“THE BLACKEST SHADOWS ARE CAST BY THE IRISH QUARTER”:

THE MAKING OF STAFFORD STREET, WOLVERHAMPTON, 1832-1882

by

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to understand the so-called Irish quarters that prompted speculation, condemnation and intervention in mid-Victorian cities. I analyse material and discursive constructions of the Irish quarter using spatial thinking and cross-disciplinary methodologies including GIS mapping and discourse analysis. Scholars of the Irish in Britain have typically studied the Irish as discrete and separate communities. Urban historians have studied the material and cultural construction of the Victorian slum. I draw these historiographies together by analysing the how the Irish quarter came to be: how the Irish were understood at local level, within contemporary understandings of race; how such neighbourhoods gained their notorious reputations; and how the self-perception of the Irish contributed to these spaces. To investigate this, I focus on the Stafford Street neighbourhood of Wolverhampton, synonymous with its Irish community in the mid-Victorian era.

To outsiders, Stafford Street's reputation was formed through territorial stigmatisation, religious discrimination and policing choices, viewed through lenses such as sanitary reform, criminal behaviour and anti-Catholicism, shaped by the power structures which formed Wulfrunian and British identities in the mid-nineteenth century. For residents however, everyday relationships and networks, supplemented by intertwining religious and political understandings of Irishness, formed a uniquely diasporic Irish space. I argue that rather than forming an Irish enclave or simply an imagined community, the Irish quarter was a very real diaspora space in which Irishness, Englishness, class, race and place were constantly revised and renegotiated. I argue too that space is a useful category of historical analysis for understanding marginalised communities, a means to access histories of those often deemed an inaccessible mass.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

BDG: *Birmingham Daily Gazette*

BDP: *Birmingham Daily Post*

BJ: *Birmingham Journal*

DC: District Centre

EE: *Evening Express*

GIS: Geographic Information System

HGA: Home Government Association

HGIS: Historical Geographic Information System

HRCGB: Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain

IRB: Irish Republican Brotherhood

JP: Justice of the Peace

ME: *Midland Examiner & Times*

MOH: Medical Officer of Health

NBSP: National Brotherhood of St Patrick

PC: Police Constable

PEMEU: Protestant Evangelical Mission and Electoral Union

PPVC: Political Prisoners Visiting Committee

SA: *Staffordshire Advertiser*

SS: Saints (as in SS Peter & Paul Roman Catholic church)

WC: *Wolverhampton Chronicle*

Chapter One: The making of the Irish quarter

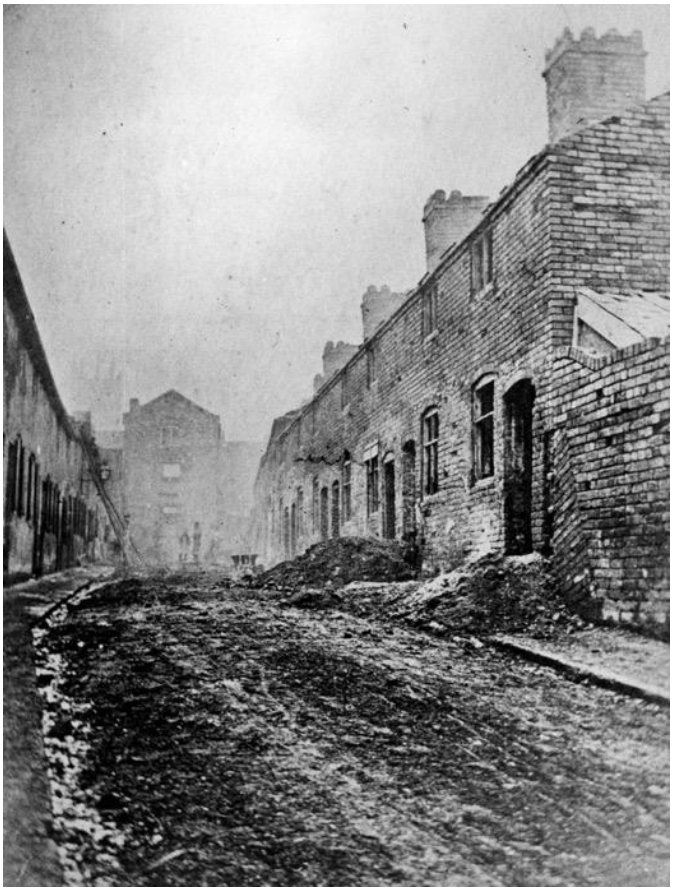


Figure 1.1 Coles Croft during its demolition, early 1880s (Wolverhampton Archives and Local Studies, P/3236)

> Here in Wolverhampton, as everywhere else, the blackest shadows are cast by the Irish quarter.[1]

In 1861, the architecture journal *The Builder* visited Wolverhampton as part of a tour to assess "the condition of our chief towns." Its correspondent found some admirable buildings, but dwelt at length on the "narrow, irregular, imperfectly-paved alleys and courts, with their

[1] 'The Condition of Our Chief Towns: Wolverhampton', *The Builder* XIX, no. 938 (26 January 1861): 49–50.

tattered fringes of miserable homes," that made up the infamous Carribee Island, a court off Stafford Street. Such language was common in the vast literature on the problems of urbanisation, almost always perceived from a very narrow social, political, economic and cultural perspective. The article continued:

> How comes it that the dirtiest, most "tumble-down," vermin-haunted localities always shelter a settlement of Irish? How comes it that, go where you will, in large towns or small, the quarters of the lower Irish are but counterparts of old St Giles?
>
> Would that St Patrick would disentangle the meshes of this rotten network, and send order and cleanliness to its swarming population. Something short of a miracle would do it. [2]

By 1861, Stafford Street, in the industrial Midlands town of Wolverhampton, had developed a fearsome reputation. It had grown into one of the town's poorest, unhealthiest, most heavily policed neighbourhoods, but its notoriety was based largely on its association with Irish residence. By the mid-Victorian era the idea of an Irish quarter – separate and distinct, an exaggeration of the whole list of urban social problems, as well as some distinct to the stigmatized Irish Catholic poor – was well-established in British minds. In this thesis, I aim to understand what made the Irish neighbourhood distinct in Victorian towns, but also the

[2] 'The Condition of Our Chief Towns'.

processes and practices through which such a conception was constructed and spatialised in the minds of Victorians.

Stafford Street, and the courts and alleyways off it, had developed a small Irish population by the 1830s, which swelled rapidly as exiles from the traumatic Irish Famine of the late 1840s began to arrive. By 1851, 5.6 per cent of Wolverhampton's residents had been born in Ireland; in the Stafford Street area, this reached 46 per cent; in Carribee Island itself, 71 per cent. As *The Builder*'s comments show, however, to the mid-Victorian onlooker the Irish quarter was much more than the sum of its Irish residents. From the 1830s, middle-class observers across Britain began to build their anxieties over social ills like crime, disease, poverty, and religious and political disorder into widely recognised "Irish quarter" stereotypes, representing the worst aspects of urban society.

Famous examples like Manchester's Little Ireland or London's St Giles' Rookery were used as shorthand and comparison for every kind of urban social problem. Such characterisations drew on common, overlapping anxieties. Worries around epidemic disease and sanitation reached a peak in the 1830s and 1840s, and Carribee Island was made a synecdoche for overcrowding, filth and "Irish Fever." Discourses of race and underclass perpetuated discussions of crime and policing in the 1850s and 1860s. Stafford Street even developed its own media trope, the "Stafford Street Row." Fears of resurgent Catholicism in the same decades drew the Irish in Britain into racialised, and highly polarising, religious debates – Stafford Street was targeted by divisive religious extremists on the grounds of its Catholic reputation. And a new terror of Irish political nationalism began to shape Anglo-Irish relationships from the 1860s onwards – commentators came to look on this neighbourhood as a hotbed of Fenianism and terrorism. These same characterisations resulted in the

condemnation and stigmatisation of neighbourhoods like Stafford Street, in distinctive methods of regulation, surveillance and policing, and in their eventual demolition – Stafford Street itself became a designated Unhealthy Area in 1877 and was cleared shortly afterwards.

Stafford Street was certainly desperately poor, with all the attendant ills of Victorian urban poverty, but it was far more complex than its racialised stereotypes admitted. In this thesis, I seek to deconstruct contemporary (and sometimes historiographical) assumptions about the Irish quarter. I argue that the construction of bad reputation in poor neighbourhoods like Stafford Street had its roots in Wolverhampton's, and Britain's, economic, social, cultural and racial politics; and that such narratives had material effects on the everyday lives of those associated with these places. But I also argue that these contemporary, pejorative characterisations can be read against the grain and, used alongside other ways of understanding spaces of the poor, something approaching the reality of the Irish quarter can be seen.

In this thesis I make two core arguments. Firstly, the Irish quarter that was the subject of so much vexed discussion and speculation in Victorian cities was real. It was demographically different. Irish-born people did cluster in certain neighbourhoods, though this clustering took its own complex spatial patterns and responded to many interacting pressures: wages, rents, landlords, and other Irish people and institutions. But it was also imagined. Victorians spatialised their anxieties by ascribing all kinds of meaning to spaces of poverty, and to Ireland itself. The Irish quarter formed as distinct sub-category of the wider discourse around slums, disease, criminality and other social ills in the Victorian city, intersecting with contemporary understandings of Ireland, race, religion and politics. The mid-Victorian years discussed here were formative for key narratives that blossomed in the late-Victorian years, most notably

about the slum and Irish nationalism. In practice, the Irish quarter was not simply an offshoot of Ireland found in the British city, nor a space of poverty which happened to an overlap with an unremarkable Irish community. It was a diaspora space, in which Irish-born, English-born and others interacted to produce something culturally and socially different altogether.

Secondly, I make a methodological argument that the urban poor, particularly the Irish, are not an unknowable mass, inaccessible to historians because of the paucity of sources. But to access their lives requires thinking laterally. I argue that a better understanding of everyday life for the urban poor can be gained by analysing spaces such as these. A substantial part of this thesis is dedicated to unpicking the layers of stigma built up by those with a variety of interests in the area: property owners, physicians, policemen, politicians and others, all of whom contributed to Stafford Street's infamous reputation. I argue that by contextualising this reputation, and by studying a very small area in great detail, these ordinary lives can be uncovered and our understanding of them bettered. Further to this, I argue that digital methodologies such as GIS mapping, and analysis of online genealogical and newspaper sources, can be productively applied to small-scale, local, spatial histories such as this.[3]

In this thesis, I argue that spaces and places are deeply reflective of the society in which they exist, and also transform that society themselves. Stafford Street demonstrates that Victorian Wolverhampton had a highly developed sense of social space, drawing on contemporary

[3] See methodology section below. This approach places this thesis within the scope of the increasingly widely defined world of digital humanities. See methodology section for a summary of the uses and limitations of digital methods for a study of this nature. For a recent survey of the potentials and pitfalls of digital humanities, see Adam Crymble, *Technology and the Historian: Transformations in the Digital Age* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2021).

understandings of race, science, morality and religion, and politics ranging from local Liberal associations to the transnational politics of Irish separatism. This was true both of observer and resident, though the perspectives on such subjects differed dramatically. Places like Stafford Street were constructed in particular ways for particular purposes, and studying how the idea of the ethnic quarter developed in this period provides a way of framing British responses to immigration and prejudice in other places, and in other periods.

Making the Irish quarter

The 'Little Ireland' stereotype was first, and most widely propagated by the Manchester-based physician James Phillips Kay, based on his experiences of Manchester.[4] Kay used spatialised language to link the "low, swampy ground, liable to be inundated… an unhealthy spot… so low that the chimneys of its houses… are little above the level of the road" with the "debased" and "savage" Irish. His descriptions were echoed in the press, and by commentators from Friedrich Engels, to Lord Shaftesbury, to Thomas Carlyle.[5] Contemporaries came to accept the idea that the Irish flocked together, segregated or ghettoised, making the worst slums distinctly Irish. Henry Mayhew observed in the late 1840s, for example, that:

> In almost all of the poorer districts of London are to be found 'nests of Irish'

[4] Mervyn Austen Busteed, *The Irish in Manchester c.1750-1921: Resistance, Adaptation and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 23.
[5] Quoted in Graham Davis, *The Irish in Britain: 1815-1914* (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1991), 57–58. For examples of the spread of Kay's ideas see: Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995), chap. 3.

> – as they are called – or courts inhabited solely by the Irish costermongers. These people form separate colonies, rarely visiting or mingling with the English coster.[6]

Reverend Thomas Beames wrote in 1852 that "Rookeries are bad, but what are they to Irish Rookeries?"[7] By 1855, the *Morning Advertiser* was describing Manchester's "New Ireland" as:

> …distinguished from all the rest by its superior collections of filth the most hideous, its dirty and ragged inhabitants, and its frequent repetitions of sanguinary affrays, which can be compared to nothing but the orgies of savages.[8]

By the time of *The Builder*'s visit to Wolverhampton, the trope was well-established. For contemporaries, the Irish quarter was a world apart: a filthy, dangerous, lawless space representing separation, segregation and Otherness.

The geography of the Irish quarter was formed at the intersection of the urban property market, the industrial economy, and the movements of large numbers of people pulled by the work available in industrial towns, and pushed by the traumatic interaction of natural disaster with laissez-faire political economy in Ireland. The *idea* of an Irish quarter was similarly formed at an intersection, where representations of urban social problems met

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[6] Henry Mayhew, *London Labour & The London Poor*, ed. Rosemary O'Day and David Englander, Wordsworth Classics of English Literature (1861; repr., Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2008), 99.
[7] Thomas Beames, *The Rookeries of London: Past, Present, and Prospective*, 2nd ed. (London: T. Bosworth, 1852), 38.
[8] 'Editorial', *Morning Advertiser*, 21 December 1855.

racialised representations of the Irish. These two concepts also interacted: the points of conflict which defined the space were often where reality and representation met. For historians too, the interaction of reality with representation has caused conflict. In this section I will outline how contemporaries and historians have understood these themes, and argue that the making of the Irish quarter should be a key site of analysis in mid-Victorian Britain.

Making the slum: materiality

When mid-Victorian writers spoke of Irish quarters in British cities, they participated in a much wider discourse around the fabric of urban space. They were fully conscious of the social geography of what, by the end of the century, would be widely referred to as 'the slum.' Slums were understood from a variety of different perspectives: as property; as labour pool; as physical manifestations of poverty; and increasingly throughout the century as representations of urban problems including disease, crime, irreligion and political radicalism. Historians too have understood the slum in these terms. In this thesis, I aim to bring the historiography of the slum into conversation with that of the Irish diaspora, and in particular how the Irish were understood racially.

To this end, although my chronology extends either side of these dates, the principle research is bookended by the arrival of Irish famine refugees in 'Black '47,' and the beginning of Stafford Street's demolition in 1880. Discussion of both urban and Irish problems in these years drew on discourses of class and reform from earlier, and became essential to how narratives like 'the slum' and 'the Irish question' would be understood in later years. Thus, as with these narratives, the Irish quarter was a process as much as an entity. This period has

often been considered an "age of equipoise," an economic and cultural heyday sandwiched between the turbulent 1840s and apparent decline from the 1870s.[9] Martin Hewitt, in his outline of Victorian periodisation, summarises the common view that between 1851 and 1867, "urban conditions remained stubbornly resistant to improvement."[10] This framing reduces poverty and urban processes to an intractable inevitability rather than a historically contingent feature of society. Instead, I suggest that the material circumstances of slum life, and the accompanying attitudes, language, prejudices and stereotypes, find their roots in an earlier generation; and that the experience of mid-Victorian towns was essential to the 'rediscovery of poverty' later in the century, when the language of 'slums' became widespread, and such spaces became sites of human geographical investigation, lurid fiction, and exotic class tourism which allowed onlookers a thrill of 'descending' into sexual danger.[11]

[9] The expression comes from W. L. Burn's influential outline of the period, cited in Martin Hewitt, 'Introduction', in *The Victorian World* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 1–54. This is also the periodisation used in key surveys of the era, including those by J. F. C. Harrison and Geoffrey Best, and Eric Hobsbawm. J. F. C. Harrison, *Early Victorian Britain, 1832-51* (London: Fontana, 1979); G. F. A. Best, *Mid-Victorian Britain, 1851-1875* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971); J. F. C. Harrison, *Late Victorian Britain, 1875-1901* (London: Fontana, 1990); Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: 1789-1848* (London: Abacus, 1997); Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital: 1848-1875* (London: Abacus, 1997); Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914* (London: Abacus, 1997). Theodore Hoppen breaks ranks slightly, using two political defeats to bookend his periodisation: the Corn Law crisis of 1846 and the defeat of Home Rule in 1886. K. Theodore Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation: 1846-1886* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). Hewitt suggests two sub-periods, again defined by political events, of 1848-1867, and 1867-1886. Hewitt, 'Introduction'. David Gange discusses the way the mid-Victorian years were presented as a pinnacle of achievement and progress in comparison to a perceived late-Victorian decline, particularly by Martin Wiener, whose work struck a chord in the Thatcherite early 1980s. Gange's observation that to most people, the second half of the century must have felt like a continuous age of improvement, rings more true. David Gange, *The Victorians: A Beginner's Guide* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2016), 180–86.

[10] Hewitt, 'Introduction'.

[11] Oliver Betts, '"Knowing" the Late Victorian East End', *The London Journal* 42, no. 3 (2017): 257–72; Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), chap. 1; Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (London: Virago, 1992), chap. 1.

1. The making of the Irish quarter

I argue that the mid-century period forms an important pre-history of the "imagined slum" discussed below.

Property

Areas of poor housing were, first and foremost, economic spaces. Property of any kind was sacrosanct in mid-Victorian Britain: it was ideologically private, state intervention was anathema and – although access to its marketplace was complex, uneven and limited to a small proportion of the population – fundamental to the operation of the economy and local democracy.[12] "To challenge this orthodoxy," Richard Rodger notes, "was to challenge the foundations of the capitalist system itself."[13] The urban rental market was a central and lucrative part of the development of the modern property market. This was especially true when demand for housing was high, as throughout the mid-Victorian era.[14] Large owners (including aristocratic and church estates) held significant power over the development of land (and thus the availability of housing) in towns like Wolverhampton, but so too did the swathe of smaller proprietors who let individual houses and courts to the working class, and maintained them in better or worse condition.[15] As the experience of one landlord described in chapters two and six shows, belief in the sanctity of private property allowed both owners

[12] On the development of the property market, see Desmond Fitz-Gibbon, *Marketable Values: Inventing the Property Market in Modern Britain* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2018).
[13] Richard Rodger, 'Slums and Suburbs: The Persistence of Residential Apartheid', ed. P. J. Waller, The English Urban Landscape (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 240–63.
[14] Fitz-Gibbon, *Marketable Values*, 56; Martin Daunton, *House and Home in the Victorian City: Working-Class Housing 1850–1914* (London: Edward Arnold, 1983), chap. 6.
[15] George J. Barnsby, *A History of Housing in Wolverhampton, 1750 to 1975* (Wolverhampton: Integrated Publishing Services, 1975), 5–8.

of slum property, and local authorities, to abdicate themselves from responsibility for its condition, opening the door to allow tenants to be blamed for their environments instead.

The activity of the real estate market is often insufficiently theorised in urban histories. As Alexia Yates has argued, the actions of individuals should be analysed and not take for granted as a systemic fact: neighbourhoods do not simply form in particular areas, but are constituted from land that has been transformed into property for capital gain.[16] Carl Nightingale places real estate as one of the key, constantly active, agents in the uneven development and segregation of the historical city.[17] Although this thesis is not an examination of Stafford Street as real estate, I argue throughout that the interaction of property owners with their wider cultural worlds was a key driver in the creation of disreputable or otherwise distinct neighbourhoods in Victorian towns.

The economic explanation for the development of slums anchored the development of a specific historiography from the 1960s, following HJ Dyos's pioneering studies of spatial segregation, and a number of surveys of working-class housing in the 1970s and 1980s.[18] The

[16] Alexia M. Yates, *Real Estate and Global Urban History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 3–4, 10–11.

[17] Carl H. Nightingale, *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 5–7.

[18] H. J. Dyos, 'The Slums of Victorian London', *Victorian Studies* 11, no. 1 (1967): 5–40; H. J. Dyos and D. Reeder, 'Slums and Suburbs', in *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, ed. H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff, vol. 2 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 359–86. Dyos' work grew from the broader history of working-class housing within urban history and economic history. The key early volume was S. D. Chapman, ed., *The History of Working-Class Housing: A Symposium* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1971). Subsequent surveys by Enid Gauldie, Anthony Wohl, and John Burnett were criticised by later historians including Martin Daunton for a Whiggish, teleological perspective – their characterisation of the failings of laissez-faire society to provide good quality homes for the working class was undoubtedly correct, but their suggestion that state intervention was the inevitable outcome was more obviously shaped by their time. Enid Gauldie, *Cruel Habitations: A History of Working-Class Housing, 1780-1918* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1974); Anthony S. Wohl, *The Eternal Slum:*

material reality of the slum became an accepted part of urban history: Anthony Wohl's *The Eternal Slum*, David Englander's *Landlord & Tenant*, and Martin Gaskell's collection *Slums* all made substantial and largely uncritical use of the term.[19] For many of these historians, such poor districts were characterised by immobility: cheap rents, proximity to work, local networks, which went towards explaining the persistent perception of a distinctive type of poor housing, with a distinctive group of people that lived there. Englander's description of poor areas was characteristic of the historiography of working-class housing in the wake of Dyos: "an insular world composed of poverty and destitution, an environment starved of capital, condemned to a living death, lingering thus and rotting until such time as the next round of improvements began."[20] In fact, Dyos's work allowed for more nuance than this, portraying the slum as an undefined and undefinable space, a representation, but based on cruel economic necessity and real social and material problems.[21] Nevertheless, the assumption that the pathological (as described by mostly male, middle or upper class observers) was normal, continued to hinder studies of both the subtleties of residential differentiation and of residents' own experiences.[22]

Housing and Social Policy in Victorian London (London: Edward Arnold, 1977); John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing: 1815-1970* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1978); Daunton, *House and Home*, 1–3. For a useful summary of how the historiography of working-class housing was affected by the age in which it was produced, see Tanis Hinchcliffe, 'Pandora's Box: Forty Years of Housing History', *The London Journal* 41, no. 1 (2016): 1–16.

[19] Wohl, *The Eternal Slum*; David Englander, *Landlord and Tenant in Urban Britain 1838-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983); S. Martin Gaskell, ed., *Slums* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990).

[20] Englander, *Landlord and Tenant*, xiii.

[21] Dyos, 'The Slums of Victorian London'; Dyos and Reeder, 'Slums and Suburbs'. In a twentieth century context, Raphael Samuel *et al* discussed the power and slipperiness within the term 'slum' as far back as 1962, but this seems to have made much less of an impact than Dyos's genre-defining work. Raphael Samuel, James Kincaid, and Elizabeth Slater, 'But Nothing Happens', *New Left Review* 1, no. 13–14 (1962): 38–69.

[22] Martin Daunton, 'Public Place and Private Space: The Victorian City and the Working-Class Household', ed. Derek Fraser and A. Sutcliffe, The Pursuit of Urban History (London: Edward Arnold, 1983), 213.

An economic definition is still vital in deconstructing the slum, and this thesis supports the findings of these scholars that Victorian rentier capitalists were responsible for the development and persistence of these conditions. Yet as Mark Shaw shows in Wolverhampton, not every poor neighbourhood became a slum, much less an Irish quarter.[23] What was different about Stafford Street? Property in Stafford Street fit the typical pattern: ownership was diverse, the wider economic conditions important, and the responsibility for poor conditions remained with neglectful owners of poor housing, who did not consider themselves part of the problem. However, I argue that local contexts and individuals were more important than has often been assumed: for example, in Stafford Street the personal role of the property agent – which has received much less attention than the landlord-tenant relationship – played an important part in the way the neighbourhoods developed as a social space (chapter six).

Poverty and labour

The slum was also an economic space from the perspective of its residents. Landlords supplied slum housing, but it required a low-paid, precarious workforce to live there. If there was one factor that tied together the disparate range of people described as the working classes, it was the precarity of their existence: in Keith McLelland's words, "scarcity and insecurity were governing facts and fundamental structures of their lives."[24] Although almost all working-class

[23] Mark Shaw, 'Individual Behaviour and Social Change: The Irish in Victorian Wolverhampton', *West Midlands Studies* 14 (1981): 1–5.
[24] Keith McClelland, 'Time to Work, Time to Live: Some Aspects of Work and the Re-Formation of Class in Britain, 1850-1880', in *The Historical Meanings of Work*, ed. Patrick Joyce (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 186.

families lived through some periods of poverty, for some, poverty was a permanent feature of lives lived amidst "glaring inequalities."[25] The principal factor was work. Seasonal and industrial insecurity dictated the lifestyles, homes and neighbourhoods of the poor.[26] Rent formed a large proportion of the household budget: even well-paid artisans sought out poor accommodation to ensure they could make the rent, but the poor had no option. While familial, social and personal ties were important, economic reality was no doubt the principal reason that low-waged families ended up in poor neighbourhoods.[27]

Histories of working-class neighbourhoods have often emphasised solidarity and community. Urban street life has been seen as "neighbourhood-centred," reliant on informal, place-specific, social networks as the lifeblood of community.[28] Despite wide connections to the rest of the city, there were "tightly circumscribed spatial limits" in such neighbourhoods. In

[25] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 8; John Rule, *The Labouring Classes in Early Industrial England, 1750-1850* (London: Longman, 1986), 33; John Belchem, *Industrialization and the Working Class: The English Experience, 1750-1900* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1990), 42; Carl Chinn, *Poverty amidst Prosperity: The Urban Poor in England, 1834-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 14. See also James Treble, who noted that urban poverty was "a product of specifically economic forces and the social environment which those economic pressures helped to create": James H. Treble, *Urban Poverty in Britain, 1830-1914* (London: Methuen, 1979), 9.

[26] Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), chap. 2.

[27] David Green and A. G. Parton, 'Slums and Slum Life in Victorian England: London and Birmingham at Mid-Century', in *Slums*, ed. S. Martin Gaskell (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990), 17–91; Englander, *Landlord and Tenant*, 6; Richard Rodger, *Housing in Urban Britain, 1780-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 10; Jeremy Boulton, '"Turned into the Street with My Children Destitute of Every Thing": The Payment of Rent and the London Poor, 1600–1850', ed. Joanne McEwan and Pamela Sharpe, Accommodating Poverty: The Housing and Living Arrangements of the English Poor. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 25–49; Avner Offer, *Property and Politics 1870-1914: Landownership, Law, Ideology and Urban Development in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 283.

[28] Chinn, *Poverty Amidst Prosperity*, 130–47.

south London, for example, Irish families moved frequently, but rarely more than half a mile.[29] Although Martin Daunton has argued that this communal mode of living diminished over the nineteenth century, Standish Meacham's definition that "neighbourhood meant more than houses and streets… it meant the mutually-beneficial relationship one formed with others; a sort of social symbiosis" has found support among more recent historians of the working class such as Carl Chinn and Andrew August.[30] August argues that, although comparatively few poor people engaged in "formal politics," the intimate negotiations of day-to-day life in tight-knit communities were crucial to the ongoing formation of the British working class.[31] Other historians have warned against sanitising lives in poverty. Robert Roberts' *The Classic Slum* (1971) was intended to counter cosy representations of slums as simply tight-knit communities – for Roberts, writing amidst mass slum clearances and another 'rediscovery of poverty,' nostalgia for such lost communities misunderstood the anxiety, anger and exhaustion of precarious lives.[32]

In this thesis, I have tried to balance these viewpoints, but also to provide a new perspective on everyday life for the poor by foregrounding their own understandings of their space. Work, wages, lodging and personal relationships can all be illustrated through this spatial

[29] Green and Parton, 'Slums and Slum Life'; Lynn Hollen Lees, 'Patterns of Lower Class Life: Irish Slum Communities in Nineteenth Century London', ed. S. Thernstrom and Richard Sennett, *Nineteenth-Century Cities: Essays in the New Urban History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969).
[30] Daunton, *House and Home*, 11–12; Standish Meacham, *A Life Apart: The English Working Class 1890-1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 45; Chinn, *Poverty Amidst Prosperity*, chap. 5; Andrew August, *The British Working Class, 1832-1940* (London: Pearson Education, 2007).
[31] August, *The British Working Class*, 2–3.
[32] Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century* (London: Penguin, 1990), 25, preface.

perspective, and while this cannot replace the value of written or oral testimony, I argue that understanding everyday life spatially can allow some access to the lives of the poor where such records do not exist.

Making the slum: representation

The materialist historiography of the slum was challenged by Alan Mayne in his 1993 book *The Imagined Slum*. Mayne criticised urban historians for failing to grasp how embedded the language of the slum was in the moral and social mores of (late) Victorian Britain.[33] His assertion that "slums are myths… they are constructions of the imagination" was firmly placed within the cultural and linguistic turn of the period.[34] It sparked considerable controversy by suggesting that, despite very real economic and social effects, the uncritical use of the term led to the same assumptions that the Victorians held: that slums were separate, essentially different spaces and their residents separate and essentially different too. Instead, he argued that in Anglophone, capitalist societies, poor neighbourhoods were transformed into slums through cultural and literary discourse. For Mayne, the word slum "misrepresents the complex realities of urban social inequality": it generalises a diversity of urban spaces across time and place, it stereotypes, stigmatises and Others places and their people, and represents only the perspective of the outsider. Concentrating on the reality of

[33] A. J. C. Mayne, *The Imagined Slum: Newspaper Representation in Three Cities, 1870-1914* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993). See also Mayne's earlier article on the subject: A. J. C. Mayne, 'Representing the Slum', *Urban History* 17 (1990): 66–84.

[34] Mayne, *The Imagined Slum*, 1. For two distinctly different appraisals of the cultural turn of the 1990s, see James Vernon, 'Who's Afraid of the "Linguistic Turn"? The Politics of Social History and Its Discontents', *Social History* 19, no. 1 (1994): 81–97; Michael Bentley, 'Victorian Politics and the Linguistic Turn', *The Historical Journal* 42, no. 3 (1999): 883–902.

such spaces snares even the sympathetic into reproducing the territorial stigmatisation of earlier generations.[35] Although Mayne's deconstruction of slum discourse echoes Dyos's uncertainties, he was taken to task by empiricists like Englander for his postmodern, linguistic approach.[36] In fact, the book proved an important contribution to the problematisation of a value-laden term, and subsequent writers on the subject have tended to steer clear of its uncritical use.

Mayne's focus is on the late-nineteenth century, when journalism had been revolutionised by recent moves into campaigning and investigation.[37] Yet mid-century newspapers played their part in the production of local Irish communities and neighbourhoods. Far more accessible than council records, maps or other cultural artefacts, even books, newspapers were the chief means of propagating ideas, images and myths of the Irish quarter. As chapter three argues, newspapers' political affiliations did not prevent this spread. Indeed, editorial inclusions and absences served to provide confirmation of its reality from a range of perspectives, and through reports of police courts, Guardians meetings or public lectures, provided the framework by which readers came to read the town's social geography.[38] As

[35] Alan Mayne, *Slums: The History of a Global Injustice* (London: Reaktion Books, 2017), 8–11. See below on territorial stigmatisation as a spatial theory.

[36] The terse exchange of replies in *Urban History* provide an excellent case study for how the cultural or linguistic turn was received by some historians in the early 1990s. David Englander, 'Alan Mayne, The Imagined Slum: Newspaper Representation in Three Cities 1870–1914. Leicester, London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1993', *Urban History* 21, no. 2 (1994): 309–11; A. J. C. Mayne, 'A Barefoot Childhood: So What? Imagining Slums and Reading Neighbourhoods', *Urban History* 22, no. 3 (1995): 380–89; David Englander, 'Urban History or Urban Historicism: Which? A Response to Alan Mayne', *Urban History* 22, no. 3 (1995): 390–91.

[37] On the way the 'new journalism' of the 1880s impacted upon urban experiences and images, see for example Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, chaps 3, 4, 7.

[38] On the relationship between law and legal reporting, see Martin Hewitt, 'The Press and the Law', in *Journalism and the Periodical Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University

historians of crime and culture have argued, the very nature of crime and punishment was substantially created by press coverage: it was in newsprint that moral panics gained currency, and through a complex set of assumptions and constructions the press contributed to the making of the so-called 'criminal class' and their spaces.[39] Similar processes can be observed in English reporting on Ireland.[40] Different kinds of problem spaces and people were an expected and important part of local news, and it was in newspapers' interests to ensure that shorthand generalisations were available to their readership.

I follow Mayne in understanding slums (and therefore Irish quarters) as imagined territories, constructed through cultural representations. This perspective is a vital step towards filtering what Rob Shields calls "spatialisations": the spatial divisions and distinctions which form necessary parts of "hegemonic systems of ideology and practice," the myths, stereotypes and prejudices of the middle-class observer.[41] In particular, I aim to demonstrate that the medico-moral geographies, reforms to policing and urban regulation, and moral panics over religion

Press, 2017), 147–64. On the use of dialect reporting as a form of mockery see Andrew Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town: The Provincial Press in England, 1855-1900* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2018), 304–17.

[39] Judith Rowbotham and Kim Stevenson, *Behaving Badly: Social Panic and Moral Outrage - Victorian and Modern Parallels* (London: Routledge, 2003), 31–40; Jennifer S. Davis, 'The London Garotting Panic of 1862: A Moral Panic and the Creation of a Criminal Class in Mid-Victorian England', in *Crime and the Law: The Social History of Crime in Western Europe Since 1500*, ed. V. A. C. Gatrell (London: Europa Publications, 1980), 190–213; Jennifer S. Davis, 'Jennings' Buildings and the Royal Borough: The Construction of the Underclass in Mid-Victorian England', in *Metropolis - London: Histories and Representations since 1800*, ed. David Feldman and Gareth Stedman Jones (London: Routledge, 1989), 11–39; Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 53–67.

[40] Michael De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

[41] Rob Shields, *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 46–48; see also *Spatial Questions: Cultural Topologies and Social Spatialisation* (London; Thousand Oaks, CA; New Delhi; Singapore: Sage, 2013), chap. 2.

and politics that shaped material lives and space in Stafford Street, can be located at the intersections of national discourses and local political, economic and cultural contexts.

Insanitary space

The construction of knowledge about the Irish quarter – that is, who was spatialising Stafford Street as a set of overlapping, imagined, social geographies, and how – forms a central theme of this thesis.[42] Who constructed the slum, how, and why? Nightingale notes two further groups (alongside real estate) most responsible for spatial segregation in towns: government (in this case local), and intellectual networks.[43] In a small town like Wolverhampton, these overlapped considerably, creating a middle class that dominated local society economically, politically and culturally.[44] Jon Lawrence notes that a small, close-knit, middle class coalesced in Wolverhampton in the years following the 1832 Reform Act, with tendencies towards Liberalism, non-conformism and industrial interests.[45] As elsewhere, this was heterogeneous (in professional, economic, confessional and political terms), but bound together by common performances of class: membership of certain societies, dedicated to the improvement of one aspect of urban society or another, was essential; and a performative sense of ownership was

[42] Shields notes that "spatialisation has a mediating effect because it represents the contingent juxtaposition of social and economic forces, forms of social organisation, and constraints of the natural world and so on. But as a 'cause,' in and of itself, it plays no role for it is not a locus of causal forces. Human agents have causal power." Shields, *Places on the Margin*, 57.

[43] Nightingale, *Segregation*, 5–7.

[44] On the dominance of the Victorian middle class on these fronts, see Robert John Morris, *Class, Sect, and Party: The Making of the British Middle Class : Leeds, 1820-1850* (Manchester University Press, 1990); Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c.1780-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority and the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

[45] Jon Lawrence, *Speaking for the People: Party, Language and Popular Politics in England, 1867-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

crucial to how this group perceived public space.[46] The overlapping networks of authority and knowledge exchange which produced such spaces can be clearly seen in the way sanitary reform was implemented in Wolverhampton.

Space was central to the exercise of power by this new urban middle class. Mary Poovey argues that knowledge and power combined spatially: in conflating environment with people under the idea of the "social body," reformers such as Kay or Edwin Chadwick were able to make urban space abstract, legible and actionable.[47] Patrick Joyce uses the Foucauldian concept of liberal governmentality to describe how power was exercised in a society that held private property and non-interventionism so dear. This ranged from door numbering, to slaughterhouse regulation, to police beats, to mapping, all aimed at ensuring that citizens essentially governed themselves without the need for state intervention.[48] Urban spaces – and particularly poor neighbourhoods – were the laboratory in which these technologies were worked out.

As Simon Gunn shows, this was particularly clearly demonstrated in the cleansing and emptying of city centres through slum clearance and dispersal (though his setting of this key change in the 1850s and 1860s before peaking from the 1870s applies more to large cities than to smaller urban spaces like Wolverhampton).[49] Gunn's interpretation of these urban

[46] Gunn, *Public Culture*, 29.
[47] Poovey, *Making a Social Body*. For a useful comparison of Poovey's and Joyce's approaches see Simon Gunn, 'From Hegemony to Governmentality: Changing Conceptions of Power in Social History', *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 3 (2006): 705–20.
[48] Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London: Verso, 2003).
[49] Gunn, *Public Culture*, 28–29, 46–47.

changes as demonstrations of middle-class cultural and political dominance is more convincing than older 'great men' theories of urban sanitary reform.[50] The movement to bring running water and sewers to the cities has often been presented as the triumph of heroic campaigners in the face of intransigent local authorities, resistant to both change and expenditure. But as Christopher Hamlin, Priti Joshi and others have shown, this campaign was intimately related to the striving for acceptance of its protagonists: they identified their work within thoroughly middle-class understandings of gender, morality and authority.[51] I argue that their understanding of the inter-relations of poverty and space were similarly rooted in their social milieu: they both derived and applied knowledge based on an understanding of the world shot through with assumptions about class, race and space. The presence of the Irish in Stafford Street bolstered the negative characterisations of the space, mingling local experience with national discourses to make this mixed area appear to have a distinctly Irish problem.

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[50] This subject has a vast historiography of its own. Particularly useful for my purposes (amongst many others) have been Christopher Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice in the Age of Chadwick: Britain, 1800-1854* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Steve Sturdy, ed., *Medicine, Health and the Public Sphere in Britain, 1600-2000* (London: Routledge, 2002); Tom Crook, *Governing Systems: Modernity and the Making of Public Health in England, 1830-1910* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2016); Felix Driver, 'Moral Geographies: Social Science and the Urban Environment in Mid-Nineteenth Century England', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 13, no. 3 (1988): 275–87; Pamela K. Gilbert, *Mapping the Victorian Social Body* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2004); Anne Hardy, *The Epidemic Streets: Infectious Diseases and the Rise of Preventive Medicine, 1856-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Frank Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England Since 1830*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2000); Erin O'Connor, *Raw Material: Producing Pathology in Victorian Culture* (Raleigh, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).

[51] Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice*; Priti Joshi, 'Edwin Chadwick's Self-Fashioning: Professionalism, Masculinity, and the Victorian Poor', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 32, no. 2 (2004): 353–70. On the making of this socially distinctive field of public medicine see also Poovey, *Making a Social Body*, chap.6; Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, 22–26; Ian Inkster, 'Marginal Men: Aspects of the Social Role of the Medical Community in Sheffield 1790-1850', in *Health Care and Popular Medicine in Nineteenth Century England: Essays in the Social History of Medicine*, ed. John Woodward and David Richards (London: Croom Helm, 1977).

Dangerous space

If this dominant middle class was constructing these representations, who were they representing, and who were they seeking to regulate? The years before 1848 had been a period of intense working-class agitation, and saw a consequent increase in policing powers across Britain.[52] The mid-Victorian age, however, saw this agitation diminish: new discourses of class and new methods of policing emerged to fill its vacuum. Rather than the whole urban working class provoking this middle-class anxiety, new designations of a lowest stratum of 'undeserving' urban poor became widespread, referred to with labels like "submerged tenth" (William Booth), "residuum" (John Bright), "lumpenproletariat" (Karl Marx), and "dangerous" or "criminal classes."[53] Early Victorians like Kay and Engels railed against the spatial concentration of the poor (particularly the Irish) from contrasting political perspectives. Kay used the example of Little Ireland to argue for a morally grounded liberalisation of social policy; Engels felt this "lumpenproletariat" proved his anti-capitalist, socialist argument.[54] But the stigmatization of a section of the poor as 'undeserving' was a far wider project than that. Historians have challenged claims that those dwelling in slums were any different to those in other working-class neighbourhoods, with most concluding that while there is little empirical

[52] George J. Barnsby, *The Working Class Movement in the Black Country: 1750 to 1867* (Wolverhampton: Integrated Publishing Services, 1977); Dorothy Thompson, *The Dignity of Chartism: Essays by Dorothy Thompson*, ed. Stephen Roberts (London: Verso, 2015).

[53] Lydia Morris, *Dangerous Classes: The Underclass and Social Citizenship* (London: Routledge, 1994). A particularly intense historiography of this "lowest" class arose in the 1980s, overlapping with contemporary, transatlantic, political discussions of the "culture of poverty" and "underclass." On this historiography, see John MacNicol, 'In Pursuit of the Underclass', *Journal of Social Policy* 16, no. 3 (1987): 293–318; John Welshman, *Underclass: A History of the Excluded, 1880-2000* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), xvii–xxi.

[54] Busteed, *Irish in Manchester*, chap. 1. While Engels seems to have continued using the word, Marx does not appear to have published anything including this expression after 1852 – before Bright's and Booth's uses.

basis for any such distinction, contemporary discourse on the subject was very real indeed and had material impacts on the lives of the poor.[55]

This 'undeserving' section of the working class was characterised as inherently criminal, and slums as criminal spaces. As John Carter Wood argues, because crimes were essentially whatever upper and middle-class legislators found offensive, state power was experienced most directly by poor people living in poor, overcrowded spaces.[56] The perception of crime certainly made it acceptable for local authorities and the police to attempt to pacify public space in towns.[57] It was little stretch, too, to imagine the poor as a criminal class, allowing authorities to neglect the physical and economic condition of marginalised neighbourhoods, while appearing to clamp down on behaviours that they themselves had criminalised.[58] Middle-class Victorians understood and described their towns as "moral geographies" based

[55] Davis, 'Jennings' Buildings'; Barbara Weinberger, 'The Criminal Class and the Ecology of Crime', *Historical Social Research* 15, no. 4 (1990): 121–39; Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* (London: Faber & Faber, 1984), 525–29.

[56] John Carter Wood, 'Locating Violence: The Spatial Production and Construction of Physical Aggression', in *Assaulting the Past: Violence and Civilization in Historical Context*, ed. Katherine D. Watson (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 20–37; 'Reading Spaces and Reading Violence in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Journal for the Study of British Cultures* 17, no. 2 (2010): 133–43.

[57] See for example Andy Croll, *Civilizing the Urban: Popular Culture and Public Space in Merthyr, c.1870-1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000).

[58] Weinberger, 'The Criminal Class and the Ecology of Crime'; Davis, 'Jennings' Buildings'. The language of underclass has a substantial literature. See in particular Koven, *Slumming*, 9; Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Chinn, *Poverty Amidst Prosperity*, 76; V. A. C. Gatrell, 'Crime, Authority and the Policeman-State', in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750–1950*, ed. F. M. L. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 243–310; Vince Bailey, 'The Fabrication of Deviance: "Dangerous Classes" and "Criminal Classes" in Victorian England', in *Protest and Survival: The Historical Experience: Essays for E. P. Thompson*, ed. John Rule and Robert Malcolmson (London: Merlin Press, 1995), 222–54; Geoffrey Crossick, 'From Gentlemen to the Residuum: Languages of Social Description in Victorian Britain', in *Language, History and Class*, ed. P. J. Corfield (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 150–78; Sarah Alexander, 'The Residuum, Victorian Naturalism, and the Entropic Narrative', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 35, no. 2 (2013): 99–120; Jose Harris, 'Between Civic Virtue and Social Darwinism: The Concept of the Residuum', in *Retrieved Riches: Social Investigation in Britain, 1840-1914*, ed. David Englander and Rosemary O'Day (Farnham: Scolar Press, 1995), 67–87.

on these assumptions.[59] My research confirms that local elites saw towns in this light. In chapter three, I interpret the post-1848 attempts by Wolverhampton's new police and its elected masters as a form of revanchism: an attempt to win back the streets through heavy-handed policing, particularly of minorities, and spatial strategies of regulation and containment. Again, although a mixed area, racial thinking informed the police in approaching Stafford Street as an Irish area.

Territorial stigmatisation

Both sanitary reform and policing can be seen as urban political technologies in the Foucauldian sense.[60] But they formed part of a further process, in which spaces were stereotyped and stigmatised as part of the process of being governed. In recent years, geographers have developed a theory of "territorial stigmatisation" to provide a conceptual grounding for the way places gain negative characterisations.[61] This provides a useful way to understand historical urban settings, and is fruitful for understanding how Stafford Street was made into a problem space.

The concept of territorial stigmatisation was proposed by Loïc Wacquant, drawing on sociological definitions of stigma as a discreditable attribute, and symbolic power in the

[59] Driver, 'Moral Geographies'.
[60] See for example Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*, 74; Crook, *Governing Systems*; Chris Otter, 'Making Liberalism Durable: Vision and Civility in the Late Victorian City', *Social History* 27, no. 1 (2002): 1–15.
[61] For a recent overview of literature and definitions, see Tom Slater, 'Territorial Stigmatization: Symbolic Defamation and the Contemporary Metropolis', in *The SAGE Handbook of New Urban Studies*, ed. John Hannigan and Greg Richards (London: SAGE Publications, 2017), 111–25.

construction of social hierarchies.[62] Stigma begins with labelling and stereotyping, which provide a "preconscious shorthand" for an audience in a specific time and place.[63] This justifies a fundamental belief in the difference, or separateness, of the stigmatised group, discrimination, and the loss of status and power within society, at both individual and structural levels. Territorial stigmatisation theory interrogates that concept in relation to space.

For Wacquant, territorial stigmatisation is characterised by: a discursive separation between stigma and actual material conditions; widespread knowledge of stigmatised spaces as "no-go" areas; a fundamental disorganisation within that social space; the exaggeration, to the point of racialisation, of cultural differences within reportage; by responses based in fear, revulsion, condemnation; and in a subsequent growth in punitive, carceral policy.[64] The concept has been applied to analyse the social construction of spaces like "sink estates" in Britain.[65] Although recognising some historical precedents, Wacquant insists that "neighbourhood taint" is a novel phenomenon, distinctive to recent capitalist society.[66] This

[62] The foundational text for territorial stigmatisation is Loïc Wacquant, *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008). For the theories on which Wacquant drew, see Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1970); Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991); Pierre Bourdieu, 'Site Effects', in *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 123–29. Note that Goffman's work has recently received its own trenchant criticism, particularly by Imogen Tyler, for carefully avoiding the civil rights questions of his day that should have played a central role in his theorisation: Imogen Tyler, *Stigma: The Machinery of Inequality* (London: Zed Books, 2020), 97–103.

[63] Bruce G. Link and Jo C. Phelan, 'Conceptualizing Stigma', *Annual Review of Sociology* 27, no. 1 (2001): 363–85.

[64] Loïc Wacquant, Tom Slater, and Virgílio Borges Pereira, 'Territorial Stigmatization in Action', *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 46, no. 6 (2014): 1270–80.

[65] Tom Slater, 'The Invention of the "Sink Estate": Consequential Categorisation and the UK Housing Crisis', *The Sociological Review* 66, no. 4 (2018): 877–97.

[66] Wacquant, Slater, and Pereira, 'Territorial Stigmatization in Action'.

chronological limitation has been criticised, however. Stephen Crossley demonstrates the similarities between Victorian and contemporary place-based stigmatisation, and local studies have shown the importance of deeper historical understanding in analysing present-day territorial stigmatisation.[67] As Jenna Loyd and Anne Bonds argue, territorial stigmatisation is a useful tool for comparison and analysis of the construction of 'problem spaces,' but a stronger focus on the power behind those representations, and the always-existing segregation and racial assumptions built into such stigma, is needed to suit it to the complexities of race within urban history.[68]

My arguments concur with this revised, historically-grounded concept of territorial stigmatisation. To identify what made Victorians believe slums or the urban poor to be so different is to take into account the power of representations, who is constructing them, and why. Such analysis must also account for the structural and systemic impacts of racial discourse. There are huge differences, of course, between the Minneapolis zip-code Loyd and Bonds describe, and Wolverhampton's Irish quarter. Yet the impact of such spaces on larger discourses of both race and urban space was huge, and no understanding of urban poverty can be complete without understanding the intersection of race with space and place.

[67] Stephen Crossley, *In Their Place: The Imagined Geographies of Poverty* (London: Pluto Press, 2017); Alice Butler-Warke, 'Foundational Stigma: Place-Based Stigma in the Age before Advanced Marginality', *The British Journal of Sociology* 71, no. 1 (2020): 140–52; Jenna M. Loyd and Anne Bonds, 'Where Do Black Lives Matter? Race, Stigma, and Place in Milwaukee, Wisconsin', *The Sociological Review* 66, no. 4 (2018): 898–918.
[68] Loyd and Bonds, 'Where Do Black Lives Matter?'

1. The making of the Irish quarter

Making the Irish quarter

For most Victorian Britons, understandings of race were formed far more by stories of racialised Others in far-flung corners of empire, than by experiences of such people on their own streets. As Catherine Hall notes, Irish people were the nearest most Britons would get to meeting a racial or colonial Other, "the most visible outsiders" in Britain.[69] This understanding of the Irish as a racialised Other was never settled, and was always contingent upon other factors like class or religion; and the shifting Victorian conceptions of race were built on the complicated, poorly understood foundations of empire. As I will discuss here, historians have argued both sides of this question: some that the Irish were widely agreed to be a separate race and were treated accordingly in culture and everyday life; others that discrimination that can be attributed to religion or class should not be attributed to race.

I argue that although the experience of Irish emigrants in Britain was in no way comparable to other racialised groups (particularly those of colour), the Irish in Wolverhampton, particularly the Catholic poor, experienced processes of racialisation, and consequent discrimination by powerful groups that can justifiably be called racist. However, describing Irishness as 'race' without understanding the role of religion or class does not do justice to the confused and often contradictory understandings of racial identity in the nineteenth century. Instead, the Irish were central to how Britain came to understand race and nation in

[69] Catherine Hall, 'The Nation within and Without', in *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the Reform Act of 1867*, ed. Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, and Jane Rendall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 179–233.

this period.[70] As Patrick Wolfe argues, race is formed when social space threatens to become shared.[71] It was in this realm that 'Irish quarter' became a distinct sub-category of slum. The stereotypes and stigmas of urban poverty were exaggerated and distorted when applied to Irish diaspora spaces.

Emigration and immigration

There had been Irish people in Britain for centuries, and by the early nineteenth century, emigration routes to mainland Britain were well-established.[72] Much of this was seasonal transhumance: itinerant labour like canal and railway navvies, and seasonal agricultural workers, reaching a peak of 58,000 in 1841.[73] There was also permanent settlement in urban areas. St Giles' Rookery in London became the most famous Irish enclave of the eighteenth century, and many of the foundational stereotypes of Irish settlement can be traced to this neighbourhood.[74] By the 1820s, permanent Irish settlement outnumbered temporary, with large cities characterised by large amounts of unskilled employment acting as the biggest attractors: London, Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow. Emigrants from southern Ireland

[70] Hall, 179.
[71] Patrick Wolfe, 'Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race', *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (2001): 866–905; Patrick Wolfe, 'Race and Racialisation: Some Thoughts', *Postcolonial Studies* 5, no. 1 (2002): 51–62.
[72] Patrick Fitzgerald and B. K. Lambkin, *Migration in Irish History, 1607-2007* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Kevin Kenny, 'Irish Emigration in a Comparative Perspective', in *The Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland*, ed. Eugenio F. Biagini and Mary E. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 405–22.
[73] Donald M. MacRaild, *Irish Migrants in Modern Britain, 1750-1922* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 44; Ian D. Whyte, *Migration and Society in Britain, 1550-1830* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 167.
[74] Adam Crymble, 'The Decline and Fall of an Early Modern Slum: London's St Giles "Rookery", c. 1550–1850', *Urban History* in press (2022); Green and Parton, 'Slums and Slum Life'; Richard Kirkland, 'Reading the Rookery: The Social Meaning of an Irish Slum in Nineteenth-Century London', *New Hibernia Review* 16, no. 1 (2012): 16–30.

typically came to London; from the north and north-east to Glasgow; and from the west to Liverpool, and on to Manchester or the Midlands.[75] Most of the Irish in Liverpool, Manchester and in towns on the Midland route like Stafford, Birmingham and Wolverhampton, thus came from Counties Galway, Mayo, Roscommon, and elsewhere in Connacht.[76]

The social and economic lives of the Irish were closely related to their work. As "the cheapest labour in Western Europe," they unavoidably ended up in the cheapest, most squalid residences, yet were vilified for lowering wages and living standards.[77] They were blamed for dragging down the English standard of living down to their own 'debased' level: the discussions of Little Ireland by Kay and Engels focused as much on Irishness as on class.[78] The actual impact of the Irish on the English labour market was negligible, but the perception remained stronger than the statistic.[79]

The most dramatic impact on emigration came in the late 1840s. Ireland witnessed many food shortages in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, exacerbated by the dependence of

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[75] Davis, *Irish in Britain*, 52; Frank Neal, *Black '47: Britain and the Famine Irish* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 52–63.

[76] The key studies on the towns mentioned are John Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse: The History of the Liverpool-Irish, 1800-1939* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007); Busteed, *Irish in Manchester*; John Herson, *Divergent Paths: Family Histories of Irish Emigrants in Britain 1820-1920* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015); Carl Chinn, *Birmingham Irish: Making Our Mark* (Birmingham: Birmingham Library Services, 2003); Alexander Peach, 'Poverty, Religion and Prejudice in Nineteenth Century Britain: The Catholic Irish in Birmingham 1800-c.1880' (PhD, Leicester, De Montfort University, 2000); Roger Swift, '"Another Stafford Street Row": Law, Order and the Irish Presence in Mid-Victorian Wolverhampton', in *The Irish in the Victorian City*, ed. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 179–206.

[77] Lynn Hollen Lees, *Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), 88; Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 472.

[78] Poovey, *Making a Social Body*, 55–56, 63–72; Amy E. Martin, 'Blood Transfusions: Constructions of Irish Racial Difference, the English Working Class, and Revolutionary Possibility in the Work of Carlyle and Engels', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 32, no. 1 (2004): 83–102.

[79] Jeffrey G. Williamson, *Coping with City Growth during the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 159.

many of the rural poor on subsistence farming.[80] The Famine of the late 1840s, when potato crops were virtually wiped out for several years, thus caused complete devastation. As the mortality rate crept up, so Irish families from poorer livelihoods and further inland began to emigrate, motivated more by "blind panic" than "conscious opting."[81] The turning point came in 1847, or "Black '47," when almost 300,000 Irish – mostly starving or sick – arrived in Liverpool alone.[82] Many hoped for an onward journey to America; for others, chain migration to Britain became a "self-sustaining culture": social and family networks were retained, and patterns of settlement established.[83] In the West Midlands, only the large city of Birmingham had a large pre-Famine Irish population.[84] From the 1840s, however, towns all across the region developed new Irish communities, mostly with links to western Connacht, and in Wolverhampton a booming economy was supplemented by connections on this migratory route. Malcolm Smith and Donald MacRaild's proposal that Irish migration is best understood as a "series of interregional connections" can be seen here between Connacht and Black Country towns.[85]

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[80] Jona Schellekens, 'Irish Famines and English Mortality in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 27, no. 1 (1996): 29–42.

[81] Donald M. MacRaild and Enda Delaney, 'Irish Migration, Networks and Ethnic Identities since 1750: An Introduction', ed. Donald M. MacRaild and Enda Delaney (London: Routledge, 2007), ix, 11, 44.

[82] Neal, *Black '47*, 61.

[83] Fitzgerald and Lambkin, *Migration in Irish History*, 45; Cormac Ó Gráda and Kevin O'Rourke, 'Mass Migration as Disaster Relief', in *Ireland's Great Famine: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Cormac Ó Gráda (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2006), 121–42.

[84] Chinn, *Birmingham Irish*; Peach, 'Poverty, Religion and Prejudice'.

[85] Malcolm Smith and Donald M. MacRaild, 'The Origins of the Irish in Northern England: An Isonymic Analysis of Data from the 1881 Census', *Immigrants & Minorities* 27, no. 2–3 (2009): 152–77. Wolverhampton's role as a place of settlement for Connacht migrants is demonstrated by the work of Roger Swift, Mark Shaw, and Alison Hobbs: Swift, '"Another Stafford Street Row"'; Roger Swift, 'Crime and Ethnicity: The Irish in Early Victorian Wolverhampton', *West Midlands Studies* 13 (1980): 1–5; Alison Hobbs, 'The Irish of Caribee Island: Wolverhampton's Irish District, 1851-1871' (MPhil, Wolverhampton, University of Wolverhampton, 2003); Mark

1. The making of the Irish quarter

The Famine took on a central place in Irish national narratives, particularly in the writings of contemporary nationalists and later popular historians, who articulated the view that Ireland's famine resulted from England's failures of government.[86] As discussed in chapter two, Black '47 played a crucial role in the development of the Irish quarter. Irish Famine refugees sought shelter with family and friends, in areas where Irishness already had a foothold. Although it remains a politicised history, the Famine was a traumatic catalyst for emigration, and its importance both to the nineteenth-century Irish diaspora, and to those who commented upon it, cannot be overstated.

Making a historiography of Little Ireland

For the literary historian Richard Kirkland, the infamous St Giles Rookery was "a state of mind… a world of its own possessing its particular codes, rules, and shibboleths," which pulled people in and radiated disorder and contagion.[87] Kirkland's vision of an outcast, separate world mirrored the findings of early historians of Irish immigration, and can still be seen in modern histories.[88] I suggest that this depiction echoes the prejudices, boundary-drawing and

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Shaw, 'Individual Behaviour and Social Change : The Irish in Victorian Wolverhampton', *West Midlands Studies* 14 (1983): 1–2; Mark Shaw, 'Reconciling Social and Physical Space: Wolverhampton 1871', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 4, no. 2 (1979): 192–213; Mark Shaw, 'The Ecology of Social Change: Wolverhampton 1851-71', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 2, no. 3 (1977): 332–48.

[86] The expression "the great hunger" comes from the Irish name for the famine, *an gorta mór*, and in this instance helps make the case that this was a manmade situation, in contrast to the more passive "famine." Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger: Ireland 1845-1849* (London: Penguin, 1991); John Mitchel, *The Crusade of the Period: And Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)* (New York, NY: Lynch, Cole & Meehan, 1873).

[87] Kirkland, 'Reading the Rookery'.

[88] See for instance J. A. Jackson, *The Irish in Britain* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963); John M. Werly, 'The Irish in Manchester, 1832-49', *Irish Historical Studies* 18, no. 71 (1973): 345–58; M. A. G. Ó Tuathaigh, 'The Irish in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Problems of Integration', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society (Fifth Series)* 31 (1981): 149–73. Carl Nightingale has recently described Victorian London as segregated between rich and

stigmatisation of middle-class observers. Following path-breaking volumes edited by Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley in the 1980s, Graham Davis's *The Irish in Britain* (1991) was the first single-author volume on the subject since JA Jackson in 1963, and revised many of these assumptions, including challenging the 'Little Ireland' trope.[89] Like the "imagined slum," he argues that the segregated Little Ireland was "a product of creative imagination and contemporary ideology."[90] The idea formed in a moment of general urban crisis in early Victorian towns, yet took on a "long-lasting and universal" stigma. While clusters of Irish residence certainly did occur, their wider meaning was – like Mayne's "imagined slum" – a product of representation as much as reality.[91]

This revisionist paradigm shifted the historiography from a broad acceptance of outcast, segregated ghettos to an appreciation of the diversity of experience across class, wealth and space. This shift can be seen in Swift and Gilley's key volumes: the first in 1985 takes this outcast nature as its starting point, while later volumes embrace more and more local and cultural specificity.[92] More recent research (such as John Belchem and Mervyn Busteed's

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respectable, and poor and unrespectable, with the Irish poor in particular racialised as the "darkest England." Nightingale, *Segregation*, 78.

[89] Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, eds., *The Irish in the Victorian City* (London: Croom Helm, 1985); Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, eds., *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939* (Savage, MD: Barnes & Noble Books, 1989); Davis, *Irish in Britain*.

[90] Mervyn Austen Busteed and Robert Hodgson, 'Irish Migration and Settlement in Early Nineteenth Century Manchester, with Special Reference to the Angel Meadow District in 1851', *Irish Geography* 27, no. 1 (1999): 1–13.

[91] Davis, *Irish in Britain*, 51. A search on the British Newspaper Archive and Google Books for "Irish Quarter" immediately reveals the widespread nature of the trope: examples can be found in Sheffield, Bradford, Stockport, Hull, Manchester, Liverpool, Wigan and London, as well as Montreal, Melbourne, Brooklyn and other Anglophone cities – even Carrickfergus, County Antrim had its own "Irish Quarter."

[92] Swift and Gilley, *The Irish in the Victorian City*; *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939*; *The Irish in Victorian Britain: The Local Dimension* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999); 'Irish Identities in Victorian Britain', *Immigrants & Minorities* 27, no. 2–3 (2009): 129–33. On this shifting historiography see Mary Hickman, 'Alternative Historiographies of

detailed studies of Liverpool and Manchester) continues to suggest that the Irish experience in Britain was more geographically, economically and socially diverse than historians had previously described.[93] Davis's thesis has been challenged, most notably by Mary J Hickman, who argues that, particularly due to state intervention in Catholic education, the Irish did remain a separate, marginalised group in Britain well into the twentieth century. Hickman's chronology of anti-Irish sentiment has been widely cited to reassert the Otherness of the Irish in Britain, and has been particularly influential in studies of integration and assimilation.[94]

However, while this perspective remains important in considerations of anti-Irish sentiment, the idea of segregation in Irish residential patterns should not be overstated – a different way of understanding the Irish urban experience is needed. This thesis is situated within the overlapping historiographies of slums and Irish settlement in Britain. I argue that deconstructing representations of Irish neighbourhoods in Victorian towns is essential to understanding their material natures. Additionally, rather than considering the extent to which Irish people integrated or assimilated into British culture, I suggest that Irish spaces are

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the Irish in Britain: A Critique of the Segregation/Assimilation Model', in *The Irish in Victorian Britain: The Local Dimension*, ed. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), 236–54.

[93] Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse*; Busteed, *Irish in Manchester*; see also Donald M. MacRaild and Enda Delaney, eds., *Irish Migration, Networks and Ethnic Identities since 1750* (London: Routledge, 2007).

[94] Mary J. Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity: The State, the Catholic Church and the Education of the Irish in Britain* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), 22–57; Hickman, 'Alternative Historiographies'. Hickman asserted that the Irish were typically presented as either assimilating fully into British society (she cites as evidence David Fitzpatrick, 'A Curious Middle Place: The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921', in *The Irish in Britain 1815-1939*, ed. Sheridan Gilley and Roger Swift (Savage, MD: Barnes & Noble Books, 1989), 10–59; Alan O'Day, 'The Political Representation of the Irish in Great Britain, 1850-1915', in *Governments, Ethnic Groups, and Political Representations*, ed. Geoffrey Alderman (New York: NYU Press, 1993).) or remaining fully segregated (here she cites Sheridan Gilley's body of work, and Steven Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity: Irish Catholics in England, 1880-1939* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993).). Her argument was that the Irish had not been instigators of their own assimilation, but that through state intervention such as state-funded Catholic education, the Irish had intentionally been made invisible, and their influence on British society diminished.

best understood as what Avtar Brah has called "diaspora spaces": "creolised" neighbourhoods which did not remain 'English' or become 'Irish' but synthesised something altogether new, affecting the host population as much as the incomers.[95]

Making the Irish race

To incorporate this broader understanding of diaspora, it is necessary to understand the place of the immigrant Irish within mid-Victorian understandings of race. This too is contested territory, but given the centrality of racial hierarchies to the way in which Victorian Britons understood themselves, is essential in discovering the place of the Irish within that society.[96] As Matthew Frye Jacobson notes, "the term 'race' was highly unstable and was applied with a staggering imprecision" in the Anglophone Victorian world.[97] Michael De Nie defines race as a "metalanguage in Anglo-Saxonist discourse, a vehicle for expressing multiple anxieties and preconceptions, among them class concerns and sectarian prejudices."[98] This broad perspective is important, because Victorians frequently considered culture, language, religion, social class, national identity and other factors as key signifiers of race.[99] This enabled some observers to view the Celtic Irish as racially distinct from, and inferior to, the Anglo-

[95] Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London: Routledge, 1996), chap. 9.
[96] Hall, 'The Nation within and Without'.
[97] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish and Jewish Immigrants in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 186. I have typically not placed the word race in inverted commas in this thesis. Although I stress the contingent and socially-constructed nature of such concepts, this thesis is about how such concepts were constructed, and the material effects of being believed to be real. Similarly, I have not used inverted commas for other socially-constructed concepts such as class, gender, slum or space.
[98] De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*, 5.
[99] Nadja Durbach, *Spectacle of Deformity: Freak Shows and Modern British Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 164–65; Martin, 'Blood Transfusions'.

Saxon English. This strain of thought could be found across society, from progressive liberals like Charles Kingsley (who described the Irish he saw in Ireland as "human chimpanzees"), to pseudo-scientists like Robert Knox ("The source of all evil lies in… the Celtic race of Ireland"), to feted intellectuals like Thomas Carlyle (for whom the Irish were "the ready-made nucleus to degradation"), back to socialists like Engels (who found them an "uncivilised" threat to working-class progress).[100] In these writers' works, the Irish were certainly described in racialised tones that should be understood as racist now, even if they may not have been considered so at the time.

The perspective that the Irish were considered a separate race has drawn substantial support from historians, who mostly begin with LP Curtis's influential 1960s work on the "simianisation" of the Irishman in newspaper cartoons.[101] Curtis outlined how stereotyping effects were seen at key moments like the Famine, the Fenian panics, or the Home Rule crises.[102] The years following Curtis's work saw an increased interest in considering the Irish

[100] De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*, 6–13; Aidan Beatty, 'Marx and Engels, Ireland, and the Racial History of Capitalism', *Journal of Modern History* 91, no. 4 (2019): 815–47; Martin, 'Blood Transfusions'; Luke Gibbons, 'Race against Time: Racial Discourse and Irish History', in *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Reader*, ed. Catherine Hall (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 207–23.

[101] L. P. Curtis, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1971), 1–2

[102] De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*; Amy E. Martin, 'Victorian Ireland: Race and the Category of the Human', *Victorian Review* 40, no. 1 (2014): 52–57; Bruce Nelson, *Irish Nationalists and the Making of the Irish Race* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), chap. 2.

as a racialised, subjugated community, though critics including Roy Foster and Sheridan Gilley continued to argue for caution on this front.[103]

Such histories cannot be separated from the conditions of their production. Firstly, histories produced in post-war Britain were written in an era of intense renegotiation of national identity in the light of Commonwealth immigration. The largest numbers remained from Ireland, but the whiteness and familiarity of the Irish compared to other newcomers meant that they were often subsumed into expanded definitions of Britishness.[104] This absence can even be seen in the most pioneering works on race in this era.[105] Secondly, in Ireland such histories were produced amid fractious historiographical debates between nationalist and revisionist schools, and from the 1970s against the backdrop of the Troubles in Northern Ireland.[106] As Barry Hazley argues, framing the Troubles as a colonial conflict maintained an oppositional view of British-Irish relations which did not always reflect reality, but did inspire a wave of activists – Mary Hickman included – to campaign for greater solidarity towards, and visibility of, the Irish in Britain.[107] In this way, the development of the historiography of the

[103] Sheridan Gilley, 'English Attitudes to the Irish in England, 1780-1900', in *Immigrants and Minorities in British Society*, ed. Colin Holmes (London: Allen & Unwin, 1978), 81–110; R. F. Foster, 'Paddy and Mr Punch', in *Paddy and Mr Punch: Connections in Irish and English History* (London: Penguin, 1995), 171–94.
[104] Barry Hazley, *Life History and the Irish Migrant Experience in Post-War England: Myth, Memory and Emotional Adaption* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 7–8.
[105] Sean Campbell, 'Policing the Irish: Whiteness, "Race" and British Cultural Studies', *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 16, no. 2 (2013): 135–54.
[106] Nancy J. Curtin, '"Varieties of Irishness": Historical Revisionism, Irish Style', *Journal of British Studies* 35, no. 2 (1996): 195–219. On the role of Mary Hickman and others during the Troubles, see Hazley, *Life History*, 4–6.
[107] On the impact of the Troubles on Irish historiography, see John M. Regan, 'Southern Irish Nationalism as a Historical Problem', *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 1 (2007): 197–223; R. F. Foster, '"Colliding Cultures": Leland Lyons and the Reinterpretation of Irish History', in *The Irish Story: Telling Tales And Making It Up In Ireland* (London: Penguin, 2001), 37–57; Gavin Schaffer and Saima Nasar, 'The White Essential Subject: Race, Ethnicity, and the Irish in Post-War Britain', *Contemporary British History* 32, no. 2 (2018): 209–30. Relating this to Mary Hickman's work to recover the Irish as a "hidden ethnic minority," see Hazley, *Life History*, 1–16. On the use of A.

Irish as an oppressed, victimised and marginalised community paralleled the development of the historiography of Irish settlement.[108] This thesis incorporates this viewpoint to a significant extent: I argue that the Irish in the West Midlands *are* still under-researched, and it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the Irish were oppressed, victimised and marginalised, particularly by powerful elites, during this period.

However, there are other factors which urge caution in embracing the conceptualisation of the Irish as racially distinct, or as a permanently marginalised population. Race in Victorian Britain was inseparable from nation, politics, religion and class. Sociologists including Satnam Virdee have argued for a more fundamental inclusion of class within concepts of race.[109] He proposes an alternative timeline of racialisation, based in British labour history rather than Irish political history, in which working-class racism emerged in the 1830s and 1840s alongside a temporary solidarity amongst Chartists. Although the primary agents of racialisation I discuss are middle-class, working-class antagonism towards the Irish does feature in chapter six: in an era where Irish and English workers were more likely to collaborate than fight, the anti-Irish Black Country riots of 1847 have been overlooked by historians to date. The subsequent souring of working-class relationships was particularly damaging, allowing the simultaneous rise in scientific and media racism to grow, unchecked by solidarity or

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Sivanandan's conception of "politically black" for the Irish, see Bill Rolston, 'Are the Irish Black?', *Race & Class* 41, no. 1–2 (1999): 95–102. Note G. K. Peatling's criticism of this well-intentioned progressive argument, 'The Whiteness of Ireland Under and After the Union', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 1 (2005): 115–33.

[108] The idea of the Irish as victims and martyrs has deep roots in certain strands of Irish nationalism, and has even generated the acronym MOPE: "Most Oppressed People Ever." For an overview of this, see Liam Kennedy, *Unhappy the Land: The Most Oppressed People Ever, the Irish?* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2015), 1–7.

[109] Satnam Virdee, *Racism, Class and the Racialized Outsider* (London: Macmillan International Higher Education, 2014).

organisation. Though Virdee's work sometimes smooths over the local and contextual complexities of Irish immigration history, his argument that poor Irish Catholics "constituted a clearly demarcated racialized minority" – if not a separate race, as "racialized outsiders" – is persuasive, and finds support in this thesis.[110] However, I do argue that while Irish quarters were understood through the homogenising, generalising lens of racialisation, the effects of social control and stigmatisation were experienced by the entire neighbourhood – Irish, English and everyone else.

The pivotal moments identified by Curtis were crucial to the formation of Irish national identity, but also to English national identity as bound up with Protestantism, sobriety, or even liberal political economy. As Poovey notes, moments when national identity becomes relevant inevitably involve "temporarily marginalising other categories that could also provide a sense of identity" – in these cases, Protestant, liberal Englishness overwhelmed a more inclusive Britishness.[111] Other historians have noted the "ethnic and religious prejudice" inherent in Westminster's dealings with Ireland.[112] All of this was most clearly on display during the popular anti-Catholic movement of the 1850s. As I argue in chapter four, anti-Irish sentiment in this period cannot be understood without reference to the vigorous expressions of anti-Catholicism, which was more widespread and vocal than any discrimination based solely on race in mid-Victorian England. The leading theme of most research into anti-

[110] Virdee, 24.
[111] Poovey, *Making a Social Body*, 55.
[112] Peter Mandler, *Aristocratic Government in the Age of Reform: Whigs and Liberals 1830-1852* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 252. For a discussion of the work of Mandler, Boyd Hilton and Peter Gray on this subject, see Edward G. Lengel, *Irish through British Eyes: Perceptions of Ireland in the Famine Era* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 2002), 9.

Catholicism has been the motivations of Protestant activists or Catholic institutions. [113] The response of the Irish Catholic mass in British towns has typically been considered a spontaneous, reactionary or ritual defence of their faith. I argue that Irish Catholic response was more nuanced and organised than this, and the Irish neighbourhood of Stafford Street provided a focal point for orchestrated responses to anti-Catholicism.

Related to this was nationalist politics, which provided much material for Curtis's cartoons.[114] I argue that the Irish quarter provided space for alternative viewpoints to develop. Anti-Catholic and anti-nationalist rhetoric provided impetus for Irish Catholics to organise and develop a broad, diasporic, positive understanding of themselves as a race. As MacRaild and Enda Delaney have shown, alongside the sheer concentration of Irish people in the area, "cultural deposits" like sympathetic pubs, nationalist clubs, new churches, lodging-houses or marine stores, "shaped the character of their communities and acted as focal points for their networks."[115] Such nodes, which played important spatial roles, permitted a new, diasporic Irish identity and cultural politics to take root.

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[113] Jonathan Bush, *"Papists" and Prejudice: Popular Anti-Catholicism and Anglo-Irish Conflict in the North East of England, 1845-70* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 9. On anti-Catholicism seen from a variety of (mostly institutional) perspectives, see: D. G. Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); Donald M. MacRaild, '"Abandon Hibernicisation": Priests, Ribbonmen and an Irish Street Fight in the North-East of England in 1858', *Historical Research* 76, no. 194 (2003): 557–73; Roger Swift, 'Anti-Catholicism and Irish Disturbances: Public Order in Mid-Victorian Wolverhampton', *Midland History* 9, no. 1 (1 January 1984): 87–108.

[114] Curtis, *Apes and Angels*; De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*; Martin, 'Victorian Ireland'.

[115] MacRaild and Delaney, 'Irish Migration, Networks and Ethnic Identities: Introduction'. See also John Belchem's discussion of how the Liverpool-Irish "enclave" extended beyond spatial proximity into shared economics and other affinities. John Belchem, 'The Liverpool-Irish Enclave', *Immigrants & Minorities* 18, no. 2–3 (1999): 128–46.

Whiteness and the Irish

The act of classifying the Irish as racially distinct, positively or negatively, should thus be treated with particular caution. In particular, as white people the experiences of prejudice against the Irish cannot possibly be the same as for groups racialised as non-white.[116] As Irish people in the Black Country noted at the time, by keeping silent they could prevent themselves being known as Irish: they 'passed.'[117] Irish people married English, they became policemen, worked as labourers and professionals. As more recent scholars of whiteness have shown, race and racism are not fixed categories: they act at the level of culture, are not limited by skin colour, and can emerge from a process of "racialisation." In the classic definition, racialisation is "the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group."[118] Steve Garner has argued that understanding the Irish experience as 'racialisation' rather than 'race' allows study of the processes "by which 'race' becomes salient" – this aids understandings of race as a contingent, historically-specific

[116] Gilley's understanding of races as fixed categories now appears dated; however, his central point about the unsuitability of Curtis's analogy between African-Americans and Irish people stands. Gilley, 'English Attitudes to the Irish in England, 1780-1900'.

[117] John Hayes, an Irishman living in Wednesbury, told the journalist A. M. Sullivan that: "'They used to hold their breath passing through the street, sir… for fear of being known by their voices. If we went into a public house to drink and that an Englishmen came in, we were struck dumb; if he asked for our pipe and didn't get it, he'd pull it out of our mouth. We dare say nothing for Oh, Sir, there wasn't law or justice here then for an Irishman." A. M. Sullivan, 'The Irish in England: The Iron Country', *The Nation*, 7 June 1856.

[118] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 111; Bianca Gonzalez-Sobrino and Devon R. Goss, 'Exploring the Mechanisms of Racialization beyond the Black–White Binary', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42, no. 4 (2019): 505–10.

category, and places the Irish and their spaces more accurately within the racialised worldview of mid-Victorian Britain.[119]

As Garner and others have shown, the whiteness of the Irish certainly benefitted them in the US context, where rather than simply assimilating, the Irish went on to political and cultural power.[120] In Britain, the Irish benefitted from being white rather than black representatives of empire, even when processes of racialisation were being deployed against them.[121] Gary Peatling has emphasised the pitfalls of assuming any kind of equivalence between white Irish and other racialised groups, and again emphasised the use of "racialisation" rather than fixed categories of race. Curtis's defensive response, threatening to drag the question back into the revisionism debate, demonstrated the limitations that Peatling pointed out.[122] The question of Irishness and race remains contentious and subject to local and historiographical contexts; but by thinking in terms of racializing processes, I argue that it is possible to see how and why the layers of anti-Irish stigma were built up without resorting to the less-nuanced categories of race that Victorians used. Throughout, this thesis uses the language of racialisation rather than of fixed categories, to emphasise where the power in these descriptions lies.

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[119] Steve Garner, 'Ireland: From Racism without "Race" to Racism without Racists', *Radical History Review* 2009, no. 104 (2009): 41–56.

[120] Garner. On the experiences of the Irish within the racial hierarchies of the USA see Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, Routledge Classics (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009); David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1999); Steve Garner, *Whiteness: An Introduction* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), chap. 7.

[121] Robbie Shilliam, *Race and the Undeserving Poor: From Abolition to Brexit* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Agenda Publishing, 2018), 39–40.

[122] Peatling, 'The Whiteness of Ireland Under and After the Union'; L. P. Curtis, 'Comment: The Return of Revisionism', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 1 (2005): 134–45.

1. The making of the Irish quarter

Race, space, and place: the Irish quarter

> In many large towns in England there is a locality known as 'the Irish quarter' which is the focus of dirt, poverty, vice…[123]

The research in this thesis is located where these overlapping historiographies of urban space, race, and Irish identity intersect: the Irish quarter, real and imagined, in the mid-Victorian British town. Caroline Knowles has suggested space can be read as an "active archive" of race, built from conflicts over built environment, everyday embodied social lives, movements of people, and social relations of all kinds.[124] This thesis takes Stafford Street as its "active archive" to investigate the inter-related processes through which race and space were subtly produced. Stafford Street was spatialised over time by a process of associating it with images, metaphors and myths that, as Shields notes, "can convey a complex set of associations without… having to think deeply" about the underlying power relationships at play.[125] In short, Stafford Street was stigmatised, racialised and regulated by those with power, to create a sense of Otherness about the neighbourhood that was explicitly linked to its Irish residents. But at the same time, residents of Stafford Street created a community through solidarity and shared ideals, which made this Irish quarter distinct from other, environmentally similar, Wolverhampton neighbourhoods.

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[123] *Bristol Times and Mirror*, 20 September 1867, cited in De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*, 166–67.
[124] Caroline Knowles, *Race and Social Analysis* (London: SAGE Publications, 2003), 78–80, 97–104.
[125] Shields, *Places on the Margin*, 46.

1. The making of the Irish quarter

The most important determinant of racialised space is how power is exercised in relation to it. My argument here is that the *racialisation* of Stafford Street was enacted through *spatialisation*: by elites, through stigmatisation *of*, and then intervention *in*, space. I have steered clear of narratives of colonial domination and oppression for the most part, though these do appear at times. Nevertheless, those in power in Wolverhampton made the lives of people in spaces racialised as Irish much worse, by actively and consciously stereotyping, stigmatising and discriminating. These ideas draw on the work of scholars of race and space, who have emphasised their mutually-constitutive and mutually-reinforcing nature.[126] Amongst historians, Joseph O Jewell has produced effective demonstrations of these processes in the US context, showing how spatial narratives of neighbourhood decline (which were shot through with racial language) inscribed class and race into the landscape of late-Victorian San Francisco.[127] The most detailed recent studies of Irish settlements in British cities have included analysis of how Irish spaces were formed from these multiple perspectives: Belchem's work on Liverpool includes a chapter on the spatiality of Irish settlement, and Busteed has analysed the myths and realities behind the notoriety of Little Ireland and Angel Meadow, Manchester.[128] Busteed's description of how limited, prejudiced, but apparently scientific information was constantly recycled to establish a national narrative

[126] Brooke Neely and Michelle Samura, 'Social Geographies of Race: Connecting Race and Space', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 11 (2011): 1933–52; George Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2011); David Delaney, 'The Space That Race Makes', *The Professional Geographer* 54, no. 1 (2002): 6–14.
[127] Joseph O. Jewell, '"An Injurious Effect on the Neighbourhood": Narratives of Neighbourhood Decline and Racialised Class Identities in Late Nineteenth-Century San Francisco', *Immigrants & Minorities* 36 (2017): 1–19.
[128] Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse*; Busteed, *Irish in Manchester*. The two surveys of Birmingham's Irish history take different approaches. Carl Chinn discusses the homes and neighbourhoods of the city's Irish at length; James Moran almost completely avoids the subject, focusing on individuals and cultures without reference to space. Chinn, *Birmingham Irish*; James Moran, *Irish Birmingham: A History* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010).

of the 'Little Ireland', is fully borne out in Wolverhampton. Thus I argue that local elites understood their town not only in terms of public health, crime, religion, work, property or politics, but also in the less tangible realms of race, culture, liberty, local and national identity.

Yet despite the deeply unequal power relationship, the inhabitants of the Irish quarter also made their own space. Irish identities in Victorian Britain can be understood through a distinctly diasporic sense of Irishness in local communities, persisting even after such quarters were dismantled or dispersed. Rather than being simple functions of work, religion, politics or even place, Irish identities and Irish neighbourhoods constantly made and remade themselves. They provided meaning for the Irish abroad, for the English at home, and for new generations steeped in both worlds. This thesis moves from the top-down stigmatisation of Stafford Street as dirty and criminal, into the organic creation of diasporic Irish identity through culture and personal relationships in later chapters. Irish quarters held a distinct place in the geographical imaginary of all kinds of Victorians, and as I have shown, have not been sufficiently studied on their own terms. This thesis aims to begin to rectify this by studying one Irish quarter, in all its complexity and depth.

Stafford Street and the "spatial turn"

This thesis is organised as a spatial history of Stafford Street, Wolverhampton's Irish quarter, and a key argument is that understanding neighbourhoods like this from a rigorous spatial perspective can give new insights into the experience of poor and marginalised communities. Like many historians who have found themselves in a putative "spatial turn," I have drawn on the ideas of Henri Lefevbre in order to think through the importance of conceptions, practices

and representations of space.[129] But as Katrina Navickas has noted, Lefebvre's work has its limits, and my approach to space is influenced by other geographical thinkers too, including Doreen Massey and Avtar Brah.[130] I argue that approaching the Irish quarter through spatial history is a natural fit for the subject, and a productive way of recovering the experiences of the poor.

Lefebvre's post-structuralist interpretation has provided historians with a means of understanding space as a social construct, and his spatial "trialectic" has proved his most durable idea: spatial practice, the "real" and material everyday use of space; representations of space, the "imagined" conceptions of space through which ideas and ideologies are projected (as seen in Mayne's work); and representational space, the directly-lived "space of everyday experience." [131] This third category has enabled spatial historians to push beyond the real/imagined binary that has long characterised urban history, and Ed Soja's exegesis of this as "Thirdspace" has opened up both geography and history to the influence of feminist and post-colonial thinkers (notable absences in Lefebvre's work).[132]

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[129] On the historiography of the spatial turn, see Richard White, 'What Is Spatial History?', Stanford University: Spatial History Project, 2010, https://web.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/pub.php?id=29; Katrina Navickas, 'Thirdspace? Historians and the Spatial Turn, with a Case Study of Political Graffiti in Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-Century England', in *Spatial Cultures: Towards a New Social Morphology of Cities Past and Present*, ed. Sam Griffiths and Alexander von Lünen (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 67–75; Simon Gunn, 'The Spatial Turn: Changing Histories of Space and Place', in *Identities in Space: Contested Terrains in the Western City since 1850*, ed. R. J. Morris and Simon Gunn (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 1–14; Charles W. J. Withers, 'Place and the "Spatial Turn" in Geography and in History', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70, no. 4 (28 October 2009): 637–58.

[130] Navickas, 'Thirdspace?'

[131] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 36–42; Rob Shields, *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 141.

[132] Soja reads Lefebvre alongside postcolonial and feminist thinkers including bell hooks, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Edward Said and Homi Bhabha – while remaining a relentlessly theoretical text, *Thirdspace* does make Lefebvre's difficult-to-read *The Production of Space* somewhat more accessible, and this wider engagement fills

As several historians have noted, however, the application of spatial theories within history has been limited.[133] Historians have frequently limited themselves to Lefebvre's triad, or even just one element of it – very often external conceptions, demonstrating how the availability of top-down sources guides such research.[134] Richard White notes that historians have focused on the "language of spatiality" rather than the "spatial experience"; Navickas and Leif Jerram have similarly argued that spatial histories have often lacked engagement with the materiality of space, and have simply used it as another lens to interpret in the same way as culture or text.[135] While language plays a critical role in the way I understand the production of space, I argue that the materiality of space, its use and physical form, both affects spatial discourse and is affected by it.

To press beyond a superficial engagement with space, I follow other historians who have placed Lefebvre's theorisations in conversation with other conceptualisations.[136] In particular, I seek to understand Stafford Street not simply as a space, but as a place with

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some of the gaps in gender and race analysis within Lefebvre's work. Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1996).

[133] Felix Driver and Raphael Samuel, 'Rethinking the Idea of Place', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 39 (1995): v–vii; White, 'What Is Spatial History?'; Leif Jerram, 'Space: A Useless Category for Historical Analysis?', *History and Theory* 52, no. 3 (2013): 400–419; Navickas, 'Thirdspace?'; Katrina Navickas, ''Why I Am Tired of Turning': A Theoretical Interlude' (British History in the Long 18th Century Seminar, London: Institute of Historical Research, 2011), https://historyofpublicspace.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Why-I-am-tired-of-turning-2011.pdf.

[134] See for example Pamela Gilbert, who explicitly recognises that conceptions of space dominate the way urban space was shaped by sanitary reform. Gilbert, *Mapping the Victorian Social Body*, 8.

[135] White, 'What Is Spatial History?'; Jerram, 'Space'; Navickas, 'Thirdspace?'

[136] For recent examples of historians embracing space in terms of its materiality and sociability, see Christina Parolin, *Radical Spaces: Venues of Popular Politics in London, 1790-c.1845* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2010); Katrina Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place, 1789–1848* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015); Laura C. Forster, 'The Paris Commune in London and the Spatial History of Ideas 1871-1900', *The Historical Journal* 62, no. 4 (2019): 1021–44; Nathan Booth, 'Drinking and Domesticity: The Materiality of the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Provincial Pub', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 20 April 2018.

meaning, identity and multiple, overlapping histories. For this I have drawn particularly on Doreen Massey's conception of space as interacting sets of historical relationships, in which places are formed – and continually reformed – by changing social relations, and multiple trajectories which extend well beyond the locality itself.[137] The history of one place, such as Stafford Street, cannot be told without appreciating the process of interaction between different perspectives, practices and identities over time.[138] As new histories interact with it, so the multiple identities and expressions of power, privilege and capital become part of the place history.[139] Massey's "global sense of place" can be compared with scholars of diaspora such as Avtar Brah. Wolverhampton's Irish quarter can be understood as what Brah calls a "diaspora space," inhabited "not only by diasporic subjects but equally by those who are constructed and represented as 'indigenous.'"[140] Spaces like Stafford Street became something substantially new in the nineteenth century. Not only did discourses of poverty and race overlap, but realities too. Brah's description of the "entanglement of the genealogies

[137] Doreen Massey, 'Questions of Locality', *Geography* 78, no. 2 (1993): 142–49; Doreen Massey, 'Places and Their Pasts', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 39 (1995): 182–92. This is not to imply that Lefebvre did not root his work in historical thinking – he did, arguing that space was the "inscription of time in the world." Cited in Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, eds., *Henri Lefebvre: Writings on Cities* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996), 16; see also Kristin Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 8. However, he often held back from full engagement with ordinary historical practice in his own, wide-ranging, philosophical work. Shields, *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle*, 119.

[138] Massey elaborated her theories over the course of many years and many different books and articles. A clear outline of how her work can be of use to historians can be seen in Massey, 'Questions of Locality'; Doreen Massey, 'A Global Sense of Place', in *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 146–56; Massey, 'Places and Their Pasts'; Doreen Massey, *For Space* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2005), 9–11.

[139] Massey, 'A Global Sense of Place'.

[140] Brah, *Cartographies*, 205.

of dispersal" in this "diaspora space" well describes the way that such overlapping identities were lived out.[141]

I agree with those historians who argue that a superficial engagement with spatial theory does not do justice to the complex interactions of historical contingency, physical form, and human movement and society. In its original context, Lefebvre's spatial theories were part of his wider critique of everyday life under capitalism.[142] The unquestioned hegemony of the Victorian capitalist perspective forms the backdrop to any discussion of urban space, and this is certainly expressed in the power of local and national elites to create, stigmatise and destroy an Irish quarter. It is also evident in the ways inhabitants of the Irish quarter adapted to, resisted, and changed how their space was conceived. At the heart of this thesis is the question of who has the right to occupy and define urban space, and through a deep engagement with the way space and meaning are produced, I argue that the formally powerless inhabitants of stigmatised spaces like the Irish quarter can gain some power over their own everyday lives.

Case study: Wolverhampton

> [In] the least desirable and oldest residential parts of a town, was nearly always to be found what was termed the "Irish quarter."[143]

[141] Brah, 238.
[142] Stuart Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre* (London: A. & C. Black, 2004), 181–83. Elden argues that Lefebvre's work on space is the culmination of his previous work on landscape, urbanism and particularly everyday life, rather than an agenda for future study.
[143] John Denvir, *The Irish in Britain: From the Earliest Times to the Fall and Death of Parnell* (London: Kegan Paul, 1892), 110.

1. The making of the Irish quarter

To interrogate the concept of the Irish quarter, this thesis focuses on one small neighbourhood in Wolverhampton, a medium-sized town in the West Midlands' industrial Black Country. The study area consists of Stafford Street and its immediate surroundings. Wolverhampton was an Anglo-Saxon settlement at the north-western edge of the South Staffordshire coal and iron district. Previously a prosperous wool-trading town, Wolverhampton industrialised into a large and complex manufacturing town with wide regional and national networks.[144] By the late-eighteenth century, Black Country iron and coal was employed by bucklemakers, locksmiths, "negro collar and handcuff makers" and other manufacturers in Wolverhampton, demonstrating Wolverhampton's global and imperial reach.[145] By the mid-nineteenth century Wolverhampton was, like many of Britain's industrial towns, a thriving and bustling local metropolis, attracting new residents at a rapid pace.

Wolverhampton's population grew dramatically in the first half of the nineteenth century, from 12,565 in 1801 to 60,860 in 1861 (see chapter six).[146] Most incomers came from rural Staffordshire and Shropshire, but a substantial number came from Ireland too. This number leapt in the wake of the Irish Famine exodus from 1846-7: whereas in 1841, Wolverhampton's Irish-born represented just over three per cent of its population, by 1851 it was over 7.5 per

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[144] C. W. Chalklin, *The Provincial Towns of Georgian England: A Study of the Building Process, 1740-1820* (London: Edward Arnold, 1974), 22, 43; Chris Upton, *A History of Wolverhampton* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1998), 17; G. P. Mander and N. W. Tildesley, *A History of Wolverhampton* (Wolverhampton: Wolverhampton County Borough, 1960), 7–10.

[145] John Smith, 'Industrialisation and Social Change: Wolverhampton Transformed 1700-1840', ed. Jon Stobart, Towns, Regions and Industries : Urban and Industrial Change in the Midlands, c.1700-1840 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 134–46; 'Sketchley's and Adams' Tradesman's True Guide; or an Universal Directory for the Towns of Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley [&c]... the Fourth Edition with Great Improvements', 1770, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; Upton, *A History of Wolverhampton*, 60–65, 79–81.

[146] George J. Barnsby, *Social Conditions in the Black Country, 1800-1900* (Wolverhampton, 1980), 2.

cent, placing it within the top twenty towns for Irish residents that year.[147] The apparent decline to 3.44 per cent in 1871 does not include second-generation Irish people, meaning that Wolverhampton's Irish community remained substantial throughout these years, and consistently larger than the proportion nationally.[148]

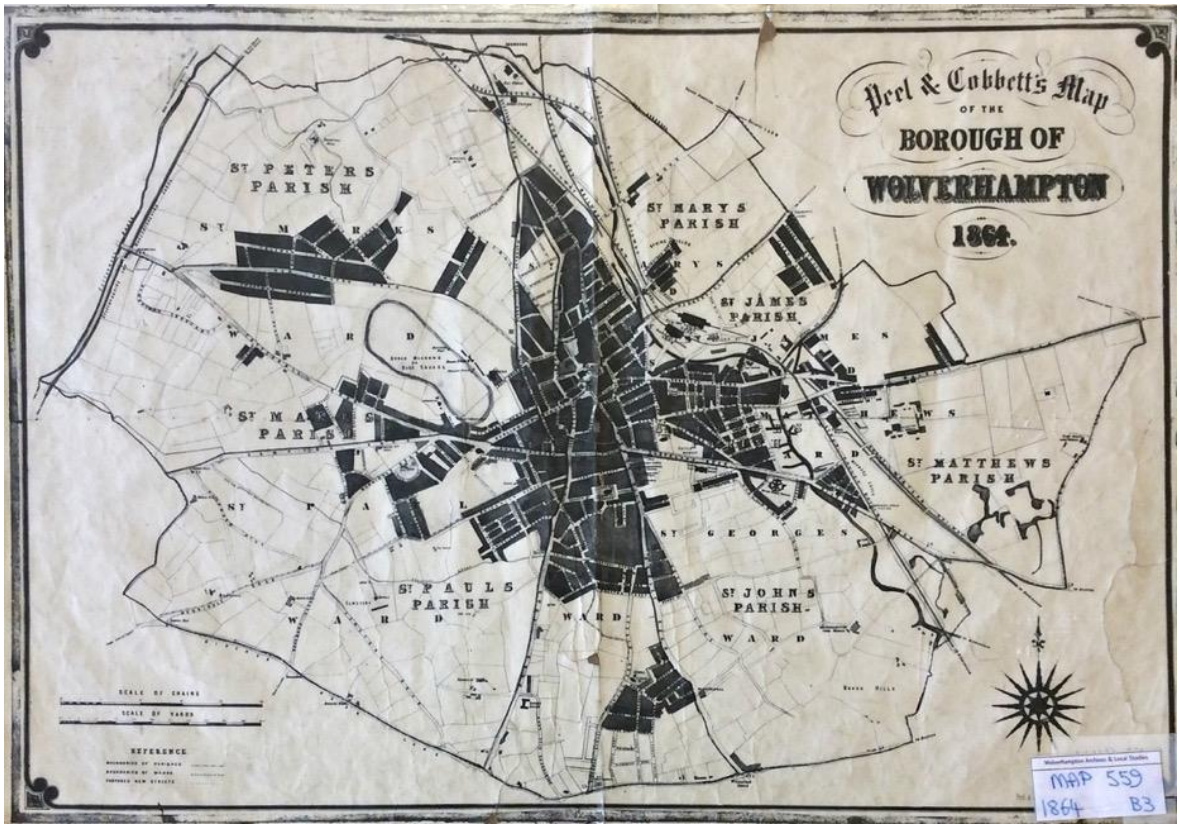


*Figure 1.2 Borough of Wolverhampton in 1864 (*Peel & Cobbett's Map of the Borough of Wolverhampton*, 1 inch: 10 chains (Wolverhampton: Peel & Cobbett, 1864), MAP/559, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.)*

The period 1848-77 represents, in some senses, an industrial golden age for Wolverhampton. Confidence was high across Britain and the Black Country, represented in the grandeur of the

[147] Hobbs, 'Caribee Island', 11.
[148] Statistical detail drawn from the Integrated Census Microdata (I-CeM) project: https://icem.data-archive.ac.uk/

1851 Great Exhibition: both the structural ironwork and plate glass were made locally.[149] Wolverhampton became a parliamentary borough in 1832, and a municipal borough in 1848. Lawrence has described Wolverhampton's parliamentary political culture as a "liberal hegemony" during these years, with strong Radical influences giving way to classical mid-Victorian Liberalism and, later, Liberal Unionism – this was the journey of Wolverhampton's MP of 63 years (1835-98), CP Villiers, for example.[150] Local government was more mixed. The new Borough superseded the older, heavily-criticised, Town Commissioners, introducing 48 members across eight wards. Councillors stood as independents without party affiliation, though the two candidates for first mayor show where the town's broader loyalties lay: the Tory George Thorneycroft, owner of the massive Shrubbery Ironworks was eventually nominated over the Liberal John Barker, owner of the equally massive Chillington Ironworks.[151]

For the working classes, the story was somewhat different. Black Country work was characterised by low, variable wages, job insecurity and exploitative labour practices.[152] A cycle of boom and bust continued across the interconnected local economies throughout the boom years, and even periods of prosperity and full employment were characterised by bitter industrial disputes.[153] Nevertheless, this wasn't new or unique to Wolverhampton, and the

[149] Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 49.
[150] Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, 73.
[151] Upton, *A History of Wolverhampton*, 67–73.
[152] Barnsby, *Social Conditions*, 211.
[153] Barnsby, *Working Class Movement*, 168.

industrial environment was more stable in these years that at any other period in the nineteenth century.

Stafford Street

As home to a substantial workforce of unskilled labour, the Stafford Street neighbourhood experienced these fluctuations as fully as any other part of Wolverhampton. But it was also the neighbourhood most likely to be called an "Irish quarter." A medieval route from the county town, by the time of Wolverhampton's first town plan in 1750 (figure 1.3) Stafford Street marked the north-eastern edge of the town, with ribbon development leading north, and east along Rotton's Row (later Canal Street, now Broad Street). In-fill building on Berry Lane (later Carribee Island) can be traced back to the late seventeenth century.[154]

When the early social investigator Frederick Eden visited in the 1790s, he found that this small area provided a high number of recipients of parish relief, suggesting that "Cribby Island" and its surrounds were already markedly poor.[155] Its name likely reflected an established reputation: "cribby" was slang for theft, and "cribby islands" had been identified in eighteenth-century London; the playful corruption to reference the mysterious and exotic Carribee Islands also emphasised their separateness.[156] This central part of the study area was

[154] Roger Chandler et al., 'Lease for Three Lives of a Small Parcel of Land in Berry Lane near Stafford Street in Wolverhampton for Building upon at the Yearly Rent of 3d.', 20 February 1682, DEED/J46/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

[155] Frederick Morton Eden, *The State of the Poor; Or, An History of the Labouring Classes in England, from the Conquest to the Present Period* (London: J. Davis, 1797), 668–74.

[156] The eighteenth-century compiler of slang, Francis Grose, noted the link from crib, meaning theft, suggesting houses "stolen out of the public way," with specific reference to parts of Covent Garden, and the densely-built areas between Cursitor Street and White's Alley, off Chancery Lane. Other geographically-referenced neighbourhoods included Higher Alsatia (Whitefriars), Lower Alsatia (Southwark), and the Bermudas (Covent

largely complete by the time Carribee Street was laid out to its east, in the early 1840s.[157] The infilling of surrounding land continued apace in the 1840s, making the study area a less peripheral, more thoroughly urban space.



Figure 1.3 Excerpt from Isaac Taylor's 1750 plan of Wolverhampton (Isaac Taylor, Map of Wolverhampton, 3 chains: 1 inch (Wolverhampton, 1750), MAP/244, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.)

Stafford Street has generally been accepted on contemporaries' terms as Wolverhampton's poorest area, and its Irish quarter. Shaw notes that while other parts of Wolverhampton were similarly poverty-stricken, Stafford Street gained a uniquely bad reputation, most likely based

Garden) Eric Partridge, *The Routledge Dictionary of Historical Slang* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003), 269; Jonathon Green, *The Stories of Slang: Language at Its Most Human*, ebook (London: Hachette UK, 2017), 130–31.

[157] By 1842, Carribee Street, Montrose Street, and St Mary's Street can be seen as planned roads. *Wolverhampton Tithe Map and Apportionment* (Wolverhampton, [1842?]), DX-411, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

on its heavy Irish presence.[158] George Barnsby – writing from a Communist perspective which uncritically embraces Engels' conception of the anti-revolutionary 'lumpenproletariat' – takes a less nuanced view, referring to it as "notorious… the worst area of the town" and "haunt of the Irish and prostitutes."[159] The most thorough research into the area is by Roger Swift, focusing on crime and law enforcement. His argument that police treated Stafford Street as a distinct type of urban space, in a variety of contexts, was made across several articles, which have made the area familiar to historians of the Irish in Britain.[160] More recently Alison Hobbs's quantitative study has used this area as a demonstration of a methodology for tracing degrees of Irishness in Victorian Britain.[161] My research builds on these foundations, but spreads its net more widely in terms of subject matter.

The contemporary views which created Stafford Street's notoriety are central to this research: it was those with the power to construct such ideas who were able to make such a reputation stick. The newspapers which covered Wolverhampton certainly understood the rhetorical appeal of associating ethnicity with place, and references to Irish people were overwhelmingly associated with the Stafford Street area. When sanitary campaigners wished to highlight the filthiest part of town, or when journalists wished to highlight the Irish nature

[158] Swift, '"Another Stafford Street Row"'; Shaw, 'Individual Behaviour and Social Change'.
[159] Barnsby, *Housing*, 18. Barnsby's work was meticulously and rigorously researched, and remains essential to scholars of the Victorian Black Country. However, unlike many contemporaries, he never left the Communist Party and his work was intended as persuasive rather than objective. For example, he attacked aristocratic landowners rather than the small landlords who owned much of the worst property in Stafford Street. On Barnsby, see Stan Newens, 'George Barnsby Obituary', *The Guardian*, 19 May 2010, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/may/19/george-barnsby-obituary.
[160] Swift, '"Another Stafford Street Row"'; Swift, 'Anti-Catholicism and Irish Disturbances'; Roger Swift, 'The English Urban Magistracy and the Administration of Justice during the Early Nineteenth Century: Wolverhampton 1815–1860', *Midland History* 17, no. 1 (1992): 75–92.
[161] Hobbs, 'Caribee Island'.

of its apparent lawlessness, they often used the most exotically-named court, Carribee Island, as a synecdoche for the whole area.[162] Even Queen Victoria pointed out residents "all in tatters, & many very Irish looking."[163] The concentration of Irish-born people in this area can be shown statistically too. Shaw and Hobbs both located Stafford Street as the centre of Irish occupation based on census enumerators' returns.[164]

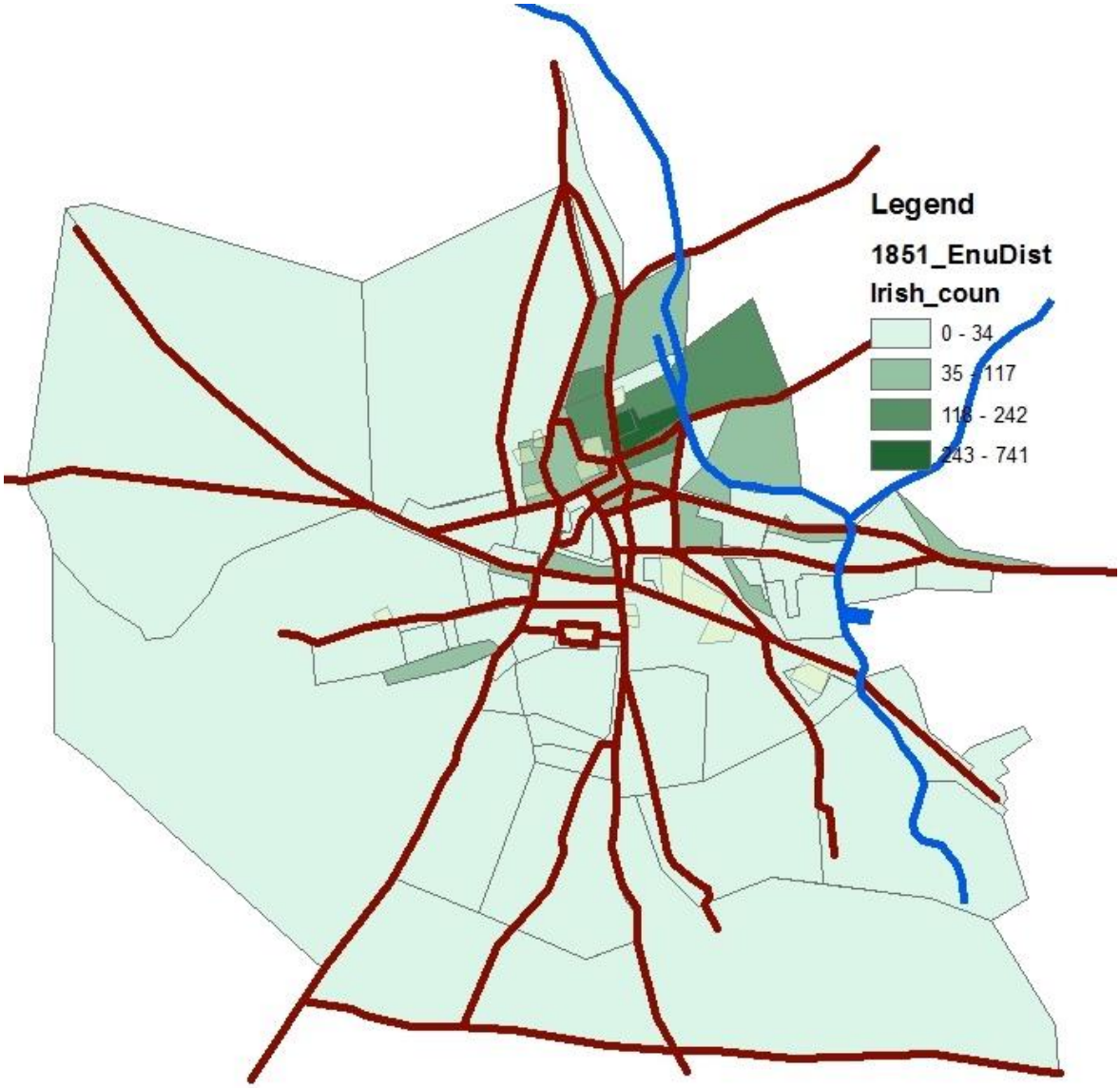
I have corroborated this by reference to census enumeration districts where more than ten per cent of the population was born in Ireland in 1851 and 1861 (Table 1.1). All are in north-eastern Wolverhampton. There was certainly overspill into surrounding streets: Stafford Street north of St Mary's church, Charles Street, Middle Row, Horse Fair, and Montrose Street and St Mary's Street off Carribee Street all had significant Irish populations, but were far less likely to feature in press or official reports as having strong Irish associations. Similarly, the much smaller numbers of Irish people in North Street and across the semi-industrial south-eastern part of Wolverhampton grew between 1851 and 1861, but did not approach the over-

[162] Anon, 'Fellowsiana! A Dramatic Sketch. Dedicated Without Permission, to the Goldthorn-Hill Lodge of Odd Fellows; and to Those Aldermen, Town-Councillors, & Burgesses of the Borough of Wolverhampton Who Are Opposed to the Sewerage' (John Beddow, 1863), LS/1088, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; William Owen, 'Carribee Islanders: The Wolverhampton Crusade Against Dirty Courts and Alleys', *Midland Examiner and Times*, 11 November 1876.

[163] The Queen's visit in 1866, discussed in chapter four, was widely reported and the stereotypes widely repeated. *The Times* and the *Illustrated London News* both referred to Wolverhampton's "Irish quarter"; the *Staffordshire Advertiser* referred to the "Irishry of the town" in Stafford Street; the *Manchester Courier* to its "Hibernian denizens". 'The Queen's Visit to Wolverhampton', *Illustrated London News*, 8 December 1866; 'The Queen's Visit to Wolverhampton', *The Times*, 1 December 1866; 'The Queen's Visit to Wolverhampton', *Manchester Courier*, 1 December 1866; 'Queen Victoria's Journals', 30 November 1866, RA VIC/MAIN/QVJ (W), Royal Archives, http://www.queenvictoriasjournals.org/.

[164] Mark Shaw, 'Life in Wolverhampton 1841-1871', *West Midlands Studies* 12 (1979): 1–11; Shaw, 'Individual Behaviour'; Hobbs, 'Caribee Island'.

representation in the neighbourhood of Stafford Street. As Map 1.1 shows, there was a clear over-representation of Irish-born residents in north-east Wolverhampton.



Map 1.1 Distribution of Irish-born population in Wolverhampton, by number recorded in 1851 census (mapped with Jenks natural breaks distribution.)

1851				1861			
Enumeration districts (ED)	**Irish-born pop.**	**Prop. of ED born in Ireland**	**Proportion of Irish-born pop. in Wolv.**	**Enumeration districts (ED)**	**Irish-born pop.**	**Prop. of ED born in Ireland**	**Proportion of Irish-born pop. in Wolv.**
1B: Berry Street	189	13.41%	5.02%	2: Canal Street S, Berry Street	322	13.6%	9.19%
1C: Canal Street S	256	16%	6.8%	5: Stafford Street W	396	21.71%	11.31%
1F: Stafford Street W	218	13.63%	5.79%	12: Littles Lane, Montrose Street, St Mary Street	270	7.71%	15.52%
1II: Charles Street/Middle Row	213	24.18%	5.66%	13: Canal Street N, Coles Croft, Carribee Street	274	15.45%	7.82%
1MM: Littles Lane and Montrose Street	220	24.1%	5.85%	14: Stafford Street W, Carribee Island, Back Lane, Castle Place/Yard	597	28.8%	17.05%
1NN: Canal Street N	155	15.7%	4.12%				
1OO: Coles Croft, Carribee Island, Carribee Street	741	72.22%	19.69%				
1PP: Stafford Street E, Back Lane, Castle Place/Yard, Littles Lane	586	41.71%	15.57%				
Wolverhampton	**3,763**		**7.56%**	**Wolverhampton**	**5,502**		**5.66%**

Table 1.3 Enumeration districts with over 10 per cent Irish-born residents, Wolverhampton 1851-61[165]

So, it is evident that Irish people lived in the Stafford Street area in far greater concentrations than in other parts of town, and that outsiders strongly associated this place with Irishness. To this can be added the features of representational space: pubs with names like the Hibernia or the Erin-go-bragh; reading rooms for Irish nationalist groups (chapter five); St Patrick's Roman Catholic church (chapter four). My study area has thus been compiled by comparing quantitative and qualitative, insider and outsider views of what constituted the

[165] Data from I-CeM. Data for 1871 is not available.

Irish quarter. The streets and courts within this space formed the basis of newspaper and archival searches (Table 1.2). The area mapped (figure 1.4) is around 52,000m² (13 acres) in total, corresponding to a population varying between 3,000 and 4,500 people. Numbers of houses fluctuate by occupation, by the quality of census recording, and by building and demolition. I will be using this area to bring historical and geographical concepts of race and space into conversation with Wolverhampton's local contexts, in order to present a rigorous and applicable methodology for studying Irish quarters in Victorian towns.



Figure 1.4 Study area highlighted on 1871 plan of Wolverhampton, corrected within GIS (Wolverhampton Town (Wolverhampton: Steen & Blackett, 1871), MAP/123, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.)

Streets and courts within study area
Stafford Street, including courts on eastern side and western side – usually referred to by number, but sometimes as Gough's Court, Rollason's Court, Bowling Green Row
Canal Street, including numbered courts and entries on both sides
Littles Lane, including numbered courts on both sides
Carribee Street, including courts on western side
Back Lane, including numbered courts on both sides
Carribee Island, including numbered courts
Coles Croft
Castle Place
Castle Yard

Table 1.4 Street and court names within study area

Methodology

The novelty and significance of my methodology lies in the means through which I have come to know Stafford Street intimately. This scale means that it was possible to learn close to everything recorded about it, and by comparing and linking records, to get a sense of what mattered in this neighbourhood. The structure, parameters and limitations of this thesis have been dictated by the nature of these sources. Little in the way of ego-documents exist based in the Stafford Street area, making access to interior worlds and emotions all but impossible. Thus, the bulk of the sources were formed by the interaction of a wealthy, powerful elite with the poor and comparatively powerless inhabitants of Stafford Street. This need not be an obstacle – reading official documents and newspapers against the grain is standard practice in history from below – and indeed justifies seeking out alternative means of accessing the lives of the poor, in this case by approaching them from a spatial perspective. Sources are, however, inevitably weighted towards those produced by the powerful. My methodology is intended to deconstruct the preconceptions and prejudices of these writers, to allow the lives of individuals and families resident in Stafford Street the opportunity to speak for themselves about what this Irish quarter was like.

Sources

My aim has been to collate as many references as possible to this space and identify the key themes, periods and trajectories for the empirical chapters based on this large body of source material collected in the initial phase of research. Physical and digital archives were searched, collated using tagged Evernote records, and mentions recorded in an Excel database.[166] This enabled information to be sorted chronologically, thematically, and by name to show who and what was important. The range of records means that while the sources were focused on one place, the perspectives on that one place were far more varied.

The key physical archives relate to Wolverhampton Borough Council, formed in 1848, and its predecessor bodies in Wolverhampton, including minutes, maps and plans produced by servants of the Corporation.[167] These were supplemented with published sources including sanitary reports produced by national bodies, parliamentary papers, and other independent reports.[168] All of these were, of course, produced from the narrow perspective of the governing middle class in Wolverhampton and beyond.

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[166] For a discussion of cloud-based archival work for historians, including Evernote, see William J. Turkel, Kevin Kee, and Spencer Roberts, 'A Method for Navigating the Infinite Archive', in *History in the Digital Age*, ed. Toni Weller (London: Routledge, 2013), 61–76.

[167] Records relating to the Stafford Street area were particularly found in minutes of the Town Commissioners prior to 1848 (D-MAN/35); Watch Committee (WOL-C-WAT) (including crime, but also licensing, lodging-house inspections and infectious disease cases. The first volume (WOL-C-WAT/1, 1848-1853) is no longer extant); the Health of Towns or Sanitary Committee (WOL-C-HOT); the Town Improvement/Public Works Committee (WOL-C-PW) ; Streets and Sewerage Committees (WOL-C-STR, WOL-C-SEW); the Bye-Law Committee (WOL-C-BYE) and the extensive files of the Artizans' Scheme Committee (WOL-C-ADSI) from the mid-1870s (WOL-D-CE/4/8); related to the latter is the collection of title deeds connected with the Scheme. The Board of Guardians minutes were also used (PU-WOL/A). Archival references relate to Wolverhampton City Archives.

[168] Relating to public health, see: 'Local Reports on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of England', P. P. (007), xxvii, 1842; Robert Rawlinson, 'Report to the General Board of Health on a Preliminary Inquiry into the

1. The making of the Irish quarter

Wolverhampton Archives' map collection served to show the development of the physical fabric of the area, and formed the basis of the geo-referenced database outlined below. These, too, are not neutral sources. "Maps," Denis Wood argues, "are arguments… mapmaking is a rhetorical exercise."[169] JB Harley agrees: a map is "as much a commentary on the social structure of a particular nation or place as it is on its topography."[170] This is certainly true in Wolverhampton. Maps of the town, from the first town plan in 1750 to the Ordnance Survey of the 1880s, reflect their conditions of production. Georgian versions emphasise the town's antiquity, aristocrats and ownership through vignettes, statistics and town histories, and by showing some buildings in detail, and obscuring others.[171] Their mid-nineteenth century equivalents highlight instead the legibility, cohesiveness and modernity of the town (especially following incorporation in 1848), emphasising railways, accessible routes or leisure

Sewerage, Drainage and Supply of Water, and the Sanitary Conditions of the Inhabitants of the Borough of Wolverhampton, and the Townships of Bilston, Willenhall, and Wednesfield', Public Health Act (London, 1849), LS/LB614p/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; Julian Henry Hunter, 'Report on the Housing of the Poorer Parts of the Population in Towns, Particularly as Regards the Existence of Dangerous Degrees of Overcrowding the Use of Dwellings Unfit for Human Habitation', in *Reports of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council and Local Government Board*, ed. John Simon (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1866), 50–195; Edward Ballard, *Report to the Local Government Board on the Sanitary Condition of the Municipal Borough of Wolverhampton* (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1874). On living conditions more generally, see Peter Razzell and R. W. Wainwright, eds., *The Victorian Working Class: Selections from Letters to the Morning Chronicle* (London: Frank Cass, 1973), 239–47; Thomas Tancred, ed., *First Report of the Midland Mining Commission: South Staffordshire* (London: HMSO, 1843); Hugh Seymour Tremenheere, 'Report of the Commissioner Appointed under the Provisions of the Act 5 & 6 Vict. c.99, to Inquire into the Operation of That Act, and into the State of the Population in the Mining Districts.', P. P. (1406), XXIII, 1851; F. D. Longe, 'Appendix to Third Report: The Ironworks of South Staffordshire and Worcestershire Districts, and the Metal Trades of the District of Wolverhampton', in *Reports from Commissioners: Children's Employment*, vol. P. P. (3414), xxii, 1864; 'Report from the Select Committee on Regulation of Public Houses, Hotels, Beer-Shops, Dancing Saloons, Coffee-Houses, Theatres and Places of Public Entertainment', P. P. (855), xxxvii, 1852–1853.

[169] Denis Wood, *Rethinking the Power of Maps* (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2010), 42–44.

[170] J. B. Harley, 'Deconstructing the Map', *Cartographica* 26, no. 2 (1989): 1–20.

[171] Isaac Taylor, *Map of Wolverhampton*, 3 chains: 1 inch (Wolverhampton, 1750), MAP/244, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; Godson, *A Plan of the Township of Wolverhampton in the County of Stafford, Survey'd in the Year 1788 by Godsons of Brailes, Warwickshire. To This Plan Belonge a Rider to Explain the Small Pieces and Gardens* (Brailes, Warwickshire, 1788), D-JSR/44/46, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

facilities.[172] The first detailed survey was commissioned based on Chadwickian demands for sanitary works: the 1850s version by Robert Syar Hoggar (see chapter two) and its 1870s revision by John Lees show in intimate detail the sanitary, domestic and working lives of the poor by showing privies, wash-houses, beerhouses, workshops, and the clutter of the built environment. Its argument was that such a town required the order and management that its commissioners wanted to impart.[173] While maps have formed a key part of this methodology, then, it is essential that they be read as critically as any other source.

The final key official source is a complete census sample for the study area for the years 1851-71 (that is, from the first presenting usable location data, to the last before the area's demolition). This provided a large amount of quantitative data to be coded and compared over time. As a state technology, this too must be approached critically. Nineteenth-century censuses were as contingent upon ideology and prejudice as any other source, and provoked widespread debate about liberal citizenship, race, nation and urban life.[174] As with other official records, omissions present a key site through which difference and belonging could be built. The Irish census, for example, was far more detailed than its British equivalent: questions about education, language and religion were included that would have been

[172] See for instance *Peel & Cobbett's Map of the Borough of Wolverhampton*, 1 inch: 10 chains (Wolverhampton: Peel & Cobbett, 1864), MAP/559, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[173] Robert Syar Hoggar, *Plan of the Town of Wolverhampton Surveyed for the Purpose of the Health of Towns Act 1848* (Wolverhampton, 1852), MAP/388b, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; David Lees, *Maps of the Town and Part of the Borough of Wolverhampton*, 1 inch: 10 chains (Birmingham: Hall & English, 1871), DX-673, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[174] Edward Higgs, *Making Sense of the Census Revisited: Census Records for England and Wales 1801-1901: A Handbook for Historical Researchers* (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2005), 4; Kathrin Levitan, *A Cultural History of the British Census: Envisioning the Multitude in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

beyond the pale in Liberal Britain.[175] Similarly, Kathrin Levitan suggests that the recording of birthplace was likely prompted by fears over Irish immigration: enumerators' instructions permitting them to write simply "Ireland" for place of birth (compared to town and county for other British subjects) acted to homogenise this population of outsiders.[176]

Although census data is imperfect for accurate statistics, this dataset does permit some quantitative analysis. Chapter six in particular looks at categories including work, household size, and degree of Irishness.[177] Analysis at this limited scale gives scope to assess not just Irish-born individuals, but those of Irish heritage. Following Hobbs' more detailed analysis, I have included some data on second-generation Irishness to understand migration timescales, and even the Irish 'feel' of a court or street after new immigration began to decline. Hobbs makes some useful spatial points about the more intensely Irish feel of the central part of the study area, but her core conclusion, that the degree of integration into Wulfrunian society depended on that intensity, asks too much of the quantitative data to be verifiable.[178] My

[175] Levitan, *British Census*, 151–53.
[176] Levitan, 164.
[177] See for example discussion in Thomas Joseph Prendergast, 'The Irish in Nineteenth-Century Coventry' (PhD, Belfast, Ulster University, 2019), 57–61. I have used the Cambridge Population Groups' PST system for classifying occupations. Tony Wrigley, 'The PST System of Classifying Occupations', The Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, 2010, https://www.campop.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/occupations/datasets/coding/.
[178] Hobbs, 'Caribee Island', 151. Hobbs employs six categories to quantify Irish individuals, from those born in Ireland, via those with identifiable Irish descent, to those with Irish-sounding names. Proving Irish descent from census records at large scale is just the first difficulty faced by this methodology. My own database relies more on birthplace: Irish-born individuals are assigned a value of 1Irish, those for whom two Irish-born parents can be identified 2Irish, those with one Irish-born parent 2*Irish, those for whom only an English birthplace can be found 1English, and so on.

argument instead is that this neighbourhood should be examined in broader terms of "creolisation," rather than just its Irish population.[179]

The final key source is historical newspapers, though these immediately present a series of methodological problems. Firstly, newspaper coverage was partial and editorial, more useful for revealing the newspaper's perspective than for building an accurate statistical picture of, for example, crime. Comprehensive local police court records do not survive, meaning that the petty crime with which Stafford Street was mostly associated had to be reviewed through this prejudiced lens. Secondly, not all newspapers have survived. The *Wolverhampton Chronicle* (henceforward *WC*) is undoubtedly the most consistent and relevant source, and this has been preserved (and, for most of this period, digitised and searchable). Other newspapers had limited reach: the Stafford-based *Staffordshire Advertiser* (*SA*) was less comprehensive; the *Evening Express* (*EE*) was only launched in the 1870s. Some, such as the short-lived *Staffordshire Examiner*, have not survived, yet this was critical in at least one key incident in the 1840s (see chapter three for discussion on this and newspapers more generally).[180]

The availability of a huge range of digitised local newspapers in the British Newspaper Archive not only served to triangulate and corroborate local stories, but also to demonstrate a historical point: that local affairs mattered nationally. The cross-pollination of local and

[179] Brah, *Cartographies*, 207.

[180] The *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, *Staffordshire Advertiser,* and *Evening Express* are partially available via the British Newspaper Archive; physical copies can be accessed at Wolverhampton City Archives (*WC* and *EE*) or Staffordshire Record Office (*SA*).

national knowledge was crucial in the way Stafford Street – and other, similar, spaces – were constructed by a combination of prejudice, stereotype and local specificity. Tracing the spatial reach of news stories shows that the meaning of a story in Wolverhampton is subtly different to its meaning in Stafford, and that it means something different again when the story is syndicated more widely.

Newspaper analysis was approached through keyword searches. It is clear that, given the condition of some digitised newspapers and the limitations of optical character recognition, that this could never be a comprehensive exercise.[181] Nevertheless, the opportunity for corroboration from multiple sources including non-local newspapers revealed new angles on stories such as the anti-Catholic Baron de Camin riots of 1858, which Swift covered in pre-digital days.[182] Comparing the story in Irish nationalist newspapers gives a different angle to the condemnatory tone of local and national press in England, which frequently operated on similar sets of assumptions about the Irish, and has enabled me to reframe the events as evidence of proto-national feeling in Wolverhampton's Irish quarter.[183] These are all outside conceptions of the space; nevertheless these different perspectives add much to the analysis.

[181] On the potential and limitations of online newspaper repositories, see Johan Jarlbrink and Pelle Snickars, 'Cultural Heritage as Digital Noise: Nineteenth Century Newspapers in the Digital Archive', *Journal of Documentation* 73, no. 6 (2017): 1228–43. See also Digital Forum in *Journal of Victorian Culture* 17, no. 2 (2012)
[182] Swift, 'Anti-Catholicism and Irish Disturbances'.
[183] On the relationship between political events and newspaper language about the Irish, see De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*, chap. 1.

Small histories

Despite the large quantity of information available within these sources, my methodology remains what Julia Laite calls "small history": a set of microhistories that tell the story of a place by placing individual lives into context at multiple scales. As Laite notes, the abundance of digitised genealogical information makes record linkage quick and fairly straightforward. Although, as Jerome de Groot points out, such processes can potentially replicate existing hierarchies, Laite suggests this abundance also allows these narratives to be "radically contextualised… to see the way that individuals defy (and often also comply) with categorizations and metanarratives."[184] While some lives remain just traces on a census enumerator's form, many – perhaps most – can be fleshed out, and shown to be more than just a statistic in an official's mind. This is precisely where thinking spatially can challenge simple assumptions about places and people, and especially the poor and mobile.

The methodology for analysing these sources falls into two broad, overlapping categories, which play different roles in each chapter. As discussed above, most sources about the poor were created by outsiders with the power to make their views known: the press, judiciary, police, medical profession, and so on. These representations of space are analysed thematically to trace the changing discourse towards poor and Irish spaces. Analysis of this discourse informs chapters on public health, policing, anti-Catholicism and Irish nationalism.

[184] Jerome de Groot, 'On Genealogy', *The Public Historian* 37, no. 3 (2015): 102–27; Julia Laite, 'The Emmet's Inch: Small History in a Digital Age', *Journal of Social History* 53, no. 4 (2020): 963–89.

