



UNIVERSITY of
ULSTER

THE IRISH TRAVELLING PEOPLE

a resource collection

editor

Aileen L'Amie

Volume I : Early History - Part B

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER LIBRARY

Shelve in Librarian's office

THE LIBRARY

University of Ulster at Jordanstown

Please return to or renew at the library from which this was borrowed by the date stamped below.

100 235 816

U.U.

due

19/6/89

Form AL 6 - 5/85J

THE IRISH TRAVELLING PEOPLE

a resource collection

editor

Aileen L'Amie

Volume I : Early History - Part B

100235816



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Editor's note		1B1
2.	Barrel top wagons (drawings)		1B2
3.	"The Idyllic Life" (photograph)		1B3
4.	Traveller life (photograph by Jinnie Fiennes)		1B4
5.	Acton, Thomas (1983)	"Gypsies in Britain" (extract)	1B5
6.	Carberry, Mary (1937)	<u>The Farm by Lough Gar</u> (extract)	1B10
7.	Ó Danacher, Caoimín	"Some Marriage Customs"	1B10
8.	Clifford, Sigerson (1955)	<u>Ballads of a Bogman</u> (6 poems)	1B11
9.	L'Amie, Aileen (1985)	"Account Book of The Rev. Andrew Ronan", c. 1672-80	1B26
10.	McCarthy, Patricia (1970-71)	"Itinerancy and Poverty" (extracts)	1B27
11.	McCarthy, Patricia (1985)	Statement re Sub-Culture of Poverty	1B36
12.	Sandford, Jeremy (1973)	<u>Gypsies</u> (extracts)	1B38
13.	"Galway 1968"	4 photographs	1B40
14.	"Tarpaulin and Canvas Tents" (photograph by Kevin C. Kearns) (1978)		1B42
15.	ni Shuinear, Sínead (1981)	"The Case for Recognition of the Irish Travellers as a separate Ethnic Group"	1B43
16.	ni Shuinear, Sínead (1979)	"Wędrowcy Irlandzcy Problem Odrębności Kulturowej I Etnicznej" (extract and translation)	1B92
17.	Simson, Walter (1865)	<u>A History of the Gypsies</u> (extracts)	1B111
18.	Smith, David (1985)	"Irish Travellers: some references in English archives"	1B113

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 19. | Synge, J.M.
(1907) | "At a Wicklow Fair" | 1B115 |
| 20. | Synge, J.M.
(1966 ed.) | <u>In Wicklow, West Kerry and Connemara</u>
(extract) | 1B117 |
| 21. | Synge, J.M.
(1910) | <u>In Wicklow, In West Kerry, In the
Congested Districts</u>
(extracts) | 1B121 |
| 22. | Saddlemeyer, Ann
(1967) | "Notes on Synge's <u>The Tinker's
Wedding</u> " | 1B122 |
| 23. | Saddlemeyer, Ann
(1968) | "Extracts from Synge's Notebook 33" | 1B123 |
| 24. | The Tinker
(1906) | picture from <u>The Shanachie</u> | 1B124 |
| 25. | Walsh, Maurice
(1953) | <u>The Road to Nowhere</u>
(extracts) | 1B125 |
| 26. | Walsh, Maurice
(1951) | <u>Son of a Tinker</u> (extracts) | 1B126 |
| 27. | Weldon, Helen
(1906) | "Tinker, Sorners and Other Vabagonds" | 1B127 |
| 28. | Yates, Dora E.
(1948) | review of ' <u>Parasites without Power</u> '
(see Volume 1A, pp. 54-8) | 1B130 |
| 29. | Coimisiun Bealoideasa
Eireann
(Irish Folklore
Commission)
(1952) | na Tinceirí | 1B132 |
| 30. | <u>Belfast News-Letter</u>
(1790, 1791, 1799 &
1800) | extracts | 1B138 |
| 31. | Borde Failte and the
N.I. Tourist Board
(1980) | "Famous Irish Fairs" | 1B140 |
| 32. | Oul' Lamma Fair
(1984) | Picture and description | 1B148 |
| 33. | References to Irish Tinkers in Wales
(1908) | | 1B116 |
| 34. | Acknowledgements | | 1B149 |

Editor's note to Volume 1 : Early History, Part 13

This volume forms part of a resource collection on the Irish Travelling People. The collection and its accompanying teaching kit of photographs, slides and tape are held in the library of the University of Ulster at Jordanstown. In addition to the 14 volumes listed below there are two supplementary collections, the first containing three reports/surveys by the West Midlands Education Authority and the second containing some recent annual reports of councils and committees for Travelling People in Ireland.

- VOLUME 1 : Early History (Parts A-C)
- VOLUME 2 : The Republic of Ireland 1951-81 (Parts A-G)
- VOLUME 3 : Northern Ireland (Parts A-D)
- VOLUME 4 : Britain
- VOLUME 5 : The United States of America
- VOLUME 6 : Shelta, the secret language (Parts A-C)
- VOLUME 7 : Folktales and Folk Music
- VOLUME 8 : Education (Parts A-E)
- VOLUME 9 : Gypsy Site Provision in England and Wales (Parts A-D)
- VOLUME 10 : Table of Contents and Bibliography
- VOLUME 11 : Health and Welfare
- VOLUME 12 : Annual Reports (Parts A-E)
- VOLUME 13 : Republic of Ireland 1982-85
- VOLUME 14 : Gypsies and Other Nomadic Groups

Due to the amount of material some volumes have had to be bound in separate sections, eg Volume 6, Part A and Volume 6, Part B. Many of the volumes contain material which has been specially written for the collection. The page numbers in each volume are prefixed by the volume number, hence 5.16 refers to volume 5 page 16 and 12A4 to volume 12 section A page 4. The supplement page numbers are prefixed by the letter 'S' followed by the page number. Any other page number present will relate to the original book or journal from which the material has been reproduced. Where the material consists of an extract or extracts this fact is indicated in the table of contents, eg. Maher, Sean (1972) The Road to God Knows Where, (extracts pp146-9). Where all or part of an article appeared directly relevant to more than one area of the collection it has been included in each of the volumes concerned.

The term Early History has been taken to include the period up to 1950. However some pre-1950 material can be found in Volumes 3 - 8 where its inclusion was considered to be more appropriate.

Thanks are due to many people whose help made it possible to compile this collection. Special thanks are due to the staff at the University of Ulster Library, to Carole Blair and May Crumlin who checked the page numbering and to Muriel Béeckman and Sadie Walsh who cheerfully completed a massive amount of typing. A full list of acknowledgements can be found in Part B of this volume.

Aileen L'Amie

University of Ulster (Jordanstown)
April 1986

...the volume form part of a ... collection ...
 ...the collection and its accompanying ...
 ...the list of ...
 ...the ...

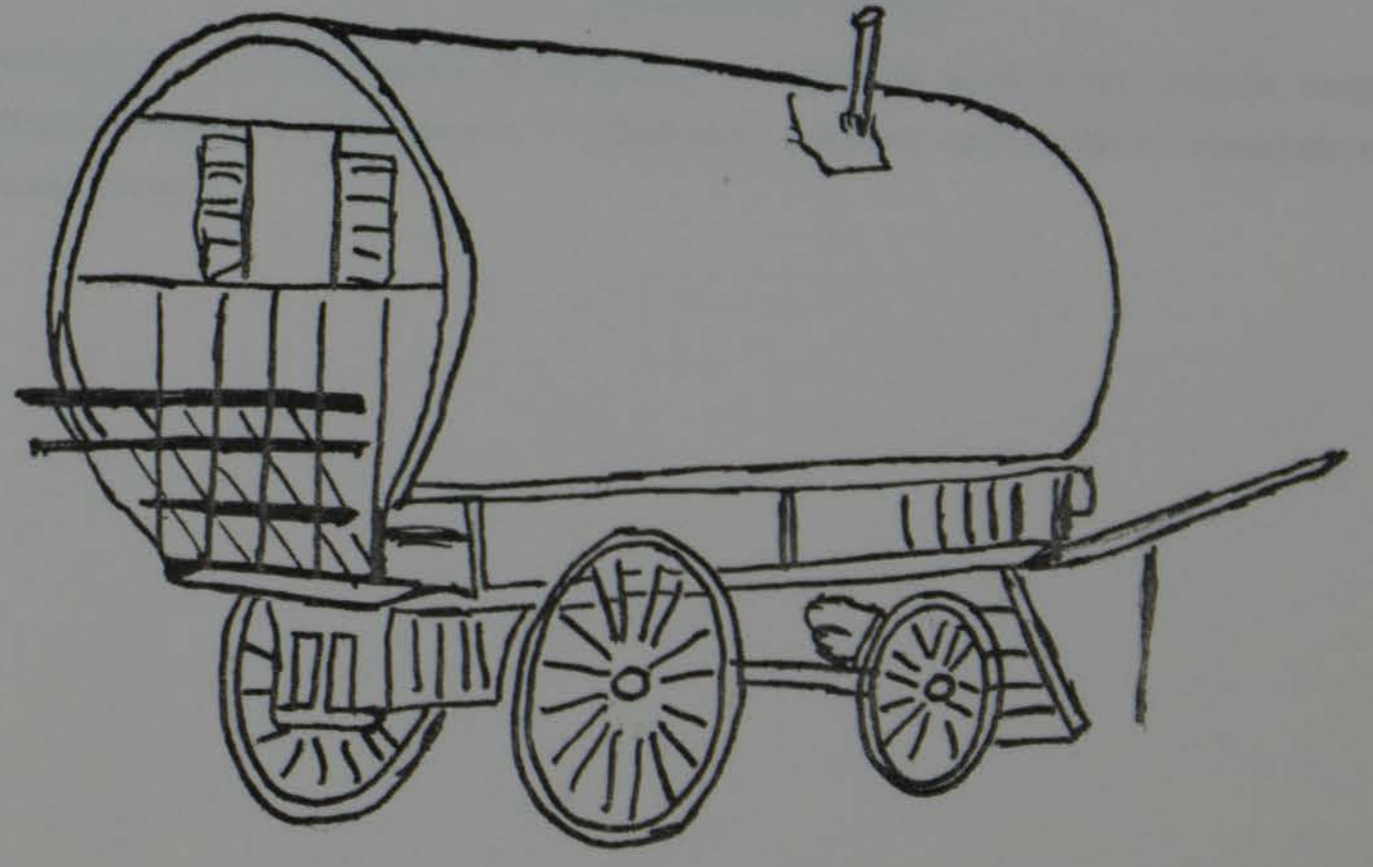
- 1 : Early History (1840-1850)
- 2 : The ...
- 3 : ...
- 4 : ...
- 5 : ...
- 6 : ...
- 7 : ...
- 8 : ...
- 9 : ...
- 10 : ...
- 11 : ...
- 12 : ...
- 13 : ...
- 14 : ...

...the ...
 ...the ...
 ...the ...
 ...the ...
 ...the ...

...the ...
 ...the ...

...the ...
 ...the ...

...the ...
 ...the ...





THE IDYLIC LIFE?

Colourful picture used on calendar. Depicts what many people imagine as the Gypsy/Traveller lifestyle - pleasant weather and readily available picturesque camp sites.



A more realistic picture of Traveller life.
Traveller barrel-top wagon at (unofficial?) site
(early 1980's).

Insight Cards, folio 4, No. 4.
Photographed by Jinnie Fiennes
Published Thompson Price Ltd., Dublin.

1 History

1.1.1. The conventional dates given for the first mention of Gypsies in the British Isles are 1505 for Scotland⁽¹⁾, 1514 in England⁽²⁾, 1579 in Wales⁽³⁾. None of the references at these dates, however, are to the entry of "Egyptians", "Gipcions" or "Gibbsies"; all seem to refer to groups already well-established in the country. It is likely, therefore, that, as in other West European countries, initial immigration of Romani groups took place in the fifteenth century.

For Ireland the historical record is less clear, and indeed, less examined, in part because the Irish government has discouraged historical study as irrelevant to current policy problems.⁽⁴⁾ In this they have been supported by the Roman Catholic establishment, and indeed the only academic study to treat the question of the ethnic origins of Irish Travellers seriously, that of Sinead ni Shuinear⁽⁵⁾, was suppressed by the very charitable body that commissioned it.

The situation is complicated by the fact that Irish commercial nomads visited other countries before, in all probability, there was any Romani immigration to Western Europe.⁽⁶⁾ No doubt in Ireland, as in other West European countries, Romani immigrants were at first distinct from other commercial nomads. In all West European countries, however, in the sixteenth century, there occurred inflation, large-scale unemployment, war, the decline of feudalism, ethnic persecution of Gypsies, and the building of nation states. This had everywhere the effect of severely limiting inter-state migration for two centuries, and consolidating local commercial-nomadic populations into single ethnic groups, each with their own dialects, usually secret. But whereas in the English, Welsh and border Scottish dialects the non-English vocabulary is predominantly Romanes, in the Irish Traveller dialect the non-English special vocabulary is predominantly pre 16th century⁽⁷⁾ Celtic backslang, (with not more than a tenth of

Romanes-derived special vocabulary). We might, I suppose, think of the English and Welsh Gypsies as Romani groups which absorbed local commercial nomads, and the Irish Travellers as a local commercial nomadic group which managed to absorb Romani immigrants to its area; but that would be to ignore the Central and Northern Scottish Travellers whose dialect includes approximately equal amounts of Romani and Celtic-backslang special vocabulary.

The fact of the matter is that all four of the "old" Gypsy groups in Britain have to be seen as amalgams of local commercial nomads and Romani immigrants formed some time after the original Romani immigration during the great persecutions of the latter half of the sixteenth century. As they are at present constituted, these ethnicities are then some four hundred years old.

As to which strand of Romani ethnicity contributed to them, linguistic evidence places them with the North-Western Manouche-Sinti-Tattare continuum rather than, say, with the "Rom". Where it exists in their dialects, the word "Rom" means "husband", not "Gypsy"; the most formal Romani word for Gypsy is "Romanichal". It is possible however, that there were different entry streams, from Scandinavia and from France, for which there is also some linguistic support.

2.9 - Map showing the

The most important period of urbanisation of British Gypsies was clearly the forty years preceding the 1914-18 war, following the agricultural crisis which cut away the material base of rural commercial nomadism in the 1870s and 1880s. (13) By the time of the National Survey carried out in March 1965 only 15% of adult males were engaged in agriculture or horticulture (and a further 2% in timber or logging, as opposed to 52% in "dealing" - predominantly urban trading. A great many of the Gypsies who remain in urban areas for three-quarters of the year, however, undertake seasonal agricultural work in the summer, however. (14)

In Ireland, however, the shift from predominantly rural to predominantly urban commercial nomadism did not occur till the 1960s; the great immigration to England of Irish Travellers since that time has to be seen as as much a rural-urban migration as an inter-country one.

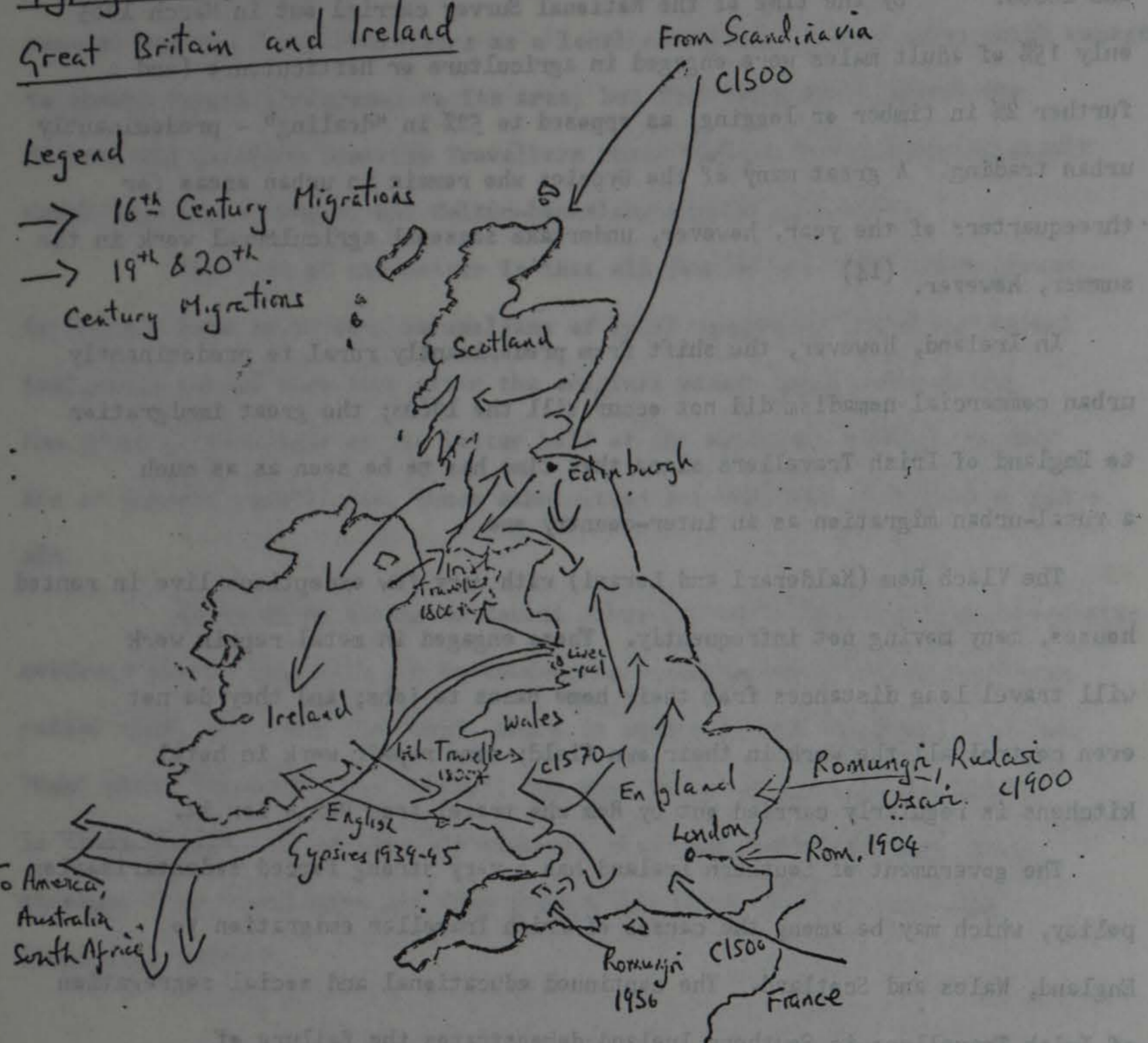
The Vlach Rom (Kalderari and Lovari) with very few exceptions live in rented houses, many moving not infrequently. Those engaged in metal repair work will travel long distances from their home bases to jobs; and they do not even control all the work in their own field; some repair work in hotel kitchens is regularly carried out by Rom who travel from Paris for it.

The government of Southern Ireland has a very strong forced sedentarisation policy, which may be among the causes of Irish Traveller emigration to England, Wales and Scotland. The continued educational and social segregation of Irish Travellers in Southern Ireland demonstrates the failure of forced sedentarisation as an assimilation programme. Rather than seeing house-dwelling as opposed to caravan- or tent-dwelling as the term "sedentarisation" implies, we should see both as part of the flexibility of Gypsy economic strategies.

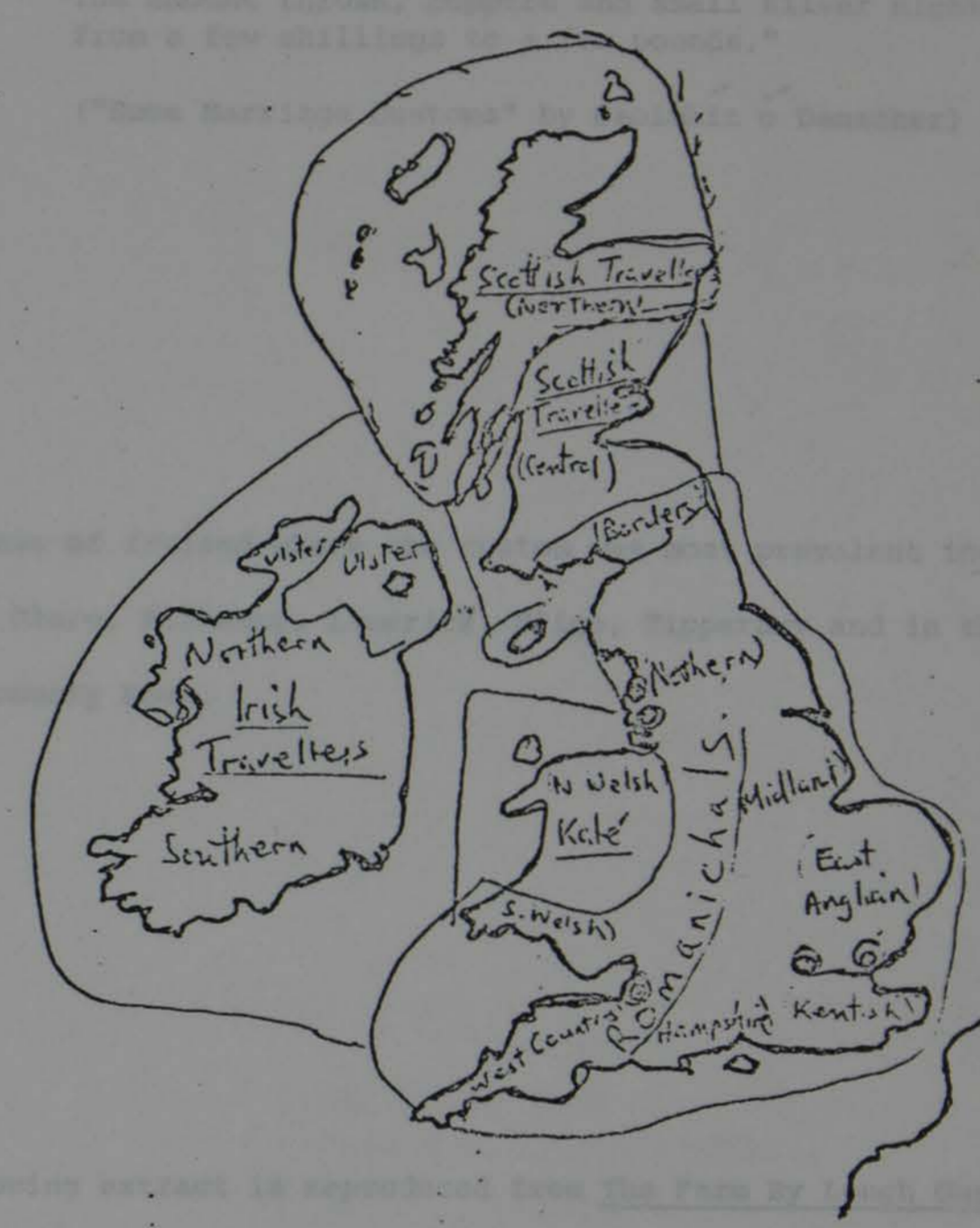
NB For full text, see Volume 14

1.4. Map showing Gypsy Immigration to Great Britain and Ireland

Legend
→ 16th Century Migrations
→ 19th & 20th Century Migrations



2.4 Map Showing the Home territories of the "old" Gypsy groups in Great Britain and Ireland, according to major dialect-group boundaries, c.1900



Legend
 — Boundary of Dialect group in the 19th Century
 Romanichals Group Name
 East Anglian Region, as perceived by Travellers
 © Some towns with Rom populations in the 20th Century
 — London, Southend, Bristol, Liverpool, Blackpool.

THE THROWING OF MONEY AT WEDDINGS

In some areas of Ireland it was customary to throw money to the crowd after the wedding ceremony -

"In most cases the money was intended for beggars and tramps who assembled for the occasion. ---

The amount thrown, coppers and small silver might vary from a few shillings to a few pounds."

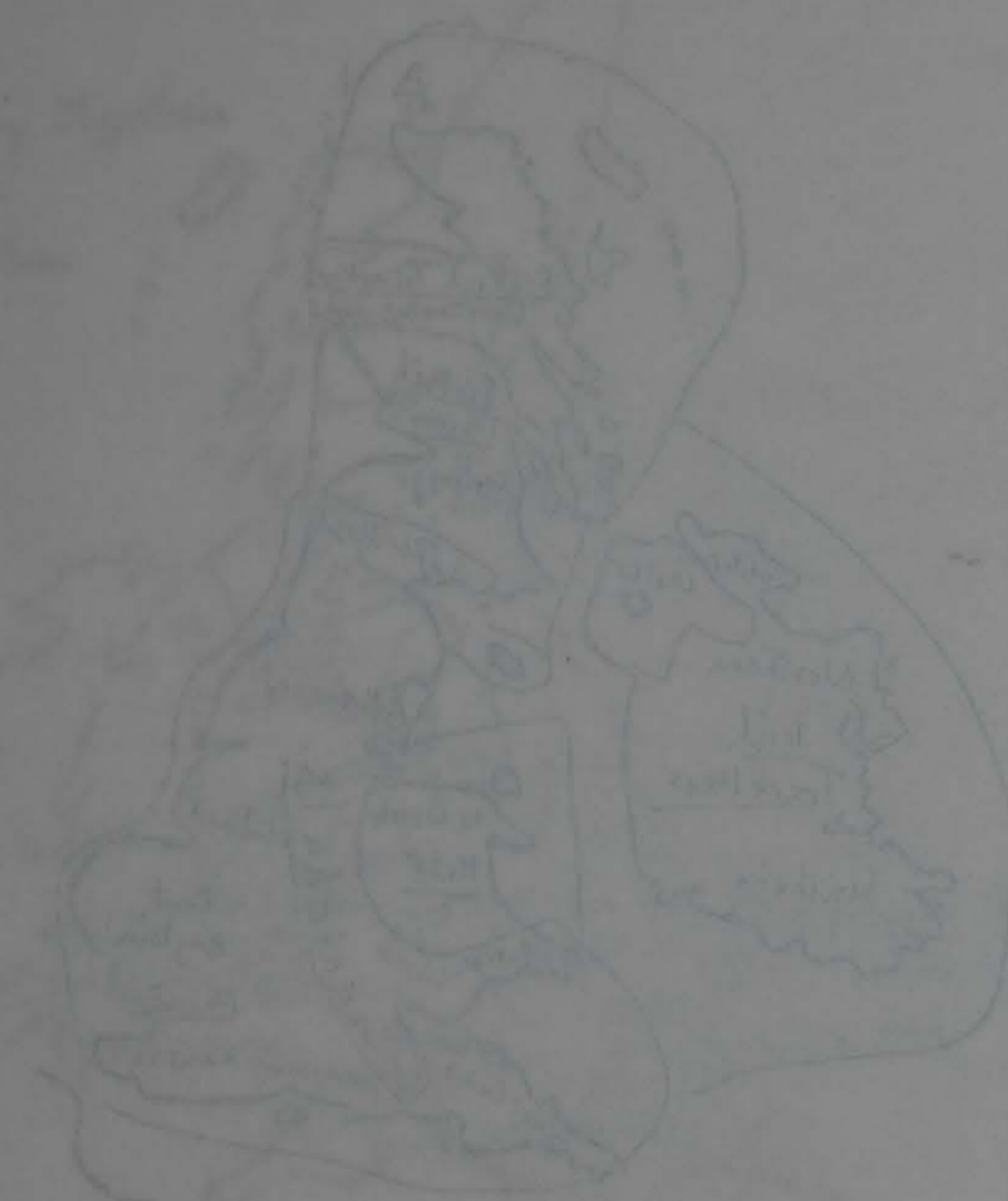
("Some Marriage Customs" by Caoimhín Ó Danachair)

Those areas of Ireland where the custom was most prevalent included counties Clare, Kilkenny, Limerick, Sligo, Tipperary and in the Newry area of county Down.

The following extract is reproduced from The Farm By Lough Gur by Mary Carbery, pub. Longmans, Green and Co., London 1937, pp. 272-3

"We arrive at Harris's Hotel, Knocklong, and step into a throng of beggars, not our own, but pushing, vociferous creatures from Limerick. Richard throws them coppers which the waiter has in readiness at door; he knows the etiquette of weddings."

Handwritten notes at the top of the page, including "2.1.18" and "These territories of the 'old' Gypsy groups in Great Britain and Ireland, according to the 'distinct-gypsy' boundaries, c.1900'".



Handwritten notes at the bottom of the page, including "Legend", "Boundaries of 'distinct-gypsy' in the 19th Century", "Some towns with Rom populations in the 20th Century", and "London, Southsea, Cardiff, Liverpool, Glasgow".

THE BALLAD OF THE TINKER'S SON

I was a tinker's son
The day the world was young
And I was a tinker's son
The day the world was young

BALLADS OF A BOGMAN

O DRINK FOR THE TINKER'S SON
TINKER MAN

BY

SIGERSON CLIFFORD

The tinker's son
The day the world was young
The tinker's son
The day the world was young

My tinker's son
The day the world was young
My tinker's son
The day the world was young

The tinker's son
The day the world was young
The tinker's son
The day the world was young

The tinker's son
The day the world was young
The tinker's son
The day the world was young

LONDON

MACMILLAN & CO LTD

NEW YORK · ST MARTIN'S PRESS

1955

The tinker's son
The day the world was young

The tinker's son
The day the world was young

The tinker's son
The day the world was young

The tinker's son
The day the world was young

The tinker's son
The day the world was young

The tinker's son
The day the world was young

The tinker's son
The day the world was young

The following poems from Ballads of a Bogman by Sigerson Clifford are reproduced by permission of The Mercier Press Ltd., Cork who are shortly to publish a new edition of this collection.

BALLADS
OF A BOG MAN

O, DRINK YOUR PORTER,
TINKER MAN

O, DRINK your porter, tinker man,
And wipe your creamy mouth,
The dust is white upon the roads,
The wind red from the south,
And where's the sense in footing fast
When your throat's on fire with drought?

Come, perch upon the barrel's edge
And slug the porter down,
We'll swop tales of the tinker men,
With women lean and brown,
Who sing the roads when old King Puck
Reigns in Killorglin town. . . .

tinker: the Irish gipsy. Often a competent tinsmith but usually engaged in the buying and selling of horses, mules and donkeys. It is held that the tinkers are the descendants of the Irish clans who supported James II, and who were, in consequence, dispossessed by William of Orange.

slug: from the Gaelic. To drink quickly.

King Puck: At the famous three-day fair held during August in Killorglin, County Kerry, a he-goat is crowned king. The origin of the custom is unknown.

THE BALLAD OF THE TINKER'S SON

I WAS in school, 'twas the first of May,
The day the tinker came
With his wild wide eyes like a frightened hare's,
And his head with its thatch on flame.

We liked the length of his bare brown legs,
The patches upon his clothes,
The grimy strength of his unwashed hands
And the freckles about his nose.

The master polished his rimless specs
And he stared at him hard and long,
Then he stood him up on a shaky bench
And called on him for a song.

The tinker boy looked at our laughing lips,
Then with voice like a timid bird's
He followed the master's bidding
And these are his singing words.

'My father was jailed for sheep-stealing,
My mother is black as a witch,
My sister off-ran with the Sheridan clan,
And my brother's dead-drunk in a ditch.

'O, Tralee jail would kill the devil,
But Tralee jail won't kill my da,
I'll mend ye a kettle for one-and-fourpence
And bring home porter to my ma.'

He bowed his head as the schoolhouse shook
With the cheers of everyone,
Then the master made me share my desk
With the raggedy tinker's son.

The days dragged by and he sat down there,
His brown eyes still afraid,
He heard the scholars' drowsy hum
And, turning to me, he said . . .

'Now what would I want with X and Y
And I singing the crooked towns,
Or showing a drunken farmer
The making of silver crowns?

'And will Euclid teach me to light a fire
Of green twigs in the rain,
Or how to twist a pheasant's neck
So it will not shout with pain?

'And what would I want with ancient verse
Or the meaning of Latin words
When all the poetry I'll ever need
Rings the throats of the singing birds?'

But he stayed at school and his flowering mind
Grew quick as a swooping hawk;
Then came a day when we said goodbye
To the master who smelt of chalk.

He went to the life of the ribbon roads
And the lore of the tinker bands;
They chained my bones to an office stool
And my soul to a clock's cold hands.

But I often thought of my tinker friend
And I cursed the smirking luck
That didn't make me a tinker man
Fighting the road to Puck.

With a red-haired wife and a piebald horse,
And a splendid caravan,
Roving the roads with Cartys and Wards,
The O'Briens or the Coffey clan.

The years went by and the Trouble came,
And I found myself again
Back where I whittled the worn desks,
With the mountains and the rain.

They put a trench-coat on my back,
And in my hands a gun,
And up in the hills with the fighting men
I found the tinker's son.

And there on the slopes of the Kerry hills
Our love grew still more strong,
And we watched the wrens on the yellow whins
Spill their thimblefuls of song.

There came a truce and I shook his hand,
For a while our fighting done;
But I never spoke a word again
To the red-haired tinker's son. . . .

'Tis many a year since he went away
And over the roads the vans
Wheel gaily to horse and cattle fairs
With the O'Brien and the Coffey clans.

The tinker's son should be back again
With the roads and the life he knew,
But I put a bullet through his brain
In nineteen twenty-two.

The Trouble : the Anglo-Irish war of 1920-21.
Nineteen twenty-two : the Irish Civil War.

THE BALLAD OF THE TINKER'S WIFE

WHEN cocks curved throats for crowing
And cows in slumber kneeled,
She tiptoed out the half-door
And crossed her father's field.

Down the mountain shoulders
The ragged dawnlight came
And a cold wind from the westland
Blew out the last star's flame.

Her father, the strong farmer,
Had horses, sheep and cows,
One hundred verdant acres
And slates upon his house.

And she stole with the starlight
From where her life began
To roam the roads of Ireland
With a travelling tinker man.

His hair was brown and curling,
His eyes were brown as well,
His tongue would charm the hinges
Off the gates of hell.

At Caher fair she saw him
As she was hurrying by,
And the song that he was singing
Would lure lark from the sky.

Her footsteps slowed to standing,
She stood and stared that day;
He made a noose of music
And pulled her heart away.

And so she left her slate-roof
And her father rich and strong
Because her mind was turning
About a tinker's song.

They walked the roads of Ireland,
Went up the hills and down,
Passed many an empty bogland,
Through many a noisy town.

She rode upon the ass-cart
To rest a tired leg,
She learned the lore of tinkers,
And he taught her how to beg.

'The tree-tied house of planter
Is colder than east wind,
The hall-door of the gombeen
Has no welcome for our kind.

'The farmstead of the grabber
Is hungry as a stone,
But the little homes of Kerry
Will give us half their own.'

