

IRISH CRICKET AND NATIONALISM

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On the eve of the Third Test of the 1993 Ashes series, Allan Border, the Australian captain, complained that fast bowler Martin McCague, once of Western Australia, had been selected for England. Border ridiculed McCague's Irish birth as a qualification, claiming that his own Irish grandmother would also make him eligible for English selection. The existence of Irish cricket as a separate entity, with a team representing the whole country, clearly needs examination. Border's team won an easy victory over a representative Irish XI soon after his outburst, and the Australian women's cricketers triumphed, with more difficulty, over Ireland in the women's World Cup of 1993.¹

Irish cricket helps to demonstrate a sporting-nationalist dichotomy. An ex-colonial country may seek national identity through competition on playing, rather than on battle, fields, against its former imperial ruler, or by boycotting the games of the latter while asserting an independent sporting tradition. Richard Cashman divides recent literature on cricket and colonialism into five explanations for the 'acceptance/rejection/adaptation' of imperial sports by former colonial territories: nationalist ideology, elite leadership interest, cultural preferences, lack of alternatives and adaptation to the local ethos. He sees a division between writers who emphasise the deliberate diffusion of cricket 'to indoctrinate colonial subjects', and those stressing the adaptation of the game to serve local needs. Cashman explains the apparent Irish rejection of cricket as possibly the result of a more powerful nationalism than the love-hate variety characteristic of Australia and India.² Australia, for example, by the middle of the nineteenth century, was particularly concerned to refute the theory that the hot southern climate led to the racial degeneration of

Antipodean English stock:³ what better way than success over the Mother Country in that quintessentially English game, cricket. Almost simultaneously, in the 1880s, the exclusivist national sporting model appeared in the establishment of Australian Rules football, 'a game of our own'.⁴ Historians, like Geoffrey Blainey, expend their energy in resisting the contention that Australian Rules football was influenced by Irish Gaelic games. Thus, as demonstrated later, sports associated with nationalism in one country are rejected as the inspiration of games symbolising nationalism in another.

Indian Adoption of Cricket

The colonised people of India not, as in Australia, of British stock, reacted predictably to cricket. The game's hegemonic association with the British garrison was highlighted by the location of Calcutta's original cricket ground on a bare maidan giving English guns command of the approaches to the city. Predictably the Indian princely and upper classes were the first to take up cricket, considered by some reactionary administrators like Lord Harris a useful instrument for the anglicisation of the Indian population. But there was no official British policy to encourage cricket.⁵ Cricket historian Mihir Bose has demonstrated that liberal British administrators, such as Lord Ripon, had little use for cricket.⁶ Lord Harris' sponsorship of the game in India did not extend to a welcome to an Indian prince, K S Ranjitsinji (Ranji), when selected for England. Indeed, Harris believed that cricket was needed in India 'to regenerate the Indian player both physically and mentally'.⁷ Ranji agreed in accepting the English game's ideology. Since Harris' governorship of Bombay in the 1890s, there was, according to Cashman, little nationalist opposition to cricket in India because of the more tactful presentation of the game by British promoters.⁸ However, during the crisis over Viceroy Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal in 1905, ticket bats and soccer balls were amongst the English manufactured goods consigned by Indian nationalists to the flames.⁹

While Test matches between India and England began in 1932, well before self-government and partition in 1947, the sport was never linked with the independence movement. As Bose shows, soccer provided a focus for nationalism in the years before the transfer of power.¹⁰ However, young Nirad Chaudhuri, growing up in Bengal at the turn of the century and later a devastating critic of English rule, was obsessed by cricket and the images of England it inspired. Using English-made equipment where possible, Chaudhuri and his comrades preferred cricket to the more plebeian soccer. The popularity of the latter sport in India, he believes, came later.¹¹ The victory over European opponents of the Hindu Mohan Bagan Club in the 1911 final of the Indian Football Association Shield was a landmark. An Indian newspaper adopted a variant of the Australian use of cricket to prove racial immunity to excessive southern heat: the victory filled 'every Indian with joy and pride to know that rice-eating, malaria-ridden, bare-footed Bengalis have got the better of beef-eating, Herculean, booted John Bull in that peculiarly English sport'¹² In cricket, the fact that the imperialist Ranji was one of the world's greatest batsmen was of little use to nationalists. Gandhi disapproved of the divisiveness of communal cricket in quadrangular or pentangular competitions that provided some of the best players of the time.¹³ In 1946, the year before independence, the Indian team touring England was still led by an Indian prince, the Nawab of Pataudi, who had previously represented England. Significantly, it was the small but ambitious Parsee community which first excelled at the game, in an obvious example of elite control.

