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THE FORGOTTEN HURLERS OF SOUTH WALES: SPORT, SOCIETY AND THE IRISH, 1910-1925.

Daryl Leeworthy

On the dull and overcast Whitsun bank holiday of 1913, two hurling sides met for a game on the Glebe grounds, Finchley, north London. The local team, representing the metropolis, featured players including the writer and Fenian organiser Patrick Sarsfield O'Hegarty and a young Michael Collins.¹ Their opposition was a team from south Wales comprised of some of the best players from the four leading clubs in Glamorgan: Bargoed, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, and Pontypridd.² It was the first Welsh representative hurling side put together and hopes were expressed that the challenge match that day would prove a catalyst for the expansion of Gaelic sport amongst the Irish diaspora in Glamorgan and Monmouthshire.³ Following the throw in, the London team quickly put the *sliotar* over the bar for a point and took a slim lead into the half-time interval. After the break, the Welsh players scored four times without reply and eventually won the match two goals and two points to one point. The *South Wales Daily News* correspondent enthused that 'the Welsh team created a very favourable impression and their success should do good for the game'.⁴ His colleagues at the *Merthyr Pioneer* concurred.⁵

Introduction

For the most part, the place of hurling in the history of the Irish that settled in Wales has been long forgotten.⁶ In a narrative that emphasises integration, successive scholars have demonstrated that sport was a unifying force and the games that were played were defined by their class-based rather than ethnic or nationalist appeal.⁷ Boxing, rugby, soccer and baseball all attracted Irish participants and some, such as Jim Driscoll, brought world-class meaning to the integrated concept of Welsh-Irish. Driscoll's funeral in February 1925 was a national event and, in the words of historian Paul O'Leary, 'by any reckoning, it was the biggest funeral Wales has ever seen'.⁸ Explaining the process of Irish integration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, O'Leary has argued that 'the relative importance of rugby football rather than soccer in working-class culture in industrial south Wales' was crucial, since

For much assistance, advice and encouragement, I am grateful to David Toms, Niall Murphy, Mark Ryan, John Borgonovo and Paul O'Leary. I would also like to thank Dónal McAnallen of the Cardinal Ó Fiaich Archive in Armagh for passing along material related to the Ulster Provincial Council. The staff at Y Llynfi Library in Maesteg helped to track down the 'Hurling Field' for me, proving once more the immense value of local studies libraries, and the staff at the reference department of Cork City Library sympathetically guided me through the politics of the Irish press of the 1920s.

¹ *Sunday Independent* (Ireland), 11 May 1913. Michael Collins' sporting career in London is traced in Peter Hart, *Mick: The Real Michael Collins* (London, 2005), ch. 3.

² *South Wales Daily News*, 21 April 1913.

³ As above, 9 May 1913.

⁴ As above, 15 May 1913.

⁵ *Merthyr Pioneer*, 17 May 1913.

⁶ Traces still exist in folk memory, however. Joe Moore, 'Irish Sports in Wales', *The Green Dragon*, 10 (2002), pp.39-40; Gerald McCormack, *The Shamrock and the Leek: The Irish in South Wales – Maesteg and District, Mid Glamorgan, 1826-1985* (Maesteg, 1996).

⁷ Tim Pat Coogan, *Wherever Green is Worn: The Story of the Irish Diaspora* (London, 2000), p.224. The literature on the Irish in Britain is vast. A helpful guide can be found in Donald M. McRaid, *The Irish Diaspora in Britain, 1750-1939* (London, 2011).

⁸ Paul O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration: The Irish in Wales, 1798-1922* (Cardiff, 2000), p.1.

‘rugby football acted as an agent of social integration in Welsh life, and none of the major teams were sectarian in composition or support’.⁹

Clubs that celebrated their Irishness such as the Cardiff Celtics or the Newport Hibernians or that developed through the patronage of the Catholic Church such as St Peter’s RFC, Dowlais St Illtyd’s RFC or the four Catholic baseball clubs in mid-1920s Newport certainly existed.¹⁰ Similarly, when tours of County Cork by the Cardiff Catholic Young Men’s Society (CYMS) RFC took place, such as occurred in 1924, they were framed by ‘home-coming’ as much as they were by sporting competition itself.¹¹ Yet, this was a Romantic Irishness of shamrocks and other mythological symbols and had little to do with the politics of difference. They were part of the ‘world of South Wales’ – a complex fusion of migrant identities that had little problem with championing as sporting heroes English-born rugby internationals or ethnically-Irish boxers.¹²

For the largely settled Irish community in late-Victorian and Edwardian south Wales, the adoption of facets of the emerging Gaelic cultural revival was therefore not without controversy. The creation of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) in 1884 and the Gaelic League in 1893 barely registered.¹³ It was not until 1899 that a branch of the League was formed in Cardiff, for example, and whilst branches of the GAA could be found elsewhere in Britain from as early as 1885, none existed in Wales until the twentieth century. When it did appear, though, cultural nationalism was strongest amongst young, often rural migrants who challenged the established way of things, particularly a diaspora that had ‘discovered a bridge [...] through Gladstonian Liberalism’.¹⁴ In other words, middle-class Irish élites that were in the business of forging consensus through the Liberal Party were not impressed by what they saw as the needless (and perhaps dangerous) posturing of young nationalist radicals.

One prominent example of this older style of Irish representation was Dr James Mullin, who for many years served as the president of the United Irish League branch in Cardiff and the vice-president of its sister branch in Newport. His views were laid out forthrightly in the pages of his autobiography, *The Story of a Toilers Life*, which was published posthumously in 1921. ‘On being told that every Irishman who neglects to have his son taught the Irish language is a traitor to his country’, he wrote, ‘I replied that every Irishman who neglects to have his son taught a trade is a traitor to his country; and that it matters little what language a man speaks if he is a slave and a pauper’.¹⁵ Mullin’s rise from poverty in Cookstown, county Tyrone, to a position of professional respectability in Cardiff society almost certainly influenced his attitudes to practical self-improvement. ‘*The Story of a Toiler’s Life*’, writes

⁹ As above, p.304.

¹⁰ *Welsh Catholic Herald*, 17 May 1924. These were the Catholic Young Men’s Society, St Michael’s Old Boys, Holy Cross Old Boys, and the Irish Social Club. The Irish Social Club was formed in 1922 following the dissolution of the Newport branch of the ISDL. *Welsh Catholic Herald*, 12 August 1922.

