

T1480

NC 0020894 9



NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

FACULTY OF DESIGN

**Department of Fashion and Textiles
Embroidered Textiles**

***IRISH DANCING COSTUME
ELEMENTS OF HISTORY AND DESIGN***

By

Martha Robb

*Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Design
and Complementary Studies in the Candidacy for the
Degree of Bachelor of Textile Design*

1995

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

REPORT OF THE

BOARD

OF INVESTIGATION

Table of Contents

	Page	
Acknowledgements	1	
List of Illustrations	2	
Introduction	6	
Chapter 1	Origins of Irish Dancing Costume	8
Chapter 2	1930 - 1995, Irish Dancing Costume : Its Style	29
Chapter 3	Irish Dancing Costume : Concepts of Tradition and National Identity	78
Conclusion		90
Bibliography		92
Appendices		98

BOON

WILLIAM BOON

Acknowledgements

Among the many people who have provided me with help or information during the preparation of this thesis, I would like to thank the following individuals:

Maeve Brogan
Mary Carey
Janet Coyle
John Cullinane
Mrs Doherty
Marlene Dunlop
Maree Falls
Brendan Gillan
Cepta Joyce
Seamus MacConuladh
Margaret McErlean
Máiréad McMullan
Rhóda Uí Chonaire
Eileen Plater
Maura Power
Máire Rodgers
Seven Towers Dancers
Máire Stafford
Annie Wark
Jack Whelan
Edwina Wright

I acknowledge the help of staff in the National Library of Ireland, the Lecci Library in Trinity College, the Library of the National College of Art & Design, the Linenhall Library in Belfast, the Ballymoney and Ballymena Libraries in County Antrim, the Traditional Music Archives in Dublin, the Ulster Museum, the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and Colleen Dube of the National Museum of Ireland.

Particular thanks go to my tutor, Deirdre Campion.

BOND

SWIFT BROTHERS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig 1 p.9 Dancing in the Glens, Co Antrim C.1900
- Fig 2 p.12 'Irish Cailíní' Gaelic Revival 1906
- Fig 3 p.17 Cassie O'Neil, Glens Feis 1906
- Fig 4 p.19 May Kerley, Needleworker, Dun Emer Guild
- Fig 5 p.20 'Irish Dress' designed by Sarah Purser, Dun Emer Guild 1928
- Fig 6 p.23 Dancers performing Galway Reel early 1920's
- Fig 7 p.26 'Group of Dancers and Musicians' C.1917
- Fig 8 p.27 'Solo' costume of 1980's featuring nut brown bodice
- Fig 9 p.30 Girls from St Louis Convent, Ballymena, dressed in 'Irish Costume', 1930
- Fig 10 p.30 Class Costume, Johnston School Belfast, 1938/1939
- Fig 11 p.32 McRuaidhe family, McAleer School of Dancing, Belfast C.1955
- Fig 12 p.34 Costume worn by E. Donaghy, Ballymoney, Co Antrim C.1945
- Fig 13 p.34 Winners in dancing competitions, Ballymena Festival, Co Antrim 1953
- Fig 14 p.35 A Belfast Class Costume (Commission) C.1969
- Fig 15 p.35 Class Costume Dunlop School (Festival), Coleraine, Co Antrim, 1969
- Fig 16 p.37 Solo Costume featuring inverted pleat, De Glin School, Derry, 1970's
- Fig 17 p.37 Solo Costume featuring inverted pleat, De Glin School, Derry, 1980's
- Fig 18 p.38 Contemporary Class Costume Gillan School (Commission), featuring inverted pleat
- Fig 19 p.38 Contemporary Class Costume Gillan School (Commission), featuring inverted pleat
- Fig 20 p.40 Contemporary Class Costume Elaine Doherty School (Commission), featuring box pleat