The latter two, however, draw on a second methodology in which this wider set of sources are studied for what they can tell us about a population so often dismissed as a mass. By collating this large number of fragmentary records, it became possible over time to fit individual traces of lives into family structures, streets and courts, jobs and social networks, and to decide the themes investigated.[185] These could then be followed further using digitized source bases, including datasets available on Ancestry.com and online newspaper repositories to follow stories that fit Stafford Street into the wider world. Short biographies can be found throughout, and demonstrate the power of such a digital methodology to open up small stories into bigger ones – see for example John Coffey's story in chapters four and five.

This methodology is most in evidence in chapter six, which follows a different format to the others by introducing quantitative alongside qualitative analysis. A methodical, exhaustive statistical survey would be a vast undertaking given the amount of data available, and exploratory analysis showed that patterns of residence and lifestyle differed little from many other urban histories of Irish communities. Instead, this chapter follows some of those individuals who became legible in this data, allowing them to dictate the twists and turns of their own stories. It uses a mixed-methods approach, supplemented by genealogies and family trees which both demonstrate the advantages of collecting longitudinal data for

[185] This methodology also lessened the impact of inconsistent spellings, particularly of Irish surnames, on record linkage. The core database was compiled of names mentioned in census returns, incidents and addresses recorded in newspapers, and names of occupants on title deeds. The resulting spreadsheet included over 18,000 sortable records, allowing similar surnames to be grouped. An example of this inconsistent spelling is Owen MacLaughlin of Back Lane, whose surname was variously recorded as MacLoughlin, McLoughlin, MacLaughlin, McLaughlin, Magloughlin, McGothlin and M'Loughlan.

individuals within the area and reveal the limitations of desk-based genealogical research into Irish families. There are still many dead ends here. We can know from alternative records that most of Wolverhampton's Irish came from the Connacht region, for instance, but beside the occasional reference to birthplace, this is often just an assumption. In this at least, the historian is unable to move beyond the contemporary depiction of the Irish as a homogeneous, undifferentiated mass.

This data was then assigned a location code and mapped using a Historical GIS (HGIS). This geo-referenced database methodology has become a widely used tool for urban historians in recent years, mapping everything from literary networks, to railways, to electoral histories of race.[186] As the first Ordnance Survey town plan of Wolverhampton was surveyed after the area's demolition, older maps were scanned and geo-referenced, particularly the 1871 Lees map.[187] By creating polygons of buildings shown on the 1871 plan (see appendix one), this HGIS can show where each head of household was born, population density, and so on. Coding these polygons rested on a number of assumptions, most prominently the route of a census enumerator around the area when house numbers were not recorded or did not exist.

GIS mapping has serious limitations when faced with uncertainty, small scale, and partial data. Close reading of sources showed that when newspapers reported crime in, say, Stafford Street, they could mean any of the streets or courts off it. As Zoe Alker notes, many

[186] See for example Ian Gregory, Don DeBats, and Don Lafreniere, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Spatial History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).
[187] Lees, 'Maps of the Town and Part of the Borough of Wolverhampton'.

"meaningful spaces" in neighbourhoods – pubs, street corners, locations on each street – are indistinct in the sources and therefore unmappable.[188] This methodology also revealed significant numbers of unmappable addresses where the enumerator had declined to record house numbers. There are therefore gaps in the maps, and each should be understood as impressionistic, rather than formally reliable or verifiable, especially in court areas. This limited the ability to compare and contrast over time, for example, and the incompleteness of the mapped data meant that more advanced GIS analyses like heat maps were not achievable.

Many spatial historians explicitly link the spatial turn in history with the technological innovations that HGIS offers, and it has evidently been a productive methodology for the field.[189] However, several challenges remain: the time and labour involved in creating a usable database; its bias towards quantitative data (reprising long-lasting quantification debates in history); and, particularly, that to date the power of HGIS has been illustrative rather than explanatory.[190] This has been my experience here: the highly contextual nature of such historical data, informal, inconsistent and often deeply prejudiced, means that HGIS cannot form my primary means of explanation. The maps are thus presented alongside statistical data and family histories as part of a storytelling methodology.[191] This mixed-methods approach aims to fill in the gaps in histories of the poor which are so often hard to recover,

[188] Zoë Alker, 'Street Violence in Mid-Victorian Liverpool' (PhD, Liverpool, Liverpool John Moores University, 2014), 23.
[189] Gregory, DeBats, and Lafreniere, *Spatial History*, 1.
[190] Gregory, DeBats, and Lafreniere, 3–5.
[191] This approach has been inspired by Joan W. Scott, 'Storytelling', *History and Theory* 50, no. 2 (2011): 203–9. See chapter six for discussion.

providing these spatial stories with a sense of the hyper-local identities and spatial patterns of a neighbourhood often conceived of as homogeneous.

Structure

The chapters in this thesis are based on those subjects that emerged from these sources as having most impact on the production of this Irish space as conceived, lived, and used. Certain concepts are woven throughout: the politics of stigma; the relationship of the Irish to contemporary understandings of race; and the dominance of liberalism (and to some extent Liberalism) in shaping how Stafford Street was understood. There would be further scope, however, to explore themes which do not form chapters: while references are made to gender, sexuality and class politics, for instance, I have not explored them here in depth.

Chapters two and three demonstrate the outsider's gaze: how space was represented by those with power to make a difference to the neighbourhood. Chapter two argues that Stafford Street, insanitary like many similar neighbourhoods, was stigmatised as a problem space using languages of public health that were shot through with racial and social stereotypes. Here, medical professional and local authority interacted to create knowledge of the space rooted in a worldview that the poor – particularly the Irish – were cradles of disease, immorality and disorder. The other side of Stafford Street's reputational coin was its criminal and antisocial associations. Chapter three argues that such a reputation was carefully constructed by a range of local elites to stigmatise the poor and justify legislative interventions. A loose consensus emerged, cutting across class, political and religious lines, that spaces like Stafford Street ought to be reclaimed from being spaces of working-class liberty and custom, to spaces deemed respectable in the eyes of this small elite. This was

again done through territorial stigmatisation, with racialisation an inevitable component. They made interventions to reclaim the streets by forcing unwanted behaviours away from public spaces into communal and commercial spaces, which could be regulated within the purview of liberal capitalism. These attempts were only partially successful, and the moral geographies constructed by Wolverhampton's middle classes were contested at every step.

Chapters four and five allow some of Stafford Street's residents their own voice, to an extent, and focus on less tangible lived understandings of the neighbourhood as an Irish diasporic space. Chapter four takes sectarian violence, a specific form of disorder associated with Stafford Street, and reinterprets it to show that Irish Catholics used the tools at their disposal, including language, disruption and riot, to assert their own identity and community. Chapter five analyses parallel attempts to establish Irish nationalist organisations, both constitutional and clandestine, in the Stafford Street neighbourhood. The final major threat identified by critics of the Irish in Britain was that Irish spaces were a breeding ground for militant nationalism. Here, the example of the Home Ruler James Francis Egan in the 1870s serves to show how individuals navigated this tension and used diasporic Irish space to campaign for an independent Ireland. I analyse the everyday operations of nationalist organisations in the period between the Famine and the Land War, an era fertile in Ireland's nationalist imagination but which has often been overlooked in favour of larger movements before and after. In particular, I reassert the importance of diasporic associations like the National Brotherhood of St Patrick in the 1860s, and the Home Rule clubs of the 1870s, which proved a starting point for much bigger movements. In both chapters, Stafford Street can be seen as formative to the development of a diaspora space that fostered Irish identity, but by different means to similar movements in Ireland itself.

1. The making of the Irish quarter

Finally, chapter six sheds light on the understanding of space most difficult to access: the experiences of the resident poor. I employ a series of miniature histories to analyse the personal journeys, interactions, families and spaces of a number of people that occupied or interacted with the Stafford Street area. This challenges the homogenising tendencies of those who sought to stigmatise this as a problem space, and the tendency among historians to see them as unknowable masses; and shows how the Stafford Street area provided comfort, solidarity and livelihoods to a variety of people. This chapter does not seek to provide a methodical breakdown of Stafford Street's demography – in many ways, this Irish quarter was similar to many others in its housing and spatial patterns. Instead, I follow stories presented by its inhabitants, providing a novel insight into the lived experience of the Irish quarter. Chapter six is a methodological intervention as much as a historical one, and I argue that multi-perspective storytelling reveals much about the overlapping geographies affecting the lives of the poor.

Stafford Street has much to teach historians about the experience of the urban poor and the Irish in Britain, as would any similar space in an equivalent town. The Irish quarter which developed here was more than a colony, ghetto, or slum. Ordinary towns like Wolverhampton witnessed, and created, something new in the mid-nineteenth century: a diaspora space which changed its residents, its town, and both Ireland and Britain. I argue that space is an important category of analysis, and can add to the understanding of marginalised, stigmatised groups. Space matters when it offers the disenfranchised a means of expressing themselves; it matters when it reveals the layers of prejudice and stigma that the powerful construct; it matters when it offers historians an insight into everyday realities amongst communities marginalised in their present and in our histories. Wolverhampton's Irish quarter was widely

understood across society, and was meaningful to many people. It was an object of study, debate, and the exercise of power amongst those with formal and informal authority in the town. It was a subject which reflected and created local, regional and national news. Most importantly it was meaningful in multiple ways to those that lived there, and is thus worthy of study.

Chapter Two: “A very hotbed of disease and pestilence”: constructing an unhealthy space, 1832-82

In 1877, Wolverhampton’s first legally-defined “Unhealthy Area” was created. It contained (though was not limited to) the eastern side of Stafford Street, including the infamous Carribee Island, described at the time as a “lurking Lazar spot,” a “dark corner where vice loves to hide itself.”[1] It had taken years of condemnation and spatial stigmatisation to reach this point. The Stafford Street area had for decades been the site of epidemic disease, overcrowding, surveillance and regulation, a distinct space where medical problems were conflated with problems of mobility, poverty, morality and race. The “Unhealthy Area,” a precursor to slum clearance, legitimised a process of stigmatisation, racialisation and social separation that had been ongoing since at least the 1830s. Its demolition put to an end the complex, shifting and contingent relationship between local authority (in many forms) and a neighbourhood that had been construed as a distinct problem based on its association with the Irish.

I argue that two inter-related processes combined to make Carribee Island (the usual shorthand for the wider Stafford Street area in public health conversations) fit the reputation of a Victorian Irish quarter. Firstly, public health knowledge in Wolverhampton was created by a small group, though part of wider networks, who built it into wider conceptions of problematic urban space. Secondly, the ways public health interventions were framed and

[1] William Owen, ‘Carribee Islanders: The Wolverhampton Crusade Against Dirty Courts and Alleys’, *Midland Examiner and Times*, 11 November 1876.

executed reflected the construction of knowledge with all its limitations and biases, forming a distinct, local approach to public health problems based in the town’s conception of itself as a cultural, political and economic entity. Wolverhampton’s Irish quarter, as a dirty, diseased space, was formed in the interactions between the medical profession and municipal authorities.

The understanding of public health was unique to each town, city or region, shaped by the nature of diseases and the social, religious, cultural and political contexts through which towns understood themselves. Wolverhampton’s comparatively peaceful religious life meant that this had less impact on public health practice than, say, Liverpool; but its Liberal politics and new Borough status, for example, had a much larger effect.[2] The incorporation of the town in 1848 created a council with responsibility for the health of the town. This was partly formed from, and certainly interacted with, a small but influential group of physicians with an interest in public health. Between them, they created a geography of stigmatized ‘problem spaces’ like Carribee Island, which justified any interventions (or not) that these elites wished to make. Geographers have described how such spaces are characterised as “vortexes and vectors of social disintegration,” and the representation of Carribee Island as transient, immoral, disorganised cradle of multiple problems fits within this description.[3]

[2] Kearns and Laxton’s analysis of the public health environment in 1847 Liverpool – with its sectarian, ethnic tensions – uses Robert Sack’s ideas of the interrelation of nature, meaning and social relations to explore the competing world views which created Liverpool’s public health response. Gerry Kearns and Paul Laxton, ‘Ethnic Groups as Public Health Hazards: The Famine Irish in Liverpool and Lazaretto Politics’, in *The Politics of the Healthy Life: An International Perspective*, ed. Esteban Rodríguez Ocaña (Sheffield: European Association for the History of Medicine and Health Publications, 2001), 13–40.

[3] Loïc Wacquant, Tom Slater, and Virgílio Borges Pereira, ‘Territorial Stigmatization in Action’, *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 46, no. 6 (2014): 1270–80.

2. “A very hotbed of disease and pestilence”

Jacob Steere-Williams argues that public health can be “conceived in terms of rhetoric and public persuasion,” and this is clear in the actions of this small group.[4] In the 1830s and 1840s, local public health officials became an increasingly authoritative source of national knowledge, and the image of a diseased Irish quarter became common currency. The language used to describe these “pernicious districts” reflected both local and national understandings of urban space, race, and morality.[5] The Irish were certainly present in numbers in this area, but the association of this poor neighbourhood with the imagined racial characteristics of the Irish was intentional and harmful. Such language had material effects on local attitudes towards residents of the Irish quarter (not all of whom were Irish). It also affected the town’s understanding of itself in relation to the nation, within which the ‘facts’ of public health were aggregated, interpreted and applied as policy.[6] Such spaces were constructed and represented as sites of dangerous difference in the Victorian town, through which other Victorians attempted to make sense of – and often called into being – these problematic themes. The way local expertise responded to, and helped create, national expertise was crucial to the way knowledge was produced in the public health sphere, the replication of prejudice about the poor and the Irish, and the way public health problems were identified and solved across Britain.

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[4] Jacob Steere-Williams, *The Filth Disease: Typhoid Fever and the Practices of Epidemiology in Victorian England* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 11.
[5] J. Dehane, ‘On the Sanitary Condition of the Town of Wolverhampton’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 16 November 1842.
[6] Tom Crook, *Governing Systems: Modernity and the Making of Public Health in England, 1830-1910* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2016), 64–66.

2. “A very hotbed of disease and pestilence”

Carribee Island also made a useful battleground for arguments about investment, intervention and ideology. It stuck out not simply because it was unhealthy, but because it was poor, Irish and ‘immoral’ – anxieties that were being discussed nationally in relation to problem spaces like this. But it was also private property. This was the height of non-interventionist government in Britain, and the gradual introduction of public health measures from the 1850s to the 1870s did not come easily. Change was hindered by the use of neighbourhoods like Carribee Island as political footballs, and residents remained stigmatised, their environment unhealthy. The perception of the neighbourhood as Irish loomed over all the choices made in this era. In the mid-1870s, a significant shift by Wolverhampton’s local authority attempted to override popular prejudice, using the same discursive tools to attempt to bring residents of Carribee Island within the pale of local citizenship – but this too had political motivations, in particular in defending local power against central. Carribee Island was an unhealthy neighbourhood mired in poverty and discrimination: the blame lay not with its residents however, but with the changing tides of political consensus in mid-Victorian Britain.

Constructing authority, 1832-49

> …a lane called the Caribee Island, which is a filthy narrow alley or *cul de sac*, inhabited chiefly by the lowest Irish, with an open stagnant ditch down the

middle. Here the cases were very numerous and fatal.[7]

The 1830s and 1840s were, in Wolverhampton as across Britain, an age of reform when the social foundations of Victorian England were laid.[8] Discourses of work, dependency, criminality, faith and nationhood were drawn together to place increasing responsibility upon the individual subject and, correspondingly, stigmatising those who did not conform to this new model citizen.[9] Public health was part of this ideology. Medical professionals found the opportunity to place themselves at the heart of this agenda, and contributed to the formation of a new urban society in which their own concerns, desires and prejudices were central. In Wolverhampton, these years culminated in new systems of local government when it was incorporated as a Borough in 1848. The expertise of public health professionals was at the forefront, and the experts embraced not just individual stigmatisation, but stigmatisation by neighbourhood, class, and race.

Change originated partly in circumstances (like the 1832 cholera epidemic) but also in the legislation arising from the prevailing political mood, influenced by evangelical theology and laissez-faire economics.[10] In particular, the New Poor Law, designed by Edwin Chadwick in 1834, had the effect of devolving local authority to a new stratum of middle-class sanitary

[7] Thomas Ogier Ward, ‘Observations upon Cholera, as It Appeared in Wolverhampton and Its Neighbourhood in August, September, and October 1832’, *The Transactions of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association* 2 (1834): 376.
[8] See for example Peter Mandler, *Aristocratic Government in the Age of Reform: Whigs and Liberals 1830-1852* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 1–10; Jon Lawrence, ‘Party Politics and the People: Continuity and Change in the Political History of Wolverhampton, 1815-1914’ (PhD, Cambridge, University of Cambridge, 1989).
[9] Christopher Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice in the Age of Chadwick: Britain, 1800-1854* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 48–51.
[10] Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 155.

‘experts’: Guardians, Union medical officers, dispensary physicians, and public health officials.[11] A Wolverhampton coterie emerged in these decades centred on the Town Dispensary and the Poor Law Union. Thomas Ogier Ward, John Dehane and William Mannix were founding physicians when the Dispensary opened in 1821; John Fowke and EH Coleman founding surgeons; they were later joined by Dehane’s brother Edward, James Gatis and John Talbot Cartwright, and others with smaller roles in effecting later public health policy. Chairman of the Board of Guardians from 1840 was the evangelical vicar of Bilston, Reverend JB Owen, who maintained a close interest in public health matters. This small body of specialists exerted lasting influence on how the response to Carribee Island was understood and acted upon.

However, they did not operate in isolation from the social, economic and political worlds around them.[12] Most were immigrants into Wolverhampton society themselves: Coleman and Fowke were local, but most came from elsewhere in the United Kingdom.[13] Yet this professional class raised no fears about mobility, as the poor would. Mannix – born in Ireland to Anglo-Irish gentry – demonstrated that Irishness, when combined with high status (and

[11] Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice*, 213, 279; Priti Joshi, ‘Edwin Chadwick’s Self-Fashioning: Professionalism, Masculinity, and the Victorian Poor’, *Victorian Literature and Culture* 32, no. 2 (2004): 353–70.

[12] Ian Inkster, ‘Marginal Men: Aspects of the Social Role of the Medical Community in Sheffield 1790-1850’, in *Health Care and Popular Medicine in Nineteenth Century England: Essays in the Social History of Medicine*, ed. John Woodward and David Richards (London: Croom Helm, 1977). Jonathan Reinarz notes too that a “wide variety of determinants” shape local healthcare, and local and regional context is vital to understanding wider, macro-scale narratives. Jonathan Reinarz, ‘Introduction’, in *Medicine and Society in the Midlands 1750-1950*, ed. Jonathan Reinarz, Midland History Occasional Publications (Birmingham: Midland History Editorial Board, 2007), 1–11.

[13] Cartwright moved to Wolverhampton from Brierley Hill, Staffordshire; the Dehanes originated in Yorkshire but had trained in Scotland and practiced in London; Gatis came from Cockermouth, Cumberland; Owen came from Portsmouth, Hampshire; Mannix was born to Protestant gentry in County Cork, Ireland.

Protestantism), need not be an impediment.[14] Instead, they were able to place themselves within a web of useful connections. Gatis, for instance, became Union Medical Officer, Borough Alderman, churchwarden at St Peter’s, president of Wolverhampton Freeholder's Permanent Benefit Building Society, and founder member of a Masonic lodge in Wolverhampton alongside politicians, businessmen and legal professionals.[15] Coleman also owned property and chaired the Athenaeum (which regularly hosted speakers like Owen); John Dehane campaigned for political reform in the 1830s and was a member of St John’s church alongside his brother, John Fowke, and Stafford Street physician Henry Gibbons. He became a coroner, and a magistrate alongside Mannix.[16] Edward Dehane and Mannix were neighbours on Queen Street.[17] Although they all sometimes competed for the same posts, they also described themselves as close friends.[18]

Both before and after the town’s incorporation in 1848, power in Wolverhampton rested in the hands of those with property. Several of these professionals were landlords: Gatis owned multiple rental properties, Mannix owned houses in Carribee Island. This privilege remained sacrosanct, and none saw any contradiction between their ownership of such property and

[14] William Mannix’s family were from Cork, but were Protestant loyalists Brian D. Price, ‘Sir Henry Mannix (1740-1822) and His Three Children’ (Typescript, Stafford, June 2004), CB/MANNIX/1, William Salt Library.
[15] Thomas Jackson Barnett, *A History of the Lodge of Honour, (Held at Wolverhampton) Formerly No. 769, Now No. 526 on the Register of the Grand Lodge of England: (Principally Condensed from the Minute Books) With a List of the Members of the Lodge During the Whole Period of Its Existence, from 1846 to 1896* (Wolverhampton: J. D. Steen, 1896).
[16] ‘Town Meeting’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 28 September 1831; ‘Musical Festival at St. John’s Church’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 28 December 1836; John Dehane, ‘Dr. Dehane’s History of the Election for Coroner in Staffordshire’, *The Lancet* 39, no. 1007 (17 December 1842): 450–51.
[17] Census return for Wolverhampton, 1861.
[18] E. F. Dehane and J. T. Cartwright were amongst those describing themselves as friends of Mr Fowke at his retirement: ‘Testimonial to Mr John Fowke, F.R.C.S.E.’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 24 January 1849. E. F. Dehane and James Gatis competed for the same Surgeon’s role: ‘South Staffordshire General Hospital: Election of Medical Officers’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 20 December 1848.

their medical profession. Wolverhampton’s medical fraternity consisted of complex, multi-faceted individuals whose identities were plural and overlapping, but they helped create, and worked within, an economic and political orthodoxy in Wolverhampton. To argue that this was simply a ruling class acting in its own interests obscures the subjectivities of these individuals and their milieu. Nevertheless, the sanctity of private property underpinned their worldview, shaping their responses to the epidemics and political changes of the following decades.

Cholera, 1832

The 1832 cholera epidemic brought into sharp relief the social divisions that had grown up alongside industrialisation and urbanisation. In particular, it raised middle-class fears of the poor, the mobile, the immoral, and the racialised Other – especially the Irish and their spaces.[19] These fears stemmed partly from the “fast-paced and violent nature” of cholera, which mimicked the frightening new hyper-mobility of a modernising, industrialising world.[20] In Wolverhampton, this imputed connection between the mobility, habits and lifestyles of the town’s small Irish population meant that neighbourhoods associated with them, like Carribee Island, were singled out as cradles not just of disease but of a wide range of other social ills: a construction that would be reproduced time and again in later years.

[19] R. J. Morris, *Cholera 1832: The Social Response to an Epidemic* (London: Croom Helm, 1976); Erin O’Connor, *Raw Material: Producing Pathology in Victorian Culture* (Raleigh, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Frank Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England Since 1830*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2000); Joshi, ‘Edwin Chadwick’s Self-Fashioning’; Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 97.
[20] O’Connor, *Raw Material*, 35, 51; Morris, *Cholera 1832*, 197; Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, 12.

2. “A very hotbed of disease and pestilence”

Practical preparations focused on cleansing, but prejudice lay just under the surface. In 1831, a Board of Health was formed to respond to the approaching “cholera morbus,” including Dehane, Mannix, Ward and Fowke, alongside clergymen, landowners and local businessmen.[21] Their roles included inspection of “every house, building, yard, garden, sewer, drain, and place in their limits” to remove nuisances, organise limewashing of homes, and “to impress upon the inhabitants the deep necessity of instantly removing every description of filth.”[22] Thomas Ogier Ward published a report on Wolverhampton’s experience in 1834.[23] It contains the quotation at the head of this section, one of the earliest published descriptions of Carribee Island and probably the first source to explicitly link this space with Irish inhabitants. Ward traced the first appearance of cholera in the Black Country to Dudley in June 1832, then to “travelling German broom-sellers,” then a boatman *en route* from Manchester, then another returning from Liverpool.[24] The first cases within Wolverhampton

[21] The Central Board appointed in 1831 included John Dehane, William Mannix, Thomas Ogier Ward, John Fowke, John Freese Proud, Mr Cox, Mr Thompson, Mr Peart, local landowner Alexander Horden, banker and magistrate Henry Hill, Reverend Dr Walsh, vicar and JP Reverend J. Clare, Reverend G. B. Clare, Reverend F Mostyn, Reverend J. Roaf, merchants Joseph Pearson and Mr Shaw, and Mr Robinson as honorary secretary. The division appointed to monitor Stafford Street included Thomas H. Fowke, Reverend Roaf, Mr Gould, William Clarke, Thomas Gibbons, Henry Gibbons and Mr Moore. ‘Board of Health’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 9 November 1831.

[22] ‘Board of Health’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 4 April 1832.

[23] Ward, ‘Observations upon Cholera’. In fact, it was the nearby town of Bilston, rather than Wolverhampton, that suffered some of the worst effects of the cholera outbreak – 732 people died, some five per cent of the town’s population, in just eight weeks in 1832. A similar toll was seen in 1849. See for example Norman Longmate, *King Cholera: Biography of a Disease* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1966), 107–18.

[24] James Turner – Secretary to the Board of Health in Greenock – wrote to the town to inform them that James Bissell, a brush-seller and resident of Wolverhampton, had contracted the disease in their district: ‘Editorial’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 25 July 1832. Cholera had been declared in Dudley in early April 1832 but was quickly refuted. The first substantiated case locally was a boatman in the canal village of Coven in June, and throughout June the disease ravaged Dudley, then surrounding towns including Brierley Hill, Tipton, Stourbridge and Bilston, which was the worst-hit of all. ‘Board of Health’, 4 April 1832; John Roberts, ‘To the Editor of the Wolverhampton Chronicle’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 4 April 1832, sec. Letters; ‘News’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 20 June 1832; ‘Alarming Progress of the Cholera’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 18 July 1832; Jones, Son & Foster, ‘The Cholera’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 12 September 1832, sec. Letters; Ward, ‘Observations upon Cholera’.

itself were in a lodging-house in North Street in July: a young man and an old woman, both of whom had been to other, worse-hit, towns during the day.[25] Cholera reached Canal Street in August: the first fatal case there was “a boy, who had been wandering about the country for work,” who died in a lodging house on 8 August. Ward’s statistics were rudimentary, but the boy was one of an eventual 193 cholera deaths from 578 cases over the next months. Ward made sure to highlight the transience and mobility of the diseased, placing them outside the jurisdiction of local government and associating them with the deviance and difference of the outsider and vagrant.[26]

Ward identified two key predisposing factors for cholera, which reveal the connection between morality, disease and space in his analysis: “the habits and state of mind of the patients, and the locality of their houses.”[27] In one unnamed part of town he condemned a row of 23 houses “inhabited by many families of a dissolute character,” where the disease spread rapidly.[28] He was not alone in drawing moral judgements: Reverend Roaf spotted an increase in cases on Sunday and Monday, which he presumed to “partly arise from the

[25] Jones, Son & Foster, ‘The Cholera’.
[26] Adam Hansen, ‘Exhibiting Vagrancy, 1851: Victorian London and the “Vagabond Savage”’, *Literary London: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Representation of London* 2, no. 2 (2004), http://literarylondon.org/the-literary-london-journal/archive-of-the-literary-london-journal/issue-2-2/exhibiting-vagrancy-1851-victorian-london-and-the-vagabond-savage/; M. A. Crowther, ‘The Tramp’, in *Myths of the English*, ed. Roy Porter (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 92–113; Raphael Samuel, ‘Comers and Goers’, in *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, ed. H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 1973), 123–60.
[27] Ward, ‘Observations upon Cholera’, 374. Ward would thus likely have supported the suggestions of ‘Sobrius’ in late August, that “drunkenness is one of the chief predisposing causes of Cholera”: Sobrius, ‘To the Editor of the Wolverhampton Chronicle’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 29 August 1832, sec. Letters.
[28] Ward, ‘Observations upon Cholera’, 375.

irregularities in which many indulge after receiving their weekly wages.”[29] Already moral and medical explanations were colliding.

Ward placed the blame firmly on the poor and their spaces. He described the lower end of Darlington Street, for example, as damp and exposed to drains and stagnant, filthy water: this was a cholera hotspot. The other place was Carribee Island, which provides an example of how the attention of the medical profession came to focus on certain small areas. The description built on many tropes of poor urban neighbourhoods: its filth (a subject that would come to be central to sanitary science); its narrowness and dead ends (signifying both lack of air and lack of escape); standing water with human waste; and, particularly, its “low Irish.”[30]

In his picture of the transient English, Ward picked out certain mobile, dangerous and already stigmatised subjects like travelling sellers and boat people, and sites of mobility like canals and lodging houses.[31] But he did not make this distinction for the Irish, generalising them all as “low.” Wolverhampton had just a small Irish population in 1831, consisting of a few settled families and an annual influx of seasonal workers for the harvest, who often stayed in lodgings in the town. This framing drew on the longstanding stereotype of the Irish as a rootless, wandering race, compared to the stable, settled Anglo-Saxon.[32] Yet it also associated them

[29] Jones, Son & Foster, ‘The Cholera’. Roaf was referring to the common Black Country working-class practice of “Saint Monday,” where workers would extend the celebration of the weekend (and the recovery from it) into Monday or even Tuesday. Douglas A. Reid, ‘The Decline of Saint Monday 1766-1876’, *Past & Present*, no. 71 (1976): 76–101.

[30] Ward, ‘Observations upon Cholera’, 376. On “filth,” and particularly its appropriation by public health professionals operating in post-cholera Britain, see Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice*, 224–27.

[31] Samuel, ‘Comers and Goers’. Boat people in particular were a stigmatised population. See Wendy Jane Freer, ‘Canal Boat People, 1840-1970’ (PhD, Nottingham, University of Nottingham, 1991).

[32] Jim Mac Laughlin, ‘“Pestilence on Their Backs, Famine in Their Stomachs”: The Racial Construction of Irishness and the Irish in Britain’, in *Ireland and Cultural Theory: The Mechanics of Authenticity*, ed. Colin Graham and Richard Kirkland (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 50–76.

with distinct, fixed problem spaces within the town. It was no surprise to Ward that the “lowest Irish” lived in the unhealthiest parts of town.

Surveying Wolverhampton’s health, 1839-47

The catastrophic arrival of cholera did not prompt the early flurry of medical activity in Wolverhampton that other towns witnessed in the 1830s.[33] A general survey of public health was only initiated in response to a request seven years later from Edwin Chadwick: architect of the new Poor Law, which used shame and stigmatisation as its methodology, now charged with an inquiry into the sanitary conditions of Britain’s towns.[34] Wolverhampton’s Poor Law Union received a questionnaire in 1839 containing copies of model reports on London’s East End by Chadwick’s associates JP Kay, Neil Arnott and Thomas Southwood Smith.[35] Chadwick instructed investigators to visit schools to find where the sickest children lived, then visit their homes.[36] Already, these reports focused on domestic representations of ill health rather than, say, industrial health or poverty wages. For all its beneficial effects, this made the Victorian focus on epidemic disease as the primary public health risk inevitable.

Wolverhampton’s questionnaire was completed by John Dehane, one of five medical officers appointed under poor law legislation.[37] A clergyman’s son, he studied at St Andrew’s and practised at Middlesex Hospital before helping to found Wolverhampton Dispensary in 1821.

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[33] Christopher Hamlin, ‘Muddling in Bumbledon: On the Enormity of Large Sanitary Improvements in Four British Towns’, *Victorian Studies* 32, no. 1 (1988): 55–83.
[34] Imogen Tyler, *Stigma: The Machinery of Inequality* (London: Zed Books, 2020), 68.
[35] Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice*, 85–86; Joshi, ‘Edwin Chadwick’s Self-Fashioning’.
[36] Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 119. See also Joshi, ‘Edwin Chadwick’s Self-Fashioning’.
[37] ‘Wolverhampton Union - Medical Contracts’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 14 March 1838.

His brother Edward Francis followed him to Middlesex and Wolverhampton. By 1839, John Dehane was probably the Union’s most prominent Medical Officer.[38] He collated reports from colleagues, which were submitted to Parliament as part of a wide-ranging collection of Local Reports in July 1842, and published simultaneously in the *WC*.[39] The reports, and Dehane’s summary, are far from comprehensive – as Dehane recognised, few public health statistics were collected, and he was compelled to “append some facts” in the form of verbatim reports. The result was impressionistic, giving each officer the opportunity to represent their own district as particularly worthy of attention. Frequently, the link was made between the environment and its occupants: in Salop Street for example, Coleman reported that the “very small, ill-constructed tenements [were] very filthy, and chiefly occupied by the very lowest of the people, together with vagrants, mendicants, and other characters of a similar description.”[40]

Dispensary physician James Gatis reported on Stafford Street.[41] He made the most use of statistics, identifying 134 cases of fever in 1838-39, of which 49 were from Carribee Island. “In one house in Carribee Isle,” he recorded:

> I had no less than eight cases of typhus fever at the same time; indeed, it assumed so threatening a character that I considered it my duty to inform

[38] *The Medical Directory for Scotland* (London: John Churchill, 1853), 141; ‘Obituary’, *The Gentleman’s Magazine and Historical Review,* 192 (November 1852): 441–552.
[39] J. Dehane, ‘On the Sanitary Condition of the Town of Wolverhampton’ (London: W. Clowes & Sons, 1842); Dehane, ‘On the Sanitary Condition of the Town of Wolverhampton’, 16 November 1842.
[40] E. H. Coleman in Dehane, ‘On the Sanitary Condition of the Town of Wolverhampton’, 1842.
[41] James Gatis was born in Cockermouth, Cumberland and moved to Wolverhampton Dispensary in 1834. ‘Obituary: James Gatis’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 16 March 1872.

> the guardians that unless some steps were immediately taken for the removal of the cause we should soon have the whole neighbourhood infected with the disease…
>
> Another great cause, in my opinion, of fever assuming so severe a character in this locality is the crowded state in which they live, several families residing in the same house; there is also great want of cleanliness in their persons, together with extreme poverty, not having the necessary articles of subsistence.[42]

Gatis’s detailed descriptions, case studies and statistical support drew the attention of readers, both in Parliament and among Wolverhampton’s news-reading public, to this area’s poverty, overcrowding and disease. They were corroborated by Gatis’s colleague RW Mason, who confirmed that most cases of fever he had visited occurred in Carribee Island.[43] Other locations were mentioned – Salop Street, Brick-kiln Street, Graiseley Row, Walsall Street – but the reporting was generalised and unspecific by comparison. JT Cartwright, reporting on western Wolverhampton, had even managed to mislay an entire quarter’s worth of reports. Between them, these medical men were creating a body of knowledge which was crucial to national understandings of public health, yet imbued with local understandings, agendas, and spatial prejudices.[44] Their reports enabled a certain section of liberal-minded, middle-class

[42] Dehane, ‘On the Sanitary Condition of the Town of Wolverhampton’, 16 November 1842.
[43] Dehane, ‘On the Sanitary Condition of the Town of Wolverhampton’, 1842.
[44] Crook notes: “Statistics were of general, translocal application, a quality noted and promoted from the start. Particular facts were just that, specific to particular places; but they were also part of a global framework of

public to become conversant with spaces and people that were defined as different to their norm.[45] However, although a number of other reports to Chadwick dwelt on the Irish as a problem, Wolverhampton’s Irish population was sufficiently small to evade mention in 1840. The groundwork for such characterisations had been laid in the 1830s, but would not come to fruition until later in the decade. These pre-Famine years represented a period when the characterisation of the Irish in Wolverhampton was still unfixed.

The immediate effect of Chadwick’s report was to prompt a Royal Commission on the Health of Towns, commencing in May 1843. Commissioner RA Slaney, a Shropshire landowner and former MP (who had undertaken a sanitary tour of the Black Country in 1842), had read Dehane’s report, and visited Wolverhampton that August for an inquiry and tour of Wolverhampton’s “worst and most neglected parts of town,” nominated by local committee.[46] He was scathing on Wolverhampton’s condition. Drainage, water supply and waste removal were all poor, and the town lacked public walks or bathing places for the poor. Slaney cited Dehane’s (and Chadwick’s) spatial and environmental argument that “fevers are not prevalent, but occur in those parts of the town where sewers are imperfect, or not introduced at all.” It would, he thought, lead to “immoral results.”[47] Like Wolverhampton

knowledge, to the extent that these facts could enter into geographical comparisons of any given phenomenon, should it be suitably classified.” Crook, *Governing Systems*, 64–66.

[45] Anne Hardy, *The Epidemic Streets: Infectious Diseases and the Rise of Preventive Medicine, 1856-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 5.

[46] Slaney recorded the visits in his diaries. In 1842 he “visited myself the worst parts of Wolverhampton, Bilston, Wedgbury, Darlaston, and Dudley”; in 1843, “large committees, headed by the authorities gave me their assurances after visiting and inspecting the worst and most neglected parts of each town.” Robert Aglionby Slaney, ‘Diaries of R. A. Slaney’, 1842, 6003/7, Shropshire Archives, February 1842; ‘Diaries of R. A. Slaney’, 1843, 6003/9, Shropshire Archives, 30 July 1843.

[47] Slaney was on-and-off Whig MP for Shrewsbury between 1826 and 1862, and a founder member of the Health of Towns Association. He had been responsible for the 1840 Select Committee on the Health of Towns – Chadwick

medics, Slaney’s commentary isolated and bounded places like Carribee Island: by separating off an area already noted as a problem, respectable Wulfrunians could accept proposed solutions more easily, and need not worry about making any more fundamental societal changes.

During the 1832 cholera outbreak, the cause of the outbreak was much debated. One Wolverhampton correspondent summed up a widely held opinion: “WANT has much more to do with the production of Cholera than dirt.”[48] But this viewpoint barely survived the decade. During the 1830s and early 1840s, investigators mapped fever, morality and class onto residential neighbourhood. The foundations for race to play its part were also established in this period. These experts identified and condemned distinct urban districts, formalising what were in reality fluid and permeable borders. Their understanding of the world, with all their privileges, meant that they framed disease as a result of environment, exacerbated by the poor moral and economic choices of residents of certain problem areas. The idea that poverty was the leading cause of disease would have proved too serious a challenge to the dominant economic and political world-view of these experts, and their spatial conceptions and solutions were led by this ontology.[49] By aligning themselves with these ascendant ideas, this new public health constituency made claims for its own authority and expertise to lead

dismissed its report as “offhand and easy generalities” in contrast to his own. Robert Aglionby Slaney, *Report on the State of Birmingham and Other Large Towns* (London: W. Clowes & Sons, 1845); Longmate, *King Cholera*, 147,150.

[48] Jones, Son & Foster, ‘The Cholera’.

[49] Lefebvre notes that outside conceptions of space dominate, and are invariably led by a world view in which property and capitalist relations dominate. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 38–39.

understandings of urban space. These spatial characterisations did productive work, reinforcing sanitary, moral and social principles using space as the lesson.

Constructing the Irish as a health concern, 1847-49

> The population of the district, which is of a migratory character, and fluctuating in its numbers, may be from about 1,100 to 1,500, and is chiefly composed of Irish labourers and their families, driven here by the late scarcity in their own country, with the view of begging or obtaining such employment as the town and neighbouring works afford.[50]

1847 was the turning point in these spatial characterisations. After two years of failed crops in Ireland, hunger and fever prompted mass emigration on an unprecedented scale.[51] In towns across the country, new Irish communities grew up; in Wolverhampton, Famine refugees filled lodging-houses and Irish homes in the Stafford Street area particularly. For them, the migration experience was one of “displacement, dislocation and relocation.”[52] For the experts, the appearance of this distinct Other on local soil provided an opportunity to stigmatise and racialise the Irish. In this discourse, Wolverhampton’s Irish changed from a small, disparate group into a homogeneous mass, the town’s ‘low Irish’: their space changed from a typical poor, insanitary district, into an Irish quarter.

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[50] J. Dehane, ‘Sanitary Condition of a District in Wolverhampton’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 11 December 1847.
[51] For the most detailed account of 1847 in British and Irish history, see Frank Neal, *Black ’47: Britain and the Famine Irish* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998). On the typhus fever epidemic of that year and its relationship to Irish immigration, see Lewis Darwen et al., ‘“Irish Fever” in Britain during the Great Famine: Immigration, Disease and the Legacy of “Black ”47’’, *Irish Historical Studies* 44, no. 166 (2020): 270–94.
[52] David Delaney describes these as key factors in the construction of race. ‘The Space That Race Makes’, *The Professional Geographer* 54, no. 1 (2002): 6–14.

2. “A very hotbed of disease and pestilence”

The principle of a problematic “Irish quarter” was not new.[53] The stigmatisation of Irish spaces in industrial cities found its fullest early expression in an 1832 pamphlet on Manchester by JP Kay. Kay’s argument, that the Irish exerted a “contagious example” which demoralised and degraded the English working classes, was based on his study of Manchester’s Little Ireland district during the first cholera outbreak there, and proved especially influential.[54] The idea found occasional expression in the 1836 report on the State Of The Irish Poor In Great Britain (examples were given by Catholic clergymen in towns including Liverpool, Wigan, and some Scottish towns).[55] But it was not until Chadwick’s inquiry that Kay’s influence became evident, and his concept of the Irish quarter as insanitary and diseased became widespread.[56] Local experts pointed out Irish neighbourhoods as problems in towns ranging from Birmingham and Liverpool to small cotton towns like Broughton, Lancashire, where a “colony of Irish” was the believed source of typhus.[57] In Carlisle, little separation of the Irish was observed in 1836, but by 1840 it had its own Irish district at Damside, suggesting that such areas were being brought

[53] On the phenomenon of the Irish quarter, see particularly Graham Davis, *The Irish in Britain: 1815-1914* (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1991), 51–82; Mervyn Austen Busteed, ‘“The Most Horrible Spot”? The Legend of Manchester’s Little Ireland’, *Irish Studies Review* 4, no. 13 (1995): 12–20.

[54] James Phillips Kay, *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester.* (London: James Ridgway, 1832), 6, 12, 22–23.

[55] Royal Commission into the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland, ‘Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland: Appendix G: State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain’, P. P. (40), xxxiv (H. M. Stationery Office, 1836).

[56] Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working-Class in England in 1844* (1845; repr., London: Grafton, 1969), 96; Léon Faucher, *Manchester in 1844: Its Present Condition and Future Prospects* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1844), 65; Richard Baron Howard, ‘On the Prevalence of Diseases Arising from Contagion, Malaria, and Certain Other Physical Causes amongst the Labouring Classes in Manchester’, in *Local Reports on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of England* (London: W. Clowes & Son Ltd., 1842), 322; Lyon Playfair, *Report on the State of Large Towns in Lancashire* (London: W. Clowes & Sons, 1845), 33.

[57] *Local Reports on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of England* (W. Clowes & Son Ltd., 1842), 269.

into being, in some cases at least, through the power of medical discourse alone.[58] Liverpool’s WH Duncan was the most scathing, blaming the Irish substantially for the city’s fever as well as reciting arguments about their degrading influence on living standards from Kay’s report.[59]

In Wolverhampton, this construction really began when the destitute famine influx arrived in 1847, bringing with them an outbreak of typhus that threatened to overwhelm local provision.[60] Following a report of a routine Guardian’s inspection of the vagrant ward, the *WC* described “the lower class of lodging houses in Stafford-street, Salop-street, and some other places [as] regular *foci* of fever… a large and lasting source of disease.”[61] John Dehane was moved to visit Stafford Street (with Edward Dehane and Cartwright) to report on its Irish “inmates” for the Town Commissioners.[62] He wrote to the *WC* shortly after explaining how, “when so many parts of the town are thronged with Irish vagrants in a state of destitution, I was led to visit some of the places where they are principally located.”[63] In his report in May 1847, the medical man stated the widely held view of the Stafford Street area bluntly:

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[58] Royal Commission into the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland, ‘State of the Irish Poor’, 159; Sir John Walsham, ‘Second Report on the State of the Dwellings of the Labouring Classes in Cumberland, Durham, Northumberland, and Westmoreland’, in *Local Reports on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of England* (W. Clowes & Son Ltd., 1842), 416–29. As Jacob Steere-Williams notes, “Public health in Victorian Britain… can usefully be conceived in terms of rhetoric and public persuasion.” Steere-Williams, *The Filth Disease*, 11.

[59] Kay, *Moral and Physical Condition*; Poovey, *Making a Social Body*, 55–72.

[60] As Darwen *et al*. have noted, the malnutrition and overcrowded flight of the famine refugees provided a perfect incubation ground for typhus in 1847. Although typhus arrived with the Irish, it took the overcrowded, poverty-stricken conditions of British towns and cities to become an epidemic. Poor Law officers in Wolverhampton spent the year building temporary fever sheds and worrying about the cost of maintaining the sick, with many hundreds of excess cases. Darwen et al., ‘“Irish Fever” in Britain during the Great Famine’; Board of Guardians, ‘Board of Guardians Minute Book’ (Wolverhampton Poor Law Union, 20 August 1847), PU-WOL/A/6, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

[61] ‘The Board of Guardians’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 19 May 1847.

[62] J. Dehane, ‘To the Editor of the Wolverhampton Chronicle’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 19 May 1847, sec. Letters; ‘Health of the Town’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 2 June 1847.

[63] Dehane, ‘To the Editor of the Wolverhampton Chronicle’; ‘Sanitary State of Some Parts of Wolverhampton’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 29 May 1847.

2. “A very hotbed of disease and pestilence”

> It is well known that of all the districts into which the town is divided, that forming Carribbee Island and Cole’s Croft is the worst – the houses are small, admit of little ventilation, and are crowded with inmates, generally the lowest Irish poor. The drains and privies from being open taint and pollute the atmosphere, and are consequently a constant source of disease.[64]

Dehane drew on the same contradiction as Ward in 1834. For him, the Irish combined both the fear of mobility and transience – they were “beggars” and “vagrants” – with the fear of their settlement in a place that became a focal point for disease. The Irish represented a “ready-made nucleus of degradation and disorder” implanted into British towns, and both their mobility and their settlement were sources of anxiety.[65]

Dehane’s description of the area was immediately understood, but attempts to remove “many tons of filth” by the Town Commissioners appeared futile. The horror of the space was again used as a means of separating Irish Others from the respectable citizens of the town. According to Town Commissioner Langman, “it was impossible for anyone to live in parts of it, and be well: the filth and stench were dreadful.”[66] The idea that certain spaces were unbearable was common, but laden with class privilege – residents had to bear it. This also fit the longstanding stereotype that the Irish preferred to live in such conditions. When the attention of the owner of Coles Croft, Francis Wood Smallwood, was brought to its

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[64] ‘Health of the Town’.

[65] Thomas Carlyle, *Chartism* (London: James Fraser, 1840). Cited in Amy E. Martin, ‘Blood Transfusions: Constructions of Irish Racial Difference, the English Working Class, and Revolutionary Possibility in the Work of Carlyle and Engels’, *Victorian Literature and Culture* 32, no. 1 (2004): 83–102.

[66] ‘Wolverhampton Poor Law Union’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 7 July 1847; ‘Wolverhampton Commissioners’ Meeting’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 11 September 1847.

environmental condition, he was swift to abdicate responsibility (see chapter six). He blamed his tenants: “the fact was the Irish had got possession of the place, and there was no removing them, nor was it possible to keep the place in the order desired.”[67] Not long after, Dispensary physician WA Lewis spoke at the Athenaeum and resorted to similar stereotypes:

> Irish navvies… seem to prefer dirt and filth, even if they might have cleanliness for the same price… Many of them are people of the worst class, and the most forbidding characters and manners, and whose haunts and habits are only known to the police.[68]

Lewis’s argument was that *place* was the causal link where “disease and vice go hand in hand.” Such language not only suggested that the Irish preferred squalor, but played on fears of Irish temperament, disorder and morality that would be frequently layered on the area in years to come.

Dehane published his findings nationally in December 1847.[69] He framed his article explicitly: the first sentence announced that he would be discussing “the effect of the generally denominated “Irish fever” upon particular districts of this place.”[70] This was typically typhus, a “disease of social dislocation” then endemic in a stricken Ireland – Reverend Owen had used the name in a lecture earlier in the year.[71] Dehane had few qualms isolating the Stafford Street

[67] Board of Guardians, ‘Board of Guardians Minute Book’; ‘Wolverhampton Poor Law Union’.
[68] ‘Wolverhampton Athenaeum: The Sanitary State of the Town’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 26 January 1848.
[69] Dehane, ‘Sanitary Condition of a District in Wolverhampton’.
[70] Dehane.
[71] Neal, *Black ’47*, 123–56; Anne Hardy, ‘Urban Famine or Urban Crisis? Typhus in the Victorian City’, *Medical History* 32, no. 04 (1988): 401–25; ‘Wolverhampton Athenaeum’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 12 May 1847.

area, and provided stark statistical evidence (much improved from the rudimentary figures a few years before) to justify this: 700 out of 1,000 fever cases in the town were from this neighbourhood; and the estimated 7,000 who lived in the area over the course of a year (given the transient nature of its population, estimated at 1,400 at any one time) sent 600 other disease cases to the Union, compared to 400 from the town’s remaining 33,000. In describing the transience of this area without applying the same analysis to other parts of Wolverhampton, Dehane glossed over the fact that all working-class areas were highly transient.[72] In his interpretation, it further emphasised the difference of the Irish. Fever “having been imported,” he decided, “the extension of the disease is to be traced to a local origin.” Irish transience and settlement were again marked out as distinctive.

Dehane’s language was spatialised, and easily slipped from medical to moral or national fears:

> It ought not, perhaps, to be assumed that the ‘Irish fever’ owes its existence to such pernicious neighbourhoods, but how frightfully when the disease has once appeared have they nurtured and propagated it, the instance before us decidedly proves… Surely such plague spots ought not to defile the towns of an intelligent nation![73]

Dehane presented Carribee Island as an unhealthy, disorderly space “a few hundred yards only removed from the Collegiate Church,” in juxtaposition to the healthy, orderly English

[72] Colin Pooley, ‘Residential Mobility in the Victorian City’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 4, no. 2 (1979): 258–77.
[73] Dehane, ‘Sanitary Condition of a District in Wolverhampton’.

middle-class urban space: a spatialised ‘us and them.’[74] This contrast of grand with squalid, honourable with dishonourable, marked that space out as different from normal, altogether too close to the centre of Wolverhampton’s established urban culture. The Collegiate Church of St Peter’s stood for all the traditions of established urban governance: churchwardens elected from the town’s elites, inherited pews, and as a Collegiate church, Wolverhampton’s independence and self-importance.[75]

Dehane’s language also reveals a complex backdrop of imperial anxieties and conflicted understandings of the processes and ethics of empire. He concludes that “were it desirable to propagate fever, and decimate a town or neighbourhood, it seems necessary only to introduce a few colonies of the kind described.”[76] Having already invoked ‘nation,’ the use of ‘colony’ is telling here. Dehane perhaps had Britain’s own colonial activity in mind, in which a small dose of Britishness was expected to have significant impact on uncivilised masses. Alternatively, Carribee Island may have represented a small but potent element of the Irish nation: the unruly, unhealthy limb in the British social body, manifesting itself on the streets

[74] Dehane. Alan Mayne highlights language like “Within a stone’s throw” used to similar effect by J. Cuming Walters in Birmingham. A. J. C. Mayne, *The Imagined Slum: Newspaper Representation in Three Cities, 1870-1914* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993), 155. See also Bruce G. Link and Jo C. Phelan, ‘Conceptualizing Stigma’, *Annual Review of Sociology* 27, no. 1 (2001): 363–85.

[75] St Peter’s was a Saxon foundation, part of a charter endowed by Lady Wulfrun (from whom Wolverhampton gained its name), and likely dating from at least 994CE. It dominates the town’s skyline still, overlooking the centre of town including the former marketplace at High Green. Collegiate churches were an ancient institution independent from the local diocese, in this case Lichfield. St Peter’s independence was at this point being undermined, however, from evangelical and political pressure without, and absentee clergy and reputational problems within. The Deanery was wound up in 1846 and the Collegiate structure abolished in 1848. G. C. Baugh et al., *A History of the County of Stafford*, ed. M. W. Greenslade and R. B. Pugh, vol. 3 (London: Victoria County History, 1970), 321–31, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/staffs/vol3. On churchwardens in Victorian politics, see John Butland Smith, ‘The Governance of Wolverhampton 1848-1888’ (PhD, Leicester, University of Leicester, 2001), 151.

[76] Dehane, ‘Sanitary Condition of a District in Wolverhampton’.

of Wolverhampton.[77] Dehane did not go so far as to explicitly separate the Irish as a race, but was not the only medic to make an association between exotic disease and the barbarity of those from whom it was deemed to originate.[78] John Simon famously ascribed cholera to the “magnificent filth” of the “native village” in India; Horatio Jameson linked it with the “black blood” of Ethiopians; even Charles Dickens described Jacob’s Island as “the very capital of cholera, the Jessore of London.”[79] The presence of Irish settlements in English streets revealed the anxiety and strain on understandings of Britain that empire produced locally. Both the “plague spot” and its Irish residents were therefore problems not just of public health, but of citizenship and belonging. Without resorting to direct slurs, Dehane had drawn on discourses of race, respectability and citizenship to build a picture of Wolverhampton where an Irish quarter represented medical, social and moral problems potentially damaging to the town.

Robert Rawlinson’s Inquiry, 1849

The Borough of Wolverhampton was incorporated in 1848, giving it the power – and with its high death rate the justification – to apply to Chadwick’s 1848 Public Health Act.[80]

[77] Jim Mac Laughlin notes that “Ireland, and especially ‘offshoots’ of it in Victorian Britain, were seen as places that had to be controlled and dominated by the British state because they were believed to be populated by a different species.” Mac Laughlin, ‘“Pestilence on Their Backs”’.

[78] David Sibley notes that in the nineteenth century, “Disease represented a threat of contagion, often a coded term for racial mixing.” In his analysis, places considered to be sources of contagion serve as “convenient depositories for threatening disease and diseased others.” David Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West* (London: Psychology Press, 1995), 25.

[79] Jessore is present-day Jashore in south-western Bangladesh, and was considered the starting point in 1817 of the cholera pandemic which eventually reached Britain in 1831. O’Connor, *Raw Material*, 37–46.

[80] As an incorporated Borough, the new local authority immediately became the Local Board Health, responsible for drainage, water, nuisance removal and paving. However, the Act also stipulated that any town with a death rate above 23 per 1,000 was required to set up a Local Board: Wolverhampton’s death rate averaged 27 across

2. "A very hotbed of disease and pestilence"

Wolverhampton received its first independent, systematic public health review in February 1849. The General Board of Health inspector Robert Rawlinson (a civil engineer rather than medical professional, highlighting the infrastructural solutions favoured by Chadwick) was appointed to oversee the inquiry into Wolverhampton's health.[81] The *WC*'s verbatim report related the events in much greater detail than Rawlinson's published account. Witnesses included familiar faces like Gatis, Coleman and Cartwright, supplemented by clergymen like Owen and George Fraser of St Mary's, Stafford Street, and Colonel Gilbert Hogg, head of the new police force (see chapter three). The presumed link between vice and disease was seldom far from the surface. This inquiry also saw the stigmatisation of Irish spaces become the widespread, accepted explanation for the environmental condition of Stafford Street.

Stafford Street featured prominently in proceedings, and the Irish were a constant in testimonies. Coleman picked out this neighbourhood as a district where fever was "rarely absent," while Gatis was quoted:

> Many parts of the towns were overcrowded. Many of the lower classes had no conveniences: some houses had conveniences common to many houses, but these were generally rendered useless, because there were no means of regularly removing the refuse. There were a great many Irish in some parts of the town, and he thought that unless they were compelled by some means to use conveniences they would not do so, even if they were provided for

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the Borough, rising to 32 in the less-prosperous eastern district. George J. Barnsby, *A History of Housing in Wolverhampton, 1750 to 1975* (Wolverhampton: Integrated Publishing Services, 1975), 18.

[81] 'Inquiry into the Sanitary State of Wolverhampton', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 7 February 1849.

> them… In my own buildings I know that when there are places provided they will not use them.[82]

Gatis drew on well-recognised tropes. It was widely believed that the Irish preferred to live in filthy, overcrowded conditions, with a pig in the house and a dungheap under the window, and were unsuited to modern or urban society.[83] Waterworks engineer Henry Marten used similarly subjective language:

> …a collection of the most squalid looking houses, on the north side of Stafford-street, inhabited by the lowest class of Irish. A passage about 100 yards in length and three or four wide leads into the heart of this loathsome neighbourhood… In Back-lane an owner of numerous small houses complained to me that his agent was in the habit of allowing in houses of two or three rooms, a miscellaneous collection of twenty or twenty-one Irish to reside. His objection was that it tended so rapidly to destroy his property.[84]

For Marten as for Smallwood in 1847, it was Irish habits to blame for the degradation of property.

Isaac Fellows, Poor Law Union clerk, also provided “much valuable information,” including tabular data showing how fever cases mapped onto outdoor relief (figure 2.1).[85] But data

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[82] ‘Inquiry into the Sanitary State of Wolverhampton’. On Gatis’s property holding see ‘Lease and Release (Attested Copy) Re a Piece or Parcel of Land in Wolverhampton on the South Side of a Newly Laid out Street Called Merridale Street’, 21 August 1835, DX-29/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[83] Joseph Nugent, ‘The Human Snout: Pigs, Priests, and Peasants in the Parlor’, *The Senses and Society* 4, no. 3 (2009): 283–301.
[84] ‘Inquiry into the Sanitary State of Wolverhampton’.
[85] ‘Inquiry into the Sanitary State of Wolverhampton’.

were not simply data: the impression of scientific impartiality was betrayed in Fellows’ annotations. He noted Carribee Island, Coles Croft, Castle Place and Stafford Street as “all Irish stations” (a phrase repeated in Rawlinson’s report) and explained the spike in fever in 1847 with an asterisk: “Of these many were Irish immigrants.”[86] Different types of data from many different sources were all made to point to the Irish not as victims, but as culprits.

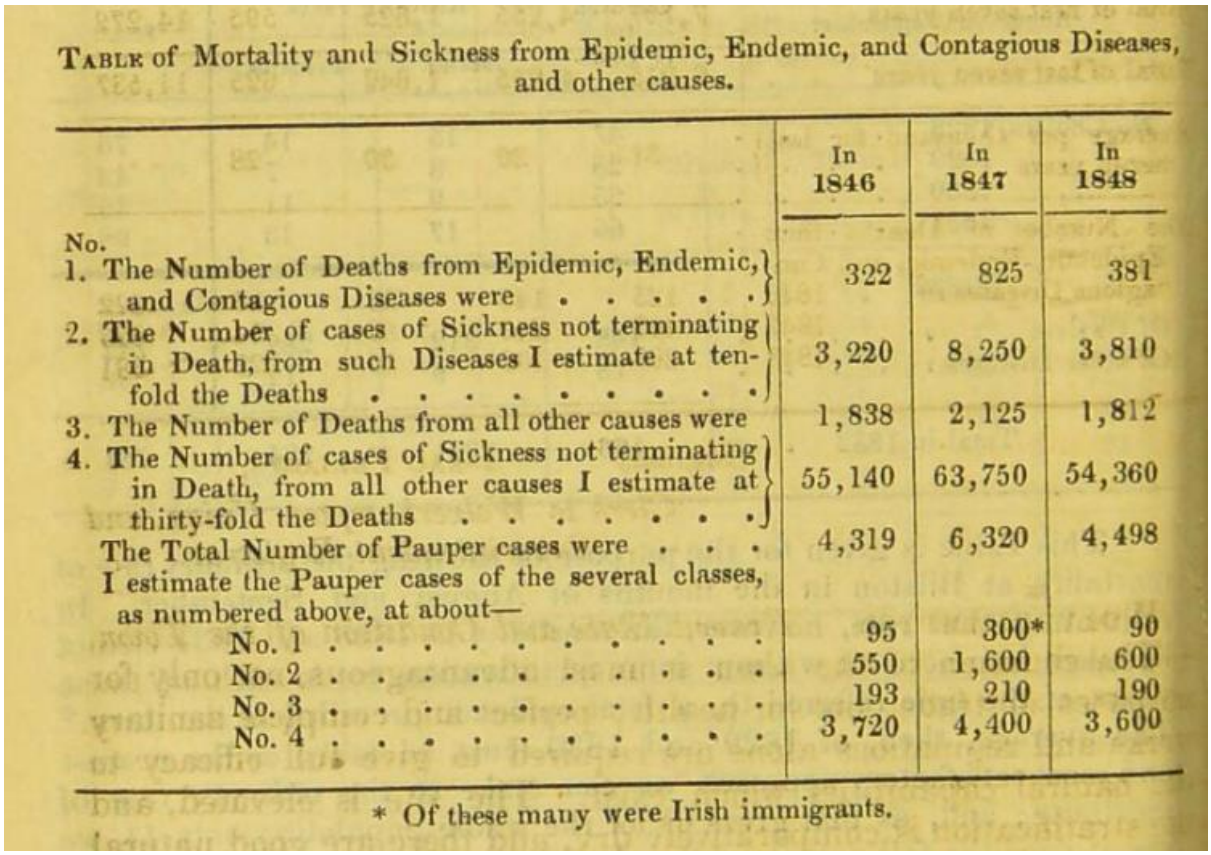


TABLE of Mortality and Sickness from Epidemic, Endemic, and Contagious Diseases, and other causes.

No.		In 1846	In 1847	In 1848
1.	The Number of Deaths from Epidemic, Endemic, and Contagious Diseases were	322	825	381
2.	The Number of cases of Sickness not terminating in Death, from such Diseases I estimate at ten-fold the Deaths	3,220	8,250	3,810
3.	The Number of Deaths from all other causes were	1,838	2,125	1,812
4.	The Number of cases of Sickness not terminating in Death, from all other causes I estimate at thirty-fold the Deaths	55,140	63,750	54,360
	The Total Number of Pauper cases were	4,319	6,320	4,498
	I estimate the Pauper cases of the several classes, as numbered above, at about—			
	No. 1	95	300*	90
	No. 2	550	1,600	600
	No. 3	193	210	190
	No. 4	3,720	4,400	3,600

* Of these many were Irish immigrants.

Figure 2.11 Table produced by Isaac Fellows for Robert Rawlinson's inquiry, 1849[87]

[86] ‘Inquiry into the Sanitary State of Wolverhampton’.

[87] Robert Rawlinson, ‘Report to the General Board of Health on a Preliminary Inquiry into the Sewerage, Drainage and Supply of Water, and the Sanitary Conditions of the Inhabitants of the Borough of Wolverhampton, and the Townships of Bilston, Willenhall, and Wednesfield’, Public Health Act (London, 1849), LS/LB614p/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

2. “A very hotbed of disease and pestilence”

The 1830s and 1840s were a period of ascendancy for a particular kind of knowledge in Britain. A generation of medics embraced an interlinked spatial and racial explanation for urban public health problems. Following Chadwick, the likes of Dehane and Gatis identified, condemned and stigmatised poor neighbourhoods in order to separate them from more respectable, healthier neighbourhoods and make them the focus of intervention. Following the arrival into one particular neighbourhood of substantial numbers of poor, sickly Irish refugees, these medics stigmatised that place on racial grounds too. The Irish and their spaces became representatives of the worst environments, morals and behaviours.

In assigning spaces to the Irish and pathologising them, sanitarians and other writers identified the Irish as a locus of contagion, as much a part of the ‘miasma’ of Victorian cities as the dungheap, the overcrowded tenement, or the “poisoned atmosphere.” A spatially-focused solution was coming though. Instead of considering wages, work or malnutrition, as a previous generation had, those following in Chadwick’s train focused on disease and environment. The “pernicious” problem space of Carribee Island was seen as the cradle of racially-stigmatised disease, the perfect environment for its propagation and spread.[88] How this problem should be tackled formed the backdrop for a new era of local governance in Wolverhampton.

[88] Dehane, ‘Sanitary Condition of a District in Wolverhampton’.

2. “A very hotbed of disease and pestilence”

Constructing interventions: 1849-71

> The very track and abiding places of the disease point out to us the course our labours ought to take, and the very spots in which they are most needed… Fever, Immorality, and Crime, also, with index finger, point to the very same localities as hotbeds nurturing them into exuberant existence, and furnishing to them unfailing shelter and the means of growth.[89]

Sanitary knowledge constructed in the first half of the nineteenth century enabled the respectable classes, from clergy to medical professionals, to point fingers at poor neighbourhoods as cradles of “fever, immorality and crime.”[90] Yet this combined knowledge was not used to justify changes to the social order, or even sweeping environmental changes, in the following two decades. Instead, this expertise was used to heap blame on the poor, and particularly the Irish. This stigmatised community played a major part in how public health interventions were put in place before the mid-1870s.

Rawlinson’s inquiry in January 1849 was immediately followed by a second severe episode of cholera. As the town took stock afterwards, the spatially specific miasmas which were held to cause disease were also blamed for immorality and crime. Clergymen, policemen, politicians and civil engineers pointed to how vice was “very much encouraged by dirt and overcrowding”; and to the “absence of cleanliness amongst the inhabitants, that there prevail

[89] ‘Editorial’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 28 November 1849.
[90] ‘Editorial’.

much the largest amount of drunkenness and disorderly conduct.”[91] Stafford Street’s racial stigma loomed large in the way all kinds of treatments were administered. When an Irishman from Castle Place was infected with cholera in 1859, the Sanitary Committee made use of imagined Irish religious superstition by calling out a Catholic priest to calm residents.[92] The Stafford Street Irish were also criticised for resistance to smallpox vaccination.[93] These all drew on Irish stereotypes of disorderliness, irrationality and superstition, which served to highlight their essential Otherness still further.[94] The major responses to Rawlinson’s report that emerged between 1849 and 1875 – regulation, infrastructural development and limited demolition – demonstrated the commonalities in the world-view of Wolverhampton’s governing class. Wolverhampton’s Irish quarter became the political battleground on which

[91] ‘Inquiry into the Sanitary State of Wolverhampton’.

[92] Health of Towns Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 14 July 1859), WOL-C-HOT/2, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; ‘Fatal Case of Asiatic Cholera’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 16 July 1859; ‘Fatal Case of Asiatic Cholera’, *Birmingham Journal*, 16 July 1859; ‘Death from Asiatic Cholera’, *Morning Advertiser*, 18 July 1859; ‘Death from Asiatic Cholera’, *London Daily News*, 18 July 1859; ‘Death from Asiatic Cholera’, *Freeman’s Journal*, 19 July 1859; ‘Death from Asiatic Cholera’, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, 24 July 1859.

[93] ‘Board of Guardians’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 12 September 1863; ‘Wolverhampton Poor Law Union: The Small-Pox in Wolverhampton’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 16 September 1863; ‘Wolverhampton Poor Law Union: Vaccination and Small Pox’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 7 October 1863. Working-class resistance to compulsory vaccination was widespread in Victorian Britain: it was uniquely invasive of healthy bodies, and was administered coercively and unevenly by Poor Law Unions. Historians have not yet explored the place of the Irish in the anti-vaccination movement, though in 1842, Birmingham medics observed a “great repugnance to vaccination” amongst the “low Irish.” Royal Commission into the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland, ‘State of the Irish Poor’; A Committee of Physicians and Surgeons, ‘Report on the Sanitary State of the Labouring Classes in the Borough of Birmingham’, in *Local Reports on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of England* (W. Clowes & Son Ltd., 1842), 198; Nadja Durbach, *Bodily Matters: The Anti-Vaccination Movement in England, 1853–1907* (Raleigh, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 9–10, 76–79; Logie Barrow, ‘Clashing Knowledge-Claims in Nineteenth-Century English Vaccination’, in *Cultural Approaches to the History of Medicine - Mediating Medicine in Early Modern and Modern Europe*, ed. Willem de Blécourt and Cornelie Usborne (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 171–91.

[94] On stereotypes of Irish difference, see for example Michael De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), chap. 1.

these changes were debated, if not enacted. Whether politician, doctor or journalist, the interaction of race and space explained differences in character, morality and citizenship.

Constructing immoral spaces: lodging-houses

One of the key sites where insanitary and immoral conditions blurred in the minds of onlookers was in the common lodging-house, and Rawlinson recommended a full system of licensing and inspection in 1849.[95] Lodging-houses ranged from large, formal affairs to ordinary small houses in which spare rooms and beds could be rented for a few pence per night. These provided an important means for travellers and new immigrants to cope in the city.[96] However, they were widely described by social reformers in terms like “festering mischief,” the scene of “Filth, Dishonesty and Immorality,” as suffocatingly overcrowded, and as sites of promiscuous mixing which transgressed Victorian class, gender, sexual and domestic ideals.[97] Attempts at regulation in mid-nineteenth century Wolverhampton drew on both reality and representation but, like other interventions, provided only a partial solution to the town’s health problems, and one guided by spatial and racial stigma.[98]

Rawlinson’s 1849 inquiry culminated with a tour of inspection. First on the agenda, naturally, was Carribee Island where, in the *WC*’s terms, Rawlinson “found intolerable nuisances and

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[95] Rawlinson, ‘Report on a Preliminary Inquiry into Wolverhampton’, 47.

[96] Carl Chinn, *Poverty amidst Prosperity: The Urban Poor in England, 1834-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 79; Jane Hamlett, *At Home in the Institution: Material Life in Asylums, Lodging Houses and Schools in Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), chap. 5.

[97] Sharon Marcus, *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 104–7.

[98] As Tom Crook notes, the historiography of common lodging houses has been typically been divided into empirical investigations of life in poverty, and cultural investigations into urban representation. Tom Crook, ‘Accommodating the Outcast: Common Lodging Houses and the Limits of Urban Governance in Victorian and Edwardian London’, *Urban History* 35, no. 3 (2008): 414–36.

nests of the fever” caused by the “filthy habits” of the inhabitants. In Rawlinson’s words, the court was a “congregation of ruinous cottages”; in Coleman’s, a “complete fever nest.”[99] Rawlinson’s definition of the “most overcrowded and worst parts of town” specified those with “low lodging-houses,” so the inspection party visited Stafford Street at night, accompanied by Colonel Hogg. They visited twenty to thirty lodging-houses, “but a fraction of the total number existing throughout the town,” and the whole party was shocked. Most beds contained at least three inhabitants, most rooms three or four beds, and in one instance in Carribee Island:

> [T]he eye of the visitor, whilst on a level with the topmost stair, close to a room, was suddenly arrested by the appearance of two heads, which proved to be those of a man and woman who were lying asleep on the floor with half of their bodies underneath a bedstead, and their heads close to the bannister of the staircase.[100]

The inspection party visited one property twice. Initially the keeper objected to the intrusion; on the second, she “appeared anxious to point out how clean her beds were.”[101] For newspaper and inspectors alike, her example was evidence of the benefits of disciplinary inspection leading to self-regulation, and both were keen to present her as exemplifying an

[99] Rawlinson, ‘Report on a Preliminary Inquiry into Wolverhampton’.
[100] ‘Inquiry into the Sanitary State of Wolverhampton, Part Two’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 14 February 1849.
[101] ‘Inquiry into the Sanitary State of Wolverhampton, Part Two’.

improved working-class domesticity.[102] The presence of the police no doubt informed her opinion, highlighting the link between policing and monitoring of domestic environments that would become apparent over the next decades.

“Whitewash, cleanse and purify”

Rawlinson’s findings meant that the Common Lodging-Houses Acts of 1851 found immediate support in Wolverhampton. This was the first legislation to permit entry into, and inspection of, private property in the name of public health – a revolutionary change in the perception of private space that essentially stemmed from a radical redefinition of private property into public.[103] The Acts were intended to aid the building of model lodging-houses on sanitary, regulated lines, and the London-based Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Working Classes did indeed attempt a building programme in Wolverhampton. However, despite a very public launch in 1853, headed by Viscount Ingestre, the local movement made little impact, only managing a group of small houses on the opposite side of town to let for 3s. per week: much higher than Carribee Island and thus out of the reach of the poorest (see chapter six).[104]

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[102] On sanitary inspection as a mode of governance, see particularly Tom Crook, ‘Sanitary Inspection and the Public Sphere in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain: A Case Study in Liberal Governance’, *Social History* 32, no. 4 (2007): 369–93.

[103] Gerry Kearns, ‘Private Property and Public Health Reform in England 1830–1870’, *Social History of Medicine* 26, no. 1 (1988): 187–99; Crook, ‘Sanitary Inspection’.

[104] Barnsby, *Housing*, 9; ‘Improvement of the Dwellings of the Poor’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 30 March 1853; ‘Improvement of the Lodging-Houses of Wolverhampton’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 2 April 1853; ‘Lodging Houses and Dwellings of the Poor’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 6 April 1853. This experience was typical of societies which promoted “philanthropy at five per cent” These societies thrived in London as a potential market-based solution for a widely-perceived problem: it rarely proved possible to provide decent quality housing at a reasonable return and most did not last, nor expand outside of London to any substantial degree. See John Nelson Tarn, *Five Per Cent Philanthropy: An Account of Housing in Urban Areas between 1840 and 1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge

Instead, registration and continually-evolving regulation proved a more popular intervention. In 1852, the Health of Towns Committee agreed a minimum of 240 cubic feet per occupant, and began to “strictly enforce” regulations.[105] Fines were issued for overcrowding, unclean privies and mixing sexes.[106] By 1854, 300 lodging houses were registered in the Borough, growing to 572 in 1857 before settling at around 360 in the mid-1860s.[107] From 1861 the Watch Committee began to minute in detail the name and offences of lodging-house keepers who had transgressed regulations, and inspectors made frequent visits. In early 1861, for instance, Ann Brown’s lodging-house at 19 Canal Street, and Michael McNaughty’s at 12 Castle Place, were both reported to the Watch Committee for overcrowding. When questioned why they did not appear on his reports, the Inspector of Lodging-Houses reported that he had visited each six times in a single fortnight, and not found them crowded.[108] At the census a few weeks later, Brown was down to three lodgers, and McNaughty could not be found.[109] The next year it was reported that of six summons from Court 7, Stafford Street,

University Press, 1973), 31–38. Rents in Carribee Island were around 1s. 3d. (see chapter six, and ‘Condemnation of Dwelling Houses as Unfit for Human Habitation’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 15 May 1861.)

[105] Health of Towns Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 17 September 1852), WOL-C-HOT/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; Health of Towns Committee, ‘Annual Report’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 29 October 1852), WOL-C-HOT/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; Health of Towns Committee, ‘Annual Report’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 3 November 1854), WOL-C-HOT/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

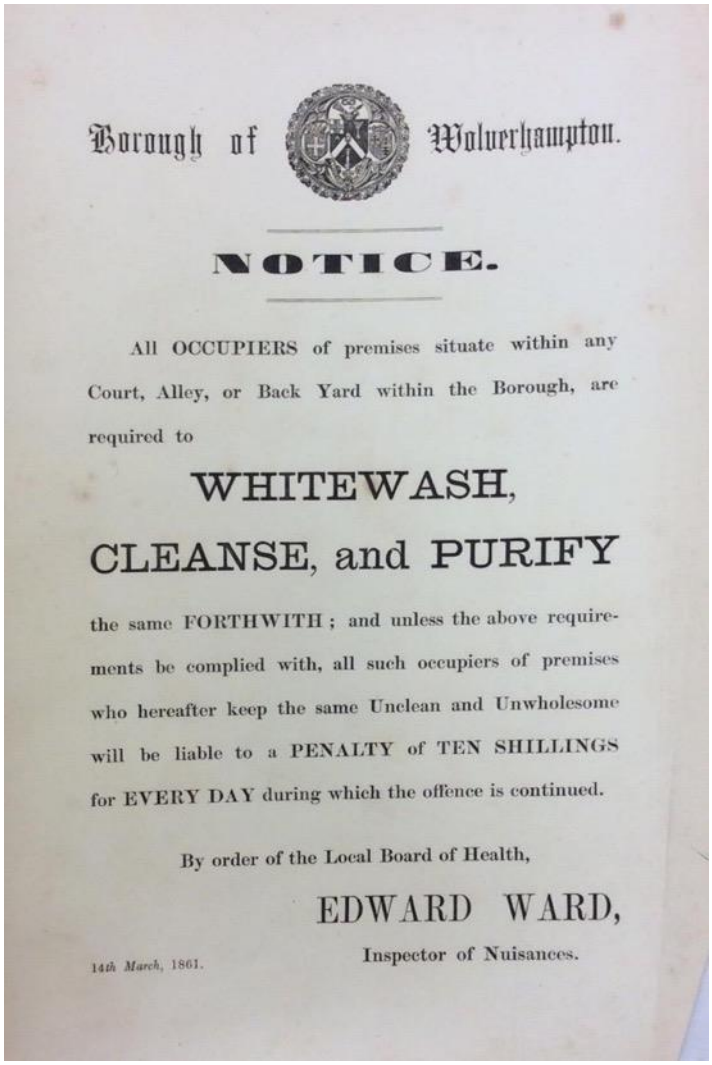
[106] ‘Caution to Lodging-House Keepers’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 22 December 1852; ‘Caution to Lodging-House Keepers’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 21 September 1853.

[107] Watch Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 7 September 1857), WOL-C-WAT/2, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

[108] Watch Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 4 March 1861), WOL-C-WAT/3, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; Watch Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 18 March 1861), WOL-C-WAT/3, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

[109] Wednesbury-born widow Ann Brown was listed as a lodging-house keeper with her family of four, plus three lodgers: John Brown, a Norfolk musician; Charles Bridley, a Wolverhampton-born labourer; and Susan Allcock, a pauper widow from rural Staffordshire. Census return for Wolverhampton, 1861.

three keepers appeared and three left the property.[110] Inspectors had some discretion then, but their presence evidently had its intended disciplinary effect on lodging-house keepers: follow the rules, or close the business.



Borough of Wolverhampton.

NOTICE.

All OCCUPIERS of premises situate within any Court, Alley, or Back Yard within the Borough, are required to

WHITEWASH,

CLEANSE, and PURIFY

the same FORTHWITH; and unless the above requirements be complied with, all such occupiers of premises who hereafter keep the same Unclean and Unwholesome will be liable to a PENALTY of TEN SHILLINGS for EVERY DAY during which the offence is continued.

By order of the Local Board of Health,

EDWARD WARD,

Inspector of Nuisances.

14th March, 1861.

Figure 2.12 Notice of occupiers to Whitewash, Cleanse and Purify, March 1861 (Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies, WOL-C-HOT/3)

By the 1870s, lodging bye-laws reached 31 separate regulations. Proprietors had to be literate: they had to submit a written application to the police with two references from local ratepayers before opening, and daily records of lodgers and fever cases. An expectation of literacy was placed on tenants too: bye-laws with maximum numbers were on display in each room, and defacement was prohibited. There was no longer any semblance of privacy or ordinary domesticity. Lodging-houses must be open to inspectors, police or members of the Corporation at any time (including even before opening), and they could check that strict rules

[110] Watch Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 4 November 1862), WOL-C-WAT/3, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

were being followed: one lodger per 300 cubic feet of air now, no lodging in cellars, maximum two lodgers per bed, and strictly no mixing of sexes (families were exempt from this, despite the regularly-voiced fear of incest among the poor).[111]

The regulatory burden on lodging-house keepers was also costly in time and money. Pure water, soap, towels, separate washing and cooking spaces must be available, floors swept daily and washed twice-weekly, interiors whitewashed quarterly, yards paved, and privies trapped to prevent rising effluvia. Proprietors risked having to burn blankets when reporting fever cases, which was compulsory. Fines could rise to £5.[112]

By 1870, this regulatory regime was already well-established for keepers, but it was also the duty of any occupants, in areas considered unhealthy, to “whitewash, cleanse and purify” any “unclean and unwholesome” premises (Figure 2.2). The lodging-house was a metaphor for all urban problems: for many, solving the lodging-house problem would solve all the wider evils of the city.[113] This was true in Wolverhampton, where language of cleansing and purification – moral as well as sanitary in the eyes of reformers – crept from spaces that had been redefined from private to public, into private domestic spaces.

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[111] The assumed link between overcrowded living conditions and sexual immorality was orthodoxy by the 1840s. At various times the narrative was further sensationalised by insinuations of incest or homosexuality. See Louise Ainsley Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England* (London: Psychology Press, 2000), 112; Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 32–33; Anthony S. Wohl, *The Eternal Slum: Housing and Social Policy in Victorian London* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), 54–55, 210; Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957*, Chicago Series on Sexuality, History, and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 118–20; Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 185, 211, 303.

[112] Borough of Wolverhampton, ‘Bye-Laws Relating to Common Lodging Houses’, 1870, DX-801/2/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

[113] Marcus, *Apartment Stories*, 104.

2. “A very hotbed of disease and pestilence”

Irish lodging-houses

The Irish lodging-house formed a distinct entity in the minds of onlookers. During the 1836 Commission on the Irish Poor, respondents were specifically asked whether the Irish clustered in lodging-houses, and by 1840, Birmingham medics identified Irish lodging-houses alongside “mendicants’ lodging-houses” and “houses in which prostitutes live” as key sanitary problems – almost all in the “old parts of town… now almost entirely occupied by the Irish.”[114]

Lodging in Irish homes, if not formal Irish lodging-houses, was common in Wolverhampton, and Irish homes were believed to be more overcrowded than others.[115] For the Irish, lodging was typically an informal practice, which did not sit comfortably within the regulatory framework of the Common Lodging-Houses Acts. Mr Grainger, a General Board of Health visitor, raised the need for “better regulation of Irish lodging-houses” in the light of a possible cholera outbreak in 1852.[116] This prompted a stricter enforcement of lodging regulations, particularly the 200 “Irish houses” that had not registered:

> It being an established fact that in almost every instance the outbreak of cholera occurs in Lodging Houses they cannot too strongly recommend the committees to carefully inspect the state of the lodging and Irish houses in

[114] Royal Commission into the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland, ‘State of the Irish Poor’; *Local Reports on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of England*, 197–98. Note that this association had a longer life as a reputation than a reality: later in the century, there were distinct lodging-house areas in Birmingham, separate to the Irish area. Barbara Weinberger, ‘The Criminal Class and the Ecology of Crime’, *Historical Social Research* 15, no. 4 (1990): 121–39.

[115] See chapter six. For comparison in other communities, see Lynn Hollen Lees, *Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), 83.

[116] Health of Towns Committee, ‘Annual Report’, 29 October 1852.

their respective districts.[117]

This initially met with some creative resistance from Irish householders who had been used to opening their home. In 1854 the Inspector noted the “great difficulty in dealing with the Irish – as soon as the regulations are posted they tear them down and leave the house and another tenant goes in.”[118] This reluctance to conform was still evidence in 1865, when the Privy Council medical officer Henry Julian Hunter noted that the Council were still registering “60 regular tramp houses, and also 300 cottages of the Irish poor, all of whom here as elsewhere receive lodgers.”[119] Hunter noted, however, that numbers were on the decline as a result of this regulatory process.

Grainger’s suggestion that Irish lodging-houses were a particular source of difficulty correlated with the fears Wolverhampton’s medics and councillors had of Irish transience, intractability and disorder. They became particular targets for registration, regulation and inspection. For the Irish though, taking lodgers was an everyday communal activity, part mutual aid, part economic necessity.[120] The stringent literacy requirements were also a particular challenge to the Irish.[121] The full force of Victorian socio-medical bureaucracy was

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[117] Health of Towns Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 19 September 1853), WOL-C-HOT/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

[118] Watch Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 13 June 1854), WOL-C-WAT/2, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

[119] Julian Henry Hunter, ‘Report on the Housing of the Poorer Parts of the Population in Towns, Particularly as Regards the Existence of Dangerous Degrees of Overcrowding the Use of Dwellings Unfit for Human Habitation’, in *Reports of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council and Local Government Board*, ed. John Simon (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1866), 50–195.

[120] Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, 83; Louise Miskell, ‘“Operating in the Ethnic Sphere”: Irish Migrant Networks and the Question of Respectability in Nineteenth-Century South Wales’, *Immigrants & Minorities* 23, no. 2–3 (2005): 233–53.

[121] Steele suggests that illiteracy was twice as high amongst the Irish in Lancashire than the English. E. D. Steele, ‘The Irish Presence in the North of England, 1850–1914’, *Northern History* 12, no. 1 (1976): 220–41.

wielded not against those who saw themselves as citizens and liberal subjects, but against a stigmatized and disenfranchised population.[122] The resulting conflict maintained the distinctive connection between Irishness and problematic lodging in the minds of Wolverhampton’s elite, and kept this racially-inflected stigma in mind throughout this period.

Constructing the sanitary town: surveys, sewers and statistics

Edwin Chadwick’s 1848 Public Health Act framed health in environmental terms, with a particular focus on the movement of water and waste around the town.[123] Rawlinson – a civil engineer – was in full agreement: his principal recommendation in 1849 was to install a full arterial sewerage system and water supply. The process by which this was achieved demonstrates how contested public health authority was mid-century: all improvements faced political and practical difficulties and Stafford Street, as a notoriously unhealthy spot, played a central role in the shaping of these works.

The Streets & Sewerage Committee pursued Rawlinson’s recommendations enthusiastically, and advertised for a surveyor to map the town in sufficient detail. Tenders were received from £274 for nine months’ work, to £1,600 for eighteen months’. The committee overcame their reservations about the lowest tender from Robert Syar Hoggar in the face of strong recommendations, including from William Cubitt, president of the Institute of Civil

[122] Graham Mooney, *Intrusive Interventions: Public Health, Domestic Space, and Infectious Disease Surveillance in England, 1840-1914* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2015), 1–7.
[123] Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice*, 288.

Engineers.[124] Their confidence was misplaced however: Hoggar’s map didn’t appear for three years, and then with completely wrong levels.[125]

Hoggar’s map (Figure 2.3) revealed visually for the first time the complexity of Wolverhampton’s urban fabric, though it demonstrated power and social relations better than it did topography.[126] It was detailed enough to reveal the complexities of areas like Carribee Island, but abstract enough to make it inscrutable without personal, professional experience.[127] Unconnected outsiders could now see the worlds behind the facades without having to venture in: the row of privies abutting houses in Cole’s Croft; the distinct lack of such amenities in Carribee Island; the back-to-backs of Back Lane; the jerry-built rows behind Stafford Street’s tall buildings.

It revealed a lack of systematic waste disposal or water supply, confirmed by the Borough Surveyor’s report in 1858. Canal Street possessed just a single brick culvert of 2 feet diameter for a sewer, Stafford Street had none at all, and back courts were lucky to have an open ditch.[128] The drought year of 1858 rendered the problem evident not just to the eyes but to other senses.

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[124] Streets and Sewerage Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 18 March 1851), WOL-C-STR/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[125] Streets and Sewerage Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 20 July 1852), WOL-C-STR/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies, see also 5 and 8 October, 2 November 1852.
[126] As Denis Wood has noted, this is true of all maps. Denis Wood, *Rethinking the Power of Maps* (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2010), 34.
[127] Compare Patrick Joyce, ‘Maps, Blood and the City’, in *The Social in Question: New Bearings*, ed. Patrick Joyce (London: Routledge, 2002), 97–114.
[128] Sewerage Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 13 December 1858), WOL-C-SEW/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; Smith, ‘Governance of Wolverhampton’, 109.



Figure 2.13 Excerpt from Robert Syar Hoggar's 1850s plan of Wolverhampton, showing Stafford Street and some of its courts. The red lines and pencil shading are later annotations dating from the revision of the map in 1871.[129]

For residents the “warm, fetid, stinking atmosphere” was unbearable: one resident in 1866 “couldn’t abear it, ‘specially when it was over hot.”[130] The poorest neighbourhoods were the first to suffer from olfactory, dietary and sanitary complaints.[131] The map appeared to prove moral as well as environmental sickness, by detailing the prevalence of public houses and the lack of churches, though it did not name other private buildings, nor did it enable better understanding of industrial environments. It paid no attention to the economic conditions under which both it and Carribee Island were produced. Its selectivity and silences reflected

[129] Robert Syar Hoggar, *Plan of the Town of Wolverhampton Surveyed for the Purpose of the Health of Towns Act 1848* (Wolverhampton, 1852), MAP/388b, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[130] ‘Inquiry into the Sanitary State of Wolverhampton, Part Two’; ‘The Sanitary Condition of the Black Country: No.1 - Wolverhampton’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 4 June 1866; On the Great Stink of 1858, see David S. Barnes, ‘Confronting Sensory Crisis in the Great Stinks of London and Paris’, in *Filth: Dirt, Disgust, and Modern Life*, ed. William A. Cohen and Ryan Johnson (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 103–29.
[131] Watch Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 6 August 1858), WOL-C-WAT/2, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; ‘Lodging-House Prosecutions’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 6 August 1858; Stephen Halliday, ‘Death and Miasma in Victorian London: An Obstinate Belief’, *British Medical Journal* 323, no. 7327 (2001): 1469–71.

the priorities of its commissioners and the socio-medical orthodoxy of the 1850s, and acted as means to wield power. It was a technology of, and an argument for, a particular kind of progress, in which domestic environment, health, and morality were inseparable and fixable, but market capitalism hidden and immutable.

Nevertheless, the solutions suggested by such evidence were not uncontested, and friction between parsimony and reform defined the period. Attempts to build a successful water supply nearly bankrupted the town in 1854, and a sewerage scheme was not agreed until 1862.[132] This was to commence the following January, but was delayed by the actions of Councillor Frank Perks.[133] Like his father Isaac in 1849, Fellows saw himself as a dispassionate statistician. In arguing for delay, he used voluminous statistical data as evidence that Wolverhampton was in fact healthier than many comparable towns, and thus this large expense was unnecessary. The authority of statistical evidence was not as commanding as he had hoped, however: although his motion was successful, he had to write to the *WC* to ensure his victorious speech was written up. His hubris led to him becoming the comic villain of an anonymous parodic sketch entitled *Fellowsiana!,* a satire on Fellows’ relationship with his

[132] Until 1847, Wolverhampton’s water was supplied from four over-worked springs. A Waterworks Company was eventually formed in 1844, and against much opposition (including the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Company) completed a waterworks at Tettenhall. This was projected to supply one million gallons per day, but managed just 130,000 in 1849. A second waterworks at Goldthorn Hill also produced half its promised capacity. A Parliamentary Bill for the Corporation to purchase the waterworks in 1854 failed too: when the town could not pay the engineers’ fees, bailiffs seized Corporation property including the mayoral mace and robes, and police uniforms, truncheons and fire engine. The Corporation finally took over the water supply in 1868, though even then mandated provision of free water at standpipes was patchy and unwholesome. Barnsby, *Housing*, 15–17.

[133] Sewerage Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 10 December 1861), WOL-C-SEW/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; Sewerage Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 13 January 1862), WOL-C-SEW/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; Frank P. Fellows, ‘The Town Sewerage’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 17 December 1862, sec. Letters.

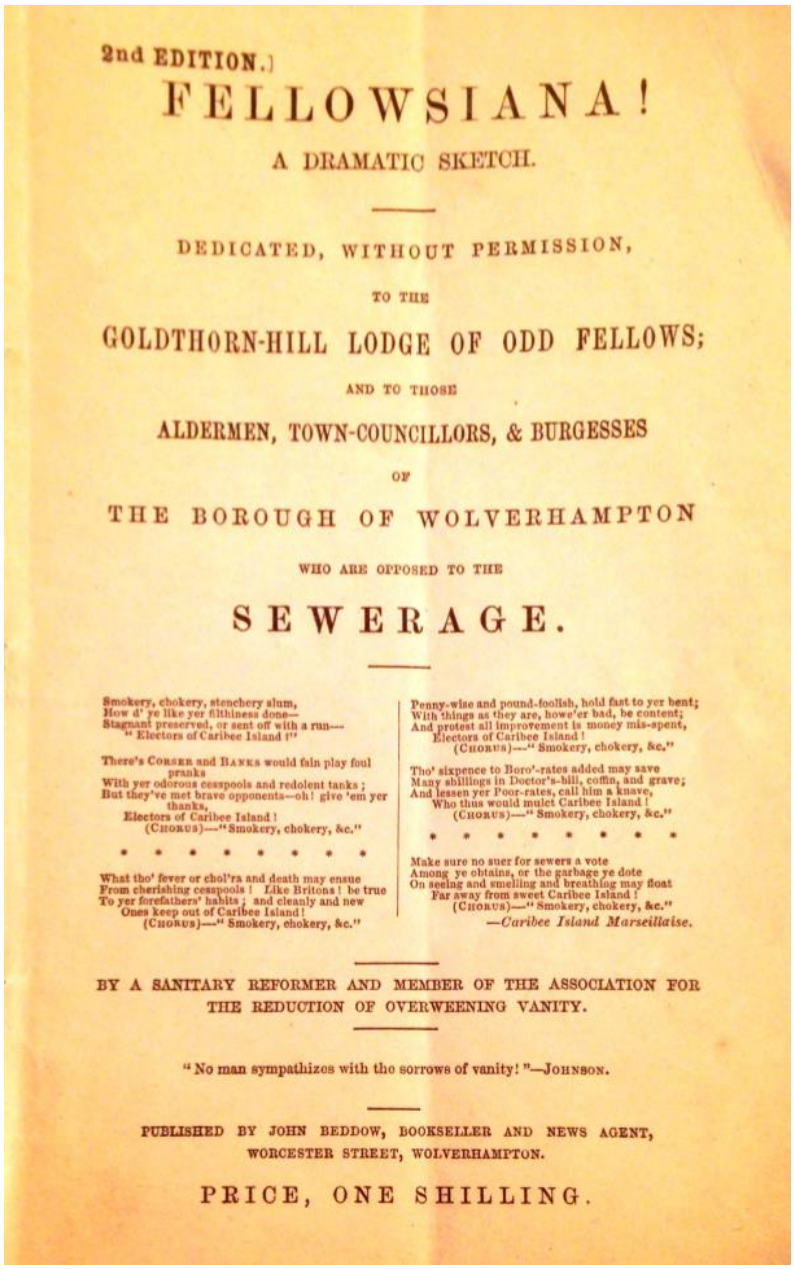
poet wife Louisa and her father, the Midlands philanthropist Sir Rowland Hill.[134] It mocked Fellows’ self-importance and reliance on “figures,” and was appended with detail of “the ridiculousness and transparency of the pretexts urged by speakers of the anti-sewerage party.” Instead of praising his diligence, the anonymous author satirised his use of “figures,” presenting him instead as ambitious:

> Aye, and its FIGURES, too: forget not those!
>
> They were MY OWN, as my bright “chick” well knows;
>
> And would have stamp’d me – as was my ambition –
>
> Not greater Orator than Statistician.[135]

[134] The writer of *Fellowsiana!* suggests that Fellows had been very careful to note in his letter that he was writing from Hill’s residence in Hampstead, in order to give the letter added gravitas. On the relationship between the Hill family and Wolverhampton’s civic and medical community, see: Frederick W. Hackwood, *The Annals of Willenhall* (Wolverhampton: Whitehead Bros., 1908), 20; C. J. L. Elwell, ‘The Sanitary Movement in the Black Country, Part 1: Wolverhampton and Bilston’, *Blackcountryman* 31, no. 2 (1998): 51–56.

[135] Anon, ‘Fellowsiana! A Dramatic Sketch. Dedicated Without Permission, to the Goldthorn-Hill Lodge of Odd Fellows; and to Those Aldermen, Town-Councillors, & Burgesses of the Borough of Wolverhampton Who Are Opposed to the Sewerage’ (John Beddow, 1863), LS/1088, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies. An insert in the archived edition includes a note by a “G. W.”: “These narratives are (with the exception of a few poets’ licence embellishments, easily distinguishable) both generally and minutely true.”

2. “A very hotbed of disease and pestilence”



2nd EDITION.)

FELLOWSIANA!

A DRAMATIC SKETCH.

DEDICATED, WITHOUT PERMISSION,

TO THE

GOLDTHORN-HILL LODGE OF ODD FELLOWS;

AND TO THOSE

ALDERMEN, TOWN-COUNCILLORS, & BURGESSES

OF

THE BOROUGH OF WOLVERHAMPTON

WHO ARE OPPOSED TO THE

SEWERAGE.

Smokery, chokery, stenchery slum,
How d' ye like yer filthiness done—
Stagnant preserved, or sent off with a run—
" Electors of Caribee Island !"

There's CORSER and BANKS would fain play foul pranks
With yer odorous cesspools and redolent tanks ;
But they've met brave opponents—oh! give 'em yer thanks,
Electors of Caribee Island !
(CHORUS)—" Smokery, chokery, &c."

* * * * * * * * *

What tho' fever or chol'ra and death may ensue
From cherishing cesspools ! Like Britons ! be true
To yer forefathers' habits ; and cleanly and new
Ones keep out of Caribee Island !
(CHORUS)—" Smokery, chokery, &c."

Penny-wise and pound-foolish, hold fast to yer bent;
With things as they are, howe'er bad, be content;
And protest all improvement is money mis-spent,
Electors of Caribee Island !
(CHORUS)—" Smokery, chokery, &c."

Tho' sixpence to Boro'-rates added may save
Many shillings in Doctor's-bill, coffin, and grave;
And lessen yer Poor-rates, call him a knave,
Who thus would mulct Caribee Island !
(CHORUS)—" Smokery, chokery, &c."

* * * * * * * * *

Make sure no suer for sewers a vote
Among ye obtains, or the garbage ye dote
On seeing and smelling and breathing may float
Far away from sweet Caribee Island !
(CHORUS)—" Smokery, chokery, &c."

—*Caribee Island Marseillaise.*

BY A SANITARY REFORMER AND MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE REDUCTION OF OVERWEENING VANITY.

" No man sympathizes with the sorrows of vanity! "—JOHNSON.

PUBLISHED BY JOHN BEDDOW, BOOKSELLER AND NEWS AGENT, WORCESTER STREET, WOLVERHAMPTON.

PRICE, ONE SHILLING.

Figure 2.14 Frontispiece to Fellowsiana!, 1863 (Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies LS/1088)

The sketch was prefaced with a satirical poem entitled “Carribee Island Marseillaise,” (Figure 2.4) set to the tune of the music-hall song “King of the Cannibal Islands.” The 1830 original was built around racist stereotyping of indigenous savagery, and would have been familiar from the popular black-face pantomime “King of the Carribee Islands,” which played in

Birmingham and around the country.[136] This comparison drew on well-established tropes: Henry Mayhew described the London poor as tribes from “savage nations”; Joseph Chamberlain described Birmingham’s poor as “savages” and “barbarians”; other writers compared slums to China, Africa and the Pacific Islands.[137] Readers of the “Marseillaise” would have easily understood the analogy between the exotic savages on stage, and those in Stafford Street, the nearest they were likely to get to a Cannibal King. Racial categories were constructed, at least in part, against this experience of the Irish, and comparisons to the exotic strengthened the point.[138]

In the poem, Carribee Island became a synecdoche for all of the town’s environmental problems. The district was presented as the evident outcome of keeping “like Britons!” to “yer forefathers’ habits” by protesting “all improvement is money mis-spent” – that is, this problem space was recognised as a by-product of ideological non-interventionism. It is clear Carribee Island had come to represent not just a fever nest but, for some at least, a damning monument to reactionary, old-fashioned politics. The sneering invocation of “Britons” suggested that claims of patriotic conservatism were also strongly contested. Edward Banks, chairman of the Sewerage Committee, had promoted such a scheme by suggesting that a lack of sewerage would:

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[136] ‘Theatre Royal’, *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 27 December 1867; Paul Cowdell, ‘Cannibal Ballads: Not Just a Question of Taste...’, *Folk Music Journal* 9, no. 5 (2010): 723–47.
[137] Mayne, *The Imagined Slum*, 157, 208.
[138] Nadja Durbach, *Spectacle of Deformity: Freak Shows and Modern British Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 160. See also: Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830 - 1867* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2002), 421; Catherine Hall, ‘The Nation within and Without’, in *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the Reform Act of 1867*, ed. Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, and Jane Rendall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 179–233.

> …drive many (especially among the poorer classes) to habits of intemperance, leading them and their families to sickness, pauperism, and crime, and hence, aiding to fill our hospitals, workhouses and gaols, which, of course, in their turn, increase the rates and other burdens of the inhabitants.[139]

This last clause demonstrates that parsimony was still foremost in the minds of the pro-sewerage politicians, but painted the “anti-sewerage party” in a regressive light.[140] Both sides approached the scheme from different ideological perspectives, but accepted and used the “taint of place” associated with Carribee Island as a means by which knowledge and authority could be expressed – to different ends, but with the same stigmatising effect.[141] Carribee Island had become an overdetermined tool to prove different sides of almost any political argument. It had become so laden with different meanings that regardless of its physical condition, what it represented was more important in the minds of the most powerful onlookers than what it actually was.

Deconstructing unhealthy space: demolition

This position was maintained throughout the mid-century decades. One of Rawlinson’s recommendations in 1849 was to open up “blind courts and alleys” to avoid the accumulation

[139] Sewerage Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 31 October 1861), WOL-C-SEW/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[140] Anon, ‘Fellowsiana’.
[141] Loïc Wacquant, *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), 233.

of bad air.[142] But it was difficult to convince many of the need for demolition. This is not to say that local elites were not at times active in campaigning for it. The St Mary’s Ward Relief Committee were well aware of their own problem space, and called a public meeting in October 1849 to publicly discuss demolition for the first time. For this mixture of politicians, clergymen, medics and ratepayers, Carribee Island and Coles Croft were the source of both medical and moral miasma: disease was held “to arise, exist and continue in these localities, regardless of all possible means adopted to arrest it.” According to the report by Dr William Duncan, another Union medical officer, there were in Carribee Island, 350-400 Irish labourers who paid no regard “to either cleanliness of person or house”; in Castle Place, the “miserably poor class of Irish labourers” lived in “peculiarly filthy” houses; in Coles Croft both “houses and inhabitants, all Irish, can scarcely be described; they are of the most truly wretched, filthy, and squalid character; and the numbers that nightly find shelter in these houses, are almost incredible.” These were “nurseries of disease,” but the danger was not just medical: it was moral. Using language similar to John Dehane two years earlier, Duncan noted:

> [T]he occupants of these houses seek employment, some in the town, others in the country, and the unemployed are so frequently seen lounging about the thoroughfares of the town, it is quite evident that the existence of these places will always prove a very fertile source of epidemic and other diseases.[143]

[142] Rawlinson, ‘Report on a Preliminary Inquiry into Wolverhampton’, 51.
[143] ‘Proposed Demolition of Carribbee Island and Cole’s Croft’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 17 October 1849.

He expressed concern that these loungers were “coming in contact with the general population of the town.” Duncan’s concern appears to be that these newcomers were both idle *and* active in their work and spatial practice, and that both were problematic. John Fowke’s comment that it was their patriotic duty “as townsmen, as Christian men, and as lovers of their country” to prevent this pernicious influence spreading to other towns and villages, seems to corroborate this: the problem for Fowke was not just local or economic, but spoke to national fears over the effect of this influx of Irish workers on national culture.[144]

The solution was simple: knock it down. But care was required of course: Councillor Wullon articulated the tightrope between supporting the sanitary idea while asserting property-holders’ rights. He was:

> …a sworn enemy against the property until it was removed (laughter and applauses). He did not say one word against the proprietors (great laughter and applause) but he declared himself a sworn enemy against the property (continued laughter) and he should never rest satisfied until it was torn down.[145]

No matter how great a menace this cradle of disease was supposed to be, the idea of blaming property owners, or interfering with their holdings, was still distant.

Nothing was put into action for over a decade, however. In April 1861 – when longstanding questions over sanitary issues like sewerage were coming to a head – a delegation led by

[144] On Fowke, see ‘Testimonial to Mr John Fowke, F.R.C.S.E.’
[145] ‘Proposed Demolition of Carribbee Island and Cole’s Croft’.

2. “A very hotbed of disease and pestilence”

Alderman GL Underhill visited Carribee Island to investigate houses thought to be “unfit for human habitation.”[146] Underhill had approached the visit seeking, if possible, “not to interfere with the rights of the present owners.” Yet despite the numerous allegations towards Carribee Island over the preceding three decades, despite regular reports from the Watch Committee on the filthy state of these streets, and despite his own financial interest in similar properties off Little’s Lane, Underhill declared himself “astounded at the state in which he found it… it beggared all description” – a useful way of absolving himself from responsibility.[147] The houses in Carribee Island were ruinous, propping each other up, but the delegation felt the problem lay in their initial construction, rather than failure to maintain the buildings, which let the owners off the hook somewhat.[148] They felt sure that rents could be no more than 1s. per week (in fact they were between 1s. 3d. and 2s. 6d.) and no house worth that little could be fit for human habitation, so could be closed with little loss to the

[146] Health of Towns Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 8 March 1861), WOL-C-HOT/2, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; ‘Condemnation of Dwelling Houses as Unfit for Human Habitation’.
[147] Evidence of Underhill’s property interests can be found in ‘Conveyance of 8 Small Messuages and Hereds in or near Stafford Street’, 23 May 1843, DEED/J57/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[148] Rawlinson, ‘Report on a Preliminary Inquiry into Wolverhampton’, 21; ‘Condemnation of Dwelling Houses as Unfit for Human Habitation’.

proprietor. The council thus approved the ideologically radical step of declaring 16 houses unfit for human habitation, and instructed their owners to dismantle them.[149]

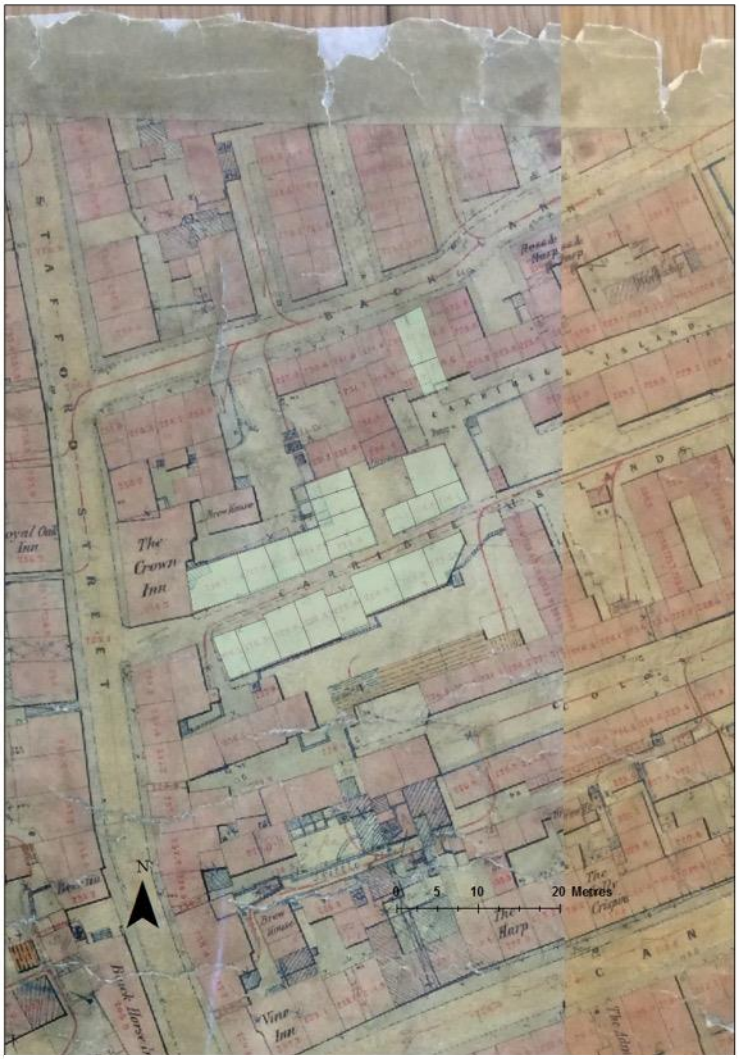


Figure 2.5 Houses demolished in 1860s highlighted on RS Hoggar’s 1854 map of Wolverhampton (Wolverhampton Archives and Local Studies MAP/388b)

The owners of the condemned property included the doctor William Mannix. Born in Ireland to an Anglo-Irish family and educated in Edinburgh, Mannix was a Town Commissioner, then Borough Magistrate, and was well-known for helping to diagnose cholera in 1849 and 1859.[150] The properties had been criticised before, in 1853, when Mannix regretted that they “had obtained an unenviable notoriety, and he felt that they had unfortunate connexion with himself.” Although “he owned only a third share” he had instructed the agents to close five houses. He had received no thanks

[149] Health of Towns Committee, ‘Minutes’, 17 September 1852, 17 September 1852.
[150] Price, ‘Sir Henry Mannix’.

for this, but happily “had enjoyed the approbation of his own mind.”[151] There was no conflict between the principles of property ownership and the problems of public health for William Mannix.

The houses in Carribee Island were demolished, but this hardly improved the environment. Medical inspector Henry Julian Hunter noted in 1865 that in Carribee Island “the board had induced the destruction of seven houses, and others had fallen down to the manifest improvement of the condition of the rest.”[152] For him the demise of the houses, by whatever means, was wholly positive.[153] But the *Birmingham Daily Post* (*BDP*), which commissioned a sanitary tour of the Black Country in 1866, was less convinced. Its description of Carribee Island was bleak:

> [A] labyrinth of narrow tortuous courts, in which every scrap of space has been built upon. There is no single passage through it for the free circulation of air: its alleyways are as intricate as the wards of some gigantic key. Even where there has been a spare corner for ash heap, privy, or what not, some wretched building has been run up and let out for a small consideration weekly.[154]

[151] ‘Sanitary Arrangements’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 12 October 1853.
[152] George Graham, ‘Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages in England (1860)’, P. P. (2977), xvii, 1862; Hunter, ‘Report on the Housing of the Poor’.
[153] ‘Wolverhampton Town Council: The Sanitary Condition of Wolverhampton and the Rector’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 13 September 1865.
[154] ‘The Sanitary Condition of the Black Country: No.1 - Wolverhampton’.

The article noted that “in one place a couple of houses have come down, and the space has been used as a refuse heap, urinal, and filth receptacle generally for two or three courts.” This description is markedly different from Hunter’s appraisal and highlights the different ideological approaches to demolition that were becoming evident.

The *BDP* argued for a far more interventionist approach to problem space than Wolverhampton’s medical or municipal community offered. It suggested two main remedies: education of the tenants, but most importantly “legislation for the compulsion of landlords… There must be more despotism in sanitary legislation.”[155] In Wolverhampton, “the only effective improvement that can be made in Carribee Island is to pull it down.”[156] Despite the disagreements over the meaning of these piles of rubble, opprobrium began to mount against the council as *The Lancet*, then other newspapers, picked up on the report, claiming that the entire Black Country was represented by these spots which Wolverhampton Council were swift to claim were “exceptional localities.”[157] Both reports mentioned Irish residents, but by the mid-1860s, the debates over insanitary spaces were just as likely to revolve around the financial and ideological correctness of municipal intervention, as they were stigmatising the population.

1848-9 were years of national and international turmoil, and echoes of this upheaval can be felt in the anxieties of the medical, political and media professions in Wolverhampton.

[155] ‘Sanitary Condition of the Black Country’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 16 July 1866.
[156] ‘The Sanitary Condition of the Black Country: No.1 - Wolverhampton’.
[157] ‘The Black Country’, *The Lancet*, 14 July 1866; ‘Occasional Notes’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 21 July 1866; ‘The Sanitary State of the Town’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 14 July 1866.

Immigration, epidemic and political change all seemed to bolster the idea that something must be done about the sanitary state of the town. Yet substantial change was hard to come by in the following decades, as economic success and political stability seemed to be coping with the trials of industrialisation and urbanisation. The medical authority that had been built up in the first half of the century struggled to translate itself into action: science faltered against barriers of economic libertarianism and parochial local government. The stigmatisation of the poor and the Irish remained, seen in racialised language, condemnation of Irish vaccination refusers, and the singling-out of Irish lodging houses. But environmental changes found stumbling-blocks at every step. The demolitions of the 1860s should not be seen as symptomatic of broader social progress, then: rather, the Liberal, laissez-faire status quo was sustained and fortified by practices which stigmatised and racialised the spaces of the poor in Wolverhampton.

Constructing solutions: 1872-80

> Dr Ballard, the Local Government Inspector, is conducting an official enquiry into the sanitary condition of Wolverhampton and the surrounding townships; and it is surmised that the result will be of anything but a flattering character.[158]

As the 1870s dawned, it was evident that little had changed in Wolverhampton since the 1840s. A sewerage scheme was underway and increased surveillance and regulation had

[158] ‘Dr Ballard’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 24 February 1874.

altered how lodging-houses were treated, but many of the town’s sanitary problems remained. In his first report as Medical Officer of Health (MOH) in 1872, John Henry Love accepted that while Wolverhampton’s problems had been identified, actual change had been minimal. He quoted Rawlinson’s 1849 report, suggesting that “the Town still retains, in the arrangement of many of its streets and the buildings which compose them, much of the evil of former times.”[159] The meaning of Carribee Island had shifted subtly over the intervening years, however, to become a useful tool for political point-scoring between local parties. It would shift its political meaning again in the coming decade: instead of being used to stall legislation and change at local level, it would be used to justify it when local power was threatened. Racial stereotyping remained present, and would re-emerge as central to media discussion about the neighbourhood in the 1870s, but politically the Irish would now become an accepted part of the town for the first time – though only in order to justify demolishing their homes. This shift formed part of a much larger picture of the changing relationship between localised and centralised power: for Wolverhampton, this moment was for reasserting local power against the threat of centralisation.[160]

Central investigation and local response

The shift began when Dr Edward Ballard was asked by the Local Government Act Board to visit and report on the town in December 1873.[161] Ballard (unlike Rawlinson a qualified

[159] J. H. Love, ‘Medical Officer of Health’s Report’ (Wolverhampton: Wolverhampton Borough Council, 27 August 1872), WOL-C-HOT/6, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[160] E. P. Hennock, ‘Central/Local Government Relations in England: An Outline 1800–1950’, *Urban History* 9 (1982): 38–49.
[161] Sanitary Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 8 December 1873), WOL-C-HOT/6, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

physician) represented central government, and as such bypassed the local prejudices which had constructed Carribee Island into such a distinctive neighbourhood. He declined the Sanitary Committee’s offer of a guide, conducting his research alone.[162] When it came, his report was damning. It took a similar structure to Rawlinson’s effort, covering location, geology, basics of population and industry, and the arrangement of the town.[163] However, the absence of local expertise meant that instead of focusing on individual trouble spots like Carribee Island, Ballard drew his own conclusion: that Stafford Street and its locality was just one poor, unwholesome, dilapidated spot among many across Wolverhampton. Ballard’s allegation was that the health of the whole town was poorer than it should be, and blame should first be laid at the Council’s door. He resorted to familiar tropes, though not as gratuitously as an earlier generation had: the only mention of the Irish was in relation to a few “flagrant instances” of overcrowding in the “the lowest and most disreputable street”; and he noted with dismay the lack of regulation of the highly mobile boating population, “probably among the most ordinary carriers of contagion from town to town in the Black Country.”[164] He certainly brought biases with him, but they were not inflected by local context as before. His approbation was aimed at the council, not the Irish or the boat people.

Ballard’s ire was particularly reserved for the hypocritical and ineffectual. His eschewal of local knowledge and authority made this an issue of sovereignty for Wolverhampton,

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[162] ‘The Town Council of Wolverhampton’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 10 December 1873; ‘Town Council Meeting’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 10 December 1873; Sanitary Committee, ‘Minutes’, 8 December 1873.
[163] Edward Ballard, *Report to the Local Government Board on the Sanitary Condition of the Municipal Borough of Wolverhampton* (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1874), 1–7.
[164] Ballard, 14, 22.

especially because it brought into focus how the entanglement of local wealth and power hindered, rather than helped, improvement:

> Some of the worst dwellings in the older part of the town, and which were stated to me to belong to one particular owner, who is an Alderman of the Borough, were made to look attractive by a coat of whitewash on the exterior.[165]

The Council were furious, accusing Ballard of bias, error, and a centralising agenda they refused to support. The Mayor responded to Ballard in no uncertain terms:

> This Council regret to see that much of Dr Ballard's Report tends to discredit this principle [of local control] and to encourage centralisation, but your Board may rest assured the people will not yield their right to govern themselves without a struggle so severe that no Government will willingly encounter it.[166]

This localised invocation of “the people” was central to Wolverhampton’s representation of its own liberal identity. When the town embraced slum clearance legislation just three years later, then, it was about cementing local control. By bringing the residents of the unhealthy area into Wolverhampton’s social body, the town could re-assert the importance of local self-

[165] Ballard, 14, 24.
[166] William Edwards, ‘Report of the Town Council of the Borough of Wolverhampton to the Local Government Board on the Report of Dr Ballard, Relating to the Sanitary Condition of the Borough’, in *Report to the Local Government Board on the Sanitary Condition of the Municipal Borough of Wolverhampton* (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1874), 7.

government in the face of an apparent centralising threat from Westminster. Thus the apparently uncharacteristic shift into interventionist policy can be explained in terms of broader political culture: the council sought to control the meaning of Carribee Island itself and the terms of citizenship.

Moral politics of intervention

Ballard had recommended judicious use of the 1868 Artisans’ and Labourers’ Dwellings Act on some areas to “improve them away altogether.”[167] This Liberal Act proved limited in value and was superseded in 1875 by Conservative Home Secretary Richard Cross’s Act, with slightly more extensive powers and compulsory rehousing for the displaced.[168] Against a backdrop of (very) gradual centralisation of local functions, Wolverhampton’s council embraced this as a means of reasserting local knowledge and power.[169] Particularly, the right to choose a small unhealthy area to stigmatise and sweep away meant that local expertise informed local action, and resisted any far-reaching structural changes. Following Birmingham’s early adoption of the Act (by which it hoped to promote a “nobler, fuller, richer… municipal life”), Love suggested a scheme for Wolverhampton in 1876 centred on civic, local improvement.[170]

[167] Ballard, *Report*.

[168] Both of these acts were criticised as ineffectual. They were created as permissive and voluntary, and compensation for property owners affected by works was initially high, making the 1868 Act virtually a dead letter. Wohl, *The Eternal Slum*, 84–92, 101–3.

[169] On the wider relationship and trajectory of the central/local relationship in government, see Hennock, ‘Central/Local Government Relations in England: An Outline 1800–1950’.

[170] J. T. Bunce, quoted in Andrew Reekes, *Two Titans, One City: Joseph Chamberlain and George Cadbury* (Alcester: History West Midlands, 2017), 32–33. Carl Chinn and Alan Mayne have outlined the workings of Birmingham’s Cross Act scheme: Mayne, *The Imagined Slum*, 59; Chinn, *Homes For People*, 7–9.

2. “A very hotbed of disease and pestilence”

Only eleven schemes were begun outside London prior to the relaxation of compensation and rebuilding rules in 1879. The Wolverhampton Improvement Scheme was the second largest after Birmingham’s, requiring a loan of £207,330 to demolish and rebuild an entire section of the town centre.[171] It was clearly motivated in part by Ballard’s report, but Love’s proposal drew too on an ongoing sense of ‘moral miasma,’ the idea that health and morality were inseparably linked in particular spaces.[172] Love viewed his plans as a way to improve health by improving the morals of the affected population: the “habits of the tenants,” he noted showed an “indifference to cleanliness, an indulgence in stimulants and vicious habits [which] superinduce a low tone of heath and morals, and predispose to various forms of sickness and disease.”[173] But “give them good houses and you get as a rule good habits.”[174] He demonstrated a conviction that the poor could be converted to respectability – and away from drink, vice and apathy – through a reconstruction of their concept of home:

> Many blocks of buildings within the Borough call for speedy annihilation. With these swept away and roomy well-ventilated buildings erected in their stead, we should doubtless find the minds of the working classes raised to a higher sense of the responsibilities of their existence, and pride in themselves, would take the place of the present existing indifference and

[171] Enid Gauldie, *Cruel Habitations: A History of Working-Class Housing, 1780-1918* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1974), 278–80.
[172] Felix Driver, ‘Moral Geographies: Social Science and the Urban Environment in Mid-Nineteenth Century England’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 13, no. 3 (1988): 275–87.
[173] Artizans, Streets & Dwellings Improvement Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 29 February 1876), WOL-C-ADSI/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[174] Borough of Wolverhampton, ‘Shorthand Notes of Proceedings at Local Inquiry Held at the Town Hall, Wolverhampton before J. Thornhill Harrison, Esq. C.E.’, 1877, 147, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

> apathy to every appearance of respectability. The attractions of the gin-palace would doubtless be considerably modified, could the houses of these people be made to assume an air of comfort, or cleanliness, which would make them in any way worthy of the name of “Home.”[175]

Improvement of physical space was also, then, about the improvement of Wolverhampton’s inhabitants. The conflation of medical and moral in public health had always asked fundamental questions of difference and citizenship.[176] In Love’s formulation, it was moral domesticity that could allow the excluded to become good local citizens.

Citizenship and the Unhealthy Area

Love demarcated an “Unhealthy Area” to submit to the Local Government Board, and a plan was produced for public consumption. If selectivity and silence had been evident in Hoggar’s map, it was much more so in Love’s because it bounded an amorphous, previously unbounded area into a cohesive neighbourhood for the first time (Figure 2.6). The area extended beyond the Irish quarter, including environmentally similar streets to the south and east (including Lichfield Street and Cat Yard, both noted for prostitution). The illustration was telling: within the area, streets, courts and alleys were shown shaded and with vague, open-ended markings, hinting towards the mazey complexity that dominated descriptions of the area.

[175] Sanitary Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 25 January 1876), WOL-C-HOT/7, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[176] J. A. Morone, ‘Enemies of the People: The Moral Dimension to Public Health’, *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 22, no. 4 (1997): 993–1020.

2. “A very hotbed of disease and pestilence”



Figure 2.6 Map of the unhealthy area, 1877 (Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies, WOL-D-CE/4/8/213)

This is especially evident on Stafford Street. The eastern side of the street was included, but not the western side despite almost identical demographic and physical conditions. The reasons for this were not recorded. The only public building to be marked on the official plan is St Peter’s Church, echoing John Dehane’s juxtaposition of grand and squalid, thirty years before. The route to the railway was shown, and St Mary’s Church appeared on later versions of the map, but the Catholic St Patrick’s, and a number of charitable and commercial buildings, never did. Human interaction within the area was ignored; the town’s wider needs were to the fore, specifically a linking of the station, a symbol of modernity and commerce, with the town centre.

The map enabled the Council to argue that the space was a cohesive district, an unhealthy area in its own right, and that healthy properties were unhealthy by definition of falling within

the designated “Unhealthy Area.” This was the logical conclusion of the environmentalist philosophies of Chadwick and his successors: although miasma was always contested as a medical explanation, still the stigma of certain types of space meant that the medical geographies created by the miasmatists defined the terms of debate over slums.

The first inquiry into the Scheme was held in Wolverhampton in April 1877, chaired by J Thornhill Harrison (fresh from the Birmingham scheme inquiry).[177] Its purpose was to hear case-by-case objections from affected property owners. Harrison made few amendments to the plans submitted to the Local Government Board and within weeks, a provisional order confirming the work had been received by the Town Council (alongside other, smaller, schemes at Walsall and Norwich).[178] This prompted further objection, gaining the Scheme the dubious distinction of becoming the first proposal under this Act to warrant a Parliamentary hearing, which took place in July 1877.[179]

The key argument that emerged during these two inquiries was the nature of a demarcated “unhealthy area.” Wolverhampton’s property owners – some of whom formed an opposition, represented by barristers named Plumptre and Williams – had by now become used to the Council’s ameliorative power over private property, but were not prepared to accept that an abstract space could be unhealthy in itself.[180] They picked at individual buildings, denying the

[177] Borough of Wolverhampton, ‘Local Inquiry’.
[178] Local Government Board, ‘A Bill Intitled An Act to Confirm Certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board Relating to the City of Norwich and the Boroughs of Walsall and Wolverhampton’, 5 June 1877, WOL-D-CE/4/8/28, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[179] ‘Minutes of Evidence Taken before the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Local Government Board’s Provisional Orders Confirmation. Artizan’s & Labourers’ Dwellings Bill. (Wolverhampton Scheme)’, 6 July 1877, WOL-D-CE/4/8/33, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[180] Borough of Wolverhampton, ‘Local Inquiry’, 25–26.

existence of a discrete unhealthy area, seeking to undermine the council’s basic objective. While some of the peripheral buildings were eventually excluded, the area surround Carribee Island was so obviously unhealthy that it was never questioned. Love, his predecessor FE Manby, Frederick Dunn (Poor Law medical officer) and even Williams all agreed that this area was without question unfit for human habitation.[181]

Instead, it was the residents of the area that were re-categorised. No longer a homogeneous mass of the poor in the eyes of the council, residents were now 2,000 “artisans” and 1,385 others, including “small shopkeepers and publicans.” There was some debate over the meaning of the first term (Williams declared, inexplicably, “Well I don’t mean a hearty woman”), but its use was as much a social production of space as any.[182] The Scheme had to be shown to benefit the respectable inhabitants of an “unhealthy area,” and suddenly the Council was claiming to “represent the two thousand hard-working artisans in that area,” making no distinction by class or race. This kind of language imbued Carribee Island’s stigmatised residents with a degree of respectability and local investment, a far cry from earlier characterisations of the idle, dangerous, Irish poor, but a language that could serve the purpose of this Scheme.[183]

[181] Borough of Wolverhampton, 51, 64, 166.
[182] Borough of Wolverhampton, 31, 113. Williams’ meaning is not clear in the printed transcript – it could have been a play on the tendency of the local Black Country accent to drop initial h’s, comparing “arti-” with “hearty.”
[183] Compare Patrick Joyce on the coalescence of the term ‘artisan’ to represent an idealised working class, as well as the myth of ‘Rochdale Man’ as a respectable, localised citizen: Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 57–58.

Even Williams attempted to utilise the rights of the residents in objection, appealing to liberty and anti-interventionism:

> Poor as they may be, they are men like ourselves, and have just as much right as the wealthiest of the inhabitants to select where they are to live… you have no right to say to a body of 2,000 working men, we will take you away from where you live – and where many of them, perhaps, have lived all their lives – and put you where we like.[184]

The residents of Carribee Island were ascribed with both individualistic and progressive tendencies as “artisans,” rather than being permitted their own voice. These terms of citizenship appear to have been broadly accepted beyond the Council too. Both sides during the inquiry used the residents of Carribee Island as rhetorical pawns, just as during the sewerage debates of the 1860s, the Irish fever panic of 1847, or the cholera epidemic of 1832.

