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The History of Hallowe'en and Related  
Festivals in Leeds and its District

Karen Allen

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance  
with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the  
Faculty of Arts

### Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original, except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other academic award. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED.....*U. Allen*.....

DATE.....*27/11/2012*.....

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On a more personal level, a very big 'thank you' to my husband Chris Allen, for his encouragement and support during this project. It would not have happened without him. Thank you also to Lucy, Hayley and Vicky for putting up with a constantly busy mum. Yes girls, you can use the computer now.



## **Abstract**

This dissertation examines the history of Hallowe'en and the related festivals of Mischief Night and Guy Fawkes Night in and around the city of Leeds, from the nineteenth century through to the present. In so doing it provides the first significant historical study of the calendar custom Mischief Night. As well as demonstrating how each of the three festivals have been celebrated, it shows how they have changed and adapted over time, and how each festival's adaptation has impacted upon the others, and it goes on to offer a tentative evaluation of the role of Mischief Night in the formulation of the current Hallowe'en trick-or-treat tradition. In so doing, the thesis has used a variety of methodological approaches to construct a historical narrative that incorporates a range of individual perspectives on the festivals, and by so doing further enriches historical understanding of the subject matter.

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## Introduction and Methodology

The purpose of this work is to investigate the history and contemporary significance of Hallowe'en and the related calendar customs Mischief Night and Guy Fawkes Night. These will be examined with respect to, and within the historical context of, the northern English city of Leeds and its surrounding district. The study will look at the extent and characteristics of these customs as practiced and understood by various sections of the community over time. The final chapter will seek to use the findings of this research in order to evaluate the idea of possible transmigration of elements of these cultural traditions between Yorkshire and America. By so doing, it hopes to provide useful insights into the English contribution to Hallowe'en as an international cultural phenomenon.

In order to establish the methodological character of this thesis it will be useful to identify the relationship between this thesis and three significant texts that most readily lend themselves to comparison in respect to the subject content. The three consist of two historical works, the first by Ronald Hutton, and the second by Nicolas Rogers, and one doctoral thesis by Leila Dudley Edwards. In each case an account of the way in which the present work extends or modifies each will be presented.

Firstly, Ronald Hutton's work *Stations of the Sun*<sup>1</sup> looks at the origins and historical development of calendar customs across the British Isles. It draws on much of the original research used in his earlier works *The Rise and Fall of Merry England The Ritual Year 1400-1700*<sup>2</sup> and *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles*<sup>3</sup>. In contrast to these works, *Stations* brings the study of calendar customs into the twentieth century by using the findings of his earlier texts to shed light on more recent material collected by folklorists and to re-evaluate their conclusions from this perspective. Despite Hutton's assertion that, *Stations* provides "no original research... into the

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald Hutton *The Stations of the Sun* (Oxford, 1994)

<sup>2</sup> Ronald Hutton *The Rise and Fall of Merry England The Ritual Year 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1996)

<sup>3</sup> Ronald Hutton *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles* (Oxford, 1991)

eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries”<sup>4</sup> he brings the study of Hallowe’en into the early 1990’s by drawing on a range of late 20<sup>th</sup> century publications to explore the way in which modern Hallowe’en practices have been interpreted both within the British Pagan Federation and between modern Pagans and the more militant element within the evangelical Christian movement. In connection with the subject-matter of the present thesis, he presents a detailed investigation of Hallowe’en, exploring its tenuous links to the date of Samhain in the Irish calendar and also its associations with the Catholic festivals of All Saints and All Souls. Within Hutton’s account of the modern Hallowe’en he also identifies a small number of accounts of customs from eighteenth century Scotland and the Hebrides which he links to ‘Mischief Night’. The accounts are brief, yet significant in that they provide the earliest historical accounts of an autumn mischief custom. The scarcity of a November Mischief Night in the English archives no doubt helped support Hutton’s assertion that Mischief Night only reached Yorkshire by the twentieth century. Here, Hutton’s use of prominent folklorists’ material such as the Opies’ study *The Language and Lore of School Children*, first published in 1959, enables him to bring his account of an Autumn Mischief Night into the twentieth century chiefly with reference to the geography of the custom. Furthermore, Hutton identifies clear evidence of much earlier ‘mischief’ on May Eve as part of May Day celebrations in Lancashire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire as early as the 1790s.<sup>5</sup> What Hutton doesn’t do is to establish the relationship between these two dates, or to explore them in any depth in respect to any one given region. In addition, none of Hutton’s references to Mischief Night intercept the custom beyond the 1950s.

In contrast to Hutton’s work, by focusing directly on the history of a particular city and broadening the research out to incorporate a greater range of historical sources, this thesis looks in detail at the relationship between May Eve ‘mischief’ and the later November ‘Mischief Night’. It challenges Hutton’s assertion that Mischief Night in Yorkshire is as recent as a twentieth century phenomenon by providing detailed accounts of the custom in this

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<sup>4</sup> Hutton *Stations*, p.ix

<sup>5</sup> Hutton *Stations*, p.233

region throughout both the nineteenth and twentieth century. Furthermore, by using a wider range of research methods to look at Mischief Night in more recent times (news articles, interviews and participant observation) this thesis goes on to bring the subject of both Hallowe'en and Mischief Night into the twenty-first century.

The second historical text, written by Nicholas Rogers, is titled *Hallowe'en from Pagan Ritual to Party Night*. As background, Rogers takes account of the way Hallowe'en is represented in the works of folklorists such as Frazer and MacCulloch and draws on the above works of Hutton as a corrective to these but by his own admission, he does not

invest a great deal of interpretive significance in the quest for Hallowe'en's origins, save only to illustrate and understand how people have appropriated parts of Hallowe'en's past in fashioning their own meaning of the holiday.<sup>6</sup>

Rogers provides a brief coverage of the origins of Hallowe'en within the British Isles, yet in contrast to the present thesis, the main focus of his material lies in the way in which it is celebrated in North America. By way of original sources, he makes extensive use of newspaper accounts, Folklore Society publications and papers from the field of cultural studies particularly in respect to the use of Hallowe'en in Hollywood horror films and late twentieth and early twenty-first century pageantry. In addition, Rogers undertakes a series of cultural observations of Hallowe'en in North America. In this way he adopts a cross disciplinary approach in order to construct a broad cultural historical narrative of the subject.

Throughout his study Rogers testifies to the changing nature of the festival as it responds to different groups and social situations. He identifies it as being historically independent of a single patron (such as church or state) and therefore having a flexibility and resilience that other festivals may not share. However he does highlight the growing relationship of Hallowe'en and powerful commercial interests both in the US and elsewhere and raises

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<sup>6</sup> Nicolas Rogers *Halloween from Pagan Ritual to Party Night* (Oxford 2002) p8

the question of whether this development will go on to undermine what he regards as the subversive virtues of the festival.<sup>7</sup>

While the text is potentially relevant to this thesis in understanding possible links between Hallowe'en-related practices associated with the Leeds area and those identified in America, it is important to recognise that Rogers does not set out to explore in any depth the transmission of Hallowe'en related traditions, preferring to echo the widely held theory supposing a purely Irish and Scots origin for the tradition. However, there has not been any substantial research published which either substantiates or refutes this theory.

Importantly, Rogers does identify examples of an early North American Hallowe'en and Mischief Night pranking tradition and these examples are explored further when considering the complex origins of these traditions in more depth in Chapter Seven of this thesis. A key element of Rogers' work has been to identify social and culturally diverse expressions of Hallowe'en in North America, both in terms of its advocates and adversaries, and to make a point of acknowledging an increasing commercial interest that both champions its future status whilst reducing its spontaneous and creative elements.

Despite the obvious difference in geographical and historical emphasis, there are a number of parallels that can be drawn between Rogers study and this thesis. Firstly, the nature of the subject matter studied requires a significant reliance on newspaper accounts. Secondly, as with Hutton's *Stations* there is an inevitable reliance on material relevant to both the historian and the folklorist alike, and thirdly, there is with each a valuable opportunity to bring the subject up to the present by use of interviews and participant observation.

The third significant text is Leila Dudley Edwards' unpublished doctoral thesis *Modern expressions of a traditional festival. Contemporary Paganism and Halloween*<sup>8</sup> is written from a folkloric perspective. Its purpose is twofold. Firstly, to provide a case study of Hallowe'en as an example of a

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<sup>7</sup> Rogers, *Halloween* p.172

<sup>8</sup> Leila Dudley Edwards, *Modern expressions of a traditional festival Contemporary Paganism and Halloween* Unpublished doctoral Thesis (Sheffield, 1998)



contemporary Pagan religious festival, by examining its modern forms and expressions. Secondly, Dudley Edwards considers Hallowe'en in its "most truly post modern manifestation,"<sup>9</sup> by which she means the modern Pagan festival, incorporating existing mythic and folkloric elements and themes but also confidently and self-consciously adapting and innovating contemporary elements alongside these to lend the festival greater resonance for contemporary Pagans. In doing this Dudley Edwards seeks to highlight what she regards as the very real significance of folklore in post-industrial society.

Despite its folkloric credentials, it is significant in that it stands as the only substantial academic study purely on the subject of Hallowe'en in a specific English location. During the course of her research Dudley Edwards' use of field work enabled her to collect practicing traditions and attitudes of contemporary pagans towards Hallowe'en in Glastonbury during the early 1990s. While Dudley Edwards does provide a brief chronicle of the festival of Hallowe'en, a historical interpretation is not central to her discussion of the subject matter. Her work in effect represents a snapshot of Pagan views and practices in respect to Hallowe'en.

There are similarities between Dudley Edwards' thesis and the present study, most notably in the use of participant observation as a research tool. Also, both consider the subject of Hallowe'en in a particular urban location, although given the nature of Glastonbury as something of a Mecca for the British Pagan community, the views collected are far more broadly representative of British Pagans as a group rather than representative of a practice specific to the native population of that geographical location. Dudley Edwards' principle research technique involved observing and recording contemporary Pagan practices pertaining to Hallowe'en.

While the present study mirrors the use of field work in order to explore current Hallowe'en practices and opinions this thesis firmly places the findings of such research, in an established historical context. By comparing such accounts with earlier accounts and mapping these onto the context of the changing city, this thesis looks at the interplay between the

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<sup>9</sup> Dudley Edwards, *Modern Expressions* p.1

growth and development of the city and the changing nature of the tradition over a given period of time. Furthermore, the present thesis identifies the way in which Hallowe'en is regarded and practiced within different sections of society, rather than one specific group. Again this is explored in respect to a historical narrative, rather than a snapshot of current practice.

Notwithstanding these few notable exceptions, very little work has been done which considers how Hallowe'en is expressed in England. Research into the related festival of Mischief Night is, at the time of writing, virtually uncharted territory. What little work that has been done has been carried out by Ervin Beck (1985) in his research into autumn traditions<sup>10</sup> and Iona and Peter Opie (1959), mentioned above in relation to Hutton's work, who provide a brief account in their broadly sweeping collection of children's customs, songs and rhymes<sup>11</sup>. What is lacking, and what this thesis intends to provide, is a comprehensive account of both Hallowe'en and Mischief Night as they present themselves during the rise and development of a major English city.

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<sup>10</sup> Ervin Beck, 'Children's Guy Fawkes Customs in Sheffield' *Folklore* [e-journal] Vol.95:ii (1984) 191-203 Available through: Jstor database. [Accessed 24 August 2006]

<sup>11</sup> Iona and Peter Opie, *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*. (St Albans, 1977) p.277

## **Aims and Objectives of the Present Study**

There are several aspects of Hallowe'en, Mischief Night and Guy Fawkes Night that I wish to explore which can be best achieved by pursuing three main aims. Firstly, I want to chart the history of each of the three customs in and around the general area of the city of Leeds. Secondly, I want to compare the historical and contemporary manifestations. The intention is for this to enable me to bring the history of the customs right up to the present. It will also allow me to make a very practical use of an interdisciplinary approach. By borrowing techniques from the social sciences as well as from oral history, I intend to make use of participant observations and open-ended interview techniques and questionnaires alongside more traditional historical sources.

The collection of personal recollection is not without its limitations. Individual memories are of course imperfect; open to distortion and even false construction, and so I have sought to cross-reference the material gained from oral interviews with other available sources where possible. Yet, as Peniston-Bird (2009) maintains, it is precisely the insight into subjective experience that oral histories offer that is "one of their greatest values"<sup>12</sup>. In many ways the material gained through the different methods used in this study helps in turn to validate and inform an interpretation of what appears in the historical record. The oral testimony, given by individuals without specialist knowledge of the custom, adds an inside voice to the material, provides valuable insights into living and evolving traditions, and in turn adds another strand to the historical record.

The use of this form of research is intended not only to broaden the scope of the material collected, but more importantly, to recover an aspect of history that would not otherwise be left in the historical record. I propose to demonstrate the co-existence of different attitudes and changing interpretations towards the customs over time, and in so doing provide a contemporary historical understanding of the customs.

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<sup>12</sup> Corinna M. Peniston-Bird 'Oral History: The Sound of Memory' in Sarah Barber and Corinna M. Peniston-Bird [Edited by] *History Beyond the Text A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources* (London, 2009)

Thirdly, I intend to use the findings of this study to question the prevailing orthodoxy which asserts an exclusively Scottish / Irish origin to the American Hallowe'en trick-or-treat tradition.

## **Methodology and Field-Work**

The question of which methodological approach to use when conducting research in any area, is, by its very nature, complex. Debates over the construction of knowledge historically revolve around notions of 'truth'<sup>13</sup>, and the perceived best ways of establishing or gaining the closest approximation of the 'truth' of the subject being studied, and history is no exception to this<sup>14</sup>. Yet the procurement of this 'truth' is at best problematic and ultimately elusive, even with the most accessible of sources. At best, any historical construct can be refined and updated, but new and seemingly convincing pieces of evidence are of course themselves constructed and then interpreted through the lens of a social, cultural and political framework. As such, there can never be a universally 'truthful' or truly singular objective historical narrative, since the historian's own interpretation of the evidence is by its very nature subjective. It is, therefore, not the intention of this study to present a singular 'truth' regarding the history and changing modes of expression of Hallowe'en. Instead it seeks to present a composite narrative of Hallowe'en and Mischief Night, through the use of both historical and contemporary material, not simply from the written evidence available, but drawn, where possible, from accounts gained from different individuals and groups within the community. By collecting insights and recollections from a variety of sources, I have sought to build up a picture of the range of histories; forms of expressions; and attitudes towards the two customs that co-exist within the city, and which present their own 'subjective truths' and their own historical legitimacy.

The issue thus becomes, 'which sets of individual or group histories are to be collected?', and 'how are they to be obtained?' Practical limitations

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<sup>13</sup> See Jurgen Habermas, *Knowledge & Human Interest* (Massachusetts, 1971)

<sup>14</sup> See Christopher Parker, *The English Idea of History from Coleridge to Collingwood* (Aldershot, 2000)

of this study mean that an exhaustive recognition of all the possible expressions and interpretations of the three customs cannot be covered. I have therefore tried to identify groups that would have a direct relationship with, or previous experience of either custom. This included: children, to whom much of the growing commercial interests of Hallowe'en are directed; religious groups, particularly Pagans who regard the date of Hallowe'en as one of their key annual festivals; local representatives of authority, who have for a number of years come into contact with Mischief Night activities; and local schools that actively embrace or reject Hallowe'en in any form in the life of the school. It follows that the groups and individuals chosen are only indicative of the sorts of views and histories present in the city but due to their proximity to the customs, represent a valid section nonetheless.

The subjective nature of the material could, and indeed should, be explored from several methodological directions. This study is, for the most part, although by no means exclusively, qualitative in nature. It makes use of archive sources both written and recorded; journals and research articles; printed books; newspaper extracts; chapbooks and sound archives. It combines these with a number of fieldwork methods including participant-observations; questionnaires; active participation; group and individual open interviews using tape recorders and video interviewing techniques. These techniques allow for what the oral historian Stephen Caunce referred to as "the direct collection of information from those whose knowledge is first hand, rather than waiting decades before attempting to build up a picture of the way they worked"<sup>15</sup>. The relevant methodology pertinent to each chapter is set out in more detail within each chapter below. The remainder of this section will be limited to a more general overview of the field-work methodology.

This thesis has made use of a number of observations with varying levels of participation<sup>16</sup>. This has been made easy to some extent because of the nature of much of the subject-matter. One key source of research material quite literally came knocking at my own front door in the form of

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<sup>15</sup> Stephen Caunce, *Oral History and the Local Historian* (London, 1994)

<sup>16</sup> The customary distinctions between non-participant observations and participant observations represent too crude a distinction for the purposes of this study which has by its nature employed a broad spectrum of observations ranging from long-range to immersive.

local children trick-or-treating. I have not needed to win the trust of my local community, nor become accepted into any other variant community, in order to obtain this material. Details such as call timings and types of costume and the number of children were recorded over a four year period in the form of written notes and tally charts as the evenings progressed. This was matched with local street observations that looked at local house decorations. Active participation was significantly aided by having children of my own young enough and enthusiastic enough to be willing participants in local Hallowe'en practices, whilst accompanied by an observer. It's important to add at this point that I was careful not to instigate, promote or pass comment on any local Hallowe'en activities, in order not to influence local activity.

Furthermore, my own children were not counted in any part of the data collection. Observing the behaviour of my own community had the added benefit of limiting the 'Hawthorne effect'<sup>17</sup>, and any subsequent distortions that an outside researcher may have brought to the findings.

From 2007 onwards I became a regular monthly attendee of a Leeds-based Pagan Moot. I participated in various events held by the Moot including both general Hallowe'en parties held at a public house near the city centre, and more specific Samhain (the early medieval Irish name for a festival marking the beginning of winter,<sup>18</sup> now often used by neo-Pagans as an alternative name for Hallowe'en) rituals held each year at Thwaite Mill stone circle (two miles to the south of the city centre). My attendance was as a member of the group and in this respect I was able to fully participate rather than just observe. I was accepted easily into the group and did not identify any evidence to suggest that my presence generated any tension or major deviation from the group's normal activities, despite openly discussing my research within the group. I was able to attend three of the parties and rituals during this time. Both the party and the ritual celebrations were regarded as 'open'<sup>19</sup>, though in practice only established members of the group attended. This provided the opportunity to observe first-hand both the

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<sup>17</sup> The Hawthorne effect refers to a change of behaviour of a group or individual, as a direct result of being studied. See R. H. Franke & J. D Kaul. 'The Hawthorne experiments: First statistical interpretation'. *American Sociological Review* (1978) Vol. 43 p.623-643.

<sup>18</sup> See Hutton, *Stations* p.361

<sup>19</sup> Open – meaning open to interested members of the public, members of other pagan communities as well as regular attendees of the group.

religious and the secular celebrations of the group. Photographs were taken at these events, by me and other members of the group. More formal recordings were made in the form of written notes made immediately after the events. The findings are discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

These observational studies involved me accompanying police officers on their patrols on Mischief Night (4<sup>th</sup> November) in 2007 and 2008. Both years I accompanied patrols overseeing different sections of the city in order to gain a wider understanding of what was happening across the area. Patrols were composed of officers using both regular police cars, and going on foot. I was able to make use of the police car radio system to inform me of instances of Mischief Night-based activity else-where in the city which contributed to a more comprehensive record. I also took a camcorder to record activities that took place during the patrols. A more detailed account can be found along with the findings in Chapter Four.

To complement the field observations at a local level, an e-mail questionnaire was distributed to primary and secondary school head teachers in Leeds. The purpose was to see what impact, if any, Hallowe'en has in the life of schools in Leeds. There were serious limitations with this form of data. Head teachers have variable years of experience in, and long-term knowledge of, their given schools and as such there is always the possibility of this, (along with low return rates) distorting the findings. Head teachers do nevertheless hold significant sway over what sort of activities are held in their school (for example a Hallowe'en disco). The principal benefit of using this method of data collection was to draw on the widest possible geographical range of feedback from schools right across the city. It was also hoped that the data would highlight any discrepancies between primary and secondary school forms of celebration. Again more detailed evaluation of the questionnaires can be found in Chapter Three.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted as a means of collecting oral history as well as procuring contemporary accounts. This technique is useful because it allows for a more direct and responsive interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. By using a semi-structured open-ended interviewing technique I was able to seek clarification on certain points and probe for a more thorough exploration of the subject. By keeping the nature

of the interviews relaxed and informal, informants were able to take the time to consider their responses and return to points they had made earlier to add details or corrections. While this approach has the benefit of allowing the informants to 'tell their story', it also has its drawbacks. Some of the interviews were lengthy and time consuming, and care had to be taken to keep the informants 'on track'. Others were exceptionally short, and could have benefited from a more structured interview style. There were nine interviews in total, and these are referred to in several chapters throughout the thesis. Seven of them were individual, and two (Age Concern and the fire brigade) were group interviews. The names of the interviewees were not asked for in the interest of anonymity, although in the majority of cases names were freely given. All of the individual interviewees were residents of Leeds, and all bar one had been born and had grown up in Leeds. The one exception had come to Leeds as a university student. This demographic proved consistent within the group interviews, both with Age Concern and with the fire crews, with a slight variation in that four of the fire crew group had been born and lived in neighbouring Bradford. The choice of interviewees reflected the desire to gain insight into the views and experiences of both the authorities and groups found in the city of Leeds. The number of interviews and their findings can only be regarded as indicative. What they offer is a partial record of some of the views and experiences of Hallowe'en and Mischief Night in Leeds, and so should not be regarded as a definitive account.

## **Chapter Contents**

In order to avoid unnecessary duplication of the material found at the beginning of each chapter, only a brief synopsis of each chapter will be found here.

Chapter One provides an account of the previous research into customs, traditions and then more specifically Hallowe'en. For simplicity it is divided between historical and folkloric accounts of customs and traditions in general, before engaging more directly in a detailed analysis of Hallowe'en-



related material. The chapter then moves on to identify how the present study relates to the existing material on the subject.

Chapter Two briefly covers the rise of Leeds from a small market town to a modern industrial city. It looks at the impact of industrialisation and the diversity of its population due to successive waves of immigration. The chapter then goes on to look at the interplay between the development and role of the police in respect to traditional working class activities and changing ideas surrounding the notion of childhood.

Chapter Three looks at the historical and contemporary manifestations of Hallowe'en in Leeds. It utilises various qualitative approaches to build up a historical composite narrative that includes the perspectives and practices of religious groups, and students' activities, while observational studies in the west of the city over a four year period provide an indicative account of children's Hallowe'en practices in the city. This is then widened out to consider the role of Hallowe'en in the development of 'fright tourism' in the city.

Chapter Four provides the first known academic study of the north of England Mischief Night tradition. It charts its development from a May Eve, to a November 4<sup>th</sup> secular custom and then goes on to provide examples of its practice in and around the area of Leeds. Written accounts from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century are then considered along-side contemporary oral testimonies from a number of Leeds residents in order to build up a more detailed account of the custom over time.

Chapter Five takes a closer look at the way in which Mischief Night has been perceived and responded to by the civic authorities in and around the Leeds area in recent years. Concepts such as the 'criminalisation of childhood' are explored in the light of what is viewed, by police and fire crews in the city, as a growing trend to a more extreme and lawless expression of the custom. The chapter includes the findings of participant-observer fieldwork during police patrols across the city and group interviews with fire crews in order to gain a more direct insight into the sort of activities associated with the night's events.

Chapter Six moves on to consider the way in which Guy Fawkes Night has changed and adapted during the nineteenth and twentieth century in and

around the Leeds area. It will briefly consider the way in which bonfires have been used as a means of civil unrest as well as public celebration. Then it will move on to the way in which fires and firework displays have gravitated away from street and small community events, towards large, council organised displays across the city. Finally, it will reflect upon the impact that this shift has had upon both Mischief Night and Hallowe'en traditions.

Chapter Seven looks at the different characteristics of Hallowe'en found in both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, and compares these with the characteristics common to the Mischief Night tradition. Having done this, the chapter moves on to look at emigration from the Yorkshire region to North America, and considers the extent to which the Yorkshire tradition of Mischief Night may have helped in the formation of the current trick-or-treat aspects of the present-day Hallowe'en.

While each chapter has its own summation, the overall conclusion returns to the three main aims of the thesis and draws together the significant themes established within each chapter and during the course of the study. In doing so it attempts to show how these related autumn customs have impacted upon, and have been in turn influenced by, the economic and social developments of the city of Leeds whilst taking account of the inward and outward migration of people and their culture.

## **Chapter One**

### **An Overview of Previous and Current Research into British Regional Autumnal Calendar Customs, Festivals and Hallowe'en**

There is currently a wide range of academic work addressing the topics of calendar customs and festivals. Although they are often not strictly identified in the literature as 'calendar customs', many traditional events and festivals often take place at a given point in the year. A review of current research therefore needs to include material concerned with festivals and popular pastimes.

Following an account of the historical approach to festivals and customs in general, this chapter is divided into two further sections. The first looks at studies concerned with autumnal customs, with particular reference to the theoretical approaches used. The second section identifies autumnal customs more specifically relevant to Leeds and the Yorkshire region. The chapter finishes with an outline of how the literature identified has informed and helped to shape this work, while establishing how it is distinctive from them.

It is perhaps worth noting at this point that this thesis is concerned with the social history of a contemporary festival and that academic interest in calendar customs has come from folklorists, anthropologists, and sociologists as well as social and cultural historians. Their different agendas and various approaches to the subject can inevitable require some effort to reconcile; however this process can be very enlightening. To cover all the viewpoints in serious depth would be beyond the scope of this study but there is, for instance, much within the approach of symbolic anthropology that can be of use to the social historian and though only limited space will be given to consideration of this discipline in the 'previous research' sections of this chapter, its methodology will be explored in respect to this thesis in the third section of this chapter. That said, the primary consideration of the 'previous research' section of this chapter will be limited to the work of social historians and folklorists.

## Historical Accounts of Festivals and Customs

The late 1970s and 1980s witnessed rising academic interest in popular culture within the field of social history. There was a growth of interest in the pastimes of the working classes and a corresponding expectation that studying these phenomena would lead to greater understanding of society – enabling scholars to establish links between popular perceptions of social structures, collective acts and the wider historical process. This in turn led to an increased level of research into previously disregarded topics such as custom, leisure and popular recreations.

A thorough and illuminating overview of the ritual calendar in the British Isles, incorporating both religious and secular traditions, can be found in Ronald Hutton's<sup>20</sup> *The Rise and Fall of Merry England 1400 -1700*. Looking at the late Middle Ages, through to the Stuarts, the work, along with the subsequent *The Stations of the Sun*<sup>21</sup>, provides a narrative overview of parish festivities throughout the English year, recognising the impact of social, economic and ecclesiastical change. Further to this, both texts serve as revisionist studies of the antiquity and form of customs, old and new, subjecting the conclusions of the folklorists and historians of the previous hundred years to scrutiny informed by careful analysis of records and the findings of recent scholarship.

Hutton's work on the ritual year came some twenty years after the work of the early social historians whose agenda was often dominated by a socialist, even Marxist, class-based model. This group tended to focus on the political meanings of regional festivals and calendar customs in Britain and in so doing opened up a whole new area of research. In short, customs, rituals and popular recreations were understood in terms of class divisions and researchers tended to emphasise the experiences and traditions of the poor whose lives had previously been underplayed or even neglected by earlier historians. This approach was popularised as early as 1966 by E.P. Thompson who advocated a shift in historical studies towards

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<sup>20</sup> Ronald Hutton *The Rise and Fall of Merry England, The Ritual Year 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1994)

<sup>21</sup> Hutton, *Stations*

understanding 'history from below'<sup>22</sup>. By understanding the role and function of festivity at a grass roots level, it was now possible to witness the significance and impact of economic, religious and political change upon wider society as opposed to maintaining focus upon social elites. In turn, greater understanding could then be gleaned about the ways in which society responded to such changes, both in respect to their modes of adaptation and the ways in which social unrest manifested itself.

Not all social historians restricted themselves to a class-based perspective, however. For example in their respective works on popular culture, Peter Burke<sup>23</sup> and Tim Harris<sup>24</sup> shifted away from viewing the social history of popular customs in terms of their relation to a two tier class structure, arguing that such distinctions were too simplistic. However, for other social historians such as Robert Malcolmson, the focus of this interplay provided an opportunity to create a more extended, refined understanding of the nature and impact of the industrial revolution on British society. Malcolmson in *Popular Recreations in English Society 1700-1850*,<sup>25</sup> set out a detailed account of the key features of the pre-industrial calendar, but more importantly, he went on to argue that the enormity of economic and social change arising from the industrial process led to a dramatic reduction in traditional recreational pastimes.

In contrast to the views of Malcolmson, Bob Bushaway's *By Rite*<sup>26</sup> argued that, rather than destroying popular custom, these same dramatic changes had the reverse effect. Since its imposition upon rural communities during the years between 1700 and 1880, the process of industrialisation actually reinforced the need for, and indeed the significance of, ritual and custom, both as a badge of community identity and as a form of social protest. Custom did not, he argued, disappear as a result of social and

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<sup>22</sup> Edward Thompson 'History from Below', *Times Literary Supplement* (7<sup>th</sup> April, 1966) 279-80

<sup>23</sup> Peter Burke *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Surrey, 1978)

<sup>24</sup> Tim Harris 'The Problem of "Popular Political Culture" in Seventeenth-Century London', *History of European Ideas* [Online] Vol. 10 (1989) 43-58 Available through Science Direct Database [Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2008]

<sup>25</sup> Robert Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society 1700-1850* (Cambridge, 1973)

<sup>26</sup> Bob Bushaway *By Rite: Custom, Ceremony and Community in England 1700-1880* (London, 1982)

economic change, but the emphasis placed upon a custom often shifted to reflect social tensions. As Bushaway asserted:

The English ritual calendar during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries gave evidence of ritual demonstrations of strength at certain times of year when deprivation threatened... The labouring poor sought to demonstrate their strength or assert their importance or reconstruct the social hierarchy as a 'communitas'. Such calendrical rites of passage were observed during the months before Christmas, at Epiphany and around May Day.<sup>27</sup>

Bushaway went on to argue that the riotous disturbances that became associated with calendar customs led ultimately to customs undergoing a process of greater social control and restriction in the face of both increased police powers and the growth of 'Victorian respectability'. In this context, the threat to customs became associated with the threat to the rights of communities and individuals.

Similar themes were explored in Edward Palmer Thompson's *Customs in Common*<sup>28</sup>. The majority of historians dealing with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries up to this point, had written under the assumption that the 'folk' customs of earlier ages had met with terminal decline during these centuries. Thompson argued, rather, that many folk customs continued, and in some cases originated during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Thompson looked at the continuation of customs, particularly the 'sale of wives' and the enjoyment of 'rough music'<sup>29</sup> in the face of a rapidly changing social environment. Industrialisation; the decline of oral tradition in favour of literacy; and a growing disdain for popular blood-sports among the ruling classes have been cited as factors leading to the decline of 'customary usages', yet Thompson argues that these tensions and pressures in fact led to a stubborn and often riotous resistance amongst the working classes, leading to a widening gap of understanding and between

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<sup>27</sup> Bushaway, *By Rite* p.168

<sup>28</sup> Edward Thompson *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (London, 1993)

<sup>29</sup> The term refers to a practice of creating a "cacophony, with or without more elaborate ritual [usually directly outside an individual's house] which usually directed mockery or hostility against individuals who offended certain community norms". Thompson, *Customs in Common* p.467

the two social groups. Thompson maintains that the top-down attempt at a prohibition of such practices effectively reinforced the customs it intended to suppress.

The idea that opposition to, and repression of, popular festivity by the 'improving' Victorian middle classes, led to the destruction or at least 'gentrification' of popular customs throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is further supported in the work of Hugh Cunningham<sup>30</sup> and Robert Storch<sup>31</sup>. The general consensus of this theory of the decline of popular customs is called into question in Denis Paz's study *Bonfire Night in Mid Victorian Northants*<sup>32</sup>. While Paz makes considerable acknowledgement of a move to reform and civilise, in this case 'Bonfire Night', and equally acknowledges the subsequent riotous backlashes that accompanied the occasion, Paz's work looks more closely into the micro-politics of the region, and in particular Northamptonshire. Tensions, it seems, existed not exclusively between classes, but emerged more often from local political disputes "between ultra-Liberal Nonconformists and Conservative Anglicans"<sup>33</sup>

A further example of the undeniable impact of politics upon ritual can be found in Robert Poole's analysis of *The March to Peterloo*<sup>34</sup> in which the "volunteer Manchester Yeomanry, backed up by the regular military"<sup>35</sup> violently dispersed a peaceful assembly comprising some sixty thousand men, women and children, killing seventeen and injuring around six hundred, in response to what it wrongly perceived as a popular uprising. Instead the festive community gathering, that took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> August 1819, occurred "in the middle of the summer wakes holiday season"<sup>36</sup> and formed

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<sup>30</sup> Hugh Cunningham *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution 1780-1880* (London, 1980)

<sup>31</sup> Robert D Storch 'Please to Remember the Fifth of November': Conflict, Solidarity and Public Order in Southern England, 1815-1900' *Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth-Century England* (London, 1982)

<sup>32</sup> Denis Paz 'Bonfire Night in Mid Victorian Northants: the politics of a popular Revel', *Historical Research* Vol. 63(1990) p.316-328

<sup>33</sup> Paz, *Bonfire Night* p.328

<sup>34</sup> Robert Poole 'The March to Peterloo: Politics and Festivity in Late Georgian England', *Past and Present* [e-journal] 192 (2006) p. 109-153. Available through Oxford Journals Database. [Accessed 19 July 2007]

<sup>35</sup> Poole, *March to Peterloo* p.110

<sup>36</sup> Poole, *March to Peterloo* p.115

part of the annual wakes and rushbearing customs common in Lancashire at that time.

Despite exceptions, such the findings of revisionists John Walton and Robert Poole in their study *The Lancashire Wakes in the Nineteenth Century*<sup>37</sup>, which showed that a number of traditional customs did continue to survive in industrial suburbs, there has been a general consensus among social and cultural historians that the last thirty years of the nineteenth century witnessed the final demise of many rural popular calendar customs. In their place rose a heavily regulated, restricted and commercial form of urban recreation. In the main, this took the form of competitive sports which were controlled by regulatory bodies and rules. As a result, historians shifted their focus away from calendar customs, festivals and feasts and onto the rise of commercial music halls and regulated spectator sports. Examples of this revised perspective appeared in the writings of James Walvin<sup>38</sup>; Peter Bailey<sup>39</sup> and Richard Holt<sup>40</sup> and the more recent work of Emma Griffin.<sup>41</sup>

Studies in the wider history of popular culture have owed much to advancements in anthropology, in particular the work of Clifford Geertz<sup>42</sup> who placed particular emphasis on the attempt to understand the symbolic meaning behind social activities. This analysis of 'the subjective' became significant to historians in that it allowed for a total re-examination of popular culture and customs in the light of the meanings these held for the individuals taking part. It would be easy at this point to be side-tracked into a discussion of the interplay between the work of social and cultural historians; social and symbolic anthropologists; sociologists and symbolic interactionists. However, in the interest of keeping to task, the discussion will be kept to an exploration of such interplay where this arises within the contemporary accounts of customs and rituals subsequently covered.

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<sup>37</sup> John Walton and Robert Poole 'The Lancashire Wakes in the Nineteenth-Century' in Robert Storch (ed.) *Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth Century England* (London, 1982)

<sup>38</sup> James Walvin *Leisure and Society 1830-1950* (London, 1978)

<sup>39</sup> Peter Bailey *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest For Control 1830-1885* (London, 1978)

<sup>40</sup> Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford, 1989)

<sup>41</sup> Emma Griffin, *England's Revelry: A History of Popular Sports and Pastimes, 1660-1830* (Berkshire, 2005)

<sup>42</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York, 1973)



Alongside the works which delve into the broad nature and function of calendar customs are studies that focus specifically upon a single date or custom. Along with Paz's study of Bonfire Night (mentioned above), such texts include Mervyn James's (1983) paper, *Ritual, Drama and Social Body in the Late Medieval English Town*.<sup>43</sup> The study offers a compelling analysis of the form and social context of the Corpus Christi celebration encountered in certain English towns during the Middle Ages. By highlighting the course and structure of the celebration it becomes possible to recognise the three distinct sections of the festival; the mass followed by the procession, followed by a wider secular celebration and feast. For James, the procession, sponsored and attended by the guilds, reflects a social 'body', or wholeness, in keeping with the symbolism of the Corpus Christi mythology. Much of the economic and subsequent social identity of the guilds was reflected in their ability to fund a carnival float with an accompanying Corpus Christi cycle play. The annual spectacle was therefore something of a status symbol, and James's paper reflects the way in which the processions, incorporating the carnival floats, chart not only the economic rise and fall of individual guilds, but also the honour and sense of worth that accompanied their position within the structure of the Corpus Christi processions.

Whilst there are plenty of historical investigations of popular British customs as practised pre mid-nineteenth century, only a comparatively small fraction focus on British traditional customs as practiced in the twentieth century. This dramatic drop in interest may be understood in light of what is regarded by many social historians as simply reflecting an equally dramatic decline in the number of traditional rural recreations and calendar customs. There is very little doubt that many rural social customs and ceremonies did indeed decline dramatically during the nineteenth century. As a result, the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s witnessed, in the words of the social historian, Callum Brown, "the final death of customary popular culture, and the emergence of commercialised, regulated and truly urban forms of leisure and

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<sup>43</sup> Mervyn James, 'Ritual, Drama and Social Body in the Late Medieval English Town', *Past and Present* [e-journals] 98 (1983) p.3-29 Available through: Oxford Journals Database [Accessed 3rd November, 2008]

recreation".<sup>44</sup> It could perhaps be argued that these subtle forces succeeded in crushing popular customs where the direct attempts, described by Bushaway and Thompson, had failed.

Despite this, studies of twentieth century calendar customs do exist. David Cannadine's 1982 historical narrative of the *Colchester Oyster Feast*<sup>45</sup> charts the changing nature and significance of the feast through four distinct phases of its history from the early nineteenth century onwards. As Cannadine explains, the pageantry and glamour of the feast stands as an example of an "invention of tradition", constructed at the end of the nineteenth century. The account of the history of the feast is mapped firmly onto a detailed history of the town, and charts its rise from a closed door corporate meal, to a grand public celebration and civic spectacle, to its post 1950s decline. Even though the Colchester Oyster Feast continues to the present day, it is interesting to note that in spite of Cannadine being one of the few historical researchers of twentieth century customs he does not venture in any depth beyond 1945, arguing "the period since 1945 is too recent for serious historical analysis".<sup>46</sup> It is unclear as to why Cannadine regards 1945 as a historical cut off point. It may have provided a convenient point at which to draw the paper to a conclusion, given the decline in standing of the feast, and the loss of the financial independence of Colchester after the 1950s. However, in taking this view Cannadine only provides what he refers to as 'general observations' in respect to the changing nature of the feast over the following thirty year period in contrast to the more detailed accounts he has supplied up to this point.

A significant contribution to the field of twentieth century calendar customs can be found in Callum Brown's study of the *Up-helly-aa* festival celebrated on the last Tuesday in January in Lerwick, Shetland<sup>47</sup>. The study differs from the Marxist historian's approach in that it draws on both social history and symbolic anthropology in its description of the historical origins

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<sup>44</sup> Callum Brown, *Up-helly-aa, Custom, Culture, and Community in Shetland* (Manchester, 1998) p.50

<sup>45</sup> David Cannadine, 'The Transformation of Civic Ritual in Modern Britain: The Colchester Oyster Feast', *Past and Present* [e-journal] 94 (1982) p.107-130 Available through Oxford Journals Database [Accessed 5 November 2008]

<sup>46</sup> Cannadine, *Transformation*.p.125

<sup>47</sup> Brown, *Up-helly-aa*

and contemporary significance of the Up-helly-aa festival. Brown's account of the custom starts with a description of the festival as practiced in the 1990s, and moves on to describe various time periods in the festival's two hundred year history. Each time period considered in the study reflects the impact of economic, political and religious changes on the Shetland Isles and the subsequent impact upon, and meaning given to, the festival. The last chapter is significant in that, in it, Brown continues to take forward the historical study of the festival into the second half of the twentieth century. In so doing he considers the festival in the light of the economic impact of the oil industry in Shetland, and the subsequent strengthening of cultural identity in the form of the Shetland Movement. Furthermore, Brown reflects upon the symbolic boundary of the festival, in the form of gender, and identifies the surprisingly limited impact of changes to women's roles in the twentieth century upon the festival. For instance, a key part of the event concerns a group known as the 'Jarl's Squad' who lead the festivities and because the festival heavily reflects traditional gender roles there has been little support for women (even by the women themselves) to be included in the Jarl's squad.

The early collections made by folklorists of calendar customs are numerous, yet many only provide a brief summary of a custom often associated with a given date. They often record oral accounts of a custom 'told as was' often by an elderly relative or older person in a given locality, or the personal recollections of the author. An excellent example of this can be found in T G Harding and Emily J Andrews' *Two Christmas Eve Customs*<sup>48</sup>. The following extract is from one of the two customs in its entirety, told by Harding (the father of Emily):

*Burning the Ashen Faggot* - On Christmas Eve the labourers on the farm remain behind after their work is done and join the carters and ploughboys, who, when it is dark, go to the hedge (previously decided upon as having a suitable ash-tree or bush) and cut down enough branches to make a faggot, taking care to get the largest branches and to put the thickest stick in the middle, because they sit in the chimney-corner drinking cider until the largest stick is burnt through; then they disperse. The ash is selected because it is the only wood

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<sup>48</sup> T G Harding and Emily J Andrews, 'Two Christmas Eve Customs' *Folklore* [Online] Vol.6 (March, 1895) p.93 Available through Jstor database: [Accessed 6 November, 2008]

that will burn green, and by it our Saviour was warmed in the stable of Bethlehem.

Such extracts provides little if any context, and so the reader is left to fashion an historical framework merely from the approximate date of the custom looked at in the light of wider external historical sources. Festivals and customs are often specific to a given location, such as the example given of Devonshire above, and there are several encyclopaedias which set out to catalogue surviving festivals, customs and superstitions<sup>49</sup>. These popularising works vary from brief descriptions of the name, date and location, to more detailed accounts, such as William Henderson's *Notes on the Folklore of the Northern Counties of England and the Borders*<sup>50</sup>. These can provide valuable insight into the form and nature of festivals, although the early folkloric attempts at providing a history to such customs frequently reflect the now abandoned ideas of ancient pre-Christian survivals, or customs from an unchanging agricultural age under threat by a rapidly expanding industrial culture. Alexandra Walsham<sup>51</sup> expands greatly on the mixed motives of Victorian and Edwardian collectors of folkloric material who, she argues, fluctuated between those who interpreted their material with notes of nostalgia of a bygone age, and those who regarded their findings as indicators of civilising progress. Such ideas gained credence through the works and ideas of Sir James Frazer<sup>52</sup> and Sir George Laurence Gomme<sup>53</sup>. Though popular at the turn of the twentieth century, the flaws in their ideas and conclusions were being openly critiqued by the 1930s by historians and anthropologists alike. Meanwhile, folklorists continued to publish material in keeping with the Frazer tradition well into the 1970s. Examples of this can be found in the opening comments of Geoffrey Ridden's (1974) paper on *The Goathland Plough Monday Customs*, which details a tradition practised in the

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<sup>49</sup> See Homer Sykes *Once a Year. Some Traditional British Customs* (London, 1977); Geoffrey Palmer and Noel Lloyd *A Year of Festivals* (London, 1972); and Charles Knightly *The Customs and Ceremonies of Britain: an Encyclopedia of Living Traditions* (London, 1986)

<sup>50</sup> William Henderson *Notes on the Folk-lore of the Northern Counties of England and the Borders* (London, 1879)

<sup>51</sup> Walsham *Recording Superstition* p.179-180

<sup>52</sup> Sir James Frazer *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (London, 1995)

<sup>53</sup> Sir George Laurence Gomme *Folklore as an Historical Science* (London, 1908)

North Riding of Yorkshire,<sup>54</sup> in which the origins of the Yorkshire long-sword dance and its accompanying ceremonies are described as “probably deriving from a pre-Christian winter ploughing feast”<sup>55</sup>. Yet by the end of the 1970s folkloric studies had witnessed a marked shift in approach, incorporating many of the ideas and principles inherent in both social history and anthropology.

The opening up of folklore to outside schools of thought enabled a significant shift in the study of calendar customs and ritual, demonstrated by the 1989 Folklore Conference on Calendar Customs. The conference built upon the recognition of the common ground evident between folklorists and historians in the contributions given at two earlier conferences. These were: the annual conference of the Social History Society held at Lancaster in 1981 and a colloquium at Cecil Sharpe House jointly organised by the Folklore Society and the English Folk Dance and Song Society in September 1984. Contributions to the conference showed great concern for documentary evidence and authenticity and even the more conservative contributions to the 1984 conference, such as Christopher Cawte's *It's An Ancient Custom – But How Ancient?*<sup>56</sup>, were framed within the context of a challenge to accepted claims about the early origins of folk customs and acknowledged the need for a more critical appraisal of folkloric source material in light of the historical record.

More recently Torunn Selberg (2006)<sup>57</sup> put forward the argument that public celebrations have significantly increased since the 1970s. Selberg goes on to quote the anthropologist Frank E Manning in arguing that “throughout both the industrialised and developing nations, new celebrations are being created and older ones revived on a scale that is surely unmatched in human history”<sup>58</sup>. Indeed, there are a seemingly inexhaustible number of

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<sup>54</sup> Geoffrey Ridden ‘The Goathland Plough Monday Customs’ in *Folk Music Journal* [e-journal] Vol.2, 5 (1974).352-388 Available through: Jstor Database [Accessed 10 November, 2008]

<sup>55</sup> Ridden, *Goatland Plough* p.352

<sup>56</sup> Christopher Cawte ‘It's An Ancient Custom – But How Ancient’ in Theresa Buckland and Juliette Wood (eds.), *Aspects of British Calendar Customs* (Folklore Society Mistletoe Series, 22; Sheffield, 1993) p.41-43

<sup>57</sup> Torunn Selberg ‘Festivals as Celebrations of Place in Modern Society: Two Examples from Norway’ in *Folklore* (December 2006) Vo.117 p.297-312

<sup>58</sup> Selberg, *Festivals* p. 297

music; craft; poetry and community based festivals that have considerable popularity within their respective networks. But in such instances the use of the term 'festival' would appear to be arbitrary, in that it may often just as well be replaced with 'concert', 'event' or even 'party'. The clear and obvious exception to this has been the significant rise in popularity of Neo-Pagan festivals<sup>59</sup> both in the United States and the United Kingdom since the 1970s<sup>60</sup>. An exploration of the growth and development of wider music and culture based festivals<sup>61</sup> may well prove interesting to future research, but would serve only to distract the present study away from its working definition of calendar festival, as one which, although it may encompass merriment; transgression of rules; disguise; role reversal and general playfulness also incorporates, directly or indirectly an element of 'belief' and is repeated at regular intervals not determined by arbitrary or purely practical considerations.

### **Wider History of Autumn Customs**

In 1973 Malcolmson<sup>62</sup> argued that the organisation of popular recreations emerged out of an oral tradition, and as such lacked an institutional framework; the lack of which has resulted in a dearth of documentary evidence within either the County Archives or the national archives. Malcolmson goes on to argue that as a consequence, the historical study of popular recreation needs to draw on a number of scattered sources.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> This area has been explored in some depth by Ronald Hutton. See *The Triumph of the Moon* (Oxford, 1999) and 'Modern Pagan Festivals: A Study in the Nature of Tradition' in *Folklore* (December, 2008) Vol.119 p.251-273

<sup>60</sup> See Sarah M Pike *Earthly Bodies, Magic Selves: Contemporary Pagans and the Search For Community* (California, 2001); and Barbra Jane Davy *Introduction to Pagan Studies* (Plymouth, 2007)

<sup>61</sup> In this context I am excluding festivals related to any aspect of Paganism, given that Paganism has now gained official recognition as a religion. The exclusion purely relates to examples such as the Glastonbury Music Festival; the Edinburgh Fringe Festival or the Isle of White Festival.

<sup>62</sup> Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations*

<sup>63</sup> This point is also raised by Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre* (New York, 1984) in which he highlights the advantages of historians using anthropological techniques to the point of developing a distinct field of *anthropological history*, as a means of understand the history of 'ordinary' people, who traditionally did not leave written accounts. Darnton places particular emphasis on symbolic expression and interpretation, drawing on the work of anthropologists Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner, who argued that symbols are multivocal.

Calendar customs, although not necessarily 'popular recreations', can face many of the same problems with source material and so Malcolmson's observation has a particular bearing on the study of autumn customs such as Hallowe'en, Mischief Night and Guy Fawkes' Night. Of course, this does not strictly apply to the church-instituted autumn festivals of All Saints (All Hallows) and All Souls which fall between the secular feasts but it does have some bearing on the traditional practices that have developed around them.

The most accessible reference linking autumn traditions in general can be found in Iona and Peter Opie's, (1959) *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren* in which descriptions can be found of a number of festive activities associated with the time of year, including Punkie Night; which, the authors maintain, was practiced in south Somerset on the fourth Thursday in October. Visiting houses with elaborately carved and scooped out turnips with lit candles inside, children would sing:

It's Punkie Night tonight,  
It's Punkie Night tonight,  
Give us a candle, give us a light,  
If you don't you'll get a fright.

It's Punkie Night tonight,  
It's Punkie Night tonight,  
Adam and Eve wouldn't believe  
It's Punkie Night tonight.<sup>64</sup>

The punkie lanterns would seem, according to Palmer (1972), to be associated with other mangelwurzel lanterns, and Jack-o-lanterns<sup>65</sup>. As with the Opies, Palmer's accounts are situated in the villages of Lopen and Hinton St. George in South Somerset. The hollowed out turnips or mangolds are made by children on the 28<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup> October and designed to "look rather like gargoyles"<sup>66</sup>. Once made, a lit candle is put inside, and the lantern is then put on gate-posts or carried around the village. According to Palmer, the purpose of their design is to keep evil spirits away at Hallowe'en.

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An idea expressed considerably earlier by Sigmund Freud, who argued that dreams symbolism is polysemic. In other words it has 'many meanings'.

<sup>64</sup> Opie, *Lore and Language* p.290

<sup>65</sup> K Palmer 'Punkies' in *Folklore* (Autumn, 1972) Vol.83. 240-244

<sup>66</sup> Palmer, *Punkies* p.243

The study of Hallowe'en, the next autumn custom to be considered, shares with the study of popular recreation the need to draw on a wide variety of non-institutional sources in order to construct an interpretation and understanding of the custom. An illuminating parallel to this can be seen in the work of Leah Marcus<sup>67</sup>, who explored the earlier political interplay of royalty and public festivity of the Elizabethan period through the works of significant writers of poetry and plays of the time.

In recent years, Hallowe'en has seen a dramatic growth in popularity in the United Kingdom.<sup>68</sup> Every year, parents dress their children as ghosts and witches and openly encourage them to stalk the streets and knock on neighbours' doors in expectation of handouts. It is a custom commonly thought of as an American import from the late nineteen seventies and early eighties. Indeed there is ample evidence that the American film and television industry and associated marketing bodies contributed significantly to the popular modern incarnation of Hallowe'en in the United Kingdom not only through a series of horror movies such as John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978) and its subsequent five sequels and George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*<sup>69</sup> but more subtly and arguably more effectively through films such as Steven Spielberg's *E.T* (1982) in which the alien visitor (*E.T.*) is disguised in a sheet and led through the town on Hallowe'en in order to get him out of the house, and through popular children's television shows such as the 1966 showing of the Charles Schulz animation *Peanuts - It's the Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown* and *The Simpsons* annual 'Halloween Special'. However, this does not provide us with the full picture. Like many modern-day practices, the history and development of Hallowe'en, when subjected to scrutiny, reveal elements not usually recognised in more popular interpretations.

In exploring the history of any custom, early dictionary definitions can often prove insightful. Volume Two of the *Imperial Dictionary* of 1854 clearly indicates both the divinatory nature of Hallowe'en and feasting nature of

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<sup>67</sup> Leah Marcus *The Politics of Mirth* (Chicago and London, 1986)

<sup>68</sup> This has been seen not only in commercial growth, but academic interest, with an international Folklore conference in Glasgow on Halloween in 2006 seeing an unprecedented level of international attendance

<sup>69</sup> An informed account of this can be found in chapter five of Nicholas Rogers *Halloween: From Pagan Ritual To Party Night*, (Oxford, 2002)



'Hallowmas', by which this occasion is defined, in its definition of both of these terms.

Hallow-e'en, Hallow-even. The eve or vigil of All-Hallows or All Saints. In Scotland, the evening is frequently celebrated by meetings of young people, when various mystical ceremonies are performed with the view of determining future husbands and wives.

Hallowmas [A.Sax. halig, holy, and maesse, the mass, and also a feast, a festival.] The feast of All-Souls' Day, the former being the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, and the latter the second.

More recently, the Oxford English Dictionary entry for Hallow-e'en defines it as:

The eve of All Hallows or All Saints'; the last night of October. Also attrib. in the old Celtic calendar the year began on the first of November so that the last evening of October was the 'old year's night', the night of the witches, which the church transformed into the Eve of All Saints.

Much of the early folkloric evidence for Hallowe'en comes from Ireland, and Gaelic Scotland. As Leila Dudley Edwards clearly states, in her doctoral thesis *Modern expressions of a traditional festival*, Hallowe'en was, to the Scottish Gaels, known as 'Oidhche Shamhinn', with the 1<sup>st</sup> November known as 'an t-Samhuinn'<sup>70</sup>. In early medieval Ireland the feast of 'Samhain' or 'Samuin' (again on 1<sup>st</sup> November) is thought to have been a major festival lasting, in one account, up to three days either side of this date which marked the first of the quarter days<sup>71</sup>. It represented a turning point in the year when any fruit as well as cereal harvests had been collected, and livestock was slaughtered and salted down for the winter. It is hard to ascertain what, if any religious significance was attributed to the festival, although Samhain Eve in Ireland was also known as 'Puca' (or Goblin) Night. The fairies or 'little people' (who were believed to be as active on this night as the spirits of the dead are often thought to be) were feared, because they were supposed to be able to lure one to one's death with distant lights or to

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<sup>70</sup> Leila Dudley Edwards, *Modern expressions of a traditional festival Contemporary Paganism and Halloween* Unpublished Doctoral Thesis (Sheffield, 1998)

<sup>71</sup> Hutton, *Stations* p.361 & 386

steal young babies and take them to fairy-land, replacing them with fairies. Such dangers required certain precautions and appeasements, such as putting an offering of milk on the doorstep, and not venturing out after dark alone. Several recordings of such beliefs and fears associated with fairies at Hallowe'en can be found in Jack Santino's *The Hallowed Eve*<sup>72</sup>. The following brief extract of a testimony given in 1994 from County Monaghan highlights the way in which church iconography (holy water) and food ritual has been merged with fairy belief in order to ward off evil spirits at Hallowe'en.

Oaten meal and salt were mixed and sprinkled with holy water, and when the family sat round the table to this special meal on Halloweve, a pinch of the mixture was taken by the mother or some of the older members of the family, and the sign of the cross was made on the crown of the head of each member of the family. This was supposed to be a protection against evil spirits and the fairies would have no control over you during the year<sup>73</sup>.

Warding off evil spirits and fairies could also be achieved by wearing menacing masks, and thus fooling the spirits into believing that the wearer was 'one of them'. According to Caoimhin O Danachair (1965)<sup>74</sup> Hallowe'en 'guisers' were a common sight in the city of Dublin. The guisers were children dressed in grotesque outfits and masks who knocked on doors or approached passers-by. Rather than 'trick or treat', the mantra was "Help the Hallowe'en party – Any apples or nuts"<sup>75</sup>.

In Scotland, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Hallowe'en was associated with rustic divination practices, such as the observation of roasting nuts on the edge of the fire, and competitive apple bobbing. In Pennant's *A Tour in Scotland 1769* he states when describing Aberdeenshire in the vicinity of Banff that "The young people determine the figure and size of their husbands by drawing on cabbages blindfold on All-

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<sup>72</sup> Jack Santino *The Hallowed Eve: Dimensions of Culture in a Calendar Festival in Northern Ireland* (Kentucky, 1998)

<sup>73</sup> Santino, *Hallowed Eve* p.99

<sup>74</sup> Caoimhin O Danachair, 'Distribution Patterns in Irish Folk Tradition' in *Bealoideas* (1965) Vol.33 p.97-113

<sup>75</sup> O Danachair, *Distribution Patterns*. p.111

Hallows even, and like the English fling nuts into the fire;”.<sup>76</sup> In an appendix to Pennant’s work, written by the Reverend Mr Shaw, Minister of Elgin, Reverend Shaw remarks of the people of Elgin “On Hallow Even they have several superstitious customs”<sup>77</sup> although he does not expand on this remark.

The folklorist Ernest Marwick provides us with a number of Hallowe’en related divination practices in Orkney and Shetland, in his study *The Folklore of Orkney and Shetland*. One of the more unusual divination practices employed by anxious lovers included collecting nettles on Hallowe’en and then “placing them between the blankets of the loved one, [which] never failed to secure his (or her) affection.”<sup>78</sup> Scotland also provides one of the earliest examples of Hallowe’en in the form of Robert Burns late eighteenth century extensive poem *Hallowe’en*. The following first two verses provided here are enough to indicate the intriguing insight into the potential for richness, power and symbolism of the Hallowe’en festival that the poem provides:

Upon that night, when fairies light  
On Cassilis Downans dance,  
Or owre the lays, in splendid blaze,  
On sprightly coursers prance;  
Or for Colean the route is ta’en,  
Beneath the moon’s pale beams;  
There, up the cove, to stray and rove,  
Among the rocks and streams  
To sport that night.

Among the bonny winding banks,  
Where Doon rins, wimplin’ clear,  
Where Bruce ance ruled the martial ranks,  
And shook his Carrick spear,  
Some merry, friendly, country-folks,  
Together did convene,  
To burn their nits, and pou their stocks,  
And haud their Hallowe’en  
Fu’ blithe that night.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland* (London, 1776) p. 156

<sup>77</sup> Shaw, Reverend, ‘Appendix II, Of Elgin and the Shire of Murray’ in Pennant, *Tour* p.287

<sup>78</sup> Ernest Marwick, *The Folklore of Orkney and Shetland* (London, 1975)

<sup>79</sup> Robert Burns ‘Hallowe’en’ in Robert Burns *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Kilmarnock, 1786)

The Welsh referred to the 31st October as 'Nos Calan Gaeaf' meaning 'the eve of the first day of winter'.<sup>80</sup> There is little historical evidence of Hallowe'en in its modern form taking place within England much before the end of the nineteenth century, yet references to the festival can be found, such as those made in the form of popular rhyme within *The Denham Tracts* (1885) which recites:

Hey-how for Hallow-e'en,  
When all the witches are to be seen,  
Some in black and some in green,  
Hey-how for Hallowe'en.<sup>81</sup>

An even earlier reference to a divinatory saying connected with the amount of rainfall and overall temperature around Hallowe'en, in Yorkshire, is to be found in David Bogue's (1880) *Dyertifit English Folk-lore*.

If ducks do slide at Hollantide,  
At Christmas they will swim;  
If ducks do swim at Hollantide,  
At Christmas they will slide.<sup>82</sup>

Early attempts to capture the nature and history of Hallowe'en are often influenced by a widespread but unsubstantiated belief that its origins may be found in the practices of early pagan religions. Such views were espoused by such dominant figures as Edward Tylor, Andrew Lang, George Laurence Gomme and most notably James Frazer who dominated the study of folklore during the nineteenth and much of the early twentieth century<sup>83</sup>. Despite his wide public appeal, academic criticism of Frazer's work has been present from the outset. As Hutton states "Frazer was never accepted by most of the historians and theologians of his day,"<sup>84</sup> although seemingly adopted without question by early folklorists. Caricatured as an 'armchair scholar', Frazer undertook little if any primary research of his own, and the

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<sup>80</sup> Jonathan C Davies *Folklore of West and Mid-Wales* (Somerset, 1992) p.76

<sup>81</sup> James Hardy, (ed.), *The Denham Tracts: A Collection of Folklore by Michael Aislabie Denham*. Vol.2 (London, 1895) p.82

<sup>82</sup> David Bogue *Dyertifit, English Folk-lore* (London, 1880)

<sup>83</sup> Trubshaw, *Explore Folklore* p.10-16

<sup>84</sup> Ronald Hutton *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles: Their nature and legacy* (Oxford, 1991) p.326

lack of supporting evidence for the 'pagan survivals' theory of folk customs further undermines both his, and subsequent folklorists', work. Indeed, in describing the detrimental impact of Frazer's influence within the study of folklore, Trubshaw regards the "paganisation" of folklore as nothing short of a "fabrication that pervades British Folklore". While there is an undeniable shift towards more historic lines of inquiry amongst folklorists at the time of writing, it is equally fair to say that folklorists of the early to mid twentieth century, following in the footsteps of Frazer, formulated and promoted ideas that paid scant regard for what Hutton refers to as "the proper conduct of historical research".<sup>85</sup> Such inadequacies are exemplified by the likes of W. H Davenport Adams in his 1882 account of the origins of Hallowe'en in which he states

...In the prehistoric past, the Druids at this time celebrated their great autumn Fire-Festival, insisting that all fires, except their own, should be extinguished, so as to compel men to purchase the sacred fire at a certain price... Needless to say that the sacred fire has vanished with the Druids, but the Halloween customs which still survive may be traced back to a hoar antiquity.<sup>86</sup>

The early studies of Hallowe'en interpreted as a fire festival are also explored in the anthropological works of James Frazer, arguably the most well known of Victorian folklorists and undoubtedly the main target for later condemnation of his period of folklore studies<sup>87</sup>. Hallowe'en fires as part of a 'Celtic' fire festival have been called into question by Hutton<sup>88</sup>, who amongst other things criticizes Frazer for his lack of written evidence. Hutton goes on partially to endorse Frazer's findings in arguing that Hallowe'en fires did take place, but argues that such fires were restricted to the Highland line of Scotland and northern parts of Wales. There is nothing to suggest that such

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<sup>85</sup> Hutton, *Stations* p. 424

<sup>86</sup> W.H Davenport Adams, *Curiosities of Superstitions and Sketches of Some Unrevealed Religions*, (London, 1882)

<sup>87</sup> For a detailed examination of the way in which early folklorists collected and recorded popular antiquities and superstitions, particularly with reference to the intellectual subtext of folkloric practitioners such as John Brand's *Observations on Popular Antiquities* including the whole of Mr Bourne's *Antiquities Vulgares*, (London, 1777) – made further use of in chapter three. see also Alexandra Walsham 'Recording Superstition in Early Modern Britain: The origins of Folklore' *Past and Present* supplement 3, *The Religion of Fools* (2008) Vol.199 178-206

<sup>88</sup> Hutton, *Stations*

fires were widespread across the country as a whole, or indeed that there any such fire festivals or practices enjoyed an unbroken lineage between the pre-Christian Celts and contemporary society<sup>89</sup>.

More recently there are two theses of relevance to this study. The first, as mentioned above, is Leila Dudley Edwards (1998) study *Modern expressions of a traditional festival: Contemporary Paganism and Hallowe'en*<sup>90</sup>. This study is indebted to her work, in that it covers much of the initial groundwork into the exploration of Hallowe'en as practiced by a given section of society, within a contemporary context. Her assessment of the changing stances adopted by folklorists in an attempt to gain academic credibility is particularly worthy of note. As its title suggests, Dudley Edwards' work looks to the beliefs and practices of contemporary Paganism in relation to Hallowe'en celebrations, through her colourful descriptions of her fieldwork using both questionnaires with recorded interviews and participant observations in Glastonbury. Much of her findings illuminate the subjective and fluid celebratory nature of Pagans' approach to both Paganism and Hallowe'en: a position echoed in the findings of the current work. Edwards also provides a generous historical overview of the feast of All Saints and All Souls.

The second is an unpublished American thesis by Karen Sue Hybertsen *The return to chaos: The uses and interpretations of Hallowe'en in the United States from the Victorian era to the present*<sup>91</sup>. Hybertsen's (1993) study again makes use of participant observation, noting not only how the custom is expressed on a individual house to house level, but also with respect to Hallowe'en parades and the development of Hallowe'en as a civic event. More generally the work follows a sociological rather than historical line addressing the role that Hallowe'en plays within the community.

Hybertsen's thesis shortly preceded a wave of American academic interest in Hallowe'en, not least by Jack Santino who in 1994 published a collection of academic writings entitled *Halloween and other Festivals of*

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<sup>89</sup> See Ronald Hutton, *The Pagan Religions* p.143

<sup>90</sup> Dudley Edwards, *Modern Expressions*

<sup>91</sup> Karen Sue Hybertsen *The return to chaos: The uses and interpretations of Hallowe'en in the United States from the Victorian era to the present*. Unpublished thesis (Drew University, 1993)

*Death and Life*<sup>92</sup>, and his later cultural study of Hallowe'en in Northern Ireland *The Hallowed Eve*.<sup>93</sup> Others including Bill Ellis<sup>94</sup>, Russell W. Belk<sup>95</sup> and Jack Kugelmass<sup>96</sup> are particularly worthy of note in that they chart the way in which Hallowe'en has been re-moulded to suit social and cultural interests. Ellis's study charts the changes in Hallowe'en customs in response to urban myths of treat-doctoring and examines the emergence of the 'safe Hallowe'en' party aimed at protecting children from the perceived dangers of the festival and into which the traditional childhood Trick-or-Treat custom appears to be contracting'. Belk, on the other hand, focuses on the expansion of the limits of Hallowe'en into the adult arena as carnivalesque features emerge comparable to Mardi-gras or other seasonal parades. He goes on to examine how the influence of corporate America is taking this aspect of the festival beyond Trick-or-Treat to the nightclubs, restaurants and shopping malls where the adult dollar can more readily be harvested. Kugelmass' less cynical take on the emergence of the carnival Hallowe'en identifies social benefits that comes from a festival of liberation and the celebration of difference – particularly in the area of sexuality and gender-ambiguity.

An instance of a piece of Hallowe'en-based academic research with a very concentrated focus concerns the use of language employed during Hallowe'en activities in Boston. This consisted of a short (1976) study by Jean Berko Gleason and Sandra Weintraub<sup>97</sup> into the words spoken by Trick-or-treating children and the responses received from the adults visited. Their observations and recordings of one hundred and fifteen children aged between two and sixteen over a two year period identified now very typical 'trick or treat' interactions. This consisted of a survey of the routine which

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<sup>92</sup> Jack Santino ed., *Halloween and Other Festivals of Death and Life* (Knoxville, 1994). See also 'Halloween in America Contemporary Customs and Performances' *Western Folklore* [e-journal] Vol.42 1, (1983) Available through Jstor database [Accessed 29 August 2010]

<sup>93</sup> Santino, *Hallowed Eve*.

<sup>94</sup> Bill Ellis ' 'Safe Spooks' New Halloween Traditions in Response to Sadism Legends' in Santino, *Halloween and Other*

<sup>95</sup> Russell W Belk 'Carnival, Control and Corporate Culture in Contemporary Halloween Celebrations' in Santino, *Halloween and Other Festivals*

<sup>96</sup> Jack Kugelmass, *Masked Culture The Greenwich Village Halloween Parade* (New York, 1994)

<sup>97</sup> Jean Berko Gleason and Sandra Weintraub 'The Acquisition of Routines in Child Language' in *Language in Society* (August 1976) Vol.5 No.2 p.129-136

commences with the child knocking on the door. When the door is opened, the child typically says 'trick or treat'. The adult then replies with a short response such as 'oh my goodness' or 'Hello' and then gives the child some 'candy' (sweets). The child responds by saying thank-you and starts to leave. Both then say goodbye. These findings highlight the strict routine associated with this occasion which the authors identify as a form of ritual and which, with minor exceptions (such as 'Oh my goodness') proves consistent with the findings of the present study as explored in greater detail in Chapter Three.

