Forum on Remembering the Past: Memory, History, Commemoration

Remembering the 1605 Gunpowder Plot in Ireland, 1605–1920

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Writing in November 1873 of the commemoration of the 1605 Gunpowder Plot (the conspiracy hatched by Guy Fawkes and other English Catholics to blow up parliament and thereby assassinate King James I), the Dublin-based liberal newspaper, the *Freeman's Journal*, observed that, whereas in England the "dubious incident" was now remembered "only in connexion with a funny effigy and a schoolboy's half-holiday," in Ireland Protestants still found in "the miserable conspiracy of three centuries since a pretext of keeping fellow-countrymen asunder in distrust and hate." The newspaper's comments had been prompted by events two days earlier, when the "Sons of William" had assembled outside Portadown—"one of the most inflammable localities in Ulster"—determined to march to the sound of their "execrable" music through the Catholic residential area known as "the Tunnel" (named after a local underground walkway).[1] But Portadown had been the scene of a riot in July 1873, and the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) had been forewarned that a similar incident might occur on 5 November. As a result, 110 additional constables were drafted from counties Armagh and Down to ensure that peace was maintained, while on the day itself, the RIC fixed bayonets and stopped the quarter-mile-long Orange procession from gaining access to the Tunnel, whereupon the great majority of Orangemen withdrew and entered the town from a different direction. However,

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[1] *Freeman's Journal*, 7 November 1873, 2.

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another group—primed with alcohol according to the *Freeman's Journal*—tried to break through the police cordon. Soon the air was "literally black with . . . flying stones," which fell like "showers of hail" and left the "blood . . . easily distinguishable" on the faces of the police. Forced to fall back, the local magistrate read the Riot Act, the police were ordered to load their weapons, and reinforcements were sent for. But by this time a group of Orangemen had successfully marched through the Catholic area of the town, "amid the most perfect quietness, not a word being spoken on either side," and this (along with the rain) appears to have pacified the crowd.[2]

The *Freeman's* purpose in reporting the riot in this way was not just to belittle the Orangemen of Portadown but also to ridicule Orange commemoration of the Gunpowder Plot in general. The paper's description of the Fifth as a "dubious incident," for example, was a cryptic reference to the long-established Catholic counternarrative of the 1605 plot (in which the English secretary of state, Robert Cecil, knew of the conspiracy in advance but allowed it to develop in order to justify repressive measures against Catholics later).[3] But it was not just that Protestant history was faulty, it was also that loyalist commemoration was—according to the *Freeman's*—anachronistic. In truth, anyone reading the English press in early November 1873 might easily have reached a similar conclusion about the anniversary in England. The *Leeds Mercury*, for example, proclaimed unequivocally that, "Happily the fifth of November has lost its anti-Catholic character," while in places as far apart as Sheffield and Gosport there were reports that the anniversary "was generally wearing off."[4] Even in the many locations where the day was enthusiastically celebrated by "youths, young men, and maidens letting off squibs, rockets, Roman candles, crackers and all the paraphernalia of . . . [the] annual display[s] of fireworks," it was the effigies of "obnoxious or notorious" local personages, the vigilance of the constabulary against public disorder, accidents with gunpowder, and the court proceedings that followed on 6 November that attracted comment in the press, rather than any religious fallout.[5] By depicting 5 November in England, therefore, as a harmless Jacobean festival kept only by school children, the *Freeman's Journal* deliberately sought to present Orangemen as atavistic, bigoted, and out of touch with an increasingly liberal and secular Britain in which anti-Catholicism was fast disappearing and seventeenth-century troubles were being forgotten.

Ulster loyalists, however, took issue with the *Freeman's* characterization of the anniversary in both England and Ireland. As the *Londonderry Sentinel* insisted, "'Guy Fawkes-day' is . . . still made the occasion of popular demonstrations against treasonable plots in the sister country."[6] Fireworks, bonfires, and burning effigies were—by this reading—reflexively anti-Catholic. After all, it was only twenty years

[2] *L'derry Journal*, 7 November 1873, 2–3.

[3] James Sharpe, *Remember, Remember the Fifth of November* (London, 2005), 132–33; W. B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, 1997), 75.

[4] *Leeds Mercury*, 6 November 1873, 4; *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 6 November 1873, 3; *Hampshire Telegraph*, 8 November 1873, 7.

[5] *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 8 November 1873, 5; *Hampshire Advocate*, 8 November 1873, 2; *Birmingham Daily Post*, 6 November 1873, 8; *Pall Mall Gazette*, 7 November 1873, 4; *Hampshire Advertiser*, 8 November 1873, 6; *Northern Echo*, 12 November 1873, 3.

[6] *Londonderry Sentinel*, cited in *Belfast News-Letter*, 8 November 1873, 4.

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since Pope Pius IX's reestablishment of the English Catholic hierarchy in 1850 (the so-called Catholic Aggression controversy) had brought "No Popery" in England to its highest level since the 1780 Gordon Riots and had given the gunpowder celebrations of 1850 in London, Birmingham, Cheltenham, Bristol, Birkenhead, Lewes, Exeter, and many other places, a strongly sectarian flavor.[7] Not only was English remembrance still very much anti-Catholic according to Ulster loyalists, but they also vehemently denied that the events of Portadown were typical of gunpowder remembrance in Ulster.[8] In truth, as the pages of the *Belfast News-Letter* (the principal organ of Ulster Conservatism) in 1873 bore witness, Orange commemoration was usually far less controversial. Lodges in places like Belfast, Cookstown, County Tyrone, Armoy, Trillick, and Glenavy, in County Antrim, and Newtownards, County Down, typically paraded—when permitted by a hostile British government—to church, where they customarily observed the "service appointed for the day" and listened to anniversary sermons that reiterated "the unchangeable and persecuting nature of Popery, which was the same in spirit now as when it kindled the fires of Smithfield." Afterward, brethren attended private soirees at their lodge rooms, where they listened to commemorative lectures and toasted the queen, William III, and various Orange dignitaries. Then they went home.[9]

But loyalists in the north of Ireland did not just argue that the gunpowder anniversary was more Protestant in England and less riotous in Ulster than the *Freeman's* alleged; they went further and asserted that the parades, church services, and soirees that characterized their observation of the 1605 plot were actually motivated by exactly the same set of underlying cultural memories (grounded in a shared experience of the Reformation and the common legacy of the "Protestant Constitution") as the bonfires and fireworks that enlivened autumn nights in late nineteenth-century England. This article examines this view, arguing that the loyalist emphasis on co-commemoration was a key distinguishing feature of the anniversary in Ireland, dating as far back as the seventeenth century. Thus, during the earliest phase of commemoration up to 1690 (when the anniversary was not formally sanctioned by church and state as in England), irregular and impromptu observation of the Fifth occurred in response to fluctuations in Protestant fear of the Catholic "Other," with considerable emphasis being periodically placed on co-commemoration as Irish Anglicans sought to remind England of their own "Englishness." Although during the second phase—coinciding roughly with the long eighteenth century—Dublin Castle officially observed the anniversary, 5 November was not widely commemorated outside of Dublin, partly because the formality of the vice-regal ceremonies did not provide a focus for wider celebration but also because Irish anniversaries proved much more popular than the Fifth. And while some plebeian Protestants did celebrate the anniversary in Dublin itself, this observance flourished only after the authorities began to withdraw from the day. Since, by this time, the anniversary had been captured by the recently formed

[7] John Wolffe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain, 1829–1860* (Oxford, 1991), 2; Roger Swift, "Guy Fawkes Celebrations in Victorian Exeter," *History Today* 31, no. 11 (November 1981): 7; D. G. Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England* (Stanford, CA, 1992), 243, 244; Sharpe, *Remember, Remember*, 148–50.

[8] *Belfast News-Letter*, 10 November 1873, 4.

[9] *Belfast News-Letter*, 8 November 1873, 4; 10 November 1873, 3.

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Orange Order, Dublin Castle eventually moved to suppress the day, thereby bringing popular observation to an end altogether.

And so, it was only in the final phase of Irish gunpowder commemoration, from 1829 to the First World War, that 5 November was observed on a large scale and in a sustained manner. But rather than being a continuation of earlier traditions of gunpowder commemoration (as loyalists later insisted), observation in the nineteenth century was triggered by the specific trauma of Catholic emancipation in 1829. This revival quickly petered out in the south after 1850, whereas the formal adoption of the anniversary by the Orange Order in Ulster buttressed the day against state opposition and Catholic hostility and led to the Fifth becoming widely observed by ordinary loyalists on a scale hitherto unknown. Orange sponsorship involved, however, an important shift in the function of the anniversary, one that differentiated it not only from the previous phase of Irish commemoration but also from contemporary English custom. Thus, while Ulster loyalists, like their southern Irish predecessors, still saw 5 November as paradigmatic of Catholic treachery and providential favor, after 1829 the Fifth was once again valued as an important opportunity for co-commemoration with England, in that Protestant loyalists (particularly in Ulster) saw in the persistence of Bonfire Night in England not only tangible and reassuring evidence of the continuing importance of anti-Catholicism within English society but also a cultural space in which the Protestant populations of both islands could reaffirm their shared religious solidarity in the face of successive ministerial betrayals of the "Protestant Constitution" and the continuing threat posed by Rome.

This article then, is the first to attempt both a longitudinal and comparative analysis of Irish gunpowder commemoration and its underlying mentalities, since it charts the fortunes of Guy Fawkes Day in Ireland from the seventeenth to the twentieth century in relation to English observation of the same anniversary. Based on an extensive consultation of the Irish press in hard copy and the English newspapers digitized by the British Library, it demonstrates that Irish observation of 5 November was very far from being simply an extension of the English tradition, since it followed a distinct trajectory, with its own rhythms, rituals, and chronology, reflecting to a large extent the island's peculiar confessional demography. And yet, this article also shows that the Fifth in Ireland, and especially nineteenth-century Ulster, was intimately bound up with the anniversary in England, since the vicarious satisfaction Irish loyalists derived from watching English bonfires was crucial in sustaining enthusiasm for their own commemoration of gunpowder, treason, and plot.

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In the immediate aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, church and state gave thanks to God for having once again delivered Protestant England from the treachery of Rome, and shortly afterward a measure was enacted instituting an annual day of public thanksgiving on 5 November.[10] General histories of the gun-

[10] The seminal study of English gunpowder commemoration is that by David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (1989; rev. ed., Stroud, 2004).

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powder anniversary have largely treated commemoration in Ireland as part of the integrated story of Bonfire Night, assuming in so doing that Irish Protestant observance was from the outset essentially English in orientation and character.[11] This view has deep roots; as one observer put it as far back as 1849, "the Gunpowder Plot was assuredly kept in Ireland as soon as in England."[12] But while this was chronologically true, the English orientation of Irish Anglican commemoration was not simply reflexive; instead it seems often to have been deliberate and calculated.

A major difference between the anniversary in Stuart England and Ireland was that observation in Ireland was not sanctioned by the 1606 Act of Parliament instituting 5 November as a national day of thanksgiving. On 9 November 1614, the Irish House of Commons did request the speaker to frame an act to have 5 November observed in Ireland by Anglicans, but this course was not adopted, because the king himself "would do nothing to sour and alienate the minds of any part of his subjects."[13] That said, the day was only gradually adopted even in England, and it was not until the 1620s that it was widely observed in English market towns.[14] By midcentury, however, the narrative encoded in the special prayers and sermons associated with the day (emphasizing the rights of kings and Protestant England's place as God's chosen people) had long since been augmented by a print culture of anti-Catholic histories and Protestant almanacs and by popular rites such as bonfires, bells, feasting, and commemorative philanthropy. Moreover, during the century that followed, new popish plots recharged the anniversary with fresh providential significance, though at the same time the meaning of the day became increasingly blurred as English puritans and Arminians, royalists and parliamentarians, Whigs and Tories all sought to appropriate the day for their own purposes.[15]

Although the anniversary in Ireland did not have the same status as in England, it was nonetheless observed—albeit somewhat erratically—within the English Pale (the region around Dublin under crown control). Protestant churches in Dublin rang their bells on 5 November from the 1620s onward, and anniversary sermons were probably also delivered. None of these sermons are known to have survived, but they may have anticipated later examples that emphasized the need for Protestant unity in the face of unceasing Catholic conspiracy.[16] Protestants were certainly enjoined to remember "God's mercy and popes [sic] cruelty" on 5 November

[11] Sharpe, *Remember, Remember*; Brenda Buchanan, David Cannadine, Justin Champion, David Cress, Pauline Croft, Antonia Fraser, and Mike Jay, *Gunpowder Plots: A Celebration of 400 Years of Bonfire Night* (London, 2005).

