



The Republic of Ireland

A Beginner's Guide

Compiled by Dr. Elaine Byrne, Department of Political Science, Trinity College Dublin, and Ciara Begley, as part of the EIF Project, Promoting Civic Participation of Third Country Nationals through Local Authority Platforms



www.integratingdublin.ie

The project, **Promoting Civic Participation of Third Country Nationals through Local Authority Platforms**, is led by New Communities Partnership in association with Dublin City Council, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, Fingal County Council and South Dublin County Council. Its aim is to deliver a series of activities over three years to support the participation of new communities in the work of their local authorities.

New Communities Partnership (NCP), with offices located in Dublin, Limerick and Cork, is a national network of 165 ethnic minority led organisations. Its mission is to support, represent and empower Ethnic Minority led organisations to bring about positive change in policies that impact on their lives.



This project is co-financed by the European Commission under the European Integration Fund and is supported by the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration in the Department of Justice and Equality, and Pobal. The project is also supported by Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, Dublin City Council, South Dublin County Council and Fingal County Council. New Communities Partnership is registered in Ireland. No. 433791. CHY 18961. The views expressed here in are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of Pobal, the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration in the Department of Justice and Equality or the European Commission



Introduction

One of the key objectives of the Project, Promoting Civic Participation of Third Country Nationals through Local Authority Platforms, is to deliver workshops to migrants to promote an understanding of the Irish political system as well as Irish culture, history and daily norms, and connecting these to their daily lives in Ireland.

A one day long workshop was delivered in each of the four Dublin Local Authorities (Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, Fingal, Dublin City and South Dublin) to identified leaders within migrant communities willing to become active on the newly established local authority Integration Forums. It was envisioned that these leaders would carry this knowledge back with them to their communities where they would share it with their neighbours.

This Booklet served as the main background resource for the workshops, and was further developed during the project on the basis of feedback from the discussions at the workshop topics.

The workshop content was devised by Dr. Elaine Byrne, author and lecturer in Trinity College Dublin. Dr. Byrne also delivered the four workshops for the project.

We now present this booklet, which we prepared in conjunction with Dr. Byrne, as a resource for migrant communities throughout Ireland.

For further information on the objectives and activities of the project, please visit

www.integratingdublin.ie

Issah Huseini, CEO

*New Communities Partnership and on behalf of the project,
Promoting Civic Participation of TCNs through Local Authority
Platforms.*



Launch of the Beginner's Guide at South Dublin County Council, 2012. There were similar launches at the other Dublin Local Authorities (Dublin City Council, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and Fingal County Council).



The island of Ireland is located west of the island of Britain. There are 4 provinces and 32 counties. The Ulster province is divided. Six of the counties in Ulster are part of the United Kingdom and three (Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan) are part of the Republic of Ireland.

Dublin is the biggest city with 1.2 million of the 4.5 million total population. Ireland has a very young population compared to many other European countries and the population is increasing each year. Race is primarily Caucasian. There is greater diversity in the population due to European Union rules which allow free movement of labour. The dominant religion is Catholicism (85%) followed by Protestantism. However diversity is increasing with (for example) the Muslim population growing tenfold in the last 20 years.

Weather- rain can be expected at any time of year, though there also is much bright weather. In the summer daylight lasts until after 10pm.

Music and the Arts



the Bodhrán, a traditional Irish percussive instrument

Irish music and dance are very unique and feature specific instruments. Irish traditional music and Irish dance are known for their lively upbeat tempo. Riverdance introduced Irish dance to the rest of the world.