A contrasting approach to the subject derives from study of the extensive photographic evidence provided by Kugelmass in his ethnographic study of the Greenwich Village Hallowe'en parade. The parade dates back to 1974, and illustrates how Hallowe'en in Greenwich has been adopted by the gay community. Far from being a small localised phenomenon, Kugelmass has shown that the Greenwich Village Hallowe'en parade attracts hundreds of thousands of people onto the streets. The predominantly adult participants put a great deal of time and resources into often very flamboyant and explicit costumes. It is regarded as a time when the participants feel able, without fear of recriminations, to express themselves and their sexuality. Although the work of Kugelmass does not fall into the strict category of academic or scholarly works, it does provide us with valuable insight through both photographic evidence and informal interview techniques, as to the powerful way in which adults can be seen to explore and exploit the qualities of Hallowe'en in a given location.

Nicholas Rogers' (2002) book entitled *Hallowe'en: from Pagan Ritual to Party Night*, seeks to provide an overview of the history of the American Hallowe'en in relation to its Celtic roots and draws attention to Hallowe'en being an occasion for the practice of divination in the 19<sup>th</sup> century across the British Isles and North America. Its main emphasis is on the tradition as it migrated to, and took hold in, North America, at the turn of the twentieth century, with particular references to the representation of Hallowe'en within the American film industry.

He does, however, make reference to earlier customs, undertaken on or around All Saints and All Souls, in particular citing Tusser's 1580 account of 'Good Husbandry' in which reference is made to the slaughtering and



salting down of livestock. "At Hallontide slaughter time entereth in." Rogers proceeds to look at the associations of Hallowtide (1<sup>st</sup> November) and All Souls (2<sup>nd</sup> November) with honouring the dead and divination. Many of his assertions rely upon relating modern practices to earlier traditions as practiced in Ireland. The text also builds on Rogers' earlier paper *Hallowe'en in Urban North America*<sup>98</sup> which unfortunately duplicates the obstinate, yet crucially unsubstantiated belief still seemingly held by the majority of scholars on the topic, that modern Hallowe'en practices have their origins in those of the Pagan festival of Samhain<sup>99</sup>. This aside, Rogers' (1995) paper concentrates on assessing the continued fascination for the festival during the twentieth century, arguing that the festival has been assimilated into a consumer culture. Rogers identifies traits within the current incarnation of Hallowe'en that he regards as 'liminal' (relating to the social process of transition as developed by the social anthropologist Victor Turner) and utilises the concept of 'hyper-reality' (drawn from authors such as the French social theorist Jean Baudrillard and the Italian intellectual Umberto Eco) to emphasise the way in which Hallowe'en serves as a vehicle for social wish-fulfilment, particularly where the wish is for liberation, self-expression or indulgence of fantasy (making particular reference to emerging carnivalesque Hallowe'en traditions, often drawing on imagery from Hollywood and television shows). In so doing, Rogers' contribution is to suggest a sociological purpose for the festival which he maintains has propelled it from relative obscurity in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century to its present-day mass appeal.

Reflecting in 1988 on his childhood memories of Hallowe'en in the 1950s and 1960s, Norman Craig's letter to the Independent newspaper describes a vivid account of the custom as practiced in Belfast. Interestingly Craig draws upon the similarities between the more 'traditional' macabre Hallowe'en and the American 'trick or treat'

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<sup>98</sup>Nicholas Rogers, *Hallowe'en in Urban North America*. [Online] Conference paper (April, 1995) [Accessed 15/2/11]

<sup>99</sup> Santino does acknowledge that the earliest known accounts of Samhain come from Irish sagas, and that these were written down some five hundred years after the arrival of Christian missionaries. While oral traditions may well preserve considerable detail, caution should be exercised when drawing direct inferences from sources of this kind without corroborative evidence.

We celebrated Hallowe'en by dressing as witches and ghosts and going door to door with turnip lanterns to frighten the adults. The terrified adults would then give us sweets, money, and applecakes with sixpences baked in them, to make us go away. Sounds a bit like 'trick or treat to me. So, as much as I like to blame the US for destroying much of the fabric of our society, in this case we should be thanking them for resurrecting a traditional seasonal British pastime.<sup>100</sup>

Further academic interest in Hallowe'en took a dramatic, if short lived<sup>101</sup>, increase in 2006 with a two day international conference on Hallowe'en at the Caledonian University, Glasgow. Many of the papers presented have now been published as *Treat or Trick? Halloween in a Globalising World* (2009). The papers presented focussed on various aspects of the tradition, not least the degree to which Hallowe'en as a festival has migrated around the world. Accounts were given from the Netherlands, Slovenia, Russia, Sweden and Transylvania as well as from more familiar sources such as Scotland, Wales, Ireland and the Americas.<sup>102</sup> Many of the papers also highlighted the commercial aspects of the custom and the tourist industry that has sprung up around it. It is worth mentioning here that for many of the presenters, the growing commercial impact of the custom was a significant theme in their papers.

America's neighbour to the north is the setting for a vivid and colourful account of Hallowe'en in Toronto between 1884 and 1910 and can be found in Keith Walden's 1987 paper *Respectable Hooligans*<sup>103</sup>. Making use of both anthropological insights and historical methods the paper employs contemporary-to-the-time newspaper accounts to describe in detail the organised events carried out by male Toronto college students on Hallowe'en. The account differs from wider conventional accounts of

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<sup>100</sup> Norman Craig (1988) (no title given) in Roy Palmer *Britain's Living Folklore* (Wales, 1995) p.124

<sup>101</sup> This is not true of populist books on the subject. At the time of writing there is over 15,000 books on Hallowe'en. The majority of these have been aimed at children and cover a range of stories, sticker-books and suggestions for Hallowe'en parties, costumes and decorations.

<sup>102</sup> Malcolm Foley and Hugh O'Donnell (eds.), *Treat or Trick? Halloween In A Globalising World* (Newcastle Upon Tyne, 2009) A full copy of the conference programme can also be found at <http://www.gcal.ac.uk/halloween/programme.html>

<sup>103</sup> Keith Walden 'Respectable Hooligans: Male Toronto College Students Celebrate Hallowe'en, 1884-1910' *Canadian Historical Review* (1987) Vol.86 No.1. 1-34

Hallowe'en antics, in that the evening's events evolved over successive years to incorporate three distinct sections, consisting of a march from the campus down into the town to the theatre house, attending a performance at the theatre, and a post-theatre march. Walden's examination of the students' Hallowe'en celebrations transcends a straightforward descriptive account, arguing that the rowdy antics served as a "Useful mechanism which helped students and others adjust to an emerging modern urban situation".<sup>104</sup> In other words it served a functional role, along with many other ritualistic practices, parties and rites-of-passage-based activities as a transitional aid to younger students who were often moving from small rural settings into a busy urban environment. What makes Walden's study particularly interesting is that it considers the social function and meaning of Hallowe'en for a specific social group. However, the students' Hallowe'en celebrations co-existed, as they do today, alongside the regular Hallowe'en activities of small children and youths. The meaning and function of Hallowe'en therefore shifts not simply over time, but fluidly within various sections of society.

Closer to home, Doug Sandle's *Hop tu naa, my father's gone away – a personal and cultural account of the Manx Halloween*, is particularly worthy of note in that it examines the changing face of Hallowe'en, or 'Hop tu naa', in the Isle of Man from the 1950s onwards. Consideration is given to the way in which traditional songs such as 'Hop Tune Nay' and traditional lanterns carved from turnips have in recent years jostled for position with the trappings of a growing Americanised expression of Hallowe'en. The paper, also presented at the Hallowe'en Conference, draws on Sandle's personal memories of Hop tu naa, the name of both the song sung and the name given to the evening, supported by a number of respondents to surveys carried out on the Island. In describing the custom of Hop tu naa during the 1950s Sandle recounts that:

on the evening of October 31<sup>st</sup> I would go round to neighbours' houses with a turnip and candle lantern, carved with a crude "witch's" face. As was then the custom throughout the Isle of Man, along with my friends

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<sup>104</sup> Walden, *Respectable Hooligans* p.2

we would knock on doors, sing a song and hopefully receive money for fireworks for Guy Fawkes Night<sup>105</sup>.

The findings present a nostalgia for a pre-American expression of the custom, somewhat vindicated by the growing revival both of Hop tu naa and the Manx language. Although Sanders is clear that the name 'Hallowe'en' was not associated historically with the Hop tu naa tradition, the carved lanterns and their association with the macabre, clearly have a certain overlap with the later, more widely known Hallowe'en. What remains unique to the Isle of Man, is the various versions of the Hop tu naa song, of which the following is but one.

Hop-tu-naa, Hop-tu-naa,  
Jinny the witch flew over the house  
to fetch a stick to lather the mouse,  
Hop-tu-naa,  
my father's gone away  
and won't be back until the morning.<sup>106</sup>

Sander's account of the uneasy interplay between the traditional Hop-tu-naa and what is regarded as the new imposed American version of Hallowe'en is far from unique. There is a growing tendency among academics internationally to regard the festival as a manifestation of American cultural imperialism, and this theme has been the focus of a number of recent studies on the topic. For example Stanley Brandes (1998) paper *The Day of the Dead*<sup>107</sup> examined the extent to which the American commercialisation of Hallowe'en has impacted upon the original Mexican day of the dead festival. The festival has its roots in the observation of the Roman Catholic holy days of All Saints (1<sup>st</sup> November) and All Souls (2<sup>nd</sup> November), and therefore shares features common with many European celebrations. But beyond those aspects deriving from the European Catholic tradition, the wider secular celebrations have come to be regarded as

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<sup>105</sup> Doug Sandle 'Hop Tu Naa, My Father's Gone Away – A Personal and Cultural Account of The Manx "Halloween"' in Foley et al, *Treat or Trick?* p.83-104

<sup>106</sup> Sandle, *Hop Tu Naa* p.84

<sup>107</sup> Stanley Brandes 'The Day of the Dead, Hallowe'en and the Quest for Mexican Identity' in *The Journal of American Folklore* [e-journal] Vol.111 No.442 (Autumn, 1998) 359-380 Available through: Jstor Database. [Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2010]

symbolic of Mexican cultural identity. According to Brandes the celebration take the form of:

colourful... carnivalesque ritual performances and artistic displays. Decorated breads, paper cut-outs and plastic toys... [furthermore] Mexicans clear, decorate, maintain and watch over relatives' graves. Everything from expensive tombstones to simple earthen-mounded burial sites are adorned with flowers, candles and food, aesthetically arranged to honour the deceased<sup>108</sup>.

The macabre elements of the festival have clear parallels with the more widely celebrated Hallowe'en, and it is perhaps not surprising that America would regard the Mexican festival as an economic opportunity. Indeed, American commercial interest in the festival has led to a significant rise of Hallowe'en products such as skeletons, skulls and pumpkins across Mexico. Despite this seeming merger of cultural expression, Brandes argues that, although Hallowe'en and the Day of the Dead festival share common origins, many Mexicans, in contrast to the Day of the Dead festival, regard Hallowe'en as a heavily commercialised and profane holiday. Consequently, American commercial interests are often regarded by Mexicans as undermining the sanctity of the festival and in turn the folkloric origins of Mexican cultural heritage. To this end, the American Hallowe'en and the Mexican Day of the Dead festival have become symbolic of Mexico's struggle against the force of American imperialism.

The feast of All Saints, as the European precursor to Mexico's Day of the Dead, has persisted for over a millennium and has expressed itself in a variety of forms in different parts of the world. The feast was formally introduced by the church as early as 837 and although there is still uncertainty as to when the feast started to develop an association with the dead in general, Hutton (1994) argues that this was well established by the fourteenth century<sup>109</sup>. The origin of All Souls, in which prayers are said for the souls of the faithful dead, (initially monks) to help them on their perceived journey through purgatory to eventual salvation, appears to first gain recognition at the beginning of the seventh century, at the time of the

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<sup>108</sup> Brandes, *Day of the Dead* p.360

<sup>109</sup> Hutton, *Rise and Fall*

Archbishop, later Saint, Isidore of Seville (d.636) and was assigned to the Monday after Pentecost<sup>110</sup>. The shift to November 2<sup>nd</sup> has been attributed to the reformer Odilo, the abbot of Cluny (d.1049) who not only shifted the date, but also extended the commemoration to “all the dead who have existed from the beginning of the world to the end of time”.<sup>111</sup> The doctrine of purgatory as practiced by the Catholic Church gained significant prominence during the latter half of the thirteenth century<sup>112</sup> and from the beginning of the fifteenth century until the Reformation it was considered universal<sup>113</sup>.

The introduction and first reading of the new Prayer Book in 1552 might have consigned the festival to the same fate as other holy days, such as the feast of St Nicholas and St George, in the same way that it removed the prayers for the dead and abolished other individual saints' days. Instead, the new book was first read on All Saints' Day, and this date joined Sundays and New Year's Day amongst the few subsequently recognised dates in the church calendar. The survival may have been something of a compromise, given the extensive nature of the Prayer Books' revisions, and the somewhat anomalous selection of saints' days to be retained<sup>114</sup>. It is perhaps worthy of note that the reading of the new prayer book on All Saints' Day corresponded to the date of Martin Luther's display of his 95 theses to the door of All Saints church in Wittenberg on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1517, at least according to the date given by the German reformer and theologian Phillip Melanchthon (1546)<sup>115</sup>. Thus this significant moment in English protestant history echoed the acknowledged inception of the Reformation in mainland Europe.

Though this practice was not confined to any one given date, All Souls Day, the day after All Saints, provided a focal point within the church calendar and survived, if only in name, despite the denunciation of purgatory during the Reformation, through to the present day. Though the concept of Purgatory may well have remained it is considered unlikely that the once common practices surrounding All Saints and All Souls, such as ringing

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<sup>110</sup> David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*. Third Edition. (Oxford, 1992)

<sup>111</sup> Farmer, *Oxford Dictionary of Saints* p.16

<sup>112</sup> Jacques Le Goff *The Birth of Purgatory* (London, 1984)

<sup>113</sup> Keith Thomas *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, 1971)

<sup>114</sup> Farmer, *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*

<sup>115</sup> Phillip Melanchthon, 1546 in Martin Brecht *Martin Luther: His road to Reformation, 1483-1521* Trans. James L. Schaaf (Philadelphia, 1985) p.12-27

church bells, and lighting candles, survived beyond the sixteenth century<sup>116</sup> despite a notable, if short lived, revival of many of the old church observances following Mary's ascension to the throne in 1553.<sup>117</sup> The practice of bell ringing to accompany the souls of the dead proved to be one of the more resistant of practices outlawed under Elizabethan rule. Despite being formally forbidden in the new liturgy of 1559, the practise of ringing bells for the dead on All Saints' Night continued across the country in clear defiance for a further thirty years<sup>118</sup>. According to Rogers<sup>119</sup> the practice of bell ringing on All Saints' Night resulted in many people being brought before the church courts throughout the 1560s.

Less formal appeasements for the dead, took the form of 'Souling'.<sup>120</sup> The baking of soul-bread and the acting out of soul-cake plays were traditionally carried out, at least in Cheshire, on All Souls Eve. According to the Folklorist Alex Helm<sup>121</sup>, the connected themes of death and revival inherent in the variation of the Mummers play made the Eve of All Souls an ideal time for its performance. The Opies also make reference to 'Souling' on either All Souls or the preceding All Saints' Day in rural Cheshire. The practice involves children, again going door-to-door, singing rhymes with the expectation of a small gift, either in the form of food or money. Practiced on or around All Souls Day (2<sup>nd</sup> November), the Opies provide variations of the songs sung, including the following 1958 account from Tunstall, north Staffordshire:

Soul, Soul for an apple or two,  
If you've got no apples pears will do;  
If you've no pears ha'pennies will do,  
If you've got no ha'pennies God bless you.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Hutton, *Rise and Fall*

<sup>117</sup> R.H. Pogson, 'Revival and Reform in Mary Tudor's Church: a Question of Money', in Christopher Haigh, (ed.), *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge, 1987) 139-157

<sup>118</sup> Hutton, *Stations*

<sup>119</sup> Rogers, *Halloween*

<sup>120</sup> See Charlotte Burne 'Souling, Clementing and Cattening. Three November Customs of the Western Midlands' *Folklore* [e-journal] Vol.25 3 (1914) 285-299 Available through: Jstor database. [Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2009] and Alex Helm 'The Cheshire Soul-Caking Play' *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society* [e-journal] Vol.6 2, (1950) 45-50 Available through: Jstor database. [Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2009]

<sup>121</sup> Burne, 'Souling' p.45

<sup>122</sup> Palmer, *Punkies*. p.298

A further descriptive account from the Opies is provided of Mischief Night on the 4<sup>th</sup> November, in which ingenious pranks are played by children on adults, often under the assumption that they would legally 'get away with it' on that night, and Guy Fawkes Day on the 5<sup>th</sup> November, as well as Hallowe'en on the 31<sup>st</sup> October. They describe Hallowe'en and related days as part of a "major childhood festival which can be seen across Britain, from Somerset to Saltburn including Derby, Stoke-on-Trent; the West Ridings; Leeds; Pontypool as well as Wales, Scotland and Ireland". Although each of these days is celebrated independently of the rest, they all occur within a few days of each other and the chief activities occur after dark. Indeed the Opies suppose these to be more intimately connected, maintaining that customs such as bringing out of turnip lanterns on Mischief Night (which they record as practiced by contemporary schoolchildren) are 'evidence that Mischief Night is in origin a postponed celebration of Hallowe'en deranged by the newer and more robust commemoration of the Gunpowder Plot' although further support for this hypothesis is lacking and their researches do not appear to identify examples of such mischief on Hallowe'en as early as the date of the 'newer' Gunpowder Plot.

It is worth noting the extensive research that Callum Brown has done into the historical culture and custom of the Up-helly-aa festival in Lerwick, Shetland. In his account he explores the mischief and misrule associated with Yule time celebrations during 1800-72. Although not itself an Autumn custom, it does mirror Mischief Night and in many cases exceeds many of the activities enacted in that, including drunken revelries, tarring of houses, the dragging, and later carting of flaming tar barrels from one end of the main street to the other, and the widespread shooting out of windows, and general unruly behaviour. In contrast to the view that Mischief Night is the preserve of children, in Shetland at least, during this time, this was far from the case. As Brown states, "In the 1860s, Christmas was for boys' pranks, New Year was for men's full blown mischief".<sup>123</sup> What is interesting is that whilst the mischief associated with Lerwick resonated with the late medieval practice of 'misrule' it was born of a new, modernising semi-industrial society. Unlike the rural

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<sup>123</sup> Brown *Up-helly-aa*



Mischief Night of May Eve, [see below] the mischief and misrule of Lerwick, was that of an industrial town, and thus has more in common with that of the Mischief Night of the 4<sup>th</sup> November in the industrial centres such as Leeds. The demise of mischief in Lerwick and the successive construction of the Uphelly-aa tradition can lend great weight in understanding the social and cultural complexities concerning the demise or otherwise of a given tradition, and this will be explored in Chapter Four.

Finally, a more recognisable festive occasion, at least on the British mainland, is the annual lighting of bonfires on 5<sup>th</sup> November. From early modern times, it had become common in England for public celebrations to mark the anniversaries of royal birthdays, marriages and military victories, and, as with other calendar events, such celebrations found expression in the ringing of church bells; the provision of barrels of beer and food by civic authorities; and the lighting of public bonfires.<sup>124</sup> Such celebrations reflected the calendar instituted earlier in the sixteenth century with Elizabeth I's contribution to the Reformation, in which such celebrations replaced many of the religious rites of the Catholic year.<sup>125</sup> Successive monarchs continued to change and adapt the calendar as key events fell in and out of favour. Against this backdrop of change, the nature of Guy Fawkes celebrations developed from a formalised celebration, at its inception, to a festival of the common people.<sup>126</sup>

James Sharpe's *Remember Remember*<sup>127</sup> reflects upon the nature and history of Guy Fawkes' Night<sup>128</sup>. As well as covering the story of the Gunpowder Plot, a major focus of the text is to provide a historical analysis of catholic and protestant relations during the late eighteenth and the whole of the nineteenth centuries. The final chapter adds to the limited historical material on contemporary calendar customs by reflecting upon the 5<sup>th</sup> November bonfires in the first few years of the twenty first century. It supplies us with a brief account of the November bonfire in a North Yorkshire village which provides interesting reading before giving way to earlier twentieth

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<sup>124</sup> Cressy, *Bonfires* p.13-33

<sup>125</sup> Hutton, *Rise and Fall* p146-148

<sup>126</sup> Griffin, *England's Revelry*.

<sup>127</sup> James Sharpe, *Remember Remember: A Cultural History of Guy Fawkes Day* (Cambridge, 2005)

<sup>128</sup> See also David Cressy, *Bonfire and Bells* (Gloucestershire, 2004)

century accounts and observations of celebrations in other parts of the world. The focus, however, then shifts and Sharpe takes a comparative approach, drawing parallels between anti-catholic fears in the mid seventeenth century, and supposed contemporary British fears around Islam and al-Qaeda.

It is worth considering possible links between all these traditions. One writer who gave some consideration to this is the folklorist Ervin Beck. Beck made a significant contribution to the study of the English Hallowe'en and autumn traditions in his 1985 surveys based on six hundred and forty nine questionnaires between seven schools<sup>129</sup>. Much of his emphasis draws on his theory of a gradual amalgamation of Hallowe'en with Bonfire night and Guy Fawkes' celebrations which could be seen as a reversal of the Opies' suggestion that Mischief Night is derived from Hallowe'en. Beck's evidence, in the main, takes the form of observations of fires and fireworks being lit from Hallowe'en onwards as well as children's costume and door to door exploits occurring right up to Bonfire night. As findings from this and other studies will show, this is clearly not representative of the whole picture. Indeed Hutton (1996),<sup>130</sup> who provides an extensive and comprehensive history of the adjoining festivals of Hallowe'en and Bonfire Night, as well as May Day, does not see fit to suggest such direct links between these festivals. Furthermore, he does make reference to Mischief Night in passing in light of these dates, and acknowledgement of his contributions to the subject will be presented throughout.

What Beck does do is to present a view of the Hallowe'en-Bonfire festival as a 'function of child-lore'. That is, a means of allowing children to reverse the adult – child role: to be able, through disguise and through play, to dominate the world of the adult in a way usually forbidden. The theory is based on the premise that celebrations such Hallowe'en and Bonfire night have no comparable adult involvement; that they are exclusively for the benefit of children.

### **Autumn Customs in Leeds and the Yorkshire Area.**

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<sup>129</sup> Beck, *Children's Guy Fawkes Customs*

<sup>130</sup> Hutton, *Stations*

Leeds and the other industrial towns of West Yorkshire, tied by geography and trade routes to their equivalents on the other side of the Pennines have historically shared with them much of the same language and culture so it is not surprising to find some of the autumn customs sharing many of the same features. In many respects, the autumnal calendar customs, such as Guy Fawkes Night celebrations and trick-or-treat practiced at the time of writing in Leeds can be seen as the local expression of traditions duplicated across the British Isles. Joseph Strutt<sup>131</sup>, for example, draws our attention to Mr Brand's late eighteenth century account of All-Hallows Eve activities who states that

Hallow Even is the vigil of All Saints' Day. It is customary on this night with young people in the North to dive for apples, catch at them when stuck at one end of a kind of hanging beam, at the other extremity of which is fixed a lighted candle, and that with their mouths only, having their hands tied behind their back; with many other fooleries. Nuts and apples chiefly compose the entertainment, and from the custom of flinging the former into the fire, it has doubtless had its vulgar name of Nutcrack-Night. The catching at the Apple and Candle at least puts one in mind of the antient [sic] English game of the Quintain, which is now almost forgotten, and of which a description may be found in Stow's Survey of London.<sup>132</sup>

Yet, interwoven in the history of such customs is the further childhood tradition of Mischief Night, explored in detail in Chapter Four. The findings of this study place the geography of Mischief Night predominantly across Yorkshire and into Lancashire. There is very little evidence to suggest that it has any historical currency further afield. In this respect the ongoing tradition of Mischief Night, alongside the modern expression of Hallowe'en and Guy Fawkes activities is a phenomenon that is particular to the region, and particularly prevalent in the Leeds and Bradford area.

The writings of Samuel Bamford,<sup>133</sup> show that mischief was also to be found in and around Middleton, Lancashire in the late eighteenth century but that such mischief was associated principally with May Eve. The apparent

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<sup>131</sup> Joseph Strutt *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (London, 1838) p.391

<sup>132</sup> John Brand *Observations on Popular Antiquities* including the whole of Mr Bourne's *Antiquities Vulgares*, (London, 1777) p.343

<sup>133</sup> Samuel Bamford (1788-1872), *Early Days* (London, 1849) p.144-5

shift in date from May eve to the eve of Guy Fawkes night will be explored more fully in Chapter Four, but it is worth highlighting here Bamford's account of 'Mischief-neet' in Middleton since it not only adequately describes the sort of activities carried out, but also illustrates the point that early accounts of this custom can be found not only in the region of Leeds, but in parts of Lancashire too. Bamford states:

The night of the first of May was "Mischief-neet", when, as "there is a time for all things," any one having a grudge against a neighbour was at liberty to indulge it, providing he kept his own council. On these occasions it was lawful to throw a neighbour's gate off the angles, to pull up his fence, to trample his garden, to upset a cart that might be found at hand, to set cattle astray, or to perform any other freak, whether in the street, house-yard, or field, which might suggest itself or be suggested.<sup>134</sup>

More general accounts of the rural practices in England, such as William Howitt's *The Rural Life of England*<sup>135</sup> published nearly forty years after Bamford's account of a childhood in the final years of the eighteenth century, makes no reference to Mischief Night, either by name or by practice. Much of the material gathered for this study (see Chapter Four) places the practice firmly within the Yorkshire and Lancashire. Whilst it is fair to say that this may to some extent reflect the geographical focus of the research, there has been very little convincing evidence to suggest that the practice is to be found further afield. In the absence of evidence it therefore seems reasonable to suppose that such practices in England, at least in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, did not venture far beyond the boundaries of Yorkshire and Lancashire.

Given that Hallowe'en is a festival with close associations with the 'other-worldly' and the dead, it is worth exploring how dramatic changes in the authorised practice of the precursor to the modern form of Hallowe'en, 'All Saints' and 'All souls' impacted upon the Leeds area. Pre-Reformation England made much of the occasion, with many parishes ringing church bells and lighting candles in order to comfort and aid the dead through their

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<sup>134</sup> Bamford, *Early Days* p.144

<sup>135</sup> William Howitt *Rural Life of England* (London, 1888)

journey through purgatory. Since this practice was widespread across the country<sup>136</sup>, it would seem highly plausible that such practices were also carried out in the Leeds area.<sup>137</sup> However, as said the Elizabethan Reformation finally dropped All Souls from the 1559 liturgy where previous attempts under Henry VIII and Edward VI had failed.

Whilst formal practices associated with All Saints may have been quelled, the old ideas of Purgatory, and practices associated with praying for the souls of the dead to aid their progress in the after-life, undoubtedly lingered on. Denied the sanction of the church, Catholics in Whalley, Lancashire were recorded lighting fires late at night on the eve of All Saints and continue to pray for the dead. According to Hutton<sup>138</sup>, the practice involved families gathering on a near-by hill, and knelt in a circle praying for the souls of friends and relatives until the flames of a small fire, called 'tindles', lit from of a burning fork of straw burnt out. The survival of this practice seems to have continued in Lancashire as late as the nineteenth century.

The pre-Reformation practice of baking soul-cakes, a type of oat cake was, according to Hutton<sup>139</sup> (1995) a widespread custom in many parts of the country including Lancashire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire. Early published evidence of the practice can be found in the tract *Festyvall*, 1511: "We read in old time good people would on All Hallowsen Day bake bread and deal it for all Christian souls"<sup>140</sup> The nature and form of its distribution was further expanded upon in Thomas Blount's 1674 publication *Glossographia* in which he states:

All Souls Day, November 2d: the custom of Soul Mass Cakes, which are a kind of oat cakes, that some of the richer sorts of persons in Lancashire and Herefordshire (among the papists there) use still to give the poor upon this day; and they, in retribution of their charity, hold themselves obliged to say this old couplet:

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<sup>136</sup> Hutton, *Stations*

<sup>137</sup> There 'Leeds area' here includes Leeds and the wider West Riding.

<sup>138</sup> Hutton, *Stations* p.372-373

<sup>139</sup> Ronald Hutton 'The English Reformation and the Evidence of Folklore' *Past and Present* [e-journal] Vol.148 1 (1995) 89-116 Available through: Oxford Journals Database [Accessed 24 July 2008]

<sup>140</sup> Hutton, 'English Reformation' .p.106

God have your soul,  
Bones and all<sup>141</sup>

Whilst it is questionable whether or not the association between Souling activities and notions of Purgatory continued into the twentieth or even long into the nineteenth century, it is interesting to note that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century children in the West Ridings often constructed 'Wassail-Boxes'. The Wassail Box was carried door to door during early November. A detailed description of the practice can be found in E Writes 1909 article *A Yorkshire "Wassail Box"*. The picture below, from the same article, shows the typical contents of the box, two dolls, holly, mistletoe, fruit, sweets and a purse with a hole in it.



The box, after being put together, is then covered as the children move from house to house. The occupants of each house are then

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<sup>141</sup> Hutton, 'English Reformation' .p.106

summoned by a rendition of the hymn 'God rest you merry gentlemen'. The occupants are then asked if they wish to see the contents of the box. Considered to be a Catholic tradition, Wright's informant claimed that the two dolls are representative of the Virgin and Child. Variants include the dolls being placed in a clothes basket covered with a white cloth, as seen in Mirfield, West Yorkshire. The adapted concluding chorus of the hymn gave voice to the purpose of the event.

We have a little purse,  
It's made of leather skin,  
We want a little of your money  
To line it well within.  
Our boots are very old,  
And our clothes are very thin;  
We're tired out with wandering around,  
And if we cannot sing,  
If you only spare a copper  
To line the purse within.  
So God prosper you and I wish you  
a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

The practice of Wassailing in the West Riding of Yorkshire is also mentioned in William Henderson's (1879) *Notes on the Folk-lore of the Northern Counties of England and the borders*<sup>142</sup>. Henderson's account contrasts with that of Wright's, in that Henderson attributes the practice not to early November, but more specifically on Christmas Eve. And while the description of the box and its contents are agreed upon, they are, according to Henderson, referred to as 'milly-boxes'. The adaptation of the carol does appear to support Henderson's timing of custom, although it is always possible that the seventy or so years between the two accounts, highlights a natural shift in its application.

Despite being a well known and long lived tradition, not only within Leeds, but across the north of England, there is surprisingly little research on Mischief Night. There are two notable exceptions. The first is Ervin Beck's 1985 study providing an interpretation of children's autumn traditions<sup>143</sup>. Beck, an American scholar, looked at the nature and practice of those

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<sup>142</sup> Henderson, *Notes on the Folk-lore*

<sup>143</sup> Beck, *Children's Guy Fawkes Customs*

traditions, and tried to address the question of whether or not Hallowe'en and Bonfire Night were merging. His findings, born out of the interviews of six hundred and forty nine school children in Sheffield, made claim that there was evidence to suggest that the traditions of guying, (going door-to-door with a dummy 'Guy' and requesting a 'penny for the Guy') Hallowe'en and Mischief Night were carried out conterminously. From this, Beck tries to establish that what was emerging, was a 'coherent season of events'. Beck argued that Mischief Night in particular was being indulged in from Hallowe'en to November 4th. Furthermore, all three traditions were merging with each other, with Hallowe'en songs being sung on Bonfire Night, and Guy Fawkes figures found accompanying trick or treaters, and mischievous antics incorporated into and around both.

Indeed there does seem to be some confusion amongst authors of popular folklore as to the name and date of each custom. Jean Harrowven for example in her *Origins of Festivals and Feasts*<sup>144</sup> seems to think that Hallowe'en was referred to as Mischief Night in Yorkshire. Indeed she may well have referred to the third volume of A.R. Wright's *British Calendar Customs*<sup>145</sup> for her material, since this again associates Mischief Night in Yorkshire, in particular a 1914 account provided by Mary Jagger, from *The History of Honley* near Huddersfield, with the night of All Hallows' E'en. In which Mary recalls "When younger, I have known doors taken off hinges, gates opened, doors whitewashed, and door latches tied. The night served as a pretext for petty revenge, in one form or another."<sup>146</sup>

The premise of a 'season of events' as opposed to individual set dates was not lost on Stephen Sayers' 2006<sup>147</sup> analysis of Martin Walsh's article, on the Medieval English Martinmas<sup>148</sup> A feast held at the onset of winter, Martinmas was a time of feasting, drunkenness, and revelling. The nature and purpose of the custom, was to set to celebrate the last remnants of the

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<sup>144</sup> Jean Harrowven *Origins of Festivals and Feasts*. London (1980)

<sup>145</sup> A.R. Wright *British Calendar Customs* Vol.III T.E. Lones ed., (London, 1940)

<sup>146</sup> Wright, *British Calendar Customs* p.109

<sup>147</sup> Stephen Sayers 'The Halloween Feast' in Foley et al, *Treat or Trick?* p.18-28

<sup>148</sup> Martin Walsh 'Medieval English "Martinmesse": The Archaeology of a Forgotten Festival' *Folklore* [e-journal] Vol. 111 .No2. (October, 2000) 231 -254 Available through: Jstor Database [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2006]



harvest, and the slaughtering and salting down of animals for provision during the winter. It is the assertion of Walsh that this celebration not only took place on the 11th November, but also sometimes on succeeding days, Thus Sayers makes the point that it stood as a boundary denoting the end of the autumn and the onset of winter, and it ushered in a 'winter revelling season'.

The second major source is the detailed account provided by Iona & Peter Opie, in their 1959 study of the lore and language of schoolchildren<sup>149</sup>. This is comprehensive not only in its description of Mischief Night, but Hallowe'en; Punkie Night; Nut Crack Night and Guy Fawkes celebrations to name a few.

According to the Opies, mischievous happenings on 4<sup>th</sup> November, were common throughout not only Yorkshire, but parts of Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Lincolnshire. The accumulation of bonfire material intensifies and the evening is spent in the indulgence of mischievous pranks, such as painting doorknobs with treacle, or unscrewing house numbers and re-screwing them to other houses.

These activities were largely considered, by those who took part, to be beyond legal sanctions. Indeed, with recommendations from the Chief Constables of Leeds to "take off your garden gate and hide it"<sup>150</sup> and even magistrates claiming that "the activities may not be without humour, even to adults"<sup>151</sup> this may not have seemed an unreasonable premise.

The night signified a time in which the roles of the adult and the child were reversed, and so the normal 'rules' (in which the adult could control or make demands and expectations on the child) did not apply.<sup>152</sup>

This reversal of roles is not unique to Mischief Night. Indeed the Roman midwinter feast of Saturnalia encompassed a certain suspension of the normal laws, and role reversals between men and their masters. Much later, such role reversal was common place amongst the roles of Boy

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<sup>149</sup> Opie *Lore and Language*

<sup>150</sup> Opie *Lore and Language* p.302

<sup>151</sup> Opie *Lore and Language* p.303

<sup>152</sup> This reversal of roles is discussed at great length by Bruno Bettelheim, *A Good Enough Parent* (New York, 1987) in which he makes reference to Erikson's concept of a 'Psychosocial Moratorium' in which a child is able to, or allowed to, delay their transition into adulthood.

Bishops and the Lords of Misrule<sup>153</sup>, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. However since the demise of the Lords of Misrule in the seventeenth century due to “a taste of genuine misrule during the Interregnum”<sup>154</sup> the tolerance for misrule, and from the ruling elite, would have seemed to all but disappeared. However the mischief allowed to children and adolescents on nights such as May Eve, during the nineteenth century and November 4<sup>th</sup> during the twentieth century may well be the last remaining vestige of that tradition, though there clearly lacks any direct historical link.

Details about the nature of Guy Fawkes celebrations on the following night, 5<sup>th</sup> November, in Yorkshire, come from the historian William Dawson’s description of mid-eighteenth century ‘Plot Night’ events in Skipton. Dawson’s account is important because as well as informing the reader that ‘Plot Night’ was regarded as one of the most popular nights in the year, he also mentions that in 1744 bell ringers on the 5<sup>th</sup> November avoided a five shilling cap, applicable to the rest of the year, earning seven shillings for their efforts which, according to Dawson ‘continued until late in the evening’<sup>155</sup>. Adding detail to the events typical of Plot night in Skipton, Dawson continues with “huge boughs of Oak were carried to the top of the steeple and attached to the weather-vane”. Dawson doesn’t illuminate the reader as to the reasoning behind such an act, but continues to state that both bonfires and fireworks were lit, and that the fires ‘were provided at the cost of the town. Thus the accounts of an old Skipton constable show the following payment – 1741 – Nov.1. – Pd for three tar barrels for the bone fire, 1s. 6d.’<sup>156</sup>

Further to this, bonfires in Leeds, as across the rest of the country, have been used as focal points for social unrest<sup>157</sup>, as well as part of wider celebratory practices.<sup>158</sup> Sharpe (2005) notes two examples of Bonfire Night disturbances recorded in Yorkshire. The first, from November 1862, describes the fate of a farmer from Manningham, near Bradford, who was left

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<sup>153</sup> A full and comprehensive account of both Boy Bishops and Lords of Misrule can be found in Hutton, *Rise and Fall*

<sup>154</sup> Hutton, *Rise and Fall* p.242-3

<sup>155</sup> Dawson, *History of Skipton* p.377

<sup>156</sup> Dawson, *History of Skipton* p.377

<sup>157</sup> Paz, *Bonfire Night* 316-328 and Storch, ‘Please to Remember’

<sup>158</sup> Cressy, *Bonfires*

insensible after he was set upon by a gang of about thirty boys and youths when he attempted to stop them from removing pales and fences for the building of a bonfire.<sup>159</sup> The second instance of bonfire night trouble-making took place on 5<sup>th</sup> November five years later in the North Yorkshire market town of Malton in which about five hundred men and boys assembled and moved through the town 'setting all law and order at defiance'. The local police were unable to halt this mob and were themselves targeted by the group.<sup>160</sup> Though the direct motivation for the assembled group is not clear, it takes place at the height of a sharp rise in the cost of wheat, following a poor harvest in 1866 which, according to Storch<sup>161</sup> (1998), pushed the price of wheat up to fifty percent higher than pre 1867 levels. The resulting tensions helped to promote considerable unrest and rioting, particularly in the South West of the county. It might not be surprising therefore, to find examples of riotous behaviour at this time in other areas of the country.

As well as economic considerations, dissatisfaction arose partly from more general attempts by civil authorities during the eighteenth century to curtail street sports such as bull-baiting, cock-fighting and badger-baiting which often took place at festivals such as Guy Fawkes. By the early nineteenth century such practices were rare,<sup>162</sup> yet attempts to curb these activities fitted more widely into a more general shift towards the restriction of rough sports in urban areas, including the attempts to remove fireworks and bonfires from Guy Fawkes Night.<sup>163</sup> Sports involving acts of animal cruelty were successfully curtailed and traditional recreations supplanted by more 'civilised' sports, such as football and cricket, helped not least by the preservation of village greens in the 1845 Enclosure Act.<sup>164</sup> Yet such attempts to extend the restrictions to Guy Fawkes celebrations proved to be more challenging. Indeed, such attempts resulted in nothing short of a riot on 'Gunpowder Plot Day'<sup>165</sup> in Skipton 1872, when, according to Dawson, the

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<sup>159</sup> Sharpe, *Remember* p.162

<sup>160</sup> Sharpe, *Remember* p.162

<sup>161</sup> Storch, *Popular Festivity* p.211

<sup>162</sup> Griffin, *England's Revelry* p.232

<sup>163</sup> For examples of how the demise of 'rustic sports' impacted on other areas such as the west Midlands, see Griffin, *England's Revelry* p.236-242

<sup>164</sup> Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations* p.108

<sup>165</sup> William H. Dawson *History of Skipton* (London, 1882) p.377-378

police superintendent took a dislike to the customary celebrations described above and tried through police intervention to prevent the event. The motivation for police intervention may well have had less to do with wider social reforms and far more to do with pre-empting what Paz (1990) refers to as a 'charivari',<sup>166</sup> and what Storch (1998) describes as 'demonstrating popular opprobrium'<sup>167</sup>, and in so doing utilising Bonfire Night as a focal point for attacking 'unpopular local political leaders'<sup>168</sup> a practice which Storch argues becomes more, rather than less, common in the nineteenth century. Either way, police attempts to prevent Bonfire Night celebrations in Skipton were met with an increase in the number of individuals and bands on the streets, all of whom were determined to let off their fireworks and enjoy themselves. The ensuing efforts of the police to break up the festivities culminated in large numbers of injuries on the side of both civilian and police.

### **Outline of Present Thesis**

Given the work of Rogers who looks at American expressions of Hallowe'en and Santino's research into the Northern Irish Hallowe'en, it would perhaps seem logical to complement these with a wider look at the English Hallowe'en in general. However, given both the practical constraints of this work and the extensive collection of English sources already assembled by Hutton on the topic, it would not seem necessary for this study to add a further contribution to the history of Hallowe'en in England. Neither does it set out to explore any political ramifications arising from previous studies of ritual and custom, although aspects of this are touched upon in respect to the related festival of Mischief Night. Rather, this study seeks to provide an account of the progress of Hallowe'en as practiced in a specific English city. This 'grass roots' approach charts the changing historical nature of Hallowe'en directly in respect to the changing history of Leeds and its surrounding areas.

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<sup>166</sup> Paz, *Bonfire Night* p.361

<sup>167</sup> Storch, R.D 'Popular Festivity and Consumer Protest: Food Price Disturbances in the Southwest and Oxfordshire in 1867' *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* [e-journal] Vol.14 No.3/4 (Autumn 1982 – Winter, 1998) 209-234 Available through: Jstor Database: [Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2010] p.210

<sup>168</sup> Paz, *Bonfire Night* p.361

In attempting to understand the custom at a local level, this thesis is in keeping with Mervyn James' study of the Corpus Christi celebration, or David Cannadine's historical narrative of the Colchester Oyster Feast; though, unlike Cannadine this thesis recognises the value of applying historical principles up to the present day. More often, where contemporary historians are focusing on existing calendar customs, the focus is often set around the time of their origin, such as in David Cressy's *Bonfires and Bells*.

This provides an opportunity for new research bringing the historical method to bear on Hallowe'en customs from a given period right up to the time of writing. The widespread nature of Hallowe'en (which can now be identified as far afield as Russia, Australia and Japan)<sup>169</sup> gives an extra impetus to the need to limit the scope of such a study to a manageable size and suggests parallels with Edwards' study of Hallowe'en and Paganism in Glastonbury and London and Kate Smith's study of May Day celebrations in Northamptonshire. An additional opportunity emerges with the choice of the city of Leeds, in that an allied tradition, Mischief Night, which has itself avoided serious historical analysis, is also practiced in Leeds and surrounding areas.

This same type of geographical constraint benefits studies such as Brown's *Up-helly-aa*, and also Cass's *Lancashire Pace-Egg Play* which are able, by limiting themselves to particular places, to focus in greater depth on their subject matter. However, since the present study is considering a subject with a global dimension, it becomes possible to establish connections between the insights gleaned from studying Hallowe'en in this one location and the nature of the custom as found further afield. In so doing, this study takes a step beyond Brown and Cass's models and makes use of the opportunity to contribute to the wider picture of a global calendar custom.

So, the present work represents an attempt to address the phenomenon of Hallowe'en (and the associated custom of Mischief Night) from a historical perspective. Yet the shift away from calendar customs by historians in favour of popular sports and recreations has meant that many

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<sup>169</sup> See Stephen Alomes 2005, 'Globalising Festivals of Consumerism: Halloween in Australia, France and Japan' in Stephen Alomes ed., *Islands in the stream : Australia and Japan face globalisation*, (Hawthorn, 2005) p.61-78 and Larisa Prokhorova 'Halloween in Russia: What Makes an Unwelcome Guest Stay?' in Foley et al, *Treat or Trick?* p.145-155

remaining twentieth and twenty first century calendar customs and festivals are, with notable exceptions, such as Ronald Hutton's *The Stations of the Sun* and Brown's *Up-helly-aa* being seemingly left to folkloric investigation.

As mentioned above, this work differs from previous accounts on Hallowe'en in that, at the time of writing, it is the only historical account of the custom to focus on an English city, rather than an overview of its Irish or American manifestations. Additionally it makes use of a more direct personal approach to the subject through the use of participant observations and interviews more in keeping with folkloric, cultural and even sociological research.

The precise form and context for the various methodologies used in this thesis are covered in the introduction, but it is important to establish that the composite methodology used in this work echoes the approach found in many of the works cited above. These include the approach employed by Bowman in her study of the Glastonbury Thorn and that found in Callum Brown's *Up-helly-aa*. In these works the authors have chosen to combine the disciplines of social/cultural history and social anthropology to create a more rounded, holistic account in keeping with the pervasive nature of these phenomena.

In using a combined approach, this work explores the nature and general characteristics of Hallowe'en in both its historic and current manifestations. But furthermore, by delving into the microcosm it takes the opportunity to extrapolate some of the multiple perspectives and inherent subjective meanings and values behind these expressions of Hallowe'en as it is celebrated by different sections of the community.

In so doing this work adds to the small, but growing, body of historical research into contemporary calendar customs at a local level, and from the insights gained goes on to consider their application in wider national and international settings.

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Social and Economic History of Leeds 1800- 2008**

This chapter explores three key aspects of the social and economic history of Leeds between 1800 and 2008. It is not intended to be an all-encompassing social and economic analysis. It is, rather, an exploration into specific themes within Leeds' social and economic history which have been chosen because they are able to furnish this thesis with historical context through which the subsequent chapters can be explored.

To this end, this chapter will look at the development of Leeds from early industrialisation through to its current manifestation dependent on the service industry. This will be explored in respect to three key areas. Firstly it will examine the impact that this change has had in respect to both population density and immigration. This is relevant for subsequent chapters in that it helps to identify the variety of cultures and ideas that have come together in Leeds, and where possible shows how customs such as Hallowe'en and Mischief Night may have changed in light of changing social contexts. Secondly, it looks at how, through a process of incremental changes a regular police force was established in Leeds, and looks at police and community relations over time. The changing role of the police and the changing public perceptions of that role have had a direct impact upon the enforcement of law and order in the city of Leeds. This in turn, has had a significant impact upon the differing levels of public tolerance and intolerance of activities associated with child-focused social traditions such as Hallowe'en and Mischief Night. Thirdly, it considers the lives of working children, and the way adult attitudes towards the behaviour of children and adolescents has changed in Leeds during this time. This is significant in that it helps to establish a contextual framework in which child-centred traditions have arisen as well as helping to explain changing attitudes of tolerance and of the role of children in society.

## Leeds History – Texts

There are a number of good overview accounts of Leeds history that are worthy of attention. One of particular note is Steven Burt and Kevin Grady's *The Illustrated History of Leeds*<sup>170</sup> which provides an authoritative narrative account of the overall history of Leeds from the medieval Manor of Leeds in 1086 through to significant and contemporary landmarks of today. It is of value to this study in that it provides an overview of the social and economic forces at play throughout both the nineteenth and twentieth century. Furthermore, it provides insight into Irish immigration in Leeds, for which there is, when compared with Jewish material, surprisingly little available.

A further good account can be found in David Thornton's *Leeds The Story of A City*. As with Burt and Grady, Thornton covers Leeds' history from its earliest days to its present day status as a European city. It not only covers the broad sweeping changes such as population growth and legislation, but interweaves such detail with the microcosm, such as the opening of The Penny Bazaar in 1884 by Michael Marks<sup>171</sup>, and the opening and closing of individual cinemas throughout the town<sup>172</sup>.

A highly statistical account of Leeds in the twenty first century can be found in Rachael Unsworth and John Stillwell's *Twenty-First Century Leeds. Geographies of a Regional City*<sup>173</sup>. Essentially the book is a collaboration of a number of scholars who have covered a range of topics including demographics, health, housing, transport, education business services, and entertainment, to provide an extensive statistical analysis of contemporary Leeds.

An early account of the industrialisation of Leeds can be found in Maurice Beresford's<sup>174</sup> exhaustive publication describing Leeds between

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<sup>170</sup> Steven Burt and Kevin Grady, *The Illustrated History of Leeds* (Derby, 2002)

<sup>171</sup> David Thornton, *Leeds The Story Of A City* (Ayr, 2002) p.147

<sup>172</sup> Thornton, *Leeds: The Story* p.198

<sup>173</sup> Rachael Unsworth and John Stillwell (eds.), *Twenty-First Century Leeds. Geographies of a regional city* (Leeds, 2004)

<sup>174</sup> Maurice Beresford, *East End West End. The Face of Leeds During Urbanisation 1684-1842* (Leeds, 1988)



1684 and 1842 in which intricate accounts of house building and occupancy details, estate developments and street plans during that period are detailed.

An extensive range of detailed material is also held and published by the Thoresby Society, Leeds. Since its foundation in 1889, it has collected material, including pamphlets, maps, manuscripts, plans and pictures, as well as books and newspapers. Much of the material used in researching this chapter, as well as material in subsequent chapters, has been obtained from the resources made accessible by the society.

### **Population Growths / Immigration and Expansion of a City**

During the period 1771 –1911, Leeds experienced a dramatic surge in population. The 1841- 1851 census provides an overview of the growth of Leeds from 1801-1851. The picture that it reveals is that of a population expanding from 30,699 in 1801 to 101,343 in 1851. This dramatic rise in population is enhanced to 53,276 in 1801 and 172,270 in 1851<sup>175</sup> when the population of the twelve small towns and villages surrounding central Leeds, including Armley, Headingley, Hunslet, and Bramley are taken into consideration. Leeds is both fortunate and bucks the national trend in that it has surviving and reliable enumerations prior to the 1801 census, for both 1771 and 1775 undertaken by the dissenting clergyman, philosopher and political theorist Dr Joseph Priestley (1733-1804) and the moral and political philosopher Dr Richard Price (1723-1791). Their calculations, excluding the townships, put the figures at 16,380 and 17,121 respectively<sup>176</sup>. It is clear from these figures that, whilst there was a modest growth between 1771 and 1775 it represented the beginnings of rapid growth evident in the 1801 census figures, and whilst it may be tempting to use the 1801 census as a starting point for establishing trends on population growth, the rapid expansion of Leeds had fundamentally begun in the twenty five years prior.

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<sup>175</sup> A breakdown of the figures for the individual townships can be found in the 1851 Yorkshire Census, p.9 and in Burt and Grady, *Illustrated History* p.264

<sup>176</sup> C. J Morgan 'Demographic Change 1771-1911' in Derek Frazer, (ed.), *A History of Modern Leeds* (Manchester, 1980)

The growth in population between 1775 and 1851 can be viewed in the light of two demographic trends. The first involves the general rise in the national population as a whole, due to an overall natural increase in births over the number of deaths during the period 1801-1911. The second, which more readily helps to explain the pre-1801 increase in Leeds, was due to a net immigration from other parts of the United Kingdom, and later from other parts of Europe: the most recognised of these being the Irish and Jews. Immigration contributed to some sixty percent of the population growth of Leeds during 1775-1801 and a further fifty three percent between 1811- 1841. However, by the last half of the nineteenth century, natural growth accounted for around three quarters of the borough's growth, with the emergence in the beginning of the twentieth century of emigration. But in order to make sense of these figures, they need to be understood in the context of the economic and social developments of the time, and arguably the two most prominent of these arose from industrialisation and sanitation.

By 1800 Leeds had already come to prominence on the back of the woollen industry, and entrepreneurs such as Benjamin Gott (1762-1840). Gott built a massive mill at Ben Ing, to the west of the city, on the side of the river Aire, in 1792 and subsequently built mills in Armley and Burley. Although his mills relied on the established spinning and weaving practices of the domestic workers, his factories ensured supervised production and a substantial increase in productivity. In so doing, Gott was able to ensure a ready supply of both the traditional broad and narrow cloth as well as the much sort-after and lucrative superfine cloth which was becoming increasingly popular to overseas markets such as the Americas. By 1797 his factories ensured work for over 1200 workers, and between 1800 and 1820 Gott was considered to be one of the top twelve largest employers in England<sup>177</sup>.

Gott's successes, far from being unique, reflected a time of rapid expansion and manufacturing growth, as well as a drive to raise the profile of Leeds as a market town with the foundation stone of the Corn Exchange being laid by John Cawood in August 1827. The following comment made by

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<sup>177</sup> Burt and Grady, *Illustrated History* p.127

the Leeds Intelligencer only three years before, captures the mood of the time.

There is perhaps hardly a town in England in which the passion for improvement is so strong as it is in Leeds. Scarcely a week elapses that we have not the pleasure to announce some project for improving and adorning the town... It is a rather curious coincidence that we have now erected or in contemplation three churches, three dissenting meeting houses, three markets, three bridges, and streets innumerable.<sup>178</sup>

Despite the obvious importance of the woollen trade, Leeds' economic success at this time was due to its high level of diversification. The period 1790-1840, not only saw the success of Gott, but in many ways the even greater success of the entrepreneur John Marshall (1765-1845). On taking on the family's linen drapers' business after the death of his father in 1787, Marshall entered a partnership with a draper Samuel Fenton and a linen merchant Ralph Dearlove. However, it was the assistance of the engineer Mathew Murray (1765-1826) that enabled substantial advances in spinning machinery, and the abandonment of water-powered mills in favour of the introduction of a twenty-horsepower Boulton and Watt steam engine in 1799. Despite the great advancements and uses of steam-powered technology in Marshall's mills during the late 1790s, it is also worth highlighting that by 1798 half of all its yarn was woven on site on 150 hand looms, but the other half was still being put out to weavers in the surrounding villages such as Hunslet and Bramley. However, Murray's engineering advances, including the introduction of the 150 horse power-engine, enabled Marshall to prosper, employing over 1,000 workers by 1803. The success and subsequent growth in production not only created a demand for workers, but also encouraged significant migration into Leeds as men and women were drawn here in the hope finding work.

Much of the material on population growth has been gained directly from the Yorkshire Census within the Leeds City Libraries. Where secondary material has been used, the supporting figures, such as those found in Tom

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<sup>178</sup> *Leeds Intelligencer*, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1824 p.7

Dillon's work on the Irish in Leeds between 1851 and 1861<sup>179</sup> have, where possible, been checked against the census findings.

Dillon's work provides a detailed breakdown not only of the numbers of Irish people in Leeds, but identifies which part of Ireland they were from, and which areas and streets of Leeds they lived in. Whilst other accounts such as *The Ham Shank*, by Mary Patterson<sup>180</sup> and Helen Kennally's<sup>181</sup> *Mount St. Mary's Schools Leeds 1853-2003* do provide a colourful account of Irish life, further academic accounts specifically on the Irish in Leeds beyond 1861 are lacking. That said, their social and economic situations can be inferred from more general sources such as those provided by John Jackson's 1963 account of *The Irish In Britain*<sup>182</sup>, Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley's 1989 text *The Irish in Britain 1815-1939*<sup>183</sup> and Donald Mac Raild's 2000 text *The Great Famine and Beyond: Irish Migrants in Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*<sup>184</sup>.

The economic development of the area clearly attracted the movement of people into both the centre of Leeds and the surrounding townships such as Holbeck, Wortley and Bramley.<sup>185</sup> Both Irish and Jewish immigrants came to England not only to find work, but to flee from problems at home; the Irish from the potato famines in the 1840s and the Jews during the 1880s fleeing from the Russian pogroms.

Growth in prosperity attracted manufacturers, tradesmen and shopkeepers, as well as bakers and property developers. The increase in commercial activity in turn led to an influx of people looking for work, not least from Ireland. The potato famine of 1840 in Ireland had resulted in some 9,030 arrivals predominantly from Dublin and County Mayo. The poverty of those coming to Leeds was recorded in the Irish Census of 1841 which portrayed a homeland in which three-fifths of the population within the

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<sup>179</sup> Tom Dillon, *The Irish In Leeds, 1851-1861* in *Thoresby Society Publications LIV-LVI* (Leeds, 1979)

<sup>180</sup> Mary Patterson, *The Ham Shank* (Bradford, 1993)

<sup>181</sup> Helen Kennally, *Mount St Mary's Schools Leeds 1853-2003* (Leeds, 2004)

<sup>182</sup> John Jackson, *The Irish In Britain* (London, 1963)

<sup>183</sup> Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds.) *The Irish In Britain 1815-1939* (New York, 1989)

<sup>184</sup> Donald Mac Raild *The Great Famine and Beyond: Irish Migrants In Britain In The Nineteenth And Twentieth Centuries* (Dublin, 2000)

<sup>185</sup> Derek Fraser, *A History of Modern Leeds* (Manchester, 1980)

western counties resided in single room mud cabins with little or no furniture, and eked out an existence from very small plots of land<sup>186</sup>.

Whilst many found work in the rapidly expanding woollen industry, their extreme poverty continued throughout the 1840s and 1850s compounded by poor nutrition, low quality housing, overcrowding, inadequate sanitation and drainage and poor water supply. Friedrich Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England* also makes reference to the quality of housing and sanitation found in the Bank area, home to increasing numbers of Irish, drawing particular attention to the consequences of the river Aire flooding into overcrowded accommodation.

The higher or western districts are clean for so large a town, but the lower parts contiguous to the river and its becks or rivulets are dirty, confined, and, in themselves, sufficient to shorten life, especially infant life; add to this the disgusting state of the lower parts of the town about Kirk-gate. March-lane, Cross-street and Richmond-road, principally owing to a general want of paving and draining, irregularity of building, the abundance of courts and blind alleys, as well as the almost total absence of the commonest means for promoting cleanliness, and we have then quite sufficient data to account for the surplus mortality in these unhappy regions of filth and misery<sup>187</sup>

In one striking example a town council report in 1839 showed that the Bank area consisted of one hundred dwellings, which were inhabited by 452 people sharing just two privies. The destitute Irish therefore arrived in an area already overcrowded and lacking in basic amenities. For the majority of Irish in Leeds in the mid-nineteenth century, life was relentlessly unforgiving. As a rule they occupied the poorest quality housing, were paid proportionally less, and were marginalised within the community<sup>188</sup>.

By 1891, the population of Leeds including the townships of Hunslet, Holbeck and Bramley had risen to 387,045<sup>189</sup>. The rise in population had been helped not only by Irish immigration, but also by the Jewish influx in the 1880s. The Jewish community occupied much of the Leylands district

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<sup>186</sup> Dillon, *Irish in Leeds* p.5

<sup>187</sup> Friedrich Engels, *Conditions of the Working Class in England* (London, 1891)

<sup>188</sup> A detailed account of the demographics of the Irish in Leeds can be found in Dillon, *Irish in Leeds*. For a first hand, if somewhat sentimental account, see Mary Patterson, *The Ham Shank* (Bradford, 1993)

<sup>189</sup> Census of England and Wales 1891 Preliminary Report - Yorkshire

previously inhabited by the Irish, who had, by this time, moved on to settle in the parish of Mount St. Mary's in Richmond Hill, an area approximately a mile due East of the Leylands, where there is a strong Irish presence to the present time.

The Jewish population were predominantly employed as tailors although not exclusively. The 1901 Census indicates that whilst there were over three thousand Jews employed in tailoring<sup>190</sup>, they did have representatives in some seventy other professions. That said, such numbers were small, often numbering fewer than ten. The majority of Jews outside of the tailoring profession were to be found in the boot and shoe trade, cabinet making, greengrocery, and bakery<sup>191</sup>. By 1887 there were an estimated 6,000 Jews in Leeds, and at their height it is thought that the Leeds Jews peaked at around 20,000 during the late 1920s and early 1930s<sup>192</sup>. By contrast the Irish immigrant community had reached 15,000 by 1861, and represented an eighth of the total townships' population<sup>193</sup>. Despite the high level of hostility facing the Jewish population in Leeds not only from the resident population, but also from the Irish immigrant community, they ultimately fared better in economic terms, many escaping the poorly-sanitised and over-crowded streets of the Leylands for the more middle class areas of Alwoodley and Moortown. But this success was often bought at a high price, as many worked long hours in tailoring sweatshops in the Leylands. An insight into their plight can be gauged by the aims of the Jewish Tailors Union, whose principle aim during their failed strike in 1888 was to secure a reduction of the hours worked to fifty-eight hours a week<sup>194</sup>.

A detailed breakdown of the occupations of the Leeds Jewish community in 1901 can be found in Murray Freedman's *Leeds Jewry: A democratic and sociological profile*.<sup>195</sup> Freedman's painstaking analysis of

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<sup>190</sup> This figure was, according to Murray Freedman, representative of sixty three percent of the working Jewish population. An individual breakdown of the number of Jews working in each profession can be found in Murray Freedman *Leeds Jewry: A Demographic and Sociological Profile* (Leeds, 1988)

<sup>191</sup> Freedman, *Leeds Jewry: A Demographic* p.15-17

<sup>192</sup> Freedman, *Leeds Jewry: A Demographic* p.2-5

<sup>193</sup> Morgan, Demographic Change in Fraser (ed.) *History of Modern Leeds* p.61

<sup>194</sup> Burt and Grady, *Illustrated History*

<sup>195</sup> Freedman, *Leeds Jewry: A Demographic*. See also Murray Freedman, *Leeds Jewry: A History Of Its Synagogues* (Leeds, 1995)

the raw data of the 1901 census provides a unique account of the professions held, predominantly within the tailoring industry, as well as an analysis of the size of the Jewish population, estimated at 16,000 by 1914. The work of Freedman is in turn supported by an earlier account provided by Ernest Krausz, titled *Leeds Jewry: Its History and Social Structure*.<sup>196</sup> Krausz explores not only the overall history of Jewish life in Leeds up to the late 1950s, but also provides detailed insight into the economic, social, educational and organisational developments, as well as family life and community relations.

Though much of the literature on immigration into Leeds concentrates on industrialisation and working and living conditions of nineteenth century, the twentieth century witnessed a much more varied and diverse range of immigrants, many of whom, like their nineteenth century counterparts, came to Leeds in search of work. The Leeds economy was, by the beginning of the twentieth century, shifting dramatically from manufacturing to engineering, transport, factory-made clothing and commerce, all of which added to the economic and demographic growth of the city.

The First World War brought with it, as with the rest of Britain, further dramatic changes, both in economic and domestic spheres. Out of the 82,000 men recruited from Leeds during the course of the war, over 10,000 were killed and many more were injured. Those that did return found a Leeds that seemed to be economically thriving. Women in particular had prospered during the war, joining the workforce as ticket collectors, bank clerks, and taking on many other professions previously thought of as male occupations. The interwar years however, saw a decisive downturn, and the great depression brought extreme hardship to high numbers of citizens, many of whom were unemployed.

The reforms introduced by the Liberal government between 1904–1911 had reduced the worst excesses of destitution, and the Local Government Act of 1929 saw the renaming of the Poor Law to Public Assistance. Despite such moves by the Public Assistance Committees and the Leeds City Council to de-stigmatise the former workhouses and

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<sup>196</sup> Ernest Krausz, *Leeds Jewry: Its History and Social Structure* (Cambridge, 1963)

workhouse infirmaries, for many people in Leeds the changes were cosmetic, and the stigma associated with both the Poor Law and the workhouses persisted in Leeds well into the 1950s,<sup>197</sup> particularly as many of the working classes were refused admission to the still charitably-funded Leeds General Infirmary, until the transference in 1934 of St. James, (until 1925 the Leeds Union Workhouse Infirmary) along with St. Mary's and St. George's hospital to the council's Health Committee, thus gaining the status of municipal hospitals<sup>198</sup>. As vividly recalled by Richard Hoggart in his autobiographical account of working class life in Leeds between the wars, "St James's is where many of the poor of Leeds have gone to die for generations."<sup>199</sup> During this period, those who managed to maintain their employment enjoyed a disproportionately high standard of living as prices nationally decreased by up to a quarter, while wages, although lowered, lowered to a much lesser extent.<sup>200</sup> It is also fair to say that the interwar years saw a vast improvement in the quality of housing in Leeds. Despite almost three quarters of the population living in back-to-back houses,<sup>201</sup> most of the worst slum areas were demolished, and a series of council house building initiatives were undertaken in the surrounding suburbs.

The next significant wave of Immigration in Leeds, as with other major cities such as Birmingham, Sheffield and Manchester occurred in the 1950s and 1960s. Citizens of the British Commonwealth were actively encouraged by the British government to come to Britain in order to help plug shortages in the labour market. Eric Butterworth's 1967 study, *Immigrants in West Yorkshire*,<sup>202</sup> highlights the economic diversity during the 1960s in Leeds. It looks at the role of immigrant labour involved in a range of engineering and industrial occupations and printing, as well as the more traditional wholesale clothing, woollen and worsted manufacture<sup>203</sup>. His analysis predominantly

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<sup>197</sup> Kelly's Directory of Leeds (London, 1936)

<sup>198</sup> Burt and Grady, *Illustrated History*

<sup>199</sup> Richard Hoggart, *A Local Habitation. Life And Times: 1918-1940* (London, 1988)

<sup>200</sup> John Burnett, *A History of the Cost of Living* (Harmondsworth, 1969)

<sup>201</sup> Thornton, *Leeds: The Story*

<sup>202</sup> Eric Butterworth, *Immigrants in West Yorkshire. Social Conditions and Lives of Pakistanis, Indians and West Indians* (Leeds, 1967)

<sup>203</sup> See also Eric Butterworth, 'The Presence of Immigrant Schoolchildren: A Study of Leeds' in *Race and Class* [e-journal] Vo.8 No.3 (1967) 247-262. Available through: Sage Journals [Accessed 25 January 2008]



consists of the breakdown of immigrant schoolchildren in Leeds, although his study does not take older white immigrant communities such as the Irish or Jewish into consideration. His findings, based on the four groups studied, show that the greatest numbers arise from the West Indian community with 1,174 of the 1,973 immigrant schoolchildren recorded for 1965 coming from this group. The West Indian community may have been the largest, but they were by no means the fastest growing, this figure representing only a 51% increase on their numbers for 1963. The Pakistani community, although smaller in size, had increased in the same time span by 89.6% from 144 to 273, with the West African community increasing by 86% from 44 to 82.

Whilst there was a clear economic need for migrant workers, many faced overt racism from small and middle sized business in the area<sup>204</sup> as well as within the wider community, and like their Irish and Jewish predecessors, they experienced considerable overcrowding. With the slums of the Leyland district demolished, over half of the immigrant population had settled in the Chapeltown district. This somewhat middle class area, about a mile and a half north of the city centre, had already become home to the more successful Jewish population between 1914 and peaking around 1945<sup>205</sup>. However, subsequent influxes into the area from Polish and other Eastern European nations adapted the larger houses into sub-let properties, which were in turn occupied by many Commonwealth immigrants who were otherwise faced with considerable obstacles in finding accommodation elsewhere.

Whilst many Commonwealth immigrants arriving in the 1950 and early 1960s did find work, albeit predominantly in the construction and engineering trades<sup>206</sup>, this trend did not last. By 1974, the unemployment figures for Chapeltown stood at 12.6% at a time when the national figure stood at under 3%<sup>207</sup>. The overcrowding and cultural tensions, combined with growing unemployment within the Chapeltown area, formed the basis for much of the

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<sup>204</sup> Max Farrar, 'Chapeltown: A Slice Of The Empire In Leeds', *'FOCUS' An Afro-Caribbean monthly magazine*, Issue no.1, (1986) p.2

<sup>206</sup> Butterworth, *Immigrants in West Yorkshire*

<sup>207</sup> Farrar, *Chapeltown*: in *FOCUS* p.3

later police and community conflict that was to follow during the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>208</sup> Max Farrar provides a clear example of the outlet of such tensions, in this instance against the police when he wrote:

On Bonfire Night 1975 they [Chapeltown's youth] launched the most ferocious attack on the police that had been witnessed up to then in the black communities. Five policeman were injured, two very seriously and several police cars were badly damaged in the battle which lasted nearly three hours. Twelve people were arrested, eleven of them young blacks.<sup>209</sup>

### **History of the Police and Community Relations**

The history of police and community relations in Leeds is complex, and is in many ways linked with the economic growth and rich cultural mix of the city. There are limited recorded accounts of the history of the Police in Leeds, but a notable exception can be found in *The Leeds Police 1836-1974*<sup>210</sup> produced by the Leeds Watch Committee. Presented as a social historical record, it provides a comprehensive account of the key events that arose during the command of each of the eighteen Chief Constables who served the Leeds Police before its amalgamation into the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police in 1974. An earlier account titled *Leeds Police Centenary 1836-1936*,<sup>211</sup> also produced by the Watch Committee covers much of the same ground as its later edition, but with a greater emphasis on the fire fighting duties of the police until the official establishment of the Fire Brigade in 1866, and their close association thereafter<sup>212</sup>.