[12] W. K. Clay, "The Irish Prayer-Book," *British Magazine* 30 (December 1846): 623.

[13] Mary T. Hayden, "The Origin and Development of Heads of Bills in the Irish Parliament," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 6th ser., 4, no. 2 (1925): 113; Thomas Carte, *A History of the Life of James, First Duke of Ormonde*, 3 vols. (London, 1735–56), 1:22.

[14] Ronald Hutton, *The Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain* (Oxford, 1996), 394–95.

[15] Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, 145–65.

[16] J. B. Leslie, "An Old Dublin Vestry Book," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 7th ser., vol. 13, no. 2 (June 1943): 44; James Kelly, "'Glorious and Immortal Memory': Commemoration and Protestant Identity, 1660–1800," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 94C, no. 2 (1994): 28.

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by almanacs published in Dublin in the 1630s.[17] Historians have argued, however, that it was only in the aftermath of the 1641 rebellion that Irish Anglicans adopted the anniversary—and then only because they wanted deliberately to emphasize their Englishness in the face of new popish plots.[18] The anniversary seems to have been neglected in the decades that followed, perhaps as a result of contemporary English anxieties as to whether the day was appropriate in the aftermath of the 1649 regicide.[19] In 1655, for example, it was reported that 5 November had been commemorated in Dublin with "more solemnity than hath been usual these many years past." That year, the day was marked with prayers, sermons, the firing of artillery, and "the blaze of bonfires before every one's door," thereby demonstrating that English and Irish public and private observance at this time employed similar ritual forms.[20]

After the Restoration in 1660, the anniversary was reclaimed in England as a Stuart red-letter day.[21] In Ireland, by contrast, greater importance was placed on adding Irish anniversaries—such as 23 October—to the existing calendar of Protestant thanksgivings.[22] Although no separate legislative sanction was given to commemorating the Gunpowder Plot in Ireland at this time, the anniversary was incorporated into the religious calendar of the Church of Ireland after it aligned itself liturgically with the Church of England in 1666 by adopting the 1662 Book of Common Prayer (though the Irish Book of Common Prayer still had not been amended to reflect these changes half a century later, and the status of 5 November was disputed long afterward).[23] While this incorporation may have been prompted in part by a desire by Irish Protestants to once again emphasize their Englishness in the wake of the Restoration, 5 November did not flourish in Stuart Ireland.[24] Still, its proximity to 23 October ensured that the anniversary and its unreconstructed message of deliverance and Anglican Protestant peril remained a feature of both devotional life and street politics.[25] Thus, in the 1660s, sermons on 5 November were among the political printed material sponsored by the state to buttress the restored Stuart dynasty, while in the 1670s Dublin guilds observed the day, and Anglican clergymen continued to rail against the "traitorous and bloody practices of the papists," though by then such professions were increasingly

[17] Patrick True, *A New Almanac and Prognostication for the Year . . . 1636* (Dublin, 1636), cited in Raymond Gillespie, *Devoted People: Belief and Religion in Early Modern Ireland* (Manchester, 1997), 55.

[18] James Kelly, "The Emergence of Political Parading, 1660–1800," in *The Irish Parading Tradition: Following the Drum*, ed. T. G. Fraser (Basingstoke, 2000), 10; T. C. Barnard, "The Uses of 23 October 1641 and Irish Protestant Celebration," *English Historical Review* 106, no. 421 (October 1991): 890.

[19] Cressy, *Bonfire and Bells*, 165.

[20] *Mercurius Politicus*, no. 285, 22–25 November 1655, 5782, cited in T. C. Barnard, "Crises of Identity among Irish Protestants, 1641–1685," *Past & Present* 127, no. 1 (May 1990): 55; Kelly, "Glorious and Immortal Memory, " 26. Also see Barnard, "Uses of 23 October," 892.

[21] Sharpe, *Remember, Remember*, 93.

[22] Kelly, "Glorious and Immortal Memory," 26–27. The anniversary of 23 October was instituted in 1661 to commemorate the discovery and frustration of the Catholic plot to seize Dublin Castle in 1641. See Barnard, "Uses of 23 October."

[23] Barnard, "Uses of 23 October," 892; Clay, "Irish Prayer-Book," 624.

[24] Barnard, "Uses of 23 October," 890; Kelly, "Glorious and Immortal Memory," 30.

[25] Kelly, "Glorious and Immortal Memory," 28.

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discouraged by Dublin Castle.[26] As for plebeian celebrations, Protestants in Ireland drew upon the English customs they had inherited or those they saw in their own time in England, which featured bonfires, high jinks, sexual badinage, burning the pope in effigy, and coded criticism of James II.[27] Indeed, just as in England, 5 November in Ireland could act as a lightning rod for wider religio-political tensions.[28] The duke of York's conversion to Catholicism in 1672, the "popish plot" of 1678, and the succession of a Catholic to the throne in 1685 were noted on 5 November on both islands, notwithstanding the efforts of lord deputy Ormonde to smother the anniversary.[29] But unlike in England, Ireland's Catholic majority ensured that sectarian tensions could—as James I had anticipated—result in violence.[30] Thus, in Clonmel, County Tipperary, gunpowder celebrations provoked an attack by local Catholics in 1672, while in 1686 the commemoration of 23 October and 5 November by Dublin Protestants led soldiers of Tyrconnell's Catholicized army to run riot.[31]

The place of 5 November within the Irish Protestant calendar of thanksgivings and military victories was, after 1690, enhanced by the coincidence of William's landing at Torbay with the gunpowder anniversary, which gave the day additional providential ballast after the special service was amended to reflect the new double anniversary.[32] That said, this did not translate into wider observance, since, first, the Book of Common Prayer was less frequently printed in Ireland and, second, because, following the Glorious Revolution, the new, more popular anniversaries of 4 November (William III's birthday and wedding day) overshadowed the Fifth in Ireland, thereby positioning the day once again as a more minor anniversary.[33]

In fact, though the Fifth was included among those "holy days" officially observed in Ireland, it only ever really became established in Dublin.[34] Elsewhere, the day was certainly observed officially with dinners and thanksgiving services by some provincial corporations (such as Waterford, Youghal, and Cork) from the 1690s to the 1730s, though whether remoter Anglican communities celebrated

[26] Henry F. Berry, "The Records of the Feltmakers' Company of Dublin, 1687–1841: Their Loss and Recovery," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 6th ser., 1, no. 1 (March 1911): 32; Henry F. Berry, "The Merchant Tailors' Gild: That of St. John the Baptist, Dublin, 1418–1841," Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 6th ser., 8, no. 1 (June 1918): 52; Raymond Gillespie and Andrew Hadfield, *The Irish Book in English, 1550–1800* (Oxford, 2006), 206; Barnard, "Crises of Identity," 56; Kelly, "Glorious and Immortal Memory," 29; Richard Caulfield, ed., *Council Book of the Corporation of Youghal, from 1660 to 1659, from 1666 to 1687, and from 1690 to 1800* (Guildford, 1878), 355.

[27] Toby Barnard, "Athlone, 1685; Limerick, 1710: Religious Riots or Charivaris?" *Studia Hibernica* 27 (1993): 62, 65.

[28] Ibid., 63.

[29] Sharpe, *Remember, Remember*, 95–102; Barnard, "Uses of 23 October," 892.

[30] Barnard, "Athlone, 1685," 70.

[31] David Butler, *South Tipperary, 1570–1841: Religion, Land and Rivalry* (Dublin, 2005), 131; S. J. Connolly, *Religion, Law and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland, 1660–1760* (Oxford, 1992), 36; Richard L. Greaves, *Dublin's Merchant-Quaker: Anthony Sharp and the Community of Friends, 1643–1707* (Stanford, CA, 1998), 50.

[32] *Daily Gazetteer*, 16 November 1736, 1.

[33] Barnard, "Athlone, 1685," 70, and "Uses of 23 October," 895.

[34] Kelly, "Glorious and Immortal Memory," 31.

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the day is uncertain.[35] As for religious thanksgiving, the Anglican episcopate beyond Dublin was clearly aware of the anniversary, since it was from among its ranks that preachers for the annual gunpowder sermons before the Irish Parliament were drawn. But it is unclear whether they habitually observed the anniversary in their own cathedrals, and doubt has been cast as to whether their published sermons circulated far beyond Dublin.[36] As for the question of whether rural Anglican congregations heard gunpowder sermons, this has also been questioned (owing both to the dearth and poor quality of the church's provincial clergy), while surviving church records from the provinces do not suggest that observation was widespread.[37] Determining whether Irish Protestants outside Dublin privately observed 5 November is even more difficult to establish. Almanacs published in Ireland certainly recorded the anniversary, and though Toby Barnard has noted that few personal records make reference to Protestant red-letter days, he observes that this could just as easily reflect their ubiquity as their lack of observance.[38] Still, reports such as the one that Quakers in County Kildare burnt an effigy of the Virgin Mary on 5 November 1740 suggest that, while the day was known of beyond the capital among Anglicans and even some nonconforming Protestants, provincial observation was in reality both infrequent and geographically patchy.[39]

In contrast to provincial Ireland, there is much better evidence that the anniversary was observed in Dublin after 1688, though never on a great scale. Elite commemoration was characteristically formal, courtly, and rather solemn, as most clearly seen in the custom—dating from the early eighteenth century—of the lord lieutenant, usually accompanied by the Irish House of Lords, attending a thanksgiving service on 5 November (the Irish House of Commons attended its own service elsewhere).[40] Of course, in Dublin, as in neighboring England, "publick

[35] Seamus Pender, ed., *Council Books of the Corporation of Waterford, 1662–1700* (Dublin, 1964), 334; Caulfield, *Council Book of the Corporation of Youghal*, 409; Richard Caulfield, ed., *The Council Book of the Corporation of the City of Cork, from 1609 to 1643, and from 1690 to 1800* (Guildford, 1876), 516.

[36] William Maziere Brady, *Essays on the English State Church in Ireland* (London, 1869), 216; Barnard, "Uses of 23 October," 917.

[37] Toby Barnard, "National Prayers and the Confessional State in Ireland, 1660–1800," paper delivered at the National Worship in International Perspective: State Prayers, Fasts and Thanksgivings since the Sixteenth Century conference, Durham University, 14 April 2010. Church records provide little evidence of provincial observance: churchwarden's accounts, Ballymodan, County Cork, Representative Church Body Library, Dublin [RCBL], 1694–1702, 1760–77, P.0140/07/01; vestry minute book, Carlow, 1669–1700, RCBL, P.0317/05/01; account book, Trim, County Meath, 1759–1802, RCBL, P.0595/07/01; St. Peter's Vestry minute book, Drogheda, County Louth, 1752–1802, RCBL, P.0854/05.01. The author would like to acknowledge the assistance of Gerard Horn in relation to these records.

[38] *An Almanacke* . . . (Cork, 1723); *The Complete Pocket Companion* . . . (Dublin, 1738); *The Gentleman's Cork Almanack* . . . (Cork, 1779); *The Belfast Almanack* (Belfast 1788); Barnard, "Uses of 23 October," 918.