Only after independence did cricket become the ultimate source of national pride. There may be some truth in Bose's contention, akin to Cashman's picture of an ambivalent Australian nationalism, that the less violent character of the Indian revolution made such competitiveness in this sport possible. The passion aroused by the chance of defeating the former imperial power was matched only by rivalry with the fellow successor state, Pakistan. In his *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*

Nirad Chaudhuri complained that, as India had obtained freedom from England without violence, there was hypocrisy in the excessive rapport between the two countries after independence: 'as between Indians and Englishmen this purification by fire has not taken place'.¹⁴ Although Chaudhuri himself disliked the English tendency to see Wembley and Lord's as 'perfectly adequate substitutes for Blenheim and Waterloo',¹⁵ many of his countrymen may well have regarded success at Lord's or the Oval as a substitute for physical insurrection in asserting national identity. Bose maintains that at no stage did cricket inspire Indian literature.¹⁶ Certainly polymaths like Chaudhuri did not develop their early enthusiasm for cricket. Rabindranath Tagore, however, saw no incompatibility in depicting Gora, a young man of pure Irish parentage who imagined himself a conservative and anti-British high caste Hindu, setting up a Sports and Cricket Club to place the sons of carpenters and blacksmiths on an equal footing with the well-to-do.¹⁷ India's nationalist leader and first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, was a cricket lover.¹⁸ After independence, India, like Pakistan, has moved steadily forward from the first victories in the 1950s¹⁹ to Pakistan's defeat of England in the 1992 World Cup final and India's whitewash of England in the 1993 Test series.

Irish Cricket

Ireland resembled India in that imperial hegemonic cricket has been associated with the British garrison in the period of agitation leading to independence and partition in 1921. According to Cashman, 'Indian nationalism was less radical, in the cultural sense, than Irish where the nationalists attacked cricket and other English sports as objectionable elements of colonial culture and patronised Gaelic sports instead'.²⁰ The Irish revolution, 1919-21, certainly created a mythology of successful physical force rather than Gandhian non-violence. The success of guerilla leaders such as Tom Barry at Kilmichael and Crossbarry in West Cork, where cricket had once been popular, may have made victory at Lord's less

imperative for the Irish psyche. In Ireland cricket still appears vaguely unpatriotic and is certainly not viewed as an expression of national cultural identity. Such an interpretation may obscure some of the history of Irish cricket.

An explanation for Irish cricket's unpatriotic image is given by John Lawrence, compiler of the annual *John Lawrence's Handbook of Cricket in Ireland*, which ran into sixteen annual editions between 1865-6 and 1880-1. Lawrence maintained that hurling and Gaelic football played between parishes all over Ireland, were destroyed in Ireland during the great famine, 1845-9. This catastrophe, which accelerated the reduction of the population of Ireland from eight to four million, provided a 'grand opportunity' to promote cricket in their stead Lawrence recommended cricket to the Irish landlords, as a substitute for coercion in the struggle against Ribbonism and other anti-establishment secret societies. Cricket, said Lawrence, was also 'a bond of union' between the country gentry, or landlords, in the foxhunting off-season.²¹ Such arguments were hardly calculated to endear the game to Irish patriots or radicals.

Cricket certainly appears to have advanced rapidly in the wake of the famine. Clubs were formed throughout the country, competition was organised against English teams and even overseas. In 1871 an Irish team apparently beat 'England' in a match at Hamburg. In 1879 Ireland played Surrey, its first game against an English county, and sent a team to tour in the United States. An Irish player, Leland Hone, who had never played for an English county, kept wicket for England in a Test match against Australia. The basis of international competition had been laid.²²

This progress, said Lawrence, was brought to an abrupt end by the advance of Irish political nationalism. His last *Handbook* appears to have been published in 1880-1. Certainly this was the period of the Land League (1879), whose president, Charles Stewart Parnell, led an Irish parliamentary

party seeking Home Rule. The Gaelic Athletic Association, which formalised the rules and nationwide competition of hurling and Gaelic football after 1884, as was being currently done for soccer in England, soon imposed a rigid ban on participation in foreign sports like cricket.

The Laurentian theory, implying imperial proselytism through the Anglophile Protestant upper classes, nevertheless has flaws if seen to exclude the adaptation of the game to local needs. Cricket, as Lawrence himself demonstrated, had been played long before the famine. We may take Rowland Bowen's suggestion that cricket might have originated in Ireland with a grain of salt, but Cromwell's notorious ill-treatment of the Irish in the seventeenth century included the proscription of Krickett,²³ which must have appeared as anti-establishment and not merely a harmless diversion of the upper classes. In 1792 the *Freeman's Journal* reported a match in Phoenix Park, outside Dublin, between an All-Ireland XI and the Garrison of Dublin, the latter winning easily by an innings.²⁴ The players were mainly officers and gentlemen, but it is significant that the victorious Garrison team included two privates and a corporal. The All-Ireland team, unlike the All-England team that played exhibition matches after 1845,²⁵ was entirely amateur, skippered by Major Hobart, Secretary-at-war, and including a captain Wesby, whom some have identified as the future Duke of Wellington, who may have thus won the Battle of Waterloo on the playing fields of Phoenix Park rather than Eton. In 1841 the Duke of Wellington insisted that cricket grounds be provided in Ireland for both officers and private soldiers.²⁶

The class composition of cricketers in the first half of the nineteenth century is important. W P Hone, the sole historian of Irish cricket, was sure that supporters were not all Anglo-Irish educated in England but does not hazard a guess at their ratio to other classes.²⁷ The landlords and officers continued to dominate, but there may have been some patriotic stirrings amongst supporters of Irish clubs, like Phoenix, born in 1830, when competing against visiting army officers. According to Lawrence, the

celebrated phoenix club was a reaction to the defeat in 1827 of metropolitan clubs by Ballinasloe, one of the two earliest Irish clubs.²⁸ A club like Ballinasloe would probably have contained working class or peasant members.