She cut the cards for girls
And made their eyes glow bright,
She read the palms of women
And saw their lips go tight.

'A dark man will marry you
On a day of June;
There's money across water
Coming to you soon.

'O, he'll be rich and handsome
And I see a bridal feast;
Your daughter will dwell in Dublin,
Your son will be a priest.'

They rode along together,
The woman pale and wan,
The black ass young and giddy,
And the brown-eyed tinker man.

He bought up mules and jennets
And sang songs far and wide;
But she never gave him children
To fill his heart with pride.

She never gave him children
To spoil his sleep with cries,
But she saw his empty arms
And the hunger in his eyes.

She saw the lonely bogland,
She felt the killing wind,
And the fine home of her father
Kept turning in her mind.

She felt the chill rain falling,
She grew tired of it all,
And twisting in the darkness
She died within her shawl.

They dug a cold grave for her
And left her all alone,
And the tinker man went with them,
His heart as grey as stone.

'She was the best of women,
The flower of the ball,
She never gave me children
But that's no blame at all.

'A lass may break her mother's heart,
A son his father's head :
Maybe she is happier now
Sleeping with the dead.'

He drank his fill of porter
And turned his face to life,
And hit the road for Puck Fair
To get another wife.

planter : one of the landed gentry of English origin.

gombeen : an unscrupulous shopkeeper.

grabber : one who buys a farm from which the hereditary owners have been evicted. A very unpopular person in Ireland.

THE TINKER'S WAKE

THE pipes ringed crowns of smoke
About the angel's head
Who frowned from his painted frame
At the tinker stiff on the bed.

They waked him under the thatch,
Talking loud by the candle's flame,
He had died at Angelus-birth
And when he died they came.

Tinker men and their sons,
Shawled women bulky as bears,
They tiptoed over the threshold
And knelt to say their prayers.

He lay on the shaky bed
Nor knew when they crowded in,
His fingers cold on his beads,
A prayer-book under his chin.

They sat on the sugawn chairs
And the stools the neighbours brought,
We gave them porter to drink
And they prayed as they blew the froth.

'God's light be upon his soul,'
Their prayers were a bee's loud drone ;
His ears were deaf to it all
And his lips were dry as a bone.

We gave them tobacco to smoke,
They puffed till the house went white,
Death's seals were over his eyes
And his tongue and his teeth were tight.

We gave them the dark-brown snuff,
'God's crown be on him,' they said.
Their prayers and sneezes were loud
But they could not wake the dead.

Last week his heart was young
And he knew the smell of the earth,
He closed no eye the night
The black ass moaned in birth.

He blew the froth from the pints
Of porter in Bawner's pub,
He sold the black ass's foal
And staggered home to his grub.

He knew the rain-washed moon,
The bell-breasted mountain rills,
And the grey skulls of the rocks
Half buried in the hills.

Many a head he cracked
In the rowdy fair of Puck,
Many a goose he stole
And many a plump-fed duck.

Many a salmon he poached,
But now he will poach no more;
The tinkers knelt and prayed
And went through the open door.

He lay in his stiff brown shroud
Nor knew when they went away,
And under the dying stars
A cock's throat called the day.

He stretched on the shaky bed
Nor knew when the day crept in,
His fingers blank on his beads,
A prayer-book under his chin.

sugawn chairs: chairs with seats made of rope.

THE BALLAD OF THE TINKER'S DAUGHTER

WHEN rooks ripped home at eventide
And trees pegged shadows to the ground,
The tinkers came to Carhan bridge
And camped beside the Famine mound.

With long-eared ass and bony horse,
And blue-wheeled cart and caravan,
And she, the fairest of them all,
The daughter of the tinker clan.

The sun flamed in her red, red hair,
And in her eyes danced stars of mirth,
Her body held the willow's grace,
Her feet scarce touched the springing earth.

The night spread its star-tasselled shawls,
The river gossiped to its stones,
She sat beside the leaping fire
And sang the songs the tinker owns.

The songs as old as turning wheels
And sweet as bird-throats after rain,
Deep wisdom of the wild wet earth,
The pain of joy, the joy of pain.

A farmer going by the road
To tend his cattle in the byre
And saw her like some fairy queen
Between the river and the fire.

Her beauty stirred his brooding blood,
Her magic mounted in his head,
He stole her from her tinker clan
And on the morrow they were wed.

And when the sunlight swamped the hills
And bird-song drowned the river's bells,
The tinkers quenched their hazel fires
And climbed the windy road to Kells.

And from his house she watched them go
With blue-wheeled cart and caravan,
The long-eared ass and bony horse,
And brown-haired woman and tinker man.

She watched them go, she watched them fade
And vanish in the yellow furze;
A cold wind blew across the sun
And silenced all the singing birds.

She saw the months run on and on,
And heard the river fret and foam,
At white of day the roosters called,
At dim of dusk the cows came home.

The crickets strummed their heated harps
In hidden halls behind the hob
And told of distant waterways
Where the black moorhens dive and bob

And shoot the glassy bubbles up
To smash their windows on the stones;
And brown trout hide their spots of gold
Among the river's pebbly bones;

And, too, the ebbing sea that flung
A net of sound about the stars
Set strange hills dancing in her dreams
And meshed her to the wandering cars.

She stole out from her sleeping man
And fled the fields that tied her down,
Her face moved towards the rising sun,
Her back was to the tired town.

She climbed the pallid road to Kells,
Against the hill, against the wind,
In Glenbeigh of the mountain-streams
She came among her tinker-kind.

They bedded her between the wheels
And there her son was born,
She heard the tinker-women's praise
Before she died that morn. . . .

The years flew by like frightened birds
That spill a feather and are gone,
The farmer walked his weedful fields
And made the tinkers travel on.

No more they camped by Carhan bridge
And coaxed their fires to fragrant flame,
They saw him with his dog and gun,
They spat and cursed his name.

And when May hid the hawthorn trees
With stars she stole from out the skies
There came a barefoot tinker lad
With red, red hair and laughing eyes.

He left the road, he crossed the fields,
The farmer shot him in the side,
The smile went from his twisting lips,
He told his name and died.

That evening when the neighbours came
They found the son laid on the floor,
And saw the father swinging dead
Between the window and the door.

They placed the boy upon the cart
And cut the swaying farmer down,
They swear a tinker woman came
With them all the way to town.

The sun flamed in her red, red hair,
And in her eyes danced stars of mirth,
Her body held the willow's grace,
Her feet scarce touched the springing earth.

They buried them in Keelvarnogue
And eyes were moist and lips were wan,
And when the mound was patted down
The tinker maid was gone.

*These things were long before my day,
I only speak with borrowed words,
But that is how the story goes
In Iveragh of the singing birds.*

THE TALE OF THE TINKER MAN

HERE'S a health to you, Bard,
And there's slainte to me,
And may we both have thirsty throats
Till Ireland will be free.
And the bed we'll get in heaven
Let it be 'longside a pub;
Once eternity has liquor,
Hell the use we'll have for grub.

I was never a chap for trouble,
You might class me a man of peace,
If I ever saw fighting in the west
I went whistling to the east.
For a broken skull's no ornament
And bones are hard to mend,
And the big ashplant I carry,
Sure it only flogs the wind.

In Dingle town I met Kitchener
On a day I was five parts full,
And he gave me the silver shilling
To win the war for Bull.
I swopped my ashplant for a rifle,
Wrapped the puttees about my shins,
And clipped three years off Purgat'ry
In France for my liquid sins.

'Twas a queer hotel in the trenches,
Death paged us by day and dark,
For those wicked German snipers
Could shoot the eye from a lark.
But a lifetime of dodging peelers
Is training enough for a gom,
And devil the hole they drilled in me
With bullet, bayonet or bomb.

One day there came a regiment,
To beat a drum in the show,
And an English boy walked towards me
And smiled, and said hello.
Shining gold he was, and handsome
With his bandolier and gun;
Maybe he knew Greek and Latin
But he didn't know the Hun.

So I sat me down to teach him,
Praying he would not forget,
'Boy, don't you show an inch of hair
Above that parapet.'
The laughter crinkled up his lips
And wiped away the rule;
He like every beardless scholar
Thought his schoolmaster a fool.

I tiptoed towards the dugout,
At the door I turned around
As the boy fell like a broken branch
From the parapet to the ground.
He lay there silent on his back,
Staring at the skies,
And he never saw the round red hole
Between his blind blue eyes.

Well, here's a health to you, Bard,
And there's slainte to me,
And may we both have throats to cool
Till Ireland will be free.
And when we own four seas again
We'll right our country's wrongs;
Till then I'll drink your stout, Bard,
And you can sing my songs.

slainte : good health.

Kitchener : was born in North Kerry. Hence the tinker's name for the British recruiting-sergeant during World War I.

gom : Gaelic for a dull-witted fellow.

ACCOUNT BOOK of the Rev. ANDREW ROWAN
Rector of Dunaghy, Co. Antrim, c1672-80

Andrew Rowan was the great-grandfather of Archibald Hamilton-Rowan, a prominent United Irishman, and ancestor of the Rowan Hamilton family, Killyleagh Castle, Co. Down.

The account book contains 159 pages and is not easy to read. A photocopy of the book is held in the Public Record Office (N.I.), Balmoral Avenue, Belfast (reference number T796). The original is about six by seven inches in size bound in leather.

It provides a fascinating insight to the life and times of a rural minister and magistrate. There are frequent references to "tinklars" or "tinkers" and the transactions with them.

Aileen L'Amie
University of Ulster
December 1985

ACCOUNT BOOK OF THE REV. ANDREW HENRY
Rector of Dunaghy, Co. Antrim, 1817-20

Andrew Henry was the great-grandfather of Archibald Hamilton-Henry, a
prominent United Irishman, and ancestor of the House Hamilton family.

Killybegs Castle, Co. Down.

The account book contains 157 pages and is not easy to read. A photograph

of the book is held in the Public Record Office (N.I.), Belfast Avenue.

Latest reference number 7983. The original is about six by seven inches

in size bound in leather.

It provides a fascinating insight to the life and times of a rural minister

and his parish. There are frequent references to "staplers" or "staplers"

and the transactions with them.

Aileen L'Amie

University of Ulster

December 1983

Introduction

ITINERANCY AND POVERTY

A STUDY IN THE SUB-CULTURE OF POVERTY

by

PATRICIA McCARTHY

Thesis submitted for degree of Master of Science in the
National University of Ireland (U.C.D.) 1970-71.

Editor's note:

Modern research on Irish Travellers began in the 1960's and
Patricia McCarthy's thesis must be considered one of the
most important works on Irish Travellers. It was the first
systematic study of the Irish Travellers in modern society
and has provided a framework for much subsequent research.
The complete thesis has been included in the resource
collection and may also be consulted in the library of
University College Dublin. Some extracts from the thesis
(pp 1-3, 51-3, 61-2 and 67-9) are reproduced on the following
pages.

N.B. Patricia McCarthy no longer subscribes to the sub-
culture of poverty theory and has kindly provided a statement
to this effect.

Introduction

The tinkers have been in Ireland for hundreds of years but the "problem of itinerancy" is comparatively new. It is a very obvious social problem. "Itinerants are probably the most abused, most poverty stricken group in Ireland".¹ The travelling people in Ireland lead a nomadic life in conditions of extreme poverty in the midst of the settled population. They constitute the lowest rung of the class and status ladder in Irish society. The travellers are now a people in transition, bearing the social costs of economic and industrial progress that has passed them by and rendered their traditional crafts redundant. Various general hypotheses about their origin have been put forward but they are all speculations as the travellers have no folklore on this subject themselves. One such hypothesis is that they are the remnants of a very rigid caste system based on occupations that existed in Ireland in pre-Christian times. The discrimination against the travellers and their caste-like social isolation gives some weight to this hypothesis. Another hypothesis is that they are the descendants of the travelling bards we read about in Irish literature. It should be possible to find support for this hypothesis among the travellers on the roads today, for example in their poetic use of language, their secret language Shelta, and the very high value placed on the dramatic relating of events and spontaneous self-entertainment of all kinds. In this regard, a certain association with magical powers and with "tinkers' curses" is still an element in the attitude of the settled population to the travellers in some rural areas. There are other hypotheses about the origin of the itinerants but perhaps the most plausible is the unromantic one that they are the descendants of Irish peasants driven to the roads out of economic necessity following plantations, famine, evictions and persecution.

Up to approximately the beginning of this century, (when extreme poverty was a fact of life for very many of the Irish people) the travellers seem to have had an accepted function and place in Irish society. They seem to have lived in a symbiotic relationship with the settled population, even though not a relationship of equals. They sold their wares to the farmers and brought news of the surrounding countryside. In return, they received a certain hospitality and friendship and in addition got a market for their wares. However, rapid progress in the fields of education, mass communication, industry (with its mass produced plastic wares) and urbanization has now created a huge gulf between the style of life of even the poorest farmers and that of the travellers who did not gain but, in fact, lost from this progress. The travellers' extreme social isolation and lack of integration in the institutional structures of Irish society is the basis of these social phenomena. The travellers were known as "Ridiri an Bothar" (Knights of the Road) or "The Gentry", terms of subtle sarcasm perhaps but with more tolerant connotations than the term "Itinerants." These terms might well be more than a question of semantics. As we move toward a more complex associational type of society with emphasis on economic rationality, and as we become more affluent, the plight of our marginal and deprived groups becomes desperate. There seems to be an inverse relationship between the degree of affluence of a society and the degree of tolerance of dependence or semi-dependence it manifests. Galbraith attributes this phenomenon to a kind of cultural lag between the increased resources on the one hand and the persistence on the other hand of the values and ideology that were functional in a world of poverty.² The hostility of the settled population to the travellers persists. This might indicate that the travellers violate some of the most important norms of the dominant society and points to the possible existence of a sub-culture among the travellers in Ireland, a sub-culture, it needs to be stated, that has not as yet been identified and delineated.

Definition of Terms

Itinerant: A person who habitually wanders from place to place and has no fixed abode but excluding travelling entertainers.³

Traveller: Same definition as itinerant, but itinerants own preferred name.

Cultural lag: William Ogburn distinguished between the material and the non-material culture. Material culture= technology, etc. Non-material=beliefs, philosophies and laws. If in a time of rapid social change the material culture changes more rapidly than the non-material culture, the non-material culture lags behind and this lag produces maladjustments.⁴ It is also possible for the material culture to lag behind the non-material.

Status: Position or rank which a person's contemporaries objectively accord to him within his society.⁵

Class: A category of people who have similar social status.⁶

Culture: Organized total structure of all the learned behaviour patterns of a people, learned ways of thinking, acting and feeling evolved in response to a given social, economic and physical environment shared by a large number of people.⁷

Sub-culture: Additional patterns of behaviour and values shared by a group within the dominant culture in response to particular environmental factors.⁸

Values: Values set out the goals of a society. They state what is felt to be desirable or undesirable by the members of the society. They are a source of legitimacy.

Roles: That set of behaviour patterns expected of a person because of his social position.⁹

Hypothesis: A tentative explanation of some phenomenon.

Model: A conceptual framework or theoretical scheme outlining some major issue including some idea of the units involved in their relationships.¹⁰

Theory: A heuristic device for organizing what we know, or think we know, at any time about some more or less explicitly posed question or issue.¹¹

Empirical Indicators: Observable signs of subtle characteristics of a group of individuals.¹²

Bilateral Kinship System: Descent is traced through males and females without emphasis on either line.¹³

Unilateral Kinship System: Descent is traced through either males or females but not through both lines.¹⁴

Impoverishment: Lack of material resources.¹⁵

Sub-culture of Poverty: "A way of life, remarkably stable and persistent, passed down from generation to generation along family lines. The culture of poverty has its own modalities and distinctive social and psychological consequences for its members. It is a dynamic factor which affects participation in the larger national culture and becomes a sub-culture of its own."¹⁶

Participant-observation case study

The participant-observation case study was carried out over a period of approximately six weeks in an unofficial itinerant camp in County Galway. The researcher lived in a horse-drawn caravan supplied by the Galway Itinerant Settlement Committee in the camp. All of the researcher's time for those six weeks were spent on the camp or with the travellers.

Participant-observation Case Study of an Itinerant Camp in County Galway

The Camp-site: The camp was situated on a side road, off the main Dublin/Galway road. This road was approximately three miles from Galway city. The passerby might be attracted by the picturesque view of a row of gaily painted caravans, but on closer inspection would probably be repelled by the dirt of the surroundings, the crowd of ragged children and the stark poverty in the faces of the older people. To the travellers camped there, the location of the camp had certain advantages. With the exception of Big Tom, who had not moved from the camp for two years, they had been there for eight months and intended to move for the summer--not a completely voluntary decision, as will be seen. It was close to a source of water, not a very reliable one, but still useful, surrounded by fields, private property and Local Authority property, a source of sticks for the fires and grazing for the animals. The ground under the wattle tents was dry, due to prolonged use, except in heavy rain. A wall afforded some shelter to the row of caravans and tents without necessitating the three distinct nuclear families living on top of each other. It was close enough to the city and far enough out to let them keep their animals.

This particular camp had been chosen for the study for the reasons set out in Chapter 1. A traveller from a site, Joseph, was hired to pull the researcher's horse-drawn caravan, supplied by the Galway Itinerant Settlement Committee, to the camp. This was not an unusual job as tourists do hire horse-drawn caravans. However, he obviously did think it strange that a lone girl wanted to camp alongside a "Tinker's" camp. On the way he asked if the researcher knew the girl who operates a hand-craft industry among the travellers. When he discovered that the researcher knew her, he was more at ease, because he felt he could understand her presence and define her role. Despite the fact that the true purposes of the visit were briefly explained to him, he was just as anxious as the researcher that she should have an understandable and definable role in the situation. A helper in the handcraft business seemed to make sense to him. The researcher discovered that he was a second cousin of some of the people in the camp and he agreed to introduce the researcher to them, after warning her about the group's bad habits: "They drink a terrible lot of beer." On arrival, a crowd of excited children and young adults gathered around. After briefly stating her intention to stay for about a month or so and without offering any explanation at this stage, a young man, Francis Ward, invited the researcher down to the campfire later in the evening to meet his family. A short while later, the researcher was visited by a young woman, Mary, a sister of Francis, who was attracted by the transistor radio. She stayed to talk for awhile and seemed troubled about something. At the main campfire, Big Mamma and Big Daddy, the Ward grandparents, were present, and also two of their married daughters, Bridget and Ann, two unmarried daughters, Mary and Theresa, an unmarried son, Francis, a married son, John, a young girl, Annie, young John, a son of the older John, and two small children, Ned and Pat. No introductions

were made and consequently it took the researcher about three days to work out the relationships between the people in the camp. No explanations or information were offered on this point, because of the broken marriages involved, as it turned out. The relationships appeared very complex and puzzling; and although no-one deliberately tried to mislead the researcher, no efforts were made to prevent her getting a completely wrong impression of a particular person's status. An example of this which was very puzzling to the researcher at the time, was the married daughter, Bridget. Only in the third week of the study did the researcher discover that her husband was alive and that she had six other children besides the girl who lived in the camp. Her present behaviour had led the researcher to believe that she was a widow with one child.

The wattle tent of the main group consisted of waterproof covering at either end, sleeping quarters of the unmarried girls and boy, divided by the main body of the tent. It consisted of canvas bags over hooped branches, held down with stones. There was a fire in the middle of the earth floor and a hole in the canvas above it for the smoke to escape. There was no furniture at all. Most of the people crouched on the floor; the lucky ones had tin canisters to sit on. The beds at either end were straw mattresses and the women's shawls were used for blankets.

The conversation was general at first. They expressed interest in Dublin, in the researcher's caravan and the cost of hiring. They seemed aware of a connection between the researcher and the handcrafts business. Big Mammy controlled the conversation, and finally asked why the researcher had come. The researcher gave them a true account of her purposes, which was greeted without surprise. Ann remarked that she knew Gratton Puxon when he was living in Dublin. The researcher mentioned that she knew some travellers in Dublin, which was greeted with scepticism. They did not seem to know any of them. However, John joined the group at this stage and knew some of the same people as the researcher, as his wife's uncle lived in Dublin. This helped to set them at ease. Big Mammy offered the researcher tea and asked her to get her radio, so that they could hear the news. They commented at length on the "human interest" aspects of the news, and in fact interpreted all of it in a very personal way, expressing interest and concern about the personal lives and feelings of the politicians, criminals, and other personalities mentioned in the news.

It needs to be stated that the three "tinker pubs" were much more than places to get drunk, to the travellers, which is what settled people generally think of them and of the travellers who gather around them. They are social centres in every sense. The proprietors of two of these pubs provided very necessary services for the travellers. One of them was used as a standing address by every travelling family in the area, depending on which pub the family frequented and also which pub they would be served in. The owners of these pubs had a monopoly on the travellers' trade and could lay down rules about which tribes they would serve. They kept messages for their customers, provided a letter-reading service, and occasionally a letter-writing service. Settled people who wanted to contact a traveller could either find him at one of these pubs or leave a message with the owner, confident that it would be delivered. Travellers left messages for each other with the owners and found that they were always delivered. A traveller could get a cup of tea in these pubs, the only places in the city where they could get one. There are very few places in any town where travellers can gather and socialise without running into trouble with the authorities. This they are allowed to do at the "tinker" pubs, situated in the back streets, avoided by the settled population. Here they gather and talk, keeping up with the news of interest to them, arranging matches, etc. Discrimination and prejudice not only mean that the pubs are almost the only entertainment allowed to travellers; they also create the need in the travellers to cling to each other in a way that settled people seem to find excessive. Settled people are very rarely seen in "tinker" pubs. Their owners depend entirely on the travellers' trade. Despite the vast amount of drink that the travellers are reported to consume, "tinker" pubs tend to look notoriously run-down.

Spending Patterns:

The material culture of the travellers is extremely poor. Their property has to be confined to what they can take with them when travelling. This partly explains the importance of horses and donkeys to them. Besides being a quick way of calculating a man's wealth, they are an investment. Vans and cars are beginning to replace them now to a limited extent. Vans have the advantage of not needing grazing, but the substantial disadvantages of needing petrol, tax and insurance. They are a status symbol, a sign of wealth. The majority of travellers would be ashamed now to arrive at a wedding, funeral or other gathering in a pony and cart, as the following incident illustrates: Big Mammy and Daddy were invited to a niece's wedding to take place in a town some twenty miles away. Next day they were visited by a group of travellers with a van. When asked if they were going to the wedding, they replied that they had no way of going.

despite the fact that they had a horse and cart. After a good deal of discussion about the price of petrol, the owner of the van offered to drive them. He drove the whole family in two trips the day of the wedding and was paid, of course. Big Tom was the only one who would drive his pony and cart to town. The others would walk or get the bus occasionally. There is a practical reason for this too, namely that it is becoming very dangerous for a man with a pony and cart on the roads, with the volume of modern traffic. There have been many road accidents involving travellers in carts and consequently they are afraid.

Very little of their income is spent on capital goods. Many travellers are in debt to a money-lender for their wagons, horses, etc. At matches, dowries are often settled by arrangements with these money-lenders, although the dowries are very little. The vast majority of the travellers seem to be outside the consumer society. Their material needs at present, speaking of the camp studied specifically, have been confined to an alarmingly primitive level. Their evaluation of the necessities of life is extremely low. The older travellers particularly are unaware of the existence of a variety of consumer goods. Many such goods have no relevance to their lives at present. The poor material culture is reflected in the children's vocabulary, and indeed in the vocabulary of all travellers. The children's lack of familiarity with things settled people take for granted, e.g. furniture, tooth paste, forks, a variety of foods and toys, etc. tends to retard them at school where all the words and the lessons come from a settled cultural background. Their pronunciation also tends to be poor, partly as a result of their social isolation and partly because all travellers learn gammon or Shelta as well as English as babies. These factors may lead a teacher to consider travelling children unintelligent, and she may consequently ignore them, increasing the already acute sense of inferiority that travellers feel with regard to "the quality" (the settled population). There seems to be a strong case for special remedial schools for travelling children, aimed at bridging the gap between the settled culture and that of the travellers.

The young people in the camp went to the pictures fairly often. This is a growing entertainment alternative to the traditional drinking. They were all orientated to modern trends, liked pop-music, and took a personal interest in the pop stars, loved Westerns because of the many links with their cultural background--the wagons, the horses, the camp-fires, etc. Like Gans' "Urban Villagers", they preferred action to dialogue in the pictures and good guys versus bad guys to love stories.² Yet they remained spectators to modern trends in real life, particularly the girls.

Husbands and Wives: Relationships between the sexes

On a warm day, Big Tom and Maggie would sit sleeping in the ditch on the side of the road, Maggie's head on Tom's shoulder, his arm around her and a child's colouring book in his other hand. Evidence of his painstaking efforts to follow the numbers and learn something could be seen on the pages. This couple were devoted to each other, almost inseparable, sharing a deep personal friendship and love (although they would never use such an extravagant word) grown out of their isolation and sharing of hardships. They are the ideal travelling couple. They represent what every young couple set out to be, but many never achieve. Young travelling couples often travel alone for some time and, according to their personalities, may continue to travel largely alone for years. They are then thrown back on each other's company, isolated socially from the settled world and the result is often deeply attached middle-aged couples (old age for them). Matches are made with the help of professional matchmakers. It is very plausible that travelling children are sometimes matched off to their cousins from birth. Marriages between first, second, and third cousins are the rule rather than the exception. Matches are less formal than they used to be in settled society. After a wedding, a match is made for the next single girl in her tribe. The girl has the right to refuse the match. Mary had turned down five matches by the time of the study and turned down a sixth during it. This last match was in fact a hoax, a mechanism of social control in an attempt to impress Mary with the unsatisfactory nature of her behaviour in turning down so many matches. The boy too had the right of refusal in a case where the match was not initiated by him. Dowries were settled in a flexible way. Someone must provide a "spre" for the wedding, enough money for drink for the company. This is usually the man but this matter is flexible. The girl's parents provide a donkey or a pony and harness and the boy provides the cart. This is all that is considered necessary. Gifts from settled people are fairly common at tinker weddings in rural areas, e.g. clothes, food, utensils, money. The bride's clothes are occasionally provided by a settled person who knows her, which accounts for the sometimes bizarre dress of the poor bride. A travelling girl is expected to be ashamed on her wedding day. The party stay with the young couple all night to make sure the bride does not try to go home and because the young couple bring them luck. Then the young couple set out to travel by themselves for awhile. Church weddings are the rule now but many of the older people are not officially married. The church ceremony is not regarded as the biggest part of the event. The marriage relationship is remarkably close in theory, especially compared with other studies of low income groups. However, a reminder of the married states in the camp studied--one desertion and two semi-desertions (one of these has not been discussed yet)--illustrates that the relationship was often very turbulent in practice. The lives of husbands and wives are not too sharply segregated, except in the sphere of work and where the men are unemployed.

This is not a major sphere. An exclusively male group exists. When visitors came to the camp, after a few minutes general conversation, the men would move away from the women and often spend hours sitting and talking. They gossip continuously, even more than the women. Their conversation appears to centre around much the same topics as low-income men everywhere--drink, gambling, eluding the Gardai, fights, encounters with the money-lenders, horses, vans, cars, women, money made on a trick or a gamble, encounters with the settled world and the usuals of births, marriages and deaths. Occasionally they go to town in a group but there is little or no segregation of the sexes in the pubs, for example. There is a women's group out of necessity, but this is completely disorganised and centres around the men's group. On sites where the men's group flourishes, the men may be absent most of the day--at the ball alley, playing cards or just sitting around. The women then complain strongly of being virtually deserted. In the site studied in the pilot study, this state of affairs seemed to be contributing to states of chronic depression among some of the women. Medical depression is not unknown in the indigenous setting among both men and women. The closeness of the marriage relationship, even when objectively speaking it seemed far from ideal, is well illustrated in the reaction to separation. John became extremely depressed, listless and apathetic when Lizzie left him. Ann seemed depressed very often and Bridget was an alcoholic and chronically depressed. Joseph Murphy, a friend of the group, had a bad criminal record--petty theft mostly, graduating to breaking and entering. He spent a great deal of time in jail. While he was in jail, his wife became extremely depressed, stopped taking care of herself and drank heavily. On his release, she changed completely, although by middle-class standards he did not treat her well. When he re-entered prison, she again lapsed into deep depression. Marriage as a relationship is very highly regarded. It is a status symbol--the most important one in travelling society.

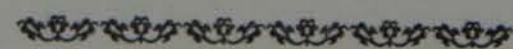
STATEMENT RE: CULTURE OF POVERTY FRAMEWORK USED IN MY THESIS ITINERANTS AND POVERTY 1972

I no longer subscribe to the culture of poverty theory used in this thesis. There may be some traits and characteristics common to people who live in poverty in western societies but the culture of poverty theory is a dangerous and tautological one that effectively leads to the conclusion that poverty is the fault of the poor themselves - the result of a self-perpetuating cycle. It places the emphasis on the dysfunctional or sub-cultural patterns of behaviour among the poor rather than on the political, social and economic forces in the wider society that produce poverty in the first place. It distracts attention from the crucial issues - such as the distribution of wealth in the society, the value system that emphasises the right to private property, for example and the class and status system that relegates certain people to the bottom of the pile because they belong to a particular class or status group. These issues are obviously of crucial importance in understanding why travellers live in the terrible conditions that can be seen all over the country, why they have so little access to the facilities and services we take for granted and why there is so little political will to change this situation. The culture of poverty idea also serves to distract from the fact that travellers constitute a separate culture within Irish society, a culture that has historical links with other traveller and gypsy groups throughout Europe. In a society as culturally homogenous as Irish culture is, it appears to be extremely threatening to suggest that a group of people live among us who do not necessarily subscribe to all of the values and norms of the wider society and whose identity and sense of meaning is rooted in their own culture. To accept this latter proposition, which I believe to be true, requires that travellers should be treated with respect, rather than with the contempt reserved for "drop-outs". It also of course directly challenges

the assimilation policies of successive Governments and various voluntary organisations. There is however, a growing body of opinion prepared to accept the concept of a separate cultural identity and for travellers of course it marks a major psychological change - to be able to see themselves as people of value and worth in their own terms rather than as a collection of individual families attempting to "make it" into settled society. I feel that it is very important to rescind this statement after many years working with travellers and after the realisation that the interpretative framework of the culture of poverty is not only inadequate to explain travellers' lifestyle but it is also dangerous because of the type of policies it logically leads to i.e. policies aimed at assimilating travellers into the wider society and of denying the real cultural differences that exist between them and us. I am in the process of writing a paper on the subject which I hope will be published next year.

Patricia McCarthy
Social Worker
October 1985

Mr Russell Bilton



'I joined the housing list, but never got no word back from them.'

A large tent made of green tarpaulin stands amid the Scottish scrub. There is a home-made stove at one end and a hole has been made near the top of the tent for the chimney of the stove. The stove is made from an oilcan which has had a hole made in the top with a little lid that can be pulled on or off, and a square hole made near the bottom of it for the draught to go in. The floor of the tent is cold earth over which some form of carpeting has been placed which has now become the same colour and consistency as the earth.

In this tent live Mr Russell Bilton and his family. They have a double bed at one end, and boxes and chairs round the stove at the other.

They pay a pound a week for the right to live amidst the scrub. I'm shown the way there by a weak torch held by one of the boys. A wild-looking man sits behind the stove-pipe.

The earth around the place is littered with roots and branches and a scrub of trees. Behind the stove is a small corrugated iron coop containing puppies. There's a large telly on a box with a Benny Hill programme playing.

Mr Bilton, unshaven, sits on the bed and is the most dispirited of any Traveller I have met so far.

He has three children. One of them is barefooted, on this cold night, on the cold earth.

Mr Bilton: 'All the land's taken over by the pylons and all, you know, big lairds, you know.'

'If you stop nowadays, you might be there for five minutes when a police comes round and just puts you in the road right away. You have to go, if you don't go you'd be pulled up. And if you're not fined you'd be taken to gaol.'

'A few years ago they picked us up four times for being just camping at the same place. And fined a pound each time. They kept us in this cell from ten o'clock at night to two o'clock next day. And then they took us to court. We had nothing to eat or drink

couldn't carry the other cover, so they dumped it. It was too heavy to carry.

'They left it where they could find it. But when they went back it wasn't there; it wasn't there. It was a very tragic time, there's no doubt, yes. And my father was taken away through drink. Just a quarrel you know through the drink. He just got lifted.'

'What has been the best time of your life?'

'The happiest times I recall were down picking the berries. Lots of Travellers around. Have a sing-song, a dance and so forth. I used to play the pipes then, but not now because my chest's away.'

'I prefer a tent to a house. With a house it can be very, very draughty. And damp. The old houses up here, they're very damp, these old houses, they're getting very old and they're usually damp. Oh yes. But in a tent - I mean you stay there with the fresh air all the time, all the time. I mean during the frosty weather I always keep an extra fire on in the tent. Keep plenty of heat. You can't do that in a house.'

'I been always in a tent. I wouldn't mind a trailer. It would be all right if you could afford to get one. Yes, but I mean to say to buy one just now, they're too dear. I had an old one here last year, but that was very old, it was damp. I just broke it up.'

'This is much more cosy actually than a yánda which can be very damp. And if the roof goes they get very damp, once they get wood rot.'

'To put up a bough tent like this takes, oh, a couple of hours starting from scratch. From cutting them, well you get boughs from round about, I mean, if you got to travel for your boughs that'll take you more time. But to get it up when you've got the boughs, roughly an hour to stick 'em up.'

'And then you make the stove yourself. Just use a chisel and hammer, that is all we use.'

'I have no horse, now. If I want to move, well you can go on a bus, but there's usually somebody to shift us around, somebody with a car.'

'The things I can't take like that bit of furniture there, I just leave it behind.'

'We tie the boughs together with string. Tie 'em round with string, put the canvas over the top and stones round the bottom to weight it down. Then it will never shift.'

'A friend of mine, he's a gentleman and he took a copy of one of these tents and he made a - what you'd call a rose byre, and he built one like this and he planted roses up each stick and all grew up into an arbour. In the summertime he can have his tea outside in the summer and smell roses, beautiful. And he just uses it as a summer-house. It's lovely, you know, when you see the roses all growing about.'

'When I lost my wife, I found it hard to start with. To keep the boys - tea and bread and cheese is no use for boys, you got to get soups and that for 'em. You've got to have a lot to keep them going.'

'What's the farthest I've travelled? Oh well, I've been all over. I've been in England. Been in Inverness, Aberdeenshire, up at Ayrshire, Edinburgh. I've been all over.'

'Well, I like Perthshire the very best. Perthshire's a great place, I think. Always come back, yes. I like a bit of fishing and there's some nice fishing in Perthshire.'