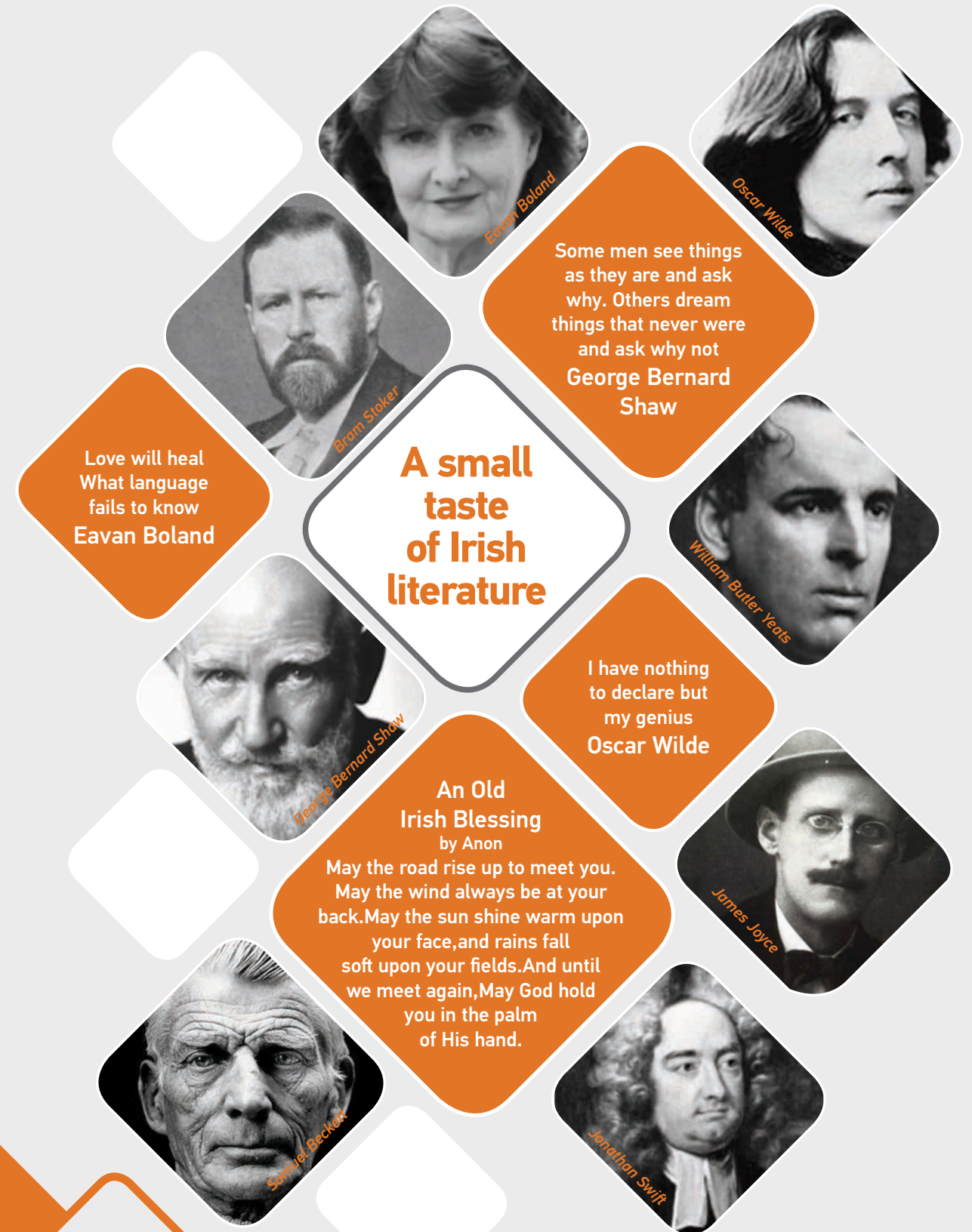
Book of Kells, Trinity College

The literature and artwork from the Book of Kells (viewable in Trinity College Dublin) drafted in the 7th century is world renowned. Ireland is also celebrated for its contribution of poetry, plays and novels.

Artwork is displayed in the museums throughout Ireland, many with free entry. Artists such as Francis Bacon, William Orpin, Seán Keating, Harry Clarke and Jack B. Yeats are famous worldwide.

www.irishmuseums.org

Irish literature a rich tradition.



Irish National Anthem

AMHRAN NA bhFIANN

Sinne Fianna Fáil, Atá faoi gheall
ag Eirinn, Buíonn dár slua, thar
toinn do ráinig chugainn, Faoi
mhóid bheith saor, seantír ár
sinsear feasta Ní fhágfar faoin
tíorán ná faoin tráill; Anocht a
théam sa Bhearna Baoil
Le gean ar Ghaeil chun báis
nó saoil, le gunnaí scréach, trí
lámhach na bpiléar,
Seo dhíbh canáigh, Amhrán na
bhFiann.

English Translation: SOLDIER'S SONG

Soldiers are we, Whose lives are
pledged to Ireland, Some have
come from a land beyond the
wave, Sworn to be free, no more
our ancient sireland Shall shelter
the despot or the slave; Tonight
we man the Bearnna Baoil In
Erin's cause come woe or weal,
'Mid cannon's roar and rifle's
peal, We'll chant a soldier's song.



