and material of this kind probably never existed, and is unlikely to have survived even if it did. Occasionally, we can perceive something resembling the words of the people themselves, when, for example, they give evidence in court, or make a statement at a Settlement Examination. Even then, however, we cannot be sure their words will have been recorded faithfully, since they will, on the one hand, have been reported to us by journalists who frequently make no secret of their prejudices, or, on the other, filtered and interpreted by a clerk interested only in noting down facts pertinent to the person's settlement status. As usual, the lives and voices of women and children are even harder to discern that those of adult males. The sources we are obliged to work with are mostly

impersonal administrative records left by Victorian bureaucracy, and while official documents such as housing reports might give us some idea of the conditions in which people lived, they are unlikely to mention individual people.

In order to attempt to overcome some of these limitations, while broadly following Swift's model, this project has adopted some aspects of prosopography.[32] All Irish-born individuals resident in Cheltenham on the census in 1841, 1851 or 1861, together with their family members, have been subjected to a biographical and genealogical investigation to try to elucidate their origins, connections, and experiences, as well as the possible reasons for their being in Cheltenham at those dates, and their subsequent history. A database of such individuals has been compiled, fleshed out from other sources, particularly newspapers, but also civil registration, church registers, military records, wills and many more. Some statistics of the Irish population in this study are taken from this database, especially where the figures were not available from the official published census reports.

However, using this database alone it was clearly impossible to put Cheltenham in the wider national context, or to consider the Cheltenham Irish in the context of the wider population of the town. Furthermore, while other studies of the Irish in Britain have used the official census reports published in the 19th century as their source, it is often impossible to produce exactly equivalent figures for Cheltenham, since the town was not included in

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[32] A good primer in prosopography is Koenraad Verboven, Myriam Carlier, and Jan Dumolyn, 'A short manual to the art of prosopography', in *Prosopography Approaches and Applications: A Handbook,* , ed. by K S B Keats-Rohan, (Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, Linacre College, University of Oxford, 2007).

the list of "Principal Towns and Cities" for which the statistics those studies employ were produced. This project has therefore also used data available from the Integrated Census Microdata service (I-CeM).[33]

Regrettably, however, a number of issues with the I-CeM data were identified. What high-level statistical discrepancies exist between I-CeM and the original reports are trivial, and can safely be overlooked. However, certain more detailed aspects of the raw I-CeM data proved less than satisfactory, and considerable data cleansing has been necessary to allow its use. For example, automatic processing of birthplace information from the census had resulted in every individual born in the Gloucestershire villages of Prestbury and Swindon (both in Cheltenham registration district) being assigned to birth counties Cheshire and Staffordshire respectively due to confusion with places of the same name in those counties, while everyone born in Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, had become Scottish due to confusion with Stonehouse, Lanarkshire. Similar issues existed with the occupation data. For example, I-CeM's dataset for Cheltenham 1851 contains 60 individuals assigned to occupation code 27 ("Men of the Marines"). While one of these individuals was indeed a "Late Serjeant R.M.", on closer inspection the other 59 comprised: 20 medical men or members of their families (surgeons, doctors, dentists); 25 officers and three privates from other branches of the Armed Forces; and two each of clergymen, railway workers, magistrates, people of independent means and people in receipt of parish relief, with one illegible. No useful statistics could be produced from this information, and it was decided to

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[33] K Schurer and E. Higgs, (2023) Integrated Census Microdata (I-CeM), 1851-1911 [data collection], *UK Data Service. SN: 7481*. doi:http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-7481-2.

carry out a full recoding exercise. The scheme chosen was Wrigley's Primary-Secondary-Tertiary (PST) coding system, with certain minor adaptations to allow for the peculiar nature of Cheltenham's population (eg the addition of extra categories to allow for a distinction between scholars at boarding schools and those at home, and for different branches of the East India Company's employees).[34] It is not claimed that the results of this exercise are without error, but it is believed that the occupation data is now considerably more reliable than previously.

There is also an issue with I-CeM's data concerning the sex of individuals in the census. Incomprehensibly, the producers of I-CeM appear to have attempted to derive each person's sex from the stated relationship and their forename. This has resulted in approximately 5% of individuals being recorded as sex "unknown", including anyone, for example, called Francis or Frances.

Another methodological issue that should be discussed at the outset relates to the use of sources that do not explicitly state a person's place of birth. The census is of little use in measuring Irish migration to Cheltenham before 1841, since the early surveys provide no figures relating to birthplace. The places of birth of the children of Irish people recorded on the later census returns can give clues to when they arrived in the town, and from where, but one other source that has been explored is the baptism register of St Gregory's, the only Roman Catholic church in the town until the 1950s. Although it would be wrong to claim

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[34] E A Wrigley, *The PST system of classifying occupations,*
    <https://www.campop.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/occupations/britain19c/papers/paper1.pdf
    >.

that the working-class Irish population of the town was entirely Catholic, and the high-status residents exclusively Protestant, this researcher's biographical survey determined that this was at least very nearly the case. It would also be wrong, however, to assume that every person baptized at St Gregory's was Irish: a study of the parents of the children baptised reveals that the congregation also included upper-class English Catholics, working-class English converts, Scots, French, Italians, and many more. Given that the registers do not state the birthplace of the parents, the number of baptisms recorded in registers of St Gregory's can serve as a no more than a very rough-and-ready indication of the total size of the Irish Catholic population of Cheltenham.

In order to address this limitation, an attempt has been made to identify "probable" Irish families using the surname. This is fraught with pitfalls, of course. The fourth and fifth most common surnames of Irish-born people in this researcher's survey were Smith and White, respectively – far from reliable indicators of Irishness. Nonetheless, a list of "characteristically" Irish surnames was compiled from an electronic version of Griffith's Valuation, selecting names which, after consolidation of variants, occurred at least 1,000 times, then removing surnames that are also common in Great Britain. It is fully acknowledged that this cannot be anything other than an imperfect method of identifying Irish-born people, but it is believed the results are still worth presenting below, in the absence of anything better.

Finally, one further source of information concerning migration prior to 1841 should be discussed. Individuals who found themselves obliged to resort to the Poor Law authorities for relief were usually subjected to a settlement examination whereby they were quizzed by one or more magistrates to determine which parish was responsible for them.

The transcripts of these interviews often give us a potted biography of low-status individuals whose lives would otherwise have left little mark on the historical record. Cheltenham is fortunate in having an excellent series of such examinations, covering the periods 1815-1826 and 1831-1852, which have been transcribed and published.[35] Simpson's volume is particularly valuable for the statistical analysis of these records it provides in addition to the detailed transcripts. It probably represents the best treatment of the topic of immigration to Cheltenham currently available.

Of course, these volumes of settlement examinations and removal orders only tell us something about those individuals whose migration to Cheltenham ended in failure, with hardship of some kind requiring the people concerned to resort to the Poor Law Guardians. The actual numbers of people who arrived from Ireland will have been considerably higher. This source tells us nothing about élite migrants to Cheltenham, and those non-élite migrants who were successful in supporting themselves and went unnoticed by the Poor Law authorities. The number relieved by the Guardians and removed to Ireland represents only a fraction of this total, though how large a proportion of the whole it is impossible to know. Not that removal to Ireland automatically meant the end of a person's connection to Cheltenham, as there are several examples of people being removed, then returning to the

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[35] Original data from: *Register of settlement examinations, Cheltenham Petty Sessions area,* 1815-1852 Gloucestershire Archives Ref. PS/CH/RA/2/1-8.; Transcripts: Irvine Gray, ed, *Cheltenham Settlement Examinations 1815-1826*, Vol. Records Section Vol. VII (Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, 1969) and Simpson, op cit. Register PC/CH/RA/2/2 (1832-1848) was omitted as it relates to the entire Cheltenham Petty Sessions area, not just Cheltenham parish like the others (personal email communication with the editor).

town, and making a success of it the second time. Edward McDermott, shoemaker, born in County Roscommon about 1806 arrived in Cheltenham sometime before 1829, but was removed with his family to Ireland in 1834 following a conviction for assault.[36] Undaunted, they were back in Cheltenham by 1836, and Edward remained in the town for the rest of his life, achieving a degree of respectability running a business making and selling footwear at 212 High Street. By 1852, he had qualified as an elector, and voted for the failed Conservative candidate.

Regrettably, due to a change in the legislation relating to the handling of immigrants from Ireland, there are virtually no Irish people included in these records after 1837.[37] Nonetheless, this remains an important source for immigration to Cheltenham in the pre-census period, and figures taken from this source will be quoted below.

The rest of this thesis is in three parts. Sections 2 and 3 ("QUANTITATIVE SURVEY" and "THEMES AND CASE STUDIES") correspond to the two strands of Swift's paradigm, namely the statistical survey and thematic studies. The final section ("SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS") attempts to draw the strands together and explore what lessons can be learned from those quantitative and qualitative studies.

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[36] *Gloucestershire Chronicle,* 07 Jun 1834, p.3 col.7.; Simpson, p.69 No. 34038SE.

[37] Simpson, p.xxiii.

2. QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

Corresponding to the first part of Swift's model, this section attempts to establish a firm quantitative foundation upon which a study of the Irish in Cheltenham can be based, by exploring various aspects of the town's historical demography from a statistical perspective.

2.1. Overall Population Growth

Although no detailed census returns for Cheltenham survive from before 1841, it is worth starting our analysis by considering the overall population totals for the town provided by the surveys of 1801-1831, as presented in Table 5.1 and Table 5.2 in Appendix 5.1. These relate to Cheltenham Registration district as a whole. The district was, unhelpfully, divided into just two sub-districts, named, misleadingly, "Cheltenham" (the main urban area), and "Charlton Kings" (comprising not just the village of that name but the entire surrounding rural area).

Although the largest percentage increase in the population of the district measurable from census returns occurred in the decade after 1801 (96%), the largest absolute increase was between 1821 and 1831, with the following decade close behind. Extraordinarily, Cheltenham urban area grew by nearly 171% between 1801 and 1811.[38] This was almost three times the next highest percentage growth of any other major town or

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[38] R. Price Williams, 'On the Increase of Population in England and Wales', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 43 (3: Sep 1880). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2339178>. This considers urban areas where the population exceeded 20,000 in 1871.

city (Brighton was second at 64%), though starting, admittedly, from a very low base.

2.2.   Measuring Migration to Cheltenham

A population increase of this magnitude can only be explained on the basis of substantial inward migration. The official census report comments: "Cheltenham: The increase of population is attributed to the resort of visitors to the mineral springs and to the number of families who have become permanently resident in the Town and its vicinity".[39] This comment is somewhat misleading. While it is true that it was the success of the spa that had triggered the initial expansion of the town, it was far from the case that everyone who moved to Cheltenham did so to take the waters: as the quotation from Cresy in the introduction implies, the vast majority of people came in search of employment or business opportunities associated with the provision of goods and services to the considerably smaller number of fashionable visitors.

Using the cleansed I-CeM data to investigate where the people living in Cheltenham on the day of the 1851 census had been born gives the figures shown in Table 5.3 and Table 5.4 in Appendix 5.1. It is remarkable that, even in 1851, a good 40 years after the town's most rapid period of expansion, nearly 60% of the population of the district had been born elsewhere. The effects of inward migration are even more evident if we analyse by age group (Table 5.4). Of those enumerated on the 1851 census in Cheltenham aged 50 or

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[39] Census of Great Britain, (1851) Population tables I, Vol. I. England and Wales. Divisions I-VII, 1851) p.29 <http://www.histpop.org/ohpr/servlet/PageBrowser?path=Browse/Census%20(by%20date)&active=yes&mno=27&pageseq=717>.

above, only 13.6% had been born in the district. Nearly 55% of that age group had migrated

a relatively short distance from a birthplace elsewhere in Gloucestershire or a neighbouring

county, but a significant proportion had travelled further: 22% from elsewhere in England,

4.5% from Ireland, and 6.3% from other places. The overall proportion of Irish-born people

living in Cheltenham district in 1851 was (depending on the source chosen) 2.31% (I-CeM) or

2.56% (census reports). This discrepancy arises because the original census reports counted

109 more Irish-born people in the district in 1851 than I-CeM includes, even after data

cleaning. This researcher's own survey is only two different from the cleansed I-CeM figure.

From the 1851 census, therefore, it is possible to determine, indirectly, that

Cheltenham had been experiencing considerable migration from Ireland and elsewhere in

the preceding decades. We can also gain some degree of insight into the numbers of Irish

people migrating to Cheltenham before 1841 from the baptism registers of St Gregory's

church. The number of baptisms recorded in that source annually is graphed in Figure 5.3 in

Appendix 5.1. The columns in green labelled "probably Irish" relate to those individuals

whose family name was included in the list of "characteristically Irish" surnames discussed

in the Methodology section above, and is acknowledged to be imperfect.

The impression given here is that the numbers of Irish-born people in the town

increased steadily and significantly during the period between 1810 and 1840 before falling

back slightly, then increasing again to a peak in the 1850s. Despite the inadequacies of this

method, this perceived trend is borne out from other sources, such as the settlement

examinations. It is notable that, out of a total of 653 examinations in Gray's volume,

covering the period 1815-1826, a mere 23 were of Irish-born people. This contrasts starkly

with the opening pages of Simpson's transcripts, covering 1831-1837: pages 2 and 3 list 15

examinations, 13 of which were of Irish families.[40] Despite the disappearance of the Irish

from these records well before the end of the period covered, in total Simpson lists no

fewer than 123 Irish and Scottish migrants (77 men, 46 women, plus dependents).

In summary, the impression given from these various available sources is that Irish

migration to Cheltenham started as a trickle in the early decades of the 19th century,

ramped up substantially in the late 1820s and reached significant proportions in the 1830s,

tailed off somewhat in the 1840s, then increased once more to a peak in the 1850s. It

remains the case, however, that it never reached the levels experienced in some other parts

of the country. Table 5.5 gives the Irish-born population numbers and percentages for

various localities, for comparison. While the proportion of Cheltenham's population that

was Irish-born was slightly below the average for England and Wales, and far below that for

Liverpool (22.3%), it was nearly twice that of neighbouring Gloucester and well above that

for Bath, a city with a similar recent history.

2.3. Geographical distribution

What is particularly remarkable about the Irish population of Cheltenham is not so

much its scale, as its diversity, and the influence it had upon the character of the town in

general, and certain parts of it in particular, in spite of its moderate proportions. This

diversity begins to become apparent if we analyse the Irish-born population in terms of

where in the town they were living in 1851. This is not entirely straightforward since the

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[40] Simpson, p.2 nos. 31011SE & 31013SE.

entire urban area of Cheltenham was assigned to a single sub-district and parish, but Table 5.6, analysing the population by parish, does at least serve to emphasise how the Irish were almost exclusively confined to the urban centre and, to a lesser extent, the nascent suburbs, such as Leckhampton and Charlton Kings.

Analysing by enumeration district is more revealing, especially if we examine the most common occupations in each district as a means of revealing the socio-economic character of each area. Table 5.7 in Appendix 5.1 uses a system of colour coding to try to highlight the contrasting natures of each district. However, those districts were somewhat arbitrarily delineated, and drilling down further to street level is more informative. Table 5.8 employs the same system of colour coding for the socio-economic makeup of the population of each of the 20 streets with the highest absolute number of Irish-born residents in 1851. From the occupation information included in that table, we can see that a socio-economic gulf separated (and, in fact, continues to separate) the streets listed in red above from those in blue. In Milsom Street, with its slums and common lodging houses, nearly a third of the population had been born in Ireland; but, equally, a similar proportion of the Cheltenham College pupils boarding at Newick House were Irish by birth, many sons of Irish aristocrats, gentry, Army officers or colonial administrators.

Figure 5.4 displays these 20 locations listed in Table 5.8 on a present-day map of Cheltenham. From this it is easy to identify how the working-class population (streets in red) were clustered in the traditional low-status district of the Lower High Street, while the élite were largely to be found in the prosperous south-western suburbs such as Lansdown and The Park. The streets designated "mixed" were to located in the commercial district of the High Street and its side roads, which included several hotels but mostly comprised business

premises, some with workshops and accommodation. Milsom Street can be located on a mid-19th century map of Cheltenham (the 1855 Town Plan) on the "Know Your Place" website using this shortened URL: https://bit.ly/CheltenhamIrish1851-MilsomStreet.[41].

2.4. Occupations

In order to explore this socio-economic dichotomy further, Table 5.9 analyses the Irish-born population in terms of a slightly adapted version of Wrigley's occupation categories (see Table 5.22). The colour coding highlights those categories with a higher than average (green) or lower than average (red) proportion of Irish-born people.

Several things of note emerge from these figures. Firstly, the top three socio-economic categories for Irish-born people were: domestic service, "independent means" and "general labourers", accounting for over a third of the total (excluding "unknown" and schoolchildren). Here, in a nutshell, are the three principal socio-economic groups of Irish people in the town: the well-to-do, their servants, and unskilled workers. The Irish were also over-represented, compared to the general population, amongst the military men, predominantly officers, reflecting the dependence of the British armed forces (and East India Company) on Irish recruits. As might be expected from other localities, significant numbers of Irish people were found among the street-traders who plied their wares on Cheltenham's thoroughfares, mostly described as hawkers, pedlars or tinkers. Among the professional classes, no fewer than 14 Irish-born Anglican clergymen were listed on the

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[41] South Gloucestershire Council, *Know Your Place Gloucestershire*, Know Your Place West of England, 2015 <https://maps.bristol.gov.uk/kyp/?edition=glos#> [accessed 15 May 2024].

1851 census in Cheltenham, besides a Roman Catholic priest, eight medical men, five

lawyers, and several teachers of various kinds, plus their families.

What perhaps marks Cheltenham out as different from other localities, however, is

the prominence amongst the Irish-born population of three groups of people (plus their

families) of particularly high socio-economic status: "independent means" (ie fundholders,

annuitants and the like); "owners of land and property" (recorded in the census with

occupation texts such as "Landed Proprietor", "Proprietor of Houses" etc.); and "Social

élite" (titled people and those described as "gentleman", "lady" etc.). Together, these three

categories accounted for nearly a quarter of the Irish in the town (excluding schoolchildren

and those with no identifiable occupation). There were 46 Irish-born people in 1851

described specifically as "Landowner" or similar, 32 of them female, 18 of whom were

unmarried, eight widowed and four married women whose husband was elsewhere.

Cheltenham was a popular place for the widows and spinster daughters of Irish landowners

to live out their days in comfort, financed by the proceeds of their property back in Ireland.

To take just two examples, at 31 Montpellier Villas lived four unmarried sisters, in their 30s

and 40s, members of the Blackburne family of Tankardstown, Co. Meath, where the same

family was in possession of 604 acres at the time of the 1876 land survey. Meanwhile, 4

Keynsham Bank was home to two elderly spinsters from the Blacker family of Woodbrook,

Co. Wexford, where two members of the same family owned 5,836 acres 25 years later.[42] In

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[42] Bernard Burke and Ashworth Peter Burke (1899), p.28.; Ancestry.com, *Return of Owners of Land in Ireland 1876*, database on-line, Ancestry.com, n.d. <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/48475/> [accessed 13 May 2024] Leinster/Meath p.65 & Leinster/Wexford p.88.

some cases, a person's stated primary occupation conceals the fact they were also a landowner. For example, Richard Wolseley, resident at 3 Wolseley Villas, was an Anglican clergyman, but also 4th Baronet Wolseley, of Mount Wolseley, Co. Carlow, where his great-nephew was still in possession of 2,547 acres in 1876.[43] On arrival in Cheltenham, low-status Irish migrants may well have found themselves living only a short distance from the same people, or at least the same class of people, who owned the land they had farmed in Ireland and which they had chosen (or been obliged) to vacate, for one reason or another. At 1 Royal Parade, in 1851, lived Lady Louisa Anne Bernard, third daughter of the Earl of Bandon, of Castle Bernard, Bandon, Co. Cork. A kilometre or so away, 67-year-old labourer James Hayes, from Bandon, was recorded at 4 Hereford Place, which appears to have consisted largely of small, cheap lodging houses, none of which was ever registered, and most of which was demolished as part of the slum clearance programme in 1936.[44] Although the 1876 government report entitled "Return of owners of land of one acre and upwards in […] Ireland" relates to a period slightly after that on which this study has focused, it is nonetheless worth mentioning that it lists 23 different landowners whose stated residence was in Cheltenham, and that their holdings in Ireland amounted to 40,551 acres spread over 16 counties.

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[43] Darryl Lundy, *Reverend Sir Richard Wolseley, 4th Bt.*, The Peerage, 2019
           <http://thepeerage.com/p61303.htm#i613029> [accessed 13 May 2024].; *Return of Owners of Land in Ireland 1876*, Leinster/Carlow, p.7.

[44] *Gloucestershire Echo*, 10 Aug 1937, p.4 col.1

One body in which Irish people played a prominent role in Cheltenham in these decades was the police force. The Gloucestershire Constabulary became the first county police force founded in England after the passing of the Rural Police Act in 1839.[45] Ireland, however, had had a system of professional rural police since 1816.[46] It made sense to draw upon Irish experience in establishing the police service in Gloucestershire. Anthony Thomas Lefroy, appointed the first Chief Constable for Gloucestershire, was English by birth, but had served in the Irish police since the age of 21.[47] Charles Keily, the first Deputy Chief Constable, was an Irishman, probably from County Cork, where he had married in 1833. The recruitment of experienced policemen from Ireland was not confined to the officer class, however: the first 12 constables employed were all Irish-born, and, of 19 appointed in the first year of the Force's existence, 15 were from Ireland.[48] Irishmen continued to feature prominently among both officers and constables in the county for some decades after 1839.

A not inconsiderable number of Irish-born men worked in Cheltenham as gardeners of one type or another: 31 different such individuals appeared on the census in Cheltenham between 1841 and 1861. Unfortunately, it is rarely easy to determine exactly what type of

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[45] Timothy Brain, *Keeping the Peace: Celebrating 180 years of theGloucestershire Constabulary* (Gloucester: 2019), p.20, Gloucestershire Police Archives, 2019 <https://gloucestershirepolicearchives.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Keeping-the-Peace.pdf>.

[46] Brain, p.4.

[47] Brain, p.9.

[48] Brain, p.10.; Gloucestershire Archives, *Gloucestershire Rural Constabulary Register, Q/Y/1/1.* <https://gloucestershirepolicearchives.org.uk/content/finding-your-police-ancestors/archive-of-police-officers/list-police-officers-1839-1849>.

gardening they were engaged in: most were probably employed by wealthy local residents to tend their flowerbeds, but others may well have laboured in the numerous market gardens that can be seen on the Cheltenham Old Town Survey (1855-1857), for example in the still undeveloped areas south-west of Tewkesbury Road and north-east of Swindon Road.[49] Still others may have worked in the public parks and gardens of districts such as Pittville and Montpellier for which Cheltenham became celebrated. To take one example, James Armstrong had been born in Dublin sometime in the 1780s, but he was certainly in Cheltenham by 1829 when he married Mary Griffin, from Galway, at St Mary's. He is described in the census simply as a "gardener".[50] However, we can understand a little more about the nature of James's work from the entry in the Register of Gloucester Gaol relating to the conviction of his son Richard for theft in 1846, which states "F[ather] is a gardener & works for Jessop"[51] From this we can infer that James was in the employ of Charles Hale Jessop, who managed a large nursery garden in the St James's Square area, which he further developed into ornamental gardens with aviaries as an attraction for visitors.[52]

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[49] *Cheltenham Old Town Survey,* 1855-1857 Cheltenham Local History Society (Gloucestershire Archives Ref. CBR/B2/9/5/1). <https://cheltlocalhistory.org.uk/database/transcriptions/>.Sheets 19-20

[50] Ancestry.com, *1851 England Census* Provo, UT, USA, database on-line, Ancestry.com, 2005 <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/8860/> [Original data: The National Archives class HO 107 (1851)] Ref. HO107/1973/631/27.

[51] Ancestry.com, *Gloucestershire, England, Prison Records, 1728-1914* Lehi, UT, USA, database online, Ancestry.com, 2016 <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/60895/> Ref. Q/Gc/6/1 no.1401.

[52] Stuart Manton, *Cheltenham's Zoo Wars: the proposed Zoological Gardens in Pittville and The Park in the 1830s*, Pittville History Works, 2017 <https://pittvillehistory.org.uk/wpt/places/pittville-zoo/>.

While it seems possible some of these gardeners had followed their wealthy Irish employers who had settled in the town, no evidence for this has been forthcoming. Others appear to have been former agricultural labourers whose skills were probably reasonably transferrable to garden work. In a few other cases, references to the gardener concerned as a "nurseryman", "florist" or "fruiterer" hint as to the true nature of their work. Conversely, there were probably some men employed as garden labourers who are missing from the numbers above because they are described in the census simply as "Labourer". Michael Hayes, who married Mary Sweeney at St Gregory's in 1853, appears on the census in 1861 and 1871 as a "Labourer". When charged with assault in 1871, however, he stated in court that he had been "23 years in one situation, at Mr Beaufin Irving's in Suffolk Square" (John Beaufin Irving being a Philadelphia-born slave-owner who lived at that location from at least 1843 until his death in 1876).[53] It is hard to imagine in what capacity he was employed if not in Irving's gardens.[54]

2.5.   Socio-economic diversity

Whereas other studies of various British localities have treated the Irish population as a single group when researching immigration to those places, the extreme socio-economic disparity between the Irish-born residents of Cheltenham means that it makes little sense to do so in this instance. The reality is that we are dealing with at least two

[53] Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery at UCL, *John Beaufin Irving II*, Legacies of British Slavery database, n.d. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/43297> [accessed 23 Dec 2023].

[54] *Cheltenham Examiner,* 28 Jun 1871, p.2 col.4.

separate identifiable groups of Irish-born people in the town, with radically different characteristics and experiences. There is no entirely satisfactory method of converting the occupation descriptions given in census returns into some form of socio-economic class categorisation, and a lot of ink could be spilt discussing this matter, but, in what follows, the relatively simple system presented in Table 5.23 has been employed. This consists of five groups that seem to reflect most closely the divisions within the Irish population of the town. Family members were allocated to the same group as the head of the household, where no separate occupation was stated. The "Servants" group includes only those resident with their employers: domestic servants recorded at their own homes were included in the low-status group.

Using this classification, we can summarise the socio-economic status of the various groups of Irish-born people recorded in Cheltenham on the 1851 census as shown in Table 5.10. This analysis reveals the deep socio-economic divide that ran through the Irish-born population of the town: low-status and high-status people both accounted for something approaching 40% of the Irish-born population overall, with another 10% or so represented by servants resident with their employers. Moreover, the Irish-born population, perhaps uniquely in the country, was skewed towards the upper end of the social scale, with nearly 37% of Irish-born people in Cheltenham being of high status, compared with less than 14% of the town's population as a whole.

Looking at these socio-economic groups by sex gives the data shown in Table 5.11 and Figure 5.5. Females outnumbered males in all socio-economic groups, but especially, unsurprisingly, among resident domestic servants, where only 17.5% were males. However, there was also a considerable excess of females over males in the high-status group.

Possible explanations emerge when drilling down by marital status and age band (Table 5.12 and Table 5.13). This is quite a complex picture: high-status single and widowed females considerably outnumbered their male counterparts, but the reverse was true of married people. The excess of young, single males over females is largely accounted for by boarding-school pupils sent to Cheltenham from elsewhere for their education. In the 20-40 age bracket, single women predominated, most likely because they were visiting Cheltenham for pleasure, quite possibly in search of a husband. In the older age groups the pattern is one of married men outnumbering married women, but with widows outnumbering widowers. This is probably to be explained in terms of older Irish men, often Army officers, active or retired, who had married younger women, often non-Irish. English Army officers also married younger Irish women, and when those men died, they left Irish widows behind.