[39] Kelly, "Glorious and Immortal Memory," 32.

[40] *Daily Courant*, 16 November 1730, 1; *George Faulkner the Dublin Journal*, 4–8 November 1746, 1. For examples of thanksgiving services, see Edward Synge, *A Sermon Preach'd in Christ Church, Dublin, . . . on Saturday, November 5, 1737. Being the anniversary . . . of the Gun-Powder Plot, and for the happy arrival of King William* (Dublin, 1737); Joseph Story, *A Sermon preach'd before the honourable House of Commons, at St. Andrew's Church, on the fifth of November, 1737, Being the anniversary thanksgiving-day for the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, and for the arrival of King William III* (Dublin, 1737).

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Rejoycing" was also a feature of the day.[41] For example, while the viceroy—at the apex of society—attended a "grand and elegant dinner" hosted by the Boyne club in 1739, elsewhere the day was regularly observed with the "Ringing of Bells, bonfires, Illuminations, &c."[42] But while these celebrations certainly suggest that 5 November was an established part of the Irish state calendar, with a plebeian tradition of popular observation as well, this was clearly not on the same scale as gunpowder commemoration in London or even in provincial England.[43] After all, unlike in Ireland, most eighteenth-century corporate towns in England made provision for festive drinking, bonfires, and fireworks, with groups of tradesmen holding dinners and processions.[44] And in both these towns and the smaller villages of the English countryside, the colorful celebrations of the day inculcated a sense of what it meant to be an English Protestant through the familiar, ritualized narrative of the Gunpowder Plot.[45] Indeed, Linda Colley has argued that 5 November also played a role in forging the English, and to a lesser extent their Scottish and Welsh co-religionists, into "Britons."[46]

If the Protestant providentialism, military triumphalism, and hostility toward France evident on 5 November contributed to forging a British identity in England, in Ireland these same "ideological co-ordinates" not only were less evident on the anniversary but also produced distinctly Irish identities.[47] This is not entirely surprising, since after 1688, the Englishness of Protestant Ireland was gradually displaced not by an overarching pan-Britannic identification but by a form of Irish identity (defined variously as "Patriotic" or "colonial nationalist.")[48] Britishness appealed to some Irish Anglicans only at times of crisis during the seventeenth century, while tensions between the established church and Presbyterianism enhanced the appeal of a British identity among Ulster Scots during the following century.[49] So, whereas in England Britishness was a key driver of gunpowder commemoration, the same was not true in Ireland. Indeed, the period between 1745 and 1790 was the high point of Irish Anglican self-confidence (as evidenced by the 1782 constitution, "Grattan's Parliament," and the Volunteer movement),

[41] *St. James's Evening Post*, 3–6 November 1733, 2.

[42] *Dublin Journal*, 3–6 November 1739, 1. Also see *Dublin Courant*, 7 November 1724, 2; *Daily Gazetteer*, 16 November 1736, 1; John Thomas Gilbert, *A History of the City of Dublin*, 3 vols. (Dublin and London, 1854–61), 1:170.

[43] Kelly, "Glorious and Immortal Memory," 38, 43.

[44] Hutton, *Stations of the Sun*, 397.

[45] Colin Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England: A Political and Social Study* (Manchester, 1993), 34.

[46] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT, 1992), 19–20.

[47] Ian McBride, "'The Common Name of Irishmen': Protestants and Patriotism in Eighteenth Century Ireland," in *Protestantism and National Identity*, ed. Tony Claydon and Ian McBride (Cambridge, 1998), 236.

[48] Connolly, *Religion, Law and Power*, 123; Joseph Leerssen, "Anglo-Irish Patriotism in Its European Context: Notes towards a Reassessment," *Eighteenth-Century Ireland/Iris an dá chultúr* 3 (1988): 7–24.

[49] David Hayton, "Anglo-Irish Attitudes: Changing Perceptions of National Identity among the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland, c. 1690–1750," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 17 (1987): 151–52.

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and this may help to explain why gunpowder remembrance—with its British associations—did not thrive in eighteenth-century Ireland.[50]

But if the Gunpowder Plot was not a major outlet for the expression of Irish Protestant identity, this is not to say that this identity was not articulated through other anniversary rituals. In fact, the observation of 5 November in Dublin was hampered by the much more popular rites of 4 November and the Georgian dynastic and military anniversaries that proliferated during the eighteenth century.[51] As the *Dublin Journal* reported in November 1742, 4 November was "observed throughout this city, with the greatest Mark of Joy; and, Yesterday, being the Anniversary of the horrid Gunpowder Plot, the same was observed with the usual solemnity."[52] The Williamite anniversary of 4 November had emerged even before the Glorious Revolution had been completed, with the day being celebrated in Dublin from 1690 onward.[53] Although William's birthday continued to be widely observed in eighteenth-century England, in Dublin and some other centers in Ireland it became the cornerstone of the official ritual calendar, with fireworks, dinners, "Bells . . . Bonefires [sic] and Illuminations."[54] Indeed, unlike other days of thanksgiving, there is also evidence from the press that the day was kept privately by Protestants.[55]

Although 4 November began as a partisan anniversary associated with the Whigs, after 1714 it became—in the words of W. E. H. Lecky—"universally recognised as [a] mere manifestation . . . of loyalty to the Constitution and the dynasty."[56] In 1716, the "Nobility, Gentry and Bishops" met at the equestrian statue of King William in College Green (erected by Dublin Corporation in 1701) before processing to the Tholsel.[57] By the 1720s the multiplication of monarchical celebrations in honor of the new reigning dynasty rather overshadowed the day, though it continued nonetheless.[58] During these years the Tholsel witnessed "splendid Entertainment[s]," while elsewhere theatricals, illuminations, bonfires, and loyal toasts were the order of the day. By the 1730s it had become customary to hold a levee at Dublin Castle on 4 November and for the lord mayor and others to

[50] Ibid., 154. On the 1780s, see R. B. McDowell, "Parliamentary Independence, 1782–9," in *Eighteenth Century Ireland, 1691–1800*, vol. 4 of *A New History of Ireland*, ed. R. W. Moody and W. E. Vaughan (Oxford, 1986), 265–87.

[51] Kelly, "Glorious and Immortal Memory," 32, 37.

[52] *Dublin Journal*, 2–6 November 1742, 1. Also see *British Journal*, 19 November 1726, 2.

[53] Kelly, "Glorious and Immortal Memory," 29.

[54] *English Post*, 4 November 1702, 1; *Post Man and the Historical Account*, 2–5 November 1706, 2; John Pointer, *A Chronological History of England* . . . , 2 vols. (Oxford, 1714), 1:371; *The Historical Register* . . . (London, 1726), 7; *Daily Courant*, 5 November 1730, 2; James Shirely, *The True Impartial History and Wars of the Kingdom of Ireland* . . . (London, 1692), 94–95. In 1733 William's birthday was celebrated in Leitrim; *Daily Courant*, 27 November 1733, 2.

[55] *General Evening Post*, 15 November 1748, 1.

[56] Toby Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland: The Irish Protestants, 1649–1770* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2003), 138; *Freeman's Journal*, 23–27 October 1764, cited in Jacqueline R. Hill, *From Patriots to Unionists: Dublin Civic Politics and Irish Protestant Patriotism, 1660–1840* (Oxford, 1997), 157; W. E. H. Lecky, *A History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* (1892–96; repr., Chicago, 1972), 303.

[57] *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer*, 17 November 1716, 1.

[58] Kelly, "Glorious and Immortal Memory," 37.

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process from the castle to William's statue.[59] It was during the 1750s, however, that official commemoration of William's birthday reached its zenith, its rituals designed to "renew the bonds of paternalism and deference by enacting in dramatic form an idealised model of the social hierarchy."[60] From midcentury, the equestrian statue of the king became the focus of the vice-regal procession held every 4 November.[61] Starting with the levee at Dublin Castle, the "annual custom" developed whereby the viceroy, accompanied by the leading office holders, nobility, and gentry, processed in their carriages around the statue three times before soldiers fired a *feu de joie*.[62]

But while Dublin Castle and the capital's Protestant population annually celebrated 4 November, after 1745 the worth of some anniversaries—such as 5 November and 23 October—came to be questioned in Ireland, as the elite in England began to doubt the value of such days.[63] In part this reflected English concerns about anti-Catholicism (in the wake of the Gordon Riots), but, as David Hempton has noted, these concerns were also prompted by the fact that by the latter part of the eighteenth century the Fifth in England was often the occasion for displays of public disorder rather than demonstration of Protestant unity. Meanwhile, the decline in the number of gunpowder sermons published after 1750 also suggests the waning appeal of devotional commemoration.[64] If public order was less of an issue in Ireland, the divisiveness of 5 November was a consideration for Dublin Castle (in a period when the state was repealing the anti-Catholic penal laws). As one newspaper noted in 1788, "Government have for some years declined the celebration of [5 November] . . . for perhaps the same reasons that have struck the 23 of October from the Court Calendar," namely, "it being judged by his Majesty's Ministers inexpedient to keep up the old distinctions among the people of this country."[65] In consequence, the extent to which gunpowder observance was contingent on state support became increasingly evident, since although it was kept as a public holiday with the "Ringing of bells, Firing of Guns, displaying of Flags, &c" as late as the 1790s, various features of the state commemoration were gradually changed or dispensed with entirely.[66] As in England, the publication of gunpowder sermons became increasingly infrequent, and it was noted on 5 November 1763 that the bells of St Patrick's Cathedral were silent and that the

[59] *Dublin Courant*, 5 November 1723, 2; 7 November 1724, 2; *Dublin Evening Post*, 4–7 November 1732, 4; 3–6 November 1733, 3; *Daily Gazetteer*, 16 November 1736, 1.

[60] Compare *Pue's Occurrences*, 3–7 November 1747, 3, with *The Public Gazetteer*, 4–7 November 1758, 4; Ian McBride, "Introduction: Memory and National Identity in Modern Ireland," *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, ed. Ian McBride (Cambridge, 2001), 18.

[61] Kelly, "Glorious and Immortal Memory," 30; Y. Whelan, "The Construction and Destruction of a Colonial Landscape: Monuments to British Monarchs in Dublin before and after Independence," *Journal of Historical Geography* 28, no. 4 (October 2002): 508–33, 515–16; Gilbert, *History of the City of Dublin*, 3:40–54.

[62] *The Public Gazetteer*, 4–7 November 1758, 4.

[63] Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England*, 37; David Cressy, "Four Hundred Years of Festivities," in Brenda Buchanan et al., *Gunpowder Plots*, 61, *Bonfires and Bells*, 187.

[64] David Hempton, *Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland: From the Glorious Revolution to the Decline of Empire* (Cambridge, 1996), 176, 177.

[65] *Dublin Journal*, 4–6 November 1788, 2; 23–25 October November 1788, 2.

[66] *Freeman's Journal*, 3–6 November 1764, 71; *London Gazette*, 12–15 November 1774, 1; *Evening Herald*, 4 November 1789, 3. Also see the church warden's accounts of St. Nicholas Without, Dublin, Representative Church Body Library, Dublin, 1782, 1784–86, 1787–91, P.0210/07/02.