St Patrick's Day March 17th



St. Patrick's day is a day of fun and celebration in Ireland and for Irish people. Music, 'craic' (fun) and parades are traditional ways of expressing the celebrations!

Who was St. Patrick?

St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland, credited with bringing Christianity to Ireland.

Patrick was born in Wales, was captured in a raid and brought back to Ireland in slavery. He worked as a slave for 6 years, after which he escaped and began his religious training in France. He returned to Ireland with a mission to convert the Irish to Christianity. He was successful as he used pagan and Celtic rituals to teach the Irish. For example he used the sun, a pagan god's symbol, on the Christian cross. This is why there are so many crosses in Ireland with a circle in the middle.



by Bruno Santos (jar2jar.wordpress.com)

Irish sport + recreation

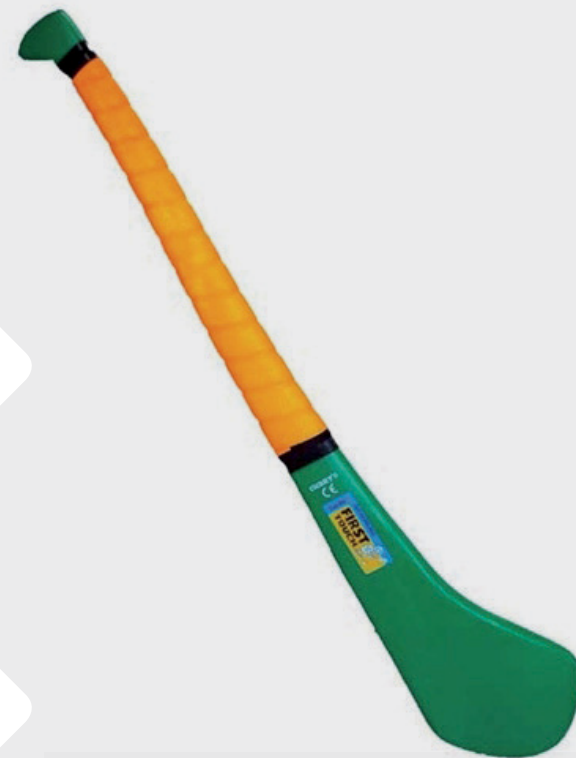
Some common expressions



The Gaelic Athletic Association is based in Croke Park, Dublin. It entails national leagues of two sports; hurling (called camogie for women), played with hurls and a sliotar, and Gaelic football. Both are very popular amateur traditional Irish sports. But of course rugby, soccer, golf and other sports also have large and enthusiastic fans.



In GAA sports scoring entails a goal (into the net) worth 3 points, or a point (above the net between the bars) worth one point. The leagues are divided into the 4 provinces and subdivided into the 32 counties. The best counties in each province play one another in the GAA quarter finals which lead to the All Ireland Final. There are over 2300 GAA clubs on the island.



'What's the craic?'
what is going on with you/any news?

'Ah we had the craic!'
we really enjoyed ourselves

'Well'
hello.

'Yoke'
any object, thing or person

'He's some tool'
he is a foolish person.

'It's Banjaxed'
it's broken.

'grand'
it's alright/all good.

History in brief

1.

There was a predominantly Celtic/Gaelic early Christian culture until the Scandinavian Vikings invaded, with Waterford the first town settled by the Vikings about 1200 years ago.

2.

The Gaelic provincial kings fought and defeated the Vikings. However the Normans, coming from Britain, followed about 900 years ago and conquered the east of the country. They later assimilated with the existing population and culture.

3.

In 1450 most of Ireland outside of the Dublin area and large parts of Munster was run by native Irish Gaelic kings,. From the 1500s British colonial control expanded Protestant ascendancy.

4.

British plantations (colonies) developed first in the modern Cork, Kerry, Clare regions in the late 1550s, expanding to the midlands and eventually to Northern areas in the early 1600s. Figures such as Daniel O'Connell fought for Catholic emancipation and improved voting rights.

5.

After the 1798 rebellion, the Act of Union dissolved the Irish parliament in 1800 and Irish MPs were later elected to the British Parliament. The 1840s famine killed well over a million people and another two million emigrated. Irish MP, Charles Stewart Parnell, tried to introduce Home Rule in the 1880s.

6.