In 1843 the *Nation*, organ of Daniel O'Connell's Repeal Association and later the Young Ireland group, which led an ineffectual rebellion in July 1848, regretted that 'this manly game' of cricket was making insufficient progress in Ireland. The patriotic weekly attributed this to sectarian hostilities, the failure of Irish landlords to sponsor cricket amongst their tenants, and the misery of the ordinary people that left them without the stamina necessary for the game. There was then no suggestion that cricket was unpatriotic and that all energies should be applied to the cultivation of Gaelic games such as hurling. The *Nation* then still hoped to appeal to the patriotism of the landlord class. A response to the *Nation* article suggested that cricket might unite classes on the principle that 'the most athletic batter and dexterous bowler being, for the nonce, king of the company'.²⁹

Cricket before the Great Famine

More research is clearly necessary on support for Irish cricket in the years before the great famine. Was interest in the game restricted entirely to country gentlemen and army officers or did the proletariat become involved either as spectators or as participants? In England the plebeian fast bowler was a foil to the elegant stroke-play of the blue-blooded batsman. Lawrence complained that Irish cricketers neglected bowling, amateur bowling being 'an utter failure'. In the post-famine era the Irish professional, such as Tom Davis, proved equally proficient at preparing the Phoenix wicket, umpiring important games and strengthening batting for Phoenix and other teams.³⁰ It is not clear whether Davis was called upon to do much bowling to compensate for amateur incompetence. When Ireland beat England at Hamburg in 1871, Lawrence was delighted to find,

alongside celebrities such as Smith Barry MP, ‘genuine natives’ like Pat Murphy.³¹ Professionals were fairly common in Irish cricket and their existence probably encouraged a class rivalry apparent elsewhere. A highlight of *Knocknagow*, by the Fenian Charles Kickham and set in Tipperary in the famine period, is the victory of the local hero, Mat the Thrasher. Mat, in a sledge-throwing contest ‘for the credit of the village’, defeated the hitherto unbeaten Captain French. Though French was depicted as a Tipperary man himself, his position as a British officer appears to have given the contest an international flavour. The account mentions some preliminary hurling,³² but the contest might as easily have been a game of cricket, which Captain French would no doubt have played. Evidence of cricket during the famine itself suggests that this could well have been the case.

Rowland Bowen’s insistence that ‘no echo of the potato famine reaches us in the news of Irish cricket in the period’³³ is borne out by the journals of W J O’Neill Daunt, a Catholic landowner and moderate nationalist in West Cork, where the famine struck particularly hard. Daunt, though not himself a player, watched the growing ‘cricket mania’ with interest. He approved of ‘the social rendezvous it promotes’. Aristocrats, squireen and Protestant clerics rubbed shoulders with Catholic peasants. ‘The *Nation* had hoped to encourage such community spirit throughout Ireland. Matches ‘great’ and ‘enormous’ aroused corresponding interest in the lower classes. ‘A poor woman named Keeffe knelt down in the field, and piously prayed to heaven to grant success to her four fine sons.’ While the Young Irelander William Smith O’Brien vainly attempted to raise a rebel army in Tipperary in July 1848, cricket was played twice a week in Daunt’s region of Cork. In 1847, a bad famine year, cricket was less in evidence, but Daunt does not blame the great hunger. A Cork County Club was established in 1849,³⁴ the last famine year. In 1850 cricket had become

so common that Daunt did not bother to chronicle the matches.³⁵ A type of dualism may well have existed: hurling for the local people amongst themselves, but cricket to hold their own against the gentry, and, at one remove, England.

Landlord Patronage of Cricket

Landlords as patrons of local cricket certainly existed before the famine. ‘The Earl and Countess of Desart sponsored the game in their district from the 1820s.’³⁶ Even more significant was the Parnell family of Avondale. Sir John Parnell had been a member of the old Irish parliament and an opponent of the Act of Union. His grandson, John Henry Parnell, was a keen cricketer who played for Carlow and the Phoenix Club. He set up the County Wicklow Club in 1835 on his own Avondale estate.³⁷ John Parnell became a martyr to the game; defying doctor’s orders he played a cricket match in 1859, only to die the next day.³⁸ His son, Charles Stewart Parnell, was equally enthusiastic, playing as a wicketkeeper-batsman for Wicklow and sometimes for the Phoenix Club as well as leading sides against it. Charles Parnell captained Wicklow in 1867. He does not appear to have been disturbed in his sport by the unsuccessful Fenian revolt of that year, though he later expressed sympathy for the ‘Manchester Martyrs’, Fenians executed for allegedly killing a policeman. Cricket was sometimes used as a cover for Fenian activities.³⁹ More upsetting to Parnell was the infamous fracas with a manure merchant that led to his rustication from Cambridge in 1869. The episode did nothing to harm his cricket reputation in Ireland and his captaincy of the county club. Parnell remained on the club committee until elected to parliament in 1874. However, in the late 1860s Avondale was replaced as the main Wicklow cricket ground by Earl Fitzwilliam’s Coolattin Park.⁴⁰ Lawrence gives the averages for Irish players indicating that Parnell achieved some respectable, if not brilliant, scores with a best of thirty-five. As a captain, however, Parnell was noted