Whilst the police in Leeds may have gained formal recognition as a force in 1836, it would be inaccurate to imply that Leeds was without police before that point. The records are incomplete, but do reveal that Leeds had Town Constables, who were supervised by the Justices during the

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<sup>208</sup> Further examples of the racial tensions of the time can be found in *Yorkshire Evening Post* 25<sup>th</sup> June 1973 which reported on the decision of the Chapeltown Parent Action Group to withdraw all of the black children from Cowper Street School because of the extremity of the racism inherent in the school. As well as the later Chapeltown Riots in July 1981. 'Violence Flares on Leeds Streets' *Yorkshire Evening Post* (13 July 1981) p.1,4,5,6 and 7.

<sup>209</sup> Farrar, *Chapeltown* in *FOCUS* p.4

<sup>210</sup> The Watch Committee, *Leeds Police Centenary 1836-1974* (Leeds, 1974)

<sup>211</sup> The Watch Committee, *Leeds Police Centenary*

<sup>212</sup> Records of individual Leeds police beats during the 1850s can also be found in Edward Read (Chief Constable) and William James (Superintendent) 1851 account of *Police Beats of the Borough of Leeds*

eighteenth century. The first recorded Chief Constable was Mr R Nottingham who served between 1717 and 1737. He was followed by a further seven Chief Constables between 1737 and 1823. Although the precise numbers of officers for each year are not available, it is known that by 1798 there were nine officers covering the main central areas of the city. This had expanded to sixteen 'day police' by 1822. The identification and distinction between 'day' and 'night' police is an important one, since the existence of the night watchman far precedes the introduction of a regular day force. Furthermore, they were far greater in number. By the same date of 1822, the night watchmen consisted of thirty eight men. Despite their greater numbers, and longer standing, they were generally regarded as inefficient, many being discharged because of old age and feebleness.

With the introduction of the Municipal Corporation Act 1835, Leeds was able to set up an elected corporation under a mayor. Under the instruction of the act, Leeds was further obliged to appoint a Watch Committee for the purpose of maintaining law and order and for appointing a local police force. The Watch Committee thus gained the responsibility for the recruitment, appointment, payments (raised solely through local rates) and discipline. By 1836 the new committee was advertising for twenty positions within the new force, for which they received a total of one hundred and thirty six applications. Thus it would seem that there was genuine enthusiasm for the new institution at least amongst certain portions of the population. That said, this figure did include a number of applications from the 'old' police, as the appointment from their ranks to all four positions of inspector clearly testifies. The night police as an independent entity effectively went out of existence when they were incorporated into the new force in 1836, although a numerical breakdown of the force, presented in a report to the Secretary of State, as late as 1851 still divided the force into Day Police and Night Police, putting the figures at thirty three, and one hundred respectively.

Whilst the establishment of a regular police force in cities such as London had met with a certain amount of opposition, in Leeds, in the main, it was initially met with approval and high regard, at least according to the daily newspaper. After only a fortnight of the force's formal establishment, the

*Leeds Mercury*, printed a lengthy article considerably praising their efforts, of which the following is a short extract:

We hear with great satisfaction from all quarters testimonials to the excellent working of the New Police in this town. The streets are now in a much better state, especially in Kirkgate and those streets contiguous to the haunts of human vice. Persons of infamous character are not allowed to annoy the inhabitants as formally, and scenes of low debauchery are prevented or checked. On Sunday the outskirts of the town are no longer allowed to be infested with gamblers, dog fighters etc., and the improvement is felt to be exceedingly great in this respect.<sup>213</sup>

It is also significant to note that the apparent efficiency of the new police was such that out-townships such as Headingley were writing petitions to the Watch Committee the same year, asking that the force be extended to the out-townships in order to compensate for the rise in criminal activity, which was in their view, being driven out of central Leeds.

The rising numbers of police were not, however, viewed with enthusiasm within the population as a whole. The Leeds Improvement Act of 1842, much championed within the temperance movement, had allowed for the crackdown on cock fights, dog fights, and the strict adherence to public house closing times, and to “observe those who resort to the public house or use sports in time of divine service”<sup>214</sup> These measures were zealously implemented by the Chief Constable, Edward Read, whose twenty two years in the position witnessed the brunt of public and military anti-police protest and civil unrest.

The nature of this unrest has been graphically described in Robert Storch's 1981 account of the Leeds police riot of 1844 in his chapter, *The Plague of the blue locusts*<sup>215</sup>. The riot erupted after police were called to a minor incident concerning off-duty soldiers at the Green Man beer-house in York Street, on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 1844. The arrest of the soldiers involved resulted

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<sup>213</sup> 'The New Police' *Leeds Mercury* (16<sup>th</sup> April 1836) p.5

<sup>214</sup> Robert. D. Storch, 'The Police as Domestic Missionary: Urban Discipline and Popular Culture in Northern England, 1850-1880', *Journal of Social History* [e-journal] Vol.9, No.4, (Summer, 1976) 481-509 Available through: Jstor database. [Accessed 19 July 2007]

<sup>215</sup> Robert D Storch, 'The plague of the blue locusts: police reform and popular resistance in Northern England, 1840-57' in Mike Fitzgerald et al *Crime & Society Readings in History and Theory*. Chapter 5 (London, 1981) 86-116

in a retaliatory attack by fellow soldiers using fists and military belt buckles. Police back-up led to an evening of police and soldier clashes, free of public involvement, except for the cheering on of the soldiers. But as Storch recounts<sup>216</sup>:

The next evening (Monday) some forty soldiers belonging to the 70<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot assembled in the Green Parrot beerhouse in Harper Street to further revenge themselves on the Leeds police. They issued from the pub armed with bludgeons and belts and attacked a number of policemen in Vicar Lane. As they entered Briggate they encountered a huge crowd of local civilians estimated by the press at more than a thousand. The soldiers raised the cry 'Down With The Police!' and the crowd which had been giving way – not exactly knowing the soldiers' intentions – moved to join them. The civilians according to the local press followed the soldiers not out of love to the soldiers themselves, but from [...] feelings of hatred towards the police.

Whilst this confrontation initially erupted between police and soldiers, the level of public resentment towards the police becomes acute in light of further information<sup>217</sup> which reveals that early on in the Monday evening many of the army officers were rounded up by their superior officers and marched back to barracks. Furthermore, the following evening (Tuesday) army officers were confined to barracks whilst local crowds confronted the Leeds police unaccompanied. Better prepared, and equipped, the police were able to restore calm and order to the streets by 10pm, for the first time in three days.<sup>218</sup>

The underlying reasons behind the riots are not altogether clear, although it is interesting to note that the previous day saw the enforcing of a ban by Leeds magistrates of political meetings on a Sunday in the free market, which may have provided a focus for underlying discontent<sup>219</sup>. The enforcement of the 1842 Act, which also levied fines for the performance of indecent songs and ballads in the streets were highly unpopular, particularly

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<sup>216</sup> Storch, 'Plague of Blue Locusts'. p.96

<sup>217</sup> John Mayhall, *The Annals and History of Leeds* (1860) 505-6; 'Military Outrage' Leeds Mercury (June 15 1844) p.4

<sup>218</sup> Further examples of riots and civil disturbances in Leeds during the nineteenth century include the Dripping Riot of January 1865.

<sup>219</sup> Storch, 'The Plague of the Blue Locusts' 86-116

amongst the Irish, with their long tradition of music and song<sup>220</sup>. The efforts of the police were often regarded as an assault against traditional working class activities, not only curtailing the worst excesses of day-to-day drunkenness, but maintaining a heavy presence at Leeds' fairs, renowned for exhibiting the worst of drunken and immoral excesses<sup>221</sup>.

By 1851 there were one hundred and thirty three police, rising to five hundred by 1900<sup>222</sup>. The increase in numbers was justified in response to both the increasing population, (some 16 percent growth per decade, between 1870 and 1900)<sup>223</sup> as Leeds expanded economically into a powerful industrial centre, and the increase in criminal activity<sup>224</sup>.

In more recent years, the police and community relations in Leeds were further strained by incidents exemplified by the death of David Oluwale, a Nigerian immigrant found dead in the river Aire in 1969. Subsequent inquests into his death revealed that Oluwale had suffered mental health problems and had spent many years homeless on the streets of Leeds. During the last few years of his life he had been the victim of relentless harassment and taunting from the police who had been seen chasing him towards the river on the night of his death<sup>225</sup>. The incident caused lasting tensions between the Afro-Caribbean community and the police, and undoubtedly played its part in the underlying tensions in the attack upon the police on Bonfire Night 1975 mentioned above.

The resulting distrust between police and immigrant communities in Leeds was highlighted in Tony Jefferson and Monica Walker's 1993 study<sup>226</sup> which looked predominantly at the views of three groups in Leeds: Afro-Caribbeans, Asians and Whites, in relation to their attitudes and perceptions of Leeds Police. Their findings revealed that despite a number of community policing initiatives, two-thirds of both Afro-Caribbeans and whites surveyed

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<sup>220</sup> Corinne Silva Roisin Ban. *The Irish Diaspora In Leeds* (Leeds, 2005)

<sup>221</sup> Storch, 'Police as Domestic Missionary'

<sup>222</sup> John Mayhall. (ed.), *The Annals of Yorkshire, From the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (Leeds, 1978)

<sup>223</sup> Burt and Grady, *Illustrated History* P.169

<sup>224</sup> Burt and Grady, *Illustrated History* p.169

<sup>225</sup> Kester Aspden, *Nationality – Wog: The Hounding of David Oluwale* (London, 2007)

<sup>226</sup> Tony Jefferson and Monica A Walker 'Attitudes To The Police Of Ethnic Minorities In A Provincial City' in *British Journal of Criminology* [e-journal] Vol.33 No.2 (Spring 1993) 251-266 Available through Oxford Journals [Accessed 23 May 2009]

believed that the police discriminated against non-whites. The Asians were more favourable towards the police than both the Afro-Caribbeans and the whites, on all aspects of the survey, including negative experience, victimization and satisfaction.

Mass unemployment during the 1980s also took its toll on Leeds. As with Toxteth, Brixton and Sandwell, the subsequent riots in Leeds arose from a myriad of social and cultural tensions, poverty and despair<sup>227</sup>. Pressure built up from sustained increases in unemployment and widespread dissatisfaction with the government culminated in July 1981, with large numbers of disillusioned youths both black and white, rioting throughout the streets of Chapeltown<sup>228</sup>. Over three hundred police with riot shields were met with petrol bombs and stones over the course of two days before calm was finally restored.

It is clear from Jefferson and Walker's study that not all immigrant communities in Leeds regard the police as hostile, and it would be wrong to assume that community relations are split on purely ethnic lines. Tensions in Hyde Park, now a predominantly student area of the city, nestled between the city centre and Headingley, have erupted on a number of occasions, not least from tensions between the local community and the large numbers of university students who lodge in this area. For many residents in Hyde Park, the police are disproportionately sympathetic to the students, who are regarded by local residents as noisy, messy and disrespectful to their needs and concerns.<sup>229</sup> The response of the local police has reflected the national trend in respect to community policing, and neighbourhood policing teams, with the aim of working closely with the communities in order build up community relations. At the time of writing, projects such as 'Quest'<sup>230</sup> were being actively promoted amongst youth community groups throughout Leeds. Quest was set up as a charity providing grants for community-based projects that assist in the reductions of crime, particularly that prevalent between Hallowe'en and Bonfire Night, and to improve the quality of life for

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<sup>227</sup> Beatrix Campbell, *Goliath. Britain's Dangerous Places* (London, 1993)

<sup>228</sup> 'Violence Flares on Leeds Streets' Yorkshire Evening Post (13<sup>th</sup> July 1981) p.1

<sup>229</sup> These views have been gathered from interviews conducted between the author, and residents present in the Hyde Park youth centre on 4/11/2007

<sup>230</sup> Quest was set up as part of the West Yorkshire Police Community Trust.

those who live and work in West Yorkshire, and has been regarded by local police as being successful in its objectives.

Whilst the success of projects such as Quest are of benefit to police and community relations, the 1997 government pledge of “tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime” has arguably made little impact on Leeds, which continues to be a city economically divided between the ‘have’s and the ‘have not’s. By 2000, anti-social behaviour hotspots in the city were still to be found in the traditionally disadvantaged areas such as Beeston, Richmond Hill, Burmantofts and Chapeltown<sup>231</sup>, where police and community relations are traditionally strained.

## Childhood

The notion of ‘childhood’ is, historically speaking, a relatively recent one. Its development has been charted by a series of texts and articles from numerous disciplines including cultural studies, anthropology, and social sciences, as well as social history, and all can provide an added richness to an understanding of the subject<sup>232</sup>. Notable historical accounts can be found in Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt 1969 work *Children in English Society. Volume II*; James Walvin’s, *A Child’s World: A Social History of English Childhood 1800-1914*<sup>233</sup>, and Eric Hopkins’ survey titled *Childhood Transformed: Working Class Children in Nineteenth Century England*<sup>234</sup>. Oral historical accounts include Thea Thomson’s *Edwardian Childhood*<sup>235</sup> and Stephen Humphries *Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working Class Childhood and Youth 1889-1939*.<sup>236</sup> and Jeremy Seabrook’s *Working Class Childhood: An Oral History*<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Unsworth and Stillwell (eds.), *Twenty-first Century Leeds* p.144

<sup>232</sup> See Phil Cohen *Rethinking the Youth Question. Education, Labour, and Cultural Studies* (Durham, 1999)

<sup>233</sup> James Walvin *A Child’s World: A Social History of English Childhood 1800-1914* (Harmondsworth, 1982)

<sup>234</sup> Eric Hopkins *Childhood Transformed: Working Class Children in Nineteenth Century England* (Manchester, 1994)

<sup>235</sup> Thea Thomson *Edwardian Childhoods* (London, 1981)

<sup>236</sup> Stephen Humphries *Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working Class Childhood and Youth 1889-1939*. (Oxford, 1981)

<sup>237</sup> Jeremy Seabrook *Working Class Childhood: An Oral History* (London, 1982)



Colin Haywood's (2001) book *A History of Childhood*<sup>238</sup> provides a broad overview of various aspects and perceptions of childhood from the Middle Ages through to the beginnings of the twentieth century. Despite its vast sweep across history, Haywood successfully includes the legislative, as well as social, cultural and economic considerations that impact upon the changing attitudes and perspectives of childhood. Of particular use to this research is Haywood's penultimate chapter on 'Children at Work', in which he questions both the recognised definitions of work, and the nature of work both in a rural and urban context as well as unpaid domestic labour in the home. Although Haywood does make reference to the role of children in factories in England during the Industrial Revolution, his account encompasses a far greater overview of the use of children in all areas of the labour market including mining, domestic service, and navigation, as well as agriculture and textiles across both Europe and America.

A more sentimental, but no less scholarly, account of childhood can be found in Hugh Cunningham's later work *The Invention of Childhood*<sup>239</sup>. Like Haywood's work, it sets out to provide a historical account of childhood from the Middle Ages onwards, but unlike Haywood, Cunningham restricts his work to childhood in Britain. Furthermore, much more emphasis is placed on the social and cultural impact of Victorian literary accounts, such as those of Charles Dickens, George Eliot and Lewis Carol. Although the writing of Dickens focused essentially on the childhood of industrial London, his work is shown to be more broadly significant by Cunningham who draws the reader's attention to the parallels that existed between London and other industrialised cities and notes the impact that Dickens's writings<sup>240</sup> had on subsequent social reform. This will be explored further below. Cunningham also highlights differences in attitudes to childhood as regards social class as well as looking into the impact of the media; the phenomenon of obesity; and juvenile crime in recent decades, notably the legal responses to high profile cases such as the murder of James Bulger in 1993 by two other children. Each of these will also be explored in further detail below.

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<sup>238</sup> Colin Heyward *A History of Childhood* (Cambridge, 2001)

<sup>239</sup> Hugh Cunningham *The Invention of Childhood* (London, 2006)

<sup>240</sup> Such as Charles Dickens *Oliver Twist* (Harmondsworth, 1985) and Charles Dickens *The Old Curiosity Shop* (Harmondsworth, 1972)

In exploring the use of home movies to highlight the changing attitudes towards childhood, Heather Nicholson<sup>241</sup> looks at how amateur film makers between 1937 and 1970 captured children's experiences, and how they linked directly to their social and cultural surroundings. Nicholson asserts that; *"When family films depict the spaces and places occupied by children, they expose aspects of current thinking about parenting, play and childhood experiences"*<sup>242</sup>

Her work concentrates on two male amateur film makers, one of whom, Charles Chislett, highlighted the social deprivation experienced by children in Leeds in 1947. It is important to understand that Chislett's filming in Leeds was conducted for the benefit of the Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS) and was heavily influenced by his own strong religious beliefs concerning the 'salvation' of children. The clear value judgments and underlying agenda are apparent in that the film focuses on poorly-clad children playing in the gutter; infants in prams outside betting shops; the squalid interiors of homes and empty hearths and an absence of toys. Whilst his work undoubtedly fits in with the social reformist perspective prevalent on the eve of both welfare reform and slum clearances<sup>243</sup> it also highlights Nicholson's view that the very *"notions of children's lives clearly influenced how those children's scenes were captured on film and subsequently viewed...and why childhoods were represented in particular ways"*<sup>244</sup>. This undoubtedly holds true for not only home cinematography but also for literary and scholarly accounts of childhood over time. Although Nicholson does not go into any serious depth on the subject, she does mention that the films generated highlight the complex relationship between childhood and society, and goes on to argue that cine-camera has both intervened in and influenced children's lives. It not only allowed the gaining of unprecedented access into

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<sup>241</sup> Heather Norris Nicholson 'Seeing how it was? Childhood geographies and memories in home movies' in *Area*, [e-journal] Vol.33.No.2 (2001) 128-140 Available through: Jstor database [Accessed 10 March 2009]

<sup>242</sup> Norris Nicholson, 'Seeing how it was?' p.130

<sup>243</sup> Owen Hartley *The Second World War and After, 1939-74* in Frazer, *History of Modern Leeds*

<sup>244</sup> Heather Norris Nicholson 'Seeing how it was? Childhood geographies and memories in home movies' in *Area*, [e-journal] Vol.33.No.2 (2001) 128-140 Available through: Jstor database.[Accessed 10 March 2009] p.136

the private lives of children and family life, but also coincided with a renewed debate about the 'disappearance of childhood'.<sup>245</sup>

Literary and biographical accounts of childhood can furnish a robust historical understanding of childhood during the nineteenth and twentieth century. An insightful and detailed account of early twentieth century Leeds can be found in Richard Hoggart's *A Local Habitation*.<sup>246</sup> Born in Leeds in 1918, Hoggart provides a first-hand account of growing up in a working class district of Leeds between the two world wars. Hoggart provides a unique child's eye perspective on both family and working class life in the Potternewton, Holbeck and Hunslet areas of Leeds, detailing the social and cultural restrictions and expectations of the time. Further accounts of Hoggart's Leeds can be found in his *The Uses of Literacy*<sup>247</sup> where he expands on the nature of boys' games played on the street during the nineteen twenties and thirties and in so doing allows glimpses of family life at that time. He states:

Games change as the year unfolds, following the products of the season (e.g. 'conkers'), or simply by the boys' own intuitively followed rhythm. At one time everyone is playing 'taws', with his marbles ranked in prestige according to age and killing power; quite suddenly marbles go and everybody wants a threepenny peashooter... throughout the year, pancake Tuesday, Voting Day, which is always a holiday, Hot-cross buns on Good Friday, the Autumn 'Feast', Mischief Night, and all the weeks of cadging and collecting for Bonfire Night. It is a truly urban fire, with very little wood that has known a tree for the last few years, a fire composed of old mattresses and chairs – replaced now that someone's club turn has come up – or a horsehair sofa displaced by a modern one on hire purchase. As the fireworks run out, you bake potatoes round the fire's edges.<sup>248</sup>

Undoubtedly one of the most graphic accounts of contemporary underclass childhood in Leeds comes from Bernard Hare's *Urban Grimshaw and the Shed Crew*<sup>249</sup>. It describes a group of children aged between ten and fourteen who lived in a world of extreme social deprivation in East End Park,

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<sup>245</sup> See also Neil Postman *The disappearance of childhood* (New York, 1982)

<sup>246</sup> Hoggart, *Local Habitation*

<sup>247</sup> Richard Hoggart *The Uses of Literacy. His classic account of twentieth-century popular culture* (Middlesex, 1957)

<sup>248</sup> Hoggart *The Uses of Literacy* p.66-68

<sup>249</sup> Bernard Hare *Urban Grimshaw and the Shed Crew* (London, 2005)

about a mile North East of the notorious Bank district. They drink; are no strangers to sex and the full array of drugs; habitually run away from care homes that frequently don't care, and from parents who appear incapable of parenting. They are depicted as constantly avoiding the police because of their practices of joyriding and stealing. Autobiographical in its delivery, its importance to a historical account of childhood is significant in that it faithfully presents a picture of British childhood that is often neglected because of the uncomfortable questions that it raises about our 'civilised' society. As the author states "...this is a true story. These kids are real. They exist."<sup>250</sup> Ultimately it provides a useful insight into the lives of many children in Leeds, living in post-Thatcherite Britain, not otherwise found in the historical accounts of the city. Other more general historical accounts of the underclass can be found in John Welshman's *Underclass: A History of the Excluded, 1880-2000*<sup>251</sup> and Robert MacDonald's *Youth, the 'Underclass' and Social Exclusion*<sup>252</sup>.

The changing attitudes towards children in the workplace can be explored through the implementation of, and reaction to, various acts of parliament, reports and publications. Children in both rural and urban settings were, prior to the 1870 Education Act frequently employed from the age of six or seven on farms, and in mines as well as in factories. Their hours were long, and the conditions were undoubtedly contrary to health<sup>253</sup>. In agricultural communities, children as young as five and six worked nine hour days, for 3d or 4d a day, excluding walking several miles to and from work.<sup>254</sup> Children in factories fared little better. The Factories' Inquiry Commission of 1833 reported that manufacturers employed children as young as five, often working fourteen to sixteen hours a day, and were regularly subjected to floggings and general maltreatment.<sup>255</sup>

Despite this there was considerable resistance to any decline in child labour, not simply from factory owners, who are often portrayed in an

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<sup>250</sup> Hare, *Urban Grimshaw* p.v

<sup>251</sup> John Welshman *Underclass: A History of the Excluded, 1880-2000* (London, 2006)

<sup>252</sup> Robert MacDonald *Youth, the 'Underclass' and Social Exclusion* (London, 1997)

<sup>253</sup> Edward P Thompson *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth, 1963)

<sup>254</sup> Ivy Pinchbeck & Margaret Hewitt *Children In Society. Volume II From The Eighteenth Century To The Children Act 1948* (London, 1969)

<sup>255</sup> Friedrich Engels *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (London, 2005) p.173

exploitative role, but primarily from parents. The Factory Act 1819 prohibited the employment of children under nine, however parents would often fail to register their children at birth, in contravention of the law, in order to help ensure early employment.<sup>256</sup>

An expression of the wider resistance to the Agricultural Children's Act 1875 was put forward in a letter to *The Times*<sup>257</sup>. The principle concern of the letter was the loss of wages that would have been generated by children obliged to attend school. The correspondent wrote "people naturally feel that great wrong has been done to them, for they can hardly be convinced of the benefit they have gained by the extra education received, while they are fully sensible of the money lost". Despite this, the compulsory schooling instigated in the 1870s and 1880s played, as Harry Hendrick argues, a pivotal role in transforming childhood from a time of earning a wage, to earning an education<sup>258</sup>.

Although the Education Act of 1870 formally established a minimal education for children to the age of ten, it would be misleading to assume that children in Leeds were without an education prior to its enactment. Indeed Leeds contained a number of charity schools in the eighteenth century, the largest established in 1705<sup>259</sup>. That said, educational provision fluctuated greatly according to available time, the provider and location as well as social class.

The rapidly expanding population of Leeds during the second half of the eighteenth century led to a significant decline in the availability of schools per head of population. And whilst working class children were admitted to schools such as Headingley and Leeds Grammar school during this time through the scholarship system, secondary education was, to a large extent, the preserve of the middle and upper classes who would attend academies and seminaries. This is reflected in the figures that show that relatively few working class boys were admitted to the Grammar School after the 1850s<sup>260</sup>.

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<sup>256</sup> Colin Heywood *A History of Childhood* (Cambridge, 2001)

<sup>257</sup> 'Agricultural Children's Act' *The Times*, (6<sup>th</sup> May 1875) p.7

<sup>258</sup> Harry Hendrick *Children, Childhood and English Society 1880-1990* (Cambridge, 1997)

<sup>259</sup> Frazer, *History of Modern Leeds*

<sup>260</sup> Frazer, *History of Modern Leeds* p.397

A further form of schooling came with the introduction of Sunday Schools in Leeds. As Derek Frazer's account amply explains, such schools were principally driven by a middle class enthusiasm for moralistic teachings and the submission of unruly behaviour, and they expanded greatly in number after their introduction in 1784. Their dramatic expansion was in part due to their ability to fit in with the working week and thus not interfere with the economic demands of child labour. By 1817 the majority of churches and chapels in Leeds, had some form of Sunday School provision, and were attended by around five thousand pupils. By 1858 this figure had expanded to around thirty five thousand pupils attending over one hundred and thirty schools. Of particular note, was the Bramley National School founded in 1850 on land donated by the Earl of Cardigan. The school was to "serve Children and Adults or Children only of the labouring, manufacturing and other poorer classes of the chapel of Bramley"<sup>261</sup> It was notable for its time in that its range of subjects taught went beyond simple reading and arithmetic and scripture, to include History, Geography, Mapping and Art. Other notable schools at that time included Wesleyan and Hough Lane.

The shift of emphases away from children as wage earners was a slow one, and legislation, such as the Education Acts of 1870, and 1878 was often minimal in its impact, but despite this the numbers of working children between the ages of ten and fourteen are thought to have fallen from 30% in 1851, to 17% in 1901, and of those 17% many were in part-time employment.<sup>262</sup>

Legislation proves indicative of the historical attitudes towards juvenile crime. Whilst there are no accurate national statistics on crime before 1894<sup>263</sup> we do have snapshots that provide us with insight into the attitudes towards youth justice. A circular from the Home Office in 1887<sup>264</sup> sent out to the police, and received in Leeds in September 1887 recommended that the rod used in birching juvenile offenders should be lighter for those aged under

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<sup>261</sup> Linne Stevenson Tate *Aspects of Leeds 2. Discovering Local History* (Barnsley, 1999) p.114

<sup>262</sup> Colin Heywood *A History of Childhood* (Cambridge, 2001) p.140

<sup>263</sup> John Gillis 'The Evolution of Juvenile Delinquency In England 1890-1914' *Past and Present*. [e-journal] Vol.67 (1975) 96-126 Available through Jstor database [Accessed 12 March, 2007] p.98

<sup>264</sup> Referenced in The Watch Committee, *Leeds Police Centenary*

the age of ten. Furthermore, medical consultation should be sought if the child appeared to be in weak or delicate health.

Recorded juvenile crime increased significantly between 1880 and 1914, but the nature of the crimes committed were generally of a lesser, non-indictable nature, such as loitering or trespass, gambling, malicious mischief and wilful damage<sup>265</sup>. In more recent years, the 1963 Children and Young Persons Act raised the age of criminal responsibility from eight to ten, and an ideological consensus developed that the court room should be the last resort<sup>266</sup>. Indeed, Home Office figures for the years 1983 to 1993 showed a marked decrease in the numbers of sentenced young offenders,<sup>267</sup> however, the murder of James Bulger in 1993 by two ten-year-olds marked a turning point. Just five years later the legal presumption, of *doli incapax*<sup>268</sup> for ten to thirteen year olds had been repealed. Children from the age of ten can at the time of writing be subjected to 'Detention and Training Orders', whilst children twelve and over can be put in 'secure accommodation'.

## Twentieth century Leeds

According to Rachael Unsworth and John Stillwell's *Twenty First Century Leeds*<sup>269</sup> Leeds stands as the second largest metropolitan district in England covering an area of approximately 213 square miles, serving a population of 770,800. The modern Leeds has developed from a post-war economy based upon its manufacturing past. The first blast furnace of the Leeds steelworks, for example, set up in the Hunslet area of the city in 1871, employed up to 1,500 people by the turn of the twentieth century, and became one of the biggest steelworks in Yorkshire<sup>270</sup>. However, foreign competition during the 1920's and the great depression of the 1930's both took their toll, leading to the dismantling of the steelworks during the same

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<sup>265</sup> Gillis 'Evolution of Juvenile Delinquency' p.102

<sup>266</sup> Hugh Cunningham *The Invention of Childhood* (London, 2006)

<sup>267</sup> Andy Furlong and Fred Cartmel *Young People and Social Change. Individualization and Risk in Late Modernity* (Buckingham, 1997)

<sup>268</sup> "incapable of crime" It is worth noting that it was only the presumption of *doli incapax* that was repealed, not the defence.

<sup>269</sup> Unsworth and Stillwell (eds.), *Twenty-first Century Leeds*

<sup>270</sup> Thornton, *Leeds: The Story* p.146

decade. The site remained largely derelict well into the 1950's and was known locally as 't'slag'. Despite the loss of the steel works, coal mining, textiles, printing, and publishing also played their part in the economic growth of the city well into the twentieth century.

With growth came expansion, by the start of the twentieth century much of housing stock of Leeds was considered unfit for human habitation<sup>271</sup>. During the 1930's the city council initiated a house building programme that proposed the clearing of some 30,000 slum houses, along with the building of 53,000 council houses over a twenty year period. Despite this the author John Waddington-Feather<sup>272</sup>, who graduated from Leeds university in 1954, was still able, in his accounts of living as an undergraduate in Leeds, published in 1967, to recollect that:

The university in the fifties, like so many other provincial universities such as Liverpool, Sheffield, and Manchester, was surrounded on three sides by slum property of the most abject type...The trek up to the university each day was through dank and evil-smelling streets where dirty and ill-cared-for youngsters, some of them only half-clothed, played in areas where grass and moss were growing and where refuse spilled out from backyards onto the pavements and streets.<sup>273</sup>

Demand for new houses meant that the programme of building houses continued well into the 1970's, despite the completion of the 1934 programme by 1964. New housing estates such as Seacroft, Swarcliffe and Whinmoor, to the north east of the city re-housed many of the poorest residents including the increasing numbers of immigrants particularly of Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi origin. More established Leeds residents who could afford to move to the outer suburbs of the city tended to relocate to the south and West of Leeds in areas such as Pudsey, Bramley and Morley, while the more wealthy inhabitants moved to the further northern districts, such as Roundhay, Oakwood and Alwoodley.

While the new housing estates improved measurable standards of living, the move from a tight-knit community living cheek-by-jowl with another

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<sup>271</sup> See W R Mitchell *A History of Leeds* (Chichester, 2000) p.140-142

<sup>272</sup> John Waddington-Feather *Leeds: the heart of Yorkshire: a history and guide to the city and its surroundings* (Leeds, 1967)

<sup>273</sup> Waddington-Feather *Leeds: the heart of Yorkshire* p.57



area of the city into sprawling estates had a significant impact on community life. As Hoggart explains<sup>274</sup>:

It is because for all ages such life can have a peculiarly gripping wholeness, that after twenty-five it can be difficult for a working-class person to move either into another kind of area or even into another area of the same kind. We all know of working-class people's difficulties in settling into the new council-house estates. Most react instinctively against consciously planned group activities; they are used to a group life, but one which has started from the home and worked outwards in response to the common needs and amusements of a densely packed neighbourhood.

This short extract highlights the cultural impact of even relatively limited forms of displacement. It undermined the social and cultural life that resulted from long years of co-existence and shared needs. In this sense, although the working classes may not have forgotten their traditional way of life, they lost touch with the social structures on which much of it depended and many were not sufficiently flexible to find new outlets for it. This mirrors the findings of Garry Cross<sup>275</sup> who, in identifying changes in working class consumer trends in lower-income families in the London suburbs of London during the 1950s found that individuals social life increasingly 'centred on the house not the people' and that 'Character, family and background, known through lifelong contact in more stable communities, could no longer be the basis for judgment. Instead, social relationships became 'window-to-window', not face to face"<sup>276</sup>.

Children, by contrast, having not lost their native adaptability and perhaps being more naturally gregarious were far more able to transcend these limitations by adapting their cultural life to a new environment and thus their traditions were in a far greater position to be able to survive.

At the time of writing the population of Leeds, whilst remaining ethnically diverse, retains its identifiable ethnic regions. It is interesting at this point to note, that many of the instances of Mischief Night identified in subsequent chapters have been found in areas of the city inhabited by older

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<sup>274</sup> Hoggart *The Uses of Literacy* p.68

<sup>275</sup> Garry Cross *Time and Money. The Making of Consumer Culture* (London, 1993)

<sup>276</sup> Garry Cross *Time and Money* p.170

established Leeds communities such as Armley, Bramley and Hyde Park. The 2001 census identified eleven distinct ethnic groups in the city, and five additional 'Other' groups, e.g. 'White: Other', 'Asian or Asian British: Other'. Whilst the Irish population, numbering 8,578 individuals has been represented in the 2001 census, the Jewish population, as defined purely by race, can only be assumed to be represented within either the 'White: Other' 10,632 or the 'Other' 2,528 or incorporated into the 637,872 'White: British'. However, those Jews self-identifying by faith (without a necessary ethnic implication) numbered 8,267. The ethnic minority population (including Irish and non British Whites) came to 77,530, (over ten per cent of the population of the city), but they are still disproportionately over-represented within more economically deprived areas of the city. The Jewish Community may represent an exception to this trend with many residing in the affluent northern parts of the city.

Alongside steady improvements in housing, came an increased demand for schools. In an attempt to address the issues of both accommodating the growing numbers of school places required, as well as parental choice, the city council embarked on a post-war school building programme titled the 1946 Education Plan<sup>277</sup>. The operation to replace all-age schools with the new comprehensive schools continued until the last all-age school was divided in 1965, and further adjustments to the new system continued until the early 1980s.

The social and economic status of Leeds has also been increased by the growth and development of its two universities.<sup>278</sup> Though both Leeds University and Leeds Metropolitan University can both trace their origins back into the nineteenth century, 1874 and 1824 respectively, rapid expansion for both of them came in the 1970s. At the time of writing the two universities combined attract some 75,000 students. While undoubtedly a proportion of these will come from existing Leeds residents, the influx of students from outside of Leeds has made a considerable impact upon the city, not least in respect to the increase in student housing in the Hyde Park

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<sup>277</sup> For a fuller description see Owen Hartley 'The Second World War and After, 1939-74' in Derek Fraser (ed) *A History of Modern Leeds* (Manchester, 1980)

<sup>278</sup> See Thornton, *Leeds: The Story* p.214

and Headingley areas close to the city centre, but also in respect to their retail spending power in the city.

There has undoubtedly been a rise in the standard of living for many in the latter half of the twentieth century in Leeds, not least from the increases in banking, financial services and call centres. The table below<sup>279</sup> from the *Census of Employment 1989, and 1991* illustrates not only the growth of employment in the Banking sector in West Yorkshire in the twelve years between 1989 and 1991, but also demonstrates a shift in the employment financial services away from London and the South of England, towards the north of the country.

| Region            | 1989    | 1991    | % change |
|-------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| London            | 792,700 | 733,500 | -7.5%    |
| South East        | 523,700 | 520,900 | -0.5%    |
| South West        | 201,400 | 198,300 | -1.6%    |
| Scotland          | 182,000 | 198,400 | +8.9%    |
| Yorks and Humbers | 156,100 | 167,600 | +7.4%    |
| West Yorks        | 80,000  | 86,700  | +8.3%    |

Writing in 2004, Unsworth and Stillwell's account<sup>280</sup> of the economy of Leeds stated that finance and business represented 22 percent of the Leeds economy; public administration 10 percent, and distribution 6 percent. Of the 401,000 employees working in the district in 2002, almost 70 percent were classified as working in three key sectors. 24.7 percent worked in public administration, education and health; 23.9 percent worked in banking, finance and insurance and 21.4 percent worked in distribution, hotels and restaurants. This shift has been reflected in changes to the city centre which has seen rapid redevelopments in office and inner-city complexes, with onsite retail outlets, hospitality services and entertainment in order to create an almost self-contained city centre community. Regarding this pattern of

<sup>279</sup> Graham Haughton and David Whitney *Reinventing a region. Restructuring in West Yorkshire* (Aldershot, 1994) p.196

<sup>280</sup> Unsworth and Stillwell (eds.), *Twenty-first Century Leeds* p.144

change, the historian Janet Douglas<sup>281</sup> identified a £2.2 billion investment into property development schemes in the city centre between 1998 and 2008. Douglas<sup>282</sup> went on to state that in practice Leeds had become a 'two speed city' and that

The 'trickle-down' model of city-centre revitalisation remains a chimera for the 150,000 or 10% who live in areas that are officially registered as being amongst the most deprived in the city.

Thus, whilst the city seeks to portray an image of a progressive metropolis, it is easy to overlook the social stasis and deprivation still present within its boundaries, as highlighted in 'Urban Grimshaw' (see above). Long term unemployment rates, combined with a lack of investment have resulted in little real change for wards such as Armley, Wortley and Gipton as well as among the non-student population of Hyde Park, where much of the original housing stock has survived, as indeed have many of the families. In this respect 'progress' within the city has been heterogeneously distributed so that despite the passage of close to sixty years since John Waddington-Feather's accounts of the living areas around the university, the standards of living, judged by factors such as having central heating and car ownership are still significantly lower than the national average.<sup>283</sup>

Despite this, there has been an increase in wealth for many since the early 1980s and this has coincided with a proliferation of affordable toys, especially electronic and computer-based products, which has in turn contributed to an increase in the amount of time children spend inside the house or in the safe confines of the family garden. To some extent this movement has drawn children from working class families closer to what was once the preserve of the middle classes as described by Lyn Murfin in *Popular Leisure in the Lake Counties*<sup>284</sup> "While working-class informants talk mainly about playing in the streets, however, those of middle-class origin talk predominantly about amusing themselves in the home and its extension, the

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<sup>281</sup> Janet Douglas 'Cranes Over the City: The Centre of Leeds, 1980-2008' in Peter Bramham and Stephen Wagg ed. *Sport, Leisure and Culture in the Postmodern City* (Surrey, 2009)

<sup>282</sup> Douglas *Cranes Over the City*: p.55

<sup>283</sup> Unsworth and Stillwell (eds.), *Twenty-first Century Leeds* p.145

<sup>284</sup> Lyn Murfin *Popular Leisure in the Lake Counties* (Manchester, 1990) p.19

garden.” This might be expected to lead to the erosion of street-based children’s customs. However, while developments in the games industry as well as changes to parents’ attitudes to child safety (see above) have led to a recognised increase in home-based play for many, again it does not follow that these changes have had this effect on all areas of the city. Almost irrespective of the growing wealth in the city centre, or the growing trend of many children to spend increasing amounts of time engaged with the products of technological advances, there runs in parallel an ongoing tradition amongst children throughout the city that has continued throughout the twentieth century, particularly, but by no means exclusively, of the children of less affluent families to ‘play out’. The importance of this to the persistence of childhood autumn traditions will be explored further in the subsequent chapters.

## **Conclusion**

Each of the three areas explored in this chapter have helped to form a picture of the rise and development of Leeds over the past two hundred years. Each has been chosen, not simply for this purpose, but in order to form a greater historical understanding of key factors that impact upon the development and practice of Hallowe’en and related festivals in Leeds. It is important to note that whilst each of the areas covered in this chapter have been looked at in isolation, they are, in reality, interwoven. The growth and development of ‘childhood’ for example, is intricately linked with economic development. Both Hallowe’en and its related festivals, particularly Mischief Night, are child-led customs. It is important, therefore, to understand something of the lives of children practicing such customs. The charting of immigration into the city is important to the thesis in that it enables a greater appreciation of the various cultural strands that may have impacted to a greater or lesser extent on the customs and traditions within the city. Attitudes towards related festivals such as Mischief Night have changed significantly over the past two hundred years, and this can be linked, not only in respect to differing attitudes to childhood, but also in respect to the relationship between the police and community, particularly in relation to law

and order, and this relationship will be considered in greater depth in subsequent chapters.

### **Chapter Three**

#### **History of Hallowe'en in Leeds**

This chapter sets out to explore the way in which Hallowe'en has manifested, and continues to manifest itself in and around the West Yorkshire city of Leeds. In so doing it will provide a historical narrative in an English urban setting. Not only will it be adding to the accounts of the nature and substance of Hallowe'en encountered in Chapter One, identifying features of Hallowe'en recorded over the given time span, but it will be looking to ascertain the relevance, interaction and merger of associated days, such as the Catholic feast of All Souls and All Saints into the overall history of the custom in the area, and will show how the custom manifests itself in a contemporary context. In so doing, various sections of the population of Leeds will be taken into account, including religious groups; the student population; and children practising Hallowe'en customs.

In Leeds, as with much of England, the most recognisable precursors to Hallowe'en are church festivals so, in keeping with the relationship of bell-ringing and the lighting of candles at All Saint and All Souls outlined in Chapter One, an attempt was made to find evidence for either bell ringing or the lighting of candles (used both to light the church and as carried in procession) in Leeds and surrounding areas. Surviving church wardens' accounts and cash books for a number of churches were examined. It was not expected that much material would be found, not least because, although the archives contain clear reference to Leeds from the eleventh century onwards, the oldest surviving church in central Leeds, St. John's, was built after the Reformation. Only one central Leeds church, St. Anne's (now a cathedral), is Catholic, but since this was built during the latter half of the eighteenth century, this also inspired little hope of supporting evidence.

The records for St. Peter's parish church, situated in the city centre, date from 1691 through to 1974, although the churchwardens' accounts are fragmentary with only one year (1765-6) surviving for the first ninety years. A more complete set of accounts exists for the periods 1782-1854; and 1854-1863. Although there are church wardens' returns of income and expenditure

1913-1932 there appears to be little other material save the cash books covering 1847-1854 and 1892-1906. None of these accounts provide any recognition of All Saints or All Souls. The records for Holy Trinity church, Boar Lane cover 1722-1881, but again reveal nothing. St John's is one of the oldest churches in the city of Leeds, built in 1634, although the records only date back to 1773. Again, the surviving records for the church wardens' cash books only cover a lesser period of 1849-1975. The only mention of All Saints was to found in the offertory accounts, and served only to identify the date. Even this seems to have been the preference of the individual church warden as it only appears between 1873 and 1882. It was hoped that the records for Kippax church, to the East of the city, but still within its borough boundary, would prove more revealing insight given that it dates back to the Saxon period. Although there are surviving registers of baptisms, marriages and deaths dating back to 1539, the only surviving mention of the 'ringers' is a note in respect to the election of ringers in 1627 which, in reference to tolling for the dead on their burial, states that the ringers are "to ring as well for the poore as for the rich whose names ar heare under written"<sup>285</sup> The only mention of the purchase of candles at that time comes from an entry dated 5<sup>th</sup> November in the 1730 *Town Book*, which makes reference for a "pound of candles for singers - 00/00/05 "<sup>286</sup>. Although this entry stands alone, without any further supporting information, it is very likely that it represents evidence for an annual celebration of delivery from the Gunpowder plot.

Further afield there are a number of pre-Reformation churches and cathedrals still functioning within the West Riding, notably the Dewsbury Minster, dating back to 627AD; All Saints Parish Church, Ilkley dating back in parts to the thirteenth century, and Wakefield Cathedral dating back to c1150. The three original bells of All Saints Ilkley only date from 1600, 1636 and 1676 respectively. Not having any bells with which to ring on All Souls

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<sup>285</sup> Kippax parish records, Record of Burials, 1627, Available at: West Yorkshire Archive Service RPD47/2

<sup>286</sup> Kippax parish records, Town Book Containing Churchwardens' And Constables' Accounts, 1730, Available at: West Yorkshire Archive Service RPD47/51



prior to the protestant clamp-downs, it hardly seems surprising that no records can be found for the practice once the bells are in place.

Even here there is little surviving, or at least accessible archive material available in which to find any evidence to suggest that even in these churches the practice of bell ringing or the lighting of extra candles on the Eve of All Saint or All Souls survived beyond the sixteenth century in the West Riding.

Looking now to folk customs associated with the church calendar, the survival of any Souling or Wassailing in the West Riding beyond the Reformation is significantly impressive given the strong puritan leanings of the region<sup>287</sup>. While the Methodist movement took hold in Leeds from the early nineteenth century, it was an earlier home for the early Quaker movement<sup>288</sup> founded by George Fox in and around the West Riding in 1652. Though a relatively small proportion of the population of Leeds, Quakers were very active employers in the woollen and clothier industries, and in the promotion of major projects such as the Leeds Liverpool Canal.<sup>289</sup> One clear explanation for the continuation of Wassail-Boxes and soul cakes, given the prominence of such puritan-led interests can be found in Catholic immigration. Large numbers of Catholics migrated from Ireland into the West Ridings following the great potato famine in Ireland in the 1840s. But even prior to this, Catholic Irish migrant workers were encouraged into Yorkshire to work on the building of the Leeds Liverpool Canal, first proposed to aid the shipment of wool between Leeds and Preston in 1765. Though many employers and mill owners were protestant, many of them recognised the economic benefits that the Irish labour market brought to the city, both as manual labourers and in the rapidly expanding mills. Religious tolerance of traditional Catholic practices simply made good economic sense.

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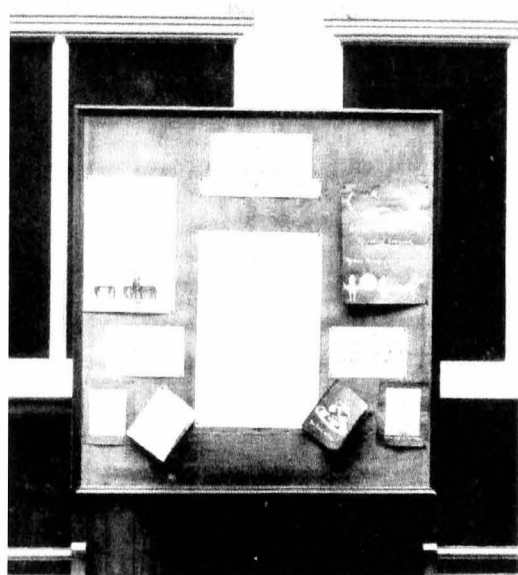
<sup>287</sup> See David Underdown *Revel, Riot, and Rebellion: popular politics and culture in Europe in England 1603-1660* (Oxford, 1985)

<sup>288</sup> Known more formally as The Religious Society of Friends, formal gatherings were met with hostility and persecution following the Restoration of Charles II. The Quaker Act 1662 made it illegal for Quakers to meet in a group of five or more. Open freely held meetings were not allowed until the Toleration Act 1689.

<sup>289</sup> Examples of Quaker owned or managed business in the Leeds area included: Low Mill (1796), Park Mill (1805) and Larkfield Mill (1824) owned by the Thompson Family in Rawden, Leeds; the Friends Provident (life insurance), set up by Samuel Tuke and Joseph Rowntree in Bradford, as well as the more well known Rowntree's sweet factory in York.

While, as discussed in Chapter One, there is evidence of an established history of both All-Souls and souling activity in the West Riding, Hallowe'en is widely regarded in Leeds as a relatively recent addition dating roughly from the middle to the late 1970s. Indeed there is a rapidly expanding wealth of evidence of Hallowe'en activity from that time onwards such as the 'Friends of the Leeds City and Abbey House Museums Society'<sup>290</sup> Hallowe'en party 1975.

Yet earlier examples of Hallowe'en in Leeds can be found. One of the earliest recorded references found for Hallowe'en in its contemporary form, comes from a photograph taken in the Leeds Civic library.



The first of these two photographs was, according to the Leeds photographic archive records, taken on 11th November 1920 to celebrate the golden jubilee of Leeds public library services. It shows a display board upon which is a record of various story-readings and other semi-educational events. In addition, it bears a small poster advertising a 'Hallowe'en Evening'. The poster depicts a witch on a broomstick, cat, owl, and a pumpkin held up by two dwarf-like figures. The presence of the pumpkin (American in origin) in the picture provides an early example of an American influence to the custom. Regrettably, efforts to find similar pictures or any further material

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<sup>290</sup> This event was recorded in Leeds City Council *The Leeds Record of Current Events for 1975-79* (Leeds, 1997)

evidence of Hallowe'en events at the library around this time or earlier have not proved fruitful but the very existence of such a record suggests that the festival had a certain currency. The second photo, taken for comparative purposes, was taken by the author in the same library in 2006. Little has changed in terms of the iconography with ghosts; witches; skeletons and black cats remaining the principle identifying features of Hallowe'en in this instance.

It might be supposed that, despite the view that Hallowe'en held little sway in England prior to the 1970s, the designer of the first display may well have been influenced by (and be appealing to an awareness of) a knowledge of the Scottish traditions of Hallowe'en. Alternatively, they may have been drawing on a take on the festival newly arrived from America, and the presence of the pumpkin would certainly support this hypothesis.<sup>291</sup> The custom was certainly practiced both in America and in Canada throughout the nineteenth century as the following example reported in the Kingston, Ontario Daily News, 1866 illustrates:

The old time custom of keeping up Hallowe'en was not forgotten last night by the youngsters of the city. They had their maskings and their merry-makings and perambulated the streets after dark in a way which no doubt was mighty amusing to themselves. There was a great sacrifice of pumpkins from which to make transparent heads and face, lighted up by the unfailing two inches of tallow candle.<sup>292</sup>

The popular expression of Hallowe'en with bats and witches on broomsticks may have made only rare appearances in the early 1920s in England. However, by 1933, the author and later columnist for the *Leeds Mercury* and *Yorkshire Evening Post*, Elizabeth Craig, felt able, in her *Entertaining with Elizabeth Craig*,<sup>293</sup> to make specific reference to a 'Hallowe'en party'. Written and published in England, the book is clearly

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<sup>291</sup> This is certainly in keeping with the arguments concerning the rise of consumer culture put forward by Cross *Time and Money* (London, 1993). Though it is equally important to note that both Cross and Andrew Davies *Leisure, Gender and Poverty in Manchester and Salford* (Maidenhead, 1992) argue that the commercialised pursuits of the mid to late twentieth century were an expansion upon an already firmly established working class culture, which was already establishing itself within the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, particularly in economically thriving towns such as Coventry.

<sup>292</sup> Daily News, Kensington (1<sup>st</sup> November 1866) in Rogers, *Halloween* p.56-57

<sup>293</sup> Elizabeth Craig, *Entertaining with Elizabeth Craig* (London, 1933)

written for a British (perhaps even an exclusively English) audience of keen hostesses wishing to impress guests with their ability to cater for every occasion.

In the section on 'seasonal celebrations', the author appears to feel she does not need to devote attention to explaining the nature of Hallowe'en before going on to devote several pages to the selection of appropriate recipes including Witch and Wizard Rolls, All Hallowe'en Layer Cake and Witch's Brew<sup>294</sup>. In so doing the book provides illuminating insight into the essential requirements of the Hallowe'en Party. Staples include 'brown, black and gold decorations', and 'apples, oranges and nuts for dessert'. In keeping with the design of the poster Craig suggests that appropriate party invitations should be sent 'on yellow notepaper with a witch's hat cut out of black paper'. Interestingly Craig goes on to claim that it is possible 'to buy Hallowe'en notepaper as well as seals, labels, caps and table decorations all made out of paper'<sup>295</sup>. If this assertion is correct it would suggest that at least a certain proportion of the more wealthy inhabitants of the country may have been familiar with the visual imagery commonly associated with Hallowe'en far earlier than otherwise supposed among the wider population in Leeds today. Furthermore, judging by the easy familiarity the author assumes on the part of what looks to be a very conservative readership, this tradition could well have been around for some time.

Craig is later seen making herself and her Hallowe'en treats familiar to Leeds inhabitants with a selection of recipes printed in the *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Mercury* on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1953. By this point she starts with the simple conditional: "If you're having a party on Hallowe'en, you will find these recipes useful." She then goes on to give recipes for 'Black Cats', 'Ghosties', 'Owls', 'Witches' as well as some less identifiably macabre 'fayre'.

By 1958 an unattributed piece in the same newspaper with overt similarities to the earlier item and a reference to Craig's own book spends a little more time setting the scene:

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<sup>294</sup> Craig, *Entertaining* p.223 – The recipe for Witch's Brew is stated as follows: 1 cup of caster sugar; 6 lemons; 6 grapes; 1 banana; 2 bottles of cider; 2 cups of cracked ice; 2 bottles of ginger ale; 1 rosy-cheeked apple; juice of 1 tangerine; 3 or 4 chunks of pineapple. For a more potent brew add 1 liqueur glass of maraschino and 1 glass of brandy.

<sup>295</sup> Craig, *Entertaining* p.220

Hallowe'en, the night when witches and hobgoblins are supposed to roam and when one may see into the future falls next Friday. Yet I have not been able to find a single Hallowe'en favour to be found in the shops. No broomsticks, caps, seals, labels or table decorations such as used to remind people of the approach of the night of omens and auguries...<sup>296</sup>

Again, this would seem to be consistent with Scottish accounts of the festival, although the American influence becomes apparent with Craig's use of pumpkins as an appropriate substitute for hollowed-out swedes or turnips to make table decorations or lanterns.

Despite the presence of the library poster, there is little other direct evidence of Hallowe'en-themed activities in Leeds prior to the mid to late twentieth century. A few notable exceptions include the Leeds Scottish Club and St. Andrew's Society. A short article in *The Leeds Mercury*, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1891, reported that:

The ancient festival of Halloween was celebrated on Saturday evening by this society at the Athenaeum Buildings, Park-Lane. The large hall was packed to overflowing by an appreciative audience, consisting for the most part of the members' children. The customs and folk-lore connected with Halloween were described in an interesting address given by Mr. W.S Cameron.

The presence of the Scottish Club; St Andrews Society and the Leeds Caledonian Society indicates that there was an established Scottish community resident in Leeds at this time, and that, as indicated by the article, such societies would have acted as conduits of Scottish culture into the city.<sup>297</sup> It is not therefore unreasonable to assume that Scottish traditions

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<sup>296</sup> 'Give a party while the witches roam abroad' *The Yorkshire Evening Post and Leeds Mercury* (October 25th, 1958) p.4

<sup>297</sup> It is unfortunate that the census of the time does not break down the population sufficiently to be able to ascertain an accurate size of the Scottish population in Leeds, although it is clear from the list of sixty-six founding members of the Leeds Caledonian Society in 1894 that many of their members were drawn from professions such as lawyers; surgeons; Scholars; schoolmasters and accountants. For a lively account of the first one hundred years of the Caledonian Society in Leeds see Jimmy Parnham *Leeds Caledonian Society The First Hundred Years 1894-1994* (Leeds, 1994)

surrounding Hallowe'en would have had some wider influence within the city, although it is unclear as to the extent of that influence.<sup>298</sup>

Earlier references are given to Hallowe'en in *The Leeds Mercury*<sup>299</sup> during the 1870s 1880s and 1890s although this is almost exclusively in reference to the royal Hallowe'en celebrations at Balmoral, and not to activities based in Leeds itself. However, it could be argued that the annual recognition of Hallowe'en at Balmoral, along with its royal association in Leeds based newspapers, may well have given a lead to subsequent Hallowe'en based activities in the Leeds area.

Certainly by the 1930s, there is a regular stream of references to Hallowe'en within *The Yorkshire Post*, such as *Halloween. Old Customs in the North*<sup>300</sup> in which reference is made not only to witches and black cats, but also uses the term 'Nut-crack Night' to refer to Hallowe'en itself. The practice of setting aside a special night for the cracking of nuts in England can be traced back to the eighteenth century and the novelist Oliver Goldsmith's highly sentimental *The Vicar of Wakefield*<sup>301</sup> in which, when describing the activities of a community of farmers of a remote parish in the region on key dates in the year, states that they "religiously cracked nuts on Michaelmas eve"<sup>302</sup> Interestingly, Brand misquotes the novel in his *Observations*, so as to read "religiously cracked nuts on All-hallow Eve".<sup>303</sup> Such a misquote may not be so surprising when taken with a further reference by Brand in which he clearly regards both Nut-crack Night and 'All-hallow Even' as occurring on the same date, "vide Hallow Even or Nut-crack Night"<sup>304</sup>. One of several divination practices enacted at Hallowe'en, nut-cracking was used by the young as a way of predicting future partners and marital happiness. The following eighteenth century account of Nut-crack

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<sup>298</sup> Given the social standing of many of the members, particularly of the Caledonian Society who could boast the Mayor of Leeds (Ald. Peter Gilston J.P) as their first President of the Society, it might well be assumed that any such influence may well be limited to the more wealthy sections of Leeds society.

<sup>299</sup> For examples of these accounts see *The Leeds Mercury*, October 29<sup>th</sup> 1872; 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1876; October 30<sup>th</sup> 1877

<sup>300</sup> 'Hallowe'en. Old Customs in the North' *The Yorkshire Post* (31<sup>st</sup> October, 1930) p.6

<sup>301</sup> Oliver Goldsmith *The Vicar of Wakefield a tale. Supposed to be written by himself* (London, 1766)

<sup>302</sup> Goldsmith, *The Vicar* p.34

<sup>303</sup> Brand *Observations* p.343

<sup>304</sup> Brand *Observations* p.398

Night encompasses something of the spirit as well as outlining the method employed. The continuity of this account with those presented in mid-twentieth century newspaper accounts indicates a clear survival of the custom.

The young folks amuse themselves with burning nuts in pairs on the bar of the grate, or among the warm embers, to which they gave their name and that of their lovers, or those of their friends who are supposed to have such attachments, and from the manner of their burning and duration of the flame, draw such inferences respecting the constancy or strength of their passions, as usually promote mirth and good humour.<sup>305</sup>

In 1931 the same Leeds based paper printed an item titled *Hallowe'en. Druids and Witches. Burning Nuts and Bobbing Apples*.<sup>306</sup> The burning of nuts is a reference to nut-cracking. Apple bobbing is an activity in which apples are placed in a tub of water or suspended from a ceiling by a piece of string. Participants are then encouraged to try to retrieve the apple using only their teeth. The article goes on to explain:

If a damsel had two lovers and wished to discover which would be the more constant, she took two brown kernels from the core of an apple, named them after her admirers, and sticking one on each cheek would say the couplet: 'Pippin, pippin, I stick thee there, That which is true you must declare'. Patiently the words were repeated until one fell off, the unfortunate swain whose name it bore being instantly described as unfaithful.<sup>307</sup>

This article was later followed with a regular annual Hallowe'en feature in a column titled *This World of Ours* in 1933, through to 1936, and a further article titled 'Ghosts of the Dales' in 1937.<sup>308</sup> As with Mischief Night (see Chapter Four) there is no mention of Hallowe'en during the early 1940s and references to Hallowe'en seem to give way during the late 1940s and 1950s to Mischief Night activities. One notable exception to this is a

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<sup>305</sup> 'Gentleman's Magazine' 1784 in Rogers, *Halloween* p.44

<sup>306</sup> Anthony Clyne 'Hallowe'en. Druids and Witches. Burning Nuts and Bobbing Apples' *The Yorkshire Post* (31<sup>st</sup> October, 1931) p.8

<sup>307</sup> Clyne, 'Hallowe'en'. P8

<sup>308</sup> 'Ghosts of the Dales' *The Yorkshire Post* (30<sup>th</sup> October, 1937) p.8

fascinating 1955 reference, in the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, titled *Village Hallowe'en Procession*. It reads:

The "Devil" will lead a procession of red and black junior devils and witches through Linton-in-Craven<sup>309</sup> for the village's Hallowe'en celebration tonight...After a firework display there will be devil dancing and a play in the village hall. The celebration will end with the vicar (the Rev. J.C.T Baker) driving the devils out. He will then set fire to the figure of a witch tied to a stake outside the hall.<sup>310</sup>

If recorded accounts represent an accurate picture of West Riding activity, then it would seem that the colourful antics of the Linton-in-Craven residents failed to inspire others to do likewise, and it is a further twenty five years before Leeds newspapers start to cite any significant Hallowe'en activities.

Aside from newspaper articles, earlier reference to Hallowe'en in Leeds can be found in the Leeds Play Bills<sup>311</sup> with a supporting ballet performance of 'Halloween' at the Theatre Royal, Hunslet Lane 17<sup>th</sup> November, 1851. The principal characters are listed on the bill including the Devil, the Piper, Wee Willie and some Highland Youths, though no further synopsis or details of the performance is given.

An alternative source of evidence comes from sound recordings held in the Leeds University Folk Life File. These archives provide evidence of Hallowe'en as practised between 1961 and 1979 in both Burscough in Lancashire and Leeds. Emma Vickers<sup>312</sup>, recorded in 1961, makes reference to Hallowe'en parties at home. Although the recording is of poor quality, reference to the sort of games played at Hallowe'en mirrors those mentioned in another recording by children in years four and five of Headingley Primary School in Leeds in 1979<sup>313</sup>. When asked about

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<sup>309</sup> Linton-in-Craven is a small parish town in the West Riding seven miles south. of Kettlewell, nine miles from Skipton and thirty-four miles from Leeds.

<sup>310</sup> 'Village Hallowe'en procession' *Yorkshire Evening Post* (31<sup>st</sup> October, 1955) p.6

<sup>311</sup> Leeds Play Bills "Normal! 'Halloween' Theatre Royal (17<sup>th</sup> November, 1851) [Online] Available at: Leodis photographic archive [Accessed 29 August 2006]

<sup>312</sup> Valerie Calvert, Leeds Archive of Vernacular Culture, Sound Recordings, Lancashire, Interview with Emma Vickers, April 1961.

<sup>313</sup> Elspeth Anne Mitchell, Leeds Archive of Vernacular Culture, Sound Recordings, West Yorkshire, Interview with children from class 4&5 Headingley Primary School, Leeds, 28<sup>th</sup> November and 5<sup>th</sup> December 1979.



Hallowe'en, both classes mentioned home parties involving apple-bobbing, biting apples suspended from the ceiling, and dressing up as witches. An emphasis on Hallowe'en parties was duplicated in an earlier recording<sup>314</sup> made in Armley Park School, Leeds (age / year group of children not given) in November 1972, although in both the 1972 and the 1979 recordings there is also a clear indication that Hallowe'en festivities are being taken out into the streets. A number of children not only talk about dressing-up as witches, but also 'hanging out'. By 1979 reference is being made to 'trick or treat' and horror films, although there is no indication that the contents of the films made any visible impact on the night's events.

From around 1930 onwards the main source of American cultural input into the British childhood was through film. For even the poorest children, the opportunity to see cowboy pictures, horror films and later musicals became a regular part of the British childhood. As Lyn Murfin points out when discussing the activities of children in the Lakeland region "Children's matinees appear to have been on offer everywhere, and the great majority of working and lower middle-class informants who spent their childhood within reach of a cinema attended them."<sup>315</sup>

The continued influence of US film and later television has undoubtedly left its mark on the cultural life of Leeds children and although no specific reference is given to any particular films in the archive sound recordings above, it is interesting to note that the 1979 recording comes a year after the first in a series of the American 'slasher' horror films *Halloween* (1978). The association of Hallowe'en and Hollywood's fascination with the horror genre is explored in some depth in Nicholas Rogers's (2002) *Hallowe'en From Pagan ritual to party night*. Given that many of the children, and their accompanying adults, dress up for Hallowe'en, it might be thought that the popularity of the American horror film industry would cause such elements to predominate in their choice of costume. However, whilst there were a few clear examples of wider film characters, notably Batman and the Storm Troopers from Star Wars, and representations of literary characters

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<sup>314</sup> Sydney Thomas, Leeds Archive of Vernacular Culture, Sound Recordings, West Yorkshire, Interview with children from Royal Park Primary School, Headingley, Leeds, 21<sup>st</sup> November 1972.

<sup>315</sup> Murfin *Leisure* p.214

that had been clearly based on their film depictions, such as Frankenstein's Monster and Dracula, there was little evidence that children's costumes reflected American horror films released after 1978, over the course of four successive years of observations in Leeds.

Thus, while the term Hallowe'en had a certain currency in Leeds towards the end of the nineteenth century, the American Hallowe'en expressed through the practice of children dressing up and going door-to-door trick-or-treating only started to gain momentum in Leeds by the late 1970s. But by 2011 the American expression of Hallowe'en has become the norm. While no specific reference to Hallowe'en is given, this increase does reflect a wider growth in retail toy sales. According to Garry Cross *Kids Stuff*<sup>316</sup> the American toy industry between 1979 and 1993 grew from \$4.2 billion to \$17.5. The impact of mass media, outlined in Chapter One, combined with a willingness on the part of shops, such as the American chain Toys-R-Us and supermarkets to supply an ever-increasing array of cheap costumes and confectionary to the children and adults of Leeds and elsewhere, undoubtedly played a significant role in its development, particularly among the less affluent sections of Leeds communities, and this will be explored in more detail towards the end of this chapter.

### **Observational Studies**

The methodologies employed in my own field work reflected a desire not only to observe the practice of Hallowe'en in Leeds, but also to try to explore some of the wider attitudes and perceptions of the custom. In light of this a number of techniques were employed including participant-observation, tape-recorded interviews and questionnaires. While all of these have been successfully used in previous research of this nature, my findings from an initial pilot questionnaire led me to conclude that both participant-observation and tape-recorded interviews allowed for a far greater opportunity to gain a more accurate and in depth understanding of the custom on an individual as well as community level.

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<sup>316</sup> Garry Cross *Kid's Stuff Toys and the changing world of American Childhood* (London, 1997) p.7

Observational studies were carried out over a four-year period on 31<sup>st</sup> October between 2006 and 2009. The studies were based in and around the Billingbark estate in Bramley, Leeds. This working class estate is a relatively self-contained housing development, consisting of about 200 family homes with gardens, built during the 1960s and situated to the West of Leeds. The primary purpose was to establish the amount and nature of Hallowe'en based activity as practised by a sample of the population of Bramley on the given date over a period of time.

Observations during 2006 took on three distinct aspects. The first of these set out to observe what proportion of the houses in the estate presented themed window dressings. By five o'clock approximately one house in every five had some form of Hallowe'en display. Whilst these consisted predominately of pumpkins, both real and plastic, there were many creative variations. These included floral arrangements with fake cobwebs and bugs; cut out cardboard skeletons; fluffy spiders; spooky window stickers; ready-made paper chains of ghosts and witches; a pop-up Dracula and suspended bouncy bats. An example of the window decorations can be seen in the following two photos taken by the author in 2007.



The second stage of the study set out to record the number of children and adults who were partaking in Hallowe'en related activities; what they were wearing and what they were saying and doing. The overwhelming majority went from house to house calling 'trick or treat', although a small number house-called with 'Happy Hallowe'en'. Without exception children presented a variety of bags, buckets and other containers in which to collect sweets and there was a clear unspoken assumption that these would be

forthcoming. As with the pace eggers who performed the pace egg street plays in urban Lancashire at the turn of the twentieth century<sup>317</sup> Hallowe'en participants tend to stick to a small number of streets around their own. Few, if any would go beyond the boundary of their own estate.