Returning to the general population, the distribution of the Irish population in terms of median age is also interesting (Table 5.14). The main point of note here is that, in respect of high-status individuals, the Irish-born were of a similar age to the general population of this class (median age 40 versus 36). In relation to the lower-status population of the town, by contrast, the Irish were considerably older than the non-Irish (median age 36 versus 19), and this was particularly true of males. This is not unexpected perhaps of a highly transient, migrant population, drawn to the town in search of work, often single men without dependents.

2.6. Permanence or Transience?

This aspect of the Irish-born population of the town – its mobility and transience – is worth highlighting further. A considerable proportion of both the high-status and low-status

Irish-born population were temporary residents – whether visitors in rented properties, hotels and respectable boarding houses on the one hand, or itinerant workers and traders in common lodging houses on the other. The comings and goings of the rich and fashionable were announced in the "Arrivals" and "Departures" sections of the local press, especially the *Looker-on*, which provided a book at the Montpellier Library where visitors could write their names for inclusion in the weekly list "as, at all times, the influx of strangers into the town is very great, and the consequent changes of residence frequent".[55] The analysis of the population of Cheltenham given in the tables in Appendix 5.1 is, of course, taken from decennial census returns, which, as discussed, have the drawback of merely providing a snapshot of the residents of a place on a particular day. Many of those recorded as being in Cheltenham on Sunday 6 June 1841, 30 March 1851, or 7 April 1861, of all social classes, will have been in the town only briefly and had no long-lasting association with it. The Irish were perhaps even more transient than the norm, since their number comprised a great many fashionable visitors at the one extreme of the social spectrum and itinerant hawkers and pedlars on the other. Table 5.15 and Table 5.16 present the results of this researcher's attempts to analyse how long Irish-born people stayed in the town in these decades by tracking the Cheltenham Irish across the 1841, 1851 and 1861 censuses. This is far from easy, and subject to all the usual pitfalls of any nominal linkage exercise, exacerbated by the particular variability of the spelling of Irish surnames (O'Neill, Oneal, Neale, Neil etc. etc.), and there can be no doubt that some errors will have occurred. A very conservative approach was adopted, and individuals from one census were only included in a category

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[55] *Cheltenham Looker-on,* 26 Jan 1839, p.8.

other than "Not found" when they could be identified and located with considerable confidence in another set of census returns. Notable here is that, of 899 Irish-born people on the 1841 census of Cheltenham, only 146 (16.2%) could be traced with confidence still living in Cheltenham 20 years later. The large number of people present in the town in either 1841 or 1851 but not found on the 1861 census will certainly include a significant number who had in fact remained in Britain but could not be traced with any certainty, but a not inconsiderable number had probably returned to Ireland (for which the 1861 census has been lost), or emigrated (one person can definitely be traced moving to the USA in this decade, but the actual number that moved to North America, Australasia etc will, of course, be higher than that). In relation to the wealthier, higher-status Irish inhabitants, as is true of other such people of English origin, it is far from unusual to find them in Cheltenham on one census but at another resort fashionable in the period 10 or 20 years later, with Bath, Clifton, Brighton and Weston-super-Mare particular favourites. It has not been practical to extend this linkage exercise across census returns to the full population of the town to determine if the Irish were different from the "average" Cheltenham resident in this respect, but it seems likely that they were.

We can also gauge the permanence or otherwise of people's settlement in the town to some extent from the information provided by the census regarding their relationship to the head of the household, as explored in Table 5.17. Around a quarter of all Irish-born people recorded in Cheltenham on the 1851 census were lodgers, boarders or visitors, while this was true of less than 10% of the general population. While it is unsurprising to find that a population that included a significant number of labourers and street traders was highly mobile, this transient nature was also true of the more high-status Irish population too. The

professional occupation groups included a mix of those still active in their careers, those who were vacationing briefly in Cheltenham, and those who had retired to the town. For example, of the 14 Irish-born Anglican clergymen present in 1851, six were active in their profession and held prominent positions in the town's churches (the Rector of Swindon, the Vicar of Christchurch, the Assistant Minister of St Paul's and the curates of Holy Trinity, St Peter's and Charlton Kings were all of Irish extraction), while two were teachers at Cheltenham College. Five appear to have retired to the town, or were independently wealthy and had made it their home (including a "Clerk without Cure of Souls Fundholder &c" and a "Clergyman and Land Proprietor"). The latter was the incumbent of an Irish parish (the Rector of Tullow), who was presumably just visiting. The medical men included a similar mix of those still working, visiting or retired, while some of the military men were residents on active service or on leave, others on half pay or fully retired.

Another aspect of the transience of people's connections to the town that is hard to discern from census returns is the seasonality of much of the population of Cheltenham. Cheltenham was a resort town, and, in its heyday, its population would be swollen by visitors coming for "The Season", which in Cheltenham ran from May to September, as well as by many accompanying domestic servants, tradespeople and working-class migrants who came in search of the work and commerce the presence of these visitors generated.[56] The 1841 census was taken on 6 June that year, during this period, while the 1851 and 1861 censuses took place on 30 March and 7 April respectively, before "the Season" commenced.

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[56] Catherine Martin, *Season*, Pittville History Works (Friends of Pittville), n.d.
    <https://pittvillehistory.org.uk/wpt/places/season/> [accessed 05 Dec 2023].

While the importance of the Spa had significantly declined by the middle of the century, there can be little doubt that these later censuses missed a number of seasonal visitors to the town.

Over the course of the first half of the 19th century, Cheltenham transitioned from a resort town, dependent on the Spa to attract seasonal visitors, to a residential centre for the wealthy, especially those seeking somewhere to retire from a life spent in the colonies. Cheltenham has long had a reputation as the home of retired colonels and colonial administrators, and the early Victorian censuses confirm that this is not unwarranted. Areas such as Lansdown and Pittville do indeed appear to have resembled retirement villages for the East India Company. Just as Gloucester had been a *colonia* for officers who had retired from the Roman Empire's Army, so Cheltenham became a place where those who had commanded the British Empire's military chose to settle comfortably and enjoy their pensions. These people needed to educate their children and grandchildren, and public schools such as Cheltenham College and, somewhat later, the Ladies' College, were founded for this purpose. The town's motto "*salubritas et eruditio*" (health and learning), still celebrates the Spa and its schools, but as the 19th century progressed the town's economic focus shifted decisively from the former to the latter. Davis says of Bath

> Despite the vain attempts to hang on to its glorious past, the city was
>
> being transformed from the mecca of the rich, in search of amusement,
>
> to a retreat for the pensioners and annuitants of the aspiring middle
>
> classes. Where in the eighteenth century Bath had courted the 'quality'
>
> for the season, in the Victorian age it sought to tempt the 'gentility' to

take up permanent residence in the city.[57]

This was equally true of Cheltenham, though Cheltenham's heyday came a few decades after Bath's. The Irish always made up a disproportionately large section of the British armed forces – both officers and other ranks – and this was reflected in the wealthier section of Cheltenham's resident population. The seasonality of the Irish population of the town will almost certainly have declined as this transition progressed, but this cannot be traced from census returns since they surveyed the town at the wrong time of year.

Another form of seasonality which is equally invisible in the census is that of the migration of agricultural workers. Discussing the Catholic church in Cheltenham, in 1857 the Catholic newspaper *The Tablet* wrote:

> The congregation is partly supported by the wealthy Catholics who come to Cheltenham during the Season, or to drink its waters. It mainly consists of poor Irish who settle in the town in considerable numbers, and migrate in the summer, wandering over the country in search of agricultural employment.[58]

If this is accurate (and there is no particular reason to doubt it), it is curious that very little evidence of it has come to light in other sources. Certainly, it had been the case since the 18th century that during harvest times thousands of "Irish reapers" would cross the sea

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[57] Davis, *Bath as Spa and Bath as Slum*, p.29.

[58] *The Tablet,* 06 Jun 1857, p.363.

from Ireland to England to provide the additional man- and woman-power required during the period of peak agricultural labour requirements.[59] However, this type of migration appears to have been most significant in the cereal-producing areas of eastern and south-eastern England, to which Irish reapers would travel after crossing the Irish sea each year, before returning to Ireland. What *The Tablet* appears to be claiming is something rather different, however, namely that the Irish who were settled in Cheltenham for most of the year would move out of the town to the country (whether just neighbouring villages or further afield is unclear) during the summer months in search of farm labour. While this seems plausible, it is hard to find evidence for it. Certainly, there are references to Irish people being involved in hop-picking in Herefordshire in the mid-19th century, such as this from 1867:

> Picking will commence on Monday next. On Wednesday last there were in this city many groups of the humblest classes, of both sexes,— we were about to say of many countries, but at all events the Irish element was conspicuous — [60]

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[59] J.H. Johnson, 'Harvest Migration from Nineteenth-Century Ireland', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (41: June 1967), 97-112. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/621329>.; Barbara M Kerr, 'Irish Seasonal Migration to Great Britain, 1800-38', *Irish Historical Studies*, 3 (12: Sep 1943), 365-380. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30006011>.; Fitzpatrick, pp.630-633.

[60] *Hereford Times*, 07 Sep 1867 p.8 col.2

This remained a popular activity with the urban working classes in areas such as Kent and the south-west midlands until well into the 20th century.[61]

The baptism registers of St Gregory's have been analysed for any clues they might provide on this subject. Over the entire period of the available registers (1809-1903), and ignoring adult baptisms and entries where the date of birth is omitted, the median number of days between birth and baptism reflects the traditional eagerness of the Roman Catholic church to baptize children as soon as possible because of doctrine regarding entry into heaven, and is a mere 19 days. In respect of those entries where the family surname is one of the selected "characteristic" Irish surnames mentioned earlier, the gap is a mere 12 days. It is therefore unlikely that the child of Catholic parents normally resident in Cheltenham who was born in the summer while they were away from the town doing agricultural work elsewhere would delay the baptism of their new-born child until they returned home, and would have sought out a church close to where they were working. Yet there is no sign of a significant seasonal peak or dip in the number of baptisms in the summer that might suggest the Catholic population of the town was higher or lower in those months.

2.7. Integration or Segregation

Measuring the extent to which the Irish migrants to Cheltenham integrated with the local population, or remained segregated from them, in any quantitative manner, is far from straightforward. A qualitative perspective on this question is explored below, but one way in

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[61] The 1939 Register, drawn up in September that year, includes cases of Birmingham people recorded in Herefordshire where they had been picking hops.

which we can consider the topic is to look at intermarriage. To what extent was the Irish community endogamous, suggesting a segregated population, or heterogamous, indicative of a more integrated group?

One way of exploring this question statistically is presented in Table 5.18, which considers the nationality of spouses listed on the census. This indicates that the Irish in Cheltenham were at least as likely to be married to a British person as to another Irish person. In respect of the high-status group in particular, heterogamy was in fact considerably more common than endogamy. This is probably indicative that, in this section of the population, the Irish-born were fully integrated into an "imperial British" population, as also implied by the number of spouses born outside Britain or Ireland but within the British Empire, eg Canada, India, West Indies etc. Even in respect of the low-status group, however, it was more common for an Irish man to be married to a British-born woman than an Irishwoman, and as likely for an Irish woman to be married to a British-born man as to an Irishman, implying perhaps a high degree of integration with the local non-Irish population. This could also possibly reflect the fact that this was a migrant population that had been resident for some years, so that the number of marriages between migrants and locally-born people had grown to rival or outnumber the number of marriages that predated the migrants' arrival in Cheltenham. It should be noted, however, that a considerable number of these marriages will have been to second-generation migrants, ie people born in Britain to Irish parents, and still part of an Irish migrant community.

2.8. Origins in Ireland

Analysing where migrants originated in Ireland is not straightforward. Regrettably, the census rarely gives us any specific information about their places of birth beyond the bare minimum, ie "Ireland" (and even that can prove to be incorrect on further investigation). Sometimes the census-taker might helpfully provide the name of a county as well, less often an actual parish or townland, but even that level of information is often of little assistance, since the effects of low literacy rates, unfamiliar accents and geographical ignorance on the part of enumerators all frequently combined to make what was written in the "Birthplace" column of the census returns unintelligible or untraceable. On other occasions, a placename was entered without a county, leaving us guessing which of several locations in Ireland of that name was intended.

Previous studies of the geographical origins of Irish migrants have similarly suffered from these deficiencies. While far from immune from those failings, this project's "quasi-prosopological" approach, where each Irish-born migrant to Cheltenham has been subjected to a biographical and genealogical investigation, helps overcome some of these issues by consolidating, as far as practicable, the best evidence regarding these people's origins from every available source. Thus, if the 1851 census entry for one of the people surveyed simply stated they were from "Ireland", but the 1881 census (for example) stated they were from "County Cork", the latter more specific birthplace has been selected for analysis. Likewise, if a person's baptism in a particular parish could be identified with a reasonable degree of confidence (not often the case, admittedly), that information has been used. Even taking

this approach, a county of origin for those people of Irish birth resident in Cheltenham in 1851 has only been determined in less than half of cases.

It is worth taking a high-level overview initially, examining place of birth in terms of province (Table 5.19). From this it is already clear that nearly eight times as many people moved to Cheltenham from the south-western province of Munster as from the north-western province of Connacht. However, if we drill down by social class, an important distinction becomes clear (Table 5.20). In respect of low-status Irish-born residents of Cheltenham listed on any of the censuses of 1841, 1851 or 1861, the survey showed that nearly a quarter could be traced to a birthplace in Munster, and almost 60% of those where a birthplace could be identified were from that one province. Very few were from Ulster. In respect of high-status residents, on the other hand, only 10% could be traced to Munster, while more than half of those whose birth county was determined came from Leinster (the province that includes Dublin) and a significantly larger proportion could be demonstrated to be Ulster-born.

Moving beyond the province level and looking at the counties from which these individuals most commonly originated gives the results presented in Table 5.21. Of those working-class Irish people in Cheltenham in these years whose birthplace could be identified, almost 45% had been born in County Cork alone, whereas less than 10% of upper-class Irish in the town were from that county. Conversely, upper-class residents were more than twice as likely to have been born in County Dublin.

This trend appears to have been true of Irish migration to Cheltenham as soon as this phenomenon commenced. Simpson's statistics, derived from settlement examinations,

show that Cork ranked third in a list of the counties that produced the most paupers

examined, with 42 persons, well behind Gloucestershire itself of course (586 persons), but

only just behind near neighbour Worcestershire (53), and ahead of other nearby counties

such as Wiltshire (40), Herefordshire (38) and Somerset (35).[62] The preponderance of

County Cork as a source of migrants to Cheltenham is further highlighted by the fact that

the second-ranked Irish county in this list is Dublin, with only 14 cases, followed by Mayo

with six.

This predominance of County Cork people in Irish migration to Cheltenham is not

unexpected. Cork was the most populous Irish county by far in 1841, with considerably

more than twice as many inhabitants as County Dublin.[63] Beyond that consideration,

however, it is also of significance that studies of other places in Wales and south-west

England have shown a similar preponderance of migrants from the south-west of Ireland,

especially County Cork.[64] The 1820s and 1830s were years during which Ireland experienced

episodes of famine, well before its sufferings during *An Gorta Mór.* In 1822, famine ensued

in West Munster and Connacht after the potato crop was badly affected by wet weather,

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[62] Simpson, p.lv Fig 9.

[63] Irish Government Open Data Unit, *Dataset E2001 - Population at Each Census 1841 to 2016*, DATA.GOV.IE, n.d. <https://data.gov.ie/dataset/e2001-population-at-each-census-1841-to-2016>.

[64] Davis, *Bath as Spa and Bath as Slum*, pp.103, 115.; David Large, 'The Irish in Bristol in 1851: A Census Enumeration', in *The Irish in the Victorian City*, ed. by Roger Swift, and Sheridan Gilley, (Croom Helm, 1985), p.42.; Chris Williams, ''Decorous and Creditable': The Irish in Newport', in *Irish Migrants in Modern Wales*, ed. by Paul O'Leary, (Liverpool: Liverpool Scholarship Online, 2004), p.7 doi:10.5949/UPO9781846313356.

and the Cheltenham press was publicising "Subscriptions towards the relief of that portion

of the Irish peasantry, who are suffering under the horrors of Famine" as early as 1831.[65] It

is reasonable to assume that these people, whose means were limited, will have chosen the

most economical route into Britain. Even if their intention was subsequently to seek

employment in London or the industrial regions of the English Midlands or North, they will

have taken the shortest and cheapest sea crossing available to them and hoped to travel the

rest of the distance on foot. Thus, most will have used one of the regular steam packet

services between Cork and Bristol and the South Wales ports (Newport, Cardiff etc.), such as

those operated by the Bristol General Steam Navigation Company, established in 1821.

Their route towards the capital, or Birmingham and the north, may well then have brought

them through or close to Cheltenham, as indeed we know to have been the case with some

of the Famine victims discussed later. Throughout the 1820s, County Cork newspapers

carried advertisements for Steam Packet services to Bristol, such as those provided by the

Superb, of which it is said "In a word this vessel is so well known in London, Bath,

Cheltenham, and almost all the watering places in England, that passengers have been

known to engage their births [sic] ten days before the day required."[66] Fares were driven

down by competition, and could be as low as 10d in steerage and 3d on deck.[67] There are

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[65] National Archives of Ireland, *Historical commentary for 1822,* , National Archives of Ireland, n.d.
    <https://csorp.nationalarchives.ie/context/Historical%20Commentaries%20for%201822%20-
    %20with%20hyperlinks.pdf> [accessed 09 Jan 2024].; *Cheltenham Journal,* 25 Apr 1831, p.3 col.2.

[66] *Cork Constitution,* 04 Jul 1826, p.3 col.1.

[67] Swift, *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1914*, p.7.

even reports of free passage being offered on occasions.[68] With respect to the upper classes, financial resources were much less of a consideration when choosing where they travelled. In their case, Cheltenham itself was the draw, and the places of origin of these individuals reflected much more closely the distribution of the prosperous, property- and land-owning classes in Ireland, with the area around Dublin, and to a lesser extent Ulster, predominating. As for the resident domestic servants of these people, their numbers are smaller, but the pattern is similar to that for the upper classes, suggesting perhaps that these were people recruited locally from the area in which the employer normally resided, and who had come to Cheltenham with them.

Cork is the largest Irish county by area, as well as the most populous, and it would be interesting to be able to determine whether people were more likely to migrate to Cheltenham from a particular part of that county. Given the difficulties associated with tracing the specific birthplace of the people concerned, as already mentioned, this is far from easy. What we can say, however, is that, of 60 low-status individuals born somewhere in County Cork for whom a more specific birthplace was identified, 46 were from places in the south of the county, mostly near the coast, including Clonakilty (15), Rosscarbery (6), Bandon (3), Kanturk (3), Kinsale (2) and Skibbereen (1). Curiously, however, no fewer than 19 seem to have had ties back to the parish of Lislee, not far from Clonakilty, which, according to Lewis, had just 1,786 inhabitants in 1837.[69] Six of these Lislee natives had

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[68] Fitzpatrick, pp.626-627.

[69] Team Ireland, GENUKI, *Lislee*, GENUKI, 2023 <https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/irl/COR/Lislee>.quoting
    Samuel Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland* (London: S. Lewis & Co, 1837).

arrived in Cheltenham between 1841 and 1851, 11 between 1851 and 1861, and another two in the following decade. It seems highly unlikely that all of these individuals had ended up in Cheltenham by pure coincidence, and some form of chain migration was probably occurring: in other words, the later arrivals chose Cheltenham as a destination precisely because friends or family were already living in the town and could offer support of one kind or another, whether that be employment, accommodation or other assistance.

3. THEMES AND CASE STUDIES

Corresponding to the second part of Swift's paradigm, this section explores the circumstances and experiences of the Irish in Cheltenham in a more descriptive manner, under various thematic headings.

3.1. Housing

Table 5.8 above indicates that the highest number of Irish-born persons listed in any one locality on the 1851 census of Cheltenham were to be found in Milsom Street (including the adjoining Milsom Court). Edward Cresy, Superintendent Inspector of the Board of Health, reported in 1849 that this locality:

> consists of several very old houses, and many are occupied as lodging-houses; one called the Rookery is used by the Irish tramps. This street is reported to be never free from disease; and, communicating as it does with the High-street, is constantly under observation. One pump and a privy suffices for five or six houses; Finch's yard is an instance of bad ventilation and filth. The pavements are seldom cleaned, and the drains are useless.[70]

Remarkably, these "very old houses" were, in fact, no more than about 40 years old at most. Milsom Street did not exist when the 1800 "Town and Tithing Plan" of Cheltenham

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[70] Cresy, p.14.

was drawn, and Cresy's misestimation of their age probably reflects the poor level of maintenance they had received.

Other streets with a high number of low-status Irish-born residents included: Hereford Place (together with Hereford Court), adjacent to Milsom Street, and of a very similar nature; Grove Street, just across the High Street, which also contained several common lodging houses; and Devonshire Street, Barnards Row and Rutland Street (now the southern end of Brunswick Street). All of these lie off or close to the Lower High Street, which has for centuries been the working-class district of the town. Of working-class housing conditions in the town generally, Cresy made this scathing assessment:

> It is unnecessary to describe the whole of the courts, alleys, and lanes, with the wretched dwellings overcrowded with inhabitants, which were visited during the several days' perambulation through the town: the lodging-houses and abodes of the poorer classes in many instances were in a pestilential condition – the scavenger, the water-cart, the sewer, were quite unknown-and there was evidence enough to convince any observer that it was impracticable to exterminate disease so long as these places were suffered to remain in their present state. Sickness and disease will prevail wherever the atmosphere is contaminated.[71]

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[71] Cresy, pp.15-16.

Cheltenham was, of course, no different from many Victorian towns of a similar size in this respect. Where it differed from most other places was that this squalor existed in a town that claimed to be a centre for health and learning and sat in close proximity to the elegant Regency mansions of the wealthier inhabitants. To take just one example, in 1841, Irish peer and former MP Henry Sadleir Prittie, 2nd Baron Dunalley, was living at North Lodge (now 37, St. Paul's Road), a stone's throw from the "Irish tramp houses" of Milsom Street.[72]

The streets listed in blue in Table 5.8 were (and still are) of a very different nature, constituting some of the most prestigious areas of the town, including several of the most famous examples of Cheltenham's Regency architecture, though many of these properties had already been converted to short-term rentals and boarding houses for the well-to-do visitors. The 35 Irish-born people recorded in Imperial Square, for example, comprised: nine fundholders (with three family members); five annuitants; three landowners or landed proprietors; an unattached Army officer; a Royal Navy paymaster on Half Pay; a barrister (not practising); the wife and two children of a retired Scottish Naval Captain; plus, to accommodate and service these people, a boarding house keeper and her niece; a lodging house keeper's assistant; five servants, plus one schoolchild.

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[72] Ancestry.com, *1841 England Census* Provo, UT, USA, database on-line, Ancestry.com, 2010 <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/8978/> [Original data: The National Archives class HO 107 (1841)] Ref. HO107/353/8/16/26.; David R. Fisher, *PRITTIE, Henry Sadleir, 2nd Bar. Dunalley [I] (1775-1854), of Kilboy, co. Tipperary* Institute of Historical Research, The History of parliament, 2020 <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/prittie-henry-1775-1854> [accessed 25 Apr 2024].

At the other end of the spectrum of temporary accommodation from these respectable boarding houses were the common lodging houses frequented by the lower-status people who came to the town. Although it is not always entirely clear from the census returns alone whether a property was a private residence that took in a few lodgers or a fully-fledged commercial lodging house, the picture becomes clearer after November 1851, when the Cheltenham Paving and Lighting Commissioners adopted the regulations of the Common Lodging Houses Act passed earlier that year. The following month they appointed surgeon Thomas Cottle as the town's first Inspector of Common Lodging Houses. Lodging House keepers were required to register their premises and make them available for inspection prior to licensing. No fewer than 13 properties in Milsom Street and Milsom Court were submitted for licensing, plus seven in Grove Street. It is noteworthy that of 63 common lodging house keepers in the town making applications for licensing (50 men and 13 women), 28 were Irish-born and another two were Englishmen married to Irish wives. Indeed, every lodging house keeper in Milsom Street/Court and Grove Street was either Irish or the husband of an Irish wife.[73]

These people are rarely described in the census returns as lodging house keepers – most had other forms of employment too – and from testimony given in court reported in the newspapers, it is clear that in many instances the wives were actively involved, if not actually the prime mover, so far as running the lodging house was concerned, with the husband probably largely acting as a male "front" to legitimise the application. To cite some

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[73] *Paving and Lighting Commissioners Minutes,* 1847-1852 Gloucestershire Archives ref. CBR/A1/1/6.

specific examples, Cottle's inspection report on Nos. 20-21 Stanhope Street was addressed to the "Occupier or Keeper Mr Edwin Harrison". In reality Edwin was a hawker and labourer by trade, and it was his Irish-born wife Jane (née Best) who ran the lodging house, as evidenced by the fact that it was she who had submitted the application for the licence, and indeed, the 1851 census describes her as a "Lodging house keeper".[74] Similarly, although the applicant for the licence at 1-2 Milsom Court was nominally James Hanning, he was listed in the census (erroneously as James *Allen*), as a labourer, and when his second wife Lydia appeared in court the following year, it was stated "She keeps the lodging house No. 2 Milsom Court".[75]

Cottle appears to have been a conscientious and efficient inspector, concerned not only with minimising the risk of the spread of infectious disease from the lodging houses to the general population, but also with the wellbeing of the lodgers themselves. An inspection report was produced for each property to be licensed, the number and type of lodgers to be accommodated in each room determined, any defects requiring action itemised, and improvements verified by further inspections.[76] He was particularly scathing in relation to properties in Milsom Street and Milsom Court and eager to close many of them down. Of James Donovan's lodging house at 4 Milsom Court he wrote:

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[74] *1851 England Census*, Ref. HO107/1973/498/17.

[75] *1851 England Census*, Ref. HO107/1973/435/36.; *Cheltenham Examiner,* 17 Nov 1852, p.3 col.2.

[76] *Cheltenham Improvement Commission: Preliminary reports on lodging houses by Dr Cottle ,* Gloucestershire Archive Ref. CBR/B1/4/2.

This house is not in any way fit for a lodging house [...] it is in a wretched state as regards repair and cleanliness and the inmates appear in every way devoid of comforts and crowding together without any adequate means of ventilation or division of the sexes.

On 1 October 1852, with regard to Milsom Street, he wrote to the Commissioners that it was:

much out of repair generally and at the same time much frequented by the Irish. I would venture to call the attention of your Board to the great necessity for a proper and efficient sewerage being laid down at the earliest opportunity as at present I am led to understand there is none of any kind.

On 7 October 1853, he wrote:

the leases of Milsom Street generally are upon the point of terminating. I trust they will not be again renewed, unless with the understanding that they shall be rebuilt or otherwise greatly improved, it being nearly impossible to keep the street in a cleanly and healthy state as it currently exists.