Race, stigma and erasure

For the purposes of the Scheme, racial stigmas were put to one side, but not forgotten. With fewer new immigrants in the 1870s, Carribee Island’s reputation was based on stereotypes created a generation before. Despite the official abandonment of racialised language during the inquiry, it is evident that popular feeling in Wolverhampton remained focused on the Irish of Carribee Island as a problem, and that the Irish had not simply been assimilated into the town. Compared to earlier surveys, the Irishness of Carribee Island was barely discussed in

[184] Borough of Wolverhampton, ‘Local Inquiry’, 182–83.

the Improvement Scheme inquiry. The longstanding Union Medical Officer Frederick Dunn even defended them against Williams, barrister for the objecting rate-payers:

> Q– Is there not a larger proportion of thieves and prostitutes, and low Irish and so on, residing in that block, than in any other part of town?
>
> A– I would hardly say that.
>
> Q– Well, than in any other block in this area?
>
> A– Certainly, as to the Irish…
>
> Q– I suppose there are a number of prostitutes there?
>
> A– No, only in one yard. They don't congregate in the Irish quarter.[185]

Wolverhampton’s Irish population had been a convenient scapegoat to avoid reform in previous decades. But now that the Council could pin their reforms on a specific space – one which was larger than this notional Irish quarter – the stigmatisation of race was less necessary.

However, Carribee Island remained a racialised and demonised “plague spot,” particularly amongst media representations. For example, Liberal trade-unionist William Owen published an editorial in his short-lived *Midland Examiner & Times* in November 1876 entitled “Carribee

[185] Borough of Wolverhampton, 64. Dunn was referring to the Cat Yard, off Little Berry Street, for many years accepted as a centre of prostitution.

Islanders: the Wolverhampton Crusade Against Dirty Courts and Alleys.”[186] The title set its tone: the inhabitants of Carribee Island would be explicitly stigmatised. Describing Wolverhampton’s “disreputable courts and alleys,” “social caves of Adullam,” and “dark corners where vice loves to hide itself,” the link between squalor and immorality was presented as axiomatic: “the police records of the town prove that the moral and social habits of the denizens of the place are in keeping with its other characteristics.”[187]

Owen made careful use of popular racialised language here. He quotes the same racist song that featured in *Fellowsiana!* to underline the link between Irishness and savagery:

> The palaces like dirty Dick’s
>
> Were built of mud for want of bricks.[188]

The space itself was presented as savage, awaiting a “patriotic spirit” to civilise it.[189] The savagery was a distinctly Irish one: his case study was a recent court case involving an “Amazon of the Island” with an Irish name involved in a domestic brawl.[190] A similar sentiment was expressed in the Liberal *SA* two months later. There, a report from the police court was

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[186] Owen, ‘Carribee Islanders’; Aled Jones, ‘Owen, William (1844-1912)’, in *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, ed. Joyce M. Bellamy, David E. Martin, and John Saville, vol. 9 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), 227–30. Owen was no stranger to critical editorials about Carribee Island – just months earlier, he had suggested it “might be fittingly used for wild beast shows, and the inhabitants of the district generally would not be likely to vote it a nuisance.” William Owen, ‘Editorial’, *Midland Examiner and Times*, 8 April 1876.

[187] Owen, ‘Carribee Islanders’.

[188] Owen. He ascribes the lines to the eccentric Irish barrister Edward Kenealy, who had recently included the song in his *Poems and Translations* (London: Reeves & Turner, 1864). Kenealy is best known as defence counsel for the Fenians Burke and Casey, and in the famous Tichborne Claimant case, and was not unknown in the Black Country: his wife Elizabeth Nicklin was from Tipton. Hamilton J. A., ‘Kenealy, Edward Vaughan Hyde (1819–1880), Barrister and Writer’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[189] Owen, ‘Carribee Islanders’.

[190] Owen.

used as evidence that “the area is equally to be condemned on moral and social grounds.” For the *SA*, the area’s notoriety:

> …points to its great provoking cause among that section of the community in which Cardinal Manning takes so special an interest, and which he thinks might be greatly benefited by the stronger enforcement on their attention, by their more happily located co-religionists, of temperance principles.[191]

This euphemistic reference to the Irish (via the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster) was now more typical than the blunter attacks in earlier years.[192] Nevertheless, the association between space, race and morality would be evident to a local audience raised on decades of such construction. For some sections of society therefore, sweeping away the physical Carribee Island would also sweep away what was seen as Wolverhampton’s problematic Irish (and particularly Catholic) population.

In Owen’s editorial, the responsible democratic citizens of Wolverhampton were the saviours of the space (notwithstanding Owen’s attempts to draw Wolverhampton’s local elites as separate again from the hardworking ordinary readers of his newspaper). This was both progressive and patriotic: echoing John Fowke in 1849, William Owen thought it required “a patriotic spirit, without any personal sacrifice, among the rich men of the town.”[193] Such patriotic urban improvements were rarely framed as altruistic: no councillor or landowner

[191] ‘Improvement Scheme’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 24 February 1877.
[192] Sheridan Gilley, ‘English Catholic Attitudes to Irish Catholics’, *Immigrants & Minorities* 27, no. 2–3 (2009): 226–47; Fergal Casey, ‘The “greening” of Cardinal Manning’, in *Irish Catholic Identities*, ed. Oliver Rafferty (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 243–58.
[193] Owen, ‘Carribee Islanders’.

was shy of applauding the higher rates and rents that this would bring, and such schemes thus fit comfortably within the free-market liberalism of local capitalism. It was imagined to be to everyone’s benefit to present an image of a healthier, more productive, more civilised town, and Owen’s quote concluded an editorial using just about every Irish stereotype available to portray Carribee Island as the antithesis of this healthy civilisation. By drawing on the elements of Irishness that appeared regressive, and by highlighting their behaviour as non-British and non-desirable, the improvement of Wolverhampton thus drew on the emotive power of Irish stereotypes, and played on fears of dangerous difference, to achieve the progress that the town was thought to need.

In the end, Carribee Island’s Irish heritage was completely wiped away. The ‘final’ plan approved in October 1881 featured working names of Erin Street and St Patrick Street, but these lasted less than three months: the Streets Committee replaced them with streets named after local MPs in January 1882.[194] For a brief moment, the respectability which the scheme had threatened to grant Wolverhampton’s Irish looked like it might become a permanent part of the environment. The reasoning for this erasure was not recorded – perhaps the arrest of Charles Stewart Parnell that October gave them cold feet about

[194] Artizans, Streets & Dwellings Improvement Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 18 October 1881), WOL-C-ADSI/3, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; Artizans, Streets & Dwellings Improvement Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 10 January 1882), WOL-C-ADSI/3, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies. The names chosen were:
Whitmore Street (formerly Erin Street): William Wolryche-Whitmore, Whig MP for Wolverhampton 1832-1835
Thornley Street (formerly St Patrick’s Street): Thomas Thornley, Liberal MP for Wolverhampton 1835-1859
Westbury Street (formerly Carribee Street): Richard Bethell, 1st Baron Westbury, Liberal MP 1859-1861, and later Lord Chancellor

celebrating Irishness in Wolverhampton.[195] The Irish had served their purpose as part of the unhealthy area’s poor artisan population, but they were still not sufficiently accepted to be inscribed on the town plan.

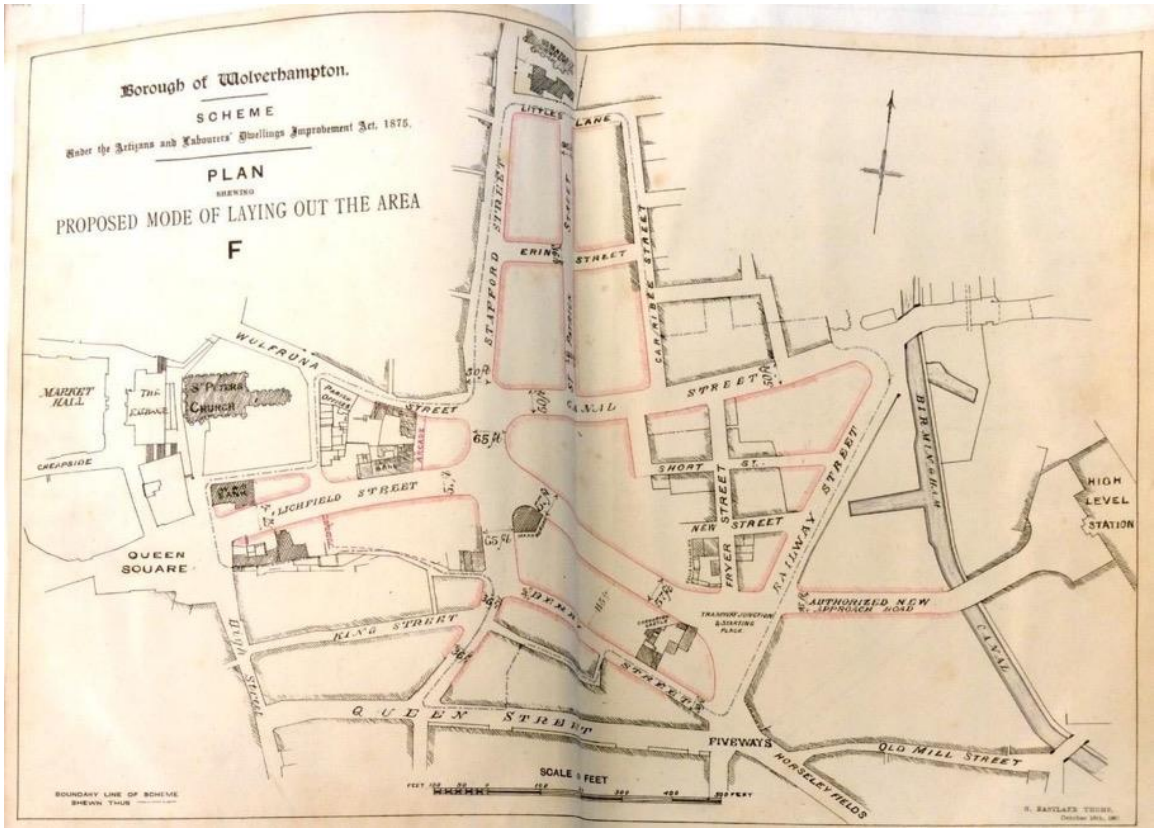


Figure 2.7 The chosen new street layout, 1881, showing Erin Street and St Patrick’s Street (Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies WOL-C-ADSI/2)

Slum clearances drew on decades of spatial production of difference, in which spaces of poverty like Carribee Island were represented as slums, fever nests, cradles of disease, spaces to regulate and on which to impose knowledge and order so that ordinary citizens need no longer fear to tread there. Wolverhampton’s example demonstrates too that racialised

[195] See for example the correspondence replying to Father J. Donworth’s defence of Parnell in the *Evening Express* for an example of this heightened atmosphere. J. Donworth, ‘An Irish Priest on the Arrest of Mr Parnell’, *Evening Express*, 15 October 1881, sec. Correspondence.

discourse contributed to the scope, location and nature of these schemes.[196] The disappearance of the Irish in official records certainly did not mean they had been assimilated unproblematically into British culture: the persistence of racialised spatial stigma was evident in press discussion of the scheme. The troublesome Carribee Islanders were brought within the town’s citizenry for the purposes of the Scheme, but both they and their space would have to become more like the conception of a good Wolverhampton that the Scheme promoted. Although enacted at a very local scale, the fate of this Irish space within Britain thus informed and echoed the national solution for the problem of Ireland itself: it must be made more like healthy, sober, middle-class Britain.[197]

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that the idea of the Irish quarters as a uniquely diseased space was a myth, constructed from layers of representation. This is not to deny that many Irish lived in cramped and overcrowded accommodation in the poorest parts of the city, nor that some of the worst health outcomes were associated with the same areas; but to show that social space is constructed by outside, often expert, representations, none of which are neutral. These constructions also shaped the practical decisions made by those same

[196] Historians have yet to analyse in depth the linkages between slum clearance schemes and Irish spaces in this first wave of legislation. Yelling suggests a link in his definitive work on the subject but does not pursue it. Yet other slum-clearance areas in the West Midlands and elsewhere, including Town End Bank in Walsall, Moor Street in Birmingham, and St Giles in London, were all characterised as Irish areas, and further research into this may prove fruitful. J. A. Yelling, *Slums and Slum Clearance in Victorian London* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 115.
[197] De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*, 23.

outsiders, and the lens of public health helps demonstrate the processes of territorial stigmatisation taking place.

From the 1830s, Carribee Island was identified as a source of contagion which presented a threat to the town. This contagion was epidemiological, but also moral, political, and racial, especially as the neighbourhood became more and more associated with Irish immigrants. The belief that cholera was propagated by the “lowest Irish” in the 1830s ensured that Poor Law officers understood Carribee Island in a racial light. That viewpoint framed Robert Rawlinson’s report, which in turn shaped policy and press optics for the new administration, which then enabled its eventual demolition to be understood in terms of patriotic progress and the civilising mission. Throughout, this area of mixed occupancy was described and legislated for as an Irish quarter. Carribee Island was defined as an Irish “colony” within the British “nation.” An area associated with Irishness both contributed to national anxieties over Ireland itself, and reinforced them to local people. By seeking newspaper audiences, policy solutions and medical progress, a form of territorial stigmatization was accomplished by constructing the Irish as a race apart in a space apart. This was an exercise of spatial power: it placed the production of space in the hands of the outsider to bound it, define it, and use it to reproduce their own narratives.[198]

[198] Patrick Wolfe, ‘Race and Racialisation: Some Thoughts’, *Postcolonial Studies* 5, no. 1 (2002): 51–62; Joseph O. Jewell, ‘“An Injurious Effect on the Neighbourhood”: Narratives of Neighbourhood Decline and Racialised Class Identities in Late Nineteenth-Century San Francisco’, *Immigrants & Minorities* 36 (2017): 1–19; Brooke Neely and Michelle Samura, ‘Social Geographies of Race: Connecting Race and Space’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 11 (2011): 1933–52.

2. “A very hotbed of disease and pestilence”

The process of stigmatising Carribee Island as a public health risk provides a set of examples of how British urban elites sought to identify themselves in the mid-nineteenth century. By identifying deviancy, it symbolised middle-class expectations of working-class domesticity and conformity: although elite viewpoints differed amongst themselves, there was sufficient agreement that such spaces provided a useful opposite to ‘normal’ behaviour, from which the ‘normal’ Wulfrunian could learn. Such language was racialised too, and the industrious, sober, settled Englishman was placed in contrast with the feckless, drunken, transient Irishman: as William Owen had it, a space full of “savage” Irish which only a “patriotic spirit” could tame.[199] A space was easier to stigmatize, for whatever purpose, if it was Irish rather than English.

Carribee Island also represented a site for political re-imaginings of Wolverhampton. It moved from an unquestioned space of rentier capital to a symbol of regressive self-interest over this period; from a representation of all that was wrong with the old system of local government, to a showcase of the potential of modern urban governance, to a testbed for surveillance and regulation of the poor, to a symbol of local autonomy. Its population were turned from insanitary pariahs into “men like ourselves,” worthy of help, but only insofar as they could aid the town in maintaining its independence. Officially, residents of Carribee Island were subsumed into a broader English working class for the convenience of the local authority; socially and culturally, they were still stigmatised. The same processes of official and unofficial production of space that brought it into being eventually brought about its demise.

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[199] Owen, ‘Carribee Islanders’.

2. “A very hotbed of disease and pestilence”

The notion of an Irish quarter persisted in representations of Wolverhampton’s public health, from its early association with cholera in the 1830s, right through to its demolition in the 1880s. In this chapter I have argued that such a label was applied in order to justify the appeasement of property-owners, non-intervention in the urban environment, and the cultural acceptance of anti-Irish sentiment. Epidemics, maps, sewers, inspections and demolitions were all tools that made Carribee Island legible as a racialised space which could be understand both locally and further afield.

Chapter Three: “Inflammatory paragraphs” and “vigorous crusades”: reclaiming disorderly space, 1837-77

> Stafford Street – a street, above all others in the town, where breakers of the law do most congregate.[1]

In 1855, the *WC* reflected on a brief moment in the spotlight for Wolverhampton’s criminal justice system. A confidence trickster, Alice Grey, had been caught fraudulently claiming to have been robbed by two boys in Stafford Street. The area’s notoriety as a crime blackspot had initially made it easy for magistrates to sympathise. Grey was granted parish relief, and the boys sentenced to twelve months’ imprisonment. This turned out to be a well-honed technique, and the newspaper recognised her skill in manipulating both people and urban environments: “looking at them and looking at her, one could scarcely doubt but that their town-bred wickedness and cupidity had resolved to make her country simplicity and ingenuousness ‘fair game.’”[2] Grey may never have actually visited Stafford Street, but its reputation clearly preceded it.[3] This chapter argues that such a reputation was constructed

[1] ‘Editorial’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 7 November 1855.
[2] ‘Editorial’.
[3] Grey had accused Charles Randle and John Perry of robbing her, and they were sentenced to twelve months’ imprisonment in Stafford Gaol. In fact, it was Grey – or Anastasia Huggard, McCarter, Brassil, or any number of other aliases – who was the criminal, having made similar accusations in towns across Britain and Ireland, and regularly being granted parish funds for her upkeep. She was only apprehended in Wolverhampton when a local reporter spotted her on the railway station platform while exchanging notes with a Birmingham colleague. ‘Impudent Robbery’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 17 October 1855; ‘Extraordinary Case of Supposed Imposture’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 20 October 1855; Frederick William Robinson, *Female Life in Prison, by a Prison Matron* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862), 20; ‘A Full Account of the Life, Trials, and Impostures of “Alice Grey,” (Otherwise Anastasia Haggart &c. &c.) Together with an Account of the Four Examinations before the Wolverhampton Magistrates, and Her Committal for Perjury, to Take Her Trial at Stafford Assizes’ (J. Wills, 1856), pbox/WOLVERHAMPTON/319, William Salt Library.

intentionally, a reaction by local middle-class society to the efforts by working-class communities to carve out a space for themselves in local and national discourse, that it was a means of justifying policies of regulation and urban change, and that the production of Stafford Street as an archetypal Irish quarter had material impacts on the town as a whole.

The spaces into which increasing numbers of Irish immigrants arrived in the late 1840s were already turbulent and tumultuous – or at least, were perceived as such by the many authorities which maintained an interest in working-class neighbourhoods. Following the decline in working-class agitation, mid-nineteenth century middle-class elites, newly self-confident in the languages of liberalism and reform, began to construct their fears with more and more specificity.[4] Instead of generalised anxiety about the great cities and the working class as a whole, which characterised the first half of the century, it was distinct locales within those cities, and a newly specified underclass sometimes referred to as the “criminal classes” – amongst whom the Irish held a distinctive place – that drew concern.[5] The stigmatisation of Stafford Street as a criminal, racialised place was a precursor to attempts to reclaim this space following the fears of mass urbanisation and working-class mobilisation in the first half of the

[4] Simon Gunn, ‘Class, Identity and the Urban: The Middle Class in England, c. 1790–1950’, *Urban History* 31, no. 1 (2004): 29–47.

[5] There is a substantial literature on the language and perception of a so-called criminal class or dangerous class in Victorian Britain. With particular reference to the notion of criminal spaces, see: John Carter Wood, ‘Locating Violence: The Spatial Production and Construction of Physical Aggression’, in *Assaulting the Past: Violence and Civilization in Historical Context*, ed. Katherine D. Watson (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 20–37; Vince Bailey, ‘The Fabrication of Deviance: “Dangerous Classes” and “Criminal Classes” in Victorian England’, in *Protest and Survival: The Historical Experience: Essays for E. P. Thompson*, ed. John Rule and Robert Malcolmson (London: Merlin Press, 1995), 222–54; Jennifer S. Davis, ‘Jennings’ Buildings and the Royal Borough: The Construction of the Underclass in Mid-Victorian England’, in *Metropolis - London: Histories and Representations since 1800*, ed. David Feldman and Gareth Stedman Jones (London: Routledge, 1989), 11–39; Barbara Weinberger, ‘The Criminal Class and the Ecology of Crime’, *Historical Social Research* 15, no. 4 (1990): 121–39.

century. This production of stigma enabled legislation which pushed the responsibility for the streets’ perceived lawlessness onto businesses and individuals in the area: a revanchist re-introduction of middle-class values onto the urban landscape.[6]

Stafford Street’s place within the policing history of the town has been comprehensively discussed by Roger Swift, whose thesis that this area and its Irish inhabitants were the focus of experiments in paramilitary, anti-working class and anti-Irish policing, still bears up.[7] This chapter confirms Swift’s findings, but places them within more recent historiographies of power relations, liberal governmentality, and the control of space at an ideological level. This territorial stigmatisation drew from different elite world-views, discussed in the first part of this chapter. The local magistracy was drawn from various constituencies including clergy, industrialists and, from 1849, a Borough council dominated by a liberal industrialist viewpoint.[8] This judiciary interacted with, and helped form, the County and Borough forces

[6] “Revanchism” as a geographical concept is a heavy-handed reclamation of the streets by urban elites, in response to the ascendancy of an alternative frame of social reference: for example, the zero-tolerance policing of cities in the 1990s as a reaction to the liberal values of the previous, social democratic, generation. See particularly Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London: Routledge, 1996); Philip Lawton, ‘Situating Revanchism in the Contemporary City’, *City* 22, no. 5–6 (2018): 867–74.

[7] See particularly Roger Swift, ‘“Another Stafford Street Row”: Law, Order and the Irish Presence in Mid-Victorian Wolverhampton’, in *The Irish in the Victorian City*, ed. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 179–206; Roger Swift, ‘Anti-Catholicism and Irish Disturbances: Public Order in Mid-Victorian Wolverhampton’, *Midland History* 9, no. 1 (1 January 1984): 87–108.

[8] Wolverhampton’s Charter of Incorporation gave the town twelve Aldermen and 36 Councillors. Candidates rarely announced any party affiliation, and instead were nominated by colleagues, acquaintances, neighbours, fellow worshippers, or political party or club members. Elections were rare – only one or two seats were generally contested at annual elections in November. However, Wolverhampton’s local political culture was dominated by Liberalism, particularly by the Liberal Committee, which Jon Lawrence describes as an “informal, yet impenetrable, oligarchy.” In the 1870s, this was opened up into a more democratic Liberal Association and adopted Birmingham’s highly successful “caucus” model in 1878. George William Jones, *Borough Politics: A Study of the Wolverhampton Town Council, 1888-1964* (London: Macmillan, 1969), 25–31; Jon Lawrence, ‘Popular Politics and the Limitations of Party: Wolverhampton, 1867–1900’, in *Currents of Radicalism: Popular Radicalism, Organised Labour and Party Politics in Britain, 1850–1914*, ed. Eugenio F. Biagini and Alastair J. Reid (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 65–85.

which policed Wolverhampton – in this, Irish experiences on both sides were formative. In addition, justice was shaped by the place of the press within Wolverhampton’s civil society: it was in the pages of newspapers that racial stereotypes were reinforced for a middle-class readership.

Stafford Street was a key space that required reclaiming, where multiple Victorian fears overlapped: public violence, drunkenness, vice, and the presence of racialized Others. The process began with territorial stigmatization, producing a problem space that required policing and regulating. Particular crimes – street brawls, drunkenness, prostitution – were assigned to the space in different ways, and attempts were made to racialize them as distinctly Irish with varying success. Alongside this came heavy-handed policing, which duly seemed to confirm the truth behind the spatial stereotype. The second part of this chapter analyses the intersecting spatial and racial strategies used to stigmatise Stafford Street’s residents in the imagination of the town and beyond.

The final section analyses the tools used by authorities to regulate space. By making public streets ‘respectable’ and pushing problem behavior into communal – typically commercial, transactional – environments, it was hoped the population would regulate itself. This section analyses the geographies of drink and commercialised sex in Stafford Street as examples. They demonstrate related, but different, approaches to this policy of containment and regulation, inflected by political, religious and racial ideologies. In each case though, elite efforts ran up against resistance, ranging from violence to careful application of legal principles, and were only partially successful. While local elites held all the cards, they did not always play them effectively. Nevertheless, the reclamation of Stafford Street had serious effects on the lives and liberty of women, the Irish and the poor which entrenched stereotypes and poverty in

the space.

Urban elites, and law and order

The magistracy

Crime is never a neutral or static category, but “an exercise in governance,” a reflection of societal norms and values.[9] Definitions of, and solutions to, crime reflected the worldviews of local and national elites. At the pinnacle of the local judicial system were the magistrates’ bench, which expanded throughout the century from an aristocratic elite to include industrialists and other middle-class members. In Wolverhampton, the magistracy was closely bound up with local government, and the crime it identified and policed was defined by the political culture of the town.

Entry into the Staffordshire magistracy had long been fiercely protected, particularly by the county’s Tory Lord Lieutenant, Earl Talbot. Talbot sought to reproduce his own class within the magistracy: an unpaid position with a property qualification, it was generally only the aristocracy, gentry and clergy that could afford to serve as justices of the peace anyway. Exceptions were typically those with family or political alliances.[10] As elsewhere in the country, under pressure from the Home Secretary Talbot began to admit more professionals

[9] David Churchill, *Crime Control and Everyday Life in the Victorian City: The Police and the Public* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 1. Shane Ewen notes that it was the twin purpose of public safety and the protection of private property that defined Victorian governance, as compared to government. Shane Ewen, *What Is Urban History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 64–65.

[10] Marjorie Jones, ‘Justices of the Peace in Wolverhampton: The Clerical Magistrates.’, *West Midlands Studies* 11 (1978): 19–22; David Philips, ‘The Black Country Magistracy 1835-60’, *Midland History* 3, no. 2 (1975): 161–90; Roger Swift, ‘The English Urban Magistracy and the Administration of Justice during the Early Nineteenth Century: Wolverhampton 1815–1860’, *Midland History* 17, no. 1 (1992): 75–92.

and industrialists in the late 1830s.[11] In this period, new appointments included medical professionals, like William Mannix and John Dehane; financiers like Henry Hill (Tory banker, brother of the Deputy Lieutenant of Staffordshire, and heir to the large Hordern estate); and industrialists like John Barker, owner of Chillington Ironworks.[12] Each group tended to use the courts in their own interests: clergymen saw themselves as moral guardians, aristocrats as guardians of traditional class deference, and industrialists were shameless in using employment law to instil labour discipline. Wolverhampton had the highest number of prosecutions under the Master & Servants Acts of any borough in Britain, for example.[13] The interventions of the mid-nineteenth century can thus be seen alongside a similar disciplinary assault in labour relations, in which workers were painted as troublesome, and coercive power used to pacify them.

With the Borough’s incorporation in 1848, a Wolverhampton magistrates’ bench was appointed, still under the aegis of the County magistracy (alongside an existing Stipendiary

[11] This was not an uncontested change. Lord Melbourne expressed his view that in manufacturing counties especially, drawing magistrates from the manufacturing world was undesirable as country gentlemen had better characters. Philips, ‘The Black Country Magistracy 1835-60’; Carl H. E. Zangerl, ‘The Social Composition of the County Magistracy in England and Wales, 1831-1887’, *Journal of British Studies* 11, no. 1 (1971): 113–25.

[12] ‘Justices’ Oaths of Qualification’ (Stafford, January 1838), Q/SB 1839 A/12-19, Staffordshire Record Office; ‘Justices’ Oaths of Qualification’ (Stafford, January 1840), Q/SB 1840 E/44-53, Staffordshire Record Office.

[13] The Black Country had the highest rate of prosecutions under the Master & Servants Acts of anywhere in the country. Staffordshire prosecuted over 10,000 individuals between 1858 and 1867, more than double any other county. Wolverhampton made more prosecutions than any other Borough in the same period, 1,670. The numbers remained almost as high between 1867 and 1875. John Barker, for example, was notorious for his leniency over the banned Truck system of payment – which he employed at his Chillington Works in Wolverhampton. Philips, ‘The Black Country Magistracy 1835-60’; D. C. Woods, ‘The Operation of the Master and Servants Act in the Black Country, 1858–1875’, *Midland History* 7, no. 1 (1982): 93–115; Richard H. Trainor, *Black Country Élites: The Exercise of Authority in an Industrialized Area 1830-1900* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 139–45.

Magistrate).[14] The following year Talbot died and was replaced by the Whig Marquess of Anglesey, who immediately began appointing a less Conservative bench, a policy followed by his Liberal successor Lord Hatherton.[15] All had experience of policing in Ireland during the turbulent early nineteenth century, when management of the populace through experimental military-style policing was seen as key to pacifying the island: Talbot and Anglesey had both been Lord Lieutenants of Ireland, and Hatherton was Chief Secretary of Ireland.[16] In the Borough of Wolverhampton, Mayors were sworn in as magistrates and served as Chairs of the prestigious Watch Committee, ensuring that law and order – particularly the protection of private property which was so central to ratepayers’ understanding of the role of their council – remained central.[17] This committee grew to embrace a variety of

[14] John Butland Smith, ‘The Governance of Wolverhampton 1848-1888’ (PhD, Leicester, University of Leicester, 2001), 93.

[15] Jon Lawrence, *Speaking for the People: Party, Language and Popular Politics in England, 1867-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 73.
The Lords Lieutenant of Staffordshire in the nineteenth century were:
Henry Bayly Paget, 1st Earl of Uxbridge (1801-1812)
Charles Chetwynd-Talbot, 2nd Earl Talbot (1812-1849)
Henry Paget, 1st Marquess of Anglesey (1849-1854)
Edward Littleton, 1st Baron Hatherton (1854-1863)
Thomas Anson, 2nd Earl of Lichfield (1863-1871)
Arthur Wrottesley, 3rd Baron Wrottesley (1871-1887)
William Legge, 5th Earl of Dartmouth (1887-1891)
William Legge, 6th Earl of Dartmouth (1891-1927)

[16] Philips, ‘The Black Country Magistracy 1835-60’; Swift, ‘English Urban Magistracy’. The Irish Constabulary was noted for arms, practices and even uniforms modelled on the army, designed to pacify a disorderly post-Union Ireland. W. J. Lowe and E. L. Malcolm, ‘The Domestication of the Royal Irish Constabulary, 1836-1922’, *Irish Economic and Social History* 19 (1992): 27–48; Surajit C. Mukhopadhyay, ‘Importing Back Colonial Policing Systems? The Relationship between the Royal Irish Constabulary, Indian Policing and Militarization of Policing in England and Wales’, *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 11, no. 3 (1998): 253–65. Talbot was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland 1817-1821. Anglesey was Lord Lieutenant 1828-1829 and 1830-1831. Hatherton was Chief Secretary of Ireland 1833-1834.

[17] Carolyn Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community: The Formation of English Provincial Police Forces, 1856-80* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 44; Shane Ewen, ‘Power and Administration in Two Midlands Cities, c.1870-1938’ (PhD, Leicester, University of Leicester, 2003), 69, 76–77. Note that on occasion, Mayors could be rejected by the Lord Chancellor. Henry Hartley Fowler, Mayor in 1862, was rejected on the grounds that he was a practising attorney. Smith, ‘Governance of Wolverhampton’, 96.

environmental and social controls: the police inspected common lodging-houses, checked weights and measures, and acted as poor law receiving officers, making them “more complete servants of property within the local financial structure of local forces.”[18]

County magistrates were also charged with keeping the peace. From electoral violence in 1835 to the 1842 Plug Plot riots, JPs read the Riot Act and called out the yeomanry.[19] The Lord Lieutenants’ Irish experience made them familiar with policing an environment in which insurrection was a present danger.[20] When magistrates inaugurated a new county-wide police force in 1842 in response to the physical threat of Chartism, the ground was already prepared ideologically for an aggressive, reactionary form of social control in which Irish and working-class resistance played an important symbolic role.

Richard Castle’s Watch, 1837-42

The foundations of Wolverhampton’s police demonstrate the early antagonisms between elite and working-class perspectives, and their potential to take root in poor neighbourhoods. Wolverhampton’s parish constables and small night watch, appointed in 1814, had proved woefully inadequate in coping with the restless Black Country of the 1830s.[21] In 1837, the Town Commissioners appointed Richard Castle as head of a reformed Day and Night Watch. Castle was recruited from London’s new Metropolitan Police, founded in 1829 by another

[18] Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, 8.
[19] David J. Cox, ‘“The Wolves Let Loose at Wolverhampton”: A Study of the South Staffordshire Election “Riots”, May 1835’, *Law, Crime & History* 1, no. 2 (2011): 1–31; George J. Barnsby, *Chartism in the Black Country* (Wolverhampton: Integrated Publishing Services, 1980).
[20] Stanley H. Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland, 1780-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
[21] Cox, ‘“The Wolves Let Loose at Wolverhampton”’; Roger Swift, ‘Urban Policing in Early Victorian England, 1835-36: A Reappraisal’, *History* 73, no. 238 (1988): 211–37.

former Chief Secretary of Ireland, Robert Peel, on the model of the Irish Constabulary he created in 1813.[22] The Metropolitan Police were the first of the “new police” forces, rolled out piecemeal across the country over the following decades, which had been prompted less by everyday crime than by fears of working-class disturbances.[23] The Irish Constabulary had been an experiment in controlling the frequent uprisings in Ireland in the years after Union, and was mapped onto British police when similar threats were perceived from working-class movements like Chartism.[24] Castle’s Watch were not quite “new police,” but were appointed in this atmosphere. His first year saw little of the feared uprising, but the young Superintendent was considered “vigilant and efficient” in policing the town, particularly in cracking down on street drinking and crime: of 1,132 arrests, over half were for drunkenness or assault.[25] This small force, readied for mass uprising, instead defined crime in Wolverhampton by policing activities, like public drinking and ritual fighting, most commonly ascribed to the poor.

On 4 July 1841 the father of Castle’s fifteen-year-old domestic servant Mary Warner appeared

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[22] Castle was a Sergeant in London and was initially paid 5s. 6d. per day. A sergeant (John Fenn) and five constables were appointed at the same time at 18s. 8d. per week plus uniform. Wolverhampton Town Commissioners, ‘Minutes’, 5 August 1837, D/MAN/35, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; Roger Swift, *Crime and Society in Wolverhampton 1815-1860* (Wolverhampton: Wolverhampton Public Libraries, 1987), 3; Marjorie Jones, *Justice and Journalism: A Study of the Influence of Newspaper Reporting upon the Administration of Justice by Magistrates* (Chichester: Barry Rose, 1974), 118.

[23] Clive Emsley, *The English Police: A Political and Social History*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1996), 24; Palmer, *Police and Protest*, 10.

[24] Palmer, *Police and Protest*, 24–27.

[25] Richard Castle was born in Lambourn, Berkshire around 1805, so was approximately 32 when he took the role on. Census returns for Wolverhampton, 1841-1861; ‘The Charge Against Castle’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 14 July 1841; ‘Deaths’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 15 February 1868; ‘The Atrocious Burglary at Church Stretton’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 9 December 1840; Swift, *Crime and Society*; Swift, ‘Urban Policing’; Jones, ‘JPs in Wolverhampton’.

at the Police Office demanding a warrant for Castle’s arrest, for attempted rape of his daughter. Warner testified that Castle:

> …came downstairs in his drawers, took her up in his arms, carried her into the back parlour, lifted up her petticoats as high as her knees, and placed her hand, indecently, on his person.[26]

Warner fled from Castle’s King Street house back to her parents’ home in Stafford Street.[27] The police were reluctant to initiate an arrest and eventually the case was tried in private, before magistrates Henry Hill and John Dehane. After detailed discussion, including of Castle’s underwear, the magistrates concluded that his conduct was indecent and fined him 40s.[28] The reaction to this incident reveals the state of relations between the police, the magistrates, the press and Wolverhampton’s working class in the 1840s. Radical and Chartist newspapers reported the secret trial as an outrage in terms of tyranny and privilege. The *Northern Star* exclaimed:

> These private hearings or secret examinations savour too much of the inquisitorial tribunals of the Continent ever to become palatable to the people of this country… If this poor girl had been the child of one these

[26] ‘The Charge Against Castle’.
[27] In the 1841 census, Mary Warner was recorded as living at the Castles’ home in King Street, along with Richard Castle, his wife Lucy and their daughter Sophia.
[28] ‘Inquisitorial Mode of Administering Justice’, *Northern Star*, 14 July 1841; ‘Inquisitorial Mode of Administering Justice’, *London Dispatch*, 10 July 1841; ‘The Charge Against Castle’.

3. "Inflammatory paragraphs" and "vigorous crusades"

> Solons, it is a question if the offence would have been so snugly disposed of.[29]

Power did not go uncriticised in the 1840s. Spurred by campaigning journalism in the radical *Staffordshire Examiner,* a public meeting was called condemning Castle, the magistrates and the *WC*, which had chosen not to report the trial.[30] An attendance of 7-8,000 was claimed and a petition presented to the Town Commissioners, who reviewed the evidence and trial statements. Castle felt the charge was a conspiracy, worked up by Chartists and supported by beershop owners he had recently fined. Indeed, the meeting took place against a backdrop of growing working-class agitation in the Black Country, and the speakers included local Chartist leader William Mogg.[31] It was likely that working-class radicals seized on the incident as a source of complaint about judicial procedure, though Castle's charge of conspiracy is impossible to substantiate. Town Commissioner Sidney certainly believed:

> …the charge to be pushed on by a most wicked and abominable combination… the charge, too, was supported by persons who did not stand very high in point of character themselves.

Commissioner Simkins unsuccessfully argued the alternative, questioning whether "being

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[29] 'Inquisitorial Mode of Administering Justice', 14 July 1841. On this characterisation of the judiciary (based on the Athenian lawmaker Solon), see David J. Cox, '"The Habitual Eccentricities of the Solons of Staffordshire": An Investigation of the Circumstances Surrounding the Parliamentary Enquiry into the Ill-Treatment of Mrs Eliza Price of Brierley Hill, 1845', *Plymouth Law & Criminal Justice Review* 3, no. 1 (2010): 109–27.

[30] Copies of the *Staffordshire Examiner* for 1841 are no longer extant, and reference is taken from responses in the *Wolverhampton Chronicle*. The article was entitled "Private Magisterial Investigation." Jones, *Justice and Journalism, 121*. Press publicity was often the only way of exposing unfairness in the judicial system: see David Bentley, 'Acquitting the Innocent. Convicting the Guilty. Delivering Justice?', in *Behaving Badly: Social Panic and Moral Outrage–Victorian and Modern Parallels*, ed. Judith Rowbotham and Kim Stevenson (Aldershot: Gower, 2003), 15–29.

[31] Barnsby, *Chartism*; George J. Barnsby, *The Working Class Movement in the Black Country, 1750 to 1867* (Wolverhampton: Integrated Publishing Services, 1977), 79.

thus convicted, he had not lost all moral standing with the public.” Castle had been “hooted” in public since, and “they could not retain a man with that stigma on him.” The gulf between working-class and elite opinion of judicial process in Wolverhampton was confirmed by the Commissioners’ dismissal of the petition. Superintendent Castle, convicted of indecent assault, remained in post for another year until the formation of the County police in 1842, after which he became Town Surveyor, and later Inspector of Nuisances – both significant roles within the remaking of Wolverhampton’s urban fabric.[32]

It is impossible to ascertain the extent to which Castle’s conviction affected attitudes towards his continued presence in a role of authority and surveillance in Stafford Street, though he was unlikely to be welcome. Nevertheless, the incident set the tone of a period fraught with antagonism between the working class, the press, and the policing and judiciary system, and highlighted the tools elites used to identify and tackle Wolverhampton’s problems.

New police, 1842-78

Staffordshire County Police was formed in response to the so-called Plug Plot riots in Staffordshire in 1842.[33] Although most of the violence was concentrated in the north of the county, Wolverhampton was still involved: in August, a Chartist meeting of several thousand in Stafford Street had been closely watched by magistrates, special constables, yeomanry and

[32] ‘Inquisitorial Mode of Administering Justice’, 14 July 1841; ‘The Charge Against Castle’; ‘Town Commissioners’ Meeting: The Charge Against Castle’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 11 August 1841; ‘Wolverhampton’, *Northern Star*, 31 July 1841.

[33] Barnsby, *Chartism*; Barnsby, *The Working Class Movement in the Black Country*, 156–60; Robert Fyson, ‘The Crisis of 1842: Chartism, the Colliers’ Strike and the Outbreak in the Potteries’, in *The Chartist Experience: Studies in Working-Class Radicalism and Culture, 1830–60*, ed. James Epstein and Dorothy Thompson (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1982), 194–220.

two companies of infantry.[34] Throughout the 1840s, disorder at the hands of the working class was foremost in the minds of the magistracy.

The new force was not set up with the policing of the Irish foremost in mind, but that nevertheless became an important facet of its constitution. Its first Chief Constable was John Hayes Hatton, an Irish Protestant from Wicklow. Hatton’s background was in the military and the Irish Constabulary, where he was commended for opposing Ribbonist secret societies on the strictest lines during seventeen years’ service.[35] Hatton’s deputy, Colonel Gilbert Hogg, was an Irish Protestant soldier too, the son of a Roscommon magistrate who followed his military commander Sir Charles Shaw into the Manchester police during the 1839 peak of Chartist activity.[36] Hogg was appointed Superintendent of the South Staffordshire Mining District (headquartered in Wolverhampton) as Hatton’s deputy in 1842, so from this point at least relations between police and the working-class Irish in Wolverhampton were framed from a distinctive standpoint.

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[34] ‘The Colliers’ Strike’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 10 August 1842.

[35] John Hayes Hatton (1793-1880) was born in Ballyloughlin, Wicklow and served in the Newtown Mountkennedy Infantry and Irish Constabulary. He was proud that his county (Meath) had the strictest policing in Ireland. ‘Appointment of Chief Constable’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 10 December 1842; ‘Chief Constable of Staffordshire’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 21 December 1842; ‘Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords Appointed to Enquire into the State of Ireland in Respect of Crime’, P. P. (486), xii (H. M. Stationery Office, 1839), 246; see also John Herson, *Divergent Paths: Family Histories of Irish Emigrants in Britain 1820-1920* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 193–97; M. R. Beames, ‘The Ribbon Societies: Lower-Class Nationalism in Pre-Famine Ireland’, *Past & Present*, no. 97 (1982): 128–43; Donald MacRaild and Kyle Hughes, ‘Underground Catholic Networks in Ireland and Britain: The Case of Ribbonism before the Famine and After’, in *Migrant Britain: Histories and Historiographies: Essays in Honour of Colin Holmes*, ed. Jennifer Craig-Norton, Christhard Hoffmann, and Tony Kushner (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 239–50.

[36] Gilbert Hogg (1815-1867) was born in Gilston, Roscommon in 1815. His father was James Hogg, JP. From 1832 he served under Sir Charles Shaw in the Portuguese Liberal Wars on the side of Dom Pedro I, former Emperor of Brazil, who aimed to restore his sister Maria to the Portuguese throne. Hogg is mentioned in Shaw’s 1837 memoirs. Gilbert Hogg, ‘Application for the Post of Chief Constable of Staffordshire, with Testimonials’, 1856, M136/7/1-3, William Salt Library; Charles Shaw, *Personal Memoirs and Correspondence of Colonel Charles Shaw* (London: H. Colburn, 1837), 501, 516, 558, 567; Swift, ‘Urban Policing’; Fyson, ‘The Crisis of 1842’.

3. “Inflammatory paragraphs” and “vigorous crusades”

Hatton’s approach to policing as a form of social control shaped his responses to resurgent Chartism in 1848. He believed that:

> [T]he great increase of cases of resisting the police are, in my opinion, attributable to the Chartist lecturers, who inculcate contempt of the laws and the authorities, and also to the seditious and violent publications which have been circulated throughout the county.[37]

Wolverhampton’s incorporation in 1848 coincided with the last burst of Chartist activity. It gradually became evident that the threat of working-class organisation was diminishing, and magistrates and police began to take steps towards what they saw as reclaiming the town’s public space. Hogg became Chief of Wolverhampton Police, and when Hatton retired in 1857 was promoted to County Chief Constable.[38] Hogg’s replacement in Wolverhampton, Captain Henry Segrave, was also an Irishman with a military background. Segrave was of aristocratic stock, but Catholic, which may have hampered his own ambitions for the County Chief Constableship.[39] Both Hogg and Segrave imported military methods into their policing, with sword drills and regular inspection.[40] Constable Samuel Ray recalled a regime of fines for misconduct like drinking on duty, and his bitterness when an arrest was claimed by a superior,

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[37] ‘Chief Constable’s Report’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 1 July 1848.

[38] Hogg, ‘Application to Chief Constable’; Watch Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 7 September 1857), 11 March 1857, WOL-C-WAT/2, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

[39] Henry Segrave was born in Ireland in 1825, the son of Henry-John Segrave Esq of Kiltimon House, Wicklow. He served in the 12th Regiment. He married Mary-Elizabeth, daughter of Edward Francis Dehane, at SS Peter & Paul in 1850. Carolyn Steedman notes that Segrave was unusual among applicants to the post in 1867 for his religion, which was likely an impediment to his case. Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*, 120; see also Swift, ‘Urban Policing’; John O’Hart, *Irish Pedigrees; or the Origin and Stem of the Irish Nation*, 5th ed., vol. 2 (Dublin: J. Duffy, 1892), 386–87.

[40] Swift, ‘Urban Policing’; Lowe and Malcolm, ‘Domestication’.

suggesting that strict discipline and a competitive spirit were encouraged.[41] Some recruits had military experience too: Shropshire-born Joseph Plimmer had been stationed at Woolwich Arsenal, and on St Helena during Napoleon’s exile.[42] Irish policemen formed a substantial and growing part of the force, though this was not the over-representation seen in Birmingham or Staffordshire police, and essentially reflected the working-class community amongst which they lived and worked (Table 3.1).

	1851		1861	
Town	Proportion population born in Ireland	Proportion policemen born in Ireland	Proportion population born in Ireland	Proportion policemen born in Ireland
Birmingham	4.79%	16.42%	4.63%	20%
Walsall (Borough and Foreign)	6.47%	0%	5.81%	0%
Staffordshire	2.59%	10.16%	2.58%	7.93%
Wolverhampton	6.47%	8.57%	5.66%	19.05%

Table 3.5 Irish-born policemen in West Midlands regions, 1851-61[43]

Policing in Wolverhampton was characterised by a militarised management style, imported by county and local magistrates from early nineteenth-century Ireland, in response to the real

[41] Samuel Ray, ‘Notebooks and Memoirs’ (MS, c.1885), DX-739/1-9, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies. Ray was born in Stockton, near Albrighton, in Shropshire. He worked as an ostler in Bridgnorth before moving to Wolverhampton.

[42] Plimmer was born in Wellington, Shropshire in 1796, and married Jane, from Wolverhampton, some time prior to 1814, when his first son Joseph was born in Woolwich, Kent. His daughter Sarah appears to have been born on St Helena (although the census return is difficult to read) in 1816, then two further sons George and Thomas in Woolwich in 1830 and 1833. A further son John was born in Wolverhampton in 1837 (the year of the Metropolitan Police’s Richard Castle’s appointment in charge of the reformed watch), followed by twin girls Jane and Abigail in 1839. By 1841 he was a Sergeant, living in Horse Fair – close to Carribee Island – and was appointed to the new Staffordshire force at its inauguration. Although chief constables preferred not to recruit former soldiers, it was by no means unheard of – see for example Carolyn Steedman, *The Radical Soldier’s Tale*, History Workshop (London: Routledge, 1988).

[43] Census analysis demonstrates the over-representation of Irish police in Staffordshire and Birmingham (compiled from https://icem.data-archive.ac.uk rather than police records, which do not include this detail). The proportion increased in Wolverhampton – this suggests that Irish police were not imported, but drawn increasingly from a local Irish community eager for work, and reputed for its physical strength.

and perceived threats of working-class activism in England.[44] As these threats died back, a new community was identified to be policed, as this chapter will show. This leadership, with its pre-existing attitudes towards the working class and the Irish, set the tone for the heavy-handed policing of unrespectable places and people in the following decades.[45]

Local elites and the press

A county magistracy thus brought a broad suspicion towards the working class, and non-local police leaders introduced distinctive policing tactics into Wolverhampton. But local elites developed other ways of defining and regulating crime too, by constructing a consensual view of law and order beyond party political affiliation. When Wolverhampton gained its Borough Council in 1848, familiar names appeared in a web of roles, subscriptions and memberships. Influential medical practitioners took their place in civic life, bringing the experiences discussed in chapter two to their roles. William Mannix (raised in Cork during the uprisings of the late-eighteenth century) and John Dehane became magistrates, James Gatis an Alderman, and so on.[46] Likewise, policemen took their place in civic society, often in positions relevant to their jobs. Hogg was involved in Robert Rawlinson’s sanitary inquiry, joined the association for improving lodging-houses, and became a Freemason. His successor Henry Segrave was a Freemason also, and married EF Dehane’s daughter Mary.[47] Segrave’s successor in 1878,

[44] Swift, ‘“Another Stafford Street Row”’.
[45] Swift.
[46] Brian D. Price, ‘Sir Henry Mannix (1740-1822) and His Three Children’ (Typescript, Stafford, June 2004), CB/MANNIX/1, William Salt Library; ‘Wolverhampton Athenaeum: The Sanitary State of the Town’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 26 January 1848.
[47] ‘Marriages’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 30 November 1850; Thomas Jackson Barnett, *A History of the Lodge of Honour, (Held at Wolverhampton) Formerly No. 769, Now No. 526 on the Register of the Grand Lodge of England:*

Major Robert Hay, was another military man, connected by family marriage to the towering figure of Wolverhampton Liberalism, Henry Hartley Fowler.[48]

Alongside these local elites was the local press. Wolverhampton was served by a number of newspapers. The *WC* was one of the country’s oldest provincial newspapers, founded in 1789 and run in the 1840s by Tory-supporting lawyer Thomas Wood.[49] He was joined in ownership by William Braddon Upcott, who took full control in 1853.[50] Upcott rarely expressed himself publicly, but the tone of his paper remained firmly in conservative Anglican mode. He acknowledged his responsible place amongst Wolverhampton society at a public dinner in 1858: like his fellow diners, he felt “invested with the exercise of a moral, social, and political power.”[51] It is unclear when a dedicated court reporter was appointed, but nevertheless police court matters formed an important and unfailingly regular part of the newspaper, and became increasingly detailed and comprehensive over time.[52] Wolverhampton had several short-lived Liberal-Radical newspapers, including the *Staffordshire Examiner* in the 1840s, the *Midland Examiner & Wolverhampton Times* (*ME*) in the 1870s, and the *Evening Star* from

(Principally Condensed from the Minute Books) With a List of the Members of the Lodge During the Whole Period of Its Existence, from 1846 to 1896 (Wolverhampton: J. D. Steen, 1896).

[48] ‘Chief Constableship’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 13 September 1878. Fowler, a solicitor born in Sunderland, took a prominent role in public life in the 1860s and 1870s, and was elected Liberal MP for Wolverhampton in 1880. He rose to prominent roles in government as President of the Local Government Board and Secretary of State for India. He was ennobled as Viscount Wolverhampton in 1908. Fowler was married to Ellen Thorneycroft – daughter of Wolverhampton’s first mayor, the Conservative G. B. Thorneycroft. Hay married the daughter of Charles Corser, Fowler’s business partner. Timothy Larsen, ‘Fowler, Henry Hartley, First Viscount Wolverhampton (1830–1911), Politician’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[49] Swift, *Crime and Society*, 12.

[50] Alexander Andrews, ‘Our Monthy Necrology: Mr W. B. Upcott’, *The Newspaper Press*, 1 July 1870.

[51] ‘Dinner to M. Ironmonger Esq., Ex-Mayor of Wolverhampton’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 17 November 1858.

[52] Jones, *Justice and Journalism*, 182.

1882, which merged with the conservative *Evening Express* (founded 1874) in 1889.[53] Further afield, the Stafford-based *SA* proclaimed neutrality but leaned towards liberalism under its mid-century proprietors, and Birmingham’s newspapers (*Gazette* (*BDG*), *Journal* (*BJ*) and *Post* (*BDP*)) were also mostly Liberal.[54] This range allows a view of Stafford Street from different political perspectives, but while this space was described differently by different newspapers, certain kinds of stigmatisation of place and people were common across the spectrum.

The press played a significant role in the spatial and racial characterisation of Stafford Street as a problem, and affected not just its readers’ understandings of space, but those of the judiciary and police. As Stuart Hall notes, through selection and interpretation news production inevitably replicates the ideas used by the powerful to define the world; crime reporting is such a central part of journalism because crime “evokes threats to, but also reaffirms the consensual morality of society.”[55] This was certainly true in Victorian Wolverhampton: while the press remained distinct from formal power, decisions about what

[53] The *ME* was run by the trade unionist William Owen. See Aled Jones, ‘Owen, William (1844-1912)’, in *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, ed. Joyce M. Bellamy, David E. Martin, and John Saville, vol. 9 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), 227–30; Aled Jones, ‘The Press and the Printed Word’, in *A Companion to 19th-Century Britain*, ed. Chris Williams (New York: Wiley, 2004), 369–80. On the press environment in Wolverhampton more generally, see Jones, *Justice and Journalism*.

[54] The *SA* was founded by the Whig printer and bookseller Joshua Drewry and based in the county town, Stafford. By the 1830s Drewry had passed control to his cousin’s sons, John Drewry Mort and Charles Chester Mort. F. David Roberts, ‘Still More Early Victorian Newspaper Editors’, *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter* 5, no. 4 (1972): 12–26. On Birmingham newspapers, see Stephen Roberts, *Now Mr Editor! Letters to the Newspapers of Nineteenth Century Birmingham* (Birmingham: Birmingham Biographies, 2015); A. J. C. Mayne, *The Imagined Slum: Newspaper Representation in Three Cities, 1870-1914* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993), chap. 4.

[55] Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 56–67. A Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies Report in 1975 found very similar conclusions based on readings of Wolverhampton’s press in the 1960s and 1970s. Charles Critcher, Margaret Parker, and Ranjit Sondhi, *Race in the Provincial Press: A Case Study of Five West Midland Newspapers*, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies Occasional Papers 39 (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1975).

constituted crime and disorder were made not just in council chambers or police offices, but in drawing rooms, clubs, offices and lodges across the town, and reinforced from multiple political perspectives in newspapers – most people’s only contact with criminal behaviour.[56] It was through these connections that the exercise of justice came to mean something more than simply law and order: it was part of a wider policing of the urban environment.[57] Urban anxieties coalesced in space: fears of public health crises, moral degradation, working-class insurrection and the rise of the “dangerous classes” found common ground in poor neighbourhoods such as Stafford Street. It was through the interaction of elite networks with the town’s police and press that moral panics were created, and reforming agendas set.

The violent streets: spatial and racial strategies of stigmatisation

> [I]f Wolverhampton is to emerge from the small semi-agricultural town of the last century to the well-regulated Manufacturing Metropolis of the important district of South Staffordshire and to lose its notoriety for dirt and mismanagement its inhabitants must (to obtain so desirable an end) submit to some change in their accustomed habits.[58]

[56] Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis*, 56.

[57] Robert Storch’s argument that the police were an instrument of social control has been much contested, but has remained important to historians of nineteenth-century policing. His articles have an implicit spatial focus too, however, although he rarely elaborated: in his most famous pieces, action was focused on working-class “neighbourhoods” in particular. Robert D. Storch, ‘The Plague of the Blue Locusts’, *International Review of Social History* 20, no. 1 (1975): 61–90; Robert D. Storch, ‘The Policeman as Domestic Missionary: Urban Discipline and Popular Culture in Northern England, 1850-1880’, *Journal of Social History* 9, no. 4 (1976): 481–509; See also Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community*; Weinberger, ‘The Criminal Class and the Ecology of Crime’; Weinberger.

[58] Bye-Law Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 29 January 1850), WOL-C-BYE/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

3. “Inflammatory paragraphs” and “vigorous crusades”

Stafford Street’s biggest problem, in the eyes of these elites, was the very public nature of its disorder. They saw it as an unrespectable place, where vices like fighting, drinking and prostitution were on public display, a space that needed to be made respectable. Attitudes towards the streetscape reveal the middle classes’ conceptions of the poor, but also of themselves. They were full of expectations about appropriate and respectable manners of conduct in public, most of which cut through political, gender, religious or other divisions within the middle class, creating something much more uniform in its attitudes towards the poor.[59]

One of the most evident perceived problems was street violence, which serves as a useful demonstration of the process of stigmatisation: territory, class and race were ascribed inherent characteristics which turned these spaces of the poor into dens of criminality, unruly locales opposed to the respectable Wulfrunian norm. Stafford Street’s notoriety was constructed where layers of representation interacted with the reforming attitudes of these new systems of law and order. Problems and prejudices were expressed in spatial language, constructing this as a threatening space in the minds of the middle class, one which impacted upon their ideas of what respectable space should be.

Stafford Street Rows

There is no doubt that violence and disorderly behaviour were common features of poor and working-class spaces in Victorian towns. Fights, brawls and assaults formed a “widely-

[59] Wood, ‘Locating Violence’.

accepted part of social relations, community self-policing and recreational life.”[60] Newspaper reports of such incidents were common from the early nineteenth century, but accepted as part of everyday life. When the rapid demise of the working-class threat coincided with the appearance of a new stigmatised group, however, focus shifted towards viewing such customary behaviour as crimes associated to particular groups of people, particular spaces and particular races.

In Wolverhampton this shift took place in the years following the first peak in Famine immigration from Ireland in 1847 (greeted by widespread anti-Irish violence – see chapter six) and the last gasp of Chartism in 1848. Prior to this, reporting focused on specific sites like disorderly public houses and specific personal crimes (though class prejudice was always present: the *WC* reported two residents as “people of low circumstances” when tried for assaulting the police in 1837).[61] From the late 1840s, a trope of generalised public disorder distinctly associated with the street began to appear – the “Stafford-street Row” – coinciding with a move towards presenting such stories as articles by themselves rather than collected under generalised proceedings of the police court.

By the time this phrase first appeared in print in January 1849, newspaper readers were familiar with the ingredients of such a disturbance: men stripped for fighting, “brickbats and other missiles” hurled at the police, crowds of dozens or hundreds of Irish bystanders using

[60] John Carter Wood, ‘A Useful Savagery: The Invention of Violence in Nineteenth-Century England’, *Journal of Victorian Culture* 9, no. 1 (2004): 22–42; J. Carter Wood, *Violence and Crime in Nineteenth Century England: The Shadow of Our Refinement* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 105.
[61] ‘Violent Opposition to the Constables in Executing a Warrant’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 25 January 1837.

“disgraceful” language, and police court scenes when “as usual Stafford Street furnished its quota.”[62] In that first appearance, entitled “Another Stafford-street Row,” the *WC* described the trial of six Irishmen “charged with violently assaulting policemen Robinson and Wardle, in Stafford-street, about half-past ten on Saturday night.” In fact, the policemen had been stationed outside the Black Horse, on the corner of Stafford Street and Horse Fair, but had pursued the prisoner down Canal Street, away from Stafford Street. Nevertheless, and despite the alibis produced by the defendant, the whole incident was labelled a Stafford Street Row and the magistrate, John Dehane, fining the prisoners £2 each, observed that “the Bench were determined to put a stop to such violent attacks.”[63] The Stafford Street Row had become a cliché.[64]

Similar reports appeared so frequently that by 1855, when three men were charged with fighting in Stafford Street and assaulting policemen, the *WC* quoted an unnamed source at the trial that this was “simply a ‘Stafford-street row.’”[65] By this time press, public, and police all knew what this entailed, and so the reports kept on coming. The language used was frequently dramatic, with headlines like “Murderous Assault,” “Savage Assault,” or “A

[62] ‘Another Stafford-Street Row’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 17 January 1849; ‘Police Court’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 29 December 1847; ‘Public Office’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 12 July 1848; ‘Public Office’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 30 May 1849; ‘Public Office’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 6 June 1849. See also Roger Swift’s work on policing the Irish in Wolverhampton, particularly ‘“Another Stafford Street Row”’.
[63] ‘Another Stafford-Street Row’.
[64] Similarly to “stereotype,” the word “cliché” passed into the English language from a French term used in mass printing (as with newspapers). A cliché became a common term for a regularly used expression which could be kept ready rather than rebuilt with movable type each time it was used. *Oxford English Dictionary Online,* 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), s.v. “Cliché” and “Stereotype”.
[65] ‘Police Court’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 31 January 1855.

Dangerous Ruffian,” and descriptions including the street being “kept… in an uproar all day.[66] That such rows occurred is not disputed. Such crowded places required complex negotiations of space amongst extended personal networks, and the arrival of a large wave of strangers in the 1840s no doubt affected this ecosystem.[67] But such language was calculated to present Stafford Street as an unruly, dangerous space, antithetical to the polite space of middle-class urbanity. On one Saturday evening in 1856, for example, though no crime was committed, the people on the street were so numerous as to block people “returning home from public worship… so that the ladies had to step into the gutter to pass.”[68] This contradicted middle-class expectations of public space, where religion, class and gender had their proper place, where the ‘respectable’ citizen had the right to attend public worship without disturbance, to pass through any part of town unmolested, and to maintain contemporary class and gender roles. To act contrary to that was to be criminalised.

It was through the appropriation of these “rows” by the press, police and courts that a specific form of intra-working class violence became a stigmatised trope, threatening to middle-class progress and respectability. Such stereotypes did not appear out of thin air, however. This apparent wave of spatialised violence began life in police tactics, which appear to have targeted those districts where multiple arrests could make the police appear valuable and effective. Stafford Street was an obvious choice: it was well-known by now as the overcrowded, insanitary, Irish area and, as in other towns, the police adopted spatial

[66] ‘Murderous Assault’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 12 September 1855; ‘Savage Assault’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 11 June 1855; ‘A Dangerous Ruffian’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 17 September 1856.
[67] Wood, ‘Locating Violence’.
[68] ‘Stafford-Street Manners’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 27 September 1856.

strategies to pacify this unruly space.[69] Responses included taking “a house in Stafford Street for a police station” – the Chief Constable “proposed to lodge four men there.”[70] In fact, the station was in nearby Berry Street but was still considered a positive influence: “since [its] establishment,” noted Hogg in 1856, “those violent and disgraceful affrays which rendered it dangerous to traverse that part of the town after dark have been diminished.”[71]

In addition, in 1859 policemen’s day beats were altered to monitor this space. Beat 3 ran from “the Black Horse through Old Horse Fair, up Charles Street, down Herbert Street, along Southampton Street into Spring Fields, up Little’s Lane, Stafford Street to Little Berry Street including Canal Street” (Figure 3.1).[72] Policing was built on spatial thinking.[73] Beats and stations allocated resources to certain areas at the expense of, or for the protection of, others, and reinforced a poor reputation. Policemen had for a number of years stationed themselves outside the Black Horse at the corner of Stafford Street and Horse Fair (Figure 3.2), where most of the main thoroughfares were visible, and it is likely that reputation and experience prompted the positioning of the branch station and the reorganisation of beats, rather than pre-emptive policing. Police knew what to expect, and took to responding to incidents in numbers. In 1864, PC Melbourne was stationed outside the Black Horse when he was called

[69] Compare Churchill, *Crime Control and Everyday Life*, 67–68, 224; Andy Croll, ‘Street Disorder, Surveillance and Shame: Regulating Behaviour in the Public Spaces of the Late Victorian British Town’, *Social History* 24, no. 3 (1999): 250–68.
[70] Watch Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 19 December 1854), WOL-C-WAT/2, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 27 January 1855), WOL-C-WAT/2, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[71] ‘The Irish in Stafford-Street’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 19 August 1856.
[72] Watch Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 18 April 1859), WOL-C-WAT/2, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; Swift, ‘“Another Stafford Street Row”’.
[73] Wood, ‘Locating Violence’.

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to Carribee Island:

> Having ascertained… that he was wanted to quell a disturbance, and knowing the rough sort of company he would very likely fall in with on this delightful island, he procured the assistance of Police-constable Parker, and together they went to the place named.[74]



Figure 3.15 Policeman’s beat in north-east Wolverhampton, 1859[75]

This strategic, spatial approach achieved several things beyond panoptic surveillance.[76] Firstly, it was about the visibility of the police themselves: policemen gained the ability to see disturbances where they were deemed likely to occur, but also to be seen as a visible presence

[74] ‘A Disorderly’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 30 November 1864.
[75] Peel & Cobbett’s Map of the Borough of Wolverhampton, 1 inch: 10 chains (Wolverhampton: Peel & Cobbett, 1864), MAP/559, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[76] Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London: Verso, 2003), 109–11.

of the state in a problem space. This can be seen, for example, in a report from 1876 when a resident, Mary Lewis, rushed to find a policemen after being attacked by her violent son. She knew to run to the Black Horse, where policemen were able to rush to Canal Street to prevent further assaults.[77]



Figure 3.16 Watercolour by Reid, c.1870s, showing the corner of Canal Street and Berry Street as seen from the policeman’s station at the Black Horse. Note the Vine Inn on the left-hand side, and the Globe Inn opposite (private collection, by kind permission of Norman Keech).

Secondly, it was about containment: by keeping crime and disorder in certain spaces other, more respectable, areas could be kept quiet and polite. Stafford Street was on the north-eastern edge of Wolverhampton town centre, and the policemen’s station at the south-

[77] ‘A Violent Assault Upon His Mother’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 3 May 1876.

western corner of the neighbourhood maintained the boundaries of the problem space by preventing disorder pushing into more respectable space beyond. In 1855, Inspector Bennett arrested Thomas Cayne and William Vance near the Black Horse. The two men had asked the policeman directions to a street in another part of the town, and Bennett detained them on the basis of this conversation “and their appearance.”[78] Thirdly, such strategies differentiated space. By regulating what occurred within sight of his patrol, the policeman tacitly acknowledged that spaces beyond that sightline – the small courts and alleys – were subject to a different kind of spatial imaginary. This implies a degree of negotiation and understanding with the community being patrolled, not complete antagonism. Finally, beats were about the production of space through spatial practice: their repetition reinforced understanding of the distinctness and specificity of that place amongst the police, perhaps creating spatial cohesion where there was none before.[79]

Racialisation of space: from “Stafford Street Row” to “Irish Row”

It did not take long before the space was racialised too. Headlines to this end appeared in July 1849: “An Irish Row and Assault at Wolverhampton.”[80] As Swift argues, the reporting of such disturbances reflected and reinforced a popular image of the Irish as a violent and disorderly people, the absence of “English rows” serving to demonstrate the relative orderliness of the

[78] ‘Police Intelligence’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 22 August 1855.
[79] A similar effect can be seen in Jennifer S. Davis’ work on Jennings’ Buildings in Kensington, where the operation of the police created an imagined criminal class: Davis, ‘Jennings’ Buildings’; ‘From “Rookeries” to “Communities”: Race, Poverty and Policing in London, 1850–1985’, *History Workshop Journal*, no. 27 (1989): 66–85. See also Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*, 110.
[80] ‘An Irish Row and Assault, at Wolverhampton’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 28 July 1849.

local working class.[81] The subsequent conflation of “Irish Row” and “Stafford Street” brought together this stigmatised place and stigmatised population so that each could be used to prove the other.

There were different ways of doing this, however, and different reasons. The *WC* did not need to explain this space to its readers, to whom the street was well-known both in the newspaper’s pages and in everyday life. Thus, it made careful use of words like “another” to signify an ongoing spatial problem: “as usual Stafford-street furnished its quota”; “another of those disturbances by low Irishmen, with whom Stafford-street is infested”; “the scene of another serious contest between Irishmen and officers of the police force.”[82] More distant newspapers had to be more explicit. The Stafford-based *SA* couched their geographical and social context in inflammatory language. An 1852 trial was explained with the following:

> Irishmen of the class of those committed frequent Cole’s Croft, in Canal-street, in large numbers, and they are often in the habit of sallying forth at night to knock down and otherwise ill-treat the first undefended person they meet.[83]

A stranger to Wolverhampton (like Alice Grey) could easily find out where the dangerous

[81] Swift, ‘“Another Stafford Street Row”’; See also John E. Archer, ‘“Men Behaving Badly”: Masculinity and the Uses of Violence, 1850-1900’, in *Everyday Violence in Britain, 1850-1950: Gender, Class and Violence in Britain, 1850-1950*, ed. Shani D’Cruze (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000), 41–54; Donald M. MacRaild, ‘“Abandon Hibernicisation”: Priests, Ribbonmen and an Irish Street Fight in the North-East of England in 1858’, *Historical Research* 76, no. 194 (2003): 557–73; Wood, ‘A Useful Savagery’.

[82] Emphasis added. ‘Public Office’, 30 May 1849; ‘Another Irish Row in Stafford-Street’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 6 August 1856; ‘Melee in Stafford-Street’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 4 February 1857.

[83] ‘Highway Robbery’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 4 December 1852.

areas were supposed to be. This was reinforced in the mid-1850s when a series of high-profile trials incorporated Stafford Street into their narratives, demonstrating the interplay between the judicial system and the reporting of it. Stafford Street was clearly read as an Irish space by this time by observers and, potentially, jurors. In 1853 one defence counsel, Rupert Kettle, had to plead with the jury to show caution when hearing testimony against his Irish clients on the grounds that the witnesses “had betrayed a strong prejudice against the Irish who live in that locality, and whom they considered extremely disagreeable neighbours.”[84] In 1854, the prosecutor in a major trial (three Irish residents were charged with assaulting a contractor named William Bishton) drew the court’s attention to a recent article from the Catholic newspaper *The Tablet*, which had recently been reprinted with scathing comment in the *WC*. It had been filled with familiar descriptions of the environmental and medical condition of Wolverhampton’s poor but had drawn the conclusion that it was the town’s Protestant poor that suffered, rather than its Catholics:

> It is true, the magnificence of Protestant England surpasses that of any other nation. But this magnificence is based upon a profound depth of misery that likewise was never equaled.”[85]

The article prompted a lecture at the Assembly Rooms in October by GH Davis, Secretary of

[84] ‘Assault at Wolverhampton’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 29 October 1853. It was still fairly unusual in Wolverhampton for barristers to appear as defence counsels for the poor. Kettle was an established barrister by this stage, later judge of the Worcestershire county courts and well-known for his support for trade dispute arbitration. E. I. Carlyle, ‘Kettle, Sir Rupert Alfred (1817–1894), Industrial Arbitrator’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and B. Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Bentley, ‘Acquitting the Innocent’; Jones, *Justice and Journalism*, 142.

[85] ‘Wolverhampton Poor Law Union’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 6 September 1854.

the Protestant Alliance. He, unsurprisingly, concluded the opposite:

> Go into any of the large towns in this land – go into Manchester or Liverpool – and perhaps it may be true also of Wolverhampton – and you will find, if there be any one part of those large towns peculiarly dirty, particularly wretched, and pre-eminently poor, they are those inhabited by the Irish Roman Catholics.[86]

The prosecutor, Alexander Staveley Hill, evidently concurred with Davis, suggesting in court that:

> [T]he originals of the pictures it drew were found in Stafford-street, where the inhabitants were Roman Catholics, he believed, to a man. In that street the offence charged against the prisoners had been committed.[87]

There was no need to outline the correlation between Catholicism and Irishness for the jury: by now that was well-established. That did not stop the *SA*, which again contextualised its report with inflammatory language: where the *WC* had reported the judge’s characterisation of Stafford Street as “riotous and dangerous” without reference to origin, the *SA* reported that the judge had stressed the “violence of its Irish inhabitants” as the street’s distinguishing feature.[88] Newspaper reports of trials were thus representations of a representation. Barristers like Hill were essentially trying to win cases. It helped them to draw a picture of a

[86] ‘“The Protestant Poor”: Mr Davis’s Lecture at the Assembly Rooms’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 1 November 1854.
[87] ‘Local Intelligence’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 25 October 1854.
[88] ‘An Irish Row’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 28 October 1854; ‘Local Intelligence’.

violent, teeming neighbourhood, very different from where the upstanding ordinary folk of Wolverhampton (like the jurors) lived. Playing on such representations was a successful court tactic, and reinforced the association in the minds of the jury (and by extension, the reading public) between this area of Wolverhampton that they knew to be dirty and Irish, and the crimes that took place there. It also gave the newspapers plenty of ammunition to show the same thing.

The magistrate indicting Bishton’s attackers was Henry Hill, a prominent member of the county magistracy, a Tory town councillor, and father to the prosecutor, AS Hill.[89] Hill junior was only recently qualified, and also a committed Conservative.[90] While engaged on Bishton’s case, the area witnessed a further spate of violent assaults. The most shocking was introduced in the *WC* as “another of those brutal and almost inhuman assaults with which Stafford-street, of late years, has abounded.”[91] In November, a boatman named Robert Leverett was kicked to death by a group of men outside the Admiral Vernon Inn on Canal Street. The perpetrators evaded capture, so an inquest was held in their absence to establish the facts of the case: Leverett had been attacked while walking towards town by, according to the witnesses, a gang of Irishmen who called out “There go the ——— boatmen and their ———,” before the attack. Witness accounts painted a picture of hostility between the Irish and the boatmen of

[89] C. A. E. Bedwell, ‘Hill, Alexander Stavely (1825-1902)’, in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and B. Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Jones, ‘JPs in Wolverhampton’; ‘An Irish Row’.

[90] Hill stood for the Conservatives in the 1861 by-election in Wolverhampton, the first contested parliamentary election in the town since 1837. He placed a distant third behind the official Liberal candidate, Thomas Weguelin, and the eccentric ironmaster Sam Griffiths who stood pledging to “smash [the] great oligarchy” of the town’s powerful Liberal Committee. Hill was later elected for Coventry 1868-1874, West Staffordshire 1874-1875, and Kingswinford 1885-1900. Bedwell, ‘Hill, A. S.’; Lawrence, ‘Popular Politics and the Limitations of Party’.

[91] ‘Death from a Brutal Assault in Canal-Street, Wolverhampton’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 15 November 1854.

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Wolverhampton, which was drawn on by the prosecution to prove the “riotous and dangerous character of Stafford-street.” In fact, there was little evidence to prove much more than an ongoing grudge between two similarly stigmatised populations.[92] A verdict of murder was passed, and warrants issued. The inquest was widely reported, locally and nationally.[93]

The reporting of such events was not restricted to local outcry, but made a manifest difference to how trials were prosecuted. Later that November, a tinplate worker named William Eddowes was attacked in Fryer Street, just off Canal Street and close to the location of Leverett’s murder. It was alleged that Eddowes was attacked because he was “a ——— Englishman.” Councillor John Hartley, presiding at the police court the day after the attack, was in no doubt the events of the preceding weeks constituted a distinct crisis:

> [T]hese attacks had of late become very numerous and dangerous in the town. Hardly a Saturday or a Sunday night passed but some person was brutally assaulted in streets occupied by Irishmen. The Bench were sorry to

[92] Wendy Freer notes that canal boatpeople were marginalised and stigmatised in much the same way as the Irish. They featured heavily during the hearings of the Select Committee on Sunday Trading in 1841: critics of their lifestyle included businessmen, clergy, magistrates and landowners. Alexander Hordern of Oxley Manor, Bushbury, held that they lacked “proper moral and religious training”, forming the “most degraded Class of Society, so far as I have seen.” Hordern was brother-in-law to Henry Hill. ‘Reports from Select Committees of the House of Lords and Evidence: Evidence of the Select Committee to Enquire into the Expediency of Restraining the Practice of Carrying Goods and Merchandise on Canals and Navigable Rivers and Railways on Sundays’, P. P. (73), xi (House of Lords, 1841); Wendy Jane Freer, ‘Canal Boat People, 1840-1970’ (PhD, Nottingham, University of Nottingham, 1991), 148–49.

[93] The post-mortem examination was carried out by E. F. Dehane. ‘Barbarous and Fatal Assault in Canal-Street’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 18 November 1854; ‘Brutal Assault’, *Morning Post*, 16 November 1854; ‘Death from a Brutal Assault in Canal-Street, Wolverhampton’; ‘Murder at Wolverhampton’, *Evening Mail*, 29 November 1854; ‘Murder at Wolverhampton’, *London Daily News*, 29 November 1854; ‘Murder at Wolverhampton’, *The Times*, 29 November 1854; ‘Murder at Wolverhampton’, *Manchester Guardian*, 2 December 1854; ‘Murder of a Boatman at Wolverhampton’, *Liverpool Mercury*, 17 November 1854; ‘The Late Brutal Assault in Wolverhampton’, *Morning Post*, 28 November 1854.

> be obliged to draw a distinction between Englishmen and Irishmen, but the fact was notorious, that no respectable person could pass through the streets in the town inhabited by the Irish without running the risk of being brutally assaulted or murdered. Very lately a man had been murdered in Canal-street, and another man had been so brutally assaulted in Berry-street that for some time his life was despaired of.[94]

When Eddowes’ case came to the Quarter Sessions shortly afterwards, AS Hill, prosecuting again, drew on the recent furore, stating that:

> This was one of those aggravated assaults which had recently taken place in Canal-street and the neighbourhood, in Wolverhampton, where from 10,000 to 12,000 Irish people were located, and where for some time past in the evening, the whole district had been in a state of riot, in consequence of the quarrelsome disposition of its residents.[95]

Hill clearly felt that r188acializing and stigmatising this space was advantageous to his case. This wasn’t automatically successful: one witness was asked whether any discussion of the “numerous assaults in Canal Street” had occurred before the crime but said no – he’d read about them, but they hadn’t affected his decision to go to the area. Hill was also taken to task by defence counsel Kenealy, who:

[94] ‘Another Brutal Assault by Irish Residents’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 29 November 1854.
[95] ‘Violent Assault at Wolverhampton’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 2 December 1854.

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> …made allusion to the accounts which had in the last few weeks appeared in the *Wolverhampton Chronicle* and the *Staffordshire Advertiser* (which papers had been referred to in the course of the court) bearing headings such as “Irish row in Canal-street,” “Brutal assaults by the Irish,” &c. These the learned counsel termed “inflammatory paragraphs,” which had a tendency (though unintentional on the part of the Editors) to generate in the minds of the subscribers or readers of those papers a feeling of animosity against the Irish, which ought not to exist.[96]

Once the jury had returned a guilty verdict the judge, Henry Hill again, expressed disbelief that the Irishmen could stand there and stake a claim for decency given the events of preceding weeks. “People who were in the habit of going along these streets,” he suggested, “could not do so with safety.”[97] The area was now, officially, a no-go zone for respectable Wulfrunians.

In July 1855, David Flinn – wanted for Robert Leverett’s murder the previous October – was brought to trial. AS Hill was prosecutor again, alongside another barrister, Patrick McMahon, and they opened the case by alluding to an ongoing feud between the Irish and the boatmen that provided the backdrop to this case and the justification for the murder charge. The defence counsel, Motteram, again pushed back at the prosecution’s claims. He implored the jury that “they must not consider the case with prejudiced minds, because the prisoner

[96] ‘Brutal Assault in Fryer Street, Wolverhampton’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 29 November 1854.
[97] ‘Brutal Assault in Fryer Street, Wolverhampton’.

happened to be a native of Ireland.” Although the lengthy reporting in local newspapers made this tension clear, the brief space permitted in newspapers from other cities, such as London’s *Evening Standard,* freely drew on the prosecutors’ scene-setting:

> In the town of Wolverhampton there is a street called Canal-street, which, together with its outlets, is infested by a number of lawless and desperate Irish labourers, who, among other antipathies seem to have entertained a deadly hatred to boatmen.[98]

The syndicated reporting of Leverett’s inquest drew on the *SA*’s more lurid style, playing on widely held prejudices and fears: the Irishmen were drunk, they were a mob, and so on.[99] Stafford Street was evidently gaining an unwelcome notoriety: an otherwise ordinary assault in August 1855 was widely reported with reference to the

> …poor fellow [who] was murdered upon the same spot not many months since. The locality is inhabited almost exclusively by Irish, and it is notorious, that neither person nor property is safe there.[100]

This kind of reporting also produced space: not just Stafford Street itself, but a type of dangerous urban space that projected fears of violence onto the Irish occupants of those

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[98] ‘Murder’, *London Evening Standard*, 25 July 1855; compare ‘Charge of Wilful Murder at Wolverhampton’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 28 July 1855; ‘Crown Court’, *Morning Chronicle*, 26 July 1855; ‘Crown Court’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 28 July 1855; ‘The Murder of a Boatman at Wolverhampton’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 25 July 1855.

[99] ‘Murder of a Boatman at Wolverhampton’. This article appeared in roughly the same form in the *Morning Advertiser*, the *Kentish Mercury*, the *Huddersfield Chronicle*, the *Windsor & Eton Express*, and a number of other local newspapers.

[100] ‘Attempt to Murder at Wolverhampton’, *Manchester Guardian*, 27 August 1855.

spaces. It represented a meeting-point for prejudices displayed by the police, the legal profession, the judicial system and the press, all of which served to stigmatise Stafford Street, and to cement the link between race, space and crime in the minds of ‘respectable’ Wulfrunians. The decade after 1847 was crucial in wrapping the stigmas of working-class space up with the stigma of Irishness, turning this ordinary neighbourhood into a feared Irish quarter.

The Forty Thieves

The production of Stafford Street as a dangerous neighbourhood was upheld throughout the following decades, with the Irish racialised as and when convenient for editorial or political benefit. In the 1870s, a new phenomenon was observed: a moral panic centred on a Stafford Street gang known as the Forty Thieves. Their first press appearance came in November 1873, when a carpenter named John Hinton was attacked and robbed in Canal Street. Though not an unusual event – local newspapers reported it in low key accordingly – the assault was highlighted in syndicated news reports as part of a spate of violent assaults in the town, and thus readers in towns like Sheffield, Lancaster and Morpeth all heard about a “gang of banditti who infest the locality.”[101] As in many towns in this era, they represented a new kind of media-inspired crime panic, based on constructions of problem spaces and youth crime that had been built up for many years.

Middle-class anxiety over youth criminality was, as with so many fears, a product of the

[101] ‘Crime at Wolverhampton’, *Sheffield Independent*, 4 November 1873; ‘Crime at Wolverhampton’, *Lancaster Gazette*, 8 November 1873; ‘Crime at Wolverhampton’, *Morpeth Herald*, 8 November 1873.

turbulent early Victorian years, and was frequently spatialised. Official anxiety was channelled into the hindering of passage through public space. Petty juvenile offences like street games, snowballing and stone-throwing were heavily policed with fines of up to £5, and in 1865 the magistrates promised to “make an example of all persons who were brought before them for annoying passers by snowballing.”[102] Youth crime was not limited to or concentrated in Stafford Street, but it was certainly an area in which the urban environment was considered problematic, and thus a focus for control measures. By mid-1874 the Forty Thieves had been linked to Stafford Street, when three alleged members were stated in court to be “one of the Stafford Street gang of ‘forty thieves.’”[103] This was corroborated by both the home addresses of alleged members and the location of incidents (Figure 3.3), which were concentrated around the junction of Canal Street and Stafford Street, the crux of the area’s notoriety in the 1850s and the site of entry into the town past pubs and beerhouses. These locations suggest less a territorial gang defending its borders than locals operating in a neighbourhood where crime was commonplace.[104]

[102] ‘Stone Throwing in Public Thoroughfares’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 10 August 1859; ‘Caution to Snowballers and Sliders’, *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 3 February 1865.
[103] ‘Magisterial Proceedings’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 28 July 1874; ‘The Forty Thieves’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 29 July 1874.
[104] Compare Andy Davies’ work on territorial disputes: Andrew Davies, ‘Youth Gangs and Late Victorian Society’, in *Youth in Crisis? ‘Gangs’, Territoriality and Violence*, ed. Barry Goldson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 38–54.

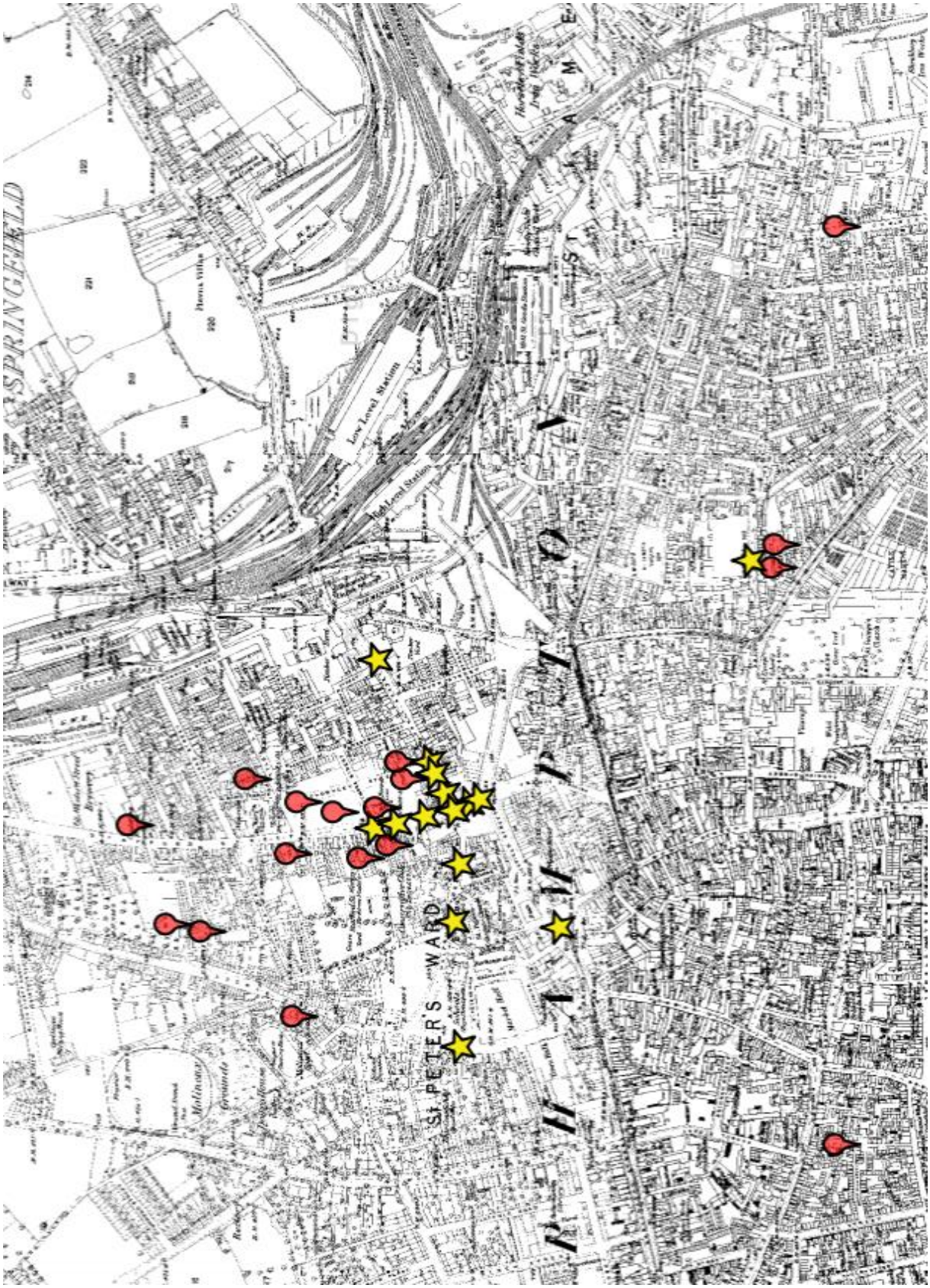


Figure 3.17 Identified home addresses of alleged members of Forty Thieves (red pointers); and incidents alleged to connect to the Forty Thieves (yellow stars). Plotted on 1887 Ordnance Survey Staffordshire 1st Edition. © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2021). All rights reserved. (1887).

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In 1878,

> Police-inspector Thomas informed the Bench that the state of things in Stafford Street was becoming worse owing to the defendant’s gang, which was part of the “Forty Thieves,” assaulting foot passengers, and extra policemen had to be told off for duty in that neighbourhood.[105]

Extra policemen were provided, and sentences became more severe.[106] In 1876, the *Lichfield Mercury* commented on the inadequacy of sentencing: “the penalty of a month’s imprisonment will do but little good to those renegades of about 16,” and was approving when three more members were given double that with hard labour in 1878.[107]

The gang’s brief notoriety came to a dramatic conclusion in 1879. In September, Anthony Moran, John Joyce and James Pryll were remanded for stealing five gallons of ale and twelve bottles of champagne from the Noah’s Ark Inn on Lichfield Street, hiding in the pub yard and drinking the entirety. A companion, Michael Atkinson, had since died.[108] It soon emerged that Atkinson was known as the “King of the Forty Thieves” and the other men were also members. His death seems to have dispersed the gang, as mentions of them drop off rapidly afterwards, though it did not appear to have reduced the criminality of those involved. In 1881, for

[105] ‘A Disorderly Street’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 16 August 1878.
[106] “Should any of the readers of the *Mercury* have business in the above neighbourhood, it will be a consolation for them to know that every night a special batch of police-officers are told off to preserve the peace." ‘The Forty Thieves Again’, *Lichfield Mercury*, 23 August 1878.
[107] ‘The Forty Thieves’, *Lichfield Mercury*, 9 August 1876; ‘The Forty Thieves Again’.
[108] ‘District Intelligence’, *Sheffield Independent*, 16 September 1879; ‘District Intelligence’, *Leicester Daily Mercury*, 16 September 1879; ‘Robbery’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 16 September 1879. NB Pryll was elsewhere referred to as Royle, and the ale may have been gin.

instance, Moran was reported as the “ex-captain” of the gang “infesting one of the lowest parts of the town,” with a string of convictions from stealing stockings to assault.[109]

What is notable in reporting the Forty Thieves is the spatialised, but *not* racialised language. This was typical of later-Victorian street gangs, which defined themselves by territory, not ethnic origin.[110] The raw materials for racism were there: of the 25 individuals identified as gang members in local newspapers, 12 are identifiable with some degree of certainty in census records and of those, ten had Irish parents. Even the gang’s name had journalistic potential for racialisation.[111] Yet the narrative here is of stigmatised space, not stigmatised race. There were two factors potentially contributing to this. Firstly, these were second-generation Irish, children of Stafford Street with local accents, clothing, friends and habits: youth offenders were frequently described as from Stafford Street, but rarely as Irish youths by this stage. Secondly, the peak of gang activity, 1876-8, coincided with the redefinition of this troublesome area under the Wolverhampton Improvement Scheme. From some perspectives, stigmatisation by race was no longer necessary: the problem was now a more

[109] ‘Daring Street Robbery At Wolverhampton’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 31 January 1881; Wolverhampton Borough Police Force, ‘Register of Those Disposed of by the Magistrates at Petty Sessions, 1850-1903’, 1881, CC-POL/D/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

[110] Andrew Davies, ‘Youth Gangs, Masculinity and Violence in Late Victorian Manchester and Salford’, *Journal of Social History* 32, no. 2 (1998): 349–69. It should be noted that the Forty Thieves were not akin to the Scuttlers that Davies describes, or Birmingham’s Peaky Blinders, both of which focused on internecine gang battles. They were more like the gangs who terrorised neighbourhoods described by Barbara Weinberger: ‘The Police and the Public in Mid-Nineteenth Century Warwickshire’, in *Policing and Punishment in Nineteenth Century Britain*, ed. Victor Bailey (London: Croom Helm, 1981), 65–93.

[111] The nickname “Forty Thieves” was drawn from the widely known folk tale of Ali Baba from the *One Thousand and One Nights*, but had a long history too of gang association. The Irish and Irish-American gang of that name was the most infamous in New York’s notorious Five Points neighbourhood, and in interwar London the all-female Forty Thieves were one of the city’s most successful shoplifting gangs. Claudia Durst Johnson, *Youth Gangs in Literature* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 2004), 19–21; William M. Meier, *Property Crime in London, 1850-Present* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 78–84.

widespread one of delinquent youth and territorial masculinity, but the spatial and racial issues seemed to have been dealt with.

Public space

In all other aspects though, Stafford Street was still racialised and associated with street violence. In 1876 the *ME* sketched a “serio-comic scene in the police court” as evidence of “the people who infest the slums of Carribee Island,” and the need to destroy it:

> Three Carribee Islanders appeared before the magistrates with their heads and faces half hidden by bandages and sticking plaister, and they almost enacted the part of the man who carried his head under his arm. Their names were Thomas, Bridget, and Patrick, and they were father, mother, and son. The trio charged an amazon of the Island with first calling the son Patrick a thief, and then, because the maternal instincts and the pride of Bridget had revolted at this scurrilous remark,
>
> > The Carribee lady at once began
> > To knock their heads about one by one
> > And while she laughed in playful fun
> > Poor Pat came up and she made him grin
> > With a tap of her poker under his chin.
>
> This gentle damsel was reward for her skill in the use of the poker by an

> excursion for six months to our county town.[112]

An *EE* editorial the following year accused “the roughs of the Stafford-street type” of propagating a “spirit of lawless violence” exemplified by the tradition of “’eaving arf a brick” at any stranger.[113] These editorials drew upon familiar stereotypes that had been formed over many years. For three decades the Irish of Stafford Street had been portrayed as violent, territorial and savage so often that the place and its people were no longer separable. The perspectives of those people were never considered: their defence only came from legal professionals with a case to win. Their words were not recorded in Wolverhampton, although a testimony from nearby Wednesbury hints at a different reading. An Irishman there recalled:

> Of course we got reckless then. We didn’t care for anything or anybody; we used to drink and fight and riot… Them times the magistrates used to have nothing to do but trying Irishmen, and mavrone! But its little scope they used to get, only off to Stafford with ‘em; hardly a day under a month and hard labour… And so they slave away their lives, uncared for and uncaring; the policemen bludgeon them without mercy with impunity; they fight and drink and riot without compunction, nay, with satisfaction.[114]

Sympathy for Irish immigrants was scarce, and this explanation did not constitute a defence

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[112] William Owen, ‘Carribee Islanders: The Wolverhampton Crusade Against Dirty Courts and Alleys’, *Midland Examiner and Times*, 11 November 1876.
[113] ‘Ruffianism in Wolverhampton’, *Evening Express*, 15 November 1877.
[114] A. M. Sullivan, ‘The Irish in England: The Iron Country’, *The Nation*, 7 June 1856. “Mavrone” is a transliteration of the Irish *mo bhrón*, “my sorrow”.

for Wolverhampton’s Irish.

For Wolverhampton’s civil society, streets were spaces of liberty – that is, liberty for the ‘respectable’ classes to use them for ‘respectable’ purposes, rather than liberty for Stafford Street’s Irish and working-class residents to use as they wished. In order to pave the way for intervention in the space, spaces were stigmatised as notorious problems, to which the need for a solution was evident. The presence of the Irish made this task easier for police, magistrates and journalists: they were already a stigmatised population with little power to respond to such characterisations. Race and class were inscribed in space and reinforced through police tactics, judicial decisions and press reporting, and the stigma of place enabled targeted interventions.

Moral geographies: public and private spaces

Those in charge of setting policing priorities, petitioning magistrates, or reporting on crime, thus created moral geographies of urban space. The intertwining processes of social, spatial and racial stigmatisation defined neighbourhoods as problems to be solved, which meant that middle-class attitudes and moralities took precedence over working-class attitudes and moralities. The next step towards reclaiming the streets was to intervene, though exactly what form this should take remained subject to political ideologies and pressures.[115] As has been seen, policing formed a central plank in the production of space, but there were other methods available to regulate space. This section identifies two of the moral geographies at

[115] See Stefan Petrow, *Policing Morals: The Metropolitan Police and the Home Office 1870–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 7–10.

work in Stafford Street which demonstrate the breadth of this movement: drink and sex, “the most popular pastimes of the working classes.”[116] In Wolverhampton, reclaiming control of the streets meant containing unrespectable behaviours in smaller and smaller areas, and placing responsibility for the regulation of behaviours onto certain spaces and individuals. These were rarely domestic spaces, to avoid challenging the sanctity of private property and domesticity prevalent in mid-Victorian Britain. Instead, they were spaces for commercialised drinking and sex which blurred the line between private and public, communal and transactional.[117]

This meant that elites could manage the “conduct of conduct” within the transactional world-view of Victorian liberalism.[118] Maintaining the language and discourse of stigmatisation alongside these interventions also justified continued intervention, allowing the process of reclamation to continue through to its fulfilment in the destruction of this working-class neighbourhood. The first section analyses how the council’s formal power was used to push responsibility for drunkenness onto licensees, and how the behaviours of stigmatised spaces and peoples were governed in these legitimate, contentious, spaces. The second section analyses a commercial field that councils were loath to intervene in formally, but in which the force of moral pressure limited women’s autonomy economically and spatially. Neither of

[116] F. M. L. Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain, 1830-1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 307.
[117] On the blurred line between public and private spaces of leisure in the Victorian town, see Nathan Booth, ‘Drinking and Domesticity: The Materiality of the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Provincial Pub’, *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 20 April 2018; John Tosh, *A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 4.
[118] Nikolas S. Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (London: Free Association Books, 1999), xxi.

these geographies were uncontested: those who held private property sacred abhorred interventions in these spaces compared to the public streets, and the town’s working class also resisted intervention in their mode of life. As such, these interventions were only partially successful during this era of liberal revanchism; but they did pave the way for the most complete spatial reclamation possible in the form of the Improvement Scheme.

Drinking geographies

> The neighbourhood of Stafford-street is crowded with public houses and beershops.[119]

Wolverhampton was not short of places to obtain drink: 212 licensed houses and 226 beerhouses in 1862.[120] The Stafford Street area alone was home to at least 35 licensed drinking places (Map 3.1). Many (from large coaching inns like the Black Horse to small old pubs like the Old Leathern Bottle) were long-established public houses, their licenses reviewed by local magistrates at annual Brewster Sessions.[121] Many were newer beerhouses, sanctioned by the 1830 Beer Act. This Act was intended to curb the taste for gin by improving the availability of beer but was unpopular with the local magistracy as it circumvented their regulation – anyone who paid the fee could open a beerhouse.[122] There were also an

[119] Robert Rawlinson, ‘Report to the General Board of Health on a Preliminary Inquiry into the Sewerage, Drainage and Supply of Water, and the Sanitary Conditions of the Inhabitants of the Borough of Wolverhampton, and the Townships of Bilston, Willenhall, and Wednesfield’, Public Health Act (London, 1849), 28–29, LS/LB614p/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[120] ‘Wolverhampton Annual Licensing Meeting’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 10 September 1862.
[121] Paul Jennings, ‘Policing Public Houses in Victorian England’, *Law, Crime & History* 3, no. 1 (2013): 52–75.
[122] Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815-1872*, 2nd ed. (Keele: Keele University Press, 1994), 81–86.

unidentified number of illicit brewing, distilling and drinking places.[123]



Map 3.1 Drinking places identified in the Stafford Street area

[123] Swift, ‘“Another Stafford Street Row”’.

Clientele varied too. The Black Horse provided drink and board to travellers; pubs near the canal, like the Raven & Bell, appear frequently with reference to boat people; the Erin-go-bragh and Shamrock on Carribee Street had a large Irish clientele.[124] The latter were typically kept by first or second-generation Irish people, particularly once the Irish community in the area had become large and settled, and Irish publicans abounded throughout.[125] Irishman Thomas Rogers ran the Old Crown for some time, for instance. When appealing the revocation of his license in 1856 he freely admitted that “the persons who frequented his house were principally Irish, the residents of the neighbourhood generally being of the lower class.”[126] Many neighbours, including Councillor James Brazier of Stafford Street, supported Rogers, though Mr Stokes the sub-postmaster demonstrated an anti-Irish strain to his qualified support. [127]

> [He] considered the house as well conducted as it was during the former tenant's occupancy… [but] in consequence of [Rogers] being an Irishman, the company at the Crown had not been so respectable as formerly, because the Irishmen always went to houses kept by their countrymen.[128]

Opinion of the Irish as drinkers was mixed and drew heavily on stereotypes of drunken

[124] For Irish organisation at the Erin-go-bragh, see chapter five, and J. Baxter Langley, ‘Burke, Casey and Shaw’, *The Nation*, 18 April 1868, sec. Letters. The title Erin-go-bragh is an anglicised form of the Irish “Éirinn go Brách”, typically translated “Ireland forever.”

[125] The Shamrock and Rose and Harp were unnamed beerhouses in the 1851 census, kept by English-born licensees. The symbology had been applied by the time Hoggar’s map was complete in 1854.

[126] ‘Rogers vs. Perry, Mayor of Wolverhampton’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 18 October 1856.

[127] Brazier, though not Irish, was Catholic, which likely framed his sympathy towards Irish landlords and drinkers.

[128] ‘Rogers vs. Perry, Mayor of Wolverhampton’.

Irishmen.[129] Several Borough policemen described the Crown as “the worst conducted house in the neighbourhood,” noting that Stokes had complained to them of the Irish in the street being supplied with drink.[130] Again, the Irish within the public streetscape were the problem.



Figure 3.18 “Tatter’d and Torn” from George Cruikshank, ‘The House That Jack Built ... With Twelve Cuts. [A Satire in Verse on the Sale of Gin and Beer.]’ (W. Tweedie, 1853), (Digital Store 11647.g.15, British Library). Note the inclusion of dress coded as Irish, bearing resemblance to the Punch caricatures of the same period. Cruikshank based part of this image on observations of an Irish couple made at Coldbath Fields gaol in London.

Drink and associated customs held important cultural roles in nineteenth-century Ireland. On arrival in Britain, Irish emigrants pursuing unremarkable behaviours like treating, distilling or ritualised fighting, found these traditional activities suddenly illegal in their new context.[131] This undoubtedly contributed to public and police perception: both developed, in David Beckingham's words, “an understanding of drink in space, read from space and expressed

[129] Judith Rowbotham, Kim Stevenson, and Samantha Pegg, *Crime News in Modern Britain - Press Reporting and Responsibility 1820-2010* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 36; David Beckingham, ‘Geographies of Drink Culture in Liverpool: Lessons from the Drink Capital of Nineteenth-Century England’, *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy* 15, no. 3 (2008): 305–13; Michael De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 169–70.

[130] ‘Staffordshire Quarter Sessions: Rogers vs. Perry, Mayor of Wolverhampton’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 10 October 1856.

[131] James R. Barrett, ‘Why Paddy Drank: The Social Importance of Whiskey in Pre-Famine Ireland’, *Journal of Popular Culture* 11, no. 1 (1977): 155–66.

again in spatial terms.”[132] Stereotypes of the drunken Irish (perpetuated by imagery such as Cruikshank’s “Tatter’d and Torn,” Figure 3.4, with its stereotyped Irish clothes) seemed to be confirmed because of the spatial stigma and policing practice that the Irish endured.

Early in the period of Irish immigration, many held the view that much Irish drinking was unlicensed or illicit, and thus worryingly outside of the town's control. There was almost certainly illicit production and importation of spirits, though there is little evidence to suggest that the stills known as “wabble shops” were as significant in number as Colonel Hogg suggested to the Select Committee on Public Houses in 1853.[133] Hogg’s testimony revealed that both he and the inquiring Home Secretary Sir George Grey (like many of Wolverhampton’s legislative elites, a liberal evangelical with Irish military experience) worked on similar sets of assumptions about the Irish, drink, and drinking spaces.[134] On the subject of the regulation of Irish lodging-houses:

> Did the illicit sale of beer or spirits take place in those lodging-houses before they were open to inspection?—Yes.
>
> Has that been stopped by the provisions of the Act?—I have heard so, to a great extent; parties coming from Ireland invariably bring spirits with them, and it is sold in those houses; in fact, some instances have been known where

[132] Beckingham, ‘Geographies of Drink Culture in Liverpool’.
[133] *Report from the Select Committee on Public-Houses, &c. 1852-53*, vol. 37, Parliamentary Papers: 1850-1908 (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1853). In fact, only one newspaper report outlined an illicit still in the area: Sarah Falkenbridge of Stafford Street was convicted in 1845. ‘Public Office’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 26 March 1845.
[134] Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830 - 1867* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2002), 36.

> parties have been drunk, and serious disturbances have taken place immediately after the arrival of some parties from Ireland, who brought a quantity of whiskey with them.[135]

The assumption that the Irish indulged in and promoted illicit drinking formed a key part of Hogg’s strategy for policing the Irish, further increasing the police’s observational and regulatory roles. It may explain patterns of arrests too: if Irish drinking was assumed to take place in the home, or in illicit venues that were hard to detect, then policing had to be on the street by default; whereas the habits of the English working class were considered better-understood, and could be easily monitored and regulated by policing the town's public houses. This racialised, stigmatised geography formed the basis of a wider geography of intervention from Wolverhampton’s middle-class elite.

Spatial strategies of regulation

Drunkenness was a constant fear for middle-class Victorians. Fear of drink sparked temperance movements, licensing reform, architectural change, and countless sermons, pamphlets and publications condemning drink as the source of moral decay. The drunkard was stigmatised as the epitome of vice, and the pub or beerhouse as the spatial embodiment of that decay. Respectable, middle-class Wulfrunians were thought unlikely to enter such a building.[136] The magistracy, drawn from precisely that constituency, therefore drew on the knowledge presented by police, courts and the press to create their own drinking

[135] *Select Committee on Public-Houses*, vol. 37, secs 6953–6955.
[136] Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society*, 308.

geographies, with which public order could be maintained through a spatial strategy of regulation. The principal tool for this was licensing. In placing the responsibility for the conduct of their customers on licensees’ shoulders, magistrates attempted to “promote particular notions of urban order,” asking landlords to internalise middle-class or elite definitions of good order.[137] Using the police to monitor drinking places for disorderly conduct, or for serving outside of hours, enabled magistrates to build up mental geographies in which religious morals and liberal political ideology loomed large.[138] These spatialisations formed the basis of the attempt to push undesirable behaviours off the public streets, and into self-regulating commercial spaces.

Licensing the Globe

In September 1846, Israel Temple of the Globe, Canal Street, was fined £1 for opening after 11pm.[139] Temple’s case allows for a long view of how licensing was used to control this neighbourhood. The Globe was an old pub at the heart of Wolverhampton's poorest district, and was regularly targeted by thieves and pickpockets.[140] There were twelve licensed establishments on Canal Street alone, and as the shortest route from town to the canal and railway station, it was constantly busy. As Figure 3.2 shows, it was also directly in the gaze of

[137] David Beckingham, ‘Gender, Space, and Drunkenness: Liverpool’s Licensed Premises, 1860–1914’, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102, no. 3 (2012): 647–66..
[138] Serving alcohol during the hours of divine service was prohibited in 1828: Mike Huggins, *Vice and the Victorians* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 83.
[139] ‘Wolverhampton Public Office’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 30 September 1846. Temple was born c.1818 in Compton, on the western border of Wolverhampton, and died in 1884 in Wolverhampton.
[140] This building can be traced back to 1723 in its title deeds, when it was a messuage sold to a brassfounder named Joseph Elton. It was an inn – the Old Cross Keys – by 1750, in the possession of John Towers. In 1835 the property was purchased by Samuel Paskin of Birmingham, who owned large amounts of property in Wolverhampton. Prior to Poole, the licensee was probably John Charles. ‘Title Deeds for Property in the Rotton Row’, 1878, DEED/J67, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

the policeman stationed outside the Black Horse, so forms a key example of a policed pub.

Temple became licensee on marrying the existing tenant, Ann Poole, in 1842, and ran it for eleven years before the magistrates refused to renew its license in 1853, “on the ground of it having been improperly conducted.”[141] The Globe was relegated to beerhouse status. Temple’s appeal in October marked the first of many attempts to have the full license reinstated. In 1854, the magistrates refused, as:

> [P]ublic houses... were very thick in that locality. If Mr Temple conducted his house properly for the future, the application for a license might be entertained at the next licensing day.[142]

Temple was disappointed in 1855 though: “the magistrates thought that another licensed house was not required in that district, and refused the application.”[143] Temple’s applications were refused again in 1856 (“Mr Andrews deprecated the practice of appealing to the pledges of former magistrates”); 1857 (“the magistrates appeared to be guided in their decisions chiefly by the suitability of the premises for a respectable inn, and to have been very reluctant to re-grant licenses forfeited through misconduct”); 1858; 1859 (“the Bench had no objection to Mr Temple, but every objection to the house and neighbourhood (a region of Stafford Street)”); and 1860 (“refused because of the want of accommodation on the premises”). In 1861, “Israel Temple... had given notice of his intention to apply for the restoration of his

[141] ‘Israel Temple vs. the Justices of Wolverhampton’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 22 October 1853.
[142] ‘Licensing’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 20 September 1854.
[143] ‘Licensing’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 22 August 1855

license, but on the advice of his solicitor he did not persevere.” After one final attempt in 1862, Temple gave up. The Globe remained a beerhouse until the 1870s, after which the widowed Temple remarried and became a grocer on Littles Lane.[144] Limiting the number of licensed houses was a crucial part of intervening in the drinking geography as perceived. Temperance campaigners had long petitioned the licensing magistrates to restrict licenses, especially where disreputable behaviours were perceived, however magistrates rarely seemed completely persuaded by their arguments.[145] Instead, Temple’s living had been effectively curtailed based on the elite imagination of this area as one of drunkenness and disorder, and accusations of disorder were held over publicans in order to promote good conduct.

Consent and dissent

This responsibility for the “conduct of conduct” – and the associated threat of loss of livelihood – meant that the publican played a crucial intermediary role between criminalised behaviour in the drinking place, and the police.[146] They frequently intervened, sometimes to

[144] ‘Applications for Victuallers’ Licenses’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 6 August 1856; ‘Licensing’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 26 April 1857; ‘Applications for New Spirit Licences’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 18 August 1858; ‘Wolverhampton Borough Licensing Meeting’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 3 August 1859; ‘Borough Licensing Meeting’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 22 August 1860; ‘Licensing’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 10 September 1862; ‘Beerhouse Information’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 14 January 1863.

[145] An 1856 petition by campaigners, presented at the Brewster sessions, is typical: “We the undersigned Ministers of religion, Sabbath School Teachers, and Ratepayers, respectfully petition your Worships not to grant any new licenses. Your petitioners submit that public houses and gin shops are already too numerous, and to augment them would be to increase drunkenness, and the various evils our licensing system entails… Your petitioners also urge that you will take the licenses from such houses as are discreditably conducted, whether it be by music, low singing, or dancing to attract custom, or in the permission of drunkenness and the assembly of prostitutes.” Magistrates were not always receptive – John Hartley regarded the details of this petition as an unfair depiction of the town, and an exaggeration of the magistrates’ capacity to act. ‘Wolverhampton Licensing Day’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 27 August 1856.

[146] On the Foucauldian concept of government as “the conduct of conduct,” see Rose, *Governing the Soul*, xxi.

their detriment. William Marshall of the Black Horse was beaten with belts in 1850; it is little surprise that later incidents report “the publican and his assistant being passive spectators of the struggle” between police and criminal in the same pub.[147] But most were also well aware of their rights and could resist this pressure. Irish-born Matthias Breen took on the Harp & Shamrock’s license in 1861, and soon ran afoul of PC Roberts for permitting drinking during divine service.[148] A year later, Breen was accused of assaulting the police. Sergeant Tomlinson, suspecting after-hours drinking, brought two constables who were also lodging-house inspectors, and knocked on the door claiming to be in search of half a gallon of ale. Once inside they found several people, who Breen claimed were domestic servants and a brewer. When the policeman pushed Breen's heavily-pregnant wife Harriet aside to enter her room both retaliated, Harriett with a candlestick and Matthias by striking Tomlinson and pulling PC Watkins' whiskers until the police retreated. The Breens counter-charged the police, and both cases were dismissed.[149]

The example highlights the complex relationship between police and publicans. Victorian police had unprecedented powers of entry and inspection for out-of-hours drinking, monitored lodging-houses and undertook sanitary and nuisance inspections, yet their control was not complete. Tomlinson heard “a murmuring of voices as if there was a company in the house” whilst on his beat, and investigated (gaining entry on false pretences, for which he

[147] ‘Fracas with the Military’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 9 October 1850; ‘News’, *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 3 March 1863.
[148] ‘A Beerhouse Keeper Fined for Refusing to Admit the Police’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 23 October 1861.
[149] ‘Beershop Case’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 9 November 1862; ‘Charge of Assault against a Beerhouse-Keeper and Counter-Charge against the Police’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 12 November 1862; ‘Police Court’, *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 7 November 1862.

was reprimanded). Yet Breen knew his rights: he was willing to admit a policeman but not a lodging-house inspector, and when they overstepped their mark, he was willing to eject them with force. Despite their usual antipathy towards the Irish, the press was not without sympathy for Breen either. The Tory *WC* reported matter-of-factly as usual, without favouring the police, supporting his right to privacy even as a semi-public space.[150] In contrast, Liberal papers skipped much of this detail and favoured the police account: they reported Tomlinson's fraudulent entry as “with some difficulty” and employed the passive voice to muddy the waters: “a quarrel arose out of the mode in which the police conducted their search.”[151] Rather than a dominant ideology, the right to privacy in commercial premises was still contested.

By 1865, Breen had crossed Stafford Street to the Old Mug House, a licensed public house with lodgings. One lodger, Owen Brennan, was the subject of a summons delivered by PC Wild. Breen refused to accept it – the court decided this was reasonable given that the best evidence for Brennan's presence was that he drank there twice a week – and “angrily told Wild to leave the house.” As Wild lingered, Breen became angry and seized the summons: “Breen used strong language, deliberately burned the summons, and afterwards turned the officer violently out of the house.” The court concluded that both Breen and Wild had shown excessive temper.[152] The incident confirms the potential for antagonism between these two

[150] ‘Charge of Assault against a Beerhouse-Keeper and Counter-Charge against the Police’.
[151] ‘Beershop Case’; ‘Police Court’, 7 November 1862.
[152] ‘Fined £5 for Assaulting a Policeman’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 2 September 1865; ‘Fined £5 for Contempt of Court’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 6 September 1865; ‘Appeal against a Conviction for Assaulting a Constable - Breen vs the Justices of the Borough’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 25 October 1865.

parties entrusted with keeping public order. The actions of publicans like Marshall and Breen demonstrate a careful, two-sided relationship, which some of them appear to have grasped more effectively than the police themselves.

Licensing Irish pubs

In 1869, the Wine & Beerhouse Act returned beerhouse licensing to local authority control, and Wolverhampton was also granted powers to license entertainment as well as drink.[153] These new powers enabled Wolverhampton’s magistrates to define appropriate culture and repress inappropriate. The *SA* noted that the “Irish quarters” provided a significant part of the total applicants. While the Black Horse applied simply for “musical entertainment in an upper room,” the Vine “was largely used by Irish, who liked to amuse themselves by a ‘jig’, and a license was therefore wanted for a fiddler in a back room (laughter).” The Royal Oak and the Daniel O’Connell applied for fiddle licenses “for Irish jigs,” while at the Admiral Vernon “the jig was on the bagpipes, which, in the opinion of Parliament, is a musical instrument.” The Old Crown hosted both. At the Wheel beerhouse, north of Littles Lane, “Irish customers required a ‘jig’ on Saturdays and Mondays.”[154] This latter detail highlights the longstanding tradition of ‘Saint Monday,’ the extension of the weekend into the following week that was still prevalent in the Black Country, possibly more than anywhere else, in the 1860s.[155] The keepers of the

[153] Wolverhampton Improvement Act, 1869 (32-33 Vict.)
[154] ‘Music Licensing at Wolverhampton’, *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 21 September 1869; ‘Music Licensing’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 2 October 1869.
[155] Thomas Wright, *Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1867), 124; George J. Barnsby, ‘The Standard of Living in the Black Country during the Nineteenth Century’, *Economic History Review* 24, no. 2 (1971): 220–39; Douglas A. Reid, ‘The Decline of Saint Monday 1766-1876’, *Past & Present*, no. 71 (1976): 76–101; Douglas A. Reid, ‘Weddings, Weekdays, Work and Leisure in Urban England 1791-1911: The Decline of Saint Monday Revisited’, *Past & Present*, no. 153 (1996): 135–63; E. P. Thompson, ‘Time, Work-

3. “Inflammatory paragraphs” and “vigorous crusades”

Wheel perhaps avoided applying for a Sunday license out of deference to the Sabbatarian views of much of Wolverhampton's elite. Most licenses were granted, but the Irishness of Stafford Street evidently played its part in formation of these moral geographies.

Despite the continued extension of the licensing regime, police observation and the temperance movement – which had little notable impact in the Stafford Street area – the area's reputation for drunkenness persisted. Captain Segrave noted its continual disorderliness when he reported an unusually quiet St Patrick’s Day in the neighbourhood in 1877.[156] His report was contested in the letters page: ‘A Resident of Stafford-Street’ was “greatly surprised,” having seen “plenty of instances where a constable would have been useful”; and ‘Truth’ criticised police neglect too, describing the entire day as “one continual turmoil; nearly every other person you met was drunk.”[157] Their views were in turn challenged by the Catholic Councillor Benjamin Williams, and Father Walter Hall of St Patrick’s. Hall stressed that he saw no drunkenness at all during his visitations, no fighting or breaches of the peace.[158] The Irish were not categorised as such, but as with the Forty Thieves, deliberately racialised language bubbled under the surface when describing Stafford Street.

Racial stereotyping played a major part in conflating the stereotype of the drunken Irish with their residential neighbourhood. But it wasn’t the only prejudice on display: attitudes towards

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Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism’, *Past & Present*, no. 38 (1967): 56–97; Woods, ‘The Operation of the Master and Servants Act in the Black Country, 1858–1875’.

[156] ‘St Patrick’s Day in Stafford-Street’, *Evening Express*, 19 March 1877.

[157] A Resident of Stafford-street, ‘Stafford-Street on St Patrick’s Day’, *Evening Express*, 20 March 1877; ‘Truth’, ‘St Patrick’s Day’, *Evening Express*, 21 March 1877.

[158] B. F. Williams, ‘St Patrick’s Day’, *Evening Express*, 22 March 1877; Walter Hall, ‘St Patrick’s Day’, *Evening Express*, 22 March 1877.

working-class custom were as significant a component of the geography of intervention in Stafford Street. Prejudiced constructions were contested too: where some campaigners sought to represent Stafford Street as a problem space, ripe for intervention and policing, others – including publicans, clergymen and councillors – resisted such constructions. The production of Stafford Street as a distinctive space, notorious for its drunkenness, was thus only partially successful, and the heavy-handed licensing and policing did not by themselves serve to alter public perception of the neighbourhood.

Nevertheless, the stigma created by these discourses meant that the interventionist elite – as represented by magistrates and their fellow councillors – had the final say. When MOH (and police surgeon) JH Love prepared his plans for the Improvement Scheme, he made sure to note that the large majority of drunkenness cases still emanated from this unhealthy area.[159] Clearing it completely was perhaps the ultimate response of the interventionists, when more liberally minded attempts failed to subdue the neighbourhood.

Sexual geographies

The other geography which exercised middle-class morals was that of women who sold sex. Neighbourhoods in which prostitution was common were often poor, and thus shared many characteristics – and often the space itself – with Irish communities, even though Irish immigrants were not strongly associated with this work. Selling sex was a visible part of everyday life across Wolverhampton, including Stafford Street, throughout this period. In the

[159] Borough of Wolverhampton, ‘Shorthand Notes of Proceedings at Local Inquiry Held at the Town Hall, Wolverhampton before J. Thornhill Harrison, Esq. C.E.’, 1877, 38, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

view of many, prostitution represented a “visible incursion” of vice in a streetscape that was supposed to be becoming more orderly and more modern. It provided troubling evidence to these elites that middle-class, masculine urban governance was not as dominant or effective as it ought to be.[160] Although prostitution was more often a circumstantial recourse for working-class women, this interpretation relied on the image of the prostitute as a uniquely dangerous moral pollution.[161]

Unlike pubs, regulation of commercial sex was not forthcoming. The Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s which enabled women to be targeted as “common prostitutes” were met with fierce opposition, and were repealed before reaching towns like Wolverhampton.[162] The same elites that policed public drinking certainly developed a moral geography of sex work, but this did not result in direct intervention. Instead, a discursive shift became evident in the reporting and stigmatisation of certain spaces as being spaces of prostitution, from general description into condemnation of particular courts, and particular buildings deemed, accurately or not, to be brothels – places where these commercial transactions were invisible. This was a purification of the streets as much as a reclamation, but its effect was to limit the economic, spatial, sexual and personal autonomy of working-class women, within restrictive, male-dominated, middle-class gender ideals.

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[160] Phil Hubbard, *Sex and the City: Geographies of Prostitution in the Urban West* (Farnham: Ashgate, 1999), 74; Frank Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England Since 1830*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2000), 53–55.

[161] Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 14. Note that this section focuses entirely on women selling sex. This does not preclude the strong likelihood that men also sold sex in Wolverhampton. But they did not form part of the discussion about governance or urban space; in fact, they were virtually unacknowledged.

[162] The Acts were focused on naval and military towns. Walkowitz, 3.

3. “Inflammatory paragraphs” and “vigorous crusades”

Stafford Street and prostitution

Prostitution was so proximate to Irish spaces that it was part of the everyday experience of Irish migrants in Wolverhampton.[163] In 1843, Richard Castle testified to the Midland Mining Commission about the moral standard of Wolverhampton in the light of the previous year's miners’ strikes. Making the link between poverty and prostitution, he described one Stafford Street court:

> From that one yard which you visited today, Rollaston Yard, in what is called the Cribby Islands (I suppose it means Carribee Islands,) behind the old church, I have with a man or two and a good stick driven out near 100 men on a Saturday night or Sunday morning. There are about eight brothels and about 20 prostitutes in the yard; and wives often go there to seek for their husbands, as you yourself saw one to-day. The wives have sometimes dreadful fights with the girls on these occasions.
>
> My stick has been the cause of great improvement since I have been here, which is five years and a half, and a great many women have been committed for disorderly conduct. I find most of them come from Shropshire, from about Wellington and Dawley Green. I dare say our loose characters go to other places also.[164]

[163] Donald MacRaild, *The Irish Diaspora in Britain, 1750-1939* (London: Macmillan Education, 2010), 151.
[164] Evidence of Richard Castle in Thomas Tancred, ed., *First Report of the Midland Mining Commission: South Staffordshire* (London: HMSO, 1843), 82.

Castle makes no connection here between Irishness and prostitution. The view that “Irish females are less given to prostitution than the English in the same state of poverty” was widely held.[165] Irish men, on the other hand, were believed to be key customers: the same report noted that alongside miners and boatmen, “the public prostitutes are chiefly supported by the working classes, such as Irish labourers at the ironworks.”[166] Castle instead suggested that women’s mobility was the problem. In Wolverhampton, he believed prostitution was imported from Shropshire, a point reinforced in the aforementioned *Tablet* article in 1854: “the females of Wolverhampton yield rarely to temptation; the deluge of sinful women which swarms the town after night, comes from Shropshire and Shrewsbury.”[167] In turn, Wolverhampton’s “loose characters” perhaps visited other towns.

Newspaper reports of prostitution in Stafford Street seem to have declined following the mass arrival of the Irish. The last source linking Rollaston's Yard with prostitution was in 1846, when Matilda Carpenter and Tymplani Simmons were arrested.[168] By 1851 the court was entirely Irish and in 1877, Medical Officer Frederick Dunn testified that prostitutes “don't congregate in the Irish quarter.”[169] As the Irish population and the space they occupied grew, sexual geographies changed: prostitution as an ordinary use of working-class space was displaced, and new bye-laws and policing powers targeting loitering enabled such activity to

[165] Royal Commission into the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland, ‘Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland: Appendix G: State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain’, P. P. (40), xxxiv (H. M. Stationery Office, 1836). Cited in Paula Bartley, *Prostitution: Prevention and Reform in England, 1860-1914* (London: Routledge, 2000), 3.
[166] Tancred, *Midland Mining Commission*, 82, 107.
[167] ‘Wolverhampton Poor Law Union’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 18 October 1854.
[168] ‘Public Office’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 23 December 1846. This court is also variously referred to as Rollason’s or Rollinson’s Court or Yard, or simply as Court 3, Stafford Street.
[169] Borough of Wolverhampton, ‘Local Inquiry’.

be contained in other areas of the town.[170]



Figure 3.5 Entrance to Cat Yard, Berry Street, Wolverhampton, by John Fullwood (Wolverhampton Art Gallery)

Nearby Cat Yard and Brown Bear Yard became particularly notorious. These were environmentally similar to Stafford Street’s court, and both areas were brought under the 1877 Improvement Scheme.[171] JH Love testified that prostitutes “are not [conducive to health]. By the improvements which the Corporation are inaugurating, we hope ultimately to get rid of them.”[172]

During the 1850s, spaces connected with prostitution began to be identified as a particular threat too, both streets and houses. Bye-Law 46 forbade beerhouses from being “used as a brothel, or shall harbour or encourage prostitutes to remain or reside therein, for the purpose of prostitution.”[173] Prosecutions for offences relating to prostitution did rise over the 1850s, as did public pressure for further

[170] Julia Laite, *Common Prostitutes and Ordinary Citizens: Commercial Sex in London, 1885-1960* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 6.

[171] A pair of houses in Cat Yard were condemned as unfit for human habitation in 1861, alongside those belonging to William Mannix in Carribee Island. Health of Towns Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 19 April 1861), WOL-C-HOT/2, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

[172] Borough of Wolverhampton, ‘Local Inquiry’, 33. Other witnesses were more pragmatic: Frederick Dunn believed prostitutes “must exist somewhere.” Borough of Wolverhampton, 73.