¹¹ *Cork Examiner*, 21 April 1924.

¹² The motif, of course, is that presented by Dai Smith in his *Aneurin Bevan and the World of South Wales* (Cardiff, 1993).

¹³ For an accessible history of the GAA, see Mike Cronin, Mark Duncan & Paul Rouse, *The GAA: A People’s History* (Cork, 2009).

¹⁴ O’Leary, *Immigration and Integration*, 274.

¹⁵ James Mullin, *The Story of a Toiler’s Life* (Dublin, 2000 edition; first published in 1921), p.196. The events which inspire this passage can be observed in a series of letters published in the *Western Mail*, 24 March 1899 and *Western Mail* 28 March 1899.

Patrick Maume, 'is a Smilesean story of self-definition through work'.¹⁶ For Mullin, and others like him, the future of Ireland lay in hard work and not in Romantic follies.

Generations younger than Mullin's, which grew up in a society where the GAA and the Gaelic League were established institutions, brought to Britain a far stronger sense of their Irishness as framed by the forces of cultural nationalism and the Gaelic revival.¹⁷ One consequence of the codification of hurling and Gaelic football that took place under the auspices of the GAA after 1884 was that it set in motion defined opposition to 'British' sports such as cricket, rugby and soccer.¹⁸ In 1901, for example, the GAA called on 'the young men of Ireland not to identify themselves with ... imported sport'.¹⁹ For many who took up Gaelic sports, however, politics was a secondary consideration. British hostility to playing sport on Sundays spread to the Irish footballing unions and as a result rugby and soccer tended to be played in the towns where workers enjoyed free Saturday afternoons. In rural areas, however, free time was limited to Sundays and the GAA benefitted from its decision to adopt the traditional Catholic attitude that saw nothing inherently wrong with playing in the afternoon after Mass.²⁰ As one priest explained, 'there was no harm whatever in indulging in manly games on Sunday'.²¹

The playing of hurling was an act of differentiation and as such it is difficult to fit its emergence in around 1910 and subsequent flowering after the Great War into the prevailing pattern of 'ethnic fade' that historians have documented. If the processes of integration in Wales were well advanced by the outbreak of the war, why did Gaelic sport suddenly find a degree of popularity amongst the newly-settled Irish when it had not for the entire period since the foundation of the GAA? It may well be the case that antipathy towards the Irish (as a result of wider integration) had grown so seldom that it was possible to play hurling on fields in Maesteg, Merthyr Tydfil and in central Cardiff without fear of reprisal. Yet the period also coincides with the expansion of the GAA throughout the global Irish diaspora from Boston and Chicago to Australia and Argentina and as such its growth in Cardiff and the coalfield tells us much about the changing attitudes of Irish migrants to Wales through to the formation of the Irish Free State in 1922.²²

The purpose of what follows is, therefore, to set out the history of Gaelic sport in south Wales in its forgotten era with the intention of demonstrating that the relationship between Irish identity and sport is perhaps more complex than historians have hitherto shown. Based on a careful reading of Welsh and Irish newspapers, existing archival material held at the archives of the GAA in Croke Park, Dublin, and with reference to the existing literature on Irish sport

¹⁶ Patrick Maume, 'James Mullin, the Poor Scholar: A Self-Made Man from Carleton's County', *Irish Studies Review*, 7, 1 (1999), p.29.

¹⁷ The GAA, though, had a torrid time in the 1890s; see Richard McElligot, "'A Good Ship Going Down with the Tide": The Collapse of the GAA in the 1890s', *Scoláire Staire*, 2, 1 (2012), pp.8-14.

¹⁸ Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford, 1990), p.238.

¹⁹ Cited in Neal Garnham, *Association Football and Society in Pre-Partition Ireland* (Belfast, 2004), p.29.

²⁰ Neal Garnham, 'Accounting for the Early Success of the Gaelic Athletic Association', *Irish Historical Studies* 34, 133 (2004), p.72.

²¹ *Western Mail*, 28 March, 29 March, 9 April 1894.

²² Seamus King and Paul Darby, 'Becoming Irlandés: Hurling and Irish Identity in Argentina', *Sport in Society* 10, 3 (2007), pp.425-38; Paul Darby, 'Gaelic Games, Ethnic Identity and Irish Nationalism in New York City, c.1880-1917', *Sport in Society*, 10, 3 (2007), pp.347-67; Paul Darby, 'Gaelic Games and the Irish Immigrant Experience in Boston', in Alan Barnier (ed.), *Sport and the Irish: Histories, Identities, Issues* (Dublin, 2005), pp.85-101; Joseph M. Bradley, *Sport, Culture, Politics and Scottish Society: Irish Immigrants and the Gaelic Athletic Association* (Edinburgh, 1998); Paul Darby, *Gaelic Games, Nationalism, and the Irish Diaspora in the United States* (Dublin, 2009).

in Britain, Ireland and the United States, it argues that hurling provided a generation of young emigrants with a vital means of expressing their Irishness in a society in which it was generally declining. In other words, the forgotten hurlers of Wales cut across the grain of ethnic fade and their story serves as a reminder that each successive generation makes its own history. The article begins with a brief overview of Irish immigration to south Wales in the early twentieth century followed by more detailed discussion of the rise and fall of hurling in the region.

The Irish in South Wales

The strength of the Irish-born community in Glamorgan and Monmouthshire is principally revealed in the decennial census. Though this ignores second or third generation individuals born in Wales who would certainly still have considered themselves as Irish, it nevertheless provides a useful indicator of the size of that part of society that brought hurling over and continued to play it when earlier (and subsequent) generations did not. At the time of the 1911 census, the total Irish-born population of Glamorgan was recorded as being 12,875 people.²³ This represented a slight increase on the 11,106 recorded in 1901, and the 11,256 enumerated in 1891. A large proportion could be found living in Cardiff and Merthyr Tydfil with smaller pockets in Pontypridd, Maesteg, Bargoed and the Rhondda. In Monmouthshire, the Irish population was considerably smaller: only around 3,000 Irish-born people were living in the county in 1901 (compared to nearer 4,000 in 1891). It was also in decline: Newport, as table 1 shows, was home to 1,422 Irish-born in 1901 but by 1911 this had fallen to 1,144.