'Do you think that travelling will go on or come to an end?'

'Oh, I think it's coming to an end. Like, the Traveller people in the glens, they're still making baskets, tinware, and that. But you don't see 'em coming around here with 'em any more because they're all getting off the road into houses. You miss them coming around with their baskets, tinware, and that.'

'Would you be sorry yourself to see the young ones giving up the old Traveller's traditions?'

'Well, not in a way, because I mean there's nothing on the road no more, the road is finished.'

This extract is reproduced from *Gypsies* by Jeremy Sandford published Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd London 1973 by permission of the publishers.

1839

1840



above - Roadside camp
below - Annie and Tom (Towney) McDonagh
(Later housed in a Flat at Rahoon)

GALWAY 1968



GALWAY 1968



GALWAY 1968

above - Martin McDonagh and family

below - Patrick McDonagh and family

Both families were housed in 1970



TARPAULIN and CANVAS TENTS

"The Irish Government has declared tarpaulin and canvas tents 'completely unfit' for human habitation and has prohibited their use. Such structures provide the only shelter for many impoverished tinker families who not surprisingly suffer from respiratory ailments.



The photograph (and caption) is reproduced with permission from "Irish tinkers are unwelcome" by Kevin C. Kearns, The Geographical Magazine, London, Volume L, Number 5 (1978).

See also Bender Tents by Edward Ayres. Macmillan Education 1979. A small illustrated children's book.

There is a strange, and universal, paradox inherent in culture. It does not "come naturally"; it has to be painstakingly learnt over the period of a lifetime particularly in the earliest years of most basic and intense socialisation. Every mother in the world is constantly plagued by her childrens' constant "why's" and the answers she gives them, however unsatisfactory they may at first be, are finally internalised; the child becomes an adult and takes his place in society. Often he, like his parents before him, when asked "why" he does what he does, believes what he believes, can answer with nothing more concrete than "Because!" - Because, this is the way we do things, and (since we would not do things in a deliberately wrong way) because, by implication, this is the Right Way.

The science of Anthropology utterly refuses to recognise any Culture, or for that matter any given aspect of any given Culture, as being THE, RIGHT, WAY - all are simply alternatives chosen from among the broad spectrum of human potential, and influenced too by external factors beyond the group's control (such as climate, flora, fauna, neighbours). On the other hand, Anthropology must recognise the existence of the Universal Paradox: that every Culture, everywhere, is firmly convinced that it and it alone embodies the Right Way. Its way of dressing is correct - others' are immoral or barbaric or both. Its religion is correct - others will suffer for refusing to see The Truth. Its morality is correct - others are either prudish or lascivious. Its economic norms and activities are correct - other are either lazy or miserly. And so on and so forth down the line - universally.

My emphasis on The Universal Paradox in this chapter is not accidental. It is very relevant indeed to the rest of the book.

This book is written by a member of Settled Culture for other members of that Culture. It is about a different Culture altogether: that of the Travelling People. Because the situation is bi-cultural, The Universal Paradox is very much in evidence in relationships between the two groups.

Persons reading through the manuscript have continually warned me: "You're basing this whole thing on the Separate Culture Argument. You're going to have to do a very good job, at the beginning, of convincing the reader that Travellers do constitute a separate Culture in the first place; otherwise all your arguments and recommendations will be perceived as invalid."

* For example: "Why have I to kiss Aunt Maude when I don't like her?": "Why have I to dress up on holidays?"; "Why can't I play with dolls/drink alcohol/stay at home instead of going to school?": "Why do people have to die?": "Why does daddy go out to work instead of staying here with us?": "Why do I have to eat carrots?": "Why can't I marry you when I grow up?": etc. etc.

One of the most insidious ways in which The Universal Paradox can operate is by refusing to even recognise a given Culture, as a Culture. We have all come a long way from the 19th-century colonialist mentality wherein all non-Europeans were "savages", "barbarians", and "heathens" languishing in darkness and making upon us the moral demand that we shoulder The White Man's Burden and bring to them the Blessings of Civilisation. They might, in their ignorance, resist our selfless and heroic efforts at bringing them The Truth, but in time (since ours was so obviously and indubitably The Right Way) they would see The Light, and bless us for our trouble. All of this was seen as justified - indeed, necessary - because their Way was devoid of validity; at worst, it was morally disgusting barbarism (imagine having more than one wife); at best, it came closest to the Truth which we alone possessed (Moslems were "better" than Hindus since they are at least recognised the existence of a single Supreme Being, and even acknowledged Moses, Abraham, and Jesus, though not quite as they should have done). At that time, then, Europeans seriously believed that they alone possessed Culture, even though they could not quite agree amongst themselves which particular form of Christianity, or which particular Indo-European language, was the rightest form of the Right Religion and the Right Language. Nowadays, however, we concede that we were wrong. We honour the artwork, music, literature and costume of our Asian and African brothers; we speak with them as equals through the United Nations; we seek them out for economic co-operation of mutual benefit. They still, sadly, do not quite conform to The Right Way - but they do have a Way of their own; it is recognised as separate and (theoretically at least) equal to our own. We have learned to live with the fact that they are going to carry on thinking sheeps' eyeballs are a delicacy, getting married to their first cousins at the age of twelve, not getting upset at the sight of bare-breasted women (or, equally 'irrationally', getting upset at the sight of an unveiled woman).

Closer to home, however, this mentality has undergone no change whatsoever, though the arguments used to justify it have altered somewhat. We in Ireland, unlike our British neighbours in their multi-denominational, multi-ethnic, multi-racial society, have yet to come to terms with the single other distinct Culture* sharing this island with us: the Irish Travellers. We have very cleverly avoided this by the only means at our disposal (i.e. the only means culturally permissible to us). The argument goes like this: since other Cultures must now be accepted and respected in their diversity, as equal to our own, yet the Travellers' way of life is clearly unacceptable, unequal and incapable of being respected, they must not constitute a separate Culture at all - they must, in fact simply be deviants and/or historical drop-outs from our own.

* Whether or not the Aran Gaeilgeoir currach-fisherman and the English-speaking, tower-block-dwelling, factory-working Ballymun man are representatives of two separate cultures, or simply of the two extreme ends of a single cultural continuum, is a debatable question, but this is neither the time nor the place for that debate.

Once this entirely unproven theory is accepted, the same old colonial tactics and attitudes suddenly become justifiable again. Their language is not a language at all - it is simply bad English with some bad Irish thrown in. We are not trying to force sedentarism and housing on equals who prefer to live nomadically - we are simply restoring a basic human right to Irishmen who, due to historical circumstances beyond their control (famine, eviction, Cromwell and co.) were deprived of them. We are not robbing a people of its present, viable economic base and ethos (namely, self-employment at a variety of tasks) - we are magnanimously giving them a chance to participate in the normal (= our, = the Correct) economic base and ethos (wage-employment at a single task). We are not depriving children of the opportunity to become acquainted with the skills necessary to Traveller life by constant observation of, and participation in, their parents' activities - we are offering them the chance for Education-with-a-capital-E (that is, training in the skills necessary to Settled Life).

On what scientific grounds does the "drop-out theory" rest? What concrete evidence has been presented as substantiation? What are the counter-arguments and counter-theories?

Firstly, the number of scientific works dealing with the question of the origin of the Travelling People of Ireland is two*. These are:

"Itinerancy and Poverty" - unpublished Master's Thesis by Patricia McCarthy, the very first work of its kind.

"The Emergence of an Ethnic Group: The Irish Tinkers" by Sharon and George Gmelch, publ. Anthropological Quarterly, Vol. 49, No. 4, October 1976 by the Catholic University of America Press.**

("Ireland's Travelling People: A Comprehensive Bibliography*** lists, under the heading "Ethnohistory", a total of 19 works. With two exceptions - the above mentioned by George and Sharon Gmelch, and "The Human Biology of Irish Tinkers" by M.H. Crawford and George Gmelch, the references constitute minor sections of works on other subjects, which often in themselves are hopelessly out of date, written by interested amateurs with no scientific training whatsoever, or both, e.g. "Tinkers, Scorners, and Other Vagabonds", New Ireland Review, Sept. 1906, pp. 43-47.)

Ms. McCarthy's thesis, while unpublished in full**** has been very widely circulated and is referred to in virtually all works on the subject of Irish Travellers.

* The single most widely-read document on the Irish Travellers, The Report of the Commission on Itinerancy, states, "As it was not essential to the consideration of the Commission's terms of reference, no special study was made of the origins of the itinerant population in this country." 1845

** This is the one published work by the Gmelch's to deal exclusively with the question of origin. Its arguments and conclusions are included in other works, notably "The Urbanisation of an Itinerant People".

*** G. and S. Gmelch, Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society, vol. 3, 1978, pp 159-169.

**** A lengthy excerpt appears in Travelling People, ed. V. Bewley, publ. Veritas 1974.

28
minor pamphlets produced by local Settlement Committees and scholarly works alike - since its appearance.

In an introductory statement, Ms. McCarthy says: "It is a basic assumption of this study that Irish Travellers are not Gypsies and do not constitute a separate ethnic group with an entirely separate tradition and culture. Poverty is considered to be basic to the problem in this study."* This basic assumption and the arguments presented in the work have been uncritically adopted by the overwhelming majority of Irish people working with, or writing about, the Irish Travellers. Ms McCarthy's work is quoted as "proof" that Irish Travellers constitute a "sub-culture".**

This is what Ms. McCarthy herself has to say on the subject, 8 years after the original appearance of her document:

"The whole assumption on which this is done, is wrong. This is the "culture of poverty" theory, which I would totally reject now. The "sub-culture of poverty" theory was very much in vogue at the time, and you can find evidence to fit things into a theory if you want to. The "sub-culture of poverty" theory has since been disproven time and time again; I myself have written an article (unpublished - author's note) disproving it.

The "sub-culture of poverty" is not applicable to Travellers; in fact, it is not valid to any group. But for Travellers in particular, it is not a question of poverty at all. It would be possible to identify small groups of Irish Travellers who live in poverty, but in fact the majority are economically successful.

I think that the "sub-culture theory" is firmly discounted at this stage. A lot of the justification for "sub-culture" rests on, say, the geneological study done by Dr. Flynn, who traced the family trees of all the families in one area, and discovered that none of them had been on the road for more than seven generations. He concluded from that that the Travellers were essentially drop-outs from society. And that they were drop-outs because of family problems like illegitimacy or alcoholism. Yet this begs the question: was there an alternative life-style already available "on the road", that pre-dated these families' opting for that alternative? And from historical documentation, we know that there was. Also, the group studied had very unusual surnames by Traveller standards: names like "Nevins". Actually, for example, the Nevins were never accepted by the Travellers as being Travellers - they were referred to as "black strangers on the road."

* Itinerancy and Poverty, p. 6

** For example, Social Contract, an undated pamphlet issued by the County Sligo C.T.P., devotes less than half a page to the question of Origin, and its only backing references are to Ms. McCarthy's thesis.

Basically, the statement that I would make is that the "sub-culture of poverty" theory rests on a desire to present the less successful Traveller as epitomising Traveller culture. Particularly in the Irish context: it requires that successful elements be ignored. Even in the census¹ that the Department of Local Government makes, I do not think they ever make any attempt to include the traders. To include them would necessarily mean that you would have to redefine that culture as viable. How can you explain the success of what probably is the majority of Travellers if you are at the same time defining them as a sub-cultural group? It is estimated that there are twice - possibly more than twice - as many Irish Travellers in Britain as there are here. That probably reflects an implicit understanding on Travellers' part, of England as a more pluralistic society.* Thus, by studying and identifying the Travellers who are here, as typical of Irish Travellers, that gives you a biased sample. What you are getting is, you are studying the least successful of the group. The general theory concerning the depopulation of the West - that those with initiative get out, while the least ambitious and most problem-ridden stay behind - is applicable here.

The Settlement Movement does not recognise economically successful Travellers, as Travellers: they are referred to as "horse-ranchers" and "roadside trader", never as "Travellers" or even "Itinerants". Most social workers** are told that they are to have nothing to do with the "traders"*** - they are not, for example, to bring the children to school. This is because encouraging contact between the children of successful and unsuccessful Travellers would provide the children with an appealing model for themselves, within the bounds of Traveller culture. Instead they are isolated from that, and provided with Settled culture as the only alternative to their poverty."****

The following are excerpts from a statement prepared by the Gmelch's at the author request to clarify their present position as regards the "culture-or-sub-culture?" status of the Irish Travellers:

"The question of whether Travellers comprise a distinct culture, ethnic group, or sub-culture, really depends on whose definition of the above you chose to use. Irish Travellers do not constitute as discrete a cultural tradition as Romany Gypsies in England do; they are too close to the Irish in fact for me to consider them a separate culture. I do not, however, like the connotations of the term

¹ This view is openly propounded by the Gypsy Council and other British-based Traveller organisations, who hold that the mass exodus of Irish Travellers to Britain since the mid-60's is due largely to a desire to escape from the assimilationist policies to which they are subjected in Ireland.

** Ms. McCarthy was herself, for several years, a full-time social worker with Travellers.

³ This statement is corroborated by the Gmelch's in The Itinerant Settlement Committee: Its Policies and Effects on Irish Travellers. publ. Studies, Spring 1971. "Some of the ISC's who have social workers in their employ have insisted that they work only with the families living on official sites" - that is, the semi-sedentary "ignoring those on the road who may also need aid." pp. 14-15.

⁴ Interview between the author and Ms. Patricia McCarthy, 22nd Jun 1971.

sub-culture which automatically implies something second-rate, sub-ordinate and less valid. I prefer the term ethnic group.

Although many of the most obvious criteria used to describe ethnic status are absent (Travellers and Settled Irish have the same skin colour, language, religion, and national origin*) I feel that Travellers do comprise a distinct ethnic group. First, they are largely endogamous, and therefore biologically self-perpetuating. Secondly, they share cultural features and behaviour patterns which distinguish them from Settled Irish. Thirdly, they comprise a separate field of communication and interaction. What contact they have with the Settled community is brief and restricted in nature. And finally, Travellers identify themselves and are identified by others as comprising a distinct group. (This is covered in more detail in the Anthropological Quarterly article**) As such they have a validity, and should have the "rights", that a mere sub-culture might not so easily lay claim to."***

I intend to present the case for recognition of the Irish Travellers as a separate Culture - or, to use the more familiar word, Ethnic Group - in three distinct parts:

- I. An examination of the arguments most typically used to demonstrate that they do not constitute a separate Ethnic Group
- II. An examination of the scientifically determined criteria which define the term "Ethnic Group", demonstrating to what extent these are fulfilled by the Irish Travellers in comparison to Irish Settled Persons.
- III. A chart of values and customs, comparing the practices of three groups: The Settled Irish, The Irish Travellers, and the Rom ("Gypsies").

I. Arguments used to Demonstrate that Irish Travellers do not Constitute a Discrete Ethnic Group, and Rebuttals to these arguments

- 1) "Itinerants do not constitute a single homogeneous group, tribe or community within the nation. Neither do they constitute a separate ethnic group. There is no (1) system of unified control, (2) authority or (3) government and (4) no group of individuals has any power or control over the itinerant members of the Community." (Report of the Commission on Itinerancy, p. 37)

None of the above-listed criteria, deemed by the Commission to be essential to qualification as an ethnic group, are deemed to be so by professionals

¹ Each of these criteria will be examined later on in this section.

** Reference given on p. 28 of this book.

** Private correspondence from Ms. Sharon Gmelch to the author, dated 19th April 1979.

(Anthropologists, Ethnographers) specialising in this question: See part II of this section.

If they were, it would mean that ALL nomadic peoples, would not qualify as distinct cultures (ethnic groups).

The criteria listed refer to one aspect of culture: political organisation. The forms listed by the Commission are typical of some, sedentary cultures - for example, that of the Settled Irish. They are never found in the same forms among nomadic peoples, which typically have diffuse, non-formalised power-and-control-structures based on criteria of kinship and of ascribed qualities. It is blatantly false to assert that there is "no" social control or authority in Traveller culture; however, the forms which these take are so radically idvergent from those of the Settled Community, that the latter may be hard-pressed to percieve their very existence (as the Commission so obviously was). For a detailed comparative analysis of the two structures, see "Political Autonomy", p. 216-218.

By the criteria of the Commission, the Eskimos, Lapps, Australian Aborigines, Pygmies, etc. etc., do not constitute "separate ethnic groups".

2) "They are not Gypsies".

"A priori to define the Irish Travellers as non-Romani suggests a clear line between the Romani and non-Romani populations of nomads in Europe. I do not think one can, because they are ranged along a spectrum from more to less Romani, rather than in two camps of yes and no.

I think we should speak of 'the Romani-influenced nomadic populations of Western Europe. The Irish Travellers are definitely now Romani-influenced; the date of the origin of that influence is obviously controversial. I accept that it is probable that a continuing identity for the Irish Traveller group probably pre-dates the origin of Romani influence in it, which is not the case for the English Gypsies; i.e., in England English nomads joined a Romani group, whereas in Ireland Romanies joined an Irish group. Both groups are, however, to-day, the product of an historical culture-contact between Gypsy and Gaje." - Commentary prepared by Dr. T. Acton, to Dr. D. Kenrick's paper, "How Old are the Irish Travellers?".

The commentary goes on to list several strikingly similar aspects shared by Irish Travellers and the Rom.* The most overwhelmingly convincing of these,

* Included in part III of this section.

is the fact that 10% of the vocabulary of the Gammon language is of Romanes origin. While parallelism of values, customs etc. does not, in itself, prove that cultural "borrowing" has occurred, linguistic similarities are irrefutable proof of contact between groups - all the more so when, as in this case they constitute one word in ten of a language.

Dr. Acton's book, "Gypsy Politics and Social Change", devotes its first 93 pages to a complete refutation of the "racialist nonsense" which has given rise to the popular belief in the existence of "true" Gypsies (as opposed to "Tinkers", "traders", "Didikois", etc.). His basic position - accepted by the author - is that there are no "pure", "true" Gypsies anywhere. Instead over a 500-year period, there was a migration of Indian Travellers to the Middle East, North Africa and Europe; these newcomers intermingled with indigenous nomadic peoples to a greater or lesser degree.

Basically, the thinking behind the "true Gypsy" argument is the tenet that Travellers of Indian origin have an inalienable right to their own way of life, whereas Travellers of indigenous European origin are mere "cheap domestic copies".

3) "Historically, they are drop-outs from Settled Irish culture".

Many superficially convincing arguments are quoted to corroborate this hypothesis. Let us examine some of them.

(a) "Many aspects of their way of life are similar to those of the Irish peasantry, particularly in the 19th century". Part III shows, in chart form, exactly which ones, and clearly demonstrates that in fact a majority of Traveller values and customs are the antithesis of these characterising the Irish peasantry.

(b) "They have Irish surnames". This in itself proves nothing. English Gypsies have English surnames, Russian Gypsies have Russian surnames, etc. Greeks, Frenchmen, Arabs, etc. in the United States have "Anglicised" surnames.

(c) "The predominance of typically "Western" surnames amongst the Travellers would point to their being descended from dispossessed members of the peasantry. Famine, eviction, and general economic hardship were far more severe in the West than elsewhere; this is reflected in the predominance of surnames from the area."

Granted that "Joyce", "Ward" etc. are names typical both of the West of Ireland, and of Travellers, however:

- A very significant number of "typical" Western surnames - such as O'Flaherty, Conneely, Noughton, Breathnach (Walsh), O'Faiclean (Wheelan), etc. etc., do not appear among Travellers at all. This would imply that,

by some historical miracle, peasants possessing these surnames, unlike people named Joyce and Ward, were never dispossessed.

- Many "typically Traveller" surnames are very rare indeed among the Settled population. I have no access to government records of surnames, but if we assume that distribution of telephones among the sedentary population is approximately the same for all surnames, a glance at the telephone director (1978) gives some interesting results. There are, for example, only 28 subscribers in the whole of Ireland, with the surname Maughan, yet Maughans comprise 3.09% of the Travelling families recorded in the 1960 census used by the Commission. Again, Mengans (2.42% of the Travelling population, according to the 1960 census) account for a mere 13 subscribers. And even here, we do not know how many subscribers are of Traveller origin. By way of contrast, 74 subscribers are Conneely's, and 87 are Flaherty's; neither of these surnames is listed in the Report of the Commission as commonly occurring among Travellers, and I myself have never met a Traveller bearing either of them.
- Some common Traveller surnames - for example, O'Driscoll - far from being typical "Western" surnames, are associated with nobility. Did the nobility "take to the roads", too?
- The Commission found that 35.64% of the Travelling population shared a mere nine surnames.

If Travellers really were descended from dispossessed members of the Settled Irish population, why is the distribution of surnames among Travellers not identical (or at least similar) to that among Settled Irish? Why do so many "Settled" surnames - particularly those prominent in the areas of greatest economic hardship - not appear at all?

(d) "Travellers show, statistically, a greater tendency towards alcoholism than the Settled population. This would indicate that they descend from problem-ridden persons who had to drop out of Settled society because they were inadequate to cope with it."

- The tendency to alcoholic addiction is not genetically determined, or biologically inheritable.
- Escapism through the use of intoxicants is typical of cultures suffering from discrimination, erosion of traditional ways of life, and prejudicial treatment from members of other, dominant cultures. The American Indians in their use of alcohol, and American Blacks in their use of hallucogens, narcotics, and barbituates, are but two analogies.

(e) "Personal problems, such as illegitimacy or alcoholism, sometimes forced an individual or family into itinerancy. The literature contains numerous

references to "strolling women" - women stigmatised and driven to begging and sometimes prostitution because of an illegitimate child...." G.Gmelch, The Irish Tinkers, p. 10.

Being driven from Settled society does not guarantee that the individual will be assimilated into Traveller society; quite the contrary, birth into the group is a pre-requisite for membership (see part II). It is possible that Settled Persons adopting certain aspects of the Travellers' lifestyle (begging nomadism) would come into increased contact with Travelling People, which would mean increased likelihood of inter-marriage, and the children, if raised as Travellers, would be considered full members of the group. The Settled spouse in such unions, however, never is. Travellers themselves recognise the existence of "black strangers on the road" (cf. McCarthy p. 29 of this section): families who are nomadic but who are not accepted by Travellers as members of the group and who, in the majority of cases, bear "untypical" surnames.

As for the assimilation of "strolling women" into the Travelling Community. The Commission itself emphasises* that Travellers' standards of sexual morality are higher than those of the Settled Community, and indeed points out that "these high standards may be imperilled in the changed social circumstances which absorption will bring about." The Commission hoped that "the itinerants will be able to discern and cope with the less desirable incidents of life in the Settled Community" - in other words, that they do not pick up any bad habits from us. Traveller women suspected of "immorality" receive the full brunt of social control mechanisms at the group's disposal, ostracisation being the most extreme of these. - However, the children of "immoral women (Traveller and, hypothetically, Settled too), if raised as Travellers, would be Travellers themselves. (For more on these criteria, see Section II.

Historical references state unequivocally that even at the times of greatest hardship amongst the Settled population, forcing them into itinerancy and begging, these persons did not assimilate into the Travelling Community. I quote:

"In 1834, the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws estimated that there were 2,385,000 beggars and their dependents (almost one-third of the total population) on the roads of Ireland at least part of the year. Of these, tinker families formed a distinct and recognisable group. A resident of County Longford told the Commission on the Condition of the Poorer Classes: 'Ordinary beggars do not become a separate class of the community, but wandering tinkers, families who always beg, do. Three generations of them

* Quotations taken from p. 90

have been seen begging together.' (1835: 574)

And from County Mayo:

'The wives and families accompany the tinker while he strolls about in search of work, and always beg. They inter-marry with one another, and form a distinct class.' (1835: 495)**

(f) "While thousands of Irish have moved onto the roads, not all ultimately became Travelling People. Many were itinerant for only a few months each year; others eventually emigrated or returned to the land with the onset of better times. Those who remained, however, developed a separate identity. At first this identity was based only on a similarity of lifestyles. But gradually it was strengthened by their growing isolation, both physical and social, from settled society and by the group endogamy which inevitably developed."**

As regards "isolation, both physical and social": "Prior to the nineteenth century they lacked shelter of their own. At night they slept in the kitchens or outbuildings of small farmers or labourers...."*** This is hardly physical isolation, and the willingness of the Settled Persons mentioned, to put up Travelling families in their own kitchens, indicates a lack of the sort of discriminatory practices that result in social isolation.

As for "group endogamy": this is one of the fundamental criteria for qualifying as a separate group,**** and thus must have been practiced for as long as Travellers have been recognised as such. Some historical references to Travellers:

"As early as pre-Christian times (fifth century and earlier), itinerant white smiths working in bronze, gold and silver travelled the Irish countryside making personal ornaments, weapons and horse trappings in exchange for food and lodging."*****

"By 1175, "tinkler" and "tynker" begin appearing in written records as surnames; by 1300, they were common."*****

"I have found a reference to a law of 1243 against wandering Irish, but have not been able to track this down. However the text is available of the law of 1413... See also 1 Henry VI 1422 III."*****

* S. and G. Gmelch, The Emergency of an Ethnic Group: the Irish Tinkers, p. 22 (my italics)

** S. and G. Gmelch, op.cit., p. 233

*** Ditto, p. 235

**** See Section II

*****Ditto, p. 227

*****Ditto, p. 227

***** "How Old are the Irish Travellers?" by Dr. D. Kenrick, p. 1

"There are Medieval references to Irish Tinkers on the Continent, but I am unable to locate these at present."*

Shakespeare makes reference to the existence of a distinct language spoken by "Tinkers".

As regards the development of a "separate identity... based on a similarity of lifestyles":

When would this have had a chance to develop? Even to-day, when motorisation has meant vastly increased mobility, most nomadic Travellers cover a fairly restricted, and regular, circuit.** Travellers meet in very large groups, from very wide distances, only at a small number of annual fairs (e.g. Puck, Ballinasloe). So - not only were they not meeting one another, but they were until the beginning of the 19th century, interacting frequently with the Settled Community (cf. S. and G. Gmelch, p. 235).

Decreased interaction with the Settled Community does not automatically imply a compensatory increase of interaction amongst Travellers. Even to-day, factional hostility between clans is rife indeed. Travellers' interaction with other Travellers, to whom they are not linked by kinship is very limited even when no traditional hostility between the groups concerned exists. A visit to any Traveller site demonstrates this clearly: extended families stick together. By the same token, a study of various camps in any one vicinity shows that different groups have their "own" places, and stay well away from one another. (Indeed, when local Settlement Committees have ignored the existence of factionalism, and stuck unrelated families indiscriminately together on crowded sites, the reaction has been open conflict and eventual departure from the site.***)

How could a motley collection of dispossessed peasants, alcoholics, prostitutes, and general misfits, who met only a limited number of other "drop-outs" like themselves, possibly have evolved into the coherent and distinct ethnic group described in section II?

* Private correspondence from Dr. D. Kenrick to the author.

** "Contrary to popular belief and some fictional accounts which have portrayed Tinkers as vagabonds wandering the entire country, most actually travelled within a small area... seldom covering more than two or three counties... Very few travelled all Ireland." - G. Gmelch, "The Irish Tinkers", p. 28.

*** "The results of a questionnaire sent to 70 local Settlement Committees indicate that "conflict between families" was the primary cause for families abandoning settlement." - G. Gmelch, Settling the Irish Tinkers, Ekistics, Vol. 43 (1977) p. 235.

Gammon vocabulary can be directly traced to modifications of Irish language/dialects. In either case, the group would have been outnumbered by other group(s) and relegated to inferior status.

3) The Celts themselves were a semi-nomadic people: they spread all over Europe. Their cattle-raising and agricultural methods necessitated migration every few years as the soil became depleted. They did not build towns/cities - really permanent, large-scale settlements - until the 8th - 10th centuries A.D. Until then, they lived in extended family groups in relative isolation from one another. Given this fact, it seems likely that persons specialising in trades other than agriculture/cattle-raising (primarily: metalworking) would not have been able to make a living by attaching themselves permanently to any single settlement: they would have had to move on when the limited market of any given settlement were exhausted. The existence of specialist "itinerant whitesmiths" is documented "from the fifth century and earlier". Since rural Ireland did not become "monetarised" until very recently (even within living memory, Traveller tinsmiths were paid for their services in agricultural produce rather than cash), and since foodstuffs are bulky and perishable, the breadwinner of the family would have been unable to support a wife and children unless they accompanied him in his travels.

Hypothesis Three: The Irish Travellers are the descendents of indigenous nomadic craftsmen who never became sedentary.*

While I have devoted a great deal of space here to the question of the origins of the Travelling People, I must also point out that the way in which a group originates, or the time-span since its emergence, is irrelevant to its standing as a separate culture. To give a few examples.

The United States of America has existed as a separate nation for just over two centuries, yet no one questions the existence of a separate and entirely distinctive American culture. Quite the contrary, an Irishman who spends even a decade or so in the States, and returns home, is referred to by his old neighbours as a "returned Yank": even in so short a time-span, he has assimilated so many elements of the new culture that he is no longer accepted as a full member of his natal group. (The Afrikaaners, Australians, New Zealanders, etc., are analogous examples: distinct cultures - not "sub-cultures" of their "parent" cultures - which have evolved within a few centuries.)

Perhaps more directly analogous to the "drop-out theory" as regards Irish Travellers, is the case of the American Negro. All American Negroes are descended from

* This is the hypothesis favoured by Séan Maher, the (Traveller) author of The Road to God Knows Where.

involuntarily displaced African peasants, much as Irish Travellers are assumed to be descended from involuntarily displaced Irish peasants. Yet to-day's American Negro is NOT, in essence, an African peasant who should "return" to the country, language, religion, lifestyle, etc. of his ancestors. His is a distinct "Afro-American" culture - neither purely African, nor indistinguishable from that of "W.A.S.P." Americans.

Thus, even if (as in the case of the American Negro) it could be irrefutably proven (and it cannot - the overwhelming majority of the evidence is against it) that every single Irish Traveller to-day is the descendent of an Irish Settled Person who was forced into nomadism, this would NOT "prove" that to-day's Travellers were still, in essence, an involuntarily displaced Settled Person who should "return" to the lifestyle of his ancestors.

II. Scientific Definitions of the Classification, "Ethnic Group": Extent to which these are fulfilled by The Irish Travellers

Sharon Gmelch, quoted on pp. 30-31 of this section, lists four criteria which, she claims, unite the Travelling People and Settled People of Ireland; she then lists four which separate them.

Let us take a "dictionary definition" and examine the Irish Travellers in relation to it.

"The term ethnic group is generally understood in anthropological literature to designate a population which:

- 1) is largely biologically self-perpetuating;
- 2) shares fundamental cultural values;
- 3) realised in overt unity in cultural forms;
- 4) makes up a field of communication and interaction;
- 5) has a membership which defines itself, and is defined by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order.
... the itemised characteristics imply.*
- 6) racial difference
- 7) cultural difference
- 8) social separation

1* Nota Bene: these are merely implications, not pre-requisites.

language barriers

spontaneous and organised enmity.**

Biological self-perpetuation (endogamy): "Only about 10% of the itinerants are to be children of parents one of whom was not an itinerant. There is no evidence that this tendency to inbreed has produced any discernable problems so far."** The reader will note that no mention is made of "itinerants", both of whose parents were "not itinerants".

Among Gypsies or Travellers*** the most socially relevant and the one necessary condition for being a Gypsy involves the principle of descent. This is the main principle of separation between Gypsy and gorgio. Probably it has always been the same amount. A Gypsy or Traveller must have at least one Gypsy or Traveller parent; and the children of Gypsies will typically assume the identity of the parent.

For this reason, Gypsies differ from other groups with which they have mistakenly been classed: for example, consider the popular song, "Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves", or the reference by a Hertfordshire social worker to Gypsies as a 'delinquent sub-culture'. Tramps, vagrants, and thieves may come to form a community of sorts with their own code and values, but their identity stems from assumed or achieved status and living pattern, rather than something ascribed at birth. Criminal families may form an on-going association, but each member becomes a criminal by his actions and not through birth, even if his parents were criminals. By contrast, a Gypsy's status is ascribed at birth. Gypsies or Travellers therefore qualify as an ethnic group."****

So you take Hippies as a sub-culture: membership there is voluntary, you decide to "drop out". With Travellers it is quite the opposite: you cannot decide to become a Traveller, indeed, you cannot become a Traveller. You must be born into the group. Which means they are an ethnic group, not a sub-culture."*****

Shared fundamental cultural values: If, as the Commission claimed, itinerants do not constitute a single homogeneous group or community within the nation"*****how could this Commission have made its investigations in the first place? They did not interview people at random to discover who was "an itinerant"

Ethnic Groups and Boundaries, ed. Frederick Barth, publ. Allen & Unwin 1970. pp 10-11. numbering and italics by the author.

Report of the Commission on Itinerancy, p. 89 (my italics)

I wish to point out that the authors are referring throughout to all the Travelling People, Romany and non-Romany, in Britain. The words "Gypsy" and "Traveller" are used interchangeably throughout the book, as is clear from the statement on p. "Travellers have a variety of languages: Anglo Romany, Romany, Shelta or Gammon and Cant" ("Shelta or Gammon" is spoken exclusively by Irish Travellers. Gypsies and Government Policy in England, B. Adams et al, p. 35 (italics in original.)

** Ms. Patricia McCarthy, interview with the author.

*** P. 37

and who was not; they knew exactly who their target population was before they started. That they perceived dividing as well as unifying factors among the population was hardly surprising: no group (certainly not, for example, the Settled Irish, with their divisions of Inisheer, Ballymun, Foxrock, etc.) fulfills the "single homogeneous group or community" criterion 100%. Having made the above statement, the Report goes on to make statement after statement about "the itinerants": for example, the whole of chapter XIII ("Social and Ethical Behaviour of Itinerants") deals precisely with the "shared fundamental values" that we are referring to here.

For more detailed listing of these values in comparison to those of the Settled population, see section III.

3. Overt unity of cultural form: Again, this cannot be taken too literally; it does not mean that all members of the group dress exactly alike, have the same possessions, behave in exactly the same manner: no two people anywhere do that. What it does mean is that the group has certain externally observable characteristics in common; that, generally speaking, it has its own guidelines within the boundaries of which cultural forms (such as material possessions, appearance, speech-patterns, behaviour, etc.) fall.

The Commission deals with many of these: for example, the types of dwelling typically used by Travellers.

It is because Travellers (unlike, say, Jehovah's Witnesses) are immediately discernably "different" from the majority population, that the latter are aware of their existence at all.