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viceroy did not attend Christ Church Cathedral with the House of Lords to give thanks.[67] Instead, Dublin's lord mayor took an increasingly prominent role. In 1773 he led aldermen, sheriffs, and MPs to Christ Church Cathedral and afterward hosted a dinner at his official residence.[68] By 1789 the procession to church had been entirely dispensed with; instead the lord mayor simply entertained the "most respectable characters in this city . . . [to] a sumptuous dinner."[69]

Dublin Castle's abandonment of 5 November and 23 October ultimately presaged disengagement from the more popular 4 November anniversary as well. According to one newspaper correspondent in 1776, "the [vice-regal] court kept up the farce of joy on this occasion," but in "their hearts, they hate [1688] revolution principles, and must therefore despise the great virtue which at this time still ingrates the breast of every honest man."[70] In fact, Dublin Castle continued to keep William's birthday for another thirty years, though its growing coolness toward the "Glorious Memory" of William III reflected not only changing notions about the government of Ireland but also the reinvestment of the Glorious Revolution with oppositional meaning, as Patriot politicians and their allies in the Volunteers identified 4 November with parliamentary liberty in their struggle for control of the Irish constitution.[71] Hitherto, the Williamite tradition—as articulated most clearly on 4 November—had been broadly representative of Protestant opinion in Dublin.[72] The radical associations of 4 November in the 1770s may have upset this, but it was only after 1790 that this consensus fractured with conservative sections of the Anglican community advancing a more sectarian and exclusive interpretation of the "Glorious Memory."[73] With the emergence of the Orange Order in 1795, conservative commemoration came to be strongly influenced by plebeian and popular Protestant perspectives, resulting in a greater emphasis on the anti-Catholic dimensions of the anniversary. Whereas some Protestant moderates associated 4 November with a liberal and even progressive tradition, conservative Protestants emphasized the military anniversaries of the battles of the Boyne and Aughrim, with the result that the state ultimately jettisoned William (4 November), just as it had earlier mothballed 23 October and 5 November, promoting in his place St. Patrick (17 March) as a new symbol around which all Irishmen (Anglican, Presbyterian, and Catholic) might unite.[74]

With the rise of Orangeism, plebeian forms of commemoration increasingly gained prominence. The Orange Order had first emerged from the sectarian politics of mid-Ulster in the 1790s but quickly spread to other parts of Ireland and be-

[67] A rare later example is James Traill, *A Sermon Preached . . . 5th of November 1767 being the Anniversary of the Gun Powder Treason* (Dublin, 1767); *Freeman's Journal*, 5–8 November 1763, 71.

[68] *Hibernian Journal*, 5–8 November 1773, 4.

[69] *Dublin Journal*, 7 November 1789, 2. Also see Jacqueline R. Hill, "National Festivals, the State and 'Protestant Ascendancy' in Ireland, 1790–1829," *Irish Historical Studies* 24, no. 93 (May 1984): 32.

[70] *Hibernian Journal*, 6 November 1776, cited in Kelly, "Glorious and Immortal Memory," 46.

[71] S. J. Connolly, "The Glorious Revolution in Irish Protestant Political Thinking," in *Political Ideas in Eighteenth Century Ireland*, ed. S. J. Connolly (Dublin, 2000), 56–57; *Magee's Weekly Packet*, 7 November 1778, 3; *Dublin Journal*, 4–6 November 1779, 1; *Evening Herald*, 2 November 1789, 3; 4 November 1789, 3.

[72] Hill, "National Festivals," 39.

[73] Ibid., 35; Kelly, "Emergence of Political Parading," 21, "Glorious and Immortal Memory," 46.

[74] Hill, "National Festivals," 43.

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yond.[75] Distinguished by its popularity among rougher sorts of Anglican Protestants (though led by gentlemen), it provided those committed to Catholic subjugation with a space for plebeian male associationalism, the opportunity for ritualized demonstrations of loyalty, and the possibility of communal violence.[76] When the order spread to Dublin in 1797, it adopted the November anniversaries that had been abandoned or neglected by Dublin Castle, harnessing them firmly to its conservative interpretation of the Glorious Revolution.[77] As with the earlier official commemoration of the November anniversaries, Orangemen focused their attention on the statue of King William in College Green, though rather than merely processing round it, plebeian Protestants elaborately dressed the statue. In 1798, for example, William was crowned with a wreath of orange and green ribbons and draped with an orange sash.[78] Dublin Castle tolerated these celebrations for over two decades, but when in November 1822 it moved to prohibit Orange demonstration, it encountered strong resistance.[79] In overcoming this opposition, a two-hundred-year-old tradition of gunpowder commemoration in Dublin was forcefully brought to an end by a state that no longer saw itself as ruling primarily in the Protestant interest.

■ ■ ■

The failure of the artillery in Phoenix Park to fire a salute in honor of 23 October in 1821 underlined how low the fortunes of the 1641 anniversary had sunk by the early nineteenth century.[80] Indeed, the day's popularity never recovered after it was abandoned by Dublin Castle, and though the rebellion itself remained a feature of Protestant polemic long afterward, the anniversary was rarely observed publicly thereafter.[81] The same might well have been expected of 5 November. After all, in 1809, the only acknowledgment that it was the gunpowder anniversary was the firing of the Phoenix Park guns and the ringing of some church bells, while the final suppression of plebeian celebrations in the early 1820s smothered the last vestiges of popular celebration. And yet, within less than a decade, 5 November had undergone a renaissance in Ireland and was to go on to achieve a level of popularity that contrasted favorably not only with the preceding two centuries of Irish commemoration but even with the gunpowder tradition in its native England.

The revival of the Fifth needs to be set in the context of the passage of Catholic

[75] Hereward Senior, *Orangeism in Ireland and Britain, 1795–1836* (London, 1966); David W. Miller, "The Origins of the Orange Order in County Armagh," in *Armagh: History and Society; Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County*, ed. A. J. Hughes and William Nolan (Dublin, 2001), 583–608.

[76] Donald M. MacRaild, *Faith, Fraternity, and Fighting: The Orange Order and Irish Migrants in Northern England, c. 1850–1920* (Liverpool, 2005), 2.

[77] Hill, "National Festivals," 35; Kelly, "Emergence of Political Parading," 21.

[78] Hill, "National Festivals," 39; Whelan, "Colonial Landscape," 516.

[79] *Freeman's Journal*, 4 November 1822, 3; 5 November 1822, 2; 6 November 1822, 3; 8 November 1822, 4; 9 November 1822, 3; *Belfast News-Letter*, 5 November 1822, 4; 8 November 1822, 4; 12 November 1822, 4; *Standard*, 5 November 1829, 3.

[80] *Morning Chronicle*, 1 November 1821, 2.

[81] For one exception to this rule, see *Belfast News-Letter*, 26 October 1885, 7.

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emancipation in 1829. Opposition to Catholic relief had been based on support for the "Protestant Constitution" (the settlement achieved in 1689 after the long struggle with "popery"), which Irish Anglicans believed underpinned their ascendancy in Ireland.[82] Suzanne Kingon has shown that many Irish Protestants were convinced that emancipation would inevitably lead to the hegemony of Catholics and subjugation of Protestants.[83] Defeat in April 1829 therefore confronted Protestants with their worst fears and produced a number of responses, the most familiar of which are the strengthening of Irish Toryism, the advancement of Orangeism, and the growing appeal of pan-Protestantism. But alongside these important longer-term repercussions was a more immediate reaction: the revival of the gunpowder anniversary. So, on 5 November 1829, Anglican churches in Dublin rang their bells and observed the special service, with those not doing so being censured by *The Warder* (the self-appointed guardian of Dublin Protestantism) as "pro-Papists and Apostates."[84] Meanwhile, in the early hours of the same day, about 100 miles to the north in the small town of Bellaghy, County Londonderry (to take but one northern example), the "Orange standard [was] unfurled" to commemorate "the frustration of the horrible design of Popery intended to be executed by Gunpowder on the King." At midday, local lodges processed to their parish church, where they heard a sermon on the "cruel and bloodthirsty designs of the Papists" in 1605, while in the evening the lodge rooms were reportedly "crowded by most respectable Protestants seeking admission into the honourable order of Orangeism."[85]

Notwithstanding the all-Ireland nature of the revival of 5 November in 1829, the character of gunpowder commemoration during the decades that followed exhibited a marked north-south divergence, reflecting in large part the different priorities within Irish Protestantism in this period. Alarmed first by Catholic emancipation and later by the municipal reforms of 1840 (which ended Protestant control of Irish local government outside Ulster) and the 1845 Maynooth grant, the southern Protestant minority centered their commemoration specifically on the special gunpowder service. In 1837, for example, one of the viceroy's Anglican chaplains actually resigned after he discovered that the Castle Chapel did not routinely observe the 5 November service.[86] Liberal commentators claimed at the time that the special service had long since become "repugnant to the consciences of the clergy and laity," but in the middle decades of the century, Protestants not only in Dublin but also in counties Waterford, Limerick, Offaly, and Cork were drawn to the anniversary because it provided much-needed reassurance both of the unceasing evil of Catholicism and of God's covenant with his Protestant peoples. That said, the gunpowder anniversary petered out in southern Ireland in the decade after 1850, at least in part as a result of the waning of the so-called Second Reformation, the steady stream of Protestant emigration from the south, and the

[82] *Freeman's Journal*, 7 November 1809, 3; G. F. A. Best, "The Protestant Constitution and Its Supporters, 1800–1829," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 8 (1958): 109.

[83] Suzanne T. Kingon, "Ulster Opposition to Catholic Emancipation, 1828–9," *Irish Historical Studies* 34, no. 134 (November 2004): 145.

[84] *The Warder*, cited in *Londonderry Sentinel*, 14 November 1829, 3.

[85] *Londonderry Sentinel*, 14 November 1829, 2.

[86] *The Times*, 7 November 1837, 7.

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growth of Catholic self-confidence.[87] So, while the Dublin Protestant Operative Association still proclaimed in 1856 that "the same spirit still presides over that system [Catholicism] that prompted the Gunpowder Plot of . . . 1605," others gradually took a more moderate view. When Robert J. M'Ghee, for example, preached a sermon on 5 November 1843 in Dublin's Harold's Cross Church, he still attacked Catholicism, but he also presented individual Catholics as victims rather than villains.[88]

By contrast, commemoration in Ulster went from strength to strength. That this should have been so could not have been predicted on the basis of the history of the anniversary up till then. After all, though the Gunpowder Plot was already over two hundred years old in 1829, the commemoration of 5 November in places like Bellaghy was probably the first time Protestants had publicly celebrated the anniversary beyond the steps of their parish church for many years. In the case of Bellaghy in particular, the clergy of the diocese had been strongly discouraged from observing 5 November during the long episcopacy of Frederick Hervey, fourth earl of Bristol and bishop of Londonderry from 1768 to 1803, because he believed it was religiously divisive.[89] In fact, before 1829, there are only four known instances of the Fifth being publicly observed anywhere in the province's nine counties (though it is possible that the press did not record earlier instances).[90] Instead, Protestants in Ulster had publicly commemorated William's birthday and the Boyne anniversary since the mid-eighteenth century.[91] This, of course, does not mean that Ulster Protestants were unaware of the Gunpowder Plot. The events of 1605 formed part of the backdrop to the plantation, were featured in the popular literature that Protestants in Ulster produced and consumed, and were the subject of sermons preached by Ulster clergy before the Dublin Parliament. Nonetheless, there does not seem to have been a widely observed, indigenous tradition of gunpowder commemoration in the north before 1829.

Whereas in southern Ireland, the Anglican church was central to the gunpowder anniversary's revival (which was expressed principally through attendance at and observation of the special service), the key to the unprecedented popularity of 5

[87] *Freeman's Journal*, 7 November 1837, 2; *L'Derry Journal*, 14 November 1837, 2; Irene Whelan, *The Bible War in Ireland: The "Second Reformation" and the Polarization of Protestant-Catholic Relations, 1800–1840* (Madison, WI, 2005); Kerby A. Miller, "The Lost World of Andrew Johnston: Sectarianism, Social Conflict, and Cultural Change in Southern Ireland during the Pre-Famine Era," in *Irish Popular Culture, 1650–1850*, ed. James S. Donnelly and Kerby A. Miller (Dublin and Portland, OR, 1998), 222–41; Thomas Bartlett, *The Fall and Rise of the Irish Nation: The Catholic Question, 1690–1830* (Dublin, 1992).