Then, on 2 June 1854, Cottle reported "all those in Milsom Street of an objectionable character have been vacated" and on 7 July: "the last of the occupiers of the houses in Milsom Street are now removing to larger tenements". The offending buildings in Milsom Street were demolished and, by 1864, a Ragged School, designed by the well-known local

architect John Middleton, had been built in their place.[77] At the opening of the new school on 19 January 1864, Rev. Griffiths recalled how, 30 years earlier, he had gone down Milsom Street with a police inspector, and:

> visited house after house, filled probably with the lowest class of people, and he remembered one room in particular in a house on this side of the street, and in which were assembled some of the lowest class of people, there were about 40 beggars and thieves, and the Inspector of Police said, pointing to a bench, 'from that form I took two men, who were afterwards hung for the crimes they had committed.'[78]

In February 1854, the *Chronicle* was still referring to "the Irish locality of Milsom Street", but, by 1861, the census recorded only a single Irish-born person in Milsom Street, and that was the two-year-old son of a Jewish painter who happened to have been born in Dublin.[79] By the time that census was taken, Rutland Street (now the southern part of Brunswick Street), with its numerous associated closes and passages, had taken over as the centre of the working-class Irish community in the town. Of some 602 residents of Rutland Street in 1861, the census tells us 130 were Irish-born and a further 89 were married to, or the child of, an Irish person.

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[77] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 20 Apr 1854, p.3 col.4.

[78] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 26 Jan 1864, p.8 col.1.

[79] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 09 Feb 1854, p.3 col.6.

3.2.   Prejudice and Community Relations

Only a few years after the demolition of the Milsom Street lodging houses, Rutland Street had gained a reputation in the Cheltenham newspapers as an infamous trouble-spot, nicknamed "The City". Then, as now, the press was happy to print dubious stories to alarm the public if it resulted in the sale of additional copies. From as early as 1855 the *Chronicle* was regularly reporting on the supposed activities of the "Rutland Street Gang".[80] On 4 March 1856 the same newspaper prefixed its report on the recent General Gaol Delivery at Cheltenham Police Court with the following comments:

> This morning the dock was crowded with prisoners, all of them residing in that notorious locality, known as Rutland Street, or the 'City,' and a worse neighbourhood could not be found throughout the town, the population being composed of thieves, prostitutes, cadgers, impostors, and all that is vile and infamous.[81]

While almost all of the supposed "gang" members whose arrests were reported appear to have been English, there can be no doubt that the presence of many Irish in this street contributed to the prejudice the Cheltenham bourgeoisie appears to have harboured towards it. On 13 March 1860, The *Chronicle* revealed this shocking truth to its readers:

> Yes, my fashionable ladies, there are localities not mentioned in the

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[80] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 29 May 1855, p.3 col.3.;

[81] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 4 Mar 1856, p.3 col.6.

guide books; pavements on which your delicately shod feet never tread

[…] There is in a certain quarter of the town a place called "Rutland

Street." […] the lowest locality of Cheltenham […] this place is

proverbially remarkable for 'rows' and quarrels, and has lately been the

scene of a disgraceful outrage. Rather more than a week ago some

cause of complaint occasioned one set of the inhabitants of this 'select'

spot to meditate a regular attack upon another clique, and a conflict

which may literally be described as sanguinary took place [….]. The

combatants are said by report to be of the Hibernian race; but, from

the evidence, it seems the are a mixture of English, Israelites, and Irish.

We are told that the police cannot venture to interfere in this locality;

but we question the fact.[82]

In many ways, after Milsom Street's redevelopment, Rutland Street became

Cheltenham's equivalent of Bath's Avon Street, which Davis describes as "the plague spot of

Victorian Bath, a classic slum, criminal quarter, red-light district, and centre of epidemic

disease".[83] The Bath newspapers reported on the various "rows" and "riots" in Avon Street,

frequently involving its Irish residents, in a very similar way to the Cheltenham press.[84]

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[82] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 13 Mar 1860, p.5 col.2.

[83] Davis, *The Scum of Bath*, p.189.

[84] Davis, *The Scum of Bath*, pp.190-192.

The Cheltenham newspapermen rarely missed an opportunity to give their readers a cheap laugh at the expense of the comical Irish when they appeared in court, and their peculiar "brogue" was, of course, a particular source of hilarity. An article entitled "The Compliments o' the Morning" in the *Cheltenham Journal* of 1 June 1861 quoted evidence given in court following an altercation between two Irish women:

> Complainant, a native of the Sister Isle, said: About a quarther to siven o'clock o' Tuesday morning last as iver was I persading to my work, yer honours – and the first time it was to a fresh gintleman's house, so I wanted to be there betimes, ye see – when I sees Catherine Sweeney, that's her, coming out o' a lodging-house in Rutland-street, and she stooped down as if, yer honors, she was tying her boot laces. Well, I went on, and on my oath, gintlemen, I was jist agoin; to say 'Good morning, Catherine Sweeney,' when she flew at me like a wild tiger and brutally bate me about me face [....]' The above evidence was given in a very rapid manner, with innumerable parenthetical remarks, which rendered her statement so obscure that Mr Harford asked: Now, what is it you complain of? […].[85]

The *Chronicle* in particular appears to have found in the impoverished residents of Rutland Street a combination of fascination and repugnance, horror and humour. This was far from restricted to the Irish population of the street, but perhaps especially true in their

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[85] *Cheltenham Journal,* 01 Jun 1861, p.7 col.1.

case. Virtually every edition during the 1850s and 1860s contains some reference to the degradation of "Rutland Street, […] better known as the 'city,' on account of its dense and lawless population, where some twenty people are crowded together in one small tenement."[86]

The letters published in the Cheltenham press are eerily reminiscent of the views expressed in today's tabloid press, with the poor being demonized as dissolute scroungers sucking the ratepayer dry. A correspondent signing himself "Observer" writes in the Conservative-supporting *Cheltenham Journal*, with respect to "The 'City' Paupers":

> The fact of relief having been given to 157 different persons in *one quarter*, all inhabitants of one street, seems to me to exhibit some severe defects in the working of the parochial machinery; […] To remedy the evil, however, a strict investigation ought to be carried out in all cases where relief has been granted in Rutland-street, and in numbers of cases it will be found that the ratepayers' money has been squandered in drunkenness and debauchery. Scarcely a week elapses but the police reports are swollen by cases of drunkenness or riots from Rutland-street – a street in which we are told upwards of 300 of the inhabitants have received parochial relief in one year![87]

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[86] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 21 Nov 1854, p.4 col.2.

[87] *Cheltenham Journal,* 07 Apr 1860, p.2 col.2.

This complaint – that the kind-hearted generosity of the respectable Cheltenham citizenry was being abused by the undeserving poor, in particular the Irish – is a constant theme in the Cheltenham press in this period. Just as today the tabloids might claim that their readers' taxes were being wasted on benefits spent on flat-screen TVs and crack cocaine, in the 1850s and 1860s the Cheltenham newspapers were full of stories of "wealthy beggars". On 2 February 1854, the *Chronicle* complained that:

> The streets of our town are, at the present period, literally overrun with Irish beggars, who, to more effectually aid their operations, have generally in their train three of four ragged children, through whose instrumentality they carry on a roaring trade […] the whole of their gains being spent in the evening at 'Beggars' Hall,' Milsom Street, in drunkenness and dissipation. It is quite a mistaken charity to give alms in the street, for not one in a hundred are deserving objects; but, on the contrary are invariably impostors.[88]

No doubt the good burghers of Cheltenham, then as now, took comfort in the knowledge that the real victims were not the inhabitants of the town's slums, but the long-suffering, put-upon ratepayers.

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[88] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 02 Feb 1854, p.3 col.3.

3.3.   Alcohol and Disorder

One prominent and persistent aspect of the treatment of the Irish population in the Cheltenham press, and the press nationally, was reporters' willingness to indulge in the customary stereotype of the Irish as argumentative, often violent, drunkards. By the 1850s, civil disorder – often referred to as an "Irish row" – appears to have become, rightly or wrongly, increasingly linked to the Irish population, in the minds of the newspapermen at least, and the cause was customarily ascribed to alcohol. The Irish were depicted as drunken, irascible figures of fun, likely to turn on each other as soon as they had had a dram or two. When Michael Murphy was charged with being drunk and disorderly and assaulting a policeman, the Conservative-supporting *Cheltenham Journal* referred to him as "A denizen of Rutland Street […] a true Irishman".[89] This prejudice was not restricted to the Conservative press, however. On 5 December 1857, invoking pretty much every stereotype imaginable, and parodying the Irish accent, the Liberal-leaning *Cheltenham Mercury* reported how the previous Sunday night:

> the inhabitants residing near St Paul's church were aroused by screams proceeding from the uproarious locality of Rutland-street." Following the baptism of their children, "the parents had invited an assembly of the 'ilegant natives of Erin,' to partake of whisky toddy, beer, and other beverages […] Everything was provided to satisfy the cravings of the thirsty Patlanders, and after a few hours spent in this elevating pastime,

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[89] *Cheltenham Journal,* 28 May 1864, p.5 col.4.

nothing remained to crown the night's orgies, but the desire to be engaged in one of their characteristic fights. Therefore in the absence of shilelaghs, other articles were pressed into service, such as fireirons, sticks, cups, &c [….] A father might have been seen batin' his 'broth of a boy,' a wife kicking her husband, a daughter displaying her skill with a poker on the head of her mother, amid a very unmelodious accompaniment of oaths, hootings, and blasphemy, and the shrill screeches of the half-naked spalpeens.[90]

It seems unlikely that the reporter who wrote this had himself been present at events, and, even if his report was based on eye-witness testimony, one suspects a considerable amount of embellishment has occurred. Numerous similar reports could be quoted from the Cheltenham press.

In reality, many of the problems for which the Irish became disproportionately criticised were common features of urban slum life:

Irish quarters in Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow and London became bywords for urban ghettos. Consequently, Irish migrants became associated with a whole catalogue of 'social evils' – squalid overcrowding, poor sanitation, epidemic disease, pauperism,

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[90] *Cheltenham Mercury ,* 05 Dec 1857, p.4 col.2.

drunkenness and casual violence.[91]

What Finnegan says of the northern city of York is equally true of the south-western town of Cheltenham:

The offence which more than any other gave the Irish community in the city its reputation for lawlessness was that of disorderly behaviour, often coupled with drunkenness and fighting, and occasionally developing into small-scale riots.[92]

It would be perverse to deny that alcohol played an important role in working-class Irish migrant culture – though whether more so than for the working-class population of Britain generally is debatable. As Fitzgerald says "If drinking was evidence of alienation, it was characteristic of the British proletariat rather than the Irish population alone", but so often it was the Irish who were singled out for criticism as inebriates.[93] Nonetheless, it is hard not to concur with MacRaild when he says:

While urban life in general was marked by high levels of drinking and drink-related crime, Irish (and indeed Gaelic) rural custom held alcohol in high cultural esteem, so that the rituals of drink were often much

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[91] Graham Davis, 'The Irish in Nineteenth Century Britain', *Saothar*, 16 (1991), 130-135.
     <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23197151>.

[92] Finnegan, p.59.

[93] Fitzpatrick, p.647.

more than 'mindless' examples of 'escapist' overindulgence. In peasant Ireland, drink was a fundamental aspect of leisure culture, playing a central role in the main rituals of life: birth, marriage and death. The Gaelic name for whiskey, usquebaugh ('water of life') says much of its importance.[94]

Criticism of Irish drunkenness in connection with baptisms, wakes and funerals was commonplace in the British press, as, for example, quoted by Pooley in connection with Liverpool: "There had been, in the presence of death, one of those shameful carousals, which, to the disgrace of the enlightened progress and advanced civilisation of the nineteenth century, still lingers as dregs of ancient manners amongst the funeral customs of the Irish peasantry."[95] Such events were likewise important in the lives of Cheltenham's low-status Irish community, and it cannot be denied that they were an occasion for drinking. Sometimes this led to incidents of disorder. However, there is little evidence of conflict between the Irish and non-Irish working-class people in the town. Arguments that ensued were usually between different members of the Irish lower classes. Where offence was given, it was to middle-class English sensibilities. Emotionally charged Irish funerary rites contrasted starkly with the buttoned-up English manner of mourning, and these cultural

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[94] MacRaild, *Irish Migrants in Modern Britain, 1750-1922*, p.264.

[95] Colin G. Pooley, 'Migrants and the Media in Nineteenth-Century Liverpool', *Local Population Studies*, 92 (1: 2014), 24-37 (p.26). <https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/lpss/lps/2014/00000092/00000001/art00005>.

differences gave the press an opportunity for "othering" this minority group. In 1857, the *Mercury* reported on "An Irish Wake in Rutland Street" thus:

> In the evenings of Saturday and Sunday, and Irish wake was held in Rutland Street, in consequence of the death of Mary Sullivan, aged 45, and the celebration of which increased the uproar of this usually disorderly neighbourhood to such an extent as to render necessary extra police officers. The corpse was placed on the lid of the coffin, and covered with a white sheet decked with flowers, the face alone being exposed; and upon an adjoining table, the *materiel* for the customary *saturnalia* was placed, consisting of ale, tobacco, and pipes. About 40 "raal natives" of the "verminless isle" with their unmistakeable cast of countenance, rendered more repulsive by the dingy light of the squalid apartment in which they were all huddled, sat smoking and drinking, occasionally uttering discordant yells mingled with jests and laughter: this was varied by one and another howling over the deceased, and addressing conversation to her. The crowd attracted outside by the noise, were admitted to the room, a few at a time. Of course the police are powerless to prevent a repetition of similar unhallowed orgies, but there are those who might at once repress these exhibitions, and the Rev. Fathers Cotham and Blount, we think, might effect this by the

exercise of their authority.[96]

Again, it seems unlikely that this was an eye-witness account of events, and much of this was probably journalistic invention pandering to the pre-existing prejudices of the *Mercury*'s readership. No disorder related to this funeral appears to have been reported in any of the other Cheltenham newspapers.

One expression of this central role played by alcohol in the life of the Irish community, as a venue where fellow migrants could socialise, was the pub. Certain pubs in the town became closely associated with the Irish. The 1855 Cheltenham Town Plan shows three pubs or beerhouses that were clearly favourite haunts of the Irish community: the Shamrock beerhouse and lodging house at 19 Grove Street (aka The Shamrock, Rose and Thistle, kept by first by John Nugent, then James Mullins, both Irishmen); the Shamrock Inn on the corner of Manchester Walk and St George's Place (kept by Irishman Thomas Foy c.1840-1849); and the Shamrock Tavern beerhouse almost next door in St George's Place. Another beerhouse called the Shamrock is mentioned in Worcester Street in 1837 (possibly that kept by Irishman Edward Simmonds in this street in 1841).[97] In 1861, Michael O'Brien, assisted by his wife and daughters, was keeping both the Hen and Chickens at 275 High Street, on the corner of Grove Street, and a lodging house at 1 Cumberland Cottage, Grove Street (he had previously been the keeper of a lodging house called the Stone House at 7,

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[96] *Cheltenham Mercury,* 06 Jun 1857, p.8 col.2.

[97] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 14 Dec 1837, p.3 col.5.; *1841 England Census*, Ref. HO107/ 353/9/61/22.

Milsom Street, from 1851 until it was demolished a few years later).[98] The Hen and Chickens was probably a pre-existing tavern that had been "adopted" by the Irish because of its convenient location close to their homes, and this is reflected in the fact it was renamed "The Harp" sometime after 1861. The Shakespeare Inn, at 273-274 (now 386-388) High Street, on the opposite corner of Grove Street to the Hen and Chickens, has also long had a reputation as an "Irish pub". It changed its name to The Shamrock after refurbishment in 2007 and now claims to be Cheltenham's last remaining Irish pub.[99] The Royal Oak, at 298 High Street, does not seem to have had a long history as a pub frequented by the Irish, but was renamed the Irish Oak in the 1990s and decked out as a themed "Irish pub", probably in the hope of appealing to those flocking to Cheltenham races. It has now closed.[100]

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[98] *Cheltenham Mercury,* 29 Jun 1861, p.4 col.3.

[99] Jeff Sandles, *Shakespeare Inn / Shamrock, (272) 274 Lower High Street, Cheltenham*, Gloucestershire Pubs & Breweries, n.d. <https://www.gloucestershirepubs.co.uk/pubs/shakespeare-inn-shamrock-lower-high-street-cheltenham/> [accessed 02 Jan 2024].; Sandles, *Harp Inn, (275) Lower High Street, Cheltenham*, <https://www.gloucestershirepubs.co.uk/pubs/harp-inn-lower-high-street-cheltenham/> [accessed 02 Jan 2024].; Aled Thomas, *Cheltenham pub prepares 100,000 Irish welcomes for Gold Cup Week*, GloucestershireLive, 2022, Mar 14 <https://www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk/whats-on/whats-on-news/pub-prepares-100000-irish-welcomes-6754298> [accessed 25 Apr 2024].

[100] Sandles, *Royal Oak / Irish Oak, (298) 332 Lower High Street, Cheltenham*, Gloucestershire Pubs & Breweries, n.d. <https://www.gloucestershirepubs.co.uk/pubs/royal-oak-irish-oak-332-lower-high-street-cheltenham/> [accessed 25 Apr 2024].

3.4.   Social Mobility

As Table 5.10 suggests, less than 7% of the Irish-born population of Cheltenham in 1851 might reasonably be termed "middle class", as opposed to over 15% of the general population. 80% of the Cheltenham Irish was split roughly equally between low-status individuals and high-status persons, with about 10% domestic servants resident with their employers and another 10% middle-class or unclassifiable. This researcher's survey of the Irish-born population across the three sets of census returns has determined that there was little in the way of social mobility between classes: overwhelmingly, people remained in the class in which they had been born. Exceptions to this rule are interesting for the very reason that they are unusual, but it is perhaps worth considering some of these nonetheless, and the following brief biographical pen pictures are intended to serve as case studies to explore this matter further.

While there are few instances of socio-economic decline in this researcher's survey, no one was immune to the risk of financial misfortune of one kind or another. Henry Hart was born in 1828, son of John Hart of Ballymacarron, Co. Down. He and his elder brother, also John, were both educated at Cheltenham College and can be found on the 1841 census listed as pupils at Bayshill House, one of the College boarding houses.[101] John studied at the Inner Temple and was called to the bar in 1854 and remained a respectable member of the educated classes. In contrast, in 1875 his brother Henry married Louisa Hannah Macdonald

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[101] Andrew Alexander Hunter, ed, *The Cheltenham College Register 1841-1910* (London: G. Bell & Sons Ltd., 1911) <https://ia601609.us.archive.org/19/items/b28982836/b28982836.pdf>.; *1841 England Census*, Ref. HO 107/353/11/15/24.

at St Faith's, Stoke Newington. Although the parish register gives a London address for her, and states that her father Ferdinand was a "gentleman", he was in fact a hairdresser from Cheltenham, and Louisa was a single mother.[102] In 1877, Louisa initiated divorce proceedings, but was rebuffed. In 1879 and 1881, Henry petitioned for divorce from Louisa, but he too was denied on both occasions.[103] In 1883 Henry was tried for perjury relating to the divorce cases, and also imprisoned for debt. One of his creditors was his father-in-law, Ferdinand McDonald.[104] Henry's fortunes appear to have declined significantly after this time and he died in Belfast Workhouse Infirmary in 1900.[105]

With respect to socio-economic advancement, examples are similarly rare. Domestic servants who were loyal to their employers and remained with them for a considerable period of time might occasionally be fortunate enough to receive a legacy in the employer's will, and find their circumstances improved as a result. Anne Rigby was originally from

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[102] Ancestry.com., *London, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1938 [database on-line].* UT, USA Lehi, Producer, database online, Ancestry.com., 2010 <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/1623/> [Original data: London Metropolitan Archives] London Metropolitan Archives Ref. P94/FAI/011 p.6 no.11.

[103] *Ancestry.com. England & Wales, Civil Divorce Records, 1858-1918 [database online],* n.d. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc, 2010.

[104] *The Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard,* 05 May 1883, p.3.; *Gloucestershire, England, Prison Records, 1728-1914*, Gloucestershire Archives Ref. Q/Gc/12/5 no.6744.

[105] *IrishGenealogy.ie: Civil Records*, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media Irish Government: Department of Tourism, Producer <https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1900/05747/4623025.pdf>. Ref. 1900Q4/Belfast vol.1 p.175

Londonderry, and can be found working as a domestic servant with her sister Martha in the household of spinster sisters Anne and Sophia Curry at 5 Hatherley Place, Cheltenham in 1851, 1861 and 1871.[106] When Anne Curry died in 1873, Anne and Martha Rigby were bequeathed an annuity of £500 per annum and were jointly residuary legatees of their employer's estate, assessed at £4,000.[107] There are a handful of other similar cases.

Likewise, there are a few instances of domestic servants improving their lot by becoming lodging-house or eating-house keepers. Dublin-born butler Richard Doran moved to Cheltenham sometime between 1841 and 1851, at which date he was a patient in the General Hospital.[108] In 1861, he was employed by Charles Kennedy, a retired Lieutenant-Colonel in the East India Company's Artillery, at 15 Lansdown Crescent. Another member of this household in 1861 was local woman Esther (or Hester) Whithorn(e), who was employed as a cook.[109] On 10 December 1867, Richard and Esther married, at Tewkesbury Abbey. [110] By 1871, they appear to have been running an eating house together in Birmingham, but probably without a great deal of success, given they were living in back-to-back housing

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[106] *1851 England Census*, Ref. HO107/1973/945/164.; *1861 England Census*, Ref. RG9/1802/90/13.; *1871 England Census*, Ref. RG10/2670/40/6. Sophia appears as "Letitia" in 1861, but it is unclear if this is another sister and the same person under a different name.

[107] *Will of Anne Curry late of Cheltenham, spinster*, Probate Service for England & Wales, n.d. <https://probatesearch.service.gov.uk/>. Died 02 May 1873; Probate: Principal Registry, 05 Jun 1873, Folio 415.

[108] *1851 England Census*, Ref. HO107/1973/823/22.

[109] *1861 England Census*, Ref. RG 9/1801/11/16.

[110] *Gloucestershire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1938*, Ref. P329/1 IN 1/38 p.132.

there, and they soon returned to Cheltenham, where Richard died in 1877, described in the burial register as a "servant" again, and his widow Esther was also back working as a "General Domestic Servant" in 1881.[111]

On the whole, it was quite unusual for Irish-born domestic servants resident with their employers to form any kind of lasting relationship with Cheltenham, unless their employers stayed in the town. Of 124 such people found on the 1851 census in Cheltenham (37 males and 87 females), only 21 were still in Cheltenham in 1861 (8 males, 13 females). Of 369 Irish-born domestic servants resident with their employers in Cheltenham in either 1841, 1851 or 1861 (241 females, 128 males), only 18 (12 females, 6 males) were identified subsequently marrying in the local area. 58 such persons dying in Cheltenham were found, six of them in the Workhouse. In the main, domestic servants of this kind spent only a short time in the town and moved away once their employers returned to Ireland or relocated elsewhere in Great Britain or overseas. This makes it very difficult to trace what happened to them subsequently, unless the name is particularly uncommon.

With respect to the Irish-born working class in Cheltenham, again, in the vast majority of cases, people's socio-economic status changed little during their time in the town and subsequently. However, there were some notable exceptions, remarkable particularly because of how unusual they were. Patrick James Donahue was born in Little

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[111] *1871 England Census*, Ref. RG10/3114/93/28.; Ancestry.com, *Gloucestershire, England, Church of England Burials, 1813-1988* Provo, UT, USA, database online, Ancestry.com, 2014 <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/5158/> Ref. Gdr/V1/512p.414.; *1881 England Census*, Ref. RG11/2574/61/28.

Malvern, Worcestershire in 1849, the son of Irish-born Timothy Donahue (or Donoghue), a labourer, and his wife Joanna, formerly Egan, and was baptized at St Wulstan's Roman Catholic church there.[112] By 1861, the family had moved to the slum district of Hereford Place, Cheltenham, where Patrick was listed as a "scholar" on the census.[113] He appears to have done well academically, and by 1871, aged 21, he was working as a teacher and living in Broadstairs, Kent.[114] He emigrated to the USA in 1873, where he first became a lawyer, before training for the priesthood in 1883. He was appointed Roman Catholic Bishop of Wheeling, West Virginia in 1894 and remained in this post until his death in 1922.[115]

For a woman, one way to achieve socio-economic advancement might be to "marry well", ie to somebody from a higher socio-economic stratum. Joanna(h) (O')Driscoll (several spellings) cannot be found on the 1851 census, but on 21 August 1851 she married Joseph Woodward, third son of William Woodward of Wingrove Farm, Elmstone Hardwicke, first at St Mary's (Anglican), and then at St Gregory's (Catholic).[116] The St Mary's register gave her residence as Hereford Place, a less than salubrious district. There is no evidence she was

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[112] GRO birth certificate, PATRICK DONOGHUE, 1849Q2, UPTON UPON SEVERN, Vol. 18 p.571.; England Roman Catholic Baptisms, (n.d.), FindMyPast, n.d. <https://search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/england-roman-catholic-parish-baptisms>. Birmingham Archdiocesan Archives ref. P199 p.8

[113] *1861 England Census*, Ref. RG9/1799/76/44.

[114] *1881 England Census*, Ref. RG10/998/39/3.

[115] *Patrick James Donahue*, , Wikipedia, 2023, Aug 11 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_James_Donahue>.

[116] *Cheltenham Examiner,* 10 Sep 1851, p.3 col.1.

pregnant, as their first child Eleanor was born on 7 June 1852 and baptized first at the parish church in Elmstone Hardwicke and then at St Gregory's. All nine of their children were baptized in both an Anglican and a Catholic ceremony in this way. Joannah's husband William was drowned near Tewkesbury in 1868. His will hints that the marriage was not without its tensions. It granted Joannah an annuity of a mere £20 from the proceeds of investing his estate, assessed at £6,000, and stipulated that she should "not have power to deprive herself of the benefit thereof by sale mortgage charge or otherwise in the way of anticipation." William appointed two of his brothers as executors and guardians of his infant children, about whom he made his intentions very clear: "it is my particular wish and desire that my Trustees or Trustee shall educate and bring my children up in the protestant faith."[117] We are left guessing at the reality of the marital dynamics underlying these bare facts.

The most remarkable "rags-to-riches" story of all, however, is certainly that of the McCarthy family. Daniel McCarthy was an illiterate, alcoholic labourer from County Cork who moved to Cheltenham around 1830 with his Welsh wife Elizabeth, née Gwyn, also illiterate. By the time of his death in 1863, from "Chronic disease of lungs and liver. Exhaustion from excitement and too liberal a use of Beer and Spirits", Daniel had learned to read and write and achieved a measure of respectability as a furniture broker based in Albion Street.[118] Daniel's son Jonadab – named after a biblical character who forbade his

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[117] *Will of Joseph Woodward of Uckington*, Probate Service for England & Wales, n.d.
<https://probatesearch.service.gov.uk/>. Died 9 Dec 1868; Probate Gloucester 12 Jan 1869

[118] GRO death certificate, DANIEL MCCARTHY, 1863Q4, CHELTENHAM, Vol. 06A, p.262.

followers to drink alcohol – took over the business after his father's death, and proceeded to build a property empire in Cheltenham. By 1871 he was a "Dealer in Works of Art" running his business out of 384-385 High Street.[119] The family moved to London in 1893, but Jonadab continued to manage his property portfolio in Cheltenham from the capital. In 1904, he was described in the press as "the largest Cheltenham property owner".[120] After his death in 1913, the gross value of his estate was estimated at the vast sum of £114,576, but almost all of this was in mortgaged property and the net value was a "mere" £4,587. While Jonadab was nominally an art and antiques dealer, his obituaries describe a remarkable man who prospered from property speculation, but was also knowledgeable and respected in several fields of intellectual activity: as a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, a renowned geologist, member of the Ethical Society and a frequent speaker at Cheltenham Debating Society.[121] Of his nine children, the most illustrious was his daughter Lila Emma, who, as Lillah McCarthy, became a celebrated actor on the stage, and, latterly, film.[122] She was awarded an OBE, and, through her second marriage to the botanist and

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[119] *1871 England Census*, Ref. RG10/2672/12/18.