for his ruthless adherence to the laws of the game, insisting on the dismissal of incoming batsmen tardy in reaching the wicket. On one occasion he forced his team to return to Wicklow from Phoenix without a game because of a preliminary disagreement with the opposing captain.⁴¹

The Desarts, Fitzwilliams, Parnells, Daunts, and Cloncurrys may not have been typical of Irish landlords, and do not prove that cricket evoked passionate lower-class enthusiasm before the famine. But in line with recent research denying that all Irish landlords were invariably the rack-renting tyrants of popular mythology, their participation suggests that class relations in Ireland were sometimes closer to the English patriarchal model than has been previously realised. The Fenian leader, Charles Kickham, ended *Knocknagow* not with the discomfiture of all landlords but the return from exile of the 'good' landlord, Sir Garret. Cricket and hurling in many areas probably coexisted, being played by the same people on different occasions. In a recent article Kevin Whelan has demonstrated the extent of landlord patronage of hurling.⁴² One of his examples, W P Cosby, appears identical with a founder of the Phoenix Club and cricketer of considerable standing.⁴³ It is likely that some landlords sponsored both hurling and cricket simultaneously.

Lawrence nevertheless appears on relatively firm ground when he claims that political excitement in the 1880s was a grievous setback to Irish cricket. Ironically it was Parnell himself who was in the eye of the political storm. Parnell was locked in agrarian agitation in 1880-1, with the Irish parliamentary party and the Land League, that culminated in Gladstone's important land act in the latter year.

At the beginning of 1882 Parnell was in Kilmainham Gaol for his part in the agrarian and political campaign. On 6 May, shortly after Parnell had made a compromise agreement with Prime Minister W E Gladstone, a more ruthless game than usual was played within sight of Parnell's former sporting arena, the Phoenix Cricket Ground. A gang of ultra-patriots calling themselves the Invincibles knifed to death both the Chief

Secretary for Ireland, Lord Frederick Cavendish, and the Under Secretary, Thomas Burke. Less than four months later Australian fast bowler F R Spofforth symbolically assassinated fourteen English batsmen, including the great W G Grace, in a glorious victory that left English cricket in 'Ashes'. Though Parnell had events other than cricket to preoccupy him at the time, Ireland was not unrepresented in the Ashes match. One of the Australian batsmen, Tom Horan, who afterwards wrote a graphic account of the occasion, hailed from County Cork where Daunt had perceived much interest in cricket. The Australian wicketkeeper, John Blackham, who disdaining a longstop, stood up to the 'Demon' Spofforth and even stumped a batsman off him, was of Irish descent. Both Horan and Blackham later captained Australia. It is perhaps not too fanciful to see Australians, including those of Irish background, using cricket to achieve the national identity which Parnell, the ex-cricketer, sought by political agitation. Biographers have emphasised the transference of Parnell's martinet-like discipline from the cricket field to the House of Commons where he kept his followers in a state of dependency.

Parnell's political apotheosis did not mean divorce from sport. His mistress, and later wife, Katharine O'Shea, shows that, while Parnell ceased to attend cricket matches after entering parliament, his enthusiasm for the game continued to such an extent that Mrs O'Shea had a private pitch laid out for him at her house at Eltham.⁴⁴ In 1884, the originators of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), resenting games controlled by Englishmen, called on Parnell, then at the height of his political power in parliament, to be one of the first patrons of their organisation. For the first years, Protestants and Unionists were happy to play Gaelic games: traditional hurling and the newly codified Gaelic football. In late 1887, however, the movement grew too nationalistic for their liking. In that year Parnell's family, no doubt with his approval, hosted a Gaelic tournament at Avondale, once the site of the Wicklow County Cricket Ground. When the majority of Parnell's parliamentary party deserted him in 1890 after his

involvement in the O'Shea divorce suit, he was strongly backed by the GAA and the secret Fenian Irish Republican Brotherhood in his last struggle to regain his position. Support for Parnell, bitterly denounced by the Catholic Church, set back the GAA for a decade. Parnell, a passionate cricketer in his youth, thus ended his life in 1891 dependent on the GAA, which came to be regarded as the mortal enemy of such 'foreign' sports. When the GAA recovered from the effects of the Parnell split its nationalism was intensified. In the early 1900s, an almost forgotten ban on participation in foreign sports was vigorously reimposed. All members of the British security forces were also excluded, even as spectators. The ban was formally lifted in 1971 but still appears to operate unofficially in Northern Ireland where the political role of the Association as a promoter of Irish unity is still controversial.⁴⁵