[88] Martin Maguire, "The Church of Ireland and the Problem of the Protestant Working-Class of Dublin, 1870s–1930s," in *As by Law Established: The Church of Ireland since the Reformation*, ed. Alan Ford, James McGuire, and Kenneth Milne (Dublin, 1995), 196; minutes of the Dublin Protestant Operative Association Public Meetings, Orange Order Archive, Schomberg House, Belfast, vol. 2, 135, 133, 208; Sharpe, *Remember, Remember*, 134–37.

[89] *The Warder*, 14 November 1829, 3.

[90] *Londonderry Journal*, 9 November 1824, 4; *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 November 1828, 2; 11 November 1828, 2. Church records do not suggest observation was widespread: vestry minute book, Ballywillian, County Antrim, 1725–53, RCBL, P.0016/05/01; vestry minute book, Templeport, County Cavan, 1817–30, RCBL, P.0082/01/01; account book, Carrickmacross, County Monaghan, 1825–1836, RCBL, P.0854/05/01.

[91] Kelly, "Glorious and Immortal Memory," 43; *Belfast News-Letter*, 12 November 1824, 4; 9 November 1827, 4; 7 November 1828, 1; 11 November 1828, 1; 11 November 1828, 2.

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November in the north of Ireland after 1829 was its adoption by the Orange Order, for whom the special service was but one element of Protestant commemoration. Far from being spontaneous, the revival was carefully engineered by the order. In November 1829, the Grand Lodge of the County and City of Londonderry had met in Bellaghy and resolved that "due and timely notice should be given by the secretary of each Lodge throughout the County, to the Ministers, Church Wardens, and Elders of the respective parishes and congregations, of the intention of said Lodges attending divine service on the 5th of November, in compliance with the act of Parliament for the observance of that memorable day."[92] While the anniversary was not commemorated in the largest Protestant center in the county, Derry, since "no requisition . . . [was] sent from the Parishioners [with regard to] . . . the present revival of the observance of this festival in Ulster," the local minister of the nearby parish of Derriaghy did receive and accept a requisition from his parishioners to observe the day.[93] Although it does not seem that the grand lodges of other counties issued similar instructions, petitions were nonetheless forthcoming elsewhere. In Belfast, for example, local Anglicans were told by one minister that their request for a special anniversary service had been refused because it was not "customary to solemnize that day in this town, and [that] the clergy would refrain from doing so on the present occasion, as [it was] . . . without precedent."[94] Elsewhere, however, Orange lodges and other Protestants from "throughout almost the entire of the province" (Armagh town, Portadown, and Lurgan in County Armagh; Stewartstown, Arboe, and Clonoe in County Tyrone; Glasslough in County Monaghan; Dromore in County Down; and Lisnaskea and Enniskillen in County Fermanagh) attended church services and anniversary dinners in very large numbers.[95]

The Orange Order's decision to rehabilitate what was otherwise a moribund Jacobean anniversary reflected the interplay of a number of factors. The order itself had only been reconstituted the previous year after its forced dissolution in 1825, and in the aftermath of emancipation it expanded its parading activities in the north in an attempt to reassert its local authority and to underline Protestant solidarity.[96] In so doing, it appropriated a number of anniversaries—including 5 November—which had earlier been abandoned by the state.[97] But its choice of 5 November in particular was by no means an accident. After all, Orangemen might otherwise have been expected to revive an anniversary such as 23 October, since it possessed much greater local resonance for Ulster Protestants than did 5 November. The Gunpowder Plot was, arguably, resurrected not only because its narrative of Catholic plotting and Protestant deliverance was reassuring but also because it was the only Protestant anniversary still widely celebrated in England.

[92] *Belfast News-Letter*, 20 October 1829, 2.

[93] *The Warder*, 14 November 1829, 3; 11 November 1829, 3; *Londonderry Sentinel*, 14 November 1829, 2.

[94] *The Warder*, 14 November 1829, 3.

[95] *Northern Whig*, cited in *Carlow Morning Post*, 12 November 1829, 4; *Belfast News-Letter*, 13 November 1829, 4; *Londonderry Sentinel*, 21 November 1829, 3; *The Warder*, 11 November 1824, 3; 14 November 1829, 3; *Impartial Reporter*, 5 November 1829, 3.

[96] Senior, *Orangeism*, 236, 238.

[97] Neil Jarman, *Material Conflicts: Parades and Visual Displays in Northern Ireland* (Oxford, 1997), 53–54.

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Other Protestant anniversaries (such as Charles I's execution on 30 January and Charles II's birthday on 29 May) had long since fallen into disuse on both islands, while those observed in Ulster (such as the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne on 12 July and the days associated with the 1688–89 siege of Derry) were peculiar to the province and tended in any case to highlight differences rather than similarities.[98] In contrast, 5 November was an English anniversary that many in Ulster saw as part of the cultural circuitry that bound Protestants in the British Isles together and through which loyalists could render their plight legible to an English audience often critical of their co-religionists in Ireland.

Ulster loyalists had hitherto tended to see their local anniversaries as the equivalents of gunpowder treason day. As the *Londonderry Journal* observed in 1826, "If Guy Faux [*sic*] blazed in effigy through a hundred streets in London, and the surrounding towns, . . . so the counter-part of the sanguinary Jesuit, in times less remote, [is] the infamous Colonel Lundy."[99] In the wake of Catholic emancipation and the assault on the "Protestant constitution," however, local Ulster anniversaries no longer sufficed. Instead, a shared anniversary that identified the history and heritage of Protestants in Ireland with their brethren in England and across the empire was again adopted as it had been after 1641 and again during the 1680s. As the *Evening Mail* put it in 1833, 5 November was the commemoration "of a special interposition of Providence in favour of Protestantism and civil liberty. On this . . . day," it continued, "every cathedral and church in the United Kingdom will be open for appropriate services; and to stamp more indelibly the recollection of such a momentous event, every fort in the KING's dominions, from Dublin to Calcutta, and every King's ship . . . will fire a prescribed number of guns."[100]

But even in 1833 the view that all gunpowder commemoration in England was necessarily anti-Catholic and Protestant was problematic. As early as the late eighteenth century, observance at the English court and in parliament had, according to David Cressy, become both "dutiful and muted," while plebeian celebration had "developed into a festival of order against disorder," in which it "barely mattered that Guy Fawkes had been a Catholic."[101] That said, it has also been argued that the fifty years after emancipation in 1829 witnessed much greater levels of anti-Catholicism in England than the half-century leading up to the Relief Act.[102] Evidence for not only the popularity but also the anti-Catholicism of the anniversary was certainly apparent in England in 1828 and 1829. In 1827 celebration had been muted, but Catholic relief also revitalized English observance of 5 November.[103] For example, after the mayor and corporation of Evesham in Worcestershire attended a gunpowder service in 1828, they were present at a public meeting at which a petition to parliament was drawn up strongly opposing Catholic emancipation.[104] Even after relief had been granted in March 1829, the anniversary

[98] Barnard, "Uses of 23 October," 914.

[99] *Londonderry Journal*, cited in *Morning Chronicle*, 28 December 1826, 4.

[100] *Evening Mail*, cited in *Morning Post*, 5 November 1833, 2.

[101] Cressy, "Four Hundred Years of Festivities," 63.

[102] Wolffe, *Protestant Crusade*, 2; Sharpe, *Remember, Remember*, 137.

[103] *Morning Chronicle*, 6 November 1827, 2; *Morning Post*, 6 November 1827, 3; *Worcester Journal*, 8 November 1827, 3; *Morning Post*, 8 November 1827, 3; *Lancaster Gazette*, 10 November 1827, 2.

[104] *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, 6 November 1828, 3. See also *Morning Post*, 8 November 1828, 1, 4.

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continued to be the occasion for heightened displays of anti-Catholic sentiment in England. "Protestant feeling" was reportedly much in evidence in Huddersfield, though the *Berkshire Chronicle* lamented that the "ruthless hand of innovation and modern 'liberality' has swept away all but the hallowed recollection of . . . those occurrences," since parliament had "granted Guy Fawkes absolution."[105]

After 1829, anti-Catholicism continued, according to Robert Storch, to be a "chief animating force" behind the anniversary in counties such as Sussex, Devon, Surrey, and Essex until at least the mid-nineteenth century.[106] Although in southern and eastern England the anniversary often witnessed the symbolic reversal of traditional social relations, ritualized disorder justified by custom, and demonstrations of popular justice, anti-Catholicism still played a part.[107] With the withdrawal of elite patronage and participation in response to this disorder, openings were created for plebeian groups—often allied with lower-middle-class elements—to form bonfire gangs, and these periodically clashed with local authorities. And though the social coordinates of the day gradually shifted, such gangs often still espoused anti-Romanist and Protestant patriotic sentiments on the anniversary and by midcentury were commonly aligned with popular street Toryism.[108]

In response to the violence and disorder that accompanied gunpowder commemoration in some parts of nineteenth-century England, local authorities sought to dampen the popular rites associated with the day and contain the uncontrolled enthusiasm of the bonfire gangs.[109] But, for all their patriotism, ritual, and professions of loyalty, these gangs were essentially local and uncoordinated, and the response of public officials reflected this orientation. In contrast, Ireland had a majority Catholic population, and so the Orange Order's coordination of 5 November locked the anniversary into a wider set of confessional tensions that centered on the question of parading and pitted the order not only against Catholics but also the liberal state. Indeed, even though 5 November 1829 passed off largely peacefully, Grand Lodge still fretted that disorder on the gunpowder anniversary "may be made the groundwork of some legislative enactment for the suppression of the Orange Society altogether."[110] Although this anxiety did not stop Grand Lodge from amending its *Laws and Ordinances* the following year to instruct brethren that they should "henceforth celebrate . . . the 5th of November," its adoption meant that the anniversary came to be regarded as an autumnal Twelfth (12 July) by Dublin Castle, the Boyne anniversary having long since become the preeminent Protestant red-letter day and an occasion associated with sectarian violence.[111] As the *Evening Mail* indignantly observed in November 1833, "while the Constitution has . . . annually recalled . . . the attention of the people to this

[105] *Morning Post*, 10 November 1829, 2. Also see 6 November 1829, 3; 11 November 1829, 3; *Berkshire Chronicle*, cited in *Standard*, 9 November 1829, 2.

[106] Robert D. Storch, "'Please to Remember the Fifth of November: Conflict, Solidarity, and Public Order in Southern England, 1815–1900," in *Popular Culture in Nineteenth Century England*, ed. Robert D. Storch (London, 1982), 82.

[107] Ibid., 73.

[108] Ibid., 81.

[109] Cressy, "Four Hundred Years of Festivities," 73.

[110] *The Warder*, 11 November 1829, 3; 14 November 1829, 3; *Londonderry Sentinel*, 14 November 1829, 3; *Belfast News-Letter*, 9 November 1830, 4; 12 November 1830, 4.

[111] Grand Lodge, *Laws and Ordinances of the Orange Institution of Ireland* (Dublin, 1830), 19; Dominic Bryan, *Orange Parades: The Politics of Ritual, Tradition and Control* (London, 2000).