Table 1: Changes in Irish-born population in South Wales County Boroughs

| Town | Irish-Born 1901 | Irish-Born 1911 | Change |
|----------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Cardiff | 2,755 | 3,124 | +369 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | 2,511 | 2,307 | -204 |
| Swansea | 1,174 | 1,464 | +290 |
| Newport | 1,422 | 1,144 | -278 |

Source: *Census of England and Wales, 1901-1911*.

Ethnic fade can be understood through these declines in population. The relative prominence of the Irish community, which was strong in the nineteenth century, had shrunk significantly by the Edwardian period. In 1851, there had been 3,051 Irish-born living amongst the 46,378 people in Merthyr Tydfil; in 1911, by contrast, the population of Merthyr stood at 80,990 but the number of Irish had shrink to 2,307. In other words from the Irish had shrunk from 6.6 per cent of the population to just under three percent. The fall their number Cardiff is even more dramatic though principally because of the equally striking explosion in the city's population. 3,317 Irish lived amongst just 18,351 people in Cardiff in 1851 – nearly one in five – but by 1911 Cardiff contained 182,259 people and just 3,124 Irish-born, or less than two per cent. Most of these were men in their twenties and early thirties who migrated from rural areas of southern Ireland or the inner-city slums of Cork and Waterford to work in the heavy industries of coal mining and iron and steel manufacture or as general labourers.²⁴

²³ *Census of England and Wales, 1911: Volume 9 – Birthplaces of persons enumerated*, Cd. 1017 (London, 1913), xiii.

²⁴ For a useful, if heavily statistical, study of the relationship between age and migration in Ireland in this period, see Timothy W. Guiranne, 'Age at Leaving Home in Rural Ireland, 1901-1911', *Journal of Economic History*, 52 3 (1992), pp.651-74.

The falling numbers of Irish-born in south Wales suggest that the Edwardian period was a time of consolidation rather than influx and that, indeed, many migrants may have seen Wales as a temporary destination before moving on either elsewhere in Britain or to the United States. The ‘ethnic fade’ which historians associate with increasing integration in this time frame is therefore balanced by significant changes in the numbers of Irish-born living in the various districts of the coalfield and elsewhere. In such a context, young male migrants from rural West Cork, for example, might find themselves living with only a small number of Irish neighbours and so hurling became a means of settling into an urban environment where much of what they had known at home was either lost or at the very least far less apparent. For them the GAA, along with the Catholic Church and the Irish-run public house, was a vital institution run by and largely for Irish-born migrants and their families. In bringing new settlers together with more established second and third-generation Irish for socialising and community building, these Irish-dominated organisations helped to overcome the cultural jolts associated with emigration and integration into the host society.²⁵ Setting up a GAA club and playing hurling or Gaelic football with other exiles might therefore be interpreted as a need for a degree of continuity with the way things were done at home.²⁶

Creating the GAA in South Wales

Gaelic sport developed relatively later in south Wales compared to other regions of Britain with large Irish populations. Britain’s first formal club was founded in Wallsend in 1885 and in London and Scotland there were GAA clubs by the end of the 1890s. County Boards, the basic administrative unit of the Association, serving London and Glasgow were set up in the same period. Clubs also appeared in Manchester and Liverpool in the early 1900s.²⁷ Their emergence, particularly in London, appears to have coincided with an influx of young Irishmen into the British civil service and the growth of cultural nationalism amongst the diaspora there. In the view of the *Boys’ Own Newspaper*: ‘several of these [GAA] clubs have been formed in London among the young Irishmen resident in the metropolis, most of them, we believe, connected with the Civil Service’.²⁸ It is almost certainly the case that this trend offers little explanation for the emergence of Gaelic sport in south Wales after 1910 since the vast majority of those who moved there from Ireland found work in the mines, factories, iron and steel works or as teachers rather than in the civil service.

Merthyr Sarsfields, for example, which was set up in late-1912, included colliers, coal and iron labourers, and pithead landers.²⁹ None of these men, then, worked in civil service jobs. Few came from outside of County Cork or County Waterford, either, suggesting the well-trodden migrants trail across the Irish Sea remained strong. The team captain, Patrick Spillane, for example, was born in Cork City in 1890 to Bridget and Denis Spillane of Middleton, County Cork. Until moving to Wales to find work as a young man, Patrick lived with his parents in a single-storey, terraced house on Ballyhooly Road near the city centre.

²⁵ Enda Delaney, *The Irish in Post-War Britain* (Oxford, 2007), p.175.

²⁶ A point which holds true even for today’s young Irish migrants. *Irish Times*, 27 April 2012.

²⁷ Though not entirely successfully. John Belchem has written of the Liverpool GAA, for example, that ‘as practised in Liverpool [it] was not a spectator friendly sport’. John Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse: The History of the Liverpool-Irish, 1800-1939* (Liverpool, 2007), pp.243-4.

²⁸ *The Boys’ Own Newspaper*, 21 March 1896; David Hassan and Stephen Moore, ‘The Emergence and Development of the GAA in Britain and Europe’, in Dónal McAnallen, David Hassan and Roddy Hegarty (eds), *The Evolution of the GAA* (Armagh, 2009), pp.207-19. A few months later, in July 1896, the *Boys’ Own* offered a guide on how to play the game. *Boys’ Own Newspaper*, 4 July, 18 July 1896.

²⁹ This is based on information gathered from the British and Irish censuses of 1901 and 1911 used in conjunction with two team sheets published in the *Merthyr Pioneer*, 14 December 1912; 22 February 1913.

He was employed, according the 1911 census, as a surface haulier in Merthyr. Amongst his teammates were James Singleton, a colliery labourer originally from Bandon; Stephen Meaney, a colliery timber man, and brothers Patrick and Thomas Donovan, both colliers, from Cork City; and Denis McSweeney, a coal miner, from Skibbereen. Maurice Gazely, a leading figure in the revival of the GAA in Merthyr after the Great War, was the son of an illiterate farm servant and came from Curraghkiely, County Waterford.