Earlier, cricket had provided a cover for young men of the Fenian revolutionary movement meeting together, now this role was attributed to Gaelic sport while cricket was portrayed as the recreation of the enemy. Neither Parnell, happy to accept the position of a GAA patron, nor his sponsors saw incompatibility with his earlier interest in cricket. The original promoter of the GAA, Michael Cusack, depicted by James Joyce's *Ulysses* as the ranting ultra-nationalist Citizen, had previously played cricket and other sports with apparent enthusiasm. Cusack's establishment of the GAA was probably due less to excessive patriotism than to the need for an expensive and more working-class game. The original ban on other sports was initially intended to preserve the GAA from rivals like cricket, rather than a feeling that the latter was unpatriotic.⁴⁶ Historians, like Bill Mandle, who depicts the GAA as a mirror image of the English Football Association,⁴⁷ and Kevin Whelan, showing a common landlord patronage for both sporting traditions, reinforce the view that the distance between cricket and Gaelic games was at first slight.

The Irish Revolution, 1919-21, in a sense sealed in blood the division between cricket and Gaelic football. At Croke Park in November 1920 the notorious 'Black and Tans' fired indiscriminately into a crowd at a Gaelic football match, killing a player and eleven other men and women, while wounding sixty others. In June 1921, perhaps in retaliation, gunmen fired at British officers, fielding at College Park, Dublin, in a match against the Gentlemen of Ireland, the Irish representative team. The officers were unhurt but a student spectator, Miss K A Wright, was killed.⁴⁸ In early 1922, at an Irish Race Congress, Dr Herbert M Moran, who had captained the first Australian Rugby Union team in Britain, aroused anger when suggesting that cricket was an excellent team game for the Irish. Mary MacSwiney, sister of Terence MacSwiney who had died on hunger-strike in a British gaol, 'scornfully stigmatised it as a subtle means for the anglicisation of Ireland'. Moran's retort that it was surely possible to learn from the enemy and provide a distraction from the 'eternal, withering, preoccupation of local politics' fell on deaf ears.⁴⁹ Here the boycotting, exclusive nationalism of the superpatriot confronted the competitive, accommodationist nationalism of the successful Irish-Australian. Was compromise possible?

Greater Acceptance of Rugby

But cricket was not the only game rejected as foreign. Rugby football, a competitor with the newer Gaelic football that soon surpassed in popularity the more ancient hurling (also organised by the GAA), was equally unacceptable. Yet Irish rugby had a very different history from that of Irish cricket. While Irish cricket in the 1860s and 1870s appeared on the verge of competition on equal terms with that of England, only to lose momentum during the political crisis of the Home Rule movement, Ireland began playing rugby internationals against England in 1875. A succession of defeats, several at the Oval in London where Australian cricketers had covered themselves with glory in 1882, ended in 1887 with Ireland's first

rugby victory over England, at Lansdowne Road, Dublin. Since then, Ireland has been a regular contestant in the annual five nations' championship against England, Scotland, Wales and France. Just as Parnell, Ireland's leading politician in the second half of the nineteenth century, was a keen cricketer, Ireland's greatest twentieth century statesman, Eamon de Valera, was an enthusiastic rugby player, once on the verge of selection for Ireland. In modern times Lansdowne Road has invariably been packed out for international matches. No partition is officially recognised in Irish rugby. Northern Ireland Protestant unionists are as passionate in their support for the Irish team as Catholics from the middle class, often Jesuit, southern Irish schools, who provide the bulk of supporters of the game. In some areas, such as Galway, it has been argued that rugby and hurling were traditionally combined by sportsmen,⁵⁰ Others maintain that rugby is in reality more elitist than cricket, the latter in recent times being played by all classes in north County Dublin in combination with hurling.⁵¹ Here the competitive, rather than the boycotting model, clearly prevails. *An Phoblacht*, organ of Provisional Sinn Fein, the alter ego of the Provisional IRA, distinguishes between rugby and cricket. To Brendan MacRuari, gaoled for IRA activities, cricket is still an unacceptable imperialist game, unsuitable for the Irish. MacRuari, however, endorses Rugby Union, delighting in the sight of green-clad players representing the whole thirty-two counties of Ireland, even when some of the Irish team might on other occasions have been IRA targets:

I always remember during my early days in prison being quite intrigued watching Ireland play England at Twickenham. A roomful of dedicated IRA men cheered wildly each time a certain emerald-clad RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary] man, ball under arm, charged for the English try-line. A curious cocktail indeed!⁵²

MacRuari here ignores the contention by two English analysts of Irish rugby that throughout Ireland 'the game is rooted in Anglophile traditions'.⁵³ This suggests that the virulence of Irish nationalism, posited by Cashman

in opposition to more moderate Indian and Australian nationalism, may not be a full explanation for the boycott model. In Australia and India the relative absence of violence against the imperial power in achieving independence may have made cricket something of a psychological substitute. But physical force Irish revolutionaries like MacRuari may themselves be inspired by sporting success.