Between five fifteen and twenty to eight in the evening, fifty five children and twelve accompanying adults were recorded. Forty one of the children were in fancy dress, along with eight of the twelve adults. Costumes varied, but the majority were witches, skeletons and monsters. Others included Batman; goblins; Egyptian mummy; Death; Storm Trooper (from the movie 'Star Wars'); and 'Scream' from Wes Craven's movie of that name. The photo below showing Hallowe'en costumes typically representative of those worn and the bucket and bag used for collecting sweets. Similar examples can be found in numerous articles in the Yorkshire *Evening Post* such as *Children's pumpkins light up the night*<sup>318</sup> and *Street 'treat' for Halloween*.<sup>319</sup>



Photograph taken by author

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<sup>317</sup> See Eddie Cass, *The Lancashire Pace-Egg Play* (London, 2001) p.74

<sup>318</sup> Joe Rostron, *Children's pumpkins light up the night* Yorkshire Evening Post (31 October, 2007) p.21

<sup>319</sup> Joe Rostron, *Street 'treat' for Halloween* Yorkshire Evening Post (1<sup>st</sup> November, 2007) p.22

The third part of the study surveyed public houses in the area to ascertain whether or not they had 'themed' the evening. Of the five contacted, two had 'Hallowe'en night', one had pumpkin and ghost paper-chains across the bar, whilst the other two remained without decoration or activity. Of the two 'Hallowe'en nights', one had considerable Hallowe'en decorations throughout, and had booked two spirit mediums for the evening. The other, again had numerous Hallowe'en decorations, plus a Hallowe'en themed quiz and raffle; pumpkin soup and apple bobbing. Customers and staff were encouraged to come in fancy dress and many had done so.

Observational findings for 2007 proved similar with windows displaying lit pumpkins, ghost and pumpkin lamps with the addition of cardboard and plastic characters such as Frankenstein's monster, ghosts and skeletons on doors and windows. There was also a generous compliment of flashing electric bats, owls, spiders and a 'Happy Halloween' banner. Inflatable illuminated pumpkins were also to be found in a limited number of gardens, but this was the exception rather than the norm. Although there was a greater variety of Hallowe'en related decorations, the number of houses taking part had dropped dramatically from roughly one in five, to roughly one in ten. With only two sets of observations it is unclear whether or not this is indicative of a blip, in an otherwise growing trend, or evidence of a dying fad.

The dramatic drop in house window displays was accompanied by a dip in the number of children and adults out on the streets. This figures reduced slightly from fifty five children to forty nine. The number of accompanying adults rose to fourteen, but the number who dressed for the occasion fell to just three. The timing of callers also remained constant with the first caller at ten past five, and the last at eight. Children's costumes remained very similar with skeletons, werewolf and vampires dominating the scene.

The number of public houses in the area supporting a Hallowe'en themed evening had however increased. Four out of the original five had some form of decoration, mainly pumpkins and ghosts in the windows and across the bar, or event such as apple bobbing or Hallowe'en quiz. This rise

was reflected in the shops and public houses in the city centre where a high proportion had Hallowe'en decorations.

Observational findings for 2008 suggested that while the precise numbers of houses taking part may fluctuate there does appear to be a significant core number of houses that continue to take part with approximately one in seven houses decorated. The nature of the decorations remained constant, as did the number of children going door to door. In this year the most popular costume was a witch with sixteen examples recorded, followed by six devils and an even spread of Draculas, monsters, ghosts, wolfs, skeletons and pumpkins. The evening witnessed a total of fifty five participants, comprising of forty five children and ten accompanying adults. None of the adults this year had costumes. Explanations as to why there was such a marked reduction in the number adults wearing costumes over the three year period were not forthcoming. It is, though, worth considering that Hallowe'en 2008 fell on a Friday, and thus adults may well have been less inclined to dress-up for Hallowe'en if they were planning other activities later in the evening. Whilst this can only remain speculation it is interesting to note that while the first caller echoed previous years, arriving at five past five, the last group of primary school witches called at seven fifteen, nearly an hour earlier than in 2006.

2009 did little to buck the trend of previous years. The number of participants rose slightly to fifty seven, including twelve accompanying adults. This year six of the adults were in costume, along with fifty five of the children. The slight increase in numbers was not reflected in the number of decorated houses. This figure dropped back to around one in ten, although decorations continued to include a range of commercially obtained plastic flashing pumpkins; ghosts; bats; spiders and webs; Happy Hallowe'en banners as well as an increasing number of fresh pumpkins that had been carved with grimacing faces and lit with tea lights. The design of the costumes remained consistent with large numbers of skeletons, witches, vampires, werewolves and monsters, while the youngest of the present author's own children insisted on bucking the trend by wearing a small pink fairy outfit. Calling times spanned between five fifteen for the first, and seven forty for the last.

Although the number of adults wearing costumes while overseeing their children's 'trick or treat' celebrations remains comparatively low, this does not mean that adults in Leeds are immune from the idea of sporting their own Hallowe'en costumes when it comes to their own nights out. Over the course of this study alone there has been a significant rise in the number of both city centre and out of town public houses putting on Hallowe'en events, and of people getting dressed up for the occasion.

The popularity of Hallowe'en events in city centre pubs is undoubtedly driven, at least in part, to appeal to the large student population of the two universities. Indeed, there are numerous examples of students using the date as an excuse to wear any kind of fancy dress, and engage in Hallowe'en parties, as the following two photos taken by Leeds University students during Hallowe'en celebrations in 2006 clearly demonstrates<sup>320</sup>. Many students, particularly in the student dominant areas of the city, such as Hyde Park and Headingley, focus their celebrations on the nearest Friday and Saturday night to Hallowe'en, and increasing numbers of public houses in student areas are responding by having appropriately themed special offers.



Both images can be found at: <http://www.see.leeds.ac.uk/current/rocsoc/images/gallery/halloween.jpg>

Large chain pubs, in and close to the city centre, such as J. D. Wetherspools, Yates and The Firkin have increasingly put on Hallowe'en

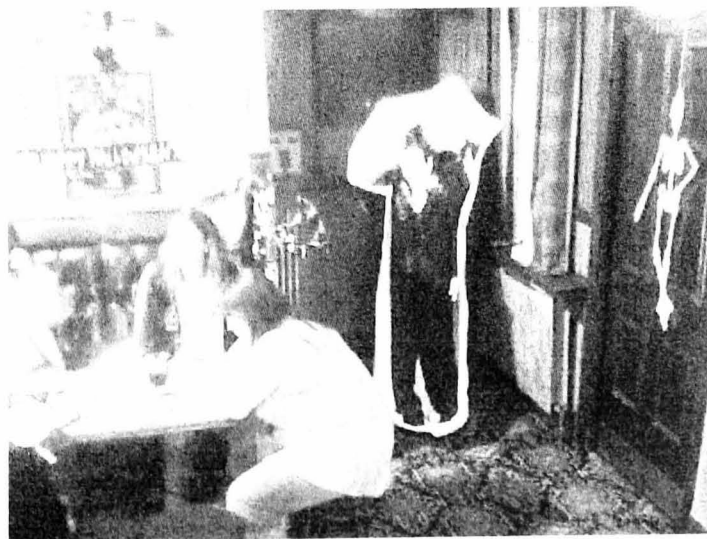
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<sup>320</sup> The increase in the participation of Hallowe'en themed activities, particularly amongst the student population can be seen to endorse Davies assertion (see Davies *Leisure* p.190-192) that increasingly commercialised pursuits and activities are often more accessible to employed, or at least in some way financially independent adolescents than for older, or more settled individuals with family responsibilities.



special offers and decorate the bar with Hallowe'en related displays. While there is a large student contingent amongst those who dress up for the occasion, there is a growing trend of participants among the wider Leeds population.

Alongside the chain pubs there are a large number of independent 'free' houses across Leeds that have also adopted the date as an occasion to put on themed quizzes, put up displays and special offers. Arguably they have been able to be far more creative in their displays, as they do not have to restrict themselves to the look or format of a themed pub. The first of the following images, is of a Hallowe'en display showing skulls, pumpkins and fake cobwebs, was taken in the Scarborough, a free public house opposite the city train station in 2010. The second and the third were taken in The White Horse, Armley in 2006.



All three images were taken by the author



While Hallowe'en celebrations have continued to grow in Leeds, as they have across the country, the Association for Christian Teachers, a Christian fundamentalist organisation, has published a number of articles such as *Hallowe'en – Harmless fun or spiritual threat?* by Doug Harris (2004).and David Porter's (1993) *Hallowe'en: Treat or Trick?* The articles are typically negative in nature, warning of the 'potential dangers' of trivialising and making light of the 'occult practices', and 'evil power' behind Hallowe'en. Such articles are indicative of a growing body of books, leaflets, comics, resource guides and publicity banners and posters designed by Christian Publishing and Outreach (CPO). A stark illustration of anti-Hallowe'en feeling can be found in Linda Winwood's *Mommy, Why Don't We Celebrate Halloween?*<sup>321</sup> Both its contents and the use of the American spelling 'Mommy' denotes its status as an import of American evangelical Christianity. Written as a conversation between two young children and their mother, the dialogue is designed to provide answers for parents faced with children's questions concerning the nature of Hallowe'en. Yet the ridiculous nature of the contents, such as "In many parts of the world...Halloween is a religious holiday – a holiday when people worship Satan and honor evil. In fact, it is the biggest holiday on Satan's calendar..." shows a greater regard for the unfounded opinion of the Christian Right than it does for informed or accurate insight, departing as it does even from established scriptural accounts.

Despite the fanatical anti-Hallowe'en messages put out by the CPO the general approach to Hallowe'en within the Universities of Leeds chaplaincy team<sup>322</sup> was considerably more relaxed. During the course of this research I was able to arrange a meeting with a number of the Chaplains, in order to find out what their views on Hallowe'en were. Five denominations were represented by chaplains taking Catholic; Church of England; United Reform Church; Baptist; and Quaker positions. The CPO leaflets that I had taken with me were met with bemusement and slight irritation by all five chaplains. One stated that the material was 'over the top'. Another agreed

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<sup>321</sup> Linda Winwood, *Mommy, Why don't We Celebrate Halloween?* (Worthing, 1995)

<sup>322</sup> The Chaplaincy team serves both Leeds Metropolitan University as well as Leeds University, and consists of a number of both mainstream and minority denominations.

saying that it was 'unhelpful'. The general consensus across the group seemed to be that Hallowe'en was an event that provided students with yet another opportunity to party and get drunk, but beyond that posed little danger. When asked, two of the chaplains admitted to letting their own children partake in Hallowe'en activities, although this was met with a certain level of 'ribbing' from the other three. When asked if they thought their views would be echoed throughout the rest of the chaplaincy team, there was a mixed response. The concern was whether or not the Lutheran and International chaplains would take a more conservative line. Unfortunately the opportunity to include their views on the matter did not arise.

Despite considering itself inclusive, a number of religious groups are not represented by the chaplaincy. One such group are modern or Neo Pagans. The broad term 'Pagan' encompasses a number of traditions including Druidry, Wicca and Witchcraft. Common to each, is an appreciation of the eight dates, or festivals which mark the 'Wheel of the Year'. Samhain, regarded as marking the beginning of the year, is widely observed on October 31. The name "Samhain", was given to the first of the quarter days in early medieval Ireland, and derives from an expression meaning the time 'when the summer goes to rest'<sup>323</sup> The association between the Irish date and a Celtic feast of the dead current in the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, particularly in modern pagan circles, was heavily influenced by the unreliable and now heavily discredited works of Sir John Rhys<sup>324</sup> and Sir James Frazer<sup>325</sup>. Between them they conjured up a picture of a pagan fire festival in which Druids gathered on hills and lit sacred fires, paying homage to the dead. Despite the lack of supporting evidence for this theory, the date is regarded by many modern Pagans to be the most significant in the year: a time when the veil between the world of the living and the dead is at its thinnest. It is viewed as a time of remembering and paying respect to ancestors and loved ones who have died.

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<sup>323</sup> 'Tochmarc Emire' cited in Hutton, *Stations* p.361

<sup>324</sup> Sir John Rhys *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by Celtic Heathendom* (London, 1888)

<sup>325</sup> Frazer, *Golden Bough*

Much of the flavour and character of Samhain has been captured in a short account of Samhain in West Cork, Ireland in the Pagan magazine *Pagan Dawn* by Donough Fitzpatrick (1996). He writes:

Samhain is an important festival in my community [West Cork], and on that night the faeries are especially active. It is a powerful and dangerous time for the unwary. The eve of All Souls... is a night on which the mist between the worlds grows thin; the world of the faeries and the world of the dead coverage with the world of the living. Lost souls wander in the dark seeking rest. Faeries come to dance and to play, and to steal the hearts and minds of the unwary. Banshees, who are a sort of female fairy, have been heard wailing in the darkness of the night. The people of our area felt the devil was there in the night, at prey.<sup>326</sup>

This account is interesting in that it encompasses a number of different strands. It has significance for Pagans in Leeds, as for those in the rest of the country, in that it embodies the perceived link with Celtic pre-Christian religion which is usually regarded as having stronger survivals in Irish traditional culture than in the English equivalent. Clear reference is also made to the recognised Irish name of the festival 'Samhain' which has been adopted within the Pagan community. There is also a religious strand, in the form of All Souls, with the idea that the departed wander in the dark seeking rest; and the Devil 'at prey'. And finally the folkloric strand in respect to the faeries and the banshees. Fitzpatrick goes on to describe some of the preparations for the night's entertainment, including masks, designed to protect the wearer, by fooling passing demons and ghosts into believing that the wearer was one of them. The night also included aspects of Scottish tradition including apple bobbin, and various divination practices<sup>327</sup>. While a neo-Pagan account of Samhain would not recognise the Christian strands within Fitzpatrick's description, it would most certainly recognise the connection with the souls of the departed. The religious observation of Samhain is one of honouring and celebrating 'the ancestors'.

A number of Pagans in Leeds attend the Leodis Pagan Circle Moot. The name 'Leodis' regarded by many in the city as an old name for Leeds, is

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<sup>326</sup> Donough Fitzpatrick 'Samhain in Ireland' *Pagan Dawn* (London, 1996) No.121, p.12.

<sup>327</sup> Fitzpatrick, 'Samhain'.p.12

probably a variation of 'Loidis' the earliest recorded account of Leeds provided by Bede AD731 in *Book II* of the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*.<sup>328</sup> While some Pagans find the secular celebration of Hallowe'en problematic or disrespectful to their religious associations with Samhain, the Moot has for the previous five years celebrated with a contemporary Hallowe'en party, with appropriately themed cakes, biscuits and crisps etc, as well as a more formal ceremonial open ritual. Neither of the two events in this particular Moot are held on Samhain itself, as it is felt that this provides the opportunity for individuals to partake in their own private celebrations on the actual date if they so choose.

The first of the photographs below shows a few of the early arrivals at the Moot party. The second shows members of the Moot partaking in the Samhain ritual at the modern stone circle at Thwaite mill, Leeds (2008) welcoming the spirit of water.



Both photographs were taken by, and kind permission to use given by, the Moot organiser Debra Scott.

The Samhain ritual called respectively on the spirits of the North, with the power of Earth; South with the power of Fire; East with the power of Air and West with the power of Water, to witness and protect the Samhain celebration. Participants were encouraged at this point to light a tea light and to remember someone who has died. Thanks was then given for the harvest and words were spoken in honour of the dead. The ritual went on to celebrate the Goddess (often regarded as a feminine personification of nature, also referred to as the 'great mother' and / or the ultimate symbol of

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<sup>328</sup> Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People. Book II* (AD731) Translated by Leo Shirley-Price. (London, 1968). The Great Domesday Book (1086-7) also makes several references to Leeds, but refers to it as 'Ledes'.

fertility) the bounty of the harvest and the idea of death and rebirth. The following is a short extract taken from the evening's script. The first four lines are from a Californian Chant composed by High Priestess of the Dianic Tradition of Witchcraft, Zsuzsanna Budapest, and gained popularity in the American feminist witchcraft tradition and the wider American Pagan movement following its introduction in 1980 at a pan-Pagan festival in Indiana<sup>329</sup>. The remainder of the extract would appear to be original, although its contents reflect the language and sentiment of many published Pagan rituals.

(All) We all come from the Goddess, and to her we shall return  
Like a drop of rain, flowing to the ocean;  
Hoof and horn (r), all that dies shall be reborn,  
Corn and grain (r), all that falls shall rise again.

Jay introduces the blessing of the food and drink:

Truly blessed are we that receive the bounty of the harvest,  
Blessed be our Mother Earth,  
Blessed be our Father Sun,  
As you teach us of life, death and rebirth.  
We honour Thee, The Two that are One.

Food Steward says a blessing, and offers the parkin to the earth; scatters some crumbs on the ground.

I consecrate you, O meal of grain.  
Who sprouted in both sun and rain.  
Whose ancient seed fulfils us all.  
And gains new life where e're it falls.  
I bless you in this circle round,  
That your abundance may abound.  
So mote it be.

## Interviews and Questionnaires

As well as the growing popularity of the Leodis Moot among Leeds Pagans there are a number of Pagans who choose a more solitary path. One such practitioner leuan agreed to be interviewed about what Hallowe'en meant to him. The interview, though recorded, was conducted in a relaxed and informal way. The conversation covered leuan's views on what he considered 'Modern Halloween'. These views are highlighted in the following extracts taken from the interview along with a brief description of how he

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<sup>329</sup> Hutton, *Triumph* p.359-360

celebrates Samhain. Many of the 'Ums' and 'Ahs' have been taken out in order to aid the flow of what was said.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your current perspective on Hallowe'en?

Ieuan: My current perspective?

Interviewer: Yeah

Ieuan: My current perspective is something that Pagans, including myself like to celebrate. I think that, well I'm pretty much sure that most Pagans are aware that it isn't quite a part of the Pagan path as much as we would like to think it does. There is not as much continuity there as Pagans want. And that's due to a lot of the academic work of people like Ronald [Hutton], but I think that for many Pagans it doesn't matter about authenticity as such, its more of a spiritual thing, using ancient ideas and inspirations, and its almost like if you pick your own approach to practice, or study or whatever, to a broad structure, and Hallowe'en is very much an important spoke in the ritual year. And I think that a lot of Pagans, myself included don't see a problem with that at all. It still feels like a very magical concept, well it certainly does for me. I suppose what it means to me is that you just feel that there is a powerful sense of magic around the otherworld and the sensory world and that they're more in sync than they normally are. I don't tend to do elaborate rituals, I just tend to do meditations and that's in line with my approach anyway. I try not to make it more important than other festivals, but because of the emphasis of the attention it gets, I think you can't help but feel that it is one of the key times of the year.

Interviewer: Do you think that your practice has been influenced by any other group?

Ieuan: Do you mean groups that I have come across, or read about or?

Interviewer: Yes, I suppose any bodies representing any given ideas

Ieuan: I suppose if you do immerse yourself in pagan ideas, it is almost impossible not to be influenced by them, I suppose the only sticking point is again about the authenticity, but having said that I think that it authenticity isn't as important as it once was. I suppose the

Wiccans<sup>330</sup> are important to me in that they helped to revive Hallowe'en as a religious idea.

Interviewer: What is your take on the modern, commercialised expression of Hallowe'en?

Ieuan: I'm all for it. I suppose my ideas have been influenced by my own academic research. I think that the vernacular, and wider cultural side is no less a part of it. It's just a wider participation of Pagan ideas. I think that it's very easy to underestimate the power of popular culture to influence spiritual values.

The interview highlighted a number of views on the part of this respondent, such as the diminishing importance of an established historical lineage, and, taken with the evidence collected at Leodis Pagan Moot, suggests a particular tolerance for mainstream commercial representations of Hallowe'en amongst the wider Pagan population of Leeds. This contrasts sharply with the way Christians view the commercialisation of feast days they consider their own – particularly Christmas.

Indeed, a sharp contrast between Christian and non-Christian interpretations of Hallowe'en were dramatically illustrated through the following findings of a Leeds school based questionnaire. Schools, particularly primary schools, across the country, have a long tradition of using significant points in the year, such as Christmas and Easter, as ways of both exploring various aspects of the curriculum and as a means of fundraising for the individual school. Examples of these activities would be a summer disco; an Easter bonnet parade; charitable non-uniform day; or Christmas party. Given this tradition and the seeming increase in the wider popularity of Hallowe'en the question arises as to whether or not Hallowe'en has become integrated in any form into the life of Leeds based schools.<sup>331</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> The term 'Wiccans' refers to those who practice Wicca. Wicca is a modern form of Witchcraft, predominantly duotheistic in nature, worshiping both God and Goddess. See Vivianne Crowley, *Wicca: The Old Religion in the New Millennium* (Dorset, 1996) and Aidan Kelly, *Crafting the Art of Magic: The History of Modern Witchcraft, 1939-1964 Book 1* (Minnesota, 1991)

<sup>331</sup> At the time of writing, a Google search for 'Halloween resources primary' produced one hundred and fifty-five thousand hits on 'Pages from the UK' alone. Much of the resources, provided by well established and regarded providers of teaching resources such as TES, Primary Resources, and the BBC, cater for both key stage one and key stage two, and

Certainly it seems very unlikely that schools would send children door-to-door asking for handouts, but they might make use of various other aspects of the tradition, such as dressing-up (useful focus for fund raising non-uniform days) or making Hallowe'en the theme of an end of half-term party.

One key problem with researching the longevity of any extra-curricular school activity across such a wide area is gaining access to a sufficiently wide range of written evidence. Schools may not keep records of such activities and written information regarding them is unlikely to be retained for any educational reason, if it is recorded at all. Letters concerning special events would be sent home to parents, and photographic material may in some cases be retained. So a systematic investigation of records of this type might be very revealing but it lies beyond the scope of the current work. More accessible, is the memory and knowledge of those who work in the schools on which this project is intended to draw.

In order to try to establish if Hallowe'en currently plays any part in the life of Leeds schools, and if so, how far back such activities can be traced, a brief questionnaire<sup>332</sup> was e-mailed to the head teachers of all 269 schools in the Leeds boundary. This consisted of the 218 primary schools and 51 secondary schools currently registered with Education Leeds<sup>333</sup>. An e-mail questionnaire was chosen over a paper based questionnaire in consideration of the low return rate often associated with paper-based questionnaires. It was hoped that the immediacy and simplicity of e-mail would result in a greater number of returns. A questionnaire was also chosen over a face-to-face interview technique, more traditionally used in the collection of oral history, in order to be able to reach out to a greater number of schools. The questionnaire was sent via e-mail, using an online survey generator and collector. This made the questionnaire both easily accessible to those taking part, and helped to correlate the findings. The purpose of the questionnaire was to identify the ways in which Hallowe'en has been recognised within an educational establishment context. The questions were designed to identify if the school had organised any Hallowe'en-based activities over a ten year

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provide a range of Hallowe'en themed literacy and numeracy worksheets, masks and pumpkin shapes to cut out, ideas for dance lessons and class assemblies.

<sup>332</sup> A copy of this survey can be found in the appendix

<sup>333</sup> Education Leeds is the Local Authority body responsible for schools in Leeds.



period, and if so, what those activities consisted off. The questions were also written to try and identify any negative association with Hallowe'en that might be influencing the schools' decision not to hold any such activities.

The drawback in directing the questionnaire solely at head teachers in Leeds was two-fold. Firstly, the city has two universities producing teachers, many of whom aim to work in or around the city. This in turn feeds through to a reasonably rapid turnover rate for head-teachers who in turn move between schools. This means that respondents may not necessarily know the in-depth history of their school, and therefore might inadvertently provide inaccurate information. Secondly, the views expressed in the questionnaire can only be regarded as the personal views of the respondents, and not the wider school (staff, pupils and parents) as a whole.

Despite the drawbacks, it was hoped that the findings from the questionnaire would provide an indication of the different ways in which Hallowe'en is celebrated, for how long, and how widespread within Leeds schools. It was hypothesised that Hallowe'en-related activities would represent a fairly low percentage of return findings, and that those activities that did take place would be in the form of school fundraising activities (for the reasons given above). It was also hypothesised that few, if any, schools would report any Hallowe'en based activities having taken place over the previous ten years, but that such evidence would exist over the previous two to five years, reflecting the wider growth in its popularity.

Out of the two hundred and sixty-three questionnaires sent out, two hundred and seventeen went to primary schools and the remainder forty-six went to secondary schools<sup>334</sup>. The number of responses were forty-five (20%) and fifteen (32%) respectively. The return figure is too low to provide any statistically significant findings for Leeds as a whole, yet the feedback given in those that were returned, do provide intriguing insight into the sorts of activities and views present. Of the forty-five primary respondents, eighteen (40%) said that they did hold Hallowe'en themed activities. The majority of these (15) held a Hallowe'en disco or party. Only three

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<sup>334</sup> The complete findings of the questionnaire can be found in the appendix.

respondents held Hallowe'en-themed lessons. Other activities included bun sales and classroom decorations and a Hallowe'en dinner.

As well as providing insight into the sort of activities presented, the findings also highlighted a dramatic split between church-based and non-church-based schools. The first of these two charts compares the number of primary church-based, to non-church-based schools in Leeds. The second chart shows the number of respondents for each, and the corresponding response figures for Hallowe'en-related activity.

| Count of All Leeds Primary Schools | Church School |     | Grand Total |
|------------------------------------|---------------|-----|-------------|
|                                    | Yes           | No  |             |
| Total                              | 67            | 151 | 218         |

| Count of Primary Respondents                                   |            | Church School? |    | Grand Total |
|--|------------|----------------|----|-------------|
|  |            | Yes            | No |             |
| Did your school hold any Hallowe'en themed activities in 2010? | Yes        | 1              | 17 | 18          |
|  | No         | 19             | 7  | 26          |
|  | Don't know | 0              | 1  | 1           |
| Grand Total  |            | 20             | 25 | 45          |

While primary church schools only make up around thirty percent of the primary schools in Leeds, they account for forty-four percent of the respondents. Furthermore there was an overwhelmingly negative response, with only one Catholic primary school respondent admitting that they undertook a Hallowe'en themed disco. This is compared with only two church

secondary school respondents, out of fifteen secondary school respondents. The following extracts are taken from the responses given by primary school head-teachers in the survey. They provide insight into why the head-teachers of a number of schools in Leeds choose not to promote such activities<sup>335</sup>.

The school is a church school and we feel Halloween is not appropriate. We prefer to do work on All Saints day.

We are a church school and our church doesn't permit us to run Hallowe'en activities. The church holds a light party on Hallowe'en night.

We had other more interesting topics going on in school at the time. Hallowe'en is not something we are particularly interested in unless it is 'a bun sale' to raise funds for the PA

We have children from all parts of the world in our school and so it would not be appropriate to celebrate Halloween. This would offend some parents e.g. Muslims.

Similar comments were forthcoming from secondary school respondents where only three said that they held Hallowe'en activities in 2010. The comments of secondary respondents are summed up by Allerton High School which stated:

It would never cross my mind to mark Halloween at secondary school. Never happened in the previous four schools I've worked in and no student has ever requested we mark the event.

The primary school comments raise two key themes. Firstly, that Hallowe'en is considered 'inappropriate' for a church school, and secondly that any celebration of a 'western' or worse still 'American' based festival would 'offend' or be 'misunderstood' within a culturally mixed school. Given this and the overwhelmingly negative response from the Church-based schools that responded, it seemed likely that there might be some formal guidance against Hallowe'en based activities coming from the local dioceses. The *Diocesan Education Team (DET) guidance for schools for Bradford*

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<sup>335</sup> These comments have been taken from the responses provided from the questionnaire which can be found in the appendix.

*Ripon and Leeds* website provides the following guidance for Church of England schools<sup>336</sup>:

#### Hallowe'en

There are many other positive things that can be celebrated at this time of the year, All Saints and All Souls Days, and Bonfire Night. The Team are content that children understand that Halloween is fictional, and not based on pagan worship/witchcraft. However, it can cause great offence to some Christians and therefore it is important any events are discussed fully with the Governing Body and the local Parish Church, and only if they are both content, should any events take place.

The guidance clearly does not forbid Hallowe'en activities, but given the 'great offence to some Christians' that it might cause, neither is it going out of its way to promote it. This should not prove surprising given the following comment, again provided by a questionnaire respondent from a Church of England School in Pool-in-Wharfedale<sup>337</sup>.

When I was a young teacher in a Church of England school (Aided) in the late 80s there was a particularly strong objection to the celebration of Halloween by a small group of parents and made worse by a national media frenzy of linking Halloween with Devil worship. Most parents saw nothing wrong however the Bradford Diocese sent out a circular stating that it was inadvisable to celebrate Halloween in CE schools. The Chair of Governors was a priest who particularly objected to Halloween hence the school never had any mention of it. Over the past 19 years I have worked in Community schools and there has been little mention of this though pumpkins have been made by younger children. Now that I am a Head teacher in Church school (Controlled) I really do not need the hassle of dealing with objections from some parents who would inevitably raise it at Governor level. I do not have strong opinions either way but as it is controversial I believe that if parents wish to celebrate Halloween they should do so in the evening after school after all this is All Hallows Eve.

This theme emerges again from Thorner C of E Primary<sup>338</sup>.

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<sup>336</sup> The Diocesan Education Team (DET) guidance for schools for Bradford Ripon and Leeds [Online] [Accessed 27<sup>th</sup> March 2011]

<sup>337</sup> Pool-in-Wharfedale is about nine miles due north of the centre of Leeds

<sup>338</sup> Thorner is about fourteen miles north-east from the centre of Leeds

A social worker recently told me she was glad we did not hold this celebration due to the harmful and disruptive effect it can have on children.

It is possible that the 'Media frenzy' referred to above and the 'harmful and disruptive effect' the social worker is reported to have identified relate to the reports of Satanic child-abuse that gained prominence in the 1980s, following which children were forcibly removed from their homes in both North America and then in England, by social workers who believed that they were in danger of 'satanic' practices. The fabricated and wholly unsubstantiated nature of such fears has been well documented<sup>339</sup> yet it is clear from these two statements that there may still be evidence of its legacy in Leeds.

One of the most interesting comments came from Mount St.Mary's Catholic High School, which highlighted the perceived interconnection between Hallowe'en and Mischief Night, and the corresponding damage to local properties in the area.

There are considerations to be taken in to [sic] account at a Catholic School, however the more relevant issue is that of disruption to the school and community that arises from this evening. Locally Halloween is associated with mischief night and as such can create considerable issues for residents faced with damage to gardens, cars etc. I don't feel it relevant to celebrate this occasion.

Despite the negative associations with Hallowe'en in Leeds' schools, there was also a significant number who did hold Hallowe'en activities. It is unfortunate that in the majority of cases those who responded positively did not provide additional comments. It can therefore only be assumed that they regarded Hallowe'en in a more positive light. The following comment from Birchfield Primary School<sup>340</sup> is particularly reassuring in this respect.

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<sup>339</sup> See Jean Sybil La Fontaine *Speak of the devil: tales of satanic abuse in contemporary England* (Cambridge, 1998) and Victor S Jeffrey 'Moral Panics and the Social Construction of Deviant Behaviour: A Theory and Application to the Case of Ritual Child Abuse' in *Sociological Perspectives* [e-journal] Vol.41 No 3 (1988) 541-565 Available through Jstor Database [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2011]

<sup>340</sup> Five and a half miles south-west of the city centre

Hallowe'en is a fun activity and anyone who has a problem with that and considers it 'devil worshipping' needs to get some perspective.

Again, from Yeadon Westfield Infant school<sup>341</sup>.

I believe Halloween should be a time for fun for the children.  
It does not have to be a time for any sinister connections if handled sensitively.

The following secondary respondent from East SILC presented a similar attitude, and sums-up the views of the few positive secondary respondents:

Whilst we recognise the complexities around Halloween we would like to emphasise that any delivery of this topic is in the spirit of fun with children dressing up for the family disco etc.

In the majority of cases (both primary and secondary) where schools did partake, this involved the whole school. Furthermore, nearly half of those at primary level who responded to the question 'Has your school held Hallowe'en based activities in previous years'? responded positively. The following small chart, constructed from the findings of the questionnaire, shows how many years the primary respondents believed that their school had taken part in Hallowe'en based activities.

|                    |   |     |
|--------------------|---|-----|
| 2 years            | 2 | 10% |
| 3-5 years          | 7 | 33% |
| 6-10 years         | 9 | 43% |
| More than 10 years | 3 | 14% |

Limited though this response undoubtedly is, it would seem to suggest that Hallowe'en has been active in at least some Leeds schools over the previous ten year period (2001-2011). Interestingly, these figures include

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<sup>341</sup> About eight and a half miles North West of the centre of Leeds.

Little London Community School<sup>342</sup>, who did not hold any Hallowe'en based activities in 2010 because:

As a culturally diverse school we feel that this 'festival' does not warrant our attention - it is over 'Americanised' and is not understood by the majority of our pupils.

Why cultural diversity should get in the way of children's appreciation of cultural traditions from other countries is not entirely clear. Yet, given that this same school also indicated that it had carried out such 'Americanised' activities over the previous six to ten years, it would have been interesting to see if the views of this particular respondent were equally shared amongst other members of staff and pupils.

The following map of Leeds highlights the location of primary school respondents that indicated that their school undertook some form of Hallowe'en activity either in 2010 or in previous years. From this it is possible to see that such activities can be found across the whole city, and not simply related to a given demographic, such as schools in the more wealthy suburbs, or inner city schools.

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<sup>342</sup> Only half a mile North outside the centre of Leeds.



From this simple survey it is possible to appreciate that Hallowe'en is an occasion that has clearly been given some attention at least by primary schools in Leeds, although the way Hallowe'en is regarded is by no means universal, ranging from enthusiasm to outright hostility (particularly amongst Church schools). Where there is evidence of Hallowe'en activity, it commonly takes the form of a themed disco. This survey can only be regarded as a starting point for concrete historical analysis of Hallowe'en practice in schools, but it does indicate that a small handful of head-teachers from a number of primary schools across the Leeds area claim that such activities have taken place over the previous decade. It is clear that further research would be necessary in determining whether or not such activities are becoming more or less common in schools.

### Further Leeds-Based Hallowe'en Activities



Hallowe'en-themed parties are enjoyed in Leeds by groups such as the Wendy House. Based in Leeds University Student Union, the Wendy House is a broadly Gothic alternative venue, which has continued to provide a colourful and creative Hallowe'en party every year since its establishment in 1988. Though based within the university campus, the appeal for such activity within the Leeds area is demonstrated in that many of the attendees of the Wendy House have long since left, if they attended at all, University.

The popularity of Hallowe'en has been accompanied by a growth in what the social geographer Robert Bristow refers to as 'Fright Tourism'.<sup>343</sup> Essentially, this refers to the tourist-driven attractions that are typically, but not exclusively, timed around Hallowe'en. According to Bristow 'tourists are drawn to macabre attractions [and] will seek a scary opportunity at a destination that may have a sinister history or may be promoted to have one'<sup>344</sup> Recreational attraction to the macabre is not a new phenomenon; there are endless examples both in literature and in the film industry as well as the ever-popular ghost train and other fear-dependent fairground rides. However, there is a significant growth in the number of attraction specifically catering for people who like to be scared. The York Dungeons and York ghost trails provide obvious examples within Yorkshire, claiming not only that York is the most haunted city in England, but that "your fears will be met head on in this unique experience"<sup>345</sup> Other Yorkshire based Hallowe'en attractions include 'Hallowe'en Family Fun' at the Abbey House Museum, Leeds, According to the Yorkshire Tourist board<sup>346</sup> (YTB) this consists of apple bobbing, the unlucky dip and hunt the creepy pumpkin trail. The YTB also makes reference to 'Fright Night' held in Sheffield city centre. The night's events typically attract over 26,000 revellers in what is billed as 'Britain's biggest Hallowe'en Party'. Leeds's 'newest attraction', which opened in 2010, described itself as "Temple HospitHell Live - Leeds premier scare attraction". This comprises elements of interactive theatre and horror movie

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<sup>343</sup> Robert Bristow 'Myths vs. Fact: An Exploration of Fright Tourism' *Proceedings of the 2004 North-eastern Recreation Research Symposium* [Online] 216-217 (2004) [Accessed, 19 May, 2008]

<sup>344</sup> Bristow, 'Myths' p.215

<sup>345</sup> 'Guy Fawkes' *The York Dungeon*. [Online] [Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2009]

<sup>346</sup> 'Halloween and Guy Fawkes' *Yorkshire Tourist Board*. [Online] [Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2006]

and would appear to be attempting to provide visitors with a safe but terrifying experience – a somewhat more immersive version of the fairground ghost train. ‘AtmosFear’, the commercial operators of the venue, are known for a creating a range of fear-based entertainments, and have in this instance employed various technologies along with paid actors to create sights, sounds and smells that are intended to create a memorable experience that the public will pay to undergo.

The financial opportunities associated with fright tourism have not been lost on a number of existing city attractions including the Tudor–Jacobean mansion and grounds of Temple Newsam, to the South East of the city, which encourages attendees to its ‘Halloween Hauntings’ to come dressed in a spooky outfit for the occasion. The eighteenth century Harewood House and grounds, to the North of the city, offers “Tricks and Treats at our Psychic Supper”. Meanwhile, the Leeds Royal Armouries, established in 1996, and situated just south of the city centre, offer a collection of Hallowee’ en related events in its ‘Medi-Evil Mischief’ programme between 21<sup>st</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup> October, comprising of a ‘spooktackular horse show’, where children can see their pumpkins splattered by the ‘Fright Knight’, as well as a ‘Gruesome medieval surgeon, physician and apothecary’ who tells tales of ‘weeping wounds, bubbling boils and putrid pus’.

Tour guide, and author of *Haunted Leeds*,<sup>347</sup> Ken Goor has built up a number of guided city walks around Leeds since 1985 including a ghost walk set in and around the city centre. Although he conducts the ghost walk throughout the year, special emphasis is placed on his ‘Hallowe’ en special’.

Adult participation of Hallowe’ en has inevitably led to a rise in consumer marketing. UK marketing director for the supermarket chain Tesco Carolyn Bradley, interviewed in an article in *The Yorkshire Evening Post* titled *Consumer: Halloween now bigger than Valentine’s Day* argued that “the size of Halloween parties is growing for people in their late teens and 20s, with parties of 60 people now becoming the norm”. The article went on to say that:

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<sup>347</sup> Ken Goor *Haunted Leeds* (Gloucestershire, 2008) See also Andy Owen *Haunted Bradford* (Gloucestershire, 2008)

Halloween is a multi-million pound event. Major products included Wanda Witch, Shaking Shackled Prisoner Pete, a hanging ghoul figure, Ear Flapping Rocking Dog and a gothic witch costume, as well as bakery and confectionery lines...[and] Halloween was worth around £300 million to food and drink retailers in the three weeks to October 31 last year.<sup>348</sup>

It is clear from this study that the contribution that Leeds makes to these figures is not an ineffectual one. Consumer trading is not a new addition to calendar customs, and in many ways can be seen as perpetuating them by broadening their social appeal. However, consumer interest can also be detrimental and, as the folklorist John Widdowson argues can amount to little more than “commercial exploitation”.<sup>349</sup> Certainly, the rapid growth of fright tourism (such as night club fright nights and parties) is increasingly becoming part of a new adult variant of Hallowe'en and has little, if any, genuine associations with early Hallowe'en traditions. And few, if any children would now be happy to trick-or-treat without the ‘credibility’ associated with a shop brought outfit. In this sense there is a danger that commercial interests are starting to define as well as trade off Hallowe'en.

## **Analysis and Conclusion**

There has been a progression of what Hallowe'en has meant to different sections of the population of Leeds. Quick to adopt protestant reforms, practices associated with the souls of the dead, such as ringing of bells, quickly disappeared from Leeds, and its immediate surroundings following the Reformation. There is nothing to suggest that there was any serious perpetuation of the old practices, save in the form of soul cakes, and the children's practice of making Wassail-Boxes, possibly re-introduced by the influx of Irish Catholic migrants during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. With the exception of brief reports of the St. Andrews society events in the latter half of the nineteenth century, a festival focusing on the spirit

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<sup>348</sup> ‘Consumer: Halloween now bigger than Valentine's Day’ *Yorkshire Evening Post* [Online] (30<sup>th</sup> September 2010) [Accessed 7th December 2010]

<sup>349</sup> John Widdowson ‘Trends in the Commercialization of English Calendar Customs: A preliminary Survey’ in Buckland and Wood (eds.), *Aspects* p.35

world does not start to re-emerge with any momentum in Leeds until the twentieth century. When it does, it takes the classic modern form of Hallowe'en. However, this starts off initially as hearsay. Along with local accounts of Nut-crack Night, it is reported briefly in newspaper columns as a practice carried out in Scotland, particularly Balmoral during the 1870s 1880s and 1890s with its focus is on divination practices and parlour games. By the 1920s and 1930s there is recognition of Hallowe'en in its contemporary form, but little evidence that it is practiced by the population to any great extent. Hallowe'en parties are both encouraged and described in Leeds newspapers by the 1950s. The impact of the American Hallowe'en as expressed in film and television, undoubtedly brought Hallowe'en out of the home and onto the streets, but home parties continued to form the basis of Hallowe'en celebrations in Leeds until children start to talk about 'hanging-out' in costumes during the 1970s. The first recording of the term 'trick or treat' doesn't appear in Leeds until 1979. The practice of children dressing up and going door to door in pursuit of treats is well established, and at the time of writing consistent in numbers. On the back of this trend commercial interests have in the last five years, seized the opportunity to create a retail highlight mimicking Christmas, even down to the use of decorations and related holiday film selections.

The rise in prominence of this date has been welcomed by the Leeds Pagan community and incorporated into their practices, while the Christian Right, has attempted nationally to dissuade people from celebrating the occasion in either fashion. The evidence would suggest that, in Leeds at least, their attempts have only succeeded in preventing any official Hallowe'en celebrations in church based schools, and not in the wider community. Even in such schools, there is the occasional reference to bun-sale or pumpkins. To this end, the expression and dramatic expansion of Hallowe'en in Leeds, in its current form, relies upon North American influences. However, this aspect of North American culture is itself heavily influenced by English traditions as will be explored in Chapter Seven.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Mischief Night**

This chapter seeks to provide an understanding of the history and character of a long-standing, yet little known, calendar custom observed in a number of locations in the North of England - 'Mischief Night'. Mischief Night is an annual custom, which has shifted over time. Today, it is often held on or around the 4<sup>th</sup> November, although in an earlier form it was usually practiced on May Eve. As the name suggests, the night itself is traditionally a time in which children partake in a variety of tricks or mischievous activities, usually under the cover of darkness, against known adults in their immediate neighbourhood.

Despite being a major regional custom, Mischief Night has not been studied outside of fleeting references by folklorists. There is no formal historical account of this custom. Therefore, what this chapter sets out to achieve is to provide a unique historical narrative of a northern custom: a custom which, despite a six month shift in date during the early nineteenth century, has changed little over two hundred years. In charting the appearance and development of the custom, it is possible to shed light on its form and significance across the region, with specific reference to Leeds.

By exploring the earliest known accounts and personal recollections of the custom, its form and possible origins will be investigated. The study will then attempt to track the course of the custom, through a variety of accounts drawn from Leeds and surrounding districts, and go on to explore the ongoing nature of the tradition within its historical and social context. Further, it aims to consider the significance of the custom in Leeds, and finally it attempts to chart and account for its rise and apparent decline.

Mischief Night is possibly unique in that it stands as a purely secular custom, without the sanction of church, state or commerce and it is principally the preserve of children. In contrast to many of the recognised regional calendar customs and festivals it would appear to have an unbroken lineage to the earliest records: a survival, rather than a revival. This study seeks to use this fact to add to the body of knowledge of secular life and

customs at a regional and local level in and around a northern English city. In doing so it crosses the boundary between folkloric and historical studies as well as drawing upon valuable material from within the wider social science disciplines.

This chapter should be of interest to the social and cultural historian on a number of levels for it incorporates firsthand accounts of childhood practices throughout the industrialisation and post-industrial period specific to a given region. It also looks at the interplay between police and community relations through the tradition, as well as the relationship between the world of the child and of the adult. Subsequent chapters explore this in more depth, whilst looking at the contemporary practices associated with Mischief Night.

To this end a variety of data and source material have been employed including interviews with Leeds residents; printed books; newspapers; journals and research articles. Archives of historical, folkloric, and police records have also been consulted. Where possible, personal accounts from archive recordings and narratives have been incorporated, in order to gain a richer historical perspective. These have been supplemented with new interviews with people working and living in Leeds in order to provide contrast and add to the tradition over time. While referring to pre-set questions, the interviews were conducted in a relaxed and conversational manner<sup>350</sup>, in order to prevent the interview from becoming mechanical and unproductive. Although this worked well practically, in hindsight this often led to significant digressions and care had to be taken to regain focus.

## Historical Accounts

Despite there being numerous clear accounts of the practices associated with the tradition, the origins of Mischief Night are a little less clear. Certain newspaper accounts<sup>351</sup> appear to support the assertion that 4<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> This style of interviewing was based on the free association method, and is recognised as being particularly beneficial for narrative based research. The reader is directed to the following for a detailed description and benefits of the technique. Wendy Holloway & Tony Jefferson *Doing qualitative research differently – free association, narrative and the interview method* (London, 2000)

<sup>351</sup> The Yorkshire Evening Post has numerous references through out the 1950s to Mischief Night - principally in the Leeds area. This will be covered in more depth below.

November had become associated with mischief-making sometime during the nineteen forties and fifties. It is certainly clear from the material gathered below that Mischief Night is far older than the 1930s or even the 1920s. There is significant evidence to suggest that the tradition dates back to at least the early nineteenth century, and probably the late eighteenth century. Furthermore, various sources suggest that the Mischief Night name and principle activities were originally set six months earlier, on the 30<sup>th</sup> April.

To establish some clarity on this point it is important to establish something of the complex history and origins of Mischief Night, and in so doing it is useful to look back to the earliest known recordings of 'Mischief Night' as a term. Despite being a relatively recent addition to the history of the English language<sup>352</sup>, the Oxford English Dictionary is sufficiently detailed to provide useful insight. The word 'mischief' can be traced back through the late 12<sup>th</sup> century Old French, to the Anglo-Norman 'meschief' meaning 'misfortune, trouble, need, want or poverty'.<sup>353</sup> The use of the word since then has been extensive, with notable early references including Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*<sup>354</sup> and Shakespeare<sup>355</sup>. However, the first reference to 'mischief night' or 'mischief neet', according to the OED is provided by Banks in 1865.

William Banks' (1865) publication of *A list of provincial words in use in Wakefield*<sup>356</sup> provides us with a clear and early account of Mischief Night. He writes "Boys, thirty years ago, used to go about damaging property, believing the law allowed them on this night. Happily the practice is over at Wakefield and the time forgotten"<sup>357</sup>. The 1865 reference that Banks provides us with is the dialect construction 'Mischief Neet'. The emphasis is on childhood pranks, undertaken by children believing their actions to be above the law.

<sup>352</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) came into existence in 1928.

<sup>353</sup> Oxford English Dictionary [Online] [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2007] The overall etymology of mischief here is extensive, running to over thirteen pages. For ease and clarity the definition provided in the text is therefore limited to a simplistic definition.

<sup>354</sup> Reference can also be found throughout the *Canterbury Tales*, both as 'Meschief' and 'Mescheef'. See G Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*. Cawley, A. C. ed., (London, 1958) 15, 37, 68, 164, 217, 319, 443, 521, 525

<sup>355</sup> William Shakespeare also makes use of the word extensively throughout his works, including *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 2 Sc1 *Macbeth* Act1 Sc3 and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Act 4 See William Shakespeare *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* (London, 1958)

<sup>356</sup> William S Banks *A List of Provincial Words in use in Wakefield* (London, 1865)

<sup>357</sup> Banks, *List of Provincial Words* p.47

Banks' account of Mischief Night is brief but significant. This clearly puts the custom firmly in the mid 1830s. What is regrettable about Banks' account is that he does not make reference to the date of 'Mischief Neet'. It is therefore left to speculation as to whether he is referring to an April or November custom.

Writing in a 1902 edition of *Notes and Queries* Everard Coleman<sup>358</sup> makes reference to J.O. Halliwell's *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words* also published in 1865<sup>359</sup>. This is significant because it makes clear reference to Mischief Night in Yorkshire being held on May Eve. Coleman backs up his argument by drawing the readers' attention to Thomas Wright's *Dictionary of Obsolete and Provincial English* (1893)<sup>360</sup> in which the 30<sup>th</sup> April in Yorkshire, was called Mischief Night on account of "the many pranks [that] are played by youths of both sexes".<sup>361</sup>

Possibly the most tantalising of references comes from a fascinating paper by Fines (1969)<sup>362</sup> in which he recounts the history of Reading School through the life of Richard Valpy, Headmaster from 1781, at the age of twenty seven. During the 1790s and 1800s Valpy ensured that the school put on a number of plays, designed to both "impress the learned gentlemen from St. John's College Oxford"<sup>363</sup> and more importantly to raise funds for various charities. Riding on this tradition, Fines claims that Valpy "often allowed funny epilogues" and "on one occasion recited an Ode to Fun, by the Rev Dr. Butt, praising Mischief-Night jokes and tricks of boys in most approving terms".

The significance of this passage is clear, in that it provides this study with almost its earliest reference. Not only that, but there is a strong implication that, by making reference to Mischief Night in such an informal or generic way, the 'Rev Dr B' would have been referring to a well-established

<sup>358</sup> E. H. Coleman. Cited in Arthur Mayall *Notes and Queries* [e-journal] s9-IX 215: 14 (1902) Available through: Oxford Journals database [Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> April 2007]

<sup>359</sup> James O Halliwell *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words* (London, 1865)

<sup>360</sup> This was published some six years after his death in 1887– Thomas Wright *Dictionary of Obsolete and Provincial English* (London, 1893)

<sup>361</sup> Copies of both of these dictionaries as well as being referenced in Mayall, *Notes and Queries* s9-IX (215): 115, can also be found in Leeds University library.

<sup>362</sup> John Fines 'An Educationalist in the age of Keate' *History of Education Quarterly* [e-journal] (Winter, 1969) Vol.9.No.4.438-454 Available through: Jstor [Accessed 27<sup>th</sup> May 2007]

<sup>363</sup> Fines, *Educationalist* p.446



practice. Thus it seems that the oldest record of Mischief Night dates not from the nineteenth but the eighteenth century. Whilst this claim is at best tentative and speculative in nature, it is not totally without support. Hutton<sup>364</sup> draws our attention to arguably the first recorded account of Mischief 'Neet' as part of the May Eve celebrations in Lancashire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Pennines in the 1790s. As described in the autobiography of Samuel Bamford born in Middleton in 1788, in addition to leaving foliage on doorsteps designed to flatter or praise, the young men would "pay off grudges by playing pranks; pulling up fences, upsetting carts"<sup>365</sup>. The similarity of this to the later November Mischief Night tradition is clear. But it is the following reference to the observation at the time, that such antics provoked responses such as - "Oh, it's nobbut th' mischief-neet"<sup>366</sup> which proves the most interesting, since, the familiarity with the night's events suggests that 'mischief neet' was not a new custom, even in the 1790s. Such casual reference to the night's events gives the impression that the occasion was well tolerated. However, punishments were readily given to culprits if caught. According again to Bamford's autobiography<sup>367</sup>, if a young lad was caught casting a slur on a young lady by hanging rags containing salt on her family home he could expect to be 'thrashed' or: 'his face channelled by the fair one's nails the next time she met him, or a mop slapped against his cheek, or a vessel of odourous [sic] liquid powered on his clothes as he passed the desecrated threshold'.

Indeed it is the tentative assertion of this study that Mischief Night, in form if not in name, can be identified as early as the Tudor period. For in 1552 Edward VI granted royal assent to 'an act for the keeping of holy days and fasting days'. The act declared a total of twenty-seven holy days, plus fifty two Sundays which were put aside for prayer and worship. As Cressy (2004) points out, all but two of the 'even', or days before holy days, were also declared as being authorised fasting days. The two exceptions were May Eve and Midsummer Eve, which were 'traditional occasions for night-time revels, and watches that could barely be justified in terms of Christian

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<sup>364</sup> Hutton, *Stations* p.233

<sup>365</sup> W.H. Chaloner, (ed.), *The Autobiography of Samuel Bamford* Vol.1. (London, 1967) 144-5

<sup>366</sup> Chaloner, *Autobiography* p.144-5

<sup>367</sup> Chaloner, *Autobiography* p.144

belief<sup>368</sup>. Although not explicit, this is possibly suggestive of a Mischief Night tradition, although the precise nature of these 'night time revels' remains elusive.

The associations between May Eve and 'mischief' could perhaps have been forged in the sixteenth and seventeenth century with the late night pranks of roguish youths, and the supposed energetic courting of young lovers<sup>369</sup> in secluded woods and ditches, the supposed nature of which led to the fiery disapproval of puritan-led opponents, such as William Perkins, during the reign of Elizabeth I who wrote that "Recreations must tend also to the glory of God..."<sup>370</sup> and the earlier criticisms of Christopher Fetherston who regarded sports held on a Sunday, to be particularly offensive to God's will. In a sweeping denunciation of popular leisure sports and festivities, such practices were regarded by puritans as indulgences, which "tempted men from a godly life; being rooted in pagan and popish practices...poorly suited to the Protestant conscience..."<sup>371</sup> Indeed, an example of the intensity of Puritan disapproval of recreations which were viewed as lacking in restraint and earnest soul searching, can be seen in the following unnamed ministerial account provided by the minister Thomas Hail in 1661.

How perilous is it then to tolerate those prophane pastimes, open the flood-gates to so much sin and wickedness, as the sad experiences of all ages doth testifie? So that if I would debauch a people, and draw them from God and his worship to superstition and idolatry, I would take this course; I would open this gap to them, they should have Floralia and Saternalia, they should have feast upon feast (as 'tis in Popery), they should have wakes to Prophane the Lord's day, they should have May Games, and Christmas -revels, with dancing, drinking, whoring, pottting, piping, gaming, till they were made dissolute, and fit to receive any superstition, and easily drawn to be of any, or of no religion<sup>372</sup>

Indeed May Day celebrations were regarded as worthy of particular disapproval by William Perkins who warning of the 'wanton gestures' of

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<sup>368</sup> Cressy, *Bonfires*

<sup>369</sup> Hutton, *Stations*

<sup>370</sup> William Perkins (1558-1602) *English Puritanist. His Pioneer Works on Casuistry: A Discourse on Conscience* Cited in Malcolmson *Popular Recreations* p.7

<sup>371</sup> Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations* p.6

<sup>372</sup> Thomas Hall. *Funebria Florae, The Downfall of May Games*, (London, [1661]2011)

dancing which he claimed to be 'the very bellows of lust and uncleanness'.<sup>373</sup> This is a view echoed by Christopher Fetherston who claimed that of 'tenne maidens whiche went to set May, nine of them came home with child'<sup>374</sup>. Despite the unfounded nature of their fears and speculation<sup>375</sup>, the derogatory statements could only add to the feel of May Eve being a time of 'mischievous' goings on.

The trail of Mischief would seem to go cold until we reach the accounts that are to be found in the writings of William Smith (1876)<sup>376</sup>. Smith's account is useful in that he provides both a clear reference to Mischief Night in Morley, about five miles from the centre of Leeds, on the 30<sup>th</sup> April, but also a clear description of the nature of the custom. This included the overturning of water-tubs; the tying of door handles and the exchanging of shopkeepers' signboards. Smith goes on to describe the "feelings of trepidation" amongst "the more peaceably disposed inhabitants"<sup>377</sup>.

Smith's account is similar to that provided by George Robert's<sup>378</sup> of Mischief Night during the 1850s in and around Lofthouse, around eight miles south of the centre of Leeds. Referring to the eve of May Day as 'mischief neet' Robert provides a detailed list of the events taking place, by describing the occasion as:

duly kept up by a squad of half-drunk, rakish ruffians [who went] upsetting water-tubs, throwing gates or doors off their crooks, knocking off copings from walls, tarring door handles, tying people's doors with a strong cord, exchanging or altering sign-boards, stretching a cord across a dark lane, ringing the church bell, and breaking down fences.

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<sup>373</sup> William Perkins in Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations* p.9

<sup>374</sup> Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations* p.10

<sup>375</sup> Peter Laslett P & Karla Oosterveen 'Long term trends in bastardy in England' *Population Studies* [e-journal] Vol.27. No.2,(1973) 255-286 Available through: Jstor database [Accessed 27 June 2009] p.259

<sup>376</sup> William Smith *The History and Antiquities of Morley* (London, 1876):

<sup>377</sup> Smith, *History and Antiquities* p.92

<sup>378</sup> George Roberts *Topography and Natural History of Lofthouse and its Neighborhood With the Diary of a Naturalist and Rural Notes* (London, 1882-85) p.35

Attention will now be drawn to the mischief associated with November. This, it would seem, can be traced back to the years following the Gunpowder Plot of 1605<sup>379</sup>. Not only was each anniversary celebrated with the ringing of bells and the lighting of fires, but it was, according to David Cressy, regarded by some as a day of mischief, akin to the 'rowdiness of both Shrovetide and May'<sup>380</sup>. The mischief of May Eve and the mischief of gunpowder plot celebrations, then happened in parallel. They existed as two distinct nights with a common theme and name, and their common traits may well prove insightful in understanding why the Mischief Night of May Eve, declined in favour of the mischief of November 4<sup>th</sup>. The explanation for the shift remains unclear, but will be considered below. What is clear is that, as the Opies suggest, it occurred "sometime during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, and in many places apparently even more recently."<sup>381</sup>

The complex and somewhat elusive nature of this sort of activity is further revealed when it becomes clear that a very similar pranking element can be identified elsewhere associated with Hallowe'en. Scotland provides the earliest possible account for 1736 when local lads were condemned by the Kirk session of Canisby for battering doors with stolen cabbages<sup>382</sup>.

Returning to Yorkshire, there are references both in 1876 and 1888 to the 30<sup>th</sup> April date. Indeed, since Banks refers to the practice as "a custom happily over and forgotten in Wakefield"<sup>383</sup>, it would make sense to argue that he is referring to an April tradition, since this would be dying out in favour of a November one.

Whatever the date of Bank's 'Mischief Neet', it is possible that the supposed progression from April 30<sup>th</sup> to November 4<sup>th</sup> was a gradual one, but the reason why one date gained prominence over the other is not clear. Smith (1876) puts forward the theory that the April custom was curtailed as a direct response to the establishment of a regular and more efficient police force.

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<sup>379</sup> Cressy, *Bonfires*

<sup>380</sup> Cressy, *Bonfires* p. 145

<sup>381</sup> Opie, *Lore and Language* p.299

<sup>382</sup> Mary Macleod Banks, 'British Calendar Customs: Scotland' Vol.3 (1939) :cited in Hutton, *Stations* p.366

<sup>383</sup> Banks, *List of Provincial Words*

This argument is not without credibility. The uncoordinated and ineffective policing that was in place prior to the foundation of the metropolitan police force by Sir Robert Peel in 1829<sup>384</sup> would have had little sway over established folk traditions. However, the establishment of a national police force was slow and it was not until the Police Act of 1856 that Yorkshire gained the West Yorkshire Constabulary<sup>385</sup>. Even with the introduction of a regional police force, it is at best speculation as to whether this on its own would have been responsible for the demise of a May Eve Mischief Night. After all, the local police would have been drawn from the local population, and would have therefore been involved in, and accustomed to, the various ebbs and flows of community life. It is also dubious as to whether many of the night's antics would have been considered of a serious enough nature for police intervention.

A more likely explanation might be sought from the large scale migration into rapidly expanding cities such as Leeds due to industrialisation. As explored in Chapter Two, Leeds attracted large numbers of workers, not only from surrounding towns and villages but also from as far afield as Scotland and Ireland, to support the rapidly expanding woollen industry<sup>386</sup>. Between 1851 and 1861 the total number of inhabitants in Leeds rose from 172,270 to 207,165<sup>387</sup>. But despite the opportunities for employment, cities such as Leeds were a far cry from the rural traditional setting<sup>388</sup>. May Day was essentially a rural tradition, in that it celebrated the ushering in of summer, when vegetation and crops were growing vigorously, the lambing season was in full flow, and cattle were being moved out into their summer pastures. Garlands of flowers and greenery were made, paraded during the celebrations and then hung in homes and churches. Gifts of greenery were often left on the doorsteps of householders during the previous night and early hours of May morning. Such customs were by their nature reflective of

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<sup>384</sup> Ian K McKenzie *Law, Power and Justice in England and Wales* (Westport, 1998) p.56

<sup>385</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service *Collection Guide 6. Police Records. The Parish Constable*. [Online] [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2008]

<sup>386</sup> Morgan, *Demographic Change* in Fraser (ed.), *History of Modern Leeds* p.46-71

<sup>387</sup> Figures from the 1851 and 1861 Census of Great Britain, as found in Dillon, *Irish in Leeds*

<sup>388</sup> A full and detailed description of the life and living conditions of industrial Leeds can be found in a number of texts, one that is particularly worthy of note is Fraser (ed.), *History of Modern Leeds*

their rural setting, required access to greenery and open spaces and involved the kinds of dwelling which would have been in stark contrast to the over-populated back-to-back housing of towns like Leeds and Bradford in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century<sup>389</sup>. In adapting to the demands of urban life, the customs associated with May Day, or the agricultural calendar in general would have diminished in both relevance and significance.

This premise would seem to be supported by the social demographic trend<sup>390</sup>, which showed that whilst people from rural communities moved away into the larger towns and cities, there was next to no opposing flux. The rural communities, although reduced in size would therefore remain relatively static in their traditional customs and festivals. Thus, while the expanding towns and cities may have lost sight of many of their old customs, they would in time fashion new or adapt established customs in order to help them make sense of their new surroundings. It is therefore possible that the old ideas and traditions would have, albeit in limited form, survived.

Whilst an urban setting may have maintained a 'need' to maintain the mischief aspect of May Eve, the context from which it derived may have become lost. The November-based mischief however, provided at least two key benefits. Firstly, it is not based on the agricultural year. It is therefore more accessible within an urban context. Secondly, the long winter evenings would have provided ample cover for mischievous pursuits. The long standing Guy Fawkes Night, with its already established mischievous associations [see above] would have provided an obvious draw. This is perhaps an example of the kind of cultural adaptability that children can bring to a new setting as explored in Chapter Two. The records suggest this kind of change was taking place to Mischief Night.

A good example of this is the following account of Mischief Night<sup>391</sup>, published in 'The Bairnsla Foaks' Annual – an Pogmoor Olmenack' for 1850. It provides us not only with a rather brutal account of the night's events, but

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<sup>389</sup> Hutton makes this point when referring to the decline of Wakes. Such decline, he argues came about through "the continuing growth of urban areas, eliminating the space needed for the traditional celebrations". Hutton, *Stations* p.358

<sup>390</sup> Fraser (ed.) *History of Modern Leeds* pp 46-71

<sup>391</sup> T Treddlehoyle 'Mischeif Neet, Fowat a Nuvember' *The Bairnsla Foaks' Annual – an Pogmoor Olmenack' for 1850* (London, 1850)

clearly suggests that in the streets of South Yorkshire at least, the custom had already moved to November by at least the late 1840s.

#### Mischeif Neet, Fowat a Nuvenber

Aght lads, aght e ivvery street,  
For this y ol larn is Mischief neet,  
An, if yor fast tan aw wot fun,  
It shap a mischief sud be dun,  
Wha, get a cloaze prop fortk't at end,  
Hey, Wun a wean't sa easily bend,  
Then to sum crabb'd owd joker start,  
Wot lives I sum nice quiet part,  
An lizen if yo hear owt stur,  
If not, the gie hiz door a pur,  
An sooin at winda hele appear,  
But 'fore heze time to say "oaze there",  
Or back agean hiz hed ta pop,  
Just catch him under t'chin wit prop,  
An smartly we it stave an job,  
'Geant winda frame, hiz sleepy nob,  
Run laffin' home, an go ta bed.

A Standard English translation would read:

#### Mischief Night, Fourth of November

Out lads, out into every street  
For this, you will learn, is Mischief Night  
And if you're penniless and out for fun,  
Maybe mischief should be done  
Well, get a clothes-prop, forked at the end,  
One that won't so easily bend  
Then go to some crabby old joker  
Who lives in some nice quiet place,  
And listen if you hear anything stir  
If not, then give his door a knock  
And soon at the window, he'll appear  
But before he has time to say "Who's there?"  
Or back again, his head to pop,  
Just catch him under the chin with the prop  
And briskly with it stab and jab  
Against the window frame, his sleepy head  
Run laughing home and go to bed.

For someone unfamiliar with the Yorkshire dialects or with this style of transcription, the verse amounts to an instruction in one of the many kinds of mischief recorded for this night. We are directed to take a clothes prop with a forked end (it is likely this would have been a sturdy wooden stave as used for supporting a washing line: ubiquitous at the time the verse was written). The victim (sum crabb'd owd joker) is chosen. It seems the man is expected to be in bed at this point which may suggest the deed was done quite late into the evening. The prop is then used to rap on his door. This was not necessarily a mischievous act in itself. A commonplace of Northern working class life was the 'knocker-up'<sup>392</sup> who, in exchange for pennies, would use a pole to rap on windows and doors to alert sleepers to their working times – a sort of community alarm clock.

However, in the poem, the unfortunate recipient of the knock, who has opened the window and put his head out to ask "Who's there?" ('oaze there') receives the wide forked end of the prop under his chin and, as near as it is possible to determine, the prop is then jammed against the ground to wedge the victim to the window frame, whilst the miscreants make good their escape 'an go ta bed' leaving their prey to attempt to liberate himself.

This somewhat violent nature of Mischief Night, was echoed in an 1865 volume of the 'Dewsbre Back Olmenac'<sup>393</sup>, in which specific reference is made to the custom as practised in Leeds. Interestingly, this late reference to Mischief Night on the 30<sup>th</sup> April makes it clear that the two dates ran in tandem for a number of years.

Mischief Neet. I think it's abate as foolish a thing as ivver com up, to hev a mischief neet, becos it cannot be mich gooid to onnybody; bud haaivver, one mischief neet a lot ov young chaps e Leeds bethowt em they'd hev a prank wi somdy, so they rapped at a door wheare t'fowks hed goan to bed. Up gate t'chap in a minute, an popped his head at chaimer winda to see what they wanted; bud as sooin as he did that bang went t'cloas-prop wi sich a wither ageean his canister at he pooled it in shaper be hawf nor he put it ate. "Oah's that?" said t'wife. "Put thi head ate an see," said t'husband; bud wal sho wor getting ate a bed to see, he stake a leet, an sho saw in a crack at theare wor

<sup>392</sup>Reference to this can be found in many sources, for instance John Benson, *British Coalminers in the Nineteenth Century. A Social History* (New York, 1980)

<sup>393</sup> M Shoddy (pseudonym) *The Dewsbre back at mooin olmenac, an t' west ridin' historical calendar* (Dewsbury, 1865)



summat wrang, for he pooled a face as long as a fiddle, an looked as saar as helliker; so show or sooin over thrang rubbin his poor napper to hev a minute ov time to look ate to see oah they wor.”<sup>394</sup>

A Standard English translation would read:

Mischief Night.

I think it's about as foolish a thing as ever came up to a have a Mischief Night, because it cannot be much good to anybody; but however, one Mischief Night a lot of young chaps of Leeds thought to themselves they would have a prank with somebody, so they rapped at a door where the folks had gone to bed. Up got the chap in a minute, and popped his head out of the chamber window to see what they wanted; but as soon as he did that “Bang” went the clothes prop with such a blow against his head that he pulled it in more sharply by half than he had put it out. “Who’s that?” said the wife. “Put your head out and see,” said the husband, but while she was getting out of bed to see, he struck a light and she saw in an instant that there was something wrong, for he pulled a face as long as a fiddle, and looked as sore as hell; so she was soon over busy rubbing his poor head to have a minute of time to look out to see who they were.

### Early Twentieth Century Accounts

At this point it is worth identifying some of the main children's autumn activities that take place at around the same point in the calendar. Firstly, there is a clearly identifiable mischief or pranking tradition, identified as taking place on the 4<sup>th</sup> November, in which the primary focus is the prank. As noted above, this is identical to the pranking aspect of the May Eve tradition. The second activity is the fuel collecting (chumping) for the bonfire night preparations, which takes place in the weeks leading up to the 5th. Although the term ‘chumping’ may be distinctive, this activity in itself is not unique to the Leeds area. Indeed there is little doubt that children would have been involved in such activities across the country. Thirdly there is ‘guying’, (explored in Chapter Six) again not uncommon in many areas of the country. These activities are carried out by the same section of the community (i.e. children) and take place at around the same time and, in the case of Mischief

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<sup>394</sup> Shoddy, *Dewsbre Back*

Night, on the same night of the year. Thus, many of the examples given below combine more than one of these activities, as will be identified.