The most prominent player to emerge from the south Wales clubs, Jack Shalloe, had a similar background to those of the Merthyr team. Born in Ballinearla near Kilmacow, County Kilkenny, in 1890, he emigrated from Ireland in 1910 and settled first in Pontypridd and subsequently in Bargoed where he found work in the local coal mines and helped to organise the Bargoed Shamrocks hurling team. He was member of the 1913 representative side that travelled to London and remained an important figure in the GAA in south Wales until he moved to Liverpool in 1914. On the outbreak of war, Shalloe joined the army and saw action on the Western Front. Following his discharge, he settled in Bromley and got a job with London County Council. In London, Shalloe continued to organise the GAA and was instrumental in the foundation of the Brothers Pearse club and the Provincial Council of Great Britain in 1926. He served as chairman of the latter in 1937 and occupied various committee positions on the London County Board in the 1920s.³⁰

Not all of those who were active in the south Wales GAA were employed in the coal mines or iron works of the Valleys, although this was unusual (at least before the Great War) and almost entirely limited to the Cardiff team. The captain of the side that faced Michael Collins and his compatriots in 1913, for instance, was Henry Arthur Kearney.³¹ Born in Kilkenny in 1883, he was living at the turn of the century in Dublin with his sister Julia (herself a nurse at Coombe Hospital) and working as an apprentice copyist with the Irish Land Commission. At some point in his mid-twenties he moved to south Wales and was qualified as a clerk in 1914.³² In the revived GAA of the 1920s, wealthier individuals became involved in the sport as it moved from being a working-class game played on the fringes of diaspora society to one embraced by middle-class nationalists as well.³³

These biographical snippets serve to illustrate that the GAA in south Wales emerged somewhat contrary to prevailing sporting habits and established patterns of development elsewhere in Britain. Equally, these early clubs were infused with clear nationalist sentiment. Three of the four clubs in existence before 1914 were named for Irish nationalist figures. The Merthyr Sarsfields after Patrick Sarsfield (1660-1693), the first Earl of Lucan, who was an Irish Jacobite and served James II in the Williamite War of 1689-91. The Pontypridd Wolfe Tones took their name from Theobald Wolfe Tone (1763-1798) the father of modern Irish republicanism, one of the founders of the United Irishmen and a prominent figure of the Irish Rebellion of 1798. And the Cardiff Emmets were named after Robert Emmet (1778-1803) who led the 1803 Rebellion against British Rule. Such names were chosen deliberately and tied the club to wider nationalist sentiments: in the view of Mike Cronin they '[stressed and publicised] their links as sportsmen to the nationalist mission, the embrace of things Irish and

³⁰ *Munster Express*, 29 March 1963. These details are taken from his obituary. Further details of Shalloe's career in London can be found in Senan Cooke, *A History of the GAA in Kilmacow 1884-2010* (Kilmacow, 2010).

³¹ Kearney also served as captain of the Cardiff side in this period.

³² *London Gazette*, 3 February 1914. Other details in this passage derive from the Irish Census for 1901 and the Census of England and Wales for 1911.

³³ The President of Maesteg *Clan na Gael* Hurling Club, for example, was a local doctor.

the rejection of West Britonism'.³⁴ These were, then, rather stronger names than those used by church-managed rugby teams or more Romantically-named soccer clubs.

Interestingly, despite their nationalist monikers, these early clubs appear to have developed independently of other neo-Gaelic organisations including the Gaelic League and Irish National League and as such fit neither the Scottish pattern of development identified by Joseph Bradley nor the London pattern identified by Paul Darby and Stephen Moore, wherein they were closely linked.³⁵ This is perhaps due to the depoliticised context in which much Welsh sport took place. It is certainly telling that reporting of the hurling clubs' activities was commonest, if still rather sporadic, in the *South Wales Daily News* and the *Merthyr Pioneer* rather than in the *Welsh Catholic Herald* and thus to a general rather than culturally-specific audience. Such coverage placed hurling in the sports pages alongside more traditional sports such as rugby, soccer, cricket and baseball and balanced the attention lavished upon the latter in the Welsh Catholic press and by Irish-Catholic institutions such as the CYMS.

The inaugural South Wales Hurling Championship began in the autumn of 1912 and concluded on 15 February 1913 with the Cardiff Emmets meeting the Merthyr Sarsfields at Llandaff Fields. The final score, one point to nil in Merthyr's favour, was described in the press as 'a hardly contested game'.³⁶ Merthyr's first match had also been against Cardiff on the 7 December 1912 at the Rhydycar Athletic Grounds.³⁷ It too resulted in a victory for the Sarsfields: sixteen points to nil.³⁸ The Emmets were better matched against the Pontypridd Wolfe Tones whom they met, for the first time, at Ynysangharad Fields on the 18 January 1913 and subsequently, in Cardiff, on the 1 March.³⁹ Following these matches little is reported until early May when Merthyr defeated Bargoed four points to two.⁴⁰ It seems reasonable to assume that the lull in competition followed the completion of the 1912-13 championship though it is not clear from the sporadic newspaper reports how it and subsequent tournaments were actually organised.⁴¹ The *South Wales Daily News* reported on 21 July 1913, for example, that Bargoed had defeated the Sarsfields to set up a meeting with Emmets for the 1913 Final without recording any of the other matches.⁴² Following that match, Merthyr 'somewhat easily defeated Pontypridd' on the 9 August and Cardiff did likewise a fortnight later.⁴³ Yet, the relationship of these matches to earlier or later tournaments is also not made clear.

The highlight of the 1913 playing season was not a championship or cup final match, however, but an exhibition game played at the Arms Park on August Bank Holiday Monday. At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Sarsfields lined up against the Emmets for a testimonial match in honour of the great Irish baritone William Ludwig. The crowd, estimated at 3,000

³⁴ Mike Cronin, 'Enshrined in Blood: The Naming of Gaelic Athletic Association Grounds and Clubs', *Sports Historian*, 18, 1 (1998), p.96.

³⁵ Joseph M. Bradley, 'The Gaelic Athletic Association and the Irish Diaspora in Scotland, 1897-1947', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 16, 3 (1999), pp.135-46; Stephen Moore and Paul Darby, 'Gaelic Games, Irish Nationalist Politics and the Irish Diaspora in London, 1895-1915', *Sport in History*, 31, 3 (2011), pp.257-82.

³⁶ *Merthyr Pioneer*, 22 February 1913.

³⁷ *South Wales Daily News*, 9 December 1912.

³⁸ *Merthyr Pioneer*, 14 December 1912.

³⁹ *South Wales Daily News*, 20 January, 3 March 1913.