Even by such blatantly obvious criteria as these, the premise that Travellers are "really", "essentially" peasants* (from whom they are supposedly descended) is patently absurd. Irish Travellers do not live, act, or even look like the Irish peasantry of the 19th or any other century. To clarify the last criterion (appearance):** despite the fact that Travellers to-day tend to wear "modern" clothing, their way of wearing them makes them immediately identifiable to the observer, as Travellers.*** So do the hairstyles of both men and women. In a more traditional context, Traveller costume was distinctly Traveller; women****

* For example: "The culture of the travellers bears definite resemblances to the rural culture of 19th century Ireland and appears to have become rigid at this period possibly because the travellers became socially isolated. The travellers, therefore, are a sub-culture of poverty not a separate culture." - Social Contract, undated pamphlet by the Sligo C.T.P., p. 2

**At this point I am referring to cultural manifestations, not to purely physical characteristics such as hair-colour, shape of face, etc.

***For more detailed discussion of the meaning of Traveller grooming see "Hygiene"
****It is a truism of Ethnography - in the European context at least - that women's costume is more elaborate and distinctive than mens'. 1866

for example, wore:

- plaid rugs (not black or fawn as the peasantry did)
- colourful "pockets" with embroidery and decorative buttons
- distinctive aprons with hand-decorated borders.

None of these articles of costume has ever been typical of the dress of the Irish peasantry.

4. Field of communication and interaction: "Their interaction with settled society continues to be restricted to economic dealings - asking for scrap items and alms - and to such formal institutional settings as courts and hospitals."*

One of the first things a Traveller will demand of the Settled Person who approaches and speaks to him is, "Are you from the Committee?" This is because Settled Persons without "ulterior motives" of some sort, never, in the ordinary course of things, converse equal-to-equal with Travellers. This fact is recognised not only by Travellers, but also by "the man in the street": on several occasions when I have been chatting with Traveller friends, a Settled stranger passing by has come up to me and congratulated me "on the great work the Committee's doing". When I deny being "from the Committee", the response is, Who are you with, so? Simon, is it?" - the idea of Travellers and Settled Persons actually being friends, and talking together because they enjoy each others' company, is so foreign that it is simply unacceptable.

This barrier between the two groups - each of which comprises a separate field of interaction - is zealously maintained, mostly by the Settled Community. Travellers who are recognisable as Travellers are forbidden access to Settled "field of interaction", such as pubs, dance-halls, and restaurants: it is not merely "known troublemakers" or "persons under the influence of alcohol" who are barred, but all Travellers who cannot successfully conceal their identity.

5. Self-ascription ("a membership which defines itself") and outside ascription ("is defined by others"): Travellers have a name for themselves as a group, and they know exactly who does and does not belong to it, and why. The Settled Community also have names for Travellers as a group, and they too know exactly who it applies to and (by criteria which are very different from the Travellers' own) why.

"Outsiders' attempts to identify Gypsies or Travellers by seemingly objective criteria, such as country or origin, race, language, occupation, or general culture have been mistaken. How Travellers identify themselves has not been considered

as of primary importance... self ascription is decisive. It should be taken to refer to group ascription rather than that of the individual; that is if a group of Gypsies or Travellers recognises as a member a person calling himself a Gypsy, then his identity as a Gypsy is a social fact.

... In the process of adaptation, aspects of Gypsy culture may even come to resemble some of the wider society. But cultural similarity with any house-dwelling, non-Gypsy group does not necessarily weaken the permanent feature in Gypsy identity, namely their conception of themselves as a distinct group. A local definition of Gypsy or Traveller is "not gorgio". Travellers mark themselves off from the gorgio, or the Flattie or "country people" in the case of some Irish and Scottish Travellers.**

IMPLICATIONS (Not "pre-requisites")

6. Racial difference: The man on the street claims that he can "spot a Tinker", and he is usually right. A large part of this "recognisability" of Travellers is, of course, due to their distinctive patterns of grooming, but it is not limited to these. Hair colour, facial features, and bodily proportions which are distinctively "Traveller" make it impossible for many persons who attempt to "pass" by copying the speech - and grooming - patterns of the Settled Community, to do so; they are still recognisable as Travellers.

Genetic studies** corroborate this popular view by demonstrating that Irish Travellers "have diverged slightly from the house-dwelling population at certain loci".*** This is taken by the authors as proof of "inbreeding" or the unproven assumption that at some point in the past Travellers were genetically identical to the Settled Population (from whose ranks they "dropped out"). How long genetic differentiation has existed, or the causes for it, have not been investigated or proved; the only indisputable scientific fact here, is that it does exist.

7. Cultural differences: these will be listed in detail in section III.

8. Social separation: (already discussed in point 4.)

9. Language barriers: The linguistic barriers separating Irish Travellers from the Settled Population are two-fold:

A) Travellers' use of English: Travellers' use of English is distinctive; so much so, indeed, that "uninitiated" Settled Persons often have difficulty in under-

2 * Gypsies and Government Policy in England, B. Adams et al, pp. 34-35

3 ** M.H. Crawford and G. Gmelch: The Human Biology of Irish Tinklers: Demography, Ethnohistory, and Genetics, and M.H. Crawford, Genetic Affinities and Origin of Irish Tinklers

14 ***S. and G. Gmelch, "The Emergence of an Ethnic Group", p. 226

standing Travellers' speech even when Travellers are trying their best to get through. The usual reason that Settled Persons give for not understanding is "they speak so fast!" This is precisely the cry heard from anyone encountering a language or dialect with which he is unfamiliar in its "real-life" context - the Irish tourist in France, for example, is heard to make the same lament: what the Parisian says, and what his Leaving Cert. teacher said, are two different things, but the tourist puts it down to the "speed" of the Frenchman's speech. (The French tourist says the same thing when he comes to Ireland.)

Distinctive vocabulary used by Travellers is often cited as evidence of their having retained "due to social isolation", "archaic" speech-patterns which were formerly common amongst the Irish peasantry.

This is simply untrue. No language is static; Travellers "pick up" new words as they are needed - some recent examples which have passed into common usage among Travellers are "no way", "to be 'into' something", etc.

If the language is not static, why does it retain "archaic" elements? An analogy is the Settled Irishman's use of English. The Irish population (Settled and Traveller) is under constant bombardment (through films, radio, television, etc.) from "new" ways of speaking, new vocabulary and syntax. We take from these what we need (rather than copying indiscriminately), in such a way that we retain the distinct "Hibernian" character of our language-use. The Irishman saying "Can you not?" (rather than the more modern "Can't you?") is no more "being archaic through social isolation from on-going linguistic changes" than is the Traveller who uses words like "scholar" and "sup".

The use of language is determined by culture, and by world-view. The patterns and boundaries of these dictate the evolution and use of language. The Settled Irishman who comes back from prolonged residence in America or Britain, and has assimilated the speech-patterns of his adopted homeland, is no longer recognised as a full member of his natal group: instinctively, the group realises that "he who does not talk like us, does not think as we do, and therefore is not one of us".

Neither "Hiberno-English", nor "Traveller-English", are static; Settled Irish to-day do not speak exactly as their grandfathers did, nor do Travellers. The dialects change, but they do so according to their own internal logic.

Apart from the distinctive vocabulary of Traveller English, there are also questions of grammar, syntax and so on. These are not simply "bad English"; they have a cohesiveness and pattern. What is more, they are not identical to any "archaic" usage of (Settled) Hiberno-English. Some examples:

- when a word ending in a vowel is followed by a word beginning with a vowel, Travellers insert an "invisible letter" (comparable to "eclipse" and "aspiration" in Irish). e.g.;

"He went to (v) England."

"They give it to (h)us."

In either case, the Settled speaker would insert an invisible letter "w":

"to (w) England"; "to (w)us".

- Verb-forms are used almost exclusively in the 3rd person singular; e.g. "We goes", "I wants", "They does" etc.
- The past tense of a verb is, in many cases, formed simply by use of the (undeclined) form of the word, e.g. "I give it him yesterday".
- "Mispronunciations" of standard English words are not a matter of individual variation, but occur in regularly repeated forms; e.g. "rubidge", "oney", "childer".

For a much more detailed exposition of Traveller English, see "To Shorten the Road", compiled by S. and G. Gmelch. The editors have simply brought forward verbatim transcriptions of folk-tales told by Travellers earlier in this century. While they do not go into specific analysis of Traveller dialect, the words speak for themselves; also, a comprehensive glossary of "non-standard" usages and pronunciations is included as an appendix.

B) Cant (Shelta, Gammon):- "It is impossible to be sure of the origin of the travelling communities (sic). There are two possible explanations:

...b) that they belong to a separate culture possible (sic) of European Gypsy origin.

The existence of a secret language was thought to lend credence to the second explanation. Now however, this secret language, Shelta, is considered to be merely an adaptation of vocabulary as a response to discrimination and segregation just as a hippie code-system has emerged."*

The above quote illustrates the virtually universally accepted explanation of those non-specialists who happen even to be aware of the existence of Cant** as to how it came to be there in the first place, and what it consists of. It is blithely dismissed as a "code-system", for the simple reason that recognising it

* Social Contract, undated pamphlet produced by Sligo, C.T.P., p. 2

** "Cant" is the general term used by Travellers to describe their language; they also use the word "Gammon". "Shelta" would seem to be an archaic or dialect word, as it is not in general use to-day. Dr. Kenrick believes that, historically, there were two distinct vocabularies, formed by different methods: "Gammon" and "Shelta". Travellers to-day, however, do not distinguish between the two. "Cant" is the general term applied to all secret communication.

as a separate language would entail simultaneous recognition of its speakers as comprising a separate culture. Let us look at the facts:

(a) Gammon has been in existence from at least Shakespearian times (16th c.); this is documented by Shakespeare's reference (Henry IV, Part I, Act 2, Scene 2 1.19) which says that young Henry could "drink with every tinker in his tongue".

(b) Deeper analysis of the language points to a far greater age. This is what Dr. D. Kenrick, linguist and Gypsiologist, has to say:

"The critical point about the vocabulary is that it uses unaspirated consonants where Middle Irish, indeed all written Irish, has aspirated consonants. The unaspirated consonants are of course older. So Old Irish (pre-manuscript) must have had "atter" for "father", with a 't' (corresponding to Latin 'pater'). Middle and Modern Irish have 'athair' (pronounced 'ahir'). Shelta preserves the unaspirated 't', giving the forms 'datair' and 'garter' ('r' representing a long 'a').

Other examples:

Cant	Old Irish	Middle Irish	Modern Irish (pronunciation)
tyal	let	leth	/le/
tober	boter	bothar	/bo(h)er/
mawler	lam	lamh	/la:v/
kon	noc	nocht	/noxt/

If, as was assumed by the first students of Shelta, the word "gre" ('to arise') was derived from 'erg-im' when 'g' was pronounced hard, the language would not be a mere relic of the eighth or tenth century A.D.; it would be prehistoric (i.e. pre-dating any Irish written records.)**

As is evident from the above, Dr. Kenrick accepts the hypothesis that Shelta was deliberately 'created' by altering the vocabulary used by the Settled population. There are two main counter-arguments to this:

Firstly, it is quite possible that Gammon was traditionally the mother language of Travellers, who learnt Irish (and later English) as a second language necessary to their dealings with the Settled population (see points C) and D) overleaf). Secondly, even if we exclude the 10% of Gammon vocabulary which is of Romanes origin, not all Gammon/Shelta words lend themselves so easily to this theory; e.g. Cant: "kinya", Irish: 'teach'; Cant: 'kannya', Irish: 'cac'.

These points are a subject of on-going debate between myself and Dr. Kenrick, and are too academic to go into in detail here. The interested reader is invited to contact myself and The Romani Institute for further details.

** "How Old are the Irish Travellers?" Occasional Papers of the Romani Institute, no. 2, p. 3-4.

C) If the Irish Travellers really are descended from dispossessed peasants from the West of Ireland, how is it that no Traveller to-day is Irish-speaking, not even those whose circuits occur largely in and around Gaeltacht areas? If Irish speakers were forced onto the road, they may have had to learn Gammon, and English but they should (functionally speaking) have retained their knowledge of Irish, for two reasons:

- as an additional "secret language" to use in the presence of English speakers;
- as a necessary tool for communication in economic etc. transactions, with Irish speakers.

D) There are to-day, living in the Southern part of the United States, several thousand Irish Travellers, whose forebears emigrated there in the mid-19th century

These Travellers, despite nearly a century and a half of isolation from other Travellers and co-existence with Settled Americans, still speak Gammon. This gives rise to many intriguing questions, for example:

- this group is descended from people who emigrated in pre-Famine times. Yet according to popular theory, Travellers as a distinct group did not even exist at that period, or were only just in the process of emergence.
- At the time (1830's) the vernacular of the majority of the Irish people - and most particularly, of the Western peasantry, from whom, in the main, Travellers are popularly supposed to descend - was Irish. Yet the Irish Travellers of the Southern United States, like the Irish Travellers in Ireland and Britain, do not speak Irish. (All three geographical groups do speak Gammon - proving that all three are representatives of a single cultural continuum).
- The fact that no Travellers to-day, in either the Old World or the New, speak Irish, yet all speak Gammon, suggests two very interesting (and so far un-researched) possibilities:

- (i) Irish was always a second language for Travellers, mother tongue being Gammon/Shelta; when it became expedient to replace one second language (Irish) with another (English), this was done;
- (ii) Assuming that Irish was the mother-tongue, Travellers managed (despite the fact that they began to acquire shelter of their own - waggons - and were thus having decreased contact with the Settled population just at the time when the English language began to take over) to learn English and forget Irish faster than did the Settled peasantry. (So much for 'social isolation resulting in archaic speech-patterns').

- If we assume that the original group of Travellers emigrating to the American

* The Gmelch's Comprehensive Bibliography lists 21 source-texts on Irish Travellers in the U.S., 3 of which are specifically linguistic: e.g. J. Harper and C. Hudson Irish Traveller Cant in its Social Setting, in: Southern Folklore Quarterly No. 37, (1973) pp. 101-104.

49
South spoke both Irish and Gammon (and they must have spoken the latter - they certainly did not learn it since they emigrated, or by sheer coincidence 'invent exactly the same vocabulary used by their counterparts in Ireland), then, irregardless of which was the "mother" and which the "second" language -

- i) why is it that, after a generation or two, both languages of "the Old Country" were not entirely replaced by English? This is certainly the case with the vast majority of ethnic groups in the States: they jump into "the melting pot", and one of the first things to go is the mother-tongue. Why has this group so tenaciously held on to its distinctive language?
- ii) If the group were to retain one of its distinctive languages, and replace the other with English, why preserve the Gammon and let the Irish die out? Why not vice-versa?

It is worth mentioning, while on the subject of Irish Travellers in the United States, that the language is not the only distinctive feature of the culture which they have preserved. Even a cursory glance at the titles listed in the bibliography shows that they are still engaged in "typical" trades (horse - and donkey - dealing, fruit-picking, trading), gather 'en masse' for funerals, and are of course, nomadic. The "Committee" in this country might, in the light of these facts, be tempted to ask itself what chance it has of "success", if the most efficient "melting-pot" in the world has failed, over a hundred and fifty year period, to "integrate" the Irish Travellers.

E) The argument is frequently heard, that English Gypsies are a "real" (separate) culture, because they have their own language, whereas by contrast Irish Traveller possess only an "argot", and so are a "sub-culture".

Yet Dr. D. Kenrick (who speaks fluent Gammon as well as half a dozen different dialects of Romanes and is one of the very few 'Country People' to do either) says that, whereas the average Irish Traveller possesses a vocabulary of 1000+ words of Cant, the average English Gypsy has only about 500 words of Anglo-Romanes. In other words, Irish Travellers know twice as much of their own language, as English Gypsies do.

No one doubts the validity of the claim of Romanes to be a "real" language (not an "argot") simply because:

- there are millions of people alive to-day who speak it as their mother-tongue and have vocabularies of tens of thousands of words (of which English Gypsies have retained only a few hundreds);
- even the limited vocabulary possessed by English Gypsies can still be traced back directly to its roots in indigenous languages alive in India to-day.

Thus even though for to-day's English Gypsy, Anglo-Romanes fulfills the function of an argot, no one is suggesting it is anything other than the "remnants" of a bona fide language, since either of the above two facts on its own would prove this irrefutably. In the case of Gammon, however, neither* of these two proofs is available. Yet the very scope, and sheer tenacity, of Gammon, even as it survives to-day, would point out its having been a much fuller entity in the past.

Sampson, writing in 1891**, says that Gammon, as it existed then, was "copious enough to express all the everyday needs of material existence." Gmelch*** writes "Traditionally, Travellers possessed Gammon words for most of the principle nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and prepositions... Travellers still speak Gammon to-day, and some new words are being created. The size of their vocabulary however, appears to be much smaller than in the past."

How is it then, that English Gypsies with their 500 words are recognised as having a "language", while Irish Travellers with twice that number, are conceded to possess merely a ('made-up') argot?

F) Dr. Anthony Cash is a linguist of Irish Traveller origin. He raises the following very important consideration: "... Or take the word 'mythra', said of someone who is constantly complaining or always looking on the gloomy side. This, surely, is a word coined for internal consumption, assuming as it does, long acquaintance with the person described. The main purpose for which Shelta was created may well have been to keep outsiders in the dark. The evidence of 'gisthra' and 'mythra' suggests a function more extensive than that."****

In other words, the existence of vocabulary (and Dr. Cash makes reference to a good many more examples) which would only be functional within the group, would indicate that the language was/is used internally rather more than is popularly supposed, at the very least. It lends credence to the alternative hypothesis, that Gammon may have been the mother-tongue used originally for internal communication and in time, like Anglo-Romanes, degenerating into an argot used primarily to conceal communication from outsiders. Again, very thorough study would have to be made of the probable age, and extent, of 'internal' words in comparison with "external" ones, before the questions raised by Dr. Cash can be satisfactorily answered.

* As previously mentioned, the second possibility has never been researched: it would be necessary for someone skilled in Comparative Historic Linguistics to seek out analogies to Gammon words, syntax, etc., in other languages, particularly for those features which are not immediately traceable to an Irish or Romanes root.

** "Tinkers and their Talk", in JGLS (first series) 2: 204-21.

*** The Irish Tinkers, pp. 38-39

**** A. Cash, The Language of the Maguires. in: JGLS (4th series) Vol. 1, No. 3. p. 180.

G) "Did Irish Travellers become Shelta speakers, or was it rather that Shelta speakers became itinerants? I have no evidence for favouring the second hypothesis: I simply find it difficult to believe that an itinerant, fragmented people could have invented such a complex, in many ways sophisticated, and internally consistent language system."* (And, I might add, hold on to it for at least 1½ centuries in Georgia.)

Dr. Cash's linguistically-based hypothesis would coincide with the three "alternative" origin-hypotheses listed earlier on (Section I, pp

How, indeed, did it come to pass that all Travellers speak a single** language (or argot), if, as is popularly supposed, they descend from "drop-out" peasants who:

- up to 1800 had no shelter of their own and habitually lodged with Settled Persons:
- travelled limited circuits
- had little contact with other nomadic persons outside their own kin-groups, etc. etc.?

10. Spontaneous and organised enmity: "Settled Irish have strongly opposed the housing of Tinkers in their communities. Upon learning of ISC or local authority plans to house Travellers in their neighbourhoods, residents have often organised protest marches, circulated petitions, and in some cases picketed County Council Offices and threatened rent strikes."*** "In the past, Travellers were sometimes harassed and even physically assaulted by settled people. As the Government Commission on Itinerancy noted, farmers who were irate over Tinkers' trespassing and poaching vegetables sometimes took the law into their own hands. In 1968, a member of the Irish Parliament was fined twenty pounds for firing his shotgun at a group of Tinkers camped near his home."****

Other criteria listed in Gypsies and Government Policy in England, under the heading "Classification from Inside" in the chapter on "Identity", include:

- 11) Self-Employment*****
- 12) Travelling
- 13) Continued Contact with Nomadic Travellers (for Travellers who are house-dwelling)
- 14) Dress
- 15) Appearance and Posture

27* Ibid.
** There are 'dialects' of Shelta/Gammon, but these are no more divisive than are the several dialects of Modern Irish.

28*** G. Gmelch, The Irish Tinkers, p. 140

29**** Ibid., pp. 34-35

***** A detailed chart of Traveller work-patterns as compared to Settled ones, compiled by the authors of "Gypsies and Government Policy", is reproduced as an appendix to this book.

16) Opposing Values: "Another crucial part of self-ascription concerns the Gypsies' value system which not only differs from, but often stands in opposition to much of the gorgio value system...."^{**}

These last six criteria are among those required by Travellers for group membership and are not, unlike the preceding ten, "standard" anthropological criteria.

17) Religion is mentioned by Dr. S. Gmelch as "the same" for both Irish Travellers and Settled Persons, I disagree. This is what the Report of the Commission had to say on the subject: "All but 30 of the itinerants recorded in the 1960 census stated that they were Catholics....Generally speaking, itinerants are not considered to be irreligious in sentiment but the available information indicates that most of them are remiss in attending to their religious duties on Sundays and Church holidays.... In many cases we believe that this irregular attendance is due to the fact that no habit of regular attendance was inculcated during the formative years.

In so far as the Catholic families are concerned, itinerant parents see to it that their children receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Penance, Holy Communion and Confirmation, and go to some trouble to enable them to obtain the necessary instruction.

It is of interest to note that 80 per cent of the itinerant population of the Netherlands are members of the Catholic Church and that they are also said to be neglectful of their religious duties so far as attendance at church is concerned. ... They also have the same anxiety to have their children baptised and receive the other Sacraments."^{***}

The Commission compared the religious observances of the Irish Travellers with those of only one other nomadic people - and were struck by the similarities. Had they used a broader research-base, comparing more Indo-European nomadic peoples^{***} (Kalderash, Lowari, Resende, etc. - in other words, those groups popularly lumped under the broad title "Gypsies") they would have been even more astonished. The practices of the Irish Travellers are far more similar to those of other Indo-European nomads, than they are to those of the Settled Irish.

Jean-Paul Clebert, in his excellent book "The Gypsies", goes into religious beliefs and practices in great detail. The basic fact about Traveller religion can be

* Gypsies and Government Policy, pp. 34-35 (See Section III)

** Report of the Commission on Itinerancy, pp. 87-88. my italics.

*** I say "Indo-European" nomads to distinguish European Travellers (irregardless of their degree of "Romany-ness") from the Sami (Lapps) who are a FinnO-Ugric people and the only other nomads of Europe.

summarised as follows:

"Gypsies have no religion of their own, but claim to follow that of the country in which they live."^{**}

The forms which this takes are primarily external: emotional devotion to certain "personalities" (among Catholics: the Blessed Virgin, Pope, and a handful of Saints among Continental Travellers, the famous "black" Saint Sara and the "Three Mary's") and a love of colourful ritual; a gradual replacement of traditional rites with Church versions of same. Neither the Irish Travellers, nor British or Continental Travellers, have ever shown much inclination for an "internal" spiritual life - such as regular attendance at "routine" (non-emotional, non-colourful) rites (e.g. weekly religious services).

Travellers' devotion to the Sacraments, as duly noted by the Commission, must be explained, NOT as a Settled theologian would see it, but in terms of what they mean to the Travellers themselves.^{**}

The Sacraments occur at turning-points in the life of the individual; they constitute solemn, ceremonial recognition of the individual's changed status: Baptism: the group welcomes the new member symbolically, making him "one of us". Simultaneously, the group guarantees, in the form of chosen godparents, to care for the child if his natural parents die; that is, the group ceremonially takes on responsibility for the new member's physical and moral well-being.

First Holy Communion: occurs when the child has attained "the age of reason"; that is, when he passes from infancy to childhood, and is deemed responsible for his actions. This new status is ceremonially conferred in the presence of the group; by their presence, the group publically recognises the child's new degree of responsibility.

Penance: occurs simultaneously with First Holy Communion, so that, in the "folk mind", the two are inseparable. Yet Penance, being an individualistic, "internal"-type Sacrament, is of far less interest than First Holy Communion. Travellers - and, indeed, all "folk" cultures - do not place equal emphasis on the two; one does not hear families speaking excitedly of a child's forthcoming First Confession, or even of First-Confession-and-First-Holy-Communion. Emphasis is placed squarely on the public ritual of First Holy Communion alone.

Confirmation: occurs when the child reaches "spiritual adulthood" and is thus able to take on full responsibility. This Sacrament fulfills, for Travellers, the textbook definition of "puberty rite". After Confirmation, the Traveller is no longer a child, but a young adult, and as such has the responsibilities and independence of an adult (though full adult status is conferred only with Marriage.)

* "Gypsies", Olga Sinclair, p. 52. my italics.

** What follows is a standard Anthropological analysis of the social aspects of the Catholic religion in folk societies, of which the Travellers, like the traditional peasantry, are one. Anthropology makes similar analyses of all (Christian and non-Christian) religious practices. It is worth mentioning here that all societies possess in one form or another...

Education authorities draw attention to the fact that Travelling children almost invariably cease school attendance immediately they have their Confirmation made. This is generally interpreted as: "They were attending school primarily in order to receive the instruction necessary for this one Sacrament; once they received it there was nothing more they wanted from the school." There is a very great deal of truth in this, since Confirmation is a socially obligatory ritual without which the individual is still in "child" status: naturally, he is anxious to undergo it, and since formal instruction is pre-requisite, this too must be undergone. There are, however, other reasons why the "post-Confirmation" Traveller ceases school attendance. He is now an adult, and must take on adult responsibility both economically and in the home; this is the "pull" factor away from school. The "push" factor is that schooling is synonymous with childhood, a stage which he has (ritually, publicly) passed: children attend school; he is not a child; ergo, he does not attend school. (This is why adolescent Travellers in Training Centres always refer to them as a "job", and to their Training Allowance as "wages". Working, and earning money, are congruous with their adult status, whereas full-time learning is not.)

Marriage: The textbook anthropological definition of "marriage" is the public recognition of the sexual union of male and female, as legitimate; by recognising the union as legitimate, the group also promises to recognise the offspring as legitimate - that is, as having a birth-right to membership in the group.

All societies have "marriage" in this sense, though the forms of ceremonial surrounding the union, like the form of union itself (polygamous? monogamous? exogamous? endogamous? preferred partners? forbidden partners?) vary greatly from society to society.

"...while there was a traditional form of marriage ceremony peculiar to itinerants and often referred to as "jumping the budget" the vast majority of present day marriages have been solemnised in Church in the first instance* and the others are usually solemnised in Church eventually."**

It is worth pointing out that this is strikingly analogous to the traditional Gypsy custom. Dr. G. Gmelch has pointed out one reason why more traditional forms are being replaced with those of the Settled Community: "Today, nearly all Tinkers are married in the Church. The introduction of State welfare benefits has been a stimulant for all Travellers to obtain a legal marriage, since without a marriage certificate a man cannot claim his wife and children as dependents."***

* This implies that, at time of writing, both forms - indigenous Traveller, and Christian - were practiced.

** Report of the Commission on Itinerancy, p. 89 - my italics.

*** The Irish Tinkers, p. 126

5
Dr. Gmelch mentions the predominance of "made" marriages and the resistance of parents to "dating" - both characteristics of Gypsy culture. He also mentions that "...when it is known in advance that the parents will object.... the couple may elope or make a 'run-away match'. Merely by staying away together one or more nights, the pair may force their parents into permitting them to marry, since it is then assumed that the girl has lost her virginity."* Both J.P. Glebert, and Jan Yoors (authors of two different books each entitled The Gypsies) call attention to exactly the same phenomenon.

Thus, while as regards the social use of Church ritual Travellers embody attitudes typical to "folk" societies, there are significant differences between them and the Irish peasantry, most notably:

- non-involvement in Church ritual which does not have immediate social significance (that is, participation in the Sacraments as turning-points, but not in weekly Church services or the Sacraments which accompany them - by contrast, weekly attendance of Mass is socially obligatory among the Irish peasantry.)
- the existence of "alternative", non-Church marriage (that is, regardless of the ceremony or lack of it surrounding the group's recognition of a new union as legitimate, such recognition does not depend upon Church solemnisation, whereas in Irish peasant society, it does.)

In both of these aspects, the religion of Irish Travellers is strikingly similar to that of the Gypsies, and strikingly dissimilar from that of the Irish peasantry from whom they supposedly spring.

III. Comparison: Irish Peasantry, Irish Travellers, and Gypsies

The final point of the last section, where we saw that Traveller religion is similar both to that of the Irish peasantry, and the Gypsies, brings us to further analysis of elements dividing and unifying these three groups.

The claim that Travellers are descended from the Irish peasantry is frequently illustrated with examples of elements held in common by the two cultures, particularly those which have since died out among the latter and been retained by the former.

"Parallelism" is the term used in Anthropology to describe the simultaneous existence of identical (or very similar) elements in two or more cultures. In the past, "parallels" were actively sought out, particularly in the search for the "cradle of mankind". It was argued that every element of culture must have originated

* Ibid., pp. 127-128.

somewhere, and spread thence through migration and 'borrowing'.* Whenever these early scientists detected any kind of similarity between cultures anywhere on the globe - say, the existence of two-handled clay water-jugs, or the practice of tracing descent through the maternal line - this was cited as 'proof' that one culture (usually the one where the scientist had done his original research) was the 'originator' of the item, and that any other culture possessing it had 'borrowed' it from the originators. (In this way, for example, it was 'proved' that Melanesia is the 'cradle of mankind', since elements found there recur all over the world.)

This type of thinking was utterly rejected by Anthropologists (but not by the public at large) in the first few decades of this century. The science came to a more profound recognition of the quintessential, unifying human-ness shared by all men in all times and places; it also came to reject the notion of 'Progress' (that is, of any culture being 'superior' to any other).

The 'basic line' in Anthropology over the past half-century can be summarised thus: All men, in all times and places, face the same basic problems: how to gain food, shelter, and defence from enemies, how to ensure social order, how to express their relationship to the supernatural, how to formulate new unions, accept new members, and sever deceased members from the group, etc. etc. What is more, there is only a finite number of ways in which Man can answer these questions: limitations are imposed both by his environment, and by the very way in which the human brain is structured to perceive, reconstruct, and respond to the universe.**

To put it more concretely: a people living on or near water will, in all probability, come to use that water for transport - they will build vessels of some kind. Now, there is only a finite number of materials, and shapes, that can be used to produce an efficient floating vessel. It is thus hardly surprising that boats all over the world bear some resemblance to one another. By the same token, it is hardly surprising that dwelling-places, cooking utensils, families, religions, music, ritual, ornamentation, foods, means of transport, agricultural implements, etc. etc. - indeed, all elements of culture - bear some resemblance to one another. They are all similar, because they are all the creations of men.

To get back to our boats: if twenty different peoples in twenty widely dispersed parts of the globe all possess boats with sails, this cannot be taken as 'proof' that one (and one only) of those peoples 'originated' the sail, and that the others then

* It followed logically, then, that all cultures which had not originated the element were inferior to, or off-shoots of, the originating culture.

** Deeper investigations into the nature of the human mind are the most exciting aspect of contemporary Anthropology, and are being pursued by the school known as Structuralism led by Claude Levi-Strauss. His "Structural Anthropology" (Pelican, 2 volumes) is an invaluable introduction to the subject.

'borrowed' it. If research unearths a remarkable number of very close similarities in items possessed by two or more cultures (say, peculiarities in the means and materials used for weaving the sail; its shape, size, colour, ways of rigging; the shape, size, usage, materials, methods, ornamentation, etc. etc. of the boat; legends surrounding both; and - this is the one really irrefutable proof - similarities in the words used to describe all of these), then and only then can we begin to hypothesise that the cultures may have been in contact, and borrowed from one another, at some point in the past. The discovery of 'parallels' in no way "proves" that contact or borrowing have occurred; it simply indicates that they may have done, and that further research along these lines should be undertaken, eventually to prove or disprove the hypothesis.

"All men are similar, but some are more similar than others." By this it is meant that, for example, desert-dwellers are likely to have more elements of culture in common with one another, than they are with peoples living in rain-forests or the Arctic - for obvious reasons. By the same token, folk-cultures* possess in common certain elements which unite them with one another and distinguish them from elite** and urban*** cultures. By the same token again, nomadic cultures possess certain unifying features which distinguish them from sedentary ones.

The Rom, the Irish Travellers, and the Irish peasantry are all folk cultures. However, the first two are nomadic, while the last is sedentary. Thus it is to be expected that we will discover certain elements held in common by all three, as well as some which occur in the first two but not the third, and some which are unique to each.

I repeat that in no case, except the linguistic, is the appearance of a single item in two or more cultures in itself proof that 'borrowing' has taken place; thus, the remarkable similarity of Romany and Traveller funeral customs no more proves that one 'copied' the other (still less, that one is an 'off-shoot' of the other), than

* A few characteristics of 'folk-cultures': rural, kinship-based, little economic specialisation, self-sufficiency, family - economic unit. Primary information source = 'face-to-face' (rather than through outside media, including the printed word). Little differentiation between dwelling-place and place of work. Education of the young primarily non-formal; observation/emulation of adults, high regard for tradition and suspicion of 'change', etc.

** "Elite cultures": this term refers primarily to the culture of the aristocracy/intelligentia/"middle classes", whether rural or urban: much economic specialisation, family is not self-sufficient nor the functioning economic unit. Primary information-source = media. Formalised, specialist education. etc. etc.

***By 'urban' it is meant, basically, non-rural "folk" culture: that of the "working classes". Many elements, such as very strong kinship-links, low emphasis on formal education, predominance of face-to-face information sources, link in to its rural counter-part; other elements, like a clear division between home and work, and between work and leisure, economic specialisation and non self-sufficiency, etc. divide them.

does the parallel appearance of "made" marriages among Irish Travellers and the Irish peasantry.

The task is first to identify the existence of parallels - which is all the following chart attempts to do. Demonstrating their origins and significance is a task for further research, and is not within the scope of the present task: the refutation of the myth that "Irish Travellers do not comprise a separate culture - they are not Gypsies and are, essentially, Irish peasants."

KEY TO THE CHART*

a) The Columns

Each column refers to the normative characteristics/attitudes/practices of a separate culture:

- I. The "traditional" (Pre-Famine) Irish peasantry
- II. Contemporary Rural (Settled) culture
- III. Contemporary Irish Travellers
- IV. Contemporary Rom ("Gypsies"), particularly those in England.

Bear in mind that no culture is static; change occurs continuously.

When referring to "contemporary" rural society, I bear in mind its ongoing "urbanisation": the advent of employment possibilities outside of agriculture, the increasing specialisation of agriculture itself, the general replacing of the former unquestioned norm (owning land, having one's own farm, as the goal) with alternatives (the children of farmers who stay on the land are no longer "the lucky ones": professional or industrial work are at least as desirable - and available), the changed roles of rural women and children, etc. etc. This is not to say that more traditional lifestyles and values do not survive; they do, but are increasingly a minority phenomenon.