[173] Colonel Hogg cited this before the Select Committee on public houses in 1853. *Select Committee on Public-Houses*, 37:405.

intervention.[174] The *SA* reported in 1858 that:

> The police appear to be making a vigorous crusade against the shameless exhibitions of prostitution which have grown to such a pitch in the town.[175]

When the bye-laws were being revised in 1859, however, Captain Segrave’s request for powers to “enter brothels without a search warrant,” as his men did with common lodging-houses, was denied.[176] Instead, discourse around prostitution was permitted to focus on certain buildings within small areas, as with pubs. The reluctance to intervene here reflects an observation raised in a lecture in 1858: that the “great social evil” was extremely lucrative not just for the proprietor but for the property owner, the power behind mid-Victorian local politics.[177]

Victorian conceptions of prostitution centred on the image of the “fallen woman,” and as such it made sense for outcast, yet professional, prostitutes to be found in particular houses of ill repute.[178] The association of this wider neighbourhood with prostitution was so strong that a “chapel for the destitute” was opened specifically to reach these women in this part of

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[174] See exchange between ‘An Old Inhabitant’ and ‘Curtius’ in the *WC* between 16 June 1858 and 21 July 1858.
[175] ‘Convictions for Keeping Brothels’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 28 July 1858; ‘The Vice of Modern Cities’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 28 August 1858. The report is copied from ‘The Social Evil’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 25 August 1858.
[176] ‘A Flaw in the New Bye Laws’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 1 February 1860. Stefan Petrow notes that prostitution was “one of the few major remaining obstacles to the successful seizure of control of all urban public spaces by the police.” Petrow, *Policing Morals*, 129.
[177] ‘Lecture in Wolverhampton on the “Great Social Evil”’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 23 June 1858. This was true elsewhere too: Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994), 34; Timothy J. Gilfoyle, ‘Prostitutes in History: From Parables of Pornography to Metaphors of Modernity’, *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 1 (1999): 117–41. However note Judith Walkowitz’s argument that prostitutes that stuck to brothels were in the minority. Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, 24.
[178] Petrow, *Policing Morals*, 118–19.

town.[179] In fact prostitution was, typically, an economic necessity: a recourse for poor women when other avenues failed.[180] This can be seen during an arrest for theft in 1868: in one register Ada Harris and Dinah Everitt of Carribee Island were listed as prostitutes; in another as nailmaker and brickmaker.[181] However, most onlookers expected prostitutes to be connected to brothels, and thus when women believed to be professional prostitutes left these confines to mix with society, anxieties were aroused. Police had power “to apprehend and carry before a justice of the peace every common prostitute wandering in the public streets, public highways, or in any place of public resort.”[182] The “common prostitute” stirred the same fears as the vagrant, beggar or drunkard, by leaving their allotted place and “wandering” in the streets: within their own constraints. But when women’s sexual and economic autonomy showed itself spatially – when their trade took them outside of recognised spaces, or into other towns – they became a problem for the masculine organisation of urban space.[183] Although intervention in domestic spaces was abhorred, the containment of women within certain spaces minimised this threat of gender

[179] The chapel was opened in Princess Alley in 1864 “to reach the destitute, the degraded, and the abandoned characters abounding in the neighbourhood of Berry Street and Stafford Street” and perhaps direct them to the Female Refuge in St John's Square. ‘Chapel for the Destitute’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 8 November 1865; ‘Chapel for the Destitute, Princess Alley, Berry Street’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 30 June 1866; ‘Midnight Meeting’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 9 March 1867.
[180] Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, 14–15.
[181] Staffordshire Calendar of Prisoners, 1868, Home Office Papers HO 140/4, The National Archives; Stafford Gaol Register of Felons, 1868 (both available via Ancestry.com); ‘A Batch of Thieves’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 23 May 1868. See chapter six on the Everitt family.
[182] ‘The Duties of a Constable’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 7 December 1842.
[183] Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800*, Themes in British Social History (London: Longman, 1981), 58.

transgression.[184]

Lottie Parker: women’s spatial autonomy

These spatial expectations are highlighted by the story of one woman who made her living in the sex industry. Charlotte, or Lottie, Parker was born in Wolverhampton in 1834, one of seven children of Joseph and Charlotte Parker. By 1851, the family lived at 32 Canal Street. Shortly after the census, Charlotte joined her sister Emma at Elizabeth Taylor's house in Farmer's Yard, in the town centre, where the census enumerator had recently recorded “I believed all females in this house prostitutes.”[185] She worked there as a prostitute for several months, leaving and returning several times. In 1854, Taylor accused Lottie Parker of theft from the house, and some of the brothel’s inner workings became public.[186]

The case hinged on the theft of £154 from a box in Taylor’s bedroom, at her house in the Cockpit, another “colony of thieves and brothels” on the opposite side of town.[187] Parker had been entertaining a “respectable gentleman” nicknamed “Champagne.” Taylor gave up her bedroom for the pair, where the money was stored in a locked box. When the money was gone, Taylor immediately suspected Parker of its theft. When police were informed, Inspector Butler followed Parker and saw her returning from the railway station to the family home in Canal Street with heavy parcels; he raided the house the next morning, and seized cash and

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[184] See David Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West* (London: Psychology Press, 1995), 11; Hubbard, *Sex and the City*, 65.
[185] Census return for Wolverhampton, 1851
[186] ‘Robbery in a House of Ill-Fame of £154’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 15 November 1854. NB this report appears in the same edition of the *Wolverhampton Chronicle* where the murder of John Leverett in Canal Street, outlined above, was first reported.
[187] The Cockpit was located off Cock Street, later renamed Victoria Street. ‘House Breaking at Wolverhampton’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 22 October 1854.

other items. Butler also followed up with merchants in Stourbridge and Birmingham, who confirmed that Parker had bought expensive items there. Parker, her sister Harriet, and another acquaintance were brought before the Magistrates and committed for trial.[188]

The case demonstrated the complex spatial and class dynamics of Wolverhampton’s sexual geography. “Champagne” (and other anonymous “respectable gentlemen”) were frequent visitors to the Cockpit, and lavish spenders: one estimate of £17 spent on champagne and brandy during a two-day stay was not denied.[189] This was “slumming” a generation before the sexual tourists described by Seth Koven in London, suggesting a long history of this kind of sexual-spatial transgression.[190] Parker, “a ‘stylishly’ dressed young woman of unhappy disrepute,” had visited expensive stores in Birmingham and attended a ball in Stourbridge. She earned well: Taylor took 5s. from every pound earned in her house, plus rent of 2s. 6d. per week, and the evidence suggested large amounts of money flowed through the brothel. Challenging contemporary narratives of the prostitute as outcast, Parker also maintained close contact with her family, including her sister Harriet, who lived with their parents and made dresses for the women; together they ranged widely across the urban West Midlands for entertainment and shopping. The prosecution used this working-class woman’s

[188] ‘Robbery in a House of Ill-Fame of £154’; ‘Robbery of £154 at a House of Ill-Fame’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 18 November 1854; ‘Robbery in a House of Ill-Fame of £154’; ‘Robbery of £154 at a House of Ill-Fame’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 22 November 1854; ‘The Robbery of £154 at a House of Ill-Fame, at Wolverhampton’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 9 December 1854; ‘Charge of Stealing £154 at a House of Ill Fame’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 9 December 1854.

[189] The National Archives currency convertor estimates this at £1,363.16 in 2017, or almost three months’ average wages; the amount stolen, £154, would be around £12,348.66, or around two years’ average wages. http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter.

[190] Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

apparently extravagant lifestyle – her spatial, sexual and economic autonomy – as evidence of guilt.

All prisoners were acquitted. The evidence was circumstantial, and defence barrister Rupert Kettle presented a closing argument so convincing that the court applauded. Parker’s close family ties elicited sympathy, though even Kettle seemed unable to countenance the thought that the Parker family were not outraged by Charlotte’s lifestyle. He concluded with:

> …an earnest hope that poor old Joseph Parker, with his five daughters and two sons at home, might yet be comforted by the chastening which this erring child of his had received from these proceedings, and that she might be induced to return to paths of virtue.[191]

The case highlighted the brothel as a site of class as well as moral transgressions, and the prostitute as a troubling exception to the social and gender boundaries that the Victorians were building: Parker had broken the social, economic and spatial restraints of a working-class woman in mid-Victorian Wolverhampton.

As in other cities, it was pressure from religious sources rather than local authorities that finally ended Charlotte Parker’s place in Wolverhampton.[192] She married George Storey in

[191] ‘Robbery of £154 at a House of Ill-Fame’, 22 November 1854.

[192] From the 1850s, organisations such as the Social Science Association and National Vigilance Association were formed precisely to exert pressure on local authorities to cleanse public space of perceived vice. This always had spatial effects: in London in 1874 for example, pressure by the Society for Suppression of Vice, combined with new entertainment and alcohol licensing, forced prostitution off certain streets (such as Haymarket) into music halls and other, less populous, streets. Petrow, *Policing Morals*, 17–26, 130.

1858, and by 1871 lived at 5 Littles Lane as a “retired gay woman.”[193] Retired was not quite accurate: she was fined that year for “keeping a house of ill fame,” and her home was later described as an “infamous house resorted to by ‘respectable’ persons.”[194] Despite – or perhaps because of – its location in this notorious district, Storey’s brothel attracted “respectable” and wealthy visitors. The erotic appeal of “slumming” was evident here.

Father Walter Hall of St Patrick’s and Reverend William Frere of St Mary’s, both of whom lived and worked nearby, had recently been successful in convincing the police to raid the Old Leaping Bar for serving alcohol during divine service. Encouraged, they spoke to Captain Segrave about Storey’s house; when Segrave felt it unlikely that they would secure a conviction, the pair wrote to Hall’s parishioner Councillor Williams, who urged the Watch Committee to act. The Watch Committee were evidently swayed by this concerted representation and resolved to take action. Police raided the house and arrested Storey, who only escaped further punishment by pledging to leave Wolverhampton for good, promising: “I hereby undertake that I will not in future reside permanently in Wolverhampton aforesaid or take a house there for the purpose of residence or otherwise.”[195] Storey's experiences over the years had not dimmed her enterprise or lifestyle, but had encouraged discretion. She likely felt that all this attention would have made her business untenable, and took her

[193] It is impossible to know whether this was Storey’s own self-identification or that of the census enumerator. William Acton used the expression “gay woman,” which appears to have been common parlance in mid-Victorian England: William Acton, *Prostitution Considered in Its Moral, Social and Sanitary Aspects in London and Other Large Cities and Garrison Towns* (London: John Churchill, 1857), 46.

[194] ‘Keeping a Brothel’, *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 1 November 1871; ‘A Magisterial Contrast’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 25 May 1878.

[195] Storey’s note was titled “The police against myself.” Watch Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 20 May 1878), WOL-C-WAT/10, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies, see also 15 April and 6 May 1878; ‘A Magisterial Contrast’; ‘The Little’s-Lane Scandal’, *Evening Express*, 9 May 1878.

counsel’s advice to quit Wolverhampton. She may have also felt that the sweeping changes coming to the area as part of the Improvement Scheme would be detrimental to her business. The council almost certainly felt such an operation could not be part of any new development. Conceptions of the Stafford Street area could be substantially different from different perspectives.

Poor neighbourhoods like Stafford Street had a complex relationship with urban sexual geographies. Not all were brothel districts like Cat Yard, but Lottie Parker’s movement through some of the town’s other poor neighbourhoods demonstrates that socio-spatial transgression, as well as sexual, was an important factor in the industry. These stigmatised neighbourhoods seem to have allowed some women spatial, moral and economic freedoms, including the freedom to own property, and make and spend money – freedoms that were not at all widespread amongst ‘respectable’ women. Police and local authority interventions were limited in scope during these years, aiming to push prostitution into manageable spaces, rather than to eliminate it entirely. Such freedoms were completely repressed by the Improvement Scheme, enacted during a period of moral reform of urban space, with its twin focus on public health and social respectability. The Unhealthy Area and its replacement building project can be read not just as moralistically middle-class, but as entirely masculine. Its plans ensured the separation of family units in new working-class houses, opened up the dense, hidden worlds of the slum into boulevards facilitating commerce and traffic in the town, and restricted the economic and spatial lives of women, particularly working-class women. As JH Love noted, prostitution was certainly in view when the scheme was drawn up.

Conclusion

By 1877, Love still considered Stafford Street “wretchedly inhabited by prostitutes and

persons of the criminal class.”[196] Similar views were expressed by the police, magistrates, clergy and newspapers. These elites had used intertwined tactics of stigmatisation, policing and intervention to attempt to reclaim the streets. Stigmatising the space had clearly worked; policing and intervention had not.

Stafford Street was not just observed to be a threatening space, it was constructed as one. At first, this was a response to the threat of working-class organisation, met with a new police and local magistracy soaked not in community relations but in suppression of disorder and the maintenance of class difference. When this threat dissipated after 1848 it left a vacuum. With all their experiences and prejudices these elites constructed a threatening space in Wolverhampton, with a threatening population displaying threatening habits. At its heart was Stafford Street: an unhealthy, overcrowded corner of Wolverhampton with a population increasingly consisting of those outside the respectable, middle-class, British and Wulfrunian norm.[197] By drawing stereotypes of Irish drunkenness, disorderliness and violence into this narrative, the legislative elite successfully turned Stafford Street into a racialised problem requiring distinctive solutions. This stigmatisation had negative impacts on working-class, Irish and women’s lives amongst others: it affected access to justice for the policed community, and redefined casual drinkers into drunkards, working-class women into professional prostitutes. It created a space notorious for the full range of vices that Victorian elites associated with the working class, and linked them to Irish stereotypes and the idea of

[196] Borough of Wolverhampton, ‘Local Inquiry’, 44.
[197] V. A. C. Gatrell, ‘Crime, Authority and the Policeman-State’, in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750–1950*, ed. F. M. L. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 243–310.

Irish space.

These elites formed mental geographies of vice in the town, and Stafford Street was a formative part of this spatial imaginary: a heart of darkness in Wolverhampton, and a yardstick by which other neighbourhoods could be measured. Alongside this discursive assault, Wolverhampton’s elites used policing and legislation to further isolate and regulate behaviours they deemed undesirable within their narrow middle-class, English worldview. By matching an aggressive, racially-prejudiced policing style with management of public and private spaces of drinking and sex, it was intended that undesirable behaviours would shift off the public streets, and into commercial environments. This not only brought such behaviours into smaller, more manageable environments, it made them subject to the power of liberal capitalism: to transgress was no longer to receive a fixed punishment, but to have a means of living taken away completely. It also sought to instil contemporary liberal ideologies of society too: for many, reclaiming the streets meant enforcing strict gender, class and racial roles.

Interventionist tactics, through policing, licensing or otherwise, were only partially successful. They faced resistance at every step, from elites who balked at the defilement of private space, or from residents who pushed back where they could. These failures made a more complete reclamation of the streets necessary, and it was only through a destructive Improvement Scheme that these elites could achieve a “class remake of the central urban landscape.”[198] But for the duration of this period, these attempts to impose ideology upon urban space

[198] Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*, 37.

through co-dependent stigmatisation and enforcement had multiple detrimental effects on the residents of the space supposedly being improved.

Contemporary imaginations of crime, vice and morality were constituent parts of what made an Irish quarter. Although forged in an era of general working-class threat, new police forces found a ready target for personal and spatial policing in neighbourhoods where Irish people lived and socialised. Residents were considered an easy target for demonstrating the importance of the police, and were the subject of preconceptions about race which sat at odds with the middle-class vision of the industrial town. In producing the Irish quarter as part of a moral geography of Wolverhampton, local elites did not just discuss or criticise the Irish, or even just residents of this neighbourhood: their interventions had material effects on the lives of women, businesses and other lives well beyond Stafford Street.

Chapter Four: “Fenian and Romanistic Schemes": Stafford Street and sectarian violence

The mid-nineteenth century marked a distinctive upturn in one type of violent urban disorder with its own spatial roots: sectarian violence, often presented as an English side motivated by an extreme, militant, conservative Protestantism, and an Irish side defending their Catholic faith against slander. The history of sectarian violence in Victorian Wolverhampton has already been written in detail, so instead of recapitulating that work this chapter instead seeks to embed these events and contexts at neighbourhood scale, to assess the symbolic and material roles of Irish spaces in the local specificities of sectarian violence.[1]

Many of these outbreaks relied on the concept of an Irish quarter: they were the targets of Anglo-Protestant violence, and Irish Catholic opposition was frequently said to have emanated from these neighbourhoods. In Liverpool, Stockport, Ashton-under-Lyne, Birmingham and elsewhere properties were damaged at tremendous scale.[2] This can be seen within the changing practice of rioting during the nineteenth century, from an autonomous

[1] Roger Swift, ‘Anti-Catholicism and Irish Disturbances: Public Order in Mid-Victorian Wolverhampton’, *Midland History* 9, no. 1 (1 January 1984): 87–108; Roger Swift, ‘“Another Stafford Street Row”: Law, Order and the Irish Presence in Mid-Victorian Wolverhampton’, in *The Irish in the Victorian City*, ed. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 179–206; Walter L. Arnstein, ‘The Murphy Riots: A Victorian Dilemma’, *Victorian Studies* 19, no. 1 (1975): 51–71. For Wolverhampton, see also James Michael Quirke, ‘Roman Catholicism in Wolverhampton 1828-1865 (Based on “The Development of the Roman Catholic Community in Wolverhampton, 1828-1867,” MA Thesis, Wolverhampton Polytechnic, 1983)’, Wolverhampton Heritage and History Website, 2002, sec. 2, http://www.historywebsite.co.uk/articles/catholics/jq00.htm.

[2] Neville Kirk, ‘Ethnicity, Class and Popular Toryism, 1850-1870’, in *Hosts, Immigrants and Minorities: Historical Responses to Newcomers in British Society, 1870-1914*, ed. Kenneth Lunn (Folkestone: William Dawson & Sons, 1980), 64–106; Arnstein, ‘The Murphy Riots’; Patsy Davis, ‘Birmingham’s Irish Community and the Murphy Riots of 1867’, *Midland History* 31, no. 1 (2006): 37–66; Daniel Downer, ‘William Murphy and Orangeism in Mid-Victorian England’, *History Ireland* 24, no. 2 (2016): 26–29.

tactic targeting those with which rioters held hierarchical social relationships, into more generalised attacks on communities perceived as alien, riddled with local and national contexts.[3]

Such attacks on Irish neighbourhoods did not happen in Wolverhampton. Stafford Street was considered more threatening than threatened. So whereas most histories describe the Irish response to anti-Catholic provocation as defensive and instinctive, this chapter argues that while the Irish of Wolverhampton certainly acted to defend their faith, this was frequently an organised response which used Irish spaces consciously and assertively. Wolverhampton’s Irish used the tools available to them to take up space in Wolverhampton too: debate, the Irish language, the protection of Irish space and eventually riot, “the language of the unheard.”[4] In doing so Irish Catholic space, both permanent and impermanent, became a means of building Irish identity and community. This chapter asserts the importance of Irish spaces – both as representations and as physical spaces – in this ongoing tension, which flared up in numerous ways in Wolverhampton between 1850 and 1867. It also provides a means by which Irish neighbourhoods can be viewed as responsive to local and national contexts, and as active agents in the understanding of categories identity like nation, religion and class.

[3] Matteo Tiratelli, ‘The Changing Practice of Rioting: Revisiting Repertoire Transitions in Britain, 1800-1939’, *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (2020): 201–19.

[4] Martin Luther King used this expression in an interview with Mike Wallace of CBS on 27 September 1966. Sheridan Gilley applied the same sentiment to the London Irish when describing Garibaldi riots of 1862: “Violence is the means of expression of men who lack any other, and is especially useful to the historian of an otherwise inarticulate working class, starving on the scraps which middle-class sources leave him. Everyman is anonymous, but becomes memorable in rebellion; and in the many memorable rebellions of nineteenth-century Europe, that self-proclaimed ‘age of revolution,’ historians have rejoiced that the poor had found voice in violence.” Sheridan Gilley, ‘The Garibaldi Riots of 1862’, *The Historical Journal* 16, no. 4 (1973): 697–732.

4. “Fenian and Romanistic Schemes”

Background

In September 1850, the newly appointed Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman announced the full restoration of Catholic bishops and dioceses in Britain. The Tory-Anglican *WC,* cognisant of the town’s long Catholic history, was not unduly concerned: “The Church of Rome,” it stated, “is like a tree decaying at its roots.”[5] But nationally, the declaration so enraged many Protestants – who believed that the Pope was attempting to reclaim Britain for Rome – that it became known as the “papal aggression.”[6] Following the restoration of voting rights to Catholics in 1829, the Maynooth Grant of 1845, and the conversion of several prominent Anglicans to Catholicism through the Oxford Movement, the scene was set for a resurgence of anti-Catholicism in Protestant England.[7] In this iteration, Catholicism came to be perceived as a threat to the fundamental identity of Britain: a religion of tyranny, superstition and immorality, opposed to the righteous, liberal, patriotic, Anglo-Saxon Protestantism that dominated.

The restoration of Catholic hierarchy also coincided with the settlement of tens of thousands of Irish Catholics in Britain, and it was they as racialised outsiders who bore the brunt of sectarian violence in the following two decades.[8] This chapter is not a history of Catholicism

[5] ‘Editorial’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 30 October 1850.
[6] Miriam Burstein, ‘The “Papal Aggression” Controversy, 1850-52’, BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History, 2016, https://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=miriam-burstein-the-papal-aggression-controversy-1850-52.
[7] Burstein.
[8] The key outlines of Irish Catholics as “racialised outsiders” are Satnam Virdee, *Racism, Class and the Racialized Outsider* (London: Macmillan International Higher Education, 2014); Mary J. Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity: The State, the Catholic Church and the Education of the Irish in Britain* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995).

in Wolverhampton therefore, or of the distinctiveness of Irish Catholicism, but about the experiences of Victorian sectarianism as experienced in the town’s most stigmatised space.[9]

Anti-Catholic violence has a lengthy history in Britain, peaking in 1780’s Gordon Riots but continuing throughout the nineteenth century.[10] A distinct pattern developed in British, Irish, American and Canadian towns after 1850. In most cases, tensions were raised by an initial verbal attack on Catholicism, by local clergy or a visiting lecturer. This attack came from different standpoints, which John Wolffe has outlined as constitutional-national, theological, socio-cultural, and popular anti-Catholicism.[11] This initial attack prompted objections from local Irish Catholics, via the Church or via popular, often violent protests, followed by much larger reprisals by crowds of English Protestants, sometimes tipping into full-scale riot. Such violence flared following Wiseman’s announcement, and fluctuated following particular lecturers around the country for the next two decades (though barely a year went by without a large-scale sectarian brawl making the news).

This violence has been explained in various ways. Some historians have argued that national contexts and cultures are central: economy, anti-Irish xenophobia, the actions of Irish

[9] For a summary of Wolverhampton’s Catholic history, see Marie B. Rowlands, *SS Peter and Paul’s Church, Wolverhampton 1692-1975*, 1975; Quirke, ‘Roman Catholicism in Wolverhampton’. On the Irish diaspora’s experience and practice of Catholicism, see Raphael Samuel, ‘An Irish Religion’, in *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity: Minorities and Outsiders Vol 2*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge, 1989), 94–122; Lynn Hollen Lees, *Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), chap. 7.

[10] D. G. Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity*, 22–42.

[11] John Wolffe, ‘A Comparative Historical Categorisation of Anti-Catholicism’, *Journal of Religious History* 39, no. 2 (2015): 182–202.

nationalists.[12] Others have stressed local cultures of work, confessional composition, the size and assimilation of Irish communities.[13] The lens for the study of anti-Catholic violence can be set transnationally, or can stress the multiplicity of interacting, often competing, local anti-Catholic cultures.[14] This chapter reiterates the importance of a multi-faceted approach to local context when analysing this violence. The events in Wolverhampton took place against differing economic, political, societal and religious backgrounds: these, alongside the personalities who were stoking sectarian feeling, help explain the course of events here.

Irish Catholicism in Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton’s religious context mitigated against some of the extremes of militant Protestantism. Mid-century Wolverhampton was a denominationally pluralistic society.

[12] See for example: Steven Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity: Irish Catholics in England, 1880-1939* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993); Frank Neal, *Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914: An Aspect of Anglo-Irish History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988); Frank Neal, ‘English-Irish Conflict in the North-West of England: Economics, Racism, Anti-Catholicism or Simple Xenophobia?’, *North-West Labour History* xvi (1991–1992): 14–25; Davis, ‘Murphy Riots’; Carolyn Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community: The Formation of English Provincial Police Forces, 1856-80* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 33–38.

[13] For instance in Wales, a very different religious culture meant that most anti-Irish violence was industrial, rather than religious: Louise Miskell, ‘Reassessing the Anti-Irish Riot: Popular Protest and the Irish in South Wales, c.1826–1882’, in *Irish Migrants in Modern Wales*, ed. Paul O’Leary (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004), 101–18; Paul O’Leary, ‘Anti-Irish Riots in Wales, 1826-1882’, *Llafur* 5, no. 4 (1991): 27–36. Other useful local examples include Donald M. MacRaild, ‘A Case of Undercutting Wages? Sectarian Tension and the Barrow Anti-Irish Riot of 1864’, *Transactions of the Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society* 96 (1996): 215–22; Gilley, ‘Garibaldi Riots’; Pauline Millward, ‘The Stockport Riots of 1852: A Study of Anti-Catholic and Anti-Irish Sentiment’, ed. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, The Irish in the Victorian City (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 207–24; Philomena Sutherland, ‘Sectarianism and Evangelicalism in Birmingham and Liverpool, 1850–2010’, in *Protestant-Catholic Conflict from the Reformation to the Twenty-First Century: The Dynamics of Religious Difference*, ed. John Wolffe (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 132–65; Jack Hepworth, ‘Between Isolation and Integration: Religion, Politics, and the Catholic Irish in Preston, C.1829-1868’, *Immigrants & Minorities* 38, no. 1–2 (2020): 77–104.

[14] Key examples of these approaches are, respectively, Donald M. MacRaild, ‘Transnationalising “Anti-Popery”: Militant Protestant Preachers in the Nineteenth-Century Anglo-World’, *Journal of Religious History* 39, no. 2 (2015): 224–43; Jonathan Bush, *“Papists” and Prejudice: Popular Anti-Catholicism and Anglo-Irish Conflict in the North East of England, 1845-70* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013).

4. "Fenian and Romanistic Schemes"

While church attendance was only 38 per cent in 1851, Wolverhampton was well-known for its strong nonconformist tradition, which constituted more than half of attendances on religious census day, 1851 (Table 4.1).[15] As Lawrence suggests, this should be interrogated at neighbourhood level: Anglicanism was stronger in wealthier western Wolverhampton, while working-class nonconformism in the town itself was less strong than the 1851 religious census result (which analysed the whole Parliamentary borough, stretching into the industrial Black Country) might suggest. Neither, given Wolverhampton's Liberal political dominance at this time, did religious affiliation map neatly onto denominational allegiance.[16]

Wolverhampton's long history of recusancy amongst middling and upper-class families from the seventeenth century gained it the nickname of *Roma parva*, or 'Little Rome'.[17] From 1804 it was the headquarters of the Midland District of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, with Vicar Apostolic John Milner at its helm. By 1834, Wolverhampton's Catholic community numbered around 650, meeting at its only church, SS Peter & Paul.

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[15] Hugh McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City* (London: Croom Helm, 1974), 28; Jon Lawrence, *Speaking for the People: Party, Language and Popular Politics in England, 1867-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 101.

[16] Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, 101–3.

[17] Wolverhampton had been where "Rome's snaky brood roosted and rested themselves more warmer and safer and with greater countenance" in the early seventeenth century, and many of its important families remained Catholic throughout the era of the penal laws. Key Catholic families, and major landowners in the region, included the Giffards of Chillington House; the Leveson-Gowers of Old Hall, Wolverhampton (later to marry into the Duke of Sutherland's line); and the Whitgreaves of Moseley. All provided finance and practical support for the local Catholic community, including during the religious persecutions of the seventeenth century when priests and Gunpowder plotters were executed in Wolverhampton, and when Charles II hid at Moseley Old Hall. The chapel at Giffard House, North Street, was completed in 1733 and was, uniquely, built by subscription. It was expanded in the 1820s. Rowlands, *SS Peter and Paul's Church, Wolverhampton 1692-1975*; Marie B. Rowlands, '"Rome's Snaky Brood": Catholic Yeomen, Craftsmen and Townsmen in the West Midlands, 1600–1641', *British Catholic History* 24, no. 2 (October 1998): 147–65.

Religious denomination	Number of Places of Worship	Number of Sittings			Number of attendants at public worship on Sunday 30 March 1851 (including Sunday Scholars)		
		Free	Appro-priated	Total	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Church of England	23	11,328	10,735	22,263	11,578	2,455	8,966
Presbyterian Church in England	1	-	100	100	28	-	42
Independents	6	1,765	1,700	3,465	1,986	475	1,367
Particular Baptists	9	1,760	2,146	3,906	1,494	1,052	1,644
Baptists (not otherwise defined)	1	200	-	200	130	-	150
Unitarians	2	346	200	546	340	280	58
Wesleyan Methodists	26	4,891	4,787	9,678	7,140	3,507	7,118
Methodist New Connexion	7	860	1,084	1,944	1,178	1,207	1,413
Primitive Methodists	14	2,661	1,086	3,747	1,481	1,697	1,937
Welsh Calvinistic Methodists	1	180	-	180	-	150	150
Isolated Congregations	1	350	-	350	-	-	-
Roman Catholics	4	862	1,034	1,896	1,645	1,040	1,750
Latter Day Saints	1	150	-	150	-	44	55
Jews	1	10	20	30	15	12	-
Total	**97**	**25,363**	**22,892**	**48,455**	**27,015**	**11,919**	**24,650**

Table 4.6 Places of worship, sittings and attendance at a place of worship from the Religious Census, 1851. The summary data is for Wolverhampton Parliamentary Borough, which did not include some of the recent western expansion of the town, but did include the Black Country townships of Wednesfield, Willenhall, Bilston, Sedgley, Gornal and Coseley, and parts of Tipton and Dudley.[1]

[1] Places of worship in Wolverhampton itself in 1851 were: St Peter’s (Reverend John Dakeyne), St John’s (Reverend Humphrey Pountney), St George’s (Reverend G. B. Clare), St Paul’s (Reverend William Dalton), St Mary’s

4. "Fenian and Romanistic Schemes"

The demography of Catholic Wolverhampton was wide-ranging, from upper-class landowners to ordinary Wulfrunians. Several Stafford Street families can be found in parish registers, including builder George Heaveningham, innkeepers James Beard, Thomas Hipwood and Ephraim Slynn, and later councillors Benjamin Williams and Joseph Spink.[2] A geography of Catholicism began to develop from the 1820s: when Irish names in parish registers begin to increase rapidly, followed by a mass influx in the 1840s, most were found around Stafford Street.[3] Their presence prompted a request to St Joseph's Convent in Handsworth for the establishment of an order of Sisters of Mercy in Wolverhampton. Although gauging the reaction of the typically upper-class English Catholics of Wolverhampton to an influx of poor Irish Catholics is difficult, the devotions offered in May 1848 to this end suggests an acceptance both of a need amongst the poor Irish, and that the Irish were likely to stay in

(Reverend George Fraser), St James' (Reverend Thomas Bromley), St Marks (Reverend A. B. Gould) and St Matthew's (Reverend A. P. Luscombe) – Church of England; Darlington Street Chapel, Cannon Street Chapel, Blakenhall Chapel, Monmore Green Chapel – all Wesleyan Methodist; SS Peter & Paul (Roman Catholic); the Old Dissenting Meeting House, St John Street (formerly Unitarian, now Particular Baptist); Temple Street Baptist Chapel (Reverend William Hatton); Unitarian Chapel, Snow Hill (Reverend S. Hunter); Presbyterian Chapel, Temple Street (Reverend John Bryson); Independent Chapel, Queen Street (Reverend Watson Smith); Congregational Church, Snow Hill (Reverend William Bevan); Mount Zion Chapel, Horseley Fields (Methodist New Connexion, Reverend John Ramsden); Jews' Synagogue, St James Square (Rabbi Isaac Barnett). There had formerly been a Quaker Meeting Room on Canal Street, but this was now closed. Horace Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship in England and Wales, Abridged from the Official Report* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1854); William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Staffordshire, and the City and County of the City of Lichfield; with... the Seats of the Nobility and Gentry; Magistrates and Public Officers; and a Variety of Other Commercial, Agricultural, & Biographical Information*, 1851, 84–86.

[2] George Heaveningham was the contractor for St Patrick's church in 1867. James Beard was the license holder at the Old Mug House, 16 Stafford Street in 1861. Thomas Hipwood ran the Roebuck Inn on Littles Lane in 1851, and took over The Vine on Canal Street in 1870. Ephraim Slynn ran The Harp on Canal Street for many years. Joseph Spink was a Stafford Street lock manufacturer, becoming a town councillor for St Mary's Ward in 1865. Benjamin Williams was a pawnbroker and japanner on Stafford Street who became a councillor in 1874. Marie B. Rowlands, ed., *Roman Catholic Registers: Chillington, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Cresswell 1720-1830* (Willenhall: Staffordshire Parish Registers Society, 1958).

[3] Samuel, 'An Irish Religion'; Quirke, 'Roman Catholicism in Wolverhampton'.

Wolverhampton, requiring the permanent establishment of an order.[4] The Sisters arrived in Wolverhampton in January 1849 and opened a poor school, one for middle-class children, and evening classes for “factory girls… many employed in brick-yards.”[5]

This rapid influx meant that by the time of the 1851 Religious Census, the Irish-born Father Patrick O’Sullivan oversaw 1,000 worshippers each morning and evening at a chapel designed for 636.[6] Shortly after, Bishop Ullathorne, newly-appointed Bishop of Birmingham, sanctioned a new chapel on Snow Hill. Major donors including Richard Wullon, an Irish-born building contractor living in Montrose Street, off Carribee Street; James Brazier, a gun-lock manufacturer living at 10 Stafford Street; and John Hawksford, a solicitor and convert later to become Wolverhampton’s first Catholic mayor.[7] SS Mary & John opened in 1855.[8]

Wolverhampton’s strong traditions of Liberal politics and religious pluralism meant that Anglicans, Nonconformists and Catholics all integrated into public and social life. Beyond commonplace rivalries, sectarian division was not militant. There was no Orange lodge, for instance, as in Birmingham and other towns where Irish Catholics were present. Wolverhampton’s Liberal milieu valued freedom of speech, including against Catholics, but as

[4] ‘Annals of the Sisters of Mercy in Wolverhampton’ (Wolverhampton, 1849), WOL/300/2/4, Sisters of Mercy Archive, St Mary’s Convent, Birmingham.
[5] ‘Annals of the Sisters of Mercy in Wolverhampton’.
[6] 600 of these seats were rented; only 36 were free. Quirke, ‘Roman Catholicism in Wolverhampton’.
[7] ‘Conveyance of Six Messuages, Malthouse and Shop in Stafford Street’, 3 December 1847, DEED/N26/18, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; ‘Parish Constables’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 22 February 1843; ‘Agent for Catholic, Law, and General Life Assurance Co.’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 22 February 1843; ‘Patriotic Fund’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 29 November 1854; ‘Board of Guardians’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 15 April 1857; Quirke, ‘Roman Catholicism in Wolverhampton’.
[8] ‘Opening of the New Roman Catholic Church at Wolverhampton’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 2 May 1855.

in Birmingham, also discouraged extreme anti-Catholicism from taking root.[9]

This equation was, however, modified by the migratory geographies of Wolverhampton’s Irish Catholics, typically from the rural, Catholic, west of Ireland, with few from Protestant areas. Their concentration in one neighbourhood made a distinctly Irish Catholic identity visible in a space that would be the focus of anti-Catholic rhetoric in the following years. From the perspectives of both the Irish and other Wulfrunians, Irishness and Catholicism were more inseparable in Wolverhampton than in cities with larger, but more diverse, Irish populations. Religion in such situations became part of the process of racialisation, so that when anti-Catholicism revived nationally in the 1850s, it was the Irish that were immediately associated with its perceived threat locally.[10] Stafford Street became not just an Irish quarter, but one associated with assertive, threatening Catholicism.

Anti-Catholicism in Wolverhampton

Anti-Catholic sentiment was certainly not unheard of prior to the Pope’s announcement in September 1850: the British Reformation Society presented a lecture that July on “the nature of Popery, and the necessity of resisting its encroachments.”[11] Nevertheless, Wiseman’s surprise announcement drew condemnation from many quarters and prompted the last peak of anti-Catholic agitation in Wolverhampton and Britain during the 1850s and 1860s.[12] From the outset, Stafford Street and its “mob” was used by polemical agitators as an example of

[9] Sutherland, ‘Sectarianism’.
[10] Virdee, *Racism, Class and the Racialized Outsider*, 3–4.
[11] ‘British Reformation Society’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 24 July 1850.
[12] Quirke, ‘Roman Catholicism in Wolverhampton’; Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism*, 1–18.

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Catholicism's constitutional-national threat to Protestants, mirroring national discourse in which Catholic nations were held up as symbols of tyranny.[13] This anti-Catholicism framed many aspects of life in the Irish neighbourhood in the 1850s, but there was also resistance from Stafford Street which demonstrated the spatialization of religion in this decade, and which contributed to the strengthening of an Irish Catholic community.

Initial reaction to Wiseman's announcement came in the form of anti-Catholic lectures and petitions. At a rowdy public meeting in December 1850, for example, resolutions of condemnation were presented by the Rural Dean, Reverend William Dalton, and Presbyterian minister Dr John Bryson. These continued into 1851 and beyond, with local speakers including Bryson, Dalton, Bilston's Reverend Owen (Chair of the Board of Guardians) and Wolverhampton's Reverend William Bevan, plus lecturers from further afield like John Victor Teodor and Alessandro Gavazzi.[14] Local Catholic clergy attempted to respond, at the meetings and in print. Fathers Longman and O'Sullivan wrote to the *WC* to defend their position:

> We, as Englishmen, acknowledge no allegiance but to our beloved sovereign, Queen Victoria; we hold her supreme; we pay homage to her alone.[15]

Nevertheless, large crowds still came to these often boisterous affairs, most notably over 3,000 who gathered to hear Gavazzi lecture (in Italian) at the Wesleyan Chapel in October

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[13] Wolffe, 'A Comparative Historical Categorisation of Anti-Catholicism'.

[14] Teodor was one of many itinerant lecturers who made their living from likely fraudulent, and often lurid, sexualised claims about their conversion from Catholicism and the evils of that system. In this respect he was a forerunner of the Baron De Camin, William Murphy and others who would cause so much anger in following years. Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism*, 26.

[15] Longman and O'Sullivan, 'To the Editor', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 13 November 1850, sec. Letters.

1851 and January 1852.[16]

Anti-Catholicism on the pulpit and platform had repercussions in the Irish quarter. In 1849, St Patrick’s Schoolroom opened in Little’s Lane for the many Irish Catholic boys in that neighbourhood.[17] But by 1853, it faced direct attacks on students and staff that are difficult to attribute to anything except anti-Catholicism:

> At present we are painfully exposed to every idle passerby and have to endure much insult from many of them. One day the stones thrown over by them numbered more than two hundred. On another occasion, one of the pupil-teachers received a severe blow in the chest from a brick end thrown through the rails, besides several other injuries received by the little children whilst at play.[18]

St Patrick’s was located off the main thoroughfare of Stafford Street, but not within an Irish ghetto by any means. The predominantly industrial Little’s Lane was a more English street than others nearby, and led via a footbridge to the new working-class suburb of Springfield, so would have seen much footfall. Its location on the edge of the Irish quarter made it a vulnerable target for passing antagonists who would perhaps not dare set foot further into

[16] Many of Wolverhampton’s great and good attended, including: John Hartley Esq., chairing; Reverend Dr Bryson; John Barker (industrialist and High Sheriff of Staffordshire); several Councillors, and the Anglo-Irish slum landlord and physician, William Mannix. ‘British and Foreign Bible Society’, *Wolverhampton Herald*, 29 October 1851; ‘British and Foreign Bible Society’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 29 October 1851; ‘Wolverhampton Protestant Alliance’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 4 February 1852.

[17] Girls’ teaching remained at the chapel house at SS Peter & Paul. ‘Annals of the Sisters of Mercy in Wolverhampton’; ‘Opening of the Roman Catholic Schools Little’s-Lane’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 28 November 1849.

[18] Minutes of Meetings of Catholic School Governors, quoted in Quirke, ‘Roman Catholicism in Wolverhampton’, sec. 2.

the Irish neighbourhood.

This kind of abuse may explain why Wolverhampton’s Irish Catholics were less content than their clergy to appease anti-Catholic sentiment, and insisted on their right to be heard. In December 1850, an Irish labourer had to be removed from the Assembly Rooms for demanding the right to reply to Teodor’s lurid claims.[19] In 1853, Irish Catholics again sought to make space for themselves in the debate, by crowding the Assembly Rooms to protest Bryson’s petition in favour of the government’s Inspection of Nunneries bill. They successfully forced the meeting to disband, the *WC* noting that it was “evident that an organised opposition to the meeting had been previously agreed upon.”[20] Priced ticketing successfully excluded many protestors at the reconvened meeting at the Exchange, and it was here that Wolverhampton’s Irish neighbourhood was first invoked as a threat not just to public health or safety, but to conscience and religion. Freedom of speech was totemic to campaigners like Bryson. He stressed the Exchange as “this place of liberty, liberty of speech and action.” He drew on familiar racialised and spatialised language:

> Driven elsewhere from the exercise of our constitutional privileges by a tiger mobocracy of priestly creation... I state openly that threats of violence were uttered... that the street in Queen Street up to the very door of the Assembly Rooms was a crammed mass of Papists, whose appearance bore

[19] ‘A Protestant’, ‘The Late Discussion at Bilston’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 25 December 1850.
[20] ‘The Bill for the Inspection of Nunneries’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 22 June 1853. Similar insistence by crowds was seen elsewhere in Britain: Katrina Navickas highlights events in Bradford in 1837 when crowds descended on the courthouse demanding access. *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place, 1789–1848* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 138.

> unmistakable characteristics of the inhabitants of Caribee Island, and the black, back, bad lanes in the vicinity of Stafford Street... I contend that the free citizenship of the people of this town has been unnecessarily, unprovokedly, and unjustly, flagrantly violated.[21]

Bryson’s comments suggest a familiarity with contemporary racial discourse, as well as language used by sanitarians, newspapers and magistrates about Stafford Street. Here the Irish, by flocking out of their space into one apparently reserved for public debate, were held to impede the free exercise of conscience by the respectable town citizens. The right of speech of the Irish Catholics was of less concern, an irony noted by one Catholic priest at the disbanded meeting who “observed that the promoters of the meeting found that ‘the friends of freedom’ were more numerous in Wolverhampton than they had anticipated.”[22]

Wolverhampton Town Mission

The atmosphere of anti-Catholicism that later visiting lecturers found so fervent was produced locally, partly by these anti-Catholic speeches, and partly by antagonistic relationships between Irish Catholics and street evangelists operating in their neighbourhoods. Open-air preaching was a widespread phenomenon in Victorian Britain and Ireland, drawing differing local responses. Street evangelists may not have considered themselves anti-Catholic; but in seeking to convert people away from Catholicism, they were certainly interpreted by Irish Catholics as an unwanted incursion into spaces associated with

[21] ‘The Bill for the Inspection of Nunneries’.
[22] ‘The Bill for the Inspection of Nunneries’.

Catholicism. Their rejection by force prefigured the larger conflicts that would emerge when anti-Catholic lecturers visited.

Wolverhampton’s Town Mission was a cross-denominational organisation formed in 1855, amid this anti-Catholic atmosphere.[23] Its role was to visit and distribute literature to “the denizens of the back streets and the crowded courts and alleys of this populous town.” In the Stafford Street area, the town missionary visited thousands of homes, of whom only 132 went to church. “Great interest,” he noted, “had been excited by the Scriptures being read to the Irish in their own tongue” (perhaps an extension of the support shown by local clergymen to similar Irish-language evangelism in Ireland).[24] Nevertheless, they were met with violent resistance at times: when Town Missionary William Clark was assaulted after using derogatory language towards Catholics at the racecourse in 1856, “the lower order of Irish… principally… persons from Stafford-street and that neighbourhood” were, according to former Police Superintendent Richard Castle, responsible for the affray.[25] In June 1858, an

[23] ‘Wolverhampton Town Mission’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 5 April 1856. Many towns and cities developed similar societies in the first half of the century: Glasgow, Dublin, Edinburgh, Birmingham and London had all done so in the 1820s and 1830s. See: Mark Doyle, ‘Martyrs of Liberty: Open-Air Preaching and Popular Violence in Britain and Ireland’, in *Faith, War & Violence*, ed. Gabriel R. Ricci (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 149–64; Geoffrey Robson, ‘The Failures of Success: Working Class Evangelists in Early Victorian Birmingham’, *Studies in Church History* 15 (1978): 381–91; Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism*, 88–89.

[24] ‘Wolverhampton Town Mission’. Clergymen including Reverend William Dalton had supported the Irish Church Mission in the 1830s: ‘Meeting of the Friends of the Irish Society’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 25 November 1835; ‘Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 18 February 1852. The travelling Irish Methodist minister Gideon Ouseley, known for his ability to preach in the Irish language, also visited Wolverhampton on several occasions, lastly in 1836: Thomas M’Cullagh, *Gideon Ouseley: The Wonderful Irish Missionary* (London: C. H. Kelly, 1906); David Hempton, ‘Gideon Ouseley: Rural Revivalist, 1791-1839’, *Studies in Church History* 25 (1989): 203–14.

[25] ‘The Assaults on the Town Missionaries Upon Wolverhampton Race Course’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 26 August 1857. In 1858, the Town Mission noted that “Irish Roman Catholics have assumed such an aggressive attitude during the last two years,” indicating that this was the near the beginning of the fraught relationship. A Member of the Town Mission Committee, ‘Cowardly and Murderous Assault upon a Town Missionary’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 4 August 1858, sec. Letters.

“unruly mob” interrupted Clark’s preaching close to SS Mary & John in Snow Hill, and two nights later (on Sunday evening), 200-300 “chiefly Irish” surrounded him while he was preaching close to SS Peter & Paul in North Street, drowning him out with jeers before chasing him through the town. Irish Catholics understandably interpreted these preaching positions as an attack on their faith, corroborated when Clark admitted that “he knew that the part of North Street where his meeting was held is principally inhabited by Irish Roman Catholics.”[26] Irish Catholics evidently defended their faith wherever and whenever they felt it appropriate.

However, Stafford Street area was directly interpreted as a key Irish Catholic space, by both sides. Local Catholic clergy certainly thought so: after a drinker in Stafford Street called him “Father Duckey” in 1861, Father George Duckett had to warn him that it was dangerous to insult a priest in that area.[27] The Town Mission targeted the area to test the right they felt to preach things offensive to Catholics, in locations offensive to Catholics – a regular tactic of town missionaries across Britain.[28] Clark was “annoyed by a gang of Irishmen” while preaching just off Canal Street in August 1858, a position on the edge of this defended territory that represented an intentional provocation.[29] One of the gang had:

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[26] ‘The Police and the Street Preachers’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 9 September 1858. SS Peter & Paul is less then 300 metres from Stafford Street.

[27] Duckett had followed the man through the streets expressing a wish that he could find an Irishman to defend him; eventually John Gough assaulted the priest for harassing him. ‘Violent Assault on a Roman Catholic Priest’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 11 December 1861.

[28] In 1861, for example, Reverend McColl of the Glasgow Free Kirk was banned from preaching in the Catholic Bridgegate neighbourhood because it breached the peace: the sheriff cited the wide range of other places he could have erected his pulpit. Doyle, ‘Martyrs of Liberty’, 153.

[29] Compare the crossing of boundaries by youth gangs as a deliberate provocation later in the century: Andrew Davies, ‘Youth Gangs and Late Victorian Society’, in *Youth in Crisis? ‘Gangs’, Territoriality and Violence*, ed. Barry Goldson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 38–54.

> …in a strong Irish brogue and with an insolent air and tone, told him that he had no business to come out there preaching, for he had received no authority to do so from the church, meaning the Roman Catholic.[30]

Clark argued that his liberty of expression was scriptural and constitutional: he “had the authority of the Bible to do so, and it was his right as an Englishman in his native country.”[31] He received a barrage of stones for his efforts, and when he “collared the fellow who threw the first… the Irish accent was heard in the appeal to his fellows of ‘Will ye see me taken?’” and Clark was beaten unconscious.[32]

The police had instructions not to attend unless a breach of the peace occurred, and the Town Mission took the police to court for failing to protect them.[33] An anonymous member of the Mission’s committee wrote to the *WC* complaining of the indifference of both the police and the town’s “respectable Roman Catholics.” The writer went on:

> The Mayor and the Watch Committee… are sadly deceived if they think that this bigoted intolerance of the free expression of religious truth will die out if left alone. The priestly influence which is at work will continue, and so will the exertions of the Town Missionary Society to stem the torrent of iniquity around it, undeterred by consequences.[34]

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[30] ‘Town Missionary’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 9 September 1858.
[31] ‘Disgraceful Romish Outrage at Wolverhampton’, *Belfast News-Letter*, 6 August 1858.
[32] ‘Outrage on a Home Missionary at Wolverhampton’, *Manchester Guardian*, 5 August 1858.
[33] Following June’s disturbances, the police had been instructed to remain uninvolved unless the peace was breached. Watch Committee, ‘Minutes’ (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 21 June 1858), WOL-C-WAT/2, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; ‘The Police and the Street Preachers’.
[34] A Member of the Town Mission Committee, ‘Cowardly and Murderous Assault upon a Town Missionary’.

Such organisations held that they had the natural and constitutional right to cause offence, without having to suffer its inevitable repercussions. By placing themselves in the position of victim but still targeting an Irish area, they created evidence for their thesis that Catholicism was tyrannical, dangerous, and antithetical to Protestant Britishness: their goal, to attack Catholicism, was achieved precisely by conflating spatial, racial and religious prejudices.[35]

Baron de Camin

Amid this ongoing tension, visits by particularly notorious anti-Catholic lecturers were key moments when anti-Catholicism defined English-Irish relations in Wolverhampton. Celebrity lecturers exploited local conditions, and the examples of socio-cultural anti-Catholics like the Baron de Camin in 1858, and William Murphy in 1867, show how they too used Irish space as a rhetorical tool. The Stafford Street neighbourhood become a site of imaginary, potential and actual physical danger for Protestants in Wolverhampton; but these events also demonstrated a growing assertiveness on the part of Irish Catholics, who mobilised from here in defence of their faith.

The first major incident occurred between the two attacks on William Clark in 1858. Andre Massena, the self-styled Baron de Camin, provided the spark in late June. Massena had lectured previously in Walsall and Birmingham, causing upset amongst local populations, but prompting little news reporting.[36] Wolverhampton journalists were thus surprised by his

[35] Swift, ‘Anti-Catholicism and Irish Disturbances’.
[36] ‘Anti-Popery Lectures at the Music Hall: Extraordinary Sceen’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 30 March 1858; ‘Disorderly Proceedings in the Music Hall’, *Aris’s Birmingham Gazette*, 5 April 1858; ‘Lectures on Popery - Disgraceful Proceedings’, *Walsall Free Press and General Advertiser*, 5 May 1858; ‘Editorial’, *Walsall Free Press and General Advertiser*, 15 May 1858.

arrival and by the vehemence of the reaction that awaited him.[37] It was less surprising to the local Irish population, as handbills advertising the talks had been distributed extensively in Stafford Street:

> A synopsis of the lecture, couched in the vilest language, had been previously circulated in the shape of handbills amongst the Irish population of Stafford Street and the adjoining courts and alleys, by which considerable fermentation was created in the public mind.[38]

A reaction was certainly looked for. Stafford Street was recognised as the site of a potent threat. This time rather than disease or crime, it was that of a violent Irish Catholic reaction. The directors of the proposed venue, the Corn Exchange, received an anonymous note on Sunday 27 June:

> Sir, You had better til the Baron de Camin not to proseed here with is lictures for if he does there will be a row for there is a plot laid against him by a prety lot of irishmen he is sure to get into it if he goes on with lectures against the catholicks and the little docter and confession Youl get the windows smashed and heel get his head broke see how they sarved him at Walsall a short time

[37] For example ‘Anti-Roman Catholic Lectures’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 3 July 1858.

[38] Massena’s talks were titled: “The Policy of Rome in Great Britain”; “The Jesuits”; and “Nuns, Nunneries etc.” A fourth on “Auricular Confession” was never held. The lectures focused on lurid descriptions of the goings-on within nunneries and of the international threat of “the Jesuits” amongst whom were counted many thousands in Britain that could rise up at any point to support their leader Louis Napoleon. Massena used his wife – apparently a former nun referred to as the Baroness – as a guest lecturer for Wednesday evening’s talk. The *SA* reported that “his address was very rambling and by no means remarkable for ability.” ‘Lecturers Against Popery by the Baron de Camin, in Wolverhampton’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 7 July 1858; ‘Anti-Roman Catholic Lectures’; Wolverhampton Advertiser, 3 July 1858, quoted in ‘The Baron de Camin’, *The Nation*, 10 July 1858.

ago. I think he is the same person.[39]

The *SA* believed the letter to be in a “foreign hand” and semi-illiterate.[40] It could have been a genuine warning; it could equally have been sent by Massena or his supporters with the intention of drumming up notoriety, because controversy drew crowds. Either way, the warnings proved correct and the following evening a gathering of around 3,000 “chiefly Irish labourers” took up space outside the Exchange, shouting and occupying respectable spaces like the stepped entry. Under Captain Segrave’s watchful eye the event passed off otherwise unaffected: Massena, who presented himself as a convert from Catholicism, was allowed to make his lurid, sexualised claims about Catholicism unhindered, from the mock altar he brought onto the stage. Massena denounced the “Irish rabble and Popish adherents” and accused the Catholic Segrave of conducting affairs “if not with complicity, at least with indifference.”[41]

For the next evening’s lecture, several hundred Irish people purchased cheap standing tickets and drowned out the lecture with hisses and noise. 3,000 more gathered outside, and just after 9pm, smashed the Exchange’s windows with co-ordinated stone throwing. The Mayor read the Riot Act and two arrests were made, a situation only quietened when Segrave called upon Father Kelly to intervene. For the next evening, Segrave requested back-up from Colonel Hogg, now Chief Constable of Staffordshire, who sent 120 men. Despite another large crowd, no riot ensued. The Exchange denied Massena any further use of the venue, and despite pleas

[39] ‘The Irish Riot at Wolverhampton’, *Manchester Guardian*, 1 July 1858.
[40] ‘Anti-Roman Catholic Lectures’.
[41] ‘Anti-Roman Catholic Lectures’.

to the town, nowhere else was made available. Massena had to resort to bringing false charges against a Walsall man on the train the next day to keep up his public profile.[42]

Performers like Massena played in the cracks of British identity. Many commentators afterwards noted that without these protests, Massena’s lectures would have slipped by barely noticed.[43] But by provoking immigrant districts to the point of protest, such lecturers found immediate, local fame and sympathy. Townspeople knew what to expect of the Stafford Street Irish by now; they were little surprised when the “Irish row” of many years’ standing was converted into an attack on archetypally “English” values like free speech and liberty of conscience. After all, the Irish had just been responsible for suppressing the Protestant evangelism of the Town Mission. It was not difficult to convert such existing tensions into notoriety and ticket sales. Massena was in all likelihood a complete fraud, but he knew how to use spatial inequalities in Britain to his advantage.[44]

From the Irish perspective, however, these events show early signs of community organisation, making their own space in local culture. According to a correspondent in the Irish nationalist newspaper *The Nation*, “a large concourse of the muscular and athletic sons of Erin moved with hurried tread and determined countenance towards the scene,” where they crowded the doors and harangued attendees. Massena was imagined to have fled, but:

> …the deficiency in lecturing line was supplied by a few of our countrymen, who addressed the multitude from the balcony on subjects well calculated to

[42] ‘Lecturers Against Popery by the Baron de Camin, in Wolverhampton’.
[43] ‘Anti-Roman Catholic Lectures’; ‘Lecturers Against Popery by the Baron de Camin, in Wolverhampton’.
[44] Paz describes Massena as a “corrupt demagogue.” Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism*, 26.

> stir the Celtic heart – the days of childhood ‘mid the green fields of Erin, the man-made famine of ’47, and the crowbar extermination of their kindred…. The air of Wolverhampton rang with true Catholic Irish eloquence.[45]

Notwithstanding *The Nation*’s evident partisanship, this suggests that this protest was more than simply an extended “Irish row.” One of those defending the faith was John Coffey, who “addressed the mob from the steps of the Exchange and… was loudly cheered.”[46] Coffey was a door-keeper at SS Peter & Paul, and lived with Father O’Sullivan.[47] He was not new to this arena: in 1852 Coffey protested Reverend Dalton’s resolution on the evangelism of Ireland by raising both hands to vote against, and in 1856 rebuffed a lecture by the London Protestant Society: “amid continued interruptions and noisy tokens of dissent” from a clearly hostile crowd, he “was proceeding in a very vigorous style to condemn Protestantism as a political scheme, when three hearty groans were raised against the Pope,” signalling the end of the meeting.[48] He was also a fervent nationalist (see chapter five): a letter from Coffey was published in *The Nation* just a month before the riots, describing the British as “would-be exterminators of the Celtic race” and “land-pirates.”[49] It seems likely that it was Coffey

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[45] ‘Great Britain’, *The Nation*, 3 July 1858. In similar terms, the *Dublin Telegraph* referred to the Irish in Wolverhampton as “true-hearted children of St Patrick, these unflinching sons of Ireland.” Cited in ‘Lectures on the Pope and Napoleon “the Little” at Wolverhampton’, *The Pilot*, 31 July 1858.

[46] Coffey was named as the principal speaker on the steps of the Exchange in the *Manchester Guardian:* ‘The Irish Riot at Wolverhampton’.

[47] ‘Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics’.

[48] ‘Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics’; ‘Mr. Lord’s Lecture on Maynooth College’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 19 March 1856. Coffey’s life outside these three years in Wolverhampton proves difficult to trace. He was likely the John Coffey living in Father Patrick O’Sullivan’s household at SS Peter & Paul in 1851, born c.1826 in Ireland. He may too have married Mary Corcoran at SS Peter & Paul in 1852. If this was the case, he did not have far to go to visit his fiancée: at the time of the 1851 census she was living in Castle Place, off Stafford Street, the grand-niece of an Irish labourer named Luke Walsh. See census return for Wolverhampton, 1851.

[49] John Coffey, ‘Donegal’, *The Nation*, 29 May 1858, sec. Letters.

employing the rhetoric of “crowbar extermination” and “manmade famine,” advanced nationalist language influenced by more famous campaigners like John Mitchel, by whom this interpretation of the Famine was most famously promoted.[50] In Coffey’s stridently nationalist world-view, Catholicism and nationhood were inseparable.

Both Coffey’s speech and general organisation for the protest were in Irish, to avoid the ears of “any lurking ‘Saxon.’”[51] Irish was still likely the first language of most of Wolverhampton’s Irish, “the language of impoverishment, exclusion and… denial,” but also a crucial means by which Irish spaces maintained some autonomy.[52] Clergy who spoke Irish were universally popular, like Bilston’s Father John Sherlock and the nationalist Archbishop of Tuam, John MacHale, who had preached in Irish in Wolverhampton the previous year.[53] 1858 also saw the nationalist newspaper *The Nation* introduce articles in Irish, earning the praise of a Wulfrunian correspondent “Salpeen Fanach” (a transliteration of *spailpín fánach*, wandering labourer). Their advice was to “accost that repulsive looking Irishman whom you see coming along the street [and]… he will soon teach the Irish Tongue, and… genuine Irish feeling.”[54] Given Coffey’s involvement, the Irish language and the coordinated “volley of stones” that

[50] Mitchel’s 1854 *Jail Journal* essentially created the nationalist conceptualisation of the Famine as genocide: crowbars represented violent evictions, and pirates and exterminators represented the English government and the landlord class. John Mitchel, *Jail Journal; or, Five Years in British Prisons* (New York, NY: The Citizen, 1854); Graham Davis, ‘Making History: John Mitchel and the Great Famine’, in *Irish Writing: Exile and Subversion*, ed. Paul Hyland and Neil Sammells, Insights (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991), 98–115.
[51] ‘Great Britain’.
[52] Richard Kirkland, ‘Reading the Rookery: The Social Meaning of an Irish Slum in Nineteenth-Century London’, *New Hibernia Review* 16, no. 1 (2012): 16–30.
[53] ‘The Archbishop of Tuam in Wolverhampton’, *The Nation*, 18 July 1857.
[54] ‘Salpeen Fanach’, ‘Letters’, *The Nation*, 3 April 1858, sec. Letters. The correspondent signed off in Irish: “siol fada le sean agad.” This is probably a blessing in Irish similar to “long life to you” before it was standardised in the late nineteenth century, which would be rendered “*saol fada chugat*” in modern Irish.

was thrown into the Exchange it was clear that, like the Assembly Rooms protest in 1853, “the attack had been organised before the mob assembled.”[55]

Massena’s publicists targeted this notorious area to provoke feeling in the town, and Irish Catholics duly defended their faith. This anti-anti-Catholic “riot” was not simply an Irish row, but an organised protest using the tools available to Wolverhampton’s Irish population at the time: mass protest and threat of violence, turning the town’s fears against them in order to make their case. This defence, by “the depraved denizens of our overcrowded courts and alleys,” can be read as a distinctly working-class, Irish, Catholic conception of urban space, with faith and solidarity at its heart.[56] While this stood in stark contrast to the notions of respectability and liberty that characterised evangelical Protestant conceptions of the same space, it represented the beginnings of self-organisation which would draw together Catholicism and Irish nationalism in the same space in years to come.

Father Gavazzi

This threat was still felt in November 1862 when the converted monk Alessandro Gavazzi returned for one of his many visits to Wolverhampton.[57] The expectation of protest was linked not just to religion or race, but often to place. As before, anonymous letters indicated that “a riot might be feared on the part of the Irish.”[58] Local Irish organisers had sent for a particular

[55] ‘Lecturers Against Popery by the Baron de Camin, in Wolverhampton’.
[56] A Member of the Town Mission Committee, ‘Cowardly and Murderous Assault upon a Town Missionary’.
[57] Gavazzi lectured in Wolverhampton on many occasions, including: 22 October 1851, on “The corruptions of the papacy, and the papal aggression”; 30 March 1852, on “Italy, and the last hours of the papacy”; 21 August 1857, on “Italy”; 19 November 1862, on “Victor Emmanuel, Garibaldi, and the Pope, Italy, her present and her future”; 9 February 1866, on “Italy’s past, present and future”; 3 July 1877, again on Italy and the papacy.
[58] ‘Gavazzi at Wolverhampton’, *Manchester Guardian*, 20 November 1862; ‘Lecture on Italy by Father Gavazzi, in Wolverhampton’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 26 November 1862.

“ticket-of-leave man… to lead a mob for the purpose, and… invitations were being sent to congenial spirits in Bilston, Darlaston, Wednesbury and Dudley to unite in the attempt.”[59] The *SA*, typically, spatialised the threat:

> In view of the recent occurrences at Birkenhead, in Hyde Park, and in some parts of Ireland, it was apprehended that some of the numerous Irish who inhabit the courts and alleys of Stafford-street, Berry-street, Caribee Island, and the neighbourhood, might follow a similar course and create a riot.[60]

Some Irish people bought tickets, but most were priced to exclude the working-class Irish. The suspected ticket-of-leave man was arrested beforehand, and Segrave “took steps both for vindicating the right of free discussion, and preventing loss of life and damage to property,” including clearing the street outside the venue, and stationing police around the town.[61] Liberty of speech was still the highest concern for officials.

Gavazzi was not a fraud like Massena. Although his lectures were fiercely anti-Catholic on constitutional-national lines, and provoked violent reaction across the world, Gavazzi’s main draw was his relationship to one of mid-Victorian England’s most incontrovertible heroes: Giuseppe Garibaldi.[62] For middle-class England, Garibaldi exemplified the victory of

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[59] The “ticket-of-leave man” in question was never identified. ‘Signor Gavazzi at Wolverhampton, Apprehended Disturbance’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 22 November 1862.

[60] ‘Signor Gavazzi at Wolverhampton, Apprehended Disturbance’. The references to Birkenhead and Hyde Park refer to recent major riots involving the Irish responding to the Italian leader Giuseppe Garibaldi. See Frank Neal, ‘The Birkenhead Garibaldi Riots of 1862’, *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 131, no. 1 (1981): 87–111; Gilley, ‘Garibaldi Riots’.

[61] ‘Lecture on Italy by Father Gavazzi, in Wolverhampton’; ‘Gavazzi at Wolverhampton’.

[62] Daniel M. Jackson, ‘Garibaldi or the Pope : Newcastle’s Irish Riot of 1861’, *North East History* 34 (2001): 49–82; Frank Neal, ‘The Birkenhead Garibaldi Riots of 1862’, *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and*

liberalism, nationalism and modernity over papal oppression, a combination which sat comfortably within mid-century English national identity.



Figure 4.19 Alessandro Gavazzi, 1860s (National Portrait Gallery)

By contrast, in Irish Catholic eyes Gavazzi and Garibaldi represented an attack on papal authority, and thus on their own Catholicism.[63] This played out locally a conflict being fought far away. Gavazzi had been chaplain to Garibaldi’s army during the campaign against the Papal States in 1860. The Irish Catholic Church, by contrast, sent a battalion to Italy to fight *for* the Pope *against* Garibaldi.[64] It included Irish soldiers with Wolverhampton connections, like the Fenian Edward Pilsworth (see chapter five), and veterans of this campaign were later celebrated as part of the long advance of Irish Catholic nationalism.[65]

Cheshire 131, no. 1 (1981): 87–111; Dan Horner, ‘“Shame upon You as Men!”: Contesting Authority in the Aftermath of Montreal’s Gavazzi Riot’, *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 44, no. 1 (26 August 2011): 29–52.

[63] Gilley, ‘Garibaldi Riots’; Anne O’Connor, ‘An Italian Inferno in Ireland: Alessandro Gavazzi and Religious Debate in the Nineteenth Century’, in *Britain, Ireland and the Italian Risorgimento*, ed. Nick Carter (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 127–50; Anne O’Connor, ‘That Dangerous Serpent: Garibaldi and Ireland 1860–1870’, *Modern Italy* 15, no. 4 (November 2010): 401–15; Jennifer O’Brien, ‘Irish Public Opinion and the Risorgimento, 1859-60’, *Irish Historical Studies* 34, no. 135 (2005): 289–305.

[64] Florry O’Driscoll, ‘For the Pope and Rome: Irish Catholic Soldiers of the Papal Battalion of St Patrick in Italy in 1860’, in *Rome and Irish Catholicism in the Atlantic World, 1622-1908*, ed. Matteo Binasco (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 193–212.

[65] Edward Pilsworth, ‘The MacMahon Sword; and the Sarsfield Monument’, *The Irishman*, 8 June 1859; ‘Edward Pilsworth St Clair’, *The Pilot* 34, no. 7 (18 February 1871): 1.

4. "Fenian and Romanistic Schemes"

The expected protest to Gavazzi's political, nationalist, anti-Catholicism did not end in violence in Wolverhampton as it had elsewhere, although "vast numbers of roughs assembled."[66] Local knowledges of Irish space interacted here with transnational understandings of political Catholicism, and riots were likely only averted by Segrave's "vigorous repressive measures," which recognised that Stafford Street represented not just a stigmatised space and people, but a material threat to the town during moments of tension.[67] Nevertheless, police were not the uncomplicated arm of the state that histories of sectarian violence often represent, and provide their own local context. Segrave's Catholicism, if not prompting sympathy for the Irish, perhaps tempered the antipathy with which police forces usually viewed the Irish, and calmed a potentially explosive situation.[68]

William Murphy

Wolverhampton's last, and most serious, anti-Catholic confrontation took place in February 1867, during a lecture series by the notorious anti-Catholic preacher William Murphy. Murphy revived a flagging anti-Catholic movement by explicitly linking the dangers of Irishness and Irish nationalism with the sexual and political fears of Catholicism, drawing again on principles of liberty of speech. Once again, Wolverhampton's Irish Catholics responded. Despite the efforts of the Church itself, riot was still the language used to express disgust, and as with previous incidents, conflicting understandings of Irish space played a central role in the course

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[66] 'Gavazzi at Wolverhampton'.
[67] 'Gavazzi in Wolverhampton', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 20 November 1862.
[68] The role of Irishmen, or those sympathetic to their plight, could make a substantial difference to community relations. In Hull, for instance, the campaigning newspaper editor E. F. Collins was supported by the Irish surgeon Edward Owen Daly and Chief Constable Andrew McManners, largely preventing the sectarian violence seen in other cities. Graham Davis, *The Irish in Britain: 1815-1914* (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1991), 68–69.

of events.

The previous year had seen the widely reported growth of international Fenianism sitting uncomfortably alongside a more confident Wolverhampton Catholic organisation.[69] In June 1866, the foundation stone was laid for a third Roman Catholic church for the town, to be located alongside St Patrick’s school in Little’s Lane. This was expressly intended for the Stafford Street Irish, “whose ragged clothing deterred them from attending a place of worship frequented by a congregation attired in rustling silks,” with a recognition that Catholicism and Irishness were inextricably linked.[70] At the ceremony, Stafford’s Reverend Canon O’Sullivan noted that:

> [B]eing himself an Irishman by birth, brogue and belonging generally, he felt pleasure in anything likely to do good to his countrymen... one thing he was certain of: that if they looked into the history of Ireland and studied it they would find that one spirit had held together the nationality of the Irish race – that one spirit being the Catholicity with which they were imbued.[71]

In line with the Irish Catholic hierarchy, which was strongly opposed to Irish nationalism at this stage, O’Sullivan thoroughly rejected rebellion as a means of raising a “ruined” Ireland.[72]

> Catholicity always rendered rebellion impossible in Ireland, because

[69] John Newsinger, *Fenianism in Mid-Victorian Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1994); Paul Rose and Patrick Quinlivan, *The Fenians in England 1865-1872* (London: John Calder, 1982).
[70] ‘Laying the Foundation Stone of St. Patrick’s Church, Wolverhampton’, *Dublin Evening Post*, 22 June 1866.
[71] ‘Catholic “Soiree” at the Exchange, Wolverhampton’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 15 November 1865.
[72] R. V. Comerford, *The Fenians in Context: Irish Politics and Society, 1848-82* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1985), 113–14.

> Catholicity was opposed to disturbance and bloodshed. It was her Catholicity that enabled Ireland to bear her sufferings, and it was the Catholic faith that would enable her to rise from her sufferings.[73]

Prior to the ceremony, placards had been spotted around the town condemning the coming of a false bishop. Father Kelly remained untroubled:

> A bishop coming did not threaten so formidable an invasion as the Spanish Armada or old Napoleon on the heights of Boulogne; they need not fear their rights and privileges were in danger because the Bishop of Birmingham chose to come to Wolverhampton and go through the narrow streets in the neighbourhood of Stafford Street, and delight the hearts of poor and sincere Catholics by laying the foundation stone of a church.[74]

So the view of Stafford Street from the perspective of the Catholic hierarchy was very different to that of the Protestant elites. The new church would minister to the needs of a distinctive community, and claimed to serve Ireland by steering attention away from violent republicanism into respectable religious practice. It would carve a disciplined Catholic space in a neighbourhood characterised as disorderly, a response by the Church to the more violent

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[73] ‘Roman Catholic Soiree’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 15 November 1865. The ultramontane Cardinal Paul Cullen instigated the “devotional revolution” in Ireland, a return to Roman Catholic piety in the second half of the nineteenth century. See David Hempton, *Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland: From the Glorious Revolution to the Decline of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 84–85; Sheridan Gilley, ‘Roman Catholicism and the Irish in England’, *Immigrants & Minorities* 18, no. 2–3 (1999): 147–67; Barr and Ó Corráin, ‘Catholic Ireland, 1740-2016’, 68–87.

[74] ‘Roman Catholic Soiree’; ‘Laying the Foundation Stone of St. Patrick’s Church, Wolverhampton’. The Bishop of Birmingham referred to was Bishop Bernard Ullathorne of Birmingham. See Judith F. Champ, *William Bernard Ullathorne 1836-1889: A Different Kind of Monk* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2006).

means of claiming space in Wolverhampton employed by protestors in earlier years.

Until Murphy arrived, this discipline seemed to be effective. When Queen Victoria visited Wolverhampton in November 1866, “she was nowhere more heartily cheered than by the people in Stafford Street.”[75] Victoria’s wish to travel through poor streets prompted some anxiety: the *SA* described Stafford Street as “the very heart of the district where the Irish swarm, too often in filth and wretchedness,” and the *BDG* suggested that “it was thought to be a nest of Fenians, and that the Queen would not meet with a very hearty reception there.”[76] On the occasion though, the Irish were the most enthusiastic of all, with flags waved and signs proclaiming “Cead mille failthe.”[77] *The Times* noted:

> There had been some stupid whispers of a possible Fenian demonstration here; but the loyalty of the poor people was as loud and apparently quite as sincere as in the other parts of the town, and their little display of evergreens and artificial flowers was in its way touching, for they evidently gave what they could afford, and gave it with right good will.[78]

In fact, “a gentleman in the garb of a Roman Catholic priest attracted some attention by being the most vociferous in his acclamations.”[79] Victoria herself noted:

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[75] ‘Roman Catholic Reunion at Wolverhampton’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 9 March 1867.
[76] ‘The Queen’s Visit to Wolverhampton’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 1 December 1866; ‘Visit of Her Majesty The Queen to Wolverhampton’, *Aris’s Birmingham Gazette*, 1 December 1866.
[77] ‘The Queen’s Visit to Wolverhampton’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 5 December 1866. “*Céad míle fáilte*” is a traditional Irish greeting translating to “a hundred thousand welcomes.”
[78] ‘The Queen’s Visit to Wolverhampton’, *The Times*, 1 December 1866.
[79] ‘Visit of Her Majesty The Queen to Wolverhampton’.

4. "Fenian and Romanistic Schemes"

> [T]hough we passed through some of the most wretched looking slums, where the people were all in tatters, & many very Irish looking, they were most loyal & demonstrative, there was not one unkind look or dissatisfied expression, every one, without exception, being kind & friendly.[80]

Suspicions, stereotypes and religious prejudice remained in Wolverhampton at the close of 1866, but they were tempered by an increasingly tolerant local view of the Catholic church as keen to suppress violent expressions of nationalism, and some evidence that the bulk of local Irish people had embraced a hybrid British and Irish patriotism.

"Fanciful stories" of Stafford Street

> The scene of these creations is laid in Stafford Street – a mythical region where all kinds of Fenian and Romanistic schemes are supposed to be concocted.[81]

In early February 1867, bills appeared across Wolverhampton, including Stafford Street, advertising lectures by William Murphy of the Protestant Evangelical Mission and Electoral Union (PEMEU) on "Romanism and Puseyism Unmasked," to take place at the Agricultural Hall on Snow Hill.[82] Murphy's pattern followed Massena's: a self-declared convert from

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[80] 'Queen Victoria's Journals', 30 November 1866, RA VIC/MAIN/QVJ (W), Royal Archives, http://www.queenvictoriasjournals.org/.

[81] 'Anti-Romanism in Wolverhampton', *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 22 February 1867.

[82] The lectures were to be:
Monday 18 February: Purgatory, the Scriptures, and the Blessed Virgin Mary coming down from Heaven to release Souls out of Purgatory
Tuesday 19 February: Transubstantiation and the Sacrifice of the Mass
Wednesday 20 February: The Glories of Mary and the Glories of Jesus
Thursday 21 February: The Seven Pretended Sacraments of the Church of Rome Unscriptural

Catholicism, travelling Britain with sensationalist attacks on Catholicism. An Irishman by birth, Murphy began his career with the Irish Church Mission, before joining the PEMEU in 1865. His own pamphlets included *Irish Priests and the Confessional*, and *Fenianism – the Priest the Real Fenian*, and he sold a notoriously lurid 1836 pamphlet, *The Confessional Unmasked*, at his lectures.[83] He had already caused riots in Portsmouth and Plymouth, but it was Wolverhampton that made his name.[84]

By the time Murphy’s first lecture arrived, newspapers were full of the recent abortive Fenian raid on Chester Castle, which first alerted authorities to the organisational capacity of advanced Irish nationalism.[85] According to John Denvir, a participant in the Chester raid, Irishmen from “the workshops of Birmingham and Wolverhampton, the coal-pits and blast-furnaces of the ‘Black Country’” were certainly in Chester.[86] Prior to Murphy’s arrival in Wolverhampton, “an alarm was given that a stack of Fenian arms had been found in Stafford Street,” though this proved unfounded.[87] Murphy’s appearance gave newspapers ample opportunity to explore this new threat.

Friday 22 February: Maynooth and Its Teaching and *The Confessional Unmasked*. Shewing the depravity of the PRIESTHOOD and the Immorality of the CONFESSIONAL

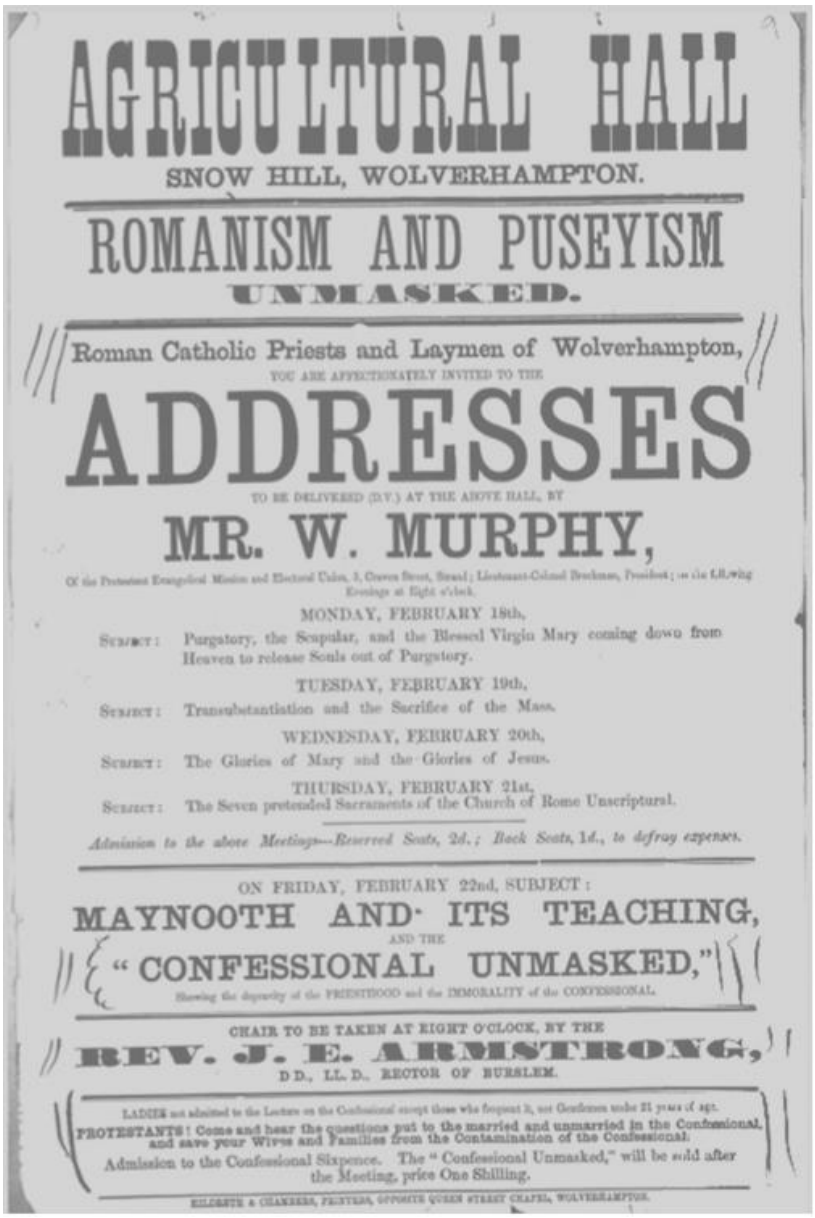
[83] The full title of the pamphlet is *The Confessional Unmasked: Shewing the Depravity of the Romanish Priesthood, the Iniquity of the Confessional, and the Questions Put to Females in Confession.* See Katherine Mullin, ‘Unmasking The Confessional Unmasked: The 1868 Hicklin Test and the Toleration of Obscenity’, *English Literary History* 85, no. 2 (2018): 471–99.

[84] Arnstein, ‘The Murphy Riots’.

[85] Rose and Quinlivan, *Fenians in England*, 16–32.

[86] John Denvir, *The Irish in Britain: From the Earliest Times to the Fall and Death of Parnell* (London: Kegan Paul, 1892), 221.

[87] ‘Anti-Romanism in Wolverhampton’, 22 February 1867; Rose and Quinlivan, *Fenians in England*, 16–32.



AGRICULTURAL HALL

SNOW HILL, WOLVERHAMPTON.

ROMANISM AND PUSEYISM

UNMASKED.

Roman Catholic Priests and Laymen of Wolverhampton,

YOU ARE AFFECTIONATELY INVITED TO THE

ADDRESSES

TO BE DELIVERED (D.V.) AT THE ABOVE HALL, BY

MR. W. MURPHY,

Of the Protestant Evangelical Mission and Electoral Union, 3, Craven Street, Strand; Lieutenant-Colonel Beckman, President; on the following Evenings at Eight o'clock.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18th,

SUBJECT: Purgatory, the Scapular, and the Blessed Virgin Mary coming down from Heaven to release Souls out of Purgatory.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19th,

SUBJECT: Transubstantiation and the Sacrifice of the Mass.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20th,

SUBJECT: The Glories of Mary and the Glories of Jesus.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21st,

SUBJECT: The Seven pretended Sacraments of the Church of Rome Unscriptural.

Admission to the above Meetings—Reserved Seats, 2d.; Back Seats, 1d., to defray expenses.

ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22nd, SUBJECT:

MAYNOOTH AND ITS TEACHING,

AND THE

“CONFESSIONAL UNMASKED,”

Shewing the depravity of the PRIESTHOOD and the IMMORALITY of the CONFESSIONAL.

CHAIR TO BE TAKEN AT EIGHT O'CLOCK, BY THE

REV. J. E. ARMSTRONG,

D.D., LL.D., RECTOR OF BURSLEM.

LADIES not admitted to the Lecture on the Confessional except those who frequent it, nor Gentlemen under 21 years of age.

PROTESTANTS! Come and hear the questions put to the married and unmarried in the Confessional, and save your Wives and Families from the Contamination of the Confessional.

Admission to the Confessional Sixpence. The “Confessional Unmasked,” will be sold after the Meeting, price One Shilling.

GILBERT & CHANDLER, PRINTERS, OPPOSITE QUEEN STREET CHAPEL, WOLVERHAMPTON.

Figure 4.20 PEMEU Placard showing Murphy’s lectures in Wolverhampton, 1867. (Home Office papers, The National Archives HO 45/7991)

Murphy linked Catholicism with Irishness even more explicitly than other lecturers. His appearance demonstrated the limits of clerical control over the Catholic Irish in this atmosphere of advanced Irish nationalism: around 10,000 “Irish men, boys, women and girls,

from Stafford-street and its purlieus” gathered in and outside the Hall to protest.[88] They greeted Murphy with “groans and hisses, and foul language” and the meeting eventually dissolved amidst a general brawl fuelled by makeshift clubs taken from broken-up chairs.[89] The following night’s lecture was preceded by an angry meeting at which Murphy and his chair, Reverend JE Armstrong of Burslem, complained of Wolverhampton’s lack of protection for free speech, the “birthright and privilege of the English” compared to the “lawless demands of Roman Catholics,” cast aspersions on Segrave again, and explicitly (though baselessly) connected Catholicism with the very current news of the Chester raid. [90]

> Whether there are Fenians or not amongst the police I don’t know, but I saw several of them looking on most complacently… The leader of the Fenians arrested at Chester appeared to have been the same man who came to oppose Mr Murphy at Burslem.[91]

That evening’s lecture prompted widespread rioting, stone-throwing and damage to the hall, and crowds grew for the following evenings. Father Duckett wrote to the *WC* begging that the lectures be cancelled for the sake of the town’s peace, prompting a storm of angry letters in following editions suggesting Duckett wished to curb free speech and impose the infamous

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[88] ‘Lectures in Wolverhampton on “Romanism & Puseyism”’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 20 February 1867.
[89] Only a handful of arrests were made, however: Patrick McDonnell, Patrick Duffy and Michael Kane were dismissed from Police Court in the absence of a prosecutor. No hard feelings were in evidence: “The defendants agreed to be agreeably disappointed,” but expressed “unmistakeable satisfaction.” Duffy even called out “Long life to your honour, sir!” to the presiding Sir John Morris. ‘Mr Murphy’s Lectures at Wolverhampton’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 23 February 1867; ‘Mr Murphy at Wolverhampton’, *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 23 February 1867; ‘The Disturbance by the Irish Roman Catholics at Wolverhampton’, *Birmingham Journal*, 23 February 1867.
[90] ‘Lectures in Wolverhampton on “Romanism & Puseyism”’.
[91] ‘Lectures in Wolverhampton on “Romanism & Puseyism”’.

tyranny of the Roman church. The town disregarded Duckett’s advice, though the magistrates did telegraph the Home Secretary for advice. His suggestion was to continue with increased police presence. With police and cavalry in place, the following lectures saw crowds of around 4,000, but reduced violence. Instead, one policeman recalled:

> [T]he Irish retired to their own quarters, and assailed passers-by, on the supposition that they had been to the lecture. So soon as the lecture was over it became dangerous for a respectable person to go through Stafford-street…[92]

Murphy departed after a final packed lecture on Friday 22 February, to equally stormy receptions elsewhere in Staffordshire.

Throughout the whole week, rumours about the plans of the Stafford Street Irish swirled, affecting the whole experience of the riots. The *BDG* noted:

> A number of fanciful stories have been floating about, but, as far as we can ascertain, have no foundation in truth… The scene of these creations is laid in Stafford Street – a mythical region where all kinds of Fenian and Romanistic schemes are supposed to be concocted.[93]

This was more perceptive than most journalists, who reported any rumours eagerly: they fit – and exacerbated – the heightened atmosphere in Wolverhampton, the potential return of

[92] ‘Serious Disturbances in Wolverhampton’, *Manchester Times*, 23 February 1867; ‘Mr Murphy’s Lectures at Wolverhampton’; ‘Mr Murphy at Wolverhampton’.
[93] ‘Anti-Romanism in Wolverhampton’, 22 February 1867.

genuine Fenians to the town and the longstanding prejudices of many newspapers. In repeating this catalogue of rumours, even sceptically, the *BDG* contributed to this environment. These rumours had little basis in fact, but did share a common location: Stafford Street.

On the Tuesday, the PEMEU’s Colonel Brockman informed local Protestants that in the part of town “inhabited chiefly by the Irish population,” a man who had shared Murphy’s platform on Monday evening had almost been assaulted by some youths. The magistrates heard the next morning that the Irish had arranged for an “ugly rush” but were dissuaded by the police presence.[94] On Wednesday, a group of “70 Irishmen, in Stafford-street” were said to have:

> …resolved to send deputations out into the Black Country, to enlist supporters in future attacks, and especially on Friday night, when the lecturer has announced his intention to ‘Expose the Confessional.’[95]

Among the rumours were that “Irishmen from Wolverhampton had been in Bilston inviting Irishmen there to come to Wolverhampton, and that in several instances the invitation had been accepted.”[96] Elsewhere it was thought that “Irish Romanists” from Birmingham and Fenians from Liverpool would descend on the town.[97] Murphy railed against Wolverhampton’s Fenians from his platform, and as well as false alarms about Fenian armaments in Stafford Street, on the Wednesday it was reported that “*real* Fenians… who

[94] ‘Mr Murphy’s Lectures at Wolverhampton’.
[95] ‘The Disturbance by the Irish Roman Catholics at Wolverhampton’.
[96] ‘Mr Murphy’s Lectures at Wolverhampton’.
[97] ‘Anti-Romanism in Wolverhampton’, *Aris’s Birmingham Gazette*, 23 February 1867.

had emanated from this same fertile region” were supposed to be in the Hall.[98] Only the *BDG* took a sceptical stance, concluding that the rumours were “fanciful” and that “police authorities believe that there is nothing like a Fenian organisation in the town.”[99]

Such rumours provided newspapers with a dramatic story that their readers could easily understand: that the Irish quarter was the source of dangerous discontent in the English city and associated with violent nationalism and insurgent Catholicism. They would appear vindicated later in the year following an Uprising in Ireland, dynamite in Clerkenwell, and the dramatic attempted rescue of Irish prisoners in Manchester later that year, which led one newspaper to suggest:

> In many large towns in England there is a locality known as ‘the Irish quarter’ which is the focus of dirt, poverty, vice, and we verily believe that in each of these places the same effect would follow as at Manchester from the same cause.[100]

Stafford Street remained a material and representational presence: a space of new threats to complement the existing medical and criminal ones. Fears of the tyranny of Rome sat paradoxically alongside the fears of Irish desire for self-government outside of Britain’s grasp. English character was invoked frequently in the debates following Murphy’s visit: the right to

[98] Italics in original. ‘Mr Murphy’s Lectures at Wolverhampton’; ‘Anti-Romanism in Wolverhampton’, 22 February 1867.
[99] ‘Anti-Romanism in Wolverhampton’, 22 February 1867.
[100] *Bristol Times and Mirror*, 20 September 1867, cited in Michael De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 166–67. On the Fenian activities of 1866-67, see Comerford, *Fenians in Context*; Rose and Quinlivan, *Fenians in England*; Newsinger, *Fenianism in Mid-Victorian Britain*.

speak even when the style and subject matter were considered distasteful was upheld as peculiarly Anglo-Saxon, and the implication that the Irish character was defined by violence was clear. The association between Irish spaces and political violence spread rapidly in the aftermath of these riots, and nothing contributed more to this than the way rumours about the Irish and their neighbourhoods were thrown around carelessly by newspapers.

Murphy returns

Murphy was back in Wolverhampton at the end of May 1867, and his presence again pointed to Stafford Street as both a symbolic and physical threat. He was there to hear the appeal of a metal broker from Waterloo Road named Henry Scott, who had been charged with obscenity for selling copies of *The Confessional Unmasked.* Inspector Thomas had seized 252 copies of this pamphlet, brought to Wolverhampton by Murphy’s PEMEU. Of all texts associated with Murphy, this was the most infamous. It contained transcriptions of Catholic texts on auricular confession, made inflammatory by their graphic nature and contextualisation. Circulated in the atmosphere of anti-Catholicism, such texts reinforced the understanding of gender and religion within the narrow, militant, evangelical Protestant definition promoted by the likes of Murphy.[101] The town magistrates, led by Benjamin Hicklin, declared the publication obscene under the 1857 Obscene Publications Act, a ruling subsequently overturned by the Borough Recorder at the appeal Murphy was attending. The eventual ruling at the Court of Queen’s Bench a year later upheld Hicklin’s decision, effectively

[101] MacRaild, ‘Transnationalising “Anti-Popery”’; Monika Mazurek, ‘Perverts to Rome: Protestant Gender Roles and the Abjection of Catholicism’, *Victorian Literature and Culture* 44, no. 3 (2016): 687–723.

applying it to any publication with a “tendency... to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences, and into whose hands a publication of this sort may fall.” This “Hicklin test” set the precedent for obscenity cases until 1959, but its roots should be understood in the light of this provocation of Irish Catholicism by militant Protestantism.[102]

Back in Wolverhampton, Murphy found himself surrounded by an angry crowd on leaving court. He was pushed and threatened along Market Street into Princess Street “evidently,” the *WC* suggested, “desiring to get him into Stafford-street.”[103] Murphy was rescued by a policeman before he arrived in this now infamous region. He went on to spark riots across the country before eventually dying of injuries sustained after an attack by Irish protestors in Whitehaven in 1871.[104] Murphy’s violent death served as a reminder that “freedom of speech… does not mean freedom from the consequence of that speech.”[105] His legacy was one in which anti-Catholicism was sexualised, racialised, and spatialised to an unprecedented degree. In Wolverhampton, there was not a pre-existing sectarian rivalry sufficient to spark Protestant reprisals, as in Birmingham in June 1867.[106] But just like Massena before him, Murphy drew on an understanding of Irish spaces as volatile and easily provoked, to draw

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[102] The Queen, on the Prosecution of Henry Scott, Appelant and Benjamin Hicklin and Another, Justices of Wolverhampton, Respondents, ‘Regina v. Hicklin’ (Court of Queen’s Bench, 29 April 1868), https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Regina_v._Hicklin; Mullin, ‘Unmasking The Confessional Unmasked’; Dominic Janes, ‘The Confessional Unmasked: Religious Merchandise and Obscenity in Victorian England’, *Victorian Literature and Culture* 41, no. 4 (2013): 677–90; F. L. Blumberg, ‘Obscenity and Marginality’, *Law and Humanities* 11, no. 1 (2017): 7–23.

[103] ‘Savage Attack on Mr Murphy, in Wolverhampton’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 29 May 1867.

[104] Davis, ‘Murphy Riots’; Donald M. MacRaild, ‘William Murphy, the Orange Order and Communal Violence: The Irish in West Cumberland, 1871-1884’, in *Racial Violence in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Panikos Panayi, Revised (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996), 44–64; John Wolffe, ‘Murphy, William (1834–1872), Public Lecturer’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[105] Charlotte Lydia Riley, ‘Introduction’, in *The Free Speech Wars: How Did We Get Here And Why Does It Matter*, ed. Charlotte Lydia Riley (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).

[106] Davis, ‘Murphy Riots’.

controversy and crowds.

Conclusion

Sectarian violence was a regular part of life in industrial towns in the 1850s and 1860s, but the experience was not uniform across Britain. In Wolverhampton, violence generally originated in organised protest by Irish Catholics against the blasphemy of the anti-Catholics. The major difference between Wolverhampton and other towns was that this violence was not reciprocated by the local Protestant population: as Swift has suggested, the main question is why there was not *more* violence.[107]

There may be multiple explanations for this. Wolverhampton’s Irish were almost entirely poor and Catholic: there was little pre-existing sectarian tension to be exploited as in other cities, no Orange lodge or antagonistic Protestant Irish. Its longstanding and influential Catholic community meant that Roman Catholic clergy and laity were well-established in the town, and usually sufficiently respected to make their voices heard at times of conflict. The loyalty shown for Queen Victoria suggests that those who would hope to instigate violence for nationalist causes did not find fertile ground in Wolverhampton. Wolverhampton also had a Catholic mayor as early as 1855, and a Catholic Chief Constable from 1857 whose standing in the community (and deployment of massive police presence) almost certainly tempered the temptation to riot. Birmingham, by comparison, had active Protestant Associations and multiple Orange lodges, and chose to minimise its police presence when Murphy arrived: the

[107] Swift, ‘Anti-Catholicism and Irish Disturbances’.

result was mass destruction.[108] In Wolverhampton, the lecturers provoking the biggest reaction were those challenging Catholicism on socio-cultural grounds: William Murphy, the biggest name of all, managed to exploit local and national politics to wrap constitutional-national, theological and populist anti-Catholicism into his rhetoric. This extreme version of Protestantism was not the unequivocal representative of Britishness it presented itself to be, and Wolverhampton demonstrates how it was contested.

In each town visited by these lecturers, Irish spaces were part of everyday thinking about race and religion. Wolverhampton’s Irish space was exploited by local and visiting preachers, and was reported on until it reached mythical status. Stafford Street may well have been the origin of the resistance to aggressive anti-Catholicism. Sometimes this took spontaneous form, like the assaults on Town Missionaries or the attempts to haul William Murphy back to Stafford Street. There is evidence of more formal organisation though: John Coffey’s stirring lectures in Irish at the steps of the Exchange in 1858, or the preparations for violent protest against Gavazzi in 1862. These would pave the way for the Irish nationalist organisations discussed in chapter five, in which Catholicism and Irish national sentiment were inextricably linked. This chapter argues that multiple contexts are necessary to understand the local iterations of sectarian violence in Britain, and that the religious and political geographies of Irish neighbourhoods show that such outbreaks of violence were not necessarily instinctual, but evidence of the coalescence of an Irish-Catholic diasporic identity.

[108] Davis, ‘Murphy Riots’.

Chapter Five: “The elements that constitute nationhood”: Irish nationalist politics in the Irish quarter, 1848-1882



Figure 5.21 Memorial to James Francis Egan, Glasnevin Cemetery (image courtesy National Graves Association). The inscription (translated from Irish) reads: “In memory of James Egan, Fenian born in Limerick in 1844, and died on 28 Sept 1909. Sentenced to 20 years imprisonment under the Felons Act in 1884. He spent 9 years in captivity in Chatham and Portland alongside his Comrades John Daly from Limerick and Tom Clarke the first signatory of the proclamation of independence, 1916. Also in memory of his exiled wife Sarah Ann who died 13 May 1908 RIP. This memorial was erected by the National Graves Association in 1936.”

In 1936, a new memorial was unveiled at Dublin’s Glasnevin Cemetery for James Francis Egan, who had been buried next to his Wulfrunian wife Annie 27 years earlier. In the Irish Free State, as Roy Foster notes, “the dead were everywhere, elevated into ceremonial niches,” and Egan

was memorialised in this tradition as a “Fenian leader” and a “faithful and fearless patriot.”[1] But like many whose nationalist sentiment had been formed in the Irish diaspora, James Egan’s life and nationalist viewpoints were more ambiguous than this. He had spent the most active years of his life organising Wolverhampton’s Irish, and his activities within Irish social space in the Black Country provide the framework for this chapter. Egan’s career took unexpected turns following his departure from Wolverhampton in 1877: he found himself embroiled in a resurgence of anti-Irishness associated with Fenian terrorism, spent almost a decade in prison, became a *cause célèbre* for Irish nationalists, and eventually resumed his organisational work in New York and Dublin.

Egan’s life acts here as a lens on the development of Irish nationalism in Britain, and the importance of diaspora neighbourhoods to this trajectory. He arrived in the mid-1860s, probably already a nationalist, and began formal organising as part of the Home Rule movement of the early 1870s. He built on a genealogy of earlier organisations that influenced his tactics and his understanding of diasporic space. I argue that this area developed something like the political inertia identified by Katrina Navickas in Manchester neighbourhoods, providing a space in which the anti-colonial politics of Irish nationalism could be practiced, and was home to a density of sympathy that was often too thinly spread to maintain momentum.[2] Whilst this chapter focuses particularly on the Home Rulers, then,

[1] ‘Memorial to Fenian’, *Derry Journal*, 8 May 1936; ‘Memorial to Fenian Leader’, *New Ross Standard*, 22 May 1936; ‘Old Crock’, ‘Political Expediency v. Active Nationalism’, *An Gaedheal*, July 1936; R. F. Foster, *Vivid Faces: The Revolutionary Generation in Ireland 1890-1923* (London: Penguin, 2015), 291.

[2] Katrina Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place, 1789–1848* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 106–17.

their precedents and successors can also be traced in Wolverhampton’s Irish quarter. As a result, Egan drops into the story after discussion of earlier nationalist activity from the Confederates of the 1840s to the Fenians of the 1860s.

I also suggest that inherent in diaspora spaces like Stafford Street is the potential to override differences in class, profession and point of origin, in the service of an Irish nationality that was formed through the practices of groups like this. As an educated merchant’s clerk from Munster living in western Wolverhampton, James Egan was very different to the often illiterate, rural, Connacht emigrants living in Stafford Street. But through shared material, literary and spatial cultures, a diasporic Irish national identity was developed. As historians have shown in other contexts, shared experiences in diasporic sites had the capacity to bring together a wide range of experiences and histories, under a new shared identity, and a new historical narrative.[3]

Egan was above all an organiser, and his grasp of spatial scale was important. He understood the importance of the Irish quarter, but he also represented Wolverhampton to other parts of the diasporic community, and back to Ireland itself. Again, he was not the first – his predecessors in the 1860s did the same – but his efforts in turning the Home Rule Association into an organised national movement hinged on multi-scalar understandings. In 1871, he asked the rhetorical question of his local compatriots: “How are we to bring together the

[3] See for example, Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 1–2; Laura Tabili, *Global Migrants, Local Culture: Natives and Newcomers in Provincial England, 1841-1939* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 236–39; Laura C. Forster, ‘The Paris Commune in London and the Spatial History of Ideas 1871-1900’, *The Historical Journal* 62, no. 4 (2019): 1021–44.

elements that constitute nationhood?”[4] For Egan, these elements were to be found in the representational value of Irish spaces: in the solidarity and security of Irish neighbourhoods, in the comradeship and materiality of Irish pubs, and in the linking of diaspora space into regional, national and transnational networks.

Much of this organisation took place via supportive Irish newspapers like *The Nation* and *The Irishman*, which provided a more sympathetic perspective than most newspaper reports on Wolverhampton’s Irish. Their pages provided a bridge between home and diaspora which cultivated and encouraged national feeling.[5] This chapter uses these reports and correspondence to assess how local expressions of Irishness within the diaspora had a long-lasting effect on the overall culture of Irish nationalism. Terence McBride has noted that “both the facilities and the active life of the association comprised a social space for the cultivation of Irishness.”[6] This chapter builds upon this conception to argue for the importance of material space, and its intersection with that representational space, to nationalists in the Irish diaspora.

Irish nationalism in Wolverhampton, 1848-61

James Francis Egan was born around 1844 in Limerick City, and moved to Wolverhampton in the mid-1860s. There was already a history of organisation in the town, however. There is

[4] James Francis Egan and John Hands, ‘To the Irishmen and Wolverhampton and District’, *The Irishman*, 25 November 1871.
[5] The importance of print culture to dispersed nationalist movements cannot be overstated. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 44–46.
[6] Terence McBride, ‘Ribbonmen and Radicals: The Cultivation of Irishness and the Promotion of Active Citizenship in Mid-Victorian Glasgow’, *Irish Studies Review* 23, no. 1 (2015): 15–32.

little evidence of United Irishmen or Ribbonism in the town (or indeed any radical organisation before the 1830s).[7] But there was certainly some basic organisation around Daniel O’Connell’s Repeal campaign: in 1847, the *WC* referred to a local “Repeal Rent” collection as an “anti-English offering.”[8] As with his successful Catholic Rent in the 1820s, this was a strategy to encourage mass participation, in Ireland and also beyond, by which emigrants could understand themselves as remaining, or becoming, part of a distinct Irish nation.[9]

Following O’Connell’s death in 1847, a handful of Repeal reading rooms in Ireland were expanded into a much larger network by the energetic Young Ireland movement, with lecture programmes, libraries stocked with Irish books and newspapers, and meeting places in sympathetic pubs.[10] Dozens existed across Britain too, often appropriating existing Repeal networks. In 1848, the Birmingham Confederate Club used its connections to form several

[7] Jon Lawrence, *Speaking for the People: Party, Language and Popular Politics in England, 1867-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 74. George Barnsby’s history of working-class movements in the Black Country also finds little prior to the Reform agitation of 1831. George J. Barnsby, *The Working Class Movement in the Black Country, 1750 to 1867* (Wolverhampton: Integrated Publishing Services, 1977).

[8] ‘Editorial’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 27 January 1847. Contributors included Father Patrick O’Sullivan of SS Peter & Paul, £3. ‘Loyal National Repeal Association’, *The Nation*, 26 July 1845.

[9] Roisín Higgins, ‘The Nation Reading Rooms’, in *The Oxford History of the Irish Book, Volume IV: The Irish Book in English, 1800-1891* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 262–73.

[10] London’s Davis Club ran an Irish language class and held a number of Irish books. It also received copies of *The Nation, The London & Liverpool Advertiser, The Cork Examiner, The Limerick Reporter, The Galway Vindicator, Peter Carroll’s Register, The Dublin University Magazine* and one further English regional newspaper: the *Staffordshire Advertiser.* Edward Kenealy, ‘Davis Club - London’, *The Nation*, 15 January 1848. See James Quinn, ‘The Nation, History, and the Making of National Citizens’, in *Literacy, Language and Reading in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, ed. Rebecca Anne Barr, Sarah-Anne Buckley, and Muireann O’Cinneide (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 53–65; John Belchem, ‘Ribbonism, Nationalism, and the Irish Pub’, in *Merseypride: Essays in Liverpool Exceptionalism* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 67–100; W. J. Lowe, ‘The Chartists and the Irish Confederates: Lancashire, 1848’, *Irish Historical Studies* 24, no. 94 (1984): 172–96.

Clubs in the Black Country.[11] Walsall’s Confederates merged with local Chartists: though distinct in aim, there was often commonality between the groups both in outcome and organisation. Wolverhampton Chartists arranged a series of lectures for the local Irish community in 1841, for instance, and one of the region’s staunchest Chartists was Arthur O’Neill, an active campaigner for Irish Home Rule.[12] Birmingham Confederates attempted to form a Club in Wolverhampton too, though no evidence appears of its success. Despite a continuing influx of Irish residents – perhaps partly because of the starving, destitute nature of these newcomers – these Clubs did not survive beyond 1848. The organisational pattern developed by Repeal, Confederate and Chartist groups, however, provided a model for later organisations.

The 1850s were characterised by fundraising for patriotic causes, offering the Irish diaspora the opportunity to support the struggle for freedom from within the heart of the oppressor. Among the contributors to an 1858 *Nation* fund for distressed residents of Donegal was John Coffey, seen that year protesting anti-Catholicism (chapter four). In a letter to *The Nation*, he praised the people of Donegal as “Celts of the pure old race, with the pure old faith,” recited

[11] Reports in *The Nation* record the “Emmett Club” in Bilston, with James Keegan as secretary; the “Wolfe Tone Club” in Great Bridge, Tipton, at the home of Martin Brown; the “Hugh O’Neill Club” in Wednesbury; the “Felon Club” in West Bromwich; and the “Convicted Felon Club” which met at Mr Roper’s Lamp Tavern, Stafford Street, Walsall.

[12] Henry Candy, a local stonemason and Chartist, lectured on “Ireland, its system of government, its institutions, and the policy with which England had governed her, with its Union and its Repeal” – with the intent of bringing the “lads of the Emerald Isle” within the Chartist fold. ‘Chartist Intelligence’, *Northern Star*, 16 October 1841; ‘Walsall’, *Irish Felon*, 15 July 1848; Christine Kinealy, ‘“Brethren in Bondage”: Chartists, O’Connellites, Young Irelanders and the 1848 Uprising’, in *Politics and the Irish Working Class, 1830-1945*, ed. Donal O Drisceoil and Fintan Lane (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 87–112; Stephen Roberts, *The Chartist Prisoners: The Radical Lives of Thomas Cooper (1805-1892) and Arthur O’Neill (1819-1896)* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008), 125–27; Lowe, ‘The Chartists and the Irish Confederates’. On Chartism in Wolverhampton, see Barnsby, *The Working Class Movement in the Black Country*.

5. “The elements that constitute nationhood”

700 years of Celtic grievances, described the landlords of Donegal as “land-pirates” and criticised the hypocrisy “in the 19th century – this age of boasted christianity and civilisation” of “men calling themselves Bible-reading christians.” He ended by calling all Irishmen, for the sake of “their homes, their wives and little ones, and for the sake of generations yet unborn” to unite in “a bond of national brotherhood.”[13] These themes of injustice, religious inequality, and a form of racial solidarity, would form the core of Irish nationalist organisation in Britain in the coming decades.

Coffey’s donation, and forty others, were collected by a James Coffey, and sent as a post-office order for £3. 3s. Donors included landlords (like Richard Baker of the Erin-go-bragh) and private individuals like Anthony Timlin (see chapter six), Anthony Scott and Mrs Fenn, who sent 10s. “collected from our poor Irish brethren in this town (it being a penny subscription).”[14] Newspapers named charitable subscribers individually, demonstrating their tangible commitment to the cause, and several of the collectors in this campaign went on to more formal organising later on. Already the importance of Irish spatial organisation can be seen: the Timlin and Scott families lived in Littles Lane, and Baker on Carribee Street.

Newer strains of radical nationalism emerged in Wolverhampton during this time too. One contemporary of Coffey’s, Edward Pilsworth, signed himself “A Celtic Brother, E. P.” and forwarded contributions from the town to honour the French-Irish Marshall MacMahon, from quite a different set of subscribers to those contributing to the Donegal fund (with the

[13] John Coffey, ‘Donegal’, *The Nation*, 29 May 1858, sec. Letters. Capitalisation as in original.
[14] Richard Baker, ‘Letters’, *The Nation*, 20 March 1858; ‘Donegal Relief Fund’, *The Nation*, 27 March 1858; James Coffey, ‘Letters’, *The Nation*, 22 May 1858; Mrs Fenn, ‘Letters’, *The Nation*, 10 July 1858; ‘Donegal Relief Fund’, *The Nation*, 24 July 1858. No relationship between John and James Coffey has been established.

exception of the energetic Anthony Scott).[15] Coffey’s and Pilsworth’s spells in Wolverhampton were contemporary with the founding of the revolutionary Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) in 1858.[16]



Figure 5.22 Edward Pilsworth St Clair in 1871, The Pilot *34, no.7, 18 February 1871:1*

Appeals such as these were appropriated by both the constitutional, peaceable nationalism represented by *The Nation* (and its editor AM Sullivan); and the more radical republican nationalism of its competitor, *The Irishman*, the IRB, and surviving Young Irelanders like John Mitchel. Catholic solidarity was central to both strains.[17] Pilsworth certainly lived in Birmingham in the 1850s and his connection to Wolverhampton is unclear, but his radicalism is not in doubt: he fought Garibaldi in 1860, joined the National Brotherhood of St Patrick (NBSP – see below) and the

[15] Edward Pilsworth, ‘The MacMahon Sword; and the Sarsfield Monument’, *The Irishman*, 8 June 1859; Edward Pilsworth, ‘The MacMahon Testimonial’, *The Irishman*, 1 October 1859.

[16] The Irish Republican Brotherhood was the long-lasting figurehead of physical-force nationalism in Ireland. It was founded in 1858 by James Stephens at the request of Irish-American nationalist, and served as a natural Irish counterpart to the US Fenian Brotherhood, so much so that both groups were typically referred to as Fenians in the British press. See amongst others: R. V. Comerford, *The Fenians in Context: Irish Politics and Society, 1848-82* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1985); Brian Jenkins, *Fenian Problem: Insurgency and Terrorism in a Liberal State, 1858-1874* (Montreal and Kingston, Canada: McGill-Queen’s Press, 2008); T. W. Moody, ed., *The Fenian Movement* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1968); Marta Ramón, *A Provisional Dictator: James Stephens and the Fenian Movement* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2007).

[17] Comerford, *Fenians in Context*, 58–60; Matthew Kelly, ‘Languages of Radicalism, Race, and Religion in Irish Nationalism: The French Affinity, 1848—1871’, *Journal of British Studies* 49, no. 4 (2010): 801–25.

IRB, became a Fenian recruiter in the British Army, and a political prisoner from 1866 to 1871.[18] Both strands of Irish nationalism evidently existed in Wolverhampton at this time, and this tension continued over the following decades.

National Brotherhood of St Patrick, 1861-65

The NBSP was a key stepping-stone between earlier and later forms of associational nationalist culture. It drew on the earlier tradition of affiliated clubs, meeting in local pubs, providing reading rooms to instil a sense of cultural national feeling, and often drew on the same personnel as Confederate Clubs in 1848. Initially constitutional and non-violent, its membership was gradually drawn into the IRB’s orbit and the organisation dissolved in the mid-1860s, just as physical force became the dominant mood in Irish nationalism. It was not the only option available to patriotic Irish emigrants, but in Wolverhampton, it was the foremost expression of Irish nationalism in the early 1860s, and provided personnel, customs and understandings of Irish social space that proved influential on later iterations of nationalist organisation.

The NBSP was founded in Dublin on 17 March 1861 by the Ulster Presbyterian Thomas Neilson Underwood, the date chosen to mark one its key objectives, the celebration of St Patrick’s Day. It was intended as a non-partisan, non-sectarian, cultural association, and soon expanded across Ireland. By May it had 23 branches, and was growing fast.[19] The first diaspora

[18] Pilsworth, ‘The MacMahon Sword; and the Sarsfield Monument’; Pilsworth, ‘The MacMahon Testimonial’; ‘Edward Pilsworth St Clair’, *The Pilot* 34, no. 7 (18 February 1871): 1; John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel* (New York, NY: Chas. P. Young Co., 1929), 147. Pilsworth adopted the additional name “St Clair” during the suppression of Fenianism by Dublin Castle in the 1860s – he kept it as a badge of pride.
[19] Comerford, *Fenians in Context*, 69–74.

branch opened in Manchester shortly after and at its height the following year, membership in Britain was around 20,000.[20] On 10 November 1861, a Wolverhampton branch was founded with “an able and stirring appeal,” at the Vine, Canal Street. It seems likely that the publicity around that day’s funeral of the 1848 veteran Terence Bellew MacManus re-invigorated nationalist sentiment.[21] Anthony Scott was appointed president.

Wolverhampton may not have had Irish Confederate members to draw on, but since 1848 an Irish social space had developed in Stafford Street which both increased the pool for membership and helped maintain enthusiasm for the project. Membership (Table 5.1) can be reconstructed from the regular reports sent into the most sympathetic Irish newspaper, *The Irishman*, and mopped up many who had contributed to patriotic appeals before, including Scott, Patrick Leonard, Anthony Timlin and TM Hunt. Others were new: John Martin would remain part of local Irish organisations for years to come, and became President of the branch in 1862. Several lived in the Irish district, though comparatively few within the poorest inner courts: Brabazon in Carribee Street; Martin in Back Lane; Leonard in Canal Street; Scott, Kearns and Timlin in Littles Lane. The venue soon shifted to the Traveller’s Repose on Carribee Street, which was spacious, sympathetic and convenient for the Brotherhood’s intended audience.[22]

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[20] Gerard Moran, ‘The National Brotherhood of St Patrick in Britain in the 1860s’, *Irish Studies Review* 7, no. 3 (1999): 325–36.

[21] ‘The National Brotherhood’, *The Irishman*, 16 November 1861. MacManus’ funeral has often been presented as a key moment in the history of the IRB, which essentially ran the proceedings – though as a secret society many onlookers simply assumed that the NBSP was in charge. Comerford, *Fenians in Context*, 75–80.

[22] One advert notes “bar parlour, parlour, tap room, brewhouse, cellars, club room and four bedrooms” (‘Wolverhampton - Extensive Sale of Valuable Freehold and Leasehold Dwelling Houses, Freehold Building Land, and Life Policies (Lot 1, Littles Lane)’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 28 September 1858. Landlords apparently

Member	Role within NBSP
Anthony Scott	President, 1861 and 1863
John Martin	President, 1862
TM Hunt	Vice-President, 1861 and late 1862
Anthony Timlin	Vice-President, early 1862
Bernard O’Neill	Secretary, 1861
Patrick Leonard	Secretary, 1862-1863
Bernard Salmon	Treasurer, 1862
John Kearns	Librarian, 1862
Edward Green	Member, 1862
Thomas Timlin	Member, 1862
Mr Sheil	Member, 1862[23]
John Blake	Member, 1862-1863
Edward Keough	Member, 1862-1863
T Roland	Member, 1862
Mr Boyle	Member, 1863
James Mulholland	Member, 1863
P Brabazon	Member, 1863
Mr Doyle	Member, 1863
Felix Groggan	Member, 1863
James Goulding	Member, 1863 – provided St Patrick’s dinner

Table 5.7 Members of the National Brotherhood of St Patrick in Wolverhampton, 1861-1864. Names taken from branch reports in the Irishman, 1862-5.

This was a typical venue for the NBSP. Most British branches met in a pub operated by an Irishman, though this was not universal or an indication of any desire for secrecy: several met

changed frequently but certainly included the Irishman John Maloney, who was fined for late opening in 1864 (‘Caution to Beerhouse Keepers’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 3 August 1864.)

[23] This was likely James Shiel, a veteran of the Papal battalion. He had been honoured in Wednesbury in February 1861, so may have been based in the West Midlands. George Montgomery, ‘The Irish Brigade’, *The Nation*, 16 February 1861.

in public assembly rooms or lecture halls.[24] In Wolverhampton, as would be evident later, a pub in the Irish neighbourhood was deemed essential.

The NBSP was criticised by the Irish Catholic hierarchy, and members elsewhere were conscious of its pub-based culture. Pubs had a long history as multi-purpose venues, including for political meetings of all persuasions.[25] Under the influence of the Temperance movement, however, radical groups began to move away from pubs by the 1860s, and some NBSP branches followed suit.[26] Wolverhampton’s Chartists, for instance, moved from a pub to

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[24] The pages of *The Irishman* featured regular reports from British branches indicating where they met. Most were in pubs, and often their Irish publicans were named. Examples just from 1861 include: John Behan’s Church Inn, Salford; the King’s Arms, Ebury Street, Pimlico; the Grapes Inn, Sheffield; the Harp & Crown, Blackburn; Mr O’Neill’s Royal Oak, Tooley Street, London; James O’Shaughnessy’s Free Trade Vaults, Salford; the Moulder’s Arms, Manchester; Patrick Kavanagh’s O’Connell Arms, Hulme; J Tunney’s Harp & Shamrock, Manchester; the Hyndburn Inn, Accrington; the Fleur de Lis, Shoreditch; Stanley Arms, Liverpool; M Coolican’s Rose Bud, Blackburn; Mr Kennedy’s Two Brewers, Southwark; the O’Connell’s Arms, Ashton-under-Lyne; the Walmer Castle, Marylebone. The Hope Pole Inn, meeting place of the Deansgate branch in Manchester, opened a reading room at the next-door building. Alternative venues included the Prince of Wales Temperance Hall in Bethnal Green; Cooke’s Academy in Preston; Nelson Street Lecture Rooms and Music Hall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; the Perseverance Coffee House, London; and the Masonic Hall, Fetter Lane, London.

[25] Other uses included as “houses of call” for trade societies, venues for political societies and clubs originating in the eighteenth century, as doctor’s consultation rooms, as temporary gaol cells, as registrar’s and tax collectors offices, and notably as venues for coroners’ inquests. See Brian Harrison, ‘Pubs’, in *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, ed. H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 1973), 161–90; Ian Burney, *Bodies of Evidence: Medicine and the Politics of the English Inquest, 1830-1926* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 80–86. All of these underwent review through the changing moral prism of the nineteenth century. Most relevant here is the literature on pubs as venues for political meetings. This peaked in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, though Harrison (p.179) notes the Sunday Evening Debating Society at the Hope & Anchor, Navigation Street, Birmingham, as an important venue for radical ideas from the 1850s to 1880s. Peter Brett, ‘Political Dinners in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain: Platform, Meeting Place and Battleground’, *History* 81, no. 264 (1996): 527–52; Marc Baer, ‘Political Dinners in Whig, Radical and Tory Westminster, 1780–1880’, *Parliamentary History* 24, no. S1 (2005): 183–206; Keisuke Masaki, ‘Within the Bounds of Acceptability: Tory Associational Culture in Early-19th-Century Britain’, *Parliamentary History* 37, no. 3 (2018): 389–414; James Epstein, ‘Radical Dining, Toasting and Symbolic Expression in Early Nineteenth-Century Lancashire: Rituals of Solidarity’, *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 20, no. 2 (1988): 271–91; T. E. Orme, ‘Toasting Fox: The Fox Dinners in Edinburgh and Glasgow, 1801–1825’, *History* 99, no. 337 (2014): 588–606.

[26] On pubs as radical venues, see particularly Navickas, *Protest and Politics*, 31–35; Christina Parolin, *Radical Spaces: Venues of Popular Politics in London, 1790-c.1845* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2010), 147–78. On the move away from pubs, see James Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture c.1815-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 215–19. Compare the Stockport branch’s resolution “that we take a room in the very centre of the town, to hold our meetings in, as there is a great prejudice against us while we assemble in a public-house.” This branch’s meetings were being held at the Dog Inn, Carr Green – very close

Mogg’s Coffee Shop.[27] In Wolverhampton, however, pubs proved a practical necessity for the NBSP. The Traveller’s Repose was closer to the homes and church of the Irish it hoped to reach, and more familiar than, say, Chartist coffee shops.[28] This was particularly important in a town like Wolverhampton, somewhat isolated from other NBSP branches compared to the multiple branches and regional associations in Liverpool, Manchester and London.[29] A reliable and sympathetic meeting point in an appropriate location was evidently crucial.

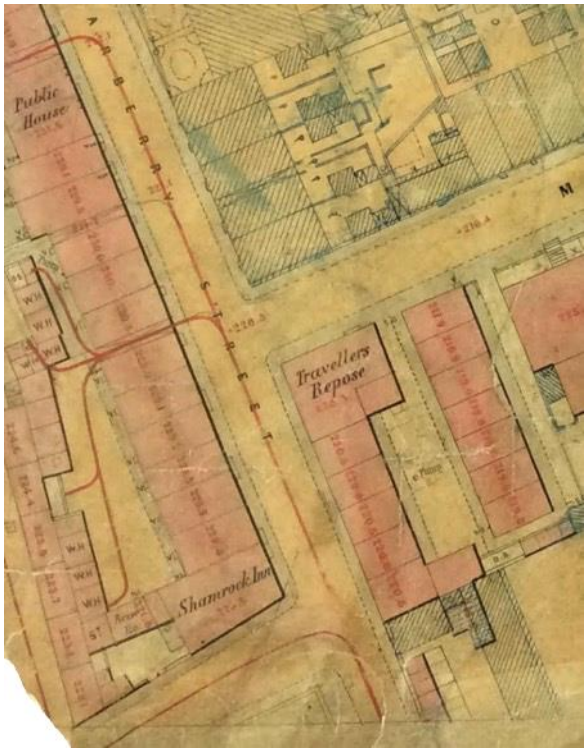


Figure 5.23 Traveller's Repose shown on the 1854 plan of Wolverhampton

The Traveller’s Repose was sufficiently large to host lectures and a library, managed by John

to the most Irish area of Stockport, and near the scene of the 1852 Stockport riots. ‘The National Brotherhood’, *The Irishman*, 12 December 1863; Pauline Millward, ‘The Stockport Riots of 1852: A Study of Anti-Catholic and Anti-Irish Sentiment’, ed. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, The Irish in the Victorian City (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 207–24; Gerard Moran, ‘Nationalists in Exile: The National Brotherhood of St Patrick in Lancashire, 1861-5’, in *The Irish in Victorian Britain: The Local Dimension*, ed. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), 212–35.

[27] The best-known Chartist meeting place in Wolverhampton was William Mogg’s coffee house – members had relocated from a pub, a common move for Black Country Chartists, calculated to increase respectability. Compare a similar trajectory in the Wolverhampton Trades Council in the 1870s. Barnsby, *The Working Class Movement in the Black Country*, 79; George J. Barnsby, *A History of the Wolverhampton, Bilston and District Trades Union Council, 1865-1990* (Wolverhampton: Integrated Publishing Services, 1994).

[28] Similarly, Birmingham NBSP meetings were held in Allison Street, Digbeth, very close to the large concentration of Irish emigrants in Park Street. ‘The National Brotherhood’, *The Irishman*, 17 May 1862. Compare radical venues in Edinburgh, where proximity to a key constituency was considered essential. Orme, ‘Toasting Fox’.

[29] The only other branches in the West Midlands were a short-lived Dudley branch, and a Birmingham branch which suffered a number of false starts. ‘The National Brotherhood’, *The Irishman*, 22 February 1862; ‘The National Brotherhood’, *The Irishman*, 26 April 1862; ‘The National Brotherhood’, *The Irishman*, 4 October 1862.

Kearns of Little’s Lane. Kearns stocked books (other branches acquired national histories and other, broader, educational works) and newspapers: *The Irishman*; the Anglo-Irish, Catholic *Universal News* (which also supported the NBSP); the more reticent, moderate *Nation*; and several provincial Irish papers.[30] Other branches stocked similarly supportive titles including the *United Irishman & Galway American,* and *Irish Liberator* – a broader range of nationalist opinion than had been available in the 1840s. Books and newspapers were read aloud as part of ordinary proceedings, and lectures given by members: in June 1862, for instance, Anthony Scott spoke on “Ireland: its present position and future prospects.”[31]

Such spaces were not unusual in English industrial towns: reading rooms were a common expression of working-class improvement, and the NBSP’s operations were familiar, and unlikely to arouse distrust.[32] These were all activities familiar from Repeal reading rooms in Ireland, too, and formed an important means by which the concept of Irish nationhood

[30] Patrick Leonard, ‘National Brotherhood of St Patrick: Wolverhampton Branch’, *The Irishman*, 17 May 1862; Patrick Leonard, ‘National Brotherhood of St Patrick: Wolverhampton Branch’, *The Irishman*, 27 September 1862. Several regional newspapers also promoted nationalist views: Ann Andrews identifies the *Dundalk Democrat,* the *Tipperary Vindicator,* and the *Connaught Patriot* among others. The *Freeman’s Journal* – even more moderate in its views than *The Nation* is not mentioned. Ann Andrews, *Newspapers and Newsmakers: The Dublin Nationalist Press in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 188. See also Comerford, *Fenians in Context*; Anthony McNicholas, ‘Faith, Fatherland and the Politics of Exile: The Irish Press in Mid-Victorian Britain’ (PhD, London, University of Westminster, 2000).

[31] Leonard, ‘National Brotherhood of St Patrick: Wolverhampton Branch’, 27 September 1862.

[32] Reading rooms were opened in a variety of forms, for a variety of reasons, from mutual self-improvement to temperance. Employers and trade unions both provided reading rooms in mining towns, for example, expressing something of a battle for workers’ minds. Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 65–67; Brendan Duffy, ‘The Progress of Education in the Northern Coalfield Before 1870’, *Northern History* 55, no. 2 (2018): 178–205; James Epstein, ‘Some Organisational and Cultural Aspects of the Chartist Movement in Nottingham’, in *The Chartist Experience: Studies in Working Class Radicalism and Culture, 1830-60*, ed. James Epstein and Dorothy Thompson (London: MacMillan, 1982), 221–68. See also forthcoming PhD by Iona Craig, University of Strathclyde. In the Black Country, Barnsby notes a Reading Room associated with the Owenite Association of All Classes of All Nations in Wednesbury, and the successor organisation the Universal Community Society of National Religionists had a library in Stourbridge with “10 useful and liberal works,” and a librarian, William Dougall. Barnsby, *Working Class Movement*, 35, 43.

became established in diasporic Irish communities.[33] In organisation, location and function, the NBSP in Britain mirrored the Confederate structures of 13 years earlier, with a more plural print culture, and in Wolverhampton, much greater success.

Through spaces like reading rooms, the NBSP mirrored the spaces of local associational culture.[34] They appropriated ritualised customs from radical and middle-class culture too, though the opportunities for social cross-pollination between most Irish immigrants and their English hosts were probably small. St Patrick’s Day celebrations were central to the NBSP’s purpose, and provide an example of this adaptation.[35] Some form of St Patrick’s Day had been celebrated in Wolverhampton since at least 1857.[36] In 1862, forty supporters celebrated at the Traveller’s Repose, chaired by John Martin. The tone appears thoroughly genial: a toast was telegraphed to the huge meeting at Dublin’s Rotundo, which telegraphed back at the end of “a most agreeable evening.” Glasses were raised to the Pope and Irish clergymen first, followed by several less-than-respectable nationalists, including Young Ireland rebels and

[33] Terence McBride, ‘The Secular and the Radical in Irish Associational Culture of Mid-Victorian Glasgow’, *Immigrants & Minorities* 28, no. 1 (2010): 31–41; Moran, ‘The National Brotherhood of St Patrick in Britain in the 1860s’; Andrews, *Newspapers and Newsmakers*, 15–16; Andrew Murphy, *Ireland, Reading and Cultural Nationalism, 1790–1930: Bringing the Nation to Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 42–45. Note in Murphy that the Repeal Reading Rooms were fondly remembered by nationalists such as *The Nation*’s Charles Gavan Duffy, and the Fenian Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa; but probably weren’t nearly as popular or as organised as these representations made out.

[34] Compare Navickas, *Protest and Politics*, 61.