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

LABORATORY OF PHYSICAL CHEMISTRY

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

RECEIVED

APR 10 1954

10:10 AM

BY

LIBRARY

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

RECEIVED

APR 10 1954

10:10 AM

BY

LIBRARY

OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

- Fig 21 p.41 Contemporary Solo Costume featuring inverted box pleat, Gillan School, Dunloy, Co Antrim
- Fig 22 p.43 Contemporary Solo Costume featuring lining of contrasting colour
- Fig 23 p.44 Contemporary Solo Costume, Loughguile School (Festival) featuring inverted pleat.
- Fig 24 p.44 Contemporary Class Costume, Seven Towers School (Festival) featuring inverted pleat
- Fig 25 p.45 Solo Costumes, Janet Coyle School (An Comhdháil) featuring inverted box pleats and box pleat. 1990's
- Fig 26 p.45 Solo Costumes, Janet Coyle School (An Comhdháil) featuring inverted box pleats. 1990's
- Fig 27 p.48 Triangular brat worn 1940
- Fig 28 p.48 Pleated style dress worn by Marlene Dunlop, Co Antrim, 1956
- Fig 29 p.48 Solo Costume featuring triangular brat 1980's, De Glin School, Derry
- Fig 30 p.49 Margaret McErlean, Shiels School of Dancing, Ballymoney, Co Antrim, 1950's
- Fig 31 p.50 A Belfast Class Costume (Commission) C.1969, featuring triangular brat
- Fig 32 p.50 Dunlop School Class Costume (Festival), Coleraine, Co Antrim, 1969
- Fig 33 p.51 Contemporary Class Costume featuring triangular turn back brat, Gillan School (Commission), Dunloy, Co Antrim
- Fig 34 p.51 Contemporary Solo Costumes, Gillan School (Commission) Dunloy, Co Antrim
- Fig 35 p.52 Solo Costume 1994, Gillan School (Commission) Dunloy, Co Antrim
- Fig 36 p.52 Contemporary Solo Costumes, Janet Coyle School (An Comhdháil), Cardonagh, Co Donegal
- Fig 37 p.54 Class Costume, Janet Coyle School (An Comhdháil), Cardonagh, Co Donegal 1995

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

LABORATORY OF PHYSICAL CHEMISTRY

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

RECEIVED

APR 10 1964

FROM

DR. J. H. DILLON

TO

DR. J. H. DILLON

RE

RECEIVED

APR 10 1964

FROM

DR. J. H. DILLON

TO

DR. J. H. DILLON

RE

- Fig 38 p.54 Solo Costume featuring kite shape brat, 1988, Ulster
- Fig 39 p.55 Contemporary Class Costume, Loughguile School (Festival), Co Antrim, featuring cape style brat
- Fig 40 p.55 Contemporary Class Costume, Seven Towers School (Festival) Ballymena, Co Antrim, featuring cape style brat
- Fig 41 p.56 Contemporary Class Costume, Dunlop School (Festival), Coleraine, Co Antrim
- Fig 42 p.57 Mary Carey wearing Class Costume, Johnston School, Belfast, 1938/1939
- Fig 43 p.57 The Graham School, Ballymena, Co Antrim, 1950
- Fig 44 p.59 Solo Costumes 1990 and 1994, Gillan School (Commission), Dunloy, Co Antrim
- Fig 45 p.59 Solo Costume, Ulster 1988, featuring red lace collar
- Fig 46 p.60 Graham School of Dancing 1960's, displaying medals and trophies won
- Fig 47 p.63 Solo Costume made from woollen fabric, 1986, Ulster
- Fig 48 p.64 Solo Costume, De Glin School (Commission), Derry, late 1970's
- Fig 49 p.64 Solo Costume, Gillan School (Commission), Dunloy, Co Antrim, 1994
- Fig 50 p.65 Contemporary Class Costume, Janet Coyle School (An Comhdháil), Cardonagh, Co Donegal
- Fig 51 p.69 Solo Costume, Dunlop School (Festival), Coleraine, Co Antrim, 1994
- Fig 52 p.73 Detail featuring embroidery, Solo Costume 1970's
- Fig 53 p.74 Detail of embroidery, Solo Costume (Commission), 1991
- Fig 54 p.75 Solo Costume (Commission) featuring chain stitch embroidery, glass rhinestones and diamanté stripping, 1994
- Fig 55 p.76 Solo Costume featuring appliqué and satin stitch embroidery, Gillan School (Commission), Dunloy, Co Antrim, 1994
- Fig 56 p.83 Scene from the Irish village of Ballymacclinton, Imperial International Exhibition, London, 1909

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

1960

1961

1962

1963

1964

1965

1966

1967

1968

1969

1970

1971

1972

1973

1974

1975

1976

1977

1978

- Fig 57 p.85 1931 Ballymena Feis competitors in class for prettiest 'Gaelic Costume'
- Fig 58 p.85 Daughters of diplomats in Dublin dressed in 'National' costume. September 1994
- Fig 59 p.88 Irish dancers of the Crean School of Dancing Dublin, Burlington Cabaret, August 1994

Small Book
B. 10. 10

Introduction

The perception of the Irish dancing costume as symbolic of national aspirations is analysed in this thesis. The Irish dancing costume is investigated by the examination of the forms and structures of dress which have evolved from ancient dress into contemporary dance costume. The profusion of Celtic and national images reflect nationalist ideas and their adoption as motifs for surface decoration of costume is discussed. This thesis assesses how costume for Irish dancing is an effect which emerged late in the 19th century.

Availability of documented information concerning the history and development of Irish dancing costume is limited. Most research on the subject has been carried out by Dr John Cullinane, author of "Aspects of the History and Development of Irish Dancing". With particular reference to his native area of Cork, Cullinane's publication provides some insight into the evolution of costume from the turn of the century to the present day.

To further investigation of the development of Irish dancing costumes, study of national sentiment, historical events and national dress styles during the Celtic Revival period was necessary. Examination of photographic records and information gathered from correspondence and interviews also formed an important part of research. Enquiry was conducted in counties Dublin, Antrim, Derry, Donegal, Cork and Galway, and in England. Letters seeking information were circulated to local and national newspapers (see Appendix 1) dance tutors, adjudicators, costume designers and dancewear companies (see Appendix 2). Participation in two radio interviews released a personal plea for information about costume, old or new.

SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL

During visits to dancing groups in County Antrim and County Donegal, it was possible to photograph contemporary and older costumes. Interviews with tutors, dancers and costume makers proved helpful.

Attendance at the Burlington and Jurys Hotels' Cabaret Shows in August 1994 provided opportunity to witness how Irish culture, inclusive of Irish dancing, is packaged for tourists.

The ensuing chapters shall examine how nationalist aspirations for Irish independence, and a rich national heritage, were to have effect on the development of distinctive costume for Irish dancing. Parallel development of evolving national dress styles shall be examined.

The establishment of the Irish Arts and Crafts Movement and home industries shall be considered for contribution in the development of dancing costume.

Examination of changing trends in costume style and consideration of colour, fabric and surface decoration shall be recorded. The ensuing discussion shall comment on how an increasing number of competitive dancing events, dancing style and technology have affected the evolvement in design of costume.

Finally, aspects of tradition and national identity, relative to Irish dancing costume, will be studied. Observation on why rural peasant dress of the 19th and 20th centuries was not more influential in its development shall be noted. Analysis of the changing significance of the Irish dancing costume and discussion about its potential development will conclude this work.

BOND

George Washington

Chapter 1

Origins of Irish Dancing Costume

The following analysis of the evolving style of Irish dancing costumes shall illustrate how the style, colour, fabric and decoration of these developed in parallel with a growing desire to establish a distinctive national dress style in Ireland.

As the different strands of national symbolic dress evolved so too did different forms of symbolic Irish dancing costume. Nationalist aspirations to revive Irish traditions and culture along with the growing realisation that Ireland had a national heritage of its own were influential in these developments.

At the start of the 20th century, the conscious development of dancing costume was affected by the proliferation of home industries, classes and guilds involved in the production of Irish textiles, lace and embroidery.

Performing on May Day in 1812 on the outskirts of Dublin, "*..... the girls, their hair decked with ribbons, were in their Sunday garb*" (Dublin University Magazine, 1863, p 582).

In the past, Sunday best dress was often worn for dancing. As is common today, many dancers wore their everyday dress whilst participating in Irish dancing at social gatherings. Dancers illustrated in Fig 1 are wearing their everyday clothes and, as was customary in earlier times, they were dancing out of doors.

ENCLOSURE

SWIFT BROTHERS



Fig 1 Dancing in the Glens, County Antrim C. 1900



At an increasing number of competitive dancing and Céile events co-ordinated by the Gaelic League during the Celtic Revival period, the wearing of symbolic costume for Irish dancing was encouraged. Indeed it was commonly adopted as class costume, a practice which began in the 1920's as a growing number of dancing schools were being established across the country.

Irish culture and tradition, inclusive of dress styles, had been suppressed continually during a lengthy period of English domination in Ireland. Henry VII, who became King in 1485, decreed that: '*..... no man or manchild [should wear no mantle in the streets but cloths or gowns shaped after the English fashion*' (O'Kelly, 1992, p 77). A campaign against the traditional wearing of saffron had been initiated by English rule in 1466 (Dunlevy, 1989, p 35). A popular song of the late 19th century relates how '*they were hangin' men and women for the wearin' of the green*' (O'Kelly, 1992, p 80).

Following the Act of Union in 1801, the Irish became more concerned about redefining their national identity as political aspirations for Irish independence grew. The Cap of Liberty worn by Daniel O'Connell of the Young Ireland Movement in 1843 and the uniform of the Eighty Two Club, founded in 1844, illustrate early attempts to establish a symbolic dress style in Ireland. Significantly both incorporated the colour green and the application of shamrock motifs (Sheehy, 1980, pp 9, 10, 38, 39).

BOARD

SECRET BOARD

By the middle of the 19th century, the application of motifs such as the shamrock, harp, wolfhound, roundtower or sunburst was a popular and immediate way in which national identity could be expressed. At the turn of the century these Irish symbols were not commonly incorporated into the decoration of national forms of dress or dancing costume. This seems to reflect the opinion of the Celtic Renaissance generation who concluded that the application of symbols eg shamrock, often portrayed "*a shallow, sentimental and ineffectual feeling for Ireland which was often used for commercial reasons in the souvenir trade or on vice regal uniforms*" (Sheehy, 1980, p 92).

In the mid-⁸1900's, national pride found expression as the Irish became more aware that they had a rich national heritage of their own. Findings of the antiquarians during the 19th century had provided an insight into Ireland's historical past. George Petrie organised a museum collection for the Royal Irish Academy. This included the acquisition of the Tara Brooch found in 1850. Replicas of this brooch were often worn by members of the Gaelic League and used by Irish dancers during the Celtic Revival period as illustrated in Fig 2.