With Irish Travellers, and Gypsies, I have used only one column - one time-scale - each, without comparing "tradition" with "ongoing changes". It is true that, among Travellers and English Gypsies (as among to-day's rural Settled population) there are exceptions to every rule - for example, semi-sedentarism is definitely on the uprise among Travellers in Ireland, but in England, where nomadism is economically more viable, this is not occurring - and there are twice as many Irish Travellers there, as here.

I have attempted to get round the difficulty of showing changes in time, by introducing a time-element to the symbolism.

* N.B.: This chart does NOT claim to be exhaustive. It has also placed particular emphasis on aspects where Traveller and Settled cultures differ.

b) The Symbols

- / : is specifically accepted/normative
- x : is specifically rejected
- ∅ : accepted more in theory than practice
- ⊗ : rejected more in theory than practice
- : a line under any of the above indicates a recent phenomenon
- () : brackets around any of the above indicates a former phenomenon

ELEMENT	I	II	III	IV
1. Basic Values (Ideals)				
a) Sedentarism	/	/	x	x
b) self-employment	/	∅	/	/
c) wage-employment	∅	/	x	x
d) land-ownership essential to prestige	/	∅	x	x
e) single, steady income-source	/	/	x	x
f) specialisation = increased prestige	/	/	x	x
g) nuclear family = work unit	/	x	/	/
h) family - self-sufficient (own food, clothing etc.)	/	x	x	x
i) desire as many children as possible	/	(/)	/	/
j) all material goods valued in themselves	/	/	x	x
k) accumulation of material goods (e.g. once a thing is obtained, it is "held onto")	/	/	x	x
l) children's life-style, education-level, skill-level, should ideally be higher than parents'	x	/	x	x
m) high value on "book-learning" (literacy, 'scholarship')	/	/	∅	∅
n) "book-learning" normative	x	/	x	x
o) all members of family contribute to family economy	/	x	/	/
2. Sedentarism				
a) normative at all times	/	/	x	x
b) permissible in special circumstances (e.g. winter months) only			/	/
c) valued in itself	/	/	x	x

Element	I	II	III	IV
3. Nomadism				
a) normative at all times	x	x	/	/
b) acceptable in exceptional circumstances (e.g. holidays) only	x	/		
c) valued in itself	x	x	/	/
4. Dwelling-Place				
a) house/flat: normative	/	/	x	x
acceptable permanently	/	/	∅	∅
acceptable temporarily only			/	/
b) caravan/trailer: normative	x	x	/	/
acceptable permanently	x	x	/	/
acceptable temporarily only (e.g. holidays)	x	/		
c) tent: normative	x	x	(/)	∅
acceptable permanently	x	x	x	x
acceptable temporarily only (e.g. holidays)	x	/		
5. Marriage				
a) arrangements: - "match", made by parents	/	x	/	/
- "dating" (courting) actively discouraged	/	x	/	/
- female virginity obligatory	/	∅	/	/
- marriage in teenage years normative	/	x	/	/

1878

1879

1880

Element	I	II	III	IV
5. Marriage cont./				
b) the ceremony:				
- Church solemnisation essential	/	/	∅	?
- alternative means of solemnisation exist	x	x	(/)	/
- "running away together" (= loss of female virginity) = automatic social recognition of the marriage even without Church (or other) solemnisation	x	x	/	/
c) the marriage:				
- preferentially to first cousin	x	x	/	/
- creates real social bond between relations of couple	/	(/)	/	/
- monogamous	/	/	/	/
- "double standard" of fidelity	x	∅	/	/
- patrilocal (only) normative	/	x		
- patri-/matri-/neo- local all normative	x	/	/	/
d) procreation:				
- large family desired	/	x	/	/
- rejection of family planning (= restriction of no. of children)	/	∅	/	/
6. Kinship				
a) existence of "extended family" (married sons and daughters in frequent contact with one another and parents; work/live together or near one another)	/	x	/	/
b) first-cousinship a real bond	/	∅	/	/
c) second-cousinship a real bond	/	∅	/	/
d) existence of "clans" (persons not necessarily able to trace their biological relationship to one another yet feeling they belong to a single large knit-unit)	/	∅	/	/
e) existence of "factions" (ritual hostility based on membership of different clan rather than personal qualities)	/	∅	/	/

62

1881

Element	I	II	III	IV
7. Child-rearing				
a) biological mother solely/primarily responsible	/	/	x	x
b) older siblings primarily responsible	x	x	/	/
c) responsibility shared with extended family	/	x	/	/
d) strict division "child"/"adolescent"/"adult"	x	/	x	x
e) children contribute economically to family	/	x	/	/
8. Death				
a) "wake" before funeral	/	x	/	/
b) funeral attendance obligatory- regardless of distance or inconvenience - for:*				
- parents	/ ∅	/ ∅	/ ∅	/ ∅
- spouse	/ ∅	/ ∅	/ ∅	/ ∅
- offspring	/ ∅	/ ∅	/ ∅	/ ∅
- siblings	/ ∅	/ ∅	/ ∅	/ ∅
- aunts/uncles/nieces/nephews	/ /	∅ x	/ /	/ /
- cousins	/ /	∅ x	/ /	/ /
- distant relations	/ /	x x	/ ∅	/ ∅
- non-relatives living locally	/ /	∅ x	/ ∅	/ ∅
c) post-funeral normative activities:				
- weeping	/	∅	/	/
- drinking	/	∅	/	/
- singing	/	x	/	/
- fighting	/	x	/	/
- telling anecdotes about the dead	/	x	/	/
d) normative duration of post-funeral activities:				
- hours		/		
- days	/		/	/

* the second symbol in these columns refers to obligatory participation in post-funeral activities. A "∅" indicates obligatory participation for their full normative duration.

Elements	I	II	III	IV
8. <u>Death cont./</u>				
e) possessions of the dead:	∅	/	x	x
- sold	/	/	∅	?
- distributed among relatives ('inherited')	x	x	/	/
- burnt				
f) aftermath of death:	x	x	/	/
- close relatives must move from immediate area	x	x	/	?
- the dead not to be mentioned after post-funeral socialising period				
9. <u>Political Organisation</u> (see chart, 'Political Autonomy' - pp. 216-8)				
10. <u>Work</u> (see appendix)				
11. <u>Money</u>	x	/	x	x
a) to be accumulated in itself	/	/	∅ (x)	? (x)
b) savings in bank or in form of banknotes/coins	/	/	x	x
c) savings/accumulation in non-transferable form (land)				
d) savings/accumulation in transferable form (to be sold/swopped as necessary):	/	/	/	/
- livestock (horses, cattle)	x	x	/	/
- goods (dwelling-place, means of transport, jewellery)				
12. <u>Begging</u>	∅	x	/	/
a) legitimate source of money	∅	x	/	/
b) legitimate source of goods	x	x	/	/
c) normative source of domestic essentials	x	x	/	/
d) normative pre-adult occupation/income-source	x	x	/	/
e) normative adult female occupation/income-source	x	x	/	/
f) skill at begging = social prestige	∅	/	x	x
g) begging at all = stigma				

Elements	I	II	III	IV
13. <u>Language</u>				
a) knowledge of Irish normative	/	x	x	x
b) knowledge of English normative	x	/	/	/
c) knowledge of other ("secret") language normative	x	x	/	/
14. <u>Use of Institutions</u>				
a) formal schooling				
- obligatory	∅	/	x	x
- permissable	/	/	∅	∅
b) normative school-leaving age:				
- legal minimum	∅	/	x	x
- Confirmation	/	x	/	/
c) hospitals:				
- normative for child-birth	x	/	/	/
- normative for relatively minor ailments	x	/	∅	?
- normative for major ailments	∅	/	/	/
d) prisons/courts:				
- encountered rarely	?	/	x	x
- entail great social stigma	/	/	x	x
e) "homes" for children of living parents				
- encountered rarely	?	/	∅	∅
- entail great social stigma	/	/	x	x
f) "homes" for aged				
- encountered rarely	/	∅	/	/
- entail great social stigma	/	∅	/	/

Elements	I	II	III	IV
15. <u>Education</u>				
a) primarily informal (observation/emulation of older family members)	/	x	/	/
b) primarily formal ("schooling", "book-learning")	x	/	x	x
c) literacy desirable	/	/	∅	∅
d) literacy normative	∅	/	x	x
e) specialist skills desirable	∅	/	∅	∅
f) specialist skills normative	x	∅	x	x
16. <u>Time-Concepts</u>				
a) primarily present-time orientation	∅	x	/	/
b) primarily future-orientation ("saving", "planning for the future")	∅	/	x	x
c) strict schedule for work	∅	/	x	x
d) strict schedule for rising/retiring	/	/	x	x
e) strict division of "holidays" from "working days"	/	/	x	x
f) strict division of "work" from "leisure"	x	/	x	x
17. <u>Cleanliness-Concepts</u>				
a) emphasis on "objective" cleanliness (of person/clothing)	/	/	x	x
b) emphasis on "ritual" cleanliness (washing of distinct categories of items in separate vessels)	x	x	/	/
c) toilet facilities within, or in close proximity to dwelling	/	/	x	x
d) animals "ritually" impure, not allowed within dwelling	∅	x	∅	/
18. <u>Concepts of Space: Its uses and "Ownership"</u>				
a) dwelling itself is "private property"	/	/	/	/
b) area surrounding dwelling is "private property"*	/	/	∅	∅

* that is, is "owned" and not to be "trespassed upon".

Elements	I	II	III	IV
18. <u>Concepts of Space: its uses and "ownership" cont./</u>				
c) area surrounding dwelling = primarily aesthetic/recreational purpose - seen as extension of dwelling area	∅	/	x	x
d) area surrounding dwelling is not "private property"*	x	x	/	/
e) area surrounding dwelling = primarily a work area	x	x	/	/
f) "ritual" cleanliness of dwelling-place	/	/	/	/
g) "ritual" cleanliness of area immediately surrounding dwelling (rubbish may not be deposited there)	/	/	x	x
h) space beyond these two is not "owned" and not kept ritually clean (i.e. rubbish may be deposited there)	/	/	/	/

* That is, is not permanently "owned", and may be used within reason by non-members of the dwelling.

IV: Recognition of the Irish Travellers as a Separate Culture: Implications for changes of attitude and practice

It is to be hoped that the preceding pages have, once and for all, convinced the reader that Irish Travellers are not a mere "sub-culture" composed of "drop-outs" from Settled society, but rather form a viable and cohesive Culture of their own.

"If the travellers are regarded as a separate culture it is difficult to justify many of the procedures now being used to integrate them into the general community because what it would mean is that a culture was being systematically destroyed."**

The Travellers are a Culture: an Ethnic Minority Group. The book Racial and Cultural Minorities** is one of many to treat, in detail, the relationships between majority and minority cultures co-existing in a given area (be it "ghetto", region, national territory, etc.). The following is adapted from pp. 20-25. The authors remind us: "These six policies of dominant groups are not, of course, mutually exclusive: many may be practiced simultaneously. Some are conscious long-run plans; some are ad-hoc adjustments to specific situations; some are by-products (perhaps unintended) of other policies. In some instances they are the official actions of majority-group leaders; in others they are the day-to-day responses of individual members of the dominant group." The reader is invited to carefully consider which of them are operative in Settled treatment of Travelling People in this country. He is also invited to consider how other minority groups e.g. Protestants, Jews, native speakers of Irish, fare.

Types of Majority Policy (towards minority groups)

1. Assimilation

a) forced: "One way to "solve" the problem is to eliminate the minority... Dominant groups have frequently adopted an extreme ethnocentrism that refused minorities the right to practice their own religion, speak their own language, follow their own customs. Perhaps the most extreme manifestation of enforced assimilation was the Nazi regime, with its ideology of a monocultural, monolingual, monoracial people ruled by an authoritarian state.

Thus, forced assimilation is an extreme manifestation of ethnocentrism developed into an active policy for the supposed benefit of the national state.***

* Social Contract: undated pamphlet by Sligo CTP, p. 1 (My italics)
** By G.E. Simpson and J.M. Yinger, publ. Harper and Row 1965. All italics my own.
*** "... the material and social interests of the settled population itself will be advanced by a just solution of the itinerant problem." - Report of the Commission, p. 104. "At the moment this community is contributing the minimum to society and taking the maximum in the form of social welfare and other benefits. Our economy is too poor to allow this situation to continue." Social Contract, p. 12

b) permitted: Peaceful assimilation is in marked contrast. It is a long-run policy of cultural and sometimes racial unity, but it permits minorities to absorb the dominant patterns in their own way and at their own speed, and it envisages reciprocal assimilation, a blending of the diverse group, not a one-way adjustment.

2. Pluralism

Some minorities, however, do not want to be assimilated, to lose their separate identity, whether it be unilaterally or bilaterally. And parallel to the pluralistic aims of such groups is the willingness on the part of some dominant groups to permit cultural variability within the range still consonant with national unity and security

3. Legal Protection of Minorities

Closely related to pluralism, or a sub-division of it, is the policy of protecting minorities by legal, constitutional, and diplomatic means. This is often official pluralism, but the emphasis on legal protection implies that there are important groups involved that do not accept the pattern.

4. Population Transfer

Majorities have sometimes adopted a possibility of population transfer in an attempt to reduce minorities' problems.... In a few instances population transfer has been peaceful process.... More often it has been a thoroughly discriminatory process aimed at "solving" the problem by driving the group members out of an area.* Population transfer is based on the monocultural ideal.... To be effective, it would have to block later population movement, despite labour demands and other economic changes.... Even when carried out in a humane way, it violates many of the most basic rights of individuals.

5. Continued subjugation

The policies just discussed have sought either to incorporate the minorities into society or to drive them out. Often however the dominant group wants neither of these results: it wants the minority groups around, but it wants them kept "in their place", subservient and exploitable....

6. Extermination

Conflict between groups sometimes becomes so severe that physical destruction of or by the other becomes an accepted goal.....**

* "Their presence is considered to lower the tone of a neighbourhood and those who live in that neighbourhood are seldom satisfied until the itinerants have been moved on." - Report of the Commission, p. 102. "...we must face up to the problem, that if any one area succeeds (sic) in getting rid of any traveller's camp or house there that they must immediately become a burden on the neighbour area." Social Contract, p. 13

** All quotations under "Types of Majority Policy" taken from Racial and Cultural Minorities, G.E. Simpson and J. M. Yinger, pp. 20 - 25.

Now that we have an idea of the various policies applied by majorities to minorities let us look at some documented quotations and see which of these attitudes they embody:

"... a natural increase in the Jewish population (of the Munich area) of about 5% per annum. ... This indicates that if emigration stopped, the problem facing the authorities in the integrating this community would grow at a startling rate and this does appear to be now happening. The people (sic) of Munich are, therefore, faced with three choices:

- (a) ensuring that emigration of Jews continues...
- (b) tolerating (sic) a very fast-growing Jewish population, especially around the town
- (c) integrating the present Jewish community quickly."

"In some other towns there are "Jewish beer-halls"... The absence of such a beer-hall in Munich leads to drinking on the streets without any control, which is a well-known feature of Jewish life-style...."

"It is natural for those who are left to feel rejected and try to hold that person or family back - the Munich Jewish Christianisation League has had this experience with trying to help individuals who were ambitious while their families were indifferent or worse."

"The Jewish Christianisation Leagues have developed as organisations helping and speaking on behalf of this community..... However, as the people (sic) of Munich know, the problem is far from being solved and it is the purpose of this booklet to discuss how the Christian community and their institutions can contribute to this solution."

".... the material and social interests of the Christian community itself will be advanced by a just solution of the Jewish problem."

Mein Kampf?

No. All quotations are taken from a single pamphlet, Social Contract,* "prepared on behalf of Humanity by the County Sligo Branch of the Committee for Travelling People." All I have done has been to replace some words with their equivalents from another time and place: "Munich" for "Sligo", "Jews/Jewish" for itinerant/tinker/Traveller, "Jewish Christianisation League" for "Itinerant Settlement Committee", "Christian" for "Settled", "Beer-hall" for pub.

* Pages of quotations (in order of appearance above): pp. 4-5; p.6; p. 12; p.2; p. 10 (quoted from the Report of the Commission).

The pamphlet was chosen because it typifies the attitudes held by Settled Persons who would consider themselves very pro-Traveller. We are all so used to making, and hearing, and accepting statements of this kind, that it is difficult for us to probe beneath the surface and identify what their underlying assumptions are. It is to be hoped that the "shock tactic" of forcing the reader to compare identical statements when applied to Jews, and then applied to Travellers, will cause an "examination of conscience": how guilty is each of us of this kind of ethnocentric arrogance?

The authors of the above pamphlet openly admit that, if Travellers were recognised as a separate culture, that it would be "difficult to justify many of the procedure now being used to integrate them into the general community because what it would mean is that a culture was being systematically destroyed." In the authors' opinions, however, this is not the case: "... the differences in culture have been brought about by poverty and social isolation and these cultural differences are therefore not worth preserving."*

Hundreds of exceptionally altruistic, dedicated, and energetic Settled People in this country have thanklessly devoted themselves to the task of righting what they, in the light of the "sub-culture" and/or "drop-out" theories, see as intolerable social justice.

The direction ("re-integration into Settled society, their birthright to the benefits of which has been denied itinerants through the callous apathy of that society") of their efforts - though never the purity of their motivation - has been questioned by colleagues elsewhere, particularly in Britain. Other countries seem to have gone through phases of similar attitudes towards Travellers. For example: "Since the majority of Travellers to-day are thus credited with no ethnic identity, no culture in the broadest sense, and no independent system of values (only feeble and fragmented replicas of those of the dominant host society), it is consistent that the outsiders' primary aims for them should be rehabilitation and humanitarian or more efficient absorption.... Consequently Gypsies were persuaded to give up travelling and self-employment in exchange for 'half-way' housing and 'regular', mainly unskilled, jobs. Earlier Vessey-Fitzgerald, the Gypsiologist advising on the survey in Kent in 1951 had suggested that only pure-blooded Romanies should be allowed to continue travelling. This faintly resembles Himmler's initial policy towards Gypsies in Nazi Germany**; Himmler wished to preserve and permit travelling by two specific tribes, whom he believed had not debased their race and culture by mixed breeding."***

* Ibid. both quotations taken from p. 1 (my italics throughout)

** The Nazis pursued a general policy of extermination of all "racially inferior" peoples, and not just, as is popularly believed, of Jews. Over half a million Continental Travellers perished in Nazi concentration camps: see The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies (Kenrick and Paxon for full documentation).

*** Gypsies and Government Policy in England, p. 31

In other words, in England until quite recently, identical policies geared towards assimilation ("integration", "rehabilitation") were followed. The English had no convenient theory of the "impurity" of the origins of their Travelling population to back this up - the Rom had been assiduously studied there since the early 19th century, and the Gypsy Lore Society* founded, in 1888, specifically in order to pursue this work. The English realised they were dealing with a people with a long and impeccable pedigree stretching back nearly a millenium and half-way across the world to India. There was thus no question of the Rom not comprising a separate culture - but the English found this culture to be just as intolerable as the Settled Irish felt that of "their" Travellers to be (hardly surprising - the two are identical in many ways, as Chart III clearly demonstrates). The way round this, then, was to say that, although "true Gypsies" were indeed a distinct people, there were no longer any "true Gypsies" left:

"The old Romany stock is diluted and there has been an infiltration of "poor white". The majority of these people have wandered all their life. Though in the past, they had their proud traditions, they and we too, as thinking people, are faced with the problem that besets a decadent stock."**

It should be clear by now that thinking on both sides of the water evolves around a common error: that of confusing genetics (biology - purely physical characteristics) with culture (everything which is not biology).

The English version of the argument summarises as "distinct culture (Romany) + genetic interbreeding (with non-Romanies - i.e. with native English "poor whites") = "racial impurity" = "decadent stock" = dilution, and finally dissolution, of separate culture." The Irish version would be something along the lines of "Settled Irish forced into nomadism + hundreds of years of nomadism = no cultural evolution = Settled Irish forced into nomadism (that is, Irish Travellers, despite their centuries of separate existence, are "still" basically identical to the mainstream from which they "dropped out", and consequently should be "re"-settled)".

To state it more succinctly:

(English version): "separate race = separate culture;
racial mingling = cultural intermingling
= end of separate culture
= justification for assimilationist policies"

(Irish version): "identical race = identical culture
= justification for assimilationist policies."

* Still very much in existence: publishes the much-reknowned "Journal" ('JGLS'). Has consistently concerned itself with Irish Travellers as well as the Rom.
** Report on Gypsies and Travellers in Hampshire, Hampshire Association of Parish Councils, publ. Winchester 1960. Quoted in Gypsies and Government Policy in England. p. 31
1890

It is to be hoped that, having read all of the preceding documentation, the reader can see the fallaciousness of both arguments, and that he agrees with the statement of the Sligo Committee for the Travelling People:

"If the Travellers are regarded as a separate culture it is difficult to justify many of the procedures now being used to integrate them into the general community because it would mean that a culture was being systematically destroyed."*

If forced assimilationism is morally wrong, what alternative is morally right? Of the seven possibilities listed on pages 68-70 only 1b and 2 give any scope for the minority group to determine its own destiny (number 3 is simply a legal guarantee that 2 will be operative). The answer is either "permitted assimilation" in which both sides make adjustments, and do so at their own pace, or "pluralism", that is, mutual tolerance of cultural variability within the society (possibly backed up with legal sanctions, as the cultural distinctiveness of Gaeltacht-dwellers is).

It is certainly not within our scope to decide what the Travellers, as a group, ought to do, and certainly we have no right to look at their way of life from the outside and judge which aspects of it are "worth preserving" and which are "not". All of that is up to the Travellers. (We were not too pleased when the English tried the same policy on us.)

What is within our scope is to make changes within our own hearts and within our own culture; we can decide that our Traveller compatriots have just as much a right to be here, and to live in whichever ways they see fit, as we do. We can also offer the hand of friendship and aid where this is requested, and in the directions in which it is requested: if the individual opts for assimilation, he deserves our co-operation; if he opts for certain aspects of our culture (e.g. a house, literacy) then he should gain them as automatically as does any other citizen; if he opts for distinctively Traveller lifestyles - particularly nomadism - these too should be his by right.

This basic attitude towards Travellers - that they are a separate culture deserving of our respect and entitled to integrate or remain separate as they themselves determine - is the central, permeating tenet of this book.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

* Social Contract, p. 1

WĘDROWCY IRLANDZCY

PROBLEM ODREBNOSCI KULTUROWEJ I ETNICZNEJ

(THE CULTURAL AND ETHNIC DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE IRISH TRAVELLERS)

Sinead ni Shuinear

JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY, KRAKOW

1979

(Thesis for Degree of Master of Arts)

p. 36

1005

FOREWORD

The following Review of Literature is an excerpt from my Master's Thesis, and dates from 1979; it is not, therefore, meant to be representative of anything published since that date, or of any changes in policy or attitude which may have occurred in the interim. The especially thorough explanations of certain facts which may seem self-evident to the Irish or British reader stem from the fact that the thesis was submitted and defended to a Polish university.

TITLE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE. excerpt from The Cultural and Ethnic Distinctiveness of Irish Travellers, Master's Thesis for the Degree of Master of Anthropology, submitted to the Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland, in 1979, pp. 18-42

Translated by the author, Sinead ní Shuinear.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. INTRODUCTION

In the Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society, vol. III 1978, pp. 159-169 was published "Ireland's Travelling People: A Comprehensive Bibliography", by Doctors George and Sharon Gmelch. It comprises a list of 102 separate titles, grouped under various headings, i.e. General Works, Folklore, Language, Genetics, Material Culture, etc. These 102 works can be classified as follows:

- 38 works published in scientific periodicals, including the J.G.L.S. itself, as well as others specializing in folklore, archaeology, history, medicine, linguistics etc.;
- 5 unpublished university theses (some for Master's, other for Ph.D. degrees);
- 10 excerpts concerning Irish Travellers taken from scientific works on other topics (i.e. Travelling People in general);
- 13 published works dealing specifically with Irish Travellers of which:
 - 2 are official reports commissioned by the Irish government;
 - 4 are works of literary fiction (novels/plays);
 - 1 is a collection of photographs accompanied by minimal text (some quotations from Travellers);
 - 2 are collections of Irish Traveller folklore;
 - 1 is an Irish Traveller's autobiography;
 - 1 is an anthology of essays written by various members of the executive of the Itinerant Settlement Committee; and
 - 2 (The Irish Tinkers: The Urbanization of an Itinerant People and Tinkers and Travellers) are serious anthropological studies.

As for the remaining works, 25 of these are articles from the popular press, 2 are unpublished collections held by the Department of Folklore at University College, Dublin, and 4 are government reports of a statistical nature.

The Gmelches (compilers of the bibliography) state:

"A chronological look at the Traveller literature shows that most writings fall into three time periods: 1873-1910, the 1930's, and 1963 to the present. Most of the early works on Travellers dealt with Shelta, their 'secret language' or cant The current interest in Tinkers emerged after the publication of the Irish Government's Report of the Commission on Itinerancy in 1963.... The recent literature has focussed primarily on urbanization (G. Gmelch 8, 9, 10, 12, 82), ethnic identity (S. Gmelch 15, 66) and settlement (Bewley, 4, 5; Cuffe 85; G. Gmelch 9, 90; S. Gmelch 91; and Sholdice 92)." (1)

An enormous quantity of "popular" articles propagating distorted or even entirely imaginary "facts" (with or without the author's laying claim to any degree of expertise) has appeared in print. On the other hand serious anthropological research - that is, research into the cultural and social realities of Traveller life, undertaken by persons scientifically trained for the task - has been rare indeed: 5 unpublished university theses, 4 essays within books on broader themes (that is: Acton; Adams et al; Kenrick; and Reiss), and only two full scientific books (G. Gmelch and S. Gmelch). As is clear from the above-quoted list of the newest literature, the overwhelming majority of published scientific monographs has been written by the Gmelches themselves.

The following brief review of extant literature is thus limited to those main works which have had a genuine impact, be it in direct political results (by influencing the opinions of policy-makers), or by deepening our respect for, and understanding of, the Travellers and their culture. As we shall see, the two categories rarely coincide.

B. IRISH LITERATURE

1. The most influential of all works on the Irish Travellers has been The Report of the Commission on Itinerancy, published 1963. The detail in which

we shall examine this work is due to the fact that, by so doing, we are exposing the fundamental attitudes of the Settled community and thus in turn shedding light on the actual conditions in which Travellers in Ireland live today.

"The Commission on Itinerancy was established by the Government in June 1960, with the following terms of reference:-

- 1) to enquire into the problem (sic) arising from the presence in the country of itinerants in considerable numbers,
- 2) to examine the economic, educational, health and social problems (sic) inherent (sic) in their way of life,
- 3) to consider what steps might be taken -
 - (a) to provide opportunities for a better (sic) way of life for itinerants,
 - (b) to promote their absorption (sic) into the general community,
 - (c) pending such absorption, to reduce to a minimum the disadvantages (sic) to themselves and to the community resulting from their itinerant habits (sic) and
- 4) to make recommendations." (2)

These first words of the Report make manifestly clear the intense prejudice with which the research was undertaken. These are the fundamental assumptions of the Committee, formulated before the commencement of any research, as expressed in the above quotation:

- 1) The subject of the research is not seen as a people or ethnic group, but as nomadism per se ("Commission on Itinerancy" - as opposed to "Travelling People" or even "Itinerants").
- 2) Simultaneously, however, nomadic people are seen as a separate group ("itinerants").
- 3) This group, and everything distinctively associated with it, is treated as a "problem".

4) The "itinerant" way of life (= Traveller culture) is a priori defined as worthless; the Commission saw as its task not the objective research of the "economic, educational, health and social" aspects of Traveller culture, but rather the "problems" "inherent" in their "way of life".

5) The Commission was formed specifically in order to "consider what steps might be taken" and to "make recommendations" with the goal of eliminating the Travellers as a separate group; for example -

3A states that it is necessary to "improve" their way of life - ergo, that way of life must be bad, or at least inferior;

3B openly states the goal of assimilation;

3C states that their "itinerant habits" can be summarily dismissed - and should be eradicated - as "disadvantages" to both themselves and to the "community".

The Commission was comprised of 11 persons, of whom only one was associated with the so-called "social sciences".⁽³⁾ The rest were professionally associated with the health services (3), local authorities (2), the law (2), agriculture (!) (2), and education (1). Through the mass media, the general public was also requested to come forward with information; direct approaches were made to various religious leaders, government departments, and 15 charitable/voluntary organizations (of which 6 were connected with agriculture!). Insofar as any contact was made with Travellers themselves, it was through the mediation of precisely those Settled persons having the most hostile relationship with them. In the Report we read, for example, that in the Dublin area contact was made with Travellers "with the aid of Mr. William Reynolds, an official of the Dublin Corporation whose regular duty it was to move itinerants from Corporation property..... A considerable number of the families in the Dublin area were interviewed in this way."⁽⁴⁾ Elsewhere, the Commission made contact with Travellers through local police authorities.

The Commission was thus an exclusively Settled body, dependent for its information on other Settled persons representing precisely those aspects of intercultural contact (the law, local authorities, agriculture) which are most frequently and intensely hostile. No effort whatsoever was made to acquire an objective, or even an internally subjective, understanding of Traveller life. The Commission was founded in order to solve a problem, and this fundamental assumption permeates the entire Report.

While the Commission does specifically reject such suggestions as "forced settlement" and special identity cards "for police use",⁽⁵⁾ the general recommendations of the Report do support the use of coercion: the Travelling way of life must, by relentless harrassment of its every aspect, be made so unbearable that the Traveller will have no option but to renounce it. The true nature of the Commission's recommendations is revealed when, in the final chapter, we read:

"It must also be realised that there will probably always be some itinerants who value their wandering mode of life sufficiently highly to follow it notwithstanding the effects of laws aimed at controlling their activities."⁽⁶⁾

A few of the Commission's recommendations:

- The use of tents as dwelling places should be prohibited to itinerants;⁽⁷⁾
- Dwelling in caravans should be permitted, subject to annual inspection by local health inspectors, which would certify the caravan as fit for human habitation for the next 12 months,⁽⁸⁾
- Local authorities should have special "right of entry" to property let to "itinerant" tenants, in order to "abate all nuisances created or permitted by the tenants on the property let and to prevent any other misuse of the premises internally or externally";⁽⁹⁾
- Legal halting sites (for nomadic Travellers) and permanent, fully equipped camping sites (with running water, electricity, sanitary facilities,

schools etc.) for sedentary Travellers awaiting conventional local authority housing, must be created immediately - and their use be made compulsory.

Camping anywhere other than an official site must be punished with a fine "considerably more than the camping fees for a week on the approved camping site" ⁽¹⁰⁾ or by a gaol sentence;

- The collection of scrap is recognized by the Commission as the main source of income for the majority of families and as "of economic value to the community generally". ⁽¹¹⁾ Legislation should however be introduced so as to limit its practice to holders of a valid licence. Such a licence would be valid only within a "clearly defined" area, so as to "discourage" nomadism; ⁽¹²⁾
- Travellers who collect unemployment benefit should be required to register "at more frequent intervals than the regulations require for the settled population". ⁽¹³⁾ And, since this must take place in the same office each time, it too is aimed at "discouraging" nomadism.
- At the same time, State benefits paid out to caravan-dwelling Travellers should be in the form of vouchers for a given quantity of food, clothing etc., "so as to overcome abuse by dissipation on intoxicating liquor." However, "those who settle down should, after a probationary period" be allowed cash payments. ⁽¹⁵⁾
- Penalties for begging should be increased: fines, imprisonment, or both. Anyone with a previous conviction for begging "shall, if charged with loitering and importuning persons" in any public place, or "with entering any public property", "be presumed to have loitered or importuned or entered the private property for that purpose" - i.e. begging - "unless the contrary is proved." ⁽¹⁵⁾
- New legislation concerning trespass, to apply exclusively to Travellers (here, "persons of no fixed abode") is recommended. According to the proposals, it should become a criminal offence for "anyone of no fixed abode"

to light a fire, or for himself, or any animal or vehicle belonging to him, to be present on the land of another person, unless he can prove he had the owner's permission, "the burden of proving which shall be on the accused". ⁽¹⁶⁾ (That is, he is guilty until he proves himself innocent.) Penalties of fines, imprisonment, and confiscation of property, are recommended.

- The education of the "children of itinerants" is seen as "urgently necessary" - not as their natural right, but "as a means of providing opportunities for a better way of life and of promoting their absorption into the settled community." ⁽¹⁷⁾
- As for the topics to be covered, it is recommended that, in addition to the '3 R's', "the curriculum... should provide regular manual training e.g. woodwork and elementary metalwork for boys, and knitting, needlework, simple cookery and domestic training for girls." ⁽¹⁸⁾

In fact, none of the recommendations of the Committee was ever put into practice, with the exception of this last. Nonetheless the Report remains the official statement of government policy towards Travellers. As such, its effects are to be felt indirectly, in all the dealings of Settled bodies (be they official or voluntary) towards Travellers. The Report is cited as an excellent example of "Christian" policy towards "itinerants" (presumably because it rejects the option of direct force).

2. Educational Facilities for the Children of Itinerants, Irish Government Publications 1970, 12 pp.

This booklet is based upon the earlier Report of the Commission on Itinerancy. It constantly repeats the "integrationary" goals which must provide the basis for all education programmes aimed at "the children of itinerants" - and not, nota bene, "Travelling children" or even "itinerant children" - clearly, the implication is that they will not be what their parents were.

Before the children "of itinerants" can be "integrated" into "normal" classes, they require in the opinion of the Commission, special preparation:

"... the educational problems of itinerant children are similar in many respects to those of other educationally retarded children, but aggravated by social disabilities and the consequences of a vagrant (sic) way of life. Accordingly it is considered that the content and methods of teaching suitable for backward children are also appropriate in the case of itinerant children modified to meet special difficulties...." When the numbers of (Travelling - S. ní S) children are not such that it is worth creating special classes for them, perhaps it will be possible to create classes for educationally backward children, which will also serve the needs of itinerant children." (19)

Thus, Travelling children - like the Travelling community as a whole - are not seen as possessing different values, attitudes and skills, than those of Settled culture, but simply as not possessing "normal" - that is, Settled - values, attitudes and skills. It is for this reason that it is recommended that they be treated as children of subnormal intelligence; notwithstanding, attention is drawn to the fact that, quoting the Report, these children are not "less intelligent" than their Settled peers. Their difficulties in formal schooling are ascribed to "disadvantaged circumstances".