[35] Gerard Moran, ‘Nationalists in Exile: The National Brotherhood of St Patrick in Lancashire, 1861-5’, in *The Irish in Victorian Britain: The Local Dimension*, ed. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), 212–35; Gerard Moran, ‘The National Brotherhood of St Patrick in Britain in the 1860s’, *Irish Studies Review* 7, no. 3 (1 December 1999): 325–36; Ramón, ‘National Brotherhoods and National Leagues: The IRB and Its Constitutional Rivals during the 1860s’; McBride, ‘Fenianism and Irish Associational Culture in Glasgow, 1863-1891’; Terence McBride, ‘The Secular and the Radical in Irish Associational Culture of Mid-Victorian Glasgow’, *Immigrants & Minorities* 28, no. 1 (1 March 2010): 31–41.

[36] Given the cost of 10s. 6d. per person for the dinner, this event at the central Star & Garter Hotel was probably not intended for the majority of working-class Irish in the town. ‘St Patrick’s Day in Wolverhampton’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 11 March 1857.

radical clergy like Father Patrick Lavelle.[37] For one evening at least, Wolverhampton's Irish community participated in a shared, celebratory sense of Irishness, made possible by this new technology.

Radicalism and the decline of the NBSP, 1865-71

Historians have often reduced the NBSP to a front for the IRB.[38] For a while it presented a viable cultural alternative to revolutionary nationalism, but there is certainly evidence to suggest that its open, non-partisan organisation was quickly infiltrated by IRB supporters. Clerical opposition may also have put off members concerned with present respectability, leaving the more radical to take control.[39] Early signs of radicalisation can be seen as early as May 1862, when the Wolverhampton branch stopped acquiring *The Nation* for its reading

[37] The toasts were to "the health of his Holiness, Pius IX," and to "the Friends of Ireland at home and abroad, specially naming his Grace the Archbishop of Tuam, Father Lavelle, the Chieftain of the Glens, and W. S. O'Brien at home, and John Mitchel, Thomas Francis Meagher and others, abroad." Later on, T. M. Hunt proposed the health of Dennis Holland, editor of *The Irishman.* Mitchel, Meagher and William Smith O'Brien were leaders of the Young Ireland uprising in 1848; Daniel "The" O'Donoghue, known by his ancestral title Chieftain of the Glens was nationalist MP for Tipperary; Archbishop John McHale and Father Patrick Lavelle were clerical supporters of radical nationalist sentiment. 'Our National Celebrations', *The Irishman*, 22 March 1862; 'Our National Festival; Great Meeting in the Rotundo', *The Irishman*, 22 March 1862. The telegraph was also reported in *The Nation*, by now less supportive (although not in a position to ignore the NBSP): 'Great Meeting in Dublin', *The Nation*, 22 March 1862.

[38] See for example Sheridan Gilley, 'The Garibaldi Riots of 1862', *The Historical Journal* 16, no. 4 (1973): 697–732; E. D. Steele, 'The Irish Presence in the North of England, 1850–1914', *Northern History* 12, no. 1 (1 January 1976): 220–41; McBride, 'Fenianism and Irish Associational Culture in Glasgow, 1863-1891'. The longstanding Fenian John Denvir certainly held this view. John Denvir, *The Irish in Britain: From the Earliest Times to the Fall and Death of Parnell* (London: Kegan Paul, 1892), 179. Comerford provides a more detailed analysis of the IRB's impact on the NBSP – that is, that as an open, public organisation it proved susceptible to IRB infiltration from the beginning. Comerford, *Fenians in Context*, 82.

[39] The prominent Fenian Joseph Denieffe's memoirs seem to confirm this, as do the experiences of branches in Glasgow and Manchester. Joseph Denieffe, *A Personal Narrative of the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood, Giving a Faithful Report of the Principal Events from 1885 to 1867, Written, at the Request of Friends* (New York, NY: The Gael Publishing Co., 1906), 56; McBride, 'Fenianism'; McBride, 'Secular and Radical'; W. J. Lowe, 'Lancashire Fenianism, 1864-1871', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire & Cheshire* 126 (1976): 1856–185.

room on account of its antipathy towards the NBSP.[40] Under Anthony Scott, the tone of its dispatches grew markedly more strident in 1863:

> Now that our country is being depopulated at a rate which will inevitably insure the total extinction of the Celtic race and the destruction of our poor Ireland – now that destitution, misery, and death are the only legislative benefits we receive from an alien parliament – it is criminal in us to remain longer silent, inactive and apathetic.[41]

Scott was president during Father Gavazzi’s visit to Wolverhampton in 1862, and likely organised the expected resistance (chapter four). He became a prolific correspondent too, writing particularly to the indefatigable Liverpool NBSP organiser George Archdeacon, and to the IRB’s new newspaper, the *Irish People*.[42] The Wolverhampton branch all but wound itself up by late 1863, the national organisation by early 1865; but although most of Wolverhampton’s members dropped out of sight, this does not mean they withdrew from nationalist activities.

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[40] Many British branches had been reporting similar protests in April and May following a series of fierce attacks on the organisation by the larger newspaper. ‘The National Brotherhood’, 17 May 1862.
[41] Anthony Scott, ‘To the Patriotic Irishmen of Wolverhampton’, *The Irishman*, 20 June 1863; see also Anthony Scott, ‘National Brotherhood of St Patrick: Wolverhampton Branch’, *The Irishman*, 22 November 1862.
[42] James O’Neill, ‘National Brotherhood of St Patrick: Liverpool Branch’, *The Irishman*, 15 August 1863; ‘National Brotherhood of St Patrick: Liverpool Central District Conference’, *The Irishman*, 26 December 1863; James Goulding, ‘To the Editor of The Irish People’, *The Irish People*, 4 March 1865, sec. Correspondence. Scott was also likely the author listed as “A Scot” of Wolverhampton, A Scot, ‘To the Editor of The Irish People’, *The Irish People*, 29 October 1864, sec. Correspondence. He may also have been the A. S. who had written to the *Irish People* editors, receiving the response “The people are moving in the direction you wish.” ‘Correspondence’, *The Irish People*, 6 August 1864.

5. “The elements that constitute nationhood”

By 1865, the Fenian leader John Denvir believed that the NBSP formed the principle recruiting ground for the IRB in Britain, and there is circumstantial evidence to corroborate this in Wolverhampton.[43] The IRB established the *Irish People* in 1863 and it quickly became the principal nationalist newspaper: it “swept all before it amongst the Irish in England and Scotland,” often completely replacing *The Nation* as the reading material of choice in Irish communities in Britain.[44] In 1865, Wolverhampton’s James Goulding wrote giving the old NBSP rooms at the Traveller’s Repose as an address. He condemned the “Irish traitors, lay and clerical… for some of them are doing that which English gold, English tyranny, penal laws, or Irish aristocratic perfidy could not do.” He censured the “tall-talkers” of *The Nation*, *Freeman’s Journal* and “I am sorry to say the *Irishman*, which is gradually becoming infected with the Goulah doctrine.”[45] Scott, too, espoused physical-force separatism in the *Irish People*:

> The only argument to which a deep-rooted tyranny will listen is the sword. The only means of securing to Ireland any lasting good is by the means to which all enslaved nations have had recourse to free themselves from tyranny and from the degrading badge of slavery – revolution.[46]

[43] Denvir, *The Irish in Britain*, 179.
[44] A. M. Sullivan, quoted in Comerford, *Fenians in Context*, 109.
[45] “Goulah” is a reference to “Goulah Sullivan” who had turned informer against Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa’s Phoenix Society in Cork in 1858. James Stephens applied the term to *The Nation*’s editor A. M. Sullivan. Goulding, ‘To the Editor of The Irish People’; Ramón, *A Provisional Dictator*, 92; Comerford, *Fenians in Context*, 55.
[46] A Scott, ‘To the Editor of The Irish People’, *The Irish People*, 22 April 1865, sec. Correspondence.

5. “The elements that constitute nationhood”

The increasingly violent language used by Goulding and Scott certainly supports the idea that Wolverhampton’s Irish were more “strongly impressed with the spirit of Fenianism” as the 1860s wore on.[47] In 1865-6, a wave of arrests pre-empted the planned Fenian Uprising in Ireland. The *Irish People* was raided, several high-ranking Fenians arrested (including Edward Pilsworth), and following the suspension of Habeas Corpus in February 1866, scores more arrested in Ireland, including Pilsworth again and one John Mahon, a Wolverhampton labourer of whom little else is known.[48] Newspapers warily, and briefly, reported “great meetings” of Fenians at Wolverhampton, hot on the heels of the Murphy riots in February 1867, and Irishmen from the Black Country were almost certainly involved in that month’s Chester Castle raid.[49]

The demise of the NBSP was when public-facing Irish nationalism dropped out of sight in Wolverhampton, until the 1870s. Its lifespan was brief, but it marked an important moment of community self-formation in Wolverhampton, and a “social space” in which in which diasporic Irish identities were formed.[50] Wolverhampton’s experience shows that material space was also important. Corresponding with newspapers, sharing reading material, and

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[47] Lowe, ‘Lancashire Fenianism, 1864-1871’.

[48] Some of the highest profile Fenians were arrested in September: Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa, T. C. Luby and John O’Leary, editor of the *Irish People*; Stephens went into hiding but was caught in November, although he was rescued from Richmond Prison less than a fortnight afterwards. See Comerford, *Fenians in Context*, 129–33; ‘Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act - Numerous Arrests’, *The Irishman*, 24 February 1866; ‘Edward Pilsworth St Clair’. No other records appear to tie a Mahon or McMahon to Wolverhampton, but he was likely a committed Fenian: a John Mahon was arrested again at Tallaght during the failed Fenian uprising of March 1867 and imprisoned in Kilmainham jail, though discharged shortly afterwards. ‘The Fenian Rising’, *The Warder*, 9 March 1867; ‘The Fenian Prisoners in Kilmainham Jail’, *Dublin Daily Express*, 30 March 1867.

[49] ‘St Patrick’s Day - the Fenians’, *Saunder’s News-Letter*, 9 March 1867; ‘Great Fenian Meetings in Wolverhampton’, *The Irishman*, 22 March 1867; ‘The Fenians in Wolverhampton’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 23 March 1867; Denvir, *The Irish in Britain*, 221.

[50] Terence McBride, ‘Irishness in Glasgow, 1863–70’, *Immigrants & Minorities* 24, no. 1 (2006): 1–21.

feeling part of a national and international celebration brought together Irish people to raise funds from local people, and to drink, read, and develop common understandings in a pub in the Irish district. Through this, Wolverhampton’s Irish population felt part of larger movements and grander stories.

James F Egan and the spatial politics of Home Rule: 1871-1877



*Figure 5.24 Sketch of James Francis Egan, c.1880s (*Pall Mall Gazette, *28 October 1892)*

This active, if fractious, Irish society was the cultural and political milieu into which James Francis Egan arrived, around 1862. The son of a Limerick hotelier, he worked in the ironmongery business at home and in Dublin, and it seems likely that this experience brought him to Wolverhampton, the centre of Black Country iron marketing.[51] He married the Wolverhampton-born Sarah Ann Gough, or Annie, in Birmingham in 1869.[52] By 1871, they lived on New Hampton

[51] As with most historiographical detail on Egan, opinions vary about dates and facts. His date of birth is different in different sources, usually given between 1844 and 1847. I have not yet been able to trace him with any certainty in Limerick parish registers. His entry in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography* suggests that his parents were hoteliers, though there are no hoteliers or wine and spirit merchants named Egan in contemporary Limerick directories. Egan himself testified in 1884 that he had been in England since he was 18, over twenty years, placing his arrival during the mid-1860s. The *Manchester Guardian* speculated at his trial that a man named Egan had been secretary for the Stourbridge & Dudley section of the St Patrick’s Sick & Burial Society, who then went to Birmingham, then Manchester, then America. This person was probably not James, but was perhaps his brother John J. Egan. Owen McGee and Desmond McCabe, ‘Egan, James Francis’, in *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009); ‘The Dynamitards: Trial of Daly, Egan and MacDonnell’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 31 July 1884; ‘The Fenian Plot’, *Manchester Guardian*, 14 April 1884. On Wolverhampton’s place in the iron and hardware market, see Andrew Popp, ‘Building the Market: John Shaw of Wolverhampton and Commercial Travelling in Early Nineteenth-Century England’, *Business History* 49, no. 3 (2007): 321–47.

[52] Annie Gough was born in Wolverhampton in early 1851 to William (from Darlaston, Staffordshire) and Sarah (from rural Worcestershire or Shropshire) Gough; by 1861 the family had moved to Ruston Street, Ladywood, Birmingham. *England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837-1915* [database on-line]

Road, Wolverhampton; they moved to Snow Hill, then to 25 Ash Street, which they named “Thomond Cottage.”[53] James’s brother John lived with them, and they both worked at John Moreton & Co.’s Wolverhampton warehouse, a firm with Dublin roots.[54] Egan’s first appearance in *The Nation* dates from November 1871 when he wrote to the Home Government Association (HGA) in Dublin about plans for a mass meeting in Wolverhampton in support of Home Rule.[55]

Home Rule

The HGA was formed by Isaac Butt MP in May 1870 to appeal for “Home Rule”: a federal solution to the Irish question in which Ireland would be granted almost complete autonomy from Westminster. As the potential for electoral change appeared to grow following the voting reforms of 1867, and as Fenianism went into decline after that year’s failed Uprising, Home Rule appeared to be a natural progression for campaigners in Britain experienced in petitioning and amnesty campaigns.[56] A network of branches across Britain and Ireland grew

[53] Thomond was a kingdom of Gaelic Ireland covering modern-day counties Clare and Limerick, from the twelfth to sixteenth centuries. The name survived as a symbol of this area of Munster principally through the Earldom of Thomond, but also in place names such as Thomondgate, Limerick, and honorary titles like Egan’s friend, the poet Michael Hogan, the “Bard of Thomond.” James’s brother John also lived here in 1873. Census return for Wolverhampton, 1871; ‘Home Rule For Ireland: Lecture by M. Maguire M.P., at Wolverhampton, Last Night’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 29 November 1871; ‘Home Government Association’, *Freeman’s Journal*, 4 June 1873.

[54] This was a hardware merchanting warehouse founded in Horseley Fields by John Moreton of Bushbury (1812-1879), son of a Dubliner who retained ongoing links with that city, as well as the steel industries in Sheffield and London. Joseph McKenna, *The Irish-American Dynamite Campaign: A History, 1881-1896* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2014), 73; Alexander H. Chatwin, *Bushbury Parish and People, 1550-1950* (Birmingham: Birmingham & Midland Society for Genealogy & Heraldry, 1983).

[55] Galbraith was a noted scientist and mathematician at Trinity College, Dublin, as well as a nationalist campaigner. Miguel De Arce, ‘The Parallel Lives of Joseph Allen Galbraith (1819-90) and Samuel Haughton (1821-97): Religion, Friendship, Scholarship and Politics in Victorian Ireland.’, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Section C* 112C (2011): 1–27.

[56] Catherine Hall, ‘The Nation within and Without’, in *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the Reform Act of 1867*, ed. Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, and Jane Rendall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 179–233.

rapidly in the early 1870s, organised along lines familiar from NBSP and Confederate days. Again, many members walked a blurry line between constitutional moderation (the grounds on which the organisation was founded) and more advanced nationalism. Ordinary IRB members tended not to be as wedded to physical-force republicanism as the leadership, and it was perfectly compatible for individuals like Egan both to organise on behalf of constitutional campaigns like Home Rule and to maintain an interest in physical-force nationalism.[57] Indeed, as with Glasgow’s John Ferguson, such ambiguity was essential both for fashioning the diasporic Irish identities of both leaders and communities.[58]

Egan intended restarting Wolverhampton’s Irish organisation with a statement public event at the Exchange: the town’s principal public venue, familiar from the anti-Catholic lectures of previous years. From the beginning then, he asserted the right to space and the legitimacy of the organisation.[59] Egan wrote that “the most active preparations were being made for the intended demonstration” in “the important English town of Wolverhampton,” with the nationalist MP JF Maguire scheduled as a speaker.[60] This was followed with a letter to *The Irishman*, co-signed by Egan and John Hands , landlord of the Clog Inn on Canal Street, which became a regular venue for HGA meetings. Like Egan, Hands had married an Englishwoman,

[57] R. V. Comerford, ‘Isaac Butt and the Home Rule Party, 1870–77’, in *A New History of Ireland, Volume VI: Ireland Under the Union, II: 1870-1921*, ed. W.E. Vaughan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4; Comerford, *The Fenians in Context*, 188–90.

[58] Elaine McFarland, ‘The Making of an Irishman: John Ferguson (1836-1906) and the Politics of Identity in Victorian Glasgow’, *Immigrants & Minorities* 27, no. 2–3 (2009): 194–211; McBride, ‘Irishness in Glasgow, 1863–70’.

[59] Navickas, *Protest and Politics*, 31.

[60] J. F. Maguire was editor of the nationalist *Cork Examiner*, and Independent Opposition MP for Dungarvan, and later Cork City, since 1852 – he was also a founder of the HGA alongside Butt. ‘Home Government Association’, *The Nation*, 11 November 1871; Comerford, *Fenians in Context*, 36, 192.

and was involved in organising almost every nationalist event in 1870s Wolverhampton.[61] The writers demonstrated a rhetorical flair that was apparent in Egan’s later writings, quoting Irish poets and concluding with the stirring lines:

> And how are we to know ourselves? How are we to bring together the elements that constitute nationhood? By frequent communication and social intercourse. Come then, fellow-countrymen, and give John Francis Maguire, Esq., M.P., a cead mille failthe in your own home. God prosper the Cause![62]

The meeting was a tremendous success, though the *WC*’s report sceptically wrapped “Wolverhampton Home Rule Association” in quotation marks and noted that while the audience was chiefly Irish, it was “interspersed with some Englishmen and a few influential inhabitants of the town, who were desirous, apparently, of hearing an exposition of the programme of the advocates of ‘Home Rule.’”[63] Maguire was joined on the platform by an array of supporters: Catholic clergy including Father Hall; Wolverhampton Councillors Cook and Walsh; John Martin and Mr Keogh from Wolverhampton HGA; HGA representatives from nearby towns; and the Birmingham Chartist and Baptist minister Arthur O’Neill, who chaired

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[61] John Hand, or Hands, was born c.1833 in Ireland. In 1861 he was living in the machine house at Earl Talbot’s Staffordshire home, Ingestre Hall – perhaps beneficiary of a similar employment scheme that another Staffordshire aristocrat, Lord Hatherton, had employed during 1847 (‘Employment for the Irish’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 24 February 1847.) He married Emma Fleming, from Ludlow, in 1863 (*England, Select Marriages, 1538–1973* [database on-line]) and by 1865 was living in Wolverhampton – he donated 2s. to the Skibbereen Defence Fund that March (‘Skibbereen Defence Fund’, *The Irish People*, 11 March 1865.) By the 1871 census he was landlord at the Clog; by that November he was Chairman of the organising committee for Maguire’s visit. He died in Wolverhampton in 1904 (*England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837-1915* [database on-line])

[62] “Cead mille failthe” would be written in modern Irish as “*céad míle fáilte*” – a hundred thousand welcomes. In the letter, Egan and Hands quote “Erin! Oh Erin!” by Thomas Moore; and “The Price Of Freedom,” attributed by the writers to Thomas Davis, founder of *The Nation,* but in Davis’s own book attributed to Denis Florence McCarthy. Egan and Hands, ‘To the Irishmen and Wolverhampton and District’.

[63] ‘Home Rule For Ireland’. The *Wolverhampton Chronicle* got Maguire’s initials wrong.

the gathering.[64] Egan had done his preparatory work. Letters of support addressed to him were read out from HGA leaders and local supporters alike. Even at this early stage of the movement, every effort was being made to demonstrate respectability, non-sectarianism and moderation, but it was already clear that, compared to the NBSP, this was a nationalist movement in which Catholic clergy could publicly participate, and in which local networks of supporters would be vital.

Maguire's visit prompted the establishment of regular meetings in Wolverhampton, and by the following March, they were ready to host a St Patrick's Day dinner at the Vine.[65] The nascent organisation had seen an enthusiastic take-up amongst diaspora communities: by March 1872, branches all over Britain were reporting in to *The Irishman* and *The Nation*.[66] Wolverhampton's was the first branch in the Midlands, having opened the previous December. The Egans were ever-present, with James the prime mover: he was toasted for "his exertions in the national cause and his energetic efforts to bring the various Irish gatherings that occurred in the town to a successful issue."[67] The brothers were at the heart of a local organisation praised by the Birmingham-based nationalist journalist Hugh Heinrick,

[64] 'Home Rule For Ireland'; 'Home Rule Movement in England: Great Meeting in Wolverhampton', *The Irishman*, 2 December 1871. Arthur O'Neill was the son of an Irish emigrant father and was a radical of long standing, having founded a Chartist Church in Newhall Street, Birmingham in 1840. He was also a dedicated Home Ruler, supporting Butt's movement in the 1870s and Parnell in the 1880s. Roberts, *The Chartist Prisoners*, 62, 151.
[65] 'The Day in Wolverhampton', *The Irishman*, 30 March 1872.
[66] The first branch was probably Glasgow; there were branches reported in London at Bermondsey, Wapping, the Strand and Poplar; in Leeds, Barnsley, Leicester, Rochdale, Dundee, Nottingham, Widnes, Warrington; three in Manchester, and no less than five in Bradford. Wolverhampton remained the only Midlands branch. See reports in *The Irishman* and *The Nation*, and Comerford, 'Isaac Butt'; David Fitzpatrick, 'A Curious Middle Place: The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921', in *The Irish in Britain 1815-1939*, ed. Sheridan Gilley and Roger Swift (Savage, MD: Barnes & Noble Books, 1989), 10–59.
[67] 'The Day in Wolverhampton'.

who undertook a national survey of the Irish in England that summer.[68] Heinrick estimated Wolverhampton’s Irish population at 10-12,000, “chiefly of the labouring class, but all earning good wages and comparatively well-to-do.”[69] Most were of superior morals to the English, he thought, being “exceptionally free from the worst vices” – a difference of opinion with Wolverhampton’s police and press. Furthermore:

> The Home Rule Association of the town, which is large and growing larger, is well organised, under intelligent, active, and earnest administration, and supported on financial and general principles eminently calculated to promote its success and efficiency.[70]

James Egan’s regular reports of growing membership, harmony in the ranks, and a firm financial footing supported Heinrick’s conclusion. The year culminated with a well-attended lecture by Heinrick, taking Ireland’s history as a source of inspiration: “The present duty of Irishman is plain,” the advertisement proclaimed; “Learn the History of your country’s wrongs, and how they may be righted – then work shoulder to shoulder.”[71] Occasional

[68] Hugh Heinrick was a journalist for *The Nation* and was also involved in the short-lived *Irish Vindicator* and *United Irishman* in the 1870s. He lived in Aston, Birmingham and was a friend and supporter of almost every Home Ruler of the period, of all shades. His knowledge of the area was demonstrated in his lengthy descriptions of Black Country towns and their residents. Hugh Heinrick, *A Survey of the Irish in England*, ed. Alan O’Day (1872; repr., London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1990).
[69] Heinrick, 56.
[70] Heinrick, 57.
[71] The lecture was entitled “1782 & 1872: what Home Rule can do for Ireland” and was held at St George’s Hall. Reverend Arthur O’Neill chaired, with other speakers specialising in Irish history. ‘1782 and 1872: What Home Rule Did and Can Do for Ireland’, *The Nation*, 19 October 1872; ‘Home Government Association: Wolverhampton’, *The Nation*, 26 October 1872.

complaints of unpunctual attendance aside, at the end of its first year Wolverhampton’s Home Rulers were in a strong position.[72]

A local network of branches grew with Wolverhampton’s help. Newell, Hands and Egan helped form new branches at the Barrel, Bilston, in December 1872, and the Albion Inn, Willenhall, the following May.[73] There were branches in Walsall, Wednesbury and West Bromwich too. The natural next step seemed to be to bring this diasporic enthusiasm together into a more formal network. Michael Kelly, the Egans and Father Hall attended a convention at Birmingham Town Hall in February 1873, where Isaac Butt founded the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain (HRCGB) with the intention of “welding together in one harmonious mass the whole political strength of the Irish element in our English constituencies.”[74] With about fifty delegates present, this was an opportunity for Wolverhampton’s nationalists to broaden their networks. They likely already knew delegates from nearby towns including Father John Sherlock, O’Neill, Heinrick, and Wednesbury’s William McDonnell. Now they could also meet the likes of veteran Fenian John Denvir, *The Nation* editor AM Sullivan, Butt himself, nationalist MP Captain John Nolan, and delegates from branches around the country. The conference agreed to organise Britain into six district councils, reflecting the relative buy-in by various diaspora communities: Glasgow, Newcastle-

[72] James F. Egan, ‘Home Government Association: Wolverhampton’, *The Nation*, 31 August 1872; James F. Egan, ‘Home Government Association: Wolverhampton’, *The Irishman*, 7 September 1872.
[73] ‘Home Rule in England: Wolverhampton – Opening of a New Branch in Bilston’, *The Nation*, 21 December 1872; ‘Home Rule in England: Willenhall’, *The Nation*, 17 May 1873. See https://www.longpull.co.uk/ for detail on Black Country pubs used by the Irish.
[74] ‘Home Rule Movement: Birmingham Home Rule Conference’, *The Irishman*, 1 March 1873.

upon-Tyne, Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol, and London.[75] The Egans were chosen to represent Wolverhampton to the district council, and were duly elected vice-president and secretary of this expanded regional network.[76]

John Egan’s life became one of administrative conflict, chasing subscriptions and ensuring proper affiliation. He rapidly became embroiled in a constitutional dispute with Nottingham’s branches, and some Black Country and Potteries branches also held out against adherence to HRCGB regulations.[77] Their “neglect or coldness” caused him much aggravation. The Egans were elevated again in October 1873, to represent District 3 (Midlands) at the national general executive, and in December Wolverhampton was the highest contributor to District funds in the Midlands. The District annual report recorded difficulty maintaining unity, commitment and energy amongst branches, but this was evidently not the case at Wolverhampton.[78] This branch, and the Egans, held an important place within the regional

[75] ‘Home Rule Movement: Birmingham Home Rule Conference’.
Wolverhampton delegates: Messrs Egan and Kelly
Walsall: Thomas Kearney, Thomas Staunton
Birmingham: Reverend John Sherlock, Reverend Arthur O’Neill, Hugh Heinrick, William Hogan, J Loughton
Wednesbury: Messrs William O’Donnell, P. Flynn, J. Hanlon
William McDonnell was frequently mis-labelled as O’Donnell – this is the same individual that was tried alongside John Daly and James Egan in 1884. Although Liverpool had a branch, Britain’s largest Irish community was noticeable by its absence here. John Belchem seems to suggest that the entrenched complexity of local Irish politics in Liverpool meant that the HRCGB was one of multiple organisations competing for authority, compared to a paucity of authority in other regions. John Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse: The History of the Liverpool-Irish, 1800-1939* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 132–39. London (as in the NBSP days) already had a degree of self-government, with a central committee meeting at the Savoy Hotel regularly.

[76] James F. Egan, ‘Home Rule in England: Wolverhampton’, *The Nation*, 15 March 1873. At the first District council meeting, held at the British Workman pub in Moor Street, Birmingham, James F. Egan was elected vice-president and John J. Egan district secretary and organiser. President was Birmingham’s William Hogan, and treasurer Birmingham’s Father John Sherlock, indicating the pre-eminence of these two branches.

[77] This was a constitutional argument about the validity of the breakaway ‘Eagle Tavern’ branch in Nottingham, but it played out in the local reports pages of the *Irishman* over weeks to come. See John J. Egan’s statement, John J. Egan, ‘Important Announcement’, *The Irishman*, 5 July 1873, sec. Letters.

[78] District 3 encompassed Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Staffordshire, Rutland, Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire. President was William Hogan of Birmingham,

structures of the HRCGB, which was by now presenting a confident statement of Irish belonging and nationality across Britain.

While the Egans were busy at District level, Wolverhampton’s local members successfully kept business going. John Molloy, John Mitchell, Patrick Timlin, Peter O’Malley, Thomas Hogan and others took on administrative roles during 1873-4, alongside Hand and Kelly. But the Egans’ absences were felt. In March 1874 the branch reported itself in dire straits:

> It is with feelings of regret we have to state the fact that, in consequence of the embarrassed financial position of this once flourishing branch, in not being able to meet the levy due to the district, it was practically allowed to die out on the 15th March last.[79]

This is difficult to corroborate, as other notices proclaimed meetings beyond this date.[80] However, by now the Midlands was in depression: strikes and trade difficulties impacted Wolverhampton’s Irish community, revealing the fragile nature of finances and support, and they were suddenly unable to meet their financial obligations. John Egan resigned his position in July 1874 because of the parlous state of finances (he was exonerated from any suspicion), and Thomas Hogan presented a “lengthy statement” explaining the predicament of his former flagship branch.[81] To remedy this, James Egan tried something similar to that which

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vice-president James F. Egan, treasurer Father John Sherlock of Birmingham, district secretary John J. Egan. An executive council was also appointed including these four men plus Reverend Michael Barry of Willenhall, and William Mannix and J. Finnigan of Walsall. ‘Home Rule Confederation: District No. 3’, *The Irishman*, 11 October 1873; ‘Home Rule Confederation’, *The Irishman*, 20 December 1873.

[79] J. Molloy, ‘Home Rule Confederation: Wolverhampton’, *The Flag of Ireland*, 6 June 1874, sec. Letters.

[80] ‘Home Rule Confederation: Wolverhampton’, *The Irishman*, 18 April 1874.

[81] ‘Home Rule Confederation: District No. 3’, *The Irishman*, 18 July 1874.

stimulated the creation of the group in 1871: a guest lecture at St Patrick’s Schoolrooms, with Captain Martin Kirwan (veteran of the Fenian brigade in the Franco-Prussian war and now secretary of the HRCGB) at the lectern.[82] The “numerous and enthusiastic audience” translated into a rejuvenation of the branch, which by September was again “flourishing.”[83] Nevertheless, the period proved the vulnerability of Wolverhampton’s contribution to the Irish nationalist movement, and – held at a sympathetic Catholic venue – even this statement lecture was not so boldly presented as in 1871. Trade depressions had a swift and severe impact on poor neighbourhoods (see chapter six), and the capacity of Wolverhampton’s Irish community to contribute to nationalist activity was curtailed. However, its rapid recovery suggests a degree of strength in the local organisation.

A second branch in Wolverhampton, the St Patrick’s branch, opened in south-east Wolverhampton that December. Its leaders, Bernard Burns and William Ford, were not previously officers of the Stafford Street branch, and it was not founded in competition with the latter, which was relaunched as “Wolverhampton Branch No. 1” in early 1875. The St Patrick’s branch based itself at Edward Cahill’s Viaduct Inn in the industrial south-east of Wolverhampton, near the town’s second-largest concentration of Irish people.[84] Egan and Ford formed a central committee for the town to help with St Patrick’s Day celebrations, and

[82] Captain Martin Waters Kirwan served alongside other well-known nationalists identified by John Denvir: Frank Byrne, James Lysaght Finegan, Edmund O’Donovan, Arthur Forrester and later MP James O’Kelly. John Denvir, *The Life Story of an Old Rebel* (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers & Walker, 1910), 161; James McConnel, ‘A Training School for Rebels: Fenians in the French Foreign Legion’, *History Ireland* 16, no. 6 (2008).
[83] J. Molloy, ‘Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain: Wolverhampton’, *The Nation*, 8 August 1874; J. Molloy, ‘Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain: Wolverhampton’, *The Irishman*, 9 September 1874.
[84] B. Burns and W. Lord, ‘Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain: Wolverhampton’, *The Irishman*, 19 December 1874; James F. Egan, ‘Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain: Wolverhampton’, *The Nation*, 6 March 1875.

by the following year, even Wolverhampton’s sceptical local newspapers praised the conduct and proceedings of the groups as they met for their annual celebration, chaired as always by James Egan.[85]

Egan guided Wolverhampton’s nationalists through a turbulent 1870s, from initial organisation through the everyday ups and downs of a nascent transnational movement, and through economic turmoil. Wolverhampton remained one of the most committed and contributory of Midlands HRCGB branches, and Egan transformed himself from enthusiastic local campaigner to organiser of national standing. As will be seen, local activities were shaped by space: concentrations of Irish demography, and sympathetic spaces of religion and sociability provided a bedrock for this community.

Organising a nationalist group

At its heart, the HRCGB was a campaigning movement: for political and charitable causes, and for local and national electoral politics.[86] Formal political power was hard to come by. Irish voters – many of whom had been in Britain for decades by the 1870s – were either alienated from or assimilated into British society too, and motivation proved difficult.[87] And although

[85] ‘St. Patrick’s Day in Wolverhampton’, *Evening Express*, 20 March 1876; ‘St. Patrick’s Day in Wolverhampton’, *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 22 March 1876.
[86] Comerford, ‘Isaac Butt’; Fitzpatrick, ‘A Curious Middle Place’.
[87] Catherine Hall notes that whatever reservations might have been held about their fitness, the Irish being Britons could not be excluded from the 1867 Reform Act: “Irish men in England had been received into the nation on the same terms as Anglo-Saxons; but their equal legal status did not prevent either their cultural exclusion from the nation or their own identification as different.” Hall, ‘The Nation within and Without’, 233. Others have noted that given their over-representation amongst the poor – and the 1867 Act’s explicit distinction of the “residuum” it wished to exclude – the Irish were far less powerful in electoral terms than they might have been. John Davis, ‘Slums and the Vote, 1867-90’, *Historical Research* 64, no. 155 (1991): 375–88; Keith McClelland, ‘“England’s Greatness, the Working Man”’, in *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the Reform Act of 1867*, ed. Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, and Jane Rendall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 97–98.

more Irish residents could vote from 1867, their spatial concentration often made bloc voting ineffectual. Nevertheless, this political geography was understood and used in ways beyond simple electoral tactics.

The organisation of the Irish vote was slow in making an impact, and religion and politics did not always align. 1871 brought an early disappointment when former Mayor James Walker sought election to the School Board in December. Walker, the Conservative Anglican candidate, was supported by a United Catholic Committee, but had “alienated himself from a large portion of the Roman Catholic voters by boldly denouncing ‘Home Rule’ in Ireland.”[88] The HRCGB resolved to “defeat him if possible… The man who insults our movement must be made to suffer at any cost.”[89] School Board elections were notorious flashpoints for religious politics, and much else was at stake besides Home Rule, but Catholic influence trumped the Home Rulers’ organisation on this occasion.[90] Despite losing overall, Walker won in St Mary’s and St Peter’s wards, the heart of Irish Wolverhampton.[91]

Competing interests and the split of the Irish population between two wards probably limited the effectiveness of electoral campaigning. The branch formed a Registration Committee in September 1872, “devoted exclusively to getting the names of the Irish people of the town who are entitled to vote at municipal and Parliamentary elections on the burgess roll.”[92] They

[88] ‘Watchman’, ‘The School Board Contest in Wolverhampton’, *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 28 December 1871.
[89] ‘Home Rule Association: Wolverhampton’, *The Irishman*, 9 December 1871.
[90] On school board contests in Wolverhampton, see N. J. Richards, ‘Religious Controversy and the School Boards 1870–1902’, *British Journal of Educational Studies* 18, no. 2 (1970): 180–96; George William Jones, *Borough Politics: A Study of the Wolverhampton Town Council, 1888-1964* (London: Macmillan, 1969), 39.
[91] ‘The Home Rule Association: Important Meeting in Dublin’, *The Nation*, 9 December 1871; ‘Watchman’, ‘The School Board Contest in Wolverhampton’; ‘Watchman’.
[92] ‘Home Rule Association: Wolverhampton’.

had more success in August 1873, when a councillor vacancy arose in St Peter’s ward. After both candidates were “catechised,” the committee announced that they were able to marshal 400 votes in the ward, and that they would support the Tory solicitor Stirk. With posters proclaiming “Vote for Stirk, the Home Rule Candidate,” Stirk duly won, and the Home Rulers claimed credit. The *SA* represented this as evidence of “sectarian feeling,” though in reality, as Stirk was also supported by the Catholic Church, many Anglicans and the Licensed Victuallers Association, the Home Rulers’ immediate impact was probably not as great as they claimed.[93] By the late 1870s however, Wolverhampton’s Irish were being courted in local elections: both candidates in St Peter’s ward in 1878 stressed either their Irish or Catholic credentials.[94]

The Home Rule movement was probably more effective in knitting disparate Irish communities together with a sense of national solidarity. While distinct political campaigns were often the starting point, the result was an increasing understanding of, and unity in, a diasporic Irish identity. The Wolverhampton branch met weekly to discuss pertinent news and formulate responses. In June 1872, for instance, they passed a resolution at the Limerick Inn condemning the overturning of the Galway by-election result, where Captain John Nolan’s

[93] ‘Municipal Contest at Wolverhampton’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 16 August 1873; ‘Representation of St Peter’s Ward’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 16 August 1873; ‘Home Rule in England: Wolverhampton’, *The Nation*, 23 August 1873.

[94] The Liberal Daws “claimed the support of all good Irishmen on the ground that he had married a Catholic wife.” The Conservative Thorne countered that “genuine Hibernian blood coursed through his veins, owing to his mother being of Irish extraction.” His support included the Catholic priests Duckett and Sollom, while posters for Daws were endorsed by a Peter O’Malier – possibly a misprint of the Home Ruler Peter O’Malley. ‘The Municipal Elections’, *Evening Express*, 1 November 1878.

victory had been overruled on grounds of “undue clerical interference.”[95] Members agreed to petition Wolverhampton’s “Irish clergy” and “Catholic population” and were pleased with the response they received.[96] Father Hall called a meeting at St Patrick’s Schoolroom to raise awareness, “to protest against the uncalled for and foul attacks recently made on the Hierarchy and Priests of Ireland by Judge (Iscariot) Keogh.” Both Hall’s presence and his authorisation of the use of Catholic space cemented clerical approval of Home Rule. His recollection of scenes from Cromwell’s invasion of Galway drew “shouts of indignation,” and he was praised as one of the “true-hearted Soggarths [priests] of the old race, to whom Faith and Fatherland are dearer than life.”[97] The difference between Butt’s conservative, non-sectarian HGA in Ireland, and Britain’s strident confederated network with its evident Catholic emphasis, was notable.

The Nolan Defence Fund of 1872 provides evidence of how networks amongst Irish communities worked spatially as well as culturally. Since the days of Daniel O’Connell, mass participation through subscription to patriotic funds had been central to the formation of diasporic Irish nationality: a link both with home and with like-minded communities around

[95] Keogh had been widely condemned for overturning the result (in which the liberally minded Nolan beat the Tory William Le Poer Trench) with fierce condemnations of Catholic clergy, leading to criticism from Irish nationalists and clergymen alike. The nature of the case explains why the choice of adjectives here is as it is, when it might have been expected to describe “Irish population” and “Catholic clergy.” Richard A. Keogh, ‘“Nothing Is so Bad for the Irish as Ireland Alone”: William Keogh and Catholic Loyalty’, *Irish Historical Studies* 38, no. 150 (November 2012): 230–48; Mary Naughten, ‘Judge William Nicholas Keogh’, *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 38 (1981): 5–30.

[96] ‘Home Government Association: Wolverhampton’, *The Irishman*, 8 June 1872.

[97] ‘Home Government Association: Wolverhampton’, *The Nation*, 15 June 1872; ‘Meeting at Wolverhampton’, *The Irishman*, 29 June 1872. “Soggarth” is a transliteration of the Irish for priest or pastor, “sagart.”

the world.[98] Wolverhampton Home Rulers threw themselves into these campaigns, and administrators like James Egan and Michael Kelly were regular signatories when their donations were acknowledged in Irish newspapers. The Nolan fund demonstrated how kinship and friendship networks worked to instil patriotic feeling amongst Wolverhampton’s Irish community. Father Hall posted a cheque for £19 in July 1872, giving detail of names and amounts subscribed, and, importantly, who collected the funds (Figure 5.5).[99]

Hall himself donated £1, and other Catholic clergymen gave generously. John Hands and a number of others passed their funds straight to Hall, including publicans Martin Neavin, Michael Flynn, James Cahill, Thomas Hipwood and James Gough. Mary Salmon, marine store dealer and deserted widow of NBSP man Bernard Salmon (see chapter six), donated 10s. Collectors were Michael Kelly and Edward Hughes; several HRCGB venue landlords (Michael Flynn of the Shamrock, Carribee Street; Martin Neavin of the Old Mug, Stafford Street; Michael Murphy of the Limerick, Carribee Street; John Hand of the Clog, Canal Street); HRCGB committee members (John Kelly, James Newell, William Bickley and John McNay); and an A Brown, about whom nothing else is known.

[98] R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London: Allen Lane, 1988), 298. Compare the politicisation of fundraising in the aftermath of the 1916 Easter Rising in Caoimhe Nic Dháibhéid, ‘The Irish National Aid Association and the Radicalization of Public Opinion in Ireland 1916-1918’, *The Historical Journal* 55, no. 3 (2012): 705–29.

[99] Walter Hall, ‘To the Editor of the Nation’, *The Nation*, 20 July 1872.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION.

St. Patrick's, Wolverhampton,
July 13th, 1872.

SIR—I have much pleasure in forwarding to you the enclosed cheque for £19 contributed by the Catholics of Wolverhampton in support of the "Galway Vindication Fund."

They desire in this way to give emphatic expression to the abhorrence with which they regard the part played by the chief actor in the late "Galway Scandal," as well as to manifest their practical sympathy with the intrepid Captain Nolan, with whose principles they are thoroughly identified. Hoping you will publish the accompanying list of the subscribers in your next issue, I remain, sir, faithfully yours,

WALTER HALL.

P.S.—Please to have this note, with the list of subscribers, published in the *Freeman*.—W.H.

The following resolution was passed at a meeting of Catholics in the school-rooms attached to St. Patrick's Church, Little's-lane, on Tuesday evening, June 18, 1872, Rev. Walter Hall in the chair :—

"That this meeting pledges itself to assist in raising funds to liquidate the heavy charges which have fallen on Captain Nolan, in consequence of the adverse judgment of Justice Keogh, and to use our influence, individually and collectively, to induce our fellow-countrymen to subscribe towards the Fund."—Rev. Walter Hall, Treasurer.

Rev G Duckett ...	...	£2	0 0
Rev H Davies ...	...	2	0 0
Rev W Hall ...	...	1	0 0
Rev W Timothy ...	...	1	0 0

Rev J Redington, A Friend, Grasley-street ; Martin Neavin, Mary Salmon, John Hand—10s each.

Michael Flynn, James Cahill, A Friend, Thomas Hipwood, James Bennett, James Gough—5s each.

John Brady, John Dwyer, James Mulholland, F M'Mahon, E Neill, H M'Dermott, J M'Manus, O M'Loughlan, J Maguire, T Atkinson—2s 6d each.

Brian M'Donnell—2s.

Thomas Hobin, Michael M'Nulty—1s each. Total, £11 9s.

Joseph Condran, 2s.

John Quin, James Thornton, Michael Finlan, John Moore—1s each.

John M'Donnell, John Brown, Patrick Murphy, Thomas Ford, Michael Deviney, Patrick Tighe, John M'Derrig—6d each.

William Flanagan, Patrick Quin, Patrick Sweeney—3d each. Total—£1 0s 9d.

Per A Brown :

A Brown, 2s 6d.

Patrick Belton, John Burns—1s each.

C Welsh, P Devine, John Brown, Richard Ford—6d each. Total—6s 6d.

Per Michael Murty :

Michael Murty, 2s 6d. Patrick M'Gowan, 1s. Total—3s 6d.

Total, £11 9s.

Per Michael Kelly and Edward Hughes :

Michael Kelly, sen, Michael Kelly, jun, Edward Hughes, Thomas Martin, John Cahill—2s 6d each.

John Ganly, 2s.

Michael Brady, Michael Nicholls, Richard Dowd, Martin Daly, Miss Murphy, Patrick Ganly, Thomas Casey, Thomas Neville, William Bates, S Constable, John Spellman, Michael Costello, Anthony Timlin, Peter O'Malley, John Sheridan—1s each.

James Pownell, John Walsh, John Fleming, Michael Clarke, Mrs. Harris, Thos Raby, Thomas Marren, John Price, Patrick M'Nay, Wm Seymour —6d each.

Michael M'Garry, Mrs Harkin, Mrs Walsh, Thomas Doyle, Patrick Doyle, Mrs Mullany, Margaret Moylan, Mrs Beathi, Mrs Pidgeon, John Grimes, Charles Dillon, Maria M'Manus—3d each. Total, £1 17s 6d.

Per Michael Flynn :

— Phillips, O Carlow—2s 6d each.

J M'Hale, 1s 6d.

Thomas Griffin, P Grant, Thomas Flynn, Jas Ryan—1s each.

D Grady, Martin Kelly, W Jones, Timothy Foy, D Rabbett—6d each. Total, 13s.

Per Martin Neavin :

A Heahion, C Gough—2s 6d each. P Maloney, 6d. Total—5s 6d.

Per John Kelly :

John Kelly, T Salmon, J M'Gowan, John Martin, — Stoker, jun ; James Newell—2s 6d each.

William Duffy, 2s.

John M'Connor, John M'Kinruff, P Cain, Thos M'Gowan, P Sullivan, — Clasby, — Nolan, P Gardiner, John Green, John Ross, — Stoker, sen ; K M B, — Bevins, — Flanagan, J H—1s each.

John White, Thomas Martin, A Murphy, Patrick Long, M O'Connell—6d each.

M Kennedy, 3d. Henry O'Hara, 2d. A Poor Man, — Hastey, 1d each. Total—£1 15s 7d.

Per John Hand :

M Hamilton, 2s. P Burke, 1s. Total, 3s.

Per James Newell :

John Leonard, P Costello, Martin Molloy—1s each.

Thomas Finn, 6d. Total, 3s 6d.

Per Edward Hughes, and Michael Kelly, jun. :

Michael Crane, Michael O'Brien, John Prendergast, Thomas M'Tighe, Patrick Gratrex, Phillip Reilly, B Hyde, H Stanton—1s each.

Michael M'Gowen, John Giffard, Patrick Power, P M'Dermott, N Evans, D M'Carthy, E Hough, E Toole—6d each.

—Stephens, A Pidgeon—3d each. Total—12s 6d.

Per John M'Nay :

Michael Flanaghan, 3s.

John M'Nay, William Hall, John M'Ginty—2s 6d each.

Figure 5.25 Letter from Father Walter Hall to The Nation, 20 July 1872

Pubs and publicans played a prominent role in this exercise, acting as nodes in a network of supporters. They were not the only nodes – the largest number of subscriptions came through non-publicans – nevertheless, it evidently suited these licensees, for patriotic or business reasons, to actively support Irish nationalist causes. The inconsistency in donors’ names makes more detailed spatial analysis impossible. Nevertheless, there was clear hierarchy in the local organisation, rooted in social networks and spaces – particularly pubs.

Spaces of Home Rule

As with previous iterations of nationalist organisation, Home Rule groups required a space and place to operate, and as before, the pubs of Stafford Street provided the ideal environment. The combination of pub, place and politics was already part of transnational radical practice. Amongst Paris Communards in London in the 1870s, Fitzrovia and Soho pubs were “spaces of intellectual kinship, comradely and intimacy” in which material and symbolic value were both essential, particularly amongst a group who, like Irish nationalists, often imagined themselves in terms of exile and political opposition.[100] Both Irish and English working-class cultures understood the potential of the pub as radical space. In Wolverhampton, Home Rule pubs were sympathetic in management and clientele, were materially suited to the task, and were located in an Irish area forming, in John Belchem’s term, an “ethnic protective environment.”[101] Those organising nationalist groups considered

[100] Forster, ‘Paris Commune in London’; David T. Gleeson, ‘Emigrants and Exiles: The Political Nationalism of the Irish Diaspora since the 1790s’, in *British and Irish Diasporas: Societies, Cultures and Ideologies*, ed. Donald M. MacRaild, Tanja Bueltmann, and J. C. D. Clark (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 177–208.

[101] William H. Sewell’s idea of a “safe space” for those practicing contentious politics is helpful here: movements need a degree of control over spaces in order to organise, recruit, and operate safely in a world where space is policed by state and non-state actors opposed to them. Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse*, 166; William H.

that pubs provided a more convivial and secure environment than could be found in other spaces associated with radical and working-class organisation, like coffee shops or assembly rooms.

Home Rule pubs were overwhelmingly in the Irish part of town, close to both population concentration and parish church (Figure 5.6, Table 5.2). Neighbourhood was key: in Manchester, pubs in the radical district attracted groups from the United Englishmen of the 1790s to the Irish Confederates of 1848.[102] Unlike NBSP and Home Rule branches in other towns, which stuck to one venue, Wolverhampton’s Home Rulers rotated their meetings to different Stafford Street pubs, and reported planned meetings to *The Nation* and *The Irishman*. Irish publicans had risen to the point of secure tenure on pubs with a solid Irish clientele. They were sympathetic, rather than (or as well as) opportunistic, as evidenced by their membership of Home Rule associations and contributions to nationalist appeals.[103] As Marc Matera notes, venue names demonstrated a degree of possession and marking of a social space.[104] In Wolverhampton, the Limerick, Shamrock and Harp & Shamrock were HRCGB meeting-places, and other nearby pubs included the Hibernia and Erin-go-bragh. This choice to focus activity in the Irish quarter was likely a combination of an abundant supply of sympathetic landlords there, and a deliberate tactic of meeting close to the Irish population

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Sewell, ‘Space in Contentious Politics’, in *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics*, ed. Charles Tilley et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 51–88.

[102] Katrina Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place, 1789–1848* (Manchester University Press, 2015), 108–10.

[103] A comparison in the choice of meeting place can be found in Joan Allen, ‘“High Days and Holy Days”: St Patrick’s Day in the North East of England, c.1850–1900’, in *Faith of Our Fathers: Popular Culture and Belief in Post-Reformation England, Ireland and Wales*, ed. Richard C. Allen and Joan Allen (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2009), 137–56.

[104] Matera, *Black London*, 163.

in order to stimulate attendance. To middle-class organisers like James Egan (a merchant’s clerk living on the opposite side of town), the working-class Irish quarter most clearly represented the diasporic community, numerically and imaginatively.

The material nature of these pubs was important too: like the Vine (albeit on a much larger scale), London’s Crown & Anchor for example was elegant, and “both expansive and immensely versatile as its many meeting rooms were capable of accommodating diverse gatherings of varying sizes.”[105] The range of pubs in Stafford Street facilitated the many types of social interaction that Irish organisations required. James Cahill’s Harp & Shamrock suited ordinary meetings, for instance, while larger buildings like Vine had multiple meeting rooms suiting different occasions, with elegant and robust furniture: it did not mirror the area’s insanitary, poverty-stricken image, but showed the Irish quarter in a respectable light.[106]

[105] Parolin, *Radical Spaces*, 107–12.

[106] The Vine was auctioned in 1870, with contents including “eleven sets of mahogany four-post, half-tester, tent, and metallic bedsteads… mahogany and painted chest of drawers, fire-proof safe… thirty Windsor chairs, smoking chairs, mahogany sofas, mahogany loo table… mahogany two-leaf dining tables… mahogany bagatelle table, with slate top… capital five-pull ale machine, piping and taps, seven motion spirit fountain” and extensive drinks and brewing equipment. ‘Sales by Auction’, *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 15 October 1870. Compare Nathan Booth’s work on the material culture of working-class Victorian pubs as described through auction listings, and Marc Matera on spaces of blackness in interwar London: Nathan Booth, ‘Drinking and Domesticity: The Materiality of the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Provincial Pub’, *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 20 April 2018; Nathan Booth, ‘Leisure and Masculinity in “Dear Old Dirty Stalybridge”, c.1830-1875’ (PhD, Manchester, University of Manchester, 2014); Matera, *Black London*, 162.



Figure 5.26 Map of Home Rule venues in Wolverhampton, 1871-82 – see Table 5.2. Shown on Steen & Blackett plan of Wolverhampton, 1871. Pink=public house; Blue=other venue.

Map	Venue	Publican/host	First reference	Nationalist activity
1	Vine Inn, 1 Canal Street	Thomas Hipwood (1870-1876) James Grainger (1876-81)	30 March 1872, *Irishman*	Contributor to funds for Nolan defence, 1872
2	Limerick Inn, Carribee Street Later Erin-go-Bragh	Michael Murphy (1870-1873) James Cahill (1872-75) Thomas Collins (1876) Joseph Gold (1881) Richard O’Dowd (1882)	8 June 1872, *Irishman*	Fundraiser for Nolan defence, 1872; HRCGB member Contributor to funds for Nolan defence, 1872, and wives and families appeal, 1875 Contributor to funds for Nolan defence, 1872
3	St Patrick’s Schoolroom, Littles Lane	Father Walter Hall, St Patrick’s Church	15 June 1872, *Nation*	Hosted Fr Lavelle 1868; supported speeches by JF Maguire and Captain Kirwan; attended Home Rule conferences; collected funds
4	Harp & Shamrock, 74 Stafford Street	James Cahill (1872) Donahoe/Donoghue (1873) Edward Conlon (1873) Joseph Keogh (1881)	15 June 1872, *Nation*	See Limerick Inn HRCGB committee member 1872-1874
5	Old Mug House, 16 Stafford Street	Martin Neavin (1870-) Mr Hyde (1882)	7 September 1872, *Nation*	Contributor to Skibbereen fund 1865, and Nolan defence 1872
6	Cottage Spring, 43 North Street	James Gough Senior (1864-1884) James Gough Junior (1884-96)	9 November 1872, *Irishman*	Contributor to McManus funeral fund 1861; Partry fund 1862; Irish poverty appeal 1866; Nolan defence 1872
7	Clog Inn, 72 Canal Street	John Hands (1870-)	9 November 1872, *Nation*	Contributor to Skibbereen fund 1865; collector for Nolan defence 1872; wives and families appeal 1875. Founding member of HRCGB, regular speaker.
8	Shamrock, 4 Carribee Street	Michael Flynn (1866-81)	9 November 1872, *Irishman*	Contributor to Partry fund 1862, Skibbereen fund 1865, Irish poverty appeal 1866, National Tribute 1869, Nolan defence 1872, wives and families 1875; HRA committee member.
9	Committee Rooms, 4 King Street		7 April 1874, *Nation*	
10	Viaduct Inn, 114 Walsall Street	Edward Cahill	19 December 1874, *Irishman*	Contributor to wives and families 1875; St Patrick’s HRCGB committee member

Table 5.8 Venues for Wolverhampton Home Rule meetings, 1872-82, recorded in The Nation *and* The Irishman

A permanent Committee Room was briefly hired in the more central King Street in 1874, but most meetings remained in pubs. The new St Patrick’s branch met in a pub too, the Viaduct Inn in Horseley Fields. Pubs around Stafford Street remained a focus after the 1877 Improvement Scheme: in 1882, the Erin-go-bragh, Cottage Spring and Old Mug were the meeting places for Wolverhampton’s Land League branch.[107] Looking back in the 1880s, James and John Egan were reported to have been the “warmest advocates of Irish nationality” at meetings:

> Irishmen were accustomed to meet with undeviating regularity at a public-house which has been taken down under the Artisans’ Improvement Scheme. The meetings are still held at a public-house situated in the district where natives of the Sister Isle mostly live.[108]

The continued cultural association of space and Irishness remained important even after the population was partly dispersed. Stalwarts like John Hand, Thomas Hogan, William Ford, James Newell, John Molloy and Michael Flynn remained active into the 1880s, St Patrick’s Day continued to be celebrated, and celebrations remained respectable – even the Mayor attended in 1882.[109] In 1881, local HRCGB branches morphed into support for Michael Davitt’s Irish National Land League; Wolverhampton renamed itself the Michael Davitt Branch in 1882,

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[107] M. Flynn Jr., ‘National Land League of Great Britain: Wolverhampton’, *The Nation*, 4 February 1882.
[108] This might refer to any of several pubs on Carribee Street – the Limerick, the Shamrock or the Erin-go-bragh which, with its more recent use as Land League headquarters, was probably in the mind of the writer here. ‘The Dynamite Plots; Antecedents and Habits of the Prisoners; The Search at Sparkbrook’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 14 April 1884.
[109] ‘St Patrick’s Day in Wolverhampton’, *Evening Express*, 18 March 1879; ‘Irish National Land League: Wolverhampton’, *The Nation*, 1 April 1882.

when a highlight was a lecture by Davitt himself.[110] There was much overlap between Wolverhampton’s Home Rule experience and its new Land League experience. It remained part of another wide network of local branches, meeting with many of the same people in the same pubs. All of this was reported in Irish newspapers, with no sense of secrecy or controversy.

Home Rule and Fenianism

Irish pubs in an Irish quarter thus proved suitable for public activity, though there was also speculation of clandestine and illegitimate conduct. This reached a pitch some years after the HRCGB operated in Stafford Street, when James Egan was arrested, and his past excavated during a national panic over Fenian terrorism. The *BDP* suggested that such meetings held a dual purpose:

> Two purposes, at least, were served by the club of which Egan was the secretary at Wolverhampton, those, namely, of a means of social employment, and of a rendezvous for Irish malcontents.[111]

As with the NBSP earlier, revolutionary groups like the IRB sought to use the Home Rule movement for its own ends. Egan never admitted IRB membership, but historians have

[110] Flynn Jr., ‘National Land League of Great Britain: Wolverhampton’; ‘The Land League in Great Britain: Wolverhampton’, *The Nation*, 24 December 1881. Irish National Land League branches reported similarly to *The Nation* and *The Irishman*. In their pages, groups were recorded in Walsall, Wednesbury (John Dillon Branch), Dudley (Henry Grattan Branch – this held auxiliary meetings in Netherton, Tipton and Brierley Hill), and West Bromwich (Michael Davitt Branch). A Black Country executive was proposed in 1882. ‘Mr Davitt in Wolverhampton’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 25 December 1882.

[111] ‘The Dynamite Plots; Antecedents and Habits of the Prisoners; The Search at Sparkbrook’.

suggested he was a node in a regional and national IRB network from 1873 to at least 1878.[112] At his trial in 1884, he was accused – alongside his HRCGB counterpart from Wednesbury, William McDonnell – of being a local IRB organiser: “he seemed to have been a conspicuous man among his fellow-conspirators… he was probably a district centre.”[113] McDonnell had certainly signed himself “DC” in a letter to Egan in June 1874, meaning that McDonnell’s other correspondence was viewed as potentially treasonable.[114]

Yet references to funds, constitution, meetings, and a trip to Manchester may all have reasonably referred to official HRCGB business. When McDonnell wrote to Egan “please to send me the constitution” in October 1873, prosecutors assumed it was the IRB constitution; yet this was just after Egan had been elected vice-president of HRCGB District 3, with its own constitution.[115] Other correspondence from McDonnell is more suggestive. In August 1875, he wrote to Egan:

> Dear Egan, I hope you and your wife got home safe from dear old Ireland…

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[112] Leon Ó Broin insisted that Egan joined the IRB aged 21 (around 1865), though he does not cite his source for this. McGee and McCabe suggest Egan “probably worked secretly during the 1870s and 1880s as an IRB arms agent.” Leon Ó Broin, *Revolutionary Underground: The Story of the Irish Republican Brotherhood 1858-1924* (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1976), 87; McGee and McCabe, ‘Egan, James Francis’; ‘The Dynamitards’.

[113] ‘Regina vs James Francis Egan, James Daly, and William McDonnell: Day One of Trial’, 29 July 1884, HO 144/193/A46664, The National Archives. “District Centre” refers to the complicated and secretive hierarchy of the Irish Republican Brotherhood cell structure. A Centre was appointed by local Irish nationalists; they reported to the County Centre, responsible for cells in that country; the County Centre reported to the District Centre. The IRB’s Supreme Council was made up of elected representatives from these Districts – the South Staffordshire District was believed to come under the Southern England IRB region. The evidence for Egan’s IRB standing was always flimsy at best.

[114] Excerpts from the letters in the canister were read at Egan’s early trials in Birmingham by the prosecuting counsel, Poland. The following references are from: ‘The Dynamite Plots; Antecedents and Habits of the Prisoners; The Search at Sparkbrook’; ‘The Fenian Plot’; ‘The Dynamite Plot’, *The Times*, 28 April 1884; ‘The Fenian Conspiracy’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 5 May 1884.

[115] ‘Home Rule Confederation: District No. 3’, 18 July 1874.

5. “The elements that constitute nationhood”

> Will you call a meeting for next Saturday night, and I will come over, for it is time that Wolverhampton did some work for the old land. I hope you will see to it, and let us do something for the cause.[116]

Prosecutors speculated about references to “the firm,” “the men of your division,” “the agent appointed in PM’s place,” and correspondents including local Home Rulers and John Desmond of the Political Prisoners Visiting Committee (PPVC), though most simply referenced financial matters.

This *post hoc* interpretation was not exactly a smoking gun even in 1884, though the heightened atmosphere of public anxiety about Fenian terrorism meant that the jury were easily convinced that Egan had been an IRB organiser in the 1870s. At the time though, there was no sense of hiding in the notorious backstreets of Irish Wolverhampton: meetings and events were public and well-conducted affairs. While it is certainly possible that Egan was an IRB operative like McDonnell, the revolutionary nature of such groups should not be overstated. By far the most important role the Home Rule movement played during the 1870s was to create a coherent narrative of Irish identity that embraced the different conceptions of “home” that constituted Irish diaspora space.[117] Wolverhampton’s Irish pubs and landlords formed not just a sympathetic social space, but a network of physical places conducive to the growth and expression of Irish identity.[118] By the 1870s, the Irish in Wolverhampton were no

[116] ‘The Fenian Conspiracy’.
[117] Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London: Routledge, 1996), 187–91.
[118] Compare John Belchem on the “ethnic protective environment” of Irish Liverpool: Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse*, 166.

longer simply a victimised minority, running scared as in the 1840s and 1850s. They were a self-reliant, spatialised community: Irish publicans ran pubs for the Irish, where Irish business was conducted. “Irishness” was more of a business asset than an inconvenience.[119] This activity spread to other parts of the town, but Stafford Street remained the most important place for a dispersed Irish community, and a node in a network of other Irish communities.

St Patrick’s Day

The combination of representational space and material culture – as well as moderate and radical – was demonstrated in Wolverhampton’s ongoing St Patrick’s Day tradition which, as in previous iterations, provided a space of memory, commemoration, and narrative-building.[120] Irish parades were not common in Wolverhampton, perhaps indicating a lack of confidence in laying claim to larger public spaces, but by March 1872, Wolverhampton HGA had sufficient support to celebrate an elaborate dinner in the Vine’s dining hall, heralding “a new era… for the Irishmen of this town, who were so long kept asunder by factious bigots.”[121] Reports of the 1872 and 1873 dinners provided a rich study in cultural, material and spatial

[119] Belchem, 46. A reminder of the pubs’ primary purpose as a leisure facility is found in the licensing debates in chapter three: at the Vine, “The house was largely used by Irish, who liked to amuse themselves by a 'jig', and a license was therefore wanted for a fiddler in a back room.” ‘Music Licensing at Wolverhampton’, *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 21 September 1869.

[120] On St Patrick’s Day and the cultural practice of commemoration, see Allen, ‘High Days and Holy Days’; Tanja Bueltmann, ‘Remembering the Homeland: St. Patrick’s Day Celebrations in New Zealand to 1910’, in *Memory Ireland Volume 2: Diaspora and Memory Practices*, ed. Oona Frawley (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2012), 101–13; D. A. J. MacPherson, ‘Cultural Transmission, Irish Associational Culture and the “Marching” Tradition’, in *The Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland*, ed. Eugenio F. Biagini and Mary E. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 551–65; Mervyn Austen Busteed, ‘“Plentiful Libations of Whisky, Perfervid Irish Oratory and Some Religious Sentiment”: Celebrating St Patrick’s Day in Manchester, 1825-1922’, in *Ireland: Revolution and Evolution*, ed. John R. Strachan and Alison O’Malley-Younger, Reimagining Ireland, 12 (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 81–100; Mike Cronin and Daryl Adair, *The Wearing of the Green: A History of St Patrick’s Day* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 31.

[121] ‘The Day in Wolverhampton’.

diasporic practices, and demonstrate the implicit spatial understandings even in small, temporary spaces like a hired room.[122]

Decoration was highly symbolic, and was used to invoke nationality and identity. Evergreens were strewn around, including “pendant festoons,” and shamrocks everywhere. These potent symbols of the old country were given additional semiotic value by their source: donated by the “Bard of Thomond,” the poet Michael Hogan (probably a friend of the Egans), “fresh from the fields of historic Limerick,” they arrived in town the day before the festival and were distributed for members of the HRCGB to wear.[123] The brothers were proud of their Limerick heritage. Their Wolverhampton address was “Thomond Cottage,” and in 1872 James sang “Limerick is Beautiful” at the dinner.[124] Shamrocks were displayed on the walls too, interlaced with slogans such as “Home Rule” (“worked with laurel leaves surrounding an immense shamrock”) and “God Save Ireland.” The 105 guests wore green rosettes with streamers on their way to the Vine. Such symbolism was vital for diasporic communities. It was not merely a reminder of the old country, but an active relationship between old and new Irish spaces that created and reinforced a narrative. In this case, Egan and Hogan’s interaction helped

[122] ‘St Patrick’s Day: Wolverhampton’, *The Irishman*, 29 March 1873.

[123] Michael Hogan (1828-1899) was a poet from Limerick City, whose work appeared in *The Nation*, *The Irishman* and other nationalist outlets. He was particularly notable for works on myths and legends of Thomond (see note 53) and on the Famine. He was certainly friends with Egan’s childhood friend John Daly. At his death in 1899, John Daly’s niece Kathleen Daly wrote to her future husband and Egan’s fellow-prisoner Tom Clarke, recalling that "I remember getting what I called a bear's hug from him once, twas awful”. Kathleen Daly to Tom Clarke, ‘Letter from Kathleen Daly to Tom Clarke Regarding the Death of the “Bard of Thomond” Michael Hogan and Meetings to Be Attended by Her Uncle John Daly’, 20 April 1899, MS 49,352/1/12, National Library of Ireland; Frances Clarke, ‘Hogan, Michael’, in *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009); Etienne Rynne, ‘John Daly and the “Bard of Thomond”’, *North Munster Antiquarian Journal* XIX (1977): 65–68.

[124] ‘The Day in Wolverhampton’. “Limerick is Beautiful” was written by the Fenian poet Michael Scanlan (1833-1917), born in Castlemahon, Co. Limerick and author of nationalist songs such as “Bold Fenian Men” and “The Jackets Green.” Owen McGee, ‘Scanlan, Michael’, in *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009).

created a cultural feeling of nationality which extended beyond simply “homeland” but with Ireland itself as a narrative.[125] Through this national narrative, Wolverhampton’s poor Irish – most of whom would have initially identified more closely with a parish or townland in western Connacht – could be brought into a bigger national picture.

Despite its secular foundations, Home Rule in diaspora communities was strongly rooted in a Catholic image of Ireland, and this was particularly true in Wolverhampton, where Catholic emigrants dominated to a greater extent than many other towns. Commemoration of past heroes and martyrs formed a crucial part of these events, just as for other radical movements.[126] John Egan and Michael Kelly junior both spoke on the legacy of St Patrick himself: Egan “trusted that the proud result [of Home Rule agitation] would be the joint work of Patrick’s faith and Emmet’s patriotic bequeathings.” John’s appropriation of the nationalist icon Robert Emmet was echoed by his brother, who “spoke of the honest sacrifices the men of every generation had made for the land that bore them,” including the United Irishmen, Daniel O’Connell and the Young Irelanders.[127] Perhaps the most rapturous applause was

[125] On this conceptualisation of diaspora, see MacPherson, ‘Cultural Transmission, Irish Associational Culture and the “Marching” Tradition’. MacPherson’s understanding of diaspora draws on conceptualisations such as the “intimate or material connections to other places” described in Virinder Kalra, Raminder Kaur, and John Hutnyk, *Diaspora & Hybridity* (London: SAGE Publications, 2005).; and Avtar Brah’s idea of diaspora space outlined in *Cartographies*.

[126] See for example Matthew Roberts, *Chartism, Commemoration and the Cult of the Radical Hero* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019).

[127] The full list Egan referred to was a roll call familiar from many such nationalist gatherings:
Lord Edward FitzGerald – United Irishman, died from wounds sustained in the 1798 Uprising
Theobald Wolfe Tone – leader of the United Irishmen in 1798
Robert Emmet – executed for leading the 1803 Irish rebellion
Daniel O’Connell – “The Liberator”: successful campaigner for Catholic emancipation
William Smith O’Brien – nationalist MP and Young Ireland leader in 1848
Terence Bellew McManus – Young Irelander whose repatriation in 1861 was co-opted by the IRB
Thomas Francis Meagher – Young Ireland leader
James Stephens – 1848 veteran and founder of the revolutionary nationalist IRB

reserved for “the Irish clergy in the town and district,” with Hall invoked again: “God bless the soggarths,” concluded the report. The Egans were happy to include Protestant nationalist icons like Wolfe Tone, Emmet and Smith O’Brien within their commemorations, which worked within Isaac Butt’s non-sectarian intentions for the HRCGB, but the way they were included made it clear that their work had been to further the Catholic version of an emancipated Ireland.[128]

Toasting was also a means of building narrative, imitating, but also providing what James Epstein calls a conscious “counter-statement” to, middle-class civic and political culture.[129] Some were traditional and broad: “the day we celebrate,” “Ireland a nation,” “the women of Ireland,” and “our kindred at home and abroad.” The loyal toast to the Queen was conspicuous by its absence.[130] The editors of Irish nationalist newspapers were “most

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Thomas Clarke Luby – Young Irelander and co-founder of the IRB
Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa – founder of the Phoenix Society which merged with the IRB soon after its foundation; by the 1870s he was in America and organising with Clan na Gael and the Fenian Brotherhood. He would eventually share a platform with James Egan in the 1890s, when the latter was attempting to bring unity to the fractured US nationalist movement.

[128] Of these commemorated figures, FitzGerald, Wolfe Tone, Luby and Smith O’Brien were Protestant. As Guy Beiner has described, the place of Protestants within the pantheon of nationalist has been contested and subject to processes of “social forgetting” both within Unionist and Republican communities in Ireland: Guy Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance: Social Forgetting and Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 266–71.

[129] Anne Kane, ‘Narratives of Nationalism: Constructing Irish National Identity during the Land War, 1879–82’, *National Identities* 2, no. 3 (2000): 245–64; Bueltmann, ‘Remembering the Homeland’; Epstein, ‘Radical Dining’.

[130] “The day we celebrate” and “Ireland a nation” had been toasted at the NBSP’s celebrations in 1862. ‘Our National Celebrations’. William Bickley (b.1833) and his brother Thomas (b.1831) were staunch supporters of nationalism in Wolverhampton. Both plasterers, they lived in and around Stafford Street, at various times in Herbert Street, St Mary’s Terrace, and later Vernon Street in Springfields. Both became involved in running the branch after its 1874 reorganisation. Michael Murphy was landlord of the regular HRA meeting place, the Limerick Inn, Carribee Street. On the political significance of toasting, compare Rémy Duthille, ‘Toasting and the Diffusion of Radical Ideas, 1780-1832’, in *Radical Voices, Radical Ways: Articulating and Disseminating Radicalism in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Laurent Curelly and Nigel Smith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 170–92; Epstein, ‘Radical Dining’; Martyn J. Powell, ‘Political Toasting in Eighteenth-Century Ireland’, *History* 91, no. 304 (2006): 508–29.

enthusiastically cheered,” and “success to the Home Government Association of Ireland, and the Irish Home Rule Confederation of England and Scotland” was responded to in “telling language” by John McConville.[131] The addition of contemporary Fenians to the roll of heroes drew “immense applause.” John Hands responded to “our countrymen in prison and their speedy release,” condemning the “bastiles [sic] of England” and urging the withdrawal of political support from any government opposed to amnesty. Amnesty remained an ongoing concern particularly for revolutionary Fenians during the 1870s – indeed, it remained a theme for the rest of James Egan’s life – and though sometimes its priority as a tactic waned in favour of agrarian agitation or parliamentary strategy, its emphasis here demonstrates its importance in 1873.[132] The choices (and absences) of toasts were a means of including Wolverhampton’s Irish patriots in the nationalist narrative of heroic struggle, and showed how diasporic groups blurred the line between constitutional and revolutionary means in building these narratives.

Songs interspersed proceedings too. These fit a similar tone to the speeches and toasts, invoking past heroes and present lamentation of Ireland’s condition. The works of romantic nationalists like Thomas Moore (“The Harp That Once Through Tara’s Halls” and “The Land That Bore Us”) and Thomas Davis (“We Shall Have Our Own Again” and “The Voice and Pen”)

[131] John Molloy went on to become assistant, and later full secretary of the branch, taking over from James Egan when he took on regional and national duties. John McConville was a regular, if undistinguished member of the branch, and son of a member of the NBSP a decade before.

[132] Comerford, *Fenians in Context*, 178–178, 209–10; Séan McConville, *Irish Political Prisoners, 1848-1922: Theatres of War* (London: Routledge, 2003), 188–92.

were ever-popular.[133] Davis’s strident songs were matched in tone by William Kelly Ingram’s ballad “The Memory of the Dead,” sung by Michael Kelly junior.[134] The use of ballads and poetry in writing a history of Ireland as a nation was crucial to the Young Ireland project, and became canonized during these years as a form of nationalist folklore.[135] The newly-organised HRCGB of 1873 was perhaps more attuned to respectability than the year before, when Fenian songs were more readily sung. As well as “Limerick is Beautiful” (by Michael Scanlan, the “poet laureate of the Fenians”), rebel songs that year had included “Rising of the Moon” (used as evidence of sedition in Ireland in 1865), “The Wearing of the Green,” and “God Save Ireland,” written to commemorate the Manchester Martyrs.[136] Although their popularity meant that none were seditious in themselves, nationalist songs formed part of the ideological development and world-view of Fenians worldwide, and are important cultural artefacts in understanding Wolverhampton’s relationship to this transnational politics.

Material objects, symbols and spaces, and the repetition of symbolic practices which inscribed identity onto those spaces, were central to the way traditions were constructed to

[133] R. V. Comerford, *Ireland: Inventing the Nation* (London: Arnold, 2003), 187–88; Richard Parfitt, *Musical Culture and the Spirit of Irish Nationalism, 1848–1972* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 187–88. “The Land That Bore Us” was probably Davis’ “Where Is The Slave.”

[134] This ballad, which begins by referencing 1798, was used in sedition trials against Daniel O’Connell and *The Nation* and remained a nationalist anthem throughout the twentieth century. Parfitt, *Musical Culture*, 4, 27–28, 42, 71, 141–47; Luke Gibbons, ‘“Where Wolfe Tone’s Statue Was Not”: Joyce, Monuments and Memory’, in *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, ed. Ian McBride (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 139–59.

[135] Higgins, ‘The Nation Reading Rooms’; Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 311–13; Comerford, *Ireland*, 161; Mary Helen Thuente, ‘The Folklore of Irish Nationalism’, in *Perspectives on Irish Nationalism*, ed. Thomas E. Hachey and Lawrence J. McCaffrey (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1989), 42–60.

[136] The words to “The Wearing Of The Green” used were probably those by the well-known Irish playwright Dion Boucicault. The words to “God Save Ireland” were written by T. D. Sullivan, brother of *The Nation*’s editor. Parfitt, *Musical Culture*, 68; Comerford, *Ireland*, 190. On Scanlan, see Denvir, *The Life Story of an Old Rebel*, 308.

legitimise nation and cultural identity in the late-nineteenth century.[137] Compared to the parades and demonstrations of other cities, events in Wolverhampton do not appear assertive or significant, but they were nevertheless confident statements of nationality, faith, and identity redolent with cultural representations of Irishness, and played an important place in the organisation of the nationalist year. Wolverhampton’s Irish nationalists understood the representational power available to them in even these small spaces.

Life after Wolverhampton: James Egan and transnational Irish spaces

The next phase of James Egan’s life took him away from Wolverhampton, and often away from politics. Even when he distanced himself from nationalist work, his experiences of Irishness in the West Midlands – and particularly with Irish pubs – were sufficient to lead to his conviction for treason-felony, demonstrating the persistence of the old association of these spaces with problematic Irishness in England. During his imprisonment Egan rediscovered his radicalism and talent for organisation, which he then put to use in New York’s fractious nationalist circles and in pre-Revolutionary Dublin. Still, his time in Wolverhampton was formative: he hardly returned after leaving, but many of his interactions with other kinds of Irish space in later years can be understood in the light of his time there.

Drinking dens and Dynamitards: Irish nationalism in the Midlands, 1877-84

In 1877, James and Annie Egan moved from Ash Street to Wolverhampton Street, Willenhall. This was a tumultuous year in the Home Rule movement. Following public disagreement over

[137] Eric Hobsbawm, ‘Introduction: Inventing Traditions’, in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 11–12.

tactics, Isaac Butt and the newly elected MP Charles Stewart Parnell parted ways. The HRCGB replaced Butt with Parnell as president, endorsing his “obstructionist” tactics in the House of Commons.[138] For Egan, 1877 meant a new job, working for the iron merchant Samuel Parkes of Willenhall, who later described him as “a very good clerk, very good in every respect.”[139] Willenhall was the Black Country’s lock-making capital, with over 500 workshops producing many thousands of locks per week.[140] Despite the ongoing depression, this was a good situation for someone in Egan’s career.

Egan retained and even expanded his position in Home Rule circles at first, continuing his correspondence with the PPVC.[141] August found him in Dublin for a meeting in honour of Parnell and his fellow “obstructionist” MPs – he had evidently risen to a position of national credibility and influence.[142] At a meeting of the organising committee, Egan supported a qualifying clause in a proposed amendment, which appeared to be seeking a way to express support of Parnell and Biggar’s intentions without acknowledging Parliament, or endorsing it as the best route to their goal.[143] The committee’s diaspora representatives pushed for the

[138] Comerford, ‘Isaac Butt’.

[139] ‘Regina vs James Francis Egan, James Daly, and William McDonnell: Day Two of Trial’, 30 July 1884, HO 144/193/A46664, The National Archives. Samuel Parkes was the nephew of the more famous Josiah Parkes, one of the largest lock manufacturers in the country. Both later signed Annie Egan’s petition for James’ release.

[140] Samuel Griffiths, *Griffiths’ Guide to the Iron Trade of Great Britain* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1878), chap. 26.

[141] At his 1884 trial, correspondence between Egan and John Desmond of the PPVC was produced as evidence. ‘Regina vs Egan Day 1’.

[142] “Obstructionism” was the Parliamentary tactic, adopted by Parnell and Joseph Biggar in 1876, of making excessively long speeches in Parliament to filibuster policy debates and effectively derail political procedure. Comerford, *Fenians in Context*, 218–19. While in Ireland Egan also attended an anniversary visit to the grave of United Irishmen leader Theobald Wolfe Tone in Bodenstown, Kildare. ‘Pilgrimage to the Grave of Wolfe Tone’, *The Irishman*, 18 August 1877; ‘The Obstruction Policy - Proposed Meeting in Dublin’, *The Irishman*, 18 August 1877.

[143] The amendment read: “But nevertheless record our unalterable conviction that even their Parliamentary action, bold and admirable though it may be, will also if pursued cause a waste of national time and a diversion

more confrontational approach against the moderation of *The Nation*’s representatives, reflecting an ongoing tension stretching back to the 1860s. The amendment was voted down and all appeared in good grace, but the disagreement required clarification in the press afterwards (Figure 5.7).[144]

This meeting marked the end of this part of James Egan’s public life. The couple took over the Lamp Tavern in Froysell Street, Willenhall, in March 1878, with Annie running it while James was at work.[145] Egan later testified that he had nothing more to do with nationalist politics after 1877.[146] Egan’s old friend John Daly came to stay on several occasions, under the name O’Donnell, spending time with customers including the industrialists Samuel Parkes, Josiah Parkes, and John Hinton.[147] Egan and Daly had grown up together in Limerick, attending the same church and school.[148] William McDonnell also visited, but otherwise Irish patrons were scarce.

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of the energies of the people.” It was proposed by Patrick O’Conor MacLaughlin, a Fenian poet, journalist and lawyer well-known for his newspaper columns. See the brief biography in William James Doherty, *Inis-Owen and Tirconnell: Being Some Account of Antiquities and Writers of the County of Donegal* (Dublin: Patrick Traynor, 1895), 250–51. A post-script in a letter to *The Irishman* about the issue outlined that “Mr MacLaughlin conceives it quite possible for an anti-Parliamentarian to appreciate the patriotic labours of a member of Parliament, without thereby incurring the responsibility of supporting Parliamentary agitation.” Those agreeing with MacLaughlin were J. J. O’Connell of the PPVC, James F Egan, and James Kavanagh, B. McGuinness, Henry Kelly, Daniel Murphy, Ennis, Carey and Hayes, all of Dublin. Those opposed were Messrs Dunne, Leavy, Glennon, Nunan, W. J. Leahy, James Matthews, and Sexton, Sherlock and J. J. Clancy of *The Nation*. ‘The Obstruction Policy - Proposed Meeting in Dublin’.

[144] ‘The Obstruction Policy - Proposed Meeting in Dublin’.

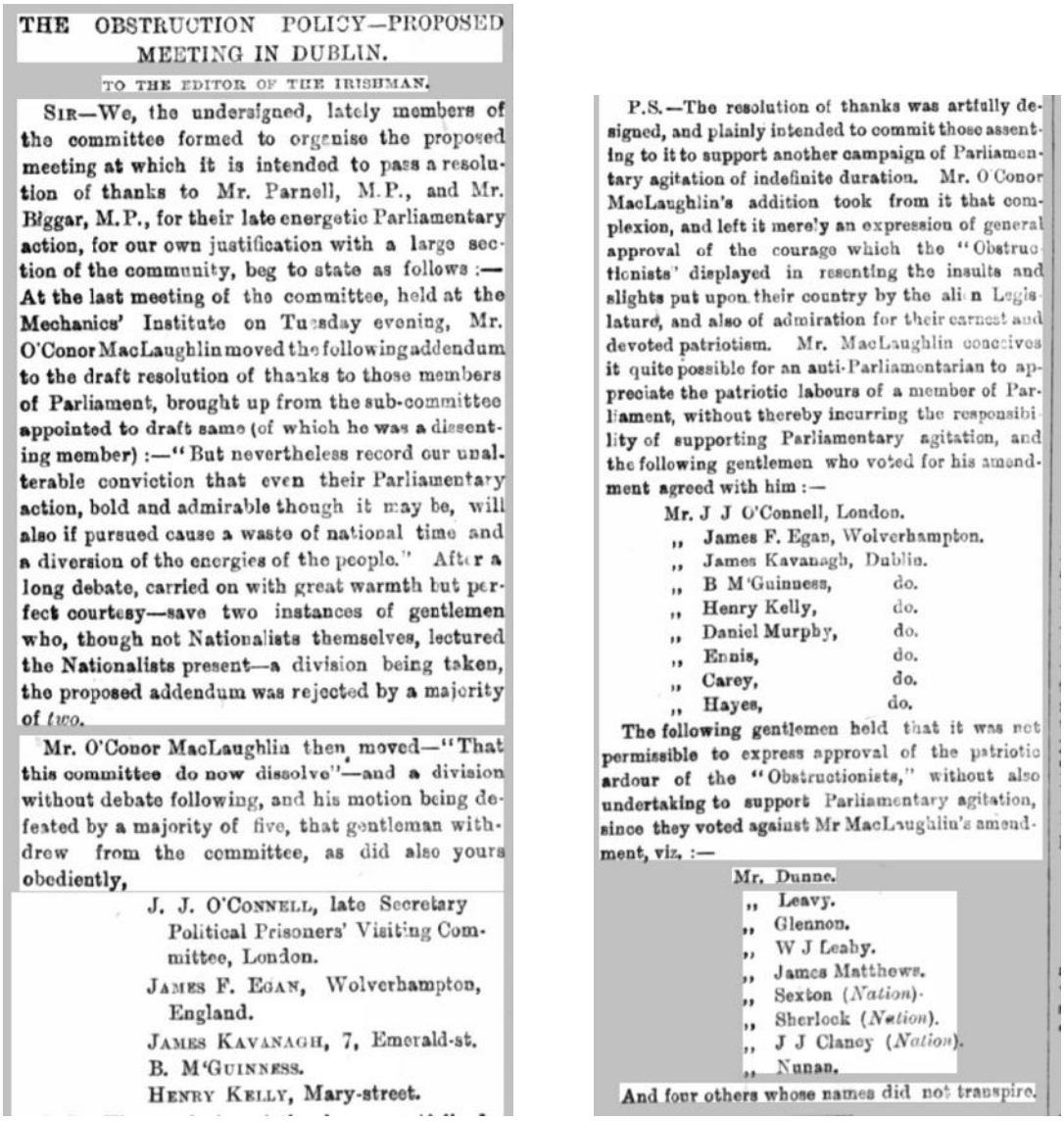
[145] ‘Temporary Transfers’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 14 March 1878.

[146] ‘Regina vs Egan Day 1’.

[147] The witness that testified this was Annie Egan’s dressmaking apprentice Sarah Pitt, but the account was corroborated by Daly. ‘Regina vs Egan Day 2’.

[148] Egan’s defence counsel in 1884 summed up as follows: “Egan and he were children together, brought up together in the same city, they went to the same school and attended the same house of God together; they were reared almost ion the same street. When they grew to manhood Egan’s destiny led him to England about the year 1862, and he never again saw him until his visit to Willenhall.” ‘The Dynamite Plot’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 2 August 1884.

5. “The elements that constitute nationhood”



THE OBSTRUCTION POLICY—PROPOSED MEETING IN DUBLIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE IRISHMAN.

SIR—We, the undersigned, lately members of the committee formed to organise the proposed meeting at which it is intended to pass a resolution of thanks to Mr. Parnell, M.P., and Mr. Biggar, M.P., for their late energetic Parliamentary action, for our own justification with a large section of the community, beg to state as follows:—At the last meeting of the committee, held at the Mechanics' Institute on Tuesday evening, Mr. O'Conor MacLaughlin moved the following addendum to the draft resolution of thanks to those members of Parliament, brought up from the sub-committee appointed to draft same (of which he was a dissenting member):—"But nevertheless record our unalterable conviction that even their Parliamentary action, bold and admirable though it may be, will also if pursued cause a waste of national time and a diversion of the energies of the people." After a long debate, carried on with great warmth but perfect courtesy—save two instances of gentlemen who, though not Nationalists themselves, lectured the Nationalists present—a division being taken, the proposed addendum was rejected by a majority of *two*.

Mr. O'Conor MacLaughlin then moved—"That this committee do now dissolve"—and a division without debate following, and his motion being defeated by a majority of five, that gentleman withdrew from the committee, as did also yours obediently,

J. J. O'CONNELL, late Secretary Political Prisoners' Visiting Committee, London.
JAMES F. EGAN, Wolverhampton, England.
JAMES KAVANAGH, 7, Emerald-st.
B. M'GUINNESS.
HENRY KELLY, Mary-street.

P.S.—The resolution of thanks was artfully designed, and plainly intended to commit those assenting to it to support another campaign of Parliamentary agitation of indefinite duration. Mr. O'Conor MacLaughlin's addition took from it that complexion, and left it merely an expression of general approval of the courage which the "Obstructionists" displayed in resenting the insults and slights put upon their country by the alien Legislature, and also of admiration for their earnest and devoted patriotism. Mr. MacLaughlin conceives it quite possible for an anti-Parliamentarian to appreciate the patriotic labours of a member of Parliament, without thereby incurring the responsibility of supporting Parliamentary agitation, and the following gentlemen who voted for his amendment agreed with him:—

Mr. J J O'Connell, London.
,, James F. Egan, Wolverhampton.
,, James Kavanagh, Dublin.
,, B M'Guinness, do.
,, Henry Kelly, do.
,, Daniel Murphy, do.
,, Ennis, do.
,, Carey, do.
,, Hayes, do.

The following gentlemen held that it was not permissible to express approval of the patriotic ardour of the "Obstructionists," without also undertaking to support Parliamentary agitation, since they voted against Mr MacLaughlin's amendment, viz.:—

Mr. Dunne.
,, Leavy.
,, Glennon.
,, W J Leahy.
,, James Matthews.
,, Sexton (*Nation*).
,, Sherlock (*Nation*).
,, J J Clancy (*Nation*).
,, Nunan.

And four others whose names did not transpire.

Figure 5.27 ‘The Obstruction Policy – Proposed Meeting in Dublin’ (Freeman’s Journal, 16 August 1877 (post-script omitted); The Irishman, 18 August 1877 (post-script included))

Egan’s connection with nationalist politics seemed to be winding down, though his adoption of a public space like a pub as his home permitted some ambiguity. As shown above, sympathetic pubs provided a network of support to the local Irish community on a public basis in Wolverhampton; but this does not mean that more clandestine organisation did not take place. The Lamp might simply have been a career move, but it could have been an altogether different tactic.

5. “The elements that constitute nationhood”

Whatever its function, Egan was less successful in the licensed trade than in his clerical career: in March 1879 he declared bankruptcy.[149] Egan – like so many active nationalists in this era – had practical considerations to consider in life: a job, a marriage, a home. So in 1880 James and Annie Egan left Willenhall for a new job in Birmingham and a new home in the suburb of Sparkbrook, where they lived in apparent peace for four years.[150] They supplemented their income with lodgers, including for a while James’ brother John, and another Irishman called John Denman.

Denman was, in fact, John Daly again. Daly was a hard-line Fenian: an 1867 veteran, and friends with numerous senior IRB members at home and in America including Parnell, CJ Kickham and John Devoy. In May 1883 Alfred Whitehead, Thomas Gallagher, John Curtin and Henry Wilson – referred to in the press as the “Dynamitards” – had been tried for manufacturing explosives at a “bomb factory” in Ladywood, part of a wave of dynamite bombings across England by a small, extremist faction of Irish-American republican nationalists.[151] Recent explosions in London had triggered further alarm. Thus when Daly moved in with Egan in September 1883, Birmingham police were alarmed and began surveillance from the next-door house in partnership with the Royal Irish Constabulary.[152]

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[149] ‘Bankruptcy’, *London Gazette*, 11 March 1879.
[150] Egan worked for Frederick Hill & Co of Birmingham, and lived at Lake Cottage, Kyott’s Lake Road, Sparkbrook, from 29 September 1880. Census returns for Birmingham, 1881; ‘Regina vs Egan Day 1’.
[151] On the Fenian dynamite campaign of the 1880s, see Niall Whelehan, *The Dynamiters: Irish Nationalism and Political Violence in the Wider World, 1867–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); McKenna, *The Irish-American Dynamite Campaign*; Shane Kenna, *War in the Shadows: The Irish-American Fenians Who Bombed Victorian Britain* (Newbridge: Merrion Press, 2013).
[152] ‘Regina vs Egan Day 1’; Desmond McCabe and Owen McGee, ‘Daly, John’, in *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009); McKenna, *The Irish-American Dynamite Campaign*, 73.

5. “The elements that constitute nationhood”

In April 1884, Daly walked to Wolverhampton to catch a train to Birkenhead.[153] Here he met a publican named Dan O’Neill (probably an *agent provocateur*) who persuaded him to transport a package to London. This turned out to be ingredients for “infernal machines” (dynamite) and he was arrested in Birkenhead by policemen who had tracked him from Wolverhampton.[154] Egan was arrested the same day and his house searched. Police found piles of correspondence dating from the 1870s between Egan and other suspected Fenians; eventually they also unearthed a canister in Egan’s garden containing sample gun cartridges, IRB rulebooks and a copy of the “Constitution of Irish Republic.”[155] William McDonnell (landlord of the Royal Oak, Wednesbury, and HRCGB organiser) was also arrested, and the three were tried together, firstly at Birmingham police court, then at Warwick Assizes.[156]

The central witness was Sergeant Benjamin Ore, part of the surveillance team. Ore testified to seeing Egan and Daly out together regularly, particularly visiting the Talbot public house (also known as Foster’s) in Moat Lane, Birmingham, a mile from home but what Ore described as an “Irish house.”[157] In February 1884, Ore saw Egan inside Foster’s, his hat off, making a speech. It was established in court that Ore must have been at least 40 feet from Egan and

[153] Superintendent James Black, in charge of the surveillance, later claimed that Annie Egan had met Daly at Wolverhampton station before he left, although he doesn’t attempt to explain this. ‘Reports as to Way Egan’s Case Was Dealt with by the Police’, 13 December 1887, HO 144/193/A46664B/13, The National Archives.
[154] John Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse: The History of the Liverpool-Irish, 1800-1939* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 180–81. Belchem describes Daly as “a former New York doctor with a lucrative medical practice” – in fact, he is mistaking Daly for another dynamite convict, Dr Thomas Gallagher of Greenpoint, Brooklyn. Gallagher was imprisoned alongside Egan and Daly at Chatham and Portland, and Egan spoke at his reception back to New York in 1896.
[155] ‘Regina vs Egan Day 1’.
[156] ‘Dynamite Plots’, *The Observer*, 11 May 1884.
[157] Supt James Black later wrote of the two that “Egan was employed at Mr Hills’, Merchant of Park Street. Daly chiefly spent his time at home, until the return of Egan from work, when they frequented Irish Public Houses, chiefly kept and frequented by Nationalists.” ‘Reports as to Way Egan’s Case Was Dealt with by the Police’.

listening through the opening and closing smoke-room door, but he stuck to his testimony that Egan said: “This night we shall be avenged – we shall be free” and, at another point, “Parnell.” Outside the pub, Daly was heard to tell Egan, “we’ll run you next.”

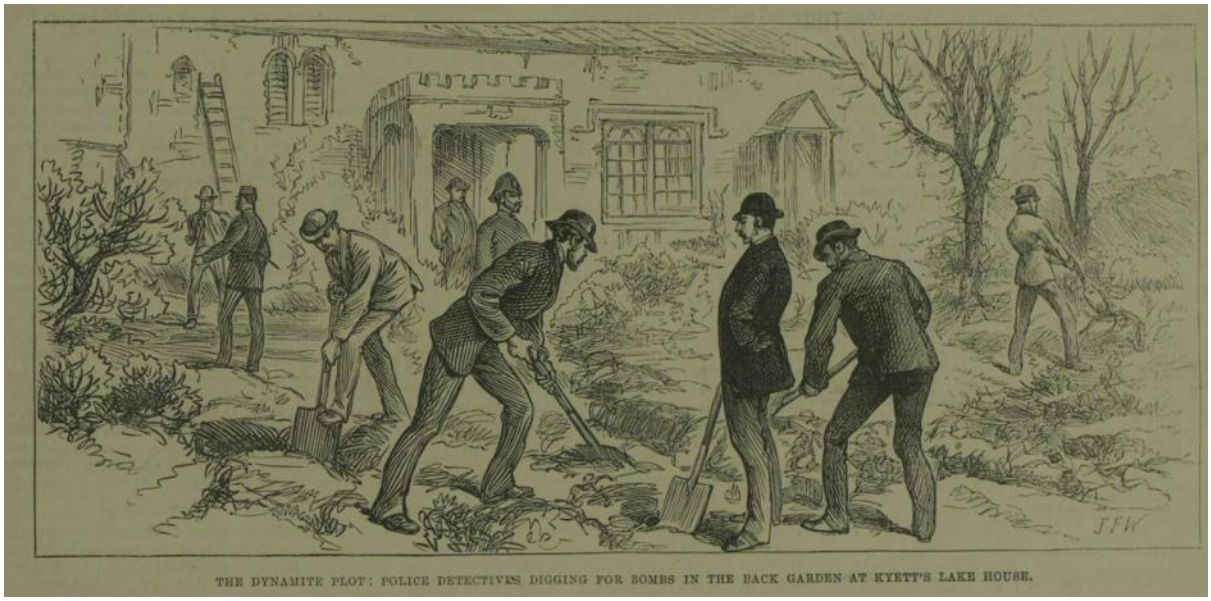


Figure 5.28 “Police detectives digging for bombs” in Egan's garden, April 1884 (Illustrated London News, 18 April 1884)

The prisoners maintained that these high spirits were prompted by a likely Home Rule victory in that day’s Cork by-election. They also noted that Ore reported this *after* hearing of the following morning’s dynamite attack on Victoria station in London. The cross-examination critiqued Ore’s conception of an “Irish house” (“Do you know a house where Scotchmen go? You do not know a Yorkshire house in Birmingham?”). Certainly this pub was close to Birmingham’s Irish community, centred on Park Street, but it was also frequented by market traders.[158] Despite these frailties, Ore’s testimony successfully drew on existing anxieties

[158] ‘The Fenian Plot’.

towards Irish spaces: given the tense atmosphere and suspicion towards the Irish in general, it was easy for the jury to accept that an Irish pub would be the heart of sedition in the city.

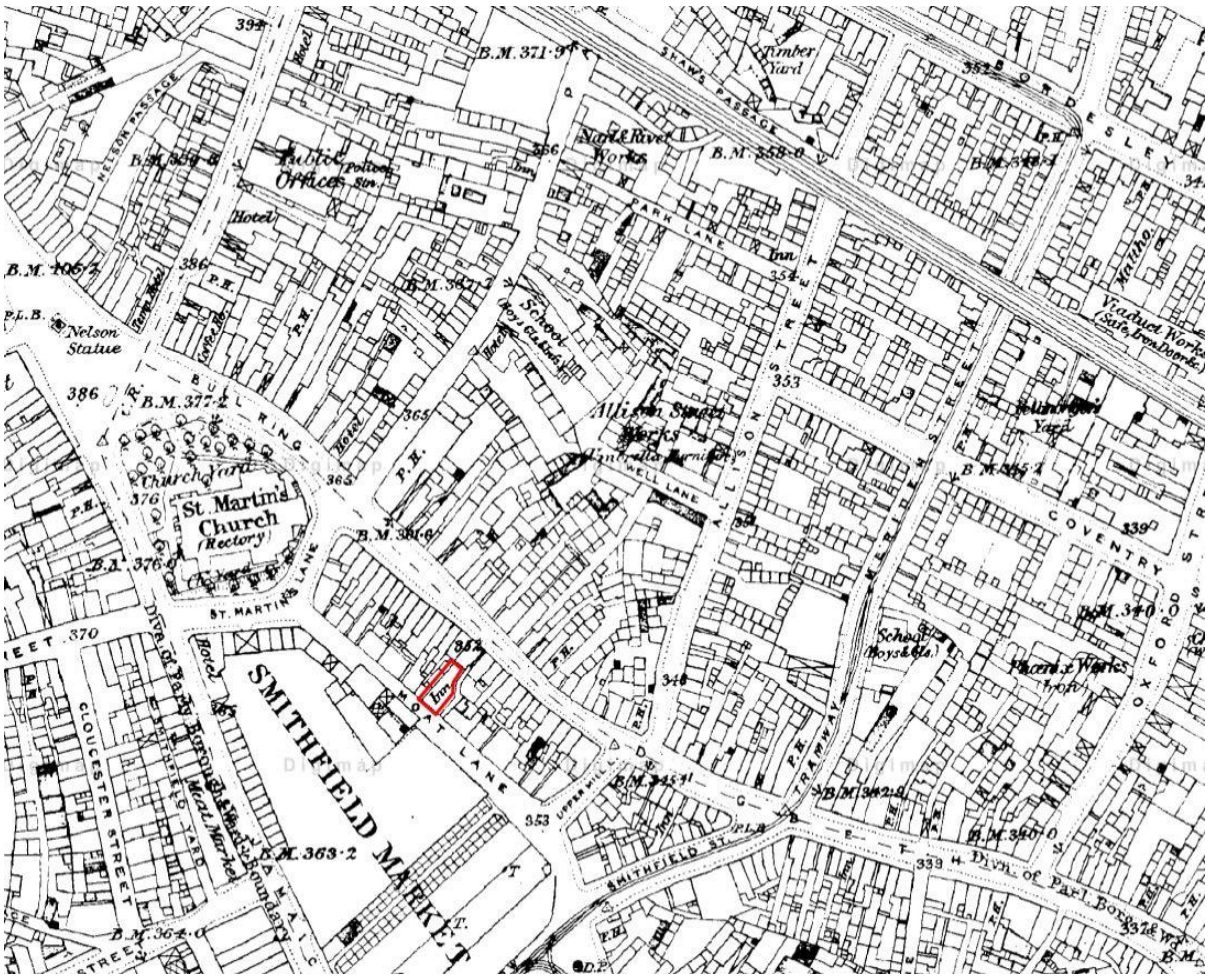


Figure 5.29 Talbot Inn on the 1890 Ordnance Survey. Note Smithfield Market opposite, and Park Street – centre of Birmingham’s Irish community – to the north. © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2021). All rights reserved. (1890).

It was Egan’s defence at the initial hearing that although:

> …he had been at one time a prominent member of a Home Rule body… for some time now he had not taken the slightest part of interest in any such organisations. He might at the present time be nominally a member of such a body, his name might appear on the lodge books, and he might just now contribute to their funds, but that was all. And besides, even if he were a

Home Ruler, that was not a suspicious circumstance.[159]

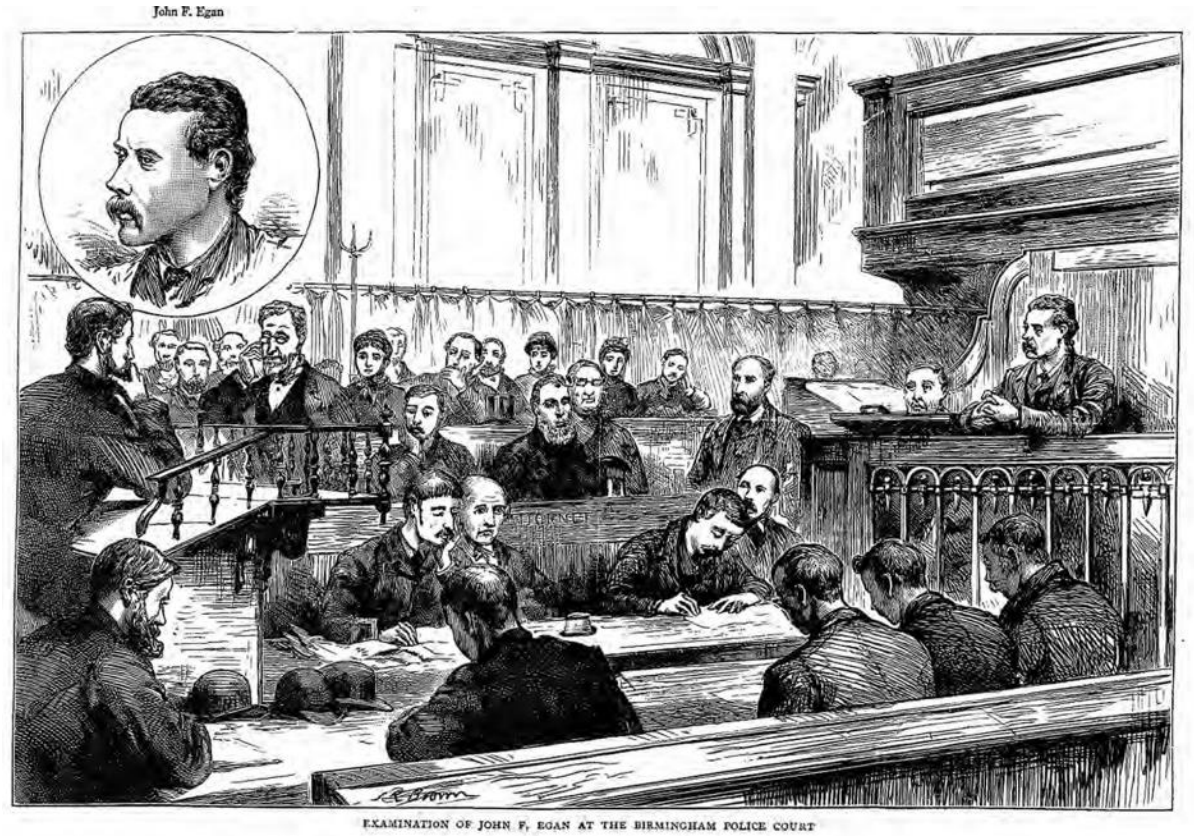


Figure 5.30 ‘Trial of John (sic) F. Egan at Birmingham Police Court’ The Graphic, 3 May 1884

In fact, he claimed “no connection with any Irish movement” since 1877 – the date of the last correspondence produced in evidence – and that “from the first day Daly lodged at his house until his arrest nothing passed between them with reference to Irish national matters. Dynamite was never mentioned.”[160] Newspapers were quick to conduct their own detective work. The *Manchester Guardian* found reports of two Egan brothers in the Home Rule movement in Wolverhampton; the *BDP* talked to the brothers’ former employers. But

[159] ‘The Fenian Plot’.
[160] ‘Regina vs Egan Day 1’.

anything after 1877 seemed impossible to prove. Certainly no evidence could place Egan any closer to a genuine dynamite conspiracy than an ambiguous speech in a Birmingham pub, and a decade-old correspondence. From the evidence of the trial, it seemed that Egan had moved to Sparkbrook in search of a quiet life, away from his former political ambitions. His summary statement reiterated his disassociation from nationalist business after 1877: “he was quite prepared to abide by the verdict of the jury,” he said, “but he should go to prison with a clear conscience, and the knowledge that he was innocent of any connection with dynamite.”[161] Daly claimed the same:

> I had several reasons for going to live in [Egan’s] house; amongst them was economy, his beautiful garden, the society of his admirable wife and his own, but before God as a dying man I wanted to say that I had no political reason whatsoever.”[162]

All three pled not guilty, but the jury took just 15 minutes to condemn them. Daly observed that the ongoing panic over Irish nationalist violence meant that a fair trial here was impossible: “it was not justice,” he said; “it was vengeance.”[163] Egan astutely noted the inability of the British press and judiciary to understand the schismatic nature of Irish nationalism. On his eventual release, he stated that: “I don’t think the county jury could draw the line between Home Rule and constitutional agitation and Fenianism, which was a secret

[161] ‘The Dynamite Plot’, 2 August 1884.
[162] John E. Redmond, *The Case For Amnesty* (Dublin: William J. Alley & Co., 1893), 15. Redmond is here citing the report into the prisoners’ welfare from 1890.
[163] ‘Regina vs Egan Day 1’.

organisation.”[164] A “county jury” in particular would have been unable to grasp the difference between constitutional and physical-force agitation that a more sophisticated urban jury would have understood: “I would not have the slightest fear of being tried again,” he later claimed, “if I could be tried by a Birmingham jury, for I am certain I should be acquitted.”[165]

Given the IRB’s secrecy, it may be impossible to know what James Egan did for the nationalist cause during his time in Birmingham. The quiet suburban demeanour he presented at court was certainly not the whole picture; yet nor were the flimsy claims of the prosecutors that he was essentially a terrorist. On reflection, it is evident that he was convicted for precisely the legitimate associational culture that he had promoted in the 1870s. The respectability that Egan strived for in Wolverhampton was re-interpreted in the light of the moral panic of the dynamite scares in the 1880s to prove conspiracy. This enabled police and jury to easily draw on older stereotypes and anxieties about the Irish: that they were dangerous outsiders in the midst of sober English society, with spaces like pubs in particular representing hotbeds of sedition. Despite decades of legal, constitutional and political work, anti-Irish feeling still simmered just below the surface.

[164] ‘The Release of J. F. Egan’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 23 January 1893.
[165] Egan’s initial magistrate’s hearing was in Birmingham, and he was held at Winson Green prison, but his crown trial was at Warwickshire Assizes, in Warwick itself. ‘The Release of J. F. Egan’.

Life after Birmingham: Egan’s second career 1884-1908



Figure 5.31 Photograph from early 1900s including Egan, left and Tom Clarke, centre (Daly Papers, P2/728. © Special Collections & Archives, Glucksman Library, University of Limerick)

Egan and Daly were incarcerated as political prisoners alongside the other “Dynamitards.” They were nicknamed “The Special Men” and sustained by their ongoing friendship with Henry Wilson, who reverted to his birth name Tom Clarke.[166] The relationship extended beyond the walls of the prison – one of Daly’s nieces moved to Sparkbrook to help Annie Egan

[166] Thomas James Clarke, *Glimpses of an Irish Felon’s Prison Life* (Dublin: Maunsel & Roberts, 1922), 13. Tom Clarke (1857-1916) joined the IRB after hearing John Daly speak in Dungannon, Tyrone, in 1878. He emigrated to New York in 1880 where he studied explosives with Thomas Gallagher. He was arrested with explosives in London in April 1883 and sentenced to penal servitude for life. James Quinn, ‘Clarke, Thomas James (“Tom”)’, in *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2019).

in her new "fancy goods repository" on Stratford Road.[167] The flimsiness of Egan's conviction was recognised in his sentence: twenty years, compared to the life sentences of the others. Despite a petition (organised by Annie Egan) of 6,000 signatures, and accusations of planted evidence, it was not until 1893 that Egan was released on license, followed by the other treason-felony convicts in the next two years.[168] Daly was released in 1895, and returned to politics in his hometown of Limerick; the other Dynamitards went to America.[169]

Egan was pressed into service by the Amnesty Association's indefatigable Mark Ryan, touring and lecturing in Britain and America alongside Maud Gonne.[170] Egan commanded "the most intense interest" in America, sharing the stage with nationalist icons like O'Donovan Rossa.[171]

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[167] 'The Dynamitard Egan: Interview with the Prisoner's Wife', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 28 October 1892. Annie Egan recalled some initial prejudice from her neighbours, who "seemed to think that the knick-knacks I sold were infernal machines, and my china treasures receptacles for dynamite." The "Miss Daly" referred to in the *Pall Mall* Gazette's interview with Annie Egan is likely to be one of the older daughters of Edward Daly, John's brother.

[168] 'Lord Randolph Churchill Presents a Petition', 13 October 1885, HO 144/193/A46664B/5, The National Archives; 'Petition on Behalf of Egan and Daly', 16 October 1887, HO 144/193/A46664B/9, The National Archives. This allegation was made by Birmingham Alderman Henry Manton in 1887, apparently a deathbed confession by Birmingham's Chief Constable Farndale. 'Report of Chief Constable Farndale to the Home Office', 27 October 1887, HO 144/193/A46664B/10, The National Archives.

[169] McCabe and McGee, 'Daly, John'. Daly's move from celebrity prisoner status into politics was not uncommon. Roy Foster notes that "political imprisonment had a long and respected history in Ireland, and traditionally formed the foundation of many political careers." Foster, *Vivid Faces*, 246.

[170] Dr Mark F. Ryan (1844-1940) was sworn into the IRB in 1865 by Michael Davitt – later chief protagonist in the Land War, but at this time a fellow cotton labourer in Lancashire. He later became a medical doctor in London and chief organiser of almost every Irish organisation in the city: Young Ireland Society, Parnell Leadership Committee, Irish National League of Great Britain, Irish National Amnesty Association, Irish National Brotherhood, Gaelic League and Irish Literary Society. The latter brought him into contact with Maud Gonne (1866-1953), and he aided Egan and Gonne in their tours of America. Egan remained friends with Gonne and her later husband, Major John MacBride. Owen McGee, 'Ryan, Mark Francis', in *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009); Margaret O'Callaghan and Caoimhe Nic Dháibhéid, 'MacBride, (Edith) Maud Gonne', in *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009); McConville, *Irish Political Prisoners, 1848-1922*, 378; Maud Gonne MacBride, *A Servant Of The Queen* (Paulton: Purnell & Sons, 1938), 193–202; 'Newspaper Clippings on James Egan', 1896, HO 144/193/A46664C/294a, The National Archives.

[171] Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa was a reluctant participant in a public meeting through which Egan hoped to reconcile the warring factions of Irish-American nationalism. The range of opinion on the platform is demonstrated in the varying – often opposing – ideologies of the organisation represented. O'Donovan Rossa and Augustine E. Costello were veterans of the 1867 Fenian Rising and now leaders of the Irish Republic Brotherhood, and its offshoots the Clan na Gael and the Fenian Brotherhood, in America. P. J. Tynan was leader of the Irish

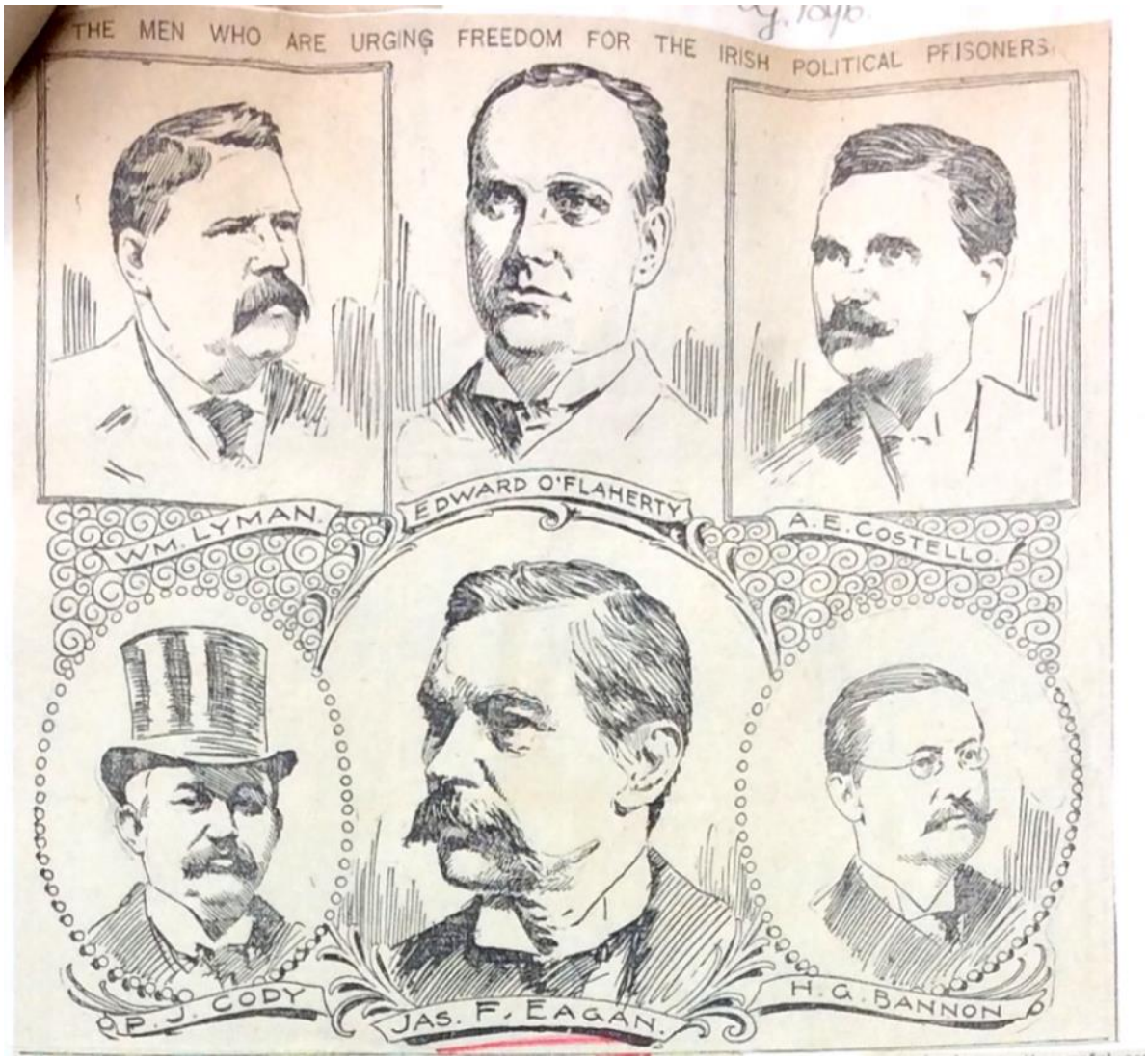


Figure 5.32 Egan and other Irish and Irish-American organisers (The World, 16 February 1896, held at The National Archives, HO 144/193/A46664C/294a)

He was called back from New York to take up a sinecure in Dublin, when friends including Gonne pressed for his election as Dublin Corporation Sword-Bearer.[172] On arrival he was

Invincibles, the extremist splinter of the IRB which had shocked nationalist society by murdering the Chief Secretary for Ireland William Forster and his Permanent Under-Secretary Thomas Burke in Phoenix Park, Dublin, in 1882. Edward O’Flaherty was leader of the Irish Independent Party; William Lyman led the Irish National Alliance, a splinter organisation from the Clan na Gael; P. J. Cody was leader of the ’98 Club; M. R. Sharkey was President of the Irish National Club. ‘In the Irish Cause’, *Sunday Democrat*, 1 March 1896.

[172] ‘The City Sword-Bearership’, *Flag of Ireland*, 10 September 1898.

greeted by throngs of Dubliners and dignitaries including Fenian veterans, trade unionists, parliamentary nationalists and a “marked absence of the IRB element.”[173]



Figure 5.33 Undated photograph of James Francis Egan (Daly Papers, P2/724. © Special Collections & Archives, Glucksman Library, University of Limerick)

Egan’s Wolverhampton years were certainly known about in Dublin – the town is mentioned in his obituaries – but he retained no connection with the Black Country other than with his wife’s family. His name does not appear in branch reports following his departure. He embraced some of his old organising spirit upon arrival in Dublin and as before walked a line between cultural, political, and revolutionary nationalism. He joined (or re-joined) the IRB, and stayed close to his revolutionary friends Clarke and Daly.[174] But both James and Annie also maintained a wide network of friends in more moderate and cultural nationalist circles, rubbing shoulders with well-known figures like John MacBride, Arthur Griffith and Maud Gonne.[175] The Egans again

[173] ‘Arrival of Mr James Egan in Dublin’, *Freeman’s Journal*, 26 September 1898.

[174] James Egan attended the funeral of IRB founder James Stephens in Dublin in 1901; his friends Michael Lambert and Jim Bermingham were pallbearers, alongside an array of 1867 veterans including Michael Davitt, C. G. Doran, William Brophy and William Hickey. ‘Funeral of Mr. James Stephens’, *Dublin Daily Express*, 1 April 1901; Ramón, *A Provisional Dictator*, 246. Egan remained a regular visitor to Tom Clarke’s home, and knew his wife well: Kathleen Daly, niece of his old friend John Daly. John Daly and Tom Clarke were lead mourners at Annie Egan’s funeral in 1908. ‘The Late Mrs J. F. Egan’, *Irish Independent*, 16 May 1908. See also the numerous mentions of the Egans in Tom Clarke and Kathleen Daly’s correspondence: ‘Tom Clarke and Kathleen Clarke Papers’, 1890–1972, MS 49,351-49,357, National Library of Ireland.

[175] Leon Ó Broin described Egan as one of “the most active channels of this propaganda” – that is, the promotion of Gaelic culture as part of the cultural nationalist movement that became known as the Gaelic Revival. Ó Broin,

found themselves in a social position which blurred the line between respectable and revolutionary nationalism, in which personal friendships and comradely networks played a crucial part.

Such networks placed James Egan in the position for which he became best known in 1900. As City Sword-Bearer, Egan's attendance was required for that year's state visit by Queen Victoria.[176] He was convinced by Arthur Griffith, who reminded him of his "long life's record of service and sacrifice for Ireland," to boycott the event.[177] After his fiery letter (mostly authored by Griffith) was published in Dublin newspapers, praise poured in for Egan's "manly action" from nationalist campaigners, campaign groups, parliamentarians, councillors, and even the entire city council of Egan's home town of Limerick.[178] He was granted the Freedom

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Revolutionary Underground, 118. He was made an honorary member of the Major MacBride National Athletic Club in 1900, alongside Maud Gonne and Arthur Griffith. 'Major M'Bride National Athletic Club', *The Nation*, 25 August 1900. He was vice-president of Griffith's political umbrella group, and precursor to Sinn Fein, Cumann na nGaedheal, alongside John O'Leary, Robert Johnston, and Gonne and MacBride. John O'Leary et al., '"To the Ancient Order of Hibernians", Circular Letter from Cumann Na Gaedheal Committee', 1 November 1902, 2009.1091, Limerick Museum. Egan was also chairman of the Swords branch of Conradh na Gaeilge (the Gaelic League, founded by Douglas Hyde in 1893, whose newspaper was edited by Padraig Pearse), and worked with the Celtic Literary Society in Dublin. *Conradh na Gaeilge*, or the Gaelic League, was founded by Douglas Hyde in 1893. From 1903, the editor of its newspaper, *An Claidheamh Soluis*, was Padraig Pearse. 'Lecture and Concert', *Drogheda Independent*, 5 December 1903. Annie Egan, though not Irish, was a founding vice-president of Maud Gonne's *Inghinidhe na hÉireann,* or Daughters of Erin, alongside Gonne and other key women nationalists like Alice Furlong, Anna Johnson, and Jennie Wyse Power. Senia Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women, 1900–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 36.

[176] Yvonne Whelan, 'Performing Power, Resistance: Demonstrating Interpreting Queen Victoria's Visit to Dublin', in *(Dis)Placing Empire: Renegotiating British Colonial Geographies*, ed. Michael M. Roche, Lindsay J. Proudfoot, and Professor Brian Graham (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 99–113.

[177] Ó Broin, *Revolutionary Underground*, 104–5; Bureau of Military History, George Lyons: IRB 1900-1901, 16 June 1947, W.S.104, Military Archives, Óglaigh na hÉireann. Griffith probably arranged the boycott at least partly to cement his position as nationalist leader by embarrassing the IRB chief secretary Fred Allan, who also held an administrative post with the Corporation. Owen McGee, 'Frederick James Allan (1861-1937), Fenian & Civil Servant', *History Ireland* 10, no. 1 (2002), https://www.historyireland.com/20th-century-contemporary-history/frederick-james-allan-1861-1937-fenian-civil-servant/; C.J. Woods and Owen McGee, 'Allan, Frederick James ("Fred")', in *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009).

[178] Egan's original letter was comparatively mild, but after Griffith's edits, read as follows: "On account of what I have been and what I am I cannot join in any act of public courtesy towards the Head of the State which tried me upon charges that were false and sent me to suffer nine years' imprisonment in English dungeons – the State that

of Limerick shortly afterwards by its radical Mayor: John Daly.[179] Daly praised his "old comrade" for his "services in the National cause," to which Egan responded that:

> He could not belie his past, degrade the cause he loved dearer than life, bring the blush of shame to the cheeks of his companions, or dishonour the race he sprang from.[180]

By drawing upon his own history, Egan situated himself within the longer narrative of Irish nationalism, that of heroes and brave deeds that he had used to stir up Wolverhampton's Irish in the 1870s, and which he had only entered by chance when he was caught up in others' deeds in the 1880s. Such narratives had been used in his younger days to create a sense of shared identity that would lead to an appreciation of the nationhood of Ireland. In his old age,

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still hall-marks me with the degradation of 'ticket-of-leave man,' more galling than the jail to an Irish Nationalist. Although the City Sword Bearer, I must abstain from joining the Lord Mayor and members of the Council in the proceedings arranged on their part for the reception of her Majesty." 'The Sword Bearer', *Dublin Daily Nation*, 4 April 1900. Letters of congratulation were received by newspapers across Ireland. Dublin Alderman John Joseph Farrell, later Lord Mayor of Dublin, conveyed his "hearty congratulations on the patriotic manliness which prompted your refusal to attend or take part in a pageant which is repugnant to the spirit of Irish nationalism." Alfred Webb, biographer, traveller and campaigner for both Irish and Indian independence praised Egan for following the "dictates of duty to yourself and Ireland." The nationalist MPs Willie Redmond (brother of the Irish Parliamentary Party leader John Redmond, whose legal action had led to Egan's release in 1893), Pat O'Brien and John Hayden, stalwarts of Parnellite constitutional agitation sent "Congratulations on your manly action." The United Irish League and City Council of Limerick were the most effusive – the former welcomed the fact that it was a Limerick man who had "acted so nobly as he had done, in defiance of the pandering and grovelling all around him"; the latter immediately moved to offer Egan the freedom of Limerick. 'The City Sword-Bearer and the Queen's Visit', *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 4 April 1900; 'Mr James F. Egan', *Cork Examiner*, 9 April 1900; 'Congratulations to the Dublin Sword Bearer', *Irish News*, 9 April 1900; 'Mr James Egan Refuses To Bear The Sword', *Irish Independent*, 4 April 1900; 'Brothers in Arms', *Irish Independent*, 11 May 1900.

[179] Daly arranged a series of such Freedoms, including Maud Gonne, Tom Clarke, Fenian leader Edward O'Meagher Condon, and Boer leader Paul Kruger. Timothy Moloney, *Limerick Constitutional Nationalism, 1898-1918: Change and Continuity* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 66–68.

[180] Maud Gonne was also present, giving a rousing and prescient condemnation of Britain's part in the Boer War, suggesting that "in future European complications England would have to fight for her life, and then would be Ireland's chance of striking a blow for freedom". 'Brothers in Arms'.

5. “The elements that constitute nationhood”

Egan could put aside those times when he had faltered in his commitment to the movement, and live a life of comfortable respectability within Dublin’s nationalist milieu.



Figure 5.34 Thomas Fitzpatrick, ‘“The Band of Hope” – in memory of James Egan City Swordbearer.’ Dublin City Library and Archive, 1909. The cartoon suggests that many of the mourners were in fact hoping for Egan’s job.

5. "The elements that constitute nationhood"

Annie Egan died in 1908, and James in September 1909.[181] Following a widely-attended funeral, a lengthy cortege led by Daly and Clarke wove through central Dublin to Glasnevin Cemetery, where he was buried next to his wife.[182] He was variously eulogised as "one of Ireland's staunchest friends"; a "highly esteemed Dublin citizen"; a "popular Corporation official" with "a varied, and somewhat stormy, career"; and a "prominent member of the Fenian Brotherhood."[183] To the various observers, James Egan was a national hero; simply a city official; or perhaps just an old Fenian prisoner.

Egan was remembered personally too, amongst those whose lives (or deaths) came to define the memory of revolutionary Irish activism. Clarke was executed for his leadership of the 1916 Easter Rising, but left fond recollections of Egan in his memoirs, as did Maud Gonne and Mark Ryan.[184] John Daly died a frustrated invalid shortly after the Rising, but his revolutionary legacy was maintained by his nieces and nephew, and in 1936, it was Madge Daly who resuscitated his memory by sponsoring a new memorial.[185] One correspondent recalled a

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[181] 'The Late Mrs J. F. Egan'.

[182] 'Funeral of Mr James Egan', *Irish Times*, 1 October 1909; 'The Late Mr James F. Egan', *Dublin Daily Express*, 1 October 1909.