The impact of industrialisation and demographic shifts on the demise of the May-Eve mischief, however dramatic, would have been slow, despite the substantial increase in populations in towns such as Burnley, Lancashire, due to the growth of the textile industries. Dyer<sup>395</sup> writing about Burnley in 1900 for example was still able to record, "The Evening before May Day is termed 'Mischief Night' by the young people of Burnley and the surrounding district when all kinds of mischief are perpetrated".

Writing in the journal 'Folklore' in 1939, Ivor Gatty provides us with his personal recollections of his childhood at Bradfield Rectory near Sheffield during the 1880s. Gatty recalls that when he was a small child, he would, with older children, go round the village collecting material for the November the fifth bonfire. In the course of this task they would visit the cottages chanting:

Oily coily bonfire oily,  
Stick or Steck,  
Cobbles or Sleck,  
If you daunt gie us summat we'll  
breck yer door-sneck.<sup>396</sup>

By means of explanation Ivor explains that in the West Riding "coal" is pronounced "coil", "steck" means "stake", and "sleck" is "slack". The door-sneck, refers to an old-fashioned lever-catch with a thumb piece outside. The explicit reference to a punishment, if the inhabitants were not forthcoming with the goods, "if you daunt gie us summat we'll breck yer door-sneck", not only combines aspects of chumping with mischief, but is also an interesting foreshadowing of the 'trick or treat' commonly associated today with Hallowe'en, i.e. "if you don't give us a treat, we will play a trick". It is unknown whether or not the earlier threat carried any more serious intent than the latter.

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<sup>395</sup> T F T Dyer *British Popular Customs, Present and Past* (London, 1900)

<sup>396</sup> Ivor Gatty 'Yorkshire Customs' in *Folklore* [e-journal] Vol.50, No3 (Sep, 1939) 316-317  
Available through: Jstor Database [Accessed 15 October, 2006]

By 1901 we find an account given in *Notes and Queries*, by Downhauler (no other name or details given) writing<sup>397</sup> of the tale of his maid who, on “the eve of Gunpowder Treason Day”, after dark, the previous year, had been set upon in Kirkstall in Leeds with boys armed with sticks, who in legitimising their actions had claimed “oh, it’s ahl reight missus, it’s ‘mischief-neight,’ doan’t you knoa?”

The tradition of mischief was evidently still going strong years later, with an account from Bill Stevenson, born in Carlton c.1910, recorded speaking as part of a survey of English dialects<sup>398</sup>. With evident joy in his voice, Bill’s recollections of Mischief Night as a child included tales of lifting garden gates off, and putting trip wires across people’s doors; also window tapping. This involved the suspension of a pin from a suitably positioned reel of cotton in such a way as to rap unseen against a window. The most dramatic antic of the night came in the form of dropping snuff onto somebody’s doorstep, which, when accompanied with a lit match, would make the smoke draw into the house. The joy was thus obtained by watching from a safe distance, while the occupants came out coughing.

A similar account comes from an oral history recording of an unnamed son of a Leeds clothing manufacturer recalling his Mischief Night tricks around 1910. During his recollections he states:

In Yorkshire... the day before Bonfire Night was called Mischief Night, and Mischief Night we always took a delight in sewing up one’s sisters and brother’s pyjamas, making apple pie beds, plastering treacle on neighbours’ door handles, ringing the bell and running away, tying up gates, and things of this sort. This was always accepted as part of the fun of Mischief Night. And of course, often neighbours lay in wait for one and one got boxed ears, but that was part of the hazards of the fun<sup>399</sup>.

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<sup>397</sup> Downhauler ‘Mischief-Night’ *Notes & Queries* [e-Journal] Vol. s9-IX, No. 212 (1902) 48-49 Available through: Oxford Online Journals [Accessed 18 April, 2007]

<sup>398</sup> B Stevenson, *Collect Britain: English Accents and Dialects*: [Online] (London, 1974): British Library Recordist, Ellis S:

<sup>399</sup> Paul Thompson ‘War with Adults’ in *Oral History* Vol.3, No.2 *Family History Issue* (Autumn, 1975) p.32

An account from the same period can be found in a work by Yorkshire poet Fred Hirst, born in 1917. His description of 'Bonfire Neet'<sup>400</sup> immediately following the end of the First World War, provides a unique account of the bonfire fuel collecting. He goes on to describe the consequent effort to defend the night's spoils, this being a pertinent feature of his understanding of Mischief Night activities, and which clearly, save the potential raids from rival gangs, focuses less on pranks, and more fully on fuel collecting (chumping)<sup>401</sup> for bonfire night.

Tha'd ta belong to a gang ta collect chumps for bonfire neet,  
Not ta be bothered abaht gerrin' mucky, nor be very breet.  
Nooah need ta be worried abaht weer tha got thi chumps,  
Ther' wor other places ta gerr 'em besides rubbish dumps.

All that tha collected, tha'd ta drag 'ooahm ta yahrd,  
Liftin' 'em on ta closets an' t 'coil 'oils wo very 'ahrd.  
On mischief neet ahr dads took ovver an' built fire,  
We looked on an' an' watched it grow 'igher an' 'igher.

That neet we got tergether an' stood for 'ahrs, on guahrd.  
We let nooahbody raid us ta pinch chumps from ahr yahrd.  
On bonfire neet, us faathers came an' set it afire,  
The' poured parafin , lots of it inta an owd tyre.

It didn't tak long afooahr it gorr ablaze an' really 'ot,  
Mi Mam an' Dad came aht wi' t' firewahrks that Ah'd got.  
If tha wo well off, tha gorr a lot purr in a big packet,  
Spahrklers, pinw'eels, rockets, bangers 'at made a racket.

We'd rosted tahties pushed inta fire wi' a stick,  
sumtimes tha cudn't get neeahr 'cos t' smook wo ta thick.  
At backend o' t' neet tha wor a reight seet ta be seen,  
Black as fireback wo thi face an' red rimmed wo thi een.<sup>402</sup>

A Standard English translation of 'Bonfire Neet' would read:

You had to belong to a gang to collect chumps\* for bonfire night,

<sup>400</sup> Fred Hirst (no date given) 'Bonfire Neet': Yorkshire Dialect Verse [online] Available at: <[www.yorkshire-dialect.org](http://www.yorkshire-dialect.org)> [Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> May 2007]

<sup>401</sup> Chumping' is the name attributed to the collection of wood collected for the purpose of bonfire building

<sup>402</sup> \*Chumps = pieces of wood etc. used as fuel

†Closets = sheds or outhouses – probably the privy / loo.

Not to be bothered about getting mucky, nor be very bright.  
No need to be worried about where you got your chumps,  
There were other places to get them besides rubbish dumps,

All that you collected, you had to drag home to the yard,  
Lifting them on to closets† and to coal holes was very hard.  
On Mischief Night our dads took over and built the fire,  
We looked on and watched it grow higher and higher.

That night we got together and stood for hours on guard.  
We let nobody raid us to pinch chumps from our yard.  
On bonfire night, our fathers came and set it afire,  
They poured paraffin, lots of it into an old tyre.

It didn't take long before it got ablaze and really hot,  
My mum and dad came out with the fireworks that I'd got.  
If you were well off, you got a lot in a big packet,  
Sparklers, pinwheels, rockets, bangers that made a racket.

We'd roast potatoes pushed into the fire with a stick,  
Sometimes you couldn't get near because the smoke was too thick.  
At the end of the night you were a right sight to be seen  
Black as the fireback was your face and red-rimmed were your eyes.

The following account, found in a letter written by James Smith<sup>403</sup> to the Institute of Dialect and Folklife Studies, at the University of Leeds in 1962, provides details of Mischief Night as experienced by both the writer, aged 45, and his mother, aged 80 in Keswick, situated nine miles from Leeds. The account, provided by the mother, of Mischief Night at the latter end of the nineteenth century, lists many recognisable elements already mentioned but also lists additional activities including:

Dressing in sheets and wailing and flapping behind the churchyard wall.  
Lowering dead hens down chimneys on a string.  
In her family they also had a hollow stone which they used to pull on a rope round the outskirts of the village; they used to fill the hollow with gunpowder, drop another stone on top of it, and 'bombard' the village.

James's personal recollections, of Mischief Night in the 1920s and 1930s include elements of disguise, with children aged about seven or eight

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<sup>403</sup> James Smith, *letter* (6<sup>th</sup> November, 1962). Available at: Leeds University Special Collections (Folklife File HIII C3)

and above wearing masks and wearing 'older or unfamiliar clothes, [or] their coats turned inside out' in order to aid their disguise while 'knocking on doors and then running away... removing gates... [putting] squibs through letterboxes... tying dustbin lids to doors...' <sup>404</sup>

The ladies of the Leeds (central) Age Concern group <sup>405</sup>, many of whom were born in the late 1920s and early 1930s in Leeds, provided a further rich source of living memories on the subject. They recalled with joy the antics that went on in their youth, many echoing the memories of Iris Dennison, who remembered her peers tying string to the door handles across the road, and then knocking the doors, so that each respective owner would be unable to open their door without pulling shut the door on the opposite side. Smearing the door handles with syrup or treacle seemed to be another firm favourite. The most common, however, remained the removal of garden gates and dustbin lids, although it was felt that this was largely the work of young lads.

Despite the nature of their antics, the ladies held fast to the premise that it was all 'harmless fun' taken in good nature; unlike the 'youth of today' who 'have no regard for what is right or wrong'. This all too common rose-tinted view of the past is not altogether supported by the newspaper accounts of the time. The *Yorkshire Evening Post* during the thirties, forties and fifties makes numerous references to the "wilful and needless damage to property" requiring "extra police and special constables." <sup>406</sup>

It appears that during the mid-twentieth century, children were able on this night to 'rebel' and hold 'power' over their elders. The adults, in at least reserved compliance with the custom, were left to brazen the night out with forward planning, and admirable fortitude. This is not to say that children had it all their own way. Letters sent to the Sunday times, in response to a query regarding Mischief Night in North Yorkshire in the 1950s, tell of both the enormous enjoyment of at least one father who rigged up hosepipe booby

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<sup>404</sup> Smith, *letter* (6<sup>th</sup> November, 1962) p.1-2

<sup>405</sup> The informal meeting consisted of the eight ladies present at Age Concern, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2007.

<sup>406</sup> Mr J Barnett (Chief Constable of Leeds) 'Mischief Night Warning' *Yorkshire Evening Post* (4<sup>th</sup> November 1947) p.1

traps in order to spray mischief makers<sup>407</sup>, and of "formidable old ladies armed with walking sticks [who] would take up position and keep watch behind the curtains".<sup>408</sup>

Indeed the Chief Constable's Annual Reports upon the Leeds City Police in 1958 and 1963<sup>409</sup> showed that between 1944 and 1963 there were one hundred and fifty-one recorded incidents of non-indictable offences by juveniles, of the nature of stealing or receiving fences, gates and growing trees. The greatest incidence was in 1955 with thirty-seven recorded incidents. Despite the close comparison of the nature of these offences, it is regrettable that no individual account of the dates of the offences seems to have survived. It is therefore impossible to say whether they have any connection with Mischief Night per se, or are simply representative of juvenile pranks in general.

One may be tempted at this point to compare the rise of mischief-related activities to the social pressures and expectations of the time. It is worth highlighting that the nineteen-fifties stood out as a time of high cultural conformity. The concept of the 'work ethic' was high and there was a strong sense of 'family values' and moral rectitude. In many ways the 1950s can be interpreted as stifling and repressive. In borrowing from sociological theory, in particular the work of Danziger (1971)<sup>410</sup> and Taylor et al (1973)<sup>411</sup>, it is apparent that such social conditions, far from fully repressing the more rebellious aspects of behaviour, simply channel them into more creative forms. Arguably the advent of youth culture during the fifties is a classic example of this principle in action. From this it may not be surprising to find a corresponding increase in recorded juvenile transgressive behaviour on the one night on which it might be perceived by children as being more permissible.

The findings of the Chief Constable's Annual Reports do, however, seem to reflect further newspaper accounts of the time. Despite a lull in the

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<sup>407</sup> D Higham 'Trick of the Night' *The Times* (16 November 2002) p. 29

<sup>408</sup> V Lanceley 'Trick of the Night' *The Times* (32 November 2002) p. 21

<sup>409</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service *Leeds City Police Chief Constable's Annual Reports 1800-1926*

<sup>410</sup> Kurt Danziger *Socialisation*: (Middlesex, 1971)

<sup>411</sup> Ian Taylor, Paul Walton and Jock Young *The New Criminology. For a Social Theory of Deviance*: (London & New York, 1973)

war years, the Leeds police felt cause to issue warning against 'needless damage to property' arising from Mischief Night throughout the forties and fifties. A report in the *Yorkshire Post*<sup>412</sup> in November 1949 claimed that Mischief Night-related 999 calls had reached a record of 61 from across the city, with the majority of the callers reporting that their garden gates were missing.<sup>413</sup>

The activities appear to come with some measure of regional variation. According to the teacher and local historian Howard Peach,<sup>414</sup> Mischief Night in East Yorkshire, at this time, was not complete unless accompanied with a 'babble'. A babble consisted of strips of leather tied with a whipcord, and it was used by youths for the purpose of beating each other. Alternatives included fashioning the leather into bags, to be filled with stone for the purpose of beating on doors. The expectation was that residents would pay them to go away. Well-worn babbles were then consigned to public bonfires the following day. In view of the fact that no further references to babbles have been found during the course of this study, it would seem reasonable to conclude that this practice was restricted to East Yorkshire.

It was to be hoped that further insight might have been gained from the national Mass-Observation Archive<sup>415</sup>, 1939-1965. The Mass-Observation programme orchestrated large numbers of surveys and actively encouraged willing participants across the country to keep and then forward on diaries. Indeed, with eleven of the diarists based in Leeds, this should have proved a rich source of material. However, despite the longevity of the programme, none of the eleven Leeds-based diarists submitted more than a few patchy entries between 1939 and 1945. Of those entries, not one of

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<sup>412</sup> 'Mischief Night bring 999-call record' *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Mercury* (November 5<sup>th</sup> 1949) P.1

<sup>413</sup> The increased tendency to report such activities may well have reflected a wider social unease at what has been subsequently regarded as the growth of 'youth culture' during the 1950s and its portrayal as a subversive or delinquent subculture. A perception of youth culture that has arguably continued throughout the nineteen-sixties, and seventies and though the present day. For a detailed analysis of this phenomenon see David Muggleton 'From Classlessness to club culture. A genealogy of post-war British youth cultural analysis' *Young. Nordic Journal of Youth Research* [e-journal] Vol.13: 205 (2005) 205-219 Available through: Sage Publications [Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> June 2012]

<sup>414</sup> Howard Peach *Curious Tales of Old East Yorkshire* (Cheshire, 2001)

<sup>415</sup> The Mass-Observation Archive. Leeds diaries (1937-1965) University of Sussex



them made any identifiable reference to Mischief Night or associated customs.

On first analysis, one is tempted to come to the persuasive conclusion that people had much more pressing matters to attend to. Indeed, the entries form an interesting perspective on war-time Leeds. But this leaves us with an interesting question. Does this mean that Mischief Night did not happen during the war years, or alternatively, that it simply wasn't pressing enough, or considered important enough to be recorded? This, after all, is a custom that is the preserve of children, whose writings are not so readily obtained. However true this hypothesis may be, in the main it is unlikely to be the root cause of such a lack of evidence for this time. A far more obvious and simple explanation can be found in the second key activity identified above, 'chumping', i.e. collecting fuel for bonfires. Any fire would have been contrary to the blackout enforced after dark during the course of the second-world-war. The lack of Guy Fawkes preparations, would have meant not only a dearth of fuel collecting, but may also have led to a corresponding marked decline in pranking activities associated with it.

Perhaps the first photographs of Mischief Night activity are a collection of photographs by Alec Dellow all taken in 1954 and used for an article in the *Picture Post*, an illustrated national news magazine which ran from 1938-1957. They illustrated a light-hearted piece entitled *Mischief Night In Leeds*<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> Photos by Alec Dellow used in an article: Alan H. Brown 'Mischief Night in Leeds' in *Picture Post* (London, 6<sup>th</sup> November, 1954) p.34

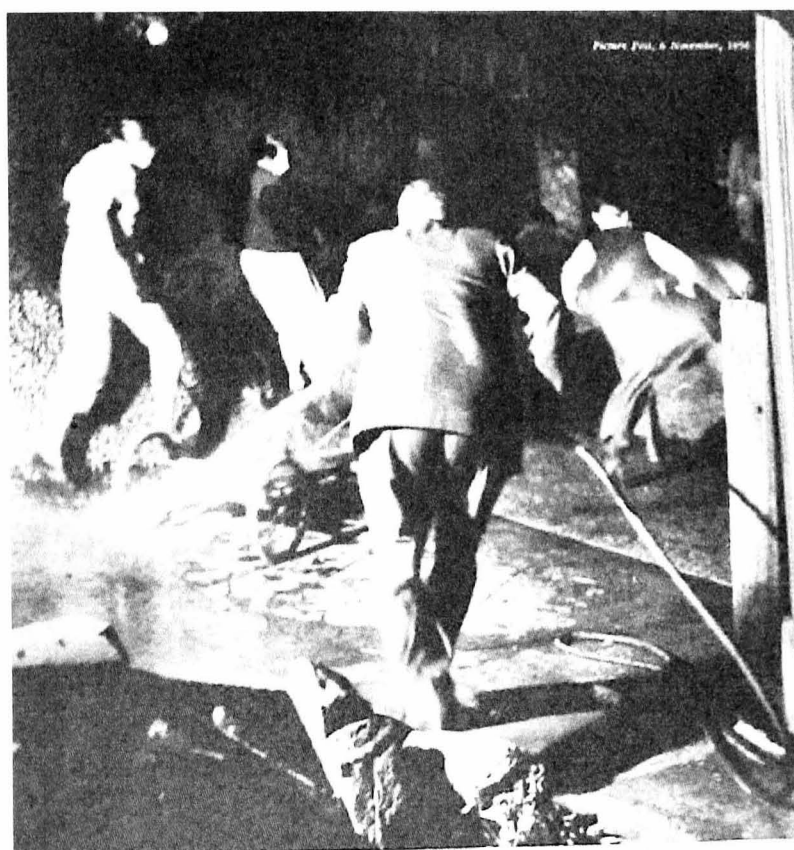


"IT'S NO LAUGHING MATTER. ONE OF THOSE DUSTBIN LIDS IS MINE."

The first of these images shows a couple of boys having lit a squib (a small firework) placed in a keyhole. The enjoyment comes from then knocking loudly on the door to summon the inhabitants and then quickly running off. The second image portrays the aftermath of the night's events, with a collection of dustbin lids tied across the street. Made of steel, the

effect would not only cause inconvenience to their owners in getting them down, but would also make a considerable noise when the rope was pulled or rocked. Both the caption and the expression on the ladies' faces would seem to indicate the good-natured way in which such activities were tolerated. The caption reads "It's no laughing matter. One of those dustbin lids is mine".

The third image, used in the same article, is best summed up by the caption directly beneath which reads: "‘RUN FOR IT!’ THE ENEMY BRINGS UP HIS ARTILLERY. A hosepipe ‘on tap’ is the householder’s most effective weapon against youthful invaders, some of whom use home-made bogey-carts to speed their escape down steep hills."



"‘RUN FOR IT!’ THE ENEMY BRINGS UP HIS ARTILLERY. A hosepipe ‘on tap’ is the householder’s most effective weapon against youthful invaders, some of whom use home-made bogey-carts to speed their escape down steep hills."

As well as describing the more common door-knob related tricks, discussed above, the article continues by saying:

To this day, mischief night in Leeds remains to be endured or enjoyed, according to one’s age and station in life. Exuberant children congregate, in the gathering darkness of the ‘Fourth’, to play their pranks on unfortunate adults. Boys *and* girls, in all manner of guises and disguises, and equipped with all kinds of strange gadgets, devise

diabolical schemes that have an uncanny knack of making grown-ups feel very small indeed.

To see, or not to see; that's the question facing any householder whose doorbell rings on Mischief Night. Does a legitimate visitor await without – or a lighted squib in the keyhole? If someone taps at the window, will it be an equally harassed neighbour – or another of those infernal kids with a button on a length of cotton?...

But long before midnight, it's all over for another year. For a few days afterwards there will be the usual Letters to the Editor, about 'young hooligans' and 'in *my* childhood days'. The vast majority of Leeds people, however, will agree with the words of Ben Jonson: 'Let them call it mischief: when it's past and prospered 'twill be virtue'.

The article closes with another picture of Mischief Night activity: this time of two girls apparently smearing treacle on a door handle.



The following image, also by Dellow and similar in theme to those above, again depicts "An irate householder waving his fist at a group of mischief makers who hung his garden gate on a lamppost to celebrate Leeds Mischief Night."<sup>417</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> Alex Dellow *Mischief Night* (Leeds, 1954) sourced from Getty Images



The image, although possibly staged for the photograph, depicts an older male standing on the pavement of a quiet suburban street waving his fist at a group of small boys and girls who are receding into the distance. In the foreground is a lamppost upon which hangs a garden gate which we may suppose belongs to the man, and has been put there by the children as part of their Mischief Night activities. Another image, patently taken on the same occasion, shows the same man staring forlornly at his recently elevated gate.

It is interesting to note that these two shots depict life in a relatively suburban location in the 1950s, rather than the more working-class districts where housing and streets were more closely-packed. This would seem to support the premise made in Chapter Two that childhood pursuits such as Mischief Night were able to withstand the process of migration from densely populated areas to the newer more open housing estates that took their place.

Another of Dellow's photographs which appears to have been made to illustrate the same piece, although it does not seem to have been used by the Picture Post, comes with the description "Young people in Leeds decorate a statue for Guy Fawkes celebrations" and is further identified with

the note “Mischief Night In Leeds”<sup>418</sup> although there is no further information provided to shed light on its contents.



This picture interestingly depicts a well-dressed group of young men and women who appear to be placing an item of clothing, possibly a scarf, on the head of a statue. The statue and the Queen’s Hotel in the background positively identify the location as the City Square close to the main railway station in Leeds city centre. The description accompanying the photograph is curious. Despite the close proximity of date, no other reference has been found to the dressing of statues as part of Guy Fawkes celebrations. However, it is possible that these smart young people may conceivably be university students, engaged in their own take on Mischief Night pranks, a common component of student life in Leeds during the 1950s as will be explored below.

The only other appearance of photographic evidence of Mischief Night activities, is of a picture, again produced by Alec Dellow for the Picture Post which was found reproduced for a 1972 account of Old English Customs by Roy Christian. It shows a young girl in Leeds who has been supplied with a

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<sup>418</sup> Alex Dellow *Mischief Night* (Leeds, 1954) sourced from Getty Images



home-made lantern and a tin of syrup to put on door handles. What is interesting about this image is that whilst both syrup and treacle are both undoubtedly associated with Mischief Night, there are things about the picture which arouse a certain amount of suspicion as to its authenticity. Firstly, the picture looks staged with the tin of Lyle's syrup being held clearly in the foreground, and secondly, there are a number of people walking past in the background. Since part of the magic associated with Mischief Night was the secretive and surreptitious nature of activities, the picture is at best only a suggestive reflection of the custom rather than a true 'caught in the moment' account.



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A more recent account of mischief-related practices can be seen in the work of Matthew Cheeseman at Sheffield,<sup>420</sup> who has highlighted the fact that university 'Rag Week', often falls close to Mischief Night, as being a key time for student antics. Although not directly connected to Mischief Night, the close proximity of Rag Week, set within the first few weeks of the academic year, seems to add to what Cheeseman refers to as a 'festival

<sup>419</sup> Roy Christian *Old English Customs*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Newton Abbot, 1972)

<sup>420</sup> Mathew Cheeseman 'Other High Jinks at the University of Sheffield' Paper Presented at Folklore Conference, *Traditional Games, Sports and Pastimes*: Sheffield 2007

license'. The students of Sheffield seemed to indulge in a long tradition of seasonal antics from water fights with fire-hoses, gluing doors shut, and directing random drunks into student beds.

As explained in Chapter Two, the Universities in Leeds in expanding over the years have played an increasingly greater role in the life of the city and it might be expected that the activities of their students would have mirrored those of their Sheffield counterparts. Unfortunately, one has to look back as far as the 1950s to find comparable recorded instances of such creative Mischief Night antics amongst Leeds students, although then, at least, they were not to be outdone by their South Yorkshire contemporaries. In 1950, police were called to investigate the removal of a ship's bell belonging to the warden of Lyddon Hall, later to be found in the Left Luggage office in the city station, and the furniture from the Common Room of Oxley Hall had been quietly removed and placed neatly on the lawn<sup>421</sup>. The following five years seemed to have been spent upsetting the residents of the women's halls with various water-based antics, and hanging bedsteads on nearby lampposts<sup>422</sup>. By 1958, however, Mischief Night celebrations were considered to have got out of hand. Twenty one Engineering students were called to account to the Vice Chancellor following a combined raid on Weetwood, Tetley and Oxley Halls, as well as a planned firework bombardment of Bardon Grange, which had been thwarted at the last moment by police, who had been summoned by the warden of Weetwood.<sup>423</sup>

The existence of this student Mischief Night tradition in Leeds may help to explain the curious photograph above of the young people dressing the statue. If they are in fact students then this could well be pictorial evidence of the kind of Mischief Night prank described here.

In an attempt to gain a greater understanding of Mischief Night from the point of view of the police of Leeds, an interview was held with PC Lawton, a policeman who was not only born and brought up in the Pudsey area of Leeds, but has served with the West Yorkshire Police for over twenty

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<sup>421</sup> S Edwards *Student traditions at Leeds University*: Leeds University Special Collections: (1967) LAVC/SRP/2/098

<sup>422</sup> 'Students made Mischief Night a damp affair' *The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Mercury* (5<sup>th</sup> November 1954) p.4

<sup>423</sup> Edwards, *Student Traditions*



nine years. During this time, the antics of the student population had not gone unnoticed. He recalled that in 2006, fourteen students were spotted attempting to walk through Headingley with a number of large wooden gates from the nearby rugby ground, gained for the purposes of constructing a bonfire for their party. They were duly required to walk them back again. Though PC Lawton provided this as an example of Mischief Night activity, it is equally possible that the students were merely collecting the wood as part of Bonfire Night preparations. Though this could be interpreted in light of traditional 'chumping' activities, it is not in itself indicative of 'mischief' and could conceivably have occurred anywhere in England at this time of year.

During the course of the interview<sup>424</sup>, it became apparent that Mischief Night is considered one of the biggest nights of the year for the police in Leeds, and that this has been the case throughout PC Lawton's career. The whole force is required to work, and the night is planned for on a region by region basis. PC Lawton recalled that, as outlined in Chapter Two, the 1970s and 1980s were occasions for racial tension in Leeds, particularly in the Chapel Town area of the city. In this context PC Lawton noted that Mischief Night, perhaps unintentionally, coincided with the race riots in 1981, which were echoed more widely in riots with similar motivations in other areas of the country such as Toxteth and Brixton<sup>425</sup>, and came about partly due to a breakdown of police and community relations. It would be difficult to claim a major role for Mischief Night in these actions which were more closely linked to the social and economic deprivation of sections of the Leeds community and indeed these factors led again to further unrest in the Hyde Park area of the city not in the autumn but in July of 1995, demonstrating perhaps that such extreme negative associations cannot normally be attributed to Mischief Night.

When asked what sort of behaviour was typical for Mischief Night during the course of his career, PC Lawton was able to provide numerous examples including the current use of 'coconut bombs' to put telephone

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<sup>424</sup> The following represents only particular points of interest taken from the interview, for the purposes of the study.

<sup>425</sup> For a detailed description of the events leading up to the riots and an analysis of the underlying causes and social implications see Paul Gilroy *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (London, 1987)

boxes 'out of action', and sticking fireworks onto windows with chewing gum: the result being to blow the window out. PC Lawton recalled that during the early part of his career the residents of Harehills would celebrate by constructing a large bonfire in the centre of the street, ready for the 5<sup>th</sup>. This period coincided with an increase in car use and ownership<sup>426</sup> along with considerable local government investment in modernising the city.<sup>427</sup> For much of Leeds this meant laying tarmac over the existing cobbles. Unfortunately, as PC Lawton recalled, the police and the fire brigade were required to hose the fire down, due to the fact that it tended to melt the tarmac causing some consternation amongst the local population.

The police also have a long history of working with the fire brigade on Mischief Night as traditionally any rivalry or grudge between neighbours could result in attempts to pre-light their fires.

In contrast to this are the recollections of Winifred Douglas, an 80 year old Leeds Quaker, who tells of Mischief Night during the nineteen thirties as being almost a community event. "There was nothing made of it at Meeting, but in the streets it were a big thing". Her recollections include tying door handles together, and then knocking on the doors, and putting treacle on door handles. One of the main purposes of the night was to collect wood for the bonfire on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Like the residents in Harehills, a bonfire was built in the centre of the street, and much effort was made to protect the fire from being lit ahead of schedule. For Winifred, the emphasis on the fire preparations stood out, as the whole street would be involved, baking potatoes in the fire and talking round the fire long into the night.

A similar account was provided by Martin Kromer, the retiring head teacher of a primary school in Bramley, who grew up in Armley. 'Mischievous Night' was always 'very localised', never really extending far beyond his own street. The nature of the mischief was described as 'spontaneous' consisting of calling out the name of passers-by and hiding, and ringing shop door bells and running away, as well as the typical tying of door handles across the street and putting sticky substances on door handles. Although he was aware of teenagers locally removing gates, Upper

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<sup>426</sup> See Thornton, *Leeds* p.233

<sup>427</sup> See Houghton and Whitney *Reinventing a Region* p.23-25

Armley, where he grew up during the 1950s, consisted of back-to-back houses that 'simply didn't have any gates to nick'. As a child, Martin regarded it as 'one of the highlights of the year'. He maintained that it was 'always held on the 4<sup>th</sup> November and Bonfire Night was always on the 5<sup>th</sup>.' This was significant, because at that time it was unheard of to move Bonfire Night to any other night, for example to the weekend. It would 'have been like moving Christmas three days earlier'. In his view, the apparent demise of Mischief Night came with the increased portability of Bonfire Night.

Despite the growth of organised bonfire nights and legal restrictions on fireworks, it would seem that reported Mischief Night incidents across Yorkshire are still prominent in the media. The traditional fire and fire-works related incidents continue, but there has also been a growth in the once-marginal activity of egg throwing. This contrasts with the earlier experience of Martin Kromer, who, when asked if eggs were a feature of Mischief Night in the 1950s, replied that eggs would not have been an obvious choice for Mischief Night during the 1950s because they were both expensive and still subject to rationing until 1953. However, by 2002, York police alone were called to twelve cases of egg throwing compared to eighteen incidents involving fireworks. Figures for the same year across North Yorkshire were fifty eight and fifty five respectively.<sup>428</sup>

A definitive date for Mischief Night remains as elusive as ever with the trail leading not only to 30<sup>th</sup> April and the 4<sup>th</sup> November, but also on the 30<sup>th</sup> October. For many people in the North of England, the night belongs firmly on the eve of Hallowe'en. Liverpool in particular seems to have adopted this date in recent years<sup>429</sup>, with large scale police operations being put in place in order to deal with the night's events. In 2006, over 4500 Mischief Night related calls were made to Liverpool police as a wave of anti-social behaviour, resulting in fifty eight arrests for criminal damage and public order offences swept across the city.<sup>430</sup>

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<sup>428</sup> Carroll S & Tierney 'Mischief Night Brings Mayhem' *Yorkshire Evening Press*. (5<sup>th</sup> November 2002) [Online] [Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> July 2007]

<sup>429</sup> 'Big Leap in Mischief Night Calls' *Liverpool Echo* [Online](October 31, 2006) [Accessed 26 June 2007]

<sup>430</sup> 'Big Leap in Mischief Night Calls'

The explanation of this third night of mischief would seem to be rooted in the American import of 'Trick or Treat'. The distinction between and yet subsequent merger of these customs can be seen in York<sup>431</sup> where, despite enjoying a traditional November 4<sup>th</sup> Mischief Night, the recent introduction of 'American-style mischief-making' on October 31, has according to North Yorkshire Police<sup>432</sup>, brought about a new wave of pranks and mischief on both nights.

Furthermore, North Yorkshire is not alone in this re-emerging phenomenon, and incidents involving flour as well as egg-throwing have been reported across the North of England, not least in Scarborough which has witnessed a number of incidents involving houses being pelted with flour and eggs on both 4<sup>th</sup> November and 31<sup>st</sup> October.<sup>433</sup>

The increased role of egg-throwing as part of the Mischief Night scene has come under condemnation from some unexpected quarters, including the medical profession. An article in the *Emergency Medical Journal*<sup>434</sup> (2006) sought to question the possible correlation between a growing trend in serious ocular trauma and egg throwing in and around Liverpool.

The ultimate reasoning behind egg throwing is unclear, although it is easy to see the attraction. Eggs are light, portable and highly effective in making a gooey and smelly mess on impact. Other virtues are their accessibility and inexpensiveness next to more traditional resources such as fireworks, which have come under increased age-related restrictions in recent years. It would seem that the youth of today have adopted a once much revered principle of 'going back to basics'.

The ingenuity of their efforts has, nevertheless, not been taken in good spirit, with a number of shops in and around the York area increasingly refusing to sell eggs to anyone under the age of eighteen in an attempt to curb the practice. This has been echoed in Wakefield where the practice of

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<sup>431</sup> 'Mischief Night Warning To Resort Children' *Yorkshire Post* (25<sup>th</sup> October 2001). P.8

<sup>432</sup> 'Mischief Night Warning To Resort Children' p.8

<sup>433</sup> 'Mischief Night Warning To Resort Children' p.8

<sup>434</sup> R M K Stuart, J M Durnian and M C Briggs "Here's egg in your eye": a prospective study of blunt ocular trauma resulting from thrown eggs: *Emergency Medicine Journal* [e-journal] 23: (2006)756-789:[Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2007]

'egging' vehicles, property and individuals in recent years, has led to supermarket ban on selling eggs to under-sixteens.<sup>435</sup>

Within Leeds itself, there appears to be considerable regional variation both in relation to continuity and terminology. Calverley is a small town on the western fringe of Leeds which is geographically an indistinct part of the Leeds conurbation and technically a suburb, yet it continues to support the semblance of "village life". According to Debbie Hardacre<sup>436</sup>, a Leeds based office worker, born in 1963, Calverley continues to enjoy Mischief Night as part of an ongoing tradition, where such child like activities as putting glue into a lock are generally tolerated with a 'here we go again' attitude.

In contrast to this, Bramley, only three miles closer to the city centre, has undergone more radical redevelopment and resettlement of inner city council tenants in the decades following the second world war.<sup>437</sup> Michele Priestley, an office worker who has lived almost exclusively in Bramley, gave an account which includes a thriving Mischief Night tradition in the 1960s.<sup>438</sup> Her recollections, included knocking on doors and running away, and putting lard on door handles, accompanied by her parents when young who would 'stand local, so they knew we were safe'.

In contrast to Hardacre's account, at the time when this interview was conducted, Priestley went on to suggest that in Bramley the tradition did not continue beyond the 1990s. However, some months after the interview, Priestley related an incident which had happened since the interview involving her own daughter (then eight years old) in the neighbourhood of her home in Bramley.

I caught them [a small group of children including her daughter] chucking flour at one of those green Cablemedia boxes [a piece of roadside furniture housing cable communications equipment]. There was her and a couple of older kids and I said 'What do you think you're playing at?' and she [the daughter] told me that the older

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<sup>435</sup> 'Vandalism prompts egg sale ban to kids' *Wakefield Express* [Online] (20<sup>th</sup> October 2006) [accessed 29<sup>th</sup> June 2007]

<sup>436</sup> Copies of interview transcript available on request

<sup>437</sup> Thornton, *Leeds: The Story*

<sup>438</sup> Copies of interview transcripts available on request

children had said it was Mischievous Night [sic] and you could get away with owt [i.e. anything] on this night.

This is of particular interest as it provides a clear example of the transmission of the Mischief Night tradition between children. The act of transmission is partly word-of-mouth (for the element of permissiveness) but also practical, in that the younger child is initiated into Mischief Night activity by being encouraged to participate in the older child's game.

It would seem from these accounts that the practice of Mischief Night is sporadic and at any one time is contained only within pockets of the Leeds population rather than it being a custom practiced universally across the city as a whole. In each of these cases, the nature of the night's events were considered 'harmless' with a strong emphasis placed on the idea that 'no one got hurt'.

## **Analysis**

The Mischief of today has a long and complex history involving many differing strands. It is clear that there is a history of Mischief Night activity that can be traced back with certainty over two hundred years. Furthermore, it is a tradition that was initially held on May Eve, but transferred to the opposite time of the year. It is possibly unique in this respect, although it is doubtful as to whether its two manifestations share a common origin. The Mischief Night of May Eve is probably as old as the celebrations of May Day itself, although further research would be needed to substantiate this claim.

It would seem reasonable to conclude that May Eve declined as a significant date for mischief by the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, possibly as a result of disruptions to community life brought about by adaptations to living in an increasingly industrial setting. From the turn of the twentieth century, the focus shifts from May Eve to November 4<sup>th</sup>. The date grows in prominence, with exception of the war years, until the early nineteen sixties. As mentioned above, it is hard to say for certain one way or the other that Mischief Night did not happen during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. All that can be said for certain is that there appears to be no recorded evidence to claim that

it did. From then on, despite a few pockets within Leeds and surrounding districts, the custom appears to decline at a local level. It has not, however, disappeared altogether.

The apparent decline of the traditional November Mischief Night in Leeds can be attributed to a number of factors. Most convincingly, these relate to the associations with and preparations for Bonfire Night. The reduction of localised fires in favour of large, council-organised bonfire events led not only to a reduction in street-level bonfires, but also had a direct impact on Mischief Night. As shown in both the early and contemporary accounts, the 'chumping and raiding' activities associated with Guy Fawkes preparations are a key aspect, and often the most socially acceptable aspect, of the night's activities. Organised bonfires have been arranged to coincide with Mischief Night, arguably in order to divert attention away from localised fires. According to PC Lawton, during the 1990s, council housing estate planners worked closely with police in an attempt to 'design out' problematic behaviour on housing estates, by for example, attempting to eliminate the focal points in which youths would tend to gather.<sup>439</sup> Whilst this may have reduced the localised low level mischief traditionally associated with Mischief Night, it has also reduced the sense of community inherently wrapped up with it. The result appears to have been a shift away from low level misdemeanours towards more serious inner city crime.<sup>440</sup>

In accounting for the supposed decline in Mischief Night in Leeds and surrounding districts, our attentions might be drawn back to the earlier references made to the Up-helly-aa festival in the Shetlands. This rose out of a tradition of Yule and New Year-related mischief. The extensive and rowdy confrontations with authority characterised the pranks of both boys and men during the nineteenth century in Lerwick, and the demise of the custom can be seen as resulting from a number of contributing factors<sup>441</sup>. The gradual decline in the use of rolling flaming tar barrels down the high street, in favour

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<sup>439</sup> The principle idea behind this approach was that of 'architectural determinism'. A fuller account of this concept can be found in Henri Tajfel & Colin Fraser C *Introducing Social Psychology*. (London, 1990)

<sup>440</sup> This information arose during the course of the interview with PC Lawton.

<sup>441</sup> For a full account see Brown, *Up-helly-aa*

of pranks or practical jokes, for example, was due at least in part to the increased financial prosperity of the town. The high street developed from one of wooden shop fronts to one of large glass windows. The damage caused on such occasions was therefore more financially burdensome and so the tolerance for such traditions declined. As highlighted by Malcolmson (1973) this rise of the 'market economy' and the development of 'normative standards' and 'material conditions' led to an ultimate breakdown in what is now regarded as 'traditional society', and the sweeping away of traditional practices.<sup>442</sup>

Another and highly significant factor was the rise in evangelical religion and respectability. As mentioned above, the views of protestant ministers have historically voiced their concerns over such festivities and customs. The rise of industrial cities such as Leeds, with all of the social plights of overcrowding, disease and alcoholism that accompanied it proved fertile ground for many of the protestant ideals. Both the Methodists and the Quakers in particular became firmly rooted in Leeds, and both promoted the virtues of sobriety and respectability amongst the working classes. Evangelical sentiment, concerned with social and self discipline and the salvation of souls stood in direct contrast with popular recreations and diversions. And so, at a time in which church attendance was considerably higher, and had far more influence, the impact of the church would have done much to undermine not only Mischief Night, but a number of popular recreations.

At first sight, the supposed decline of Mischief Night in Leeds would seem to conflict with the apparent re-emerging of 'Mischief Night' events in recent years across the North of England [see above]. The perception of those interviewed, however, all maintained that the 'traditional' Mischief Night in Leeds is on the decline, if not ceased altogether. This may be attributed to the dramatic recent growth of Leeds as an economically thriving and culturally cosmopolitan city in contrast to some of its neighbours. Although, as discussed in Chapter Two, the economic prosperity of Leeds hides stark contrasts in the economic standing of many of its residents. Whilst the

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<sup>442</sup> Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations*



traditional aspects of Mischief Night may be on the decline, it is worth contrasting this with the view of the West Yorkshire Police, who still consider it to be one of the nights of the year to which they devote the most planning. This seeming contradiction will be explored in further detail in the following chapter.

Despite the seemingly chaotic nature of Mischief Night, there do appear to be a certain set of 'rules' associated with it. Firstly, in all of the interviews conducted there was a sense of boundaries. Whether these were stated or perceived, there was a feeling that there were limits to what was acceptable behaviour and what wasn't. Secondly, while members of one's own family were considered to be 'out of bounds', the night's events were usually carried out close to home, often in same and neighbourhood streets. And thirdly, the night's events were generally tolerated by the adults, with at least a moderate level of good will. Fourthly, unlike the mischief of Lerwick, the mischief of Leeds and surrounding districts was mainly the preserve of younger children.

Taking account of these rules, as well as less tangible features of the tradition it is possible to see some points in common with other activities taking place at this time of year. The idea of testing boundaries by toying with fears and anxieties, whether one's own or those of neighbours, is a recognisable feature in both the Mischief Night activities and those associated with Hallowe'en. Both Hallowe'en and Mischief Night can be regarded as neighbourhood activities, taking place within the range that a child might be expected to explore. The fact that many adults at one time tolerated or even condoned Mischief Night as some now do the activities of Hallowe'en is another common strand. Finally, the central participants, although not the only ones, are children in both cases.

However, the two traditions remain distinct and not just in terms of date. Whereas Trick or Treat is conducted by openly visiting the houses of neighbours, Mischief Night visitors make every effort not to be seen. Furthermore, the commercial world, although making much of Hallowe'en in recent years, has never had any hold or interest in Mischief Night.

The age of participants is an important factor. All of those interviewed had abandoned Mischief Night by the age of fourteen. With the exception of

the students mentioned above, it is not until the current manifestation of Mischief Night that we see the age group rising into the late teens, with the development of a very different style of mischief.

At this point it is fruitful to borrow an idea that is current in psychology. Devised by Erik Erikson,<sup>443</sup> the concept of the psycho-social moratorium was put forward as a means of understanding adolescents in western cultures. According to Erikson the moratorium is a psychosocial stage that resides between “childhood and adulthood and between the morality learned by the child, and the ethics to be developed by the adult”<sup>444</sup>. Adolescence is considered a time in which the adolescent is treated with a degree of moderation. They can get away with behaviour which would not be tolerated from those older or more mature. In other words it serves as a permitted delay of adulthood, It also serves the adolescent in his desire for affirmation from both his peers and his elders, to enter into a ‘rite of passage’ from childhood to adulthood.

Bruno Bettelheim, in his book *A Good Enough Parent*<sup>445</sup> uses this idea to demonstrate that traditional customs, and children’s holidays such as Trick or Treating, Hallowe’en and April Fool’s Day are examples of role-reversing. It is a time at which the child is dominant, making demands of adults in a way which he cannot normally do. In the case of Hallowe’en, children are allowed to ‘scare’ the adults. But more than just an excuse to dress up or play tricks, such reversals of authority are meaningful and of immense importance for children. As Bettelheim states:

A child is badly deprived if he cannot fully enjoy special holidays or benefit from what these symbolise; such symbolic meanings are built permanently into our unconscious experience of the world... how they were celebrated when we were children can and does have the most far-reaching consequences over the rest of our lives.<sup>446</sup>

Bettelheim goes on to argue that these celebrations or holidays act as a social safety valve, or a means for children to release built-up tensions. It

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<sup>443</sup> Erik Erikson *Childhood and Society*. Second edition. (New York, 1963)

<sup>444</sup> Erikson, *Childhood* p.254

<sup>445</sup> Bettelheim, *Good Enough Parent*

<sup>446</sup> Bettelheim, *Good Enough Parent* p.347

provides an opportunity which children can act out their resentment towards those adults who expect them, for the rest of the year to conform to a more civilised and adult way of behaving.

From this it is possible to see that Mischief Night can be understood in this way. It, like Hallowe'en, provides an opportunity in which the same processes of allowing aggression out of the system can take place. Like the reversing of roles within the practise of misrule, the child seizes the opportunity to turn the tables. To gain a sense of control that is otherwise denied to them. And it is here that we can see the commonality that is shared between Mischief Night and other traditions which incorporate role reversal such as the Lords of Misrule, Boy Bishops and May Eve. They essentially serve the same purpose, and it is therefore not surprising that we find them presenting very similar practises. Adolescents, through their actions on Mischief Night, are entering a set period of time in which they can expressively challenge their boundaries, at least in respect to authority. By so doing it serves effectively as a means of aiding their transition from childhood into adulthood.

Mischief night was seen traditionally as the preserve of much younger children, and so it might not be immediately apparent why a theory highlighting the transitional needs of adolescents retains its significance to a tradition traditionally the preserve of younger children. The relevance becomes clearer however, when we consider how 'childhood', now extending to the age of eighteen, far exceeds the cultural norms of less than a century ago, when it was not uncommon for children of thirteen and fourteen to enter the workplace. Children therefore would enter such a period of transition at a much earlier age. It is here then that we find a shift in the practice of Mischief Night. Its appeal and subsequent indulgence, whilst maintaining its social function, is shifting its emphasis to an older age group.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has attempted to provide a historical account of Mischief Night to the present day in the North of England with specific reference to Leeds. Mischief Night in Leeds is a centuries old tradition which appears to

have engaged the young of the city every year in activities that are remarkably consistent over time. There has been little evidence in this study to support the claim by Beck (1975) that Mischief Night is 'merging' with Hallowe'en or Bonfire Night. If anything, the commercialisation of Hallowe'en and the council-run activities of Bonfire Night have helped to secure the individual identity of these celebrations and in turn helped clarify the 'traditional' identity of Mischief Night. Mischief Night is possibly unique in that it has been maintained for centuries without the need for adults to co-ordinate or resource it. But it may, due to the effects of council-organised bonfires and the lure of the American Hallowe'en, be finally dying out. It remains to be seen whether any aspects of the custom as practiced in Leeds will survive into the second half of the twenty first century.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Changing Attitudes and Responses to Mischief Night among Civil Authorities**

The previous chapter looked at the phenomenon of Mischief Night as it has developed over time, with the focus on the social development of this tradition. The current chapter seeks to show how the tradition has been received by the establishment by describing the way in which official institutions, in particular the police and fire services, have responded to the challenges presented by the criminal aspects of Mischief Night in Leeds and surrounding districts from the early nineteenth century onwards. Its purpose is to examine the premise put forward by a number of fire and police officers interviewed and referred to in this chapter, that Mischief Night has lost touch with its 'traditional' or 'harmless' origins, in favour of a more extreme, lawless form of expression. In so doing, it attempts to analyse the relationship between law enforcement and traditional customs and to identify the communities which practice the custom. First-hand contemporary accounts have been gained from both police and fire brigade officers in order to establish how extensive or pronounced Mischief Night activity is perceived among such authorities in recent years. Field research for two consecutive years with the police, on the part of the author, has provided further insight into the nature of the night's activities. Whilst highlighting the modern expression of Mischief Night, this chapter will go on to test the question of whether the criminal or lawless aspect of Mischief Night is or is not as radical a shift from the past as might seem the case. If this is not the case then an explanation for the change in attitudes and public perception towards Mischief Night will be explored.

This investigation will be supported by a detailed look at the number of police and fire brigade call-outs and the nature of the incidents on their arrival. A full account of police and fire brigade planning for Mischief Night, as well as a number of interviews of long standing officers, will provide this chapter with a unique insight into the way in which the local authority both plans for, and in turn perceives the level of 'trouble' associated with the night's events.

It is the intention in this chapter to represent the lawless aspects of Mischief Night both through the eyes of the local emergency services and through the eyes of the youths involved. This will form the basis of an understanding of how Mischief Night has developed in the past twenty years. This will then be used to indicate the extent to which actual Mischief Night lawlessness is a modern phenomenon and the extent to which this has been a characteristic aspect throughout its history.

From this the chapter will present two theoretical arguments. Firstly, that the nature of Mischief Night has not become more violent or 'criminal' in itself, but that through increased legislation and changes in social expectations of both the role of the child and the role of the authorities, it has undergone a criminalisation process. Any changes in the response to Mischief Night activity, both from the authorities and the general public, can thus be viewed in light of that process. Secondly, it will further develop the argument put forward throughout this thesis that Mischief Night has survived, when so many other traditions and customs have died out, precisely because it is a childhood custom.

As with the previous chapter, a number of sources will be employed including interviews with individual police officers and fire brigade officers as well as community youth officers and youths resident in the Hyde Park area of Leeds, a Mischief Night hotspot. A number of field research studies have also been undertaken with the police in order to see first-hand the nature of the night's activities.

During the course of this research numerous references to the film comedy 'Mischief Night' have come to light. This British-made film concerns two families in the Beeston area of Leeds who come together in the lead-up to one Mischief Night. The film makes use of the Mischief Night theme to create an interesting plot device and in doing so re-creates on film a number of classic Mischief Night pranks, although beyond this it contributes little to an understanding of the tradition itself.

This chapter is in the unusual position of being unique in its research criteria. The uncharted nature of its subject matter means that, whilst there is some literature associated with Mischief Night itself, provided in the previous chapter, there is only limited academic material available regarding the

criminal or lawless aspects of such traditions. The only significant exception to this is again Brown's (1998)<sup>447</sup> study of the Up-helly-aa custom in Shetland, in which he examines the lawless nature of mischief at Yule, and this has been explored within the previous chapter. At the time of writing, Brown's account stands in virtual isolation. Ronald Hutton, in his vivid description of November the fifth bonfire celebrations highlights the association between the celebrations, misbehaviour and general disorder when he states "In the North Riding of Yorkshire the establishment of a strong rural constabulary was required to stamp out a local custom of stealing brooms to make torches"<sup>448</sup>. Hutton goes on to describe equally disruptive behaviour during the 1930s in both Wiltshire and Botley, near Southampton where boys "were fined for adding cars to their bonfire in the village square"<sup>449</sup> Mike Brogden (2005)<sup>450</sup> a professor in Criminology, makes passing reference, in an article in the *Police Quarterly*, to a visit by German police as part an international police exchange. In promoting the export potential for their neighbourhood policing, Brogden explains how Merseyside police boasted of how two German constables had gained "the opportunity to go out on evening patrols with Huyton's Neighbourhood team as they undertake a Knowsley-wide operation to tackle youth disorder on Mischief Night in Merseyside", but Brogden does not make any reference to the nature or character of Mischief Night beyond this.

The supposed lack of legal accountability for mischievous activities can be found in the passing reference within Richard Blakeborough's (1911)<sup>451</sup> account of customs and folklore of the North Ridings, in which he describes that in the days before county police if a yard broom was not at this time of year securely locked up, it would inevitably be stolen. He writes, "I have known of scores of brooms which were stolen – aye, and stolen them myself - but I do not recollect an instance of the thief being prosecuted. No, if

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<sup>447</sup> Brown, *Up-helly-aa*

<sup>448</sup> Hutton, *Stations* p.404

<sup>449</sup> Hutton, *Stations* p.404

<sup>450</sup> Mike Brogden 'Horses for Courses and Thin Blue Lines. Community Policing in Transitional Society' *Police Quarterly* [e-journal] Vol.8 (March, 2005) 64-98 Available through SAGE Journals database [Accessed 6 January 2006]

<sup>451</sup> Richard Blakeborough *Yorkshire Wit, Character, Folklore and Customs of the North Ridings of Yorkshire* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (Saltburn-by-the-sea, 1911)

you did not secure your broom, it went, and that was very much the end of it.”

As mentioned in the previous chapter, a search through the court records revealed little. Regulations restricting access to material less than one hundred years old ensured that each page from the child court records was searched beforehand by archivists for sensitive material. Pages containing such material were clipped to the facing page. Because of this the research material found for this period cannot be considered exhaustive. The material found was negligible, save a small number of incidents during the 1950s, 60s and 70s involving the throwing of fireworks and wilful damage to property, the context of which is at best dubious. The possible reasons for this apparent gap in the records will be discussed below.

Beyond such accounts, what is left are police statements and the often emotionally-charged material gained from newspaper accounts which provide at best a distorted and sensationalised picture. Such accounts are, however, plentiful and provide this study with a useful backdrop to the criminal take on Mischief Night. One of the earliest accounts comes from Huddersfield,<sup>452</sup> where four youths in May 1859 were summoned to Huddersfield Guildhall for upsetting a straw-stack, belonging to Mr. Wm Wilkinson of Salendine Nook. The four pleaded ‘legally guilty’, with the ‘historical excuse of Mischief Night’. As identified in the previous chapter, the perceived legality of such events on Mischief Night was not uncommon, and in this case, on hearing their plea, and with the further knowledge that the four had paid a man with ‘malek’ (milk) for putting the stack back up again, the Magistrate discharged the case on payment of expenses. Thus, in essence the four had got away with it, perpetuating the widely held view that such activities were immune to legal restraint. Although it is worth adding at this point that the payment of expenses would in itself have constituted a significant fine.

The use of Mischief Night as a legal defence was not always as successful, however, as an 1862 account<sup>453</sup>, clearly testifies. The two boys aged thirteen and fourteen were charged with stealing lead which was fixed

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<sup>452</sup> Untitled Article, *Leeds Mercury* (14<sup>th</sup> May 1857) p.3

<sup>453</sup> Untitled Article, *Leeds Mercury* (7<sup>th</sup> May 1862) p.3



to a mill building, and depositing it within a stone quarry. The Bench did not accept the excuse, and both boys were found guilty and duly committed to the House of Correction for one calendar month. This might not be a surprising result, since the activity involved is extreme for what would normally pass as credible behaviour for Mischief Night. But what is revealing about this account is the position that it holds within the newspaper. It stands as a detailed paragraph titled 'Mischief Night' directly above, but clearly distinct from a further paragraph headed 'Law Keepers and Law Breakers'. It is clear that despite the findings of the court, the association with Mischief Night somehow elevated the recording of their antics above that of the perceived common criminal.

More recently, newspaper coverage has proved even less sympathetic to the night's events, reporting a succession of negative stories such as 'A Mischief Night Journey to Terror'<sup>454</sup> in which a brick was thrown at a bus window in Copley Hill, Leeds; 'Mischief Night Madness Blacks Out Homes' where the electricity supply to three hundred homes was cut for an hour following a break-in to an electricity sub-station in Beeston, Leeds; and 'Houses ablaze on Mischief Night', where a stray firework *may* have been responsible for causing damage to a kitchen. By displaying a lack of tolerance towards the custom, the media may be attempting to appeal to the growing community of relatively affluent, socially-mobile newcomers and in so doing turning their back on the more settled communities who would more readily tolerate the seasonal license associated with Mischief Night.

### **Law Enforcement and Traditional Customs**

The accounts above aptly illustrate a dynamic interaction between tradition, community and the law. In the case of Mischief Night it would appear that custom could at one time take priority over the law if the two came into conflict. This is a bold statement, but it is a perspective in keeping with the sense of legal immunity strongly associated with Mischief Night throughout its history, and not only by those children who partook, but also

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<sup>454</sup> 'A Mischief Night journey to terror' *Yorkshire Evening Post* (5<sup>th</sup> November 1985) p.1

amongst those in authority. As highlighted in the previous chapter, police and magistrates alike were not immune from the authoritative nature of Mischief Night when it came in direct conflict with the law. For example, the removal of garden gates is clearly an act of theft, and yet, as we saw in Chapter One in 1948 the Chief Constable of Leeds, far from issuing an ultimatum to the youth of the city, simply recommended residents to “take off your garden gate and hide it”<sup>455</sup>

However, the response of the police to traditional customs has not always been so passive, as the historian Robert Storch<sup>456</sup> clearly demonstrates in his exploration of the role of the police in Northern England during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Storch draws our attention to an unnamed observer writing about Batley, (West Yorkshire) in the 1880s, who, in reference to the decline of customs in general, regarded the introduction and subsequent actions of the police to be of particular significance:

The first policeman came into our midst, to plant the thin edge of the wedge, which was... to revolutionise our manners and customs. Since he came... we have lost all trace of mumming; all trace of Lee Fair,... most of our mischief night: as nearly all the pace eggers; for what are left of the latter are of another mould to those of my old childhood days... If mummers were to be seen upon the street now, the police would interfere... I put a deal of this severance from ourselves of old customs down to the advent of the policeman in uniform.<sup>457</sup>

The growing Victorian distaste for behaviour unbefitting ‘civilised’ order and decorum ensured that in order to appear effective, police actively intervened in areas traditionally associated with drinking and rowdiness. The ‘unruly’ behaviour at events such as mentioned in Batley undoubtedly provided the police with an opportunity to enforce their relatively newfound authority upon days of popular licence. Needless to say this did not increase their popularity among the lower classes, and attacks against the police, such as took place in 1864, when a group of men attacked two constables

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<sup>455</sup> Opie, *Lore and Language* p.302

<sup>456</sup> Storch, ‘Police as Domestic Missionary’ 481-509

<sup>457</sup> Storch, ‘Police as Domestic Missionary’ p.492

outside of the Black Bull Inn at Pudsey, Leeds<sup>458</sup> became commonplace, and successive attempts by the police to suppress Guy Fawkes celebrations across the region often led to serious riots.

This might imply that Mischief Night would have come under the same levels of police intervention. But, it must be remembered that Mischief Night was the preserve of the young, and there is no association of drunkenness, violence or anti-police behaviour. Furthermore, as pointed out by the criminologist Barry Godfrey (2008),<sup>459</sup> the police during the latter half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century were “reluctant to arrest people for minor offences if they thought the offences trivial.”<sup>460</sup> However, this depends on the assumption that the activities of Mischief Night were regarded as trivial or minor. Whilst this may well be the case it is worth highlighting the findings of the historian John Gillis<sup>461</sup> (1975) who explored the growing social and political preoccupation with juvenile delinquency during the period 1890–1914. As Gillis points out, concern within society regarding the delinquent behaviour of the young can be traced back with ease to at least the sixteenth century, yet the preoccupation with youth and crime came to a head during the 1890s with the introduction of national statistics on juvenile crime in 1894.<sup>462</sup> The nature of the non-indictable offences for 14-19 year olds ranged from gambling to trespassing, but the most significant number of offences between 1890 and 1914 were for ‘wilful damage’ and ‘malicious mischief’ and ‘dangerous play’<sup>463</sup>. The association was made, during the Victorian period, between the poverty of the working classes and growth in recorded criminal activity.<sup>464</sup> Juvenile crime was, as a consequence, predominantly associated with the children of the poor,<sup>465</sup> and

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<sup>458</sup> Storch, ‘Police as Domestic Missionary’ p.493

<sup>459</sup> Barry Godfrey 2008 ‘Changing Prosecution Practices and Their Impact on Crime Figures 1857-1940’ in *British Journal of Criminology* Vol.48 p.171-189

<sup>460</sup> Godfrey, ‘Changing Prosecution’ p.180

<sup>461</sup> Gillis ‘Evolution of Juvenile Delinquency’

<sup>462</sup> Gillis ‘Evolution of Juvenile Delinquency’ p.98

<sup>463</sup> Gillis ‘Evolution of Juvenile Delinquency’ p.102

<sup>464</sup> Accounts of the changing relationship between the police and Juveniles can be found in a number of sociological and criminological studies including Gareth Stedman Jones, *The Threat of Outcast London* (New York, 1984) and John Muncie *Youth and Crime*. Second Edition. (London, 2004)

<sup>465</sup> Until the nineteenth century little legal distinction was made for children after the age of seven, between children and adults, both in terms of their legal liability, and in their subsequent chastisement.

this despite the slow change to more progressive attitudes towards children and childhood in general, as explored in some detail earlier in Chapter Two. This point has been further highlighted by the social scientist John Clarke (2008) who argues that the formation of the contemporary youth problem grew out of the “nineteenth century capitalist societies [which] were overflowing with focal points of social anxiety: from the state of the family to the health of the proletariat...”<sup>466</sup> This is further supported by Ronald Hutton in his reference to the growing hostility amongst the upper classes in England following the French Revolution to “celebrations that could lead to disorder”<sup>467</sup>. For social historians such as Robin Pearson,<sup>468</sup> social perceptions in Leeds between 1790-1890 reveal complex shifts around the development of community relations and the impact and influence of lower middleclass tradesmen and small employers within local communities. The prevailing winds of social and economic change from the late eighteenth century through to the mid nineteenth brought with them a social unease amongst the middle classes, and a growing dominance of the view that ‘community’ should be based firmly on ‘social harmony’. In parallel with any notions of social harmony, the prosperous of Leeds continued to change and develop the city. Such advancements are illustrated by The Leeds Guide of 1806 in their announcement that ‘every year has witnessed an increase of buildings having started into existence with a rapidity which constantly afford astonishment in the minds of the occasional visitor’.<sup>469</sup> Whilst this middle-class construct of community may not have been wholly adopted by the working classes<sup>470</sup>, the social expectations of what was deemed to be a more ‘civilised’ age only added to the pressure put on the police to crackdown on the more distasteful aspects of working class life.

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<sup>466</sup> John Clark ‘What’s the Problem? Precarious Youth: Marginalisation, Criminalisation and Racialisation.’ In *Social Work and Society. Online-only Journal*. [e-journal] Vol.6 Issue 2 (2008) Available through: Digital Peer Publishing [Accessed 10 February 2009] p.2

<sup>467</sup> Hutton, *Stations* p.399

<sup>468</sup> Robin Pearson. ‘Knowing One’s Place: Perceptions of Community in the Industrial Suburbs of Leeds, 1790-1890’ *Journal of Social History* [e-journal] Vol.27.No.2, (Winter, 1993) 221-244 Available through: Jstor database [Accessed 12 March, 2009]

<sup>469</sup> No Author name given *Leeds Guide. Including A Sketch of the Environs, and Kirkstall Abbey* (Leeds, 1806) p.18-19

<sup>470</sup> John Benson *Working Class in Britain 1850-1939* (London, 1989)

The supposed link between juvenile crime and poverty has been explored in some depth by a number of studies including S D Levitt and L Lochner's *The Determinants of Juvenile Crime* (2000)<sup>471</sup>; J Ludwig et al *Urban Poverty and Juvenile Crime* (2001)<sup>472</sup> and M Rutter et al, *Antisocial behaviour by young people* (1998).<sup>473</sup> In these and the majority of the literature found, the association between poverty, youth and criminality was both positive and significant, and would appear at first glance to be quite convincing. Findings in this field are of huge political value, particularly those such as Ricardo Sabates's (2008) study into *Educational Attainment And Juvenile Crime*<sup>474</sup>. Sabate, on arguing the link between crime, poverty and education, goes onto calculate the financial cost to LEAs in England, and the potential financial savings possible with increased educational attainment. It is pertinent to ask who is funding such research before blindly accepting their findings. However, it is not the purpose of this study to delve deeply into the complexities and motivation of criminological arguments and the reader is directed to the aforementioned texts for a greater understanding of the issues involved. That said, it is worth exploring the way in which attitudes to the young, both in society in general and by the authorities have changed over time.

Whilst a preoccupation with the behaviour of the young can be clearly identified within the late Victorian and Edwardian period, it is worthy of note that there have been more than sixteen Acts of Parliament and reports<sup>475</sup> specifically regarding youth justice since the Labour Party came to power in 1997. Indeed one of the five pledges with which Labour won the election related specifically to youth crime. The intensity of parliamentary activity can

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<sup>471</sup> S D Levitt and L Lochner's *The Determinants of Juvenile Crime* (2000) Online [Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> March 2007]

<sup>472</sup> Jens Ludwig, Greg J Duncan and Paul Hirschfield, 'Urban Poverty And Juvenile Crime: Evidence From A Randomized Housing-Mobility Experiment' [Online] [Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> March 2007]

<sup>473</sup> Michael Rutter, Henri Giller, and Ann Hagell, *Antisocial Behavior by Young People*. (Cambridge, 1998)

<sup>474</sup> Ricardo Sabates 'Educational Attainment And Juvenile Crime' *British Journal of Criminology*, [e-journal] Vol.48. Issue 3 (2008) 395-409. Available through: Oxford Journals Online [Accessed 4 May, 2009]

<sup>475</sup> These include Misspent Youth: Young People and Crime (Audit Commission, 1996; Crime and Disorder Act (1998); And the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) A full list with access links can be found at Youth Justice Board *Legislation and Reports* [Online] (Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> March 2009)

be seen as a response to the public outcry following the James Bulger murder in 1992 by two ten-year olds. The trial fuelled not only the wave of subsequent legislation, but also reinforced the association between youth crime and social deprivation that had originally been popularised during the Victorian period.<sup>476</sup> This association continues into the Youth Crime Action Plan (July 2008) which identifies both 'deprivation such as poor housing or homelessness' and 'drug or alcohol misuse and mental illness' as two out of five major risk factors likely to increase the risk of young people committing crimes<sup>477</sup>. Public perception of youth crime is often influenced by misleading messages from the media as to the nature and scale of the problem<sup>478</sup>. As the criminologist Rob Allen points out, not only does the media "systematically misrepresent the level of, and nature of, criminal acts"<sup>479</sup> but the often extreme representation of specific youth crime further perpetuates a growing fear of crime. Despite this, and in spite of increased legislation, the official figures for 10-17 year olds convicted or cautioned between 1991 and 1999 actually dropped by around seventeen percent<sup>480</sup>. However the reliability of statistics to portray an accurate record is notoriously questionable, as recent controversy following the supposed 10.2% drop in first time entrance into the youth justice system between 2005/6 and 2007/8<sup>481</sup> would seem to indicate.

Unpicking any Mischief Night activity from police statistics is problematic. Whilst Mischief Night might be considered as 'anti-social behaviour', it is evidently not the case that all anti-social behaviour can be

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<sup>476</sup> It is significant to note that, as highlighted in Chapter Two, the late 1980s and early 1990s marked a time of economic improvement and growth for Leeds. Such associations between crime and social deprivation can arguably be seen to run in parallel with historic period of economic growth in the city.