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Popish plot, our Irish Executive substantively declares this to be improper, by commanding the Protestants to be dispersed."[112]

In fact, while 5 November remained a day of potential conflict, it was the Twelfth that was the real focus of anxiety during the 1830s and later.[113] After all, the order's rules enjoined brethren to attend church on 5 November, and, though lodges often processed to their place of worship, this gave the anniversary a rather different tone in comparison to the Twelfth. But though gunpowder commemoration was rarely violent, its early history in Ulster was nevertheless shaped by the 1832 Party Processions Act and the formal (albeit temporary) dissolution of the order in 1836. Thus, the Orangemen of Myroe, County Londonderry, took "refreshment" in their lodge room in 1839 "because they feared lest their proceeding in order to a house of worship on a weekday might be prosecuted by the Crown lawyers as a breach of the anti-procession act."[114] Indeed, owing to the strictures of the Processions Act, the gunpowder anniversary was almost smothered during the 1840s. Only the coincidence, for example, of the anniversary with a Sunday seems to have prompted the dean and chapter of Derry Cathedral and the clergy of other places of Anglican worship in the "Maiden city" to observe the special service that year.[115] As a result, liberal predictions that the established church would ignore 5 November unless it fell on a Sunday seemed to be borne out.[116] While the Processions Act was not renewed in 1844, and though the order was reconstituted two years later, commemoration during the middle part of the decade remained subdued. As the *Belfast News-Letter* noted of the northern capital in 1846, "With the exception of the usual religious services, the remembrance of the 'gunpowder treason and plot' was marked by no public rejoicings. Our information from the country is to the same effect."[117] And though, after the abortive Young Ireland rebellion in 1848, there was some concern about violence on 5 November, the fact that the anniversary fell on a Sunday meant that gunpowder commemoration that year was subdued.[118] By 1850 then, the Fifth was a settled, if sometimes inconspicuous, part of the Protestant calendar in Ulster, marked by small-scale parading, church services, and the chinking of glasses and consumption of dinners.[119]

Although the gunpowder anniversary was once again caught up in the government's efforts to tame Orange parading after the Dolly's Brae confrontation between Catholics and Protestants in 1849 prompted the renewal of the Party Processions Act in 1850, Ulster loyalists remained determined to celebrate 5 November. So, in Newry that year, Orangemen resolved to stay indoors and avoid "outward display of any kind" so that there would be "nothing of which the pestilent foes of Protestantism could hold of, and convert into a handle to injure

[112] *Evening Mail*, cited in *Morning Post*, 5 November 1833, 2.
[113] *Belfast News-Letter*, 11 November 1831, 4; Bryan, *Orange Parades*, 38.
[114] *Londonderry Standard*, 13 November 1839, 2.
[115] *Londonderry Standard*, 11 November 1843, 2.
[116] *L'Derry Journal*, 14 November 1843, 2, 4.
[117] *Belfast News-Letter*, 6 November 1846, 2.
[118] *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 November 1848, 2.
[119] Sean Farrell, *Rituals and Riots: Sectarian Violence and Political Culture in Ulster, 1784–1886* (Lexington, KY, 2000), 156; MacRaild, *Faith, Fraternity, and Fighting*, 53.

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the good cause."[120] In fact, not only did the anniversary survive, but its function as an Anglo-Irish cultural synapse was also greatly enhanced by the advent of the "Papal Aggression" controversy in the autumn of 1850, when English anti-Catholicism reached its highest level since the 1780 Gordon Riots.[121] Pope Pius IX's decision to restore the English Catholic hierarchy in 1850 sparked tensions, but the coincidence of this controversy with the "great Protestant festival" of 5 November helped to accelerate the dispute and, in turn, amplify the anniversary's anti-Catholic character.[122] On the day itself in 1850, many more Anglican ministers than usual observed the special gunpowder service, preached on the unchanging "errors of Popery," and declared that England was unalterably a "free and enlightened Protestant kingdom."[123] Meanwhile, celebrations on the streets of London, along with towns and villages across England, were more than usually enlivened by the appearance of graffiti such as "No Popery" and "No wafer-gods" on walls and the burning before large crowds of giant effigies of Cardinal Wiseman (the newly created "archbishop of Westminster"), Pope Pius IX, and, of course, Guy Fawkes.[124] In Towcester, crowds gathered after dark and shouted "No Popery" and sang "Rule Britannia," while in nearby Northampton, the local newspaper observed that, "if the feeling of Northampton against Popery, and a chance of a return to the darkness of past ages, may be judged of by the displays on Tuesday, the hopes of the 'Holy Father' cannot be of a very sanguine kind."[125]

Historians have seen the outburst of "No Popery" in 1850 as underlining the continued importance of anti-Catholicism in Victorian England, and so it is unsurprising that England's response proved to be music to the ears of many Irish loyalists.[126] "Never, perhaps, has a common danger more thoroughly organized a common phalanx of resistance," reported the *Belfast News-Letter* approvingly, while for the *Evening Mail*, the fact that gunpowder commemoration in England "surpassed anything which has been witnessed since the days of George III" led them to hope "that the adversity, which threatens their own alters and firesides will bring them [the English] into terms of better and more kindly acquaintance" with regard to the Catholic threat to the Protestants of their "Sister Kingdom."[127] Irish Protestants were reassured by the upsurge of anti-Catholic feeling in 1850 precisely because of their deep-seated misgivings about England's commitment to them, as evidenced by the granting of emancipation in 1829 and the Maynooth grant in 1845. Indeed, in November 1850 Orangemen in Newry "hailed with joy" the "genuine spirit of resistance to Popish . . . usurpations" that they saw on

[120] *Evening Mail*, 6 November 1850, 4.

[121] Wolffe, *Protestant Crusade*, 2; Swift, "Guy Fawkes Celebrations," 7; Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism*, 243, 244; Sharpe, *Remember, Remember*, 148–50.

[122] *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 9 November 1850, 4.

[123] *The Times*, 6 November 1850, 6; *Standard*, 5 November 1850, 3; *Hull Packet and East Riding Times*, 8 Nov 1850, 4; *Newcastle Courant*, 8 November 1850, 3; *York Herald*, 9 November 1890, 5, 6; *Ipswich Journal*, 9 November 1850, 3; *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post*, 14 November 1850, 2.

[124] *Bradford Observer*, 14 November 1850, 3; *Preston Guardian*, 9 November 1890, 2, 6; *Ipswich Journal*, 9 November 1890, 2; *Essex Standard*, 8 November 1850, 2; *Hampshire Telegraph*, 9 November 1850, 3; *Derby Mercury*, 13 November 1850, 3; *Bury and Norwich Post*, 13 November 1850, 2; *Bristol Mercury*, 9 November 1850, 5; *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 9 November 1850, 2.

[125] *Northampton Herald*, 9 November 1850, cited in Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism*, 233.

[126] Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism*, 299.

[127] *Belfast News-Letter*, 5 November 1850, 2; *Evening Mail*, 6 November 1850, 2–3.

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the anniversary in England, while some years later the Tory MP, Edward Grogan, instructed Irish Protestants to look "across the channel—look at England, that mighty power, which for many years treated their remonstrances, complaints and appeals, with neglect, regarding them merely as the outpourings of bigotry." But now, "thanks to the arrogance of the Romish Court . . . [the people of England] were beginning to find that [their] complaints and appeals . . . were well founded."[128]

Given the importance many Irish loyalists attached to the gunpowder anniversary as an opportunity for co-commemoration with their English fellow Protestants, the discontinuation of the 5 November state service (along with other anniversary fasts and thanksgivings) in 1859 was greeted with some dismay. While *The Times* was confident that only elderly English country rectors would be alarmed by the removal of the service from the Book of Common Prayer (since it was now largely unused), some Irish Protestants strongly disagreed.[129] Outside Ulster, of course, the special service had long since been regarded as (in the words of one County Meath Anglican rector) "now nearly obsolete," though even in Ulster, the service had always faced some opposition.[130] As early as 1829, a minority of clergymen had opposed gunpowder commemoration and in the following decades a tradition of nonobservance developed that often occasioned criticism from more conservative parishioners who insisted that minister did not have the right to exercise his discretion in the matter.[131] As such, some Protestants in Ireland saw the discontinuation of the special service in 1859 as symbolizing something more profound about England and its Protestantism. As the grand master of the County Wicklow Order, the Reverend S. G. Potter, put it in his sermon of 5 November that year, "That England will meet with judgement for this practical infidelity, I am as confident as that I stand here today." Condemning Ireland's "false friends" and "lukewarm Laodiceans," Potter declared himself determined not to forget the "noble achievements of remote ancestors."[132]

Notwithstanding the removal of the special gunpowder service from the Book of Common Prayer in 1859, many parishes in Ulster (in contrast to England) continued to hold services to commemorate 5 November, though the role of sacred thanksgiving in Irish observance diminished further as commemoration developed a marked adaptation toward more social and companionate forms of Orange remembrance. Granted, sociability had been a feature of 5 November celebrations in Ulster since as far back as 1829. During the middle decades of the nineteenth century, Orangemen had annually dined with one another on 5 November and afterward enjoyed loyal toasts. From about 1860, however, tea parties, soirees, and balls increasingly replaced or supplemented Orange dinners. The underlying social reasons for this shift require further research, though it may well

[128] *Evening Mail*, 8 November 1850, 3; *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 November 1856, 1.

[129] *The Times*, 28 June 1858, 8. Also see "Abolition of Church Services," *Church of England Quarterly Review* 44 (1858): 211.

[130] *Belfast News-Letter*, 22 November 1854, 1. Alse see David Cressy, "Fifth of November Remembered," in *Myths of the English*, ed. Roy Porter (Oxford, 1992), 82.

[131] *Londonderry Standard*, 4 November 1843, 2; *L'Derry Journal*, 14 November 1843, 2, 4; *Belfast News-Letter*, 10 July 1849, 3; 10 November 1854, 1; J. Fred Rankin, *Down Cathedral: The Church of St Patrick of Down* (Belfast, 1997), 137–38.

[132] *Irish Times*, 10 November 1859, 4; *The Warder*, 13 November 1858, 10.

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have been connected to the growing influence of temperance, the cause of which was closely connected to the 1859 religious revival.[133]

One distinctive feature associated with this shift was the greater participation of women. Relatively little is known about female Orangeism in nineteenth-century Ireland.[134] Whereas Irish Protestant women in England were involved in the order both in a domestic capacity and as members of female lodges from the 1850s, their sisters in Ireland did not organize until the 1880s.[135] That said, it is clear that women were informally involved in associational life in Ireland much earlier than this. In 1851, for instance, the Orange ladies of Dungannon visited and admired the arrangements for the local lodge's celebrations of the anniversary, though it was only after they had left that their menfolk engaged in dining, toasting, and singing.[136] By the following decade, however, it had become customary for women not only to admire the celebrations but also to attend 5 November events (in part because temperance rendered such occasions increasingly respectable). So, for example, in 1867 local Orangemen in Lurgan, along with their female companions, attended a gunpowder ball where "quadrilles, waltzes, [and] gallopes" were all danced with "spirit."[137] Similar reports filled the pages of the *Belfast News-Letter* every November thereafter.

Loyalists at these social events saw nothing incongruous about consuming "splendid" teas and enjoying "capital music and literary programme[s]" while listening to speeches about the "Jesuitical and bloodthirsty designs of Guy Fawkes."[138] Nonetheless, the development of mixed-sex events and activities (like dancing) changed the tone of gunpowder commemoration, further marginalizing sacred thanksgiving within Orange observation and moving it more in the direction of leisure and entertainment. Moreover, as sociability became more important, so the adoption of more recognizably English ritual forms became more common, with bonfires, fireworks, and effigies occasionally featuring as self-consciously "English" gunpowder customs.[139] That said, Ulster loyalists clearly did not see the adoption of English rituals as essential to gunpowder commemoration or to the co-commemorative nature of their thanksgiving. But the fact that gunpowder observation in mid-Victorian Ulster rarely looked, smelled, or sounded like the anniversary in England led some English commentators to conclude that England's Bonfire Night and Ireland's gunpowder anniversary shared little beyond the same date. This was certainly the case with W. E. Gladstone, who, speaking at Wigan

[133] Elizabeth Malcolm, *"Ireland Sober, Ireland Free": Drink and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 1986), 160.

[134] D. A. J. MacPherson and Donald M. MacRaild, "Sisters of the Brotherhood: Female Orangeism on Tyneside in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Irish Historical Studies* 35, no. 137 (May 2006): 41.

[135] Diane Urquhart, "'The Female of the Species Is More Deadly than the Male': The Ulster Women's Unionist Council, 1911–1940," in *Coming into the Light: The Work, Politics and Religion of Women in Ulster, 1840–1940*, ed. Janice Holmes and Diane Urquhart (Belfast, 1994), 93–123; Donald M. MacRaild, *The Irish Diaspora in Britain, 1750–1939*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke, 2010), 106–7

[136] *Belfast News-Letter*, 10 November 1851, 4.

