

GENERATIONS OF LEARNING: Background notes for teachers

CRICKLEWOOD

Settlement in the Cricklewood area goes back more than 2,000 years, and there is a long tradition of people migrating to the area.

The main road, the A5 Cricklewood Broadway follows the route of the Roman road, which still lies buried beneath the modern tarmac. The name Cricklewood itself is from the Saxon meaning 'wood with a crooked outline' and was first recorded as the Norman French, 'le Cricklewode'.

Until 1870, when the new railway station opened, Cricklewood was a small village, with a number of large mansion houses on the outskirts. This included Dollis Hill House, which entertained guests including Prime Minister William Gladstone and American writer Mark Twain.

In 1879, a second railway station opened at Willesden Green. The new transport infrastructure made commuting into central London to work easier, and the area began to develop. People moved to the growing London suburb from across Britain. Thousands of new houses were built between 1880 and 1930. Some of these were workers cottages, like the railway cottages that survive in nearby Neasden. In Cricklewood, larger semi-detached houses were built. The 'tree roads' - Pine, Larch, Ivy, Olive and Ashford Road - were part of the Cricklewood Park development constructed between 1893-1900.

Local amenities included the Crown Hotel, which was rebuilt in 1889, and the shops along Cricklewood Broadway, built between 1910 and 1914. There was a new school and a cinema and skating rink for entertainment. Gladstone Park was completed in 1901 and the swimming pool was added in 1903, open from May to September. Three synagogues were built for new Jewish communities. Several churches were built for the growing population, including St Agnes Roman Catholic Church. Built in 1883, many of the people who attended this church were Irish migrants.

In the years following the start of the First World War in 1914, more light industry businesses were started in the Cricklewood area, with factories making use of the transport links along the A5. One of the best-known factories was Smiths Industries, which opened in 1915, making clocks and speedometers for cars.

At the start of the 20th century, the village gave its name to a London postal district that included the modern areas of Cricklewood, Dollis Hill, Childs Hill, parts of Golders Green and Brent Cross, Willesden (north), and Neasden (north). This is the area covered by the familiar NW2 postcode today. In 1965, re-organisation of the London borough boundaries split this area between the boroughs of Barnet, Brent, and Camden.

In the years after 1945, when the Second World War ended, thousands of men and women came from Pakistan and Ireland, as well as India and the West Indies, to work in the many factories along the A5, from Cricklewood to Neasden, Hendon and Staples Corner. There were also important industrial centres in nearby Harlesden and Park Royal. However, after the 1960s, local industry went into a steady decline.

POST-WAR MIGRATION

As England's close neighbour, migration from Ireland went back centuries, increasing significantly during the 19th century. Although Ireland supported Britain during the First World War, by 1922 the nation had successfully fought independence. In 1949 it left the Commonwealth and became a republic. The new nation experienced economic hardship and people were forced to leave to find work. In the 1950s and '60s, thousands of young men and women came to London to build new lives. Many enjoyed the freedom of the city after quiet lives in rural villages. Cricklewood was famed for its dance halls, including the Galtymore and Burtons.

Migrants from Pakistan also came from rural areas, many coming to Cricklewood from the Punjab, which had strong links with Great Britain. The Punjab was a key recruitment area for the British Empire in pre-Partition India and many Punjabi men fought for Britain in the First and Second World Wars. After independence in 1947, Pakistan remained part of the Commonwealth. With the turmoil and hardships of the early years of the new nation, men often came to Britain leaving their families at home, thinking they would only stay a few years before returning to Pakistan.

The British Nationality Act of 1948 created the status of 'Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies', with automatic right of entry to Britain. This was to make it easier for people from colonial nations to come and work in Britain. So crucial was the need for workers, some large organisations began overseas recruitment campaigns. London Transport began recruiting in Ireland in the early 1950s, and in 1956 set up a recruitment office in Barbados, in the West Indies.

Doctors from India and Pakistan came in huge numbers in response to an appeal in the early 1960s by the health minister Enoch Powell, to work in the new National Health Service. More than 18,000 subsequently arrived in the UK. And by 1971, an estimated 12% of NHS nurses were Irish.

Enoch Powell later spoke against large-scale immigration in his April 1968 'Rivers of Blood' speech. Powell believed mass migration by people of different racial and religious backgrounds was a threat to British people. The speech coincided with a vote on the 1968 Race Relations Act.

A quirk in the legislation meant Irish citizens had the same rights to live, work, and vote as British citizens, which they retained after Ireland left the Commonwealth. By 1951, the census recorded 250,000 Irish in London. Between 1951 and 1961 an estimated 500,000 more Irish migrants came to Britain. The Irish represented the largest migrant minority in the country.

However, there was opposition to unrestricted migration. In 1958 questions were raised in the House of Lords about controlling "the influx into this country of Pakistanis of the non-labouring class"*. In the 1950s, 14,500 Pakistanis – 12, 800 men and 1,700 women – came to Britain. According to the 1961 Census, about 25% of Pakistani migrants had settled in London.

[*<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1958/jun/10/pakistani-immigrants>]

The 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act introduced a voucher system, allowing those already here to arrange jobs for relatives and bring over their families. Other vouchers were issued for those who'd served in the Second World War, and for skilled professionals. Between 1961 and 1966 the Pakistani population in Britain grew from 25,000 to 120,000.