<sup>477</sup> Home office *Crime and Victims* [Online] [Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> March 2009]

<sup>478</sup> Rob Allen 'There Must be Some Way of Dealing With Kids: Young Offenders, Public Attitudes and Policy Change' *Youth Justice* [e-journal] Vol.2. No.1(April, 2002) 3-13 Available through SAGE Journals Database. [Accessed 19th December, 2008]

<sup>479</sup> Allen, 'There Must be Some Way' p.8

<sup>480</sup> Narco, *Youth Crime factsheet* [Online] [Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> January 2009]

<sup>481</sup> This concerned the fact that some 19,000 penalty notices for disorder issued to 16/17 year olds had not been entered into the official report figures issued by the Youth Justice Board. See Prof. Rod Morgan 'The smoke and mirrors behind 'positive' youth crime statistics' *The Guardian* [Online] (7<sup>th</sup> January 2009) [Accessed 14 March 2009]

ascribed to Mischief Night. The following table<sup>482</sup>, provided by North West Leeds Police, indicates the nature of anti-social behaviour calls that were received by Leeds police between 1<sup>st</sup> and 7th November for 2005 and 2006 in Bramley, Armley and Pudsey. These were identified as 'hotspot' areas of Mischief Night activity and are characterised by relatively settled populations who have lived in Leeds for generations.

|                               | 2005 |                 |     |                 |     |     |     | 2006            |                 |     |                 |                 |     |                 | Total |
|-------------------------------|------|-----------------|-----|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----------------|-----------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|-----|-----------------|-------|
|                               | 1st  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 3rd | 4 <sup>th</sup> | 5th | 6th | 7th | 1 <sup>st</sup> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 3rd | 4 <sup>th</sup> | 5 <sup>th</sup> | 6th | 7 <sup>th</sup> |       |
| Admin- other                  | 12   | 10              | 16  | 46              | 17  | 14  | 14  | 8               | 9               | 11  | 16              | 7               | 7   | 5               | 192   |
| Alarms, Audible Alarms        | 8    | 2               | 7   | 8               | 4   |     | 7   | 9               | 8               | 4   | 13              | 5               | 5   | 3               | 83    |
| ASB,999 Hoax                  |      |                 | 2   | 2               | 2   | 1   |     |                 | 1               |     | 1               | 1               |     |                 | 10    |
| ASB, AAV                      |      |                 |     |                 |     |     |     | 1               | 2               | 4   | 6               |                 | 6   | 1               | 20    |
| ASB, Drunkenness              |      | 2               | 3   | 4               | 5   | 4   | 4   | 2               | 3               |     | 2               |                 |     |                 | 31    |
| ASB, Loutish Behaviour        | 9    | 8               | 9   | 16              | 14  | 13  | 9   | 20              | 26              | 25  | 40              | 24              | 16  | 22              | 251   |
| ASB, Throw Things + Fireworks | 9    | 6               | 8   | 18              | 30  | 17  | 8   | 6               | 2               | 7   | 15              | 19              | 3   | 1               | 149   |
| ASB, Neighbour Disp           | 1    |                 |     | 5               | 4   | 2   | 4   |                 |                 | 2   | 4               | 3               | 2   |                 | 35    |
| ASB, Veh Related Nuis         | 2    | 5               | 11  | 18              | 13  | 2   | 11  |                 | 1               | 2   | 5               | 3               | 2   | 2               | 77    |
| ASB, Animal Related           |      |                 |     | 2               | 1   |     |     |                 |                 |     |                 |                 |     |                 | 3     |
| ASB, Public Space             | 1    | 4               | 1   | 10              | 6   | 1   |     |                 |                 |     |                 |                 |     |                 | 23    |
| Crime, Harassment             |      |                 |     | 2               |     |     |     |                 |                 |     | 2               |                 | 1   | 1               | 6     |
| Crime, Other Nofit Crime      | 4    | 7               | 8   | 8               | 8   | 9   | 2   | 5               | 4               | 7   | 19              | 8               | 7   | 5               | 101   |
| Crime, Robbery                |      | 2               |     | 1               |     |     |     |                 |                 |     | 2               |                 |     |                 | 5     |
| Crime, Theft from Veh         | 17   | 10              | 13  | 10              | 16  | 8   | 6   | 6               | 4               | 8   | 11              | 10              | 6   | 14              | 139   |
| Crime, Sexual + Violent       | 5    | 7               | 3   | 19              | 11  | 9   | 7   | 3               | 6               | 11  | 24              | 11              | 5   | 7               | 128   |
| Crime, Burglary               | 19   | 15              | 16  | 23              | 20  | 22  | 19  | 13              | 6               | 20  | 22              | 15              | 12  | 14              | 236   |
| Crime, Criminal Damage        | 11   | 4               | 12  | 19              | 26  | 33  | 19  | 13              | 5               | 13  | 20              | 19              | 10  | 17              | 221   |
| Crime, Drugs                  |      |                 | 1   | 1               |     |     | 1   |                 |                 |     |                 |                 |     |                 | 3     |
| Crime, Fraud, Forgery         |      | 1               |     | 1               | 2   | 1   |     |                 |                 |     |                 |                 |     |                 | 5     |
| Crime FSMV                    |      |                 | 1   | 2               | 2   | 2   | 1   | 1               | 1               | 2   | 1               | 2               |     |                 | 15    |

<sup>482</sup> This table was in a document generously put together and provided by North West Leeds Police titled 'Mischief Night Profile. NPT / Vehicle Intelligence Analyst North West Leeds'(2007)

|                      |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |
|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Crime, Hate<br>Crime |     |     |     | 1   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | 1    |
| Safety Welfare       | 20  | 22  | 27  | 29  | 39  | 26  | 15  | 28  | 29  | 44  | 70  | 41  | 35  | 34  | 459  |
| Transport<br>Related | 17  | 10  | 9   | 17  | 17  | 9   | 8   | 13  | 14  | 17  | 19  | 10  | 18  | 18  | 196  |
| Grand Total          | 205 | 179 | 200 | 298 | 344 | 248 | 186 | 197 | 184 | 260 | 321 | 262 | 212 | 205 | 3301 |

The table shows a notable increase in the overall number of calls received between 2005 and 2006. The most significant number of calls concerned safety/welfare, with over 459 calls over both years. The most easily attributable to Mischief Night - 'Loutish behaviour' and 'throwing things / Fireworks' recorded 251 and 149 respectively over both years. Although high scorers, these two only made up 12 -13% of all the 3301 received calls. The amount of behaviour attributable to both Mischief Night and Bonfire Night is statistically low, yet the high number of safety/welfare calls, clearly indicate a high 'fear of crime' at this time. It is also worth noting that received calls are not in themselves an accurate representation of criminal activity, only the belief on the part of the caller that such an incident is taking place.

That said, a wonderfully insightful account of the night's events was recorded in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* in 1982. In an article titled *Mischief youths set bus alight*<sup>483</sup> an account is provided, not only of the bus incident, but also of a list of eighteen typical complaints around Leeds that had been logged at Holbeck Police station between 5pm and 9pm. The nature of the calls listed could be identified into three distinct categories: youths causing a disturbance or nuisance; damage to windows and children throwing stones at trains. Similar accounts had been recorded in *Yorkshire Evening Post* (1985)<sup>484</sup>, where Gipton police "received a string of complaints about youngsters causing a nuisance [but] it was mainly rowdyism and acts of minor damage such as kids throwing stones". It went on to say that "Weetwood division... had been kept busy by complaints about egg throwing and children banging on doors, but there was [sic] no serious incidents".

<sup>483</sup> 'Mischief youths set bus alight' *Yorkshire Evening Post* (5<sup>th</sup> November 1982) p.7

<sup>484</sup> "Mischief' Shock As A Home Blazes' *Yorkshire Evening Post* (5<sup>th</sup> November 1985) p.4



## Police Planning Records

A telling example of how each division within Leeds prepares for Mischief Night, can be seen in the extra van patrol rotas for 2007. These extra rotas were referred to as 'Bonfire Patrol', and operated between the 2nd and the 5th November. During this time, there were at least two extra vans on the rota between 17.00 and 01.00. Each Van is staffed by six officers, a sergeant and a driver. A dedicated patrol car was also included into the rota. A total of sixteen extra members of staff per night were solely tasked with responding to incidences of bonfire and mischief related criminal or anti-social behaviour. P.C Graham Lawton confirmed that this arrangement was consistent with the cover provided for this period of the year over the previous three decades (1977-2007). Furthermore, he confirmed that the practice of police deployment of extra dedicated units at this time of year was not restricted to the West Yorkshire area, but is a nation-wide phenomenon, although for many forces this is seen as a precautionary measure against the possible spread of Mischief Night activity into other areas. Furthermore, in order to meet such extreme staffing requirements, it is not uncommon for police officers in Leeds to be denied leave during the Mischief Night and Bonfire Night period.

In 2006 the crime reduction department within the Home Office held an online forum for police departments across the country<sup>485</sup>. The objective was to discuss the problems, such as anti-social behaviour and criminal damage, and possible solutions surrounding the Hallowe'en and Bonfire Night period. The forum was attended by police from Yorkshire, Merseyside, Birmingham, and Gloucestershire. Much of the concern was centred on fire-work licensing and related misuse, but there was a clear Mischief theme running through much of the content. In particular 'Topic 10' titled 'Mischief Week' contained a number of comments regarding the sale and subsequent misuse of eggs. The topic was dominated by Merseyside and East Yorkshire. Keith from Merseyside claimed that "The word 'Mischief' is, almost by

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<sup>485</sup> Home Office – Crime Reduction Halloween, *Bonfire Night & Diwali - high jinx or misery for communities?* Online Forum (3<sup>rd</sup> September 2007)  
<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/chat003.htm>

implication, a permit to have a bit of fun". The solution he adds, when designing posters, is "to make frequent reference to 'misery' [since] that may be a more apt description of events". The emphasis on 'misery' was immediately echoed by Tony from East Yorkshire who stated:

In relation to ASB<sup>486</sup> at the time of year in our rural area of East Yorkshire we target the schools and local press with a 'Your Mischief Their Misery' format using PCs, PCSOs<sup>487</sup> and all other partner agencies. In conjunction with this we visit local shops asking shopkeepers to monitor and limit sales of eggs and flour to children / young persons and to inform local officers of individuals who seem to be stockpiling supplies...

Whilst there was no contribution to the forum from West Yorkshire police, it is clear from the above comments that Mischief is not restricted to the confines of West Yorkshire. That said, the limiting of egg sales to children during the latter half of October and early November has been a growing phenomenon in Leeds, as in Merseyside and East Yorkshire, and similar letters and posters have been sent to retailers across the city.<sup>488</sup> In 2007 alone some 33,000 letters were sent out, from the Safer Leeds Crime Reduction Partnership across Leeds via thirty two schools, urging pupils to 'behave sensibly'<sup>489</sup>. In 2008 police in Leeds issued the warning of a 'mischief crackdown in West Yorks' stating that 'All six local neighbourhood police teams will carry out extra patrols from Friday [31<sup>st</sup> October] to November 5' individuals found misusing fireworks 'faces an £80 fixed penalty notice or more serious action'<sup>490</sup> The warning was duplicated in an article in Leeds Metropolitan University's student paper 'The Met' which went on to highlight the dangers of fireworks around Mischief Night, Hallowe'en and bonfire night, adding reference to a curfew of the use of fireworks between 11pm (12 midnight on bonfire night) and 7am<sup>491</sup>.

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<sup>486</sup> Anti-Social Behaviour

<sup>487</sup> 'Police Constables' and 'Police and Community Support Officer'

<sup>488</sup> An example of the letters sent out to retailers can be found in the appendix.

<sup>489</sup> 'Letters spell out a bonfire warning' *Yorkshire Evening Post* [Online](18<sup>th</sup> October 2007) [Accessed 30 October, 2007]

<sup>490</sup> 'Police warn of Mischief Crackdown' *Yorkshire Evening Post* (29<sup>th</sup> October 2008) p.14

<sup>491</sup> Lauren Sedgley 'Police Say Avoid Mischief on Bonfire Night' *The Met* (4<sup>th</sup> November 2008) p.7

Efforts to stamp out Mischief Night by police in Merseyside, commonly held in Merseyside on the 30th October, have included an emotional appeal on You-tube (an online video distribution network). The film clip, which is just under eight minutes in length, plays heavily on the idea that Mischief Night has 'got out of hand'. The video asserts that the night's activities start with children's tricks and then escalate into acts of vandalism with older children. The dramatic energy for the clip comes from the mother and immediate friends of a young boy who was hit by a bus whilst out with friends on that given evening. What seems to be implied by this is that if he was not out engaging in Mischief Night activities, he would not have been killed. The clip clearly carries a heartfelt plea from those involved. But when the clip is stripped of its emotional content there are various questions that arise from it. What is this rise in criminal activity? The policeman in the clip spoke of fences being dug up, and eggs being thrown at cars, but nothing further. Furthermore the death of the young boy, tragic as it was, could arguably have happened on any night of the year. There was nothing about the accident in itself that appears to relate specifically to Mischief Night. This presents a question of motivation and opportunity. To link Mischief Night with such a tragedy provides an opportunity to launch a sensationalist appeal to 'make Mischief Night a thing of the past' as the title of the clip states. Cynically, it could be argued that the police campaign to reduce problems on and around Mischief Night used the death to add a highly emotive event to an otherwise unremarkable campaign.

In contrast, a neighbourhood policing team in the Belle Isle and Middleton areas, again areas populated mainly by Leeds families of long standing, organised a 'Mischief Madness' activity evening between 6 and 9pm. The event, carried out for the second year running, had, according to police, contributed to a "40 per cent reduction in the number of calls about anti-social behaviour compared with the previous Mischief Night".<sup>492</sup> Although these areas have certainly harboured Mischief Night activity for many years, the increase in calls, reflecting an increase in anxiety amongst residents has led to greater numbers of police initiatives of this nature.

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<sup>492</sup> Vicky Robson 'Get up to some Mischief Madness, kids urged' *Yorkshire Evening Post* (4<sup>th</sup> November 2008) p.9

## Fieldwork

The aim and purpose of the fieldwork undertaken in this study was to gain a first-hand understanding of the nature and scale of mischief-related activities as expressed in Leeds. As with the research conducted on Hallowe'en, the precise calendar occurrence of the tradition provides the primary drawback and disadvantage to any sustained investigation into its practice. Secondly the city of Leeds covers an area of 552 square kilometres. The ability of a single observer to provide anything more than a fleeting insight into the various activities throughout the city is limited. However, in an attempt to cover as much ground as possible a number of approaches were implemented. The first was to conduct repeated field-work investigations. The field-work was conducted over a two year period November 2007, 2008. The second was to gain access to a police computer feed, located in each police station. The 'feed' is a computer system which logs all calls to the police in a given area. Thus all calls concerning Leeds are put through the Leeds police computer feed. The information gained from the system provides the time of the call, location and a brief synopsis of the situation as described by the caller. The system is updated in real time and provides a continuous account of the activity reported to the police across the city. The third was to accompany individual police officers during the course of the late afternoon and evening, in order to gain a greater appreciation of the nature of the activity at source.

The city of Leeds is divided into a number of separate police divisions, which are further divided into a number of sub-divisions, each of which has a number of officers assigned to it. In accompanying any one individual officer, therefore, any observer is exposed to only a fraction of the city's police activity. The limitations of this are obvious, yet it was felt of worth to gain whatever insights could be gained, however limited. Both pieces of fieldwork were undertaken in a different area of the city. The first covered the city centre, the Hyde Park area and Headingley which are predominantly student areas of the city. The second covered Pudsey and Green Hill which lie in West Leeds.

The methodology employed incorporated a participant-observer approach. Due to the often sporadic and secretive nature of the phenomenon, it was clear that direct participation would be untenable. The observations were expected to be predominantly after the event, and in the main this was the case although as described below there was, on occasion, some first-hand experience of being a recipient of the nights' mischief. Footage was taken with a small hand-held Sony HDV digital video camera with night-vision. During the course of the first fieldwork session it was possible to conduct an unexpected and informal interview with a community worker which was recorded using the video camera. Incidents from the city's police computer-feed are automatically relayed through to each car radio system and these, when relevant, were recorded in a field notebook. Interviews with individual fire officers were also conducted using an informal approach and were tape-recorded and later written-up verbatim.

### **Mischief Night in Leeds 2007 & 2008**

Hyde Park in Leeds has been the location of a number of civil disturbances, notably during 1981 and 1995 when riots occurred in various urban areas across the country. Yet, while the riots were broadly regarded as racially motivated, many of the problems in the Hyde Park area of the city are not due to racial but social tensions. They are fostered by the perceived lack of facilities and opportunities for the resident community over the perceived rights and privileges of the ever growing student population. Much of the tension generated is vented on Mischief Night with a history of cars (usually students') being set alight and bins placed across the centre of the road also set alight.

As part of the time spent with the police on Mischief Night 2007 I was invited to attend the Hyde Park Community Centre. A community disco evening had been set up as part of a local collaboration between community workers and local youths in the area.<sup>493</sup> The aim behind the night's events

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<sup>493</sup> It is worth noting that despite the way leisure facilities have expanded within the city centre over the last twenty years to include the Carriageworks Theatre, a variety of restaurants, cafes and bars; alongside new art galleries, museums and prestigious shops,

was to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the area on Mischief Night. Part of the motivation behind setting it up was the potential to be nominated for an award through a police initiative called Quest. The purpose of Quest is to improve community relations between youths and police, and to engage with and encourage young people to design projects which will help to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in their communities. Whilst at the event, P.C Lawton explained to those who had attended, the significance of the date for police, and the impact that the Quest project had made on anti-social behaviour in the Hyde Park area on Mischief Night.

Tonight, we're dressed in riot gear, the reason is tonight we are on the 'public order' patrol, that's because usually there is disorder, throughout the city, not just Hyde Park, but this time last year, we were snowed under, we couldn't move, there were all sorts going on. This year, no calls to Hyde Park, not yet anyway, and that is a reflection on yourselves.<sup>494</sup>

The event was heavily attended, predominantly with teenagers from the local community, police and community workers. The opportunity arose to partake in a relaxed and informal interview with one of the local development workers, who had been involved in helping to set up the event. In explaining the connection between the event and Mischief Night, the development worker explained that Mischief Night had become a focus in the year for criminal and anti-social behaviour. By holding the event on Mischief Night, it was hoped that the number of incidents in the area would fall, and subsequently increase the chances of winning a Quest award. As the development worker explained:

Mischief Night is the worst night of the year for crime in the area. They came up with putting on, like, a dance for young people, so that they

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many of the local youths in this area still regard such facilities as being the preserve of the privileged few, and are therefore disenfranchised not only economically but also socially. Tensions in the area arise at least in part due to the perception that the student population are not only able to enjoy such facilities, but that they also gain preferential treatment in the form of student discounts, and perceived police leniency in respect to their disruptive behaviour. The privatisation of cheaper properties in the Hyde Park area, along with those of other traditional working class areas of the city, resulting from central government policy during the 1980s, has further compounded the polarisation between the haves and the have-nots in the city.

<sup>494</sup> P.C. Lawton, speaking at Hyde Park Community Centre 4<sup>th</sup> November 2007

would be able to show that the crime figures for that night had reduced, to show that they had really done something - made a difference in the community.<sup>495</sup>

Despite the good intentions of the project, according to PC Lawton, during the following evening (November 5<sup>th</sup>) a number of parked cars in Hyde Park, belonging to students had been turned over and set alight at the end of Hyde Park Road. This reflected the previous years' mischief in Hyde Park when youths built barricades in the street and fired fire-works into nearby cars.

As well as the time spent in the community centre, much of the time was spent on patrol, driving around the Hyde Park, Headingley, and central areas of the city in a marked police car with three police officers. As stated above, radio contact meant that it was possible to record any further instances arising, thus limiting the principal drawback of only being able to be in one place at a time. The early afternoon was uneventful. The first call relating to Mischief Night came in at 16.45, with a report of 'a group of 'hoodies' (youths in hooded tops) throwing eggs. This was quickly followed by a report of ten to fourteen boys and girls throwing eggs at houses. When we arrived at both locations however, there was little sign of any youths and no evidence of broken eggs. At 17.48 we were asked to check out a group of teenagers 'hanging around' All Hallows Church in Hyde Park. Although they were there upon our arrival, they were not doing anything untoward. It was clear that these were children who always hung around in the area, principally because that is where they lived.

There was however a number of subsequent calls reporting stones being thrown at passing cars, and a car being turned over onto its side in Otley, a small market town to the North West of Leeds. At 18.21 we were called to the Hawkswood estate, West Leeds to find a car covered in flour.

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<sup>495</sup> Community development worker, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2007 at Hyde Park Community Centre. Full transcript of interview available on request.



Photograph taken by author

Whilst no doubt upsetting to the owner, this was not considered by the police to be a criminal act, because there was no lasting damage to the car.

There were a further three calls over the radio between 19.25 and 20.50, the first two regarding eggs being thrown at pedestrians in Headingley and a restaurant in Otley. The third, which we attended, came as a report of children setting fire to wheelie-bins in Weetwood, North West Leeds. When we arrived this turned out to be a fire that had been lit on disused wasteland. The children (approximately five or six young teenagers) fled when we arrived. When it was established that the fire was safe, i.e. that it was not in any danger of spreading, (and so, there was no need to inform the fire service) we left and headed back to the station. When discussing the seriousness of the event, there was unanimous agreement amongst the three officers that the lighting of the fire in that given location did not amount to any criminal activity, and that their biggest concern was to ensure that nothing dangerous (such as petrol canisters) had been put on the fire, and that it was not in any danger of spreading.

Once back at the station it was possible to look through the computer log which enabled me to see all the calls that had come in, and had not yet been resolved. This proved to be the most lucrative source of material. Between 20.39 and 21.40, there were a further twelve reported incidents. These included throwing fireworks at both individuals and property; putting



road work signs across the roads; pulling down fences and setting light to them in wheeled bins; and most commonly throwing eggs at passing cars, houses and residents. Unfortunately it was not possible to ascertain the outcome of these calls, simply that they had been made and logged.

2008 was spent with the Pudsey branch of Leeds police. The area covered includes the south west section of the city. The demographics of the region are diverse and cover a range of differing social /economic communities. The evening was spent, as in the previous year, in a patrol car, this time covering the Gamble Hill estate, South West Leeds, which contains high density council owned housing stock, and has significant levels of social deprivation<sup>496</sup>.

Assigned to a patrol car, the first call-out at 18.11 concerned the congregation of large numbers of youths 'making a nuisance of themselves'. On our arrival, it was established that whilst the group, roughly eight to ten in number, and between eight and twelve years of age, were being noisy, 'just hanging around' was ultimately the extent of their activities. Their conversation with the police officer did however maintain a seasonal theme, with several asking, "are we allowed to have a fire?" and showing evident disappointment when being told that they couldn't.

By 18.30 a further call was received regarding the presence of a group of children, aged between six and twelve, banging a post box with a pole. The aim, rationale, or purpose of their activity was unclear, or at least not forthcoming, but the excuse provided when questioned was "It's Mischievous Night". A call at 18.45 regarding 'kids kicking out a telephone box' yielded little, as there was nobody there on arrival, and no obvious damage to the telephone box.

The evening looked as though it would provide little in support of a continuing Mischief Night tradition in this particular area of Leeds. However, at 18.54 a call was received regarding eggs being thrown at house windows by a large group of children close to the Gamble Hill Flats (these are two high rise council flats in the centre of the estate). There was indeed the evidence of such activity, although those responsible had long since

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<sup>496</sup> Unsworth and Stillwell (eds.), *Twenty-first Century Leeds*

disappeared. This was followed about thirty minutes later by another call declaring that 'thirty kids' were throwing 'white powder' at a further given address in the estate. Whilst there were undoubtedly a number of children and teenagers 'hanging around' the area, the numbers were closer to ten–fifteen than thirty. The 'white powder' turned out to be flour that had been mixed with eggs and water in small plastic bags and then thrown with dramatic effect at the individuals' house windows. Furthermore, there was considerable evidence of egg adorning the pavements, thrown presumably between the children / adolescents themselves. No doubt in the spirit of inclusivity, the police patrol car also received a generous 'egging' during the course of the evening.

By 20.00 Mischief Night activity on the estate had all but come to an end, and so we returned to the station. There had been no further reports heard over the radio, and the computer log which had been particularly insightful the previous year showed nothing that could be identified exclusively as Mischief Night activity. By 22.00 the evening was brought to a close. The lack of material on the log was frustrating, not least because I was unable to gain access to it until 21.30, a full half an hour after the last recognisable Mischief Night related incident the previous year. Given this lack of access, I could gain no direct insight into any possible changes in volume in the early part of the evening, simply that any such activity was not taking place by roughly the same part of the evening.

That said, the officers on duty did feel that that the evening had been quieter than usual. Their explanation for the reduction in activity gravitated around a series of letters that were posted, in association with 'Safer Leeds' to homes in 'hot spot estates' such as the Gambles, warning youths not to congregate in given areas. The letters might seem harmless, but the implications for council tenants are serious in that the parents of children who are repeatedly picked up for anti-social behaviour related incidents can be 'threatened with tenancy' i.e. threatened with eviction on the basis of the behaviour of their children. This, combined with other measures such as the Quest, and publicity material sent to shops urging shop keepers not to sell flour, eggs and superglue to under sixteens during October and early November, would seem to have made an impact upon the number of

Mischief Night related activities in Leeds, although history has shown that it is unwise to declare its long term demise just yet.

## **Fire Service Experiences**

The West Yorkshire fire service view Mischief Night not as an individual night of trouble, but as a focal point for a season of activity often directed personally at fire crews. In an attempt to reduce the numbers of deliberately started fires and anti social behaviour, the West Yorkshire Fire Service set up an 'Arson Task Force' and 'Youth Inclusion Units'. Established in 2004, the force organises Young Fire Fighter Schemes, which are run in Wakefield, a midsize town south of Leeds. The schemes are offered to youths who have been previously involved in fire related anti-social behaviour across West Yorkshire. They are ten week courses which teach the basic principles of fire safety, the hazards associated with fires and the role of the fire service. The general view amongst the fire officers interviewed in both Leeds and Bradford was that the schemes are both popular and help to form positive community relations between the fire crews and the local youths.

Unlike the police, the fire service in West Yorkshire does not make any significant changes to staffing rotas during Mischief Night and Guy Fawkes Night celebrations, although use is made of an unmarked patrol vehicle which is used to assess the severity of fires and potential hazards in advance of engines being called out. This, at least in part, is due to the increased numbers of bogus call- outs received at this time, as well as self-contained fires that do not require serious attention.

It is interesting to note that fire crews are subjected to a greater number of personal attacks compared to those experienced by the police. Whilst there is no definitive explanation as to why this should be the case, the fire crews are in a vulnerable position. They are, like the police in a position of authority, and yet they have no powers to arrest or apprehend. And, they are duty bound to turn out to a fire, regardless of location. This during times of civil unrest makes them both a focal point and an easy target

for those seeking to vent their aggression towards a clearly identifiable authority structure.

In the first instance an interview was carried out with Adrian Cornelissen, the Assistant District Manager for the Leeds district of the West Yorkshire fire service, and a fireman for over thirty years. During the course of the interview, Adrian talked of the changes that have occurred during his length of service. In his view, the nature of Mischief Night has become associated with civil unrest rather than traditional mischief. When asked if he could provide an example of what he meant by that, Adrian responded by saying that while fire engines are undoubtedly pelted with eggs and flour, during Mischief Night, such traditional activities are now becoming the exception rather than the norm. More commonly, fire engines are being attacked and damaged by fireworks and slates which are thrown like 'Frisbees' and which rip through the aluminium shutters on the sides of the engine and become lodged, and the 'weapon of choice' 'brick bats'. A brick bat, Adrian explained, is simply half a brick, which is thrown at the fire engines and, like the fire-works and the slates cause considerable damage. In describing the usage of fire-works, Adrian described how in Bradford in recent years, adolescent youths are constructing and using 'pipe-bombs'. 'Pipe bombs' refer to a large wide diameter rocket fire-work which is then placed in the end of a piece of scaffolding approximately four feet in length. The scaffolding is then placed on the shoulder and pointed in the direction of the intended target. A second person then lights the rocket. The rocket can thus be directed at specific targets. According to Adrian, Manchester Road, a major arterial road in Bradford, is often subjected to rounds of pipe bombs being fired across it during what he refers to as 'Mischief Fortnight'.

Adrian was asked if there were similar scenes taking place in Leeds. His responded by saying that associated problems within Leeds, such as attacks to crews and engines, were considerably less volatile than those experienced in Bradford. When asked why he thought that there would be such a difference in civil unrest between Leeds and Bradford, Adrian highlighted a number of different factors. One significant explanation for the comparatively low levels of street fires in Leeds compared with Bradford was

the success of 'Action Days' organised by 'Arson Task Force'<sup>497</sup>. The purpose of 'Action Days' is to identify any significant build up of bonfire materials on the streets. Then through the application of new fly-tipping regulations request the council to remove it ahead of both Mischief and Bonfire Night; thus getting "the fuel off the streets".

How successful such schemes have been, can arguably be demonstrated by the numbers of incidents in each region over a set period of time. A report from the director of fire safety and community relations argued that in the first two years of the Leeds Arson Task Force "the number of vehicle fires had reduced by 63%, and the number of secondary fires by 23.5%"<sup>498</sup>. Whilst these figures are certainly persuasive, they do not address the possibility of other variables that might be at play in respect to problematic behaviour around Mischief Night. According to Adrian arguably the biggest factor in determining a busy or quiet mischief season is the weather. "If it as much as drizzles there is next to no action on the streets, if it's fine, there is mayhem."

Following the interview with Adrian, the opportunity arose in November 2007 to witness footage taken from a number of 'Silent Witness' CCTV cameras set up in fire engines.<sup>499</sup> There were twenty-one available recordings made between 1997 and 2003. The camera footage viewed was from engines based chiefly in Bradford, but also included limited footage from Leeds and Wakefield. The footage taken spanned not only the Mischief Night and bonfire night period, but also covered the start of the riots in Bradford during 2000. The material that was regarded by fire crews as 'Mischief Night related', i.e. it fell within what is regarded as 'Mischief Fortnight', contained elements of anti-social behaviour which were extensive and graphically confrontational. Scenes from every year between 1997 and 2003 included youths throwing bricks and stones at the engines. Typically engines would be called out to a fire deliberately started in roads and areas with restricted access. On arrival, the 'trapped' engine would then be pelted

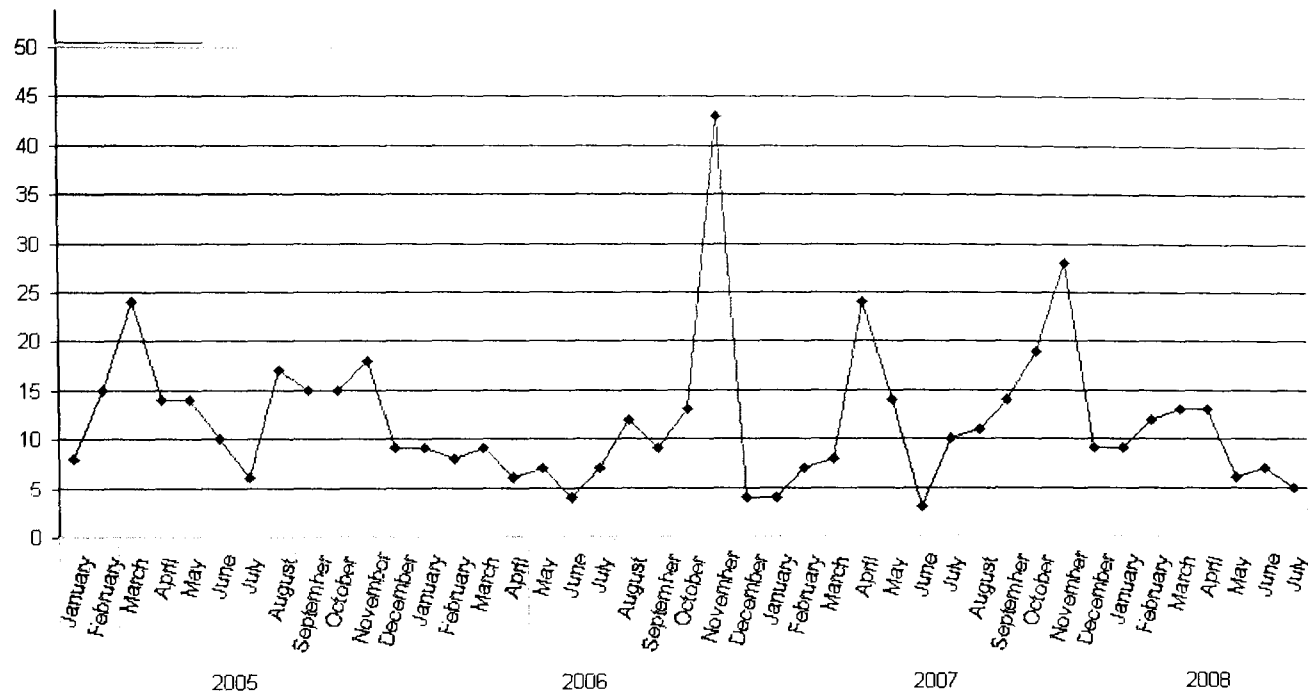
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<sup>497</sup> Ask and Task are a part of the fire service, although not fire-fighters.

<sup>498</sup> Report of the Director of Fire Safety & Community Relations: West Yorkshire Fire Service. 13<sup>th</sup> October 2006

<sup>499</sup> Each engine has two cameras connected to recording equipment, one facing through the front window of the engine, the other covering the back of the engine. Footage is scanned both for evidence gathering and training purposes.

Number of incidents of violence to staff at work

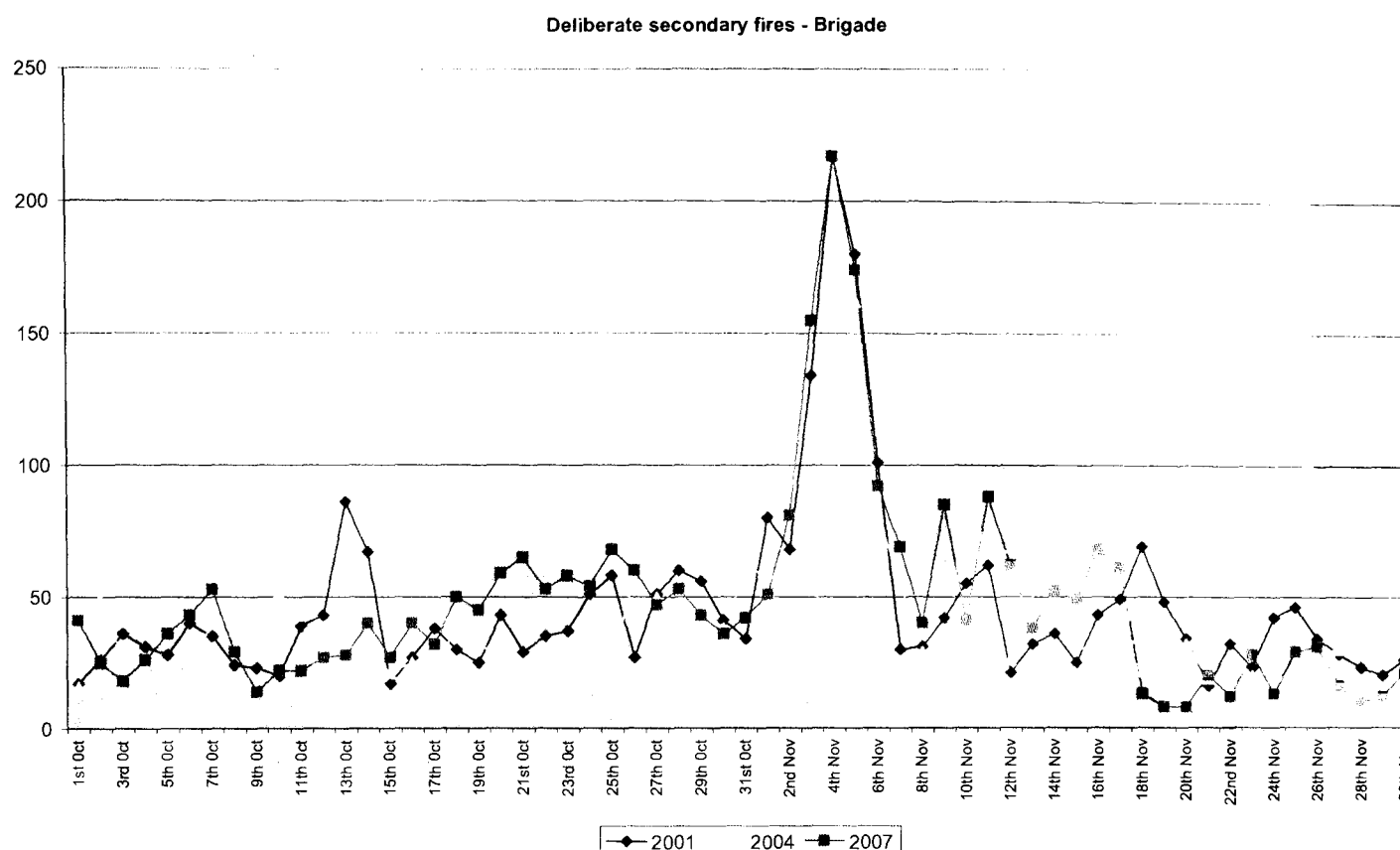


with bricks and stones. More extreme behaviour included attacks on individual fire officers; a tree trunk being rammed into the front of the engines, and fireworks launched directly at the windows of the engines.

While there was certainly a lot of activity during the 'Mischief Fortnight' there was also a significant number of clips during April, May, September, October and December. Some of the incidents shown were accounted for by the Bradford riots, and so the question arose as to whether or not such attacks were really associated with Mischief Night per se, or simply symptomatic of social unrest and wider, more general attacks on fire crews irrespective of the time of year. The following chart helps to shine a more balanced light on the recorded number of incidents against fire crews in West Yorkshire during a four year period between 2005 and 2008.

From the chart it is clear that although attacks do take place throughout the year there are significant peaks in November for both 2006 and 2007, with forty three, and twenty eight incidences respectively. These figures would seem to support the time scale of the footage presented in the video, but both offer only comparatively recent account of activities associated with fire crews at this time of year. Surprisingly, according to the West Yorkshire Fire service, it is only since 2005 that figures concerning the number of attacks on fire crews in West Yorkshire have been kept and collated. It might be surmised that this recent development in the collection of statistical data may well be due to an overall increase in incidents. However, it is more likely that this time scale coincides with the length of time that camera footage has been used widely in fire engines.

Further indications of the activity faced by fire crews over Mischief Night can be seen in the table showing the number of deliberate secondary fires between 2001 and 2007 across West Yorkshire. The table provides a day by day breakdown of the individual number of incidents during October and November. It is clear from the chart that there is a dramatic rise in deliberate fires, peaking consecutively on Mischief Night over the six year period. The total number of secondary fires between 1<sup>st</sup> October and 31<sup>st</sup> October stood at 2,821: 2,106 and 2,900 for 2001, 2004 and 2007 with Mischief Night accounting for 217, 81 and 217 respectively.



The close proximity of Mischief Night to Bonfire Night would seem to suggest that the increase in fires at this time might have more to do with the latter than the former, and this argument is strengthened when the figures for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> November are taken into consideration along with the days in the week in which each date falls.

|                     | 2001       | 2004        | 2007       |
|---------------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Nov | Sat<br>134 | Wed<br>40   | Sat<br>155 |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Nov | Sun<br>217 | Thurs<br>81 | Sun<br>217 |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Nov | Mon<br>180 | Fri<br>162  | Mon<br>174 |

As can be seen from the table, highlighting the figures provided in the chart above, there is a significant number of secondary fires on the 5<sup>th</sup> November, as might be expected. There is also a considerably higher number of fires lit when the lead up to Bonfire Night falls on a weekend. The



figures for 2004, considerably lower than those for 2001 and 2007. It is also worth noting that the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 2006, which witnessed the highest levels of recorded violent incidents against fire crews, (see above) fell on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Whilst this can only be seen as indicative of a potential trend, it would seem reasonable to suggest that the days in the week on which Mischief Night and Bonfire Night fall have a significant impact upon the numbers and nature of problems faced by fire crews.

This hypothesis was independently aired during a further interview with a fire crew at Fairweather Green Fire Station at Bradford in November 2008. Fairweather had been the busiest station in West Yorkshire during Mischief Night and Bonfire Night period during 2007, and for a number of years previously. The crew consisted of twelve fire officers, ten of which were present at the time of the interview. Seven had over ten years working experience, and one of those seven had over twenty five years service within West Yorkshire. The interview was conducted as an informal group interview and video recorded. In the interest of anonymity names were not asked for. All names given below have therefore been created in the interest of presenting a more clarified account. The officers were asked if they could share their experiences of the Mischief Night and Bonfire Night period, and how, if at all, those experiences differed from any other time of year.

Initially their recollections focused on the series of Bradford riots during the mid to late 1980s; 1995 and 2001. Despite the popular view put forward within a number of texts and articles<sup>500</sup>, the consensus amongst the crew was that the problems that they faced during the riots were not simply racially motivated, but were more closely linked to social deprivation in general. Tony added, “the abuse that we got didn’t just come from Asians, we got just the same level of abuse from whites”. A number of officers went on to describe some of the problems experienced more generally when called to run-down 1960s estates.

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<sup>500</sup> See Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black In The Union Jack* (London, 1987) and Max Farrar 'Leeds Footsoldiers and London Bombs' *Open Democracy*. [Online] (22<sup>nd</sup> July 2005) Online [Accessed 13 April 2009] and Paul Bagguley and Yasmin Hussain 2003. *The Bradford 'riot' of 2001: A preliminary Analysis*. A paper presented to the Ninth Alternative Futures and Popular Protest Conference, at Manchester Metropolitan University (22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> April 2003) Online. [Accessed 13 April 2009]

John "When council estates were being knocked down, their idea of fun was to take out the floorboards out of staircases and then watch outside while we went in and tried to climb the stairs... They went on to putting needles under the handrails and down the settees, so search procedures led to us getting a number of needle stick injuries."

I then asked if such activities were specific to a given time of year.

Paul answered: "It's when it gets to the dark nights, October, November, when it starts getting dark".

I replied "So, it's not specific to Mischief Night per se?"

The general response from all present was that Mischief Night stood as a focal point for such activities.

Mark seemed to speak for all present when he said: "Mischief Night is when it comes to a head. It subsides after that. It builds up and it all kicks off at that time. I think, they think that they have a licence to go and do what they want, just because it's Mischief Night".

I went on to ask if there is any difference between the behaviour on and around Mischief Night compared with any other time of year.

Paul answered: "It's the same thing, just more of it."

Tony agreed and added "It's not just Mischief Night, but Mischief Night is the peak: fireworks and that are more common 'cos they can get hold of them, but the rest of the year it decreases, more general, to verbal, throwing stones and bricks".

When asked how such activity compared over the course of their experience working in West Yorkshire, the answers ranged from "not as bad as it was five to ten years ago", to "the nature of the attacks have got worse".

Alan went on to highlight an incident in which he had been shot at with a rifle by a group of children aged between seven and fifteen from an upstairs window. Simon concurred and added “young kids still tend to give you verbal abuse, but it’s not the first time that we’ve been shot at”.

Thus, the messages concerning the nature and severity of Mischief Night concerning the police and the fire crews are mixed. Both agree that the number of incidents have declined in recent years, although there is not a clear or simple explanation as to why. There is certainly the belief that youth based initiatives have had a positive impact upon the decline in the numbers of related incidents, although there is a lack of substantial evidence to suggest that Mischief Night really was much worse in previous years. The nature of the nights’ events can be attributed to a relatively new and fast growing area of criminal legislation. Although anti-social behaviour legislation is not age-specific its implementation is predominantly directed and enforced upon the young. Behaviour once tolerated or unchallenged has become criminalised, and so behaviour once tolerated within the boundary of Mischief Night would now be met with legal sanctions.

There is, within both the police and the fire service a general feeling that ‘Mischief Night used to be just a bit of fun, but has now got out of hand’, that the youth of today ‘step over the line’, and it would be easy for us to make the same assumption: particularly if there were a correlation between the number of calls received for anti-social behaviour and the number of sanctions implemented. Yet there is nothing to suggest that any such correlation exists. When asked, the police agreed that few, if any, of the calls received on Mischief Night ended with the implementation of any legal sanctions. The research carried out with the police in two separate areas of Leeds revealed nothing beyond the level of activity historically associated with Mischief Night.

The finding from the fire crews differed significantly from the police, in that they experience a considerable rise in anti-social behaviour directed at the fire engines during October and November. Although this peaks at Mischief Night, I would argue that the behaviour experienced by the fire service has no historical lineage connecting it to the behaviour associated with Mischief Night. What is experienced by fire crews is therefore not

Mischief Night behaviour that has got out of hand, but social unrest that is making full use of earlier nightfall and a traditional cover story.

For both the police and particularly the fire crews, much of the association with Mischief Night in certain areas of Leeds and Bradford is tied up with the Riots mentioned above. But, it is important to note that the riots took place during the summer months, not over the Mischief Night period. The connection between the riots and Mischief Night might be seen in terms of the potential that the authorities sensed for the possibility of trouble. It would be logical to suppose that an increase in activity in those localities, particularly for those officers directly involved in dealing with the riots, could be responsible for creating a false association between the two.

This potential overestimation of the extent of Mischief Night criminality is in keeping with that seen amongst the wider population in Leeds. Why would Mischief Night be assuming a greater criminal impact? What can have changed? The more pertinent question is 'has it changed'? There has always been an element of mischief that has stood outside of the law. Theft and wilful criminal damage have been a constant theme throughout its history. It would therefore be inaccurate to refer to the criminal element of the contemporary Mischief Night as a new phenomenon.

As mentioned above, much of the perceived criminality of Mischief Night among the authorities in Leeds originates within the longer-standing, more settled and less socially mobile sections of the population. It is possible that, as well as reflecting a class backlash against social and cultural disenfranchisement, it may also reflect intolerance on the part of other, more affluent sections of society of what are perceived to be less respectable working class practices.

An example of this intolerance can be seen in Hoggart's account of Bonfire Night, when he equates, in negative tones, the occasion as a "noisy, chilly affair, with kids squabbling and a clack of gossiping housewives on the fringe". In contrast, the more "respectable", "professional", middle-class bonfire night, held in the more dignified garden, as opposed to the common street, is characterised by "controlled fireworks, safe outdoor lights,

gingerbread, baked potatoes and drinks for both children and adults.”<sup>501</sup> In the years since Hoggart was writing the growing university-educated and new professional sections of the Leeds population, not understanding or not willing to tolerate the culture of license in respect to Mischief Night have increasingly allowed or even encouraged the media and police to view Mischief Night as a legitimate target for vilification.

Returning to the criminal aspect of Mischief Night however, there is an argument that the nature of the criminal activity has become more extreme. As stated above, this study has found little to support this claim. The associations of criminal activity with Mischief Night can be more readily understood in respect to society’s perceptions of crime and in particular youth crime.

The main findings of a 1995 study looking at youth crime, victimisation and racial harassment in Keighley, West Yorkshire<sup>502</sup>, highlighted something of the complexity of this field. While 89% of the youths interviewed admitted to committing at least one offence, with 63% claiming that they had committed an offence in the last twelve months, the notion of rises in youth crime would seem to be justified. However, the same study goes on to say that conventional ideas about the nature of the ‘youth crime problem’, i.e. that the delinquent behaviour of youths is directed outwards, needs to be reconsidered. The study revealed that there was a growing fear of crime amongst the youth population, and that young people were themselves often victims of crime. Indeed the study concluded that much of the official time and resources that were made available were channelled into ‘apprehending and punishing young people as offenders, rather than supporting them as victims.’<sup>503</sup>

## **Analysis and Conclusion**

Despite the new problems faced by the fire service in Bradford and elsewhere, there are still undoubtedly identifiable survivals of the traditions of

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<sup>501</sup> Hoggart *A Local Habitation* p.96

<sup>502</sup> Colin Webster *Youth Crime, Victimisation and Racial Harassment. The Keighley Crime Survey* (Bradford, 1995)

<sup>503</sup> Webster, *Youth Crime* p.8

Mischief Night as practiced at the turn of the last century. It has not been possible, however, to find substantial evidence that there is an increasing criminal aspect to these. Certainly there are activities that are outside of the legal boundaries (boundaries which, as pointed out above, have become very much tighter), but this has always been the case. What is apparent from this study is that there has been a significant shift in attitudes both socially and legally towards children, and that these shifts have had an impact in the way in which both the police and the fire service have been obliged to respond to Mischief Night. Such shifts have run parallel with economic advances both in respect to the gentrification of the Victorian period, and with the economic prosperity of Leeds during the latter half of the twentieth century. Such economic prosperity can be linked to an increase in social mobility, and arguably an increase in less settled or permanent residents in the city. Those new to the city, (and increasingly the wider county) are unlikely to be familiar with the Mischief Night custom, are therefore far less likely to be tolerant of its expression, particularly in light of wider national moves in the form of legislation to criminalise youth culture, and the increasingly negative coverage given in the local press. While local police may well be more familiar with the history of the custom, they are, equally party to the wider pressures, not only from the expectations of an increasingly transient, and less settled population, but also from the ever-changing trends in law enforcement. Although historically, Mischief Night activities may well have been tolerated or had a blind eye turned to them, the increasing decline of working class customs, as indicated by Storch<sup>504</sup>, amongst others, combined with the invention and subsequent criminalisation of childhood has led to both a public perception of youths that are 'out of control' and an increased demand for the authorities to clamp down even where there appears to be little material crime for them to clamp down on. It is possible to compare the 'out of control' children to the 'out of control' working classes or 'plebs' in Storch's account of the Victorian reforms of the nineteenth century. Embodied in the 1839 Metropolitan Police Act, such reforms were brought in to deal with what Storch describes as a genuine and

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<sup>504</sup> Storch, *Popular Culture*, p.1-19

aggressive danger to public order. And it is certainly the case that the working classes of the early Victorian period and earlier were inclined to engage in kinds of revelry which brought about mounting disapproval from both church and the ruling classes. But here lies the nub of the connection between the two. The perceived rising level of 'sin and debauchery' associated with fairs and various recreational pastimes can be interpreted in light of the changing perceptions and growing disassociation of the upper-classes from the recreations of working classes in which they had previously shared. While Storch acknowledges that such attempts often only served initially to provoke further social unrest, he also argues that such reforms ushered in a unprecedented level of social harmony, 'a social world in which turbulence, violence, crime and disorder declined to levels unimaginable before, and, certainly, since'.<sup>505</sup> However, there is an extent to which such alienation from cultural modes of expression that were once familiar continues, and where once the ruling classes turned their backs on the pastimes of their working compatriots, now the adult world can be seen to eschew that of the child. Thus, when recounting genuine examples of extreme Mischief Night behaviour, the fire and police appear to be strongly influenced by fears and memories associated with the altogether different phenomenon of the riots of previous decades. The struggle to control childhood Mischief Night can therefore be seen to be mimicking the effort in the nineteenth century to gentrify British society through the imposition of new levels of law and order.

That Mischief Night continues to exist at all, with all its criminal associations, is a tribute to the power of children to preserve their traditions orally, independent of the adult world. Like the rhymes and games practiced in the playground, Mischief Night survives precisely *because* it is a childhood custom: adults are not needed in order to perpetuate it and nor, in spite of their best efforts, are they able to prevent it.

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<sup>505</sup> Storch, *Popular Culture*, p.13

## Chapter Six

### Guy Fawkes Night in and Around Leeds

This brief chapter seeks to show how Guy Fawkes Night<sup>506</sup>, as a cultural phenomenon, has been celebrated in Leeds and the surrounding area during the nineteenth and twentieth century. In particular, it will focus on the changing character of Guy Fawkes celebrations, noting the social tensions that have found expression at this time of year and the trends in scale as events have grown from local street-level and small-scale community fires, to the significantly larger council-run bonfire and firework displays that have taken place around the city on into the twenty-first century. Consideration will then be given to the impact that such changes have had on both Mischief Night and Hallowe'en.

A possible source of information on the celebration of 5<sup>th</sup> November in the Leeds area is through the examination of church records. With the exception of payment for bell ringers at Kippax for All Souls in 1627 (given in Chapter Three), the evidence for the ringing of church bells as a celebratory element in Leeds is limited. Despite this such activities undoubtedly occurred, since a surviving document in the churchwardens' accounts<sup>507</sup> for Leeds Parish Church 1782-1854 makes clear reference to an agreement of duties, drawn up between the church and the ringers on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1782. The agreement identifies twelve days throughout the year, aside from Sundays, for which the ringers will be required. As well as Birthdays, and coronations, the fifth of November sits along-side 30<sup>th</sup> January, Lent Wednesday and Good Friday as acknowledged days. That this date was given special attention by the church is consistent with the service outlined in the Book of Common Prayer entitled 'A Form of Prayer for the Fifth Day of November' and subtitled 'Gunpowder Treason'.<sup>508</sup>

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<sup>506</sup> While the term 'Guy Fawkes Night' is used when not referring to a specific source or reference, there are a number of subsequent terms, particularly 'Bonfire Night' that are commonly referred to in the sources used. The frequency of the term 'Bonfire night' over 'Guy Fawkes Night' also reflects the use of the popular use of the term throughout the timescale studied in and around Leeds.

<sup>507</sup> Churchwardens' Accounts – Leeds Parish Church 1782-1854 Available at West Yorkshire Archive Service RDP68/41/20

<sup>508</sup> The Church of England *The Book of Common Prayer* (Oxford, 1701) p.156-9



However, several examples of the secular use of celebratory bonfires in Leeds do exist for the eighteenth century. The first, on 12 May 1713, witnessed over five hundred attendees in a celebratory march through the city during the day, in celebration of the Peace of Utrecht with France. The evening, according to the eighteenth century historian John Lucas<sup>509</sup> gave rise to 'great demonstrations of joy by illuminations and loud huzzahs' and a considerable number of large bonfires.

Two years later, another bonfire took place on 4<sup>th</sup> November. The occasion<sup>510</sup> was to honour of the anniversary of King William's Birthday and landing, and to celebrate the crushing of the 1715 Jacobite rebellion. It was orchestrated by one Brigadier Munden, and consisted of a large bonfire, attended by both the clergy and Leeds Corporation at the King's Arms coaching inn on Briggate. Interestingly, in spite of the date, no mention is made in Lucas' account of Guy Fawkes or the Gunpowder Plot.<sup>511</sup> Notable other bonfire celebrations in the city include the coronation of King George II and Queen Caroline in 1727 and again are unconnected to the Guy Fawkes celebrations. The limited evidence for celebrations on the Fifth during the course of the eighteenth century may be at least in part due to a growing association between the date and civil disturbances, as highlighted by Storch, below.

In some parts of the United Kingdom, notably the North of Ireland, Guy Fawkes celebrations continued to retain a strong element of anti-Catholic nationalism, however this was not the case in every region. In contrast to the Gunpowder Plot commemorations held by Orange Order in Ulster<sup>512</sup>, and with the exception of the flaring of tensions arising from Pope Pius IX's reestablishment of the English Catholic hierarchy in 1850, English celebrations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, had lost much of any remaining anti-Catholic associations. Indeed, the decline in the date's overall

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<sup>509</sup> Jonathan Oates (ed.), *The Memoranda Book of John Lucas 1712-1750* (Leeds, 2006) 36

<sup>510</sup> Oates, *Memoranda Book* 49-50

<sup>511</sup> Briggate is a main street in the centre of Leeds.

<sup>512</sup> For a detailed account of the Ulster Protestant changing and complex relationship to mainland Britain through the commemoration of the Gunpowder Plot, see James McConnel 'Remembering the 1605 Gunpowder Plot in Ireland, 1605-1920' *Journal of British Studies* [e-journal] Vol.50 No.4 (2011) 863-891 Available through Jstor database [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012]

political and religious significance during the nineteenth century is demonstrated most aptly in the removal of the gunpowder sermon from the Book of Common Prayer in 1859. The lack of any remaining anti-Catholic feeling to the celebrations in Leeds was highlighted in an 1873 edition of *The Leeds Mercury*, which stated that “Happily the fifth of November has lost its anti-Catholic character.”<sup>513</sup>

The historian William Smith makes specific reference to the popularity of 5<sup>th</sup> November celebrations in Morley, five miles south west from the centre of Leeds, during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Commenting on the nature of the preparations made by young boys in the village Smith describes ‘sundry visits to way-side hedges, farm yards, and ill-secured fences, from whence more burnables are generally taken and deemed lawful prize than the law allows’. Smith then compares the nature of such preparations, with an earlier record found in the Morley Town Minutes, 1788 which stated:

Resolved, on Nov.6<sup>th</sup>, 1788, by a Public Town’s Meeting, on account of many depredations committed upon the property of the people of Morley, that, on the Fifth of November of every succeeding year, the Constable shall charge a sufficient number of men, and make a public search throughout the town by virtue of his warrant, and put out or extinguish all the bonfires in this township, at the hour of eleven at night. – Signed Samuel Webster, John Webster, Joseph Webster, Robert Dixon, and others.

It is unclear why the meeting felt that extinguishing of bonfires at eleven would make any difference to the depredations upon property, other than to perhaps restrict the need for further fuel for the fires; but the decision does reflect a growing trend, within a number of civic authorities from the late eighteenth century, to bring about a more orderly and sober character to civil celebrations<sup>514</sup>. The change in attitude led to a significant decline of civic authorities providing financial assistance for bonfires, or providing wood. And

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<sup>513</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 6<sup>th</sup> November 1873 p.4

<sup>514</sup> This at least in part was due to the way in which many such celebrations were regarded as potential opportunities for civil unrest. This would have been particularly pertinent given that they follow in the wake of the Gordon Riots in 1780, which started as an anti-catholic protest, but which developed into what Rogers describes as ‘the most tumultuous and destructive of the century’. See Nicholas Rogers *Crowds, Culture, and Politics in Georgian Britain* (Oxford, 1998) p.152

in turn, according to Griffin,<sup>515</sup> it marked a steep decline in the use of bonfires for marking commemorative events.

The removal of local authority support for public bonfires did not reduce the status of Guy Fawkes celebrations among the wider population. While the *Leeds Mercury* during the 1840s seemed to be doing its best to curtail enthusiasm for Guy Fawkes celebration by announcing 'the silly "fifth of November" parading Guy Fawkes is falling into general and deserved disrepute and disuetude'<sup>516</sup>, such affection for 'The Plot', as it was referred to in Leeds during the latter half of the nineteenth century<sup>517</sup> can be gleaned, if indirectly, through the vast quantities of gunpowder sold in local shops. The Explosives Act 1875, came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1876 restricting the quantity of gunpowder a shop owner could hold on his premises to 50lbs.<sup>518</sup> The following November, Leeds Chief Constable Mr. Withers seized large amounts of fireworks both from unlicensed premises and from shops exceeding their allowed limit. Such seizures, recorded in *The Leeds Times*<sup>519</sup> included '50lbs weight of gunpowder and 226lbs. weight of fireworks' from an unauthorised ironmonger, and a shopkeeper found with '400lbs. weight of gunpowder'.<sup>520</sup>

Such large amounts of easily accessible gunpowder inevitably led to accidents, particularly among children. An earlier report, again from *The Leeds Times*<sup>521</sup> told of two separate instances which no doubt served to highlight the dangers associated with explosives, and thereby help to reinforce the enforcement of the incoming Act. The first involved three children aged fifteen, thirteen and eleven in Hunslet, within two miles of Leeds city centre, who were caught in an explosion after 'playing with a quantity of loose gunpowder in a bag...They had moistened a quantity of the powder and set fire to it, when a flying spark ignited the remainder of the bag' the report concluded: 'no doubt preparatory to the approaching celebration

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<sup>515</sup> Griffin, *England's Revelry* p.92

<sup>516</sup> Miscellaneous *The Leeds Mercury* (14<sup>th</sup> November, 1840) p.7

<sup>517</sup> See 'Seizure of Fireworks' *The Leeds Times* (4<sup>th</sup> November, 1876) p.3

<sup>518</sup> *Explosive Substance Act 1875* [Available online] [Accessed, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2011]

<sup>519</sup> *Seizure of Fireworks* p.3

<sup>520</sup> *Seizure of Fireworks* p.3

<sup>521</sup> 'Accidents From Guy Fawkes' Celebrations' *The Leeds Times* (28<sup>th</sup> October, 1876) p.3

of Guy Fawkes'-day.' The second involved two boys named Frank Pinder and John Blamires, in Cleckheaton, nine miles from Leeds. The boys:

were engaged discharging a miniature cannon, made from a piece of iron gas pipe, when Blamires applied a lighted piece of tar-band to some powder on the top, causing the pipe to burst in several places, one of which struck Pinder under the eye, lacerating it in a dangerous manner<sup>522</sup>.

A further negative account of 'bonfire night' is given in an 1864 article in *The Leeds Mercury*, describing it as a night "when people, following a foolish custom, sit round out-door fires and throw crackers into the air."<sup>523</sup> But this 'foolish custom' was remembered with some affection by H Slater<sup>524</sup> who, when recalling the events of 'Plot Neet' about 1910, vividly describes his excitement as the headmaster of his elementary school marked the event by firstly setting off a 'golden rain' firework in each class and secondly by closing the school early. Slater goes on to describe how bonfires had to be defended against by other raiding parties, and referring to wood and the collection of wood as 'prog' and 'propping' respectively.

Despite the popularity of Guy Fawkes celebrations, accounts of larger more centrally organised bonfire celebrations in the first half of the twentieth century are less common. Though a detailed account of both Bonfire Night and Mischief Night is to be found in John A Harrison's autobiography *A West Riding Childhood: In the Village of Calverley*.<sup>525</sup> Harrison's account, which dates between around 1902 and 1908 is large, but sufficiently rich in both personal accounts of the sights and smells of Bonfire Night and the nights leading up to it; the impact upon village life, in respect to gardeners, farmers and mill owners, and the detailed descriptions of fireworks that it was felt worth duplicating much of his account here<sup>526</sup>.

Whether or not November 5<sup>th</sup> is the exact place in the calendar for the commemoration of Guy Fawkes' escapade, it fits remarkably

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<sup>522</sup> *Accidents From Guy Fawkes* p.3

<sup>523</sup> *The Leeds Mercury*, *The Leeds Mercury* (5<sup>th</sup> November, 1864) p.6

<sup>524</sup> H Slater 'Plot Night' *The Dalesman* (Clapham, 1969) 707-8

<sup>525</sup> John A Harrison *A West Riding Childhood: In the Village of Calverley* (Leeds, 1967)

Calverley is about eight miles West from the centre of Leeds:

<sup>526</sup> Harrison, *West Riding Childhood* p.23-24

well with the habits of gardeners. It may be a little early for the lopping of branches from trees and hedges, before the sap has quite run down, but in any district where boys make a fire on the evening of November 5<sup>th</sup>, the loppers and trimmers can have their waste cleared away free, with mutual satisfaction to gardener and “chumper”. Chumping was always one of the happiest times of the year. Boys worked in gangs of from three or four up to twenty members. All the equipment needed was a rope and a patch of waste ground where the chumps could be stored, defended from raids by other gangs, and afterwards set on fire. Then as now there was some rule about “not within X feet of the main road” but nobody remembered it more than ten minutes even if they heard it. Common sense was enough for safety.

Harrison goes on to describe a practice that is reminiscent of the misdemeanours of the young men and boys of Manningham described above – although he does not intimate that the protests of farmers were met with any violence when he says<sup>527</sup>:

Farmers did not like Guy Fawkes. Indirectly he was the cause of destruction of hedgerows. A young tree that could have been chopped through close to the ground and pulled clear with the rope was obviously good for the bonfire. A loose bar in a gate and wood palings burned very well, but the raids had to be as quiet as possible and after dark.

And farmers were not the only ones to suffer at the hands of the bonfire-builders. Harrison’s account goes on to suggest a mechanism by which the shift of rural bonfire building worked its way into the urban industrial setting as well as giving an insight into the role of fireworks in Bonfire Night activities.<sup>528</sup>

It was not unknown for a cottager to lose a few yards of trellis fence up which in spring he used to train sweet peas, and the three local mill companies took care not to leave mill baskets lying in the yard at night... A good mill basket of wickerwork, soaked with oil after a few months’ use, was an asset to any bonfire. Fireworks were fairly plentiful. String of miniature red crackers, said to be from Japan, seventy-two in a string, cost halfpenny. Each was about ¾” long. To unravel them so that the fuses did not fall out was tricky. Squib, blue

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<sup>527</sup> Harrison, *West Riding Childhood* p.23-24

<sup>528</sup> Harrison, *West Riding Childhood* p.23-24

lights, pin-wheels were three-pence a dozen, some sparklers three-halfpence a dozen, rockets up to 6d. each... Only the wealthy struck matches to light the fireworks. Most of us got a soft bulky kind of string that had been made in the mills and was soaked in oil. Millband would keep dully alight like a cigarette for hours and would glow bright if blown on. Even a rocket could be lit with a millband... Millband was good for sun-burning your palms, by holding the lighted end inside the cupped and joined hands for an hour or two. Householders would make parkin, toffee, and brandy-snap for Plot Night, and though somebody always threw a few potatoes into the bonfire, I never tasted one that came out properly roasted. Very rarely indeed was there a Guy..."

Closer to the centre of Leeds, Holbeck<sup>529</sup> held an annual bonfire and carnival<sup>530</sup> between 1920 and 1925, which included a procession at 2pm and a gala at 7pm. The 1920 fire was lit with due ceremony by the Lord Mayor, M,T,B Duncan at 9.30pm. The occasion would have provided an excellent example of an early bonfire night event, except that it took place every year in July, and was organised in aid of the local nurses' home. What this event does provide, however, is an early example of the close association between the travelling fairs, that would visit Leeds annually<sup>531</sup> both around the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of November and 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> July, and subsequent city-wide bonfire night events.

David Barron's autobiographical account, of his childhood<sup>532</sup> in Leeds during the late 1920s and 1930s also refers to 'the Holbeck Moor Bonfire' but on the fifth of November. Born in 1925, at the tail-end of the time of the nurses' home summer bonfires, it is possible that Barron's account recalls a new Holbeck November bonfire, most likely in the early to mid 1930s. However, despite a convincing account in which he describes being bought 'treacle toffee, called bonfire toffee, and fireworks which were let off for me by one of the bonfire's organisers'<sup>533</sup>, the author was unable to find any further supporting evidence for a November bonfire at Holbeck Moor at that time. Therefore unfortunately, no firm conclusions can be drawn from Barron's account.

<sup>529</sup> About two miles south of the city centre.

<sup>530</sup> 'Holbeck Annual Bonfire and Carnival. In aid of the local nurses' home' *pamphlets* (1920-1925) LH69(394) Available at Leeds central library.

<sup>531</sup> 'Yorkshire Fairs' *pamphlet* Y394.6YOR Available at Leeds central library

<sup>532</sup> David Barron, *A Price To Be Born* (Harrogate, 1996)

<sup>533</sup> Barron, *Price* p.22

In keeping with the traditions of previous centuries, large-scale bonfires were still held in celebration of one-off events, again not connected to Guy Fawkes Night, during the first half of the twentieth century. The first of the following pictures<sup>534</sup> taken from the David Atkinson Archive, held at the Leeds photographic archive service, shows a bonfire built at Morley rugby ground in celebration of the coronation of King George V in 1911. The second, was taken by the *Yorkshire Post*, at an unknown location in Leeds in 1945. It depicts a street party bonfire victory celebration, following the end of the Second World War.



Both Accessed from Leodis Photographic Archive

As with the second of these two pictures, bonfires lit specifically in celebration of Guy Fawkes Night, Gunpowder Plot Day / Night or Bonfire Night in Leeds during the latter half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century often took the form of local street fires. These provided ample opportunity for children to engage in related Mischief Night 'chumping' activities, described in the previous Mischief Night chapter; a brief example

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<sup>534</sup> Both of these photos can be found at 'Leodis Photographic Archive of Leeds'[Online] [Accessed 20 May 2011]

of which come from Bill<sup>535</sup> (no surname provided) in his recollections of his Catholic childhood in an area known as The Bank<sup>536</sup> in the late 1930s. Bill describes the tensions and subsequent fights that took place between his group of friends and the protestant Shannon Street gang over a bridge which separated their respective streets. In describing the interchange between the two groups Bill explains:<sup>537</sup>

We used to shout “you can’t cross!” And they did the same. If they got to our side, we had lost the bridge and vice versa. The worst time was bonfire night. They tried to get over to steal our chumps.

As well as providing an account of childhood rivalry played out in part through Bonfire Night preparations, the account reveals that by the 1930s at latest, Bonfire Night was equally enjoyed both by Catholic and Protestant children alike. The close inter-relationship between chumping and Bonfire Night is further exemplified by Malcolm Glegg’s<sup>538</sup> autobiographical account of his childhood near to Cookridge, about five and a half miles north of the city centre, between 1928 and 1924 in which he says:

‘Chumping’ in Black Wood to build up the big pile of wood for bonfire night occupied much free time. Concerns that imagined vandals might sabotage it by lighting it ahead of time gave rise to much fear. The time of lighting was widely proclaimed and family and friends assembled, lighting fireworks, eating treacle toffee and parkin, roasting potatoes in the embers, all making these events to be remembered. Braver children even found courage to jump over the embers<sup>539</sup>.