[137] *Londonderry Standard*, 7 November 1865, 2; *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 November 1867, 3.

[138] *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 November 1892, 6; 8 November 1880, 3.

[139] *Irish Times*, 10 November 1859, 4; *L'Derry Journal*, 7 November 1873, 2; *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 November 1864, 3. For later examples see *Belfast News-Letter*, 6 November 1888, 8; 6 November 1891, 6; 7 November 1891, 6; 7 November 1896, 7.

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in late October 1868, sought to illustrate the profound differences between English and Ulster Protestants by highlighting how the 1605 Gunpowder Plot was remembered on the two islands. Gladstone—shortly to become prime minister for the first time—contended that in England commemoration before 1859 had been "a question of returning thanks to the Almighty for the deliverance of the Legislature from a terrible and execrable plot aimed at its destruction," and he attributed its discontinuation to the "justice and kindness" of Englishmen to "our Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen." By contrast, he claimed that in Ireland, "the wretched memory of former feuds is kept up year by year, by . . . misguided men" for the sole purpose of maintaining Protestant "Ascendancy."[140]

Ulster's gunpowder commemoration was, of course, grist to Gladstone's mill, since his purpose was to win support for his proposal to disestablish the Church of Ireland. Even so, his case was still rather disingenuous. By presenting the special service of 1605 as central to English thanksgiving he effectively postdated the devotional character of the anniversary in England to a time long after many parishes had dispensed with the service. Moreover, while it was certainly true that the 1859 change received widespread support in England, by no means all welcomed parliament's decision.[141] But more problematic for Gladstone's argument was the fact that, as G. M. Trevelyan later noted, 5 November had long since become more than a "decorous" special service; it was also a matter of "democratic rites at the street corner."[142] Indeed, the November following the special service's retirement in 1859, the continued attachment of some to the anniversary was evident. In London, effigies of Cardinal Wiseman, the pope, and Tractarian clergymen continued to be a feature, though magistrates at Witham expressed doubts as to whether the "disgraceful proceedings" witnessed there on 5 November reflected "any great zeal or ardour for the Protestant cause."[143] But the Dublin *Freeman's Journal* was certainly in no doubt that "bigotry and intolerance" remained central to such displays.[144] If so, there was still evidence to this effect in the year Gladstone made his Wigan speech a decade later in 1868. Conservatives in Birmingham met on the Fifth because "they, as Protestants, were bound to remember that day," while the *Essex Standard* observed that "Some people would argue that the commemoration of Guy Fawkes is out of place now-a-days"; instead, the paper contended, not only should it "be an eloquent reminder of what the Papacy was hundreds of years ago," but it also demonstrated that it was "as venomous as ever: the enemy of all liberty, civil and religious, as well as of all true religion."[145]

And yet, a few short years later, the *Freeman's Journal* was claiming that the anniversary was now remembered in England "only in connexion with a funny effigy and a schoolboy's half-holiday." In contrast, Protestants in Ireland—as the 1873 rioting in Portadown demonstrated—still found in "the miserable conspiracy

[140] W. E. Gladstone, *Speeches of the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone* . . . (London, 1868), 87.

[141] *The Times*, 28 June 1858, 8. Also see *Standard*, 1 July 1858, 4; *Leeds Mercury*, 3 July 1858, 1; *York Herald*, 3 July 1858, 8; *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 4 July 1858, 1; *Morning Post*, 9 July 1858, 4; *Morning Chronicle*, 29 June 1858, 2; *Standard*, 3 July 1858, 4; *Morning Chronicle*, 7 July 1858, 3.

[142] G. M. Trevelyan, *History of England* (London, 1956), 385.

[143] *North Wales Chronicle*, 12 November 1859, 5; *Essex Standard*, 16 November 1859, 2.

[144] *Freeman's Journal*, 9 November 1859, 2.

[145] *Birmingham Daily Post*, 6 November 1868, 3; *Essex Standard*, 6 November 1868, 2.

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of three centuries since a pretext of keeping fellow-countrymen asunder in distrust and hate."[146] The purpose of the *Freeman's Journal* was clearly to challenge Protestant assumptions about the co-commemorative nature of the Fifth. Not surprisingly, the *Belfast News-Letter* rejected this claim, contending instead that the day had been "observed this year very generally throughout England," with the commemoration at Lewes—replete with effigies of the Pope, Father Ignatius, and Guy Fawkes along with its "No Popery" banners—being singled out as typical of the sterling Protestant spirit that still animated the day.[147] Indeed, in 1873 the *News-Letter* restated loyalist orthodoxy on the Fifth when it argued that the "magnitude of the deliverance was such that to this day, notwithstanding the lapse of nearly three centuries, it has never faded from the minds of Protestants," so that "it is still their wont and delight to assemble on that day, and by acts of public worship, and otherwise, to testify that they are not insensible to the benefits they reap from the triumph of their cause."[148]

Ulster loyalist assertion's in 1873 were not without some substance; according to the *Hampshire Telegraph*, the anniversary remained "one of the most troublesome . . . of the year," and "were it not for the active intervention of the police . . . and the singular forbearance of the Catholics . . . the English carnival would be constantly accompanied by shocking scenes of bloodshed."[149] But if this and other reports demonstrate that the *Freeman's Journal*, like Gladstone, was perhaps a little ahead of events, then both correctly read the general direction in which gunpowder commemoration was traveling.[150] From the 1830s, according to James Sharpe, the Protestant, providentialist, and anti-Catholic dimensions of the anniversary were increasingly meaningless for "educated" and "enlightened" Victorians, who by the 1870s and 1880s were succeeding—in alliance with respectable working-class elements—in their efforts to impose a degree of social order and respectability on disorderly plebeian commemoration of 5 November.[151] Of course, anti-Catholic violence did not disappear quickly; it remained a possibility at English bonfire events at places like Lewes into the twentieth century, while Catholics in England certainly felt that 5 November was still a sectarian anniversary even when the more conspicuous "No Popery" elements had disappeared.[152] But whereas in the eighteenth century anti-Catholicism had offered Protestants in both islands a "deeply felt principle to rally around," by the final decades of the century it was declining among all sections of English society.[153]

These changes in English observance gradually became apparent to Ulster loyalists in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Historically, loyalists in the north had seen 5 November as part of the Protestant circuitry that connected the two islands and so expected to see that "the day has been also commemorated in

[146] *Freeman's Journal*, 7 November 1873, 2.
[147] *Belfast News-Letter*, 11 November 1873, 2.
[148] *Belfast News-Letter*, 6 November 1873, 3.
[149] *Hampshire Telegraph*, 8 November 1873, 6.
[150] *The Times*, 13 November 1873, 12.
[151] Sharpe, *Remember, Remember*, 128, 136; Storch, "Please to Remember the Fifth of November," 73; Cressy, "Four Hundred Years of Festivities," 74.
[152] Sharpe, *Remember, Remember*, 152; Lyn Murfin, *Popular Leisure in the Lake Counties* (Manchester, 1990), 51.
[153] Hempton, *Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland*, 147.

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other parts of the United Kingdom as it has been in Belfast."[154] But although they could be satisfied that "Orangemen throughout the United Kingdom naturally take the lead in this annual commemoration,"[155] the *Belfast News-Letter's* regular reports on the anniversary in England were often tempered with disappointment on this score.[156] Indeed, reporters were forced to admit that in England "little political or religious feeling is associated . . . with these annual displays" and that most "care . . . little for the lesson of history which they perpetuate."[157] As one speaker told an Orange soiree in Armagh in November 1879, "It was owing to sentimentalism that the old [English] celebrations of the Fifth of November had been dropped," with the consequence that, "instead of the old processions of boys singing 'Let us remember the Fifth of November . . . ,' which served to keep Englishmen in remembrance of mercies vouchsafed to them, they had now monks and nuns and ritualism."[158]

Although English observance led some Ulster loyalists to wonder, "what have we now but a few remnants of that Protestant constitution[, since England] has ignored her Protestant character by outraging her Irish Protestant subjects [?]" this perception did not immediately erode the anniversary's importance in the north of Ireland.[159] This was due to its established role in the Orange culture there and also to the advent of home rule. After 1829, many northern Protestants (mostly Anglicans originally but by the 1880s Presbyterians and Methodists also) saw the Gunpowder Plot as paradigmatic of the subversive intentions of Catholics toward both the Union and the empire. So while they would gladly "hail the day, when the observance of the Fifth of November . . . would, indeed, be a needless and irrelevant portion of our Church rubric, and a libel on the loyalty and Christian love and fellowship of our Roman Catholic countrymen," this was not possible, because "alas! The record of their political crimes and religious hatred is kept up, and newly furnished."[160] As a later speaker explained, the " spirit . . . which actuated the concoctors of the diabolical plot to exterminate Protestantism still existed."[161]

Of course, as Brian Walker has noted, it is important to recognize that there was a range of Protestant and Unionist historical narratives.[162] But while some Protestants in Ulster—such as Bishop Hervey—actively opposed gunpowder commemoration, for many others 5 November continued to provide an annual opportunity to rehearse the Irish Protestant metanarrative of peril and deliverance that resounded with renewed force during times of crisis.[163] Indeed, many Ulster

[154] *Belfast News-Letter*, 6 November 1857, 2.

[155] *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 November 1887, 4.

[156] *Belfast News-Letter*, 9 November 1863, 3; 7 November 1867, 3; 6 November 1874, 3; 6 November 1877, 3; 10 November 1879, 7; 9 November 1881, 6; 6 November 1886, 8; 7 November 1887, 5; 6 November 1890, 5.

[157] *Belfast News-Letter*, 10 November 1879, 7; 6 November 1884, 5; 7 November 1887, 5; 6 November 1889, 5; 6 November 1890, 5.

[158] *Belfast News-Letter*, 8 November 1879, 4.

[159] *Belfast News-Letter*, 2 November 1869, 3.

[160] *The Warder*, 4 November 1837, 8.

[161] *Belfast News-Letter*, 6 November 1880, 4.

[162] Brian Walker, *Dancing to History's Tune: History, Myth and Politics in Ireland* (Belfast, 1996), 1–14.

[163] *L'Derry Journal*, 14 November 1843, 2, 4; *Belfast News-Letter*, 10 July 1849, 4; 10 November 1854, 1; *Dublin Evening Post*, cited in *L'Derry Journal*, 13 November 1861, 2; Farrell, *Rituals and Riots*, 41.

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loyalists saw in Catholic emancipation, the repeal campaign, and later in the Land War and home rule campaign "plots of the same insidious character" as 1605.[164] In 1880, for example, Orangemen across Ulster condemned the boycotting of Protestant farmers and landlords as the "outcome of [another] Popish plot for the extirpation of Protestantism," while in 1887 the *Belfast News-Letter* explained that, "Instead of gunpowder plots, there are dynamite plots. Guy Fawkes is gone, but [the Irish-American Fenian] O'Donovan Rossa lives."[165] And as late as 1917, one minister observed, "Three centuries had passed. . . . Why did they not forget it? It was time that those days had been gathered into the bosom of the forgotten, but the spirit and the antagonism still lived, and must be reckoned with by those who called themselves Protestants."[166]

In the 1870s and 1880s then, Ulster loyalist fear was heightened first by agrarian agitation and later by the emergence of home rule, with the result that the anniversary was revitalized by Unionist rhetoric and display. Between 1880 and 1890, and again after the return of a Liberal government in 1906, Unionist MPs often attended anniversary meetings.[167] After 1886, antinationalist sentiment was also woven into the speeches, sermons, and newspaper articles produced for the anniversary. As one speaker reflected during the third home rule crisis, "at the present time, when an irrational and ill-considered scheme of . . . Home Rule . . . [is] before the minds of the people, it is not amiss to recall . . . the attempt of the band of conspirators, under Guy Fawkes."[168] Ulster Protestants, however, showed that they were not simply waiting for providence to frustrate these new plots; in Keady, County Armagh, for example, loyalists, including twenty-four "stalwart men chosen for their fine physique," paraded on 5 November by torchlight with shouldered rifles to celebrate the anniversary.[169]

And yet, within a decade, the day had all but disappeared. Although commemoration was suspended during the Great War, in the years immediately following the conflict Protestants of all denominations continued to observe the anniversary in Ulster. But the changing nature of their anxieties, along with the founding of the Northern state, and the creation of the November armistice anniversary, contributed to the rapid abandonment of 5 November.[170] Indeed, the fact that after 1918, one anniversary in November (the Fifth) was superseded by another (the Eleventh) is of some significance. Ulster's blood sacrifice during the Great War quickly came to have much greater resonance for many Protestants than gunpowder, treason, and plot. Keith Jeffrey has written how Ulster Protestants quickly made 11 November into an extension of 12 July; but if he is correct, something of the gunpowder anniversary may also have been incorporated into the new

[164] *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 November 1892, 6.