[120]*Cheltenham Chronicle,* 12 Mar 1904, p.6 col.7.

[121] Unknown author, 'Jonadab McCarthy', *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*, 74 (4: 1914).; *Cheltenham Examiner,* 16 Oct 1913, p.5 col.2.; *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 18 Oct 1913, p.7 col.4.

[122] *Lillah McCarthy*, Wikipedia, 2023 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lillah_McCarthy#Biography>.; *Lillah McCarthy(1875-1960)*, Internet Movie Database (IMDB), n.d. <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0444231/?ref_=fn_al_nm_2>.;There is a short film clip of Lillah acting on the stage in 1921 on the British Pathé website: https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/64070/

academic Sir Frederick Keeble, CBE, the grand-daughter of the illiterate, alcoholic, Irish labourer ended her days as Lady Keeble.[123]

Again, the McCarthys are notable largely because they are so exceptional. It is perhaps noteworthy, however, that they found respectability whilst (or, perhaps, by) abandoning their Irish heritage. The fact that several of Daniel McCarthy's children were baptized at St Gregory's suggests that he was a Roman Catholic originally, while his Welsh wife Elizabeth (née Gwyn) was almost certainly a Protestant.[124] It may not be entirely coincidental that the family's fortunes appear to have improved around the time they, apparently, left the Catholic church and (belatedly) embraced the Temperance Movement, managing to better themselves financially and socially through entrepreneurial acumen and the pursuit of education. It may well be the case that it was necessary at least partly to reject certain aspects of their Irish heritage to become prosperous, respectable citizens, accepted, more or less, by Cheltenham society.

The predominant picture of Cheltenham society in this period, however, is one of rigid social divisions with little mobility between social classes. If anything, social mobility

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[123] Wikipedia, *Harley Granville-Barker*, Wikipedia, 2023 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harley_Granville-Barker>.; *Harley Granville-Barker (1877-1946)*, Internet Movie Database (IMDB), n.d. <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0335766/?ref_=nm_ov_bio_lk>. *Frederick Keeble*, , Wikipedia, 2023 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Keeble>. A more extensive account of the McCarthys' story, written by this researcher, is planned for publication in 2025 in the Cheltenham Local History Society Journal under the title *A Tornado of a Man: Jonadab McCarthy and the rise of the McCarthys*.

[124] Ancestry.com, *Monmouthshire, Wales, Anglican Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1551-1994* Lehi, UT, USA, database online, Ancestry.com, 2020 <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/62107/> Ref. Welsh Archive Services/Gwasanaethau Archifau Cymru, Trelleck baptisms, 25 May 1800, p.12.

was probably further reduced for those of Irish birth, unless they were willing to cast off those things which marked them out as different from their British neighbours. There is considerable evidence of the high-status Irish being fully integrated into Cheltenham's upper social stratum, intermarrying with and being accepted by the wider British-born population of similar socio-economic status. Their Irishness does not appear to have been any impediment to their involvement in Cheltenham's cultural life. Whether or not they could justifiably be termed an upper-class Irish *community*, however, is more questionable, as that somewhat loaded word implies a degree of group cohesion that was probably lacking. Former officers of the British Army, and ex-East India Company men, would almost certainly have felt greater affinity to those with similar career histories, both Irish-born and British-born, than with their fellow countrymen from different career backgrounds.

With respect to the low-status Irish in Cheltenham, the picture is mixed. As discussed below, there is only occasional evidence of conflict with their English neighbours of a similar social standing, largely arising from religious differences. Conversely, there are numerous examples of working-class people of Irish ancestry intermarrying with working-class people of British ancestry. As elsewhere, the Irish working class in Cheltenham, largely Catholics, tended to live in particular streets and districts in the town, frequenting the same pubs, and retaining some level of Irish community sentiment, but that did not mean they did not fraternise with their British, ostensibly Anglican, working-class neighbours. During the course of the biographical survey, 54 marriages at a parish in Cheltenham or Gloucester were identified between a low-status Irish-born man and a British woman, ranging in date between 1818 and 1890, 15 of them at St. Gregory's (Roman Catholic). However, at least six of the women in question were of Irish ancestry. 31 such marriages between an Irish-born

woman and a low-status British-born man were identified, four of them at St Gregory's, though two of the men in question were of Irish extraction. The marriage register of St Gregory's not infrequently includes a note to the effect that a dispensation had been obtained from Clifton Diocese *ob Religionis diversitatem*, ie to permit the marriage of a couple from different faith backgrounds.

Conversely, there is little or no evidence of integration or mobility or even contact between the high-status Irish of Cheltenham on the one hand and their low-status fellow countrymen in the town on the other. Nothing of this kind has been identified, not even in the form of an employer-employee relationship. The domestic servants employed by the high-status Irish appear to have been recruited in Ireland and come to Cheltenham with them, and no evidence of the Irish upper classes of Cheltenham choosing to employ fellow Irish people from the ranks of the general population has been identified. The two groups of Irish-born people appear to have coexisted within the same borough boundaries but to have lived separate lives. Where the presence of the upper-class Irish had any kind of impact on the lives of the lower-class Irish, it may have been by contributing to the "hostile environment" encountered by local Catholics, as we shall now proceed to discuss.

3.5.   Religion and Religious Tensions

The importance of religion in the story of the Irish in Cheltenham should not be minimised.

> Cheltenham is a favourite place with the Irish and although the
> Catholics of that nation who are wealthy bear a very small proportion
> when compared to those who are poor, yet they are not a small

number, and the congregation in this Chapel is at all times composed

in no small degree by Irish Catholics.[125]

Thus wrote the Very Reverend John Augustine Birdsall, who arrived in Cheltenham in

1809 to become the town's first full-time Catholic priest. Before this, masses had been held

in Cheltenham on an irregular basis from about 1799 by priests who travelled over from the

Catholic Chapel in Gloucester (itself only founded in 1795), or by French priests resident in

the town whose main employment was as teachers of their mother tongue to the

fashionable local inhabitants and visitors.[126] Birdsall wasted no time in setting about the task

of establishing a permanent base in Cheltenham. A plot of land was purchased just off

Somerset Place, building work commenced in December 1809, and the new Roman Catholic

Chapel was opened on 3 June 1810.[127] The congregation grew considerably over the

following decades, and in 1857, the current Church of St Gregory the Great was opened on

the same site to replace the original chapel. It remained the only Catholic church in the

town until the mid-20th century.

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[125] Richard Barton, *Birdsall and the Founding of the Cheltenham Catholic Mission* (Cheltenham Local History Society, 1988), p.4 <https://cheltlocalhistory.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Birdsall-and-the-Founding-of-the-Cheltenham-Catholic-Mission.pdf>.

[126] Richard Barton and Brian Torode, *The Catholic Mission at Cheltenham 1799-1809* (Cheltenham Local History Society, 1994), pp.1-6 <https://cheltlocalhistory.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/The-Catholic-Mission-at-Cheltenham-1799-1809.pdf>.

[127] Barton, *Birdsall and the Founding of the Cheltenham Catholic Mission*, p.3.

Hart suggests three reasons for the popularity of the town with the Irish: "Some of the Irish, as, for example Colonel Charretie, were drawn by the opportunities for racing and hunting and perhaps by the general gaiety of the time. Others – passionate amateurs – were interested in the Cheltenham Theatre which had provided scope for many Irish since the early management of the Irishman John Boles Watson." That the Irish were drawn to the town by its racecourse, then as now, seems undeniable, while the argument that the theatre was an important factor seems less convincing. Hart also emphasises the importance of a thriving Catholic community as a potential factor, however: "Others who were Roman Catholics were happy to be in a town where there was a large and flourishing Catholic church".[128] While it seems unlikely that the Irish chose to come to the town specifically because of the availability of a Catholic church, this may well have been a point in its favour that persuaded them to stay. It could also be the case that this would have been mentioned as an attraction to possible future migrants by people already in the town, as part of the chain migration process.

It would be hard to overstate the apparent importance of St Gregory's in the lives of the town's Irish-born Roman Catholics. Very few examples have been found of children born in Cheltenham to working-class Irish families who appear on the census but not in the baptism register of St Gregory's. There are rather more examples of such children whose birth does not appear to have been registered with the civil authorities. For example, of 23

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[128] Hart, p.203.

children named Donovan born between 1 July 1837 and 1 July 1857 and baptized at St Gregory's, only 13 appear to have had their births registered.

Another aspect of life in the working-class Irish community of Cheltenham, and other British cities, that should be highlighted is the central role of the Catholic Priest. Writing about Manchester, Werly says: "The dominant cultural figure in the Irish ghetto was the priest. The cultural tie which he represented was a highly important element that helped the Irishman to overcome the isolation of the ghetto." Quoting E.P. Thompson, he goes on:

> the priest was the last point of orientation with their old way of life. Literate but not far removed in social class, free from identification with English employers and authorities, sometimes knowing the Gaelic, the priest passed more frequently between England and Ireland, brought news of home and sometimes of relations, could be entrusted with remittances, savings or messages […] An outstanding quality possessed by the Irish catholic clergy was their great authority in the ghetto; 'the priest was the only authority to whom the Irish labourers showed any deference'. This enabled the clergy to maintain order and settle disputes, since the police were not well respected by the Irish.[129]

Where chain migration operated within a largely illiterate community, one suspects that Werly is right in identifying the priest as pivotal in the process, as the person most likely

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[129] John M Werly, 'The Irish in Manchester, 1832-49', *Irish Historical Studies*, 18 (71: March 1973), 345-358 (p.351) quoting E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1963).

to read and write letters and convey messages back and forth between the migrants and their former homes in Ireland.

Moreover, the priest was certainly instrumental at times in maintaining order, both proactively and reactively. Only six months or so after the report of the wake quoted above, the *Mercury* was relating a story about an "Irish Riot in Rutland Street", this time following the baptism of two children. The initial report claimed that trouble was quelled by the intervention of the curate of St Paul's, and had bemoaned the Catholic priests' failure to mediate.[130] However, a further article a week later corrected this to some degree, presumably after complaints from the priests:

> We have good authority for stating, that on the Sunday upon which the riot occurred, to which we alluded last week, after the Baptisms had been celebrated in the Catholic church, the Priest had especially warned the parties against drinking [...] On Sunday last, Dec. 6th, in the Evening Discourse the Rev. H.J. Blount spoke most strongly and energetically on the subject, and most emphatically denounced the riot. Last year, the two Priests both went down to Rutland street, and visited parties who were then at variance, and brought about a reconciliation; and we have every reason to believe, that if on any future occasion, an Irish row should be begun, the Priest would readily hasten to the scene and effectually use his influence. Thus only can the

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[130] *Cheltenham Mercury ,* 05 Dec 1857, p.4 col.2.

peace in Rutland Street be maintained, police interference being useless.[131]

The Catholic community in the town expanded rapidly after the establishment of the Chapel. This notwithstanding, Cheltenham was far from being a friendly environment for Roman Catholics. Barton comments that "Between the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Bill in 1829 and the Restoration of the Hierarchy in 1850, Catholicism throughout the country experienced a certain amount of opposition, but in Cheltenham this reached the proportions of outright hostility."[132] In 1816, the Living of the parish church of St Mary's had been purchased by the Evangelical Charles Simeon (it and several other Cheltenham churches remain under the control of the Simeon Trust he founded).[133] In 1824, the Trust was instrumental in the appointment of a young minister of Evangelical convictions named Francis Close as curate of Holy Trinity, newly built to supplement St Mary's and provide a long-overdue second centre of Anglican worship in the dramatically expanded town. Close subsequently became the incumbent of St Mary's in 1826, and remained there as Rector until appointed Dean of Carlisle in 1856. Close, and his social and religious views, rapidly

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[131] *Cheltenham Mercury,* 12 Dec 1857, p.1 col.6.

[132] Richard Barton, *Anti-Catholicism in Nineteenth Century Cheltenham* (Cheltenham Local History Society, 1988), p.1 <https://cheltlocalhistory.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Anti-Catholicism-in-Cheltenham.pdf>.

[133] Simeon Trust, *Simeon's Trustees*, The History of Simeon's Trustees, n.d. <https://www.simeons.org.uk/simeons-trustees-history> [accessed 26 Dec 2023].; Simeon Trust, *Our parishes - Diocese of Gloucester*, Simeon's Trustees, n.d. <https://www.simeons.org.uk/our-parishes#gloucester> [accessed 26 Dec 2023].

came to dominate the moral and ecclesiastical landscape of the town. Hart says "He desired to spread the gospel according to Low Church principles by the building of churches and the founding of schools; to succour the poor by well-organized charity societies; to extol sobriety and to uphold strict Sabbatarian observance".[134] Having possessed just a single Anglican church until 1824, the town acquired a further seven new churches over the next three decades, most of them under Close's influence, including Christ Church and St Luke's for the wealthy of Lansdown and Sandford, and St Paul's and St Peter's for the working-class districts along the Lower High Street and Tewkesbury Road.[135]

Close's puritanical outlook frequently brought him into conflict with the town's role as a pleasure resort. In his sermons, he railed against all forms of excess and self-indulgent profligacy: failure to observe the Sabbath, abuse of alcohol and tobacco, the theatre, and, in particular, the racecourse. On 17 June 1827, he lectured on "The Evil Consequences of attending the Race Course", and within four days of its delivery this homily had been printed and 3,500 copies sold.[136] Paradoxically, Cheltenham was simultaneously a town whose economy depended on the provision of pleasurable entertainments and a "stronghold of the evangelicals" that denounced those fripperies – what the *Gentleman's Magazine*

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[134] Hart, p.211.

[135] Steven Blake, *Cheltenham's churches and chapels, A.D.773-1883* (Cheltenham Borough Council Art Gallery and Museum Service, 1979), pp.28-33 <https://archive.org/details/cheltenhamschurc0000blak>.

[136] Hart, p.202.; *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 13 Sep 1827, p.3 col.4.; Rev. F. Close, *Occasional sermons, preached in the Parish church of Cheltenham* (London: Seeley, Burnside, and Seeley, 1844), pp.219-267 <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.hwjrc3>.

unflatteringly described as "an elegant, constructed case of fashionable butterflies (the idle rich) and evangelical beetles (the crawlers after Close)".[137] That Close's words might sometimes be translated into deeds is suggested by reports that the 1829 race meeting was disrupted by his supporters throwing bottles and rocks at the horses and riders.[138]

That same year, as Parliament was debating the Roman Catholic Relief Act, tensions rose in many places across the country. Father Birdsall noted that, in Cheltenham, a placard had been erected, attempting to rouse a mob to tear down the Catholic Chapel with these words:

> Notice to all true Protestants of the Town of Cheltenham – There is a heap of rubbish that stands in this Town near to the Baptist Chapel, which is a nuisance to all true Protestants and we have about two hundred that have resolved to pull it down to the ground and all true Protestants are requested to meet on that spot on Monday 9th day of March, about 7 o'clock in the afternoon, and drive all Popery out of the

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[137] Brian Torode, *Dean Close's fight against 'Romanism'* (Cheltenham Local History Society, n.d.), p.2 <https://cheltlocalhistory.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Dean-Close-and-Romanism-CLHS.pdf>.

[138] *Cheltenham Festival History | Early Years & Modern Era*, , Cheltenham Festival website, 2023 <https://www.cheltenhamfestival.net/guide/history/> [accessed 31 Dec 2023].; *History of Cheltenham Racecourse*, The Jockey Club, The Jockey Club, 2023 <https://www.thejockeyclub.co.uk/cheltenham/about/history/> [accessed 20 Dec 2023].

Town. Come and let not your hearts fail you to do a good deed.[139]

The threat of potential violence seems to have been taken seriously enough that the *Journal* saw fit to remind its readers of the law:

> By 7 & 8 George IV Cap 30 Sec 8 – That if any persons riotously and tumultuously assemble together to the disturbance of the public peace, shall unlawfully and with force demolish, pull down or destroy, any church or chapel for religious worship of persons dissenting from the United Church of England and Ireland, every such offender shall be guilty of felony and being convicted thereof shall suffer death as a felon.[140]

Birdsall recalled that "during the excitement great animosity and bitter opposition was manifested in the Town of Cheltenham".[141] In the event, no disorder is reported to have occurred, but the febrile atmosphere in the town at this time is clear.

Close does not appear to have been at pains to reduce these tensions. In 1845, while a resident in the town, Tennyson wrote to his friend Rawnsley that Cheltenham was "a

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[139] Richard Barton, *Anti-Catholicism*, p.3. Exact original source unclear, but Barton's bibliography includes Birdsall's archives held by Douai and Downside Abbeys.

[140] *Cheltenham Journal,* 16 Mar 1829, p.2 col.4.

[141] Barton, *Anti-Catholicism*, p.3

polka, parson-worshipping place of which Francis Close is Pope".[142] This probably gives a reasonably accurate impression of the Rector's influence over the town's spiritual, cultural and political life, but is also a description that would particularly have offended him, as Popery in all its forms was another favourite target for his opprobrium. Trafford is surely correct when he says:

> Close was a typical Evangelical in his hatred of Sunday trading, theatre going, attendance at race meetings and the use of alcohol and tobacco […] However Close was not a typical Evangelical because of the vehemence of his denunciations, the extreme language which he used and because of his intense hostility towards Roman Catholicism and those who initiated Roman practices within his own church.[143]

Each November 5th Close took the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot as an opportunity to decry Catholicism and its – as he saw it – insidious influence on national life. These sermons were eagerly awaited and announced in notices in the local press.[144]

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[142] Hart, p.211.; Cecil Y. Lang and Edgar Finley Shannon, eds, *The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson 1821-1850*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge, MS, USA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981) <https://archive.org/details/lettersofalfredl0000tenn>.

[143] Robert S. Trafford, *The Rev. Francis Close and the Foundation of the Training Institution at Cheltenham 1845-78. (PhD thesis)* (The Open University, 1997), pp.66-67 doi:http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.0000d3a9.

[144] eg *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 05 Nov 1840, p.2 col.5.

The next major flashpoint of anti-Catholicism in Cheltenham occurred in 1850 with the issuing, on 29 September that year, of the Papal bull *Universalis Ecclesiae* which re-established the Catholic hierarchy in England for the first time since the reign of Elizabeth, creating new Catholic dioceses and bishops under the overall control of the first Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Wiseman.[145] Close was outraged by what he saw as a Popish plot to undermine the Protestant state, and used the occasion of his November 5th sermon to rail that "the Pope had interfered with the episcopate; he had parcelled out their land – he would have his own spiritual jurisdiction, showing that he was still what he had ever been – arrogant, tyrannical, and dogmatic. No doubt all this was calculated to weaken the country."[146] A public meeting at the Town Hall was announced for the following Monday, 11 November, to decide how to respond to this "Papal aggression".[147] This "Great Protestant Meeting", said to be "certainly the largest ever assembled within the walls of the Town Hall", was extensively covered in the pages of the *Chronicle* some days later.[148] Both Close himself and the town's Liberal M.P., Grenville Berkeley, addressed the gathered Cheltonians. Close's speech was delayed for a time as some people had been unable to gain entry and were demanding the meeting be adjourned to the yard of the Plough Inn, but matters proceeded after Close promised to call a further meeting for those denied

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[145] Prof. Anthony S. Wohl, *The Re-establishment of the Catholic Hierarchy in England, 1850*, The Victorian Web, 2018 <https://www.victorianweb.org/religion/Hierarchy_Reestablished.html>.

[146] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 07 Nov 1850, p.2 col.3.

[147] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 07 Nov 1850, p.3 col.3.

[148] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 14 Nov 1850 pp.2-3.

admittance. Close went on to decry "the great enemy of God and man – Popish apostacy – which attempts to crush the human intellect, that would cramp and deform the mind of man, which shuts up men and women in convents and nunneries – interferes with the charities of life, breaks into the bosoms of families, and dissolves all those ties which a merciful God had devised to bind society together". He called for deeds as well as words: "They would do nothing – they would be wasting their breath upon thin air if they did not follow up words by action, – they would accomplish nothing without they put their hands to the root of the evil". While Close's idea of "action" appears, ostensibly, to have been limited to the submission of a petition to the Queen, it is not surprising that in the fevered atmosphere others interpreted his appeal in more muscular fashion.

A "Second Great Meeting" was indeed held at the Town Hall on Thursday 21 November 1850, "the attendance being quite as large as at the former meeting". The mood was again hostile and explosive: "every sentiment and expression which could be in any way construed into a defiance of Papal domination, whether spiritual or temporal, being instantly seized upon and greeted with the most enthusiastic applause"[149] Yet the *Looker-on* seems surprised that matters took a darker turn:

> The after occurrences of these Anti-Papal proceedings proved,
> unfortunately, of a more serious character. The occasion of the public
> meeting was taken advantage of, by some over-zealous parties, to
> prepare a no-Popery demonstration, after the fashion of a Guy Fawkes

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[149] *The Cheltenham Looker-on,* 23 November 1850 pp.742-743.

celebration, and arrangements were made for a procession to burn the Pope in effigy, when the business of the public meeting should be over.[150]

In fact, two such effigies had been modelled, one depicting the Pope, the other Cardinal Wiseman, and, "dressed out in gay costume", they had been displayed in the window of a tailor's shop in the High Street. The magistrates having got wind of this potential disorder, prohibited the burning of the effigies and stationed constables to bar access to the premises. Notwithstanding, at about ten o'clock, "a great crowd being then assembled in the High Street", the mob broke the shop's windows and removed the effigy of Cardinal Wiseman, which was paraded down the High Street, through St George's Square, to the Roman Catholic Chapel. Smashing the Chapel windows and tearing up its railings, they built a bonfire just outside the main entrance, on which the guy was burned. The *Looker-on* states that after this "the rabble quietly dispersed", but this is contradicted by the *Journal*, which asserts that they "might have proceeded to further extremities, had not a body of police constables [...] armed with cutlasses, come up, and, with difficulty, dispersed them".[151] In a letter to his Bishop, held at Clifton Diocesan Archives, the Catholic priest of St Gregory's, Father Glassbrook, gives his own eye-witness testimony, which suggests that the local Roman Catholic Irish population was active as vigilantes in defending the chapel from their Protestant neighbours:

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[150] *Ibid.*

[151] *Cheltenham Journal,* 25 Nov 1850, p.2 col.4.

The Chapel door was forced open in about twenty minutes after the violence had began. Several of the poor Irish had managed to get to the back door of our house and gradually cleared the rabble who formed part of the multitude who had attended the procession from the High Street. By means of these poor faithful Children of the Church I managed to get out with safety in search of the Police and the magistry to prevent any further damage and to extinguish the fire which was already blazing so near the buildings of our property […] About 60 persons came and volunteered their services in protecting the property till the following day.[152]

Ten young men were brought before the magistrate a week or so later, charged with damage to the tailor's shop and throwing fireworks in the street, and small fines were imposed.[153] Their testimony in court gives the impression that they were simply hot-headed local youths under the influence of alcohol caught up in the excitement of events rather than religious fanatics driven by anti-Popish frenzy. No charges related to the damage to the Chapel appear to have been thought prudent. Similar anti-Catholic riots, often likewise

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[152] Barton, *Anti-Catholicism*, pp.16-17.

[153] *Cheltenham Journal,* 02 Dec 1850, p.4 col.5. *Cheltenham Examiner,* 04 Dec 1850, p.4 col.1.

involving "No Popery" processions and the burning of Wiseman in effigy, occurred in several places across Britain at this time, including Exeter and various London districts.[154]

Within seven years, the Roman Catholic Chapel in Cheltenham was indeed torn down, but on this occasion with the express permission of the Church. Work began on the building of the current Church of St Gregory the Great on the same site in 1854, and in 1857, Cardinal Wiseman, who had been burned in effigy on the Chapel steps only a few years earlier, preached at the High Mass celebrated in honour of the formal opening of the new church.[155] The old chapel, now redundant, was demolished. With an expanding Catholic population to serve, both wealthy and impoverished, Catholicism was thriving in the town despite Close's best efforts. Nonetheless, it is clear that, at least at times of heightened religious and political tensions, this must have been a far from welcoming environment in which to belong to the Church of Rome. Even sixteen years after the "Anti-Popery Riot" of 1850, and ten years after Close had departed the town, the Liberal-minded *Examiner* could write: "Quiet church-going people in Cheltenham, brought up at the feet of that Gamaliel of Evangelicalism, the Dean of Carlisle […] look upon the beautiful spire of 'St Gregory, R.C.' with some degree of uneasiness, as upon the citadel of an open enemy, who is raising among them the bulwarks of a spurious faith."

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[154] Wohl, *The Re-establishment of the Catholic Hierarchy in England, 1850*; J.A. Sharpe, *Remember, Remember: A Cultural History of Guy Fawkes Day* (Harvard University Press, 2005), pp.78–79, 159.

[155] Blake, pp.32-33.; *Cheltenham Mercury,* 23 May 1857, p.8 col.3.; *Cheltenham Mercury,* 30 May 1857, p.8 col.1-4.

To what extent persistent attitudes of this kind impacted the everyday lives of ordinary Catholics in the town is hard to judge. The riot of 1850 apart, very little evidence of violent conflict between the Irish immigrant population and their British neighbours is detectable in the contemporary press. Although "Irish rows" were constantly being reported, these were almost always between fellow Irishmen and women. However, that anti-Irish and anti-Catholic prejudice was a feature of people's lives is hinted at by advertisements such as this, from 1845: "Wanted: A Lady's Maid – A steady, respectable person, who can have an unexceptional character from her last place, and has travelled on the Continent, and speaks French. Must understand hair-dressing and dress-making, and be willing and good-tempered. No Irish or Foreigner need apply".[156]

Not that it should be assumed that anti-Catholic sentiment and campaigning was entirely the preserve of the British population of the town – far from it. From at least 1827 there were Cheltenham branches of three societies that interested themselves in converting Irish Catholics to Protestantism. The London Irish Society was established in 1822 "for promoting the scriptural instruction of the Irish poor, through the medium of their own language", while the London Hibernian Society was founded by Evangelical Anglicans in 1806 with the purpose of "establishing schools and circulating the Holy Scriptures in Ireland".[157] Its sister organisation, the Ladies Hibernian Society, ensured that Irish women

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[156] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 31 Jul 1845, p.3 col.3.

[157] *Cheltenham Chronicle ,* 29 Mar 1827, p.3 col.5.; *London Hibernian Society*, , wikipedia.org, 2023
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Hibernian_Society> [accessed 02 Jan 2024].; London
Hibernian Society, *A brief view of the London Hibernian Society for establishing schools and circulating
the Holy Scriptures in Ireland* (London: 1837), p.37.

were instructed in sewing, knitting and the like. All of these societies had active branches in Cheltenham by at least 1827, when the *Chronicle* advertised that:

A PUBLIC MEETING will be held at the MONTPELLIER ROTUNDA, on THURSDAY, April the 5th inst. by permission of P. Thompson, Esq. in Aid of the Funds of "THE LONDON IRISH SOCIETY," — "THE HIBERNIAN AND LADIES' HIBERNIAN SOCIETIES;" — when the Rev. Robert Daly, of Powerscourt, Ireland, and the Rev. Dennis Brown, will attend as a deputation; and much interesting matter respecting the state of Ireland will be submitted to the Meeting."[158]

Regular meetings were held, to which, as this notice suggests, Anglican preachers from Ireland were invited, and these Irish-born Protestants would also preach sermons in the parish church and its new daughter churches. As already mentioned, a considerable number of Irish-born clergy, both active and retired, were residents in the town at various times, and they too would attend these meetings and sermonise. Collections for the benefit of these societies were taken and people encouraged to give generously, for "Now, if ever, is the time to afford efficient aid to every society which has for its object the EMANCIPATION of the Irish Roman Catholics from the thraldom of intellectual and spiritual bondage under which they so long have suffered."[159]

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[158] Cheltenham Chronicle, 29 Mar 1827, p.3 col.4.