These brooches were symbols of a glorious past and its art skills. The wearing of Tara brooches continues and is integral with many contemporary Irish dancing costumes as illustrated in Figs 23 and 24. According to Eileen Plater of Dancewear, Rochdale, Lancs., the brooches are decreasing in popularity as they can damage the fabric of the dress (Plater, letter, August 1994).

THE
LIBRARY OF THE
BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION
222 NASSAU ST. N.Y.C. 10038

BOSTON

ESTABLISHED 1822



Fig 2 Mazie McCarthy, prize dancer, piper and drummer. Alice Dann, prize dancer. May McCarthy, union piper. Dublin 1906 illustration titled '*Irish Cailini*' (Irish Girls), Gaelic Revival, O'Neill '*Irish Minstrals and Musicians*', p.483.



The Celtic Revival, which began in the 1880's, was primarily an attempt to regenerate Irish tradition and culture. The Irish language, names, literature, music, sport, dance and dress styles were to be revived. In 1892 the Irish Literary Society was founded, in 1893 the Gaelic League came into being and, in 1894, the Gaelic Athletic Association was inaugurated. In delivering a lecture on 25 November 1892, Douglas Hyde, a founder member of the Gaelic League, spoke of '..... *the necessity for de-anglicising the Irish nation* ' (Cullinane, 1994, pp 16-17).

The Gaelic League stimulated a renewed interest in Irish dancing. The first Céile event organised by the Gaelic League was held in London in 1897 (Cullinane, 1994, pp 16, 17). Very soon Céile events were being held in Dublin. As they grew in popularity, attempts were made to ensure that these events were truly Irish. "Green for Old Ireland" was a well used slogan at that time. The colour green had been of significance in Ireland as far back as 1681 (Sheehy, 1980, p 10). Consequently, the Gaelic League encouraged ladies attending Céile events to wear green skirts as an expression of their national identity. The concept of wearing symbolic costumes for Irish dancing may have stemmed from this and was practised to a degree.

In an attempt to revive old Irish traditions, the first Oireachtas, organised by the Gaelic League, was held in Dublin in 1897. An oireachtas was a national festival of Irish dance, music, song and literature and was reminiscent of the ancient Tara Feis as described by Cullinane (Cullinane, 1994, p 87).

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year. It also mentions the results of the various expeditions and the discovery of new species.

2. The second part of the report describes the various expeditions and the results of the same. It mentions the names of the participants and the places visited.

3. The third part of the report deals with the results of the various expeditions and the discovery of new species. It mentions the names of the participants and the places visited.

4. The fourth part of the report describes the various expeditions and the results of the same. It mentions the names of the participants and the places visited.

5. The fifth part of the report deals with the results of the various expeditions and the discovery of new species. It mentions the names of the participants and the places visited.

The first modern feis, a similar event but held at county level, was organised by the Gaelic League and held in Macroom, County Cork in 1899. The programme acknowledged the importance of Irish dancing by awarding silver medals for the best hornpipe and for the best reel and jig. The feis movement quickly gathered momentum and soon became a well established feature of the Gaelic League's calendar. In the autumn of 1900, provincial feiseanna (plural of feis) were held in Belfast and Cork.

In 1901, the Gaelic League began a campaign to revive Irish industries with the direction that "*..... no prize be awarded to a competitor in an oireachtas unless they were dressed in clothes of Irish manufacture*" (MacConuladh, 1980, p 16). The Gaelic League believed that, in order to decelerate Irish emigration, both the revival of Irish industries creating employment coupled with the revival of Irish pastimes were necessary.

The concept of encouraging Irish industry to help boost the economy and thereby create employment was in keeping with the expressed spirit of viceregal society ladies who were genuinely concerned with the welfare of the poor in Ireland. At the turn of the century, they became actively involved in promoting the establishment of Irish cottage and home industries. Celebrating the inauguration of the Irish Industries Association in 1886, Lord and Lady Aberdeen requested that guests attending should '*array themselves in garments of Irish materials*' (Gordon Bowe, 1993, p 185).

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

FROM

Stuart Brock

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

Textiles being manufactured in Ireland, at this time, included wool, linen and poplin. As many classes, schools and cottage industries were established all over Ireland, women became actively involved in lace-making and embroidery (Larmour, 1992, pp 11-17). Irish lace and, in particular, Irish crochet lace were to become characteristic in the decoration of collar and cuff of the Irish dancing dress.

The inauguration of the Royal School of Irish Art Needlework in 1882 stimulated the establishment of other schools in Ireland including those in Belfast and Cork later in the eighties.