[165] *Belfast News-Letter*, 6 November 1880, 3, 4; 7 November 1887, 4.

[166] *Belfast News-Letter*, 5 November 1917, 3.

[167] *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 November 1879, 4; 6 November 1880, 3; 7 November 1890, 6; *Londonderry Sentinel*, 4 November 1905, 8; *Belfast News-Letter*, 6 November 1906, 4; 6 November 1907, 8, 9; 7 November 1908, 8.

[168] *Belfast News-Letter*, 5 November 1912, 5.

[169] *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 November 1912, 4.

[170] *Londonderry Sentinel*, 6 November 1920, 4; *Belfast News-Letter*, 6 November 1922, 10; *Londonderry Sentinel*, 6 November 1930, 4; 7 November 1935, 1, 3; 18 November 1950, 2; the *Londonderry Sentinel* made no reference to the anniversary in 1955, 1965, or 1975.

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Armistice Day.[171] It not only shared some of the same commemorative forms (thanksgiving church services and parades) with 5 November, but more important, it psychologically reconnected Ulster loyalists with England through a shared day that—unlike the Gunpowder Plot—employed a common vocabulary of ritual and commemorative forms. This opportunity for co-commemoration was, as James Loughlin has demonstrated, crucial in the years 1919–21, when several of the most critical periods in which the partition of Ireland seemed imperiled coincided with commemoration of the Great War, thereby allowing Ulster loyalists to remind English statesmen of the "Imperial Province's" wartime sacrifices.[172] Thus, having become gradually aware from the 1870s onward that that the Gunpowder Plot was no longer keenly observed in England (and so no longer provided a link between the two islands), loyalists in Ulster discarded Guy Fawkes in favor of the Unknown Soldier. By so doing, Ulster Protestants were able once more to locate a co-commemorative discourse that could be actively shared with "mainland" Britons.[173]

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Ever since 5 November 1605, the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot has animated English autumns, though for many years the press in England has annually reported that Bonfire Night is slowly but inexorably declining. In more recent times, commentators have often observed that few of those who now enjoy the bonfires and fireworks associated with the anniversary know very much about its seventeenth-century origins or indeed the centuries-old tradition of Protestant commemoration of the event.[174] The major exception to this is the celebration held in Lewes, Sussex, every year, where elements of Victorian pageantry and anti-Catholic ritual have survived to the present day.[175] In a celebration that features banners proclaiming "No Popery," processions of blazing crosses, and the burning of Pope Paul V in effigy, members of the Cliffe Bonfire Society annually dress up in episcopal regalia and are ritually booed by the assembled crowd. Whereas admirers of Lewes's gunpowder commemoration see its traditions in terms of antiauthoritarianism and cultural heritage, its sectarian rituals regularly provoke accusations of anti-Catholicism and counterclaims of political correctness.[176]

[171] Keith Jeffrey, *Ireland and the Great War* (Cambridge, 2001), 107.

[172] James Loughlin, "Mobilising the Sacred Dead: Ulster Unionism, the Great War and the Politics of Remembrance, in *Ireland and the Great War*, ed. A. Gregory and S. Paseta (Manchester, 2002), 137.

[173] Ibid., 142, 146–50. For one recent exception, see "City Orangemen to Host Gunpowder Plot Service," *Londonderry Sentinel*, 4 November 2010, http://www.londonderrysentinel.co.uk/news/local/city_orangemen_to_host_gunpowder_plot_service_1_2106196.

[174] Jonathan Brown, "How Fireworks Night Lost Its Sparkle," *Independent*, 5 November 2009, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/how-fireworks-night-lost-its-sparkle-1814791.html.

[175] For Lewes, see Jeremy Goring, *Burn Holy Fire: Religion in Lewes since the Reformation* (Cambridge, 2003).

[176] Jake Bowers, "Burning Desire," *Guardian*, 1 November 2000, http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2000/nov/01/guardiansocietysupplement7?INTCMP=SRCH; Simon Heffer, "I Find Hallowe'en Frightfully Frightening," *Daily Telegraph*, 31 October 2009, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/simonheffer/6474809/I-find-Halloween-frightfully-frightening.html; Jus-

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Such disputes have been lent additional color over the years by the presence of visitors from Ulster. In the 1970s some onlookers reportedly wore jackets bearing the loyalist slogan "No Surrender," while in the following decade Lewes was "contaminated" by the presence of Ian Paisley, whose Free Presbyterian church has a small congregation in the town.[177] Most recently the Lewes Martyrs' Memorial Southdown Orange Lodge 398 has held its own thanksgiving service for 5 November.[178] Loyalists, Paisleyites, and Orangemen have been drawn to Lewes for a number of reasons. The spectacle itself may, of course, attract some (as it does thousands of ordinary tourists), but many of the visitors from Ulster seem to take Lewes's "No Popery" banners more seriously than the average sightseer. As Britain has become an increasingly pluralistic and inclusive society in the years since the Second World War, the traditional Protestant and anti-Catholic dimensions of British identity have been gradually marginalized.[179] This has not only resulted in the forgetting of seventeenth-century Catholic plots and Protestant victories by England, but it has also meant that the versions of Britishness cherished by loyalists in Northern Ireland have come to be seen as outdated and archaic.[180] Perhaps as a consequence of this, Ulster loyalists value Bonfire Night in Lewes because it seems to maintain a thin strand of continuity with older traditions of British identity once dominant on the "mainland."[181] As one Paisleyite has written, the Fifth in Lewes is a "symbolical, but utterly vital, reminder of the origin of the atrocities of that time," while the Paisleyite minister in Lewes has similarly claimed that the town's Bonfire Night reminds people that the Pope is "an anti-Christ, a man of sin, a deceiver of the souls of many people."[182]

If this is so, the people of Lewes for their part have not always welcomed having their celebrations associated with the "Troubles" of Northern Ireland. In 1982 Ian Paisley himself was burnt in effigy, a form of censure for his having distributed anti-Catholic leaflets at the previous year's 5 November celebrations.[183] More recently, the Free Presbyterian minister of Lewes has received the same treatment, in his case for publicly criticizing as "immoral" the drinking and lewdness of gunpowder celebrations in Lewes.[184] Such responses have left Ulster loyalists occasionally feeling hurt and not a little confused. And yet, these exchanges bear—in microcosm—more than a passing resemblance to the earlier, nineteenth-century history of 5 November in Ireland: loyalist enthusiasm for a co-commemorated Protestant anniversary being met with English indifference, puzzlement, and even

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tin Champion, "The Flames of Hate," *Guardian*, 4 November 2005, http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2005/nov/04/britishidentity.comment?INTCMP=SRCH.

[177] Peter Burke, "Co-memorations: Performing the Past," in *Performing the Past: Memory, History and Identity in Modern Europe*, ed. Karin Tilmans, Frank Van Vree, and Jay Winter (Amsterdam, 2010), 115.

[178] Goring, *Burn Holy Fire*, 130, 145; J. R. Daescher, *True Brits: A Tour of Britain in All Its Bog-Snorkeling, Shin-Kicking, and Cheese-Rolling Glory* (London, 2004), 290–91, 300.

[179] Richard Weight, *Patriots* (London, 2003), 439, 449, 451

[180] Patrick Mitchel, *Evangelicalism and National Identity in Ulster, 1921–1998* (Oxford, 2003), 221, 451, 530–32.

[181] Daescher, *True Brits*, 270–71.

[182] Arthur Noble, "Of Bonfires, Famous and Infamous," http://www.ianpaisley.org/article.asp?ArtKey=lewes.

[183] Goring, *Burn Holy Fire*, 157.

[184] Daescher, *True Brits*, 271, 299.

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hostility. Of course, what makes this even more interesting is that the parties involved in these exchanges seem to have been oblivious to the fact that Irish Protestants have not always been mere onlookers and bystanders at English bonfires. In 1977, the folklorist Alan Gailey stated in unequivocal terms that gunpowder, treason, and plot had never had any "meaning . . . in north Irish folk tradition," and while the anthropologist Jack Santino found some fragmentary evidence in the 1990s of bonfires, effigies, and fireworks in some places in Northern Ireland, such traditions seemed to him to have been inspired more by the *Beano* comic than the Book of Common Prayer.[185]

But the fact that there is no cultural memory of the centuries of Irish gunpowder commemoration is not just ironic; it is also historically important. Northern Ireland is often portrayed by journalists (and occasionally scholars) as a place "where the troubles of the past are relived as contemporary events."[186] Loyalists, in particular, are commonly seen as trapped in a history "constructed upon a grid of talismanic dates—1641, 1690, 1912."[187] But what the history of 5 November in Ireland demonstrates is not Ulster Protestants' capacity for remembering but actually their talent for forgetting, assimilating, and rationalizing change.[188] Of course, historians have long been aware of the importance of not taking Ulster loyalist claims to the historical continuity of their commemoration at face value, while scholars of cultural memory for their part understand that commemoration as a phenomenon "includes forgetting."[189] Even so, this modern amnesia in relation to the revival and later discontinuation of a whole thread of remembrance in the modern era still seems quite remarkable.

As such, the one major feature of this trajectory that is worth noting when considering the wider study of popular memory and commemoration is the unusual nature of the gunpowder anniversary as a "*lieu de mémoire*." Although Pierre Nora argues that all modern communities possess such sites, there has been a quite natural tendency among scholars to examine cultural memory in the context of the nation.[190] But 5 November was not the site of just a single national memory; rather it was the focus of transnational co-commemoration by a number of connected peoples, as evidenced by the Anglo-Irish example, but also by the anniversary's history elsewhere (such as in colonial America).[191] The interplay of centripetal and centrifugal impulses within such co-commemorative traditions may well, this article suggests, provide further interesting insights into how cultural communities imagine themselves over time.

[185] Alan Gailey, "The Bonfire in North Irish Tradition," *Folk-Lore* 88, no. 1 (1977): 5; Jack Santino, "Light Up the Sky: Halloween Bonfires and Cultural Ceremony in Northern Ireland," *Western Folklore* 55, no. 3 (Spring 1996): 219, 220–21.

[186] Richard Rose, *Governing without Consensus: An Irish Perspective* (London, 1971), 70, cited in McBride, *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, 2.

[187] McBride, *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, 6.

[188] Ibid.

[189] Bryan, *Orange Parades*, 7; Lawrence D. Kritzman, foreword to *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, vol. 1, *Conflicts and Divisions*, ed. Pierre Nora (New York, 1996), ix.

[190] Pierre Nora, "General Introduction: Between Memory and History," in Nora, *Realms of Memory*, 1–20.

[191] Brendan McConville, *The King's Three Faces: The Rise and Fall of Royal America, 1688–1766* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2006), 56–63.

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