[159] *Cheltenham Chronicle ,* 29 Mar 1827, p.3 col.5.

3.6. Politics

In other cities around Great Britain, particularly Liverpool and Glasgow, tensions within the Irish-born population took on a political dimension and found an expression in violence. In these places, MacRaild says "Orange Day riots became a regular feature of street life. Exacerbated by innate native hostility, anti-Catholicism and tensions over the Home Rule question, violence and the Irish seemingly went hand-in-hand."[160] No evidence for conflict of this kind has been found in Cheltenham, almost certainly because the Orange Order was a working-class, mainly Nonconformist movement, and very few Irish immigrants to Cheltenham fell into this category. The Cheltenham Irish were almost exclusively either middle- to upper-class Anglicans on the one hand, or working-class Roman Catholics on the other. On the rare occasions when tensions and distrust spilled over into violence, as described above, this was always expressed in religious terms – Protestant versus Catholic – not political, at least not as Orangeism versus Nationalism. No trace of an Orange Lodge ever having existed in Cheltenham has been identified: indeed, one suspects Cheltenham's élite Irish-born residents – almost exclusively Anglicans – would have disdained such a body, whose membership was drawn predominantly from the ranks of lower- and middle-class Presbyterians and other non-Anglican Protestant denominations.

Nor has any sign of Irish Nationalist activity or organisation come to light either, though no doubt some Cheltenham Irish harboured such sentiments in private, and there

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[160] Donald M MacRaild, *Culture, Conflict and Migration : The Irish in Victorian Cumbria* (Liverpool University Press, 1998), p.171 doi:https://doi.org/10.5949/UPO9781846312892.

were attempts to alarm the good people of Cheltenham with tales of enemies within their midst. A letter received by the *Mercury* and published on 11 January 1868 under the title "Fenianism in Cheltenham", was signed by "Head Centre Fireball" and "Captain Dreadnought", and purported to wish to:

> set the 'sapient editor in the first number of a Cheltenham paper, and the still more sagient [sic] body of Police, right upon the subject of Fenianism in Cheltenham; but we can award them no thanks for their terribly low estimate of the character of the Milesians of this town. Would they have us believe that two thousand men love serfdom, poverty, beggary, expatriation from a beautiful and beloved country to the hated land of the Sassesnach, better than liberty, wealth, and a dwelling in the land of their birth, from which they are driven forth with regret? Men who have but one hope in life – to return and lay their bosses in their darling, misgoverned and persecuted country. We, who know better, think it unfair that our labours should be so little appreciated, for, during the last three months, we have administered the oath, drilled, and armed —nay, do not be astonished! — drilled and armed, we say, under the nose of the police, over five hundred fine stalwart fellows, from the like of whom we have everything to hope and nothing to fear.[161]

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[161] *Cheltenham Mercury,* 11 Jan 1868, p.2 col.1.

The letter concluded with a warning of violence to come: "Caution the Police to beware of squalls, for the Brotherhood are watching them." The letter arrived less than a month after 12 people had been killed by a bomb planted in Clerkenwell by the Irish Republican Brotherhood. It was rightly suspected as being a hoax by the editor of the *Mercury*, who nevertheless decided to publish it. The story was subsequently picked up by other newspapers and reported elsewhere in the country.[162] There is no evidence to suggest that this claim was anything other than a malicious fabrication: the 1861 census tells us that the adult male population of Cheltenham at that date, both Irish-born and second-generation Irish immigrants, of all classes and religious persuasions, did not in total amount to the 500 men claimed to have been enlisted. Whether this was just a foolish prank or a serious attempt to further inflame an already febrile political atmosphere is harder to discern.

With respect to mainstream British politics, there is little evidence that the well-to-do Irish visitors and residents took much interest in Cheltenham's administration, preferring to involve themselves merely in its cultural life and in the opportunities for leisure and pleasure that it offered. One exception that could be cited was Lord Dunalley, who served as a Town Commissioner and a founder member of the Cheltenham Loyal and Patriotic Association, established by a group of local Liberals in 1832 to campaign for Parliamentary Reform. He was an active supporter of the Liberal Craven Berkeley, elected as the town's

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[162] *Birmingham Daily Gazette,* 13 Jan 1868, p.8 col.4.; *Worcester Journal ,* 18 Jan 1868, p.6 col.6.

first M.P. later that year.[163] When that same man was re-elected 20 years later, the *Examiner* reported on "an assault case arising out of the late election. Party feeling, it would appear, running very high in the lower part of the town, the inhabitants of Grove Street, especially, being possessed of the most excitable temperaments". The reporter took great delight in mocking the Irish accents of Margaret Foy and Patrick Sexton, called as witnesses to the affray, but the two combatants, Charlotte Tanner and Jane Mott, can be located on the census the previous year and identified as English.[164]

3.7. Education

Religious tensions spilled over into the realm of education too. One lasting legacy of Close's work in Cheltenham was the foundation of the new Teacher Training Colleges for men and women – forerunner institutions of the current University of Gloucestershire – which were established with the express purpose of countering the spread of Roman Catholicism and its – as Close viewed it – Anglican "Fifth Column", Tractarianism.[165] Close was similarly instrumental in the foundation of Cheltenham College and Cheltenham Ladies' College, both as firmly Evangelical centres of education for the offspring of the local Protestant worthies.

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[163] Hart, pp.203, 207.

[164] *Cheltenham Examiner*, 14 Jul 1852, p.4 col.5

[165] Trafford, pp.173-189.; Torode, *Dean Close's fight against 'Romanism'*, p.4

Meanwhile, on 23 April 1827, a charity school for the poor, attached to the Catholic chapel, was opened, and there can be little doubt that this institution will have been responsible for providing what little education many of the town's working-class Irish were able to receive.[166] Sadly, no registers survive from its early years, so it is impossible to know exactly who its pupils were, but it appears to be the case that a significant number of Protestant children were educated at the school, at least in its early years, there being a dire lack of educational facilities for Cheltenham's urban poor at this time, despite the town's claim to be an educational hub.[167] In 1828, this caused great alarm among Close's supporters, as it was feared the Protestant children were being instructed in the Catholic catechism and "taught to repeat the Romish prayers each morning". In 1857, with the help of grants from the Government and the Catholic Poor School Committee, the school moved to new premises in St Paul's Street North, "close to the dwellings of the poor." The grant application had asserted that new school buildings would be used for "the instruction of the children of the labouring poor in the Parish of Cheltenham […] the labouring portion of which are chiefly employed as Mechanics and in Agriculture." While this assessment of the occupational profile of the Irish community is highly questionable, in the light of the evidence from the census quoted above, the importance of the school to the education of the working-class Irish and others in the town cannot be overstated.

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[166] Richard Barton, *St Gregory's School, Cheltenham* (Gloucestershire and North Avon Catholic History Society, 1989) <https://cheltlocalhistory.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/St-Gregorys-School-Cheltenham.pdf>.

[167] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 18 Sep 1828, p.4 col.1-2.; Richard Barton, *St Gregory's School*, pp.2-3.

3.8. Why Cheltenham?

We may well ask why so many Irish people, from diverse backgrounds and social strata, chose to settle in Cheltenham. Of course, there will have been as many specific reasons as there were individuals, but we can perhaps indulge in speculation, and generalise about possible causes that brought people to the town.

With respect to the high-status Irish-born visitors and residents, their motivations are likely to have been very similar to those of the people of comparable socio-economic standing born elsewhere in the Empire who chose to stay, and, in some cases, settle, in Cheltenham. Fashion was no doubt a major factor. Those suffering ill health came in search of relief, of course, but the town also boasted many entertainments and cultural attractions – not just the races, but also balls, clubs and galas. In particular, perhaps, it offered the company of people from a similar background, such as fellow military officers or colonial administrators, many of them having lived overseas in various parts of the Empire for decades. The Anglo-Indians were perhaps especially prominent, such as the 221 current or ex-employees of the East India Company and their family members who were recorded in Cheltenham on the 1851 census – ten of them Irish-born. One suspects that the likes of Irishman William Burroughs, former Colonel in the Bengal Army, and his Indian-born wife Charlotte (née Marley), residents at Apsley Villa, Pittville Circus, felt a greater affinity to these other East India Company men and the other Anglo-Indians than to the "Irish tramps"

of Milsom Street. These people were fully integrated into the élite of British society, and their Irishness was secondary to their Britishness.[168]

With regard to the low-status Irish, on the other hand, Cheltenham's attractions may not seem so obvious. Some were doubtless drawn by the economic opportunities offered by Cheltenham's well-to-do visitors and residents. Hawkers, pedlars and street traders of various kinds found a ready market, as did tailors, shoemakers, dressmakers and others employed in manufacturing items of apparel that could be sold locally to the wealthier tourists and inhabitants. The well-to-do expected to amusements to be provided, and Cheltenham also attracted those offering various kinds of entertainment –musicians, showmen and players, but also what the Cheltenham press referred to delicately as the "frail sisterhood". What drew unskilled labourers to settle in the town is more puzzling, however, and one wonders why they did not, like many of their fellow countrymen, head for the major industrial centres where work was more readily available. Many of those described as "labourer" on the census and other sources may have been agricultural workers, of course, and, as discussed, some of those found employment of a similar nature in Cheltenham's ornamental and market gardens, or on the farms that were still to be found on the fringes of the town. In 1861, four Irish-born residents of that most urban of districts, Rutland Street, were recorded on the census as "Ag Lab"s, while as late as 1881 two Irishwomen from that street were described as "field labourer". It might be tempting to imagine that, when an Irish landowner settled in Cheltenham, their former tenant farmers

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[168] *1851 England Census*, Ref. HO107/1973/101/26.

might have followed them to the town, but absolutely no sign of this has been traced. In reality, absentee landlords kept themselves at one remove from their tenants by employing agents to manage their affairs in Ireland, and it is probably fair to say that relations were seldom cordial, even in times of plenty.

A sizeable workforce must have been needed during the construction boom of the early decades of the 19th century, but, while histories of the town will make statements to the effect that "Pearson Thompson built Montpellier", or "Joseph Pitt developed Pittville", we have precious little evidence who *actually* built Cheltenham's Regency townscape – that is to say, who laid, let alone carried, the bricks and mortar. Some described as "labourers" may have been employed in the building trade, though relatively few skilled construction workers of Irish origin in the town are visible in the census. In the absence of firm evidence to suggest any particular "pull effect" causing working-class Irish people to gravitate to Cheltenham, one is left to speculate that much of the non-élite Irish settlement in the town took the form of chain migration, with friends and relatives of people who had for some reason found a home in Cheltenham following them over subsequent decades. That many of the Cheltenham's Irish working-class people came from the same small area of County Cork around Lislee might be interpreted as supporting this view.

3.9.   Cheltenham and the Great Famine

In a letter published in the *Chronicle* in 1840, written by an unidentified Irish-born Cheltenham resident who signed himself simply "L.L.F.", the author speaks of "the number of my countrymen that are daily wandering about your streets – hungry, destitute, friendless. Driven by the most piercing want from their homes, they have come to throw

themselves on English hospitality" and he bemoans the reception they receive: "The heart is steeled against their entreaties and the eye forbid to dwell on their want-worn, famishing countenances."[169] In this supposed bastion of Christianity, the Irish paupers are met with prejudice and ridicule, and the blame in large measure falls on the wealthy Irish residents of the town: "by none is the Irish character more traduced and vilified than by the Irish absentees, who, in order to break, as much as possible, the hateful tie that links them to their country, affect to scoff at its poverty, and ridicule its misery." The wealthy Irish enjoying the Cheltenham scene while their fellow countrymen suffer are pilloried: "Have none of these aliens ever considered, as they lavish their thousands on thousands on expensive frivolities – that perchance the indulgence of their whims and fancies is bought with groans and tears, with want, hunger, sickness, and sometimes even death? […] You live in England on Irish money – they toil for you, but you allow them to reap no harvest – you spend their money in another country". With chilling foresight, the writer accuses the Irish absentee landlords who have moved to Cheltenham to enjoy its pleasures of instructing their agents in Ireland, with respect to their tenants, to "Heed no bad seasons, or unlooked-for distress – spare them not – I must have my rents". He appeals to the "genuine Irish" of Cheltenham: "let those who are too unfeeling to pity, and too blinded to be CHARITABLE from motives of policy, have the pleasing assurance that they are responsible agents – that every groan and tear, and every deed of midnight lawlessness and bloodshed, which has been caused by their brutal indifference, or the indulgence of their heartless sensuality – that every one of these shall be required at their hands; and though, for the present, they

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[169] *Cheltenham Chronicle ,* 13 Aug 1840, p.4 col.1-2.

may stifle conscience and remorse, they cannot evade the retributive justice of the world to come."

Five years after this warning was issued, the potato blight appeared in Ireland and decimated the staple crop on which the population depended. By the spring of 1847, even the inhabitants of genteel, inland Cheltenham were beginning to notice the greatly increased numbers of destitute Irish people passing through the town. The *Examiner* of 24 March 1847, under the heading, "Influx of Irish Paupers", states "Most of our readers must have noticed the groups of Irish people to be seen wending their way through the streets of this town, and soliciting charity of the passers by."[170] The *Examiner* did not miss the opportunity to shift the blame for the issue from the British authorities back on to the Irish landlords, nor did it fail to indulge in a conspiracy theory about English kind-heartedness being abused: "Those who reach Cheltenham are merely the stragglers of the vast hordes which are being daily shipped off under the auspices of the Irish landlords, to seek that subsistence from English charity which their own self denies them. These shipments, it is believed, are made from the very money sent over from this country towards the Irish relief fund, and which is thus turned against us by throwing an increased number of paupers on English charity."

The article highlights the plight of the town of Newport, Monmouthshire, through which many of the destitute were entering Great Britain from the south-west of Ireland, before dispersing to seek employment in the Midlands or London, a journey which would

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[170] *Cheltenham Examiner,* 24 Mar 1847, p.2 col.5 .

likely take them through the area of Gloucester and Cheltenham.[171] One such family of impoverished, desperate Irish was the Sullivans. Their story can be found in the pages of the Cheltenham press, but was also reported in the Irish newspapers, and even in *The Times*. It is also recounted by Neal in his study of the Famine.[172] On Friday, 2 April 1846, a PC Fowler doing his rounds on the outskirts of Charlton Kings had his attention drawn to a shed on the London Road by groans emanating from within. On entering, he found sheltering there the emaciated forms of Jeremiah Sullivan and his wife, who was attempting to suckle an infant, along with their four other children aged between two and eight years. The constable fetched the surgeon, Mr Feegan, who declared the youngest child dead, and Fowler also contacted the Overseer of the Poor, who instructed him to take the Sullivans to the Union lodging house in Grove Street. There, however, they were refused admittance, and were left outside shivering in the cold for over half an hour before the lodging house keeper could be persuaded to take them in.

An inquest into the death of baby Timothy Sullivan, aged 6 months, was held at the London Inn, Charlton Kings, on Monday 5 April 1847, where it was learned that Jeremiah had been the tenant of a smallholding between Schull and Skibbereen, in County Cork. He grew potatoes to feed his family, and a little corn which, however, "always went to the landlord as payment for the rent", until "when visited by distress and famine, with misery and despair surrounding them, their landlord, Mr Summerfield, with that peculiar species of

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[171] Frank Neal, *Black '47 : Britain and the Famine Irish* (Liverpool: Newsham Press, 2003), pp.166-173.

[172] Neal *Black '47*, pp.177-179.; *Cork Examiner*, 21 Apr 1847, p.3 col.5. quoting the Times of London.

Christian charity which forms a distinguishing characteristic of Irish landholders, turned them out of their little holding to beg or starve, he cared not which." At Christmas 1846, they had been obliged to sell their only livestock – a horse and a single cow – which sale raised a meagre £3, but once that sum was nearing exhaustion, they had travelled to Cork. There they had spent their last eight shillings on a passage to Newport, from where they set off to walk the 225 km to London in search of an aunt who kept a shop in the capital. Along the way, all they had to eat was a little bread given by a charitable person they encountered, and some sugar purchased by selling items of clothing.

The jury returned a verdict of "Died from starvation" and they and the Coroner Mr Lovegrove expressed concern that the surviving family members were still at the lodging house in Grove Street, where they had had no further medical assistance, and that "The children, who were so weak they were unable to walk, had nothing but bread and water." Lovegrove remarked that "if any one of the family died in consequence of this neglect, he should feel it to be his duty to hold an inquest on the body, and in his opinion a grave responsibility would rest with the parish officers for such neglect."[173] The editor of the *Chronicle* was anxious to assure his readers that, "notwithstanding the tenour *[sic]* of the evidence given upon the inquest", the conduct of the parochial officers "towards Sullivan and his family has been free from blame". In contradiction to Jeremiah's testimony – presumably under oath – before the inquest, the editor had heard that they "were visited three times during the course of the night by Dr Brookes, who ordered them to be supplied

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[173] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 08 Apr 1847, p.3 col.6.; *Cheltenham Examiner,* 07 Apr 1847, p.2 col.5.;

with arrow root, brandy, mutton, tea and sugar." Whether they actually received those items, he does not appear to have attempted to ascertain.

Whatever the truth of the matter, before the month was out, two more of Jeremiah Sullivan's children had succumbed: Dennis, aged 3, died on the 18th, and Mary, aged 5, on the 22nd, both at the "Union Relieving House", in other words, Bethel House, the property close to Grove Street leased by the Guardians from Bethel Chapel to serve as a fever hospital or isolation unit. True to his word, Lovegrove held an inquest into the deaths of these two children on Friday, 23 April 1847, at the Red Lion in Cheltenham High Street, and also enquired into the death of another Sullivan child, Hannah, the ten-year-old daughter of labourer Michael Sullivan, who had died at the same place on the 20th.[174] In all cases the verdict was "died from a want of the common necessaries of life", adding, as they no doubt saw it, importantly, "previous to their admission into the Cheltenham Union". These three Sullivan children were buried together on 24 April 1847 at the New Burial Ground and are recorded in the burials register of St Mary's. However, of the burial of the youngest, Timothy, there is no trace in the registers of Cheltenham or Charlton Kings. At the inquest, the mother, Catherine Sullivan had implored the jury: "'Oh, gentlemen, give me the body of my poor child, that I may bury it somewhere, and not let the dogs eat it, as I have seen then

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[174] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 29 Apr 1847, p.3 col.4. The dates and ages given here are taken from the children's death certificates and are somewhat at odds with what was reported in the *Chronicle.*

do at home.' The Coroner kindly assured her of the safety of the corpse".[175] What actually happened to the child's body is unknown.

Frustratingly, there is a gap in the surviving series of admission and discharge registers for Cheltenham Workhouse for the period September 1845 to September 1847, so we cannot easily know how long the Sullivans remained in the Cheltenham Union Lodging House or what happened to them subsequently. We can, however, dignify them a little by adding a few details to their story that are not provided by the press reports. Jeremiah Sullivan had married Catherine McCarthy at Schull East Roman Catholic parish church on 17 January 1836, and their five children had all been baptized in that same place: Margaret (1836), Joanna (1839), Mary (1841), Dennis (1844) and Timothy (1846). Unsurprisingly, it was the youngest three of the five who had not survived. "Hannah" Sullivan was perhaps the child baptized as Joanna Sullivan in the same church on 23 October 1831, daughter of Michael Sullivan and his wife Margaret (the forename Joanna often being reduced to Anna or Hannah), in which case it is hard not to surmise that Jeremiah and Michael were related. The *Gloucester Journal* had despaired of the lives of Jeremiah's two surviving children, but there is no sign that they died, in Cheltenham at least.[176] Indeed, they may have actually made it to London: a Jeremiah Sullivan and his wife Catherine (née McCarthy) from County Cork, with children of the right names and ages, can be found on the census in 1861 and 1871 living in Lamb Square, Clerkenwell, and it is clear at least three further children had

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[175] *Cheltenham Examiner,* 07 Apr 1847, p.2 col.5.

[176] *Gloucester Journal,* 24 Apr 1847, p.3 col.5.

been born to them in England after 1847, though there is no sign of them on the 1851 census.[177]

The Sullivan children were the first casualties of *An Gorta Mór* (the Great Famine) that we know of to have occurred in Cheltenham, but, sadly, they were not the last. At least five more Irish children died of starvation-related causes in Cheltenham between April 1847 and May 1848. In fact, another child, 18-month-old Andrew Donovan, died at Bethel House on 23 April 1847, less than a week after the inquest into the deaths of the Sullivan children, but his death seems somehow, initially at least, to have gone under the radar. His death certificate records the cause of death as "Fever from want of food", but no inquest was held. Nonetheless, the Poor law Commissioners in London became aware of his death and wrote to the Cheltenham Guardians asking if it was in any way the fault of an officer of the Union. The clerk was instructed to write back explaining that it was not.[178]

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[177] Ancestry.com, *1861 England Census* Provo, UT, USA, database on-line, Ancestry.com, 2010 <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/8767/> [Original data: The National Archives class RG 9] Ref. RG9/191/128/35.; Ancestry.com, *1871 England Census* Provo, UT, USA, database on-line, Ancestry.com, 2010 <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/7619/> [Original data: The National Archives class RG 10] Ref. RG10/383/59/34.; FindMyPast.co.uk, *England Roman Catholic Parish Baptisms* FindmyPast, London, England, database on-line, FindMyPast, 2024 <https://search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/england-roman-catholic-parish-baptisms> Baptism of Alexandrinus Sullivan, son of Jeremiah Sullivan and Catherine McCarthy, at Holborn, Saffron Hill, Holy Family 03 May 1857.; GRO death certificate, SULLIVAN, ALEXANDER, 1859Q1, CLERKENWELL, Vol 01B p.360. (son of Jeremiah Sullivan, died at 6 Lamb Square, registered by Catherine Sullivan).

[178] Cheltenham Poor Law Union Meetings of the Board, 1845-1847, Gloucestershire Archives ref. G/CH/8a/5 pp.330-331

Two more children died at Bethel House in early May: Daniel "Dreskill" (more usually "Driscoll"), aged six months, on the fourth, and six-week-old Patrick McCarthy on the sixth. This time, Lovegrove held another inquest into these deaths, on the evening of the sixth, at the Roebuck Inn in Cheltenham High Street.[179] In relation to the first child, his mother Ellen was examined, and, interestingly, an interpreter was required as clearly she spoke only Irish and little or no English. She had travelled to England, via Newport, about five weeks previously, "from the south of Trenlass", County Cork (no such place has been identified so this was probably misheard by the reporter) after the death of her husband and three other children "from want", having pawned her cloak to pay her fare. Since then, Ellen and her infant son appear to have been moved from place to place seeking support: "Since she came to England she had been in unions, and had always been relieved." They had spent the night of Monday 3 May in the Cirencester Union, where she was said to have received two loaves of bread, and then set off towards Cheltenham. Her milk had failed, and the infant Daniel was already dead when she arrived at the Union Lodging House in Grove Street the next day, having died somewhere on the Cirencester Road. The jury's verdict was that Daniel had died "from want of the common necessities of life", and his death certificate, registered by the Coroner Lovegrove, gives the cause, starkly, as "Starvation". As in the case of Andrew Donovan, the Poor Law Commissioners in London got wind of the Daniel's death, and also those of Hannah, Dennis and Mary Sullivan, and wrote to the Cheltenham Board of Guardians requesting that they make enquiries to determine if blame were attributable to

179 *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 13 May 1847, p.3 col.7.; *Cheltenham Journal ,* 10 May 1847, p.2 col.3.; *Gloucester Journal,* 08 May 1847, p.3 col.5.

any officer of the Union. The Board responded instructing the Clerk to send the Commissioners "the particulars given in evidence at the Inquests and the result of the Inquests".[180]

With respect to the second child, Patrick McCarthy, son of Thomas McCarthy, labourer, from Kilmeen, County Cork, his mother gave testimony to the inquest that he was their only child, and had died while they were on the road between Gloucester and Cheltenham.[181] Again, they had pawned a few basic belongings to pay their four-shilling fare to Newport, where they had landed the previous week. They had been refused relief in Gloucester because they were not entirely penniless or without food, being in possession of 4½d, some sugar, flour and a few bits of bread. The deceased child had been unwell for a few days, the mother's milk having failed. A policeman had directed them to a lodging house, where they had spent the night before setting off towards Cheltenham. In this case, the jury was not entirely convinced that the death was due solely to starvation, and passed a verdict of death from natural causes.

Both the *Gloucester Journal* and *Cheltenham Chronicle* were critical of the respective Poor Law Unions' handling of this type of case. The *Chronicle* noted that "it was stated to be the rule, at the temporary lodging house for the casual poor in Grove Street, to give out 1lb of bread each morning to each pauper who may have spent the night in the house, nothing

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[180] Gloucestershire Archives Ref. G/CH/8a/5 pp.339-340

[181] The death certificate states that he died at Wotton, so considerably closer to Gloucester than Cheltenham.

in the shape of refreshment being given them if they arrive in the afternoon. This is a regulation that needs amendment." The *Gloucester Journal* expounded further on this issue:

It would seem from the above and other evidence given on these inquests that the arrangements made at Gloucester for the relief of the casual poor are by no means characterised by liberality, scarcely by humanity, and not at all by regard to health or decency. As regards these wandering hordes of Irish paupers, their story amounts to this, that if they are found to be totally destitute of money or food, they are supplied at night with a supper, consisting of a fourpenny loaf, divided between four persons, and they are then taken to a lodging house for the night; the next morning they receive nothing, and are ordered to leave the town. From Gloucester, the starving wretches find their way to Cheltenham, at which town relief is given in the morning instead of night, but as the wanderers usually reach that town long after the daily dispensation of public relief, they have to remain till the next morning (that is two nights and a day) before they obtain a second supply of food, unless they are fortunate enough to obtain some on the road by begging. To avoid this long fast, many of them, it would appear, return to Gloucester at night in the hope of again obtaining the nightly pennyworth of bread. It is right to state, for the credit of our neighbours at Cheltenham, that they do not consign these poor creatures to the common lodging houses of the town, but have provided three houses, one of them a very capacious residence, for their reception, and the

treatment of the Irish multitudes that swarm into the place is marked

by humanity and kindness.[182]

The article then proceeds to castigate the Gloucester authorities for housing the destitute Irish in the common lodging houses of the city rather than providing separate accommodation for them as in Cheltenham, raising the spectre of "Irish fever" being spread in this way. Fear that the Irish would not only be a drain on the ratepayer but also bring infectious disease with them from Ireland is a recurrent theme in press reports of the time and a major consideration in the way the authorities responded to the problem. Bethel House was already being rented for use as an overflow workhouse when the Cheltenham Guardians ordered that it should in future be used solely for "sick vagrants" on 8 April 1847, presumably in response to the influx of famished refugees from Ireland.[183] Their fears were probably not entirely unjustified: on 14 June 1847, one-year-old John Driscoll, son of Daniel Driscoll (and quite possibly the brother of Daniel who died the previous month), died at Bethel Union House "From want, Irish Fever with Dropsy" from which he had been suffering for "1 month & more".[184] No inquest appears to have been held, but the Poor Law Commissioners wrote to the Guardians once more inquiring about him and were told that

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[182] It is not clear exactly which three houses are referred to here. The Cheltenham sources refer to Bethel House, in or near Grove Street, and another lodging house in Grove Street. If these latter premises were the "capacious residence", this may refer to Cumberland House.