[183] 'Death of the City Sword-Bearer', *Dublin Daily Express*, 29 September 1909; 'Death of Mr James Egan', *Freeman's Journal*, 29 September 1909; 'News', *Daily Mail*, 29 September 1909; 'Mr J. F. Egan', *The Times*, 29 September 1909; 'Death of the City Sword-Bearer'.

[184] Clarke, *Prison Life*; Gonne MacBride, *A Servant Of The Queen*; Mark Francis Ryan, *Fenian Memories* (Dublin: M. H. Gill, 1945).

[185] Despite his eulogies, Egan's name was not listed in the 1932 list of "Ireland's Heroic Dead" produced by the National Graves Association in 1932 to mark the resting places of nationalist heroes, further suggesting that his life and contribution did not leave a lasting mark on Irish society. Mary Donnelly, *The Last Post: Glasnevin Cemetery Being a Record of Ireland's Heroic Dead in Dublin City and County Also Places of Historic Interest*, 1st ed. (Dublin: National Graves Association, 1932). The Dalys were a fervently nationalist family: Kathleen Daly eventually married Tom Clarke; Ellen Daly married Edward O'Toole, a chief mourner alongside Clarke at Egan's funeral; Madge Daly was a leader in the Cumann na mBan; Laura Daly married the IRA man Jim O'Sullivan; Agnes Daly was never so involved in organisational nationalism as her sisters, but was nevertheless attacked by the Black and Tans during the war of independence; Carrie and Annie were still less involved, but the youngest, married Éamonn de hÓir, bodyguard to Easter Rising leader Seán MacDiarmada. The solitary son was Ned Daly, executed

“rather small crowd” for the unveiling, perhaps reflecting a general lack of understanding of Egan’s contribution to the nationalist cause: one newspaper described him having “played a prominent part in the Anglo-Irish War,” despite his death a decade too early.[186] Unlike the apparent singlemindedness of some of his peers, Egan’s commitment to Ireland’s freedom was ambiguous: he was at times frustrated, despondent, ambivalent, or reluctant, and left whole swathes of his life in the past. He never again reconnected with his fellows in Wolverhampton. He left no memoir to immortalise his place within the nationalist narrative, and perhaps even became a source of irritation by the end of his life.[187] But Egan’s navigation of the overlapping strands of Irish nationalism for nearly four decades makes him a useful lens through which to view the conflicts and frustrations of a nationalist myth often presented in very straightforward terms.

Conclusion

James Egan did not quite make it to the point when Tom Clarke and his fellow rebels struck for Ireland’s freedom in 1916. But neither the Dublin Rising itself, nor the rapid growth in

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alongside Tom Clarke and the rest of the Easter Rising leadership in 1916. On the Daly family, see Helen Litton, *Edward Daly: 16Lives* (Dublin: The O’Brien Press, 2013).

[186] Sean O’Moore, a veteran of 1916 having served under Madge Daly’s brother Ned, presided; and the procession featured the O’Rahilly band, the National Graves Association, the Associated Easter Week Men, the Cumann na mBan, and Fianna Eireann. Some syndicated versions of the story, typically, got Egan’s name wrong and attributed the subject of Madge Daly’s lecture to a James Daly. ‘Old Crock’, ‘Political Expediency v. Active Nationalism’; ‘Memorial to Fenian Leader’; ‘Memorial to Fenian’.

[187] The Egans appear to have experienced financial difficulties in 1908. Letters between Tom and Kathleen Clarke from 1908 discuss rumours that bailiffs had called on him, that his salary was being reduced, and that Annie might have to go to the workhouse. This seems to have distracted James Egan from their friendship, which was difficult to restore even after Annie’s death in 1908. At this point Kathleen Clarke suggested taking Egan in as a boarder to cover their own financial worries; Tom was opposed on account of Egan’s drinking. Other letters suggest that he was not welcome as a visitor to Limerick. ‘Tom Clarke and Kathleen Clarke Papers’; Sinead McCoole, *Easter Widows* (London: Random House, 2014), 25.

support after it, would have been possible without the hard work over many years by people like Egan, repositioning Ireland, its culture and history, as points of pride. Nor would it have been possible without the energies, funds and organisation of Ireland’s global diaspora. Many of Irish nationalism’s most important leaders were born or spent most of their lives abroad, and their conceptions of the cultural, political and revolutionary elements of diaspora space were fundamental to Ireland’s eventual freedom.[188]

Nationalist organisers employed a conception of diasporic space that bound its disparate, poverty-stricken, stigmatised residents together under the banner of nationhood. This conception was built of multiple, overlapping layers. Stafford Street was a political space: although during the lifetime of this area it was never electorally strong, still it became a space of political organisation and activism, and a cradle of Irish politics in the town. It was conceived as a space of revolutionary potential too, providing volunteers for the Fenian uprising in 1867, and perhaps for the dynamiting campaigns of the 1880s.

Most effectively though, this proved to be a space in which an understanding of Irish nationhood could be understood on cultural lines. Nationalism strengthened feelings of solidarity and shared experience amongst these emigrants and allowed ordinary people a place within an accessible narrative of heroes and villains. Representational space was found in Irish pubs and homes, at St Patrick’s Day dinners and at district meetings. When the Wolverhampton NBSP sent a telegram from the Traveller’s Repose to the Dublin Rotundo in

[188] Of the 1916 leaders, James Connolly was born in Edinburgh, Tom Clarke in England, Eamon de Valera in New York; Michael Collins, a minor participant in 1916 but destined for a much greater role, spent several years in London under Mark Ryan’s wing. In an earlier generation, Michael Davitt and Ryan himself were born in Ireland but raised in nearby Lancashire towns.

1862, they were participating in Irish space, and celebrating a shared national narrative of past and present heroes. This was restated when James Egan handed out Limerick shamrocks from Michael Hogan.[189] When Egan and Hands invited their fellow-countrymen to Maguire’s lecture in 1871, they presented “frequent communication and social intercourse” as the means by which the elements of Irish nationhood would be knit together, regardless of where this took place.[190] When Wolverhampton’s Irish read *The Nation*, *The Irishman* or the *Irish People* they were participating in a wider construction of Irishness that had its own internal conflicts, but was evident in Irish spaces across the world. In this sense, Stafford Street was a deeply meaningful social space: it represented a potential future of solidarity, community and nationhood for Ireland, and through its own processes of narrative building, helped form what that future would be.

In this chapter I have demonstrated the importance of spatial thinking in the creation of a diasporic politics of Irish nationalism in Victorian Wolverhampton. I have attempted to subvert the tendency of the historiography of Irish nationalism to focus on individual actors and pivotal moments, by drawing attention to how such a life interacts with the layers of unexceptional practices in the unexceptional places which made up Irish diaspora space. James Egan was by no means the whole story of Wolverhampton nationalism, nor was he an uncomplicated hero. His position as an important figure in nationalist history is not affirmed or denied here. Instead, he is presented as a small part of a transnational movement which had, at its heart, Irish spaces across Britain and the world. It was these spaces, with their

[189] ‘Our National Celebrations’.
[190] Egan and Hands, ‘To the Irishmen and Wolverhampton and District’.

layers of everyday routines, customary practices and organised events, which provided the building blocks for the global movement for Irish independence.

Chapter Six: Stafford Street Stories: a historical ethnography of a neighbourhood



Figure 6.1 Unidentified group of men standing at the corner of Stafford Street and Horse Fair. The photograph is taken outside the Black Horse (right), facing south along Berry Street, c.1880 (Wolverhampton Archives, P/6456)

The narratives that swirled around Stafford Street were constructed from multiple, overlapping understandings of power, legitimacy and social relations, and were articulated through space.[1] Anxieties around disease, crime, religion and politics prompted the creation

[1] Doreen Massey, 'Places and Their Pasts', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 39 (1995): 182–92; Doreen Massey, 'A Global Sense of Place', in *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 146–56.

of huge amounts of text about the Irish quarter. By comparison, the production of space in everyday life generated much less, but those invested in this space – owners, shopkeepers, residents – inhabited this space within their own understandings and narratives. By focusing on the individuals, interactions and relationships which constituted this space, I aim to reinsert the ordinariness of life in this stigmatised neighbourhood into its history, to demonstrate the unequal agencies and contested narratives of Stafford Street, and to challenge the generalisation of the poor and the Irish as unknowable masses which so often characterises top-down histories of spaces of poverty.

While everyday economics dominated the lives of its residents, an economic explanation is not sufficient to explain why this neighbourhood developed in this place, in this way. Instead, overlapping geographies of personal, working and commercial relationships played a more significant role in the everyday experiences of residents. Similarly, while understanding its characterisation as an Irish quarter is vital, Stafford Street should also be understand as a hybrid space: one in which Wolverhampton's Englishness and urban setting redefined what it meant to be Irish, and in which networks of Irish relationships redefined what it meant to be English or Wulfrunian.[2] Wolverhampton's Irish community was formed, sustained and enriched by this neighbourhood; its demise was met with protest and heralded the decline of a distinctive Irish community in the town. Tanya Evans has concluded that "big pictures are constructed using lots of little people": I use this principle to counteract the stigmatising,

[2] Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London: Routledge, 1996), 205–7, 238–39.

generalising narratives which dominated contemporary understandings of both the poor and the Irish, by telling inhabitants' stories from their own perspectives.[3]

Most studies of majority-Irish neighbourhoods have concluded that poor, Irish immigrants to urban Britain gravitated to poor, Irish neighbourhoods; that a combination of economic necessity and cultural choices took them there; that they were back-street communities, clustered in courts and alleys, not on thoroughfares.[4] This chapter does not dispute these assertions: the same was true of Wolverhampton. Instead, it aims to add more complexity to that familiar picture by following the stories of individuals who point to larger trends and social changes, even if they were not always representative of the community as a whole. Sitting with individuals in this way, allowing them so far as is possible to tell their own story, and watching how they responded to their world, helps with "throwing… the orthodox categories of current historiography… off their guard."[5]

This chapter is therefore organised around a series of microhistories touching on the supply and demand for homes in the area, and the practices which defined home from different perspectives. Stafford Street represented a supply of some of the cheapest housing in Wolverhampton, and thus attracted the poorest tenants, of whom the Irish were a large part.

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[3] Tanya Evans, 'Secrets and Lies: The Radical Potential of Family History', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 71 (2011): 49–73.

[4] Detailed examples include Mervyn Austen Busteed, *The Irish in Manchester c.1750-1921: Resistance, Adaptation and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), chaps 1–2; John Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse: The History of the Liverpool-Irish, 1800-1939* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), chap. 2; Lynn Hollen Lees, *Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), chap. 3; Graham Davis, 'Beyond the Georgian Facade: The Avon Street District of Bath', ed. S. Martin Gaskell, *Slums* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990), 144–85.

[5] Joan W. Scott, 'Storytelling', *History and Theory* 50, no. 2 (2011): 203–9.

Landowners therefore played a major role in the construction of space, but this was mediated by other factors. In these examples, the (accurate) image of absentee, uninterested landlord exemplified by Francis Wood Smallwood is tempered by that of Mary Salmon, embedded in the neighbourhood's economic, political and cultural relations, and by the sympathetic letting agent James Brassington. Most primary sources have property ownership as their basic worldview, and space was calculated through exchange value, its residents by their economic utility.



Figure 6.35 Study area shown against 1871 Steen & Blackett map of Wolverhampton. This area includes all streets and courts with an address of Stafford Street, Canal Street, Carribee Street, Back Lane or Littles Lane – the annotations show early plans for the Improvement Scheme. Note original map corrected for orientation.

A straightforward economic explanation reinforces contemporary discourse on the development of slum neighbourhoods: that a combination of neglectful landlords and low-class tenants combined to degrade the environment, lifestyles and prospects of its residents. But Stafford Street was not the only poor part of town. Understanding the labour geographies of the poor helps explain housing demand to some extent: the work they could do dictated the housing they could afford. Industry in Wolverhampton needed labour, and retaining a nearby pool of casual workers was beneficial to industrialists. The Irish formed part of that pool, as several examples here show. But again, this economic explanation oversimplifies the equation. Ends

were met by many means, from child and casual labour to taking lodgers, and work was affected by the social environment of xenophobia and discrimination. Therefore the stories of those who had different conceptions of their space are vital to paint a more complete picture of Stafford Street. These stories use lenses like class, race, migration, marriage and eviction to argue that the spatial worlds of Stafford Street were far from the homogeneous mass of elite imaginings, but constituted a richer, more mobile, more complex web of experience than these dominant conceptions liked to portray.

I have sought to reconstruct a historical ethnography of Stafford Street by reading spatial stories into the traces left in primary sources created under these dominant conceptions of space.[6] These traces are contextualised throughout with family histories, quantitative analysis, and GIS maps populated from the census returns of 1851-71.[7] These too are imperfect, but aim to give some sense of these spatial worlds. The small scale of the study (Figure 6.2), geographically and temporally, enables a close reading of data which often

[6] On the use of historical ethnography as a means of recreating "the dynamic complexities of vanished social worlds," see Alan Mayne and Susan Lawrence, 'Ethnographies of Place: A New Urban Research Agenda', *Urban History* 26, no. 3 (1999): 325–48.

[7] Unless otherwise stated, all biographical data is drawn from the census enumerators' returns for years 1841-1911 searchable on genealogical websites. The study area falls within Wolverhampton eastern district:
1851: enumeration districts 1c, 1f, 1mm, 1nn, 1oo, 1pp
1861: enumeration districts 2, 5, 11, 13, 14
1871: enumeration districts 2, 5, 11, 12, 13, 14
Other key databases used are available online:
FreeBMD, England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915
FreeBMD, England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837-1915
FreeBMD, England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837-1915
Ancestry.com, England, Select Marriages, 1538–1973
Ancestry.com, Ireland, Select Marriages, 1619-1898
Ancestry.com, England, Select Deaths and Burials, 1538-1991
Find A Grave, https://www.findagrave.com/
National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995.

subsumed these individual lives into an undifferentiated mass. To provide chronology and comparison, many of the examples focus on Coles Croft, a court of 32 small houses in which ownership, personal relationships, mobility and work typify many experiences. This chapter is not intended to provide a representative sample, or a methodical breakdown of spatial demography in this neighbourhood (inconsistencies in the data limit that), but to create story from the data. This means following the twists and turns of everyday lives, and using such data to add meaning to lives of which little was recorded. These stories show that no one explanation can account for the complexities of an ordinary working-class neighbourhood: from the wealthiest landowner to their poorest tenant, Stafford Street was built from the individual choices and experiences of all of its inhabitants.

Stafford Street: housing ownership and supply

Francis Wood Smallwood: the absent landlord

Property, the economic value of space, was the essential, unquestioned building block of Victorian Britain, and the urban landowner held substantial power over the development of the town.[8] Francis Wood Smallwood, a retired gentleman draper and owner of Coles Croft, represents an archetypal slum property owner in Wolverhampton. His mental separation between property as a source of income, and property as peoples' homes, allowed him to

[8] Lefebvre identifies the urban property owner as a particularly powerful part of the reproduction of space. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 323–27. His analysis follows Marx, who describes "the palpable and complete passivity displayed by the owner, whose activity consists simply in exploiting advances in social development… [t]owards which he does not contribute and in which he risks nothing, unlike the industrial capitalist." Karl Marx, *Capital: Critique of Political Economy Vol.III*, trans. David Fernbach, 3rd edition (New York, NY: Penguin Classics, 1992), 908–9.

disassociate himself from the physical space, and helps explain the environmental and social conditions of the neighbourhood.

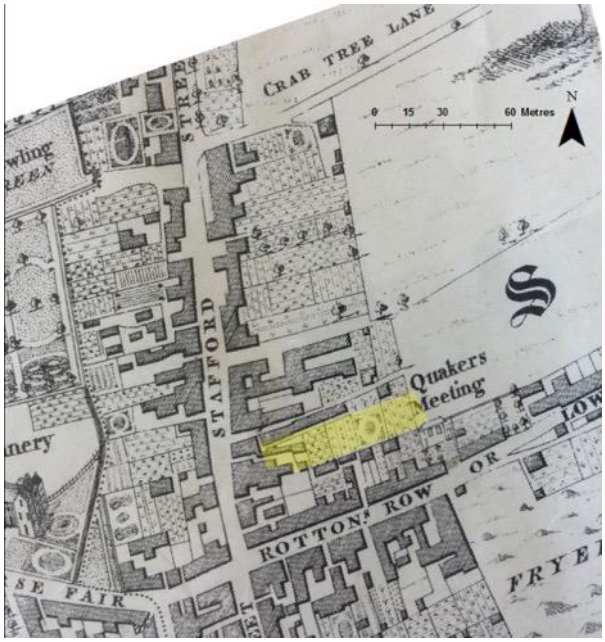


Figure 6.3 The area that would become Coles Croft, shown on Isaac Taylor's 1750 plan of Wolverhampton. The study area is in the north-eastern part of Wolverhampton.

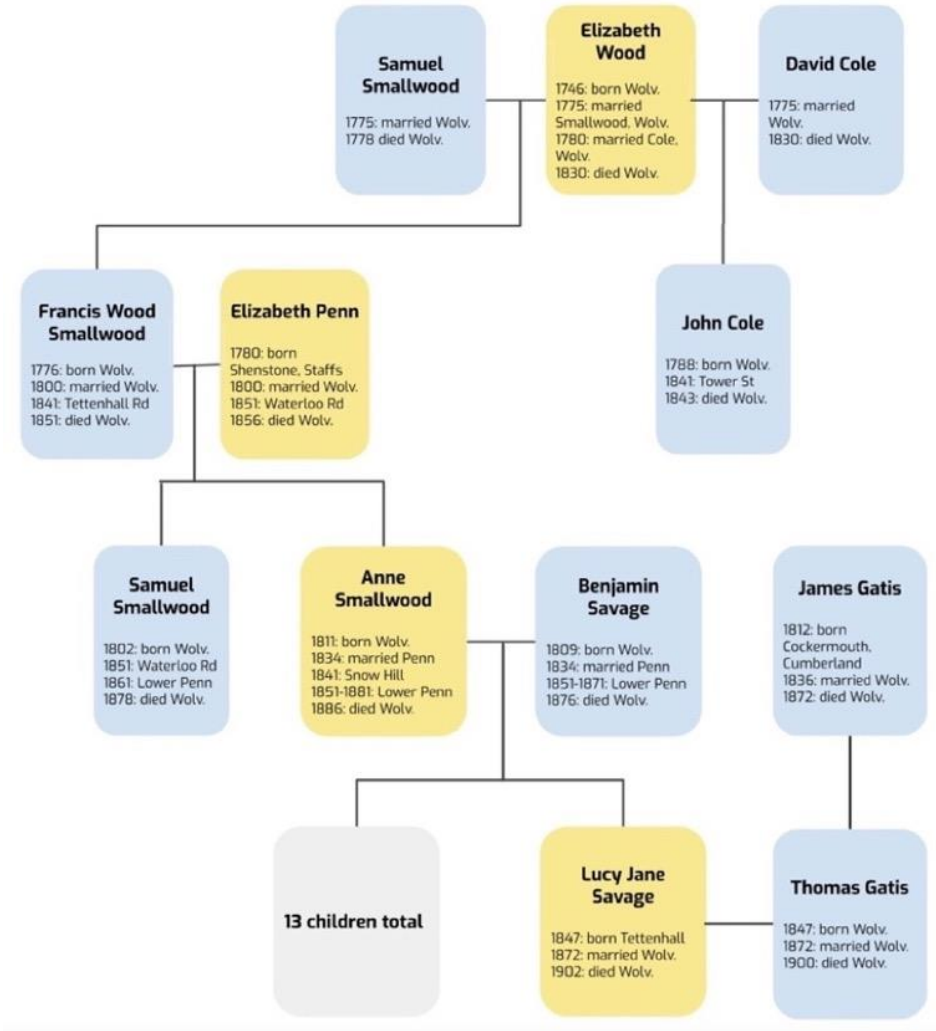


Figure 6.4 Cole's property shown on Godson's plan of 1788. The Birmingham Canal was completed in 1772, with a lock at the end of Littles Lane.

Smallwood came into possession of Coles Croft via a circuitous route. The first reference to this space is in 1684, when it was leased by its tenants Walter and Alice Bridgins, nailmakers, from owner Joseph Hicken of Ettingshall:

> All that cottage dwellinghouse or tenement situate and being in or adjoining to a certaine streete in Wolverhampton aforesaid called Berry Street also Stafford Street together with the Naylor's shop garden outhouses and buildings thereunto belonging now in the possession of the said Walter

Bridgins.[9]



Tree 6.1 Smallwood family tree.[10] NB family trees are partial and dates approximate.

[9] 'Lease for One Year of a Messuage and Premises in Berry Street Alias Stafford Street, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire', 28 September 1684, DEED/500/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies. Berry Street was an alternative name for Stafford Street in the seventeenth century, and in this deed it is possible to trace how Berry Lane in 1682 became known as Carribee Island over time. Roger Chandler et al., 'Lease for Three Lives of a Small Parcel of Land in Berry Lane near Stafford Street in Wolverhampton for Building upon at the Yearly Rent of 3d.', 20 February 1682, DEED/J46/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; John Roper, *Wolverhampton: A Study of the Early Town Based on Manuscripts from the Sutherland Collection in the County Record Office, Stafford and on the Wolverhampton Town Deeds* (Wolverhampton: Wolverhampton Public Libraries, 1966), 10.

[10] The Smallwoods were connected by marriage to the Gatis family: James Gatis, mentioned in chapter two, was a physician heavily involved in early public health debates in Wolverhampton. He too owned property near Stafford Street, and accused the Irish of being unwilling to use the privies he provided.

The deeds are incomplete, but the plot passed through several hands to a currier named Francis Wood in 1727. Wood's daughter Elizabeth married another currier, Samuel Smallwood, in 1775; gave birth to Francis in 1776; was widowed in 1778; and remarried yet another currier, David Cole, in 1780 (Tree 6.1).[11] Cole expanded his holdings in the surrounding area, purchasing further property on Stafford Street, but went bankrupt in 1816 and was forced to part with much of his land. His legacy remained solely in this parcel's name, which remained empty until after his death in 1830 (Figures 6.3, 6.4). In the late 1830s, his stepson Francis Wood Smallwood developed the garden into two rows of small, ten feet square 'blind back' houses, with the northern row forming the back of courts in Carribee Island.[12]

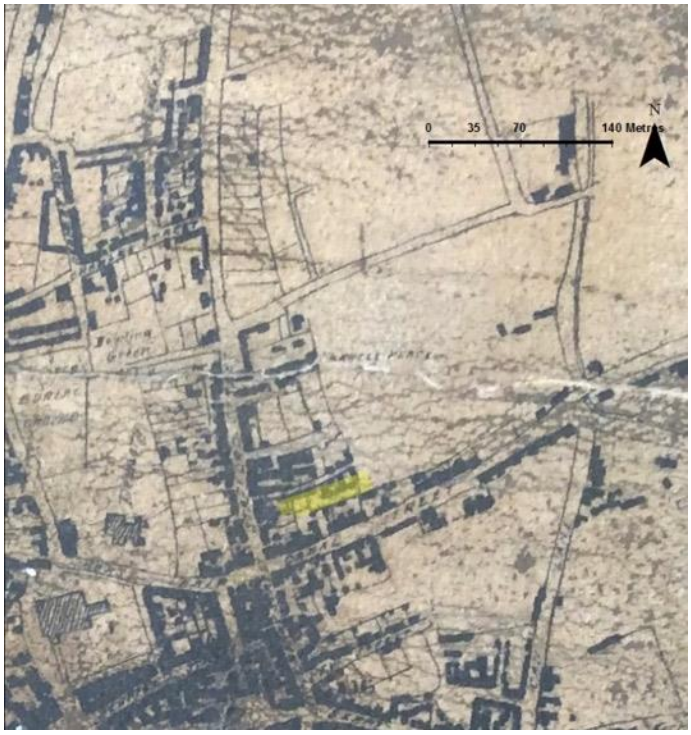


Figure 6.5 Coles Croft appeared for the first time on an 1836 plan of the town by J. Dewhirst. The first to be built were the six backing onto Carribee Island. Elsewhere, Rotton Row is now called Canal Street, and new development can be seen along the alleys later known as Castle Place and Castle Yard.

[11] England, Select Marriages, 1538–1973; Staffordshire, England, Extracted Church of England Parish Records, 1538-1839 [databases online]. Compare Adam Crymble's findings in London's St Giles Rookery that urban spaces like this were produced at the intersection of "macro geographies of migration [and] the economics of development" but also "the micro forces of multi-generational marriage contracts and wills within a land-owning family." Adam Crymble, 'The Decline and Fall of an Early Modern Slum: London's St Giles "Rookery", c. 1550–1850', *Urban History* in press (2022).

[12] It is unlikely that Smallwood built the houses himself – the most common approach was to lease parcels of land to a developer. Linda Clarke, *Building Capitalism: Historical Change and the Labour Process in the Production of the Built Environment* (London: Routledge, 1992), 263–65.

The first houses appeared on an 1836 map, and by the 1841 census, six were occupied and 14 were under construction (eventually there were 32 houses).[13] As Figures 6.5 and 6.6 demonstrate, this was the most active period of new building in the area, coinciding with the most rapid period of growth in Wolverhampton.[14] Smallwood's premises were labelled "building land with new houses" and all the houses were shown on the accompanying map, suggesting a completion date of 1841-2, just as new streets were springing up all around.[15]

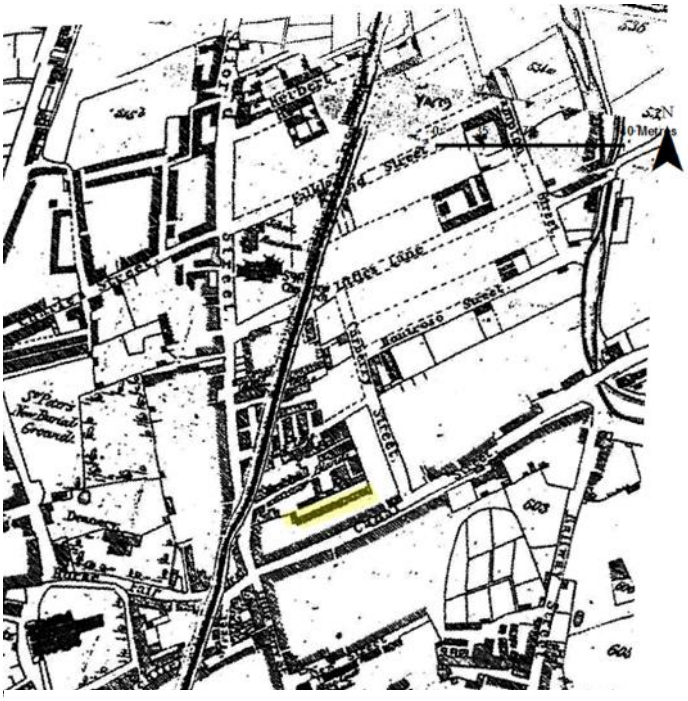


Figure 6.6 Coles Croft on the 1842 Tithe Apportionment map of Wolverhampton. The whole court has now been constructed, and opens onto the Carberry, or Carribee Street.

Slum property, requiring minimal maintenance for a steady profit, became a popular middle-class investment in mid-Victorian towns, catalysing the shift from the dominance of a few large landlords towards a more varied ownership, spatially and demographically.[16] In 1788, seven individuals owned over half Wolverhampton's 3,000

[13] Census returns for Wolverhampton, 1841-1851; J. Dewhirst, *Map of the Borough of Wolverhampton in the County of Stafford* (Wolverhampton, 1836), MAP/19, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[14] Barnsby notes that the decade 1831-1841 was the decade of greatest growth in Wolverhampton's housing stock, as for most towns in the Black Country. George J. Barnsby, *Social Conditions in the Black Country, 1800-1900* (Wolverhampton, 1980), 85.
[15] *Wolverhampton Tithe Map and Apportionment* (Wolverhampton, [1842?]), DX-411, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[16] H. J. Dyos, 'The Speculative Builders and Developers of Victorian London', *Victorian Studies*, Symposium on the Victorian City, 11, no. 2 (1968): 641–90; H. J. Dyos and D. Reeder, 'Slums and Suburbs', in *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, ed. H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff, vol. 2 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 359–86.

acres of titheable land, and this was reflected in the study area, where the large majority of land – mostly still undeveloped – was in the hands of a few wealthy private individuals and aristocrats.[17] These were notorious for limiting development on their land, leading to houses packed into those spaces that could be built on. The dense knot of housing in the Stafford Street area is evidence of the power of urban landowners to influence the urban fabric even beyond their own property.[18]

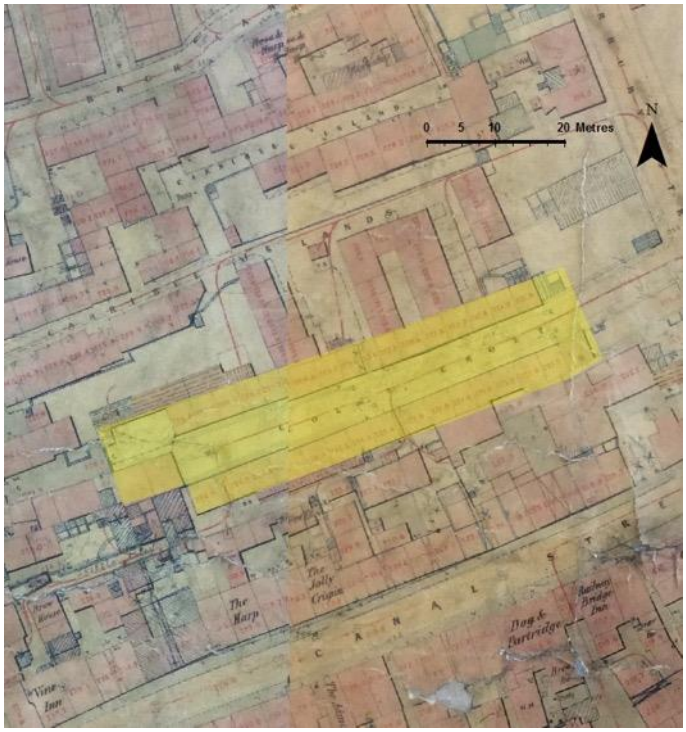


Figure 6.7 Coles Croft on Robert Syar Hoggar's early 1850s survey. The red inked lines are later annotations of the sewerage system – these were not in existence in the 1850s.

By comparison, 90 years later land in just the study area was owned by scores of smaller owners. The typical feature of ownership in the 1870s was the group of houses within a court, all owned by an individual or estate, with houses on the main thoroughfares

[17] George J. Barnsby, *A History of Housing in Wolverhampton, 1750 to 1975* (Wolverhampton: Integrated Publishing Services, 1975). See list of owners in Godson, *A Plan of the Township of Wolverhampton in the County of Stafford, Survey'd in the Year 1788 by Godsons of Brailes, Warwickshire. To This Plan Belonge a Rider to Explain the Small Pieces and Gardens* (Brailes, Warwickshire, 1788), D-JSR/44/46, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies. The Hinckes, Petits and Fryers were all notable Staffordshire families with merchant or clerical history – Richard Fryer's bank, for example, was a centre of Wolverhampton trade and Theodosia Hinckes, Josiah's daughter, donated the land and all costs for St Mary's church, Stafford Street. The Marquis of Stafford was Granville Leveson-Gower, scion of a longstanding and powerful family who became the Dukes of Sutherland in the early-nineteenth century, most infamous for the Highland Clearances. Thomas Giffard, of Chillington Hall, was part of Wolverhampton's oldest, wealthiest recusant family. Other single portions of land were owned by wealthy private individuals including John Leabridge, Sir Charles Lane, John Gough, John Bedford, and William Bamford.

[18] Barnsby, *Housing*, 4–6. Most of the study area was owned by private owners, with the exception of part of Canal Street, owned by the Lords of the Manor of Stowheath, the Leveson-Gowers.

more likely to be owned individually. Some landowners – like builder Christopher Farrington or printer George Mitchell – were local, but more complex, absentee patterns of ownership were more common. Property was a global commodity, with small plots here held by families like the Paskins and Hadleys, dispersed around the world.[19] Although investment in such property was diverse, environmental and residential conditions tended towards similarly declining conditions.

The changing demography of Coles Croft reflected this environmental decline. In 1841, the six occupied houses reflected a mixed population of English families with heads in semi-skilled work, and Irish families in labouring jobs.[20] These were new, but poor-quality houses. Just six years later John Dehane condemned the street as one of the worst in Wolverhampton.[21]

[19] The Paskins were originally from Birmingham, but by this time were mostly based in America. Harrison Paskin of Samaria, Indiana, sold much of his property in Back Lane in 1872, bought not long after by Christopher Farrington. 'Deeds Re Property in Back Lane, Stafford Street, Sold to Wolverhampton Corporation by C Farrington', 1877, DEED/J30, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies. The Hadleys were a military family spread across Guernsey, France, Ireland, Brazil and New South Wales. They owned the Railway Bridge pub in Canal Street in the first half of the nineteenth century – they sold up to Ralph Gough, gentleman, who owned a large amount of property in the Stafford Street area, managed by James Brassington. 'Deeds Re Property in Canal Street, Sold to Wolverhampton Corporation by T. Holland', 1847–1878, DEED/J193, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; 'Deeds Re Property in Carribee Street, Sold to Wolverhampton Corporation by R. D. Gough, Apr 1879', 1847–1878, DEED/J95, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

[20] For instance: William Hodgson was a locksmith, William Spittle was a grinder; both were English. All Irish workers are listed as labourers with the exception of Michael Dougherty and John Rybrey, both colliers apparently lodging, and Thomas Gallagher, a shoemaker.

[21] J. Dehane, 'To the Editor of the Wolverhampton Chronicle', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 19 May 1847, sec. Letters.

Street or court	Occupants per occupied house			
	1851	**1861**	**1871**	**1881**
Stafford Street	6.035	5.938	5.140	5.133
Canal Street	6.415	5.747	6.405	6.868
Littles Lane	5.762	5.077	3.378	6.308
Carribee Street	7.944	6.839	6.186	6.154
Stafford Street courts	6.149	6.115	5.648	4.647
Canal Street courts	7.086	4.976	5.485	4.674
Littles Lane courts	6.362	5.640	5.389	5.615
Carribee Island	9.509	6.568	4.458	3.600
Coles Croft	10.250	6.185	5.765	4.793
Back Lane	8.087	9.231	6.500	0.000
Back Lane courts	7.615	7.439	6.587	5.471
Castle Place & Castle Yard	8.171	7.023	5.108	4.083
Overall density	**7.137**	**5.998**	**5.448**	**5.393**
Total population	**4418**	**3899**	**3165**	**2400**

Table 6.1 Number of residents per occupied house, 1851-71 (full table)

Year	Total population	Occupied houses	Unoccupied/ under construction	Occupants per occupied house
1841	43	6	14	7.167
1851	328	32	0	10.25
1861	167	27	5	6.185
1871	98	17	16	5.765
1881	139	29	3	4.793

Table 6.2 Census population of Coles Croft 1841-81

In 1849, Robert Rawlinson recorded 283 occupants, growing to 328 by 1851.[1] In 1841, only two houses had more than five occupants (though those both housed an excessive 12 people). By 1851, the average house had more than 10 occupants (Map 6.1; Table 6.1), and

[1] Robert Rawlinson, 'Report to the General Board of Health on a Preliminary Inquiry into the Sewerage, Drainage and Supply of Water, and the Sanitary Conditions of the Inhabitants of the Borough of Wolverhampton, and the Townships of Bilston, Willenhall, and Wednesfield', Public Health Act (London, 1849), 21, LS/LB614p/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies. Rawlinson gave the number of houses as 41 in error.



Map 6.1 Excerpt of map of occupation density, showing central part of study area in 1851. The darker the red, the more densely occupied the dwelling. Black buildings are unoccupied. (full maps 1851, 1861, 1871)

the court was entirely Irish, the most densely populated of any in the study area (Map 6.2; Table 6.2). Over a third of residents were listed as lodgers: 3.78 per house, higher than any other street or court except Back Lane, which had several large lodging-houses (Table 6.6 below). Coles Croft was more overcrowded and more Irish than anywhere else in Wolverhampton: this was where the first impact of the famine exodus most keenly affected the town.

Many were certainly densely occupied, though "overcrowding" was a subjective condemnation, a reflection of middle-class anxiety over health and morality more than a useful, standardised descriptor of living conditions.[2] Wolverhampton developed a working minimum of 240 cubic feet per person for lodging-houses in 1852; it is likely that most homes

[2] Dyos notes that "statutory overcrowding did not become punishable in the courts until the passage of the Housing Act 1935," and Barnsby had to use the 1957 Housing Act definition of "two persons sleeping in a one-room dwelling, three persons sleeping in two rooms, five in 3 rooms and 7½ in four rooms" for his survey. He found that 18% of Wolverhampton homes were overcrowded in 1891, and 9% grossly overcrowded. H. J. Dyos, 'The Slums of Victorian London', *Victorian Studies* 11, no. 1 (1967): 5–40; Barnsby, *Housing*, 24–24. In the early twentieth century there was still debate about what constituted overcrowding, and the definition varied locally. For discussion of the challenges of measuring overcrowding, see John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing: 1815-1985*, 2nd ed. (London: Methuen, 1986), 331–33; Oliver Betts, 'Working-Class Homes in Three Urban Communities 1870- 1914' (PhD, York, University of York, 2013), 116; Anthony S. Wohl, *The Eternal Slum: Housing and Social Policy in Victorian London* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), 318.

in Coles Croft had substantially less space than this.[3] Other courts were similar. They were built quickly to fit a particular parcel of land as it became available, from the mazy Carribee Island to the long, narrow, former gardens west of Stafford Street.[4] Coles Croft was one of several "pudding-bags," a local term for a dead-end court.[5] Most had two rooms, and some had cellars, though there are no indications that these were occupied.[6] The surface was beset with stagnant water (despite the slight incline of the court) and piles of refuse.[7] There were only two privies between 32 cottages at first, and the Sanitary Committee had to insist on more.[8] The lack of road traffic meant that living space sprawled into the street: water was

[3] Health of Towns Committee, 'Minutes' (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 17 September 1852), WOL-C-HOT/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies. Images of demolition in Coles Croft suggest a height of approximately 14ft, which would give one house there a volume of 1,134 cubic feet (see *Coles Croft*, 1880, Photograph, 1880, P/3236, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies. Under Wolverhampton's lodging regulations, five people – at a stretch – would be a maximum. In 1851, Michael Grany's household housed 17.

[4] On different types of houses available to the builder of working-class housing, see Enid Gauldie, *Cruel Habitations: A History of Working-Class Housing, 1780-1918* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1974); John Nelson Tarn, *Working-Class Housing in 19th Century Britain*, Architectural Association Papers 7 (London: Lund Humphries, 1971); Patrick Crouch, 'Blind Backs and Nineteenth-Century Working-Class Housing', *Vernacular Architecture* 31, no. 1 (2001): 52–58.

[5] In 1849, the *WC* included the following request in its editorial: "We ask the reader to supply – and if he knows the town at all, or has had in his hand any one of the many reports of the condition of the courts, alleys, and "pudding-bags" in the neighbourhood of Stafford Street, in Piper's-row, and other places, he can well do so – we ask, we say, the reader to supply the detail. Let him call to mind the multitudinous scenes of overcrowded wretchedness, of profligacy, of misery, of dirt, and of unwholesomeness that have been placed before him." Alderman Benjamin Williams used the term in reference to a planned new street in 1877. 'Editorial', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 28 November 1849; 'Town Council Meeting', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 7 March 1877.

[6] As Coles Croft was being demolished in 1881, a minor sensation was caused by the discovery of a skeleton in a cellar in the court. 'Singular Discovery in Wolverhampton', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 19 May 1881. In Liverpool and Manchester, cellar dwellings were the most notorious residences of the Irish, but they were not common elsewhere. Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse*, 56–57; Busteed, *Irish in Manchester*, 20–21.

[7] Dehane, 'To the Editor of the Wolverhampton Chronicle'; Rawlinson, 'Report on a Preliminary Inquiry into Wolverhampton'; Julian Henry Hunter, 'Report on the Housing of the Poorer Parts of the Population in Towns, Particularly as Regards the Existence of Dangerous Degrees of Overcrowding the Use of Dwellings Unfit for Human Habitation', in *Reports of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council and Local Government Board*, ed. John Simon (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1866), 50–195.

[8] 'Proposed Demolition of Carribbee Island and Cole's Croft', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 17 October 1849; Health of Towns Committee, 'Minutes' (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 23 January 1851), WOL-C-HOT/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

communal, animals were common and washing spanned the courts, a symbol of cleanliness and respectability in a degraded environment.[9]

On many fronts, back courts represented a different environment to street houses. Courts were more densely occupied, and those in the centre of the area more so than those on the periphery. Street houses – typically older, with larger footprints and often with more than two storeys – were less likely to be overcrowded than the smaller, shorter court houses. As Coles Croft shows, this high level of overcrowding lasted a relatively short time. Density in the inner courts declined, and the rate of vacancy also rose within these poorest houses. Within a decade five houses were abandoned, and by 1871, half were empty, most likely resulting from improved real wages.[10] Yet the reality of everyday life for the poor remained that the smallest houses held the most occupants, in the worst conditions.

The Board of Guardians' attention was drawn to Coles Croft and Carribee Island in August 1847 by a complaint that these courts were the major sources of fever admissions to the workhouse, and that the recently-demolished privies had not yet been rebuilt. Indeed, they "were left open in a worse state than previously." Smallwood responded that he was desirous of cleansing the place, but that "the Irish had got possession of the place, and there was no

[9] Oliver Betts quotes *The Builder* on homes in Bethnal Green: "Both small side passages and the front doors of houses have become throughways, rather than impermeable barriers between home and street, and lead into yards crammed with the detritus of life. Drying washing intermingles with toilet blocks, overflowing drains and the small workshops and timber stores of the furniture trade that has come to fill the economic vacuum left by weaving in the district." Betts, 'Working-Class Homes', 39; see also Carl Chinn, *Poverty amidst Prosperity: The Urban Poor in England, 1834-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 114 .
[10] Barnsby, *Social Conditions*, 222–24.

removing them."[11] This was not the first, or last, time a Smallwood was notified about Coles Croft, yet it remained the court most likely to be called insanitary until its demolition.[12]

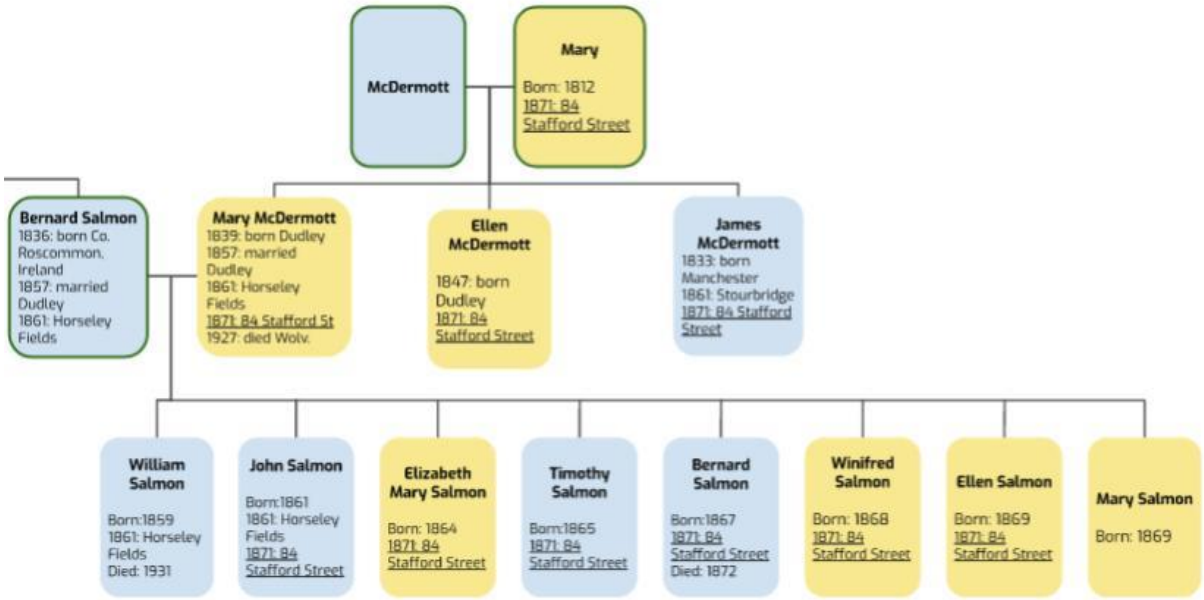
The Lancet condemned the "dominant influence" of "owners of small house-property, whose temptation is to get the largest amount of rent and to give the last quantity of accommodation" in Wolverhampton.[13] Landlords like the Smallwoods portrayed the physical environment of spaces like this as solely the responsibility of their occupants, and disregarded issues like overcrowding, sanitary provision and maintenance. Smallwood conceptualised his property solely in terms of economic value, and actively denied its meaning as home to its Irish residents. This disassociation enabled him to neglect its maintenance, resulting in the infamously poor conditions of Coles Croft. His attitude was typical, and demonstrates how a distinctive conceptualisation of space by the landowning class was the root cause of poor environments in the Victorian slum.

Mary Salmon: landlords in the community

Mary Salmon was a different sort of property owner, not part of the same social world as Smallwood, and with a different conceptualisation of space as property. This does not mean that she mitigated the environmental conditions of her tenants, but her background and community functions meant that her role as landlord was far more embedded in local

[11] 'Wolverhampton Poor Law Union', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 1 September 1847; Board of Guardians, 'Board of Guardians Minute Book' (Wolverhampton Poor Law Union, 20 August 1847), PU-WOL/A/6, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[12] 'Nuisances', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 1 September 1849; Health of Towns Committee, 'Minutes', 23 January 1851; 'Minutes' (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 22 September 1853), WOL-C-HOT/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; 'Caution to Landlords of Small Tenements', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 24 September 1853. In 1853,
[13] 'The Black Country', *The Lancet*, 14 July 1866.

geographies of neighbourhood, poverty, ethnicity and politics than Smallwood's ever could be, and that Irishness could be embedded into economic relations of all kinds.



Tree 6.2 Salmon family tree. NB underlining references locations within the study area (full image)

Salmon was born Mary McDermott in Dudley around 1839. Her parents are difficult to trace, but her older brother was born in Manchester, so it seems likely that the McDermotts were pre-Famine emigrants who moved south. She married Roscommon-born soldier's son Bernard Salmon in Dudley in 1857, and they had several children (Tree 6.2). Salmon's family were marine store dealers, and Bernard moved his family to Wolverhampton to set up shop, initially in Horseley Fields. The 1860s were a busy time for the young family. Bernard was treasurer for the National Brotherhood of St Patrick (see chapter five), and later licensee of the Traveller's Repose; Mary herself was a donor to nationalist causes.[14] Bernard proved a

[14] Bernard Salmon took on the license of the NBSP meeting place, the Traveller's Repose in Carribee Street, in 1868 – this was several years after the branch had dissolved (chapter five). 'Our National Celebrations', *The Irishman*, 22 March 1862; Bernard Salmon et al., 'Wolverhampton Brotherhood of St Patrick', *The Irishman*, 14

less than ideal husband: he was jailed for bankruptcy in 1869 and fled to America. Mary had to file for desertion in order to redeem the value of the property.[15] She took on a large marine store in Stafford Street and was sufficiently financially resilient to purchase the property itself, which included Coles Croft, from Smallwood's estate in 1872.[16] She repaired the dilapidated cottages but found them difficult to let during these boom years – nearly half the houses in Coles Croft were untenanted in 1871 (Map 6.1c).[17] The cottages fell into disrepair again, until the whole was declared unfit for human habitation in 1876.[18] Salmon sold the plot to Francis Lowe of Manchester in 1878 and bought property on Horse Fair instead.[19] Lowe spent over £1,000 on repairs and found that by this time, in the depths of a trade slump, he could have filled Coles Croft two or three times over.[20]

June 1862; 'Transfer of Licenses', *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 24 September 1868. Mary Salmon donated to the Nolan Defence Fund in 1872. 'Nolan Defence Fund', *The Nation*, 7 August 1872, sec. Letters.

[15] 'Singular Bankruptcy Case', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 6 August 1869; Henry Walker and G.L. Underhill, 'Protection Order for Deserted Wife', 4 August 1870, DEED/500/23, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; 'Conveyance Re Plot of Land between Stafford Street and Caribee Street Measuring 2,163 Square Yards Containing 32 Messuages in Caribee Street and Numbers 85, 86 and 87 Stafford Street', 23 December 1872, DEED/500/27, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

[16] Former mayor James Walker acted as trustee for Salmon's mortgage on behalf of the Second Wolverhampton & South Staffordshire Benefit Building & Investment Society. Such building societies proliferated in this period in the West Midlands, although this particular society did not seem to be a survivor. Walker and Salmon made unlikely partners – see chapter five on Walker's vehement opposition to Home Rule. 'Conveyance Re Plot of Land between Stafford Street and Caribee Street Measuring 2,163 Square Yards Containing 32 Messuages in Caribee Street and Numbers 85, 86 and 87 Stafford Street'.

[17] 'The Artizans' Dwellings Scheme at Wolverhampton: Arbitration Proceedings Today', *Evening Express*, 7 July 1880.

[18] Sanitary Committee, 'Minutes' (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 1 January 1876), WOL-C-HOT/7, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies; Sanitary Committee, 'Minutes' (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 11 July 1876), WOL-C-HOT/7, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

[19] Mary Salmon and Francis Lowe, 'Conveyance of a Plot of Land between Stafford Street and Caribee Street Wolverhampton, Containing 1,808 Square Yards; Also the 35 Messuages Standing on the Land, 3 of Which Are Known as 85, 86 and 87 Stafford Street', 30 March 1878, DEED/500/33, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

[20] 'The Artizans' Dwellings Scheme at Wolverhampton: Arbitration Proceedings Today'.

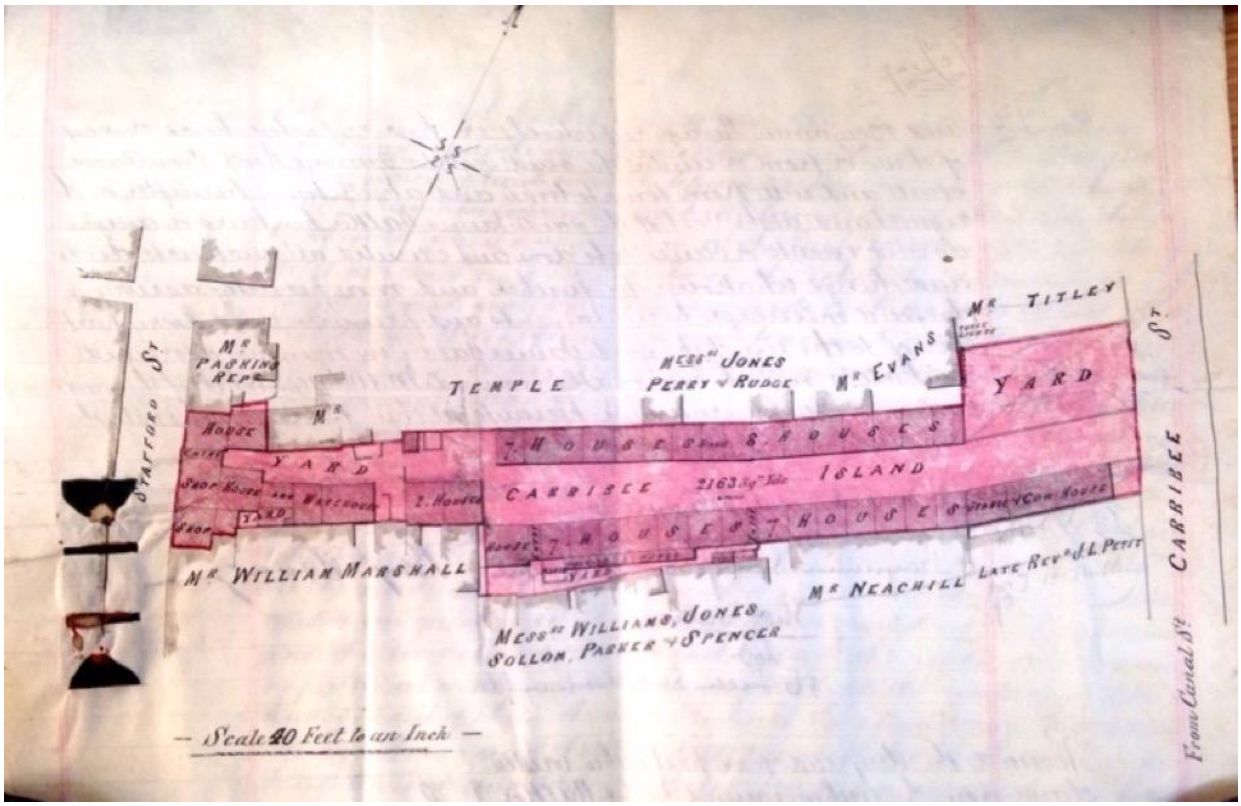
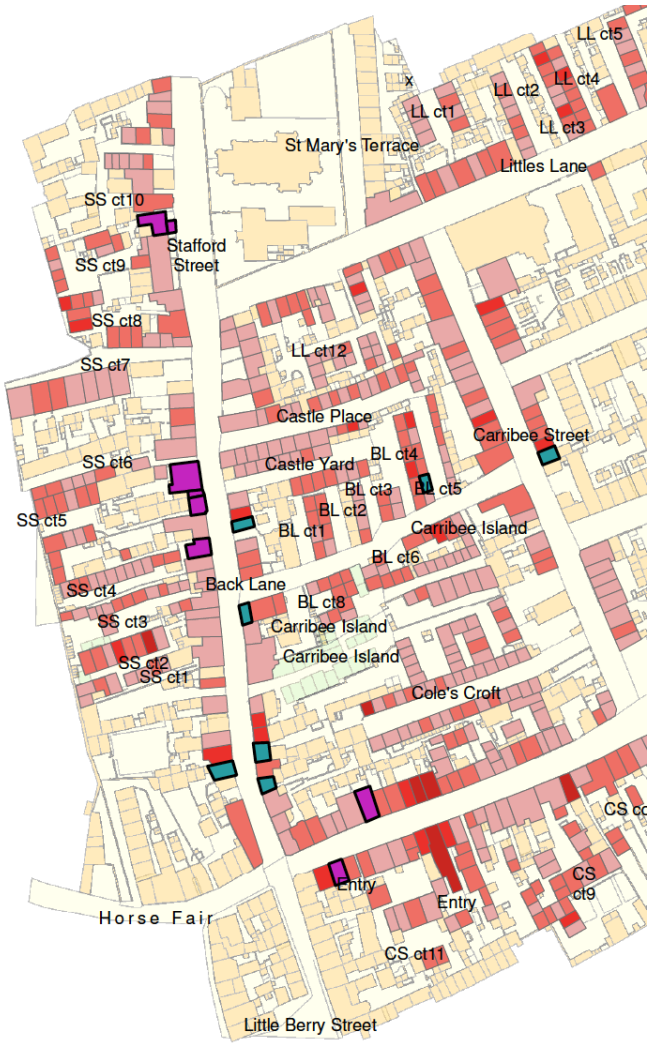


Figure 6.8 Coles Croft at the time of Mary Salmon's purchase in 1872. Adjacent landowners include William Marshall (licensee of the Black Horse); Israel Temple (licensee of the Globe – see chapter three); Reverend Petit; and a representative of the Paskins.[21]

Mary Salmon's wealth was founded on the rag, pawnbroking and marine store trades (used goods of various descriptions, often scavenged). These played an increasingly important role in Victorian Wolverhampton, especially amongst the poor. The West Midlands had the highest rate of such shops in the country, and South Staffordshire was noted for its lax regulations.[22] The industry particularly attracted Irish and Jewish participation in Wolverhampton, as elsewhere.[23] As well as its legitimate functions, all shops buying used

[21] 'Conveyance Re Plot of Land between Stafford Street and Caribee Street Measuring 2,163 Square Yards Containing 32 Messuages in Caribee Street and Numbers 85, 86 and 87 Stafford Street'.
[22] Melanie Tebbutt, *Making Ends Meet: Pawnbroking and Working-Class Credit* (London: Methuen, 1984), 2, 93.
[23] For instance, Isaac Cohen ran a pawnbroking shop in Fryer Street, just off Canal Street. 'A Point of Law under the Pawnbrokers' Act', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 24 October 1855; Tebbutt, *Making Ends Meet*, 107, 123.



Map 6.2 Pawnbrokers (pink) and marine stores (green) in the Stafford Street area, 1871, and occupation density (red) (full map for key)

items had the potential to be receiving houses for stolen items, and pawnbrokers in particular had to be vigilant to prevent prosecution. Salmon was fined 40s. in 1876, for instance, for failing to properly record her purchase of (what turned out to be) stolen spelter.[24] Benjamin Williams, whose triple-fronted pawnshop on Stafford Street was the most prominent in the area, was a frequent witness at the police court. He too was Catholic, and later became a supportive ward councillor.[25] Williams was proof that a pawnbroker's intermediary position, though sometimes exploitative, could make a

[24] 'Stealing and Receiving', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 4 March 1876. For just a handful of many other examples, see 'A Young Man from the Country', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 3 July 1862; 'Stealing a Watch and Chain', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 16 January 1867; 'Caution to Pawnbrokers', *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 22 December 1870.

[25] In 1877, for instance, Williams reported to the council that "the residents in the locality almost to a man were opposed to the idea of being removed to Springfields." 'Wolverhampton Town Council', *Midland Examiner and Times*, 17 January 1877; see also 'The Evictions under the Artisans' Improvement Act', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 14 October 1880.

good career: he left his son a legacy of nearly £14,000.[26] While Williams' pawnbrokers was undoubtedly the largest, map 6.3 demonstrates that the second-hand trade was available within a short distance of every resident of the study area.



Figure 6.9 Reid, Site of new street, c1880, showing a marine store on Fryer Street, to the rear of the Cheshire Cheese pub (private collection, by kind permission of Norman Keech).

Customers would have ranged from poor residents themselves to the better-off seeking a bargain, so marine stores occupied a central position in a complex web of working-class entrepreneurialism.[27] As the number of shops increased, so too did those making a living by

[26] This amount represents approximately £1,000,000 in 2017. Will of Benjamin Frederick Williams of Stafford Street, Wolverhampton, proved Lichfield, 2 August 1911. England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995 [database online]

[27] Henry Mayhew, *London Labour & The London Poor*, ed. Rosemary O'Day and David Englander, Wordsworth Classics of English Literature (1861; repr., Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2008), 204.

collecting for them and working in them (Table 6.3). Collecting involved buying or 'gathering' rags, scrap metal, and second-hand items to trade with dealers. This was casual, precarious work, often undertaken seasonally or alongside other work – the trade peaked in the summer, but the number of sellers peaked during the winter when labouring work declined.[28] Poor families often came to rely on the good will and patronage of working-class entrepreneurs like the Salmons, and such entrepreneurs could build up substantial wealth: Bernard died in New York in 1874, but Mary lived until 1927, leaving a large scrapyard business to her children.[29]

Category	1851	1861	1871
Rag and bone	4	12	15
Marine store collector	3	7	0
Marine store dealer/worker	2	6	6
Pawnbroking	3	3	10
Total	**12**	**28**	**31**

Table 6.3 Second-hand dealing in the study area, 1851-71

Mary Salmon, part of a stigmatised Irish Catholic class, nevertheless made a successful career out of the realities of life in Stafford Street. She was an entrepreneur in a space of poverty: she provided housing, credit, cheap clothes and household items, and informal work, becoming a key node within the informal penny capitalism of such a space. Her sensitivity to

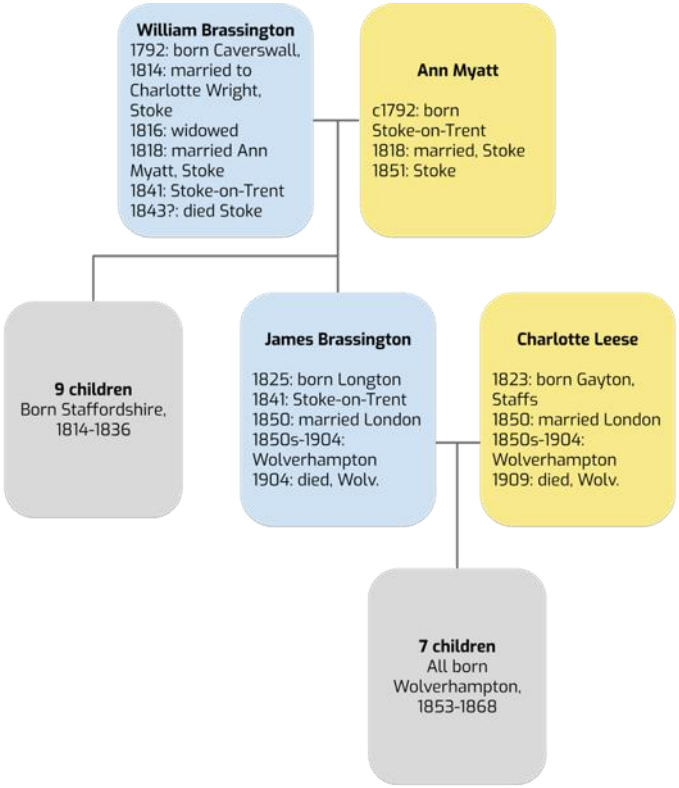
[28] Mayhew, 200–205; Beverley Lemire, 'Consumerism in Preindustrial and Early Industrial England: The Trade in Secondhand Clothes', *Journal of British Studies* 27, no. 1 (1988): 1–24.

[29] England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1927 [database on-line]. Mary Salmon left £1,142.10.5 (nearly £50,000 in 2017) to her scrap metal dealer son William and widowed daughter Mary Day. Her large scrapyard extended from Tower Street to Castle Street and included weighing machines, smelting shed, horses and ponies in a stable and harness room, with a large house in the middle. Bernard Salmon died on 14 December 1874 and was buried at Calvary Cemetery in Queens, New York City. My thanks to the Edwards family for sharing their family history research.

Irish politics and religion gave her an entry into the community, but it was her economic position that truly enmeshed her in the communal life of the neighbourhood, her ethnicity a commercial benefit rather than a hindrance.

James Brassington: the rent collector

Slum property was common in Wolverhampton, yet the Irish settled rapidly and *en masse* in the inner courts of the Stafford Street area. This was only partly economic: there were other areas of cheap accommodation after all. In Wolverhampton, the intermediary between landlord and tenant played a key role in making this area an Irish space. The individual preferences and practices of James Brassington, property agent to the Smallwoods and others, helped define Stafford Street's character.[30]



Tree 6.3 Brassington family tree

Samuel Smallwood, Francis' heir, would barely have stepped foot in Coles Croft: instead, he – like many of his fellow landlords – employed local land agents Brassington &

[30] Francis Wood Smallwood had bequeathed his property to his children Samuel (1802-1878) and Anne Smallwood (1811-1886). Francis Wood Smallwood, 'Will of Francis Wood Smallwood, Gentleman of Wolverhampton, Staffordshire', 12 September 1851, PROB 11/2140/457, The National Archives.

Turton as property managers.[31] James Brassington was born in the Potteries in 1825, the son of a Catholic grocer in Longton (Tree 6.3). He was an apprentice potter in 1841, suggesting a working-class background closer to his later tenants than to Smallwood. In 1853, he and one George Turton took over the business of the recently-deceased House, Land and Commission Agent Thomas Myatt.[32] Smallwood, and later Salmon, retained Brassington & Turton to manage Coles Croft, and they became "agents for property in that neighbourhood to a large extent."[33]

Rent was a key factor in determining living conditions. Rents in the Black Country leapt during the Napoleonic Wars, remained stable until mid-century, then began to rise steadily until the economic depression of the 1870s. The period under study represents continually rising accommodation costs in the region.[34] Although sufficient sources are not available to validate that effectively in the study area, multiple sources refer to rents paid in the poorest houses. A degree of hyperbole needs to be accounted for: it served sensational reports well to highlight high rent for poor properties. Nevertheless, they allow some idea of accommodation

[31] 'Declaration by James Brassington, House Agent and Rent Collector, of Identity of Property in Caribee Island Belonging to Francis Lowe', 14 March 1878, DEED/500/32, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[32] Brassington's father William married Ann Myatt in 1818 in Stoke-on-Trent following the death of his first wife Charlotte in 1816. I have not yet been able to establish a connection between Ann and Thomas Myatt; however it appears that James Brassington's assumption of the business was through a family connection. Thomas Myatt, House Agent of Darlington Street, was most probably Smallwood's agent prior to 1853 too. As an agent for poor houses, he appeared in court in 1848 to charge one William Davis of "flitting," or fleeing a property to avoid the rent. Davis' wife's "told a piteous tale, which excited the sympathy of the Bench" – flitting was a common response to extreme poverty. 'Mrs Elizabeth Myatt', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 2 March 1853, sec. Classified; 'Clandestine Removal of Goods', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 29 November 1848; David Englander, *Landlord and Tenant in Urban Britain 1838-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 3–21.
[33] Watch Committee, 'Minutes' (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 29 July 1858), WOL-C-WAT/2, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[34] Barnsby, *Housing*, 24; George J. Barnsby, 'The Standard of Living in the Black Country during the Nineteenth Century', *Economic History Review* 24, no. 2 (1971): 220–39.

costs, and indicate that these houses typically rented below the average for the region. This was not by much. Only in the case of the smallest and poorest-served buildings did rents fall below 2s. per week (Table 6.4).

Year	Weekly rent, Wolverhampton	Black Country average	Source
1848	2s. 6d. or 2s. 9d.		*WC*[35]
1849	2s. 6d. for newer houses; 1s. 3d. – 1s. 6d. for older		*WC*[36]
1850s		3s.	Barnsby[37]
1860s		3s. 4½d.	Barnsby
1861	1s. for houses condemned as unfit for human habitation		*WC*[38]
1865	One bedroom house, Coles Croft: 1s. 6d. Two bedroom house, Coles Croft: 2s. One bedroom house, Stafford Street: 2s. 4d. Two bedroom house, Canal Street: 2s. 3d.		Henry Julian Hunter[39]
1866	2s. to 4s.		*The Lancet*[40]
1870s		3s. 9d.	Barnsby
1872	Castle Place: 19d. to 1s. 1½d. Carribee Island: 17d. to 1s. 11d.		Rate book[41]
1877	3s. to 7s. across "unhealthy area"		Local Inquiry[42]
1880	2s. 6d., Coles Croft		Arbitration inquiry[43]
1880s		3s. 9d.	Barnsby

Table 6.4 Rents reported in study area, 1848-1880s

[35] 'Wolverhampton Athenaeum: The Sanitary State of the Town', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 26 January 1848.
[36] 'Inquiry into the Sanitary State of Wolverhampton', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 7 February 1849. The *Morning Chronicle* reported a rent of 2s. 6d. for squalid houses near Wolverhampton in the same year: Peter Razzell and R. W. Wainwright, eds., *The Victorian Working Class: Selections from Letters to the Morning Chronicle* (London: Frank Cass, 1973), 100.
[37] Barnsby, 'Standard of Living'. Barnsby's index presumes a four-roomed house in the Black Country, a typical dwelling that might be occupied by a collier with a family of two small children. In this index, rent in 1850 forms around 12 per cent of income. Barnsby himself recognises that his figures are disputable, but are likely to represent a regional average reasonably well.
[38] 'Condemnation of Dwelling Houses as Unfit for Human Habitation', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 15 May 1861.
[39] Hunter, 'Report on the Housing of the Poor', 194. Hunter also reports the size of some houses: a one bedroom house in Coles Croft was 9' 9" square; a two bedroom house in Coles Croft was 10' 6" x 9' 4".
[40] 'The Black Country'.
[41] 'Poor Rate Book: St Mary's & St James' Ward Volume No.3' (Wolverhampton Poor Law Union, 1872), D-FIN-1/1/1/1, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[42] Borough of Wolverhampton, 'Shorthand Notes of Proceedings at Local Inquiry Held at the Town Hall, Wolverhampton before J. Thornhill Harrison, Esq. C.E.', 1877, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[43] 'The Artizans' Dwellings Scheme at Wolverhampton: Arbitration Proceedings Today'.

Standard of living has been bitterly contested by historians, and the paucity of available data for Wolverhampton makes comparisons difficult.[44] The salient point here is that these homes were cheaper than average for the area, but that contemporaries found rents high for the quality of accommodation.[45] The Borough Council felt that residents would be able and willing to pay more for better accommodation, perhaps up to 5s. per week; in fact the instability of employment typically led many residents to choose worse accommodation than they could afford in order to ensure they had enough to eat.[46]

Brassington does not seem to have been reviled, as in some Irish districts in Britain, where those entering "the Irish quarter" did so with "trepidation," frequently resisted with violence.[47] There are no records of Brassington being treated in this way. As agent for Wolverhampton's cheapest property, he certainly wielded power as a gatekeeper for those in need. However, he had more in common with his tenants than Smallwood had, and was also a familiar face to many as a fellow Catholic – Brassington's children were all baptised at SS Peter & Paul. He certainly had some sympathy for his tenants: he called the attention of the Watch Committee to lack of water supply during the hot summer of 1858, for instance.[48]

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[44] On the historiography of the standard of living debate, see K. Theodore Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation: 1846-1886* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 72–79.

[45] Henry Julian Hunter recorded that "rents seemed unusually high" in 1865. Hunter, 'Report on the Housing of the Poor', 194.

[46] Borough of Wolverhampton, 'Local Inquiry'; Barnsby, 'Standard of Living'; David Green and A. G. Parton, 'Slums and Slum Life in Victorian England: London and Birmingham at Mid-Century', in *Slums*, ed. S. Martin Gaskell (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990), 17–91.

[47] Englander, *Landlord and Tenant*, 14. Much of Englander's, and comparative, research focuses on the late nineteenth-century era of slum journalism, new trade unionism and housing activism, rather than mid-century. As Desmond Fitz-Gibbons notes, G. B. Shaw's Mr Lickcheese in his *Widowers' Houses* sums up attitudes to house agents in that era. Desmond Fitz-Gibbon, *Marketable Values: Inventing the Property Market in Modern Britain* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 55.

[48] Watch Committee, 'Minutes' (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 6 August 1858), WOL-C-WAT/2, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

He was probably also flexible, able to manage properties profitably while recognising in 1865 that "rents were not usually paid with regularity."[49] It was probably Brassington's own decision to continue Myatt's practice of letting the houses to Irish families, contributing to its increasingly Irish feel in the post-famine decades. This was also a rare (for Wolverhampton) documented example of the relationship between English Catholic laity and new Irish parishioners in the town. What effect his own working-class background had on his relationships is more difficult to gauge.

James Brassington demonstrates that individual personalities and relationships had an impact on how spatial difference was constructed, and that economics cannot fully explain the production of this type of urban space. Without Brassington, many of Wolverhampton's poorest residents would have struggled to find a home, yet his actions perpetuated the dire environmental condition of courts like Coles Croft. Brassington's working-class Catholicism placed him in an unusual position for such a figure. It likely explains why violence towards rent collectors was not a significant feature of the area as it was elsewhere, and provides context for the police focus on interpersonal violence than property violations. The place of this ambiguous intermediary between landlord and tenant has often been forgotten in urban histories, and James Brassington provides a means of re-introducing their ubiquitous presence in poor neighbourhoods.[50]

[49] Hunter, 'Report on the Housing of the Poor', 194.

[50] Most writing on landlord-tenant relations in Victorian towns, following David Englander, presents the landlord as the personal presence with whom the tenant dealt, as this was the direct economic relation. More recently, historians such as Ruth Livesey have analysed the power that women rent collectors in late-Victorian London wielded over the conduct of their tenants, suggesting that further study would be profitable. Englander, *Landlord*

Stafford Street: housing demand and labour

The Henrys: making ends meet

Stafford Street's environment was defined by the interaction of housing supply and demand. The latter was defined by access to work and wage security, or lack thereof. Finding ways to buy food and clothes and pay the rent dominated the everyday lives of the poor: what work they could do, what home or family life they could maintain, was affected intimately and immediately by local, national and global economies. The story of one Coles Croft family demonstrates how wage insecurity and the search for income impacted intimately upon domestic life.

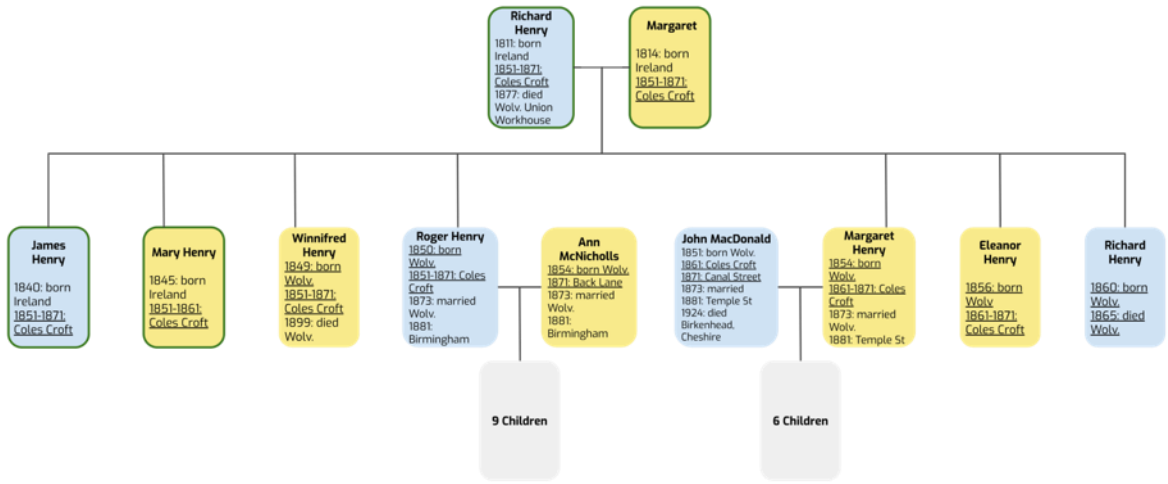
Family member	Birth	1851 occupation	1861 occupation	1871 occupation
Richard Henry	1811, Ireland	Common labourer	Coal dealer	Coal dealer
Margaret Henry	1815, Ireland			
James Henry	1840, Ireland		Dealer in salt	Salt dealer
Mary Henry	1844, Ireland		Servant	(Absent)
Winifred Henry	1847, Ireland		Servant	Shop girl at nail factory
Roger Henry	1850, Wolverhampton		Striker for blacksmith	Forgeman
Margaret Henry	1854, Wolverhampton			Shop girl at nail factory
Eleanor Henry	1856, Wolverhampton		Scholar	Scholar
Richard Henry	1860, Wolverhampton (died 1865)			

Table 6.5 Occupations of Henry family, 1851-71. NB five lodgers in 1851, two lodgers in 1861.[51]

and Tenant; Ruth Livesey, 'Women Rent Collectors and the Rewriting of Space, Class and Gender in East London, 1870–1900', in *Women and the Making of Built Space in England, 1870-1950* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 86–105.

[51] Not all Henry children can be traced beyond these records. Roger Henry married and moved to Aston, Birmingham – he continued in the metal trade as an edge-tool maker. Margaret Henry married a brickmaker named John MacDonald and remained in Wolverhampton. Ellen Henry was a school governess in Walsall in 1881. Richard, the youngest, died as a child in 1865.

Richard Henry moved his young family to Wolverhampton in the mass exodus of 1847.[52] They probably went straight to Coles Croft, the address Richard gave when he was injured building a brickkiln in 1848.[53] Richard and Margaret had three children, including a baby (Winifred was born in Ireland in 1847), but they settled into life in Wolverhampton and remained in Coles Croft at least until the 1870s (Tree 6.4). As unskilled Famine emigrants, they constituted some of Wolverhampton's poorest residents, and their working lives reflect the choices such families had to make to survive.



Tree 6.4 Henry family tree (full tree)

In 1851, Richard Henry's labouring wages were no more than 20s. per week. Barnsby estimates that any less than 25s. per week was barely sufficient to survive.[54] The distinctive

[52] It is not clear from where in Ireland the Henrys emigrated. MacRaild and Smith suggest that the link between family and place in Ireland means that isonymic, or surname, analysis, is sufficiently robust to make an educated guess (Malcolm Smith and Donald M. MacRaild, 'The Origins of the Irish in Northern England: An Isonymic Analysis of Data from the 1881 Census', *Immigrants & Minorities* 27, no. 2–3 (2009): 152–77.) Data from the Irish Ancestors website (John Grenham, 'Irish Ancestors', Irish Ancestors, accessed 27 January 2020, https://www.johngrenham.com/.) suggests that Henry correlates most strongly in this period to counties Derry, Sligo, Tyrone, Mayo and Armagh.

[53] 'Accident at a Brickkiln', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 22 November 1848.

[54] Barnsby, 'Standard of Living'.

features of Black Country work were the variability and contingency of wages. Full employment was infrequent, and the daily earnings of a collier, for instance, ranged from a nadir in 1842 (2s. 4½d. per day) to a peak of 5s. 6d. in 1873, after which they dropped dramatically and did not recover until the twentieth century.[55] Neither was this a consistent improvement in real terms: the standard of living was likely better during the turbulent 1840s than the more economically successful 1850s or 1860s.[56] In 1873 Thomas Baker, a puddler at Chillington Works, met his colleague Thomas Jones in Stafford Street. Baker accused Jones of earning 3s. 6d. per day, compared to his own 3s. (21s. and 18s. per week respectively). Baker's jealousy was sufficient for him to bite part of Jones's nose off, earning himself a sentence of twelve months' hard labour.[57] Even during apparently prosperous times, small discrepancies made a big difference.

Richard Henry's 20s. was nowhere near sufficient to maintain a family, and over the following years, the whole household became involved in making ends meet (Table 6.5). One option was to take paying lodgers – often related through kinship or friendship networks – and the Henrys supplemented their income by 1s. to 1s. 3d. per week in this way.[58] This was not uncommon, and though related to Stafford Street's position near key entry points into

[55] Wages are for a standard twelve-hour working day; the working week was typically 6 days. See Barnsby, *Social Conditions*, 215–18.
[56] Barnsby, 224.
[57] 'Shocking Brutality', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 7 January 1874; 'Biting off a Man's Nose', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 9 January 1874.
[58] This estimate of the cost of lodging was suggested by local sanitarian W. A. Lewis in a lecture at the Athenaeum: 'Wolverhampton Athenaeum: The Sanitary State of the Town'. Census returns indicate the Henrys housed five lodgers in 1851 and two in 1861. In 1854, Richard Henry was fined 6s. for overcrowding. 'Conviction under the Lodging-House Act', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 8 March 1854.

Wolverhampton, such informal lodging was particularly attributed to the Irish.[59] Robert Rawlinson was told:

> The Irish paid better than the English, and the reason of this was that the former took in so many lodgers; that it could never be ascertained how many they would take into one house; that they slept on the floor, men, women and children being crowded together.[60]

Lodging declined over time, and shifted from this widespread, networked, informal lodging in homes, to formalised, commercial lodging-houses in larger buildings (Table 6.6; Map 6.3).[61] Although it has been argued that this decline was a result of improving economic conditions, as I suggested in chapter two this was as much to do with regulation and enforcement.[62]

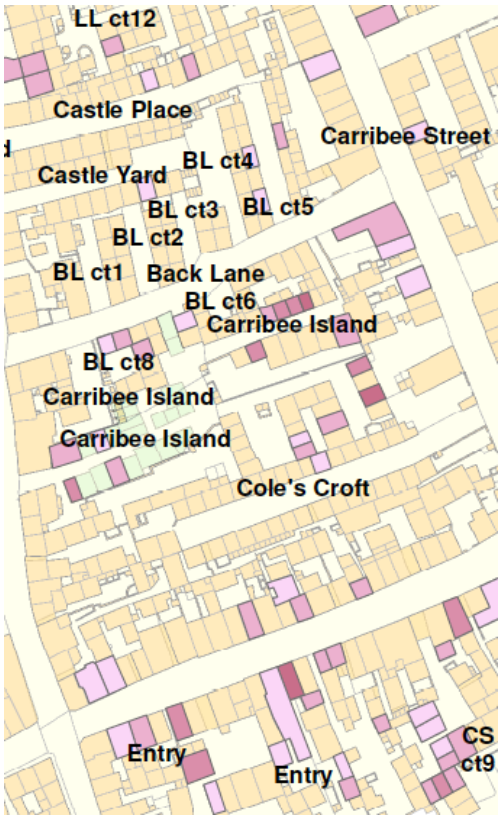
[59] Compare London's St Giles Rookery, which developed as an entry point for migrants in the eighteenth century, when it was still located at the edge of London. Crymble, 'The Decline and Fall of an Early Modern Slum'.
[60] 'Inquiry into the Sanitary State of Wolverhampton'.
[61] Lodging is difficult to quantify accurately from census records – lodgers were recorded in different ways, formal lodging houses were often not distinguished from informal lodgers, etc. The census itself was constructed with an idealised nuclear family at its heart, recording residents in relation to a putative head of household who may have had no authority in the house. These figures use those described as lodgers or boarders on census returns. Leonore Davidoff, 'The Separation of Home and Work? Landladies and Lodgers in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century England', in *Fit Work for Women*, ed. Sandra Burman (London: Routledge, 2013), 64–97.
[62] Alison Hobbs, 'The Irish of Caribee Island: Wolverhampton's Irish District, 1851-1871' (MPhil, Wolverhampton, University of Wolverhampton, 2003), 72.

Street or court	1851		1861		1871	
	Lodgers	Lodgers per occupied house	Lodgers	Lodgers per occupied house	Lodgers	Lodgers per occupied house
Stafford Street	42	0.737	15	0.313	18	0.360
Canal Street	178	1.894	62	0.713	143	1.702
Littles Lane	44	0.698	8	0.205	23	0.622
Carribee Street	37	2.056	64	2.065	29	0.674
Stafford Street courts	116	1.731	83	0.954	54	0.614
Canal Street courts	163	2.329	50	0.595	50	0.735
Littles Lane courts	95	1.638	44	0.440	54	0.568
Carribee Island	197	3.456	64	1.455	7	0.292
Coles Croft	121	3.781	1	0.037	0	0.000
Back Lane	92	4.000	4	0.308	17	1.417
Back Lane courts	135	3.462	14	0.341	20	0.435
Castle Place & Castle Yard	136	3.317	11	0.250	13	0.351
Total	**1356**	**2.191**	**420**	**0.651**	**428**	**0.698**

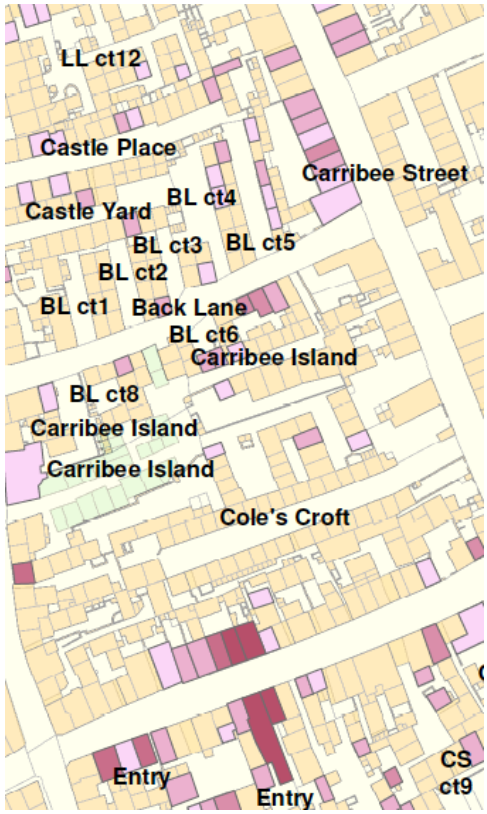
Table 6.6 Number of lodgers per occupied house, 1851-1871 (full table)



Map 6.3a Excerpt from map of lodgers per household, 1851 (full map)



Map 6.3b Excerpt from map of lodgers per household, 1861 (full map)



Map 6.3c Excerpt from map of lodgers per household, 1871 (full map)

Formal lodging-houses were typically on main streets (with a cluster on Back Lane), and were easily recognisable to everyday travellers into Wolverhampton, who would not have to risk venturing into an unfamiliar Irish space, as the central courts represented, or have needed a contact or network to stay with a family. These were still spaces of transience, however. The widowed licensee of the Jolly Crispin beerhouse on Canal Street, Alice Williams, ran such an establishment. This could be extremely crowded, though with far fewer Irish lodgers. In 1871 for instance, Williams was joined by nine English lodgers (seven men and two women) and the Anglo-Italian Galvani family, whose children had been born all over the world, suggesting a family accustomed to travel. The stigma of the "low lodging-house" was rife in

Wolverhampton; nevertheless it provided income for both starving Irish families and unsupported widows alike.[63]

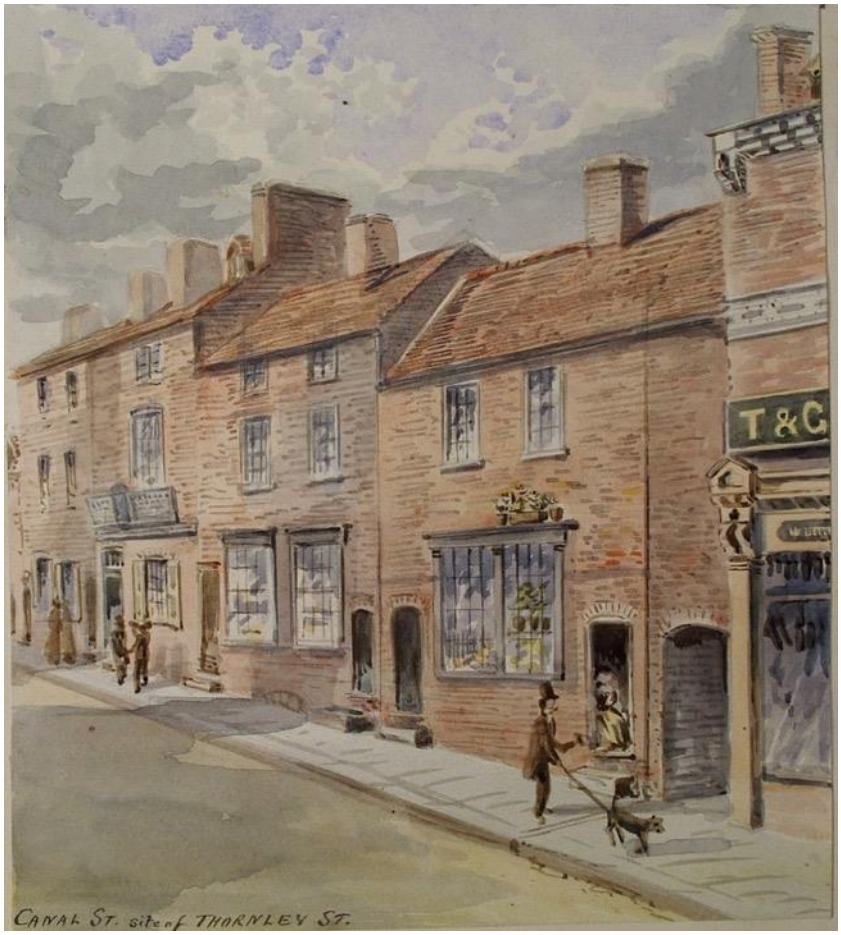


Figure 6.10 Reid, c.1880s, Canal Street. The Jolly Crispin beerhouse and lodging-house is the two-storeyed building in the foreground with a display above one window (private collection, by kind permission of Norman Keech).

As well as taking lodgers, others in the Henry family worked too, including domestic service, street-selling, and industrial labour. Several followed a common second-generation route into local manufacturing work. Winifred and Margaret would not have been out of place amongst their peers working in an industrial setting, and women workers were common in both poor courts and the better-off houses of Stafford

[63] In 1853 Viscount Ingestre lectured in Wolverhampton on the "low lodging house, filled to suffocation by the most abandoned of all ages – one of the twenty or thirty inmates of a space not large enough for the night accommodation of more than two or three." Charles John C. Talbot (Viscount Ingestre), *Social Evils: Their Causes and Their Cure, a Lecture* (Wolverhampton: William Parke, 1853).

Street.[64] Women's work did not conform to any distinct spatial divide, but children's work was far more prevalent in the poorest courts than elsewhere in the study area.

Ten-year-old Roger Henry would have been far from the only working child in Coles Croft in 1861 (Map 6.4, Table 6.7). Work frequently began aged 9, with a few outlying results younger than this, earning wages as low as 5s. per week.[65] In 1862, the economist FD Longe visited several workplaces in the study area for the Children's Employment Commission. William Newman's door-spring workshop in Bowling Green Row employed six skilled spring-makers, and was not condemned (although employees were typically graduates from the lock industry, which *was* a widespread employer of child labour). No-one under 13 worked for Newman.[66] John Foster's Canal Street lockworks operated with six or seven apprentices, starting at 11. Work was hard, with low pay, long hours, and beatings for the recalcitrant.[67]

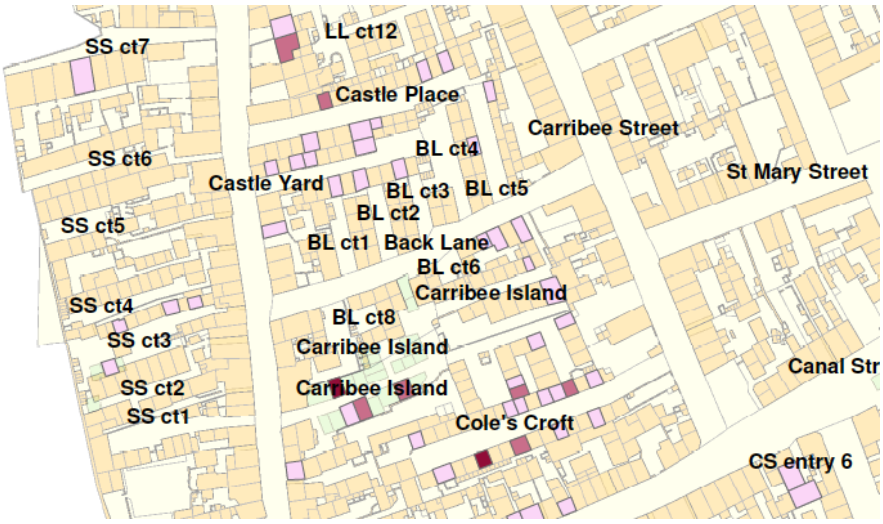
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[64] The recording of women's work in the census was idiosyncratic to individual enumerators, and is difficult to quantify or compare over time – see Edward Higgs and Amanda Wilkinson, 'Women, Occupations and Work in the Victorian Censuses Revisited', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 81 (2016): 17–38. In the study area, the proportion of women working rose from 32.5 per cent in 1851 to 38.2 per cent in 1871, but this could easily be related to differences in recording.

[65] Ivy Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850*, 3rd ed. (London: Virago, 1981), 273; R. H. Horne, 'Reports on the Iron Trades and Other Manufactures of South Staffordshire and the Neighbouring Parts of Worcestershire and Shropshire', in *Appendix to the Second Report of the Commissioners: Trades and Manufactures, Reports and Evidence from Sub-Commissioners*, vol. P. P. (432), xv, 1842, Q22; F. D. Longe, 'Appendix to Third Report: The Ironworks of South Staffordshire and Worcestershire Districts, and the Metal Trades of the District of Wolverhampton', in *Reports from Commissioners: Children's Employment*, vol. P. P. (3414), xxii, 1864.

[66] William Newman & Sons is a good example of reach and importance of the small Black Country firm within wider economies. The business was established in Wolverhampton in 1750 and the year prior to the 1851 census had patented the "Imperial" door spring. The firm operated in Wolverhampton and Birmingham and became a major manufacturer – by their bicentennial, the firm celebrating that their springs were found all across the British Empire and Commonwealth. *The Story of William Newman & Sons Limited* (Birmingham: William Newman & Sons, 1950).

[67] In 1842, the Children's Employment Commissioner R. H. Horne had interviewed one Benjamin Simcox at Foster's workshop. His experience had been good: "his master never beats him," he recorded, "only when he wants it," and the other five apprentices were "all well treated, plenty to eat, it's a very good place; nobody much beated." By 1851, Simcox was a journeyman locksmith living on Canal Street. Horne, 'South Staffordshire', q21; Longe, 'Children's Employment', 27.



Map 6.4 Excerpt from map of children under age 14 in employment, 1851 (full 1851 map; see also 1861, 1871)

Street	1851	1861	1871
Stafford Street	10.91%	5.10%	1.23%
Canal Street	7.78%	7.80%	3.90%
Littles Lane	1.55%	2.78%	2.22%
Carribee Street	0.00%	9.76%	6.49%
Stafford Street courts	4.41%	4.62%	3.86%
Canal Street courts	14.06%	3.36%	1.99%
Littles Lane courts	9.68%	8.15%	2.93%
Carribee Island	9.68%	5.31%	5.13%
Coles Croft	17.98%	11.94%	3.13%
Back Lane	4.00%	2.50%	20.00%
Back Lane courts	4.76%	2.83%	2.99%
Castle Place & Castle Yard	14.29%	4.20%	8.82%
Total	**8.81%**	**5.80%**	**3.69%**

Table 6.7 Proportion of children aged under 14 in employment in census returns 1851-71 (full table)

At Danks & Walker's large cut-nail works on Stafford Street (possibly where Winifred and Margaret Henry worked), interviewees started work aged eight or nine, and had been brought in by their older brothers.[68] Child labour was by no means uncommon.

[68] Longe interviewed Abraham Williams (16) and John Edwards (14). Boys were sub-contracted by the workmen rather than the proprietors. Williams started work aged eight "to blow bellows for my brother"; by 1862 he was

The racialised environment clearly impacted Longe's assessment. Though none of Foster's apprentices in any census were Irish, for example, Longe described his workshop as being "in the style of the most degraded Irish life."[69] Joseph Stainton, master of the Ragged School, revealed similar prejudices to Longe:

> I do not think there are many children of English parents idling in the streets; but in Stafford Street and that neighbourhood you will find plenty of Irish children playing about the streets.[70]

Irishness and child labour were linked in these representations, even though few of Longe's interviewees were actually Irish.[71] As with earlier sanitary inspections, this assessment was based on a reading of the workshop's wider environs, informed by a self-appointed authority. In reality, child labour was an everyday part of life regardless of ethnicity, unquestioned by child or parent.

Other casual work included James Henry's salt-dealing, probably best described as hawking. His father's coal-dealing may have been equally informal. Hawking was an important part of the street economy in Victorian towns: for some a full-time career, for others a recourse in times of slack work.[72] Henry Mayhew noted the seasonality of "costermongers": some spent

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a nail cutter, working 6am-6pm daily. He attended night school for two hours per day, but could not read. Edwards worked similar hours "turning tips" on the nails and had started aged nine. He "does not know what county this town is in, nor how much six times seven are; never learnt arithmetic." Longe, 'Children's Employment', 23.

[69] Longe, 27.

[70] Longe, 40.

[71] The exception may have been 12-year-old Thomas Murphy of Back Lane, who started as a rope spinner aged eight and now earned 4s. 6d. per week at a hinge manufactory. Longe, 29.

[72] John Benson, *The Penny Capitalists: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working-Class Entrepreneurs* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1983), 103–4; Stephen Jankiewicz, 'A Dangerous Class: The Street Sellers of Nineteenth-Century London', *Journal of Social History* 46, no. 2 (2012): 391–415; Sébastien Rioux, *The Social Cost of Cheap Food:*

the warmer months of spring and summer hawking, collecting rags during the autumn and winter; others moved from street-selling in winter into labouring when more work became available in the spring.[73] The census was generally taken in this changeover period, however, preventing further analysis of seasonal labour. Levi Bernstein's lodgers in Canal Street hawked rhubarb, for instance, just becoming available when the census was taken in late March 1851, but it is impossible to say whether they went into labouring or alternative street-selling after the spring.[74] Richard and James Henry's returns suggests a degree of consistency over time, probably sustained by informal networks of such sellers in the area. In 1871 there were seven salt-sellers in the study area, all Irish, all living in the poorest courts (including Mary McNicholls, whose daughter Ann married Roger Henry in 1873).[75]

Despite this collective effort, Richard Henry died in poverty in 1877 at the workhouse.[76] Life for the Henrys had been a struggle from the moment of arrival in Wolverhampton, and their

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Labour and the Political Economy of Food Distribution in Britain, 1830–1914 (Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen's Press, 2019), 79.

[73] Mayhew, *London Labour & The London Poor*, 90, 201.

[74] Although I have been unable to trace them any further, it is possible that Bernstein's rhubarb-hawking lodgers Wolf Lipman and Henri Jacob were connected to another lodger, Samuel Weinberg – as a quack doctor, Weinberg may well have used rhubarb for its purgative properties. M. R. Lee et al., 'Rhubarb (Rheum Species): The Role of Edinburgh in Its Cultivation and Development', *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh* 47, no. 1 (2017): 102–9.

[75] The salt hawkers in the 1871 census were John Henry of Coles Croft, Mary McNicholls of Back Lane, Anthony and Catherine Brown of Carribee Island, Patrick Callaghan of Castle Place, Patrick Jordan of court 3, Canal Street, and John Walsh, also of Back Lane. Other items hawked included skins, brushes, fish, oranges, rags, cotton, baskets, fruit, leather, rhubarb, haberdashery, knitted wares and "soft goods". Salt-selling has had a long history in the Black Country, and remained associated with certain villages (notably the Gornals) well into the twentieth century. This may not have been edible salt: Phil Drabble describes a sandy material used for scrubbing floors and steps sold by the Watton family of Gornal in the early twentieth century – they too supplemented this income with hawking logs, "rag-and-boning" and picking hops, depending on the season. Phil Drabble, *Black Country* (London: R. Hale, 1952), 176–77.

[76] 'Richard HENRY (Unknown-1877)', Find A Grave, accessed 27 January 2020, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/199353647/richard-henry.

poverty completely dictated their lifestyle. Wages varied with the economy, and had to be supplemented in various ways. When any reduction in hours could have a dramatic influence on household income, it is hardly surprising that poor families spent as little on rent as possible, and ended up in the worst possible housing. Yet this was not limited to the Irish, but was true for all living in poverty. Although there were spatial patterns of labour which impacted upon everyday life, the lives of all poor families were dominated by finding work, and the poorer the resident, the greater the importance of the whole family working, and the greater the difficulty in conforming to Victorian ideals of gendered work, education, or privacy. Poverty was not an Irish phenomenon: its reality cut across age, gender, ethnicity, and space.

Thomas and Anthony Timlin: labour geographies

For most of Wolverhampton's residents, work meant industrial labour. Its economy was built on metal, drawing on the vast mineral mining and processing capacity of the Black Country and a combination of large ironworks, traditional domestic-scale industries like lockmaking, and a commercial sector supporting this.[77] Residents of Stafford Street worked in the immediate neighbourhood, but also spread across the region in patterns defined by local labour practices and the Black Country economy. Statistics provide only a limited insight into these labour geographies. Census descriptions of employment rarely distinguished between work setting, skill level or place of employment, and to understand how working lives affected

[77] Chris Upton, *A History of Wolverhampton* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1998), 84–91.

domestic lives in Stafford Street, it is necessary to draw in personal and family histories of these places.



Map 6.5a Excerpt from map of heads of household by occupational sector, 1851 (full map)

Some initial conclusions can be drawn from the available data. As Table 6.8 and Map 6.5 show, secondary (manufacturing) work dominated, with primary labour also important, particularly in the inner courts. As time went on, more and more of those poorer inner residents moved into manufacturing roles. But this reflected Wolverhampton in general, and does not speak to the specificity of this neighbourhood.[78] It also fails to differentiate between scales: older,

[78] Barnsby, *Social Conditions*, 18.

domestic-scale industry was as important as factory-based industry in Black Country towns, but was often highly skilled, and access relied on contacts and patronage, rather than more casual recruitment at larger employers.[79]

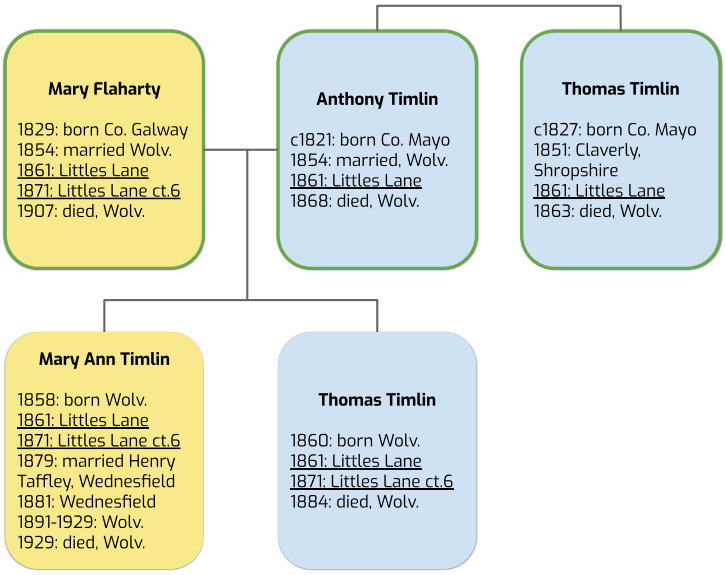
	1851						1861						1871					
Street	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary dealers	Tertiary sellers	Tertiary service	Transport & Comms	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary dealers	Tertiary sellers	Tertiary service	Transport & Comms	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary dealers	Tertiary sellers	Tertiary service	Transport & Comms
Stafford Street	2	51	5	11	24	6	2	38	3	12	33	2	2	32	7	26	29	2
Canal Street	10	50	2	4	16	9	8	49	4	9	20	5	6	48	4	8	20	11
Littles Lane	1	72	1	2	17	6	9	64	1	7	15	2	4	59	0	4	19	13
Carribee Street	13	71	3	0	11	3	19	52	4	1	17	2	11	44	4	7	14	17
Stafford Street courts	12	59	1	10	7	10	38	46	1	5	5	2	20	61	4	4	3	5
Canal Street courts	31	37	2	3	11	4	30	41	1	7	12	4	17	55	3	6	6	11
Littles Lane courts	13	63	2	4	10	9	18	67	0	0	7	5	8	64	2	1	6	17
Carribee Island	31	46	0	4	15	1	16	28	2	12	9	0	9	46	0	26	7	6
Coles Croft	34	38	3	2	10	2	24	35	3	6	22	0	10	69	7	10	5	0
Back Lane	31	39	7	7	7	7	29	18	0	9	7	2	8	48	2	9	26	2
Back Lane courts	28	49	0	4	10	6	12	20	1	9	6	0	14	52	1	7	10	8
Castle Place & Castle Yard	23	53	0	2	14	6	12	17	0	3	14	1	15	49	1	12	18	0
Total	19	50	2	5	13	6	18	43	2	6	14	3	11	52	3	9	14	9

Table 6.8 Proportion (per cent) of employment within each street, by sector, 1851-71 (full table).

These unsatisfactory statistics can be fleshed out by reading sources like newspaper reports against the grain to reveal important details about changing labour geographies, urban fabric and regional economy. Stories like that of Thomas and Anthony Timlin show that labour in

[79] Barnsby, 16; George Cyril Allen, *The Industrial Development of Birmingham and the Black Country, 1860-1927* (New York, NY: A. M. Kelley, 1929), 113.

Stafford Street had distinctive features that contributed to its overall character, and that variables such as ethnicity, age and residence correlated to real inequalities. Though comparatively few residents worked within the area itself, Stafford Street was nevertheless defined by work.



Tree 6.5 Timlin family tree

Thomas Timlin was born in Mayo around 1827 and emigrated to England during the famine (Tree 6.5). In 1851, he took agricultural work alongside three other Irishmen in the hamlet of Hopstone, Shropshire, 8.5 miles from Wolverhampton. He was soon joined by his brother Anthony, and in 1861 both lived in Littles Lane, with Anthony's wife Mary, their two young children, and Mary's sister Catherine. This extended family living arrangement was by no means exclusively Irish, but was crucial to the immigrant community to the extent that the nuclear family in one household was the exception rather than the norm. The Timlins were Irish patriots: they contributed funds to various causes, and both were active in the National

Brotherhood of St Patrick (chapter five).[80] Their participation ended before that branch's decline, however, with a tragic accident at work in 1863.

Thomas and Anthony were both gasworks labourers in 1861, and worked on the railway sidings at the Stafford Road gasworks. Work in the Transport and Communication sector increased substantially with each census. The reasons for this are partly general – the increase in traffic and delivery work as Wolverhampton grew – and partly specific: Wolverhampton's first railway station opened just across the canal in 1852, its second adjacently in 1854, and a major expansion of the Great Western Railway works just to the north of Littles Lane in 1858.[81] Just beyond the latter was the large new gasworks, opened in 1849.[82] By 1871, railway work had become one of Wolverhampton's largest employers, and was particularly evident in Littles Lane and its courts, close to both (Maps 6.5b-c). Listed employment included engine fitters, porters, railway policeman and shunters.[83]

[80] 'Donegal Relief Fund', *The Nation*, 27 March 1858; B. Salmon, 'Fair Trial Fund', *The Nation*, 7 May 1859, sec. Letters; B. Salmon, 'The M'Manus Fund', *The Nation*, 26 October 1861, sec. Letters; 'Our National Celebrations'; Patrick Leonard, 'National Brotherhood of St Patrick: Wolverhampton Branch', *The Irishman*, 17 May 1862.

[81] The first station named for Wolverhampton was in fact on the Grand Junction Railway at Wednesfield Heath, several miles to the east, in 1837. The GJR did not envisage the need of a station any closer than this to Wolverhampton, enabling the GWR to capitalise and make Wolverhampton one of Britain's major railway towns. Upton, *A History of Wolverhampton*, 83.

[82] Bev Parker, 'Stafford Road Gas Works', Wolverhampton Heritage and History Website, accessed 5 January 2021, http://www.historywebsite.co.uk/Museum/OtherTrades/BCN/gasworks2/Gasworks.htm.

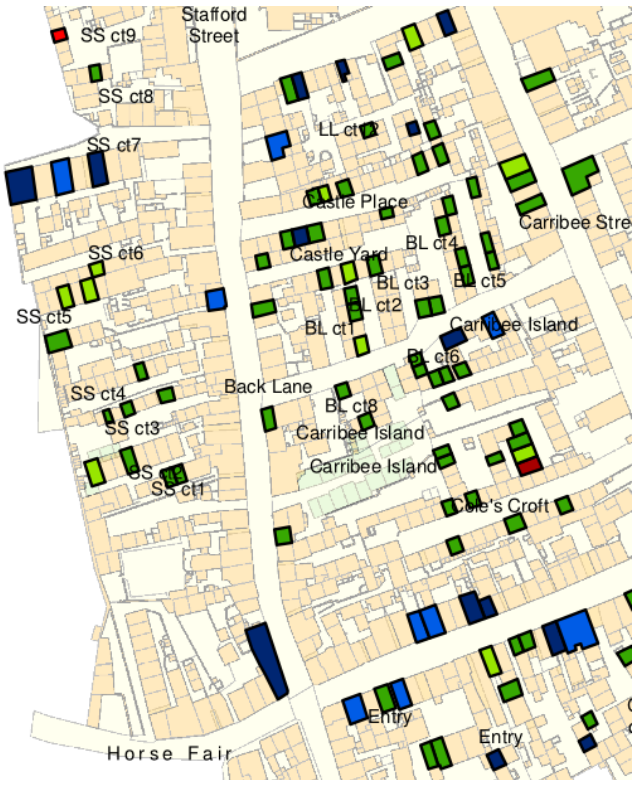
[83] The Stafford Road works manufactured 800 locomotives between 1859 and 1908, and employed 450 men by the 1930s. Upton, *A History of Wolverhampton*, 83.



Map 6.5b+c Employment by occupational sector in Littles Lane, 1861-71, showing growth in Transport sector employment (full maps 1861, 1871)

At work in November 1863, unaware of each other's actions, Anthony Timlin began to shunt a laden wagon downhill while Thomas was moving an empty wagon on the same siding. When the two met, the momentum of the laden wagon forced Thomas's wagon onto him, and he was crushed under the wheels, killing him.[84] The event seems to have completely demoralised Anthony. While other Timlins in Wolverhampton went on to be prominent local home rulers in the 1870s, no further trace can be found of Anthony, and he died at home in 1868.

[84] 'A Man Accidentally Killed by His Own Brother at the Wolverhampton Gasworks', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 11 November 1863. The inquest found the blame to be with the deceased, who "had no business whatever to remove the empty wagon, and had his brother been aware of the obstacle before him, he might, with the facilities at his command, in the shape of breaks, have stopped the wagon almost immediately."



Map 6.6 Households headed by widows or widowers, 1871, demonstrating the concentration in courts rather than streets (full map)

His widow Mary turned to charring, and would have been far from alone in having to enter the workforce.[85] Widowed female heads of household were spread across the study area, but Irish widows mapped closely to the poorest areas (Map 6.7). As the Timlins show, work – from the types available locally, to larger attitudes towards social security – impacted upon multiple labour geographies at neighbourhood scale.

Much unskilled employment was casual, and evidence like accident reports are often the only way to identify employers. This scanty data (Figure 6.11) suggests that residents of the study area worked in the town's larger factories – major employers, although not monolithic in the same way as individual employers in shipbuilding or cotton towns – though larger workplaces did often present more opportunities for injury.

[85] Maggie Andrews and Janis Lomas, *Widows: Poverty, Power and Politics* (Cheltenham: The History Press, 2020), chap. 2.

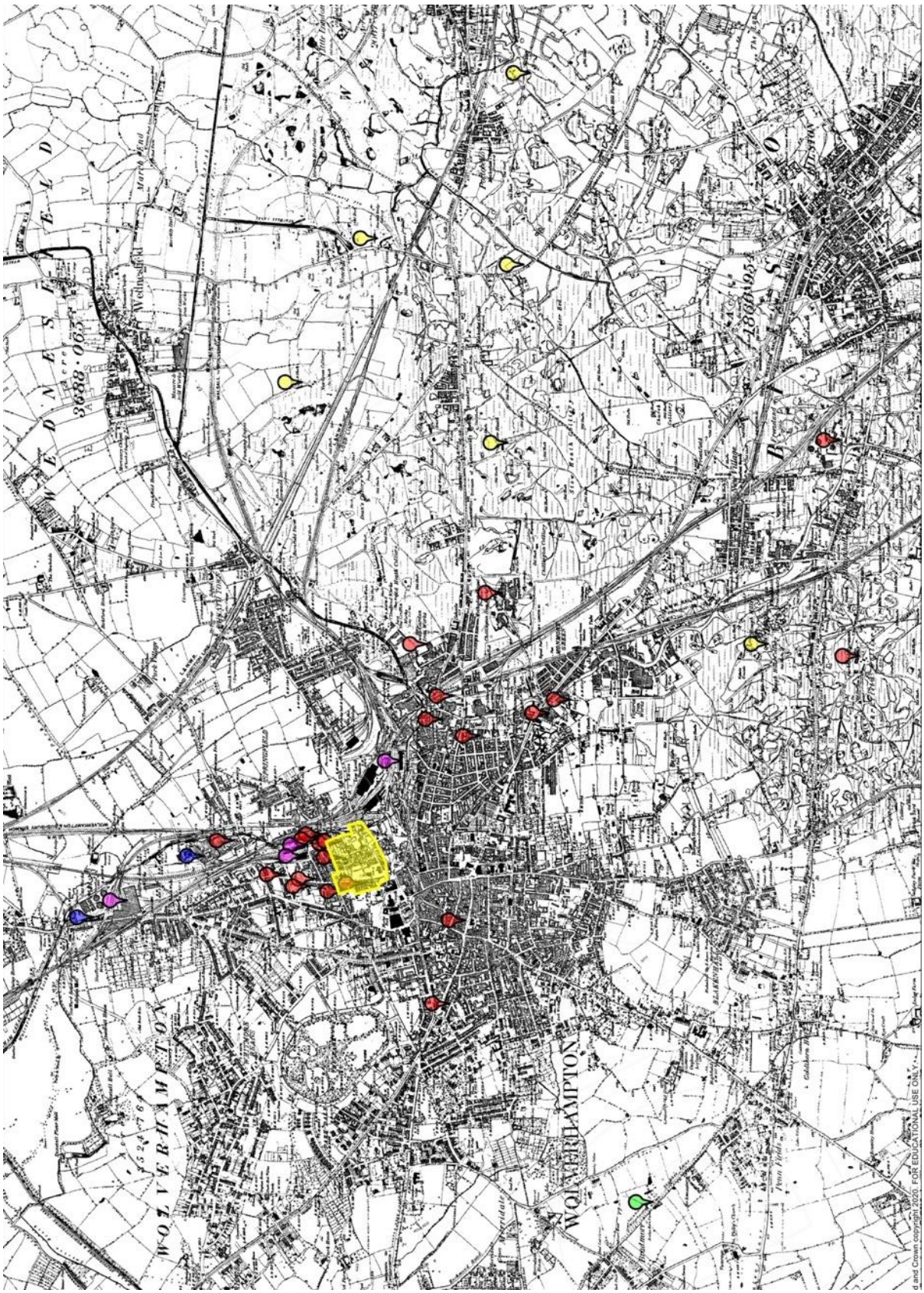


Figure 6.11 Identified workplaces of Stafford Street residents plotted on 1887 Ordnance Survey Staffordshire 1st Edition. © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2021). All rights reserved. (1887). Red = manufacturing; yellow = mining; pink = transport; green = agricultural; blue = other.

Many were situated south-east of Wolverhampton, adjacent to the coalfield, the Birmingham Canal and the railway (Figure 6.12).[86] George Thorneycroft's Shrubbery and Swan Garden Ironworks were some of the largest in the Black Country, supplying railway, the military and the Manchester cotton industry. Nearby, the Minerva Works (owned by another mayor, Isaac Jenks) produced up to 80 per cent of steel exported to the US in the 1870s. John Barker's vast Chillington Works produced coal and every kind of iron. The Mitre, Eagle, and Crown Nail Works lay nearby too, and another cluster of factories developed in north-eastern Wolverhampton, from Little's Lane northwards.

Few workers from the Stafford Street area were recorded in central or western Wolverhampton, where older, smaller, workshop-based industries traditional to the town predominated: lockmaking, tinplating and japanning works employing skilled operatives in less dangerous conditions than the larger ironworks. Almost all however produced for a global, particularly imperial, market so that global economic changes like the global recession of the 1870s impacted directly on spaces of the poor.[87]

[86] On the tendency of Black Country industry to cling to these transport corridors, see Paul Quigley, 'Suburbanisation and Changing Landscape Character: The Example of the Black Country', *Landscapes* 11, no. 2 (2010): 45–59.

[87] The unparalleled economic success of the 1850s and 1860s was followed by global recession in the 1870s, for instance. Each of these large employers responded differently: Thorneycroft's business collapsed in 1877; Jenks's rode out the trouble by operating at a loss; and Chillington diversified into tools, becoming one of the largest suppliers of hoes in the world – a key product in an Empire built on colonial agriculture. Samuel Griffiths, *Griffiths' Guide to the Iron Trade of Great Britain* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1878); Allen, *Industrial Development*, 233; Chris Evans, 'The Plantation Hoe: The Rise and Fall of an Atlantic Commodity, 1650–1850', *The William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (2012): 71–100.

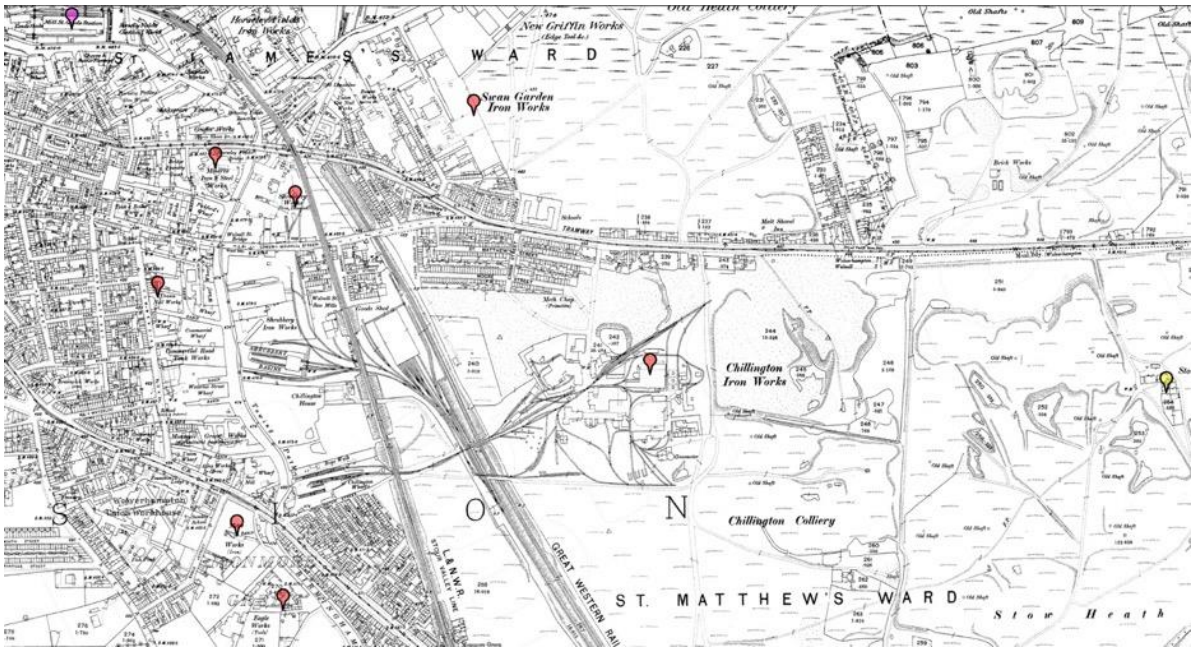
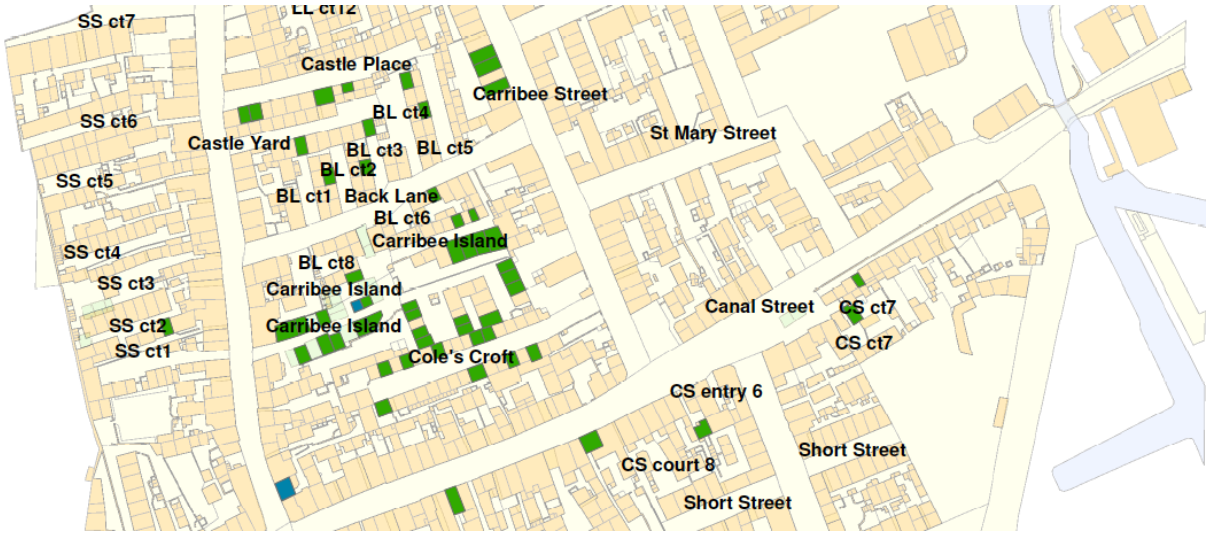


Figure 6.12 Identified workplaces of Stafford Street residents in south-east Wolverhampton, plotted on 1887 Ordnance Survey Staffordshire 1st Edition. © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2021). All rights reserved. (1888).

The extremely dangerous Black Country collieries were another key source of employment.[88] Most Stafford Street miners worked at collieries towards Wednesfield or Willenhall, including Stow Heath, Neachells, New Cross and even Portobello, almost three miles away. Commuting was on foot, compounding an already hard day's work with an uphill journey home. Miners – including Irish residents – thus mixed with some, but not all, of the region's workforce: the unskilled workforce in collieries, brickyards, large works and building sites, but less frequently with skilled workmen in small workshops. The path of assimilation was into the unskilled working class, with few opportunities for climbing the social scale.

[88] The abundance of coal in the Black Country (exemplified by the famous thirty-foot seam) encouraged irresponsible practice amongst both miners and coalmasters, and the death rate amongst miners was higher in the Black Country than anywhere else in Britain. Barnsby, *Social Conditions*, 62.



Map 6.7 Agricultural labours in 1851 (full map)

The Stafford Street Irish did have one distinctive labour pattern, which the Timlins' early experience bears out: agricultural labour. In 1851, 1,066 residents of Wolverhampton listed this occupation: 453 of them (42.5 per cent) lived in Stafford Street, overwhelmingly clustered in the poorest central courts (Table 6.9; Map 6.7).[89] Almost a third of Irish heads listed this occupation. This initially seems incongruous in an industrial town like Wolverhampton. It could have been a reflection of the self-perception of newly-arrived labourers, yet to establish themselves in steady work and thus defining themselves by their traditional role in Ireland. However, it could also be accurate: Wolverhampton was not a large town, and often agricultural work (for which labour was still cheaper than mechanisation) was close at hand in farms around the town, temporarily swelling the population during the harvest months.[90]

[89] For comparison, the study area comprised less than nine per cent of Wolverhampton's population in 1851 (4,442 out of 49,798).

[90] The Inspector of Lodging Houses noted that an increase in overcrowding cases in June 1858 was attributable to "influx of Irish labourers to the Harvest." Watch Committee, 'Minutes' (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 21 June 1858), WOL-C-WAT/2, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

Street	1851			1861			1871		
	Pop.	Ag. Labs	Proportion	Pop.	Ag. Labs	Proportion	Pop.	Ag. Labs	Proportion
Stafford Street	344	5	1.45%	285	3	1.05%	257	0	0.00%
Canal Street	412	16	3.88%	532	8	1.50%	497	4	0.80%
Littles Lane	496	3	0.60%	418	9	2.15%	373	1	0.27%
Carribee Street	369	31	8.40%	564	15	2.66%	512	5	0.98%
Stafford Street courts	143	18	12.59%	212	75	35.38%	266	20	7.52%
Canal Street courts	603	31	5.14%	500	23	4.60%	538	7	1.30%
Littles Lane courts	363	14	3.86%	198	31	15.66%	125	3	2.40%
Carribee Island	542	178	32.84%	289	12	4.15%	107	1	0.93%
Coles Croft	328	72	21.95%	167	9	5.39%	98	1	1.02%
Back Lane	186	20	10.75%	120	7	5.83%	78	2	2.56%
Back Lane courts	297	40	13.47%	305	5	1.64%	303	5	1.65%
Castle Place & Castle Yard	335	30	8.96%	309	5	1.62%	189	4	2.12%
Total	**4418**	**458**	**10.37%**	**3899**	**202**	**5.18%**	**3343**	**53**	**1.59%**

Table 6.9 Agricultural labourers in study area, 1851-71

John Denvir observed in 1896 that:

> [M]ost of the harvest men came from the West of Ireland, and that many of these who have not returned have settled down in the Midland counties,

nearest to where they had previously been employed at field work.[91]

Transient Irish seasonal labourers probably provided Carribee Island's earliest Irish inhabitants, and there is no reason to suggest that famine emigration ruptured that longstanding connection.[92] This too was casual work, so places of work are recorded infrequently. In newspaper records, Martha Burks was a nursery labourer at Birches Barn Farm, on Wolverhampton's south-western boundary; James McLaughlin travelled 4.5 miles to Coppice Farm, Wednesfield; and John Roham over 6 miles to Perry's farm in the village of Swindon.[93] This distinctive correlation of space, ethnicity and work declined by 1871, but seasonal agricultural labour remained important: Frederick Dunn testified in 1877 that "the ordinary lives of many of them are those of people working in the fields; agricultural labourers, and people of that class."[94] This type of work evidently remained an important part of this industrial town's economy.

Mapping Irish heads of household by occupation sector demonstrates the changing nature of Irish labour (Map 6.8a-c). In 1851, this was overwhelmingly a picture of unskilled labour in the primary sector. Colonel Hogg identified "iron works, coal-pits, masons, bricklayers and bricklayers' labourers" as the key employment for Irish immigrants in 1853. He believed Irish

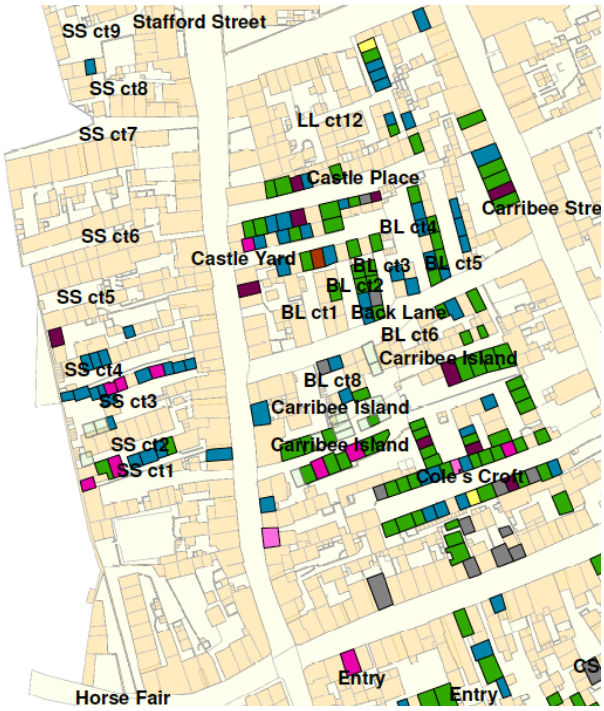
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[91] John Denvir, *The Irish in Britain: From the Earliest Times to the Fall and Death of Parnell* (London: Kegan Paul, 1892), 387.