Irish cricket, like rugby, has also had some international triumphs. In 1969 Ireland dismissed a powerful West Indian side, including all-time greats such as Clive Lloyd, Basil Butcher and Clyde Walcott, for twenty-five on a wet wicket at Sion Mills in Northern Ireland and won on the first innings.⁵⁴ The Irish batting hero, was appropriately David Pigot, the direct descendant of a Young Ireland patriotic leader of the 1840s, John Edward Pigot. Had this achievement been against an English Test team it might have helped Irish cricket to qualify for the competitive model and rise rapidly in popular estimation. As rugby shows, ability to compete successfully against a former imperialist power can override nationalist proselytism, or even compel its reformulation.

Perhaps some deep aversion in Irish character or inherited psychology may explain why Irish cricketers do not play Test cricket on equal terms with the English as Irish rugby players have done since 1887. Cashman's descriptions of cultural preferences appear relevant: thus if caste Hindus preferred cricket to the pollution of contact rugby, Irish culture or temperament may have emphasised the physical. Bill O'Reilly, growing up in the strongly Irish New South Wales town of Marengo, believed that 'cricket did not come naturally to Irish people who, as I found out later, regarded it more or less as a foreign game that was somewhat beneath their dignity'. Rugby Union seemed less foreign in Marengo.⁵⁵ Yet O'Reilly's contention is belied by his own phenomenal success and that of many other men of Irish descent wearing the baggy green cap of Australia. One of the first Test centuries was scored by Tom Horan from County Cork where Daunt noticed such enthusiasm for the game during the Irish famine. John

Blackham revolutionised the art of keeping wicket. Charlie Macartney's batting has been compared favourably with that of Don Bradman. The glorious stroke play of Stan McCabe brought tears to Bradman's eyes when he watched him scoring a double century against England in 1938. The best bowler Bradman ever faced was the leg-break genius, Bill O'Reilly. The power and accuracy of fast bowler Ray Lindwall, proud to acknowledge Irish descent, shattered the English batting in 1948.⁵⁶ An all-time Irish-Australian XI would be virtually unbeatable.⁵⁷ O'Reilly's assumption that rugby is natural to the Irish presents problems. Rugby, to those who believe that the Irish psyche demands physical contact, may appear closer to the Irish temperament than cricket. The national character argument, however, is double edged. Rugby allows more personal contact than Gaelic football. While hurling requires crash-helmets, so too does modern cricket.

By analogy, the white South African contention that Black Africans lack an inherent aptitude for cricket is countered by the descendants of Black Africans in the West Indies. Like Ireland, the West Indies is integrated by the selection of its cricket team but is no longer a political unit. In Ireland, however, the integrative effect of national rugby and cricket teams (Irish soccer divides into two international elevens) is destroyed by the reluctance of most Catholic Nationalists in Northern Ireland to play rugby and cricket. However, John Hume, the political leader of the Northern Ireland Catholic-Nationalist community, was once a slow left-arm bowler of some note.⁵⁸

If sports-loving people like the Irish fail to excel in cricket, despite its long history in the country, the weather, significantly worse in summer than that of neighbouring England, may be partly to blame. During the boom period of Irish cricket in the 1860s and 1870s, Lawrence's cricket almanac begins each annual summary with a weather report. Some seasons were virtually washed out and at least one adversely affected by excessive heat.⁵⁹ Migration to Australia took care of such problems by providing experience of coping with high temperatures without racial degeneration. Rugby Union was less dependent on fine weather.

Conclusions

No single factor explains the phenomenon of Irish cricket. It certainly appears to have suffered the vicious circle of adverse propaganda, reducing local confidence against outside opposition, and thus inhibiting a popular break through. However, modern Irish cricketers often demonstrate passionate commitment to the game. Club matches sometimes attract more spectators than Sheffield Shield games in Australia. Irish women's cricket is also raising its profile.⁶⁰ As in India elite leadership was an important factor of Irish cricket in the nineteenth century, but only for a brief period around the famine did cricket lack competitors. The reality, regardless of rival imperialist and nationalist sporting proselytism, may be that Irish cricket has generally adapted to local ends, with somewhat less success than Rugby Union. Now that the persistent Northern Ireland Troubles have led many Irish people to question the cult of extreme nationalism and its associated violence, cricket, even without the power to compete successfully against the former imperial power, may be subjected to less negative pressure. Whether such positive indications will ever amount to world-class technical improvement, remains to be seen. But a more accurate analysis of the historical basis of Irish cricket will not only raise the morale of contemporary Irish cricketers but also provide an important tool for probing more deeply Irish class relations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

NOTES

1. *Mercury*, Hobart, 1 July 1993 for Border's Irish grandmother; 27 July for Australian women's victory over Ireland by 49 runs (Australia 8 /194, Ireland 4/145); 12 July for Australian men's victory over Ireland by 272 runs (Australia 3/361 Ireland 89 all out). Though McCague was born in Northern Ireland, had he remained there, he would have been eligible to play for Ireland as a whole. Technically, Northern Ireland is not part of Great Britain but of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.
2. Richard Cashman, 'Cricket and Colonialism: Colonial Hegemony and Indigenous Subversion?', J A Mangan, ed., *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad, 1700-1914*, Cass, London, 1988, pp. 258-60.