[183] Gloucestershire Archives ref. G/CH/8a/5 p.316

[184] GRO death certificate, DRISCOLL, JOHN, 1847Q2, Cheltenham, Vol. 11 p.164.

they were in no way to blame.[185] Several adult deaths ascribed wholly or in part to "fever" (probably typhus) occurred at Bethel House in the following months, some of them almost certainly of Irish people (their names include Patrick McCarthy and Julia Mahony), though it is not known if they were recent refugees from the Famine or not. In August 1847, the *Gloucestershire Chronicle* reported that a Catholic priest named Rev. Peter Hartley had died after contracting "a malignant fever [...] by attending some destitute Irish people in a lodging-house" in Gloucester, and asserted that he was the 38th priest to have died in this way during the crisis.[186]

While 1847 appears to have represented the peak of the crisis so far as Cheltenham was concerned, its effects dragged on into the following year and beyond. Eleven-year-old Michael Malony died at Bethel House on 22 May 1848. Unusually, his death was registered twice: first, the next day, by Jesse Castle, master of Bethel House, with the cause of death being certified as "Starvation Low fever &c &c"; then, some three months later, on 7 August 1848, by the Deputy Coroner, Joseph Lovegrove. An inquest had in fact been held just a day after the death, on 23 May 1848.[187] Michael, his unnamed mother and a sibling had come to England via Newport, and arrived at the Union lodging house in Grove Street on the evening of Thursday 18 May and asked for relief. They were given a bed for the night and the following morning some gruel and tea. The lodging house keeper became concerned about

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185 Gloucestershire Archives ref. G/CH/8a/5 p.358

186 *Gloucestershire Chronicle,* 07 Aug 1847, p.3 col.5.

187 *Cheltenham Journal,* 29 May 1848, p.1 col.5.; *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 01 Jun 1848, p.3 col.6.

their condition and sent for the doctor, who examined them that evening and sent them to the sick ward at Bethel House. They were given "saline mixture", as well as some bread and cheese, which they were apparently too ill to consume. The next day they took some gruel, and later some arrowroot, but could not eat the bread that was offered. The saline draught was again administered over the next two days, and the doctor attended, but, notwithstanding, Michael expired on the Monday evening. The verdict was that he had died from "natural causes accelerated by the want of the necessaries of life".

The nine Irish children who are known to have died in Cheltenham from starvation or hunger-related disease in the years 1847 and 1848 represent only a tiny fraction of an estimated 800,000 to 1.5 million Irish people who died as a result of the Famine between 1845 and 1852.[188] Nonetheless, they are far from insignificant: the fact that even such a place as Cheltenham – well inland, with its genteel reputation and aspirations to be a centre for health and recuperation from illness – should have found itself embroiled in the catastrophe brings home the scale of the disaster and the extent to which scarcely any part of the country can have been unaffected. That these children died in Cheltenham is all the more poignant because of the presence in the town of so many Irish absentee landowners (over 50 on the 1851 census), whom we, like "L.L.F.", the author of the letter published in the *Chronicle* in 1840, might reasonably accuse of being complicit in their plight.

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[188] J Mokyr, 'The deadly fungus: an econometric examination of the short term demographic impact of the Irish famine', *Research in Population Economics*, 2 (1980), 237–277.

The Cheltenham Poor Law authorities appear, in the main, to have genuinely attempted to respond with a degree of compassion to those who were obliged to appeal for relief, and made the best of a system that was patently inadequate to deal with the issue. Not all residents were so sympathetic, however. The solicitor Walter Jessop complained that the use of Bethel House as a fever hospital was having a detrimental effect on the value of property in the neighbourhood.[189] There was also criticism of the location of the lodging house for the casual poor in Grove Street in the centre of town, because "it afforded an opportunity for tramping paupers, when leaving it, to remain in town, wandering about begging to the annoyance of the inhabitants."[190] Likewise, when "six travelling Irish paupers" were found taking potatoes from a field in Charlton Kings, rather than taking pity on them and providing relief, the authorities saw fit to prosecute and sentenced each of them to 21 days confinement.[191] As usual, the Cheltenham press was happy to dismiss the impoverished Irish as imposters endeavouring to deceive the ratepayer. At the height of the Famine, the *Cheltenham Journal* alerted its readers to this threat:

> WEALTHY VAGRANTS: We have been informed by the assistant relieving officer of the Cheltenham Union, that upon the person of several vagrants from the sister isle, who have applied for temporary relief at Bethel-house, have been secreted various sums of money – on

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[189] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 08 Jul 1847, p.3 col.4.; Gloucestershire Archives ref. G/CH/8a/5 p.390

[190] *Cheltenham Chronicle,* 01 Jun 1848, p.3 col.6.

[191] *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 28 Oct 1847, p.3 col.7

some to the amount of 14s or 15s.[192]

If this story has any validity at all, we can surmise, in the light of the testimony given by those questioned at the inquests quoted above, that these amounts (hardly justifying the appellation "wealthy") were almost certainly the proceeds of having, in desperation, pawned or sold their last few possessions, possibly quite literally the shirt off their backs, in order to obtain a little money to survive on. Regardless, unless they were already absolutely penniless, and beyond the point where their children's lives might be saved by the provision of the "basic necessities of life", they were not to be considered worthy of compassion.

The main practical response of the good burghers of Cheltenham appears to have been to organise "A Bazaar in aid of the Destitute Poor in Ireland", held on 25-26 March, under the auspices of the great and the good of the district, including several of Irish extraction, such as Lord and Lady Dunalley.[193] The *Looker-on* reported excitedly that it had been "quite the event of the week". It raised £831.[194]

It seems unlikely any of these destitute Irish people had come to Cheltenham with the intention of finding work or settling here. Like the Sullivans, their plans had probably been simply to pass through en route to somewhere that offered better prospects of employment, or where they had family to join up with. Moreover, it would be naïve to think that the effects of the Famine on migration came to an abrupt end in 1852, which is

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[192] *Cheltenham Journal,* 27 Mar 1848, p.2 col.4.

[193] *Cheltenham Looker-On,* 23 Jan 1847, p.14.

[194] *Cheltenham Looker-on,* 27 Mar 1847 pp.2-6.

normally reckoned as its end-date. The Incumbered Estates (Ireland) Act 1849 had

established the Incumbered Estates' Court to manage and facilitate the sale of estates in

Ireland where the owners were unable to meet their financial obligations or pay their

mortgages as a result of a fall in rental income consequent on the Famine. The Court's

powers included the authority to break entails to prevent delays in the transfer of

ownership.[195] Sales of properties under this act continued for some years after the Famine

had abated. One of the objectives of the establishment of the Court was to promote

agricultural "modernisation" and further evictions of tenants occurred after properties

changed hands as the new owners pursued a policy of consolidating multiple smallholdings

into larger estates.[196]

In this context, it is worth considering one family that arrived in Cheltenham after

the worst of the Famine had passed, namely that of Daniel Grace, from Ballymacshoneen

townland in Lislee parish, County Cork. The Graces arrived in the town sometime between

1851 and 1857, and it may be relevant that Ballymachoneen had been sold under the

directions of the Commissioners in 1853 to John Longfield. John was a cousin of Mountifort

Longfield, onetime resident of Cheltenham, and himself a Commissioner of Incumbered

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[195] Padraig G. Lane, 'The Encumbered Estates Court', *Economic and Social Review*, 3 (3: 1972), 413-453.;
Padraig G. Lane, 'The General Impact of the Encumbered Estates Act of 1849 on Counties Galway and
Mayo', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, 33 (1972-1973), 44-74.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/25535443>.

[196] Lane, p.46.

Estates.[197] As always, it is impossible to do any more than guess at the precise factors that pushed a particular family out of Ireland, or pulled them to Cheltenham specifically, but there are strong hints here that the effects of the Famine on migration to the town continued for some years after 1852.

3.10. Feargus O'Connor's Chartist Colonies

One curious, and, regrettably, as yet unsatisfactorily explained, aspect of the topic of Irish migration to Cheltenham is a series of links between Irish-born people in Cheltenham and two of the colonies established by Feargus O'Connor as part of his troubled Chartist Land Scheme, namely those at Snigs End, near Redmarley, on the border between Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, and that at Great Dodford, near Bromsgrove.[198] O'Connor himself had farmed an estate at Fort Robert, near Ballineen, only 30 km or so from Lislee, County Cork.[199] Whether or not this has any relevance is unclear, but each of the five families identified as having connections with the Chartist colonies was definitely

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[197] *Cork Examiner,* 07 Mar 1853, p.1 col.3.; *Cork Constitution,* 14 Apr 1853, p.2 col.5.; *Ballymacshoneen: Incumbered Estates & Longfield, Mary,* 1853 Vol.18, p.47 no.138 Registry of Deeds, Dublin, Ireland.; The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica , *Mountifort Longfield*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 2024 <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mountifort-Longfield> [accessed 14 Jan 2024].

[198] Joy Mackaskill, 'The Chartist Land Plan', in *Chartist Studies*, ed. by Asa Briggs, (London: Macmillan, 1965), pp.304-340.; P. Searby, 'Great Dodford and the Later History of the Chartist Land Scheme.', *The Agricultural History Review*, 16 (1: 1968), 32-45. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40273256>.; W. H. G. Armytage, 'The Chartist Land Colonies 1846-1848', *Agricultural History*, 32 (2: Apr 1958), 87-96. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3740118>.

[199] Davis, *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1914*, p.165.; Maura Cronin, *O'Connor, Fergus (Feargus)* doi:https://doi.org/10.3318/dib.006589.v1.

from County Cork and potentially from Lislee (there are possible baptisms and marriages in that parish in the right names and around the right dates, but certainty is a scarce commodity when dealing with Irish genealogy). The following pen pictures present, in brief, what has been gleaned about these families.

Timothy White was born in County Cork sometime around 1808-1811. He and his wife Ellen Murphy were almost certainly the couple from Ardgehane Townland who had eight children baptized at Lislee Roman Catholic church between 1833 and 1847.[200] In 1851, the Whites were in Cheltenham, at 11 Hereford Place, then in 1861 at 12 Rutland Street. According to the 1861 census, their ninth child, son John, had been born at "Worcestersh[ire], Snigsend", while the 1881 census says he had been born in Redmarley, Worcestershire (Redmarley, now Gloucestershire, was in Worcestershire until boundary changes in 1931).[201] Two children, Michael (1851) and Catherine (1856), were baptized at St Gregory's, Cheltenham. According to the 1861 census, Catherine had also been born at "Snigsend".[202]

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[200] Irish OpenStreetMap Community, *Ardgehane Townland, Co. Cork*, Irish Townlands, 2022 <https://www.townlands.ie/cork/ibane-and-barryroe/abbeymahon/abbeymahon/ardgehane/> [accessed 17 Dec 2023].

[201] *1861 England Census*, Ref. RG9/1798/141/30.; Ancestry.com, *1881 England Census* Provo, UT, USA, database on-line, Ancestry.com, 2004 <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/7572/> [Original data: The National Archives class RG 11] Ref. RG11/2574/27/18.

[202] Her name is given there as Caroline – almost certainly an enumerator error.

Patrick Sexton, his wife Margaret and son Daniel, were recorded as lodgers at the same address as the Whites in 1851 (11 Hereford Place).[203] It is possible (though far from proven) that they were the couple Patrick Sexton and Margaret Tobin married at Lislee in 1831, and whose son Daniel was baptized there in 1835.[204] Four other children were born in Ireland between 1839 and 1846. However, by 1848, they may well have been resident (probably briefly) at the Chartist colony at Great Dodford, since a child, Joanna Sexton, daughter of Patrick Sexton and Margaret Tobin, was baptized at St. Peter's Roman Catholic church in Bromsgrove that year. If this was the family lodging with the Whites in 1851, then we have to ask where the other children were at that time, since they were certainly not deceased. By 1860, the Sextons had emigrated to the USA and can be traced on the federal census in Massachusetts that year.[205]

Timothy Regan was probably also from County Cork, as there is a possible baptism for him in Lislee in 1820, but the census returns give us no further clue to his birthplace beyond "Ireland". He and his future wife Mary Conolly were clearly in the West of England by 1848, however, as they married in an Anglican ceremony at the parish church of Ledbury,

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[203] *1851 England Census*, Ref. HO107/1973/429/24.

[204] Ancestry.com, *Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1655-1915* Provo, UT, USA, database online, Ancestry.com, 2016 <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/61039/> National Library of Ireland MF 04776 / 01 p.896, 05 Sep 1835.

[205] Ancestry.com, *1860 United States Federal Census* Provo, UT, USA, database on-line, Ancestry.com, 2009 <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/7667/> [Original data: 1860 U.S. census, population schedule. NARA microfilm publication M653, 1,438 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.] Record Group Number: 29; Series Number: M653; Roll: M653_507; p.124.

Herefordshire, on 24 April that year. Their address was given as "Back Homend" in Ledbury, and the witnesses to the wedding were a couple named Jeremiah and Ann Murray. They were undoubtedly the same people listed as Jeremiah and Honorah (a forename which occurs in various forms, including Ann and Hannah, as well as Norah etc) Murray, both hawkers, living in the Homend area of Ledbury on the 1851 census: Jeremiah's birthplace is given as Bandon, Cork, and Honorah's as Lislee.[206] In fact, Honorah was almost certainly a relative of Mary's, since she too was a Conolly by birth.[207] Timothy and Mary Regan had seven children between 1849 and 1856, all of them baptized at St. Peter's (RC), Bromsgrove, with the sole exception of son Timothy, who was baptized at Lislee on 1st January 1850. The 1861 census records that the family had then settled in Cheltenham, in one of the passages off Rutland Street: the place of birth given for all of the children other than Timothy is "Worcestersh[ire] Great Dodford", suggesting strongly they had been resident on the Chartist colony there for several years.[208] Timothy had three further children with Mary in Cheltenham between 1862 and 1866, all baptized at St Gregory's.

James Hurley may well have been the child of that name baptized at Lislee in 1813, and he married Catherine Conolly in that parish in 1840. Catherine was potentially the sister of Mary Conolly, wife of Timothy Regan, but that cannot be established with certainty. James and Catherine had eight children between 1842 and 1860: the first three were

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[206] *1851 England Census*, Ref: HO107; Piece: 1975; Folio: 132; Page: 15.

[207] Marriage of Jeremiah Murray and Honorah Conolly at St Mary's, Blackmore Park, Hanley Castle, Worcestershire, England, 9 Dec 1850, 1850Q4/

[208] *1861 England Census*, Ref: RG9/1798/145/37.

baptized in Lislee, then one child, Mary, at St Gregory's, Cheltenham, then four at St Peter's, Bromsgrove. Only one of these later children seems to have had their birth registered: Margaret was born on 25 June 1858 at "Dodford, Bromsgrove" where her father James Hurley was an "agricultural labourer".[209] This is all confirmed by the 1861 census, which records the Hurley family living in Great Dodford.[210] The census does not make clear if he was occupying one of the plots laid out for the colonists, but it seems likely, as few of the heads of the neighbouring households were local men, and they look very much as if they too had gravitated to Great Dodford in connection with O'Connor's scheme. By this date, however, the Chartist Land Company had been compulsorily wound up and the colony at Great Dodford was in steep decline. It had failed to thrive right from the outset, the plots having proven totally inadequate for producing an adequate living, Having only officially been opened in July 1849, by 1851 the colony had lost 11 of its original 36 settler families.[211] By 1861, many more of the original colonists had abandoned their holdings and sold up. It is probably unsurprising, therefore, that by 1871 the Regans had returned to Cheltenham, where they can be found on the census that year living in Newman's Place.[212]

James's brother Michael Hurley, baptized at Lislee in 1806, seems to have stuck it out at Great Dodford. He and his family can be located there on the census in 1861 and

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[209] GRO birth certificate, MARGARET HURLEY, 1858Q3, BROMSGROVE, Vol. 06C p.368.

[210] *1861 England Census*, Ref. RG9/2114/49/3.

[211] Searby, p.36.

[212] *1871 England Census*, Ref. RG10/2672/70/29.

1871. In 1881, Michael was in Bromsgrove Workhouse, where he died on 7 May 1881. No direct connection between Michael and Cheltenham is obvious, but, in addition to the family link through his brother James, it is worth noting that in 1861 Michael's household at Great Dodford included Bartholomew Conolly, aged 90.[213] His relationship to the (presumed) Conolly sisters is unknown (Mary's marriage certificate gives her father's name as Matthew), but it is surely no coincidence that Bartholomew died at 3 Rutland Street, Cheltenham, the following year, and his death (supposedly aged 103) was registered by Timothy Regan of that address. It seems likely Bartholomew was Mary and Catherine's uncle. Michael Hurley seems to have taken over the lease of one of the Chartist colonists' properties after it had been abandoned by its allottee: a sale notice from 1855 names him as the occupier of a cottage and four acres of land.[214]

What are we to make of all these, admittedly vague and tenuous, connections? None of these families are listed among the men selected by ballot as colonists at Snigs End or Great Dodford, nor were they on the colonies at the time of the 1851 census. One thing that is worth noting, however, is that some of the dates of birth and baptism provided by the register of St Peter's, Bromsgrove imply that these families had connections with the colony at Great Dodford prior to "Location Day" (the official "moving-in day" for the colonists) on 2 July 1849: Joanna Sexton was born 5th December 1848 and Mary Regan 1 February 1849. Searby says, of Great Dodford:

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[213] *1861 England Census*, Ref. RG 9/2114/49/4. .

[214] *Worcester Journal,* 06 Jan 1855, p.4 col.3.

O'Connor bought the Priory and 273 acres of land in January 1848; he paid £10,546 for them. After the preparation of the Snig's End estate the National Land Company's horses and building equipment were moved from there to Dodford in the summer of 1848, so that the new settlement could be made ready. […] From the summer of 1848 to the spring of 1849 roads were built and land cleared at Dodford, and forty four-acre plots marked out and their accompanying cottages built.[215]

It is conceivable that some of these men had been employed in the laying out and setting up of the colonies at Snigs End and/or Great Dodford before they were opened. It is also possible that some subsequently stayed on or near the colonies and worked for a time as labourers for the tenants. This is suggested by a scathing report of the Snig's End scheme published in the *Illustrated London News* in 1850, complete with sketches of the colony, which mentions how the newspaper's artist had encountered:

a man (an Irishman) working in a garden attached to a house presenting a better appearance than the rest. This man stated that he had nothing to find fault with 'at all, at all': the ground was good, and he was satisfied. This Irishman, however, proved not to be a member of the community, but was only employed as a labourer by the foreman.[216]

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[215] Searby, pp.33-34.

[216] *Illustrated London News,* 23 Feb 1850, p.2 col.1.

One wonders whether the smallholdings created under O'Connor's scheme, which had proved so unappealing to the allottees – who often had no previous experience of farming, having naively travelled from industrial areas of the country in the hope of discovering a utopian idyll – were more attractive – especially in the depths of the Famine – to the likes of James and Michael Hurley, who had almost certainly grown up on a tiny leasehold plot of land in County Cork. In many ways, the Irish were perhaps ideal tenants, accustomed to scratching a living from a modest farmstead.

It is also unclear why they all appear to have had earlier and/or later links to Cheltenham, which is located about 25km from Snigs End and 55km from Great Dodford. One possibility might be, perhaps, that it was the Lislee connection that first brought them to Cheltenham, via some form of chain migration, and that they were recruited in Cheltenham for the work needed at Snigs End and subsequently Great Dodford. Sadly, given the lack of sources, it is unlikely we will achieve any clarity on this question.

3.11. "Accidental Irish"

One final aspect of the Irish-born population of Cheltenham which should not be overlooked is what Solar and Smith term the "accidental Irish": that is to say those individuals born in Ireland to one or more British parents.[217] Some 38 different persons recorded in Cheltenham on the census of 1841, 1851 or 1861 fall into this category. Of those 38 (some of whom were siblings), one was the child of an Irish-born father and an English

[217] Solar and Smith, p.49.

mother, two the child of a British father and an Irish mother, and in 35 cases neither parent was Irish. By far the most common reason for the child to have been born in Ireland was that the father was in the British Army or Militia, either as an officer or "other ranks", and stationed there at the time the child was born (21 cases). A place such as Cheltenham, popular with the officer class, was particularly likely to have residents of this kind. There were also five instances of children born to British Customs Officers or Excisemen who had been based in Ireland at some point. The others included two children of domestic servants (a coachman and groom) who were presumably in Ireland with their employers when the child was born; one whose father was a Master Mariner; and a miscellany of others the reasons for whose presence in Ireland we can only guess at (children of a printer/compositor, a cork manufacturer, a grocer, and a German musician-cum-violin-string maker).

Not unrelated to this group is another subset of the Irish-born population consisting of the Irish-born spouses of British people who had been in Ireland for some reason or another – often the same reasons as detailed above, in particular service in the Army in Ireland. In the case of British Army officers with Irish-born wives, or Irish-born Army officers with British wives, it is impossible to know if they had met their future spouses because of service in Ireland, as these people were usually from a social class where the distinction between Britishness and Irishness was already blurred, and both parties can be considered "children of the British Empire". However, there are also instances of men who had served as privates and Non-commissioned Officers (NCOs) in the British Army having married Irish wives, and, in these cases, it seems almost certain the couple had met while the future husband was serving in Ireland.

The example of William James may serve as a case study of this phenomenon. William was the son of an agricultural labourer, born in Charlton Kings and baptized at St Mary's there on 10 March 1822.[218] By 1841, he had enlisted in the 1st Battalion, 16th Regiment of Foot and was stationed at Canterbury.[219] On 17 February 1844, "Gulielmus James miles" (ie William James, soldier) married Eliza "Murren" (various spellings) at Roscommon and Kilteevan Roman Catholic parish church. A son, Henry, was baptized at St Patrick's, Cork City, on 6 March 1845, but his brother William was born on Gibraltar in 1847, presumably after his father's regiment had relocated to the Mediterranean. Early in 1851, William was stationed on Corfu, and it is probable his daughter Eliza was born there in 1850, but she was baptized at St Gregory's, Cheltenham on 13 May 1851.[220] By 1854, William was back in Charlton Kings working as a "husbandman", and the James family can be found on the 1861 census living at 4 Leighfield (now "Lyefield") Cottages, Charlton Kings.[221] It is this family history that explains how the census for this rural village on the edge of Cheltenham comes to list a woman born in Ireland, a son also born there, plus another born on Gibraltar. This is just one example of several that could be adduced to illustrate how service in the

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[218] Ancestry.com, *Gloucestershire, England, Church of England Baptisms, 1813-1913* Provo, UT, USA <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/5066/> Ref. P76 IN 1/8 p.50 no.400.

[219] The National Archives, Kew, (n.d.).Muster Books of the 16th Regiment, 1st Battalion Ref. WO 12/3350

[220] The National Archives, Kew, (n.d.). Muster Books of the 16th Regiment, 1st Battalion Ref. WO 12/3359; Gloucestershire Family History Society, *Baptism Index St Gregory's Roman Catholic Cheltenham 1809-1903* Gloucestershire Family History Society <https://gfhs.org.uk/product/st-gregorys-rc-baptisms-1836-1903/>.

[221] *1861 England Census*, Ref. RG9/1794/62/7.

armed forces might result in the arrival of an Irish-born wife and children in this seemingly incongruous and unexpected location.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Cheltenham's links with Ireland through the racecourse are well known and vitally important to the local economy. What is less well known, perhaps, is that those links can be traced right back to the beginning of the 19th century and the town's period of dramatic expansion. Less well known still is the fact that Cheltenham has been a place where Irish people not just visited, but settled, ever since the Regency period. Moreover, despite its reputation for elegant gentility, Cheltenham attracted people of all classes – not just the wealthy élite, but also the impoverished working-classes, who migrated to the town in not inconsiderable numbers throughout the early decades of the nineteenth century and beyond.

The result was that, by the middle of the 19th century, Cheltenham was populated by two entirely separate and distinct groups of people of Irish origin, one prosperous and high-status, the other economically deprived and low-status. In social, religious and political terms, Cheltenham was perhaps a microcosm of Ireland itself, with clearly defined, rigid barriers delineating two separate population groups that would have considered themselves (at least in part) "Irish". The economic situation of the Irish in Cheltenham – where an impoverished labouring class serviced the demands of a moneyed, leisured élite – mirrored conditions in the town more generally, as well as those in Ireland, and, arguably, the entire British Empire. There can have been few places in Britain, however, where these socio-economic divisions were quite so acute and conspicuous, with the depths of degradation and deprivation coexisting cheek by jowl with the heights of refinement and privilege.

Nowhere else, with the possible exception of Bath, could élite and low-status Irish people be found in roughly equal numbers, living in such close proximity to one another.

With respect to the Irish-born working-class population of the town, its characteristics and experiences appear remarkably similar to those of other groups of Irish people who settled in English towns and cities in this period. Much of what has been uncovered about the Irish experience in Cheltenham mirrors closely what has already been documented in other places in Britain. Like other localities in the south-west of England, such as Bristol and Bath, they originated predominantly from the south-west of Ireland, particularly Co. Cork. Unsurprisingly, given the religious profile of the population of that part of Ireland, they were overwhelmingly Roman Catholic. As was the case elsewhere in Britain – and, understandably, as is universally the case with a migrant population – they tended to live close to one another geographically after they crossed the Irish Sea. Because they tended to have few resources, they were obliged to take the cheapest and worst kind of housing Cheltenham had to offer, and, perhaps because living conditions in Ireland were so poor, they were more prepared to tolerate such accommodation than the British. They were looked upon with suspicion and not a little disdain by the local population, and this attitude was fuelled by a local press that portrayed them as a barely human, invasive, alien culture that threatened Cheltenham's genteel order with vice and disorder and represented a drain on the taxpayer. This "othering" helped make it possible to overlook their suffering, especially during the Great Famine.

One unique aspect of the Irish working-class experience in Cheltenham was the particularly hostile environment engendered by Francis Close and his fervent anti-Catholicism, though this seems to have done little to stop the Catholic church flourishing

and growing. To what extent Close's vituperations affected conditions for ordinary Irish men and women in the town is doubtful. The impression is that they simply got on with their lives and there are few signs of friction with their working-class British-born, notionally Anglican, neighbours.

With regard to the other main group of Irish-born people in the town – the well-heeled, élite visitors and residents – it is probably more accurate to view them as children of the British Empire who happen to have born in that part of it called "Ireland". Belonging to the ruling class of that particular British colony, many of them had subsequently spent time imposing British rule on the more far-flung colonies as officers in the British Army or Navy or employees of the East India Company before settling in the town, or would go on to do so after completing their schooling in Cheltenham. Many of them would probably have viewed their Irishness as secondary to their Britishness. They were not drawn to Cheltenham first and foremost because the town was popular with the Irish – though to find many like-minded fellow countrymen already in the town may have been a bonus – but because the town was fashionable with their class – ex-Army officers, former East India Company employees and so on. For the professional classes – medical men in particular – Cheltenham's ageing, ailing population offered a ready, prosperous clientele. For the clergy, the influence of that evangelical Tory firebrand, Francis Close, is probably to be perceived behind the appointment of so many Irish-born Anglican priests to positions in the town.