⁴⁰ As above, 5 May 1913.

⁴¹ More concrete patterns of play are established in the 1920s with the season beginning in May or June and ending in September.

⁴² *South Wales Daily News*, 21 July 1913. Bargoed won by two goals and three points to nil.

⁴³ *Merthyr Pioneer*, 16 August 1913; *South Wales Daily News*, 25 August 1913.

people, were treated to a game which was still unknown to the great majority living in the city. However much or little the spectators understood of the game, the snapping in two of a hurley following a clash in mid air and the vigorous style of play offered a spectacle largely unseen in Cardiff before.⁴⁴ The *Merthyr Pioneer* recorded that: 'players numbered fifteen and their display gave excitement and not a little amusement to a couple of thousand spectators'.⁴⁵ As with the London match that May, the Arms Park exhibition was designed to expand awareness of hurling and to encourage more Irishmen in the region to take up the sport. Its success was, however, somewhat limited before the 1920s.

Post-war Revival

The outbreak of the Great War brought the fledgling hurling competition to a halt. From the summer of 1914 until the interment of around 1,800 Irish prisoners at Frongoch near Bala in the aftermath of the Easter Rising, hurling was not played in Wales in an organised manner. Formerly a prisoner of war camp for captured German soldiers, Frongoch was hastily reorganised in the summer of 1916 to house Irish internees and is remembered as the 'university of revolution'.⁴⁶ Inmates were given the freedom to participate in a number of cultural activities including Irish-language classes, folk dancing and sport, and the camp quickly became home to several hurling and Gaelic football teams.⁴⁷ Matches and athletics tournaments were organised that summer, primarily by Michael Collins.⁴⁸ The scratch hurling teams that were created often reflected the diverse regional backgrounds of the internees – there was a Dublin Frongochs, for example – and the natural division of the camp into two parts provided further means upon which to build sides.⁴⁹ Playing Gaelic games in a prison camp was not merely recreational; it was also an important symbol of Irishness and indicative of the growing relationship between the GAA and Sinn Féin, which was to reach its peak the following year.⁵⁰

Although contemporaries, such as Eoin O'Duffy, dismissed allegations of republican politics in the GAA as 'a falsehood', it is clear that the British government were wary of the organisation and the playing of Gaelic games.⁵¹ The Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland, for example, heard evidence that the GAA was anti-British, that extreme sections had endorsed Sinn Féin doctrines including armed struggle, that it held political meetings, and that it had led to an increase in crime.⁵² Thus, by the time hurling clubs began to be reorganised amongst the diaspora in post-war Britain, suspicion of them and their motives was strong. Had officials paid close attention to the relationships being forged in Ireland by the South Wales County Board, alarm might have been raised. In early 1920, P. J. Delaney, the

⁴⁴ *South Wales Daily News*, 4 August, 5 August 1913.

⁴⁵ *Merthyr Pioneer*, 9 August 1913.

⁴⁶ A translation of the Irish, *Ollscoile na Réabhlóide*. Sean O'Mahoney, *Frongoch: University of Revolution* (Kilkenny, 1987).

⁴⁷ Bureau of Military History (Dublin), 1913-1921, Witness Statements: Joseph Furlong, Witness Statement #335, p. 12; Patrick Rankin, Witness Statement #163, p. 19; Joseph V. Lawless, Witness Statement #1043, p. 177. These are freely available online via the BMH website: www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie.

⁴⁸ Chrissy Osborne, *Michael Collins: Himself* (Cork, 1999), p.22.

⁴⁹ David Fitzpatrick, *Harry Boland's Irish Revolution* (Cork, 2003), p.63.

⁵⁰ Peter Hart, 'The Geography of Revolution in Ireland, 1917-1923', *Past and Present*, 115 (1997), p.169.

⁵¹ *Dundalk Democrat*, 3 June 1916, cited in Fergal McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy: A Self-Made Hero* (Oxford, 2009), p.27. O'Duffy had joined the Irish Volunteers in 1917 and became Chief of Staff of the IRA in January 1922. He served as the first Commissioner of the Garda Síochána. Dismissed by Eamon de Valera in 1933, O'Duffy founded the Blueshirt movement of Irish fascists and during the Spanish Civil War organised the Irish Brigade which fought on the side of Franco's nationalists. He died in 1944.

⁵² The Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland, *Minutes of Evidence and Appendix of Documents* [Cd. 8311], 1916, xi.

Board's secretary, entered into discussions with his counterpart in Ulster, Eoin O'Duffy, to secure a touring side for the coming season. The latter reported to his colleagues in March that 'it will be a pleasure for any county in Ulster to travel to Wales to assist our exiled sons in the noble work they have undertaken'.⁵³

O'Duffy was well known to the authorities as an IRA organiser and courted arrest on several occasions that year. He was finally apprehended on 17 April when, shortly after the start of the postponed annual meeting, a group of armed soldiers and police burst into the house in which it was being held.⁵⁴ Not long before they arrived, O'Duffy had been reading a letter from the South Wales County Board asking for trophies for the hurling league that they had recently formed. O'Duffy was directed to bring it before the Central Council in Dublin since Ulster could not provide immediate material assistance.⁵⁵ He did not get the chance and instead spent the summer in gaol. The Ulster Provincial Council itself became moribund for over a year after that meeting and earlier efforts to provide support to south Wales, including the touring side, were extinguished.⁵⁶ Fortunately, a letter asking for trophies had also been sent to the Central Council ahead of its annual meeting and twenty hurleys were given as a gesture of good will and encouragement.⁵⁷

The South Wales Hurling Championship began in the summer of 1920 and featured resurrected teams such as the Cardiff Emmets and Pontypridd Wolfe Tones as well as newly forged sides including Maesteg *Clan na Gael*, Mountain Ash, Neath, Tonypandy and Treorchy. This was in contrast to the exaggerated claims made by John Boylan, an expatriate living in the Rhondda. In a letter to the Monaghan County Board he suggested that 'hundreds of teams' had been started providing for hurling and Gaelic football.⁵⁸ In fact, by 1921 there were eight sides in existence along with three Gaelic football clubs: one of which was from Cardiff and another from Newport.⁵⁹ By early January 1922, it was reported that the tally had risen to five Gaelic football clubs.⁶⁰

In comparison to other parts of Britain, these numbers are remarkably high. In Scotland, for example, there was 'little Gaelic sporting activity ... during the 1920s'.⁶¹ In Manchester, there was just one hurling club and only two in Liverpool. The number of Gaelic football clubs stood at four and two respectively.⁶² A revival in London was not registered until around 1925 and even then it was a decade later before the number of hurling clubs had reached levels seen in south Wales in the early 1920s.⁶³ This is not to suggest that south

⁵³ Ulster Provincial Council, Minutes of Annual Convention, 17 March 1920; *Anglo-Celt*, 27 March 1920. I am grateful to Dónal McAnallen for providing me with a transcript of these minutes.