In contrast to the Report, this document describes not only theory, but actual practice concerning the education of Travelling children.

3. Itinerancy and Poverty - unpublished Master's Thesis by Patricia McCarthy, 1971, 135 pp.

This work supported and developed the fundamental assumptions of the government Commission - and did so for the first time (in the history of Irish social studies as a whole) on the basis of scientific fieldwork. The author concludes that itinerants live in a "closed circle" of the subculture of poverty, from which they are unable to escape without outside help. The scientific tone of the work, plus the fact that the author lived with a group of Travellers for a 6-week period, gave her words enormous weight. This work was important from another point of view: that is, it was the first systematic attempt to clarify the origin of the group (it developed

the assumptions of the Commission that today's Travellers are the descendants of alcoholics, evicted peasants, and general social misfits).

Despite its basic hypothesis, this work is valuable from the purely ethnographical point of view; the author undertook excellent and intensive participant observation and describes in detail the daily life of the group with which she lived. Had she not been under the illusion that this group (which did in fact exist in conditions of extreme deprivation) were typical of the culture as a whole, it would be hard to criticize this work. (See Patricia McCarthy's disclaimer of the sub-culture of poverty theory in this volume (1B) of the resource collection).

C. BRITISH LITERATURE

To date, there have been no publications dealing exclusively with Irish Travellers living in Great Britain. However, the number of Irish Travellers there is very high (about twice as many as in Ireland itself, and comprising 10-20% of the Travelling population of Britain) and rising due to increased emigration. For these reasons, all works dealing with the general Travelling population of Great Britain make some reference to Irish Travellers. There are three main works dealing with British Travellers in general, namely:

1. Gypsy Politics and Social Change, by Dr. Thomas Acton, pub. 1974, 310 pp.

This is a general work on the history of Travellers in Great Britain, with special emphasis on the last hundred years and on political aspects of the topic; the full title of the book continues: "The Development of an Ethnic Ideology and Pressure Politics among British Gypsies from Victorian Reformism to Romani Nationalism". The author explains his terminology very clearly: "In referring to English Gypsies and Irish Travellers, I am not passing any comment to the effect that the latter are not Gypsies, or the former not Travellers. I am just using the words as they come most naturally to the lips of the people in the situation." (20) Other British authors use the terms in a similar way: usually the word "Traveller" is used in a

general, all-encompassing sense, and, when it becomes necessary to differentiate by national origin, the terms "Gypsy" and "Irish Traveller" are used.

In this book there are two sections devoted specifically to the Irish Travellers. The first of these (pp. 65-57) appears in the introductory chapter, where the author attempts to clarify all 34 (!) different names applied to the Travelling population of Britain. In this, the author points out that Travellers of Celtic origin were present in Britain long before the arrival of the Roma. He goes on to summarize MacAlister's ⁽²¹⁾ theory as to their origin, based on philological evidence. However, Acton is strongly critical of MacAlister for refusing to take into account all vocabulary of Romanes origin used by Irish Travellers. "To say that on the evidence of their non-Romanes language, the Irish Travellers must be Irish in origin, and that because they are Irish in origin any Romanes words they have cannot really be 'theirs', is to circularise the argument." ⁽²²⁾

He goes on to say, "Their ancestry, thinks MacAlister (op. cit. pp. 132-133) should be thought of as ordinary Irish, not beginning to delimit itself as the present ethnic group until the economic upheavals at the end of the medieval period. The case, however, is not proven. There is no actual evidence on their ancestry, nor is any data on their physical anthropology available yet." ⁽²³⁾

Of far greater importance from the practical point of view, however, is the author's long and brilliantly stated critique of the "racist nonsense" lying at the foundation of the common belief in the "true Gypsy" or "real Romany", who is supposed to be quite separate from all other ⁽³²⁾ "categories" of Traveller. He also shows that, when this particular myth was finally debunked, the whole of the antagonism previously directed towards "didekais", "poshrats", "mumpers" etc. (all supposed subcategories of English Traveller) was redirected towards the Irish "Tinkers", who then became, in Acton's words,

"the ultimate whipping-boys". Acton clearly shows how, in Britain today, all anti-Traveller action and legislation are "justified" by the claim that they are directed against "Irish Tinkers" and not "full-blooded Romanes". Yet his own research has shown that usually the Travellers effected by such discrimination are native-born British, speaking not Gammon but Romanes.

The author's arguments are enormously relevant in Ireland itself, where assimilationist policies have been justified with the same arguments as in Britain: that is, that Irish Travellers are "not Gypsies" and thus do not have a right to their own way of life, whereas Travellers of Indian origin should have such a right. Unfortunately Dr. Acton's book, despite its widespread availability in the Republic, has had no discernible effect on the thinking of the Irish authorities.

2. Gypsies and Government Policy in England, by B. Adams, J. Okley, D. Morgan, and D. Smith, pub. Heinemann 1975, 321 pp.

Irish Travellers are frequently referred to throughout the book, and they are also the subject of a full chapter (pp. 172-186) entitled "Irish Travellers in England". Despite the fact that on page 1 the authors state unequivocally that "the terms Gypsy and Traveller are used interchangeably in this report", and that in the index we find the heading "Irish Gypsies", they explain that their separate examination of Irish Travellers stems from two facts. Firstly, that their presence in England - on today's massive scale - is a new phenomenon, and thus little is known about them; secondly, that "they have become the scapegoats for all other Travellers".

The authors do not deal with the question of the origin of the Irish Travellers, but accept their ethnicity as a self-evident fact requiring no elaboration. They do, however, make reference to the work of McCarthy, treating her hypothesis of "culture of poverty" as an entirely regional phenomenon stemming from conditions in Ireland and particularly in the West of Ireland (where her research was carried out), and not as something typical of Irish Travellers as a whole.

The authors identify many of the "push" and "pull" factors contributing to present-day mass emigration to Great Britain. In the first category they mention, inter alia, discrimination and lack of economic opportunity, while in the second they point out the generally higher standard of living in Britain and the possibility, once there, of avoiding anti-Traveller discrimination by "passing" as Settled Irish.

The importance of this work to our present enquiry lies primarily in the fact that it systematically defines the criteria of ethnicity, and clearly demonstrates that Travellers (English, Scots, Welsh and Irish) fulfil all of them - thereby discrediting earlier definitions of the Travelling People as "drop-outs". In this, they continue the work of Dr. Acton: it was he who identified the error of treating "race" and "culture" as synonymous, whereas Adams et al have systematically analyzed specific elements of that culture, as well as criteria for group membership.

3. The Education of Travelling Children, by Christopher Reiss, pub. Macmillan Education Ltd., 1975, 199 pp.

This author, like the preceding, also classifies all Travellers in Great Britain as belonging to a single cultural continuum. Within this, he does differentiate between "Gypsies, native to England and Wales, who possess a vestigial but significant Romany heritage" (comprising about 80% of the Travelling population) and "Irish or Scottish travellers or tinkers" among whom, "although Romany heritage and ancestry have left traces in their histories, the dominant influence derives from an indigenous Celtic nomadic tradition." (24) The ethnicity of both groups - or rather, of this single, internally subdivided group - is accepted by the author as self-evident.

Mr. Reiss, like the above-mentioned writers, emphasises the culture, history and language of the Travellers, and supports their being formally taught in the schools.

As for the origin of the Irish Travellers, the author states that they

are an "indigenous Celtic nomad group"; "Irish peasants dispossessed during famines and journeying craftsmen and metal workers are generally thought to have fused with this ancient group. The added Romani ingredient makes the position even more clouded ... How far back their real origins go is conjecture : Sampson's study of Shelta led him to propose a twelfth-century genesis in Ireland." (25) In this context, he draws attention to the analogous situation on the Continent (particularly in Holland and Sweden) where autochthonous nomads have been influenced by, and, in turn, absorbed, nomads of Indian origin.

This work, outlining a broad programme of education for Travelling children based on respect for their cultural distinctiveness, has not been accorded serious consideration in Ireland: indeed, this dismissive attitude has been the Irish response to all British works on Traveller education.

D. INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

This category is dominated by an American couple, George and Sharon Gmelch, both Doctors of Anthropology. It is they who have conducted the so far only serious, systematic fieldwork among Irish Travellers (living among them for a year and a half in various Dublin camps) on the basis of which they have written, both individually and collectively, a whole series of works on specific aspects of Traveller life and culture - for example, on begging strategies, discrimination, problems associated with settlement etc. They place special emphasis on ongoing changes in Traveller life, in the context of "urbanization". Their works are, apart from my own, the only general anthropological studies dealing with the Irish Travellers.

Two of the Gmelches' works are relevant to the present thesis:

1. The Irish Tinkers: The Urbanization of an Itinerant People by Dr. George Gmelch, the Kiste and Ogan Social Change Series in Anthropology, pub. Cummings, 1977, 178 pp.

This work is of a general, descriptive nature, but also includes analyses

of that which it describes. Its conceptual foundation is Marxist, since the author proceeds on the premise that economic factors exert a dominant influence on the rest of the aspects of a culture, and that changes in the economic base lead to wide-ranging changes in all other areas of life. The author takes as his task the identification and analysis of these fundamental changes and their effects on Traveller life.

In this work we see for the first time descriptions of such basic anthropological categories as kinship systems, social structure, levelling mechanisms, time-orientation, social control, norms, values, ideals, customs. Dr. Gmelch is an excellent anthropologist, capable of perceiving, and communicating to the reader, the subtle nuances of social and cultural reality.

As for the origin of the Irish Travellers, Dr. Gmelch carried out no special research on this topic, since this book is concerned with describing contemporary phenomena. He devotes only three pages (8-10) to the question of origin, rejecting the popular assumption that the group arose as a direct result of the Great Famine (in the mid-19th century). He suggests instead an earlier origin from assorted "drop-outs" who gradually developed a separate ethnic identity: "The basis of their identity was a common adaptation to itinerant life and almost exclusive marriage with other itinerants ... The prejudices and discriminatory practices of settled society against itinerants helped to draw the boundary between the two populations." (26)

2. "The Emergence of an Ethnic Group: The Irish Tinkers" by Dr. Sharon and George Gmelch, in: Anthropological Quarterly, vol. 49 nr. 4 October, 1976, pp. 225-238 (i.e. 14 pages)

This work defines the Irish Travellers as an ethnic group on the basis of the four criteria listed by Dr. Sharon Gmelch and included in the introduction to part II of the present work (27) (This article is included in Volume 1, part A of the resource collection)

The author accepts the existence of "itinerant white-smiths" in Ireland from the 5th century and earlier; (28); she also states that this occupational group may have formed the nucleus of the later ethnic group. However, in her opinion, the overwhelming majority of the ancestors of today's "Tinkers" were Settled people who, for various reasons, were forced into "itinerancy": "During various periods in Irish history, sedentary Irish have been forced to adopt a nomadic existence. Many craftsmen became itinerant when the demand for their services was not great enough in one area to permit them to remain settled. Peasants and labourers were also forced to become itinerant as the result of widespread evictions, unemployment and famine. And occasionally individuals, who because of problems such as alcoholism or illegitimacy were stigmatized by settled society, sought refuge "on the road". (29)

The above excerpt is an excellent summarization of the "drop-out theory". The purpose of the present work is to provide a constructive criticism of the above theory, and to propose alternate hypotheses.

REFERENCES

1. Ireland's Travelling People: A Comprehensive Bibliography, by Drs. G. and S. Gmelch, pp. 161-162.
2. The Report of the Commission on Itinerancy, p.1.
3. This field is virtually identical to that known in Poland as "Social Rehabilitation", i.e. practical training towards the career of social worker. On the other hand Sociology senso stricto was not taught in Irish universities until a full decade after the 1963 publication of the Report. To the present day neither Ethnography nor Anthropology are taught in university in the Republic of Ireland.
4. op. cit., p. 29.
5. In Ireland (unlike most countries of the Continent), there are no official identification documents; it would have been necessary to create them specifically and exclusively for Travellers.
6. op. cit. p. 106
7. op. cit. p. 44
8. op. cit. p. 42
9. op. cit. p. 62
10. op. cit. p. 56
11. op. cit. p. 74
12. ibid
13. op. cit. p. 76
14. op. cit. p. 77
15. op. cit. pp. 92-93
16. op. cit. pp. 97-99
17. op. cit. p. 67
18. op. cit. p. 68
19. Educational Facilities for the Children of Itinerants, pp. 4-5
20. Gypsy Politics and Social Change, p. 65

21. Stewart MacAlister, philologist, whose book The Secret Languages of Ireland appeared in 1937. It deals in great detail with the question of the origin of Shelta, but the methodology and assumptions of the author - for example his emphasis on vocabulary alone, without taking into account structures, syntax etc. as would be required by contemporary linguistic standards - are completely out of date. (See ní Shuinear's two articles on MacAlister in Volume 6, Part C of this resource collection).
22. op. cit. p. 66
23. ibid. nota bene, Dr. Acton's work appeared before the publication of Gmelch and Crawford's genetic studies.
24. The Education of Travelling Children, p. 55
25. op. cit. p. 59
26. The Irish Tinkers: The Urbanization of an Itinerant People, by Dr. G. Gmelch, p. 10
27. That is: 1. They are biologically self-perpetuating (endogamous); 2. They share common cultural and behavioural models which differentiate them from the Settled Irish; 3. They comprise a separate field of communication and interaction; and 4. They identify themselves, and are identified by others, as a separate group.
28. The Emergence of an Ethnic Group, by Drs. S. and G. Gmelch, p. 228
29. op. cit. p. 225

The following four extracts are reproduced from
A History of the Gypsies by Walter Simson (1865).
Published by Sampson, Low & Son & Marston, Edinburgh.

1811
p 6
Although a few years have elapsed since the principal details of this work were collected, the subject cannot be considered as old. The body in Scotland has become more numerous since the downfall of Napoleon; but the improved system of internal order that has obtained since that period, has so very much suppressed their acts of depredation and violence toward the community, and their savage outbursts of passion toward those of their own race who had offended them, that much which would have met with only a slight punishment before, or in some instances been passed over, as a mere Gipsy scuffle, would now be visited with the utmost penalty the law could inflict. Hence the wild spirit, but not the number, of the body has been very much crushed. Many of them have betaken themselves to regular callings of industry, or otherwise withdrawn from public observation; but, in respect to race, are as much, at heart, Gypsies as before. Many of the Scottish wandering class have given way before an invasion of swarms of Gypsies from Ireland.

p 7
† *Tinkler* is the name generally applied to the Scottish Gypsies. The wandering, tented class prefer it to the term *Gipsy*. The settled and better classes detest the word: they would much rather be called *Gipsies*; but the term *Egyptian* is the most agreeable to their feelings. *Tinkler* has a peculiar meaning that can be understood only by a Scotchman. In its radical sense it means *Tinker*. The verb *tink*, according to Jamieson's Scottish Dictionary, means to "rivet, including the idea of the noise made in the operation of riveting; a Gipsy word."

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth it was thought England contained above 10,000 Gypsies; and Mr. Hoyland, in his historical survey of these people, supposes that there are 18,000 of the race in Britain at the present day. A member of Parliament, it is reported, stated, in the House of Commons, that there were not less than 36,000 Gypsies in Great Britain. I am inclined to believe that the statement of the latter will be nearest the truth; as I am convinced that the greater part of all those persons who traverse England with earthenware, in carts and waggons, are a superior class of Gypsies. Indeed, a Scottish Gipsy informed me, that almost all those people are actually Gypsies. Now Mr. Hoyland takes none of these potters into his account, when he estimates the Gipsy population at only 18,000 souls. Besides, Gypsies have informed me that Ireland contains a great many of the tribe; many of whom are now finding their way into Scotland.*

I am inclined to think that the greater part of the English Gypsies live more apart from the other inhabitants of the country, reside more in tents, and exhibit a great deal more of their pristine manners, than their brethren do in Scotland.†

The English Gypsies also travel in Scotland, with earthenware in carts and waggons. A body of them, to the number of six tents, with sixteen horses, encamped, on one occasion, on the farm of Kingledoors, near the source of the Tweed. They remained on the ground from Saturday night till about ten o'clock on Monday morning, before they struck their tents and waggons.

DISQUISITION ON THE GYPSIES.
If the Gypsies in England were estimated at above ten million during the early part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, how many may they not be now, including those of every kind of mixture of blood, character, and position in life? If there is one Gipsy in the British Isles, there cannot be less than a quarter of a million, and, possibly, as many as six hundred thousand; and, instead of there being sixty thousand in Spain, and constantly decreasing, (*disappearing* is the right word,) we may safely estimate them at three hundred thousand. The reader has already been informed of what becomes of all the Gypsies. As a case in point, I may ask, who would have imagined that there was such a thing in Edinburgh as a factory, filled, not merely with Gypsies, but with *Irish Gypsies*? The owner of the establishment was doubtless a Gipsy; for how did so many Gypsies come to work in it, or how did he happen to know that his workmen were all Gypsies, or that even one of them was a Gipsy?

* I know another instance of a Gipsy having a child in the open fields.

It took place among the rushes on Stanhope-hangh, on the banks of the Tweed. In the forenoon, she was delivered of her child, without the assistance of a midwife, and in the afternoon the hardy Gipsy resumed her journey. The infant was a daughter, named Mary Baillie.

[When a Gipsy woman is confined, it is either in a miserable hut or in the open air, but always easily and fortunately. True Gipsy-like, for want of some vessel, a hole is dug in the ground, which is filled with cold water, and the new-born child is washed in it.—Grellmann, on the Hungarian Gipsies. We may readily believe that a child coming into the world under the circumstances mentioned, would have some of the peculiarities of a wild duck. Mr. Hoyland says that "on the first introduction of a Gipsy child to school, he flew like a bird against the sides of its cage; but by a steady care, and the influence of the example of the other children, he soon became settled, and fell into the ranks." It pleases the Gipsies to know that their ancestors came into the world "like the deer in the forest," and, when put to school, "flew like a bird against the sides of its cage."—Ed.]

* This invasion of Scotland by Irish Gipsies has, of late years, greatly altered the condition of the nomadic Scottish tribes; for this reason, that as Scotland, no less than any other country, can support only a certain number of such people who "live on the road," so many of the Scottish Gipsies have been forced to betake themselves to other modes of making a living. To such an extent has this been the case, that Gipsies, speaking the Scottish dialect, are in some districts comparatively rarely to be met with, where they were formerly numerous. The same cause may even lead to the extinction of the Scottish Gipsies as wanderers; but as the descendants of the Irish Gipsies will acquire the Scottish vernacular in the second generation, (a remarkably short period among the Gipsies,) what will then pass for Scottish Gipsies will be Irish by descent. The Irish Gipsies are allowed, by their English brethren, to speak good Gipsy, but with a broad and vulgar accent; so that the language in Scotland will have a still better chance of being preserved.

England has likewise been invaded by these Irish swarms. The English Gipsies complain bitterly of them. "They have no law among them," they say; "they have fairly destroyed Scotland as a country to travel in; if they get a loaf of anything from the country-people, to wrap themselves in, in the barn, at night, they will decamp with it in the morning. They have brought a disgrace upon the very name of Gipsy, in Scotland, and are heartily disliked by both English and Scotch." "There is a family of Irish Gipsies living across the road there, whom I would not be seen speaking to," said a superior English Gipsy; "I hate a Jew, and I dislike an Irish Gipsy." But English and Scottish Gipsies pull well together, and are on very friendly terms in America, and frequently visit each other. The English sympathize with the Scottish, under the wrongs they have experienced at the hands of the Irish, as well as on account of the persecutions they experienced in Scotland, so long after such had ceased in England.

Twenty-five years ago, there were many Gipsies to be found between Londonderry and Belfast, following the style of life described under the chapter of Tweed-dale and Clydesdale Gipsies. Their names were Docherty, McCurdy, McCloskey, McGuire, McKay, Holmes, Dinmore, Morrow, Allan, Stewart, Lindsay, Cochrane, and Williamson. Some of these seem to have migrated from Scotland and the North of England.—Ed.

* In England, some of the Irish Gipsies send their children to learn trades. There are many of such Irish mechanic Gipsies in America. A short time ago, a company of them landed in New York, and proceeded on to Chicago. Their occupations, among others, were those of hatters and tailors.—Ed.

† They are neither overgrown giants nor diminutive dwarfs; and their limbs are formed in the justest proportions. Large bellies are as uncommon among them as humpbacks, blindness, or other corporeal defects.—Grellmann on the Hungarian Gipsies.—Ed.

But there are Irish Gipsies of a class much superior to the above, in Scotland. In 1836, a very respectable and wealthy master-tradesman informed me that the whole of the individuals employed in his manufactory, in Edinburgh, were Irish Gipsies.

The Gipsies do not appear to have been altogether free from the crime of destroying their offspring, when, by infirmities, they could not be carried along with them in their wanderings, and thereby became an encumbrance to them. It has, indeed, been often noticed that few, or no, deformed or sickly individuals are to be found among them.† The following appears to be an instance of something like the practice in question. A family of Gipsies were in the habit of calling periodically, in their peregrinations over the country, at the house of a lady in Argyleshire. They frequently brought with them a daughter, who was ailing of some lingering disorder. The lady noticed the sickly child, and often spoke kindly to her parents about her condition. On one occasion, when the family arrived on her premises, she missed the child, and enquired what had become of her, and whether she had recovered. The father said his daughter was "a poor sickly thing, not worth carrying about with them," and that he had "made away with her." Whether any notice was taken of this murder, by the authorities, is not mentioned. The Gipsies, however, are generally noted for a remarkable attachment to their children.

Several authors have brought a general charge of cowardice against the Gipsies, in some of the countries of Europe; but I never saw or heard of any grounds for bringing such a charge against the Scottish Gipsies. On the contrary, I always considered our Tinkles the very reverse of cowards. Heron, in his journey through part of Scotland, before the year 1793, when speaking of the Gipsies in general, says: "They make excellent soldiers, whenever the habit of military discipline can be sufficiently impressed upon them." Several of our Scottish Gipsies have even enjoyed commissions, as has already been noticed.† But the military is not a life to their taste, as we have already seen; for, rather than enter it, they will submit to even personal mutilation. There is even danger in employing them in our regiments at the seat of war; as I am convinced that, if there are any Gipsies in the ranks of the enemy, an improper intercourse will exist between them in both armies. During the last rebellion in Ireland, the Gipsy soldiers in our regiments kept up an intimate and friendly correspondence with their brethren among the Irish rebels.

IRISH TRAVELLERS?

Some references in English archives.

1 Waltham-on-the-Wolds, Leicestershire

Parish Constables Account Book: entry after Michaelmas quarter-bridge payments (so possibly September).

1637 Itm. given to Egyptians and Irishe folke by dan hopkins
3s 7d.

2 Old Warden, Bedfordshire: Parish Register

Parish Registers:

1808 28 February: Jas son of Charles and Sophia Mullane, gipsy -
Baptised.

1808 19 May: Elizabeth daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth O (? w) ded,
gipsy - Baptised.

1808 20 November: Margaret daughter of John and Mary Peace,
gipsy - Baptised.

1806 14 December: Charles son of Charles and Sophia Macklin of
the people called Gypsies - Baptised.

1804 16 September: Edward son of Charles and Silence McLean,
Rehabites or Gypsies - Baptised.

NB From c. 1902 to 1955 one of the winter quarter areas for Leicestershire
Gypsies was Macklins Yard, Catherine Street, Leicester.

Biggleswade, Bedfordshire

Parish Registers:

1780 7 April: James son of Charles and Silence Macklean, gipsy - Baptised.

The above information was made available to the resource collection by David Smith, Leicester Polytechnic.

EXTRACT FROM "AT A WICKLOW FAIR" by J M SYNGE

first published in the Manchester Guardian, 9 May 1907

When I reached the green above the village I found the curious throng one always meets in these fairs, made up of wild mountain squatters, gentlemen farmers, jobbers and herds. At one corner of the green there was the usual camp of tinkers, where a swarm of children had been left to play among the carts while the men and women wandered through the fair selling cans or donkeys. Many odd types of tramps and beggars had come together also, and were loitering about in the hope of getting some chance job, or of finding some one who would stand them a drink. Once or twice a stir was made by some unruly ram or bull, but in these smaller fairs there seldom is much real excitement till the evening, when the bad whisky that is too freely drunk begins to be felt.

When I had spoken to one or two men that I wished to see, I sat down near a bridge at the end of the green, between a tinker who was mending a can and a herd who was minding some sheep that had not been sold. The herd spoke to me with some pride of his skill in dipping sheep to keep them from the fly, and other matters connected with his work. 'Let you not be talking,' said the tinker, when he paused for a moment. 'You've been after sheep since you were that height' (holding his hand a little over the ground) 'and yet you're nowhere in the world beside the herds that do be reared beyond the mountains. Those men are a wonder, for I'm told they can tell a lamb from their own ewes before it is marked, and that when they have five hundred sheep on the hills - five hundred is a big number - they don't need to count them or reckon them at all, but they just walk here and there where they are, and if one is gone away they'll miss it from the rest.'

Two references to an Irish tinker family in Wales

1 Patrick Mochan said to have been an Irish traveller who came into Wales from the West Country.

Patrick and Elizabeth Mochan listed in the parish register of Tregaron as the parents of a girl Bidd, baptised 1823.

2 Report of a charge of assault by Rose Mochan on Charlotte Mochan, two Irish gypsies who dwelt in tents in summer and sheltered in winter in houses at Merthyr. Rose is reported as being of uncommonly fine stature.

1 Derek Tipler (1962): Gypsies of South Wales. Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society, Vol. XLI, p 110.

2 South Wales Daily News, 19 September 1908.

THE VAGRANTS OF WICKLOW¹

SOME features of County Wicklow, such as the position of the principal workhouses and holiday places on either side of the coach road from Arklow to Bray, have made this district a favourite with the vagrants of Ireland. A few of these people have been on the road for generations; but fairly often they seem to have merely drifted out from the ordinary people of the villages, and do not differ greatly from the class they come from. Their abundance has often been regretted; yet in one sense it is an interesting sign, for wherever the labourer of a country has preserved his vitality, and begets an occasional temperament of distinction, a certain number of vagrants are to be looked for. In the middle classes the gifted son of a family is always the poorest—usually a writer or artist with no sense for speculation—and in a family of peasants, where the average comfort is just over penury, the gifted son sinks also, and is soon a tramp on the roadside.

In this life, however, there are many privileges. The tramp in Ireland is little troubled by the laws, and lives in out-of-door conditions that keep him in good humour and fine bodily health. This is so apparent, in Wicklow at least, that these men rarely seek for charity on any plea of ill-health, but ask simply, when they beg: 'Would you help a poor fellow along the road?' or, 'Would you give me the price of a night's lodging, for I'm after walking a great way since the sun rose?'

The healthiness of this life, again, often causes these people to live to a great age, though it is not always easy to test the stories that are told of their longevity. One man, however, who died not long ago, claimed to have reached one hundred and two with a show of likelihood; for several old people remember his first appearance in a certain district as a man of middle age, about the year of the Famine, in 1847 or 1848. This man could hardly be classed with ordinary tramps, for he was married several times in different parts of the world, and reared children of whom he seemed to have forgotten, in his old age, even the names and sex. In his early life he spent thirty years at sea, where he sailed with someone he spoke

¹ Probably written in 1901-2; first published in Autumn 1906 in *The Shanachie* (Dublin).

THE VAGRANTS OF WICKLOW

of afterwards as 'Il mio capitane,' visiting India and Japan, and gaining odd words and intonations that gave colour to his language. When he was too old to wander in the world, he learned all the paths of Wicklow, and till the end of his life he could go the thirty miles from Dublin to the Seven Churches without, as he said, 'putting out his foot on a white road, or seeing any Christian but the hares and moon.' When he was over ninety he married an old woman of eighty-five. Before many days, however, they quarrelled so fiercely that he beat her with his stick, and came out again on the roads. In a few hours he was arrested at her complaint, and sentenced to a month in Kilmainham. He cared nothing for the plank-bed and uncomfortable diet; but he always gathered himself together, and cursed with extraordinary rage, as he told how they cut off the white hair which had grown down upon his shoulders. All his pride and his half-conscious feeling for the dignity of his age seemed to have set themselves on this long hair, which marked him out from the other people of this district; and I have often heard him saying to himself, as he sat beside me under a ditch: 'What use is an old man without his hair? A man has only his bloom like the trees; and what use is an old man without his white hair?'

Among the country people of the East of Ireland the tramps and tinkers who wander round from the West have a curious reputation for witchery and unnatural powers.

'There's great witchery in that country,' a man said to me once, on the side of a mountain to the east of Aughavanna, in Wicklow. 'There's great witchery in that country, and great knowledge of the fairies. I've had men lodging with me out of the West—men who would be walking the world looking for a bit of money—and every one of them would be talking of the wonders below in Connemara. I remember one time, a while after I was married, there was a tinker down there in the glen, and two women along with him. I brought him into my cottage to do a bit of a job, and my first child was there lying in the bed, and he covered up to his chin with the bed-clothes. When the tallest of the women came in, she looked around at him, and then she says—

"That's a fine boy, God bless him,"

"How do you know it's a boy," says my woman, "when it's only the head of him you see?"

"I know rightly," says the tinker, "and it's the first too."

'Then my wife was going to slate me for bringing in people to bewitch her child, and I had to turn the lot of them out to finish the job in the lane.'

I asked him where most of the tinkers came from that are met with in Wicklow.

'They come from every part,' he said. 'They're gallous lads for walking round through the world. One time I seen fifty of them above on the road to Rathdangan, and they all match-making and marrying themselves for the year that was to come. One man would take such a woman, and say he was going such roads and places, stopping at this fair and another fair, till he'd meet them again at such a place, when the spring was coming on. Another, maybe, would swap the woman he had with one from another man, with as much talk as if you'd be selling a cow. It's two hours I was there watching them from the bog underneath, where I was cutting turf, and the like of the crying and the kissing, and the singing and the shouting began when they went off this way and that way, you never heard in your life. Sometimes when a party would be gone a bit down over the hill, a girl would begin crying out and wanting to go back to her ma. Then the man would say: "Black hell to your soul, you've come with me now, and you'll go the whole way." I often seen tinkers before and since, but I never seen such a power of them as were in it that day.'

It need hardly be said that in all tramp life plaintive and tragic elements are common, even on the surface. Some are peculiar to Wicklow. In these hills the summer passes in a few weeks from a late spring, full of odour and colour, to an autumn that is premature and filled with the desolate splendour of decay; and it often happens that, in moments when one is most aware of this ceaseless fading of beauty, some incident of tramp life gives a local human intensity to the shadow of one's own mood.

One evening, on the high ground near the Avonbeg, I met a young tramp just as an extraordinary sunset had begun to fade, and a low white mist was rising from the bogs. He had a sort of table in his hands that he seemed to have made himself out of twisted rushes and a few branches of osier. His clothes were more than usually ragged, and I could see by his face that he was suffering from some terrible disease. When he was quite close, he held out the table.

'Would you give me a few pence for that thing?' he said. 'I'm



A WICKLOW VAGRANT

after working at it all day by the river, and for the love of God give me something now, the way I can get a drink and lodging for the night.'

I felt in my pockets, and could find nothing but a shilling piece.

'I wouldn't wish to give you so much,' I said, holding it out to him, 'but it is all I have, and I don't like to give you nothing at all, and the darkness coming on. Keep the table; it's no use to me, and you'll maybe sell it for something in the morning.'

The shilling was more than he expected, and his eyes flamed with joy.

'May the Almighty God preserve you and watch over you and reward you for this night,' he said, 'but you'll take the table; I wouldn't keep it at all, and you after stretching out your hand with a shilling to me, and the darkness coming on.'

He forced it into my hands so eagerly that I could not refuse it, and set off down the road with tottering steps. When he had gone a few yards, I called after him: 'There's your table; take it and God speed you.'

Then I put down his table on the ground, and set off as quickly as I was able. In a moment he came up with me again, holding the table in his hands, and slipped round in front of me so that I could not get away.

'You wouldn't refuse it,' he said, 'and I after working at it all day below by the river.'

He was shaking with excitement and the exertion of overtaking me; so I took his table and let him go on his way. A quarter of a mile further on I threw it over the ditch in a desolate place, where no one was likely to find it.

In addition to the more genuine vagrants a number of wandering men and women are to be met with in the northern parts of the county, who walk out for ferns and flowers in bands of from four or five to a dozen. They usually set out in the evening, and sleep in some ditch or shed, coming home the next night with what they have gathered. If their sales are successful, both men and women drink heavily; so that they are always on the edge of starvation, and are miserably dressed, the women sometimes wearing nothing but an old petticoat and shawl—a scantiness of clothing that is sometimes met with also among the road-women of Kerry.

These people are nearly always at war with the police, and are often harshly treated. Once after a holiday, as I was walking home

through a village on the border of Wicklow, I came upon several policemen, with a crowd round them, trying to force a drunken flower-woman out of the village. She did not wish to go, and threw herself down, raging and kicking, on the ground. They let her lie there for a few minutes, and then she propped herself up against the wall, scolding and storming at every one, till she became so outrageous the police renewed their attack. One of them walked up to her and hit her a sharp blow on the jaw with the back of his hand. Then two more of them seized her by the shoulders and forced her along the road for a few yards, till her clothes began to tear off with the violence of the struggle, and they let her go once more.

She sprang up at once when they did so.

'Let this be the barrack's yard if you wish it,' she cried, tearing off the rags that still clung about her, 'Let this be the barrack's yard, and come on now, the lot of you.'

Then she rushed at them with extraordinary fury; but the police, to avoid scandal, withdrew into the town, and left her to be quieted by her friends.

Sometimes, it is fair to add, the police are generous and good-humoured. One evening, many years ago, when Whit Monday in Enniskerry was a very different thing from what it is now, I was looking out of a window in that village, watching the police, who had been brought in for the occasion, getting ready to start for Bray. As they were standing about, a young ballad-singer came along from the Dargle, and one of the policemen, who seemed to know him, asked him why a fine, stout lad the like of him wasn't earning his bread, instead of straying on the roads.

Immediately the young man drew up on the spot where he was, and began shouting a loud ballad at the top of his voice. The police tried to stop him; but he went on, getting faster and faster, till he ended, swinging his head from side to side, in a furious patter, of which I seem to remember—

Botheration
Take the nation,
Calculation,
In the stable,
Cain and Abel,
Tower of Babel,
And the Battle of Waterloo.

Then he pulled off his hat, dashed in among the police, and did not leave them till they had all given him the share of money he felt he had earned for his bread.