Not all descriptions and recollections of Bonfire night in Leeds are warm and nostalgic. As mentioned in Chapter Five, Richard Hoggart<sup>540</sup>, in his account of working class life in Hunslet and Holbeck<sup>541</sup> between 1918

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<sup>535</sup> Bill *My Childhood Days. Recollections of Childhood in the late 1930s in Leeds* (Leeds, 1988)

<sup>536</sup> Less than half a mile east of the centre of Leeds, and an area that continues to hold a large proportion of the Irish community in Leeds.

<sup>537</sup> Bill, *My Childhood* p.3

<sup>538</sup> Malcolm Glegg *The Recollections of the Childhood (1928-1942) of Malcolm Glegg* (Leeds, 2008)

<sup>539</sup> Glegg, *Recollections* p.7

<sup>540</sup> Hoggart, *Local Habitation* p.96

<sup>541</sup> Both just to the south of the centre of Leeds.



and 1940, briefly describes Bonfire night as 'a noisy, chilly affair with kids squabbling and a clique of gossiping housewives on the fringes'<sup>542</sup>. Interestingly, Hoggart's negative inter-war depiction of what must be a street Bonfire night is then contrasted with what he describes as

Today's professional middle-class version, in a garden with school and neighbourhood friends, controlled fireworks, safe outdoor lights, gingerbread, baked potatoes and drinks for both children and adults<sup>543</sup>.

Hoggart's 'today' refers to the 1980s, after the introduction of larger Leeds council bonfires. Yet there is no mention of their existence in his account. Instead Hoggart refers to a middle-class, home garden event. Yet this transference from the 'working class' street, to the 'safe', 'middle-class' garden though ultimately less public, still maintained aspects of the 'working class' street event, such as neighbourhood friends, drinks, and baked potatoes.

Newspaper accounts of street fires during the 1940s, 50s and 60s, are often noted in reference to instances of them being lit ahead of schedule as part of Mischief Night. An example of this was noted in *The Yorkshire Post*, 1949, when a bonfire in Roundhay caught light ahead of schedule. According to the article<sup>544</sup>

the bonfire had been built by the children of Street Lane on waste land at the junction of Devonshire Avenue and Street Lane, [and it] burned so well that nearby property became threatened and Leeds Fire Brigade had to be called.

Further accounts of street bonfires during the 1960s include the following additional comment added by Dianne Jack<sup>545</sup>, to a photograph held on the Leodis photographic archive website, taken on the corner of Allerton Street, Kirkstall, joining Kirkstall Road in Leeds. While the picture itself does not provide any insights, Dianne's recollections not only make reference to

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<sup>542</sup> Hoggart, *Local Habitation* p.96

<sup>543</sup> Hoggart, *Local Habitation* p.96

<sup>544</sup> 'Roundhay Plot and Counter Plot' *The Yorkshire Post* p.1

<sup>545</sup> 'Allerton Street, Kirkstall' *Leodis - a Photographic archive of Leeds* [Online] [Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2011]

the continued city council's slum clearance programme, mentioned in Chapter Two, but also highlight the popularity of street fires in Leeds at this time. They also provide the additional detail of what her mum made for the occasion which provides further evidence of the types of foods eaten:

I lived towards the top end of this street. (Allerton Street) from the early 1960s until the houses were demolished in the 70s... I have some fantastic memories of bonfire nights there would be huge bonfire's [sic] all the way up the street, seeing who could make the biggest. My mum used to make the toffee apples, pie and peas and we would sit around the bonfire till late.

The following photograph, taken on 12 October 1966, provides evidence of the way in which fires, as well as being built in the street, were often built on nearby wasteland. The picture, showing two small boys in the process of constructing the bonfire, was taken on derelict land at the end of Devon Terrace in Richmond Hill<sup>546</sup>, less than a mile from the city centre.



Accessed from the Leodis Photographic Archive

In 1996, Cheryl Riemold provided an account of her childhood experiences of Guy Fawkes Night in Leeds, during an award presentation

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<sup>546</sup> Richmond Hill is situated in The Bank area of the city, as previously stated, home to large numbers of Irish Catholics that have continued to live in the area in significant numbers since the 1840s

speech for the Alfred N. Goldsmith Award. Though it is not clear exactly which decade Reimold is referring to in respect to her childhood memories of Leeds<sup>547</sup>, her account provides an excellent description of a street bonfire, including reference to a Guy Fawkes effigy which was used to adorn the top of the bonfire. She states:

All the children on our road in Leeds carried any possible castaway bits and pieces – from bags and baskets to old chairs and tables – up to the top of the road for a huge bonfire... Then at nightfall, everyone on the street gathered around the bonfire, each family with a basket of fireworks in hand.

Recorded customs associated with Guy Fawkes celebrations in and around Leeds include the following chant sung on 'Plot Night' recorded<sup>548</sup> in Halifax, about 16 miles from Leeds, in 1971. The newspaper account does not reveal the age of the informant, but given the high use of regional dialect, the song itself gives an impression of its longevity, possibly dating from the late nineteenth, or early twentieth century.

Dahn in yond cellar it's  
Crammed full of bogs,  
They've etten mi stockens  
And part of mi clogs,  
We'll get a sharp knife and  
We'll chop their yeds off,  
An have a good supper o'  
Bog yeds an broth.

It will be productive to consider, at this point, the 'bogs' referred to in the poem. The writer of the article interprets 'bogs' as 'boggards' a Yorkshire term for ghosts, but this raises the question of why such entities would want to eat stockings or clogs? Or for that matter, need their heads to be cut off, given that, as ghosts they must already be dead. It should be remarked that the notion of ghosts as incorporeal beings is not necessarily consistent with

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<sup>547</sup> Given that her son was born in 1978, it would seem reasonable to assume that her accounts of childhood relate roughly to the 1950s

<sup>548</sup> 'Bonfire Traditions' *Telegraph and Argus* (5<sup>th</sup> November, 1971) LAVC/FLF/9/2/3 Available at Leeds University Special Collections.

the traditional boggard<sup>549</sup>, which was often regarded as far more solid than the Dickensian spectre popularised in *A Christmas Carol* and so might well be vulnerable to the effects of decapitation. An early 1930s dictionary defines 'Boggard' partly in respect to 'hobgoblin' and is also connected with the word 'bogle' meaning goblin.<sup>550</sup> A greater understanding of both the word 'boggard', and the poem can be gained through the writings of Joseph Lawson<sup>551</sup> In his descriptions of life, beliefs and customs in Pudsey, (now a suburb of Leeds) covering sixty years of the nineteenth century, Lawson describes a 'boggard' as a fictional entity used to both entertain and intimidate through stories and threats. Akin to a more contemporary bogymen, the 'black boggard' [often took the form of] some ugly monster or malicious ghost<sup>552</sup> Lawson provides an illustration of the use of the term when he says:

It was a common practice of parents when their little ones were naughty to tell them there was a black boggard up the chimney, or coming down to fetch them... or to shut up their children in cellars and other dark places for the black boggard to take them.<sup>553</sup>

Given the supernatural character of the 'bog', it is interesting that it should keep to its association as a 'plot night' chant and not migrate on to Hallowe'en. The widespread use of the term may well have meant that it would have been used on any occasion in which children would have been left outside on their own after sunset. The collecting of firewood for bonfire night, (often stored in the cellar) thus provides an excellent opportunity for the children to encounter and delight in the testing and rejection of such fears as described in the rhyme.

Whilst considering the potential for correspondence between Guy Fawkes Night and Hallowe'en, it should be noted that in Yorkshire, at least, no apparent connections have been identified between the two events to

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<sup>549</sup> See Gillian Edwards *Hobgoblin and Sweet Puck. Fairy Names and Natures* (London, 1974)

<sup>550</sup> Ernest A. Baker (ed.), *New English Dictionary*. "John Bull" Edition. (London, 1932) p.115

<sup>551</sup> Joseph Lawson *Letters To The Young on Progress In Pudsey During The Last Sixty Years* (Stanningley, 1887)

<sup>552</sup> Lawson, *Letters* p.71

<sup>553</sup> Lawson, *Letters* p.71

support Beck's assertion that the two have become fused. This may not be the case when considering the North American traditions as will be explored in the following chapter.

In 1977 Nancy Ann Boyal conducted a brief, but informative Guy Fawkes survey in Leeds train station<sup>554</sup>, apparently as part of a school English assignment. Handwritten, the notes, now kept in the archives of Leeds University, are at times sketchy, and the reader is left to infer what questions were asked from the nature of the written responses. Despite setting out to speak to women approximately over the age of 65, one of her informants is described as an elderly gentleman and another a boy aged about 11. Despite this Boyal does collect important details, such as where they grew-up, what they did, and what they ate.

Geographically the respondents were quite diverse, coming from Leeds, Wakefield, Castleford, and Cleckheaton (all within ten miles of Leeds) South Elmsall (21 miles), Sheffield (33 miles), and Bawtry (37miles). All respondents reported having a bonfire, and two made specific reference to the fires being held in the street. Additional detail comes from the Bawtry respondent who spoke of 'tea parties on bonfire night for all the neighbours' and the Castleford informant who used coal, offered by minors for the fire instead of rubbish or wood. Foods repeatedly mentioned by five of the respondents included black toffee, parkin, toffee apples, bonfire 'taffee', gingerbread squares and roast potatoes cooked in the fire. Bonfire effigies are only referred to explicitly by four, and on all four occasions they are termed 'dummy'. The Wakefield informant did not collect money with the dummy, because 'it would be considered scrounging.' The South Elmsall informant seems to have emphasised that she didn't have a dummy, and didn't collect money, although there is nothing added to the notes to explain why. The Castleford informant 'made a dummy, but didn't take it outside til night of bonfire', while the Bawtry informant made a dummy, but sent others, (presumably brothers or close friends) to go door to door to collect money.

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<sup>554</sup> Nancy Ann Boyal, *Guy Fawkes Survey* (3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> November, 1977) LAVC/FLF/9/2/3 Available at Leeds University Special Collections.

Aside from the practical considerations, Boyal also noted some of their responses to their historical understanding of Guy Fawkes. Comments ranged from Sheffield respondent, 'Guy Fawkes tried to blow up parliament seven hundred years ago, I think he was hung', to the 11 year old Leeds respondent who said 'Guy Fawkes tried to burn it up about 90 years ago'. This particular Leeds respondent also provided the following chorus.

Build a bonfire  
Build a bonfire  
Put the teacher on the top  
Put the school books in the middle  
Burn the rotten lot

### **Club Fires**

As well as street fires, some residents of Leeds during the middle to second half of the twentieth century attended Bonfire Night events organised by local sports clubs. The importance of sports clubs in the social life of the city becomes apparent when looking at the origins of the existing clubs. Leeds United, formed in 1919, grew from Leeds City Football Club in 1904. This in turn was part of a much wider and older series of rugby clubs such as Holbeck Rugby club which joined the Northern Union in 1896, and 'rugby football' clubs including Bramley; Holbeck; Hunslet; Kirkstall; Wortley; Leeds Parish Church and Leeds St. John's. The presence of the two church-based clubs may in themselves be indicative of the wider influence of Victorian gentrification through church intervention discussed in Chapter Two, promoting instead structured, rule-governed alternatives to the more historically rough versions of the game.<sup>555</sup>

The following photograph taken at Morley cricket club in 1961, shows a group of children helping to build the club's annual Guy Fawkes night bonfire.

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<sup>555</sup> See Murfin *Popular Leisure* p.90-125



Accessed from Leodis Photographic archive

These events are similar to events held at Darton Cricket Club in South Yorkshire and founded in 1875. According to Brian, a long-standing club member, the bonfires and fireworks displays were held throughout the twentieth century as a means of fundraising, (selling beer and pies) and raising the profile of the club within the local community. Given the potential for fundraising and the strengthening of community ties, it was expected that similar Rugby, Football and Cricket clubs in and around Leeds<sup>556</sup> would furnish this study with similar accounts. A small test sample of eleven e-mails was therefore sent to sports clubs in Leeds, to ascertain if the clubs in question had any known history of holding bonfires or fireworks displays on or around the 5<sup>th</sup> November. Of the eleven cricket, rugby and football clubs contacted, five responded. The first of these, was Roundhegians Rugby Football Club<sup>557</sup>, who claimed never to have held any bonfire or fireworks displays. A similar response came from West Riding County Football Association and Leeds United Football club. The fourth response came from the Stanningley Rugby League Club (RLC). Jon Norfolk, the club

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<sup>556</sup> The clubs contacted were: Stanningley R.LC; Bramley Phoenix RFC; North Leeds CC; East Leeds CC; The Yorkshire County CC; Leeds City FC; Leeds United FC; West Riding County FA; Roundhegians RFC and Leodiensian RUFC.

<sup>557</sup> Established in 1928.

administrator claimed that the club had successfully held bonfires every year at the clubs' former site, (on Stanningley Road) between 1971 and 2000 when the club moved premises. As with Darton Cricket Club, Stanningley RLC used Bonfire Night as an opportunity to raise money for the club and to raise its profile. However, the new grounds did not offer a suitable location to build bonfires, and the rising costs of hosting fireworks displays made further such events for the club untenable. The final response came from Dennis, Chairman of East Leeds Cricket and Social Club who said 'East Leeds CC has held bonfire nights since the 60s but due to a fire getting a bit too large, we now just have a fireworks display'.

### **Council Organised Fires**

In 1977, Leeds held what was to be its first municipal bonfire. It was held in Roundhay Park, to the North of the city. According to a newspaper account of the time, the fireworks were paid for by Fred Miller, who, in exchange was allowed to run a fair next to the display, free of charge. Unfortunately there are no surviving council records to corroborate or embellish the reciprocal arrangements between this or subsequent fair owners and bonfire events. Despite this, there is ample newspaper coverage to uphold the link between the privately-owned fairs and the council firework displays. By the following year, the fair complemented the 'Monster Bonfire' and 'spectacular firework display' with a weekend of attractions including a "Blond Bomb shell; Russian Roulette with Dynamite presentation with 'real explosives' and 'Royal Rama, Fire eating, [with the] biggest blow of flames ever seen in Leeds."<sup>558</sup>

The events at Roundhay proved popular, although this did not mark an instantaneous cessation of private bonfires. Evidence of their survival comes from newspaper reports<sup>559</sup> concerning Mischief Night. In 1978 over 100 private bonfires were lit prematurely. However, within two years of the launch of council-organised displays, senior officers in the West Yorkshire

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<sup>558</sup> Advert – Roundhay Park Leeds *Yorkshire Evening Post* (3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1978) p.24

<sup>559</sup> 'Mischief Shock – Gift Wrapped Car' *Yorkshire Evening Post* (4<sup>th</sup> November, 1978) p.3



Fire Brigade reported a significant decline in the number of private bonfires, in favour of the public events.<sup>560</sup>

The decline in the number of street fires led Derek Nayler<sup>561</sup> to write a somewhat sentimental article in the weekend section of the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, titled *Is the Bonfire Going Out?* Nayler's account records not only a decline in 'chumping' activities when he says 'but a few years ago the streets would be busy with lads and lasses hauling behind them trees branches and stumbling along with their old chairs and sideboards to feed local fires'. Despite lamenting the reduction of communal bonfires, Nayler goes on to state that there is 'no shortage of teenage beggars knocking upon doors asking for a penny for the guy'.<sup>562</sup> The subsequent decline in children 'guying' in Leeds will be discussed in more detail below.

While the popularity of large-scale bonfire events grew, it would be wrong to argue that the use of fireworks amongst the general population of Leeds declined. In an attempt to curtail the popular use of fireworks, the 1875 Explosives Act, effectively prohibited the use of fireworks on the streets by stating 'if any person throw, cast, or fire any fireworks in or into any highway, street, thoroughfare, or public space, he shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds'<sup>563</sup> and further amendments in the form of the Explosives (Age of Purchase) Act, 1976<sup>564</sup>, placed further restrictions on the sale of fireworks to young persons, from thirteen to sixteen, and increased the fine for those caught selling fireworks to them from twenty pounds to two hundred. Yet, it is clear from the warnings issued in Leeds newspapers, concerning the dangers of fireworks, that their use, particularly among teenagers remains popular. Such warnings were issued by both the police and fire departments in Leeds throughout the latter half of the twentieth century up to the present day and reflect national television campaigns urging people to keep to the 'fireworks code'. While such campaigns have

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<sup>560</sup> 'Bonfire night in the rain goes off with a wimper' *Yorkshire Evening Post* (6<sup>th</sup> November, 1979) p.7

<sup>561</sup> Derek Naylor 'Is the Bonfire Going Out?' *Yorkshire Evening Post. Weekend Post* (1<sup>st</sup> November, 1980) p.11

<sup>562</sup> Ibid. p.11

<sup>563</sup> *Explosives Act, 1875* Section 80

<sup>564</sup> *Explosives (Age of Purchase &c.) Act, 1976* Chapter 26 Section 1. - (1) and (2). [online] [Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2011]

undoubtedly encouraged attendance at organised events, the continuing need for such campaigns at least reflects the continued popularity of small-scale family fireworks displays. While such campaigns, along with the steady enforcement of safety legislation<sup>565</sup> and further amendments to the Fireworks Acts 1951, 1964 and 2003, have sufficiently changed public attitudes to health and safety in respect to fireworks to ensure that the use of fireworks on the street is uncommon, they are, at the time of writing, more often associated with Mischief Night. However, an article in the *Yorkshire Evening Post*<sup>566</sup>, as late as 1980 still felt it necessary to inform its readers that 'in addition to the distress and annoyance caused to other people, the discharging of fireworks in the street is illegal'.

By 1981, there was a recognisable trend for larger, organised bonfires and fireworks displays, such as that put on at East End Park, by the community association; Oulton Hall at Oulton, near Rothwell, organised by the West Yorkshire police; and Batley Community bonfire, which held a 'best Guy' contest<sup>567</sup>. Contrasting markedly with the editorial line of the *Leeds Mercury* in 1864, local Leeds newspapers a century later started to embrace the celebrations by not only publishing details of events at Roundhay, and those already mentioned, but by providing a list of events held across the region at Harrogate, North Allerton, Bridlington, Scarborough Wakefield and York. The express decision to shift events at Roundhay from the 5<sup>th</sup> a Thursday, to the 6<sup>th</sup> a Friday, 'so that children can stay up to the end' reflects the desire of the City Council, not only to promote the event, but also for it to be seen as a child-friendly event. Given the continued prominence of Mischief Night at this time, the council may have been partly motivated to move the celebration by a desire to do what it could to help shift the balance away from Mischief Night by making it a more attractive option. If so, this approach had a mixed effect, which will be looked at in more detail below.

The popularity of such organised events grew markedly. By 1996, Leeds City Council organised events, not only at Roundhay, attracting more

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<sup>565</sup> There have been twenty-two public general Acts of Parliament concerned with safety between 1932 and 2008 with six hundred and twenty-two corresponding statutory instruments between 1953 and 2011.

<sup>566</sup> 'Fireworks' *Yorkshire Evening Post* (4<sup>th</sup> November, 1980) p.5

<sup>567</sup> 'Where to take the kids' *Yorkshire Evening Post* (4<sup>th</sup> November, 1981) p.5

than 40,000 people<sup>568</sup>, but at six other locations across the city: Middleton Park; Bramley Park; East End Park; Spring Head Park; Rothwell and Woodhouse More. Each of these smaller events had their own bonfire and fire-works display, as well as accompanying fairs containing a number of rides, and stalls, from which live goldfish<sup>569</sup> could be won as late as 2010. By 2010, the popularity of Bonfire Night at Roundhay Park had attracted an estimated 70,000 people.

### **Guy Fawkes Effigies**

Ervin Beck's investigation into *Children's Autumn Traditions*<sup>570</sup> in Sheffield in 1985 provides the most significant study geographically close to Leeds to consider any aspect of Bonfire night in respect to Hallowe'en.<sup>571</sup> But more relevant to this chapter is an earlier paper of Beck's which looked more specifically at Guy Fawkes customs, and the use of Guy Fawkes effigies on bonfires and in 'Penny for the Guy' traditions, again in Sheffield.<sup>572</sup> Beck's sample of 649 children between eight and sixteen recorded a relatively healthy twenty three percent who made Guy Fawkes figures. Given that a number of children would share one figure, be it on the top of a communal fire, or as part of Guy door to door begging, it is clear that Guy Fawkes effigies were still popular and a significant part of Bonfire night tradition in Sheffield in the early 1980s.

During the course of this study, however, the number of Guy Fawkes effigies made in Leeds would appear to be significantly fewer than Beck's findings. From the accounts identified in this study, the use of a Guy is patchy. As noted above, the practice of 'parading a guy' was a common enough experience in Leeds to warrant comment in *The Leeds Mercury* in 1840 as to its 'deserved' decline, while Harrison describes the use of Guys at

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<sup>568</sup> 'Roundhay set for Sound and Light Spectacular' *Yorkshire Evening Post* (12<sup>th</sup> October, 1996) p.3

<sup>569</sup> Contrary to the efforts of an earlier RSPCA's campaign to outlaw the sale of live animals as fairground prizes. See Ben Hoyle 'Funfair goldfish see light at the end of Coconut shy' *The Times, The Sunday Times*, (7<sup>th</sup> July, 2003) [Online] [Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2011]

<sup>570</sup> Beck, 'Children's Guy Fawkes Customs'

<sup>571</sup> See chapter one

<sup>572</sup> Beck 'Children's Guy Fawkes Customs'

the turn of the turn of the twentieth century as 'very rare indeed'.<sup>573</sup> On the other hand, Nancy Ann Boyal's informants tend to make more frequent reference to a non-descript 'dummy', while both Cheryl Rienold account of the 1950s and Nayler account of the late 1970s describe the use of Guy Fawkes effigies for adorning the top of bonfires and for 'penny-for-the-Guying' respectively. More recently, council-organised bonfires in Leeds have not used any form of effigy, and in at least the south west area of Leeds, the period 2003-2011 produced few Guy Fawkes effigy sightings, although the practice has not completely disappeared. The following picture was taken in Bramley on 4th November 2010, and shows a Guy made by two children aged about twelve, situated at the door to a petrol station shop in the early evening. When asked why they had chosen the shop entrance in preference to door-to-door guying, they replied by saying that it 'was too risky' and 'this is easier'.



Photograph taken by author.

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<sup>573</sup> Harrison, *West Riding Childhood* p.24

Despite the dramatic decline in children 'Guying', they still maintained the phrase 'penny for the guy' which they said to every customer coming in and out of the shop. When they were asked what the money was for, they replied 'for fireworks' and added 'we make one every year'. While they may well do, they appear to be in a declining minority.

As historians such as Storch and Paz have made clear, the use of bonfire effigies until the latter half of the nineteenth century often took the form of unpopular figures such as the pope as much as Guy Fawkes. Storch<sup>574</sup> expands on this point when he informs us that such effigies often took the form of over-zealous policemen, unpopular local officials and disreputable local tradesmen among others. The use of political figures as targets for bonfire effigies found recent expression in Conservative-run Ripon, where the Council in 2009 placed an effigy of Gordon Brown on their Bonfire.<sup>575</sup> This mirrored previous bonfires in Lewes in east Sussex (and possibly unrecorded instances in many other areas of the country) during the 1980s where effigies of Margaret Thatcher and George W Bush were common. In keeping with this tradition, market traders in Leeds in 1985 fighting re-development plans put forward by the local council, not only made an effigy of the local councillor George Mudie<sup>576</sup> but they also burnt the effigy ceremoniously 'at the stake'<sup>577</sup>, and wrote a song to mark the event. Unfortunately the song could not be traced.

## Conclusion

From being one of many events celebrated with fires and fireworks, Guy Fawkes Night has become the pre-eminent time for bonfires as reflected in the synonym 'Bonfire Night' – a term which would not have necessarily implied 5<sup>th</sup> November during earlier centuries. The use of bonfires as a

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<sup>574</sup> Storch, *Popular Festivity* p.210

<sup>575</sup> 'Effigy of Gordon Brown to be torched on Bonfire Night' *Ripon Gazette* [Online][Accessed 26 May 2011]

<sup>576</sup> George Mudie councillor Leeds City Council between 1971 and 1992, and became a Labour MP for Leeds East in 1992

<sup>577</sup> A brief reference to the George Mudie Guy can be found at the end of an article titled: 'Glass in woman's eye as gang attacks bus' *Yorkshire Evening Post* (5<sup>th</sup> November, 1985) p.1

means of celebrating Guy Fawkes Night shifted from a formal commemorative event with church and civil authority backing and financial assistance, into a communal street level event, deprived of civil authority support, finally emerging with dual expression in the form of large-scale municipal events, and small private family garden fires by the end of the twentieth and early twenty-first century. Owing, perhaps, to the municipal appropriation of bonfire construction, the 'chumping' activities which so often led to minor acts of theft, damage and mischief around Guy Fawkes Night in Leeds, appear to have declined, leaving only a less-purposeful mischief tradition to continue.

The process of change which characterizes the way in which Guy Fawkes celebrations have been celebrated in Leeds is driven by multiple factors. On an economic level, the rise in prosperity of the city, as established in Chapter Two, led to a clearance of slum housing conditions in which families had lived 'cheek-by-jowl'. The corresponding growth in suburban housing estates not only provided better quality housing but an increase in private space, not least in the form of family gardens. The reduction of crowded living conditions allowed for the growth of a more private 'middle class' as Hoggart refers to it, family event, as opposed to street, bonfire. It is possible to infer from Hoggart's insights a gradual shift in social and cultural attitudes to Guy Fawkes celebrations and to the use of bonfires in general.

This shift can, furthermore, be viewed as a means of social adaptation to an ongoing process of political reform expressed through the gentrification of rough sports, and the regulation of gunpowder and fireworks. The diminishing financial support from civil authorities in the late eighteenth century for public bonfires and accompanying provisions served initially only to fuel social tensions and encourage the use of bonfires and effigies as a means of popular protest. Yet arguably it was the severing of civil authority funding that helped to promote a greater sense of personal ownership over Guy Fawkes celebrations. The widespread use of community street bonfires marked a shift away from a civil authority event, to one solely in the realm of individual, or street ownership, which in turn, in and around Leeds at least,

helped to further give rise for a demand for Mischief Night chumping activities.

Legislation concerning gunpowder use, and later with reference to fireworks, in both the nineteenth and twentieth century can be regarded as a move to advance a health and safety agenda. It is interesting to note that the application of safety regulations, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century, corresponds to a marked decline in the use of open fires in the home, and thus an increased alienation from the use of fire. But more directly, the impact of such legislation upon Guy Fawkes celebrations can also be interpreted as a continuation of the process of gentrification of rough sports that was promoted throughout the nineteenth century.

This process further benefited from an overall increase in consumer wealth and rising standards of living throughout the twentieth century. For Leeds this manifested itself in the form of post-war slum-clearances and the building of new housing stock with individual private gardens, whereby many council-tenants formerly resident in the close-packed terraces of central Leeds, were re-housed in the growing suburbs of Seacroft, Horsforth, Bramley, and further out in the town of Otley. Such growth not only managed to contribute to a 'civilised' expression of Guy Fawkes celebrations, but ultimately at least a partial erosion of the sense of ownership of the event. And, as a consequence, this gave rise to the eventual removal and ultimate alienation from the more riotous or loutish behaviour previously associated with the event. In this sense, the re-introduction of municipal Bonfire Night events in Leeds, as throughout the country, not only turns full-circle the relationship between the civil authority and the wider population of Leeds over the promotion of bonfires but in so doing it helps to reinforce and further promote what has become the established social order.

Thus, the use of bonfires has shifted markedly from a one which served in some senses as a political safety-valve for releasing political and social tensions (with attempts to curtail the event leading to acts of open defiance) to an event in which the majority have become passive recipients rather than proactive participants. Weighted down with safety legislation and commercial distractions in the form of accompanying fairs, such legislation has done much to alter social perceptions of the event from a rather ad hoc

affair to one which requires formal organisation and management, thereby removing many of the event's former impulsive or spontaneous aspects. The changing attitudes towards Guy Fawkes celebrations, particularly in the latter half of the twentieth century, reflect changing attitudes towards class. To comply with the prevailing social order by attending organised events, or holding a private bonfire display in the privacy of a family back garden, is to take on attributes of middle-class refinement.

Despite this, social tensions, particularly those generated through economic hardship, remain. Though such tensions are no longer expressed on Guy Fawkes Night itself, it appears that such tensions have found expression through the once relatively innocent Mischief Night and have helped to shift the character of this festival to one which, to some extent, takes on the earlier law-and-order-defying attributes of Guy Fawkes Night. In short, the gentrification of Guy Fawkes Night succeeded in neutering its more political functions. In keeping with Chris Humphrey's analysis<sup>578</sup> of the social role and meaning of medieval misrule, Bonfire Night in the twenty-first century cannot be viewed simply as either a vent to social tensions or as a catalyst for social unrest. Instead it must be seen as an expression of wider social culture, embedded within the structure of society, and as such helping to engender a sense of national identity. But in so doing, this process has created a vacuum, preventing the airing of local tensions. In part this vacuum has been filled by the more reckless aspects of Mischief Night, when social tensions are often directed towards authority figures, such as uniformed emergency services, as demonstrated in Chapter Five. The interplay between Mischief Night and Hallowe'en and their social role will be further considered in the final conclusion.

Guy Fawkes Night's resilience and ability to change and adapt to developing and changing constraints has resulted in its growing popularity as civic event across the city. While Hallowe'en is also growing in popularity, it would be unjustifiable to claim that it rivals Bonfire Night yet in terms of popularity and civic engagement. Furthermore, as shown in Chapter Three,

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<sup>578</sup> Chris Humphrey *The Politics of Carnival. Festive misrule in medieval England* (Manchester, 2001)



the form and expression of Hallowe'en is fragmented and is represented in a far wider range of celebratory activities dependent to a large extent on individual preference. In contrast, while private garden bonfires and firework displays are still common, they reflect a uniformity of expression not present in Hallowe'en or Mischief Night. The popularity of the municipal Bonfire Night displays in Leeds may in part be due to the accompanying fairs that are present at municipal Bonfire Night events, providing two key attractions at the same event. But, again, given the vast array of private family fireworks seen across the night sky across the city not only on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November but at least a week either side, taken with the considerable numbers of people that attend organised displays, it is clear that an individual sense of ownership for the event has not been completely lost. In any event, its popularity in Leeds is in little danger of declining, or merging with any other festival in the foreseeable future.

## Chapter Seven

### Hallowe'en Meets Mischief Night

In Pioneer days, Hallowe'en practices were scattered and regional until the great immigration in the 1840s. The Irish brought with them not only the religious observances of Hallowe'en but also their folklore remnants of Hallowe'en which included the traditional mischief. By the late 1880s, Hallowe'en had become a national observance in the United States, characterised by games, divinations, parties, and especially the children's custom of going "trick-or-treating" dressed in masks or costumes.<sup>579</sup>

This quote, from a study by Stacey Levinson et al (1992) into the 'consumptive experience' of Hallowe'en, clearly places the introduction of Hallowe'en and its mischief firmly at the door of the Irish during the 1840s. 'Trick or treat' is arguably the most recognisable aspect of the American Hallowe'en, and the findings of prominent figures such as Santino have largely reflected views in keeping with Levinson's assessment. Yet as previous chapters have shown, there are strong similarities of form between the 'trick' aspects of trick-or-treating and the 'mischief' associated with Mischief Night. The migration of ideas and customs is often more complex and less well defined than the migration of more tangible things such as people or even languages. Santino seems ready to recognise the migration of the Scots into Northern Ireland and the subsequent Scots/Irish to North America, yet places surprisingly little emphasis on English migrants and their impact on North American culture. Furthermore, Santino fails to satisfactorily recognise the extent of cross-migration between Britain and Ireland, beyond the Scots migration into Ireland. This cross-migration included significant numbers of English, and more specifically settlers from the North of England, as well as Scotland, into Ireland (both Northern and Southern) with Irish migrants moving into Lancashire and Yorkshire, as well as London and other

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<sup>579</sup> Stacey Levinson, Stacey Mack, Dan Reinhardt, Helen Suarez and Grace Yeh 'Halloween As A Consumptive Experience' *Advances in Consumer Research* [e-journal] Vol.19 (1992) 219-228 Available through Association for Consumer Research [Accessed 19 November, 2010]

areas.<sup>580</sup> Such patterns of migration represented recurrent features throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, reflecting the changing pattern of opportunities and hardship within the British Isles.

Thus the migrations to North America from both Britain and Ireland allow for a further cross-pollination of ideas, customs and traditions. By looking at the specific aspects of Hallowe'en and Mischief Night in Britain and Ireland, and comparing these with the history of migratory patterns both within the United Kingdom and from there to North America, this chapter seeks to draw attention to the geographical diversity of the Mischief Night tradition as well as to consider the impact that Mischief Night may have had on the North American Hallowe'en tradition.

In order to explore this dynamic, the chapter will firstly take a closer look at the commonalities and differences between the traditional Scottish and Irish Hallowe'en, and the Yorkshire Mischief Night. Secondly, it will then look at how such festivals would have had the opportunity to intermix within the British Isles through internal migration of people between Ireland, Scotland and England. In addition, this chapter will provide a brief account of the history of emigration from the Yorkshire region and more broadly the North of England, to North America. It will go on to look at where such migrants settled in respect to the Irish and Scottish communities, and whether they can be identified as establishing and maintaining recognisable Yorkshire communities in such a manner as to be able to feasibly allow for the continuity of the Mischief Night tradition at a time when it can be shown to have been actively practiced in the North of England. Thirdly, this chapter will compare and explore accounts of both Hallowe'en activities and acts of autumn 'mischief' both in North America and Canada. From this it will test the hypothesis that Yorkshire emigrants took with them, and continued to practice, their Mischief Night traditions. Furthermore, it will test the hypothesis that common aspects of the tradition in their earlier forms led to the eventual merger of Mischief Night with the Irish and the Scottish

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<sup>580</sup> See Kevin McCafferty 'The Northern Subject Rule in Ulster: How Scots, How English?' *Language Variation and Change* [e-journal] 15 (2003) 105-139 Available through: Cambridge Journals [Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2011] p.118,132.

Hallowe'en, becoming connected with the North American Hallowe'en of the late twentieth and early twenty first century.

### **Comparing and Contrasting the Scots, Irish and English Hallowe'en with Mischief Night.**

Whilst it is not necessary to repeat material that has already been covered in Chapter One, it is useful at this point to revisit and highlight some of the distinctive, as well as more widespread, features of Hallowe'en across Britain and Ireland, and how they compare with Mischief Night.

Accounts of Irish Hallowe'en practices are often presented, and often unquestioningly, as originating from Ireland's pre-Christian 'Celtic' or 'Pagan' past. Yet even amongst the heavily romanticised accounts from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, more historically plausible references are made to the Irish Hallowe'en in respect to All Saints; Patron Days and mumming plays, such as in John Hogan's *Patron Days And Holy Wells In Ossory*<sup>581</sup>. The paper is littered with references to "Druids lighting their sacred fires on the Eve of Samhain"<sup>582</sup>, yet it also makes more contemporary references to "our festival of All Saints"<sup>583</sup> which evidently nestled alongside the Irish Patron Saint feasts, in which believers not only sought protection and guidance from their chosen saint, but also offered "prayers and distribute[d] alms for their departed friends"<sup>584</sup>. He also makes reference to more widespread practices, such as making "use of nuts, apples, and other fruit"<sup>585</sup> which are easily recognisable aspects of the Scottish Hallowe'en tradition. Given the predominance of Catholicism in Ireland, even, and in some respects especially, following the failed Reformation,<sup>586</sup> it is hardly surprising to find ample references to All Saints, All Souls and All Hallows

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<sup>581</sup> John Hogan 1873 'Patron Days And Holy Wells In Ossory' in *The Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland, Fourth Series*. [e-Journal] Vol.2 No.2 (1873).261-281 Available through: Jstor database [Accessed 25 April, 2011]

<sup>582</sup> Hogan, *Patron Days* p.272

<sup>583</sup> Hogan, *Patron Days* p.262

<sup>584</sup> Hogan, *Patron Days* p.263

<sup>585</sup> Hogan, *Patron Days* p.272

<sup>586</sup> See Henry Holloway *The Reformation In Ireland: A Study of Ecclesiastical Legislation* (London, 1919) p.228-233 for a summary of how the Reformation failed within Ireland, and to an extent contributed to a greater devotion amongst the Irish both to the Pope and the Church of Rome. For a more contemporary account see Henry A Jefferies *The Irish Church and the Tudor Reformations* (Dublin, 2010)

Eve, even in the protestant heartlands in the North of Ireland, such as those in the *All Ireland Review*<sup>587</sup> as late as the turn of the twentieth century which, as with Hogan's account, assume ownership of the custom by referring to it as "our own All Hallows' Eve"<sup>588</sup> The following extract in Jack Santino's *The Hallowed Eve*<sup>589</sup> from an informant in 1944 from Loughinisland, County Down, provides a concise depiction of the associations and preparations made for the souls of the departed on All Souls' Eve:

It is believed that the dead whose souls are in Purgatory are permitted to return to the ancestral home on that night. In most houses the door is left on the latch, a good fire is kept burning all night, the floor is swept, all the chairs are set around the fire. The members of the household say the family rosary and go early to bed, but get up again about midnight, say a long rosary of fifteen decades, put more turf on the fire and go back to bed again in order to leave the departed souls in undisturbed possession of the fireside<sup>590</sup>.

Yet the beliefs associated with the Irish Hallowe'en are not restricted to the return of souls from purgatory. As previously mentioned in Chapter One, notions of returning souls around the time of All Saints and All Souls correspond to ideas found across both Britain and Ireland long after the Reformation. Though the formal recognition by the church may have been removed, the association between the onset of winter and the souls of the dead continued. Hallowe'en came to be regarded as being outside the normal parameters of time. Diarmuid O'Gillain refers to this in respect to the Irish Hallowe'en when he says that "the normal order of the universe is suspended, the barriers between the natural and the supernatural are temporarily removed, the *sidh*<sup>591</sup> lies open and all divine beings and the spirits of the dead move freely among men."<sup>592</sup>

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<sup>587</sup> No author given 'Samhain' *All Ireland Review* [e-Journal] Vol.3 No 34 (Oct.25, 1902) 554 Available through: Jstor database. [Accessed 25th April 2011]

<sup>588</sup> Ibid. P.554

<sup>589</sup> Santino, *Hallowed Eve*

<sup>590</sup> Santino, *Hallowed Eve* p.90

<sup>591</sup> Irish - A 'hill' under which the fairies are believed to live.

<sup>592</sup> Diarmuid Ó Giolláin 'The Leipreachán and Fairies, Dwarfs and the Household Familiar: A Comparative Study' *Báloideas* Vol. 52 (1984) 75-150 Available through: Jstor database [accessed 26/04/2001] P.130

The term 'spirits of the dead' therefore denotes not only the shades of saints and past family members (at least in Ireland) but also indicates mischievous fairies and banshees. The presence of banshees and other fairies in Irish mythology are often associated with given locations such as wells and woodlands as much as they are associated with any given time of the year<sup>593</sup>. Yet it seems that Hallowe'en's associations with death and the 'otherworld' provide a focal point in the year for belief in their influence over the living to come to the fore in the Irish folk record. The folklorist Elizabeth Andrews describes the precautionary measures used in Londonderry during the early twentieth century, that were used to protect against fairies, and the possible harm that they could do – usually in the form of abduction, at 'Hallow Eve'. She writes "The fairies, being believed to be fallen angels, are especially dreaded on Hallow Eve night. In some places oatmeal and salt are put on the heads of children to protect them from harm"<sup>594</sup>.

Amongst the aspects of other accounts of Hallowe'en customs recounted by Santino (in addition to that quoted above) is that of Hallowe'en pranks. As with Mischief Night, these were often, but not exclusively, the preserve of children. The nature of the pranks identified by Santino are also similar, such as letting livestock out of their pens; dismantling carts and reassembling them in unlikely places; smoking out household inhabitants and hiding gates. It might seem reasonable from this to conclude that any mischievous element associated with Hallowe'en inevitably originates from an older Irish tradition. Yet there are two important points to take into consideration when considering Santino's findings. Firstly, the vast majority of Santino's informants are recalling a middle-to-late twentieth century experience of a range of Irish Hallowe'en customs. This point is especially relevant to the section on pranks, where the majority of the testimony derives from the 1940s and 1950s. Secondly, the material is useful in that it clearly demonstrates that activity akin to that practiced on Mischief Night in Yorkshire can be positively identified in Ireland by the latter half of the

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<sup>593</sup> For an account of Irish Hallowe'en related mythology as expressed in general literature see Helen Sewell Johnson 'November Eve Beliefs and Customs in Irish Life and Literature' *The Journal of American Folklore*. Vol.81, No.320 (Apr – Jun., 1968) 133-142 Available through: Jstor database [accessed 20/04/2001]

<sup>594</sup> Elizabeth Andrews *Ulster Folklore* (London, 1913) p.96

twentieth century but not earlier. By contrast, the Yorkshire Mischief Night can be firmly evidenced throughout the nineteenth century (and even as far back as the eighteenth century). There is as yet, however, no direct evidence that these traditions share a common origin.

While Santino's findings on their own may not be representative of Ireland as a whole, many of the accounts he provides are drawn from Hallowe'en observances gained from a further countrywide Hallowe'en-focused questionnaire circulated by the Irish Folklore Commission in 1943. According to Caoimhin O Danachair<sup>595</sup> (first referenced in Chapter One) many of the replies that came from across the whole of Ireland, "told of the activities of young people going about the locality playing pranks or indulging in marriage divination". Santino's findings, in respect to Hallowe'en-related pranks, are therefore reflective of practices across the whole of Ireland, not simply Northern Ireland, during the twentieth century. The existence of Hallowe'en pranks in Ireland at this time raises important questions. Firstly, how far back can this association be traced? And secondly, to what extent can it have been influenced by other areas within Britain or further abroad? In many ways it is unfortunate that the great accumulation of Irish folklore gathered by the Irish Folklore Commission didn't take place a century or two beforehand, and in so doing potentially provide a greater indication of the antiquity of what otherwise could amount to only relatively recent Irish Hallowe'en pranking practices. Despite this limitation, earlier accounts of Hallowe'en in Ireland do exist. The *Dublin Penny Journal*<sup>596</sup>, for instance, ran a short article on Hallowe'en in 1833. The article describes the evening as one which is 'always spent in revelry and mirth'. The only reference to 'the various tricks practised' however, comes from a poem taken from Graham's *British Georgies* (1809) which makes reference to divination games commonly found in Scottish parlours. The use of tricks in this context bears no relation to a pranking or child-led mischief tradition.

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<sup>595</sup> O Danachair, *Distribution Patterns* 97-113

<sup>596</sup> No Name Given 'Hallowe'en' *Dublin Penny Journal* [e-journal] Vol.2. No.70 (Nov.2 1833)  
141 Available through: Jstor database [Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> November 2010]

A later informant named Ann Hagarty in Haddon's 1893 paper *A Batch of Irish Folklore*<sup>597</sup> also provides an early account of Hallowe'en in Ireland. But here again, the association is not with a pranking tradition, but with stories of people being led away, often for years at a time, by the fairies.

The fact that there is a pranking tradition associated with the Irish Hallowe'en does raise an important question. Do all of the Irish and Scots Hallowe'en pranking tradition and that of the Yorkshire Mischief Night, arise from an earlier, more widespread pranking tradition spread out across the British Isles, making them, therefore, essentially local variants of the same phenomenon? This possibility, which was briefly discussed in Chapter One, is not without merit. Firstly, since the Irish pranking tradition appears in the records from the mid-twentieth century throughout most of Ireland it would seem reasonable, even without further evidence, to speculate that it must be older still in order to be so well-established: conceivably originating in the nineteenth century or before. Secondly, there is the long-standing pranking tradition to be found in Scotland, particularly at Yule and New Year.<sup>598</sup> It might seem to be more than simply a matter of cultural convergence or coincidence that these traditions have established themselves with so many common features and relatively close geographical proximity to one another. They may in fact be the diffused forms of an older event.

However, studies by Hutton, the Opies, Callum Brown and others have identified nineteenth and twentieth century examples of children's mischief attendant on various festivities throughout the year in England and Scotland. In each of these examples the children's pranking element is attendant on and arises from a celebration encompassing the whole community. Thus there doesn't need to be a common ancestor to account for the similarity of the pranking element. Conceivably any community festival might evolve a mischievous element as long as the event provides the necessary excitement to the children and the young. And while all seasonal festivals provide an opportunity for children, (and adults for that matter, particularly in the case of the Shetland Isles) to engage in mischievous

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<sup>597</sup> A.C. Haddon, 'A Batch of Irish Folklore' *Folklore* [e-journal] Vol.4. No.3 (1893) 349-364 Available through Jstor database [Accessed 30th October, 2010] p.353-354

<sup>598</sup> Notwithstanding the well documented 'mischief' of the Shetland Isles as mentioned by Brown, *Up-helly-aa* p.84-125



activity, the convergence towards an autumn date may simply reflect the timing of festivals which balance the cover of darkness with a time before the cold of winter dissuades the young from venturing out with the same enthusiasm. If, conversely, there were indeed a single historic precursor common to the whole of the British Isles, strong evidence for this has not come to light during the course of this study.

From the evidence of the commission as presented through Santino, much of Hallowe'en in Ireland remained either in accordance with the Christian feast of All Hallows, a time for remembering and praying for the dead followed by communal meals or at least in keeping with these themes in the form of socialising and divining the future. Yet a further aspect of the night's events in rural Ireland included Hallowe'en 'guisers'. According to Kevin Danaher<sup>599</sup>, the Hallowe'en guisers would disguise their faces with masks, and in gangs, headed by horn-blowers, call upon farm houses demanding various food provisions. The wearing of masks afforded them not only protection against the fairy folk or other spirits abroad that night, but aided their disguise, so that any corresponding antics could be attributed not to them, but to the fairies. This assertion is supported by Hutton who argues that the youthful mimicry of malevolent spirits at Hallowe'en provided a natural stepping stone to playing pranks.<sup>600</sup> Danaher's account is important because in quoting from the Gaelic journal *Irisleabhar na Gaedhilge* published between 1882 and 1909, he provides an account far earlier than the work of the Commission. Danaher's account of Irish Hallowe'en guising activities in the county of Waterford on 'Hallow E'en' describes the night itself as Oidhche na h-aimleise, which Danaher translates as "The night of mischief or con."<sup>601</sup> It is hard to substantiate this translation. While Oidhche certainly seems to translate as 'night', according to the 1864 edition of *An Irish-English Dictionary*<sup>602</sup> the word 'aimleise' is a composition of "aim, and am, a negative" and "leise, s.f. happiness". Which when put together would probably read as 'The night of unhappiness'. Indeed, Danaher's translation may be further drawn into question given that the same dictionary has two

<sup>599</sup> Kevin Danaher *The Year in Ireland* (Cork, 1972) p.210-211

<sup>600</sup> Hutton *Stations* p.382

<sup>601</sup> Danaher, *Year in Ireland* p.211

<sup>602</sup> Edward O'Reilly *An Irish-English Dictionary* (Dublin, 1864) p.14, 327.

further entries that would be far more in keeping with Danaher's desired translation: "*aimhbeart*, s. an evil action, mischief" and "*aimhbeartach*, adj. mischievous." Given this, while it is highly likely that guisers enjoyed the opportunity to participate in pranks on Hallowe'en, we cannot look to Danaher to support the claim that the Irish in the latter half of the nineteenth century referred to the occasion as 'The Night of Mischief'.

As set out in Chapter One, the Scottish Hallowe'en is one which, to a large extent, has been built on and popularised by Robert Burns' 1785 poem "Hallowe'en". It should be noted that Burns was inspired by a similar-themed poem by John Mayne from 1780 in which ghosts, fairies and the supernatural roam<sup>603</sup> to which Burns added witches and devils. Furthermore, Burns and Mayne both express Hallowe'en as essentially an occasion which involves various divination games in which future marriages or deaths are foretold, and not necessarily one in which pranks are particularly prevalent. Nevertheless there are some early examples of pranks to be found in Scotland, such as the aforementioned early eighteenth century practice of "battering doors with stolen cabbages"<sup>604</sup>

### **Migration within the British Isles and Beyond.**

Though much of the inward migration into expanding industrial English cities such as Leeds and Bradford came from the surrounding rural districts, a significant proportion came from Ireland. The presence of the Caledonian Society in Leeds since 1894 also points to a Scottish population in Leeds but, as stated in Chapter Three, there is no clear way to determine the size of this population.

The course of Irish immigration into Britain has been extensively charted elsewhere and it is not the intention of this chapter to contribute anything to the wealth of material on this subject. The brief account provided below is intended only to illustrate a recognisable means by which childhood customs could potentially migrate.

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<sup>603</sup> See Robert Burns, Allan Cunningham *'The Works of Halloween'* (London, 1840) p.212

<sup>604</sup> Hutton, *Stations* p.382

According to the historian Hugh Heinrich<sup>605</sup>, the number of Irish migrating to Britain was second only to the numbers leaving for the United States. Even prior to the mass Irish emigrations of the 1840s into England and North America, the Irish made a significant contribution to the mill-working population across Lancashire and Yorkshire.<sup>606</sup> According to Blewett,<sup>607</sup> Irish immigration into the West Riding, as early as 1820, contributed to the rapid expansion of Bradford, resulting in a doubling of its size by 1850. By the early 1870s, the Irish population in Leeds was estimated at between 22,000 and 25,000 and up by a further 3,000 in the surrounding districts<sup>608</sup>. Sizable Irish communities, aided by cheap crossings, could also be found in the textile towns across the north of England, notably in Stalybridge, Ashton-under-Lyne, Liverpool and Manchester, where as early as 1830 the “Irish-born and their descendants formed around a fifth of the population”<sup>609</sup>

The influx of Irish immigrants does not, however, necessarily imply the migration of Irish families with young children or, conversely, that children who migrated were part of a family unit. The picture in this respect would seem to be mixed and complex. Studies which focus on Irish migration into England, such as those of Marie McClelland<sup>610</sup> and Donald MacRaild<sup>611</sup> highlight the large numbers of single young Irish migrants, both men and women, particularly prior to the 1840s. Michael Anderson<sup>612</sup> employs a common stereotype when writing “The Irish frequently came over as single men, and married in England” however, other sources suggest a more complex mix. For example, according to MacRaild, single Irish “men *and women* aged between 20 and 24 accounted for two-fifths of all emigrants

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<sup>605</sup> Hugh Heinrich *A Survey of the Irish in England* (1872) (London, 1990)

<sup>606</sup> See above, Chapter Two p.43-45

<sup>607</sup> Mary H. Blewett *The Yankee Yorkshireman* (Urbana, 2009)

<sup>608</sup> Heinrich, *Survey of the Irish* p.66

<sup>609</sup> Gerard Connolly ‘Irish And Catholic: Myth or Reality?’ in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds), *The Irish in the Victorian City* (London, 1995) p.226

<sup>610</sup> Marie McClelland ‘Catholic Education in Victorian Hull’ in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds), *The Irish in Victorian Britain* (Dublin, 1999) p.101-122

<sup>611</sup> Donald M. MacRaild *The Irish Diaspora in Britain*. Second Edition. (Basingstoke, 2011) p.9-12

<sup>612</sup> Michael Anderson *Family Structure in Nineteenth Century Lancashire* (London, 1971) p.40

[from Ireland]”<sup>613</sup> (my italics). Also, alongside the adult population, a significant number of those leaving Ireland were children travelling either as part of a nuclear family, with kin, or on their own. As well as heading for North America throughout the nineteenth century, many of these children travelled to England and Scotland. The years immediately following the famine witnessed the greatest exodus, with a conservative estimate of fifty six thousand people leaving between 1851 and 1855 and a further quarter of a million leaving by the turn of the twentieth century<sup>614</sup>. And in contrast to the large numbers of single male workers or ‘navvies’ that came to places like Leeds to work on such projects as the Leeds-Liverpool Canal during the latter half of the eighteenth century, the Irish migration of the nineteenth century was, at least according to David Fitzpatrick,<sup>615</sup> ‘essentially a family movement.’ It’s also worth saying at this point that accounts such as those provided by Davis, (1991)<sup>616</sup> Ó Tuathaigh (1985)<sup>617</sup> and Holmes (1978)<sup>618</sup>, make it clear that the growing Irish communities (whether in family groups or otherwise) which often took to the most rundown and deprived areas of any given city, were often met with considerable hostility and resistance from the established population.

The social and economic problems facing Irish communities were often compounded by prejudice, social exclusion and alienation. In spite of this, the influx of Irish families with young children during the nineteenth century ought to have presented a clear opportunity for English and Irish children, coming together in both in the mills and in schools, as well as in the wider community, to share their knowledge and experience of Hallowe’en and Mischief Night traditions. Yet there is little to suggest that, in England at least, such contact either interfered with the established Mischief Night or introduced the Irish Hallowe’en.

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<sup>613</sup> MacRaild, *Irish Diaspora* p.9

<sup>614</sup> See Thomas E. Jordan ‘Stay and Starve, or Go and Prosper! Juvenile Emigration from Great Britain in the Nineteenth Century’ *Social Science History* [e-journal] Vol. 9 No.2 (1985) 145-166 Available through: Jstor database [Accessed 20th April 2011] p.160

<sup>615</sup> David Fitzpatrick *Irish Emigration 1801-1921* (Dundalk, 1984)

<sup>616</sup> Graham Davis *The Irish In Britain* (Dublin, 1991) p.51-82

<sup>617</sup> M.A.G. Ó Tuathaigh ‘The Irish in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Problems of Integration’ in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley ed., *The Irish in the Victorian City* (London, 1985)p.13-37

<sup>618</sup> Colin Holmes ed., *Immigrants and Minorities in British Society* (London, 1978) p.81-111

There is a possibility that the Irish pranks associated with All Hallow's Eve guising may have helped to re-enforce the shift of Mischief Night from May-Eve to the eve of Guy Fawkes Night. But if this was the case, it might be expected that pranking traditions at or around Hallowe'en would be found in other English cities with a large early to mid nineteenth century Irish population. Such evidence is not forthcoming. That said, given the considerable cross-migration between England and Ireland during the nineteenth century, it is not unreasonable to suppose that to a greater or lesser extent the Irish pranking tradition may well have gained something of its character from Mischief Night. In either case, the Mischief Night tradition maintains its own distinct identity in northern England throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. In order to follow its possible influence on the American Hallowe'en tradition it is necessary to chart the possible transmission of the tradition through the migration of those who would have practiced it.

### **Yorkshire & Lancashire Emigration to America and Canada**

If the Yorkshire Mischief Night has contributed to the North American expression of Hallowe'en, the tradition, as a childhood custom, would have had to have been transported and maintained by children. This then demands not only emigrants from areas familiar with a Mischief Night tradition, but also the emigration of families with young children who would have been able to take such traditions with them, or at least children who have been transported, as a great many were, through the legal and charitable efforts following reforms to the Poor Law. And, it demands that such migrants settled within a relatively close proximity to each other, in order for such practices to become established within any cohesive meaningful context.

There are records of migrants leaving the British Isles, and indeed returning to the British Isles, especially in the form of passenger lists, since the Mayflower set sail from Plymouth in 1620. Yet such accounts are often

fragmentary and often under-represent the true numbers of migrants<sup>619</sup>. Of use to this study are those that are able to shed light on the number of emigrants formerly resident in the North of England, particularly Yorkshire and Lancashire during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Having established that the trend of migration was from this region to North America, this chapter will shift its focus onto the story of those settlers, particular those from the Leeds and Bradford area. By focusing on the history of emigrants from Leeds and Yorkshire to America and Canada this chapter seeks to present a picture of a long-standing transplanted Yorkshire community in North America that grew and developed with successive waves of migration as well as continued contact with elements who stayed behind. This 'community' provided fertile ground for the continuation of localised cultural traditions.

The history of emigration from England to America can be comfortably traced back to the seventeenth century, and is presented in some detail in David Fischer's seminal work *Albion's Seed*.<sup>620</sup> In the course of just eleven years between 1629 and 1640 England witnessed what Fisher described as nothing short of an "exodus" of "some 80,000 men, women and children [who] swarmed outward from their island home."<sup>621</sup> Fleeing a country gripped by economic depression, disease and the political fallout arising from Charles I's attempt to rule without a parliament, some 21,000 fled to North America. The majority were puritans who originated from East Anglia, or were connected to an East Anglican minister or magistrate in some way.<sup>622</sup> This is amply reflected in the place names in Massachusetts, eighteen of which echo names found in Suffolk, Essex and Norfolk. But the impact made by large numbers of early East Anglican puritans overshadows the numbers of less influential emigrants from other areas of England. Though comparatively small in number, emigrants from Yorkshire and Lancashire make up some one hundred and twenty three families in New England originating from the Winthrop fleet of 1630 that went on to found New

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<sup>619</sup> Charlotte Erickson, *Leaving England: Essays on British Emigration in the Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca and London, 1994)

<sup>620</sup> David Fischer, *Albion's Seed. Four British Folkways In America* (Oxford, 1989)

<sup>621</sup> Fischer, *Albion's Seed* p.16

<sup>622</sup> Fischer, *Albion's Seed* p.39

England. Combined, both counties represented the fifth largest of English counties represented in migrations of the period, shortly behind Dorset with one hundred and twenty seven.<sup>623</sup>

Many Yorkshire farmers during the 1770s were also enticed into migrating to Nova Scotia with promises of land and property from land dealers such as Michael Francklin. Francklin needed emigrants to work his land in Nova Scotia and in so doing help settle his rising debts. According to the historian Bernard Bailyn<sup>624</sup>, Francklin focused his attention not on the semi-industrial areas of the West Riding of Yorkshire, but in the more rural North Ridings, Pennines and Dales. Many farmers were being hit hard by a steep rise in enclosures and sharp increases in rent from manor landlords during the 1760s. Such 'improvements', as they were often regarded by landlords of the time, often provided the impetus for many farmers to at least consider migration as a viable alternative. Bailyn provides an example of this when recounting the improving efforts of the M.P. Beilby Thompson. In his efforts to modernise Escrick (just south of York), and increase profits Thompson "enclosed open fields and commons... diverting roads, turning strips fields into parkland, and tearing down old houses in the village and building (in fewer numbers). And ... raised rents"<sup>625</sup> Such 'improvements' drove many farmers off the land. Bailyn goes on to describe the fate of John Bulmer, a tenant farmer of Thompson, who at the age of 45 along with his wife and three sons, left from Hull on the ship *Two Friends* for Nova Scotia. Thompson's actions were not unique and similar rent increases from landlords such as the Duke of Rutland, Lord Cavendish and Weddell enabled Francklin to exploit large numbers of farmers who had the wherewithal to migrate.

A recognition of Yorkshire surnames in North American directories, customs records and business accounts formed the starting point for Herbert Heaton's exploration into *Yorkshire Cloth Traders in the United States*.<sup>626</sup> The impact of the Yorkshire cloth trade in North America was, according

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<sup>623</sup> Fischer, *Albion's Seed* p.35

<sup>624</sup> Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West. A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of Revolution* (New York, 1986)

<sup>625</sup> Bailyn, *Voyagers* p.376

<sup>626</sup> Herbert Heaton 'Yorkshire Cloth Traders in the United States 1770-1840' *Thoresby Society Miscellany*, Vol. XXXVII, Part III 225-287 (Leeds, 1944)

Heaton, considerable, building up over a seventy year period between 1770 and 1840. By 1790 the American market accounted for thirty percent of woollen and worsted exports, of which Leeds and the West Ridings produced a significant share. By 1890 Yorkshire was responsible for a quarter of woollen exports to North America<sup>627</sup>. Yet these figures hide a rollercoaster of high and low demand: American economic depression resulting in debts to British traders; fluctuating import and export duties; as well as significant variations in market prices contributed to numerous bankruptcies on both sides of the Atlantic. The resulting economic instability in West Yorkshire, which relied heavily on the cloth trade, was substantial.

In contrast, the financial opportunities in America were considerable, and merchants such as John Ackroyd of Leeds and Thomas Swaine of Halifax joined a growing number of British firms in New York and Philadelphia who were in the process of shifting production from Yorkshire to America leading many clothiers, attracted to the growing cloth trade, to join established communities of fellow Yorkshire people in America.

Farmland proved equally profitable. The following extract from an advert in the Leeds Intelligencer in February 1775 from the former Leeds merchant Mr John Wetherhead provides insight into some of the opportunities presented to Leeds residents with the ability to relocate.

The principle Proprietor of the Township of Blenheim being himself a Yorkshireman is very desirous of selling to and settling the said Tract [46,000 acres of land] with Forty or Fifty Families of his own Countrymen on whose Industry and Honesty he could depend. He therefore proposes to sell the Fee Simple of the Farms or Lots to such a number, or to a lesser Number of good substantial Farmers, at the rate of Six Shillings Sterling per acre.<sup>628</sup>

Yet as Heaton goes on to explain, Wetherhead's advert was but one of many. He notes that between 1770-3 advertisement columns in the *Leeds Intelligencer* and *Leeds Mercury* "are sprinkled with notices of ships which are available for the carriage of passengers and goods from Hull to Rhode Island, Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Philadelphia and New York". The

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<sup>627</sup> Heaton, 'Yorkshire Cloth Traders' p.227

<sup>628</sup> John Wetherhead 'New York Advertisement' *Leeds Intelligencer*. (21 February 1775) p.1



lure of a new life in America attracted considerable numbers from the Leeds region, prompting the following report in the *Leeds Mercury* in May 1774:

Several families in this town, among which are butchers, joiners, etc., are disposing of their effects in order to try their fortunes in the Western World. There is scarcely a week but some are setting off from this part of Yorkshire for the Plantations, finding it next to impossible in the present lamentable state of trade and dearness of provisions to provide, in any sort, for themselves and families. Some that have lately gone and are now going are persons of considerable property.<sup>629</sup>

Concern over the number of emigrants leaving the United Kingdom, and the subsequent drain of money and personnel, prompted John Pownall (undersecretary to Lord Dartmouth) in November 1773 to propose a formal recording of emigrants leaving from English and Scottish ports. The weekly registers are regarded as incomplete, many more leaving than were officially recorded and they only continued until the American War of Independence brought a brief cessation of emigration in April 1776. However, they do provide valuable insights into the age and profession of emigrants from the Yorkshire region at that time, and their known destination. According to Michael Cooney's *Emigrants of Yorkshire*<sup>630</sup> some 691 of the 938 known to have come from Yorkshire between 1772 and 1775 went to Nova Scotia in Canada. Other destinations included New York, Philadelphia and Halifax.

Emigration records following the War of Independence are patchy, yet it is evident<sup>631</sup> that Yorkshire migrants continued to settle in throughout North America well into the nineteenth century, not least due to further agricultural depression in England during the 1830s and an influx of cheap Irish labour into England following the devastating potato famines during the second half of the 1840s and early 1850s. Furthermore, industrial innovation and the introduction and growing use of labour-saving devices such as the spinning jenny and the power-loom also played its part in encouraging emigration

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<sup>629</sup> Untitled Article. *Leeds Mercury*, (17 May 1774) p.3

<sup>630</sup> Michael F Cooney *Emigrants of Yorkshire* (Hull, 1994)

<sup>631</sup> See Stanley Johnson *A History of Emigration from the United Kingdom to North America 1763-1912* (London, 1913) p.47-59

from the north of England. Stanley Johnson<sup>632</sup> draws attention to a Select Committee on Emigration report 1826-7 which looked at the impact of industrial progress on employment figures and emigration in particular reference to hand-loom weavers. It states:

For some time, the advance of the cotton trade was so rapid as nearly, if not altogether, to absorb, in the more productive system, the hands thus thrown out of employment. But difficulties, arising from a temporary check in trade, shortly fell upon the weavers, with the double pressure of these two combined causes, a diminished demand for the produce of their industry and an increased facility of production.

The increasing levels of contact between Yorkshire to America are also reflected in American place-names such as Leeds (one in Maine, another in Massachusetts), Wakefield (Massachusetts) and Halifax (Massachusetts).

Considerable attention is often given by historians such as Fischer, to the large numbers of Irish emigrants leaving for North America particularly in years of 'famine'<sup>633</sup>, yet figures presented by Jonson (1913) reveal that this emphasis can overlook the significant numbers of English migrants in the period immediately following the Irish famine. The chart below<sup>634</sup> breaks down the number of British passengers destined for America and Canada, into respective English, Irish and Scottish groupings in the latter half of the nineteenth, and early twentieth century. Furthermore, the chart, along with eighteenth and nineteenth century newspaper reports and adverts indicates that rather than transatlantic crossings and migrations being occasional events, they were, as they still are, recurrent features throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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<sup>632</sup> Johnson, *A History of Emigration* p.53-4

<sup>633</sup> A controversial term given the vast amounts of food, other than potato produced in Ireland during the 1830s, 40s and 50s and sold to England by English landowners while hundreds of thousands of native Irish starved. A point Davis highlights in *The Irish in Britain* p.14 when he says that "the very ships that transported thousands of emigrants across the Irish Sea to British ports carried a more 'valuable' cargo of wheat, oats, barley, butter, eggs, beef, pork and lamb, sufficient in 1847... to feed four times as many people as were leaving the country".

<sup>634</sup> Adapted from Johnson, *A History of Emigration* p.347

| Year    | English to<br>Canada | Scotch to<br>Canada | Irish to<br>Canada | English to<br>USA | Scotch to<br>USA | Irish to USA |
|---------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 1853-60 | 30,328               | 28,400              | 64,680             | 195,680           | 35,064           | 574,848      |
| 1861-70 | 65,890               | 24,340              | 40,080             | 365,110           | 76,670           | 690,840      |
| 1871-80 | 126,380              | 25,810              | 25,810             | 549,780           | 88,070           | 449,550      |
| 1881-90 | 222,220              | 35,190              | 44,510             | 909,190           | 178,160          | 626,600      |
| 1891-95 | 88,885               | 8,585               | 6,175              | 371,005           | 71,620           | 243,170      |
| 1896    | 12,802               | 1,563               | 902                | 48,434            | 10,535           | 39,952       |
| 1897    | 13,442               | 1,281               | 848                | 43,381            | 9,121            | 32,882       |
| 1898    | 15,975               | 1,685               | 1,065              | 42,244            | 7,372            | 30,878       |
| 1999    | 15,050               | 1,717               | 873                | 45,723            | 8,128            | 38,631       |
| 1900    | 13,819               | 1,703               | 888                | 49,445            | 11,504           | 41,848       |
| 1901    | 15,748               | 1,733               | 962                | 57,246            | 11,414           | 35,535       |
| 1902    | 20,985               | 3,811               | 1,497              | 58,382            | 12,225           | 37,891       |
| 1903    | 46,760               | 10,296              | 2,596              | 68,791            | 15,318           | 39,557       |
| 1904    | 54,051               | 12,715              | 2,915              | 76,546            | 17,111           | 52,788       |
| 1905    | 64,876               | 14,214              | 3,347              | 58,229            | 19,785           | 44,346       |
| 1906    | 88,099               | 22,278              | 4,482              | 76,179            | 23,221           | 45,417       |
| 1907    | 110,329              | 33,393              | 7,494              | 91,593            | 24,365           | 54,306       |
| Total   | 1,005,639            | 228,714             | 209,124            | 3,106,958         | 619,683          | 3,079,039    |

The figures for the first five year group entries are multiples of the annual average between the years stated, and are therefore estimates, yet even with these rough figures, the chart reveals that the combined number of English emigrants to both Canada and the United States, stood some eight hundred and twenty four thousand, four hundred and thirty four higher than the combined figures for Irish emigrants over the same fifty four year period, with significantly lower numbers (less than eight hundred and fifty thousand) from Scotland. This chart is important because it identifies a comparable increase of English emigrants at the time which coincides with an increase in the number of recorded accounts of Mischief Night in the Ridings, as discussed in Chapter Four.