⁵⁴ Con Short, *The Ulster GAA Story, 1884-1984* (Rassan, 1984), p.78.

⁵⁵ Ulster Provincial Council, Minutes of Meeting, 3 July 1920.

⁵⁶ For details of this, and the GAA in Northern Ireland more generally, see Dónal McAnallen, 'Playing on the Fourth Green Field: The Gaelic Athletic Association and the Northern Ireland State, 1921-68', unpublished National University of Ireland, Galway, PhD thesis, 2010.

⁵⁷ Gaelic Athletic Association Central Council, *Minute Books*, 24 April 1920. These are held at the GAA Museum in Croke Park, Dublin.

⁵⁸ *Irish Independent*, 9 September 1919.

⁵⁹ *Welsh Catholic Herald*, 17 September 1921; 7 January 1922. Efforts to form a hurling club in Newport appear to have been a near miss. *Welsh Catholic Herald*, 19 March, 9 April 1921.

⁶⁰ *Welsh Catholic Herald*, 28 January 1922.

⁶¹ Joseph M. Bradley, 'Heritage, Culture and Identity: The GAA in Scotland', in Grant Jarvie (ed.), *Sport and the Making of Celtic Cultures* (Leicester, 1999), p.169.

⁶² Report of the Secretary of the Provincial Council of Great Britain for 1936, cited in Tommy Walsh, *The Gaelic Athletic Association in Britain: The History of the Provincial Council* (London, 2005), p.27.

⁶³ *Irish Independent*, 29 April 1924.

Wales was suddenly *the* hotbed of Irish sporting activity since that would be an exaggeration. Yet, the number of clubs that were established and greater recognition of the sport in the newspapers, particularly in the Maesteg-based *Glamorgan Advertiser* and eventually in the *Aberdare Leader*, suggests a community that was extremely active and willing to embrace cultural traditions on a wider scale than in previous years.

The GAA was also being actively promoted to Irish residents in south Wales rather than being left entirely to the players themselves. ‘Has the clash of the hurleys and the cry of “on the leather, boys!” made no appeal to other of our South Wales towns’ pondered one correspondent of the *Welsh Catholic Herald* in July 1921 before encouraging his readers to ‘get a jersey on’.⁶⁴ In Dowlais a month later, a meeting was held at the Irish National Foresters Club to form a new hurling side that would ‘place Dowlais in the position she was some years ago when she was one of the best hurling teams in South Wales’.⁶⁵ At its first meeting, held at the end of August, the captain Maurice Gazely implored ‘all members and followers of that national game ... to leave nothing undone to select the best material and field a first-class team’.⁶⁶ Likewise, in November 1923, a meeting of the Cardiff Irish Fellowship in Splott was encouraged to ‘assist in every way the diffusion of the native drama, sports and pastimes’.⁶⁷

Support for the activities of the post-war South Wales County Board was relatively broad and drew on Catholic working men’s clubs, Irish clubs, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Irish Self-Determination League (ISDL), the Gaelic League and a number of Irish pipe and brass bands. The latter meant that matches, particularly those between the Cardiff Emmets and Maesteg *Clan na Gael*, were often transformed. The walk between the changing room in the local pub and the playing field became a procession through the town and added to the sense of spectacle. As the *Glamorgan Advertiser* recorded on 6 June 1924: ‘the Cardiff team brought with them [to Maesteg] two pipers [... they] played Irish airs and were dressed in Gaelic costume’.⁶⁸ In 1925, the pre-match procession included four pipers and the Catholic Mission Silver Band!⁶⁹ Meanwhile, the support of hurling by the Gaelic League in Cardiff encouraged the formation of a second club in 1923.⁷⁰

Some of this was the result of increased middle-class participation and the South Wales County Board and the hurling clubs benefitted from a cohort of officials who were generally active in the Irish community and served on numerous committees.⁷¹ The secretary of the Merthyr and Dowlais Hurling Club, Eugene O’Sullivan, was a prominent figure in the ISDL and Jim Rohan, a member of the Maesteg team, was chairman of the town’s Catholic Working Men’s Club.⁷² Yet, it was also the case that hurling clubs after the Great War were more prominent in the Irish community and had wider popular support than before it.

⁶⁴ *Welsh Catholic Herald*, 30 July 1921.

⁶⁵ As above, 20 August 1921.

⁶⁶ As above, 3 September 1921.

⁶⁷ As above, 8 September 1923.

⁶⁸ *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 6 June 1924.

⁶⁹ As above, 3 July 1925.

⁷⁰ *Welsh Catholic Herald*, 7 July 1923.

⁷¹ On the wider subject of Irish doctors in south Wales, see Louise Miskell, ‘The Heroic Irish Doctor: Irish Immigrants in the Medical Profession in Nineteenth-Century Wales’, in O. Walsh (ed.), *Ireland Abroad: Politics and Professions in the Nineteenth Century* (Dublin, 2003), pp.82-94.

⁷² *Welsh Catholic Herald*, 10 September 1921; *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 9 July 1926. O’Sullivan was also a leading member of Dowlais Irish Club and served as its President and Secretary. *Welsh Catholic Herald*, 15 September 1923.