Initially, the floral type of embroidery referred to as 'Renaissance' or 'Naturalistic' was carried out. However, during the 19th century, George Petrie and Margaret Stokes were instrumental in stimulating an interest in Celtic ornamentation. Alice Hart promoted the adoption of 'Kells embroidery'; it was displayed in public for the first time at the Inventions Exhibition in London in 1885 where it was awarded a gold medal. This style of embroidery was distinctively Irish, being inspired by Celtic illumination of the Book of Kells. It was carried out using indigenous threads of polished flax and worked on linen. The main stitches used were 'flat', 'couching', 'darned work', 'blanket' or 'buttonhole stitch' (Larmour, 1992, ch 2). Fig 2 taken in Dublin, c 1906, demonstrates the use of 'Kells embroidery' on the dress worn by Mazie McCarthy, a prize dancer, piper and drummer. The embroidery is of a Celtic interlace design. The choice of stitches used cannot be discerned from the photograph. Her dress appears to be made from linen. This would be in keeping with the Gaelic League's desire to encourage the wearing of 'Irish manufacture' clothing.

Handwritten text, mostly illegible due to fading. The text appears to be organized into several paragraphs, with some lines starting with capital letters. The ink is very light and the paper is aged.

Handwritten text, mostly illegible due to fading. The text appears to be organized into several paragraphs, with some lines starting with capital letters. The ink is very light and the paper is aged.

Fig 3 depicts Cassie O'Neil competing at the Glens Feis in County Antrim. This photograph also dates from 1906. Cassie's dress is likely to have been her Sunday best or everyday wear. It is also possible that, for dancing, she was wearing her communion dress, also a common practice during the 1950s (Stafford interview, August 1994) and the 1960s (Uí Chonaire, letter, 27 September 1994).

The style of dresses worn by Mazie McCarthy, Alice Dunne and May McCarthy in Fig 2 reflect the type of 'Irish Costumes' being made by Dun Emer Guild (Emer, the wife of the ancient Ulster hero Cúchullain was endowed with "the gift of embroidery and all needlework") in Dublin at this time (O'Curry, 1861, p 283). Evelyn Gleeson, a supporter of the Gaelic League, founded the Dun Emer Guild in 1902 and employed girls '*to make beautiful things in the spirit and tradition of the country*' (Gordon Bowe, 1993, p 190). Irish costumes made by the guild and those worn by girls in Fig 2 specifically for Irish dancing, were inspired by the new availability of information about ancient Irish dress styles and by the publication, during the Celtic Revival period, of works of mythology. These costumes were created as nationalists attempted to establish links with history, prior to the Norman invasion of Ireland, generating a feeling of national pride.

Research completed by Eugene O'Curry during the 19th century concluded that the léine, worn in ancient Ireland, was usually of ankle length. It was a tunic type garment made from unbleached or dyed linen. It could be slipped over the head and gathered at the waist using a crios/belt. A brat was rectangular in shape falling to the ground from the shoulders where it was fastened with a Tara brooch.

BOARD

James A. Board



GIÚIL
MISIÚIN
GAELACHA

Eanair 1993

Photograph Taken at Féis na nGleann
Co. Antrim, June 1906. (See Note 1)

Fig 3 Cassie O'Neil, Glenarm. Glens Feis C. 1906.
F J Biggar, Photographic Collection, Ulster Museum