Following the 1916 Easter Rising and the assassination of its leaders - including Padraig Pearse and James Connolly - the growing demand for Irish independence could no longer be ignored by Britain. It developed into the War of Independence from 1919-20 after an election victory for Sinn Féin. Michael Collins led the negotiations for a Treaty between Ireland and Great Britain, which was signed in December 1921

7.

The Treaty was passed by a narrow majority in the new Irish parliament. However, some Irish MPs did not agree to parts of this Treaty. In particular, the Treaty maintained an oath to the British Crown and partitioned the island, with the 6-counties of 'Northern Ireland' remaining part of the UK, and a Civil War resulted civil war resulted between pro and anti treaty sides in 1922-1923.

8.

Michael Collins, head of the pro-treaty side, was assassinated. However, the pro-treaty army won out and the Treaty came into force in Dec 1922. Ireland became independent but did not have control over the six counties in Northern Ireland. Today, the two main political parties that dominate Irish politics, Fine Gael & Fianna Fáil, are direct descendants of the opposing sides of the Civil War.

9.

Ireland remained neutral in World War II under the leadership of Taoiseach Eamon de Valera. Ireland formally became a Republic in 1949. The Good Friday Peace Agreement was signed by the Irish and British governments in 1998 in a bid to end the violence and bring stability and peace to Northern Ireland.

10.

In the late 1990's up to 2007 Ireland's economy was known as the Celtic Tiger. However the continued increase in wealth based in part on inflated property prices was unsustainable and in 2008 the Irish economy crashed, the Irish government issued a state guarantee for all banks, which eventually, among other external factors such as recession in the world economy, led in 2010 to a loan agreement with the EU/IMF/ECB (known as the 'Troika'). Austerity as an Irish government policy was implemented.

The Great Famine 1845-49

Brief Background to the Famine:

- Irish people were dependant on the potato crop for food as a result of the Penal laws (denying Catholics many rights such as owning/leasing land, voting, educating themselves, living in an incorporated town), the system of laws that led absentee British landlords to export crops for profit and to delegate responsibility for tax collection to middlemen, who exploited the farmers and made the situation worse for them. The only food source left to the Irish people, particularly those in rural Ireland, was the potato.
- A description of life for a farming tenant from the Earl of Devon: 'it would be impossible adequately to describe the privations they habitually and silently endure... in many districts their only food is the potato, their only beverage water... their cabins are seldom a protection against the weather... a bed or blanket is a rare luxury... and ... their pig or manure heap constitute their only property'.
- This didn't change until Daniel O'Connell started a campaign, which captured the English public's attention, for a series of reforms beginning with the Catholic Relief Act of 1829.
- The blight first appeared in 1845 and spread with each subsequent crop, turning the dominant potato crop into a mushy sludge. It worsened in 1846 and 1847 until Irish people, particularly those living in rural areas, were desperate for food.
- The years 1847-50 in Ireland were years of death by starvation and disease such as fever, typhus, yellow fever and dysentery.
- 1 million died of starvation in The Great Potato Famine. 2 Million emigrated to the USA, Canada, Industrial Centres of Great Britain in overcrowded British sailing ships, poorly built and often unseaworthy, that became known as 'coffin ships'.
- www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/famine

The Famine Year (The Stricken Land), Lady Wilde (nee Jane Francesca Elgee)

Weary men, what reap ye? -
Golden corn for the stranger.
What sow ye? - human corpses
that wait for the avenger. Fainting
forms, hunger -stricken, what
see you in the offing? Stately ships
to bear our food away, amid the
stranger's scoffing. There's a proud
array of soldiers - what do they
round your door? They guard our
masters' granaries from the thin
hands of the poor. Pale mothers,
wherefore weeping - would to God
that we were dead; Our children
swoon before us, and we cannot
give them bread.



Ireland is in your hands, in your power. If you do not save her, she cannot save herself. I solemnly call upon you to recollect that I predict with the sincerest conviction that a quarter of her population will perish unless you come to her relief.
Daniel O'Connell (known in Ireland as The Liberator) to the British House of Commons, 1847.



Famine Memorial, Dublin City Quays

Revolution

Following the 1798 Uprising in Ireland, The English Parliament responded with the Act of Union 1801, that formed a new country titled “The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland” by uniting England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland. A new flag – the Union Flag – was created from the symbolic flags of the “member nations”.



In the aftermath of the Great Famine, a new group calling themselves the Irish Republican Brotherhood – or ‘Fenians’ – emerged, aiming to create an independent Irish Republic by force if necessary. In 1867 they staged an uprising but it was easily defeated by the British.