Supporting themselves through fundraising events such as Cinderella dances or playing exhibition matches to raise money for charity meant that clubs provided for the wider social lives of the diaspora.⁷³ That match reports in the *Glamorgan Advertiser* included directions on how to attend away games and where to catch the special bus surely meant that the sport had moved from the margins of cultural habit.⁷⁴

Tailteann Games

The importance of wider community support for the South Wales County Board and its activities was underlined when the invitation arrived from Dublin to participate in the revival of the Tailteann Games. Resurrected from ancient sporting traditions, the Tailteann Games were presented as a celebration of Irish culture and of Irish sport. Held just after the Paris Olympic Games, the modern revival offered a fusion of ancient games such as hurling, camogie, and contemporary activities including motorcycle racing, water polo and speedboat racing.⁷⁵ Although the latter were, as Mike Cronin has observed, distinctly lacking in ‘any traditional Celtic virtues or heritage’!⁷⁶

Organisation for the Tailteann Games had begun shortly after the formation of Dáil Éireann in 1919 and was conducted by the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, J.J. Walsh.⁷⁷ Originally intended to be held in 1922, they were delayed by initially by the War of Independence and subsequently by the Irish Civil War.⁷⁸ Following the latter’s resolution in May 1923, preparations for the Tailteann Games began again in earnest and an open invitation to all Irish people living abroad was issued. It prompted a wide response from across the English-speaking world – the teams that took part in the inaugural Tailteann Games in August 1924 came from Scotland, England, Wales, the United States, Australia, Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand, whilst all four provinces of Ireland sent their own teams.

The response from Britain was generally slow. From the point of view of hurling, newspapers in Britain expressed the view that few counties were able to send a team to compete in Dublin. ‘Portsmouth and Southampton have hurlers’, remarked the *Welsh Catholic Herald*, ‘and South Wales could put up a team but of Birmingham, Manchester, Newcastle etc., no organisation exists worthy of the name. It would take eighteen months strenuous work to put a team of Irish athletes in the field’.⁷⁹ A council to organise the Welsh team was not formed until April 1924 but at its inaugural meeting, held at the CYMS rooms in Newport, nevertheless attracted support from many of the leading Irish sportsmen, politicians and businessmen in south Wales.⁸⁰ These included the Cork-born champion shot-putter Dr W.J.M. Barry, Jim Driscoll (who served as vice-president of the Welsh Tailteann Council), Councillor Edward Curran, whose steel factory on the edge of Grangetown was one of the

⁷³ *Welsh Catholic Herald*, 17 September 1921, 21 July, 8 September 1923. This was a common way of raising money amongst GAA clubs in Ireland in this period; see David Toms, ‘Whist Drives and Cinderella Dances: Fundraising, Sports and Society in Ireland, 1900-1945’ (Unpublished Paper, 2012).

⁷⁴ *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 3 July 1925.

⁷⁵ A lively account of the 1924 Tailteann Games can be found in W. F. Mandle, *The Gaelic Athletic Association and Irish Nationalist Politics, 1884-1924* (London, 1987), pp.214-21.

⁷⁶ Mike Cronin, ‘The Irish Free State and Aonach Tailteann’, in Barnier, *Sport and the Irish*, p.60.

⁷⁷ Mike Cronin, ‘Projecting the Nation through Sport and Culture: Ireland, Aonach Tailteann and the Irish Free State, 1924-32’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 38, 3 (2003), pp.395-411.

⁷⁸ R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London, 1988), part four.

⁷⁹ *Welsh Catholic Herald*, 19 January 1924.

⁸⁰ As above, 19 April 1924

major employers in Cardiff, and the ship-owner Daniel Radcliffe, who had helped to finance Captain Scott's ill-fated expedition to the Antarctic in 1910.⁸¹

Trial events were held throughout June and July (those for athletics coincided with the annual Irish sports festival held at Sophia Gardens).⁸² With the hurling season soon to commence – the first game, featuring Cardiff and Maesteg, was held on 10 May – it was decided to hold the hurling trial in mid-July thereby minimising disruption to the league.⁸³ After several weeks of league competition, selected players from the Bargoed, Cardiff, Maesteg, Mountain Ash and Tonypany clubs assembled at the Glasbrook Field, Penrhiwceiber, on 12 July for the Inter-Glamorgan (trial) match.⁸⁴ In front of several hundred spectators, a team dressed in the blue Cardiff jerseys faced a team attired in the green and gold jerseys of Maesteg in an effort to win a place. The ceremonial throw-in was performed, just before 6pm, by George Hall, the local Labour MP, and the match proceeded with 'exceptionally speedy play'. It was won, ten goals to two goals, two points, by the green and golds and mirrored Maesteg's general superiority that season.⁸⁵

The fortunes of the Welsh team when they arrived in Dublin were, however, somewhat mixed. Victory in a hard-fought opening match against England on the 6th August was followed over the course of the next three days by defeats to Scotland, Ireland, and the United States. The *Irish Times* correspondent was unimpressed, pointing out at the end of the Wales-England match that it had been 'very poor hurling at best'.⁸⁶ According to reports the Welsh team had not all arrived by the time they were scheduled to play and a couple of men were drafted in from the streets of Dublin to bulk out the team.⁸⁷ In the match against Scotland, Wales were seemingly down and out by the end of the first half having conceded seven goals. A striking second half recovery led the correspondent of the *Irish Independent* to conclude that 'it was only by dint of sterling work in the rear line that Scotland's lead was not overhauled'.⁸⁸ A similar story of determined play was reported in the match against Ireland the following day. Not expected to win: 'the exiles gave the home team a surprisingly close run' losing five goals and four points to two goals and six points.⁸⁹ Having given a good account, the *Irish Times* offered the consolation that 'they displayed pluck and sportsmanship'.⁹⁰

⁸¹ *Irish Independent*, 9 April 1924.

⁸² *South Wales Daily News*, 30 June 1924; *Irish Times*, 28 June 1924.

⁸³ *South Wales Daily News*, 12 May 1924.

⁸⁴ *South Wales Daily News*, 14 July 1924; *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 18 July 1924.

⁸⁵ *Aberdare Leader*, 19 July 1924.

⁸⁶ *Irish Times*, 7 August 1924. They would repeat the claim of poor gameplay during the Wales-Scotland match claiming that 'it was not an inspiring exhibition'; *Irish Times*, 8 August 1924.

⁸⁷ *Irish Independent*, 7 August 1924.

⁸⁸ As above, 8 August 1924.

⁸⁹ As above, 9 August 1924.

⁹⁰ *Irish Times*, 16 August 1924.

"Hurling" at Penrhiwceiber.



Figure 1: Hurling at Penrhiwceiber, 1924.

This cartoon, published in the *Aberdare Leader*, satirises the relative novelty of hurling to the majority of newspaper's readership whilst, at the same time, capturing some of the essence of the game. It also reveals the jersey colours and designs used by Cardiff and Maesteg in the early 1920s. Source: *Aberdare Leader*, 19 July 1924, p.8.