Gwen Hart is surely correct when she says that Cheltenham held an attraction for the Irish since the first days of the spa, and Irish visitors and residents certainly left their

mark upon the town in those decades.[222] Without further study of the decades after 1861, however, it is hard to say to what extent the Irish affection for, and influence on, Cheltenham continued unbroken throughout the rest of the 19th century and endured into the latter half of 20th century, when the current links with Ireland became of crucial significance. Nonetheless, the fondness the Irish feel for Cheltenham, and their importance to its economy, today, in the 21st century, are undeniable, and the tricolour will doubtless continue to be seen flying prominently in many places throughout the town, especially during the March race week, for many years to come.

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[222] Hart, p.203.

5. APPENDICES

5.1. Tables and Figures

Table 5.1: Population of Cheltenham Registration District 1801-1851[223]

Census Year	Sex	Number of Persons		
		Sub-district		
		Charlton Kings	Cheltenham	Total
1801	Males	1,517	1,405	2,922
	Females	1,570	1,671	3,241
	Total	**3,087**	**3,076**	**6,163**
1811	Males	1,802	3,780	5,582
	Females	1,971	4,545	6,516
	Total	**3,773**	**8,325**	**12,098**
1821	Males	2,448	6,088	8,536
	Females	2,539	7,308	9,847
	Total	**4,987**	**13,396**	**18,383**
1831	Males	3,390	10,053	13,443
	Females	3,550	12,889	16,439
	Total	**6,940**	**22,942**	**29,882**
1841	Males	4,138	13,404	17,542
	Females	4,697	18,007	22,704
	Total	**8,835**	**31,411**	**40,246**
1851	Males	4,254	14,690	18,944
	Females	4,879	20,361	25,240
	Total	**9,133**	**35,051**	**44,184**

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[223] Census of Great Britain, (1851) Population Tables, I. Number of the inhabitants in 1801, 1811, 1821, 1831, 1841 and 1851. Vol. I BPP 1852-53 LXXXV (1631) pp.28-29 <http://www.histpop.org/ohpr/servlet/PageBrowser?path=Browse/Census%20(by%20date)&active=yes&mno=27&pageseq=716>.

Figure 5.1: Population of Cheltenham Registration District from census returns 1801-1851[224]

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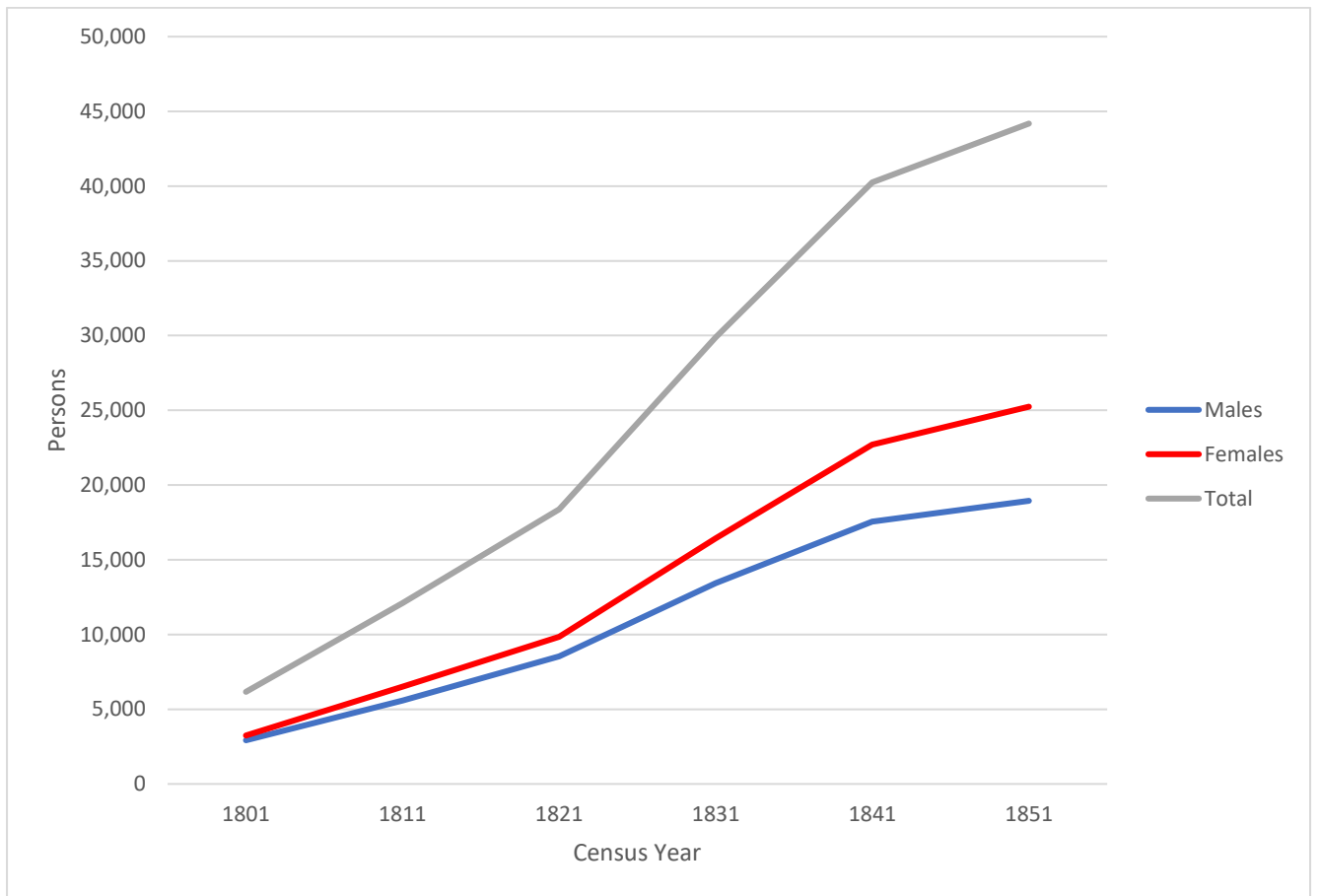
[224] Ibid.

Table 5.2: Increase in Population of Cheltenham Registration District 1801-1851[225]

Census Year	Sex	Increase since previous census			% increase since previous census		
		Sub-district			Sub-district		
		Charlton Kings	Cheltenham	Total	Charlton Kings	Cheltenham	Total
1811	Males	285	2,375	2,660	18.79%	169.04%	91.03%
	Females	401	2,874	3,275	25.54%	171.99%	101.05%
	Total	**686**	**5,249**	**5,935**	**22.22%**	**170.64%**	**96.30%**
1821	Males	646	2,308	2,954	35.85%	61.06%	52.92%
	Females	568	2,763	3,331	28.82%	60.79%	51.12%
	Total	**1,214**	**5,071**	**6,285**	**32.18%**	**60.91%**	**51.95%**
1831	Males	942	3,965	4,907	38.48%	65.13%	57.49%
	Females	1,011	5,581	6,592	39.82%	76.37%	66.94%
	Total	**1,953**	**9,546**	**11,499**	**39.16%**	**71.26%**	**62.55%**
1841	Males	748	3,351	4,099	22.06%	33.33%	30.49%
	Females	1,147	5,118	6,265	32.31%	39.71%	38.11%
	Total	**1,895**	**8,469**	**10,364**	**27.31%**	**36.91%**	**34.68%**
1851	Males	116	1,286	1,402	2.80%	9.59%	7.99%
	Females	182	2,354	2,536	3.87%	13.07%	11.17%
	Total	**298**	**3,640**	**3,938**	**3.37%**	**11.59%**	**9.78%**
1801-51	Males	2,737	13,285	16,022	180.4%	945.6%	548.3%
	Females	3,309	18,690	21,999	210.8%	1118.5%	678.8%
	Total	**6,046**	**31,975**	**38,021**	**195.9%**	**1039.5%**	**616.9%**

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[225] Ibid.

Figure 5.2: Increase in Population of Cheltenham between censuses 1801-1851[226]

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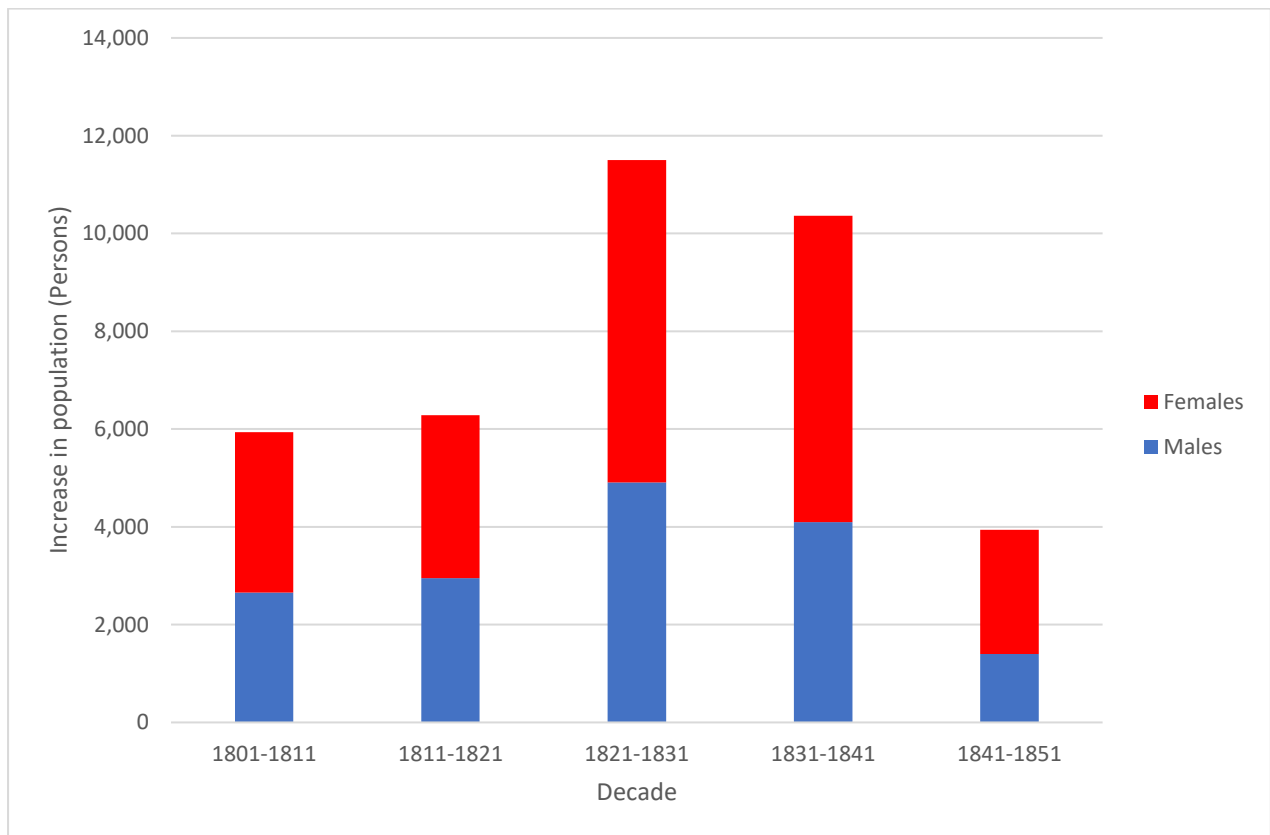
[226] Ibid.

Table 5.3: Origins of the population of Cheltenham in 1851[227]

Birthplace	Sub-district		Total	Sub-district		Total
	Cheltenham	Charlton Kings		Cheltenham	Charlton Kings	
Cheltenham sub-district	12,860	811	13,671	36.7%	8.9%	30.9%
Charlton Kings sub-district	859	3,326	4,185	2.5%	36.4%	9.5%
Elsewhere in Gloucestershire	8,197	3,132	11,329	23.4%	34.3%	25.6%
Neighbouring English counties	4,728	810	5,538	13.5%	8.9%	12.5%
Elsewhere in England	5,344	772	6,116	15.2%	8.5%	13.8%
Wales	626	55	681	1.8%	0.6%	1.5%
Scotland	347	26	373	1.0%	0.3%	0.8%
Ireland	957	65	1,022	2.7%	0.7%	2.3%
IOM & Channel Islands	44	9	53	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Outside Britain & Ireland	1,086	127	1,213	3.1%	1.4%	2.7%
Totals	35,048	9,133	44,181	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

[227] I-CeM 1851 census after data cleansing on birthplace

Table 5.4: Origins of the population of Cheltenham in 1851 by Age Group[228]

Birthplace	% of Age Group born in Locality				
	Age Unknown or Invalid	< 20	20-49	50+	All Ages
Cheltenham sub-district	47.5%	52.7%	17.9%	8.2%	30.9%
Charlton Kings sub-district	10.0%	13.7%	6.9%	5.4%	9.5%
Elsewhere in Gloucestershire	12.5%	15.7%	32.2%	34.4%	25.6%
Neighbouring English counties	10.0%	5.4%	17.2%	19.0%	12.5%
Elsewhere in England	10.0%	7.3%	17.2%	22.2%	13.8%
Wales	0.0%	0.8%	2.2%	1.8%	1.5%
Scotland	0.0%	0.4%	1.1%	1.5%	0.8%
Ireland	0.0%	1.2%	2.6%	4.5%	2.3%
IOM & Channel Islands	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Outside Britain & Ireland	10.0%	2.8%	2.7%	2.9%	2.7%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

[228] Ibid.

Figure 5.3: St Gregory's baptisms by decade[229]
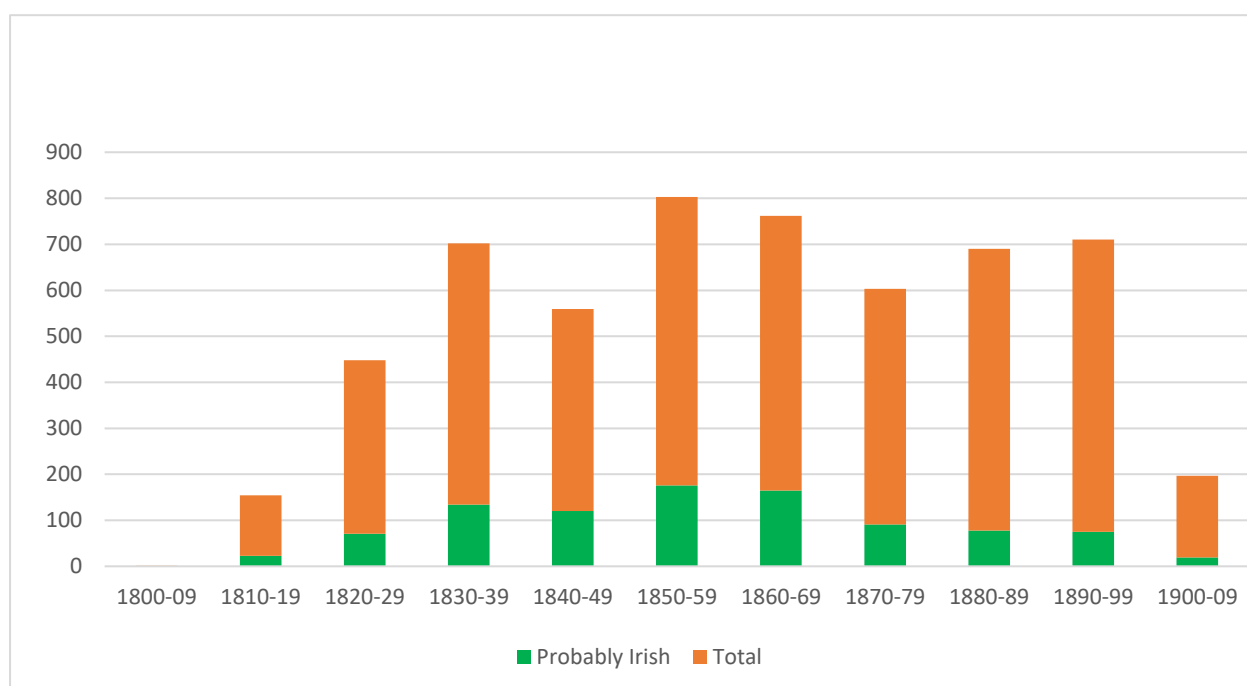
Table 5.5: Total Population and Irish-born Inhabitants of selected places in 1851 by age group

Place	Total Population			Irish-born in 1851			Irish as %		
	<20	20+	Total	<20	20+	Total	<20	20+	Total
England & Wales			17,927,609			519,959			2.9%
Scotland			2,888,742			207,367			7.2%
London	967,273	1,394,963	2,362,236	20,006	88,542	108,548	2.1%	6.3%	4.6%
Bath	20,991	36,249	57,240	235	830	1,065	1.1%	2.3%	1.9%
Bristol	58,039	79,289	137,328	949	3,812	4,761	1.6%	4.8%	3.5%
Gloucester	7,212	10,360	17,572	45	206	251	0.6%	2.0%	1.4%
Birmingham	106,020	126,521	232,541	2,420	6,921	9,341	2.3%	5.5%	4.0%
Liverpool	162,188	213,767	375,955	22,724	61,089	83,813	14.0%	28.6%	22.3%
Manchester & Salford	175,594	225,727	401,321	13,127	39,377	52,504	7.5%	17.4%	13.1%
Cheltenham District	18,519	25,665	44,184	217	914	1,131	1.2%	3.6%	2.6%

[229] Gloucestershire Family History Society, *Baptism Index St Gregory's Roman Catholic Cheltenham 1809-1903* Gloucestershire Family History Society <https://gfhs.org.uk/product/st-gregorys-rc-baptisms-1836-1903/>.

Table 5.6: Irish-born population of Cheltenham by parish[230]

Parish	Irish-born	Total	% Irish-born
Badgeworth	6	874	0.69%
Charlton Kings	31	3,174	0.98%
Cowley	1	317	0.32%
Cubberley	0	243	0.00%
Elmstone Hardwicke, Swindon	1	221	0.45%
Great Shurdington	0	173	0.00%
Leckhampton	17	2,149	0.79%
Prestbury	8	1,314	0.61%
Staverton	0	278	0.00%
Uckington (part of Elmstone Hardwicke)	0	173	0.00%
Up Hatherley	1	50	2.00%
Whitcomb Magna	0	167	0.00%
Charlton Kings sub-district	**65**	**9,133**	**0.71%**
Cheltenham	957	35,048	2.73%
Cheltenham District totals	**1,022**	**44,181**	**2.31%**

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[230] I-CeM after data cleansing

Table 5.7: Enumeration districts of Cheltenham with most Irish-born residents in 1851[231]

District Code	Irish-born	Total Popula-tion	% Irish-born	Top 5 occupations (excluding scholars living at home and resident servants)
1o	100	767	13.04%	Labourer; Cleaner; Peddler, hawker; Laundry work; Shoemaker, bootmaker
1ll	85	1,213	7.01%	Independent means; Land, property owner; Boarding school pupils; Gentleman/Lady; Army Officer
1mm	74	962	7.69%	Independent means; Boarding school pupils; Lodging House Keepers; Land, property owner; Gentleman/Lady
1kk	58	1,177	4.93%	Independent means; Boarding school pupils; Land, property owner; Agricultural labourer; Dressmaker
1x	50	775	6.45%	Shoemaker, bootmaker; Laundry work; Dressmaker; Cleaner; Tailor
1y	45	884	5.09%	Dressmaker; Labourer; Police officer (Lower ranks); Shoemaker, bootmaker; Tailor
1k	42	722	5.82%	Independent means; Land, property owner; Dressmaker; Lawyer, barrister; Education: university
1bb	40	1,293	3.09%	Gentleman/Lady; Independent means; Land, property owner; Dressmaker; Tailor
1w	39	1,045	3.73%	Labourer; Dressmaker; Shoemaker, bootmaker; Laundry work; Porter etc.
1a	33	960	3.44%	Boarding school pupils; Independent means; Dressmaker; Land, property owner; Gentleman/Lady
1dd	32	1,021	3.13%	Gentleman/Lady; Independent means; Boarding school pupils; Dressmaker; Laundry work
1nn	32	997	3.21%	Independent means; Land, property owner; Gentleman/Lady; Boarding school pupils; Lodging House Keepers
1ii	31	1,033	3.00%	Independent means; Dressmaker; Labourer; Boarding school pupils; Laundry work

[231] Ibid.

1hh	27	1,181	2.29%	Boarding school pupils; Labourer; Dressmaker; Shoemaker, bootmaker; Laundry work
1m	25	1,171	2.13%	Shoemaker, bootmaker; Labourer; Dressmaker; Students; Laundry work
1n	24	1,065	2.25%	Shoemaker, bootmaker; Labourer; Students; Dressmaker; Tailor

Table 5.8: Streets/Buildings in Cheltenham Sub-district with the most Irish-born residents in 1851[232]

Colour-coding: Low-status, High-status, Mixed Milsom Street can be viewed on the 1855 Town Plan at Know Your Place[233] https://bit.ly/CheltenhamIrish1851-MilsomStreet					
Rank	Street	Number of Irish-born Residents	Total Popul-ation	% Irish-born	Most common occupations of the inhabitants (excluding resident servants)
1	Milsom Street	71	215	33.02%	Labourer; Peddler, hawker; Cleaner; Shoe-/bootmaker; Servant
2	Grove Street	38	269	14.13%	Labourer; Servant; Shoe-/bootmaker; Peddler, hawker; Cleaner
3	Hereford Place	38	162	23.46%	Labourer; Laundry work; Cleaner; Tailor; Shoe-/bootmaker
4	Imperial Square	35	301	11.63%	Independent means; Lodging House Keepers; Land, property owner; Servant; Army Officer
5	Clarence Square	21	286	7.34%	Independent means; Land, property owner; Servant; Lawyer, barrister; Army Officer (Half Pay)
6	Barnards Row	21	58	36.21%	Labourer; Poor, beggar; Shoe-/bootmaker; Jeweller; Sellers of clothing
7	Lansdown Terrace	19	167	11.38%	Boarding school pupils; Independent means; Army Officer; Land, property owner; Lodging House Keepers
8	Bays Hill Terrace	19	394	4.82%	Laundry work; Labourer; Agricultural labourer; Dressmaker; Independent means
9	Devonshire Street	19	84	22.62%	Shoe-/bootmaker; Rail transport labourer; Tailor; Gardener (general); Mason's labourer
10	Newick House, Bath Road [234]	19	59	32.20%	Boarding school pupils; Vicar; Tutor, lecturer, governess
11	Lansdown Crescent	18	317	5.68%	Independent means; Land, property owner; Gentleman/Lady; Servant; Boarding school pupils

[232] I-CeM after data cleansing and addition of street name

[233] South Gloucestershire Council, *Know Your Place Gloucestershire*, Know Your Place West of England, 2015
<https://maps.bristol.gov.uk/kyp/?edition=glos#> [accessed 15 May 2024].

[234] A Cheltenham College boarding house.[235] I-CeM after data cleaning.

12	Montpellier Terrace	18	227	7.93%	Gentleman/Lady; Land, property owner; Independent means; Lodging House Keepers; Servant
13	Promenade	18	278	6.47%	Gentleman/Lady; Independent means; Land, property owner; Hotel keeper; Other sellers of printed products
14	Rutland Street	18	474	3.80%	Shoe-/bootmaker; Laundry work; Labourer; Cleaner; Dressmaker
15	High Street	16	2290	0.70%	Grocer; Shoe-/bootmaker; Students; Dressmaker; Tailor
16	Queens Parade	16	76	21.05%	Independent means; Lodging House Keepers; Land, property owner; East India Company's Service; Servant
17	Winchcomb Street	14	675	2.07%	Boarding school pupils; Independent means; Servant; Poor, beggar; Dressmaker
18	Lansdown Place	13	196	6.63%	Gentleman/Lady; Land, property owner; Independent means; Judge, magistrate, JP; Household duties
19	Park Place	12	193	6.22%	Independent means; Land, property owner; Doctor, surgeon; Officer East India Company's Army; Servant
20	North Place	11	198	5.56%	Independent means; Dressmaker; Hatter, milliner, bonnet maker etc.; Builder; Servant

Figure 5.4: Map of Streets from Table 5.8
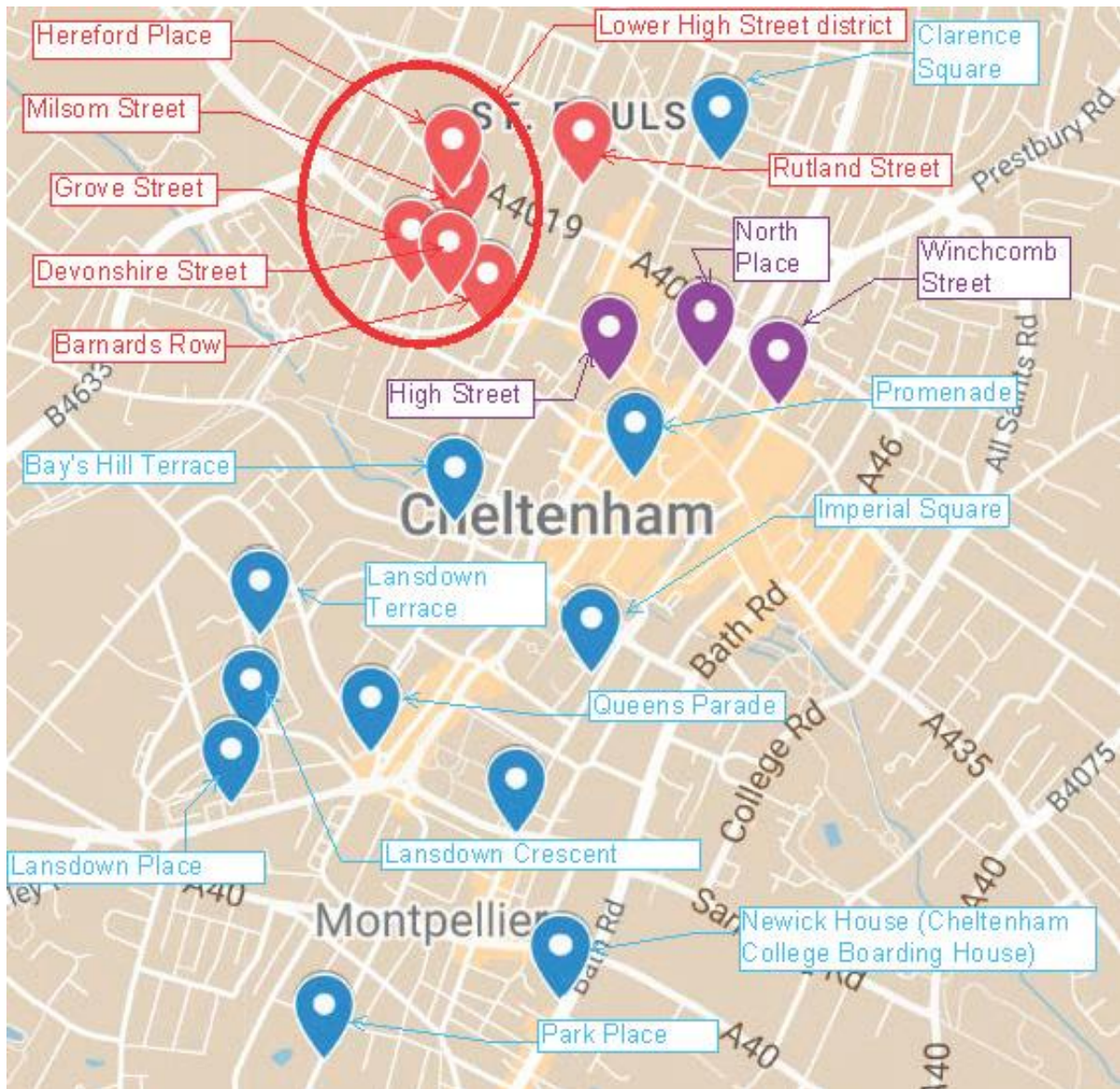
Colour coding as per Table 5.8
A more extensive, interactive version of this map is available at https://tinyurl.com/CheltenhamIrish1851

Table 5.9: Irish-born People in Cheltenham in 1851 by Occupation Category[235]

Category	Sub-category	Irish-born	Total Popul-ation	Irish % of Total	% of Irish Popul-ation	% of Irish excl. school & un-known
Domestic service	Low-ranking	123	5428	2.27%	12.04%	14.64%
People of independent means		97	1238	7.84%	9.49%	11.55%
Unknown, not stated, unclear etc.		79	1891	4.18%	7.73%	9.40%
Labourers	General	70	2071	3.38%	6.85%	8.33%
Owners of land and property		66	818	8.07%	6.46%	7.86%
Schoolchildren	High-ranking	54	452	11.95%	5.28%	6.43%
Military	High-ranking	50	310	16.13%	4.89%	5.95%
Schoolchildren	Low-ranking	49	5928	0.83%	4.79%	5.83%
Personal services	Low-ranking	48	1910	2.51%	4.70%	5.71%
Clothing manufacture	Low-ranking	45	3723	1.21%	4.40%	5.36%
Social élite		34	339	10.03%	3.33%	4.05%
Gardening	Low-ranking	28	1301	2.15%	2.74%	3.33%
Professional classes	Religion	28	346	8.09%	2.74%	3.33%
Traders	Low-ranking	27	119	22.69%	2.64%	3.21%
Transport		27	1759	1.53%	2.64%	3.21%
Traders	Middle-ranking	25	1967	1.27%	2.45%	2.98%
Manufacturing and processing	Low-ranking	23	3376	0.68%	2.25%	2.74%
Agriculture	Low-ranking	18	2218	0.81%	1.76%	2.14%
Accommodation & refreshment	Low-ranking	11	596	1.85%	1.08%	1.31%
Building trade	Middle-ranking	10	2776	0.36%	0.98%	1.19%
Professional classes	Education	10	575	1.74%	0.98%	1.19%
Domestic service	Middle-ranking	9	348	2.59%	0.88%	1.07%
Professional classes	Medical	9	253	3.56%	0.88%	1.07%
East India Company	Military	8	162	4.94%	0.78%	0.95%
Labourers	Building	8	75	10.67%	0.78%	0.95%
Accommodation & refreshment	Middle-ranking	7	446	1.57%	0.68%	0.83%
Domestic service	High-ranking	6	85	7.06%	0.59%	0.71%
Professional classes	Legal	6	276	2.17%	0.59%	0.71%
Professional support	Middle-ranking	5	297	1.68%	0.49%	0.60%

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[235] I-CeM after data cleaning.