In all the circumstances of this tramp life there is a certain wildness that gives it romance and a peculiar value for those who look at life in Ireland with an eye that is aware of the arts also. In all the healthy movements of art, variations from the ordinary types of manhood are made interesting for the ordinary man, and in this way only the higher arts are universal. Beside this art, however, founded on the variations which are a condition and effect of all vigorous life, there is another art—sometimes confounded with it—founded on the freak of nature, in itself a mere sign of atavism or disease. This latter art, which is occupied with the antics of the freak, is of interest only to the variation from ordinary minds, and for this reason is never universal. To be quite plain, the tramp in real life, Hamlet and Faust in the arts, are variations; but the maniac in real life, and Des Esseintes and all his ugly crew in the arts, are freaks only.

'The Vagrants of Wicklow' is reprinted from
J M Synge: Collected Works volume 11 edited
by Alan Price (1966) pp 201-208 by
permission of Oxford University Press.

J M Synge and the Tinkers

The following five short extracts are taken from the prose writings of J M Synge first published in 1910 by Maunsel & Co Ltd, Dublin under the title In Wicklow, In West Kerry, In the Conjested Districts and Under Ether. The following year Maunsel & Co Ltd published a Library edition in which the last section was omitted and In the Conjested Districts was retitled In Connemara. All the extracts are from 'In Wicklow'!

1 (place: the Arklow races)

"At either side a varied crowd collects and straggles round among the faded roulette tables, little groups of young men dancing horn-pipes to the music of a flute, and the numerous stalls which supply fruit, biscuits and cheap drinks. These stalls consist merely of a long cart covered by a crescent awning which rises from one end only, and gives them at a little distance a curious resemblance to the cars with sails which the Chinese employ. They are attended to by the semi-gipsy or tinker class, among (whom) women with curiously Mongolian features are not rare. All these are extraordinarily prolific, and at a few paces from each stall there is usually a pile of hay and sacking and harness that is literally crawling with half-naked children."

2 (place: on the road from Ballyduff)

"At the next turn in the road near Laragh I came on a tinkers' camp in a fragment of wood that grows at the apex of the meeting between the Annamoe River and the waters from Glendalough and Lough Nahanagan. Dusk was coming on rapidly yet no one seemed to be at the camp but two young children that I could see through a gate sitting up with the light of the fire full on their faces. They were singing a few bars of some droning song over and over again, that I could just hear above the noise of the two rivers and the waving of the black fir trees that stood above them."

3 (place: a glen in the south of Co Wicklow)

Reference to ". . . a cross roads much frequented by tinkers . . ."

4 "In Wicklow, as in the rest of Ireland, the union, though it is a home of refuge for tramps and tinkers, is looked on with supreme horror by the peasants."

5 (place: not indicated but somewhere in Co Wicklow)

". . . there were a number of tinkers yoking up for a journey. One of them took a nose bag from a pony he had been feeding and threw it to a man with a red mare across the road. "There," he said "put her nose into that." "I will surely," said the man, "what would I want putting her - into it, I ask you in the name of God?"

Synge evidently based this two act comedy on his County Wicklow experiences (see In Wicklow, In West Kerry . . . published Maunsel & Co Ltd, Dublin, 1910 and 1911). The first reference to The Tinker's Wedding occurs in Synge's diary for 3 October 1903 and the first draft was completed by the end of that year. The play was not published until 1908, Synge considered it too dangerous to put on in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. The first performance was by an English company, the Afternoon Theatre Company, at His Majesty's Theatre on 11 November 1909. Synge died on 24 March 1909 never having seen a production of the play.

Characters:

Michael Byrne, a tinker
 Mary Byrne, an old woman, his mother
 Sarah Casey, a young tinker woman
 A Priest

Earlier typescripts had included two tinker children (Mickey and Nanny), their mother Nora Casey, little girls from the village and a village woman who buys the tin can from the tinkers. The children and village woman were later omitted and Nora Casey became Sarah Casey.

The Setting:

Act 1 " After nightfall. A fire of sticks is burning near the ditch a little to the right. Michael is working beside it. In the background, on the left, a sort of tent and ragged clothes drying on the hedge. On the right a chapel gate."

Earlier typescripts had an unyolked donkey cart behind Michael and Nora Casey keeping the fire bright by throwing on it dry twigs from a withered furze-tree.

Act 2 " The same. Early morning. Sarah is washing her face in an old bucket; then plaits her hair. Michael is tidying himself also. Mary Byrne is asleep against the ditch."

Earlier typescripts had a hawthorn tree in full flower over Nora Casey's head.

For a detailed description and analysis of The Tinker's Wedding readers are referred to The Collected Works of J M Synge general editor, Professor Robin Skelton. Volume 4 edited by Professor Ann Saddlemyer provides definitive texts of The Tinker's Wedding and two other plays. Publisher The Oxford University Press, London, 1968.

According to Sean Maher the play proved a big disappointment to present day Irish Travellers. After seeing the play a group of Travellers commented that it bore no resemblance to the Travellers' way of life.

'I had to leave Bray late in the twilight to make my way to Annamoe. Near Farraroe I passed four carts full of tinkers moving towards Kilmacanogue. They had many horses with them—it was not many days after the Wicklow horse fair—tied in various ways to their carts which were filled with women and children. A few of the men were on their feet and seemed more than usually drunk. A little further on I came to another cart coming towards me in an opposite direction. One young man of this party was a little behind and I had to get down and tell him where I <had> seen the other cavalcade, how many carts there were and what way they were taking.

'When he was satisfied with my directions he wanted me to buy some of his tin cans, and then to give him a 'chew' of tobacco. By the time I left him his companions were lost in the darkness under the trees and he set off at a shaky run to overtake them. I had to stop for a moment at the public house in Kilmacanogue, which had the usual mournful note that is peculiar to these places in wet weather. There were some men talking slowly and heavily over their porter at the half-dusky end of the shop, a woman or two buying a few things at the counter and the rain hissing outside where a drunken tramp was staggering about the doorway.

The above description directly follows those of the old woman and the two tinker children (see extract 2 on previous page 1B)

Professor Ann Saddlemyer puts the above passage as probably written in 1907. (Ref Collected Works of J M Synge, Volume 4, p 289, ed Ann Saddlemyer, OUP, London 1968).

The above picture was published in *The Shanachie* (Dublin 1906) facing p 98 (Immediately following 'The Vagrants of Wicklow' by J M Synge)



He hurried to the tilt-cart, scrambled inside, scrambled out again, and lifted a heavy leather bag to the ground. It was an ancient bag of a kind never seen nowadays, with stiff square ends, and a heavy curved bar across the top. It dragged down his shoulder as he brought it across between brazier and van where there was no draught. There he laid it down, fumbled at the catch, and thrust it open in a wide gape that showed the complete jumbled kit of the tinsman: the small anvil in its wooden block, the blunt-nosed vice on its stilt, the soldering irons, scissors, tweezers, pincers, long-nosed hammers, old-fashioned rods of solder, and half-empty bottles of spirits of salt.

Jamesy shook his head reminiscently at his tinker's budget. "God be with the ould days when my father used you in every townland in Munster and in Connaught as well. That ould tilt there was the first car he ever owned, and it will carry me to the grave; and this budget belonged to my grand-grandfather—and the use of it will go with me; but many a lively couple jumped it, with no priest to bless or curse before or after—and this night it will be jumped too, priest or no priest."

He fumbled in the bottom of the budget and brought out two dusty wax candles; next he propped the vice upright in the bag and fixed the candles close together in its jaws, took off his bowler hat, scraped a match alight on tightened pants, made the sign of the cross carefully with the flame and lighted the candles to a muttered Gaelic phrase—"agus go gouiroid Dia an rath—and God send luck."

"Julie Brien Shamus Og Coffey—come here!" His voice had grown strangely deep and stern.

Julie looked at her mother, and her mother nodded. "Let not a law be made or broken," said the wise woman.

The two young people came to the old man's hands, and he placed them back to back by the side of the burning candles. "You will do what I tell you now!" he ordered. "Are ye ready?" He was as solemn as a vestmented celebrant, and his blue-jowled face, in the light of the brazier, had taken on an old dignity. The ritual was more ancient than his name, as ancient as fire worship, and was in a Gaelic of many obsolete words.

"*Brostuig agus gluisigid go mear*—haste ye and walk swiftly from the lightness of your youth." They obeyed and came face to face at the other side of the budget.

"*Iumpuig agus siubal ar ais*—turn and haste back again and welcome the clan not yet born."

"*Fill ar ais aris*—return again, and that is for the last meeting of all in Tir-nan-og—the land of youth."

The two were face to face now, and, with a motion of the hand, he directed them to turn to the lighted candles, shoulder to shoulder.

"*Leim, a Shiobain ni Briain!*—Jump, Julie Brien! to happiness or to sorrow, and let the flame tell you."

Julie gathered her skirts close about her slim legs, looked anxiously at the flaring candles, relaxed her knees, and bounded, like a fawn, safely over. The light flickered below her toes and flared again. Shamus Og drew a deep sigh of relief.

"*Leim Sheamus Oig Ui Cobhthaig!*—Jump, Shamus Og Coffey."

"*Suas e!*—Shamus Og!" cried that bold man, and jumped four feet into the air and over. The candle flame did not even flicker. He landed neatly at Julie's side, threw his arms round her, and kissed her full on the mouth before them all.

"Jacus! Paddy Joe Long!" cried Jamesy disgustedly, "wou-wouldn't they give you a pain in your belly?"

He bent down and put the candles out between thumb and finger. "So life goes without blow of breath to warn it." He finished the ritual. "*Ta sib posta, anois*—now ye are bound."

The above extract from *The Road to Nowhere* by Maurice Walsh 1953 reprint, pp 281-3 is reproduced by permission of the publishers W & R Chambers, London & Edinburgh.

He had his trade, of course, his father's trade, the tinkers' trade, the making of tin cans, the mending of pots and kettles and saucepans, anything that a soldering-iron would hold together. So he strapped on his father's budget—the ancient leather bag holding the tinsman's tools—and went out into the province of Munster to ply his wandering trade.

He found the hoeing hard. The age of the cheap store and aluminium ware had come to Ireland, and repairing was no longer worth while.

18126
No tinker, anywhere, has been known to fall so low in the tinkers' scale as to hire himself out. Soldiering yes, but not servile labour. But Owen Oge fell so low as to take to plain peddling, the tinker-woman's trade beneath the dignity of the male craftsman. He sold his tinsman's tools, and half-filled the leather bag with all the small gadgets to wheedle a farmer's wife out of her egg money.

For the travelling shop had also found its way into Ireland: stocked motor-vans covering Owen Oge's territory with dispatch, and selling at a figure he could not touch, and live. But he put up a good fight.

I can keep this up, but for how long? he asked himself. Maybe five years pullin' the divil by the tail, and after that a hobo of a tramp on every road. Very well so! Better for me to be enjoyin' life wide and aisy while I'm young, robbin' my way through Ireland, spendin' the cold weather in jail, and dyin' in a ditch when my time comes.

He had summed up the tinkers' life, and did not like it, for he had a sound core in him, and he did not want it sapped by a slow and inevitable degradation. And, perhaps, he knew that degradation had already taken its first nibble.

The above extracts are taken from *Son Of A Tinker* by Maurice Walsh published W & R Chambers, London and Edinburgh, 1951, pp 8-9.

TINKERS, SORNERS, AND OTHER VAGABONDS.

18127
THERE seems to be deep down in human nature a fascination about a wandering life which still throws its glamour over even the super-civilization which distinguishes the twentieth century. How else account for the spasmodic efforts made every now and then by luxuriously brought up individuals to go a-wandering. Bicycle and motor tours, walking expeditions, sketching trips, have about them the germ of this need for movement, change of scene, and the experiencing of those feelings engendered by variety of abode and a closer dealing with nature.

In olden days a taste for vagrancy was neither understood nor encouraged by the authorities, or by those who worshipped robust prosperity, a regular and conventional life and the gathering together of substance which could be left to their immediate descendants. In fact all wandering and vagrant persons were more or less held in contempt.

The fifteenth century marks the date of the entrance of the gipsies into Western Europe. Hogg writes that the gipsies were a tribe of Arabs who acted as guides to the Crusaders against Jerusalem. The Ettrick Shepherd refers to the notion that they came of Jewish stock, though philologists aver that "not more than fifty words of Hebrew are to be found in their language, and in no part of the world are their customs alike."

The application of the term "gipsy" to any certain race within the British Isles was not made before the fifteenth century, and, strange to say, the gipsies, though well known from that period in England and Scotland, seem never to have appeared in Ireland. There are earlier references to bands of men and women who wandered through the country, selling hardware and ruddle, called in Scotland tinklers, for the word tinkler can be traced back to the year 1200, tinker and tinkler being not uncommon titles at that time.

Editha le Tynker lived in Wallingford, Berkshire, in the year 1273, and a Ralph Tincler had a house at Morpeth, in Northumberland, before 1294.

Mr. Crofton observes: "All gipsies may be pedlars, brasiers, or tinkers, but the reverse may not follow." At Kirk Yetholme in Scotland there was a whole street called Tinkler Row, whose inhabitants spent the summer as wandering tinkers; there were also tinklers rows in Edinburgh, Newcastle, and in Southwark, London.

Here is a Scotch lullaby connected with the tinkers:—

Hush ye, hush ye, dinna fret ye,
The Black Tinkler winna get ye.

Sometimes the tinkers in Scotland could boast of influential connections, for we learn that in the sixteenth century Sir William Sinclair, made Lord Justice General by Mary and Francis, head of the tinkers in his part of the country, one day cut down a tinker who was being hung at a spot on the road between Edinburgh and Roslyn. The band of tinkers, to show their gratitude, appeared at Sir William's home every May and June and acted plays free of charge in the stanks (marshes) of Roslyn, being quartered in the two towers named Robin Hood and Little John. Fletcher, of Saltoun, affirms, writing in 1698, that in Scotland "the numbers who lived as vagabonds even in ordinary times amounted to at least a hundred thousand, of whom no magistrate could discern that ever they were baptized, or which way one in a hundred of them died: they were not only an unspeakable oppression to poor tenants, who if they give not bread or some kind of provision to perhaps forty such villains in one day, are sure to be insulted by them, but they rob many poor people who live in houses distant from any neighbourhood." In the seventeenth century there was a Captain William Baillie well known as a tinker, sorner, and robber, but who dressed in scarlet, with greyhounds following him, and was considered the best swordsman in Scotland; his acquaintance was much sought after by the quality of the neighbourhood, as apparently from his wit and knowledge of the world he seems to have been the best of company.

Jane Baillie Walsh, the wife of Carlyle, was descended from a certain Mathew Baillie, who, we are told, "could steal a horse from under the owner if he liked, but left always the saddle and bridle, a thorough gentleman in his way, and six foot four in stature."

"*coshery*." The wording of the following, taken from the Index of Irish Statutes, will amuse those who have a grudge "agin ould Ireland:" "Idle vagrants and pretended Irish gentlemen that won't work, but wander coshering among fosterers, and loose persons of infamous lives and character, may be presented at assizes and sessions, and on warrant of the Justices, imprisoned till sent on board the fleet or transported." And again, "young gentlemen without means walking up and down the country with greyhounds are to be bound to good behaviour."

In Ireland, before and after the days of Queen Elizabeth, there was a large floating population, many of whom were called Thiggers and Sorners, people who roamed about the country in bands threatening the inhabitants of lonely farms and country dwellings with setting fire to their hay-ricks and stealing their poultry and otherwise plundering them of their goods if not gratuitously supplied with food and provision; sorning meant the masterful taking of food and drink without payment. When in turn threatened, these sorners took refuge in the woods and were quite happy if they had a piece of frieze to hang on a bush by way of a shelter. One of the reasons given for the devastation of the woods in Ireland is that they were cut down so as no longer to afford refuge for these wandering bands.

Kuno Meyer, the Celtic Scholar, in a number of the *Celtic Review*, avers that the present slang in use by Irish tinkers and which he calls Shelta, is distinctly traceable to the Ogham or old Irish language. He says:—

Dans cet argot un grand nombre de mots remontent directement au vieil Irlandais; c'est à dire qu'ils s'expliquent par une déformation systématique de mots empruntés au vieil Irlandais.

It was Mr. John Sampson, another Celtic Scholar, who first drew attention to the argot (the slang) Shelta of the tinkers of Ireland. He writes that, while travelling in Wales, he met a troop of Irish tinkers, and on addressing a woman in some words of this argot, she cried out astonished to her companions—"Minker, Thari, Okham"—"he is a tinker, he speaks Okham." This gives colour to Kuno Meyer's statement that he has reason to recognize the Ogham of Irish grammarians in this argot of the tinkers. Most of the present wandering tinkers to be met with in Kildare come in small bodies from Wexford, passing through Wicklow and on through Dunlavin and Baltinglass.

Sir Walter Scott refers to a William Marshal as the Caird (Tinker) of Barullion, king of the gipsies of the Western Lowlands. This man was born in the Parish of Kirkmichael, Ayrshire, in 1671, one of the Marshal family, time out of mind tinkers of the South of Scotland; his career would have served Scott himself as the foundation for one of his romances. This William Marshal was seventeen times lawfully married, could remember seeing King William's fleet riding at anchor in the Solway Firth, was present at the siege of Derry, and had an uncle who commanded one of the king's frigates. He further enlisted seven times in the army and deserted as often; before one of his desertions Marshal calmly told his commanding officer (who came from Galloway, his own part of the country) that he intended deserting, as he wished to attend the fair of Keltown Hill. Marshal's tribe ranged Carrick in Ayrshire, the shire of Galloway, and the Carrick mountains, but in 1712 it was defeated by other tinkers from Argyle or Dumbarton.

When a very aged man this hero was supported by the Earl of Selkirk in a comfortable cottage at Poinure in South Wigton, and finally this fighting, roving old tinker died at Kircudbright in 1792, and was buried by the Hammermen, Lord Daer, Lord Selkirk's son, attending as chief mourner.

In Northumberland "the Faws" figured for four centuries as the generic name for all tinkers and travelling muggers; Wright in his provincial Dictionary defines Faw as signifying an itinerant tinker or potter, though originally it was a surname.

Winters and Clarkes were the names of gipsy families known in the borders, and in the burial register of Yarrow church, under date of the 13th January, 1756, is inscribed the name of Francis Herron, King of the Faws.

In Ireland, as long ago as the reign of Edward II., the Parliament of Kilkenny passed the following Act against vagrants and idlers: "It is agreed also that none shall keep idie people nor kearns in the time of peace to live upon the poor of the country and if any idle man or kearn take anything off any person against his will in the form aforesaid, the wardens of the peace and the sheriff of the County where such act shall be done, shall do with him as with an open robber." There was probably good need for some such Act when we remember that an ancient right of an Irish chieftain enabled him to quarter himself and his retainers on his tenantry, a proceeding which was termed

They very often travel on fiat carts drawn by a horse, several small children, and a woman or two seated in the middle surrounded by bundles of rags. These, accompanied by two or three loose horses, some donkeys, and a couple of dogs, and escorted by two or more greasily-dressed, loosely-buit, men, form a procession which cannot fail to catch the eye. The motley group are generally laughing and staring round them as they pass on their way to their next roadside encampment. Having chosen a piece of grass which has encroached on the road in a broad strip surrounded by thorn bushes, and backed, perhaps, by a wood, they unyoke the horses, allowing them and the donkeys to make their evening meal off the rich pasture on the highway. They light a fire while the children scamper up and down the road, and having disposed their rags to the best advantage, they eat their plain repast, the only comfortable thing about them being the rays from the fire. Then, some choosing to lie under the propped up cart, and the rest making the best of the shelter afforded by the hedges, they sleep the sleep of the wandering tinker, who dreams of pots and pans, and how he can best induce the housewives of the next village to believe that their store is in need of replenishing.

So here we take leave of these modern descendants of the old sorners and vagrants, who are evidently filled with the same love of movement, change of scene, and variety of life which has distinguished all wanderers from time immemorial.

HELEN WELDON.

"Tinkers, Sorners and Other Vagabonds" by Helen Weldon is reprinted from *The New Ireland Review* Vol XXVI, September 1906, pp 43-47.

3

Dora Yates' review of *ANVIL: Life and the Arts* is reproduced from *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* Volume XXVII (1948), pp149-152.

The full text of Leslie Daiken's article "Parasites without Power" forms can be found in the following item in this Volume of the resource collection.

ANVIL: Life and the Arts—Book I. Edited by JACK LINDSAY. (Meridian Books: London.) October 1947. Price 2s. 6d.

In this new and intriguing miscellany edited by Jack Lindsay, the folk-elements surviving in Scotland, Wales and Ireland form the theme of the opening articles. Among these the paper of chief interest to members of the Gypsy Lore Society is that on the Irish Tinkers by Leslie Daiken. His first-hand acquaintance with the 'Travelling Men' and the conditions under which they live in post-war Eire distinguishes his 'vagabond-discussion' from the work of those writers, whose interest (in his own words) 'centres around the magic of camp-fires, fortune-telling, wild earth, flashing eyes, sallow skin, folk-expressions, sly relationship; but baulks at fleas, chicanery and plain dirt.' From this 'clatter of invented rubbish' Mr. Daiken excepts John Sampson's *Tinkers and their Talk* (*JGLS*. (1) ii. 204-21), and quotes that collector's helpful record of the principal names of Tinker families in Ulster, Leinster, Connaught and Munster, prior to 1890.

But since the days of Sampson and Leland, Mr. Daiken tells us, the making of tin-cans, hawking plants and ferns in pots ('shelkin' gallopas'), selling clothes-pegs ('hand-made from peeled willow'), fashioning baskets from osiers and rushes, and peddling small-wares from house to house to the accompaniment of fortune-telling, are no longer the main occupations of the Irish tinkers. His own description of the activities of the folk he terms 'Parasites without Power' is so entertaining that I venture to quote the following passage from this article:—

'A rising generation and changing modernity have diverted many a lazy tinsmith from precarious picking and stealing towards better money-making lines. Though begging is still a real auxiliary, and the worth of children is measured by what they bring in coins, they are schooled from the age of four in the planned cadge technique, as intensively as a chain-store novice is primed with lectures on the psychology of the planned sale!

Although 'pride of breed' is still to be found among the older families, Mr. Daiken considers the facial types of the Irish Tinkers of to-day show the 'most mongrel grouping indigenous to these islands,' e.g.: the Spanish type in Clare, Galway; the stunted, dark-faced types in the East; elsewhere the clear blue eyes of the Dane with the flaxen hair of the Saxon, or the red-haired type 'with freckled skin and half-shut eyelids'; and in Leinster the 'nondescript type: the women with mouse-grey, matted wispy hair, black-shawled, and babies at the breast, in all weathers.'

Tinker brawls are, of course, still very violent and frequent at closing-time in market towns, and one publican had actually to call in a force of local Civic Guards to protect his civilized customers. But Mr. Daiken has no sympathy for the feeling of discomfort with which 'the propertied and snug' watch a 'parade of these human grasshoppers . . . commandeering the public road at harvest time.' It is with the vagabonds he sympathizes, when he paints for us a realistic picture of:

' . . . tinkers converging on a fat parish, in a single large family, or a winding procession of wagons, carts and trotting foals, the women and girls hardy and bright-eyed, holding infants, the men independent if ragged, with glances full of that "separateness" you sense in the eyes of outcasts and underprivileged, the teeming kids, wild as foxcubs and untameable.'

Such are the Irish Tinkers of to-day! But they seem to have forgotten their secret language, for Mr. Daiken has never heard Shelta spoken himself. Wisely, therefore, he bases his views of the tongue on Professor R. A. S. Macalister's *Secret Languages of Ireland*, and quotes from it five proverbs and five 'wishes good and evil' culled from Dr. Sampson's collection. Is it not, however, too sweeping a statement to make that 'Shelta . . . is to-day spoken by absolutely nobody'? I myself, for instance, have heard many Shelta words and phrases during the past ten years from travelling Irish Tinkers in the streets of Liverpool, and hardly ever came across a 'travelling man' who did not understand the meaning of: *trip a gäter* (drop of drink), *bug me a mijog* (give me a shilling), or 'that *gut-glox granhes thoman*' (that policeman knows too much).

In itself this article will serve to illustrate the original matter and vigorous style of the twenty-five essays, stories and poems which fill this Book I of *Anvil*. Whether we read of the work of Mallarmé or Picasso or Gauguin; the Gaelic poems of the patriot Sorley MacLean; the music of Welsh miners; the interpretation of Nature by the Russian Michael Prishvin; or the architecture of eighteenth century France, throughout the 160 pages of this enterprising magazine we are made aware of the intimate relation between Life and the Arts. We must therefore congratulate Mr. Jack Lindsay on having secured for his first number an exceptionally wide range of writing by a team of original contributors who all have something definite to say and say it with force and conviction. D. E. Y.

na tincéirí

COIMISIÚN BÉALOIDEASA ÉIREANN

na tincéirí

Is iontsuime go léir an t-dream daoine na tincéirí. Ní heol dúinn puinn mar gheall ar a mbunús ná ar a stair; 'do d'eallrócaí, ámh, go bhfuil ar éann des na dreamanna is sean-da ar pobal na hÉireann. Ó tárla bun-os-cionn ar a lán slí leis an gcuid eile des na daoine na tincéirí, is fada a beas nó a mhór de suim as staraíóche, as cineolaíóche agus as scríobhóirí ionnta. Ní fásann san níos eol-saisiúge orda sinn, más ead. Is miéir leis an gCoimisiún iarraict cumasac a d'éanaí cun tuairiscí ina dtaob 'do éruimniú ó taob taob na tíre, agus tá súil asáinn go mbeir torad roganra ar an gceistiúicán so atá á scaipead asáinn anois.

Tá na blianta as sleamhú leó, agus an saol as acru go tuig lena linn. Níl bliam dá dtaasann ná cailtear morán sean-daoine go bhfuil stór de sean-cas den tsasas so aca, agus san oigre ina ndiaid cun é 'do d'uanú. Iarraimí ort, dá b'ri sin, cabrú linn cun an eolais atá asáinn á lorg 'do cur le céile, sara mbeir sé ró-déannaic.

Focal comairle.—Más trom leat na ceisteanna go léir sa ceistiúicán so 'do freasairt, ba mhór asáinn eolas ar cuid aca fásáil uait. Dailigeann brob beart.

Is mise 'do cara,

SÉAMUS Ó DUILEARSA,
(Stiúrtoir Oimís).

Feadhra, 1952.

IRISH FOLKLORE COMMISSION

TINKERS: "TRAVELLERS"

The nomadic groups to which the general title of tinkers is given form an interesting part of the Irish community. While very little is known about their origins or history, it is probable that they are one of the oldest classes of Irish society. They differ so much from the rest of the people in their way of life that they have for a long time attracted, in a spasmodic and casual way, the attention of historians, ethnologists and writers. Comparatively little is known about them, however, as no serious attempt has hitherto been made to collect information about them from all over the country in a systematic way.

The Irish Folklore Commission is issuing this questionnaire in the hope that it will secure a representative documentation on certain aspects of the tinkers' way of life before it is too late to do so. It relies confidently on your cooperation towards that end, and hopes that your assistance will be forthcoming.

NOTE.—If you feel that a reply to all the queries would involve too much time or trouble, we will be grateful for any information which you can give regarding some of them. We would, however, deeply appreciate your earnest help in securing a good return to this very important questionnaire.

Yours sincerely,

SÉAMUS Ó DUILEARGA,
Honorary Director.

February, 1952.

QUESTIONNAIRE
CEISTIÚCÁN

FEBRUARY, 1952
FEABRA, 1952

NA TÍNCÉIRÍ

NOTE.—Ní heolais ar luict siubail a gabann timcheall ina n-ádh (bacaí, daoine bóta, agus a leicéirí) atá uainn sa cás seo. 'Siaid atá i gceist again na tincéirí a gabann timcheall le cairteanna, ina linteighe nó ina ndreamanna, agus ceáir nó gnó rialta ar siubail aca (d'éanam agus veisiú áraistí de stán, díol n ceannac nó malartú capall, agus mar sin de).

Ainm Coitcheann. Cad é an ainm is coitcheannta a tugtar do cheanntar fé: ortá: tincéirí, taistealaithe, etc.?

Tincéirí a Tugann 'on Cheanntar. Cad iad na sloinnté atá ar na dreamant fé leit de tincéirí a tugann cuairt ar do cheanntar ó am go ham? An bhfuil sí sloinnté nó leas-ainmneada as muinntir na háite ortá? Má bhíonn ainmneada baiste neamh-coitcheannta ar cuirt aca, luaid iad.

Limistéirí Taistil. Is béas as tincéirí go minic taisteal laistigh de limistéir áirithe, agus gan dul taob' amuigh de. Cad iad na limistéirí gnóta agus taist atá as na tincéirí is áirithe duit? An eol duit aigheas idir dreamanna tincéirí gabann tar teorainn?

Nósanna agus Piseoga. Scríob síos, leo toil, tuairisc ar don nósanna i piseoga atá as tincéirí i dtáob na neite seo leanas: saolú leanbái, pósadh, bá díol, ceannac, malartú, raí nó mí-raí, péilí na bliana, cairébsí, an saol eile, agus mar sin de.

Creideamh agus Cleachtadh. Cad é an creideamh atá as na tincéirí a tugann cuairt ar do cheanntar féin? An bpóstar san eaglais iad? Cé'n áit? An bhfuil am fé leit aca cuige sin? Don cuntaisí nó scéalta i dtáob pósaithe tincéirí: An mbíonn muinntir na háite, nó cuirt aca, ar na pósaithe sin? An gnátaí sa dháirt an bail leanbái tincéirí do baisteadh? An ndéineann leanbái tincéirí preastal ar scoileanna an pháiriste ar feadh tamail den bliain? An gcuireann tincéirí iarraid ar an sa dháirt nó ar an ministir nuair a bhíonn duine díob i mba báis? Cad é an sa dháirt tórraim agus sócraide agus adlaca a chuirtear ortá? Cá gcuirtear na tincéirí a cailtear sa cheanntar? Éinní eile suime i dtáob neite sin?

Cuairdeanna agus Láitreacha Campa. An féidir duit tuairisc a tabairt ar gnáth-cuairt a tugann na tincéirí 'on áit? An minic tagaid sa bliain? An dtagaid don am fé leit? An fada fanaid? Cá mbíonn an campa aca? San á céanna i gcomhnaí? Cá gcuirid na trucailí, na gléiseanna eile a bhíonn aca, as na hainmhithe i rit an ama? Cá gcuirid na hainmhithe cun inbhir—fan vigeada bótair nó i bpáirceanna? Cad is dóig leis na gnáth-daoine agus leis na fáir de sin? Cad is gnátaí leis na tincéirí, idir fearaib agus mnáib agus leanb. a d'éanam an fáir a bhí sa cheanntar? An ngabaid ó tigh go tigh, nó an mbíonn a cuairdeam aca le muinntir na háite? Cá mbíonn an leadaid córlaca as na tincéirí i rit an ama san? Cá n-ullmhuighid a gcuirt bíd? Cá n-íid é? An bhfuil na cairteanna a bhíonn aca veipreac le cairteanna an bail ar don cuma (d'éanam, de méid)? An mar a céile na cairteanna anois agus an gléas iomcair agus taist a bhíod aca san am atá cailte? Cá mbíonn na tincéirí sa gheimhead?

Ceáirdanna agus Slí Beada. An mbíonn ceáir nó slí beada fé leit as tincéirí? Cad é féin? An ndéimid áraistí stáin nó an ndéisighid iad? An ndéimid nó an ndíolaid don earráil eile? An saoire nó an daoire iad-san ná earráil an tsíopa? An mbíonn ainmhithe ar díol nó á ceannac nó á malartú aca ar don nó i n-ádh áit eile? Cad iad féin? Cad is dóig leis na daoine díob—sur do iad nó á malairt? An saidbre anois iad ná mar bhíis, dar le daoine? An daoire lágada, mór-croideada iad, i dtuairim daoine?

TINKERS

NOTE.—This questionnaire is not intended as a means of collecting information about individuals who travel the roads alone (tramps, beggars). It refers only to tinkers who move about in family or other groups and ply a trade or calling, such as tin-smithwork or horse-dealing.

Generic Names. By what general title(s) are these nomads referred to locally: tinkers, travellers, 'gipsies', tramps, beggars, *tincéirí*, *siúbhloirí*, etc.?

Local Tinker Groups. Give the family-names of any tinker groups which visit your district. Are any of them known locally by special by-names or nicknames? Have individual tinkers any unusual Christian names?

Areas Within Which Tinker Groups Operate. As a general rule, tinkers travel about only within certain areas. Can you find out which areas are included by the local tinkers in their "rounds"? Any stories of rivalry between groups in this regard?

Customs and Superstitions. Please write down an account of any customs or superstitions of tinkers regarding the following: birth, marriage, death, buying, selling or exchange, good luck or ill-luck, festivals, belief in the supernatural, or any other matter.

Religious and Social Practice. To which religious belief do the local tinkers belong? Are they married in church? If so, where? Do tinker marriages take place at particular times? Any accounts or stories of tinker marriages or weddings? Do the local people, or local individuals, take part in these weddings? Are tinker children baptised by local priests? Any special lore about this? Do tinker children attend local schools for any period? Does a priest or other clergyman attend tinkers who are dying locally? Any special lore about the wakes, funerals, or burials of tinkers? Where are tinkers who die locally buried? Any other lore regarding these matters?

Visits and Local Encampments. Please give a general statement about the routine visits of tinkers to your district—their frequency, the periods at which they arrive and leave, the length of their stay. Where do they camp? Have these camp-sites changed from time to time for any reason? How do tinkers dispose of their waggons or cars, gear, and animals during their stay at the camp? Where do the animals graze—along the roads or in fields? Any friction with the local people or with the authorities regarding this? What do tinkers (men, women, and children) do during the camping period? Do they travel about locally or mix with the local people? Where do tinkers sleep while in camp? Where do they cook, and eat? Is there anything peculiar about their carts or waggons (style, colours, size)? Have these changed over a period of years? Where do tinkers spend the winter?

Crafts and Means of Livelihood. What trades or calling do the local tinkers follow? Do they make or repair tins and other vessels? Do they produce or sell locally any other articles? How do the prices of these articles compare with those bought in shops? Do they buy, sell, or barter animals casually or at fairs? Are tinkers regarded as being poor or fairly well-to-do? Have they changed in this respect over the years? Are they regarded as being generous or the reverse?