Several attempts were made throughout the late 1800's and early 1900's to pass laws through the British Parliament that would grant Ireland some parliamentary autonomy, called Home Rule. However in 1914 Home Rule was postponed due to the outbreak of World War I. The IRB, taking advantage of the fact that Britain did not have many available troops, planned and staged an uprising on Easter Monday 1916. After bitter fighting, the Rising was defeated, and it's leaders were executed. In 1918 an overwhelming majority voted in favour of independence, but this was rejected by Britain. In 1919 the War of Independence broke out, followed by Anglo/Irish Treaty negotiations and the Irish Civil War. On the defeat of the Republicans, the Treaty was enforced and an Irish Free State declared.



1916 Easter Rising was mainly confined to Dublin. It lasted for one week, after which the signatories of the Proclamation of Independence (below) were arrested and executed. Although the Rising failed initially, it led to the War of Independence and ultimately to the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922.

POBLACHT NA H EIREANN.
THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT
OF THE
IRISH REPUBLIC
TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

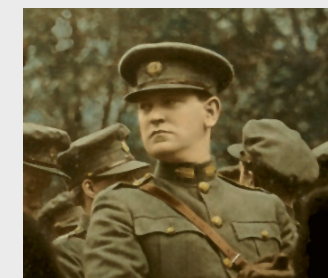
We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty, six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government,
THOMAS J. CLARKE,
SEAN Mac DIARMADA, THOMAS MacDONAGH,
P. H. PEARSE, EAMONN CEANNT,
JAMES CONNOLLY. JOSEPH PLUNKETT.



Michael Collins. Following his release from prison for his part in the 1916 Rising, Collins rose to lead the IRB and to Commander in Chief of Irish Republican Army (IRA). A member and Minister of the First Dáil of 1919, he led the Treaty Delegation and the pro-Treaty side in Civil War. He was assassinated in 1922.



Pádraig Pearse signatory of the Proclamation of Independence, leader of 1916 Rising & subsequently executed for treason in 1916

'The Troubles'

The conflict in Northern Ireland

Stems from religious, cultural and economic differences between the two unique groups in Ireland but most specifically Ulster. The plantations in Ulster in the 1600s produced a strong population that remained faithful to Britain ("Unionists"). Following the 1916 Easter Rising, the Irish War of Independence 1919-21 brought the British government to peace negotiations with the Irish leaders. Under the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 Ireland was given autonomy from Britain, but 6 counties in Ulster were to remain in British control, separate from the new Free State (Ireland). In 1948, the Irish Free State broke its remaining ties with Britain and became a Republic.

In Northern Ireland, Protestant Unionists and Loyalists sought to remain a part of the UK while Catholic nationalists sought to reunite the 32 counties of Ireland. Unionist domination was opposed by a Nationalist civil rights movement that arose in the 1960s. Both sides were fearful of the other and discrimination hampered all aspects of life. The communities – including the education system – remain divided.