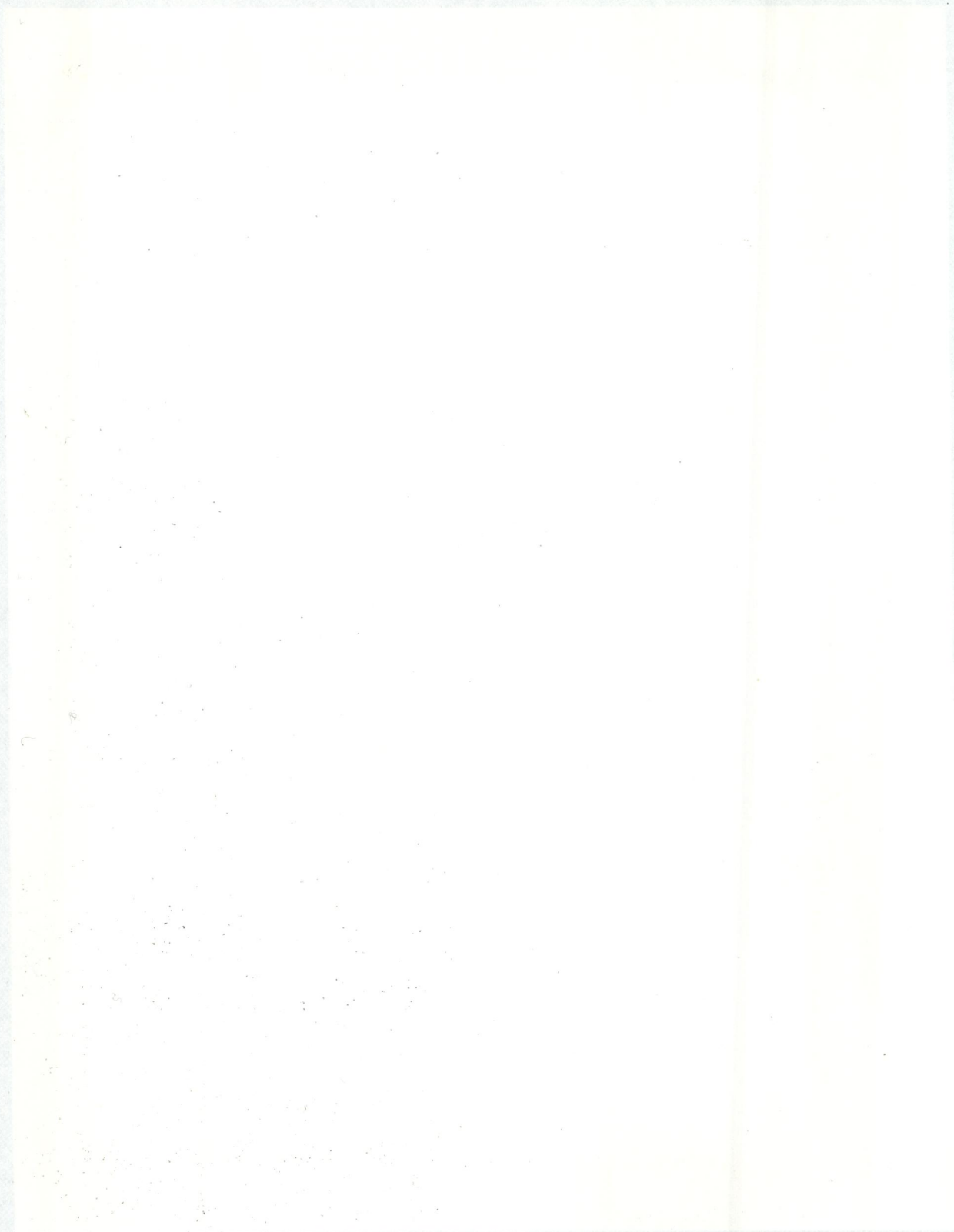


Fig 4 illustrates May Kerley, a needleworker at Dun Emer, wearing an 'Irish Costume' made by the Guild. It is evident that the style of this dress and those worn by the girls in Fig 2 were derived from descriptions of the léine and brat. All dresses appear to be made from unbleached linen. Brats and Tara brooches are seen to be worn and one of the girls in Fig 2 demonstrates the wearing of a crios/belt.

In the famous tale 'The Destruction of Da Dorga's Hostel', Etain is described as wearing "*a purple cloak made of fine fleece and silver brooches of filigree work decorated with handsome gold in the cloak, she wore a long hooded tunic, stiff and smooth, of green silk with embroidery of red gold*" (Mahon, 1975, Vol 10). Such descriptions of colourful and richly decorated costumes, found in Celtic mythology, inspired the creation of many dresses by the Dun Emer Guild. Fig 5 depicts an embroidered dress and brat designed by Sarah Purser and made at the Guild in 1928. It is of peacock blue poplin. The bodice is lined with silk and trimmed with silk chiffon. The silk embroidery is in rich shades of blue and purple (Dunlevy, 1989, p 177). The dresses made at Dun Emer were worn primarily by those attending Gaelic gatherings and by those members of the literate, including Mary Colum, wife of the writer Padraic Colum, who wanted to keep '*the memory of the romance and beauty of the past*' alive (Butler, 1917, pp 222-228).

From photographic information gathered, it is clear that Irish dancing costumes, created during the revival period and reminiscent of the brat and léine, were not as elaborate as some of the Irish costumes produced at Dun Emer. These latter were often more suitable for wear

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

BOARD

STUDENT BODY



Fig 4 Mary Kerley, needleworker at Dun Emer Guild, dressed in an 'Irish costume' made by the Guild.





Fig 5 'Irish dress' designed by Sarah Purser, Dun Emer Guild 1928.



at 'Gala occasions' (Butler, 1917, p 222). Those costumes worn by dancers were plainer, often being of unbleached linen. Dun Emer dresses were often very colourful and decorated with elaborate embroidery (Dunlevy, 1989, p 177) Both types of costume were inspired by descriptions of dress worn in ancient Ireland.

The costumes evolved as the Irish grappled with the concept of developing some form of national dress which would express affinity with the Revival Movement. The wearing of a brat and léine style of costume, inclusive of Celtic embroidery, alluded to Ireland's glorious and ancient times.

Fig 6 dating from the early 1920's illustrates another form of costume worn for Irish dancing. The dresses worn by the two girls are similar to contemporary dress styles. According to Linda Ballard, this is an illustration from *Rincí na h Éireann* (Burchenal, New York, 1924) in which other photographs portray girls wearing similar dresses, some with girdles at the waist and some with brats draped over the shoulder. Some of the dresses carry simple Celtic style embroidered motifs (Ballard, 1991, p 65). In the 1920's, some dancers wore costumes which embodied both fashionable and ancient Celtic dress styles. These particular Irish dancing costumes reflected national dress concerns of middle class Gaelic Leaguers, who wanted to *"maintain an establishment appearance alongside that of the Celtic Hero"* (O'Kelly, 1992, p 80). The wearing of the kilt with a black jacket, white collar and black tie was also an expression of the same concept. According to McClintock, Joyce's *"Social History of Ancient Ireland"* was influential in popularising the idea that the kilt was

BOOK

Small Book



Fig 6 Dancers performing Galway Reel early 1920's.
Illustration from Burchenal, Rincí na h Éireann.



authentically Irish and that it had been worn by the Irish in ancient times. According to McClintock this concept arose out of a misinterpretation of the word 'léine' (McClintock, 1950, pp 118-123). Derricke's Kernes, as illustrated (McClintock, plate 18, p 30) were probably more crucial to the belief that kilts were worn by the 16th century Irish (McClintock, 1950, p 30).