IOMÉAR AGUS TRÉITE. Conus a ioméraio 1^o féin agus 1^o as deigleáil le céile, le muinntir na háite, leis na sárdaí, leis an tscléir, le mnáib agus le leanbáí? An mbíod cineálta le hainmíóite? Conus tá an scéal aca maidir le macánta, leis an bhfirinne innsint, le cartanna, agus mar sin de, i dtuaisrim dáoinne? Na caitlicíóite aca orda—an dtéigeanann siad cun an Aifrinne agus cun Comaoime nuair a bíod sa ceannatar? An socrúis éinne aca síos ar an dtalamh nó i mbun céirde sa ceannatar riamh? An eol tuit sur pós éinne aca cúl le cine?

PEARSA, ÉIRIM, AGUS ÉADAIC. An bhfuil na tincéirí is aithnío tuit bun-osc-ionn le muinntir an paróiste i n-don tsli maidir le dealtraim, le daic na sruaige nó an ónis, le féadaint, le haoirde, le mód siubail, le riúneas, le sláinte, le deas-láimh nó le haicillídeáct, le mód labartha? Nó le buad cun gotha cinn, nó cun rinne, nó cun aicrise, nó cun scéalaíóicta? An mbionn na héadaí a caiticíóite deifreac ar don tsli le héadaí na hgnáit-dáoinne?

TINCÉIRÍ CÁILIÚLA. Don tuairisc ar féaraib nó ar mnáib orda do bí (nó aca) i mbéal an pobail ar cúis éisim?

RIAR AGUS CEANNAS. Conus a riarann na tincéirí a saol agus a n-imteáctáil, más eol tuit é? An mbionn ceann nó rí orda sa ceannatar san? Más ead, cé hé féin agus conus a toghad é? An bhfuil cuid aca is iste céim ná a tuille aca? An eol tuit sur shab éinne nár díob féin leó mar úime orda?

TEANGAIC. An bhfuil teanga (teangaic) aca seadac an sáedúis nó an déarla? Cad é an ainm aca aca féin ar teangaim mar sin? Catam a labraio i? Más féidir tuit don focail nó abairtí di a scríobad síos, ba maic linn é—scríob a úrú i n-sáedúis nó i mbéarla ma ceannata, leó coil. An aithnío tuit tincéirí sur cumas díob an sáedúis nó don teanga eile (seadac an déarla) a labairt mar bun-teanga?

BUNÚS AGUS STAIR. An bhfuil don cuntas le fásáil ós na tincéirí nó ó éinne eile ar an mbunús do bí leó? Nó an eol tuit féin, ar don tsli, cé'n fát sur túsadur na bóitire orda féin? An fada díob as teadac ar cuairt cun do ceannatar féin?

NAICANNA, SEANFOCAIL, AGUS ANIRÁIM. Má tá don cuid díob so, as tagairt do tincéirí, asac féin nó le fásáil timdeall ort, ba maic linn go mór 1^o fásáil.

Behaviour. Any accounts of the general behaviour of the tinkers would be welcome—their attitude to one another, to the local people, to the law, to the clergy, to women and children, to animals. Any information about their moral character—honesty, truth, charity, and so on? Do the Catholics among them attend Mass or other religious services when they are camped locally; do they frequent the Sacraments? Are there accounts of individual tinkers having settled down on the land locally, or having married outside their own social group?

Physical and Other Characteristics. Do tinkers differ in any special way from the local community as regards the following: physical appearance, hair colour or skin pigmentation, facial structure, height, gait, hardiness, health, dexterity, manner of speech, ability to sing, dance, mimic, or tell stories? Any peculiarity in their dress?

Tinker Personalities. Any stories of individual tinkers, men or women, who were better known than the rest for some reason?

Tinker Society. Can you get any information about the structure of tinker society? Have the local groups a king or other lesser head to whom obedience is given, as distinct from parental authority? Are there classes within the tinker world? Do tinkers absorb individuals from outside their own class?

Languages. Have the local tinkers a language or languages of their own which they use for private conversation among themselves? By what name or names are these languages known? When are they used, as a rule? Can you obtain any words, or phrases of these languages? If so, please give the Irish or English translation also. Do you know of local tinkers who can speak Irish or any other well-known language, that is, as their native tongue?

Origins and History. Have the tinkers themselves, or any local persons, any traditions about how the tinkers originated? Apart from these, is anything known about who the tinkers really are in origin, or how it has happened that they took up the nomadic life? Is anything known as to how long they have been visiting your district?

Sayings, Proverbs or Songs about Tinkers. Can you get any of these locally, e.g. "a tinkers' damn (curse)"—what was that?; "the bray of a tinker's ass", "eyes like two burned holes in a tinker's blanket"; "*bean táilliúra agus bean tincéara, sin beirt ná réidhtigheann le chéile,*" etc.?

Belfast News-Letter

Tuesday, 30th November, 1790

Deserted

DEPARTED, from a Recruiting Party of the Royal Army Sergeants, from LISBURN, From Captain Edward Sweetman's Independent Company, Michael Baarey, about JOHN LINDSAY, by trade a Tinker, 37 years of age, 5 feet 2 inches high, five feet eleven inches high, brown hair and grey eyes, stoop shouldered yellow complexion, grey eyes, black hair, large features, steps short when and pock-marked, by occupation a Ragman.

Whoever apprehends the said Baarey shall receive a Reward of Three Pounds One Shilling from BERNARD O'NEILL, Sergeant.

Charles Lindsey this brotherly, same trade, 37 years, 5 feet 11 inches, yellow complexion, hazel eyes, black short hair, large features, steps short when Armagh, 22nd November 1790.

Tuesday, 29th July, 1800

Maraghan Assizes

Mary Begley, vagabond, to be transported for seven years, unless she shall, before next Assizes, give security to be of good behaviour for seven years.

Tuesday, 19th April, 1791

Editorial

Patrick Marmion, tried and found guilty, being presented as a vagabond, to be transported 7 years, unless he shall in three months find bail.

Extract from the Belfast News-Letter Friday 15 November 1799

DESERTED, from a Recruiting Party of the Loyal Surray Rangers, from LISBURN.

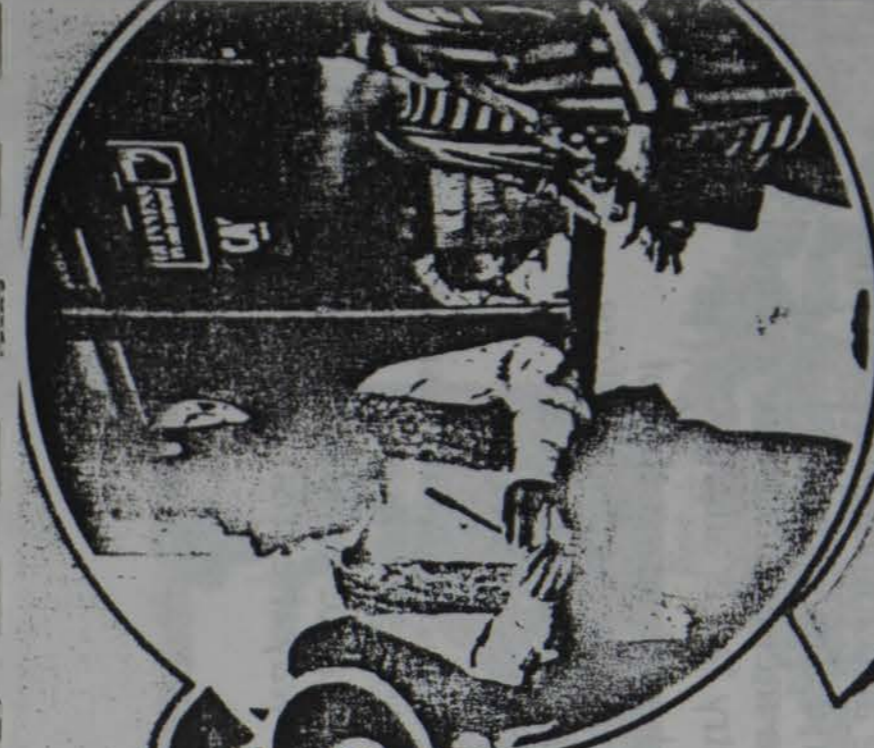
JOHN LINDSAY, by trade a Tinker, 27 years of age, 6 feet 2 inches high, sallow complexion, grey eyes, black hair, large features, steps short when he walks. -

Charles Lindsay (his brother), same trade, 17 years, 5 feet 11 inches, sallow complexion, hazle eyes, black short hair, small stoop in his shoulders. -

Hugh Kidd of Ballinderry, county Antrim, 18 years, 5 feet 7 inches, fair complexion, black hair, blue eyes, stout made. -

Earl M'Murry (taylor) of same place....

(the notice goes on to list and describe several other deserters).



Irish Travellers



Introduction

Whether originally a pagan ritual of the seasons or simply a chance for good neighbours to bargain, or relax and socialise when the work of the year was over, the country fair has survived and flourished and is very much a part of the Irish country calendar.

Of course, there's another very good reason why country fairs were an overnight success and have enjoyed such a long run ever since. They're just plain good business. Here, among neighbours and friends, the farmer could sell the farm surplus that he didn't need and buy what he did. The better the fair, the farther afield came the buyers. The more buyers, the better the prices — and then there was surely every reason to celebrate. As more money came into circulation, more tradesmen arrived to take up the slack. And then he could buy new clothes for the wife, toys for the children, listen to traditional musicians and be entertained by the travelling minstrels and storytellers. Dance and games of skill and strength were also important elements of the fair and of course they provided opportunities for old friends to meet and share a drink. And that's what an Irish country fair is all about.

At one time, fairs were held on the first day of August, Lammass Day, or later in the autumn before winter set in. The Gregorian calendar and local convenience have altered the dates slightly.

Everyone is welcome at the fair, and while visitors at first may feel more inclined to watch the proceedings, they'll soon find it quite impossible not to get involved. That's just the way the Irish are.

Like so many other things Irish, the holding of fairs goes back so far into the past that its beginnings are delightfully entangled in myth, history and tradition. There will always be several stories about the origins of each of them and you are free to choose the one that appeals to you most.



18145

The Oul Lammass Fair

Make a rule for an Irishman and nothing delights him more than breaking it. Perhaps that's why the Oul Lammass Fair is held at the end of August instead of on the first day of the month, Lammass Day. But more likely, it's because the late harvest in the Ballycastle district keeps everyone busy until that time.



18142

At this stage, no one is absolutely sure how the Oul Lammas Fair started. Some say it originated in the early sixteenth century when the MacDonnells of the Isles first occupied the area. Others argue that it didn't begin until 1606 when a Royal Charter granted Sir Randal MacDonnell permission to hold six fairs in the Ballycastle area.

Whatever its beginnings, the Lammas Fair is a thriving annual event much valued by the local people and tourists from all over the world. The fair hinges on the sale of sheep and ponies and it used to last one week but now all the activity and colour has been crammed into two splendid days.



So come along and join the celebrations for that's what they surely are. As you wend your way through the good-natured crowds around Ballycastle's central Diamond, or square, you'll be tempted to sample some of the local delicacies — "dulse", a dried edible seaweed, and very good for you, too, they say. Then there's "yellow man", a sweet honey-combed toffee-like confectionery that's a must if you're to get the full flavour of Ballycastle.

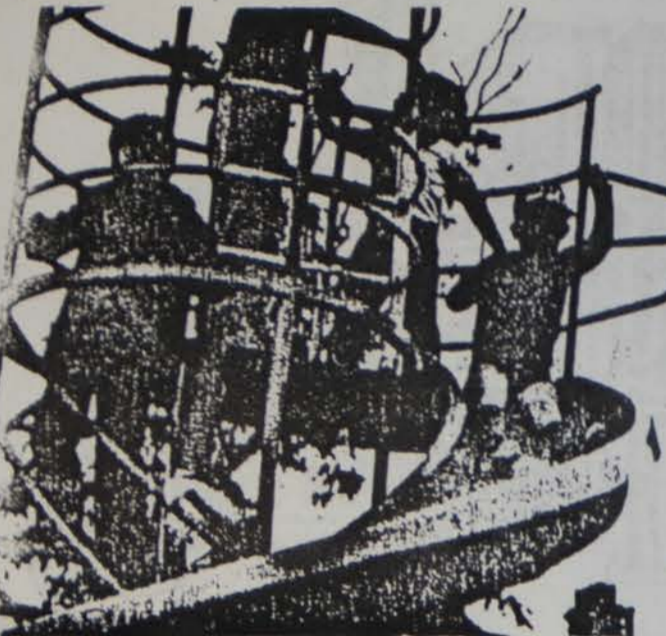
The many stalls offer a variety of items for sale — souvenirs, curios and bric-a-brac of every description, fruit and clothes. It doesn't matter, really, how much or how little you buy, because you're bound to carry away the

sights and sounds of an authentic Irish tradition that's as alive today as it was when John MacAuley, a Ballycastle man, wrote this song many years ago —

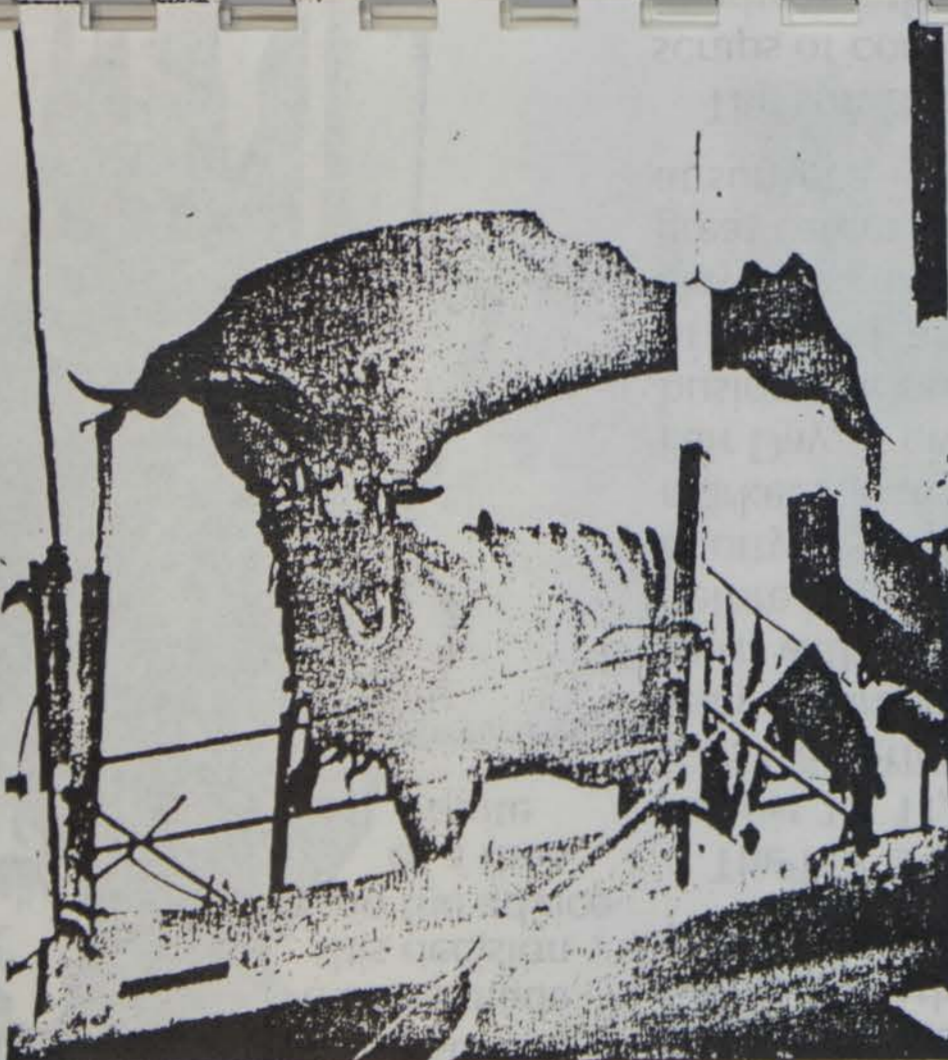
"Did you treat your Mary Ann,
To some dulce and yellow man,
At the Oul Lammas Fair in
Ballycastle-O?"

For further information, contact:
Malin District Council
Dallada House,
Carrine Road,
Ballycastle BT54 6EY
Northern Ireland
Tel: Ballycastle 82004

18143



18144



Puck Fair

Undoubtedly, King Puck, the great male goat that presides over the festivities at the great fair of the South, is bound with pre-Christian rites of harvest and fertility. Certainly, there's been a Puck fair in many different guises since those time-shrouded days.



LAUNDRY
DRY CLEANERS
&
LAUNDRETTE

...down to modern times, so to speak, historical records show that a local landowner, Jenkin Conway, received a royal patent in 1613 to "hold a fair in Killorglin on Lammas Day and the Day after".

There are some who say that King Puck was only introduced to the fair in 1808, when the local landlord, Herman Blennerhassett, forbidden by law to levy tolls at cattle, horse or sheep fairs, hit upon the enterprising and novel idea of holding a goat fair, in order to collect his toll money. It is also said that he made this decision on the advice of a then quite

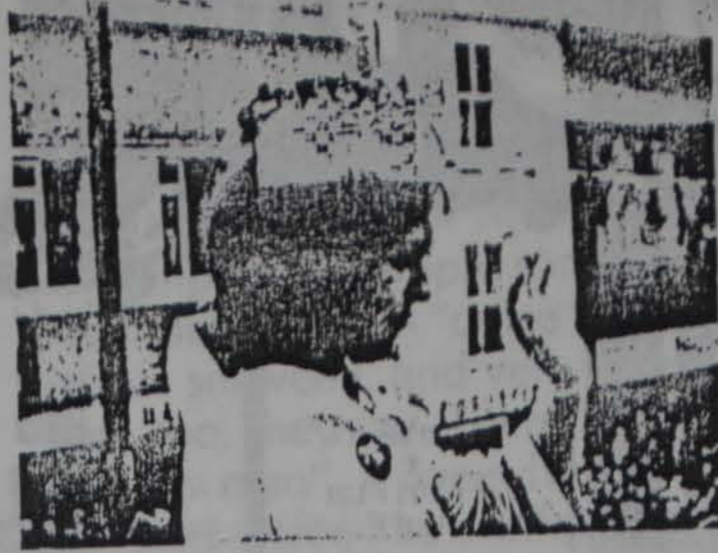


OBSCURE DANISH HISTORIAN Daniel O'Connell. Nor is that the end of the story, or stories, as the case may be. According to legend, a troop of Cromwellian Roundheads routed a herd of goats which obligingly stampeded in the direction of Killorglin, thus warning the inhabitants of the approaching army. Soon after, the grateful populace installed King Puck at the fair in honour of the goats who saved the town.

Whichever version you prefer, you'll find today's Puck Fair the occasion of a grand round of events and festivities quite unlike any other country fair you're likely to visit.

The fair is usually held on August 10, 11, 12. On the first day, Gathering Day, the puck goat is paraded through the town with great enthusiasm before being installed as king on a lofty platform over Killorglin's market square. The second day, Fair Day, is given over to the business of buying and selling of livestock and on Scattering Day, the goat is released with great ceremony and celebration at sunset.

The soft country accents, the scraps of conversations



local elders. The carnival atmosphere, the many amusing side events. The pretty girls, the swaggering young men, the children, the laughter, the fun — it's Puck Fair!

For further information, contact: Cork/Kerry Regional Tourism Office, Tourist House, Grand Parade,

Ballinasloe Great October Fair

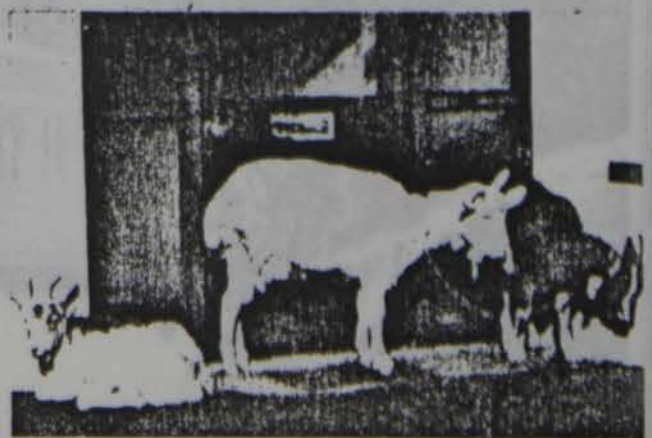


Ever since warriors from the West took to stopping at the settlement on the banks of the River Suck as they made their way to and from Tara, the residence of the High Kings, Ballinasloe has thrived as a market town. As the town grew, so did the trade in goods and horses.

fairs enthusiastically and, by the following century, Ballinasloe was not only the largest livestock fair in Ireland, it was the best known horse fair in Europe. In those days of cavalry warfare and horse transport, buyers representing all the great armies of the Continent came, anxious to purchase top quality horses. They kept coming, in fact, right up to the end of the Second World War.

In the early 18th century, the Trench family were granted permission to hold fairs on their land. As this was always a profitable proposition for landowners if things went well, the family promoted these toll

The buyers still come today, for hunters and show jumpers, for children's ponies and quarterbreds — the quality of the Irish horse is sought after wherever the horse is loved and admired.





The hunter trials and the class judging are interesting and exciting. Whether or not you are a keen horse lover. Certainly, everyone will enjoy the "Foal of the Fair" and the "National Foals Final" competitions. Outside the show ring, the traditional ceremony between buyer and seller, whenever a horse changes hands, is fascinating to watch.

The rugged faces of the men of the West, the serene beauty of the women, the delighted children as much at ease on the back of a pony or sturdy hunter as other children are on a seesaw, starry-eyed young girls devotedly tending their charges and dreaming of great victories and red ribbons...

... enough said! See you at the Great October Fair!

There's a great deal more to see and enjoy besides horses at The Great October Fair which takes place, during the first week of that autumn month. The "King of the Fair" is specially elected and presides over all functions in elaborate ceremonial robes. There are stalls and games and fair ground and above all, the people themselves.

For further information, contact:
Western Regional Tourism Office,
Aras Failte,
Eyre Square,
Galway
Telephone: 091-63081

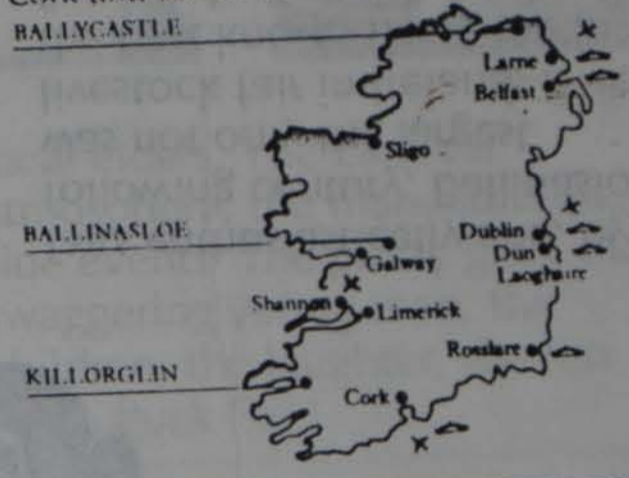
For general enquiries, write to:
Irish Tourist Board
P.O. Box 273
Dublin 8
and
Northern Ireland Tourist Board
River House,
48 High Street,
Belfast BT1 2DS

How to get to Ireland

There are international airports at Dublin, Cork, Shannon and Belfast.

Car and passenger ferries cross from Liverpool to Dublin and Belfast; from Pembroke to Cork and Rosslare; from Holyhead to Dun Laoghaire; from Stranraer to Larne; from Fishguard to Rosslare. There is also the high-speed, passenger only jetfoil from Liverpool to Dublin.

Continental ferries operate between Rosslare and Le Havre/Cherbourg and Cork and Roscoff.



Published jointly by Bord Failte - Irish Tourist Board and Northern Ireland Tourist Board. Designed by McCaffrey, Hutton, O'Rourke. Colour separations by Litho Studios Ltd. Printed in the Republic of Ireland by Graphic Printers Ltd. 10m.12.80.

Brooking
table at the
Oul' Lammass Fair



18148

Oul' Lammass Fair
Oldest of Ireland's big traditional fairs (1606 charter). Big sheep and pony sales - but also great social occasion. Nearly 200 stalls selling everything from jewellery and antiques to ropes and ladders. Try a little 'yellow man' coffee or 'dulse' (edible seaweed). Street dancing at night.

Ballycastle
26-27 Aug.

The Stalls at The Diamond



Lammass Fair, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim

R.T. 519

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In compiling this resource collection acknowledgement must be made to the multitude of sources from which material has been obtained. For convenience the journals, newspapers and publishers have been listed alphabetically, as have individuals, groups and libraries. Without their assistance this collection could not have been made.

JOURNALS

The Academy
Africa - St. Patrick's Mission
American Cattle Producer
J. of American Folklore
Annabel
Annals of the Association of Americal Geographers
Anthropological Quarterly
Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly
Area
ATTP Newsletter
Ave Maria

Bealoidéas
British Medical Journal

Catholic Digest
Catholic Periodical
Contemporary Review
Co-Options
The Crane Bag

Disadvantage in Education
Dublin Historical Recrod
Dúiseacht

J. of the East Belfast Historical Association
Ekistics
J. of English Linguistics
Ethnos
Extension Magazine

The Father Matthew Record
Flac File
Rolk Music Journal
The Furrow

The Gaelic Journal
Trans. of the Gaelic Society of Dublin
Trans. of the Gaelic Society of Inverness
Trans. of the Gaelic Society of Scotland
The Gentleman's Magazine
The Geographical Magazine, London
Grassroots
J. of the Gypsy Lore Society

Health Visitor
Hibernia
Human Heredity

International Journal of the Sociology of Language
Ireland of the Welcomes
Ireland's Own
Irish Geography
Irish Historical Studies
J. of the Irish Medical Association
Irish Monthly

J. of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society

The Listener
Lourdes Messenger

MacMillan's Magazine
Magill
Minceir Staimer

Natural History
The New Ireland Review
New Quarterly Magazine
The New Yorker Magazine Inc.
The Nineteenth Century
Notes and Queries
Nusight

Oideas

Pavey
Peace News
The Planner
Polska Sztuka Ludowa

The Readers's Digest
Revue Celtique
Romani Sociolinguistics
Roof
R.T.E. Guide

Scope
Settlement News
The Shanachie
The Shropshire Magazine
Social Biology
Social Science Quarterly
Social Work Today
Southern Anthropological Proceedings
Proceedings of the Southern Anthropological Society
Southern Folklore Quarterly
Studies : an Irish Quarterly Review

This Week
Town Planning Review
Traveller Education

Ulster Folklife
Ulster Tatler
Urban Anthropology
Urban Life and Culture

The Word

NEWSPAPERS

Belfast Newsletter
Belfast Telegraph

The Clare Champion
The Connacht Sentinel
The Connacht Tribune

Daily Mail
Down Recorder

Evening Herald
Evening Press

Flac File

Galway Advertizer

Hot Press

Impartial Reporter
Ireland's Own
Irish Independent
Irish News
Irish Press

Kerry's Eye
Kilkenny People

Londonderry Sentinel
Longford Leader
Lurgan and Portadown Examiner

Manchester Guardian
Meath Chronicle
Mourne Observer

Newry Reporter
Newsday
New York Times
North Antrim Times
North British Advertizer and Ladies Journal
Northern Whig

Observer
Observer Magazine
Orchadian

Portadown News
Portadown Times
Press and Journal

Settlement News
Sphere
Southside Express
South Wales Daily News
Sunday Express
Sunday Independent
Sunday Mirror
Sunday News
Sunday Press
Sunday Tribune
Sunday World

The Times
TP's Weekly
Tyrone Constitution
Tyrone Courier

Ulster Gazette and Armagh Standard

PUBLISHERS

Academic Press (London) Inc.
Addison-Wesley Publishers Ltd., London

John Baker, London
Bamforth & Co. Ltd., Holmfirth, Yorkshire
B.T. Batsford Ltd., London
T.V. Boardman & Co. Ltd., London
The Bodley Head

Cambridge University Press
Capuchin Publications, Dublin
Centre for Environmental Studies, London
W. & R. Chambers Ltd., Edinburgh
Chapman & Hall Ltd., London
College of Industrial Relations, Dublin
Wm. Colline & Son Ltd., London
Collins Publishers, Glasgow
The Contermporary Review Company Ltd.
Council for Social Welfare, Blackrock, Co. Dublin
Curtis Brown Ltd., London
Cummings Pub. Co. Inc., California

David & Charles Ltd., Newtown Abbot, Devon
Peter Davies Ltd., London
J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London
Andre Deutsch, London
Denis Dobson, London
Dolman Press, Dublin
Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies

Eas & Son Ltd., Belfast and Dublin
Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin

Allen Figgis & Co. Ltd., Dublin
T. Fisher Unwin, London
Folklore Academy, Douglas, I.O.M.

G.B.S. Colour Slides Ltd., Bray, Co. Wicklow
Georgetown University Press

Hamlyn Publishing Group, London
William Heinemann Ltd., London
John Hinde Ltd., Cabinteely, Co. Dublin
H.M.S.O., Edinburgh and London
Hope Ltd., Dublin
Haughton, Mifflin & Co., Boston

Insight Cards, Kilkenny

S. Karger, A.G. Basle, Switzerland

Liverpool University Press
Longmans, Green & Co., London

Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co. Ltd., London
Maunsell & Co. Ltd., Dublin
J. Maxwell & Sons, Dumfries
John Menzies & Co. Ltd., Edinburgh
Meridian Books, London
Minority Rights Group, London
Mouton & Co. Ltd., The Hague
John Murray Ltd., London

W.P. Nimmo Press, Dublin
Oxford University Press
O'Brien Press, Dublin

Plenum Publishing Corporation, New York

Quartermaine House Ltd., London

Romanstan Publications, London
Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London
Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland

Sage Publications Inc., California
Sampson, Low & Son & Marston, Edinburgh
Stationery Office, Dublin

Martin Secker & Warbury Ltd., London
Maurice Temple Smith, London

Talbot Press, Dublin
Thompson Price Ltd., Dublin
Traubner Ltd., London
Trubner & Co., London

Walsall Council for Community Relations

Valentine & Sons Ltd., Dublin
Veritas Publications, Dublin

LIBRARIES

City of Aberdeen
Belfast Central Library
British Library
Brotherton Library, Leeds
Cambridge University Library
Central Catholic Library, Dublin
Central Library, Newcastle upon Tyne
Dublin City Library
Franciscan Library, Killiney, Co. Dublin
Grangemouth Library, Stirlingshire
Herefordshire Library Service
Linenhall Library, Belfast
Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University
National Library of Ireland
Notre Dame University, Indiana
Public Record Office, Dublin
Public Record Office, Northern Ireland
Queen's University, Belfast
Royal Dublin Society
Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool
Trinity College, Dublin
Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Co. Down
Ulster Museum, Belfast
Ulster Polytechnic
University College, Cork
University College, Dublin
University of Ulster

GROUPS and INSTITUTIONS

Advisory Committee for the Education of Romany and other Travellers (ACERT)
An Cumann le Béaloideas Éireann
Area Education and Advice Centre, Cork
Assisi Fellowship
Association of Teachers of Travelling People (ATTP)

Belfast City Council
Belfast Education and Library Board
Bord Failte
British Museum

Cumann Le Seand Atha Cliath
Cambridge Institute of Education
Centre for Environmental Studies, London
College of Industrial Relations, Dublin
Connemara Hors Caravans, Westport House, Co. Mayo
Council of Europe
Cumann Duiseachta na hInse

Department of Education and Science
Department of the Environment, Dublin
Department of the Environment, England and Wales
Department of the Environment, Northern Ireland
Department of Health and Social Services, Northern Ireland
Department of Local Government, Dublin
Dieter Clissman Horse Caravans, Carrigmore, Co. Wicklow
Downtown Radio, Newtownards, Co. Down
Dublin Committee for Travelling People
Dublin Corporation, Community and Environment Department

Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin
Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, Stockholm
Exchange House, Dublin

Galway Itinerant Settlement Council

H.M.S.O., Belfast, Edinburgh and London

I.B.G. Urban Study Group
Institute of Race Relations, London
Irish Folklore Commission
Irish National Teachers Organisation

Uniwersytet Jagiellónski, Kraków

King's Fund Centre, London

Mary Ward Centre, London
Minority Rights Group, London

National Council for Travelling People, Ireland
National Museum of Ireland
National Gypsy Council
Newry Committee for Travelling People
Northern Ireland Council for Social Service
Northern Ireland Council for Travelling People

Planning Exchange, Glasgow

Quaker Social Responsibility and Education, London

An Roinn Oideachais
Romani Institute, London
Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland
The Romany Guild

Save the Children Fund
Slattery's Travel Agency, Tralee, Co. Kerry
Sligo Committee for Travelling People
Society of St., Vincent de Paul

Ulster Folk and Transport Museum
University College, Dublin, Department of Irish Folklore

West Midlands Education Authority
Western Group Public Health Committee, Co. Tyrone
World Development Group, Derry

INDIVIDUALS

Thomas Acton, Micahel Bach, Adam Bartosz, Victor Bewley, Dennis Binns,
Brendan Brennan, Cathal Butler, Olive Carolan, Noel Carter, Juanita Casey,
Margaret Crawford, Elisabeth Davies, Sr. Colette Dwyer, Fr. Egan,
Mervyn Ennis, Monsignor G.T. Fehily, Ann Fitzmaurice, Maugie Francis,
Sharon and George Gmelch, Tom Griffen, Jared Harper, Pieter Hovens,
Fr. Christy Jaones, Hawley Kane, Kevin Kearns, Mairin Kenny, Linda Kent,
Donald Kenrick, Martine Tugman-Kret, Patricia McCarthy, Michael and Nell
McDonagh, Breda McGeown, Mary McKavanagh, Sr. Anne McKernan, Sean Maher,
John Mannion, Nigel Middleton, Mary Moriarty, Tom Munelly, John A. Murphy,
Sean Murphy, Sheelagh Murnaghan, Mai Neary, Eithne Nolan, Paul Noonan,
Donal O'Brien, Terry O'Connor, Pat and Phyl O'Donnell, Sr. Maraid O'Dunnavan,
Sr. Brigid O'Flanagan, Dr. Michael O'Flynn, Gerry O'Hanlon, Mary O'Kane,
John O'Sullivan, Paul O'Toole, Siobhan Quinn, Sinéad ní Shuinear, Eithne Russell,
David Smith, Seamus Smyth, Grainne Tobin, Sr. Cyprian Unsworth, Alma Walker.

Thanks must also go to the following staff at the University of Ulster at
Jordanstown, Muriel Beeckman, Carole Blair, May Crumlin, Paul Hunter and
Sadie Walsh. Without their help this collection could never have been
completed.

Whitney's ...