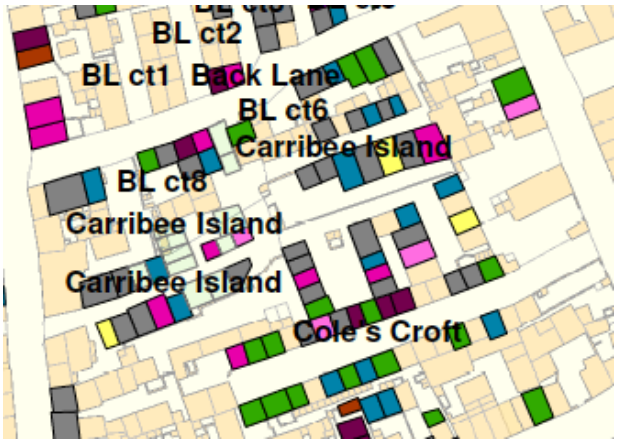
[92] Seasonal Irish labourers were known as "spalpeens," a transliteration of the Irish *spailpíní*, migrant worker. See Donald M. MacRaild, *Irish Migrants in Modern Britain, 1750-1922* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 44; Anne O'Dowd, *Spalpeens and Tattie Hokers: Irish Migratory Agricultural Workers* (Blackrock, Co. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1990).

[93] 'The Mysterious Discovery in a Well at Wolverhampton', *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 24 May 1867; 'Highway Robbery at Wolverhampton', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 19 March 1851; 'The Fatal Machinery Accident at Wednesfield', *Evening Express*, 8 October 1875.

[94] Borough of Wolverhampton, 'Local Inquiry'.



Map 6.8a Excerpt from map of occupational sector of Irish-born heads of household, 1851 (key in full map)



Map 6.8b Excerpt from map of occupational sector of Irish-born heads of household, 1861, showing the central, most comprehensively Irish part of the study area (full map; 1871)

workers earned 12s.-26s. per week (2s.-4s. 2d. per day) in Wolverhampton – highly variable, which led many workers to behave as though poverty was around the corner.[95]

Father Walter Hall still described the Irish in the 1860s as "with few exceptions, earning their living by manual labour, some working in the coal pits, some in the foundries, and others as bricklayers' labourers."[96] Commentators rarely noted the prevalence of agricultural labour, demonstrating the limitations of their own understandings of this urban workforce.

Primary industry remained the predominant employer of the Irish in the poorest courts in 1861, though what type of work was not always clear. An increase in tertiary (services and professions) can be linked to growing numbers of Irish licensees

[95] *Report from the Select Committee on Public-Houses, &c. 1852-53*, vol. 37, Parliamentary Papers: 1850-1908 (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1853), sec. 6936; Green and Parton, 'Slums and Slum Life'.
[96] Denvir, *The Irish in Britain*, 417.

and lodging-house keepers, a process which continued to 1871. By then, Irish-born residents were as prominent in secondary industry as primary and tertiary. This reflects several factors. Black Country coal production peaked in the 1860s and went into a long decline, with a related rebalancing of the regional economy towards manufacturing throughout the following decades.[97] For the Irish, it may suggest that employers became increasingly willing to employ Irish workers not just for brute strength as before, but as employees capable of becoming skilled; it may be that the Irish, without further influxes of immigrants, had become a stable and accepted part of the town economy.

Work was, for most, by far the most significant factor in determining any resident's life course. Where they lived was co-dependant with how and where they worked. As John Herson notes, "the lives of… Irish families were conditioned by the jobs they had," and labour geographies dictated residential geographies in various ways.[98] Mostly casual, unskilled and based at large, distant employers, opportunities for workplace interaction and assimilation with other Wulfrunians were limited. The paths by which the Stafford Street Irish, in particular, could assimilate into English society were thus pre-determined by pre-existing work patterns. Although assimilation did happen over time, community in this space was therefore built partly from the inclusions and exclusions of structural labour geographies in Wolverhampton.[99]

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[97] Trevor J. Raybould, *The Economic Emergence of the Black Country: A Study of the Dudley Estate* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973), 212; Allen, *Industrial Development*, 192–93.
[98] John Herson, *Divergent Paths: Family Histories of Irish Emigrants in Britain 1820-1920* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 69.
[99] On the intersections of "family," "local" and "community" history, see Bernard Deacon and Moira Donald, 'In Search of Community History', *Family & Community History* 7, no. 1 (2004): 13–18; Alexandra Shepard and Philip

Edward Maloy: the "Irish inroad"

There were also social and cultural factors that made the experience of work different for the Irish poor. EP Thompson regarded them as "the cheapest labour in Western Europe," and they were labelled strike-breakers, responsible for wage depression (although, in fact, their economic impact was negligible).[100] But attitudes towards the Irish as fellow-workers had serious impacts on everyday life throughout this period: an atmosphere of threat, real or potential, often related to other moments of Irish vulnerability, permeated the Irish quarter.

For many Irish immigrants, arrival in Wolverhampton represented the end of a traumatic emigration experience, and an opportunity to rebuild their lives. But for some, a new home brought new dangers. In May 1847, Edward Maloy, a 46-year-old widower from Mayo, was walking through Wolverhampton with another Irishman, Bartholomew Jordan, when they were attacked by a group of construction workers. Maloy lived in Rollinson's Court with his four children and six others from Mayo.[101] The attack was part of a wave of anti-Irish violence that broke across the Black Country that May. The region was approaching a turning point between economic boom and downturn in the autumn: food prices were already rising, and

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Withington, 'Introduction', in *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric*, ed. Alexandra Shepard and Philip Withington (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 1–17.

[100] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 472; Jeffrey G. Williamson, 'The Impact of the Irish on British Labor Markets during the Industrial Revolution', *Journal of Economic History* 46, no. 3 (1986): 693–720. On the pervasive cultural stereotype of the Irish as strike-breakers, see Susanne S. Cammack, '"You Have Made Him What He Is": Irish Laborers and the Preston Strike in Elizabeth Gaskell's North and South', *New Hibernia Review* 20, no. 4 (2016): 113–27.

[101] 'Wolverhampton Police Court', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 15 May 1847. See chapter three: Rollinson's Court had been singled out by Inspector Richard Castle as a venue for prostitution in the early 1840s. Head of household in the 1851 census in Maloy's case was a pedlar, Patrick McNeil, who lived there with his wife, two children, and seven boarders, including Maloy's family. Of these, only McNeil's youngest child, two-year-old Patrick, was born in Wolverhampton – all the rest were Irish-born. Maloy's children prove difficult to trace with certainty except for his eldest son Bernard, who married Bridget Ginty of the next court along in 1854.

financial crises were hovering on the masters' horizons. A wage cut for railway workers near Walsall had already resulted in strikes, and employers were alleged to have found a labour solution in the newly-arrived Irish. The strikers called this "the Irish inroad," suggesting they feared further wage depression and competition.[102]

Rather than target their employers however, the many hundreds of strikers recruited similarly disgruntled colliers and began to vandalise the homes of Irish labourers, and attack Irishmen wherever they might be found, regardless of whether they were labourers or merely "tramps" (most likely referring to famine migrants). The *SA* described the:

> [G]reat antipathy… manifested towards the Irish employed in the mines… several of them have been pelted and beaten, and others threatened, and there appears to be a determination on the part of the miners not to allow them to work.[103]

Irish workers were targeted across the colliery district.[104] In Wolverhampton, they were attacked in Darlington Street, and at the Chillington and Shrubbery Ironworks.[105] John

[102] 'Disturbances at Walsall', *Manchester Guardian*, 15 May 1847.
[103] 'The "Strike" Amongst Miners', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 15 May 1847.
[104] Colonel Gilbert Hogg was at this time Deputy Chief Constable for Staffordshire, in charge of the Mining District with headquarters in Wolverhampton. The following year he was to become first Chief Constable of Wolverhampton's own Borough police force. Hogg acted on his own initiative in keeping the peace, but received the approval of the Home Secretary, Sir George Grey, for his actions. 'Serious Disturbances in South Staffordshire', *Evening Standard*, 14 May 1847; 'Riots in Staffordshire', *Illustrated London News*, 15 May 1847; 'Rioting in South Staffordshire', *Dublin Evening Post*, 15 May 1847; 'Brutal Treatment of Irish Labourers in England', *Freeman's Journal*, 15 May 1847; 'Riots in the Mineral Districts', *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 16 May 1847; Home Office, 'Disturbances Entry Books 1843-1848', 25 May 1847, HO 41/18, The National Archives.
[105] 'Wolverhampton Police Court'; 'Assault on an Irishman', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 19 May 1847; 'Assaults on Irishmen &c.', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 19 May 1847; 'State of the Mining District', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 19 May 1847; 'The "Strike" Amongst Miners', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 19 May 1847.

Doherty of Berry Street died after an attack on the Willenhall Road, and James McDonald was accosted on the Bilston Road: his testimony suggests that although wages provided the immediate spark, xenophobia provided the fuel amongst Wolverhampton's working class:

> …as far back as six or seven weeks ago, M'Donald had been met by a number of men in a field, who threatened to put him in some water; and also to break a bottle on his jaw, "if he did not go to his own country."[106]

The violence provided a frightening backdrop for new immigrants. Ironmaster-magistrates including John Barker doled out exemplary sentences in 1847 on the grounds that such assaults were "un-English" and that "no Englishman in Ireland ought to be maltreated, nor ought an Irishman here, nor any man anywhere. Civilisation and humanity repudiate such outrages."[107] This certainly appears sympathetic, but does reflect the tendency amongst Black Country magistrates to enact legislation beneficial to themselves.[108] The Truck Act, by comparison, was often ignored: Barker himself was accused of operating a truck system.[109] In

[106] 'The "Strike" Amongst Miners', 15 May 1847; 'The "Strike" Amongst Miners', 19 May 1847.
[107] G. B. Thorneycroft, owner of the large Shrubbery Works, was not a magistrate but was a Town Commissioner and became Wolverhampton's first mayor – he gave Barker his explicit support on this issue. 'Wolverhampton Police Court'; 'Editorial', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 19 May 1847.
[108] Labour discipline laws were notoriously strictly enforced in the Black Country. For example, the Master & Servant Act 1823 codified sanctions against workers in breach of contract. Staffordshire prosecuted 10,000 cases under this act between 1858 and 1867, including 1,670 in Wolverhampton. D. C. Woods, 'The Operation of the Master and Servants Act in the Black Country, 1858–1875', *Midland History* 7, no. 1 (1982): 93–115.
[109] The Truck Act 1831 forbade masters paying workers in anything other than coin of the realm and was designed to put an end to the "truck" system common in industrial regions like the Black Country. Under this system, workers were paid in tokens inside of cash, redeemable only within "tommy shops" owned by the master. The Black Country was notorious for perpetuating this system. 'Wolverhampton Police Court'; David Philips, 'The Black Country Magistracy 1835-60', *Midland History* 3, no. 2 (1975): 161–90; Roger Swift, 'The English Urban Magistracy and the Administration of Justice during the Early Nineteenth Century: Wolverhampton 1815–1860', *Midland History* 17, no. 1 (1992): 75–92.

this example, employer-magistrates were happy to welcome the Irish, a pool of labour widely believed to accept lower payment and exert downward pressure on wages.

Irish writers recognised the place given to Irish workers in the Black Country. AM Sullivan, touring the Black Country for *The Nation* in 1856, concluded that:

> [I]t is not skill, or craft, or service, that is hired in their case: it is lives not labourers that are bought and sold in the forges and furnaces of South Staffordshire… all that the poor Connaught peasant has to sell is his physical strength, his health, his life and thus the law of supply and demand is worked out.[110]

Sullivan was told by a Wednesbury Irishman that:

> [T]he English miners rose up against the Irish and endeavoured to expel them by fire and sword from the place. Many were killed, many were murdered in the works at night of whom no word was ever heard of trace ever found… 'They used to hold their breath passing through the street, sir,' said my Celtic cicerone, 'for fear of being known by their voices… We dare say nothing for Oh, Sir, there wasn't law or justice here then for an Irishman.[111]

[110] A. M. Sullivan, 'The Irish in England: The Midland District', *The Nation*, 17 May 1856. Sullivan was a key figure in mid-century Irish nationalism. He had supported the Young Irelanders in 1848, joined the Dublin-based *The Nation* in 1855, and became its editor in 1858. *The Nation* was a strongly nationalist newspaper, but one opposed to physical-force Fenianism, particularly under Sullivan's editorship (1858-1876). "Connaught" is the anglicised version of the Irish province of Connacht.

[111] A. M. Sullivan, 'The Irish in England: The Iron Country', *The Nation*, 7 June 1856.

These reports portray an atmosphere of ongoing xenophobic violence, and an Irish population living in terror in these early years. Local newspapers reported on the May riots, but otherwise corroboration is rare. The only other report of anti-Irish violence is from June, when three men in nearby Coseley were charged with:

> a nightly series of disturbances at a small house in Coseley, inhabited by some poor Irish people, and had proceeded so far as to break the windows and door, and pull part of the walls down.[112]

Such reports seem to confirm Sullivan's description of Irish life in the Black Country at that time. Even if this was limited to certain times and locations in the Black Country, the tendency of local workers towards xenophobic violence evidently cast a long shadow over Irish lives. Whereas elsewhere Chartism was able to provide bonds of empathy between workers and the Irish, this influence was not evident here.[113] The riots of May 1847 demonstrate that anti-Irish violence was certainly not limited to the post-Chartist era, as some historians of anti-Irish movements have argued.[114] Although numerically insufficient to affect wages, perception of immigrant groups was an important factor within Wolverhampton's labour

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[112] 'South Staffordshire Police Intelligence', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 5 June 1847.

[113] The most recent overview of Black Country labour history is still John Benson, 'Black Country History and Labour History', *Midland History* 15, no. 1 (1990): 100–110. In this article, Benson recognises that Black Country workers were "industrially weak and politically conservative," even if this was less unique than previous historians had considered. The main dissenter from this tradition is George Barnsby – nevertheless it is notable that in his attempt to draw Black Country labour history into a linear, progressive narrative, he avoids these anti-Irish riots. George J. Barnsby, *The Working Class Movement in the Black Country, 1750 to 1867* (Wolverhampton: Integrated Publishing Services, 1977).

[114] D. G. Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 226; Neville Kirk, 'Ethnicity, Class and Popular Toryism, 1850-1870', in *Hosts, Immigrants and Minorities: Historical Responses to Newcomers in British Society, 1870-1914*, ed. Kenneth Lunn (Folkestone: William Dawson & Sons, 1980), 64–106.

history. It is little wonder that when faced with such hostility, Irish workers sought familiar faces and environments in an Irish neighbourhood.

Stafford Street: home

Commercial families

English residents could also be immigrants, but the diversity of class, regional and occupation backgrounds within the Stafford Street area meant that it was a hybrid, heterogeneous space, rather than the homogeneous Irish slum it was often presented to be. Stafford Street was a mixed bag of shops, pubs, workshops and homes, of English, Irish and other nationalities. Commerce and industry were as important to residential choices as housing stock. Those of English background included a range of social statuses, but as the next sections will show, family, origin and class positioning were relevant to their experiences of this space. The stories of two local businesses first demonstrate that for some residents, Stafford Street even formed part of a respectable, socially-mobile community.

From at least 1861 to 1881, the easternmost house on Bowling Green Row (Figure 6.13) was occupied by John Fullard or Fullwood, a brass manufacturer employing a man and two boys, plus his family. The seven houses with workshops that made up the court dated from around 1768 and were typical of domestic-scale industry in Wolverhampton.[115] Despite being sandwiched between poor courts, its residents were “small masters,” the typical early

[115] ‘Attested Copy of Lease to Invest Possession’, 7 November 1768, DEED/N26/6, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies. The property later passed to Very Reverend John Hawksford and Reverend Henry Barwise Davies of SS Mary & John. On Huddlestone see Herson, *Divergent Paths*, 107, 280.

organisation of Black Country metalworkers, a sole artisan or one employing a small number of workers.[116] Longstanding neighbours of the Fullwoods included door-spring maker William Newman, Thomas Bryan (a lockmaker employing three men) and bell-founder James Barnett: English, mostly Wulfrunian, a contrast to the wage-labouring, predominantly Irish residents of nearby courts.

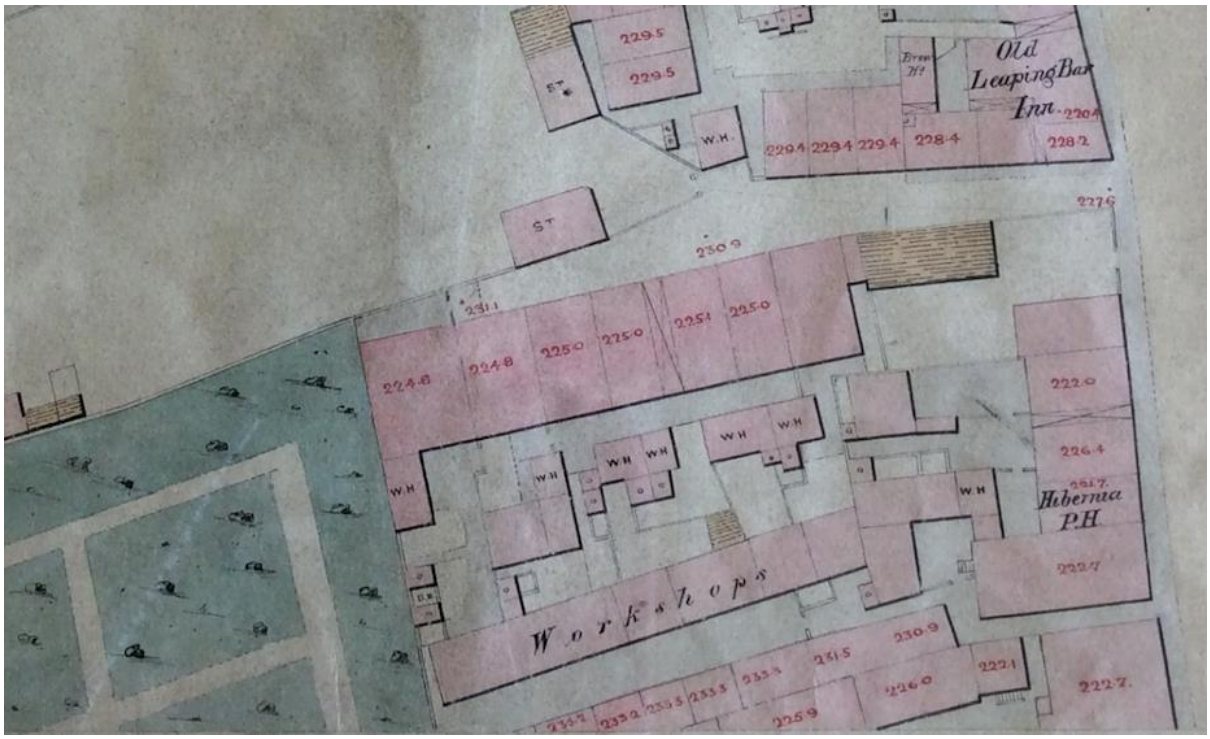
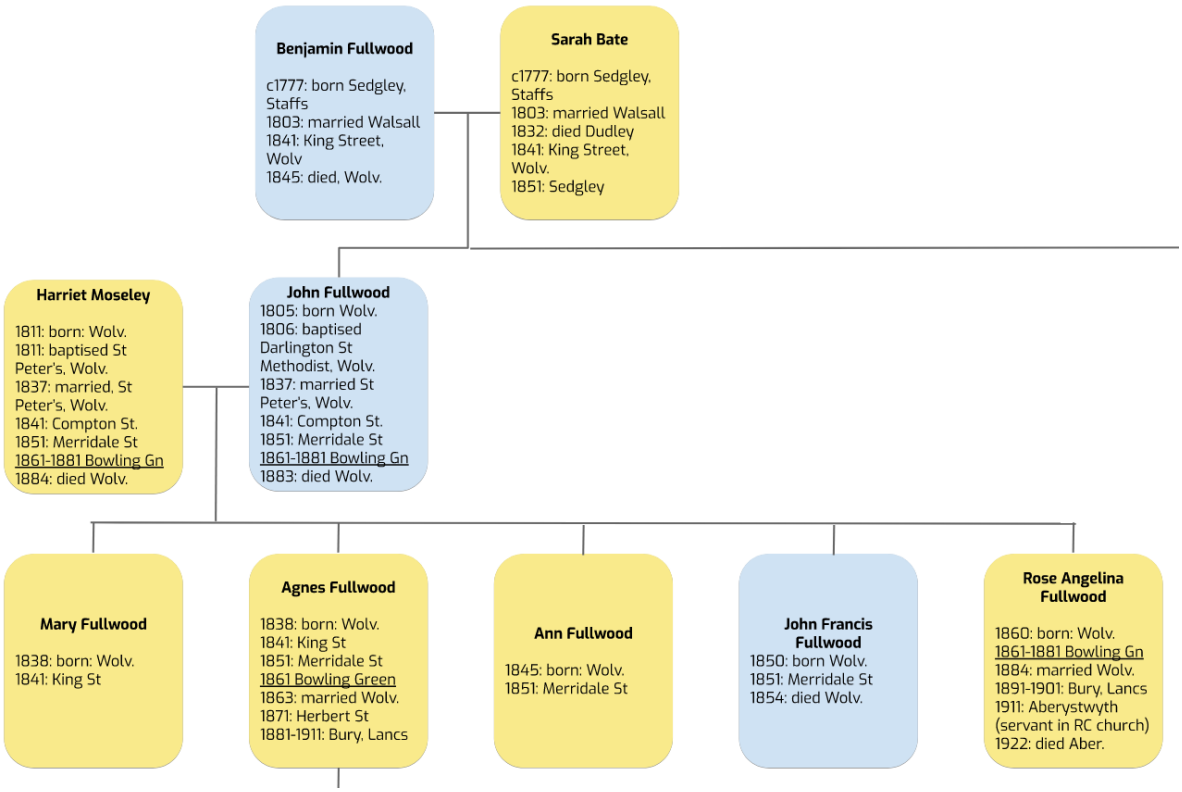


Figure 6.13 Bowling Green Row, or Court 7 of Stafford Street, shown on 1871 Lees plan – entered next to the Old Leaping Bar Inn. Note the workshops to the rear of the houses, and the site of the Deanery Gardens and former bowling green itself to the west.

[116] L. E. Cort, '"This Is the Place for Toil": Neighbourhoods at Work in the Later Victorian Black Country' (PhD, London, University College London, 2001), 50–51. On the early industrial organisation of the Black Country, see Allen, *Industrial Development*.



Tree 6.6 Fullwood family tree (full tree)

Fullwood was part of an established Wulfrunian family (Tree 6.6). His brothers Benjamin and Joseph lived nearby. Joseph's son John grew up on Worcester Street but knew Stafford Street well, as evidenced by his series of sketches depicting the neighbourhood prior to its demolition.[117] They show a dilapidated, but not intimidating district, in which the distinction between the better conditions of the main streets and the poorer courts is less clear-cut.

[117] John Fullwood (1855-1931) later became an internationally-recognised landscape artist. See Paul Fullwood and David Fullwood, *'These Are My Designs': The Life Story of John Fullwood, Landscape Artist* (Wolverhampton: Self-published, 2018). The sketches were published as John Fullwood, *Remnants of Old Wolverhampton and Its Environs*, vol. 1 (Wolverhampton: Fullwood and Hellier, 1880); *Remnants of Old Wolverhampton and Its Environs*, vol. 2 (Wolverhampton: Fullwood and Hellier, 1880).



Figure 6.14 Carribee Island, looking towards Stafford Street – preparatory sketch by John Fullwood (private collection, by kind permission of Norman Keech)

In one preparatory sketch drawn from within Carribee Island itself (Figure 6.14), Stafford Street's shops blend into the dilapidated feel of the court, and its proximity to Wolverhampton's centre is demonstrated by St Peter's Church in the near background, recalling John Dehane's comments about its proximity (see chapter two). Fullwood does not show people – these were probably to be added later – but signs of everyday life: washing on the line, advertisements on the wall. Fullwood must have been familiar with Stafford Street's reputation, but his sketches draw from personal experience of a space in which he spent part of his childhood, rather than the stigma constructed by outsiders.

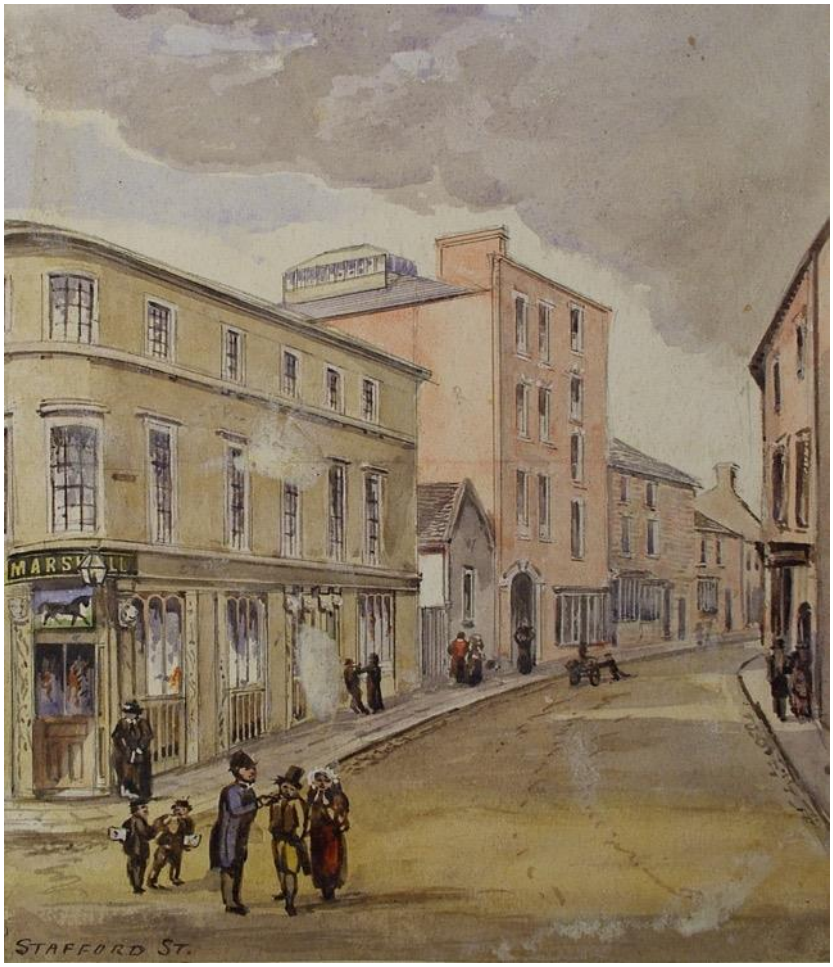
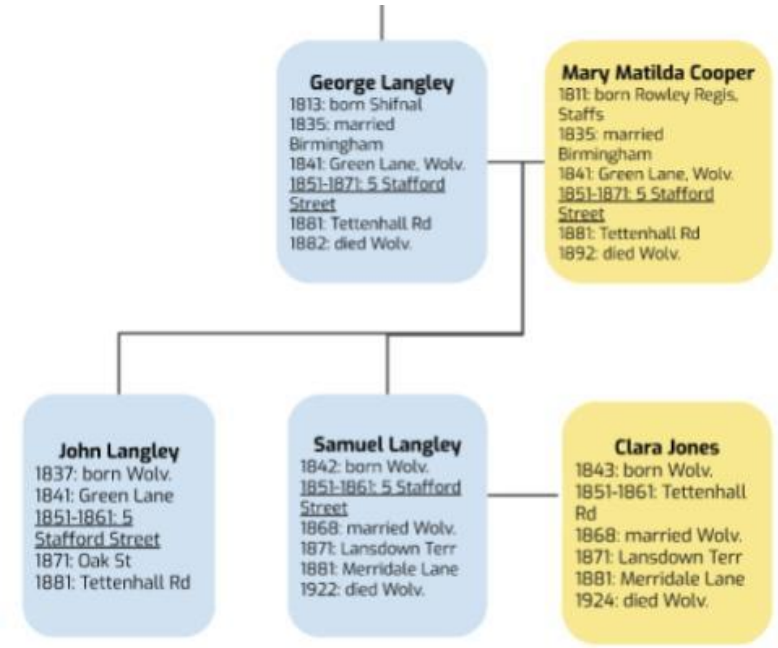


Figure 6.15 Stafford Street looking north, seen from Little Berry Street, by an artist named Reid (private collection, by kind permission of Norman Keech).

The same part of Stafford Street can be seen in another depiction, a watercolour by an amateur artist named Reid, also probably produced shortly before the clearance scheme (Figure 6.15). Reid also represented Stafford Street not as wretched slum but with clean, neat buildings and an amiable social environment. In the foreground, a smartly-dressed man speaks with a couple likely intended to be read as Irish: their clothing is similar to contemporaneous depictions of Irish peasants.[118] Other juxtapositions can be seen. Pedestrians include a smart couple outside Mary Salmon's marine store; children at work pushing carts and perhaps selling newspapers; shawled, working-class women; a pair of men leaning against an ornate Black Horse Inn; and a solitary woman standing by the pub entrance.

[118] See for instance the Cruikshank print in chapter three, and portrayals in the *Illustrated London News*, December 4, 1880. See also Sighle Bhreathnach-Lynch, 'Framing the Irish: Victorian Paintings of the Irish Peasant', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 2, no. 2 (1997): 245–63. It should be noted that all photographs of the space in this period showed residents in typical English working-class clothing.

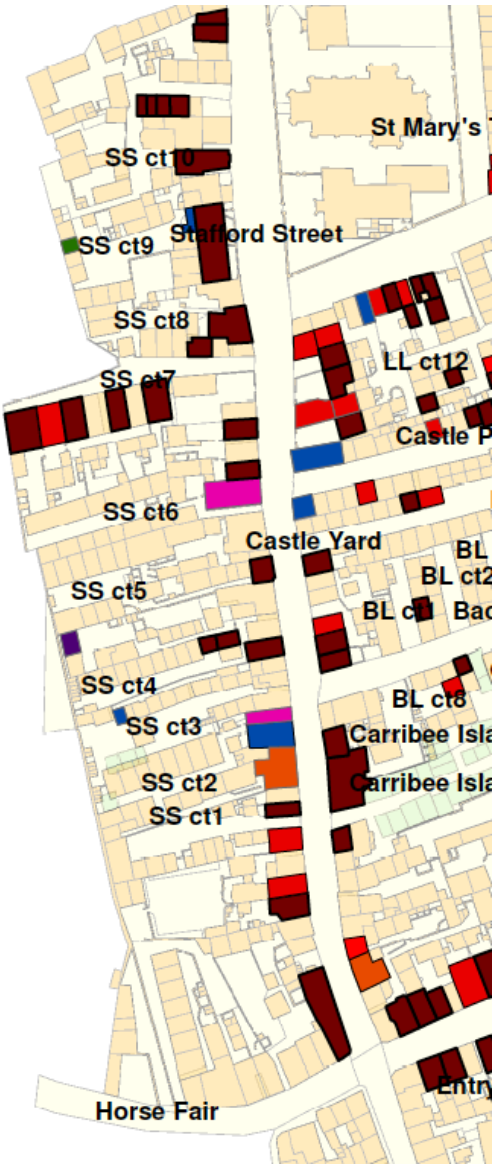
The depiction of a single woman in such a position may have been suggestive of an unrespectable moral environment, but otherwise each of these represents a choice by the artist, from a multitude of passers-by, intended to suggest congeniality rather than vice.



Tree 6.7 Section of Langley family tree (full tree)

These artworks both show the business of one of Stafford Street's longest-standing shopkeepers: George Langley, a grocer and butcher at 5 Stafford Street from before 1851 to at least 1873.[119] Langley's life-course demonstrates the importance of internal migration to spaces like Stafford Street, and the connections he retained during that process echo those of immigrants from further afield. George Langley grew up in the small Shropshire town of Shifnal, but in 1839 moved to the industrial Black Country, marrying then setting up shop first in Green Lane, Wolverhampton, then in Stafford Street (Tree 6.7). Family followed: his older sisters by 1851, and by 1871, the next-door grocers shop was run by Joseph Langley,

[119] The last record of Langley in Stafford Street is in 'White's Directory' (White, 1873), L91:M9, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.



Map 6.9 Excerpt showing Stafford Street, from map of counties of birth of English-born heads of household, 1871 (full map)

George's nephew from Shifnal.[120] The next house was occupied by Irish master plasterer Michael Duffy, an emigrant from Mayo whose wife Jane also hailed from Shifnal – this was inter-marriage within certain class boundaries. The Langleys ran a successful business, with an uneventful career in such an infamous neighbourhood.[121] They were certainly not the only Salopians in Wolverhampton: following the decline of the coal and iron industry in the Shropshire coalfield, the influx of industrial workers and management into the Black Country was regularly noted.[122] This local diaspora certainly did not face the opprobrium shown towards the Irish, and George Langley maintained a healthy enough income and social standing to retire to the more fashionable Tettenhall Road.

[120] Joseph's father Samuel Langley (1807-1875) was born in Shifnal but like his own father, married a wife from the small village of Sutton Maddock, close to Coalport in the Severn valley – this suggest family marriage networks go deeper still.

[121] The only other reference to Langley was in 1858, when "John Langley" (probably a misprint) was fined the small amount of 2s. 6d. for "a pair scales three drachms incorrect." He was one of several shopkeepers in the Stafford Street to have been targeted in a raid in June 1858. 'Unjust Scales and Weights', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 7 July 1858.

[122] L. J. Jay, 'The Black Country of Francis Brett Young', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 66, no. 1 (1975): 57–72.

English-born residents in the study area traced their roots from almost every English county – unsurprisingly, given the region's rapid growth in the preceding half-century. This diversity of birthplace (Table 6.10; Map 6.9) suggests that shopkeepers were more mobile than most, but the Langleys suggest that a strong connection with 'home' was maintained: the desire to remain close to family and familiar faces from Shifnal. Their choice of location in which to reside and set up shop gives the lie to the reputation afforded Stafford Street in the newspapers: these families were not participating in the construction of a vicious slum, but of an area suitable for families and businesses.

Region	1851	1861	1871
South East and East Anglia	2.10%	1.13%	1.38%
South West	0.82%	0.55%	0.73%
North West	0.91%	1.16%	1.29%
North East	0.43%	0.53%	0.23%
Wales	0.91%	0.26%	0.18%
East Midlands	1.12%	0.68%	0.64%
West Midlands	46.12%	56.29%	65.82%
Of which Staffordshire	39.46%	50.96%	59.29%
Of which Shropshire	7.58%	5.46%	3.92%
Total: England & Wales	52.42%	60.60%	70.27%
Scotland	0.25%	0.24%	0.09%
Ireland	46.83%	38.74%	29.24%
Other	0.50%	0.42%	0.41%

Table 6.10 Proportion of English-born population by county of birth 1851-71 (full data)

The Langleys and Fullwoods demonstrate the unsuitability of projecting a homogeneous social character onto a neighbourhood. They maintained successful, respectable businesses during the height of Stafford Street's notoriety. Like their Irish neighbours, they typically depended on connections with 'home' for family relationships, and were co-dependent with their new community for their business. There were evident differences in social class between residents of main street shops and back court houses, and different experiences. Personal and transactional relationships produced this space across different social classes,

but the racialisation of space had significantly less impact on such non-stigmatised families, compared to the poor Irish residents of the area.

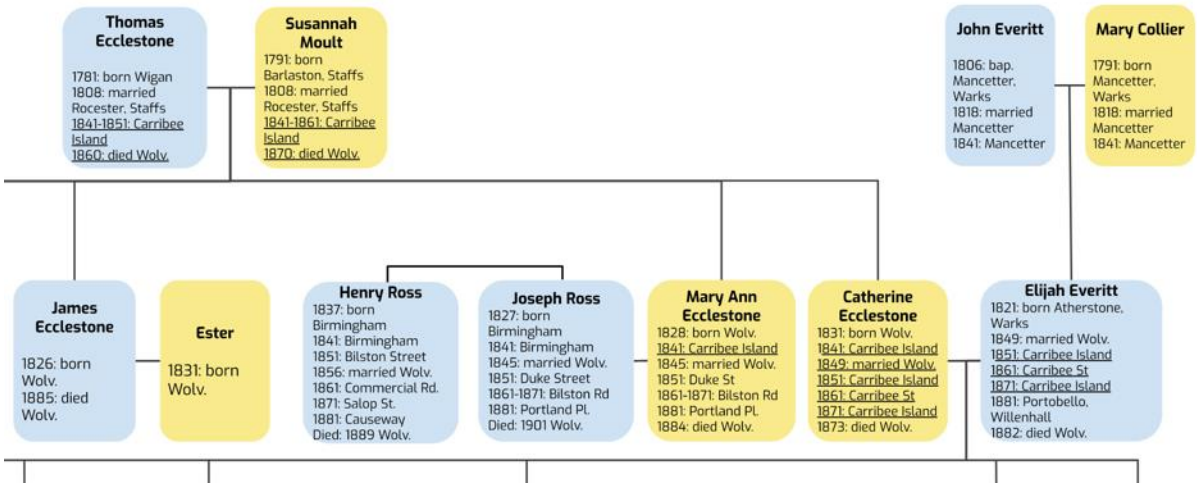
The Ecclestones: an English family?

The same complex hybridity and interaction was evident across the study area. Economic decisions – principally the cost of housing – were key to explaining the social character of Stafford Street, but they were not the only factors that affected people's housing choice, where it could be described as choice. For many, their identities were formed in and by Stafford Street: more than simply English or Irish, they were "diaspora spaces," formed and re-formed not just by those who have migrated from another country, "but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous" occupying the same conceptual and physical space.[123] The inter-related Everitts and Ecclestones of Carribee Island highlight this "creolisation" of space here.[124] On the face of it a tight-knit English clan which persisted in the heart of the Irish quarter, they reveal a more complex genealogy in which their Englishness was continually reformed and redefined through this physical space.

[123] Brah, *Cartographies*, 205–7, 238–39.
[124] Brah, 207.

Name	Relationship to head	Est. birth	Occupation	Birthplace
William Everitt	Head	1848	Striker (edge tools)	Wolverhampton
Ada Everitt	Wife	1850		Wolverhampton
Henry Everitt	Son	1870		Wolverhampton
James Everitt	Brother and boarder	1851	Striker (edge tools)	Wolverhampton
James Eccleston	Head	1848	Striker of edge tools	Wolverhampton
Ada Eccleston	Wife	1849	Nil	Wolverhampton
William Eccleston	Son	1870		Wolverhampton
Elizah Evritt	Head	1821	Labourer, brickkiln	Alcester, Warwickshire
Catherine Evritt	Wife	1831		Wolverhampton
Elizah Evritt	Son	1861		Wolverhampton
Ann Evritt	Daughter	1863		Wolverhampton
Mary Smith	Visitor	1840	Hawker, knitted wares	South Wales

Table 6.11 Everitts and Ecclestones in Carribee Island, 1871



Tree 6.8 Excerpt from Ecclestone/Everitt family tree (full tree)

Thomas Ecclestone, a labourer, moved from his birthplace of Wigan to Wolverhampton via Rocester, Staffordshire, where he married Susannah Moult in 1808. Their eldest child William was born in Wolverhampton in 1817, and they had moved to Carribee Island by the 1830s at the latest (Tree 6.8).[125] The family were well-recorded on the basis of their many criminal

[125] The first record of Ecclestones in Carribee Island was when Susannah appeared as a witness to an inquest in 1839 when her next-door neighbour burned to death in unexplained circumstances. John Taylor, the deceased, kept "a house of ill fame." He returned home drunk and ended up in the fire – before he died he maintained that "the big man put him on top of the fire" but that he was too drunk to tell who it was. The inquest introduced

sentences, none so severe as William's sentence of "death recorded" in 1835 for highway robbery, resulting in transportation to Australia.[126] William's brother James and sister Catherine lived in Carribee Island, next-door to his mother. Catherine married Warwickshire countryman Elijah Everitt in 1849, and they too remained in Carribee Island. Members of these families were close and appeared to confuse outsiders. In 1868, Elijah and Catherine's daughter Dinah was recorded as "Dinah Everitt alias Eccleston" in the Assizes register. Her accomplices from Carribee Island were Mary Kirwan and Ada Harris, who a year later married Dinah's elder brother William.[127] Several other Ecclestones and Everitts are found in criminal registers and newspaper reports, and uncertainty over dates of marriage mean that some children appeared as Ecclestone, some as Everitt. This suggests that marriage was a convenience, rather than a prerequisite, when having children.

A first glance at this family history suggests an English clan at the heart of Carribee Island marrying only within their own, but the reality was more expansive and inclusive than this. The movements of the Ecclestones and Everitts from various Midland and Northern counties highlights the ongoing influx into the Black Country in the years preceding the arrival of the

several witnesses, including prostitutes (Phoebe Bevington, Sarah Ann Thomason) and clients (Samuel Pearson, Joseph "Joe the Cat" Rhodes, and men named Wild and Haywood). The 'Mysterious Case of Burning', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 10 April 1839.

[126] William Ecclestone and Thomas Leather had robbed one Isaac Smith in Wolverhampton. Tasmania, Australia, *Convict Court and Selected Records, 1800-1899*; *Comprehensive register of convicts (CORE SERIES) A-L, 1804-1841* [databases online]; 'Highway Robbery at Wolverhampton', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 21 March 1835. The sentence of "death recorded" was created in order to avoid actually bringing about executions in capital cases where there was possibility of pardon. Richard Ward, 'Sentencing', Digital Panopticon, accessed 1 June 2020, https://www.digitalpanopticon.org/Sentencing.

[127] In 1868, Harris, Everitt and Kirwan were arrested for stealing a length of calico. In the Staffordshire Calendar of Prisoners Harris and Everitt were listed as prostitutes, Kirwan as no occupation; in the Register of Felons from Stafford Gaol, Everitt was recorded as a brickmaker, Harris as a nailmaker, and Kirwan as a hawker (see chapter three). Staffordshire Calendar of Prisoners, 1868, Home Office Papers HO 140/4, The National Archives; Stafford Gaol Register of Felons, 1868 [databases online].

famine Irish – Wolverhampton grew by nearly 400 per cent in the first half of the nineteenth century (Table 6.12; Figure 6.16) – and make it clear that although this was an English family, describing them as homogeneous or indigenous would be inaccurate. Even before it became known as an Irish space, Stafford Street was already not simply a Wulfrunian one.

Year	Population: Wolverhampton	Growth	Population: Black Country	Growth
1801	12,565		97,242	
1811	14,836	18%	129,187	33%
1821	18,380	24%	159,934	24%
1831	24,732	35%	205872	29%
1841	36382	47%	284886	38%
1851	49,985	37%	362,212	27%
1861	60,860	22%	457,329	26%
1871	68,291	12%	498,451	9%
1881	75,766	11%	546,613	10%
1891	82,662	9%	591,678	8%
1901	94,187	14%	671,009	13%

Table 6.129 Population of Wolverhampton, 1801-1901[128]

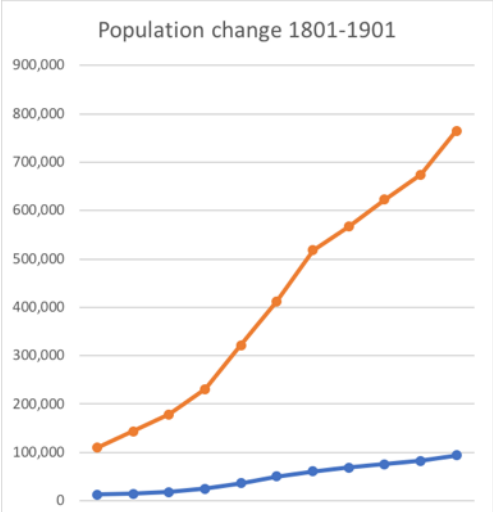


Figure 6.16 Population of Wolverhampton and the Black Country, 1801-1901

Mary Ann Ecclestone married Birmingham-born Joseph Ross in 1845, and they had a large family together.[129] Ross and his brother Henry both moved to Wolverhampton during the 1840s and married local women, and both were recorded in newspapers with a key distinction: they were black, or more likely of mixed heritage. Henry, or "Harry

[128] Barnsby, *Social Conditions*, 4–5.

[129] In 1875, Mary Ann claimed to be the mother of 28 children. This was probably an exaggeration, but records of at least eleven can be found. 'A Mother Of 28 Children', *Midland Examiner and Times*, 14 August 1875.

the Black," was described as a "coloured man," a "man of colour," or "apparently a Malay"; Joseph as a "Creole."[130] Both Ross families and their children lived in south Wolverhampton and were regularly in court for petty offences. Their skin colour was typically reported as a novelty rather than a matter of concern, although the use of "Creole" suggests a local familiarity with a longstanding discourse on 'race mixing' in England.[131]

Though few in Wolverhampton, black people were not an unfamiliar sight around Stafford Street. Some were passing through, like the unnamed black Chartist in 1842; "Sambo," charged with stealing women's underwear in Canal Street in 1861; and John Thomas, a "negro" assaulted in Back Lane in 1866.[132] But there were certainly other black Wulfrunians

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[130] 'Neglecting to Support a Wife', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 11 October 1852; 'A Cool Farewell', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 15 October 1862; 'A Caution to Husbands Deserting Their Families', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 5 October 1864; 'Neglecting to Maintain His Wife', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 18 April 1866; 'Pigeon Poisoning', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 22 October 1856. Henry Ross, a foreman at an edge tool works, married Elizabeth Penrice in 1856; they lived in Commercial Road in Horseley Fields, south-east Wolverhampton.

[131] See Chamion Caballero and P. J. Aspinall, *Mixed Race Britain in The Twentieth Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 3–4; Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), 234–35. Not enough information on the Rosses' parents can be ascertained to learn anymore about their heritage.

[132] The former was a speaker at a Chartist rally "in a vacant space in Stafford-Street… attended by three or four thousand persons." The same speaker was later recorded at a meeting in Dawley Green, Shropshire. The *WC*'s report was much less critical than the *Chester Chronicle*'s racist description of the latter occasion. It wrote that "On Wednesday, a large meeting took place at Dawley Green, which was addressed by a would-be orator and a Black!" Further on the newspaper showed its view of Black people by suggesting "The Black man was instructed to say…" and that the crowd were "greatly amused by Blackie's speech," using an extreme transliteration style: "Pend 'non it, de dtcharter marsthers are de worsdt enemies – dthay hab pig pellies – dthay hab vat tcheeks" and so on. 'The Colliers' Strike', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 10 August 1842; 'Disturbances in the Manufacturing Districts', *Chester Chronicle*, 26 August 1842.
In 1861, Hannah Hassell of Canal Street charged "a negro, who gave the name of 'Sambo'" with stealing laundry: the prisoner was arrested for sleeping in a passage in Horse Fair and was found to be wearing Hassell's linens, including a "pair of highly-decorated drawers and a chemise." He subsequently attempted to escape the lock-up with a homemade pickaxe, providing newspapers with a popular, sensational story. "Sambo" was committed to the assizes but his eventual sentence was not recorded in newspapers. 'Stealing Wearing Apparel', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 18 September 1861; 'Attempted Escape from the Police Cells', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 18 September 1861; 'The "Man of Colour" Attempting to Break out of Gaol', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 18 September 1861; 'A Dark-Skinned Burglar', *Birmingham Journal*, 21 September 1861; 'A Desperate Negro', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 21 September 1861.

alongside the Rosses. In 1862 Peter Dawson, or "Peter the Black," was assaulted in the Raven & Bell, Canal Street, where he played drums. Dawson, occasionally referred to as a "blackamoor," was born in America around 1819 and lived in court housing in Herbert Street.[133] James Munroe, nicknamed "Jemmy the Black," was a "coloured man" involved in election day violence in Stafford Street in 1868.[134]

Analysis by birthplace or surname fails to reflect the full diversity of an ordinary Victorian town.[135] Reliance on published statistics misrepresents the presence of people of colour, as well as imperial and international Others.[136] As Table 6.17 below shows, numbers born outside the United Kingdom were small, and diminished in Stafford Street against the national

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John Thomas, also described as "a negro" and "a man of colour," was assaulted by Patrick Burke in Back Lane. 'Serious Assault on a Coloured Man', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 2 May 1866; 'The Assault on a Coloured Man', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 9 May 1866.

[133] Dawson had lived in various parts of the Midlands, including the Potteries, Worcester and Kidderminster before arriving in Wolverhampton. 'A Blackamoor Assaulted by a Woman', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 11 January 1862; Simon Briercliffe, 'Five Black Lives in the Black Country', *Black Country Living Museum* (blog), 8 October 2021, https://bclm.com/2021/10/08/five-black-lives-in-the-black-country/.

[134] 'An Election "Lark"', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 28 November 1868; 'The Polling', *County Express*, 28 November 1868. It's likely Jemmy wasn't always on the right side of the law – he features as a manufactured alibi in a case from 1863 too. 'Shop Robbery', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 12 August 1863. A James Munroe born in South America c.1845 was a barman and brewer at the Black Horse, Stafford Street, in 1871, but it has not been possible to confirm a link.

A search for contemporaneous terms such as "man of colour" in local newspapers reveals that other black Victorians in Wolverhampton were not unusual. Examples included the barman William Garratt ('Embezzlement by a Man of Colour', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 28 October 1863.); servant at the local branch of the Integrity Assurance Friendly Society, Anthony Benson ('Charge of Embezzlement Against a Friendly Society's Agent', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 27 March 1861.); and Alex Furguson, later subject of a photograph by Thomas Barnado's charity (Jeffrey Green, '227: Alex Furguson and Other Waifs', Jeffrey Green, accessed 13 February 2020, http://www.jeffreygreen.co.uk/227-alex-furguson-and-other-waifs). John Rum lived to the north of the study area in Dunstall Road, and was born in Serampore, to the north of Kolkata, West Bengal ('Charge of Robbery and Assault', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 1 July 1857).

[135] On the methods and challenges of these histories, see Caroline Bressey, 'Looking for Work: The Black Presence in Britain 1860–1920', *Immigrants & Minorities* 28, no. 2–3 (2010): 164–82.

[136] Catherine Hall, 'The Nation within and Without', in *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the Reform Act of 1867*, ed. Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, and Jane Rendall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 179–233.

trend.[137] Simple statistics gloss over complexities though. American-born John Malony and Patrick Lavell were both born overseas, for example, but their surnames imply Irish heritage.[138] Likewise, subjects born in British colonies appeared, typically reflecting imperial military service: William Hayhoe's children were born in "British Colonies" (possibly Ireland), for instance, and Michael King's were born in Poonah and Bombay, East Indies.[139]

North-east Wolverhampton also formed part of the global Jewish diaspora. Levi Bernstein, a glazier, lived in a Canal Street court for many years (Table 6.13): he and his family had emigrated from the disputed Prussian province of Posen in the previous five years.[140] Also present were several lodgers with Jewish names, all of whom prove difficult to trace beyond Wolverhampton. The Bernsteins remained in Canal Street for at least the next decade and almost certainly had a hand in building Wolverhampton's first permanent synagogue, just metres from their home, in Fryer Street in 1857. Most of the town's small Jewish community lived close by on Berry Street, placing the new synagogue within walking distance, an important feature for orthodox Judaism.[141] It's likely that the Tompowski family, who moved to Stafford Street in the early 1860s, were also part of this congregation of around fifty.[142]

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[137] The General Report on the 1871 census suggested that "UK census: "The most remarkable feature in this Table is the decrease since the previous Census of people born in Ireland, the great increase of people of Scotch birth, and the still greater increase of people born in the colonies and in foreign countries." *General Report on the Census of England and Wales for the Year 1871* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1873).

[138] Both are found in the 1851 census: Maloney lived in the decrepit court 12, Littles Lane, Lavell in the equally decrepit Carribee Island.

[139] William Hayhoe was born in Norfolk, c.1810, and appears in the 1851 census living with family at 31 Stafford Street. He was a retired Stripe Sergeant in the 68th Regiment and had served in Ireland. Michael King was born in Ireland, c1821 and appears in 1861 census living with family in Court 9, Stafford Street. Poonam is modern Pune, and Bombay is modern Mumbai, both in the state of Maharashtra.

[140] Posen is modern Poznań, Poland.

[141] Laura Vaughan, *Mapping Society* (London: UCL Press, 2018), 144–53.

[142] Wolverhampton's Jewish community was small, family-orientated, and focused on Berry Street, just south of Stafford Street. Some exceptions included Levi Harris (from modern-day Lithuania) in Worcester Street and the

Although a tight-knit local community, Wolverhampton's Jewish area in nearby Berry Street did not provoke the idea of 'ghetto' in the same way as the Irish in Stafford Street.

Name	Relationship to head	Birthplace	Est. birth	Occupation
Levy Bernstein	Head	Prussia	1802	Glazier
Henda Bernstein	Wife	Prussia	1805	
Lymon Bernstein	Son	Prussia	1834	Glazier
Emma Bernstein	Daughter	Prussia	1838	
Wolf Bernstein	Son	Prussia	1840	
Simeon Bernstein	Son	Prussia	1845	
Benjamin Blysman	Lodger	Holland	1815	Quack Doctor
Samuel Weinberg	Lodger	Poland	1824	Hawker
Wolf Lipman	Lodger	Prussia	1830	Rhubarb hawker
Henri Jacob	Lodger	Turkey	1805	Rhubarb hawker

Table 6.13 Residents of a court house (Schedule no.64, District 1c) in Canal Street, 1851

Stafford Street does not support the assumption that the Victorian working-class residential neighbourhood was ethnically or culturally homogeneous. The extended Ecclestone family and their neighbours show that poor areas like Stafford Street were not insular, or parochial, but were global spaces, whether that meant a stop on a longer journey, a life begun in distant lands, or a diversity of 'racial' identity. Although Carribee Island, in particular, gained its reputation through the stereotyped application of presumed Irish racial characteristics, this diaspora space was a "creole" space, where the definition of Englishness was re-defined by the presence of Others, and the understanding of Others by the English in the same space.[143]

Hugh Hart's daughters: the development of the Irish quarter

Irish families were amongst the first to move into Coles Croft in the 1830s. With less of an established Irish community to influence their choices, economic decisions will have weighed

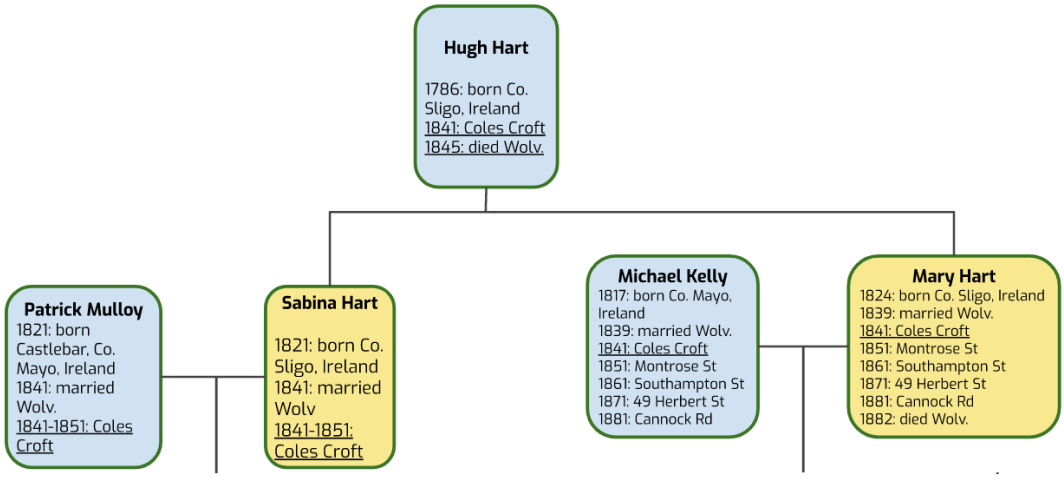
pawnbroker Jacob Cohen in Bilston Street. For Tompowski, see birthdates of children, and *Jones's Mercantile Directory*, 1865. My thanks to Andy Sloane of the Wolverhampton Society for sharing his unpublished research.

[143] Brah, *Cartographies*, 207.

heavily on these early Irish immigrants. These choices substantially influenced both where Irish immigrants settled in Wolverhampton, and from where in Ireland Wolverhampton's Irish would come from. This in turn affected the life choices of Stafford Street's residents: neighbours became couples, couples became families, and over time and generations this neighbourhood took on an increasingly cohesive and networked feel, all of which contributed to a positive understanding of Stafford Street as an Irish quarter, a counterpoint to the negative stereotyping of outside conceptions.

Name	Age	Est. birth	Occupation	Country of birth
Michael Kelly	20	1821	Labourer	Ireland
Mary Kelly (née Hart)	15	1826		Ireland
James Kelly	1	1840		England
Thomas Galagher	20	1821	Shoemaker	Ireland
Thomas Hughes	43	1798	Labourer	Ireland
Bridget Hughes	30	1811		Ireland
Michael Hughes	1	1840		England
Patrick Mulloy	20	1821	Labourer	Ireland
Sabina Mulloy (née Hart)	20	1821		Ireland
Hugh Hart	55	1786	Labourer	Ireland
Michael Dougherty	25	1816	Collier	Ireland
Catherine Dougherty	20	1821		Ireland

Table 6.14 Residents of Hart/Kelly/Mulloy household, 1841



Tree 6.9 Excerpt from Hart family tree (full image)

Amongst Francis Wood Smallwood's residents in 1841 were the Irish-born widower Hugh Hart, his daughters Sabina and Mary, and their young families. This snapshot captures his daughters in the earliest days of their married lives (Table 6.14; Tree 6.9). Both went on to form households of their own as the Famine exodus swelled in the late 1840s.

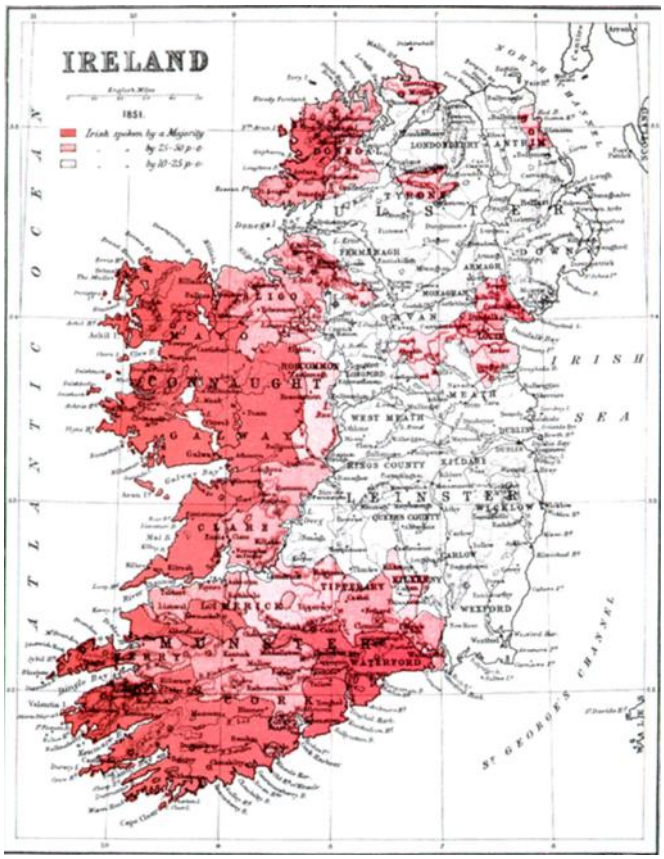


Figure 6.17 Map of Ireland showing proportion of Irish speakers, c.1851, from E. G. Ravenstein, 'On the Celtic Languages in the British Isles; a Statistical Survey'. Journal of the Statistical Society of London *42, no. 3 (1879): 579–643.*

The Harts likely emigrated from Sligo.[144] Detailed information on birthplaces outside England or Wales was rarely recorded by census enumerators, making precise origins difficult to trace.[145] However, the available evidence (Table 6.15) confirms contemporary speculation that the principle point of origin was the Harts' home province of Connacht: Colonel Hogg testified in 1853 that Wolverhampton's Irish "come from Mayo, Roscommon, and Sligo generally," for example, which matches

[144] Mary Hart's birth county was recorded as Sligo in 1871 census.
[145] Smith and MacRaild, 'Origins'. In the study area, only 11.25 per cent of Irish-born residents had their county recorded in 1851; 14.81 per cent in 1861; 5.61 per cent in 1871.

testimony from elsewhere in the West Midlands suggesting that this part of Connacht provided most of the region's Irish, and that parish ties were reconstituted in the diaspora.[146]

County	Province	1851		1861		1871	
		Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Galway	Connacht	28	12.121%	42	18.667%	10	17.857%
Leitrim	Connacht	1	0.433%	0	0%	0	0%
Mayo	Connacht	184	79.654%	141	62.667%	39	69.643%
Roscommon	Connacht	3	1.299%	29	12.889%	3	5.357%
Sligo	Connacht	2	0.866%	0	0%	0	0%
Dublin	Leinster	2	0.866%	4	1.778%	0	0%
Longford	Leinster	0	0%	0	0%	1	1.786%
Louth	Leinster	0	0%	0	0%	1	1.786%
Kilkenny	Leinster	0	0%	2	0.889%	0	0%
King's County	Leinster	0	0%	3	1.333%	0	0%
Westmeath	Leinster	0	0%	1	0.444%	1	1.786%
Cork	Munster	5	2.165%	2	0.889%	0	0%
Kildare	Munster	3	1.299%	0	0%	0	0%
Limerick	Munster	2	0.866%	1	0.444%	0	0%
Tipperary	Munster	1	0.433%	0	0%	0	0%
Waterford	Munster	0	0%	0	0%	1	1.786%
Armagh	Ulster	1	0.433%	0	0%	0	0%
Total		**231**		**225**		**56**	

Table 6.15 Irish-born residents by county of birth, where recorded in census 1851-71

Wolverhampton's larger scale likely meant that more of these kinship and parish networks had opportunity to develop in the same space, but most arrivals were probably from roughly

[146] *Select Committee on Public-Houses*. A. M. Sullivan recorded that all the Irish in Wednesbury, the second-most Irish town in the Black Country, came from a few parishes in a small area of southern Mayo, close to Lough Corrib: Kilmaine, Shrule, Cong, Ross and Neale. The area covers the border between Counties Galway and Mayo, indicating that county affiliations can be over-emphasised compared to local. John Herson found that the majority of Irish people in Stafford originated from Castlerea, Roscommon. Sullivan, 'The Irish in England: The Midland District'; Graham Davis, *The Irish in Britain: 1815-1914* (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1991), 52; Colin Holmes, *John Bull's Island: Immigration and British Society, 1871-1971* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 39; see also Patsy Davis, 'Green Ribbons: The Irish in Birmingham in the 1860s, a Study of Housing, Work and Policing' (MPhil, University of Birmingham, 2003); Herson, *Divergent Paths*, 34–39.

the same part of Ireland: they will have followed similar migration routes, spoken a similar dialect of Irish (Figure 6.17), and feasibly have had friends or relatives in common.[147]

Mary Hart married Michael Kelly, of Mayo, in 1839; their first child was born in 1840. Over time they moved away from Coles Croft, though not far: Montrose Street in 1851, Southampton Street (off Little's Lane) in 1861, then 49 Herbert Street in 1871 (the address given by Michael Kelly as treasurer of the Home Rule Association in the 1870s).[148] Their children's family mostly married locally (only Michael junior moved, leaving for London with his English wife). Sabina Hart married Patrick Mulloy, originally from Castlebar, Mayo, shortly before the 1841 census. They stayed in Coles Croft and opened their home to Famine refugees in 1851.[149] The families stayed close: Mulloy children could be found staying with the Kellys in each census. They demonstrate the importance of kinship networks in the creation of a recognisable neighbourhood. This was not unique to the Irish, as the Ecclestones showed, but it demonstrates that mobility within towns was defined by more than economic choice: neighbourhoods identifiable to their residents – not just outside observers – were constructed in part from the complex webs of kinship networks.[150]

For first-generation immigrants, emigration broadened marriage options beyond the parish. Across the Irish diaspora, emigration rates were broadly similar for both men and women,

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[147] Davis, *Irish in Britain*, 52–53. The Irish language at this point had three main surviving dialects: Ulster, Munster, and Connacht, each of which featured numerous local idioms and variations.
[148] 'Nolan Defence Fund', *The Nation*, 17 August 1872, sec. Letters.
[149] Residents in 1851 included Edmund and Letitia Burke, Lilly Lyons and the young Cosgrave family, all from Ireland.
[150] Chinn, *Poverty Amidst Prosperity*, 101–4; compare Michael Anderson, *Family Structure in Nineteenth Century Lancashire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); Lees, *Exiles of Erin*; Laura Tabili, *Global Migrants, Local Culture: Natives and Newcomers in Provincial England, 1841-1939* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 65.

allowing for endogamy: most residents of this area married before emigration, or married within the Irish diaspora once in England.[151] High rates of endogamous marriage undoubtedly contributed to the tendency for observers to ascribe a distinctive identity to areas such as Stafford Street area.[152] For the second generation, marriage to others of Irish heritage, within the Irish quarter, remained the norm, but marriage into English families became an increasingly acceptable choice. For example, Thomas Grany's upbringing in Coles Croft would have been similar to his neighbours the Mulloys. Born in 1854, his parents had headed the most crowded house in the court in 1851: six Granys and 11 lodgers in one two-roomed house. Like the Mulloys they stayed at least until the next census, a surprisingly common choice given the conditions of the court: of those in Coles Croft in 1851, 14 were listed in the 1853 poor rate book, and seven in the 1861 census. Rather than marrying within the Irish community however, Thomas married Betsy Collins of Canal Street. Her father, William Collins, was a keysmith of long Wolverhampton heritage, her mother Susannah was from the neighbouring parish of Sedgley, and the family lived yards away at 23 Canal Street. Although life in streets and courts could be quite different, the two homes were close by, and spatial proximity overruled other differences.

[151] D. A. J. MacPherson and Mary Hickman, *Women and Irish Diaspora Identities: Theories, Concepts and New Perspectives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 29.

[152] Chinn Identifies mother-daughter relationships in particular as creating this sense. Using examples from Birmingham, he notes that "Outsiders amongst the working class did not talk of the residents and the street separately; rather they were one, a unity indivisible and frightening to those who did not belong. Thus it was that 'you didn't tangle with Studley Street', rather than 'you didn't tangle with Mr so-and-so from Studley Street' or a particular family or even the people of Studley Street." Carl Chinn, *They Worked All Their Lives: Women of the Urban Poor in England, 1880-1939*, 2nd ed. (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing, 2006), 23–24.

Year	1851	1861	1871
Total married couples	728	662	544
English husband, Irish wife	12	12	10
Irish husband, English wife	17	27	28
Both English	307	214	207
Both Irish	367	396	292
Other	25	13	7
Total mixed marriages	29	39	38

Table 6.16 Marriages by birthplace of partner, 1851-71 (full data)

Thomas and Betsy's Irish-English marriage was not uncommon (in particular, marriages of Irish men to English women grew more than vice versa), but was by no means the norm. The overall rate of mixed marriages (partners born in different countries) grew over time, but not by a large amount: from 29 in 1851 to 38 in 1871 (Table 6.16). There were some trends during this period – Stafford Street, Castle Place and Castle Yard were consistently over-represented, Coles Croft consistently under-represented (in fact zero) – but the numbers of mixed marriages were really too small to draw firm conclusions.[153] The recording of birthplace rather than ethnic identity in the census also overestimates exogamy. A sizable proportion of mixed marriages were in fact second-generation immigrants. Patrick and Ellen Clines for example, living in Carribee Island in 1851, qualify as a mixed marriage as Ellen was born in Newport, Shropshire. In fact, they were living with Ellen's Irish parents, making Ellen a second-generation Irish woman, in a heavily Irish court, in the most Irish part of Wolverhampton. This would hardly have felt like a mixed marriage. Such statistics become increasingly less useful as the children of Irish immigrants married amongst themselves.

[153] A more exhaustive survey of residents would undoubtedly reveal more complicated marriage arrangements and enable conclusions on family "strategy" to be drawn, as John Herson does for Stafford *Divergent Paths*, 11.

As well as property and labour, then, kinship networks were a key determinant of the spatial patterns of the Irish quarter. This is borne out by mapping. From 1851, the head of household's birthplace can act as a reasonable proxy for ethnicity, showing that Irish immigrants in Wolverhampton continued to settle in this area, making it increasingly Irish over time. Famine emigrants settled and had families in an area already characterised by Irish residence, so that even when new immigration declined from the 1860s, Stafford Street remained mostly occupied by those who identified as Irish. Mapping residence demonstrates that similar patterns occurred here as in other British towns: although the Irish tended to cluster in neighbourhoods, this was in courts and poorer houses behind the main roads. Although the wider space was conceived and racialised in sweeping terms by outsiders, it was this central area that formed Wolverhampton's Irish heart.



Map 6.10a-c Excerpt from map of birthplace of heads of household, showing central part of study area, L-R 1851-1871 (for key see full maps: 1851, 1861, 1871)

As Table 6.17, Figure 6.18 and Maps 6.10a-c show, court houses were much more likely to be occupied by Irish residents than main streets like Stafford Street, with its larger houses and

shops.[154] Betsy Collins' Canal Street, with its large number of small, dilapidated houses, was an exception, but overall this pattern was especially true in the enclosed court areas behind Stafford and Canal Streets: difficult to access, with the poorest amenities, and where some areas were exclusively Irish. These maps show a differentiation in space, a tendency towards clustering by birthplace in the courts, and a progression towards a greater degree of Irish occupation over time.

Street	1851			1861			1871		
	% born England	% born Ireland	% born other	% born England	% born Ireland	% born other	% born England	% born Ireland	% born other
Stafford Street	84%	10%	6%	82%	17%	1%	85%	12%	2%
Canal Street	56%	43%	1%	48%	52%	1%	60%	40%	0%
Littles Lane	50%	47%	3%	2%	30%	2%	0%	31%	0%
Carribee Street	53%	44%	3%	61%	38%	1%	75%	25%	1%
Stafford Street courts	52%	43%	6%	55%	42%	3%	64%	35%	1%
Canal Street courts	75%	22%	2%	2%	18%	2%	2%	14%	2%
Littles Lane courts	79%	15%	6%	83%	15%	3%	83%	16%	1%
Carribee Island	25%	71%	4%	0%	49%	0%	1%	40%	1%
Coles Croft	12%	88%	1%	0%	60%	0%	0%	47%	0%
Back Lane	38%	62%	1%	0%	71%	0%	0%	56%	0%
Back Lane courts	33%	66%	1%	0%	62%	0%	0%	42%	0%
Castle Place & Castle Yard	37%	63%	0%	2%	62%	2%	0%	43%	0%
Total	**51%**	**46%**	**3%**	**59%**	**39%**	**1%**	**69%**	**30%**	**1%**

Table 6.17 Proportion of population by birthplace 1851-71 (full data)

[154] Note that in some cases, record linkage enables Irish heritage to be identified and used as a marker of ethnicity – this is highlighted on the maps. For a discussion of the definition of Irishness in quantitative terms, using Wolverhampton as an example, see Hobbs, 'Caribee Island', 21–26.

By 1871, the central area was almost entirely Irish (when identifiably second-generation heads are included), with more houses uninhabited: the worst housing stock in Coles Croft, for example, became undesirable even for the Irish poor, and half of its 32 houses lay empty. Littles Lane's courts remained divided by ethnicity, with some almost entirely English, some entirely Irish. The main streets themselves, however, were more mixed than before. Although there is still the general pattern of English occupancy on the main streets compared to Irish behind, the picture was much less clear-cut than in previous years. Stafford Street had shifted from an area of migratory transience in its earlier years, to a settled population characterised by a networked, inter-related Irish community.

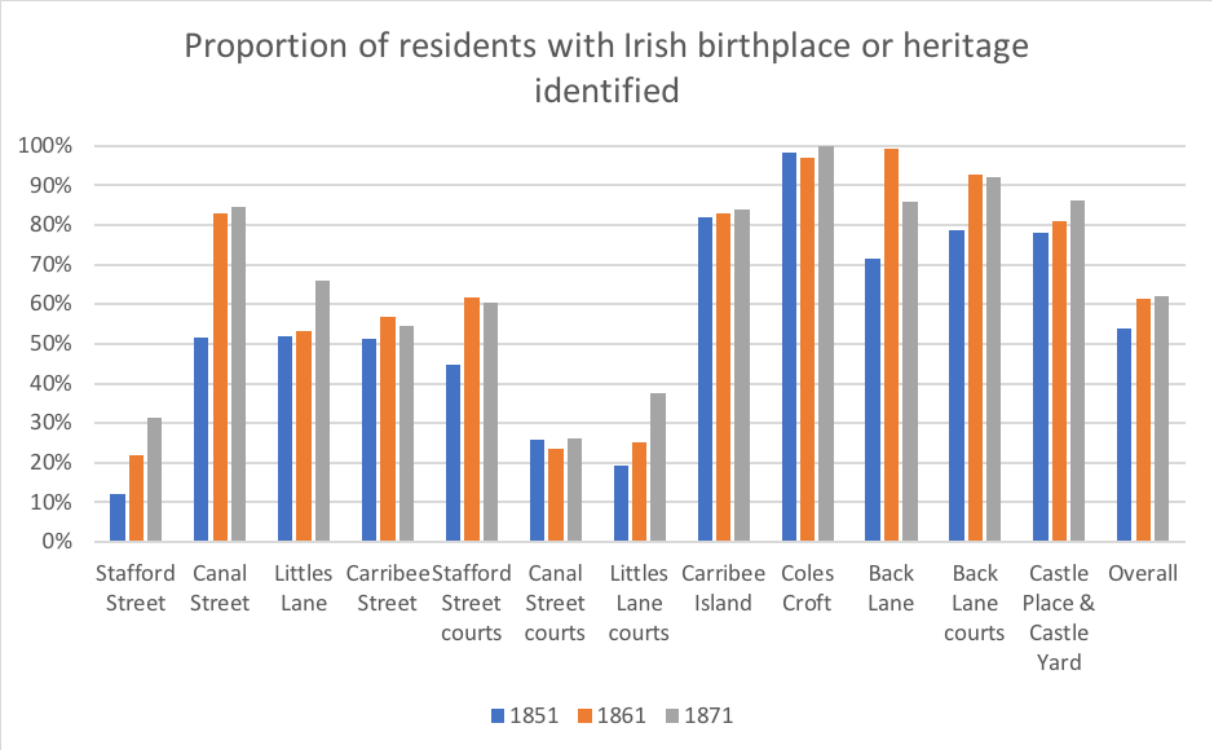


Figure 6.18 Proportion of residents with Irish birthplace or heritage, 1851-71 (full data)

Stafford Street was, then, an Irish quarter, but it was more distinctive than that broad-brush description. Its concentration of Connacht Irish – a historically poor, predominantly Catholic population – helps explain the relative absence of sectarian or regional dispute in

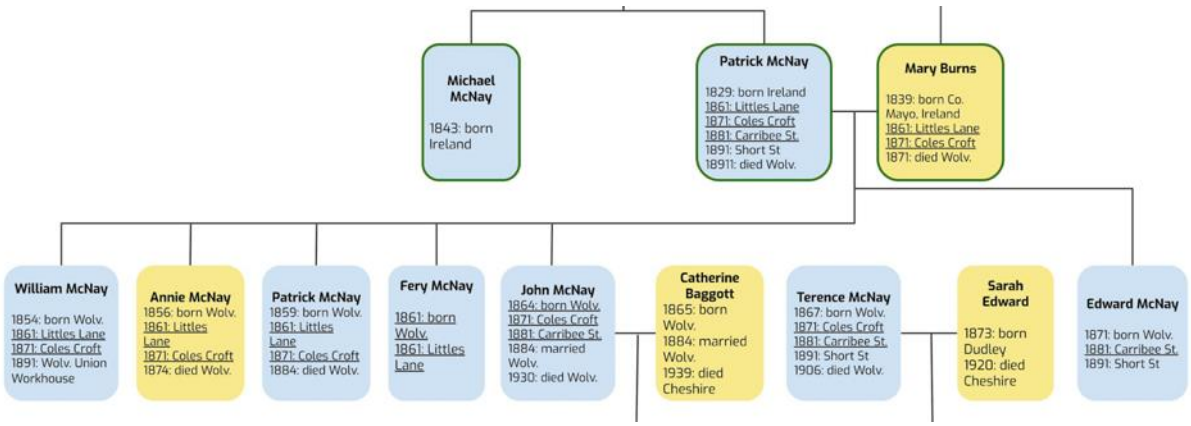
Wolverhampton between different groups of Irish: local rivalries may have persisted, but this was a community which shared more social, cultural and religious customs than separated them.[155] The maintenance of parish and kinship ties likely protected Stafford Street's new residents from some of the trauma of Famine emigration, the dislocation and disorientation somewhat mitigated by the knowledge that friends and relatives were nearby. As Irish people married and had families, Irish space was reproduced in those parts of the study area which had received the initial influx of Irish emigrants in the late 1840s and 1850s. Although the marriage market was much broader than would have been the case in Ireland, the very limited number of mixed marriages suggest that the Irishness of this area really did persist. These patterns demonstrate the flaws in the presumption of shared racial characteristics that some believed to apply across Ireland, and which were used to stigmatize Irish quarters. In fact, such spaces were highly distinctive diaspora spaces, and the trope of the Irish quarter is revealed to be a very basic and inaccurate stereotype.

Patrick McNay: eviction

The final vignette demonstrates that families clung to the Irish quarter even after it was condemned, and shows that there was resistance to the council's assertion of dominance over this space. The experiences of those affected by slum clearance programmes were rarely

[155] In Liverpool or Glasgow, for example, which were also home to large numbers of Protestant emigrants from Ulster, Irish communities were often characterised by sectarian dispute. See chapter four, and Donald M. MacRaild, 'William Murphy, the Orange Order and Communal Violence: The Irish in West Cumberland, 1871-1884', in *Racial Violence in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Panikos Panayi, Revised (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996), 44–64; Kyle Hughes and Donald M. MacRaild, 'Anti-Catholicism and Orange Loyalism in Nineteenth-Century Britain', in *Loyalism and the Formation of the British World, 1775-1914*, ed. Allan Blackstock and Frank O'Gorman (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014), 61–80.

recorded, but starting with Patrick McNay's story, it is possible to trace both individual and communal resistance to the process. It is likely that the very real emotions surrounding evictions in Wolverhampton were exacerbated by raw memories of evictions, and the ongoing anti-landlord agitation, in Ireland.



Tree 6.10 Excerpt from McNay family tree (full tree)

Patrick McNay was born in Mayo around 1829, and made his way to Wolverhampton via Liverpool. By 1861 he had married Mary Burns, gained a family of four, and lived in Littles Lane as a collier (Tree 6.10). By 1871, he was a rag-and-bone collector in Coles Croft.[156] This downward trajectory is probably explained by his blindness, first recorded in the 1871 census. Mary died in 1871, so it was Patrick and four children who were evicted when MOH Love instructed that all houses should "be closed and nailed up as they are now mere receptacles of filth and offal" in 1876. Alfred Cale, Inspector of Nuisances, duly pasted up the notice in the court.[157]

[156] Of the seven children that can be linked to Patrick and Mary McNay, only four seem to have survived into adulthood – Patrick McNay attested to four children in 1876. 'In a Condemned Dwelling', *Midland Examiner and Times*, 16 December 1876.
[157] Sanitary Committee, 'Minutes', 11 July 1876.

Patrick McNay refused to leave. A poor, visually-impaired man, in late middle age with four children to support, amid an ongoing depression, McNay – not unreasonably – claimed to find it impossible to get lodgings, and was subjected to repeated fines and summons before the magistrates forced him out. The Sanitary Committee recorded "still there" week after week over the winter of 1876, until he finally quit on 8 January 1877 to move into James Bradley's house at 66 Canal Street, abandoning his furniture in the condemned house.[158] Despite the padlocked doors the houses proved a temptation for those seeking accommodation in the depressed late 1870s: fifteen were occupied again by mid-1878, and by 1881, 29 were again full.[159] Coles Croft was never a site of complete transience. There were always families like the Henrys and Mulloys providing continuity, but it appears that the evictions of 1876-7 were almost complete, coinciding with the sale of the land from Mary Salmon to Francis Lowe. Only two residents survived the cull.[160] Apart from this, Coles Croft's status as the most Irish street in Wolverhampton completely changed: from entirely Irish in 1871, by 1881 it had become as mixed as it was in 1841, before the Famine arrivals. The change in ownership coincided with a change in how the houses were let, with James Brassington no longer in charge of rent.[161] This also reflected a local economy under pressure. With wages stagnating or falling, and little new housing being built to relieve the pressure, Coles Croft became a resort for the desperate.

[158] Sanitary Committee, 'Minutes' (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 23 January 1877), WOL-C-HOT/8, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[159] Census return for Wolverhampton, 1881; Sanitary Committee, 'Minutes' (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 14 May 1878), WOL-C-HOT/8, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.
[160] Mary Loftus, an Irish charwoman, and her son John, a japanner.
[161] Brassington testified to having collected for the Smallwoods and Mary Salmon, but not for Lowe. 'Declaration by James Brassington, House Agent and Rent Collector, of Identity of Property in Caribee Island Belonging to Francis Lowe'.

By 1881, Patrick McNay was boarding at 14 Carribee Street with a former neighbour from Coles Croft, Elizabeth Foy, and his adult children John, Terence and Edward.[162] By 1891, Patrick, Terence and Edward were lodging nearby still, in Short Street; John, a galvanizer, lived across town on Melbourne Street with his young family, next door to his father-in-law; William was in the workhouse. Eventually the family dispersed: Terence's family lived on Littles Lane in 1901, and both John and William eventually moved to Ellesmere Port, Cheshire.[163]

The displacement of evicted tenants into nearby streets was one of the biggest criticisms of Victorian slum clearance schemes and Patrick McNay's experience certainly supports this.[164] Possibly he attended a noisy meeting at St Patrick's Schoolroom in October 1880, held "to protest against the way in which the Corporation are carrying out the… Scheme" following complaints to the Artizans' Scheme committee by Councillor Williams about the way evictions were proceeding.[165] 70 notices had been delivered, evicting around 400 people, but Williams and Father Walter Hall argued that too few new houses had been built to accommodate these families, and those were simply too expensive. Hall prepared a memorial to the Home Secretary,

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[162] Elizabeth Foy's occupation was listed as "keeps boarders" in 1881, suggesting a degree of formality to the relationship in keeping with lodging-house regulations (census return for Wolverhampton, 1881).
[163] John McNay became active in the home rule movement in the 1870s. 'Home Rule in England: Wolverhampton', *The Nation*, 7 December 1872. His move to Ellesmere Port was probably related to the opening of a large factory there by the Wolverhampton Corrugated Iron Company in 1904 – many Black Country metal workers were employed there, a large number of them relocating on foot via the Shropshire Union Canal towpath. Cath Turpin, 'The Wolverhampton Corrugated Iron Company of Ellesmere Port', *Waterways Journal* 14, no. Spring (2012).
[164] P. J. Smith, 'The Rehousing/Relocation Issue in an Early Slum Clearance Scheme: Edinburgh 1865-1885', *Urban Studies* 26, no. 1 (1989): 100–114.
[165] 'Wolverhampton Town Council', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 12 October 1880; 'The Evictions under the Artisans' Improvement Act'.

> …informing him of the wholesale evictions about to take place in St Mary's Ward [and] requesting him to stop their oppressive and heartless proceedings until such time as the obligation imposed upon them… of providing for those displaced, a sufficient number of suitable houses, has been discharged.[166]

The council's view was, of course, different. They demonstrated a lack of understanding of life in poverty by suggesting that tenants should be willing to pay more rent for better facilities. There were more than enough houses available, they believed, it was just that the tenants:

> …find a difficulty in obtaining dwellings at the low rental they have been accustomed to pay, and at the same time they find that Landlords are not particularly anxious to have that class of tenants… the apparent hardship has thus caused something like a temporary excitement and agitation in the neighbourhood.[167]

The memorial did nothing to prevent the evictions, just as the Scheme did precious little to provide housing for the town's poorest residents during an economic slump. In highlighting the "oppressive and heartless" nature of the evictions, Hall no doubt had his own country in mind.[168] Eviction was an emotive subject amongst the Irish diaspora. Mass evictions had

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[166] 'The Evictions under the Artisans' Improvement Act'.

[167] Artizans, Streets & Dwellings Improvement Committee, 'Minutes' (Wolverhampton Borough Council, 6 December 1880), WOL-C-ADSI/2, Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies.

[168] The large scale evictions during and in the decades after the famine had been the cause of much grievance in Ireland, and provided source material for nationalists such as Michael Davitt, at that point in the throes of a Land



Figure 6.19 Photograph of Coles Croft under demolition c.1881 (Wolverhampton Archives WOL-D-CE/4/8/210)

occurred during the Famine era, and this "crowbar extermination" had been a rallying call for nationalists in the 1850s (see chapter four). Evictions had increased again following the agricultural crises of the late 1870s. Michael Davitt – himself evicted from his Mayo home as a child – was at this time fighting the Land War against landlords on exactly these grounds, and Wolverhampton's Land Leaguers focused that year's electoral campaign on this Irish "distress."[169] Little wonder a "temporary excitement" arose.

War prompted by fresh rounds of eviction. There is no doubt that these evictions, alongside the starvation, fever and emigration from the famine, contributed to nationalist sentiment amongst the diasporic Irish. Cormac Ó Gráda, 'Famine, Trauma and Memory', *Béaloideas* 69 (2001): 121–43; James S. Donnelly, 'The Construction of the Memory of the Famine in Ireland and the Irish Diaspora, 1850–1900', *Éire-Ireland* 31, no. 1–2 (1996): 26–61; Padraig G. Lane, 'The Tedious Business of Unwanted Tenants: Galway and Mayo in the 1850s', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 60 (2008): 126–35.

[169] Charles Stewart Parnell's injunction to the Irish Land League in 1879 to "hold a firm grip of your homesteads" must have been resonant for the evicted tenants of Wolverhampton. 'The Home Rulers and the Liberal Party', *Evening Express*, 16 March 1880; James S. Donnelly, 'The Construction of the Memory of the Famine in Ireland and the Irish Diaspora, 1850–1900', *Éire-Ireland* 31, no. 1–2 (1996): 26–61.

Nevertheless, Coles Croft was finally demolished in the summer of 1881, though it kept one last surprise. In May, two skeletons were discovered in the ruins. Local newspapers quickly ruled out foul play, reporting them as anatomical specimens, but the syndicated version of the story revived all the basest stereotypes about this part of Wolverhampton:

> The neighbourhood has long borne a bad character and was inhabited by thieves and women of the lowest class, and there is reason to fear that the remains found are those of persons who were the unfortunate victims of some undiscovered crime, the authors of which are no doubt now long dead.[170]

Right up to its demolition, Wolverhampton's Irish quarter shouldered a notoriety which affected every outside conception of the space. Yet for those like the McNays who lived there, it was home. Most could not, or would not, move far, even when their doors were padlocked and their homes demolished.

Conclusion

I have argued that Stafford Street was more than its reputation, in particular because it was in no way homogeneous. Poverty was widespread, but not ubiquitous. Irish identity was essential to understanding the space, but local identities were more complex than this. Small spatial differences played significant roles in the social and cultural lives of Stafford Street's

[170] 'Singular Discovery in Wolverhampton'; 'Discovery of Skeletons at Wolverhampton', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 19 May 1881. There may have been a collective memory of a similar occasion in 1876, when an Irish collier named William Carey was charged when human remains were found in his house in Carribee Island. 'Supposed Murder of Two Children in Carribee Island', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 17 May 1876.

occupants, and each of these microhistories and microgeographies intersected with other histories and geographies. In this chapter I have sought to broaden the understanding of spaces like this beyond simple economics. They required more than a simple will to exploit, and a population to be exploited. The choices made by economic actors – the conscious distancing of property owners from the materialities of everyday life; the personalities of intermediary agents; the community roles of small property owners; lodging practices rooted in kinship and community translocation – all contributed to how Stafford Street developed in the way it did. But by bringing overlapping geographies of labour, marriage and class into the equation, it can be seen that the community grew on its own terms too.

I have also explored the reality of everyday life in a 'typical' Irish quarter, so commonly reported in Victorian towns. An economic explanation can only ever be partial. Other places in Wolverhampton provided cheap accommodation, but only Stafford Street provided the sense of community which attracted, then retained Irish immigrants in the post-Famine era. A critical mass of personal relationships was the key explanation for why this space developed into an Irish quarter: friendships carried from Ireland to England, new relationships leading to marriages, neighbours sharing intelligence on the availability, and safety, of work, and so on. Rather than simply being attracted by the existing presence of Irish people, the Stafford Street Irish community was defined by sharing space with English people, creating relationships with shopkeepers, employers, neighbours and romantic partners. In this period, then, both the Irishness *and* the Englishness of Stafford Street was continually redefined. Processes of Irish assimilation in Britain have been the source of much debate for historians, with church, work,

class and other aspects considered.[171] This chapter concludes that a vibrant Irish identity in Wolverhampton was maintained most strongly by the continuing existence of a distinctly diasporic Irish space. When that was demolished was when community cohesion began to dissipate.

This chapter's other key intervention is methodological. It follows Joan Scott's assertion that building individual stories resists temptations to categorise or generalise, and instead places difference and variety at the heart of any conclusions.[172] By writing spatial stories – and by utilising space amongst the contexts Scott suggests – this chapter argues that even with the limited data available to the historian of the poor and illiterate, everyday worlds can be recreated, persistent stereotypes challenged, and individual lives re-written as pathways, not static points of information.[173] Stories like these provide a means of reconciling 'big data' with the specificities of individual lives – there is no need to choose between scales. The small study area allows for understanding the minute, everyday complexities of life at an accessible scale. At this scale, it is almost possible to create an exhaustive record of what the historian can know. This timeframe also allows for everyday stories because they are not overshadowed by defining moments, as in most microhistories: the census data from 1851 to 1871 falls between the turbulent 1840s of famine and working-class upheaval, and the long

[171] On this debate, see Alan O'Day, 'A Conundrum of Irish Diasporic Identity: Mutative Ethnicity', *Immigrants & Minorities* 27, no. 2–3 (2009): 317–39; Mary Hickman, 'Alternative Historiographies of the Irish in Britain: A Critique of the Segregation/Assimilation Model', in *The Irish in Victorian Britain: The Local Dimension*, ed. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), 236–54.
[172] Scott, 'Storytelling'.
[173] See also N. J. Crowson, 'Tramps' Tales: Discovering the Life-Stories of Late Victorian and Edwardian Vagrants', *The English Historical Review* 135, no. 577 (2020): 1488–1526.

depression of the late-nineteenth century Black Country, and thus fits into a time period without drama or pivotal change, allowing these individuals breathing space. Digital data has been essential. Without the ability to build a 100 per cent sample, and to follow up lives across multiple datasets, it would not be possible to pick out those lives whose traces were more than fleeting. The rapid construction of basic family trees would also not have been possible without mass digitisation of census and other records.[174] These bring their own temptations to create large, longitudinal histories: using such tools in conjunction with big data and spatial analysis forces the historian's mind back from mere information, to stories.

The counterpoint to the many stories that sought to represent Stafford Street from the outside, were the many, many more which fashioned this space from the everyday movements, interactions and relationships within the area. This chapter has aimed to demonstrate just a handful of these, and to show the usefulness of recreating even the least well-documented lives. By placing them in their spatial contexts, these individuals demonstrate the variety and complexity of life in a space that was characterised in blunt, stigmatising terms. Their lives were shaped by their space – but they also exerted agency and shaped their space themselves.

[174] Alison Light suggests that this ready access to decades of data and life events makes family historians "history's speed freaks." Alison Light, *Common People: The History of An English Family* (London: Penguin, 2014), 17.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

Stafford Street was a far more complicated place than almost anyone gave it credit for. On any given day, James Brassington might meet Roger Henry or Mary McNay in Coles Croft – a representative of economic and spatial power interacting, perhaps on friendly terms, with men and women who had left a distant land only to find differing successes and struggles. Joseph Ross, visiting parents-in-law from around the country, might reflect on his own ethnic identity when passing Irish neighbours being harassed by the police. Journalists, following Robert Rawlinson – representative of sanitary reform – and Anglo-Irish police chief Gilbert Hogg, might record Sabina Mulloy's reaction to their intrusions. Limerick's James Egan might meet Mayo's Michael Kelly in the Shamrock to plan a public event – or maybe a clandestine operation. Each had different understandings of what an Irish quarter meant, those conceptions overlapping and interacting to create the Irish quarter which was such an important representational and material part of the experience of British urban life.

The Irish quarter was not a homogeneous space: it was built from multiple, overlapping histories, in which the presence of the Irish played a formative role in the creation of a new kind of urban neighbourhood. From these competing narratives, a diaspora space emerged. I argue that understanding how the Irish and their spaces were constructed as homogeneous, while their lives varied, is crucial to the understanding of the lived experience of the Irish and the poor in Britain. This conclusion addresses my key arguments and reflects on the advantages and challenges of thinking spatially. Firstly, using Lefebvre's organisation of space as representation, representational and practical, I will demonstrate how this thesis contributes to understanding this distinctive type of space. Secondly, I consider the value of a small space as an organising tool for historical enquiry. I argue that there are important

benefits in thinking about history spatially, and although limitations remain, this method has shown a depth to the life of the neighbourhood that could not have been uncovered in other ways.

Space and the Irish quarter

Stafford Street was an example of the mythical "Irish quarter" in the Victorian town. The difference between contemporary representations of the Irish quarter and its reality was power. Those with power to publish their viewpoints were middle-class or higher, and often overlaid preconceived, racialised notions of the dirty, dangerous, lazy Irish onto all residents of this kind of neighbourhood. Those best equipped to describe the realities of an Irish quarter, however, were those with the least opportunity to speak out or write down their viewpoints. Thus any analysis of space must take into account the dominance of external representations and the difficulty of tracing lived reality. Lefebvre's framework for understanding social space provides a useful way of summarising the importance of the Irish quarter, but also recognises this imbalance: he notes that under the capitalist mode of production, everyday lived experience and spatial practice were usually subordinated to external representations.[1] Nevertheless, it is important to note that the powerless sought and found opportunities to, in Lefebvre's words, "Change life! Change society!" through their re-appropriation of space.[2]

[1] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 38–39, 365–66.
[2] Lefebvre, 159.

7. Conclusions

Representations of the Irish quarter: race and place

Stafford Street was, as the *BDG* identified, "a mythical region."[3] It was analogous to the imagined slum: just as the material worlds of Victorian poverty were entwined in discourses in which the power of the middle classes to define and control the poor was displayed, so too were tools of race and ethnic prejudice used to condemn this type of space. Most people's understanding of Stafford Street was built on representations constructed by the powerful, and these images were built of layer upon layer of intersecting prejudice and stereotyping, leading to territorial stigma. I have used 'elites' as a shorthand for a wide-ranging and diverse group, from physicians to magistrates, from councillors to policemen to clergy; the roles frequently overlapped. This group differed in politics, religious practice, occupation and in use of language yet as I have shown, there was substantial uniformity in the territorial stigmatisation they applied to this neighbourhood.

Physicians, sanitarians, magistrates and journalists drew on wider discourses of poverty and race to locate their elision of geographical, moral and epidemiological pathologies in the Irish quarter: "Fever, Immorality, and Crime," the *WC* remarked, "with index finger, point to the very same localities."[4] The Irish presence in urban settings became a topic of discourse just as public health and policing solutions were becoming formalised. These elites imagined geographies of crime, drink, sex, disease, terror and religion to include racial characteristics: street brawls became "Irish rows," religious protestors became lawless Fenians, Irish workers

[3] 'Anti-Romanism in Wolverhampton', *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 22 February 1867.
[4] 'Editorial', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 28 November 1849.

became potential vectors of epidemic disease. The actual day-to-day lives of residents barely registered interest amongst onlookers more concerned with salacious detail. Outside conceptions of Stafford Street focused almost entirely on the sensational.

Although these elites rarely used the terminology of race in the pseudo-scientific or anthropological form, nevertheless these representations racialised Stafford Street as an Irish quarter: separate from the rest of Wolverhampton, different from other urban space, threateningly Irish. John Dehane noted how the Irish "colony" was only a stone's throw from the centre of polite Wolverhampton, but his implication was that these social spaces were worlds apart from one another, and different because of their inhabitants' ethnicities.[5] The analysis of the layers of stigma, prejudice and discrimination in this thesis has provided a study of the racialisation of space. I argue that understanding the development of Irish quarters as a process of racialisation should be an essential component of any study of Irish settlement in British towns, because those doing the racialisation were most commonly those who held the power to make material differences to the inhabitants of those spaces. This can be seen in miniature too, as chapter two demonstrates: during 1847 alone, elites were able to shift public opinion from sympathy towards the Irish in Ireland, to stigmatisation, racialised language and homogenisation of the same Irish in England.

This racialisation was far from a completed process. As Britain's first mass immigration event, Irish immigration bears comparison to later large-scale movements of people, but the whiteness of the Irish made assimilation possible in ways unavailable to other racialised

[5] J. Dehane, 'Sanitary Condition of a District in Wolverhampton', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 11 December 1847.

minorities.[6] This too was operationalised by local elites: when it suited them to wipe Stafford Street from the map, the Irish were re-imagined so that their difference was not a hindrance. I suggest that elites wielded the tools of race against Irish spaces, and as such, Irish quarters present a useful means of understanding historical processes of stigmatisation.

Using the Irish Quarter

On the surface, life in Stafford Street appears similar to life in any other poor neighbourhood. The dominant representations of Stafford Street as dirty, overcrowded, criminal, suspicious and Other match other neighbourhoods branded as 'Irish quarters.' Residential patterns were also similar to other urban settings, with Irish residents most often found in spaces behind the main streets, in courts and alleys, more likely to share their home and work in unskilled jobs. However, following Avtar Brah's concept of "diaspora space," I argue that any such space is essentially unique: experiences and identities were grounded in urban contexts, but also redefined those contexts to create something new.[7] Exploring spatial practices in diasporic contexts is also key to understanding the Irish quarter.

Being a resident of Stafford Street meant living at the intersection of interacting prejudices, whether Irish, English or other. Spatial practices were circumscribed by elite worldviews. Residents mostly undertook unskilled, dangerous, work, paid in poverty wages, the widely accepted principle of industrial capitalism. Leisure time was constrained by licensing regulation, rooted in the moral judgements of magistrates, churches and the press. Lending

[6] G. K. Peatling, 'The Whiteness of Ireland Under and After the Union', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 1 (2005): 115–33.
[7] Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London: Routledge, 1996), 205–7, 238–39.

spare bed space to friends or relatives was regulated by lodging restrictions and enforced by sanitary inspectors and police. However, even fragmentary evidence demonstrates that the power of representation and enforcement was not complete. Everyday spatial practice was probably the most effective means by which an Irish neighbourhood was created, yet it is also the hardest to describe. The Irish quarter was made of a mass of personal connections in individual courts or streets, of families and friends interacting and inter-marrying, of labour geographies, of economic nodes like Mary Salmon's shop, of attachments to home. The Irish dominated some courts but not others and were rarely a majority across the whole study area. This diversity defined the Irish quarter as a diasporic space, not simply an offshoot of Ireland, but where people of different backgrounds met and melded into something different again.[8] The Irish in Stafford Street had a choice between blending in or asserting a strong Irishness: both contributed to the overall feel of the area.

This means that there are alternative ways to read the condemnations of Stafford Street behaviour. For instance, alongside the much-discussed common lodging-houses of national public health discourse, ordinary homes in back streets provided temporary accommodation, cushioning the impact of famine arrivals on the rest of Wolverhampton, and providing spaces of kinship and comfort for emigrant Irish people. These were undoubtedly overcrowded, and the price of affordable lodgings was paid with typhoid and cholera as well as pence. Similarly, the melees and street brawls attributed to a Stafford Street Irish identity are better understood as responses to overcrowding, unpleasant domestic environments, and the

[8] Brah, 238–39.

widespread availability of alcohol. Whilst there were some incidents that could be considered defensive – turf wars between Irishmen and boatmen, or violent reactions to Protestant preachers – these were over-interpreted by commentators, and were hardly unique to the Irish quarter.[9] The rioting outside anti-Catholic lectures likely originated in plans made in Stafford Street, as onlookers imagined, but it is more difficult to say who made those plans, or whether these were instinctive outbursts or the product of clandestine political organisations. And alongside national panics about Irish nationalism, the sympathetic, protective environment of the Irish quarter was appreciated and used by organisers like James Egan to instil shared cultures and narratives. When it was demolished, and this concentration of Irishness dispersed, the feeling of Irish community in the town struggled to maintain itself. It was the way this space was used that enabled the Irish in Wolverhampton to organise and contribute to a much larger picture.

Representational space in the Irish Quarter

Residents of Stafford Street were well aware of its symbolic value at a sensory level. Many "couldn't abear" its "warm, fetid, stinking atmosphere," for example.[10] Its drinking geographies were full of symbolism, with illicit stills, and Irish-run, Irish-named pubs hosting Irish music and dances. A Saturday evening in Stafford Street's pubs – with friends from home, speaking Connacht Irish and reminiscing of home – would certainly have demonstrated a

[9] In fact, the savagery of the wider Black Country was a common trope in mid-Victorian writing, and can be seen in, for example, Benjamin Disraeli, *Sybil, or The Two Nations* (London: Henry Colburn, 1845); Thomas Tancred, ed., *First Report of the Midland Mining Commission: South Staffordshire* (London: HMSO, 1843).
[10] 'Inquiry into the Sanitary State of Wolverhampton, Part Two', *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 14 February 1849; 'The Sanitary Condition of the Black Country: No.1 - Wolverhampton', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 4 June 1866.

conviviality and warmth which characterised the area more strongly than the violence which outsiders ascribed it. Such places created provided a tangible link between homes, in Ireland and in Wolverhampton. Stafford Street's Irish Catholicity was evident not just on Sunday mornings, but any time outsiders impugned or tried to supplant it. The representational role of Irish nationalist groups was fairly small during the core years of this study, though this grew alongside the respectability of such organisations in the 1880s. But even during these years, a hundred Irishmen bearing rosettes, descending on a pub festooned with shamrocks and Irish slogans, praising priests and rebels, showed the importance and vitality of the Irish quarter's visual and material space.

I argue here that the sensory and symbolic life of the Irish quarter made it not simply an Irish quarter but a distinct and unique space. Those representing the Irish quarter construed it as part of landscapes of morality, economy or fear. But other landscapes – of material culture, of sense, of political symbolism – were available. Understanding these personal topographies as lived is the third crucial part of understanding the Irish quarter as a space, and just as significant as representations and uses.

I have outlined here the way differing perceptions and uses of space can be understood together, to give a fuller picture of any given space. It is not possible to understand the everyday lives of historical subjects without understanding the constraining and liberating contexts within which their lives were lived. This thesis represents an attempt to apply a methodical spatial analysis to a space which was condemned, maligned, endured, and even sometimes enjoyed. Any association with Irishness exacerbated the swirl of myths around poor neighbourhoods, blinding observers to the realities of everyday life. To describe somewhere as an Irish quarter damned it not only by assumptions about Irish national

character, but with multiple assumptions about the English poor too. The dominant representations of Stafford Street were clearly those presented by physicians, police, clergymen, landowners and the like, and the interventions in space that these representations generated had tangible impacts on the lived experiences of its residents. Yet while summing this diverse area up as an 'Irish quarter' over-simplifies many things, it also suggests a difference in the urban fabric and a better way of understanding urban life than simply following the assumptions of onlookers about Irish ways of life. These were unique spaces of creolisation which created something new in the British experience, neither Irish nor slum.[11]

Methodological reflections

As several historians have noted, centring space in historical analysis is not straightforward.[12] The physical neighbourhood was shaped by human forces, economic, social and political, not by inert space: as Leif Jerram notes, "they are people doing things, not things doing things."[13] I have thus sought to identify the way different actors understood and used historical space, rather than analysing the impact of physical space on behaviours. The small scale of this makes it possible to trace changes in opinion in fine detail, especially because – Murphy riots and murders aside – these were comparatively uneventful years during Wolverhampton's industrial heyday. It makes it possible to see how national conversations project themselves

[11] Brah, *Cartographies*, 207, 238–39.
[12] Leif Jerram, 'Space: A Useless Category for Historical Analysis?', *History and Theory* 52, no. 3 (2013): 400–419; Katrina Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place, 1789–1848* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 13–19.
[13] Jerram, 'Space'.

onto local discourses and local spaces, and vice versa: how local discourses about local spaces end up becoming part of the national conversation. Starting with a space, rather than a topic, can therefore be a useful way to think through processes not in isolation, but as they intersect and build. It is possible to get to know a community intimately in this way, and space provides an alternative tool with which to read against the grain of the historical documents.

The chapters here are the key themes that emerged from the archives, but other studies could be made: housing studied through property advertisements and title deeds; solvency and insolvency, studied through those who resorted to living here temporarily; working-class leisure, studied through advertisements for prize fights, races and bicycles for sale. Avenues for further research would include more detailed studies of gender and working-class politics. Gender certainly intersected with race and contemporary descriptions of the poor: newspapers used sarcastic language like “Amazons” and “beauties,” and women were not considered separate from the masculine fray of Irish rows.[14] Records of religious orders aside, in many sources women’s contributions to Catholic practice and Irish nationalist organising were also minimised, presuming that their realm was the everyday and unacknowledged. In fact, as chapter six shows, the everyday was one of the most powerful forces in the creation of space. Similarly, my sources suggested that working-class politics were not of major importance within this space, but this too is a result of the power dynamics involved in their creation. Chartist and Fenian rallies of thousands of people were glossed over because it was in the interests of most newspapers and their political allies to diminish stories of working-

[14] William Owen, ‘Carribee Islanders: The Wolverhampton Crusade Against Dirty Courts and Alleys’, *Midland Examiner and Times*, 11 November 1876; ‘A Pair of Beauties’, *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 31 July 1863.

class self-determination. Studying the intersections of Irishness and working-class politics would require looking beyond this immediate space and understanding how organising impacted on home and social lives within the Irish quarter.

Maps and data

Space has been central to urban history's key interventions, but this has not always extended to consciously foregrounding space or conducting spatial analysis.[15] This research has highlighted why this is challenging. The foremost difficulty echoes longstanding debates about using quantitative data in history. Historical statistical data is an exercise in power, and power shaped *when*, *what*, *how* and *why* information was collected, about *whom*. Census enumerators' returns, newspaper reports, title deeds and other potentially quantifiable data were all shaped within the same power structures that shaped the lives of the poor.[16] I argue that *where* data was collected, and the spatial ideologies informing that, is relevant too.

Originally, for example, I had hoped to map thematic detail like crime reports, or disease outbreaks. But as chapter three shows, precise locations of incidents like assaults were only recorded when they proved something about the area or its residents. "Stafford Street rows" did not just happen in Stafford Street, let alone a location that could be pinned on a map; instead, Stafford Street – poor neighbourhood, slum, Irish quarter – became a metonym for

[15] For overviews, see Shane Ewen, *What Is Urban History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), chap. 2; Simon Gunn and R. J. Morris, *Identities in Space: Contested Terrains in the Western City since 1850* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001).
[16] As Hudson and Ishizu note, Victorian data collection took place in an atmosphere where moral judgements informed methodologies, and where central/local conflicts were reflected in outcomes and analysis. Such "moral statistics" were always considered in spatial terms. Pat Hudson and Mina Ishizu, *History by Numbers: An Introduction to Quantitative Approaches* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 29–33; see also Robert Cook and Howard Wainer, 'A Century and a Half of Moral Statistics in the United Kingdom: Variations on Joseph Fletcher's Thematic Maps', *Significance* 9, no. 3 (2012): 31–36.

both the neighbourhood and its perceived characteristics. Similarly, while addresses were recorded for the starting points of cholera outbreaks, disease reports were collated by the Watch Committee: as chapter two shows, their perspective is evident in the way that movements and expected social responses to disease were policed. Even in the most complete dataset, the census, street houses are faithfully and accurately recorded, whereas court houses are lumped in together, suggesting a certain sort of spatial thinking amongst enumerators: the higher the perceived social position of a residence, the more they considered its residents individuals; the further away, the more like a homogeneous mass they became. So mapping at close scale becomes impressionistic rather than fully accurate; and longitudinal comparisons are ruled out. Such formal spatial analysis would require census and map data, particularly, to match over time. While not the case in Wolverhampton, the erratic nature of census recording means it may be in other places, and those would make productive case studies, both historically and methodologically.

This thesis thus does not take the shape I initially expected, and more sophisticated GIS functions were less useful than hoped at this scale.[17] However, even in a secondary, contextual role, the mapping included here is important. In chapter six particularly, mapped data helps explain the spatial arrangements of Irish neighbourhoods, and refute some of the generalising assumptions around occupation, family structure and integration that have been

[17] This does not rule out such analysis at a larger (but less detailed) scale. Compare the advanced GIS work on urban populations by James Perry, and the MESH project: James Perry, 'Foreigners, Aliens, and Strangers: Foreign-Born Migration and Settlement in England and Wales, 1851-1911' (PhD, Lancaster, Lancaster University, 2020); Richard Rodger et al., 'MESH: Mapping Edinburgh's Social History', MESH: Mapping Edinburgh's Social History, 2015, https://mappingedinburgh.org/.

assumed to be the corollary of such arrangements. Such maps also contribute to the way stories of the poor are told in history. They form an integral part of the storytelling methodology of chapter six. So often, poor people have formed the most fleeting of historical traces: a solitary census reference; a court report; an epidemiological or cultural footnote. A mixed methodology can – at times – rectify this. By triangulating maps with family histories, statistical data, imagery, and other sources, the spatial worlds of the poor begin to make sense. Their stories are no longer fleeting, but rounded and coherent. This level of overlapping data is only really feasible at neighbourhood scale, as while assisted by digital methods, it still relies on the historian to spot relevant themes and individuals which complete quantification would miss. However, despite the claims of some HGIS specialists that spatial history is primarily about mapping and formal spatial analysis, I argue that thinking spatially can be – and should be – done across the full breadth of historical sources and methodologies.[18] I suggest that the uses of historical data are not limited to larger places or longer timescales, but as Julia Laite has argued, such approaches can be used to reveal intimate lives and "small histories."[19]

Change over time

Mapping and related analysis is thus better suited to studying spatial practice than more representational, discursive themes. But thinking spatially still also reveals much about how

[18] For example, Ian Gregory, Don DeBats, and Don Lafreniere, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Spatial History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 1.
[19] Julia Laite, 'The Emmet's Inch: Small History in a Digital Age', *Journal of Social History* 53, no. 4 (2020): 963–89.

politics, societies and cultures change over time. In particular, this research has shown the relationship between significant historical moments and more slowly developing discourses.

For example, I have shown how Stafford Street shifted in local judicial consciousness. Policing in Staffordshire was formed in the tense class politics of the 1830s and 1840s, which came to a head in 1848 when the rapid decline of the Chartist threat overlapped with the arrival of a mass of poor Irish immigrants. These new arrivals filled a policing vacuum, most keenly felt in the Irish quarter, which experienced the full power of stigmatising discourse. Over time, policing became more and more a matter for local civil and political discussion: regulation and licensing replaced police coercion in many areas, evidence of a moral landscape which existed in the minds of Wolverhampton's legislators. Both the revanchism of the new council, and the ethical gymnastics they later performed to justify Stafford Street's demolition, reflect the changing nature of liberal governance in Victorian towns. Moments of particular conflict demonstrate these changes too: the differing responses to anti-Catholic lecturers show how the relationship between the police, the town and Stafford Street changed.

Some of the advantages that come with thinking small about space are also relevant to thinking about change over time. The mid-Victorian decades are often considered a period of stasis.[20] In fact, despite the council's apparent inaction on many issues, this small-scale focus highlights the subtle changes in liberal governance, racial thinking and urban community life. The change in the management of unruly urban neighbourhoods from direct, class-based

[20] For an outline and critique of this historiography, see Martin Hewitt, 'Introduction', in *The Victorian World* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 1–54.

policing to arms-length regulation is a key example, but chapter five also demonstrates a time of rapid fluctuations. Here, in the generation between 1847 and 1877, nationalist organising in Wolverhampton went from non-existent, through radical cultural nationalism in the early 1860s, to the fully-formed, highly-organised, translocal and transnational Home Rule campaign of the 1870s. Just a few years in the early 1870s demonstrate a rollercoaster of changes in how the Irish quarter formed part of organisational thinking. These were certainly momentous times in individual lives, but those lives lasted much longer than this, and have reference to other spaces, and other histories. It is intended that the personal histories of, for example, Samuel Smallwood (whose property ownership history necessarily extends much further back than 1832) or James Egan (whose story pushes us into the 1930s) provide some of this longer contextualisation. But the abundance of source material means that knowing when and where to stop is the principal challenge of such an approach.

Summary

I have made two core arguments in this thesis. Firstly, Irish quarters were an important part of urban life in Victorian towns. They were constructed discursively, and the image of an Irish quarter wielded at least as much power as the reality: when elites linked social and environmental conditions with understandings of the Irish as a race or stigmatised group, such neighbourhoods were made to stand for every urban ill. There were neighbourhoods where large numbers of Irish people lived, and they were often the poorest, most insanitary, most policed parts of town. But in practice these neighbourhoods were new kinds of urban world: diaspora spaces in which people of different backgrounds mingled to create something different.

I have also demonstrated that thinking spatially about historical subjects is a productive way to understand urban processes. Novel methodologies, including comparing GIS and family histories, demonstrate that the lives of the poor and Irish – so often considered by contemporaries and historians as an unknowable, homogeneous mass – can be rendered more legible by understanding their spatial worlds. But I have also shown that to understand these worlds it is first necessary to unpick the layers of stigma, discrimination and prejudice that were applied to the poor and the Irish. I have done this using a tight spatial and chronological focus to show that processes of stigmatisation, racialisation and discrimination occur and interact in multiple, subtle ways. Stafford Street was a site in which power was exercised, but also where lives were lived. This thesis has shown that the Irish quarter in Victorian towns is an object worthy of study, and rewards close analysis by revealing subtly changing layers of representation and experience.

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Appendix 1: maps

All maps were produced in ArcGIS. David Lees' 1871 survey of Wolverhampton (Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies, DX-673) was photographed and geo-referenced, then physical structures traced to create a polygon map ready to populate with data from census and similar sources.

Map 6.0 Unpopulated map showing streets and courts in study area

Map 6.1 Occupation density, 1851-71

Map 6.2 Pawnbroking and marine stores, 1871

Map 6.3 Lodgers per household, 1851-71

Map 6.4 Children aged under 14 in employment, 1851-71

Map 6.5 Heads of household by occupational sector, 1851-71

Map 6.6 Households headed by widowed individuals. 1871

Map 6.7 Agricultural labourers, 1851

Map 6.8 Occupation sector of Irish-born heads of household 1851-71

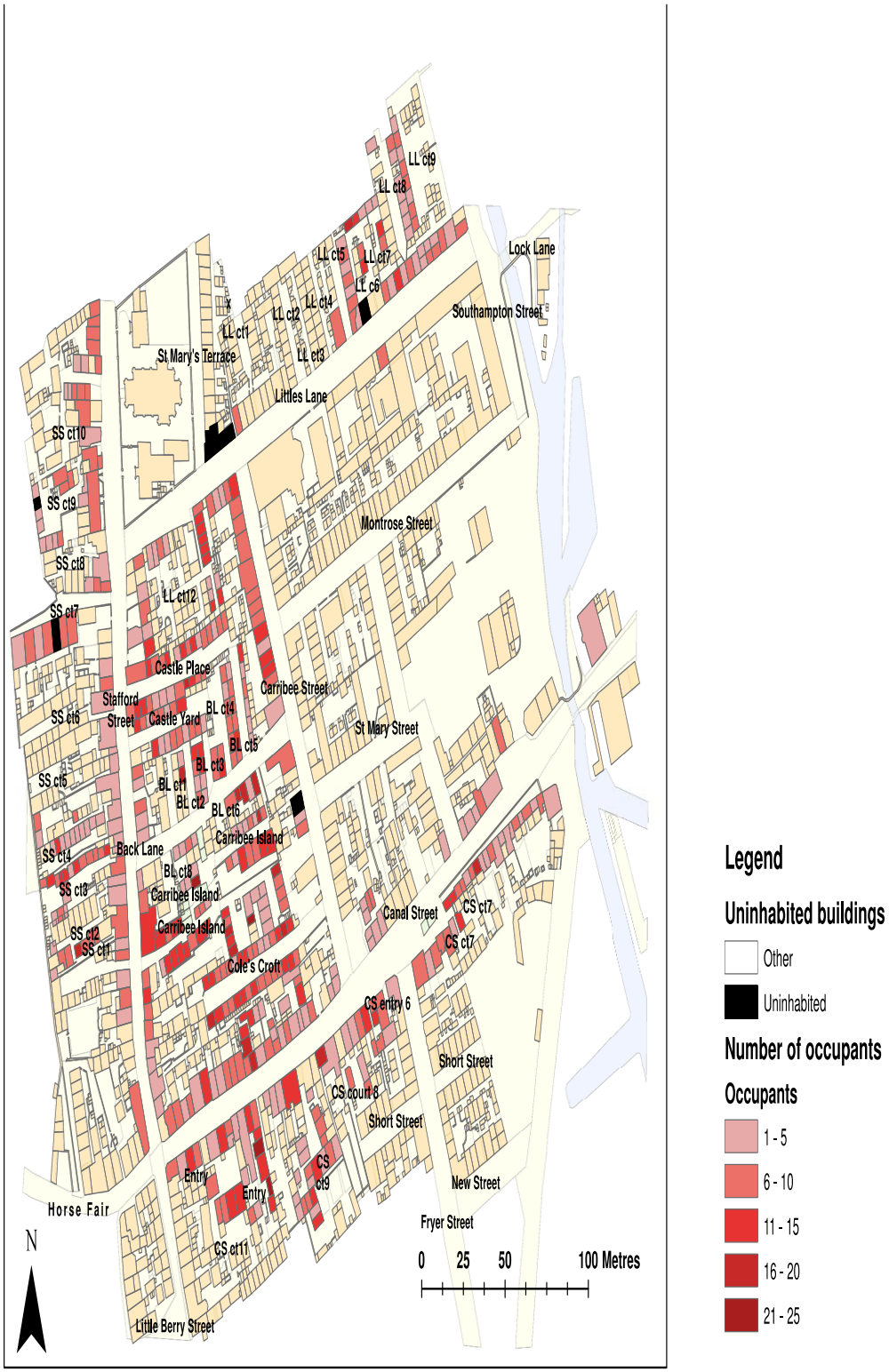
Map 6.9 Counties of birth of English-born heads of household, 1871

Map 6.10 Birthplace of heads of household 1851-71

Appendix 1: maps

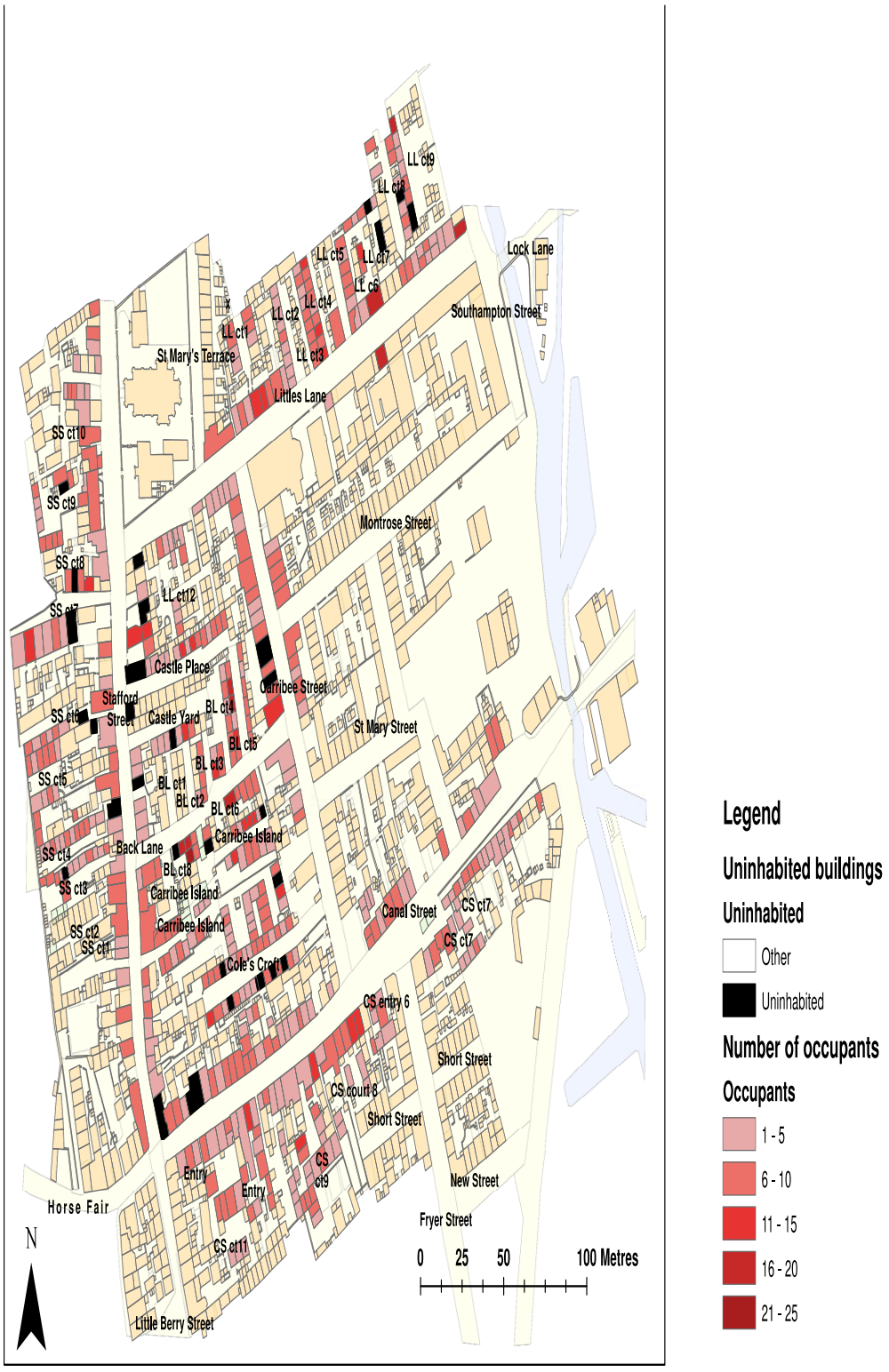


Map 6.0 Unpopulated map produced in ArcGIS, showing streets and courts in study area.



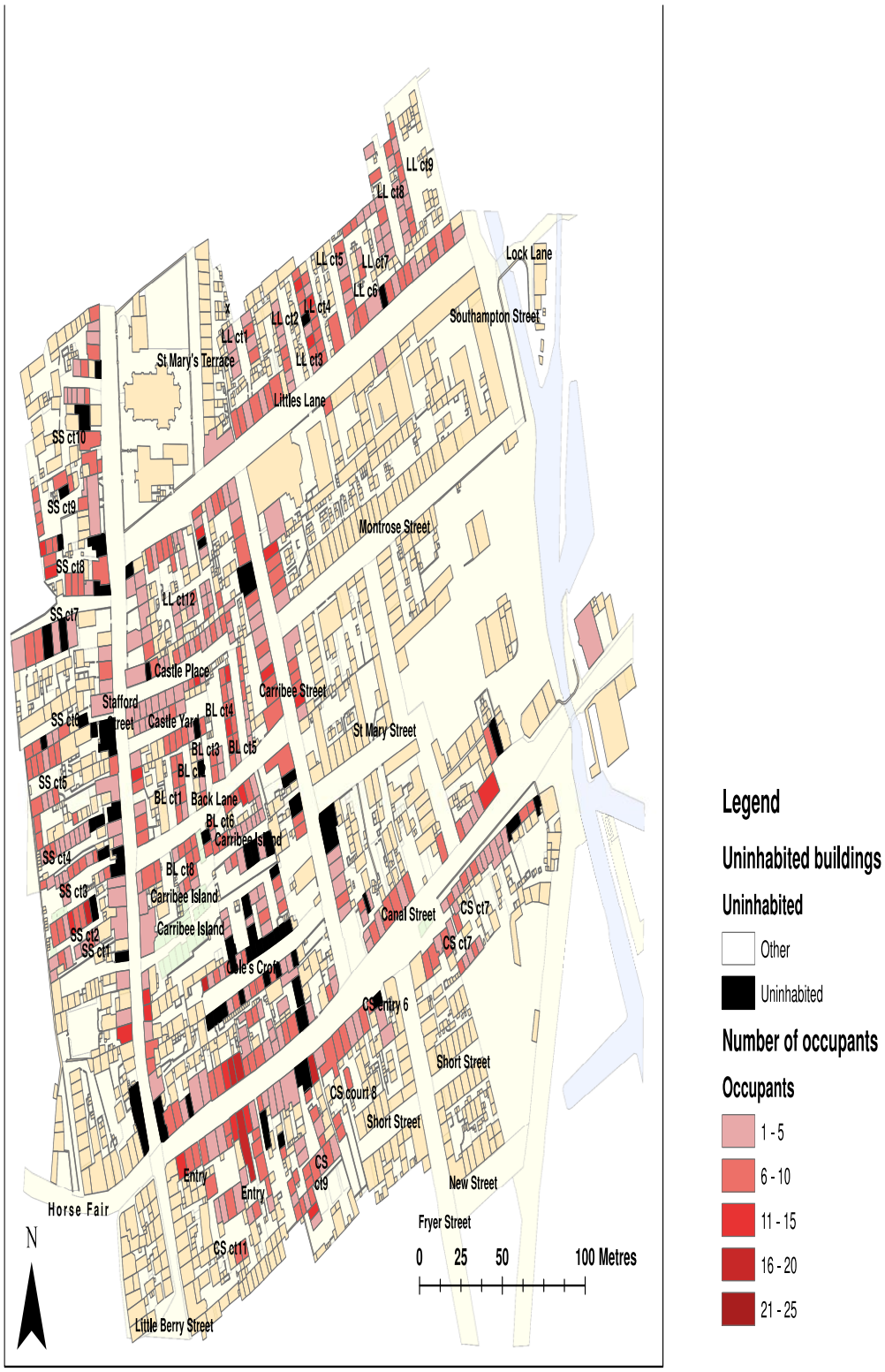
Map 6.1a Occupation density and uninhabited buildings, 1851. See Table 6.1 (return to text).