- 3.. W F Mandle, *Going it Alone: Australia's National Identity in the Twentieth Century*, Penguin, Ringwood, 1980, pp.28-9; Richard Cashman, *The "Demon" Spofforth*, NSWUP, Kensington, 1990, p. 14.
4. Geoffrey Blainey, *A Game of Our Own: The Origins of Australian Football*, Information Australia, Melbourne, 1990, esp. pp. 88-99.
5. Richard Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd: The Phenomenon of Indian Cricket*, Orient Longman, Delhi, 1980, pp. 3 and 5-8 (Harris).
6. Richard Cashman, 'The Phenomenon of Indian Cricket', in R Cashman and M McKernan, eds, *Sport in History: the Making of Modern Sporting History*, UQP, St Lucia' 1979, pp. 180-204. Mihir Bose, *A History of Indian Cricket*, Andre Deutsch, London 1990, p. 30.
7. Alan Ross, *Ranji: Prince of Cricketers*, Collins, London, 1983, p. 62. Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd*, pp. 11-12.
8. Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd*, p. 13.
9. R C Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. 2, F K L Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1963, p. 42 The incident was at Jalpaiguri in 1905. It is possible that the protest was against English - made bats and balls, not the sports themselves.
10. Bose, *History of Indian Cricket*, p. 16.
11. Nirad C Chaudhuri, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, Hogarth Press, London, 1987 (1951). pp. 109-10.
12. Tony Mason, 'Football on the Maidan: Cultural Imperialism in Calcutta', in J A Mangan, ed., *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society*, Cass, London, 1992, p. 150. The newspaper was *Nayak*, a Calcutta daily.
13. Bose, *History of Indian Cricket*, p. 33.
14. Chaudhuri, *The Autobiography*, p. 502.
15. Nirad C Chaudhuri, *A Passage to England*, Macmillan, London, 1960, p. 167,
16. Bose, *History of Indian Cricket*, p. 32.
17. Rabindranath Tagore, *Gora*, Macmillan, London, 1924, p. 78.
18. Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd*, p. 23.
19. India first beat a weak English touring side at Madras in February 1952 and Pakistan beat England in its first Test series in that country 1954. As Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd*, p. 2, shows, an 'All-India (Indians) team had played au English touring side in 1926-27'. The mainly European official All-India side was considerably weaker,
20. Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd*, pp. 22-3.
21. John Lawrence, *Handbook of Cricket in Ireland, 1870-1*, Dublin, 1871, pp.4-5, 1878-9, p. 19. Lawrence's view is generally accepted by John Sugden and Alan Baimer, 'Northern Ireland: Sporting Divided Society', Lincoln Allison, ed., *The Politics of Sport*, Manchester University Press, 1986, p. 92.
22. Derek Scott, 'Ireland v. Surrey (1879-1979)', *Irish Cricket Union Yearbook 1979*, p. 87.
23. Rowland Bowen, *Cricket: A History of its Growth and Development throughout the World*, Eyre & Spotswood' London, 1970, pp. 28-9, 37-8, 262.
24. *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Aug. 1792, quoted in Don Bradman, *Farewell to Cricket*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1950, pp. 243-4.
25. Llewellyn Woodward, *The Age of Reform, 1815-1870*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1962, p. 627.
26. W P Hone, *Cricket in Ireland*, Kerryman, Tralee, n.d. [1953], pp. 1-4.