The Immigration Act of 1971 resulted in a flurry of migrations in the early 1970s, especially from families of Pakistani migrants who feared changes to the law might mean permanent separation.

In 1972, Pakistan withdrew from the Commonwealth due to disputes over recognition of Bangladesh. This placed further restrictions on migration to the UK and the number of migrants declined after the early 1970s. That same year, Ireland agreed to join the European Community (now known as the European Union). The economic boost led some migrants to return home and the number of Irish immigrants to Britain declined.

In the 1991 census, a question on ethnic identity was asked for the first time. For the UK as a whole, 640,000 people identified as Pakistani, with 47% of these born in the UK. When 'White: Irish' was included as an option in the 2001 census, 691,232 people identified as Irish, although this is believed to be an under representation of Irish people born in the UK.

MIGRANTS IN CRICKLEWOOD

In the 1950s and 1960s, people came from Ireland and Pakistan to work in London, seeking a better life, making the difficult decision to leave home, friends, and family.

The wider Cricklewood area had a long tradition of welcoming new communities. In the early 20th century, large populations of Jewish and Irish arrived. After the WWII, new migrants from the West Indies, and elsewhere in the Commonwealth arrived, including Cyprus and India. There was also a notable Polish community, with a Polish language Saturday School set up for children who had arrived as refugees during the war.

This history possibly made it easier for new communities to integrate and be accepted. However, there was some animosity, centred on fears of a loss of English identity and culture. A book from 1954, 'Willesden, An official Guide', produced by the local council, noted "Nowadays the movement of population into and out of Willesden is a factor which greatly hampers the fostering of a true civic pride. Probably not more than one quarter of the present adult population were born here". (Before 1965, Cricklewood was within the Metropolitan Borough of Willesden.)

People who came to London from Ireland and Pakistan usually moved to areas where they already had friends or family living, to help find work and a place to stay. So many Irish moved into North West London that Kilburn gained the nickname 'County Kilburn' – in reference to the Irish county names. For people from Pakistan, being near people they knew was even more important, as they were so far from home and their old support networks. Many of the Pakistanis who settled in the Cricklewood area came from the Punjab, from towns and villages around Jhelum and Rawalpindi.

Young people sent money home to support their families. Culturally, both countries shared similar outlooks including the importance of family, strong religious identity, and a hard work ethic.

The earliest wave of migrants from Ireland and Pakistan were predominantly unskilled or semi-skilled, from rural towns and villages, able to undertake manual work in factories and construction industries. Later, doctors and nurses were actively recruited from Pakistan and Ireland. Many Irish also came to find work in schools and further education, something they could do more easily than professionals from Pakistan due to the common language.

MIGRATION ROOTS

For many new communities who settled here from the 20th century on, the relationship with Britain goes back much further. From the 17th to the 20th centuries, British governments oversaw the colonisation of nations across the world and the creation of the British Empire. At its peak in the 1920s the British Empire ruled nations on every continent, covering nearly 25% of the earth's total land area. Some 700 million people were part of the empire, representing a huge diversity of culture, religion, language, and ethnicity. The empire began to decline as Britain grew weaker after the end of the Second World War. In 1949, the British Commonwealth was established, as a symbolic successor to empire. As nations gained their independence, they could choose whether or not to remain part of the Commonwealth community.

Ireland

English monarchs had been claiming the right to rule Ireland since the 12th century, declaring themselves **Overlords of Ireland** in 1177 AD. At the time, Ireland was a patchwork of small states and kingdoms. For several centuries, there was limited direct rule and the Irish people continued to enjoy cultural and religious freedoms. In the 16th and 17th century, wars were fought to establish English rule, with colonies of English settlers established, displacing Irish people from their farmlands. The impact was felt particularly in the north, where the settlement was known as **Plantation**. This created a religious division between the Irish Catholics in the south and the English and Scottish Protestants in the north. In 18th and 19th century the economic boom created by the Industrial Revolution saw thousands of Irish coming to England to work. Many were escaping poverty caused by British underinvestment in Ireland. There was a growing movement for independence throughout 19th century, with numerous armed uprisings, as well as cultural and political campaigns. In early 20th century, independence was finally declared in 1922, although Britain retained control over Northern Ireland. In 1949 Ireland formally left the **Commonwealth** and became a republic. Since the 1960s, there have been on-going disputes in the UK and Ireland over Northern Ireland.

Pakistan

English merchants had been formally pursuing trade with Indian regions since 1600, when the **East India Company** was founded. At the time, India was a patchwork of small states and kingdoms under the rule of the Mughals. As the Mughal Empire began to crumble in the 18th century, British traders established private armies and began to exercise increasing military and administrative power. At the start of the 19th century, powerful Maratha rulers had emerged, but they were defeated by the military strength of the East India Company. Following the Indian Rebellion of 1857, the British Government took on **direct rule** of India, bringing the various regions into a single nation, known as the **British Raj**. In the early 20th century, India provided vital support for Britain during the First and Second World Wars. At the same time, the political and cultural campaigns for independence grew in strength. As the **British Empire** declined, India achieved independence. In 1947, the **Partition of India** created the separate nations of India and Pakistan. The nations were roughly divided according to the Hindu and Muslim majority and many millions of people were displaced. Some ancient regions were split in two, such as the Punjab, and the area continues to be disputed.