At the beginning of the 20th century, people wishing to express their affiliation with the Revival Movement, wore kilts. Members of the Gaelic League and pipe bands wore kilts, as well as some Irish dancers later in the 1920's, (Cullinane, 1994, p 62) though there seems to be no evidence to suggest that kilts were worn by female dancers at that time. However, photographs from the Cork Examiner newspaper and held by the Traditional Music Archives, Dublin, illustrate the wearing of kilts by female dancers during the 1930's and 1940's. Kilts worn by dancers and by those expressing allegiance to the Revival Movement were most often of green or saffron blue. The wearing of saffron, like the wearing of green, was of symbolic significance. It was a reactionary statement against English suppression of Irish dress styles.

The Tailteann Games, reviving the ancient festivities honouring Queen Tailte of the Firbolgs, were held in 1922 and 1924 in celebration of the new Free State (Gordon Bowe, 1987, p 26). Cormac O'Keefe in "Aspects of the History of Irish Dancing" indicates that girl dancers, wearing ankle length green cloaks and participating in dancing events at the 1924 games, were wearing "*the proper traditional dress*". ^(Cullinane) Green cloaks were often worn over white

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal of office, at the City of New York, this 1st day of January, 1901.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

Attest: JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

JOHN W. WALKER, Mayor of the City of New York.

dresses for dancing. These outfits were similar to those worn by some supporters of Gaelicism. These latter wore white bawneen dresses decorated with green ribbons and Tara brooches signifying their political affiliations with the Revival Movement. At the beginning of the 20th century, the wearing of a cloak was often associated with the idealised portrayal of the Irish Cailín (colleen) or peasant girl. During the 19th century, the cloak was worn and its style was probably derived from the brat.

The World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893 was largely responsible for popularising the romantic image of girls performing Irish dancing in peasant style clothing. Visitors to the Irish village *"were captivated by the sight of rosy colleens, who danced jigs in the village hall"* (Sheehy, 1980, p 147). This presentation of girls performing Irish dancing becomes a regular feature of exhibitions throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. Irish dancers dressed in rural costume of post-famine Ireland and inclusive of aprons associated with Irish colleen style of dresses are illustrated in Fig 7 photographed c 1919 by the Lander Brothers of Dublin (Ballard, 1994, p 64).

To an extent, the image of the Irish colleen or peasant girl has influenced the development of Irish dancing costumes this century. The apron, worn by the Hasson School of Cork during the 1940's, the application of bands of braid to the hems of skirts worn by dancers in Galway in 1955 (Carty, 1987, p 113) and the inclusion of a velvet brown bodice in the costume worn by Ann McErlean dancing with the De Glin School in Derry during the 1980's - Fig 8 - are all reminiscent of rural styles of dress worn in Ireland during the 19th century.

BOARD

OF DIRECTORS



Fig 7 'Group of Dancers and Musicians' originally published as the frontpiece to Rincí na h Éireann