Clerks		4	233	1.72%	0.39%	0.48%
Military	Low-ranking	4	31	12.90%	0.39%	0.48%
Military	Middle-ranking	4	15	26.67%	0.39%	0.48%
Police	Senior ranks	4	8	50.00%	0.39%	0.48%
Students in further education		4	153	2.61%	0.39%	0.48%
Commercial services		3	107	2.80%	0.29%	0.36%
Capitalists		2	123	1.63%	0.20%	0.24%
Financial services		2	172	1.16%	0.20%	0.24%
Manufacturing and processing	Middle-ranking	2	284	0.70%	0.20%	0.24%
Paupers, poor relief etc.		2	183	1.09%	0.20%	0.24%
Traders	High-ranking	2	36	5.56%	0.20%	0.24%
Agriculture	High-ranking	1	697	0.14%	0.10%	0.12%
East India Company	Civil Service	1	33	3.03%	0.10%	0.12%
East India Company	Role unknown	1	16	6.25%	0.10%	0.12%
Entertainment		1	84	1.19%	0.10%	0.12%
Labourers	Other	1	88	1.14%	0.10%	0.12%
Media		1	8	12.50%	0.10%	0.12%
Police	Middle ranks	1	6	16.67%	0.10%	0.12%
Professional classes	Arts	1	86	1.16%	0.10%	0.12%
Professional classes	Science	1	5	20.00%	0.10%	0.12%
Accommodation & refreshment	High-ranking	0	35	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Agriculture	Middle-ranking	0	1	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Apprentices		0	69	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Building trade	Low-ranking	0	5	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Colonial service		0	10	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
East India Company	Medical	0	10	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Gardening	Middle-ranking	0	117	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Government	High-ranking	0	6	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Government	Middle-ranking	0	73	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Household duties		0	133	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Management		0	53	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Miscellaneous		0	1	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
People in institutions		0	48	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Police	Lower ranks	0	79	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Primary roles	Low-ranking	0	21	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Professional classes	Engineering	0	48	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Professional classes	Miscellaneous	0	9	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Unemployed		0	12	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Totals		1022	44181	2.31%	100.00%	

Table 5.10: Cheltenham District in 1851 by Socio-economic Group[236]

Socio-economic Group	Irish-born	Total Population	Irish-born % of Group	% of Irish-born population	% of Total Population
Low	402	24,658	1.63%	39.33%	55.81%
High	377	6,069	6.21%	36.89%	13.74%
Servants	97	4,699	2.06%	9.49%	10.64%
Unclear	79	2,141	3.69%	7.73%	4.85%
Others	67	6,614	1.01%	6.56%	14.97%
Total	**1,022**	**44,181**	**2.31%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**

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[236] I-CeM after reclassification of occupations

Table 5.11: Cheltenham in 1851 by socio-economic group and sex[237]

Socio-economic Group	Males			
	Irish-born	Irish % of Total Irish	Others	Total
High	134	35.5%	1934	2068
Low	191	47.5%	10832	11023
Others	32	47.8%	3305	3337
Servants	17	17.5%	523	540
Unclear	9	11.4%	548	557
Total	**383**	**37.5%**	**17142**	**17525**

Socio-economic Group	Females			
	Irish-born	Irish % of Total Irish	Others	Total
High	203	53.8%	3389	3592
Low	202	50.2%	12445	12647
Others	32	47.8%	2982	3014
Servants	70	72.2%	3840	3910
Unclear	61	77.2%	1402	1463
Total	**568**	**55.6%**	**24058**	**24626**

Socio-economic Group	Sex Unknown			
	Irish-born	Irish % of Total Irish	Others	Total
High	40	10.6%	369	409
Low	9	2.2%	979	988
Others	3	4.5%	260	263
Servants	10	10.3%	239	249
Unclear	9	11.4%	112	121
Total	**71**	**6.9%**	**1959**	**2030**

Socio-economic Group	Total			
	Irish-born	Irish % of Total Irish	Others	Total
High	377	100.0%	5692	6069
Low	402	100.0%	24256	24658
Others	67	100.0%	6547	6614

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[237] Ibid.

Servants	97	100.0%	4602	4699
Unclear	79	100.0%	2062	2141
Total	**1022**	**100.0%**	**43159**	**44181**

Figure 5.5: Socio-economic Groups in Cheltenham in 1851 by Sex[238]

(Source: Graphing Table above)
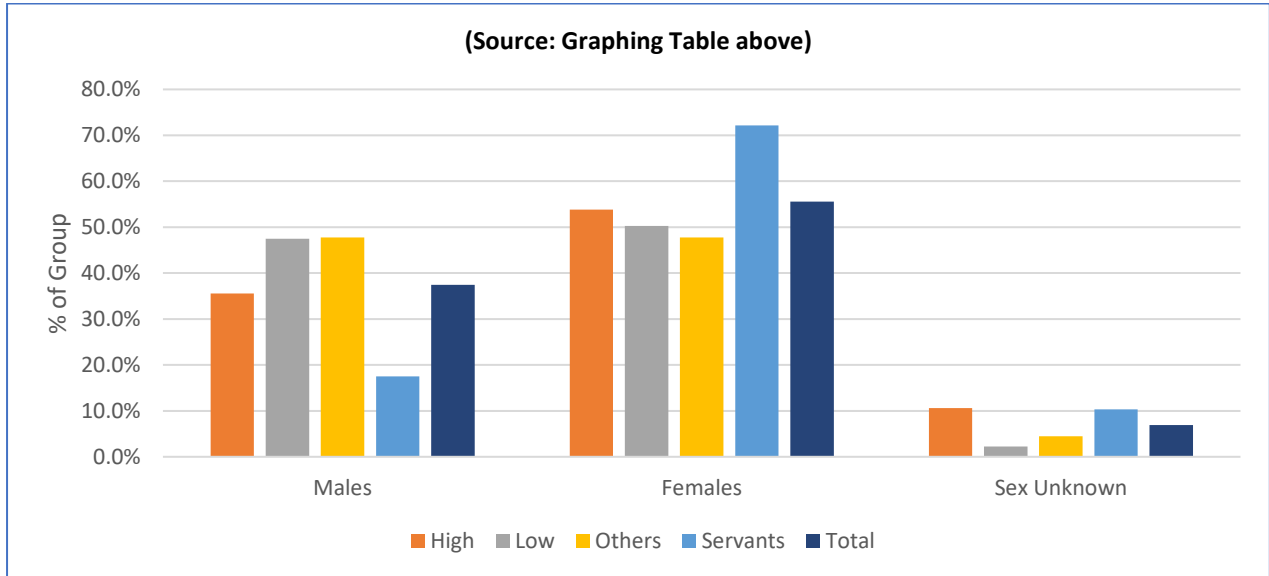
Table 5.12: High-status Irish-born people in Cheltenham in 1851 by Sex and Marital Status[239]

Marital Status	Sex			
	Males	**Females**	**Unknown**	**Total**
Single	59	114	28	201
Married	63	37	4	104
Married, spouse absent	6	11	2	19
Widowed	6	40	4	50
Other	0	1	2	3
Totals	**134**	**203**	**40**	**377**

Table 5.13: High-status Irish-born people in Cheltenham in 1851 by Age Band, Sex and Marital Status[240]

Age Band	Marital status	Males	Females	Unknown
00-19	Single	45	27	14
00-19	Widowed	0	1	0
00-19	Other	0	1	1
20-39	Single	8	42	5
20-39	Married	13	13	0
20-39	Married (spouse absent)	3	4	0
20-39	Widowed	1	4	1
40-59	Single	4	24	4
40-59	Married	26	17	4
40-59	Married (spouse absent)	2	4	2
40-59	Widowed	2	9	0
60+	Single	2	21	5
60+	Married	24	7	0
60+	Married (spouse absent)	1	3	0
60+	Widowed	3	26	3
60+	Other	0	0	1
Source: I-CeM				

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[239] I-CeM

[240] Ibid.

Table 5.14: Median Age of Population of Cheltenham in 1851 by Sex and Socio-economic Group[241]

Socio-economic Group	Males								
	Irish-born			Others			Total		
	Persons	% of Total	Median Age	Persons	% of Total	Median Age	Persons	% of Total	Median Age
High	134	35.5%	38	1934	34.0%	35	2068	34.1%	35
Low	191	47.5%	40	10832	44.7%	19	11023	44.7%	19
Servants	17	17.5%	29.5	523	11.4%	23	540	11.5%	24
Others	32	47.8%	37	3305	50.5%	29	3337	50.5%	29
Unclear	9	11.4%	19.5	548	26.6%	10	557	26.0%	10
Total	**383**	**37.5%**	**38**	**17142**	**39.7%**	**22**	**17525**	**39.7%**	**23**

Socio-economic Group	Females								
	Irish-born			Others			Total		
	Persons	% of Total	Median Age	Persons	% of Total	Median Age	Persons	% of Total	Median Age
High	203	53.8%	42	3389	59.5%	39	3592	59.2%	39
Low	202	50.2%	35	12445	51.3%	21	12647	51.3%	21
Servants	70	72.2%	29	3840	83.4%	24	3910	83.2%	24
Others	32	47.8%	35	2982	45.5%	28	3014	45.6%	28
Unclear	61	77.2%	36.5	1402	68.0%	29	1463	68.3%	30
Total	**568**	**55.6%**	**36**	**24058**	**55.7%**	**25**	**24626**	**55.7%**	**25**

Socio-economic Group	Unknown Sex								
	Irish-born			Others			Total		
	Persons	% of Total	Median Age	Persons	% of Total	Median Age	Persons	% of Total	Median Age
High	40	10.6%	33	369	6.5%	20.5	409	6.7%	21
Low	9	2.2%	20.5	979	4.0%	11	988	4.0%	11
Servants	10	10.3%	28	239	5.2%	27	249	5.3%	27
Others	3	4.5%	13.5	260	4.0%	17	263	4.0%	17
Unclear	9	11.4%	50.5	112	5.4%	13	121	5.7%	16
Total	**71**	**6.9%**	**30.5**	**1959**	**4.5%**	**15**	**2030**	**4.6%**	**16**

Socio-economic Group	All Sexes								
	Irish-born			Others			Total		
	Persons	% of Total	Median Age	Persons	% of Total	Median Age	Persons	% of Total	Median Age
High	377	100.0%	40	5692	100.0%	36	6069	100.0%	36
Low	402	100.0%	36	24256	100.0%	19	24658	100.0%	20
Servants	97	100.0%	29.5	4602	100.0%	24	4699	100.0%	24

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[241] Ibid.

Others	67	100.0%	36.5	6547	100.0%	28	6614	100.0%	28
Unclear	79	100.0%	37.5	2062	100.0%	22	2141	100.0%	23
Total	**1022**	**100.0%**	**36**	**43159**	**100.0%**	**23**	**44181**	**100.0%**	**24**

Table 5.15: Irish-born Residents of Cheltenham on 1841 census and where they were found on the 1861 census[242]

Where found on 1861 Census	Number of Irish-born People
Still in Cheltenham	113
Known to have died by 1861	70
Found elsewhere in Gloucestershire	7
Found elsewhere in England	30
Not found	679
Total	899

Table 5.16: Irish-born Residents of Cheltenham on 1851 census and where they were found on the 1861 census

Where found on 1861 Census	Number of Irish-born People
Still in Cheltenham	272
Found elsewhere in Gloucestershire	6
Found elsewhere in England	68
Known to have died by 1861	149
Not found	525
Total	1020

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[242] Researcher's biographical survey

Table 5.17: Relationship to Head of Household on Cheltenham Census 1851[243]

Relationship to Head of Household (Grouped)	Irish	% of Irish	Total	% of Total
Apprentice	2	0.20%	95	0.22%
Assistant	2	0.20%	187	0.42%
Boarder	14	1.37%	161	0.36%
Employee	2	0.20%	55	0.12%
Head and Family	586	57.34%	32785	74.21%
Inmate	0	0.00%	30	0.07%
Lodger	172	16.83%	2592	5.87%
Mixed Households	0	0.00%	7	0.02%
None specified	31	3.03%	1416	3.20%
Orphans	0	0.00%	2	0.00%
Patient	3	0.29%	56	0.13%
Scholar	28	2.74%	295	0.67%
Servant	103	10.08%	4973	11.26%
Student	2	0.20%	47	0.11%
Teacher	0	0.00%	2	0.00%
Visitor	77	7.53%	1478	3.35%
Total	1022	100.00%	44181	100.00%

[243] I-CeM

Table 5.18: Couples on the 1851 Census of Cheltenham where at least one party was Irish-born[244]

High-Status		
Husband	**Wife**	**Couples**
British	Irish	20
Empire	Irish	1
Irish	British	38
Irish	Empire	6
Irish	Irish	10
Irish	Other	1
Other	Irish	1

Low-Status		
Husband	**Wife**	**Couples**
British	Irish	17
Irish	British	23
Irish	Irish	17
"Irish"=Born in Ireland. "British"= born in England, Wales, Scotland, Channel Islands, IOM. "Empire"=born in British Empire excl. United Kingdom "Other"=Born elsewhere.		

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[244] Researcher's biographical survey

Table 5.19: Province of Birth of Irish-born Residents of Cheltenham in 1841, 1851 or 1861[245]

Province	Number	% of Total
Unidentified	1599	62.15%
Munster	399	15.51%
Leinster	398	15.47%
Ulster	125	4.86%
Connacht	52	2.02%
Total	2573	100.00%

Table 5.20: Province of Birth of Irish-born Residents of Cheltenham in 1841, 1851 or 1861 by Social Class[246]

Low Status				High Status			
Province	Number	% of Total	% of Identified	Province	Number	% of Total	% of Identified
Unidentified	628	66.38%		Unidentified	519	57.67%	
Munster	179	18.92%	56.29%	Leinster	204	22.67%	53.54%
Leinster	89	9.41%	27.99%	Munster	93	10.33%	24.41%
Connacht	24	2.54%	7.55%	Ulster	68	7.56%	17.85%
Ulster	26	2.75%	8.18%	Connacht	16	1.78%	4.20%
Total	946	100.00%		Total	900	100.00%	

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[245] From biographical survey

[246] Researcher's biographical survey

Table 5.21: County of Birth of Irish Born Residents of Cheltenham in 1841, 1851 or 1861 by Social Class[247]

Low Status					High Status				
County	Province	Number	% of Total	% of Identified	County	Province	Number	% of Total	% of Identified
Unidentified		628	66.38%		Unidentified		519	57.67%	
Cork	Munster	141	14.90%	44.34%	Dublin	Leinster	147	16.33%	38.58%
Dublin	Leinster	49	5.18%	15.41%	Cork	Munster	37	4.11%	9.71%
Tipperary	Munster	16	1.69%	5.03%	Limerick	Munster	20	2.22%	5.25%
Galway	Connacht	12	1.27%	3.77%	Down	Ulster	19	2.11%	4.99%
Waterford	Munster	9	0.95%	2.83%	Antrim	Ulster	16	1.78%	4.20%
Kilkenny	Leinster	7	0.74%	2.20%	Waterford	Munster	13	1.44%	3.41%
Mayo	Connacht	6	0.63%	1.89%	Tipperary	Munster	11	1.22%	2.89%
Wicklow	Leinster	6	0.63%	1.89%	Londonderry	Ulster	10	1.11%	2.62%
All other counties		78	8.25%	24.53%	All other counties		118	13.11%	30.97%
Total		946	100.00%		Total		900	100.00%	

[247] Ibid.

5.2. Classification of Occupations and Socio-economic groups

Table 5.22: Occupation categorisation employed in this study (adapted from Wrigley PST)

Category	Subcategory	Examples of occupations included
Accommodation & refreshment	Low-ranking	Lodging House Keeper; Beer, ale seller; Waiter; Others in restaurants etc.; Others in public houses etc.; Others in hotels and restaurants
Accommodation & refreshment	Middle-ranking	Innkeeper; Non-domestic cook; Publican; Victualler; Boarding House Keeper
Accommodation & refreshment	High-ranking	Hotel keeper
Agriculture	Low-ranking	Agricultural labourer; Cattle husbandry; Agriculture, other; Servant in husbandry; Farm work, other, Sheep husbandry; Horse husbandry
Agriculture	Middle-ranking	Husbandman
Agriculture	High-ranking	Farmer; Management, farming; Management, agriculture; Veterinary surgeon (qualified eg MRCVS); Yeoman
Apprentices		Apprentice (where trade unknown)
Building trade	Low-ranking	Thatcher
Building trade	Middle-ranking	Carpenter; Mason; Plasterer; Painter, decorator; Bricklayer, Plumber; Builder; Joiner; Slater; Glazier
Capitalists		Capitalist; Shop owner; Ship, vehicle owner; Owners, possessors of capital; Factory owner, Mine owner; Other owners of capital; Entrepreneur; Indefinite occupation, other
Clerks		Clerk; Law clerk; Bank clerk; Clerk, Post Office; Rail transport clerk, Road transport clerk; Clerk in manufacturing industry; Clerk, Home service; Clerk, public office; Local government service clerk
Colonial service		Ceylon Civil Service; Foreign service; Foreign service, other; Colonial service
Commercial services		Commercial traveller; Other agents; Agents; Management, administrative services; Pensioner, dependent, Administrative officers
Domestic service	Low-ranking	Servant; Housemaid; Housekeeper; Lady's maid/Gentleman's servant; Footman, Kitchen staff; Personal servants; Others in domestic service; Outdoor service; Domestic coachman
Domestic service	Middle-ranking	Domestic cook; Tutor, lecturer, governess
Domestic service	High-ranking	Butler; House steward
Clothing manufacture	Low-ranking	Dressmaker; Shoe-/bootmaker; Tailor; Hatter, milliner, bonnet maker etc.; Clothing manufacture, other, Maker of underwear;

		Knitter; Hosiery maker; Maker of indoor clothing; Umbrella manufacture
East India Company	Civil Service	East India Company's Civil Service
East India Company	Medical	East India Company's Medical Service
East India Company	Military	Officer East India Company's Army; Officer East India Company's Navy
East India Company	Role unknown	East India Company's Service
Entertainment		Instrumentalist; Sport, other; Theatre; Entertainment, other; Music, Horse racing; Entertainment
Financial services		Accountant; Auctioneer; Banker; Broker; Book keeper, Management, banking; Insurance other; Financial clerk; Other financial services; Miscellaneous financial services
Gardening	Low-ranking	Gardener (general); Garden labourer; Gamekeeper et sim.; Gardener (domestic); Pensioner, dependent, Forester.
Gardening	Middle-ranking	Market gardeners, nurserymen; Park keeper
Government	Middle-ranking	Inland revenue service; Customs and excise service; Other parish, town officer; Poor law service; Parish, town officer, Government service, other; Workhouse official; Sheriff, sheriff's officer; Other county, local officer; Social services
Government	High-ranking	Senior county official; MP; Senior government official
Household duties		Household duties
People of independent means		Independent means; Annuitant
People in institutions		Prisoners; Sick, crippled; Inmate of institution
Labourers	Building	Bricklayer's labourer; Mason's labourer; Builder's labourer
Labourers	Other	Labourer, road construction; Coal mining labourer; Rail transport labourer; Worker; Alcoholic drink, labourer, Maritime service labourer; Miller's labourer; Labourer, glassmaking
Labourers	General	Labourer
Owners of land and property		Land, property owner; Pensioner, dependent
Media		Journalist; Photographer; Newspaper publishing
Management		Management, Post Office; Management, road construction; Management, animal powered road transport; Management, rail transport; Management, railway construction, Management, construction, public works; Management, quarrying; Management, retail trade; Management, medical services
Military	Low-ranking	Soldier; Naval seaman

Military	Middle-ranking	Army; Non-commissioned officer; RM, petty officer; Naval petty officer; Militia
Military	High-ranking	Army Officer; Naval officer; Army Officer (Half Pay); Navy Officer (Half Pay); Militia officer, RM, officer; Military officer
Manufacturing and processing	Low-ranking	Butcher; Baker; Blacksmith, smith; Cabinet maker; Beer brewing, Upholsterer; Sawyer; Tin production and processing; Wheelwright; Brick making
Manufacturing and processing	Middle-ranking	Printer, compositor etc.; Miller; Engineer; Musical instrument maker; Goldsmith, Clock maker; Spectacle maker; Organ builder; Perfumer; Silversmith
Miscellaneous		Vagrant
Police	Lower ranks	Police officer (Lower ranks)
Police	Middle ranks	Police officer (middle ranks)
Police	Senior ranks	Police officer (senior ranks)
Paupers, poor relief etc.		Poor, beggar
Primary roles	Low-ranking	Quarrying; Coal miner; Coal mining, other; Stone quarrying
Professional classes	Arts	Artist; Sculptor; Music
Professional classes	Education	Education: school; Tutor, lecturer, governess; Education: art, music, handicraft; Education: humanities; Education: university, Educational management and head teachers; Education: athletic activities; Education: science, medicine, mathematics
Professional classes	Engineering	Architect; Surveyor; Civil engineer
Professional classes	Legal	Lawyer, barrister; Judge, magistrate, JP; Other legal offices
Professional classes	Medical	Doctor, surgeon; Dentist; Pensioner, dependent; Other medical professionals; Medical profession.
Professional classes	Religion	Vicar; Minister; Curate; Rector; Clerical offices, other, Priest; Senior clerical offices
Professional classes	Science	Physical sciences
Professional classes	Miscellaneous	Professions, other
Professional support	Middle-ranking	Nurse; School support; Parish clerk; Midwife; Education support, other, Hospital service; Verger, sexton, churchwarden; Other church officers; Legal support, other; Medical services
Personal services	Low-ranking	Laundry worker; Cleaner; Hairdressing; Chimney sweeping; Refuse collection, Service industries, other; Lamplighter; Undertaker; Warehouseman
Schoolchildren	Low-ranking	Schoolchildren
Schoolchildren	High-ranking	Boarding school pupils
Students in further education		Students
Traders	Low-ranking	Peddler, hawker

Traders	Middle-ranking	Grocer; Draper, mercer; Shopkeeper, shopman, shop worker; Chemist; Coal dealer, Milkman; Sellers of fruit, vegetable products; Linen draper; Wine dealer; Poultry seller
Traders	High-ranking	Merchant
Transport		Messenger (incl. errand boys etc.); Porter etc.; Stables (groom, ostler etc.); Driver (passenger vehicle); Driver (goods eg. carter, haulier, drayman etc.), Passenger road transport, other; Support for rail transport; Road toll collection; Postman; Ships' crew
Unemployed		Unemployed
Unknown, not stated, unclear etc.		No stated occupation; Others of uncertain status; Pensioner, dependent; Illegible or unclear; Foreigner, visitor, stranger, etc., Schoolchildren; Indefinite occupation, other; Uncertain status
Social elite		Gentleman/Lady; Graduate; Titled; Distinguished, titled, gentleman

Table 5.23: Socio-economic Group Classification used in this study

Socio-economic group	Examples of occupation categories included	Examples of specific occupations included
High-status	People of independent means; Agriculture (High-ranking); Owners of land and property; Professional classes (Education); Schoolchildren (High-ranking); Professional classes (Religion); Military (High-ranking); Social élite; Professional classes (Legal)	Fundholder, annuitant; Farmer, Veterinary surgeon (qualified); Landed Proprietor, Owner of Houses; Teacher, lecturer, tutor; Pupils in boarding schools; Vicar, curate, rector, RC priest, Nonconformist minister; Army/Navy/Marines Officer
Others ("middle classes")	Building trade (Middle-ranking); Traders (Middle-ranking); Accommodation & refreshment (Middle-ranking); Manufacturing and processing (Middle-ranking); Professional support (Middle-ranking); Clerks; Commercial services; Gardening (Middle-ranking)	Carpenter, Mason, Plasterer, Painter, Bricklayer; All dealers/traders except merchant/broker or street trader; Innkeeper, publican, victualler, eating house keeper; clockmaker, watchmaker, jeweller, goldsmith; Clerk, assistant to members of professional classes
Low-status	Schoolchildren (Low-ranking); Manufacturing and processing (Low-ranking); Clothing manufacture (Low-ranking); Labourers (General); Transport; Agriculture (Low-ranking); Personal services (Low-ranking); Gardening (Low-ranking); Primary roles (Low-ranking)	Schoolchild living at home; Blacksmith, weaver; Dressmaker, shoemaker, tailor; General labourer, "Labourer"; Rail/road worker, driver, flyman, wheelchairman, porter; Ag Lab, farm labourer, ploughman, shepherd etc.; Workers in mining, quarrying, fishing
Servants	Domestic service (Low-ranking); Domestic service (Middle-ranking); Domestic service (High-ranking)	Maid, groom, footman etc.; Valet, gentleman's/lady's servant; Butler, housekeeper
Unclear	Unknown, not stated, unclear etc.; Household duties; People in institutions; Apprentices (trade unknown)	Not specified, illegible, unidentified etc.; Housewife etc.; Invalid, patient, lunatic; Apprentice (trade unknown)

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