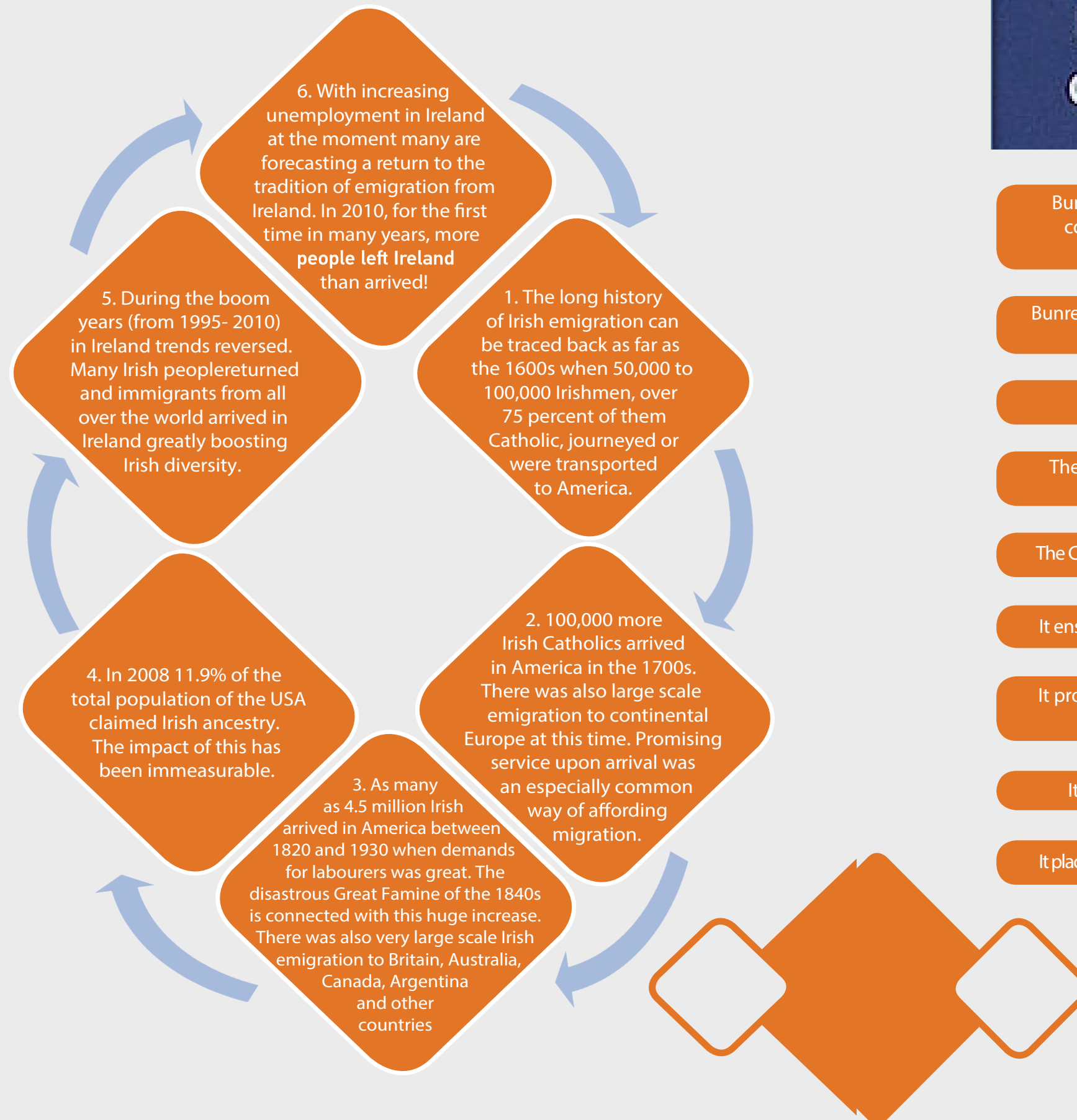
The paramilitary groups on the nationalist side included the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and some other splinter groups. On the unionist and loyalist side, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the Ulster Defence Association (UDA). The state forces such as the police – Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) – and the British Army were involved in the conflicts too. Tribunals are still investigating the atrocities on both sides that killed an estimated 3,524 people over a thirty year period.

The peace process evolved with ceasefires and talks behind the scenes, leading to the signing by all parties, including the British and Irish Governments, of the Good Friday Peace Agreement in 1998. Many cross community initiatives have developed in Northern Ireland to foster social cohesion.



In August 1969, Northern Ireland was rocked by intense political and sectarian rioting. The disorder led to the "Battle of the Bogside" in Derry between the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the nationalist/Catholic residents. The violence spread to other towns in NI, and the events of that summer are generally seen as the beginning of the thirty-year conflict known as "the Troubles".

The Irish and emigration



BUNREACT NA hÉIREANN CONSTITUTION OF IRELAND

Bunreacht na hÉireann was introduced in 1937, it replaced the 1922 constitution which was secular in tone but included had an oath of allegiance to the British King.

Bunreacht na hÉireann consolidated Irish independence by affirming Irish autonomy.

The Constitution can only be changed by referendum.

There have been 29 referendums to date, with 24 amendments to the constitution being adopted.

The Constitution represents the fundamental laws of the Irish State since 1937.

It ensures that Ireland operates under a representative democratic system.

It protects certain rights and places significant responsibility on the role of the state in social policy.

It values and protects the family and emphasises property rights.

It places importance on the Irish language (Gaelic) as the "first national language".

The Oireachtas (Government)

Dáil Éireann

(the House of Representatives) has 166 members called TDs.

Seanad Éireann

(the Senate) has 60 members called Senators.

The Committees of the Oireachtas

of which there are 14 (e.g. Committee for Agriculture, Food and the Marine · Committee for Education and Social Protection).