27. Hone, *Cricket in Ireland*, p. 89.
28. Lawrence, *Handbook 1878-9*, p. 16.
29. *Nation*, Dublin, 12 and 26 Aug. Earlier (18 March 1843) the *Nation* had quoted Samuel Lover's *Rory O'More* to the effect that Irish children, clad in rags, were unable to emulate their English counterparts who partly undressed to play cricket.
30. Lawrence, *Handbook 1866-7*, pp. 4 and 10 (Davis), *Handbook 1873-4*, p. 2, *Handbook 1874-5*, (bowling).
31. Lawrence, *Handbook 1871-2*, p. 6.
32. Charles J Kickham, *Knocknagow or the Homes Tipperary*, Mercier, Cork, 1978, pp. 48-9.
33. Bowen, *Cricket*, p. 96.
34. Bowen, *Cricket*, p. 274.
35. J O'Neill Daunt, Journal 1, Ms3040, National Library of Ireland, Aug.-Sept. 1846, pp. 199, 202, 204, 219, 221-2, July 1848, p. 312, Aug. 1848, p. 295, 1850, pp. 388, 390-91, 489-90.
36. Lawrence, *Handbook 1866-7*, p. 69.
37. Lawrence, *Handbook 1878-9*, p. 18.
38. Jules Abels *The Parnell Tragedy*, Bodley Head, London, 1966, p. 19.
39. Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland*, Penguin, London, 1989, p. 394.
40. Lawrence, *Handbook 1866-7*, p. 91.
41. R B O'Brien, *The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, Nelson, London, 1910 ed., pp. 46-7.
42. Kevin Whelan, 'The Geography of Hurling' ,*History Ireland*, vol. 1, no. 1, Spring 1993, pp. 27-31.
43. For Cosby and Phoenix, see Lawrence, *Handbook 1865-6*, p. 4.
44. O'Brien, *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell*, pp. 46-7. Roy Foster, *Charles Stewart Parnell: The Man and His Family*, Harvester, Sussex, 1979, pp. 115-6, traces the story of Parnell the cricket martinet to Standish O'Grady, suggesting that while true in substance the story's wider application was due to political bias. Foster (p. 116) insists that cricket was the gentry's preserve and uses Mrs O'Shea's mention of his abandonment of cricket watching after 1874 to hint that Parnell found his enthusiasm for the game politically dangerous. A calculated abandonment, however, seems unlikely. Foster does not mention Mrs O'Shea's ticket pitch at Eltham. See Katharine O'Shea, *Charles Stewart Parnell: His Love Story and Political Life*, Cassell, London, 1973. p. 209.
45. For summary, see W F Mandle, 'The Gaelic Athletic Association and Popular Culture, 1750-1950', O MacDouagh, W F Mandle and P Travers, eds, *Irish Culture and Nationalism, 1750-1950*, Macmillan, London, 1983, p 108.
46. Marcus de Búrca, *The GAA: A History of the Gaelic Athletic Association, Cumam Lúthchleas Gael*, Dublin, 1980, pp. 6, 11, and 13.
47. W F Mandle, *The Gaelic Athletic Association and Irish Nationalist Politics, 1884-1924*, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, pp. 14-15.
48. *Freeman's Journal*, 4 June 1921. See also Trevor West, *The Bold Collegians: The Development of Sport in Trinity College*, Lilliput Press, Dublin, 1991, p. 63. I am indebted to Derek Scott and Charles Lysaght for these references.
49. Herbert M Moran, *Viewless Winds: Being the Recollections and Digressions of an Australian Surgeon*, Peter Davies, London, 1931, pp. 193-4.

50. Brendan O'Heithir, *Over the Bar: a Personal Relationship with the GAA*, Ward River Press, Swords, 1984, pp. 103-5.
51. Interview with Derek Scott, Secretary of the Irish Cricket Union, 9 June 1993. and letter to writer, 25 Oct. 1993.
52. *An Phoblacht*, 23 Jan. & 2 Apr. 1992.
53. Sugden and Baimer, 'Northern Ireland: Sport in a Divided Society', in Allison, *The Politics of Sport*, p. 116. Their recent book, *Sport, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland*, Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1993, is even more critical of Irish sport in arousing 'nationalism, racialism, ethnocentrism and sectarianism', See review by Tom Gallagher in *Fortnight*, Belfast, Dec. 1993.
54. See D R Pigot, 'The Miracle of Sion Mills', *Irish Cricket*, Summer 1974, pp. 3-4.
55. Bill O'Reilly, *'Tiger': 60 Years of Cricket*, Collins, Sydney 1985, p. 21.
56. Don Bradman, *Farewell to Cricket*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1950, pp. 58, 62, 300; Ray Lindwall, *Flying Stumps*, Hutchinson, London, 1977, p. 16.
57. An Irish-Australian All-time XI: J H Fingleton (1,189 runs: av. 42.46, 5 centuries); T Horan (254 runs: av. 18.84, 1 century; 11 wickets, av 23.36); C G Macartney (2,131 runs: av. 41.78, 7 centuries; 45 wickets: av. 27.55); S McCabe (2,748 runs: av. 48.21, 6 centuries; 36 wickets: av. 42.68); N O'Neill (2,779 runs: av. 45.55, 6 centuries; 17 wickets: av. 39.23); L Hassett (3,073 runs: av. 46.56, 10 centuries); J McC Blackham Wk (800 runs: av. 15.68; 60 dismissals: 36ct, 24 st.); R Lindwall (1,502 runs: av. 21.15, 1 century 228 wickets, av. 23.03); W J O'Reilly (410 runs: av. 12.81; 144 wickets: av. 22.59); A Connolly (260 runs: av. 10.40; 102 wickets: av. 29.22); L O'B Fleetwood - Smith (54 runs: av. 9.00; 42 wickets: av. 37.38); 12th man P Sheehan (1,594 runs: av. 33.91, 2 centuries; 17 catches).
58. Barry White, *John Hume: Statesman of the Troubles*, Blackstaff, Belfast, 1984, pp. 13-14.
59. Lawrence, *Handbook 1868-9*, p. 1.
60. Women's cricket in Ireland began seriously after World War II, but appeared to peter out in the late 1950s. See Rachel Heyhoe Flint and Netta Rheinberg, *Fair Play: the Story of Women's Cricket*, Angus & Robertson' London, 1976, pp. 117-18.