As indicated above, not all children who emigrated to North America did so as part of a family unit. Many children from Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire, as well as from London and other parts of the country, were transported, often by over-zealous charitable or philanthropic organisations such as Dr. Barnardo's, following a report of a Select Committee of the

House of Lords in 1827 which argued that the one-off cost of transporting children, identified either as criminal or destitute and therefore a social burden, to the various outposts of the British colonies, was cheaper than the ongoing expense to the tax-payer of the workhouse<sup>635</sup>. A more personalised report is provided in James Hole's<sup>636</sup> account of the state of education in Leeds, in which he makes reference to the transportation and subsequent adaptation to life in Canada of five former residents of the Adel reformatory. Though this is but a single example, the overall numbers of children (aged up to fourteen) leaving the British Isles throughout the nineteenth century was significant. According to Jordan<sup>637</sup> the estimates for child migration to both the United States and British North America grew from over six hundred in 1815, to nearly twenty thousand by 1830, mushrooming to over ninety thousand by 1850 and closely approaching ninety four thousand by 1890. Given both the influx of Irish into Lancashire and Yorkshire throughout the nineteenth century and the significant numbers of children leaving England involved, it is not unreasonable to suppose that these child emigrants represented both Irish immigrants and native English, although there is nothing in the records to either substantiate or undermine such an assertion. If this were the case, it is furthermore not unreasonable to suppose that even in the unlikely event that there was no social interaction between the two groups prior to their departure from England, the voyage itself may well have provided an opportunity to share knowledge and experience of calendar customs practised. Thus, even if it could be demonstrated that the English-born and Irish-born child emigrants from England did not mix prior to emigration, we are still left with two groups with distinct and recognisable pranking traditions crossing the Atlantic and arriving together throughout the nineteenth century.

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<sup>635</sup> Jordan, 'Stay and Starve' p.146

<sup>636</sup> James Hole *"Light, More Light"! On the Present State of Education Amongst the Working Classes of Leeds and How it Can be Improved* (Whitefish, 2009[1860])

<sup>637</sup> Jordan, 'Stay and Starve' p.153&154

## Yorkshire Settlements in North America and the Case for the Migration of Children's Traditions

Possibly one of the earliest accounts of English autumn traditions in North America can be found in an account provided by L. Douglas Good<sup>638</sup> in his article *Colonists at Play: Leisure in Newport 1723* certainly suggests that early English colonists continued to celebrate associated customs such as 'Gun Powder Day' as one of several special days in the calendar in and around Newport, Rhode Island. He writes:

Other special days included the kings birthday, commemorations of British victories, and Gunpowder Day. Celebration of the last was typical – effigies were burned, cannons discharged, city officials visited, drinks downed. Processions marched, masqueraders thronged streets, singing crowds invaded houses, huge bonfires illuminated the town at night.

While this may well be an accurate account of gunpowder day activities in the early 1720's it is hard to establish such accounts within Good's acknowledged sources, and the lack of further supportive evidence unfortunately draws his account into question.

Certainly, the material from the eighteenth and nineteenth century would seem to support the premise that many emigrant children did leave Yorkshire, as with other areas of England, either as part of young families, particularly for those who responded to the opportunity to purchase farm land, or as part of Poor Law Reforms. The *knowledge* of the Yorkshire Mischief Night therefore may well have crossed the Atlantic. However, if the custom was to survive at all in its new home, arguably it would have been necessary for children from Yorkshire and Lancashire communities to have maintained something of a community structure on their arrival.

For commentators such as Francesco Cordasco<sup>639</sup> and John Bodnar<sup>640</sup> the English settlement into North America encountered little in the

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<sup>638</sup> L. Douglas Good 'Colonials at Play: Leisure in Newport 1723' *Rhode Island History* [online] Vol.33:1 (February 1974) 9-17 Available through: The Rhode Island Historical Society [Accessed 9<sup>th</sup> July 2012] p.14

<sup>639</sup> See Francesco Cordasco ed., *A Bibliography of American Immigration History: George Washington University Project Studies* (Fairfield, 1978)

way of resistance and the assimilation of the English is regarded as having been a swift and often uneventful affair. This might indicate that the English were less likely to form geographically close communities. However, Blewett<sup>641</sup> argues that the settlers from Yorkshire not only maintained the spirit of Yorkshire tradition within the framework of the transplanted textile community, but that such ties transcended the perceived generic Anglo-Saxon assimilation, and as such presented as an ethnic group in their own right. The basis of Blewett's argument rests on grounds that "Yorkshiremen" maintained a "stubborn and pervasive resistance to assimilation, an abiding transatlantic political perspective and a fierce loyalty to Yorkshire cultural identity."<sup>642</sup> Indeed, despite arguing that "The strong family element in early nineteenth century immigration enhanced the acceptability and relative contentment of English migrants" Cordasco goes on to acknowledge that the "English-speaking foreign-born residents of these regions [Massachusetts and Rhode Island] were somewhat less likely to move on to other areas than either the native-born or other immigrant groups". This may well be down to some extent to economic necessity, yet accounts such as Blewett suggest that the English, as with other immigrant groups<sup>643</sup> took at least a generation or two to take on a fully American identity.

Resistance to the loss of Yorkshire cultural identity is evident in the accounts provided by James Burnley<sup>644</sup> of factory life, and the wider social context of Bradford migrants in Boston and Lawrence, New England in as late as 1880. In identifying the extent to which communities even from within the West Ridings stayed geographically close together once settled in North America, he writes:

Lawrence is sometimes called the Bradford of America, for it is there that Bradford Americans come out the strongest... Bradford faces meet you in the street, Bradford saloon keepers supply you with a glass of lager, Bradford people stand behind the counters of the

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<sup>640</sup> John Bodnar *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington, 1985)

<sup>641</sup> Blewett, *Yankee Yorkshireman*

<sup>642</sup> Blewett, *Yankee Yorkshireman* p.64, 65,95

<sup>643</sup> See William Pencak, Selma Berrol and Randall M Miller ed., *Immigration To New York* (Philadelphia, 1991)

<sup>644</sup> James Burnley *Two Sides Of The Atlantic* (London, 2009 [1880])

shops, Bradford names stare out from numerous sign-boards in the principal street, and, once you get inside a factory, its Bradford, Bradford everywhere.<sup>645</sup>

From the above quote, it is clear that the English, as with other immigrant groups such as the Italians and the Czechs<sup>646</sup>, retained a notable proportion of their social and cultural identity. With that identity comes, what John Bodnar<sup>647</sup> succinctly describes as a “rich repository of song, dance, and folktales”. Going on to describe the significance and longevity of a given set of cultural expressions, he continues, “much of the folklife and culture of immigrants proved surprisingly resilient and actually functional in their new lives in industrial cities. Indeed, folk culture could serve to reinforce group identity in the face of meeting new groups...”<sup>648</sup>

However useful folklife was in respect to an individual groups’ cultural identity, it frequently became an adaptive and evolving process which reflected the changing economic and social environments that migrant communities faced<sup>649</sup>.

From this it is possible to argue that a Yorkshire-based Mischief Night had both the opportunity to migrate, and the opportunity to continue and spread within a Yorkshire community context, although if Bodnar’s premise concerning the necessary adaptive quality of folk-tradition is correct, it becomes relevant to this study to examine the extent to which Mischief Night and Hallowe’en retained their character in North America, and the extent to which they may have adapted and indeed become amalgamated to create new variants.

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<sup>645</sup> Burnley, *Two Sides* p.62

<sup>646</sup> See Svatava Pirkova-Jakobson ‘Harvest Festivals Among Czechs and Slovaks in America’ *Journal of American Folklore* [e-journal] Vol.69. No.273(July–Sep, 1956) 226-80 Available through Jstor database [Accessed 9th May 2011] and Lawrence Pisani *The Italian in America* (New York, 1975) p.175-76

<sup>647</sup> Bodnar, *Transplanted* p.185

<sup>648</sup> Bodnar, *Transplanted* p.185

<sup>649</sup> Stephen Stern ‘Ethnic Folklore and the Folklore of Ethnicity’ *Western Folklore* [e-journal] Vol.36 No.1 (1977) 7-32 Available through: Jstor database [Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> May 2011]

## Accounts of North American Hallowe'en and Mischief

The strength and resilience of the Yorkshire identity can certainly be found in Canada, particularly in Brigus Newfoundland where the English Guy Fawkes Night traditions have been maintained in the form of Bonfire Night. Catherine Schwoeffermann's study *Bonfire Night in Brigus, Newfoundland*<sup>650</sup> during 1977 and 1980 highlighted a number of interesting factors in respect to the Mischief Night tradition. The colony in Brigus dates back to 1675 and has been built predominantly on its fisheries. Interestingly, the name 'Brigus' may itself be a corruption of 'Brighthouse' near Bradford in keeping with the town of origin of its English founders. While the Guy Fawkes bonfires may have lost the 'Guy' (until one family's introduction or re-introduction of this element in the 1970s) the preparations for their 'Bonfire Night' have remarkable similarities to the Yorkshire pre-bonfire night traditions. These similarities included the preparation and collection of combustible material by adolescent groups who would often not only collect but raid and exploit each others' respective hoard. An informant of Schwoeffermann's describes this practice, when he says "We'll raid their places where they have their barrels hid. If they raid us one night, on the night after, we'll go back and try to get back what they stole from us, plus a little more."<sup>651</sup> This form of raiding, mirrors the Yorkshire and Lancashire descriptions of 'chumping', and the parallels are further reinforced by descriptions of what they would steal for the fire including traditional gates, and barrels as well as the more contemporary car tyres. The tradition in Brigus differs from that in Yorkshire, in that it is the sole preserve of young boys, rather than boys and girls. And, while most groups are aged between twelve and sixteen, the age range has shifted to include occasional older participants up to thirty. The example of Brigus is unusual in that while the practitioners are assured that they will be 'getting away with' activities normally falling outside of the law, this did not seem to extend to pranks directed to other members of the community.

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<sup>650</sup> Catherine Schwoeffermann 'Bonfire Night in Brigus, Newfoundland' in Santino, *Hallowe'en and Other* p.62-81

<sup>651</sup> Schwoeffermann, *Bonfire Night* p.67



North American Hallowe'en pranks akin to those of Mischief Night are visible in earlier accounts in the Kingston, Ontario, Daily News in both 1889 and 1890. The following extract from Rogers (2002) places emphasis on the trick or pranking aspect, which, as with the Brigus Bonfire Night, afforded a 'special licence' to working class, often male, adolescent revellers.

Revellers were usually given a 'special licence' to be merry on Halloween, and the public normally respected the tradition...Neighbourly pranks were also very much a part of the festive raillery. It was customary to root up vegetables from backyard gardens, disfigure jack-o-lanterns on front porches, unhinge gates and shutters, tip over outhouses, pull down signs and fences, and even tear up the wooden boarded sidewalks.<sup>652</sup>

The account is described in the context of Hallowe'en and there is no mention of 'chumping' activity to relate it to events practiced in Yorkshire and Lancashire on the eve of Guy Fawkes Night. Yet, the description of the pranks 'uprooting vegetables' 'unhinging gates' and pulling down signs and fences', and the 'special licence' allowing them to 'get away with it' on that night are recognisably the traits of Mischief Night but it is not clear whether they have their origin in an exclusively Irish, English or Scots tradition.

The following report in the New York Times<sup>653</sup>, from Westchester County, New York in 1894 provides a further clear example of pranking activities in North America, once more practiced on Hallowe'en, including the customary swapping gates and signs, and general pranks.

The boys of Westchester County celebrated Hallowe'en by exchanging gates, signs, &c., and indulging in many pranks to the annoyance of citizens and storekeepers generally. Chinese laundry signs were found in front of drug stores and hardware signs in front of millinery establishments. It took some time to readjust matters yesterday morning.

A more creative endeavour took place on Hallowe'en six years later on Long Island, less than twenty miles from Lawrence, (the 'Bradford of America'). Large numbers of headstones, taken from a local marble yard,

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<sup>652</sup> Rogers, *Halloween* p.57

<sup>653</sup> 'Westchester County' *The New York Times* [Online] (2<sup>nd</sup> November 1894) [Accessed 18 May 2011]

were positioned around a boarding house, occupied by a number of young teachers, creating the effect of a cemetery around the house.<sup>654</sup> Despite the initial shock, both the landlord and the teachers seemed to have taken the prank in good spirits.

The disruption and antics of students of Leeds University<sup>655</sup> during the 1950s (mentioned in Chapter Four) came some seventy years after students of Toronto College started a twenty-year-long tradition of Hallowe'en mayhem. As described in Chapter One, the night's events consisted of a semi-structured march into the town, followed by a rowdy attendance of a theatre performance. Yet, according to Walden<sup>656</sup> the night then "transformed into an evening of gaiety and petty mischief". Speaking of the contrast between the more formal Hallowe'en supper held by the Caledonian society and more general widespread minor disruptions of students and children and youths from the wider population alike, Walden goes onto argue that:

In the Queen City, by the latter part of the nineteenth century, Hallowe'en inaugurated the winter social season [incorporating] evening shenanigans, most of which were perpetrated by groups of young boys and girls. Common pranks included ringing door bells, setting small fires, and coercing fruit and confectionary store owners to shell out.<sup>657</sup>

This last reference to eliciting fruit and confectionary from store owners is particularly interesting as it introduces a clear 'treat' element to the pranks and small fires.

H.J Rose's 1921 paper *Canadian Folklore*<sup>658</sup> presents an additional account of Hallowe'en customs, this time in Montreal. Rose describes the practice of children dressed up with blackened faces and going 'door to door, asking for Hallowe'en apples'<sup>659</sup>, as a recent (1911-1913) practice. As

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<sup>654</sup> Gruesome Halloween Joke. Tombstone from a Dealer's Yard Scare a Patchogue Household ' *New York Times* [Online] (November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1900) [Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011]

<sup>655</sup> See chapter four.

<sup>656</sup> Walden, *Respectable Hooligans* p.6

<sup>657</sup> Walden, *Respectable Hooligans* p.6

<sup>658</sup> H.J.Rose, 'Canadian Folklore' *Folklore* [e-journal] Vol.32. No.2 (June, 1921) 124-131 Available through: Jstor database [Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2010]

<sup>659</sup> Rose, *Canadian Folklore*. p.126

with Toronto, Rose maintains that an earlier form of Hallowe'en took the form of 'rather noisy and rowdy processions of students and other young people, who sometimes did damage to property, - shopkeepers signs, etc...' <sup>660</sup>

Rose's account is also useful in that it highlights a time of transition between when a wide mixture of different practices, associated with Hallowe'en, are identifiable. These include young boys firing pea-shooters at windows; apple bobbing, and possibly one of the earliest accounts of the making, what Rose refers to as 'jack-o-lanterns' out of pumpkins; Hallowe'en parties and children dressed as goblins or witches <sup>661</sup>.

The possible merging, or at least relationship between Irish and Scottish Hallowe'en traditions and Mischief Night may be present in the following account of a party, held by the Rev. Mr. Nelson at Pocantico Hills, about forty miles due north of Lawrence, again in the New York Times <sup>662</sup>, in 1914. The event was made newsworthy by the attendance of John D Rockefeller, who "gathered the young folk round the fireside to hear tales of the pranks of his boyhood". Furthermore, he "took the lead in ducking for apples", and looked "into the glass over the flame of a candle, and other seasonal gayeties" akin to Scottish Hallowe'en practices. A combined Irish and Scottish flavour was added on his arrival where "the house was darkened, and goblins, witches, spooks and other supernatural things jumped at him from the shadows of the porch".

Possibly the most dramatic and memorable account that may indicate the conflation of Mischief Night with Hallowe'en in America came with Orson Welles' radio adaptation of H.G Wells "War of the Worlds". Broadcast on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1938 the show caused panic on the streets as thousands believed that an alien invasion was underway. Perhaps the strongest echo of Mischief Night comes when, in an attempt to account for the impact that the show had caused, Welles makes the following announcement. <sup>663</sup>

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<sup>660</sup> Rose, *Canadian Folklore*. p.127

<sup>661</sup> Rose, *Canadian Folklore*.p.127

<sup>662</sup> 'John D. Ducks For Apples' *The New York Times* [Online] (November 1<sup>st</sup> 1914) [Accessed 19 May 2011]

<sup>663</sup> Orson Wells, 1938. Cited in Robert J Brown *Manipulating the Ether. The Power of Broadcast Radio in Thirties America* (Jefferson, 1998) p.216

This is Orson Welles, ladies and gentlemen, out of character to assure you that The War of the Worlds has no further significance than as the holiday offering it was intended to be. The Mercury Theatre's own radio version of dressing up in a sheet and jumping out of a bush and saying 'Boo!' Starting now, we couldn't soap all your windows and steal all your garden gates by tomorrow night... so we did the next best thing. We annihilated the world before your very ears, and ultimately destroyed the CBS... and if your doorbell rings and nobody's there, that was no Martian... it's Hallowe'en.

What is interesting about this statement is the fluid inter-relationship between the Hallowe'en ghost that says 'Boo' – characteristic of both the Scottish and Irish associations of roaming spirits, and the Mischief Night related practices of soaping windows, stealing garden gates and knocking on doors, or in this case ringing doorbells and then hiding so that 'nobody's there'. It is clear that Welles not only knew the customs associated with both, but, by effectively announcing that the production was 'nobbut the Mischief Neet', he hoped that listeners would also hear and recognise it as such, and ultimately forgive him.

It seems clear that in many of these accounts, where the population is assuredly not all Irish or Scots the only reason to suppose that an element of the Yorkshire Mischief Night might *not* be present in these accounts is that they are all dubbed 'Hallowe'en' events. However, although it has not been possible to evidence an unbroken chain of transmission for the term 'Mischief Night' to accompany these activities, the term itself is found in North America with the first traceable appearance in print being 1962 where it appears in a letter syndicated across several newspapers including *The Victoria Advocate*<sup>664</sup>. In expressing her contempt for Mischief Night, the author of the letter, who gives her name as 'Mamma' writes

I think the jerk who invented Mischief Night (Hallowe'en) must have hated his parents. I am the mother of three frustrated children who are not allowed out on Hallowe'en. I fail to see the humor in poor old Mrs G. down the street with a bad back having to crawl around mopping up squashed pumpkins or Mrs P. across the street who is pregnant having to spend hours unrolling toilet paper from her trees and bushes and scoop up smelly garbage from her overturned garbage pail

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<sup>664</sup> 'Dear Abby' *The Victoria Advocate* (15<sup>th</sup> December 1962) p.3

While such pranks clearly have a long tradition, by 1988 the tolerance for such activities was clearly waning in Port Washington North, Long Island, where youths were issued with a curfew for all 18 year-olds and younger. Here the term 'Mischief Night' appears as the eve of Hallowe'en. The curfew followed a marked increase in activities involving the throwing of rocks and Molotov cocktails as well as the more usual and acceptable eggs; "shaving cream on cars and toilet paper on lawns"<sup>665</sup>. The article goes on to say "Last year on Halloween eve, known here as Mischief Night, a roving gang of 150 teen-age hooligans hurled eggs, rocks and firebombs at cars, houses and police officers who tried to break up the melee."

A still more sinister manifestation of Mischief Night can be seen in Detroit in Michigan, and Camden, New Jersey, where the name 'Mischief Night' is used interchangeably with 'Devil's Night'. According to reports in the *New York Times*<sup>666</sup> during the 1980s and 1990s, severe economic deprivation led to high numbers of annual arson attacks on the eve of Hallowe'en across the city. Fires were commonly lit in vacant houses, dustbins, abandoned buildings, and garages as well as occupied quarters.

Although the night before Hallowe'en is known as 'Devil's Night' in Detroit also, it is interesting to note that the term 'Mischief Night' itself is present across the Hudson river in Camden, where, during the early 1990s it was possible to buy car bumper stickers which read "Do Camden Right – Stop the Fires on Mischief Night."<sup>667</sup> As described in Chapter Five for Bradford in England, both Camden and Detroit adopted civil authority anti-arson strategies to deal with the rise in fires on the eve of Hallowe'en. For Detroit and Camden this included a dramatic and contentious twelve hour curfew from 6pm -6am for all those aged five to seventeen<sup>668</sup>. Despite the negative publicity attracted to the Devil's Night arson attacks, it would be wrong to assume that the more traditional Mischief Night activities had been

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<sup>665</sup> Eric Schmitt 'Our Towns; What Next? Linus Hauled Off In Handcuffs?' *The New York Times* [Online] (26 October, 1988) [Accessed 5 May 2011]

<sup>666</sup> See Jerry Gray 'Camden Braces for Mischief Night Fires' *New York Times* [Online] (October 25, 1992) [Accessed 5 May 2011] 'Arsons Plague Detroit in Pre-Halloween Outbreak' *New York Times* [Online] (October 31, 1984) [Accessed 20 May 2011] and, Isabel Wilkerson 'Detroit Efforts Fail To Stem Arson On Eve Of Halloween' *New York Times* [Online] (1 November, 1986) [Accessed 5 May 2011]

<sup>667</sup> Gray, 'Camden Braces'

<sup>668</sup> Gray 'Camden Braces'

completely subsumed. An article written in the mid 1980s describing Mischief Night in New Jersey was still able to describe pranking activities such as soaping up windows, and throwing eggs.<sup>669</sup> The article goes on to further support the early introduction of Mischief Night by claiming that a tradition of removing wrought iron gates was “Common before the turn of the century”, and was known as “Gate Night”.

Again, the rise of ‘Devil’s Night’ in Detroit has recognisable parallels with the way in which Mischief Night has changed in character in Bradford. Both have seen a dramatic rise in secondary fires and arson attacks on Devil’s Night and Mischief Night respectively, and both are cities with areas of pronounced social and economic deprivation. The social tensions built up from such deprivations have, according to research carried out by Toni Mocerì,<sup>670</sup> found a natural and unavoidable outlet at least in Detroit’s Devil’s Night. Mocerì’s findings are interesting in that it charts both a dramatic rise of over 250 recorded fires over a three day Hallowe’en period between 1979 and 1994. But interestingly the largest proportion of fires, despite a hike in building fires, continued to be fires containing brushwood and rubbish<sup>671</sup>.

When looking at the use of the term ‘Mischief Night’ in America at the time of writing it is interesting to note the provisional findings of *The Dialect Survey*<sup>672</sup> conducted by Harvard University between 2002 and 2003. The study looked into the various dialects of English spoken across America. Question 110 of the survey asked ‘What do you call the night before Hallowe’en’. The respondents were given a number of options<sup>673</sup>, and while Mischief Night only accounted for 10.84% of the 10,640 responses, it is interesting to note the location of those that chose Mischief Night. As the following map indicates, the term Mischief Night is most prominent on the North Eastern coast of America. This is significant in that this region

<sup>669</sup> ‘New Jersey Journalz Historians’ *New York Times* [Online] 4 November 2011. [Accessed 20 May 2011] Although the ‘z’ at the end of ‘Journalz’ is quite possibly a typographical error, this is how it is presented on the New York Times archive database. I have therefore left it on in order to aid any future reference to the article.

<sup>670</sup> Tony Mocerì, *Devils Night* [Online] (2003) [Accessed 12 May, 2011]

<sup>671</sup> Mocerì, *Devil’s Night* p.72

<sup>672</sup> Bert Vaux *The Dialect Survey* (Harvard, 2003) available online [Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2012]

<sup>673</sup> The options available to participants were Gate Night (0.39%) Trick Night (0.33%) Mischief Night (10.84%) Cabbage Night (1.68%) Goosy Night (0.37%) Devil’s Night (11.13%) Devil’s Eve (0.78%) I have no word for this (70.38%) Other (4.11%)

corresponds with the settled Yorkshire communities in Lawrence, Boston and Halifax. Here again the synonyms 'Gate Night' and 'Cabbage Night' reflect some of the other practices associated with the date.



Without very direct evidence that the Mischief Night tradition recorded in America in the late twentieth century arises from the custom practised in Yorkshire it is important to bring together a number of key facts. Firstly, the term 'Mischief Night' cannot be successfully identified within either the Irish or the Scottish cultural traditions. It is unlikely, therefore, that migrants from Ireland or Scotland would have introduced the term. Secondly, the use of the term 'Mischief Night' is most commonly found in precisely those areas most heavily populated by significant numbers of Yorkshire migrants during the nineteenth century. The November Mischief Night tradition appears to have developed in Yorkshire during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as seen in Chapter Four. Given that there is no evidence to support the idea that the Mischief Night tradition was present in America prior to the late nineteenth century in Canada or America, despite there being settled English communities from the Yorkshire region in America from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and that the term itself comes from such a specific geographical area, any argument suggesting Mischief Night might have evolved separately in America seems at this point implausible. What does, however, appear likely is the idea that Mischief Night, sometime after its arrival, was drawn into a close relationship with similar traditions from both Scotland and Ireland as recorded in the accounts above.

Another interesting feature that helps to confirm this festival of trouble-making as having its roots in the Yorkshire Mischief Night, aside from the use of the name, is that just as in Yorkshire the mischief comes on the eve of the big festival (Guy Fawkes' Night) such North American variants are celebrated on the eve of Hallowe'en. This further distinguishes them from the Irish pranking traditions which are certainly a Hallowe'en phenomenon but which happen on the night itself. The American mischief may have become connected to a different autumn festival (Hallowe'en as opposed to Guy Fawkes' Night) but it is in many cases associated with the eve of the festival as in Yorkshire and not with the night itself.

The integration of Scottish, Irish and English practices into what could be described as an American Hallowe'en melting pot is particularly visible in a further article titled *Halloween Spirit Faithful To Past*.<sup>674</sup> Written in 1933, the article attributes a varied range of activities to Hallowe'en including processions where participants are dressed in grotesque masks and costumes, in keeping with an Irish Hallowe'en, and for that matter, a wider English guising tradition. The article further mentions divination practices, strongly associated with, but not exclusive to the Scottish Hallowe'en tradition, such as ducking for apples, and mischievous pranks, common to all three traditions. A variation to Mischief Night and Gate Night, called "door-bell-night" is also mentioned in the article as is the associated practice involving the placing of pins into door bells causing them to continually ring.

By the time the following photograph<sup>675</sup> was taken in the Oval Office in 1963 a commercial element was firmly established alongside the traditional ones. It depicts two Hallowe'en visitors, no doubt JF Kennedy's children, dressed in manufactured Hallowe'en outfits in America as early as the nineteen-sixties.

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<sup>674</sup> 'Halloween Spirit Faithful to Past' *New York Times* [Online] (October 29, 1933) [Accessed 20 May 2011]

<sup>675</sup> Cecil Stoughton (Photographer) 'Halloween Visitors to the Oval Office' (31 October, 1963)(ARC Identifier: 194260); Series: Cecil Stoughton White House Photographs, 01/29/1961 - 12/31/1963; Collection JFK-WHP: White House Photographs, 12/19/1960 - 03/11/1964; John F. Kennedy Library; National Archives and Records Administration. Available Online [Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2011]





Photographer, Cecil Stoughton 'Halloween Visitors to the Oval Office'

It is interesting to note that recognition of a connection between Hallowe'en and Mischief Night has been made by Lesley Bannatyne in *Hallowe'en: an American holiday, an American history*, who states that "Mischief Night... bears a great resemblance to the Mischief Night that preceded American Halloween in many regions"<sup>676</sup>. While Bannatyne provides no fresh evidence to bear on Mischief Night itself, referring only to the Opies, and a populist account of the Scottish Hallowe'en by Marian McNeill, she not only links the two, but goes on to indicate such American Hallowe'en mischief as 'chalking' on the sidewalks, smashing bottles close to windows, and more conventional Mischief Night practices such as removing gates and suspending buttons on string so as to create a tapping on the window.

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<sup>676</sup> Lesley Pratt Bannatyne, *Halloween: an American holiday, an American history* (New York, 1990) p.61

## Conclusion

The Scots and Irish Hallowe'en traditions have rightly been seen as important contributors to the modern American Hallowe'en. So can Mischief Night be viewed in the same light? It is unreasonable, and unjustifiable to hold up the Yorkshire Mischief Night as the single contributor to Hallowe'en-related pranks: the Irish, and even to a small extent the Scots came to America from places with recognisable Autumn pranking practices which have found their way into the American way of life. What is evident, however, is that Mischief Night does have a role to play. It has contributed recognisable elements to the customs on and around Hallowe'en, and in some parts has maintained something of its own identity. It is unfortunate, yet important to note, that this study has not produced evidence specifically of Mischief Night under that name in North America prior to the mid-twentieth century, in contrast to the Scottish Hallowe'en which has a much longer recorded history in North America thanks to the activities of the Caledonian and St. Andrews Societies.

The emergence in the historical record of a night of autumn pranks in North America around the middle of the nineteenth century has given weight to the popular idea that it was transmitted by the large numbers of Irish migrants fleeing the famine. Yet, as this chapter has shown, the Irish were not alone in their exodus across the Atlantic during this time. Given the considerable cross-migration between Ireland, England and Scotland during the mid to late nineteenth century and before, it is more likely that, rather than existing in isolated cultural bubbles, a certain level of cultural fluidity existed between them. The Irish may well have identified the prank element of Mischief Night with their conception of the mischievous antics of fairies and wandering souls abroad at All Hallow's Eve, helping to create a new relationship between the two traditions. Given the relatively late accounts of the Irish pranking tradition, this cannot be ruled out. It is also clear that, despite its strong attachment to Hallowe'en, Mischief Night by name, as well as practice did cross the Atlantic. The longevity of settled English communities in both Canada and the rest of North America would have provided Yorkshire immigrants throughout the nineteenth century with a

foundation and common basis upon which a local custom could survive, but which inevitably evolved and adapted.

Taking all of this into account, the modern commercial Hallowe'en with its treats, costumes, pranks and mischief, rather than being a direct descendent of either the Irish or Scots traditions or the product of convergent cultural evolution appears, in fact, to be a fusion of several cultural influences, of which the Yorkshire Mischief Night tradition is certainly one.

## Conclusion

This thesis has not only looked at the changing face of Hallowe'en in Leeds during the nineteenth and twentieth century, but it also represents the first historical study of the custom of Mischief Night in England as well as examining the related Guy Fawkes tradition. A number of methodologies have been employed in order to approach a holistic understanding of the history of both Hallowe'en and Mischief Night, as well as in order to recognise the interplay between these and Guy Fawkes celebrations. The fluidity of this approach has provided the opportunity to explore a number of individual histories, as well as to arrive at a broader understanding of the subject matter. This has provided a useful demonstration of the potential benefits of a multi-disciplinary approach in the field of social history.

One of the key starting points for this research has been Ronald Hutton's *Stations of the Sun* which looks at the origins and historical development of calendar customs across the British Isles. For each of the three main festivals considered in this thesis Hutton's work has provided key background information particularly in providing the wider British traditional context. In contrast, this thesis has narrowed the focus to a limited geographical region, providing the opportunity to incorporate a greater range of methodologies and sources. In so doing it has both extended the known history of a November Mischief Night in Yorkshire back into the nineteenth century and forwards into the twenty-first century.

The second significant contributor to this area is Nicholas Rogers whose more general approach to the subject incorporates a cultural analysis of the subject of Hallowe'en as it manifests itself in North America. Although in keeping with Roger's multi-disciplinary approach the focus of this thesis has gone beyond Rogers in its pursuit of a historical understanding of the customs considered. In exploring the history of migration between the British Isles and North America, a more comprehensive analysis of the interwoven cultural threads present in the history of Hallowe'en has been possible.

Finally, Leila Dudley-Edwards' folkloric analysis of Hallowe'en as practiced and expressed through the Pagan community in Glastonbury has,

as with Rogers, provided a social snapshot of the festival of Hallowe'en at a given point in time. In doing so, Dudley Edwards provided a model for the participant observation elements of this study and inspired the structure for the contemporary and recollection-based components of the historical narrative of this thesis. In contrast to her work, this thesis incorporates the wider population of a given region as well as establishing a historical context for the changing nature of its autumnal customs.

The thesis was focused on three main aims. The first two of which were firstly to investigate the historical span of each of the three customs as it appears in the available records for the Leeds area and secondly to compare and contrast the historical and contemporary manifestations of each custom.

The Hallowe'en identified in Leeds at the time of writing is a late twentieth-century phenomenon, but not, as is often supposed, purely the result of American cultural imperialism. Knowledge of Hallowe'en in an earlier form came to Leeds in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century from Scotland, notably through newspaper accounts of the royally sponsored celebrations at Balmoral, and, through newspaper accounts of parlour games in Balmoral in the first two decades of the twentieth century, and for the more literate parts of Leeds society, through Robert Burns' poetry. If such knowledge prompted emulation of Scottish Hallowe'en traditional customs in Leeds, aside from those practiced within the Leeds Caledonian Society and Hallowe'en readings in the central city library, it seems likely to have been restricted to the more 'well-to-do' in the form of Hallowe'en tea parties. There is no evidence to suggest that the wider population of Leeds imitated such activities, although the lack of evidence in itself cannot rule out the possibility. The absence of a popular Hallowe'en tradition in Leeds in the nineteenth century may not be surprising given that it was a stronghold for non-conformist movements who would not readily promote activities with a supernatural element. It had, as a result, little cause to maintain echoes of earlier Catholic notions of prayers for the dead associated with All Souls. That said, migrants, particularly Catholic migrants, made up a sizable proportion of the Leeds population from the 1840s onwards and evidence of customs such as Souling and the making of Wassail-boxes as late as 1909

indicate that at least some aspects of an All Souls tradition was re-introduced to the Leeds area during the nineteenth century, although the lack of later evidence suggests that it quickly died out again.

Trick-or-treaters in Leeds have been present from the late 1970s, though Hallowe'en parties have been documented since the 1950s. In its current manifestation, Hallowe'en in Leeds is much more than a children's custom. As an example of a modern secular festival its growth and popularity has been considerable in the last fifty years. Set against a backdrop of rising economic prosperity within the city the last forty years have seen a significant increase in efforts on the part of the retail sector to exploit Hallowe'en commercially, running in parallel with representations in American mass media, particularly in the form of film and television. This has helped to promote Hallowe'en not only in the minds of children, who continue every year to 'trick or treat', but also among adults who increasingly organise their own Hallowe'en parties and attend Hallowe'en-focussed fright tourism events.

Furthermore, the festival of Hallowe'en is understood and interpreted and expressed differently by different identifiable groups within the city. Indeed, there is little consistency even within these groups. In essence, although some generalisations can be made, such as 'children express Hallowe'en through trick-or-treating' or 'pagans express Hallowe'en through their understanding of Samhain' or 'secondary schools don't encourage Hallowe'en' the picture is subtly more complex. Individuals within each group are frequently party to more than one social context. For example, a teacher may not promote Hallowe'en in the class-room, but may well go home and accompany children trick-or-treating, or spend the evening at a Hallowe'en-themed night-club.

Economic factors in the form of growing consumer wealth in the second half of the twentieth century enabled a cross-cultural awareness of Hallowe'en, predominantly through television, and films such as 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind' and 'ET the Extraterrestrial' which made reference to the American Hallowe'en and provided a clear demonstration of how activities such as 'trick-or-treat' might be conducted. Leeds residents,

however, are less flamboyant in their choice of costume than their American counterparts, keeping more often than not to a macabre theme.

For many people growing-up in Leeds, Hallowe'en is overshadowed by the presence Mischief Night, and its relationship with Guy Fawkes Night. It is possible to regard Mischief Night as a vestige of a once-rural May Eve tradition which shifted over time to connect with the bonfire building activities commemorating the defeat of Gunpowder Treason. In its earlier form it has aspects in common with 'rough music', with mischief often being directed at those who were considered unfriendly, or who had fallen out of favour in some way. But more significantly, it can be regarded as a residue of customary popular culture surviving in part because its participants have always been children, bringing with them resilience to cultural change not found amongst their elders. As such, it is not in itself enough to add any serious challenge to Callum Brown's assertion that the latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed the 'final death of customary culture'. Yet, as an unusual survival it does offer some interesting features. Unlike Guy Fawkes Night it has escaped the sort of regulation that impinges directly on its form, notwithstanding the multiplication of laws devised to control children's behaviour. Indeed its participants continue to regard their activities as standing outside of the law. Furthermore, it stands in isolation as a calendar custom free from commercial interests, church involvement, state sponsorship, or parental influence. In these regards it is unique.

Changing attitudes towards Mischief Night during the latter half of the twentieth century can be interpreted as part of a wider alienation and ultimate loss of traditional popular culture brought about through a combination of attempts at social engineering and the rise of mass media. Undoubtedly the accounts collected reflect varying degrees of displeasure, particularly from those at the receiving end of mischievous pranks, but alienation has led to a growing perception of the harmful nature of such pranks. While many traditional acts of mischief, such as removing garden gates, have always technically been outside of the law, with an increase in prosperity for some and the development of a more cosmopolitan city, there has been a marked shift in public perception which has moved the emphasis from 'harmless fun' to 'criminal activity'. Yet close analysis of the precise nature of calls to police

indicate a greater fear of crime than actual criminal activity. Additionally the economic growth of the city, along with the rapid expansion of the two universities, has brought with it an influx of new residents for whom Mischief Night has no intrinsic value, and are thus less sympathetic to its expression. Thus the late twentieth century process of regulation, legislation and economic migration into Leeds may well be achieving the desired aims of the gentrification process begun in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Given that many of the more extreme expressions of Mischief Night occur in more socially deprived areas of both Leeds and neighbouring Bradford, it is sometimes claimed that activities which embody an element of social disorder provide a safety valve for social tensions. However this study has not brought to light any significant evidence to support this point of view. Much of the associated behaviour lacks significant purpose or depth of meaning beyond the universal childhood appreciation for moments of license: a perceived legitimacy of being able to misbehave on one night of the year and 'get away with it'. It is the enjoyment and thrill of conducting the act itself, not any wider social or political agenda that provides the motivation.

An important aspect of Mischief Night is its necessary proximity in date to an 'adult' calendar custom. Early accounts of Mischief Night recall it falling on May Eve and later shifting to the 4<sup>th</sup> November, the eve of Guy Fawkes Night. Cross migration both within the British Isles and North America has furthermore provided a further development of the custom. Given the earlier change in date, it should not be surprising to find Mischief Night adapting and appearing in North America, again on the eve of the nearest calendar custom; this time Hallowe'en. Its ability to shift in date and adapt may well be down at least in part to it being a children's custom, free from the constraints of fixed ideas or expectations.

By contrast Guy Fawkes Night is a custom which has historically appealed to Leeds' adults as well as children, yet associations of civic disturbances with commemorative events, particularly following the Gordon Riots, led to a decline in civic authority support for Guy Fawkes celebrations during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and Leeds was no exception



to this. Yet, as established in Chapter Six, the reduction in civil authority backing did little to dampen enthusiasm for the event among the wider population who continued the celebrations throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, despite legislation which set out to curtail the use of fireworks on the streets, with community street fires and fires organised by the growing numbers of sports clubs and organisations in the city.

Economic expansion, re-housing programmes and road improvement programmes within the city during the early twentieth century in turn contributed to the inevitable demise of local street fires by the late 1960s, although by this time a rise in economic prosperity promoted the development of individual family celebrations conducted in back gardens. The re-instatement of civic authority promotion of Guy Fawkes Night events only took place in the late 1970s. While their re-introduction has not curbed enthusiasm for individual family celebrations, the popularity of the numerous bonfires and fireworks displays across the city provided by the Leeds City Council has grown considerably over the past forty years, and has ensured its continuation as a significant calendar custom in Leeds.

However, this change has also had an impact upon the nature of Mischief Night, in the form of the loss of a 'chumping' tradition. In many ways the chumping activities in the nights leading up to Guy Fawkes Night documented throughout the nineteenth and a greater part of the twentieth century provided Mischief Night with a form of legitimacy. Children were engaging, at least in part, in a productive activity, the result of which the whole street would benefit from. The effective clamping down on street fires and the rise of municipal bonfire displays deprived children of both this productive aspect to the tradition, and the legitimacy that allowed them a certain leeway in which they could get away with their pranks. This therefore has only added to the growing alienation and perceived lawlessness of children on Mischief Night, commonly felt in the Leeds and Bradford area.

In collecting personal accounts, such as those from police officers, fire crews, community workers, pagans and other church leaders and the elderly, it has been possible to construct not only a broad understanding of the development of these calendar customs in and around Leeds, but has contributed to a process that adds to the personalisation of history or

individual 'histories' within the city. Far from being a purely the preserve of childhood, Hallowe'en in Leeds has a growing appeal to adults who engage in themed club nights; ghost walks and private Hallowe'en themed parties. Yet the picture is mixed, with many church schools opposing any related activities.

From this it is clear that while there is a degree of overlap in various accounts, all three customs (Hallowe'en, Mischief Night and Guy Fawkes Night) can be understood from a variety of different individual perspectives alongside the traditional picture, defined according to religious, economic or class divisions. Insights gained concerning the reluctance of Leeds' schools to celebrate or associate themselves with Hallowe'en, and the willingness of Leeds Pagans to celebrate a secular Hallowe'en as well as their religious observances of Samhain are both good example of this.

The final aim of the thesis has been to address the question of the extent to which the Yorkshire Mischief Night influenced the development of Hallowe'en in its North American and international expressions. The competing possibilities explaining the current Hallowe'en tradition are threefold. Firstly, there is the idea that the modern Hallowe'en owes its similarities to Mischief Night to a simple convergence of cultural forms. This would imply that the children of the Scottish and Irish settlers in North America either developed or brought with them a tradition that resembled Mischief Night because the social and cultural environments that shaped them were sufficiently similar. The second possibility is that although the modern Hallowe'en owes much to the Irish and Scots traditions and indeed could be explained entirely with reference to them, still a contribution from the distinct but similar Mischief Night tradition has fused with these elements without the loss of its identity and can be identified still. The third possibility is that the elements that the modern Hallowe'en has in common with the older Mischief Night can only be explained by cultural diffusion from a starting point in the Yorkshire area and that these elements have found their way, along with Scots and Irish elements, into the present form and were necessary for its development.

This study has been able to show that many of the elements present in the twentieth century Hallowe'en including the date, a pranking element,

night-time perambulations of children in costume and the gathering of treats have all been practised to some extent in parts of Scotland and Ireland since before their emergence in North American culture. In the face of this evidence it would seem difficult to argue that a resemblance of the modern Hallowe'en to Mischief Night was more than cultural convergence or coincidence.

But the establishment of Yorkshire communities along the Eastern coast of North America, maintaining many of their established occupations and retaining many aspects of their cultural identity well into the late nineteenth century provides a possible mechanism, at least, for the diffusion of Mischief Night into North American culture. It has even been possible to show that the term 'Mischief Night' has established itself in North America in areas where Yorkshire communities have historically settled, which lends support to the idea that the tradition travelled with Yorkshire migrants. Furthermore, the term 'Mischief Night' has become clearly identified in North America with the night before Hallowe'en as opposed to 4<sup>th</sup> November. The evidence necessary to explain quite how the American use of 'Mischief Night' developed from the Yorkshire and Lancashire expression has not, however, come to light during the course of this study. Yet it is certainly a connection worthy of further investigation, and given that the term 'Mischief Night' cannot be successfully attributed to Irish or Scottish origin, and has been evident in both Yorkshire and Lancashire throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century it would seem very unlikely for there to be no such connection. So within the modern American Hallowe'en phenomenon there is almost certainly a strand representing the Yorkshire Mischief Night.

This said, it is not so easy to say for certain what, if anything, of the international Hallowe'en, as practised by children around the world from the late twentieth onwards, owes its existence to the Yorkshire Mischief Night. It is certainly possible that the Scots and Irish Hallowe'en traditions have given rise to the whole of the exported version of the phenomenon unaided since the pre-Hallowe'en Mischief Night element does not appear to have travelled in the same way that the Trick or Treat element has. However, given the similarity of the youthful character of both events, the shared elements of nocturnal perambulation, taken with the fact that over the twentieth century

Hallowe'en became a familiar event across North America (for which Mischief Night appears at times to have become a synonym) it looks very likely that the Yorkshire contribution is still in some sense present in the International version.

### **Limitations of this Study and Areas of Possible Future Research**

Working as a sole researcher has placed limits on this research. Leeds is a big city and in many ways the observational findings can only be regarded as indicative. A team of researchers, situated at various parts of the city, would be able to provide a far greater body of evidence from which to draw their conclusions. Financial considerations also made major excursions to America and Ireland unrealistic. Again, accessing Irish and American archives, in order to better inform the migration of Mischief Night, and its subsequent impact upon Hallowe'en may well prove beneficial. Finally, although the Hallowe'en conference in Edinburgh did much to widen the focus of Hallowe'en research in consideration of its global reach and significance, and although the present study looks at British, American and Canadian cross-migration of people and traditions, it remains to be seen what, if any, impact Mischief Night has had on Hallowe'en and other traditions in other parts of the English-speaking world. Of particular interest would be the arrival of these traditions in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and other places where migrants from the British Isles have taken root.

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## Appendix

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## Questionnaire for Primary Schools in Leeds

Please answer the following questions. It should take you no more than a minute or two.

\* 1. Did your school hold any Hallowe'en themed activities in 2010?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

2. If so, what form did they take? Please tick all that apply

- ☐ Decorations/displays
- ☐ Themed lessons/activities (please specify below)
- ☐ Disco / party
- ☐ Bun / cake sale
- ☐ Costume/Non-uniform day
- ☐ Other – Please give details in the box below

3. If not, which, if any of the following considerations had a bearing on this? Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ Consideration of disruptive element of Hallowe'en
- ☐ Perception of harmful nature of Hallowe'en
- ☐ Perception of pagan character of Hallowe'en
- ☐ Perception of more general un-Christian side to Hallowe'en
- ☐ None of the above (please give details below)

4. If your answer to Q1 was 'yes', which year groups were involved?

- |                                       |                                  |                                    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whole school | <input type="checkbox"/> Nursery | <input type="checkbox"/> Reception |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Year 1       | <input type="checkbox"/> Year 2  | <input type="checkbox"/> Year 3    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Year 4       | <input type="checkbox"/> Year 5  | <input type="checkbox"/> Year 6    |

5. Has your school held Hallowe'en based activities in previous years?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

6. If yes, for how long do you believe them to have been held? (Either annually or on and off):

☐ 2 years

☐ 3-5 years

☐ 6-10 years

☐ More than 10 years

7.

Please feel free to enter any thoughts, comments or observations which you think may be of use in relation to this study in the box below.

## Questionnaire for Schools in Leeds

Please answer the following questions. It should take you no more than a minute or two.

\* 1. Did your school hold any Hallowe'en themed activities in 2010?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

2. If so, what form did they take? Please tick all that apply

- ☐ Decorations/displays  
☐ Themed lessons/activities (please specify below)  
☐ Disco / party  
☐ Bun / cake sale  
☐ Costumes/Non-uniform day  
☐ Other – Please give details in the box below

3. If not, which, if any of the following considerations had a bearing on this? Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ Consideration of disruptive element of Hallowe'en  
☐ Perception of harmful nature of Hallowe'en  
☐ Perception of pagan character of Hallowe'en  
☐ Perception of more general un-Christian side to Hallowe'en  
☐ None of the above (please give details below)

4. If your answer to Q1 was 'yes', which year groups were involved?

- ☐ Whole school ☐ Year 7 ☐ Year 8  
☐ Year 9 ☐ Year 10 ☐ Year 11  
☐ Year 12

5. Has your school held Hallowe'en based activities in years prior to 2010?



☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

6. If yes, for how long do you believe them to have been held? (Either annually or on and off):

☐ 2 years

☐ 3-5 years

☐ 6-10 years

☐ More than 10 years

7.

Please feel free to enter any thoughts, comments or observations which you think may be of use in relation to this study in the box below.



| School  | Church School | Did your school hold any Hallowe'en themed activities in 2010? | Decorations/Displays | Themed lessons/activities (please specify below) | Disco / party | Bun / cake sale | Costume/ Non-uniform day | Other – Please give details in the box below | Comments  | Consideration of disruptive element of Hallowe'en | Perception of harmful nature of Hallowe'en | Perception of pagan character of Hallowe'en | Perception of more general un-Christian side to Hallowe'en | None of the above (please give details below) | Comment   | Whole school | Nursery | Reception |
|---|---------------|--|----------------------|--|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|---|--------------|---------|-----------|
| Rothwell St Mary's Catholic Primary School                                | Yes           | Yes  |                      |  |               | 3               |                          |  |   |   |  |   |  |   |   | 1            |         |           |
| Yeadon Westfield Infant School  | No            | Yes  |                      |  | 2             |                 |                          |  |   |   |  |   |  |   |   | 1            |         |           |
| Harewood Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School            | Yes           | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   |   |  |   | 4  |   |   |              |         |           |
| All Saint's Richmond Hill Church of England Primary School                | Yes           | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   |   |  |   | 4  |   | The school is a church school and we feel Halloween is not appropriate we prefer to do work on All Saints day.  |              |         |           |
| Manston St James Church of England Primary School                         | Yes           | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   | 1   |  | 3   | 4  |   |   |              |         |           |
| Bardsey Primary School  | No            | Yes  | 1                    |  |               | 3               | 4                        |  |   |   |  |   |  |   |   | 1            |         |           |
| Middleton Primary School  | No            | Yes  |                      |  |               |                 |                          | 6  | Halloween dinner  |   |  |   |  |   |   |              |         |           |
| Thornor Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School             | Yes           | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   |   |  |   | 4  |   |   |              |         |           |
| Brownhill Primary School  | No            | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   | 1   |  | 3   | 4  |   |   |              |         |           |
| Christ The King Catholic Primary School                                   | Yes           | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   |   |  |   | 4  |   |   |              |         |           |
| Wigton Moor Primary School  | No            | Yes  |                      |  |               | 3               |                          |  |   |   |  |   |  |   |   | 1            |         |           |
| Beeston Hill St Luke's Church of England Primary School                   | Yes           | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   |   |  |   | 4  |   |   |              |         |           |
| Allerton Church of England Primary School                                 | Yes           | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   |   | 2  | 3   | 4  |   |   |              |         |           |
| Little London Community Primary School                                    | No            | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   |   |  |   |  |   | As a culturally diverse school we feel that this 'festival' does not warrant our attention - it is over Americanised and is not understood by the majority of our pupils. We do however hold a lantern festival in November which celebrates the community. |              |         |           |
| Ingram Road Primary School  | No            | Yes  | 1                    |  |               | 3               |                          |  |   |   |  |   |  |   |   | 1            |         |           |
| Kirkstall Valley Primary School   | No            | Yes  |                      |  |               | 3               |                          |  |   |   |  |   |  |   |   | 1            |         |           |
| St Paul's Catholic Primary School   | Yes           | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   |   |  |   | 4  |   |   |              |         |           |
| Burley St Matthias' Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School | Yes           | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   |   |  |   |  |   | We are a church school and our church doesn't permit us to run hallowe'en activities. The church holds a light party on hallowe'en night.   |              |         |           |
| Oakwood Primary School  | No            | Yes  |                      |  | 2             |                 |                          |  | But, not much due to some parental complaints in the past about the un-christian aspect of halloween and the timing of Halloween which was in the half-term holiday |   |  |   |  |   |   |              | 2       | 3         |
| Iveson Primary School   | No            | Yes  |                      |  |               | 3               | 4                        |  |   |   |  |   |  |   |   | 1            |         |           |
| Grimes Dyke Primary School  | No            | Yes  |                      |  |               | 3               |                          |  |   |   |  |   |  |   |   |              |         |           |

| School   | Church School | Did your school hold any Halloween themed activities in 2010? | Decorations/Displays | Themed lessons/activities (please specify below) | Disco / party | Bun / cake sale | Costume/ Non-uniform day | Other – Please give details in the box below | Comments | Consideration of disruptive element of Halloween | Perception of harmful nature of Halloween | Perception of pagan character of Halloween | Perception of more general un-Christian side to Halloween | None of the above (please give details below) | Comment   | Whole school | Nursery | Reception |
|--|---------------|---|----------------------|--|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--|----------|--|---|--|---|---|---|--------------|---------|-----------|
| St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Otley                                       | Yes           | No  |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |          |  |   | 3  | 4   |   |   |              |         |           |
| Bramley St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School         | Yes           | No  |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |          |  |   |  | 4   |   |   |              |         |           |
| Pool-in-Wharfedale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School         | Yes           | No  |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |          |  |   | 3  | 4   |   |   |              |         |           |
| Ashfield Primary School  | No            | Yes   |                      |  |               | 3               |                          |  |          |  |   |  |   |   |   | 1            |         |           |
| Hollybush Primary School   | No            | Yes   |                      |  |               | 3               |                          |  |          |  |   |  |   |   |   | 1            |         |           |
| Raynville Primary School   | No            | No  |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |          |  |   |  |   |   | 5   |              |         |           |
| St Theresa's Catholic Primary School   | Yes           | No  |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |          |  |   |  |   |   | 5   |              |         |           |
| Strawberry Fields Primary School   | No            | Yes   |                      |  |               | 3               |                          |  |          |  |   |  |   |   |   |              |         |           |
| Birchfield Primary School  | No            | Yes   | 1                    | 2  | 3             |                 |                          |  |          |  |   |  |   |   |   | 1            |         |           |
| Featherbank Infant School  | No            | No  |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |          |  |   |  |   |   | We had other more interesting topics going on in school at the time. Halloween is not something we are particularly interested in unless it is 'a bun sale' to raise funds for the PA |              |         |           |
| Churwell Primary School  | No            | Yes   |                      |  |               | 3               |                          |  |          |  |   |  |   |   |   |              |         | 3         |
| Gildersome Primary School  | No            | Yes   |                      |  |               | 3               |                          |  |          |  |   |  |   |   |   |              |         | 3         |
| Hill Top Primary School  | No            | Yes   |                      |  |               | 3               |                          |  |          |  |   |  |   |   |   |              |         |           |
| Hovingham Primary School   | No            | No  |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |          | 1  | 2   |  |   |   |   |              |         |           |
| St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, Beeston                                    | Yes           | No  |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |          |  |   |  |   | 5   |   |              |         |           |
| Quarry Mount Primary School  | No            | No  |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |          |  |   |  | 4   |   | We have children from all parts of the world in our school and so it would not be appropriate to celebrate Halloween. This would offend some parents eg Muslims                       |              |         |           |
| Victoria Primary School  | No            | Don't know  |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |          |  |   |  |   |   |   |              |         |           |
| Christ Church Upper Armley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School | Yes           | No  |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |          |  | 2   | 3  | 4   |   |   |              |         |           |
| Meanwood Church of England Primary School  | Yes           | No  |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |          |  |   |  | 4   |   |   |              |         |           |
| Hunslet St Mary's Church of England Primary School                               | Yes           | No  |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |          |  |   |  | 4   |   |   |              |         |           |
| Five Lanes Primary School  | No            | No  |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |          |  |   |  |   |   | 5   |              |         |           |
| St Philip's Catholic Primary and Nursery School                                  | Yes           | No  |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |          |  |   |  |   |   |   |              |         |           |
| Valley View Community Primary School   | No            | Yes   |                      |  |               | 3               |                          |  |          |  |   |  |   |   | Event was organised by PTA rather than school   | 1            |         |           |
| Shire Oak Church of England Primary School                                       | Yes           | No  |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |          |  |   |  | 4   |   |   |              |         |           |

| School  | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Has your school held Hallowe'en based activities in previous years? | 2 years | 3-5 years | 6-10 years | More than 10 years | Please feel free to enter any thoughts, comments or observations which you think may be of use in relation to this study in the box below.                      |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---|---------|-----------|------------|--------------------|---|
| Rothwell St Mary's Catholic Primary School                                |        |        |        |        |        |        | Yes   |         |           | 2          |                    |   |
| Yeadon Westfield Infant School  |        |        |        |        |        |        | Yes   |         |           | 2          |                    | I believe halloween should be a time for fun for the children. It does not have to be a time for any sinister connections if handled sensitively.               |
| Harewood Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School            |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    |   |
| All Saint's Richmond Hill Church of England Primary School                |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    |   |
| Manston St James Church of England Primary School                         |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    | As a C of E School we do not feel this is an activity we wish to take part in   |
| Bardsey Primary School  |        |        |        |        |        |        | Yes   |         |           | 2          |                    |   |
| Middletown Primary School   |        |        |        |        |        |        | Yes   | 1       |           |            |                    |   |
| Thornor Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School             |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    | A social worker recently told me she was glad we did not hold this celebration due to the harmful and disruptive effect it can have on children.                |
| Brownhill Primary School  |        |        |        |        |        |        | Don't   |         |           |            |                    |   |
| Christ The King Catholic Primary School                                   |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    | We are a catholic primary school and as such do not promote this festival.  |
| Wigton Moor Primary School  |        |        |        |        |        |        | Yes   |         |           | 3          |                    | We have one or two families each year who object to Halloween activities on religious grounds, but we do not want to spoil the fun of others.                   |
| Beeston Hill St Luke's Church of England Primary School                   |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    |   |
| Allerton Church of England Primary School                                 |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    | Halloween is an irrelevance and commercially pugnacious hyped up event. My Governors and the staff are very opposed to it.                                      |
| Little London Community Primary School                                    |        |        |        |        |        |        | Yes   |         |           | 3          |                    |   |
| Ingram Road Primary School  |        |        |        |        |        |        | Yes   |         |           |            | 4                  |   |
| Kirkstall Valley Primary School   |        |        |        |        |        |        | Yes   |         |           | 3          |                    |   |
| St Paul's Catholic Primary School   |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    |   |
| Burley St Matthias' Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    |   |
| Oakwood Primary School  |        |        | 5      |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    |   |
| Iveson Primary School   |        |        |        |        |        |        | Yes   |         | 2         |            |                    | I do not approve or encourage these but the PTA organised it. Most were boycotted by our Muslim parents who make up almost 50% of our families.                 |
| Grimes Dyke Primary School  | 4      | 5      | 6      | 7      | 8      | 9      | Yes   |         |           | 3          |                    | We like to help the children to celebrate Hallowe'en in a safe way although we have to be quite strict on costumes and accessories as this can get out of hand! |
| St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Otley                                |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    | As a Church school we do not approve of the practices of Halloween.   |
| Bramley St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School  |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    |   |

| School   | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Has your school held Hallowe'en based activities in previous years? | 2 years | 3-5 years | 6-10 years | More than 10 years | Please feel free to enter any thoughts, comments or observations which you think may be of use in relation to this study in the box below.   |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---|---------|-----------|------------|--------------------|--|
| Pool-in-Wharfedale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School         |        |        |        |        |        |        | Don't know  |         |           |            |                    | When I was a young teacher in a Church of England school (Aided) in the late 80's there was a particularly strong objection to the celebration of Halloween by a small group of parents and made worse by a national media frenzy of linking Halloween with Devil worship. Most parents saw nothing wrong however the Bradford Diocese sent out a circular stating that it was inadvisable to celebrate Halloween in CE schools. The Chair of Governors was a priest who particularly objected to Halloween hence the school never had any mention of it. Over the past 19 years I have worked in Community schools and there has been little mention of this though pumpkins have been made by younger children. Now that I am a Headteacher in Church school (Controlled) I really do not need the hassle of dealing with objections from some parents who would inevitably raise it at Governor level. I do not have strong opinions either way but as it is controversial I believe that if parents wish to celebrate Halloween they should do so in the evening after school after all this is All Hallows Eve. |
| Ashfield Primary School  |        |        |        |        |        |        | Yes   |         |           |            | 3                  | The Halloween Disco is run by the PTA.   |
| Hollybush Primary School   |        |        |        |        |        |        | Yes   |         |           | 2          |                    |  |
| Raynville Primary School   |        |        |        |        |        |        | Yes   |         |           |            | 3                  |  |
| St Theresa's Catholic Primary School   |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    | Don't have strong views one way or another on this. We are a Catholic Primary School and as such tend to focus on All  |
| Strawberry Fields Primary School   |        |        | 6      | 7      | 8      | 9      | Yes   |         |           |            | 3                  |  |
| Birchfield Primary School  |        |        |        |        |        |        | Yes   |         |           |            |                    | 4Hallowe'en is a fun activity and anyone who has a problem with that and considers it devil worshipping' needs to get  |
| Featherbank Infant School  |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    |  |
| Churwell Primary School  | 4      | 5      | 6      | 7      | 8      | 9      | Yes   |         |           | 2          |                    |  |
| Gildersome Primary School  |        |        | 6      | 7      | 8      | 9      | Yes   |         |           |            |                    | 4  |
| Hill Top Primary School  | 4      | 5      | 6      | 7      | 8      | 9      | Yes   |         |           |            | 3                  |  |
| Hovingham Primary School   |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    |  |
| St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, Beeston                                    |        |        |        |        |        |        | Yes   |         | 1         |            |                    |  |
| Quarry Mount Primary School  |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    |  |
| Victoria Primary School  |        |        |        |        |        |        | Don't   |         |           |            |                    |  |
| Christ Church Upper Armley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    |  |
| Meanwood Church of England Primary School  |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    | As we are a Church school, some of our Governors consider it inappropriate to "celebrate" Halloween  |
| Hunslet St Mary's Church of England Primary School                               |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    |  |
| Five Lanes Primary School  |        |        |        |        |        |        | Yes   |         |           |            | 3                  |  |
| St Philip's Catholic Primary and Nursery School                                  |        |        |        |        |        |        | No  |         |           |            |                    |  |
| Valley View Community Primary School   |        |        |        |        |        |        | Yes   |         |           | 2          |                    | Our school is only 5 years old   |
| Shire Oak Church of England Primary School                                       |        |        |        |        |        |        | Don't know  |         |           |            |                    | The catering agency supplies a themed meal on or around that date, but rather than being specifically Hallowe'en themed they just have a 'spooky' theme. There is a commonly held perception in school that, being a church school, we cannot celebrate or mark hallowe'en. In some classes I am sure that children have written recounts of trick or treating, etc. but we do have a small (albeit significant) group of parents who would be unhappy with an explicit focus on it.   |

| School   | Church School | Did your school hold any Hallowe'en themed activities in 2010? | Decorations/displays | Themed lessons/activities (please specify below) | Disco / party | Bun / cake sale | Costumes/Non-uniform day | Other – Please give details in the box below   | Consideration of disruptive element of Hallowe'en | Perception of harmful nature of Hallowe'en | Perception of pagan character of Hallowe'en | Perception of more general un-Christian side to Hallowe'en | None of the above (please give details below) |
|--|---------------|--|----------------------|--|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| St Mary's Catholic Comprehensive School, Menston | Yes           | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   |  |   |  | 5   |
| Allerton Grange School                           | No            | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  | 1   | 2  |   |  |   |
| Mount St Mary's Catholic High School             | Yes           | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  | 1   |  |   |  |   |
| Teaching and Learning Centre                     | No            | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   |  |   |  |   |
| Otley Priory                                     |               | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   |  |   |  | 5   |
| Henry's Grammar School                           |               | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   |  |   |  |   |
| Lawnwood School                                  | No            | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  | 1   |  |   |  |   |
| East SILC - John Jamieson                        |               | Yes  | 1                    | 2  | 3             |                 |                          | As a special school this is always in the spirit of fun - sometimes an assembly etc. |   |  |   |  |   |
| Oakwood Pupil Support Centre (PRU)               | No            | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  | 1   |  |   |  |   |
| Cockburn School                                  |               | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  | 1   |  |   |  |   |
| Allerton High School                             | No            | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   |  |   |  |   |
| Carr Manor High School                           | No            | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   |  |   | 4  |   |
| Horsforth School                                 |               |  |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   |  |   |  |   |
| Specialist Science College                       | No            | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  | 1   |  |   |  |   |
| South Leeds Academy                              | No            | No   |                      |  |               |                 |                          |  |   |  |   |  | 5   |
| Hunslet Gate Centre (PRU)                        | No            | Yes  |                      |  |               |                 |                          | 6  | assembly only                                     |  |   |  |   |
| West SILC  | No            | Yes  |                      |  | 3             |                 |                          |  |   |  |   |  |   |

| School   | Whole school | Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 | Year 10 | Year 11 | Year 12 | Has your school held Halloween based activities in years prior to 2010? | 2 years | 3-5 years | 6-10 years | More than 10 years | Please feel free to enter any thoughts, comments or observations which you think may be of use in relation to this study in the box below.   |
|--|--------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---|---------|-----------|------------|--------------------|--|
| St Mary's Catholic Comprehensive School, Menston |              |        |        |        |         |         |         | No  |         |           |            |                    |  |
| Allerton Grange School                           |              |        |        |        |         |         |         | No  |         |           |            |                    |  |
| Mount St Mary's Catholic High School             |              |        |        |        |         |         |         | No  |         |           |            |                    | There are considerations to be taken in to account at a Catholic School, however the more relevant issue is that of disruption to the school and community that arises from this evening. Locally Halloween is associated with mischief night and as such can create considerable issues for residents faced with damage to gardens, cars etc. I dont feel it relevant to celebrate this occasion. |
| Teaching and Learning Centre                     |              |        |        |        |         |         |         | Dont Know   |         |           |            |                    |  |
| Otley Prince Henry's Grammar School              |              |        |        |        |         |         |         | No  |         |           |            |                    |  |
| Lawnswood School                                 |              |        |        |        |         |         |         | Dont Know   |         |           |            |                    |  |
| East SILC - John Jamieson                        | 1            |        |        |        |         |         |         | Yes   |         |           |            | 4                  | Whilst we recognise the complexities around Halloween we would like to emphasize that any delivery of this topic is in the spirit of fun with children dressing up for the family disco etc.   |
| Oakwood Pupil Support Centre (PRU)               | 1            |        |        |        |         |         |         | No  |         |           |            |                    |  |
| Cockburn School                                  |              |        |        |        |         |         |         | No  |         |           |            |                    |  |
| Allerton High School                             |              |        |        |        |         |         |         | No  |         |           |            |                    |  |
| Carr Manor High School                           |              |        |        |        |         |         |         | Dont Know   |         |           |            |                    |  |
| Horsforth School                                 |              |        |        |        |         |         |         | No  |         |           |            |                    |  |
| Specialist Science College                       |              |        |        |        |         |         |         | No  |         |           |            |                    |  |
| South Leeds Academy                              |              |        |        |        |         |         |         | Yes   |         | 2         |            |                    |  |
| Hunslet Gate Centre (PRU)                        | 1            |        |        |        |         |         |         | No  |         |           |            |                    |  |
| West SILC  | 1            |        |        |        |         |         |         | Yes   |         | 2         |            |                    | We have themed discos throughout the year. We do put up displays for the discos but any witch or ghost element is removed the following morning, as some families do not want their children exposed to these  |

Safer Leeds Partnership  
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Email: [community.safety@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:community.safety@leeds.gov.uk)  
Tel: 0113 3950821  
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Date: October 2007

Dear Retailer,

As you may be aware nuisance behaviour and vandalism traditionally increase at this time of the year with the coming of the dark nights. We are launching a campaign during October and November to tackle the anti social behaviour and vandalism associated with the mischief night and bonfire night period. Agencies taking part include Safer Leeds, Leeds City Council, West Yorkshire Police, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Youth Services departments.

As part of that campaign we are asking for your help and cooperation. I know that you will be fully aware of the restrictions that apply to the sale of fireworks and I have spoken with my colleagues from the Trading Standards department and know that they will be contacting retailers to help them in that respect.

I am writing to ask that over this period you are mindful of what you sell to young people and consider whether it could be used to cause vandalism to property. At this time of year the police receive lots of complaints about children throwing eggs or flour at houses, super gluing locks or spraying graffiti. All I am asking is that you don't sell items such as eggs, super glue or spray paint to unaccompanied children under 16 to help put a stop to that kind of behaviour.

To help you and to deter children from asking for these sorts of items we have produced a poster which I am asking you to put up in your shop so that young people know that you are supporting the initiative and don't ask in the first place

Contd/..



# Safer

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**tackling drugs and crime**

I would also ask you to consider how and where waste is stored as this time of year can also see a rise in rubbish and nuisance fires, sometimes with serious consequences. I would ask you to consider chaining wheelie bins so that they can't be pushed away or opened and set fire to, securing skips and putting things like out of date eggs awaiting collection somewhere children can't get access to them.

I know that you want the best for your local community and hope that you will be able to support this and ensure that your staff are aware of the need to consider why children are buying something and what use they might make of it.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I hope the poster will be helpful to you.

Yours sincerely



**R Jackson  
Chief Officer  
Leeds Community Safety**

[www.leeds.gov.uk](http://www.leeds.gov.uk)

switchboard : 0113 234 8080