Local Government is

comprised of county councils and city and town councils. Elections to these are held (separately to national elections) every 5 years. They organise local services (e.g. waste collection and water distribution) and provide a means of representation in the community.

Voting in Ireland PR-STV

What is PR- STV?

This is Ireland's electoral system. People vote not for the political party they want but for the individual candidate.

How does it work?

You vote on a ballot paper like this one. You fill in each box with a number and order or rank them from your most preferred candidate (1), your second most preferred candidate (2), your third (3), fourth (4), fifth (5) and so on.

The results?

In theory the most popular people win not just the most popular political party. However, knowing exactly who you vote for means that you are more personally attached to the candidates and this has led to problems where some believe that there is too much of a local focus for national politics.

Where is it used?

The only places in the world that use this as their national electoral system are Ireland and Malta!

Do you know that as a new Irish citizen
you have the right to register and vote
in all elections in Ireland?



**For information on how to register call in to your:
Local City or County Council
Citizen Information Centre www.citizensinformation.ie
Go to www.envron.ie/en/localgovernment/voting**

Your vote counts!
**Register today to vote and help to make
a better Ireland for us all.**

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Political Parties in Ireland



Fine Gael - means 'tribe' or 'family of the Irish'. It is a centre right party. In the last election, it became the largest political party in Ireland for the first time.



Labour - is a centre left party. It is the second largest party in Ireland. Fine Gael and Labour currently govern Ireland in a coalition.



Fianna Fáil - means 'warriors of destiny'. It a centrist party. Up until the last election in early 2011, it was the largest party and suffered the worst losses of any party since the foundation of the State.



Sinn Féin - is a party that advocates republican nationalism. The party is in government in Northern Ireland and won 14 seats in the Republic's Dáil (government) in the 2011 election.



The Green Party - Ireland's only environment focused party. It has largely centre left policies. It was in government with Fianna Fail and lost all its seats in the last election.

Independents (non-party) feature very strongly in Irish politics. There are more Independents elected now than ever before.

Ireland & the European Union (EU)

Impact on Ireland's economy- Given that Ireland is a small open economy, it is highly susceptible to fluctuations across the continent. EU membership has reduced our dependency on the UK and diversified our economy hugely. Yet it has also contributed to the slow response to the worst economic crisis ever experienced due to our lack of control over monetary policy.

Impact of Euro on Ireland - The euro became Ireland's official currency on January 1, 2002. Before that, the Irish punt (pound) was the official currency. The euro has positively impacted Irish industry, although it is now associated with monetary problems and the global economic crisis. The financial crash of 2009 has resulted in a massive national debt which the state is seeking to resolve through negotiation with European institutions.

Impact on Education in Ireland- Uniform teaching standards especially at third level. EU funding specifically targeted improving standards.

Impact on Ireland's environment- Regulations for water pollution, waste disposal, air quality, energy emissions and preservation of natural habitats.

Impact on Irish life- The standard of living has increased significantly since 1973. EU legislation has ensured that women have equal rights in the workplace. It is now easier to travel, live and work within other EU countries.

Impact on Traditional Industries- CAP Common Agricultural Policy and the CFP Common Fisheries Policy have changed and supported agriculture and aquaculture in Ireland thanks to redistribution subsidies, while EU transfers (Structural Funds) greatly modernised Irish infrastructure (roads, rail, communications, vocational training).

The INTERVENTION by the I.M.F. and the E.C.B. in 2010



1. A property bubble developed in Ireland between 2000 and 2008. Banks became over leveraged and there was a failure of regulation.
2. Property prices dropped by 50% and the number of mortgages has fallen by close to 75% between 2008 and 2011.
3. In 2009, the government devised “NAMA” to take over the worst assets of the Irish banking system into one entity that would seek to slowly draw out their value through sales and the pursuit of debt.
4. The loans were worth € 77 billion when first drawn up. They are now estimated at €47 billion.
5. The total losses are hard to measure as they depend on future realisable values.
6. In 2010 the IMF and ECB offered the Irish government an €85 billion loan package – called a ‘bailout’ – at an interest rate of 5.8% that the government succeeded since in reducing to 3.5%.
7. The Irish government has begun implementing a wide variety of austerity measures to achieve budget deficit targets agreed with the Troika to ensure we have the capacity to repay the loans.



Botanic Garden – Dublin, Ireland



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www.integratingdublin.ie



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Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall
Fingal County Council



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