The following season proved to be the last conducted by an independent South Wales County Board and the last in which hurling was played in an organised manner throughout the region. By the summer of 1925 the games being played, according to contemporary reports, were amongst the very best. Public interest was piqued, skill levels were increasing and reasonably large crowds were present at matches in Cardiff, Maesteg, Mountain Ash and Pontypridd.⁹¹ The Championship Final that year was played at Llandaff Fields on 28 August. An unbeaten Maesteg team faced their great rivals, the Cardiff Emmets, in a tense, thrilling encounter that was eventually won by the Emmets 7 goals, 2 points to 5 goals, 1 point. In an effort to find reason for Maesteg's loss, the *Glamorgan Advertiser* commented that 'the shortness of the field was to an extent spoiling Maesteg's game'.⁹² The latter's loss prompted a replay a few weeks later. At Ynysangharad Park, Pontypridd, in front of 2,000 spectators the championship was won by Maesteg in a relatively easy manner. Over drinks at the Criterion Hotel after the match, the assembled officials of the County Board toasted Maesteg's victory and Cardiff nursed their first loss in the championship final in nearly six years.⁹³

1926, however, was a very different year.⁹⁴ It began with the traditional medal ceremony – held at the Catholic Working Men's Club in Maesteg, *Clan na Gael*'s headquarters – during which the secretary of the South Wales County Board, M. Walsh, reflected that 'the GAA was progressing, slowly perhaps, but surely, in South Wales'. Dr Hannan, the club's president, looked forward to Maesteg retaining the trophy in the forthcoming season.⁹⁵ Unfortunately, the miners' lockout, which began on 3 May and lasted for the next seven months, transformed the situation in the Valleys and Gaelic sport was simply not picked up again that summer. In an edition of the GAA Annual published in 1936, a retrospective on the state of the Association in Britain offered the following summary: 'some twelve years ago hurling teams existed in South Wales, Southampton, Leicester and Glasgow. Owing to various causes they have lapsed'.⁹⁶ Matter of factly, it recorded the end of the quite remarkable flourishing of Gaelic games in a region that had traditionally eschewed sectarian sport.

Conclusion

Following the demise of hurling in the mid-1920s, there was to be no organised Gaelic sport played in south Wales until 1956 when the Cardiff St Colmcilles were formed. Competing as part of the Gloucestershire County Board, the St Colmcilles proved to be extremely successful. They won the hurling league five times between 1967 and 1972.⁹⁷ Yet this phase also waned. Writing of the fortunes of the GAA in Cardiff in the 1980s and 1990s, Tim Pat Coogan observed that:

⁹¹ *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 24 July, 14 August 1925; *Aberdare Leader*, 25 July 1925.

⁹² *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 4 September 1925. The pitch available at Llandaff Fields, typically used for soccer, measured 110 yards. Maesteg typically played on a field measuring 160 yards.

⁹³ *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 16 October 1925. The final score was 1 goal, 2 points to Cardiff against 5 goals, 3 points for Maesteg.

⁹⁴ The history of 1926 is dealt with, briefly, by Ness Edwards in his *History of the South Wales Miners' Federation, Volume 1* (London, 1938). The classic treatment is that by Dai Smith and Hywel Francis in *The Fed: A History of the South Wales Miners in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1980). For a more recent assessment, see Sue Bruley, *The Women and Men of 1926: The General Strike and Miners' Lockout in South Wales* (Cardiff, 2010).

⁹⁵ *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 5 February 1926.

⁹⁶ Gaelic Athletic Association, *Annual, 1936-37* (Dublin, 1936), p.21.

⁹⁷ Peter Foley, *Gloucester County Board, Gaelic Athletic Association: A Brief History from 1949-1999* (Gloucester, 2000). For a sense of what Ireland was like in the 1950s, see Tom Garvin, *News from a New Republic: Ireland in the 1950s* (Dublin, 2010).

the GAA is a barometer of Irish emigration ... In Wales today, the GAA sometimes finds it hard to field full teams. The shortage of players is, in large part, a reflection that the players are staying home.⁹⁸

With regard to the 1920s and certainly the 1930s, they were simply going elsewhere. Success on the hurling pitch in Cardiff or Maesteg signified lack of opportunities at home in Ireland. It is easy to celebrate the success of the GAA in south Wales in the early 1920s and to overlook that reality.

Recovering the long forgotten history of Welsh hurling in the years immediately before and after the Great War adds both to our knowledge and appreciation of the social lives of Irish immigrants and to our understanding of the rich sporting activities of the people of Wales in that period. Those who played Gaelic games were, generally, first-generation migrants who had grown up in Ireland with the GAA. It would have been unusual for them to have turned their backs on such a potent symbol of contemporary Irishness even though their second- and third-generation peers preferred the more traditional codes of football, cricket and baseball. Historians of the Irish in Wales have argued that, by the Edwardian period, and certainly by the time of Jim Driscoll's funeral in 1925, the trajectory of Irish integration was towards the replacement of questions of nationalism and ethnicity with those of class. In sporting terms, as Steven Fielding has argued of the Manchester Irish, they 'developed an intermediate way of life' – neither fully of the host society nor fully of Ireland either.⁹⁹ In other words, the sporting passions of second- and third-generation Irish might have been rugby or baseball, but the teams were named for Ireland and a romantic Irishness. This is not in doubt.

However, first-generation immigrants were rather more fully of Ireland and it is clear that, for the generation born in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and in the first decade of the twentieth, Gaelic sport was too significant a part of their identity and their sense of Irishness to abandon upon arrival in a new society. For them, and particularly for that generation caught up in the midst of the final phase of Ireland's long march to independence, it was a powerful symbol of home and of their own way of doing things. Historians knew this to have been the case for migrants living in London, New York and Sydney, and it is now possible to add Bargoed, Cardiff, Maesteg, Merthyr Tydfil, Mountain Ash, Neath, Pontypridd, Tonypany and Treorchy to that list of Irish sporting enclaves overseas in the years before and immediately after independence.

⁹⁸ Coogan, *Wherever Green is Worn*, p.213.

⁹⁹ Steven Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity: Irish Catholics in England, 1880-1939* (Buckingham, 1993), pp.17-18.