Appendix 1: maps

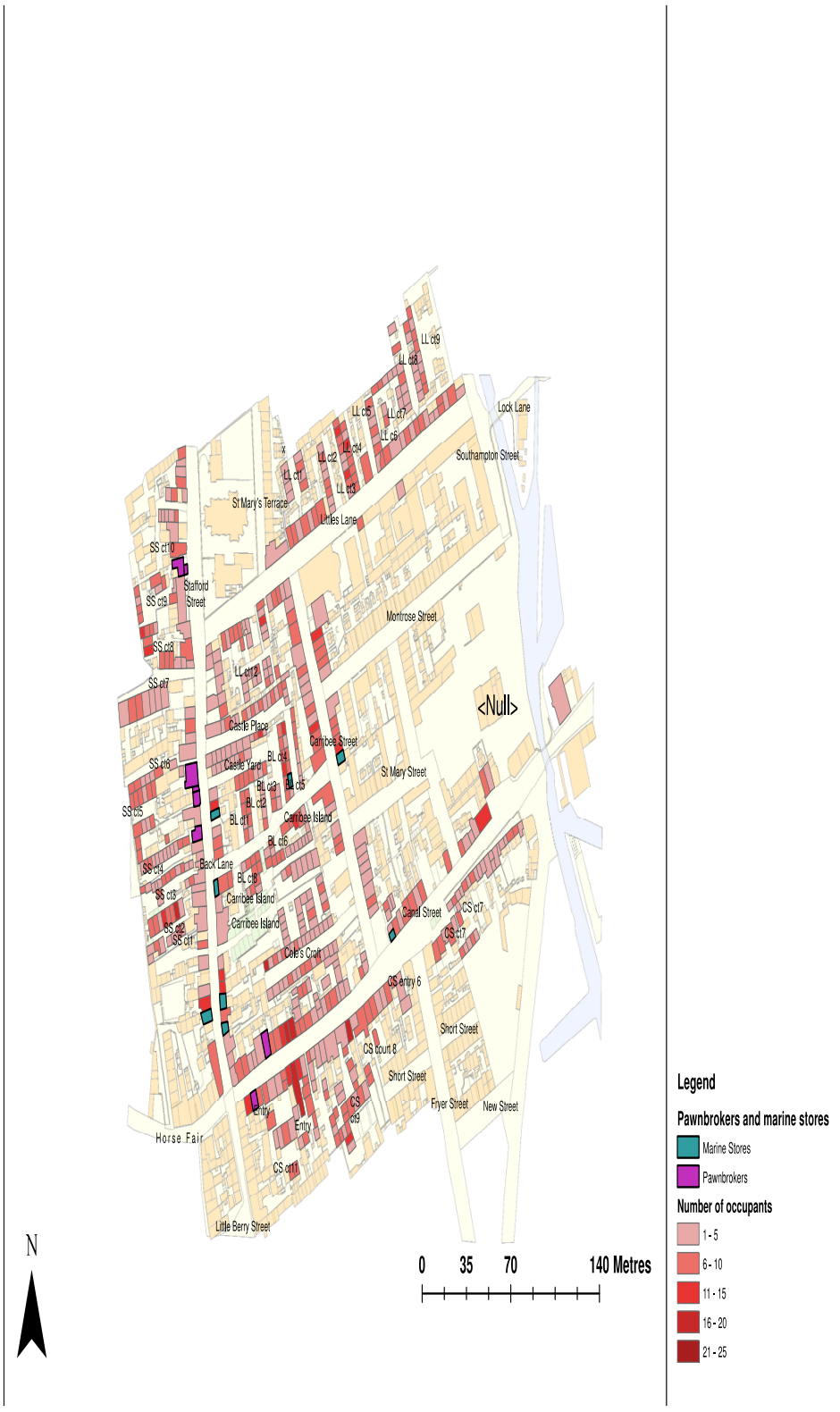


Map 6.1b Occupation density and uninhabited buildings, 1861. *Return to text*.

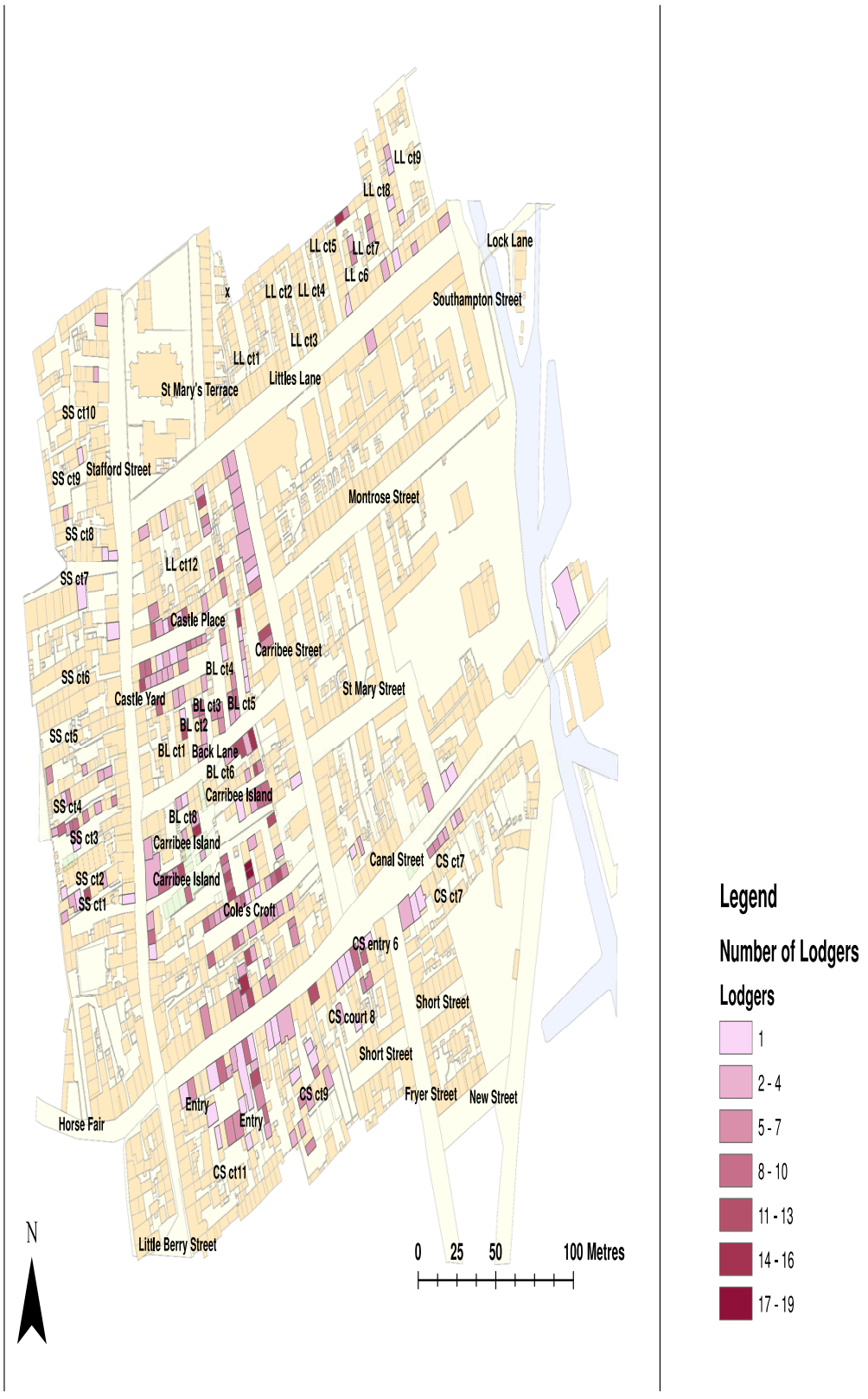
Appendix 1: maps



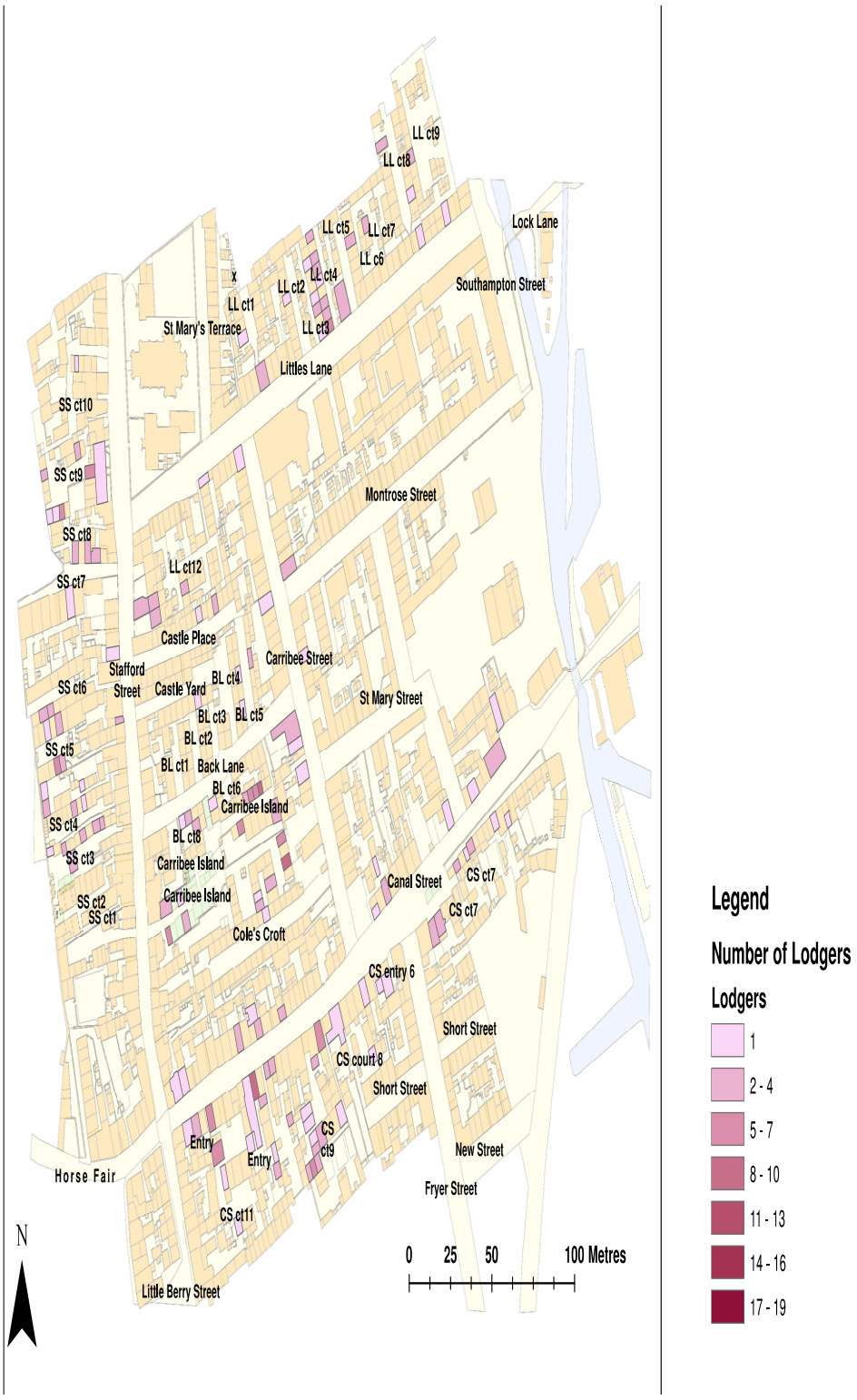
Map 6.1c Occupation density and uninhabited buildings, 1871. *Return to text*.



Map 6.2 Pawnbroking and marine stores in 1871 (return to text).

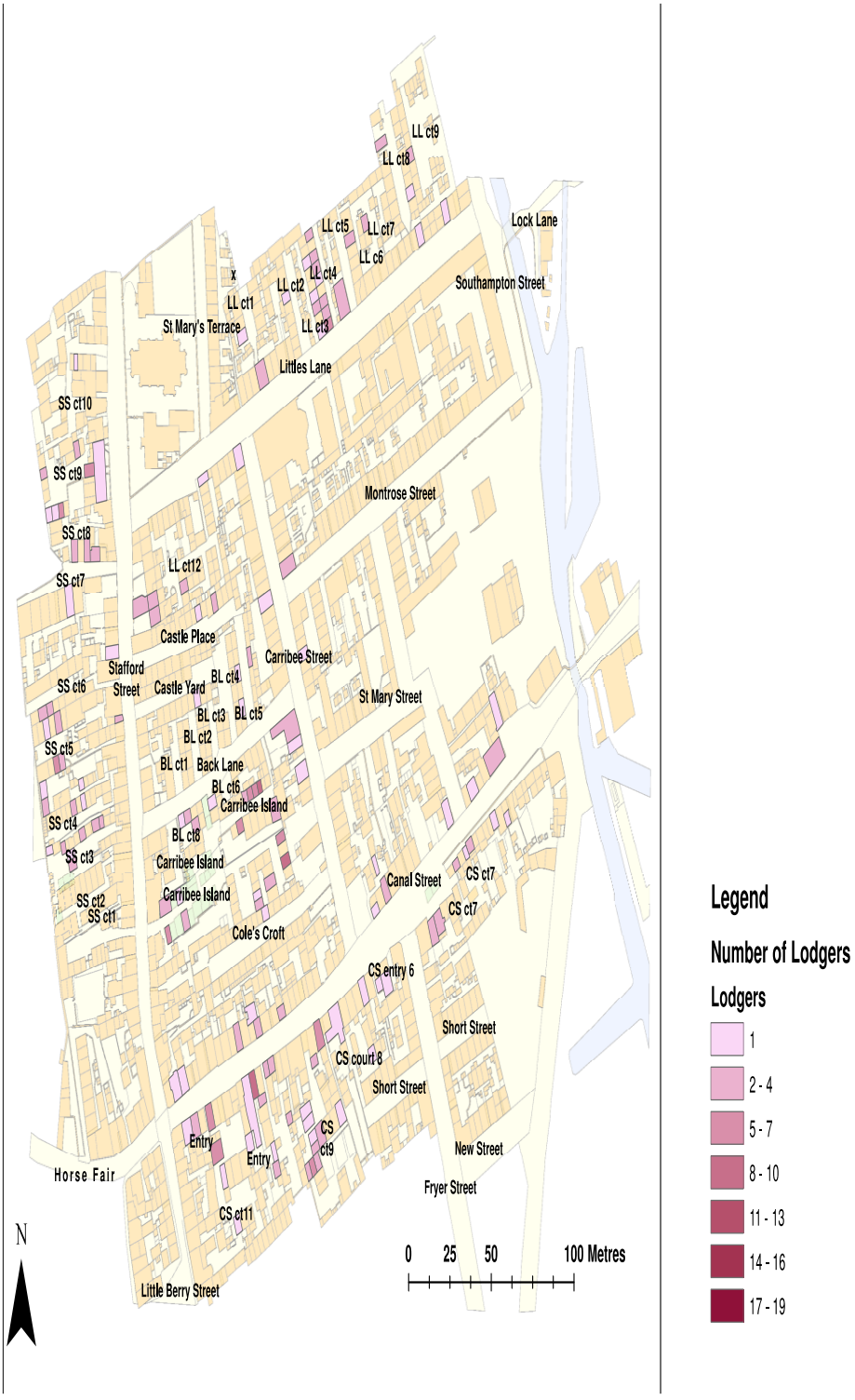


Map 6.3a Numbers of lodgers per household, 1851. See Table 6.6 (return to text).

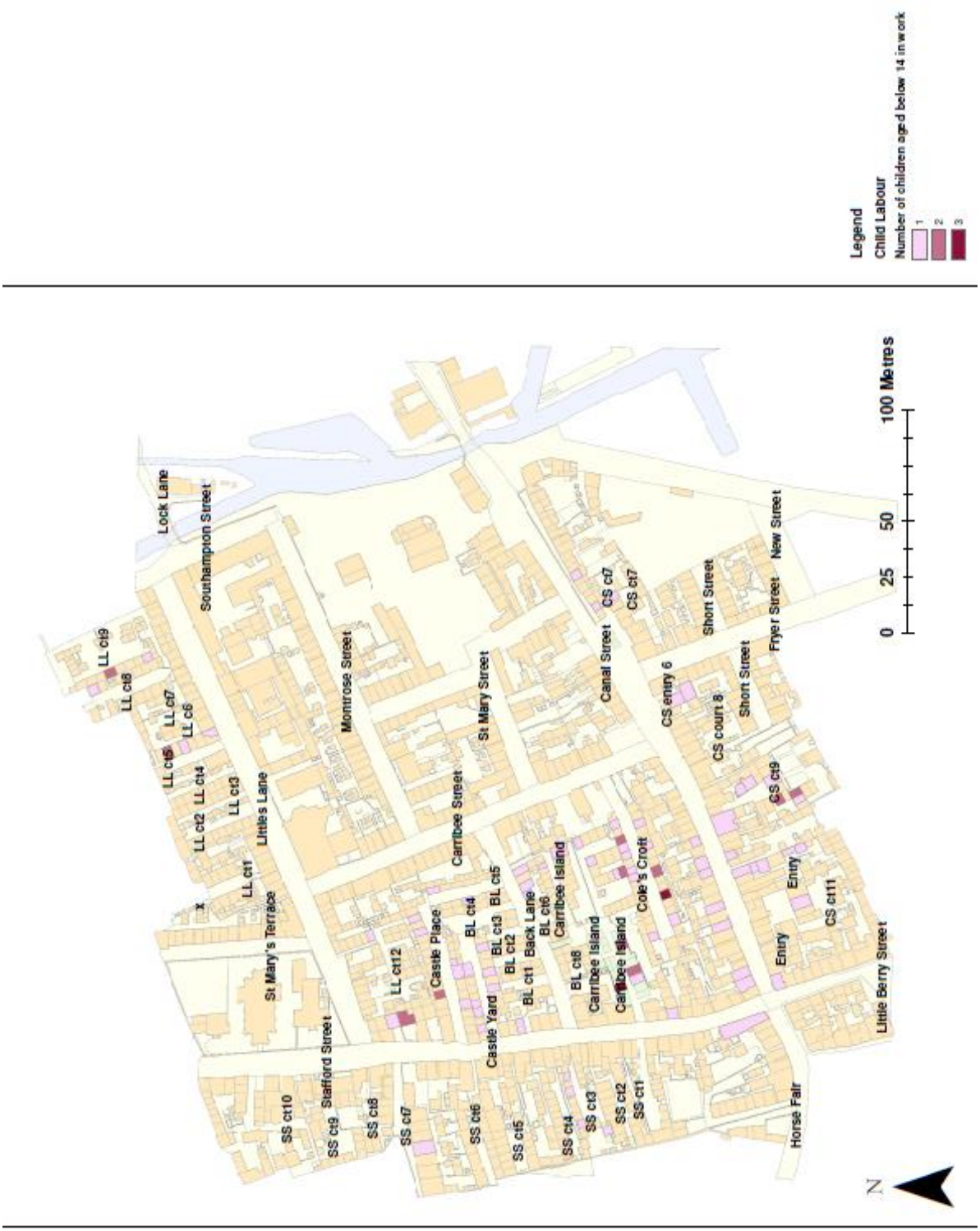


Map 6.3b Numbers of lodgers per household, 1861 (return to text).

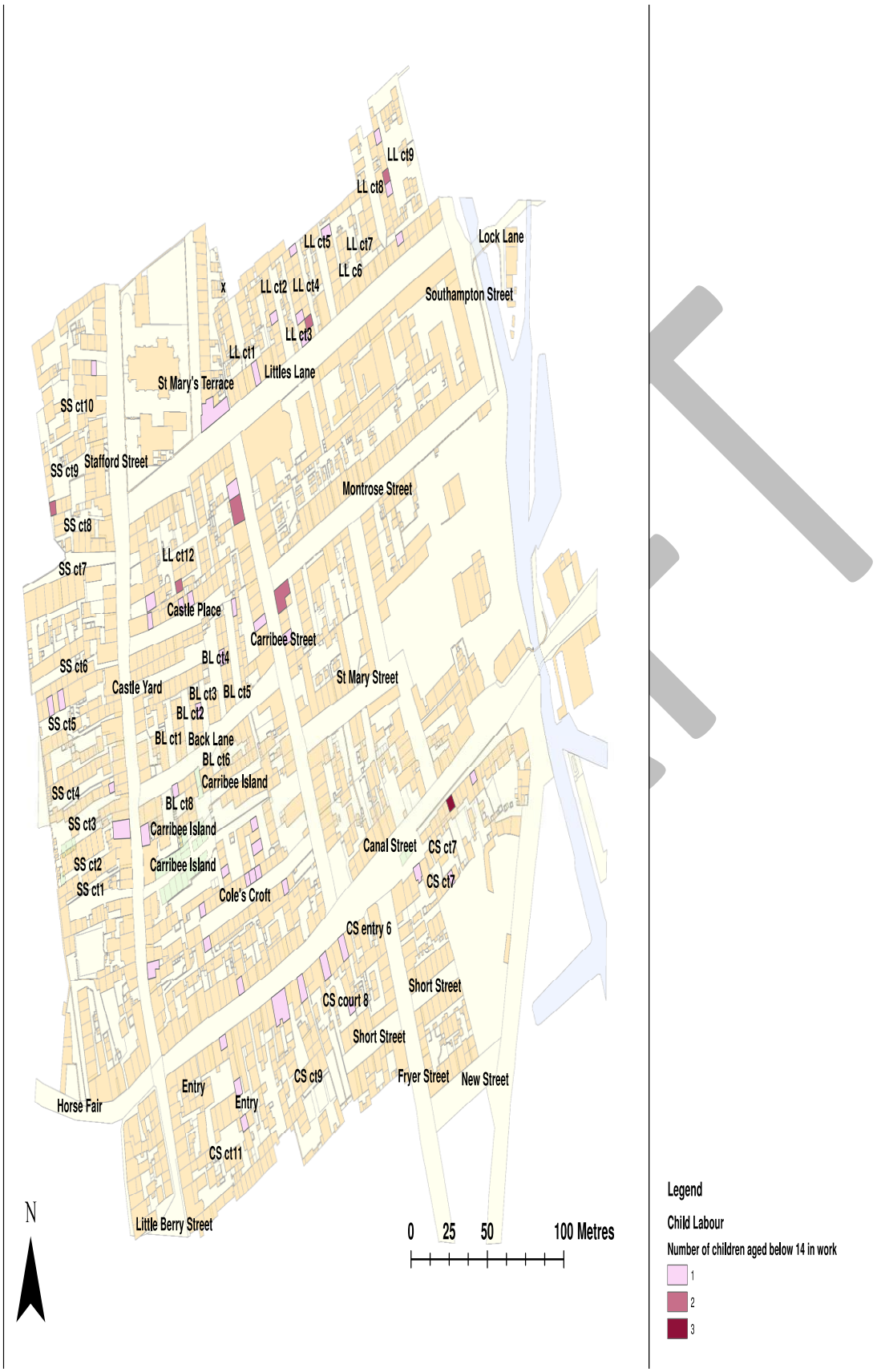
Appendix 1: maps



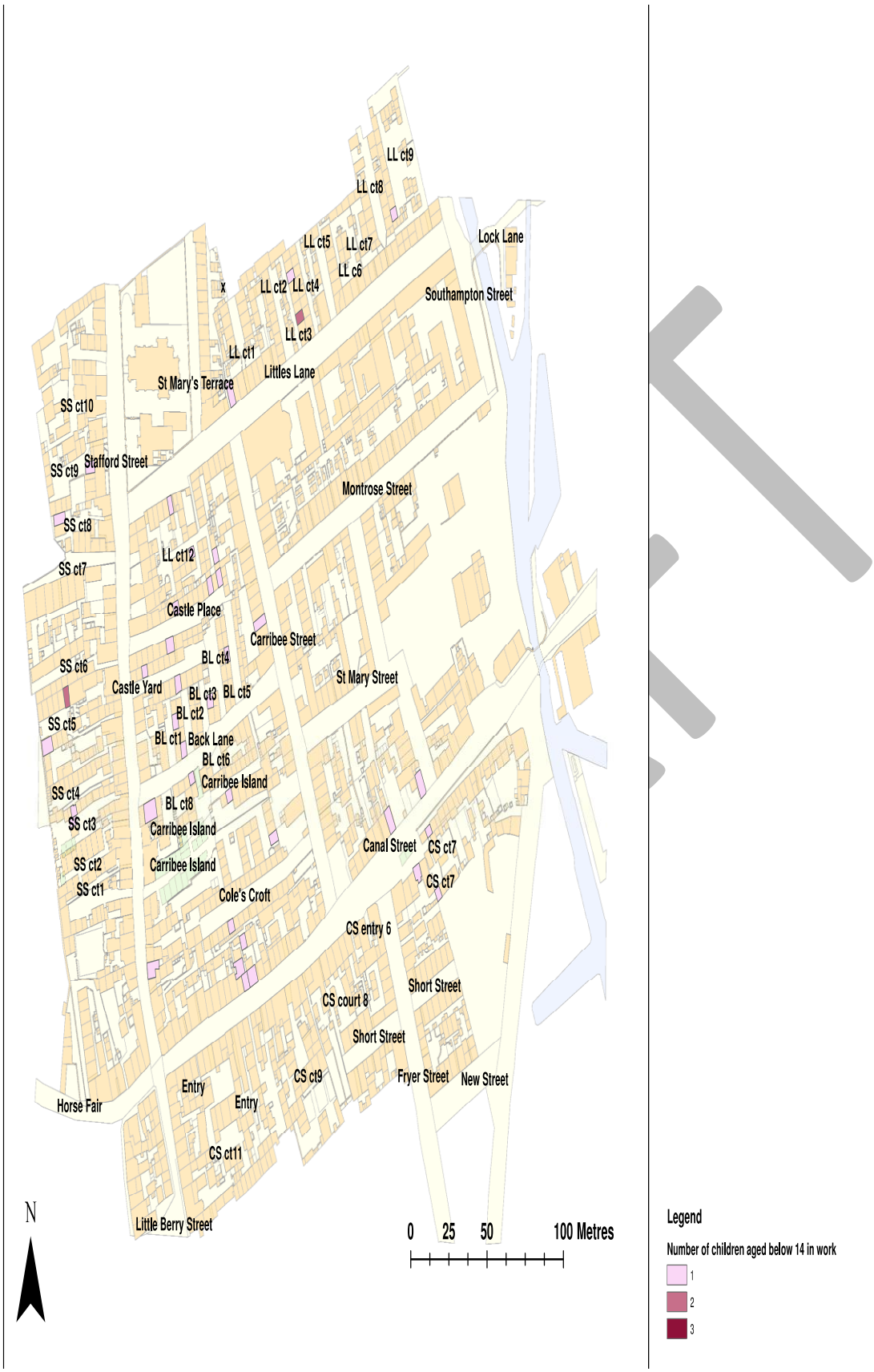
Map 6.3c Numbers of lodgers per household, 1871 (return to text).



Map 6.4a Children under age 14 in employment, 1851. See Table 6.7 (return to text).

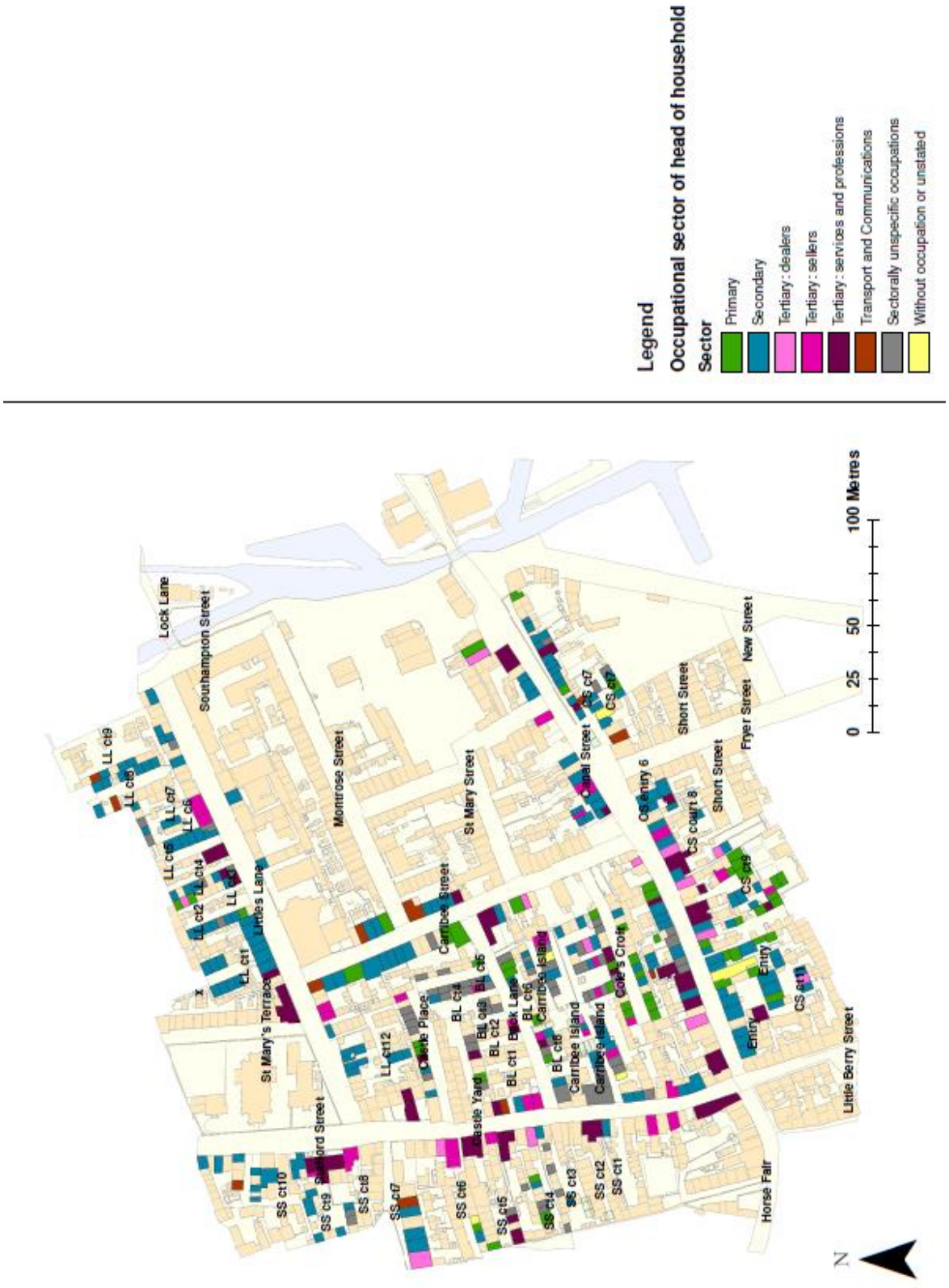


Map 6.4b Children under age 14 in employment, 1861 (return to text)

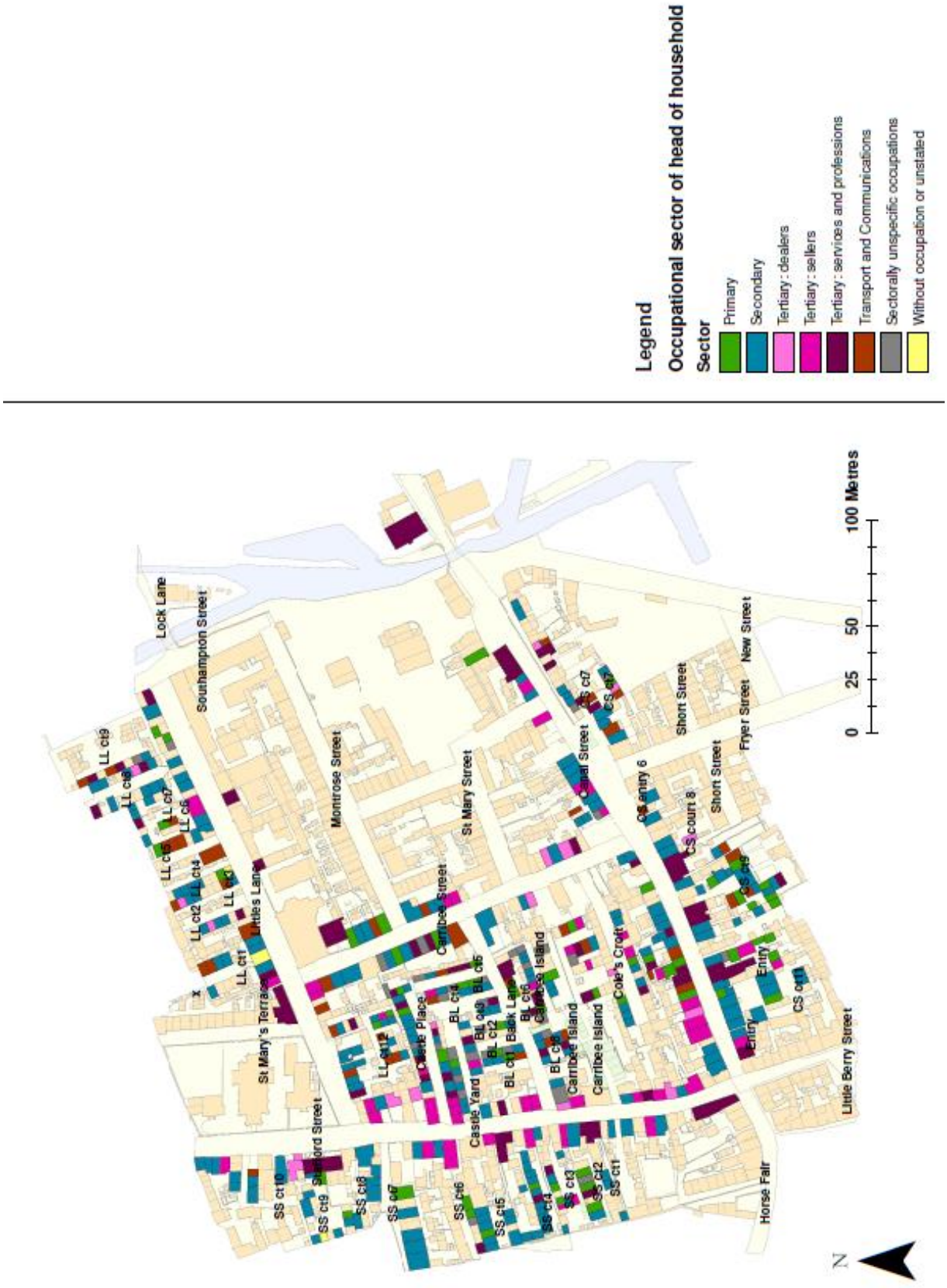


Map 6.4c Children under age 14 in employment, 1871 (return to text).

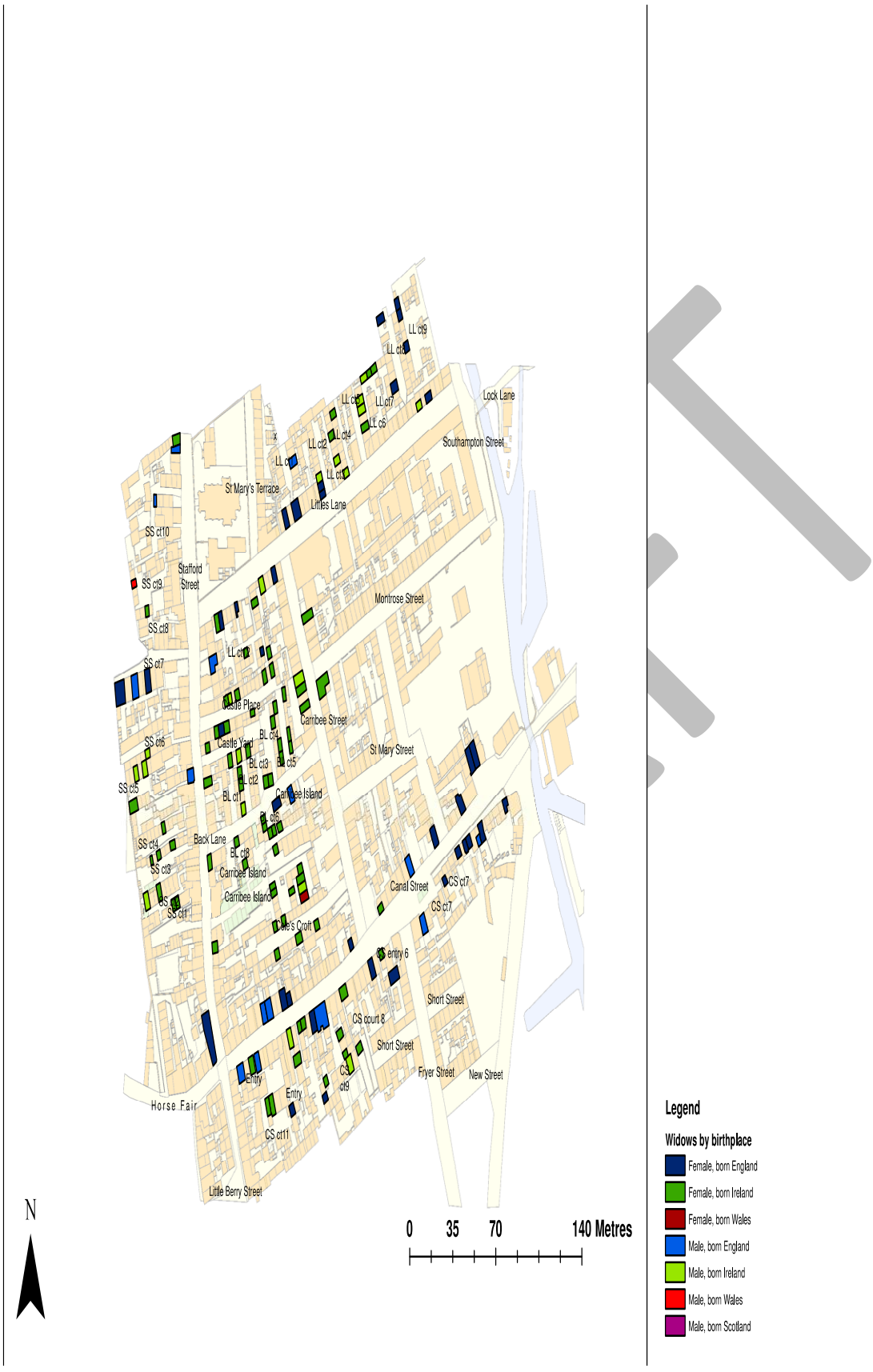
Map 6.5a Heads of household by occupational sector, 1851. See Table 6.8a (return to text).



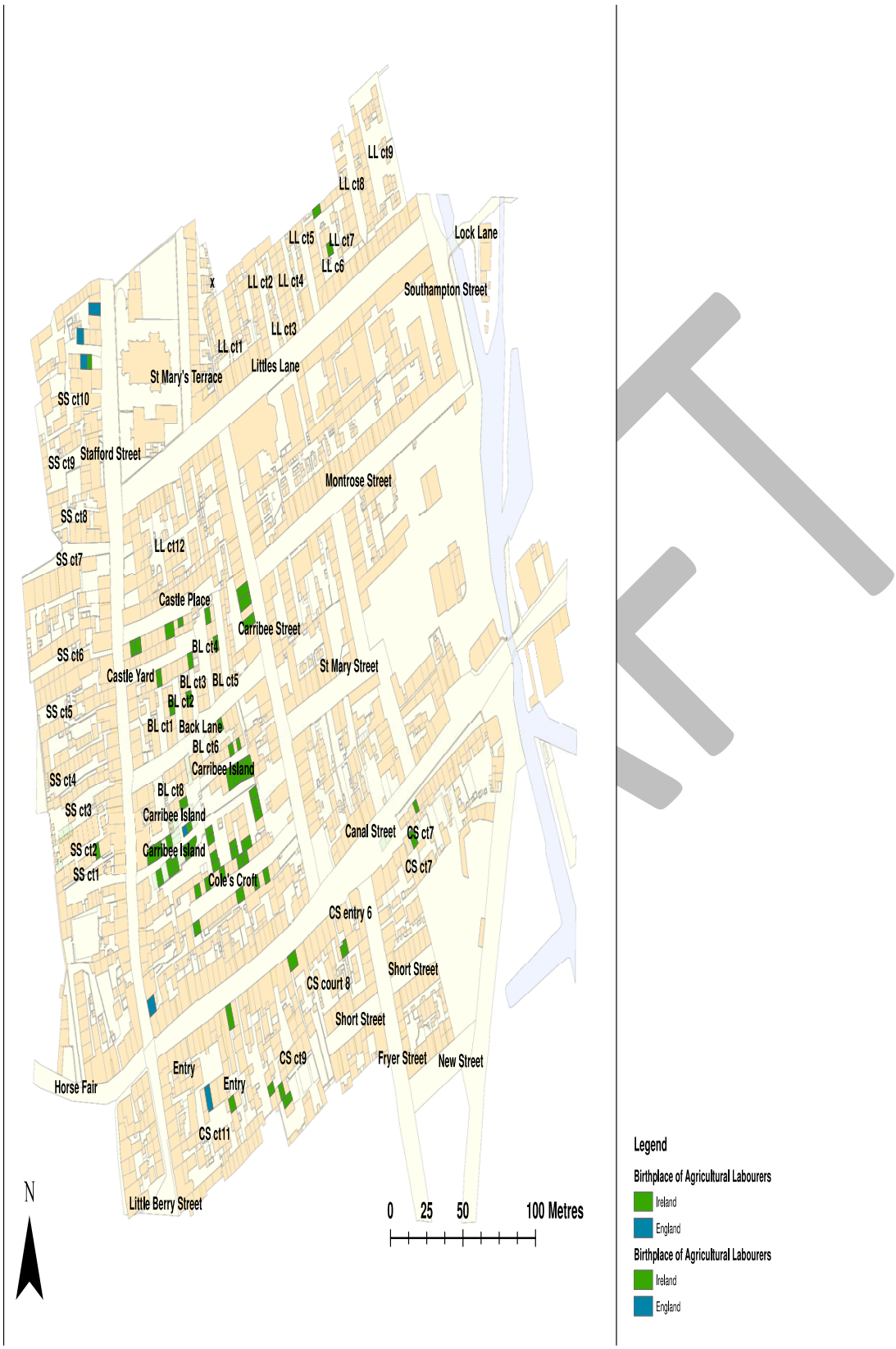
Map 6.5b Heads of household by occupational sector, 1861. See Table 6.8b (return to text).



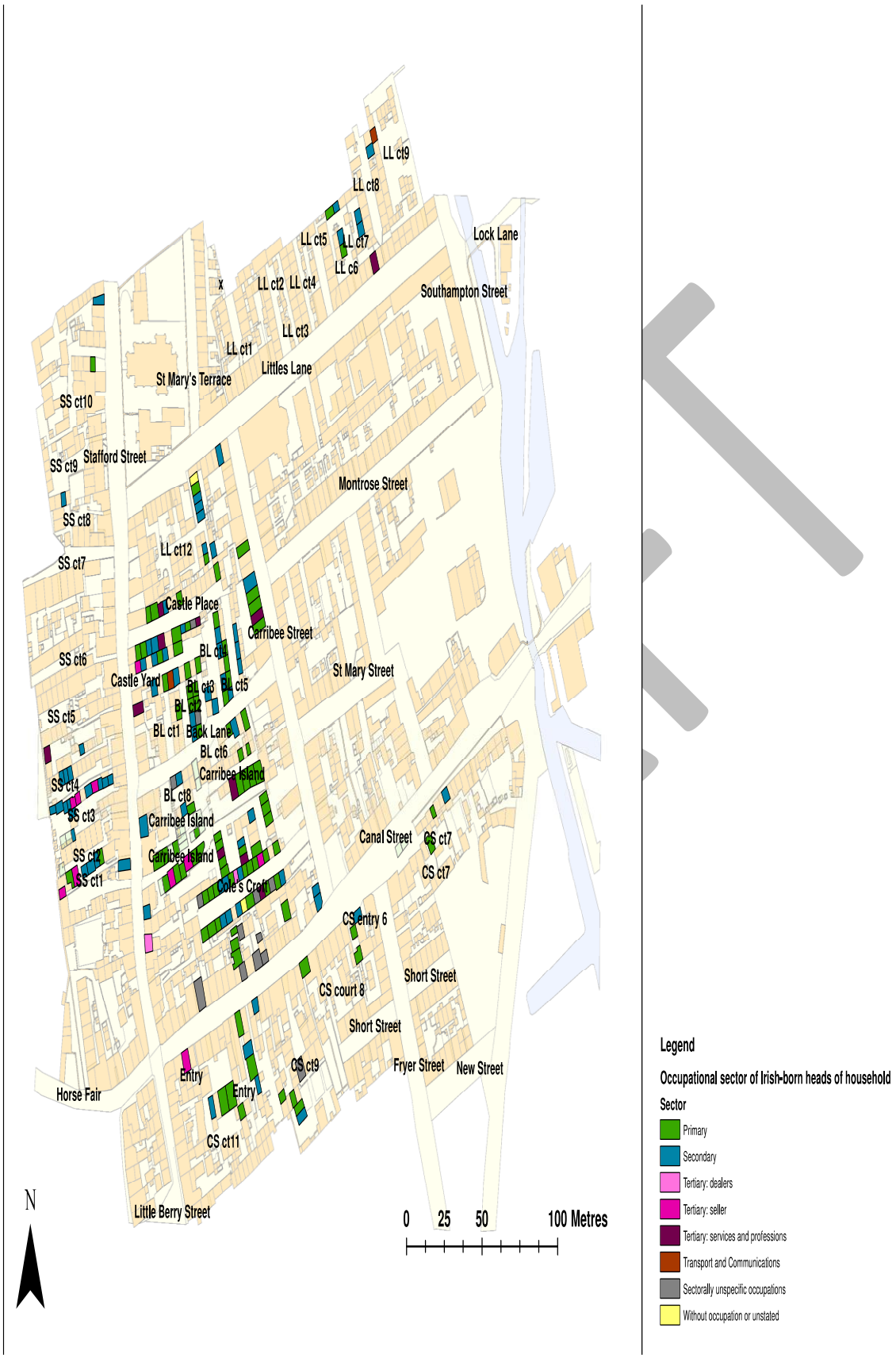
Map 6.5c Heads of household by occupational sector, 1871. See Table 6.8c (return to text).



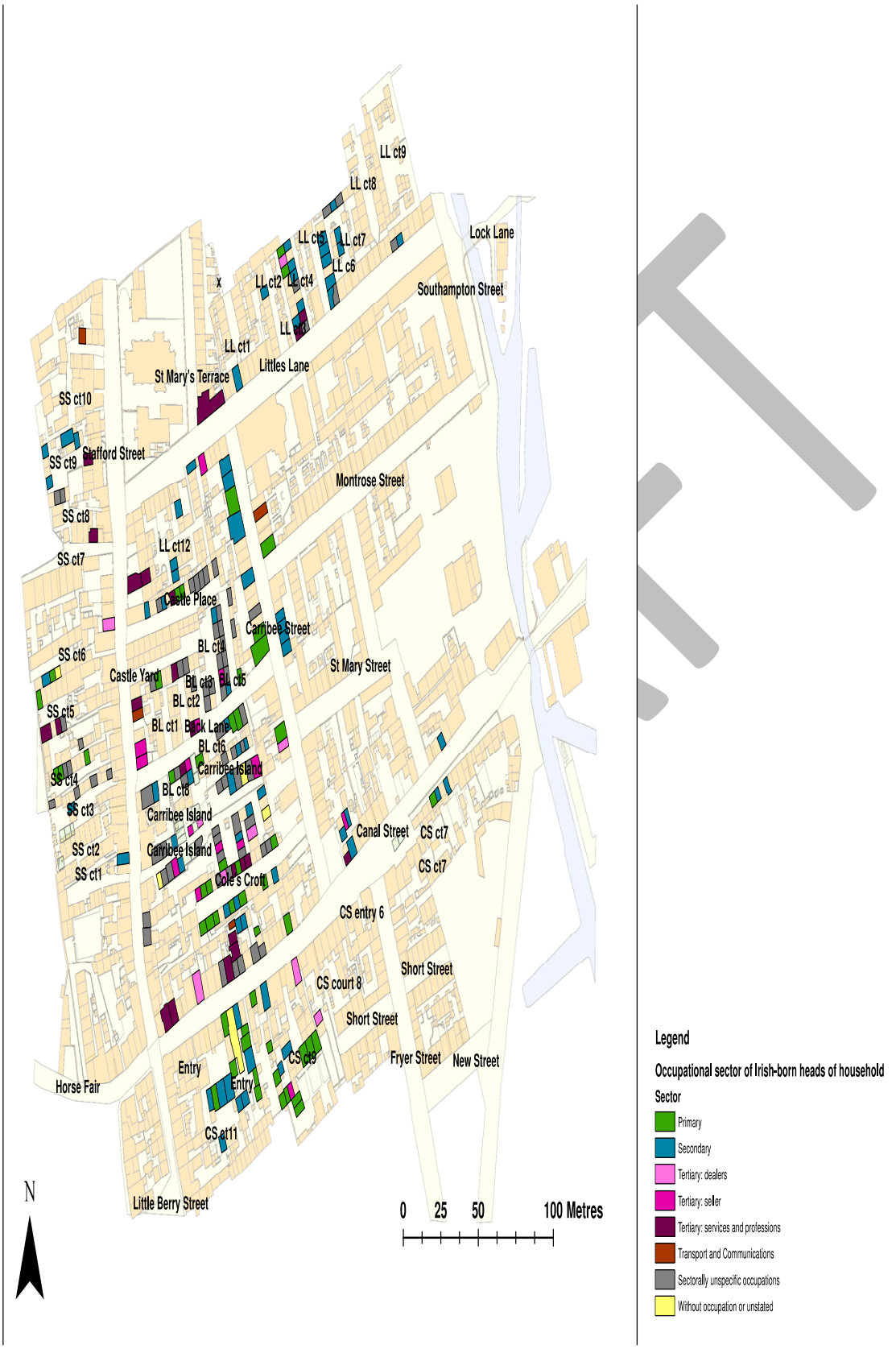
Map 6.6 Households headed by widows or widowers, 1871 (return to text).



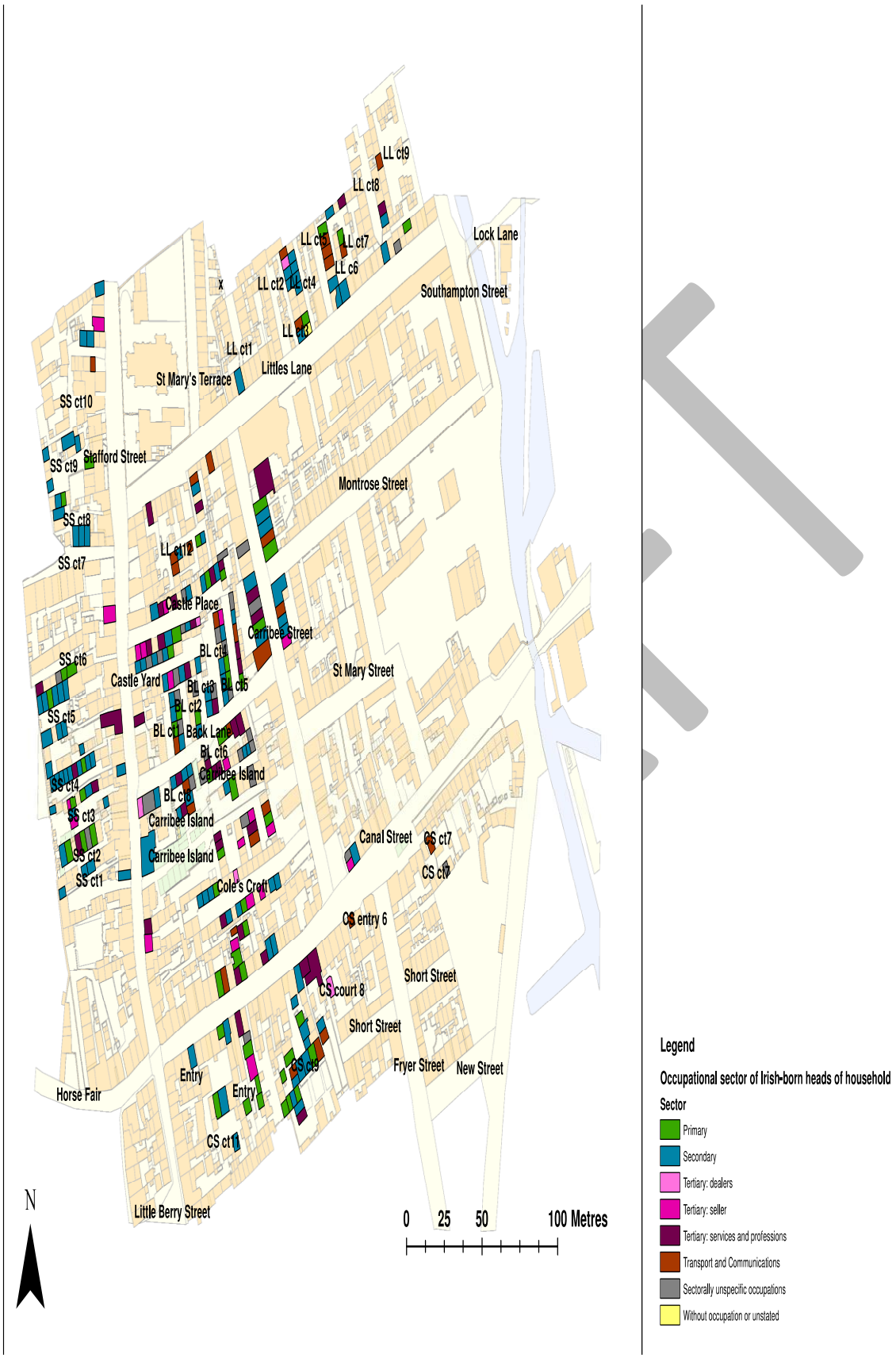
Map 6.7 Agricultural labourers in 1851 (return to text).



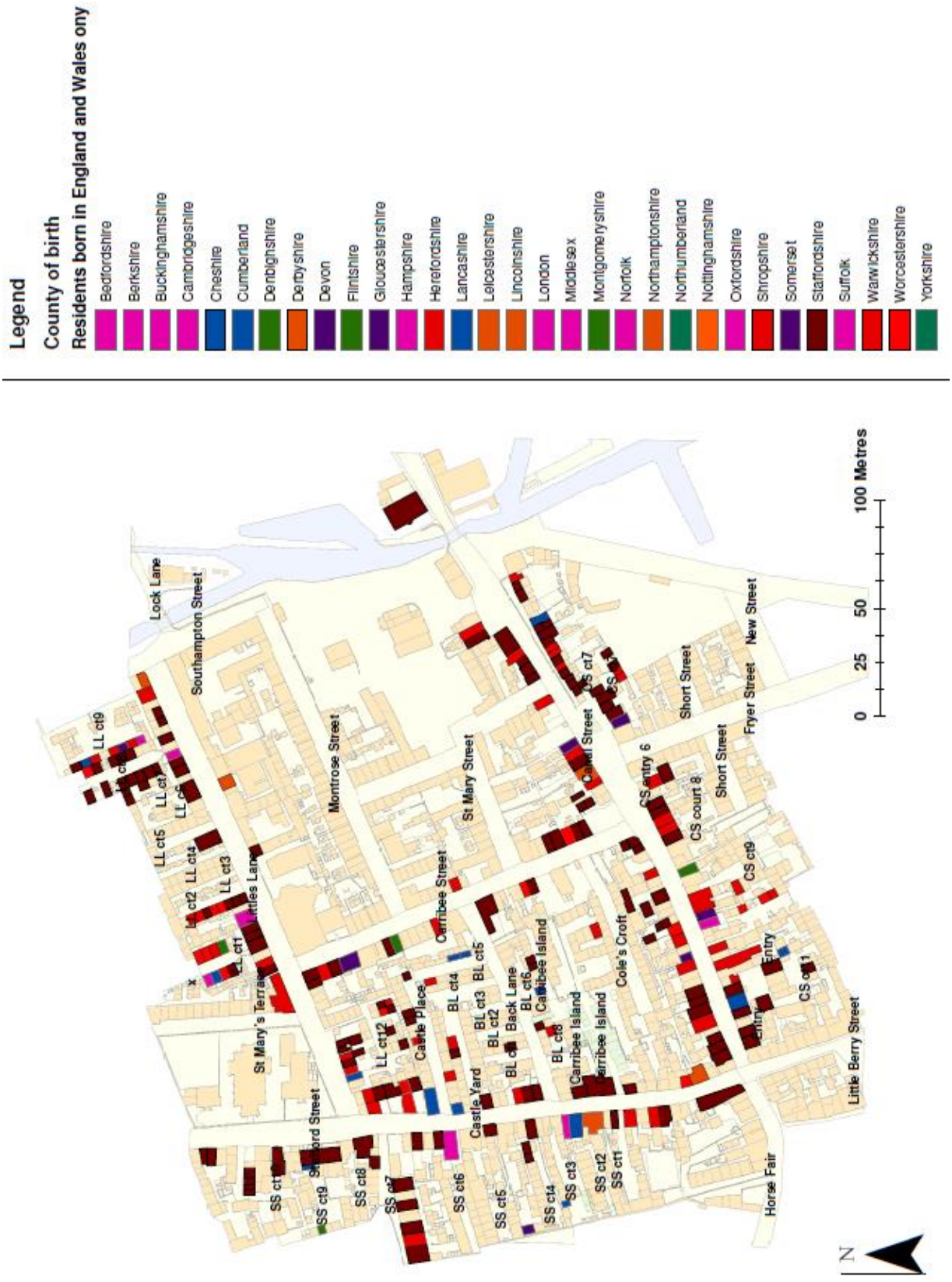
Map 6.8a Occupational sector of Irish-born heads of household, 1851 (return to text).



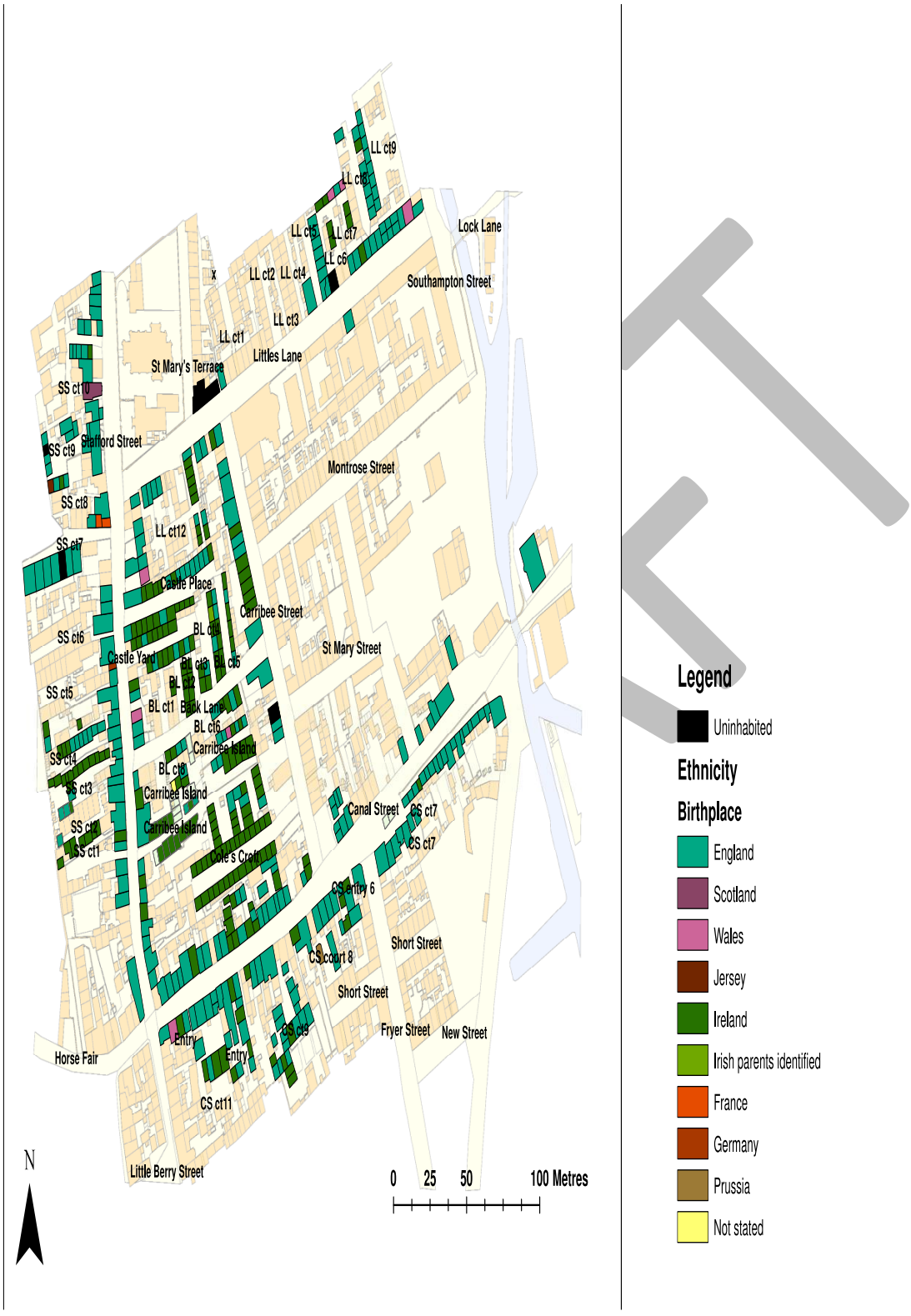
Map 6.8b Occupational sector of Irish-born heads of household, 1861 (return to text).



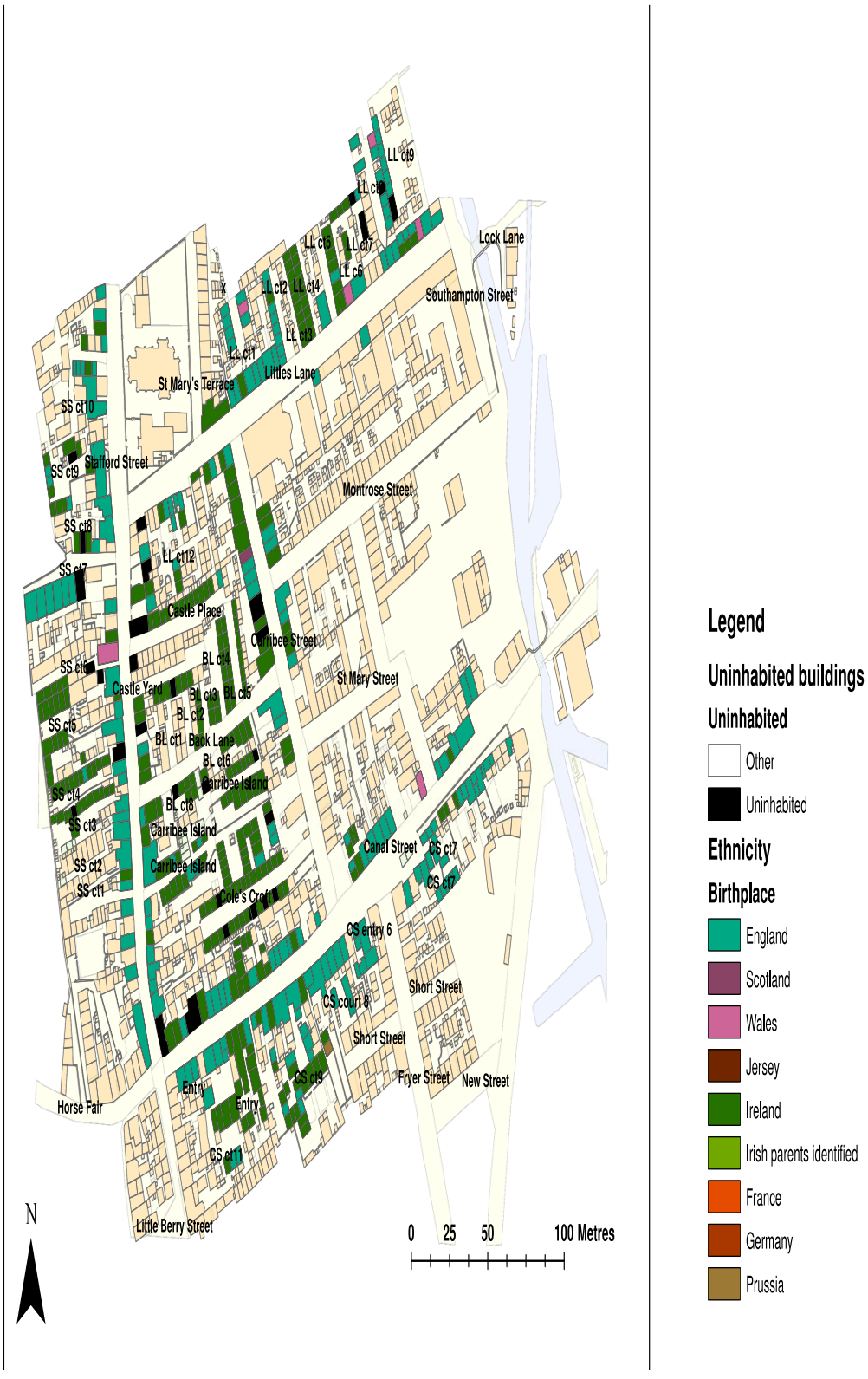
Map 6.8c Occupational sector of Irish-born heads of household, 1871 (return to text).



Map 6.9 Counties of birth of English heads of household, 1871. See Table 6.10a (return to text).

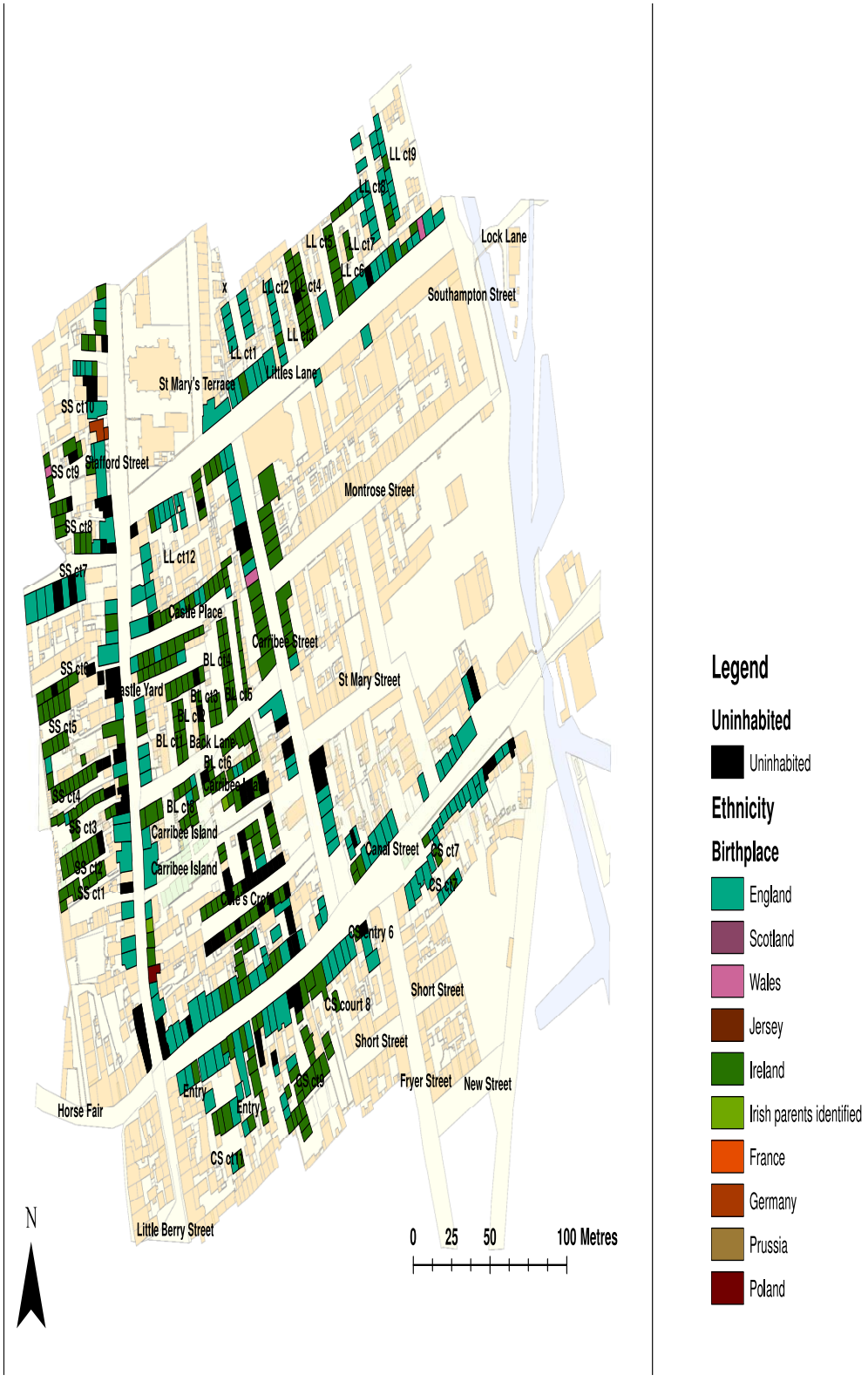


Map 6.10a Birthplace of head of household, 1851. See Table 6.17a (return to text).



Map 6.10b Birthplace of head of household, 1861. See Table 6.17b (return to text).

Appendix 1: maps



Map 6.10c Birthplace of head of household, 1871. See Table 6.17c (return to text).

Appendix 2: family trees

Underlined references refer to locations in the study area. Individuals with green borders were born in Ireland. Family trees were initially designed using the Ancestry.co.uk family tree builder.

Tree 6.2 Mary Salmon

Tree 6.4 Richard Henry

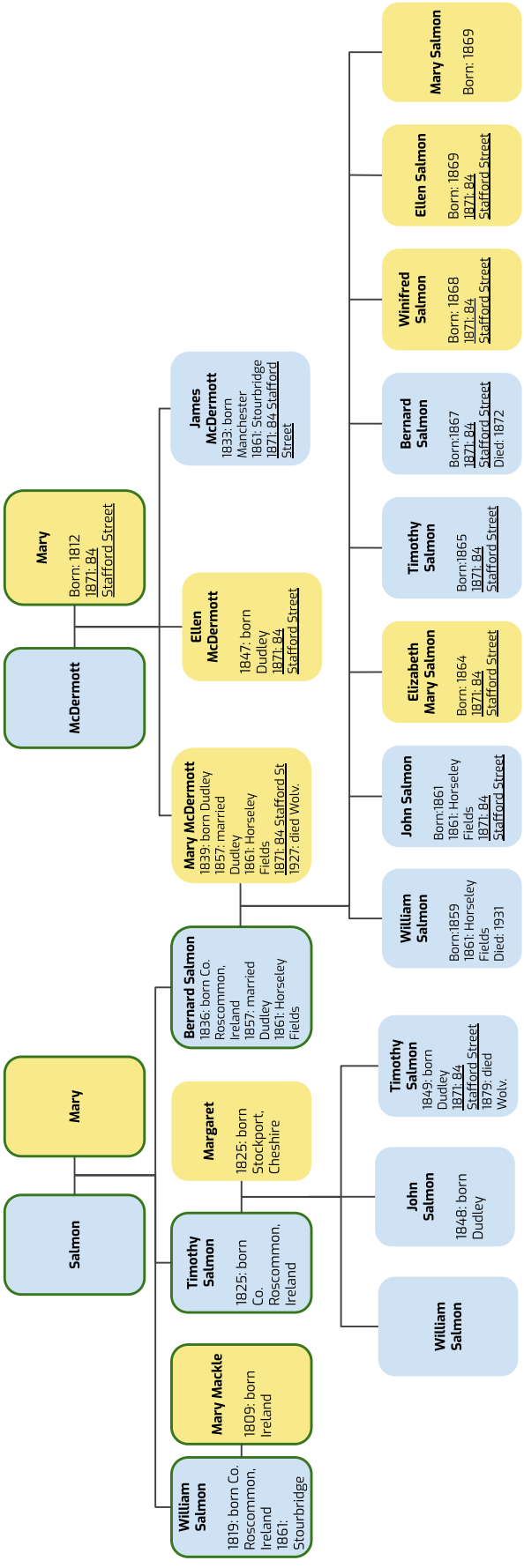
Tree 6.6 John Fullwood

Tree 6.7 George Langley

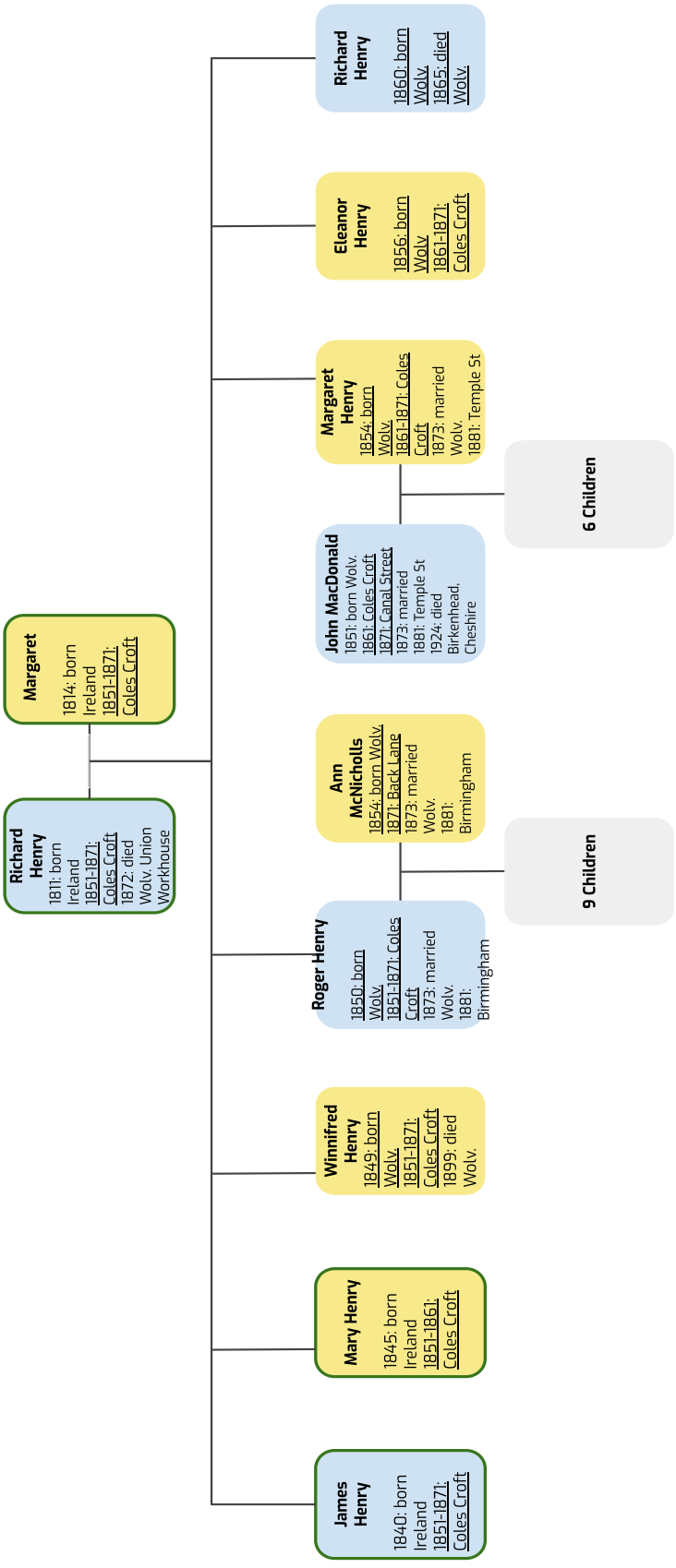
Tree 6.8 Ecclestones and Everitts

Tree 6.9 Harts, Kellys and Mulloys

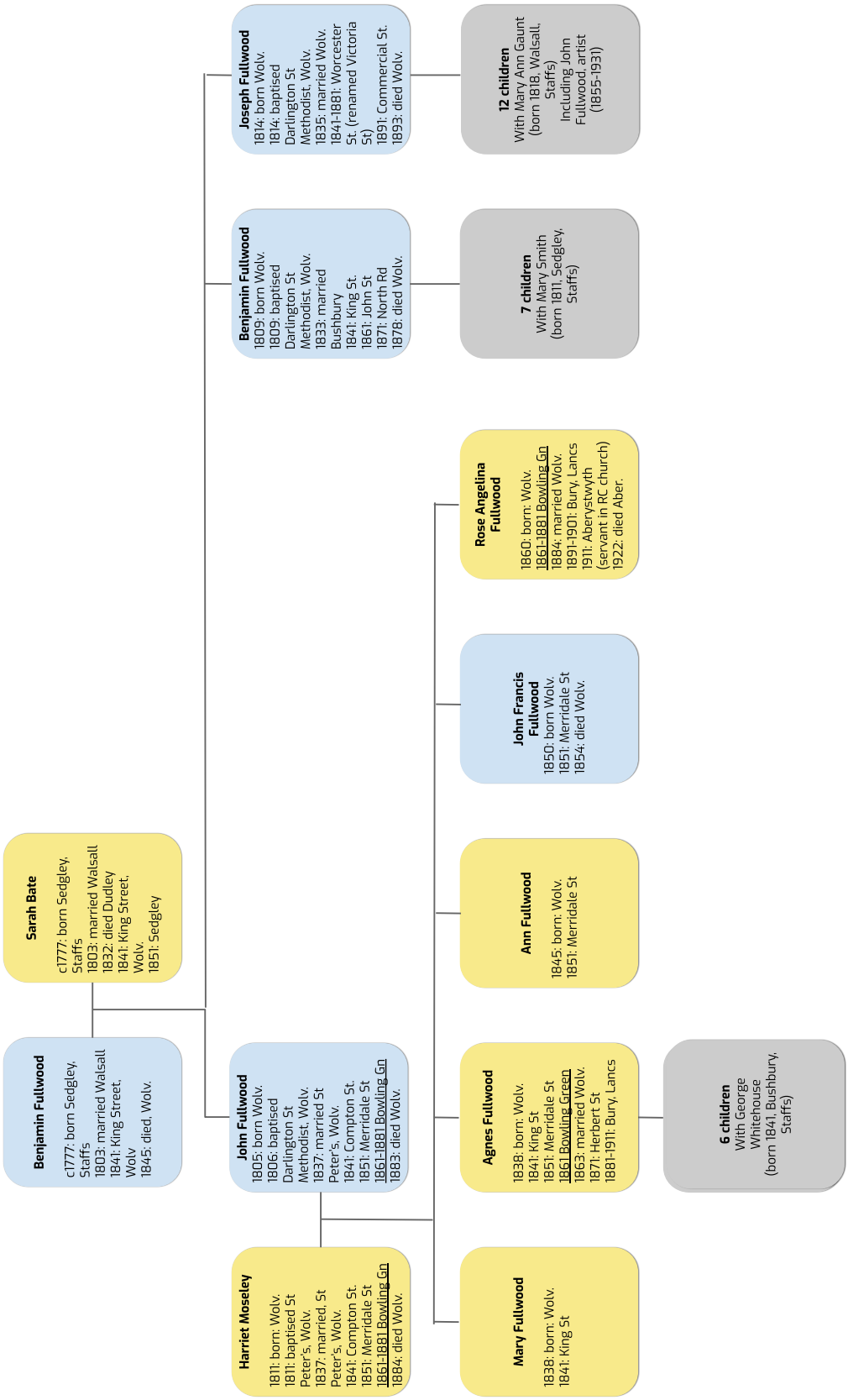
Tree 6.10 Patrick McNay



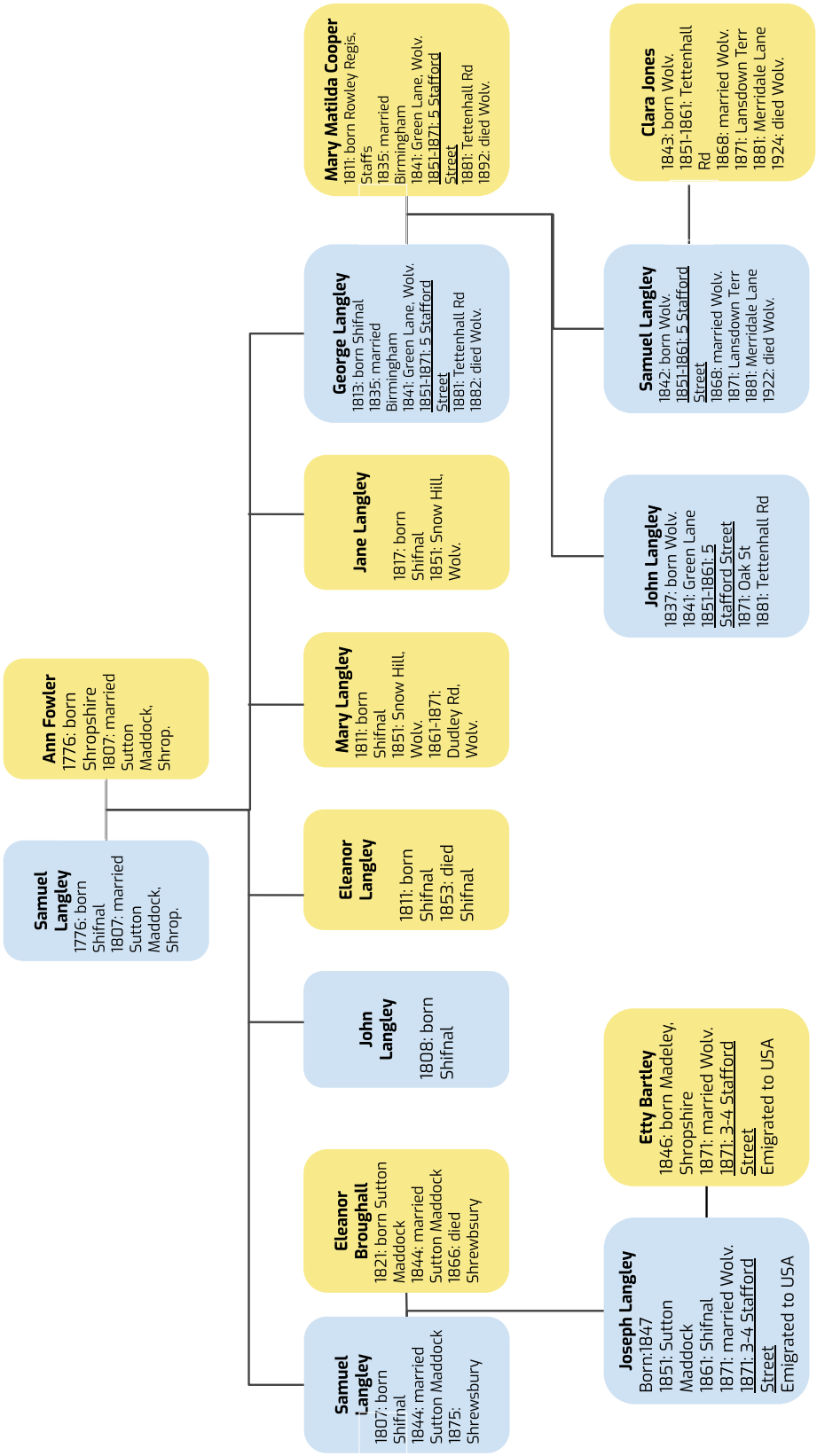
Tree 6.2 Mary Salmon family tree. (return to text).



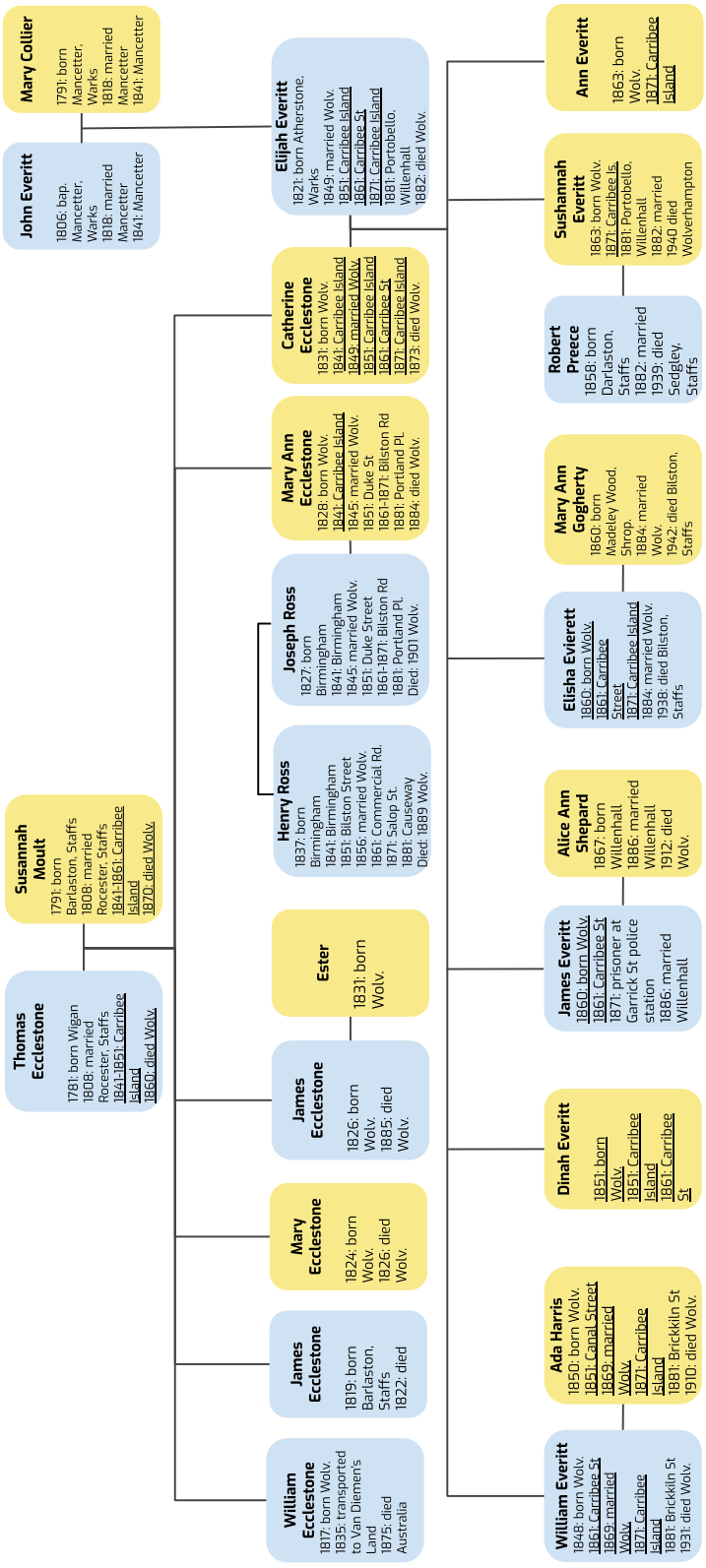
Tree 6.4 Richard Henry family tree (return to text).



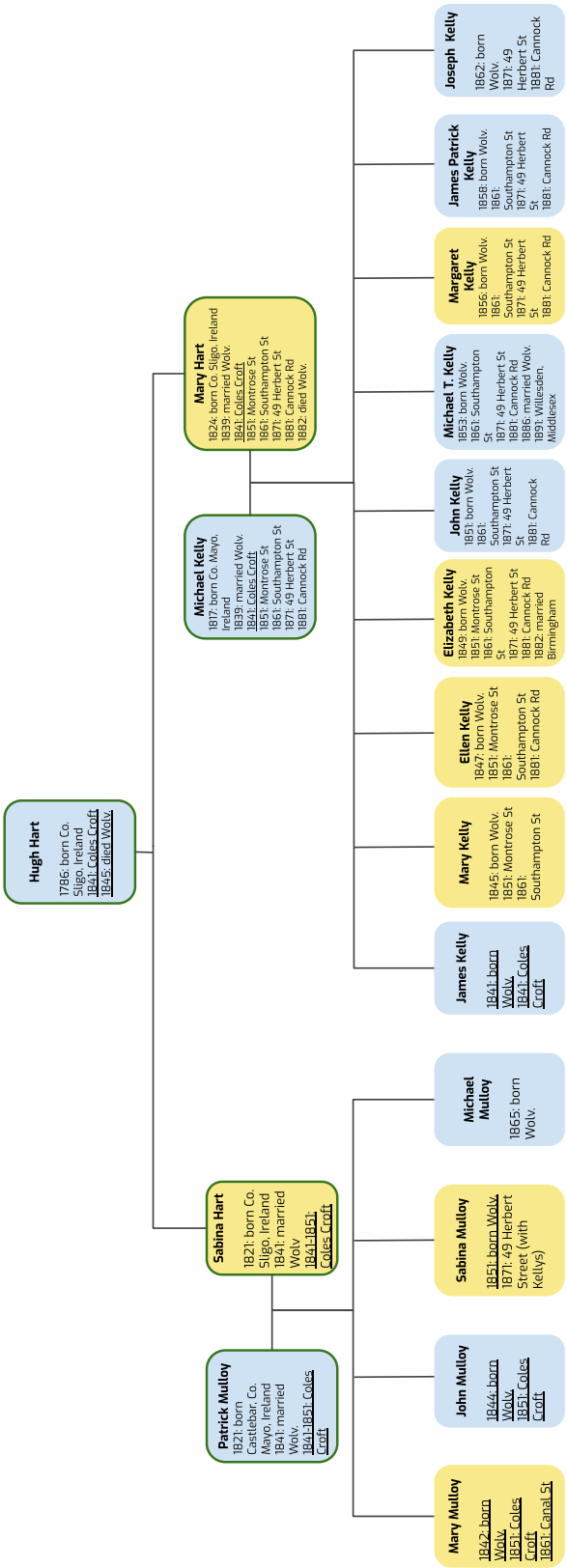
Tree 6.6 John Fullwood family tree (return to text).



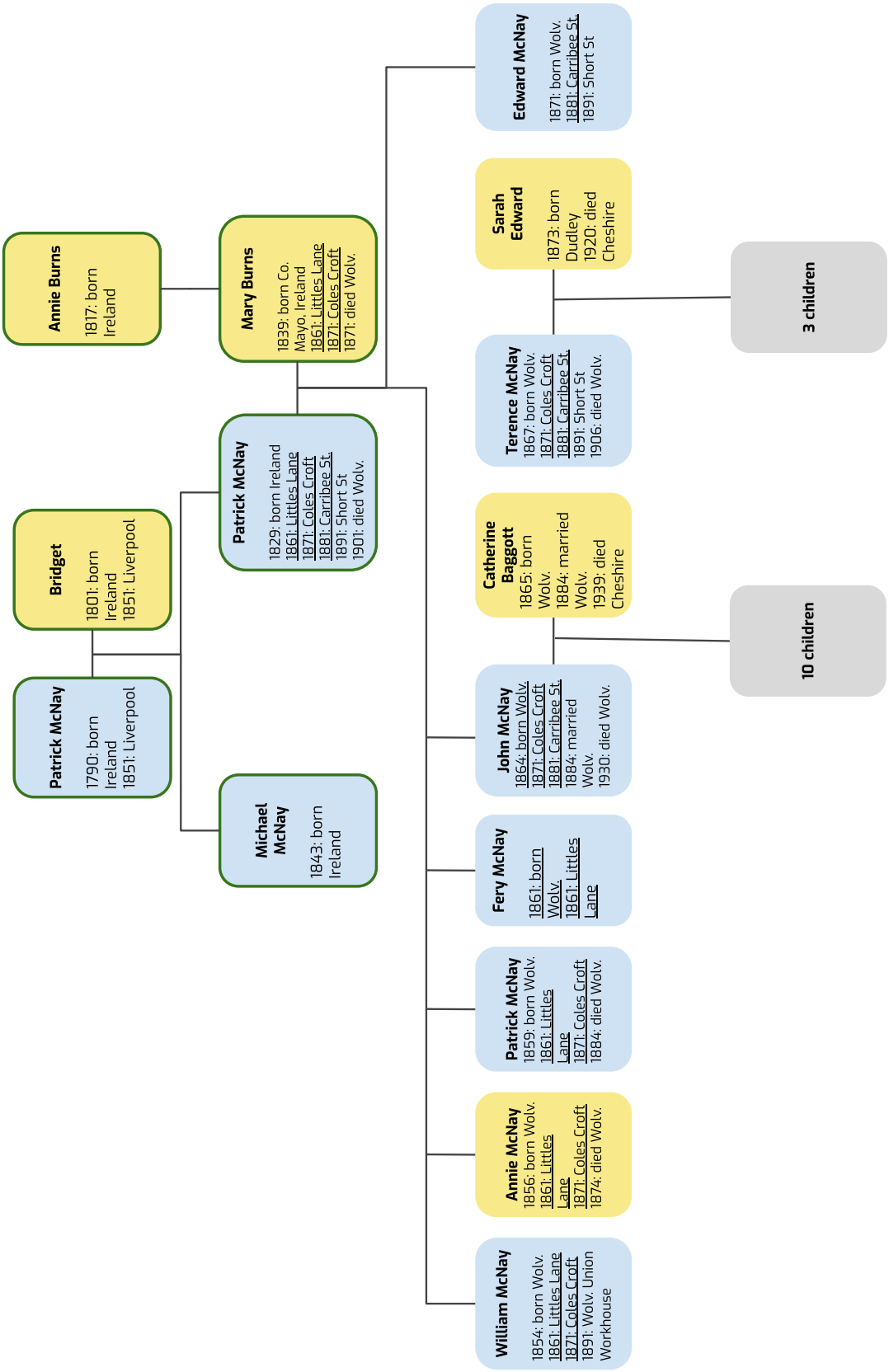
Tree 6.7 George Langley family tree (return to text).



Tree 6.8 Ecclestone and Everitt family tree (return to text).



Tree 6.9 Hart, Kelly and Mulloy family tree (return to text).



Tree 6.10 Patrick McNay family tree (return to text).

Appendix 3: tables

Table 6.1 Number of residents per occupied house, 1851-71

Table 6.6 Number of lodgers per occupied house, 1851-71

Table 6.7 Proportion of children aged under 14 in employment in census returns 1851-71

Table 6.8a-c Proportion of employment within each street by sector, 1851-71

Table 6.10a Proportion of English-born population by county of birth, 1851-71

Table 6.10b Proportion of English-born population by region of birth, 1851-71

Table 6.16 Marriages by birthplace of partner, 1851-71

Table 6.17 Proportion of population by birthplace, 1851-71

These tables outline show the data acquired from the complete sample of census returns in the study area from 1851 to 1871. In order to identify significant results, I have used two simple statistical tools, widely used in geographic research: location quotients (LQ) and standard deviation (SD). SD measures the amount of variation from the mean within a set of results. A low SD value indicates that the distribution of values remains close to the mean; a high SD value indicates that the distribution of values deviates widely from the mean.[1] This can be interpreted further using LQ, "an index for comparing a region's share of a particular activity with the share of that same activity found at a more aggregate spatial level."[2]

[1] James E. Burt, Gerald M. Barber, and David L. Rigby, *Elementary Statistics for Geographers*, Third edition (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2009), 112–15.
[2] Burt, Barber, and Rigby, 124–26.

Appendix 3: tables

If LQ > 1, there is a relatively high concentration in that sub-region compared to overall. If LQ < 1, there is a relatively low concentration. If LQ = 1, the share of activity in that region mirrors exactly the share in the wider area. LQ is calculated by dividing the result for a particular sub-region by the result for the whole study area. For example if housing density in Coles Croft in 1851 was 10.25 occupants per house, compared to 7.137 overall, this gives an LQ of 1.436, demonstrating a comparatively high occupation rate in Coles Croft. Results of LQ ≥ 1.5 are marked here in green, demonstrating strong over-representation. Results of LQ ≤ 0.5 are marked in red, demonstrating strong under-representation. It will be seen that the higher the SD of a set of results, the higher the likelihood of very high or very low LQ results within the results. These under- and over-representations have informed my choice of data and stories.

	1851				**1861**				**1871**			
Sector	Population	Occupied houses	Occupants per occupied house	LQ	Population	Occupied houses	Occupants per occupied house	LQ	Population	Occupied houses	Occupants per occupied house	LQ
Stafford Street	344	57	6.035	0.846	285	48	5.938	0.990	257	50	5.140	0.944
Stafford Street courts	412	67	6.149	0.862	532	87	6.115	1.019	497	88	5.648	1.037
Canal Street	603	94	6.415	0.899	500	87	5.747	0.958	538	84	6.405	1.176
Canal Street courts	496	70	7.086	0.993	418	84	4.976	0.830	373	68	5.485	1.007
Littles Lane	363	63	5.762	0.807	198	39	5.077	0.846	125	37	3.378	0.620
Littles Lane courts	369	58	6.362	0.891	564	100	5.640	0.940	512	95	5.389	0.989
Carribee Street	143	18	7.944	1.113	212	31	6.839	1.140	266	43	6.186	1.136
Carribee Island	542	57	9.509	1.332	289	44	6.568	1.095	107	24	4.458	0.818
Coles Croft	328	32	10.250	1.436	167	27	6.185	1.031	98	17	5.765	1.058
Back Lane	186	23	8.087	1.133	120	13	9.231	1.539	78	12	6.500	1.193
Back Lane courts	297	39	7.615	1.067	305	41	7.439	1.240	303	46	6.587	1.209
Castle Place & Castle Yard	335	41	8.171	1.145	309	44	7.023	1.171	189	37	5.108	0.938
Total	**4418**	**619**	**7.137**		**3899**	**650**	**5.998**		**3165**	**581**	**5.448**	
			SD	**0.199**			**SD**	**0.194**			**SD**	**0.170**

Table 6.1 Number of residents per occupied house, 1851-71. See Map 6.1 (return to text).

Appendix 3: tables

	1851					1861					1871				
Street	Lodgers	Pop.	Occupied houses	Lodgers per occupied house	LQ	Lodgers	Pop.	Occupied houses	Lodgers per occupied house	LQ	Lodgers	Pop.	Occupied houses	Lodgers per occupied house	LQ
Stafford Street	42	344	57	0.737	0.336	15	285	48	0.313	0.480	18	257	50	0.360	0.516
Stafford Street courts	116	412	67	1.731	0.790	83	532	87	0.954	1.465	54	497	88	0.614	0.879
Canal Street	178	603	94	1.894	0.864	62	500	87	0.713	1.094	143	538	84	1.702	2.438
Canal Street courts	163	496	70	2.329	1.063	50	418	84	0.595	0.914	50	373	68	0.735	1.053
Littles Lane	44	363	63	0.698	0.319	8	198	39	0.205	0.315	23	125	37	0.622	0.890
Littles Lane courts	95	369	58	1.638	0.748	44	564	100	0.440	0.676	54	512	95	0.568	0.814
Carribee Street	37	143	18	2.056	0.938	64	212	31	2.065	3.171	29	266	43	0.674	0.966
Carribee Island	197	542	57	3.456	1.578	64	289	44	1.455	2.234	7	107	24	0.292	0.418
Coles Croft	121	328	32	3.781	1.726	1	167	27	0.037	0.057	0	98	17	0.000	0.000
Back Lane	92	186	23	4.000	1.826	4	120	13	0.308	0.473	17	78	12	1.417	2.029
Back Lane courts	135	297	39	3.462	1.580	14	305	41	0.341	0.524	20	303	46	0.435	0.623
Castle Place & Castle Yard	136	335	41	3.317	1.514	11	309	44	0.250	0.384	13	189	37	0.351	0.503
Total	**1356**	**4418**	**619**	**2.191**	1.000	**420**	**3899**	**645**	**0.651**	1.000	**428**	**3343**	**613**	**0.698**	1.000
				SD	**0.526**				SD	**0.909**				SD	**0.680**

Table 6.6 Number of lodgers per occupied house, 1851-71. See Map 6.3 (return to text).

Appendix 3: tables

	1851							1861							1871						
Street	Population	Children under 14	%	LQ	Children under 14 in employment	Proportion of children (%)	LQ	Population	Children under 14	%	LQ	Children under 14 in employment	Proportion of children (%)	LQ	Population	Children under 14	%	LQ	Children under 14 in employment	Proportion of children (%)	LQ
Stafford Street	344	110	31.98	1.092	12	10.91	1.238	285	98	34.39	0.947	5	5.10	0.880	257	81	31.52	0.844	1	1.23	0.335
Canal Street	603	180	29.85	1.019	14	7.78	0.883	500	141	28.20	0.777	11	7.80	1.346	538	154	28.62	0.767	6	3.90	1.057
Littles Lane	363	129	35.54	1.213	2	1.55	0.176	198	72	36.36	1.002	2	2.78	0.479	125	90	72.00	1.929	2	2.22	0.603
Carribee Street	143	32	22.38	0.764	0	0.00	0.000	212	82	38.68	1.066	8	9.76	1.684	266	77	28.95	0.775	5	6.49	1.762
Stafford Street courts	412	136	33.01	1.127	6	4.41	0.501	532	195	36.65	1.010	9	4.62	0.796	497	207	41.65	1.116	8	3.86	1.049
Canal Street courts	496	128	25.81	0.881	18	14.06	1.596	418	149	35.65	0.982	5	3.36	0.579	373	151	40.48	1.084	3	1.99	0.539
Littles Lane courts	369	124	33.60	1.147	12	9.68	1.098	564	233	41.31	1.138	19	8.15	1.407	512	205	40.04	1.073	6	2.93	0.794
Carribee Island	542	155	28.60	0.976	15	9.68	1.098	289	113	39.10	1.077	6	5.31	0.916	107	39	36.45	0.976	2	5.13	1.391
Coles Croft	328	89	27.13	0.926	16	17.98	2.041	167	67	40.12	1.105	8	11.94	2.060	98	32	32.65	0.875	1	3.13	0.848
Back Lane	186	50	26.88	0.918	2	4.00	0.454	120	40	33.33	0.918	1	2.50	0.431	78	10	12.82	0.343	2	20.00	5.426
Back Lane courts	297	63	21.21	0.724	3	4.76	0.541	305	106	34.75	0.958	3	2.83	0.488	303	134	44.22	1.185	4	2.99	0.810
Castle Place & Castle Yard	335	98	29.25	0.999	14	14.29	1.622	309	119	38.51	1.061	5	4.20	0.725	189	68	35.98	0.964	6	8.82	2.394
Total	**4418**	**1294**	**29.29**		**114**	8.81		**3899**	**1415**	**36.29**		**82**	5.8		**3343**	**1248**	**37.33**		**46**	3.69	
			SD	**0.15**		**SD**	**0.63**			**SD**	**0.1**		**SD**	**0.526**			**SD**	**0.37**		**SD**	**1.385**

Table 6.7 Proportion of children aged under 14 in employment in census returns 1851-71. See Map 6.4 (return to text).

	1851														
Street	Pop.	Occupied houses	Total in all work	Primary	Prim. LQ	Secondary	Sec. LQ	Tertiary dealers	Tert. D, LQ	Tertiary sellers	Tert. S. LQ	Tertiary service	Tert. Ser. LQ	Transport & Comms	T&C LQ
Stafford Street	344	57	172	4	0.124	88	1.016	9	2.672	19	2.407	41	1.768	10	0.980
Stafford Street courts	412	67	134	16	0.637	79	1.171	1	0.381	14	2.277	10	0.553	14	1.761
Canal Street	603	94	295	29	0.524	148	0.996	6	1.038	12	0.886	48	1.206	26	1.486
Canal Street courts	496	70	253	78	1.645	93	0.730	4	0.807	7	0.603	27	0.791	10	0.666
Littles Lane	363	63	135	2	0.079	97	1.427	2	0.756	3	0.484	23	1.263	8	0.999
Littles Lane courts	369	58	129	17	0.703	81	1.247	2	0.792	5	0.845	13	0.747	11	1.438
Carribee Street	143	18	38	5	0.702	27	1.411	1	1.344	0	0.000	4	0.781	1	0.444
Carribee Island	542	57	149	46	1.647	68	0.906	0	0.000	6	0.878	23	1.145	2	0.226
Coles Croft	328	32	122	42	1.836	46	0.749	4	1.674	2	0.357	12	0.729	2	0.276
Back Lane	186	23	83	26	1.671	32	0.766	6	3.691	6	1.575	6	0.536	6	1.219
Back Lane courts	297	39	121	34	1.499	59	0.968	0	0.000	5	0.901	12	0.735	7	0.975
Castle Place & Castle Yard	335	41	156	36	1.231	82	1.044	0	0.000	3	0.419	22	1.046	9	0.973
Total	**4418**	**619**	**1787**	**335**		**900**		**35**		**82**		**241**		**106**	
				SD	**0.635**	**SD**	**0.239**	**SD**	**1.129**	**SD**	**0.749**	**SD**	**0.356**	**SD**	**0.484**

Table 6.8a Proportion (per cent) of employment within each street by sector, 1851. See Map 6.5a (return to text).

	1861														
Street	Pop.	Occupied houses	Total in all work	Primary	Prim. LQ	Secondary	Sec. LQ	Tertiary dealers	Tert. D, LQ	Tertiary sellers	Tert. S. LQ	Tertiary service	Tert. Ser. LQ	Transport & Comms	T&C LQ
Stafford Street	285	48	129	3	0.099	49	0.687	4	1.484	16	1.554	43	1.934	2	0.462
Stafford Street courts	532	87	231	88	3.726	107	1.926	2	0.953	11	1.371	12	0.693	5	1.482
Canal Street	500	87	258	20	0.385	126	1.030	10	2.163	22	1.245	52	1.364	12	1.615
Canal Street courts	418	84	181	54	1.211	75	0.715	2	0.505	12	0.792	22	0.673	7	1.099
Littles Lane	198	39	95	9	0.378	61	1.090	1	0.473	7	0.866	14	0.802	2	0.588
Littles Lane courts	564	100	240	42	1.847	160	2.991	0	0.000	1	0.129	17	1.019	13	4.002
Carribee Street	212	31	103	20	2.986	54	3.427	4	6.718	1	0.439	18	3.664	2	2.090
Carribee Island	289	44	109	17	0.647	30	0.486	2	0.857	13	1.457	10	0.519	0	0.000
Coles Croft	167	27	78	19	0.884	27	0.534	2	1.046	5	0.684	17	1.078	0	0.000
Back Lane	120	13	55	16	1.094	10	0.291	0	0.000	5	1.006	4	0.373	1	0.478
Back Lane courts	305	41	127	15	0.703	25	0.498	1	0.527	11	1.518	8	0.511	0	0.000
Castle Place & Castle Yard	309	44	99	12	0.436	17	0.263	0	0.000	3	0.321	14	0.694	1	0.255
Total	**3899**	**645**	**1705**	**315**		**741**		**28**		**107**		**231**		**45**	
				SD	**1.119**	**SD**	**1.060**	**SD**	**1.845**	**SD**	**0.490**	**SD**	**0.913**	**SD**	**1.172**

Table 6.8b Proportion (per cent) of employment within each street by sector, 1861. See Map 6.5b (return to text).

Appendix 3: tables

	1871													
Street	Pop.	Occupied houses	Total in all work	Primary	Prim. LQ	Secondary	Sec. LQ	Tertiary dealers	Tert. D, LQ	Tertiary sellers	Tert. S. LQ	Tertiary service	Tert. Ser. LQ	Transport & Comms	T&C LQ
Stafford Street	257	50	131	2	0.128	42	0.547	9	2.078	34	2.697	38	1.871	3	0.224
Stafford Street courts	497	88	186	38	3.128	113	1.888	8	2.371	7	0.713	6	0.379	9	0.863
Canal Street	538	84	283	18	0.673	136	1.032	10	1.346	22	1.017	57	1.636	32	1.395
Canal Street courts	373	68	133	23	1.003	73	0.646	4	0.628	8	0.431	8	0.268	14	0.711
Littles Lane	125	37	78	3	0.245	46	0.763	0	0.000	3	0.303	15	0.941	10	0.952
Littles Lane courts	512	95	193	16	1.368	123	2.135	3	0.924	2	0.211	12	0.788	32	3.189
Carribee Street	266	43	142	15	4.354	62	3.654	5	5.225	10	3.590	20	4.457	24	8.120
Carribee Island	107	24	54	5	0.370	25	0.376	0	0.000	14	1.282	4	0.227	3	0.259
Coles Croft	98	17	42	4	0.362	29	0.532	3	0.977	4	0.447	2	0.139	0	0.000
Back Lane	78	12	65	5	0.665	31	0.836	1	0.478	6	0.986	17	1.735	1	0.155
Back Lane courts	303	46	131	18	1.641	68	1.258	1	0.328	9	1.015	13	0.910	11	1.169
Castle Place & Castle Yard	189	37	103	15	1.061	50	0.718	1	0.255	12	1.049	19	1.032	0	0.000
Total	**3343**	**601**	**1541**	**162**		**798**		**45**		**131**		**211**		**139**	
				SD	**1.277**	**SD**	**0.945**	**SD**	**1.473**	**SD**	**1.011**	**SD**	**1.187**	**SD**	**2.287**

Table 6.8c Proportion (per cent) of employment within each street by sector, 1871. See Map 6.5c (return to text).

Appendix 3: tables

	1851				1861				1871			
County of birth	Wolv.	Study Area	LQ	Prop. of E&W	Wolv.	Study Area	LQ	Prop. of E&W	Wolv.	Study Area	LQ	Prop. of E&W
Anglesey	17	1	1.586	0.04%	14	0	0.000	0.00%	6	0	0.000	0.00%
Bedfordshire	86	0	0.000	0.00%	51	0	0.000	0.00%	64	2	1.069	0.08%
Berkshire	119	3	0.680	0.13%	92	3	0.798	0.13%	97	2	0.705	0.08%
Breconshire	19	1	1.419	0.04%	11	0	0.000	0.00%	15	0	0.000	0.00%
Buckinghamshire	142	5	0.949	0.22%	81	1	0.302	0.04%	110	3	0.933	0.12%
Camarthenshire	15	0	0.000	0.00%	8	0	0.000	0.00%	10	0	0.000	0.00%
Cambridgeshire	81	1	0.333	0.04%	31	0	0.000	0.00%	50	4	2.736	0.17%
Cardiganshire	15	1	1.798	0.04%	6	0	0.000	0.00%	21	0	0.000	0.00%
Carnarvonshire	15	0	0.000	0.00%	12	0	0.000	0.00%	11	0	0.000	0.00%
Cheshire	704	9	0.345	0.39%	517	17	0.804	0.74%	506	13	0.879	0.54%
Cornwall	67	5	2.012	0.22%	41	0	0.000	0.00%	28	0	0.000	0.00%
Cumberland	60	2	0.899	0.09%	36	2	1.359	0.09%	41	0	0.000	0.00%
Denbighshire	328	11	0.904	0.48%	108	3	0.680	0.13%	115	2	0.595	0.08%
Derbyshire	597	10	0.452	0.44%	320	6	0.459	0.26%	338	12	1.214	0.50%
Devon	200	1	0.135	0.04%	133	1	0.184	0.04%	175	3	0.586	0.12%
Dorset	41	4	2.631	0.17%	25	1	0.979	0.04%	32	0	0.000	0.00%
Durham	100	1	0.270	0.04%	56	2	0.874	0.09%	68	0	0.000	0.00%
Essex	79	1	0.341	0.04%	48	0	0.000	0.00%	73	1	0.469	0.04%
Flintshire	89	0	0.000	0.00%	40	0	0.000	0.00%	63	3	1.629	0.12%
Glamorgan	64	4	1.685	0.17%	28	0	0.000	0.00%	44	0	0.000	0.00%
Gloucestershire	992	18	0.489	0.78%	562	11	0.479	0.48%	577	15	0.889	0.62%
Hampshire	157	1	0.172	0.04%	93	4	1.052	0.17%	121	3	0.848	0.12%
Herefordshire	655	8	0.329	0.35%	313	8	0.625	0.35%	403	8	0.679	0.33%

Hertfordshire	81	1	0.333	0.04%	53	1	0.462	0.04%	53	0	0.000	0.00%
Huntingdonshire	31	0	0.000	0.00%	18	0	0.000	0.00%	26	0	0.000	0.00%
Kent	122	9	1.989	0.39%	71	3	1.034	0.13%	82	0	0.000	0.00%
Lancashire	1066	28	0.708	1.22%	721	25	0.848	1.08%	806	30	1.273	1.25%
Leicestershire	484	15	0.836	0.65%	211	7	0.812	0.30%	273	1	0.125	0.04%
Lincolnshire	161	5	0.837	0.22%	94	1	0.260	0.04%	120	4	1.140	0.17%
London	1026	3	0.079	0.13%	702	3	0.105	0.13%	809	0	0.000	0.00%
Merionethshire	15	0	0.000	0.00%	7	0	0.000	0.00%	5	0	0.000	0.00%
Middlesex	53	49	24.929	2.13%	35	22	15.378	0.95%	44	20	15.546	0.83%
Monmouthshire	194	1	0.139	0.04%	91	0	0.000	0.00%	140	0	0.000	0.00%
Montgomeryshire	784	17	0.585	0.74%	409	7	0.419	0.30%	378	1	0.090	0.04%
Norfolk	130	4	0.830	0.17%	68	2	0.720	0.09%	104	1	0.329	0.04%
Northamptonshire	290	14	1.302	0.61%	165	10	1.483	0.43%	221	2	0.310	0.08%
Northumberland	58	0	0.000	0.00%	47	1	0.521	0.04%	49	1	0.698	0.04%
Nottinghamshire	211	4	0.511	0.17%	144	2	0.340	0.09%	142	3	0.723	0.12%
Oxfordshire	261	5	0.517	0.22%	159	2	0.308	0.09%	194	5	0.881	0.21%
Pembrokeshire	19	1	1.419	0.04%	9	0	0.000	0.00%	18	0	0.000	0.00%
Radnorshire	142	3	0.570	0.13%	54	0	0.000	0.00%	62	0	0.000	0.00%
Rutland	13	1	2.074	0.04%	5	0	0.000	0.00%	8	0	0.000	0.00%
Shropshire	12091	174	0.388	7.58%	5147	126	0.599	5.46%	21754	94	0.148	3.92%
Somerset	239	5	0.564	0.22%	209	5	0.585	0.22%	241	4	0.568	0.17%
Staffordshire	30347	1729	1.536	75.27%	40332	1940	1.177	84.09%	47673	2026	1.453	84.38%
Suffolk	75	0	0.000	0.00%	42	1	0.583	0.04%	49	0	0.000	0.00%
Surrey	63	9	3.852	0.39%	38	1	0.644	0.04%	48	5	3.563	0.21%
Sussex	66	1	0.409	0.04%	37	0	0.000	0.00%	37	1	0.924	0.04%
Warwickshire	3964	65	0.442	2.83%	2390	44	0.450	1.91%	2826	53	0.641	2.21%
Westmorland	27	1	0.999	0.04%	8	0	0.000	0.00%	13	1	2.631	0.04%

Wiltshire	212	3	0.382	0.13%	126	3	0.583	0.13%	158	3	0.649	0.12%
Worcestershire	4549	45	0.267	1.96%	2072	25	0.295	1.08%	2427	68	0.958	2.83%
Yorkshire	521	18	0.932	0.78%	352	17	1.182	0.74%	390	7	0.614	0.29%
Total specifying county E&W	**61937**	**2297**	1.000		**56442**	**2307**	1.000		**82118**	**2401**	1.000	
		SD	**3.407**			**SD**	**2.096**			**SD**	**2.187**	

Table 6.10a Proportion of English-born population by county of birth 1851-71. See Map 6.9 (return to text). NB the large number of variables in this data make LQ much less useful.

	1851		**1861**		**1871**	
Region	Number	Proportion of whole	Number	Proportion of whole	Number	Proportion of whole
South East and East Anglia	92	2.10%	43	1.13%	47	1.38%
North West	40	0.91%	44	1.16%	44	1.29%
South West	36	0.82%	21	0.55%	25	0.73%
Wales	40	0.91%	10	0.26%	6	0.18%
East Midlands	49	1.12%	26	0.68%	22	0.64%
Staffordshire	1729	39.46%	1940	50.96%	2026	59.29%
West Midlands	292	6.66%	203	5.33%	223	6.53%
North East	19	0.43%	20	0.53%	8	0.23%
England & Wales	2297	52.42%	2307	60.60%	2401	70.27%
Scotland	11	0.25%	9	0.24%	3	0.09%
Ireland	2052	46.83%	1475	38.74%	999	29.24%
Other	22	0.50%	16	0.42%	14	0.41%
Grand total	**4382**		**3807**		**3417**	

Table 6.10b Proportion of population by county of birth 1851-71, organised by region (return to text).

Appendix 3: tables

	1851								
Street	No. married couples	English husband, Irish wife	Irish husband, English wife	Both English	Both Irish	Other	*Total Mixed marriages*	*%*	LQ
Stafford Street	56	0	4	42	4	6	*4*	*7%*	1.7931
Stafford Street courts	73	1	1	37	33	1	*2*	*3%*	0.6878
Canal Street	108	3	0	73	27	5	*3*	*3%*	0.6973
Canal Street courts	83	4	1	39	37	2	*5*	*6%*	1.5123
Littles Lane	58	0	1	46	8	3	*1*	*2%*	0.4328
Littles Lane courts	64	1	2	27	29	5	*3*	*5%*	1.1767
Carribee Street	27	0	0	13	14	0	*0*	*0%*	0.0000
Carribee Island	77	0	3	11	60	3	*3*	*4%*	0.9781
Coles Croft	49	0	0	0	49	0	*0*	*0%*	0.0000
Back Lane	26	0	0	5	21	0	*0*	*0%*	0.0000
Back Lane courts	54	2	3	6	43	0	*5*	*9%*	2.3244
Castle Place & Castle Yard	53	1	2	8	42	0	*3*	*6%*	1.4209
Total	**728**	**12**	**17**	**307**	**367**	**25**	***29***	*4%*	
							SD		**0.7559**

Table 6.16a Marriages by birthplace of partner, 1851 (return to text).

	1861								
Street	No. married couples	English husband, Irish wife	Irish husband, English wife	Both English	Both Irish	Other	*Mixed marriages*	*%*	LQ
Stafford Street	43	1	3	28	8	3	*4*	*9%*	1.5790
Stafford Street courts	97	0	2	15	80	0	*2*	*2%*	0.3500
Canal Street	81	2	4	56	16	3	*6*	*7%*	1.2574
Canal Street courts	74	2	2	32	38	0	*4*	*5%*	0.9175
Littles Lane	33	1	3	18	9	2	*4*	*12%*	2.0575
Littles Lane courts	102	2	3	43	51	3	*5*	*5%*	0.8321
Carribee Street	35	1	2	12	18	2	*3*	*9%*	1.4549
Carribee Island	46	1	3	6	36	0	*4*	*9%*	1.4760
Coles Croft	24	0	0	0	24	0	*0*	*0%*	0.0000
Back Lane	23	0	0	0	23	0	*0*	*0%*	0.0000
Back Lane courts	61	1	2	2	56	0	*3*	*5%*	0.8348
Castle Place & Castle Yard	43	1	3	2	37	0	*4*	*9%*	1.5790
Total	**662**	**12**	**27**	**214**	**396**	**13**	***39***	*6%*	
							SD		**0.6581**

Table 6.16b Marriages by birthplace of partner, 1861 (return to text).

Appendix 3: tables

	1871								
Street	No. married couples	English husband, Irish wife	Irish husband, English wife	Both English	Both Irish	Other	*Mixed marriages*		LQ
Stafford Street	43	0	4	29	7	3	*4*	*9%*	1.3317
Stafford Street courts	84	0	4	12	68	0	*4*	*5%*	0.6817
Canal Street	71	1	4	49	14	3	*5*	*7%*	1.0082
Canal Street courts	62	2	2	22	36	0	*4*	*6%*	0.9236
Littles Lane	33	0	3	26	4	0	*3*	*9%*	1.3014
Littles Lane courts	84	1	5	40	38	0	*6*	*7%*	1.0226
Carribee Street	45	1	0	20	23	1	*1*	*2%*	0.3181
Carribee Island	18	1	0	4	13	0	*1*	*6%*	0.7953
Coles Croft	17	0	0	0	17	0	*0*	*0%*	0.0000
Back Lane	14	0	1	1	12	0	*1*	*7%*	1.0226
Back Lane courts	44	2	4	2	36	0	*6*	*14%*	1.9522
Castle Place & Castle Yard	29	2	1	2	24	0	*3*	*10%*	1.4809
Total	**544**	**10**	**28**	**207**	**292**	**7**	***38***	*7%*	
							SD		**0.5180**

Table 6.16c Marriages by birthplace of partner, 1871 (return to text).

	1851											
Street	Population	Occupied houses	Ireland	Proportion born Ireland	England	Proportion born England	Other	Proportion born Other	LQ of Irish-born	Irish ethnicity	Proportion Irish ethnicity	LQ Irish ethnicity
Stafford Street	344	57	34	9.88%	290	84.30%	20	5.81%	0.213	42	12.21%	0.226
Canal Street	412	67	177	42.96%	231	56.07%	4	0.97%	0.925	213	51.70%	0.957
Littles Lane	496	70	234	47.18%	249	50.20%	13	2.62%	1.016	257	51.81%	0.959
Carribee Street	369	58	162	43.90%	196	53.12%	11	2.98%	0.945	189	51.22%	0.948
Stafford Street courts	143	18	61	42.66%	74	51.75%	8	5.59%	0.918	64	44.76%	0.828
Canal Street courts	603	94	135	22.39%	454	75.29%	14	2.32%	0.482	156	25.87%	0.479
Littles Lane courts	363	63	54	14.88%	288	79.34%	21	5.79%	0.320	70	19.28%	0.357
Carribee Island	542	57	386	71.22%	133	24.54%	23	4.24%	1.533	445	82.10%	1.520
Coles Croft	328	32	287	87.50%	38	11.59%	3	0.91%	1.884	322	98.17%	1.817
Back Lane	186	23	115	61.83%	70	37.63%	1	0.54%	1.331	133	71.51%	1.323
Back Lane courts	297	39	196	65.99%	99	33.33%	2	0.67%	1.421	234	78.79%	1.458
Castle Place & Castle Yard	335	41	211	62.99%	123	36.72%	1	0.30%	1.356	262	78.21%	1.448
Total	**4418**	**619**	**2052**	**46.45%**	**2245**	**50.81%**	**121**	**2.74%**	1.000	**2387**	54.03%	1
								SD	**0.508**		**SD**	**0.501**

Table 6.17a Proportion of population by birthplace, 1851. See Map 6.10a (return to text).

	1861											
Street	Population	Occupied houses	Ireland	Proportion born Ireland	England	Proportion born England	Other	Proportion born Other	LQ of Irish-born	Irish ethnicity	Proportion Irish ethnicity	LQ Irish ethnicity
Stafford Street	285	48	48	16.84%	234	82.11%	3	1.05%	0.445	62	21.75%	0.353
Canal Street	532	87	274	51.50%	254	47.74%	4	0.75%	1.361	442	83.08%	1.350
Littles Lane	418	84	127	30.38%	282	2.15%	9	2.15%	0.803	223	53.35%	0.867
Carribee Street	564	100	213	37.77%	345	61.17%	6	1.06%	0.998	320	56.74%	0.922
Stafford Street courts	212	31	88	41.51%	117	55.19%	7	3.30%	1.097	131	61.79%	1.004
Canal Street courts	500	87	88	17.60%	401	2.20%	11	2.20%	0.465	118	23.60%	0.383
Littles Lane courts	198	39	29	14.65%	164	82.83%	5	2.53%	0.387	50	25.25%	0.410
Carribee Island	289	44	142	49.13%	146	0.35%	1	0.35%	1.299	240	83.04%	1.349
Coles Croft	167	27	100	59.88%	67	0.00%	0	0.00%	1.589	162	97.01%	1.576
Back Lane	120	13	85	70.83%	35	0.00%	0	0.00%	1.872	119	99.17%	1.611
Back Lane courts	305	41	189	61.97%	116	0.00%	0	0.00%	1.638	283	92.79%	1.507
Castle Place & Castle Yard	309	44	92	29.77%	211	1.94%	6	1.94%	0.787	250	80.91%	1.314
Total	**3899**	**645**	**1475**	**37.83%**	**2372**	**60.84%**	**52**	**1.33%**	1.000	**2400**	61.55%	1.000
								SD	**0.500**		**SD**	**0.471**

Table 6.17b Proportion of population by birthplace 1861. See Map 6.10b (return to text).

	1871											
Street	Pop	Occupied houses	Ireland	Proportion born Ireland	England	Proportion born England	Other	Proportion born Other	LQ of Irish-born	Irish ethnicity	Proportion Irish ethnicity	LQ Irish ethnicity
Stafford Street	257	50	32	12.45%	219	85.21%	6	2.33%	0.417	81	31.52%	0.508
Canal Street	497	88	197	39.64%	299	60.16%	1	0.20%	1.326	421	84.71%	1.366
Littles Lane	373	68	114	30.56%	259	0.00%	0	0.00%	1.023	246	65.95%	1.064
Carribee Street	512	95	126	24.61%	382	74.61%	4	0.78%	0.824	280	54.69%	0.882
Stafford Street courts	266	43	94	35.34%	170	63.91%	2	0.75%	1.183	161	60.53%	0.976
Canal Street courts	538	84	75	13.94%	450	2.42%	13	2.42%	0.466	140	26.02%	0.420
Littles Lane courts	125	37	20	16.00%	104	83.20%	1	0.80%	0.535	47	37.60%	0.606
Carribee Island	107	24	43	40.19%	63	0.93%	1	0.93%	1.345	90	84.11%	1.356
Coles Croft	98	17	46	46.94%	52	0.00%	0	0.00%	1.571	98	100.00%	1.613
Back Lane	78	12	44	56.41%	34	0.00%	0	0.00%	1.888	67	85.90%	1.385
Back Lane courts	303	46	127	41.91%	175	0.33%	1	0.33%	1.403	279	92.08%	1.485
Castle Place & Castle Yard	189	37	81	42.86%	108	0.00%	0	0.00%	1.434	163	86.24%	1.391
Total	**3343**	**601**	**999**	**29.88%**	**2315**	**69.25%**	**29**	**0.87%**	1.000	**2073**	62.01%	1.000
								SD	**0.470**		SD	**0.408**

Table 6.17c Proportion of population by birthplace 1871. See Map 6.10c (return to text).