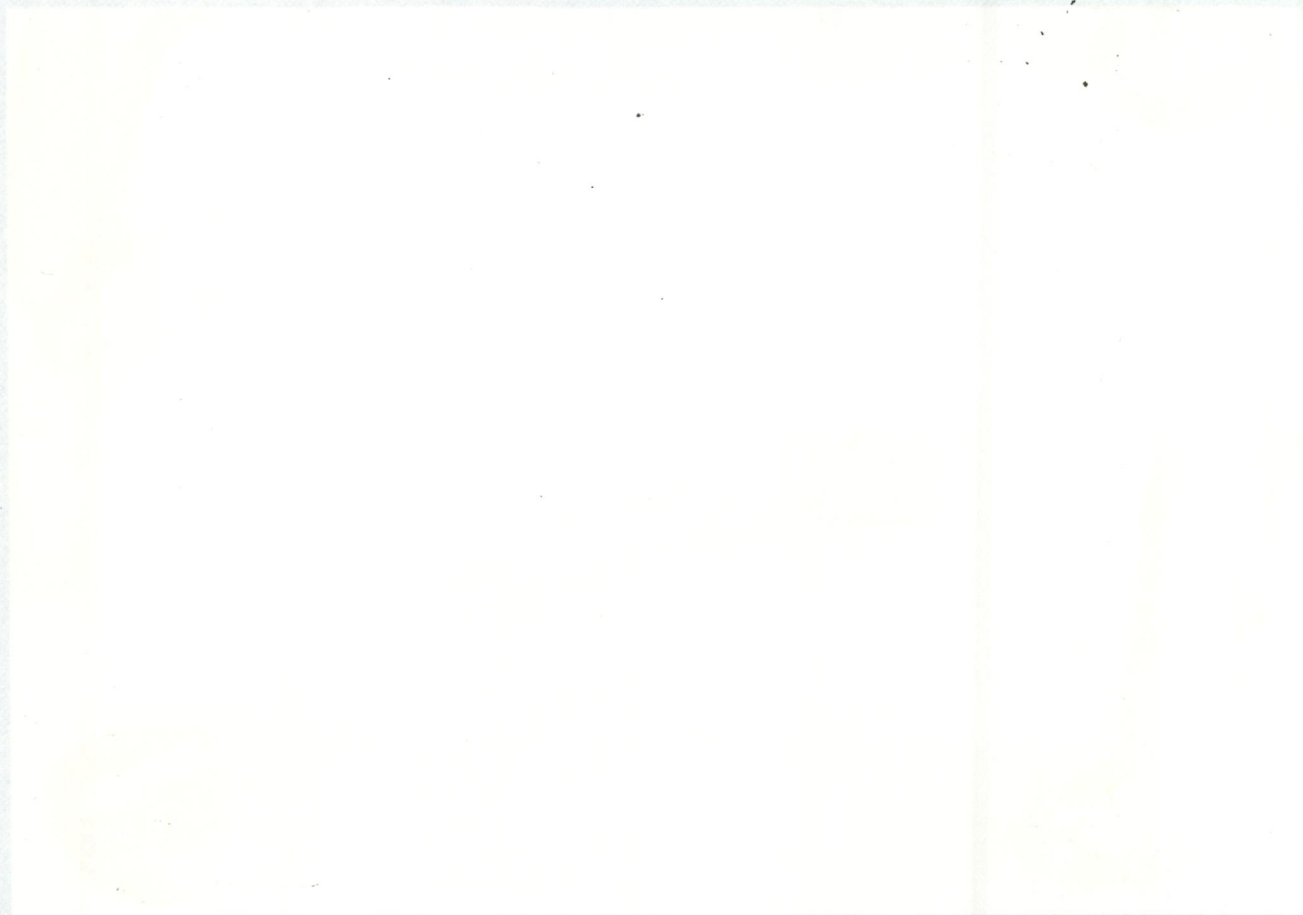




Fig 8 Costume, worn by Anne McErlean member of the De Glin School of Irish Dancing in Derry during the 1980's, features a nut brown bodice reminiscent of Irish rural peasant dress in the 19th century.



As part of the revival of Irish dancing, new schools of dancing were established during the Celtic Revival period. The first of the new era was set up in Dublin by Cormac mac Fhionnlaoich in 1915. Lily Comerford, opening a class for children in Dublin in the early 1920's, was the first person to make a career of teaching Irish dancing. It was she who was responsible for the introduction of a distinctive "class costume".¹ According to Breathnach *"girls were attired in Irish costume, a characteristic feature of which was the lavish use of Celtic tracery"* (Breathnach, 1983, p 50). The introduction of wearing white lace collars and cuffs was also attributed to Lily Comerford.

After the creation of the Free State in 1922, enthusiasm for Irish Dancing continued to grow and it became usual for dancing groups to wear class costumes. In the 1920's as more dancing classes were established, Peggy Medlar had a school in Derry, Jim Johnston in Belfast, Cormac Ó Caomh established a school in Cork and Joe Halpin in Limerick. In 1929 An Comisiún le Rinci Gaelacha (The Irish Dancing Commission) was established in order to promote and preserve Irish dancing and improve the organisation of dancing groups and competitive events (Cullinane, 1994, p 1). Following 1929, class costumes would continue to reflect concepts of national dress, inspired by ancient and indigenous Irish dress styles, fashionable dress and rural peasant dress.

¹ A class costume is worn by a dancing school group. Combination of style, colour and decoration used in the design allows the costume to carry the identity of a particular school.

BOND

SMITH BROS

Chapter 2

1930 - 1995, Irish Dancing Costume : Its Style

By 1930 the wearing of a 'class costume' by Irish dancing groups was an established practice. As has been discussed in Chapter 1, rural peasant dress, associated with the Irish colleen style image, would significantly influence class costume. More often class costume consisted of a dress and brat reminiscent of clothing worn in ancient Ireland. It shall become evident that a pleated dress style was influenced by the kilt.

In this chapter I shall examine specifically the changing trends in dress and brat design. I shall discuss features and consider fabric, colour, motifs and embroidery used in the design and manufacture of costumes worn. Primarily, my discussion is based on a study of photographic record and oral enquiry made in the northern counties. However, I shall make cross references to costumes worn in County Cork, County Dublin, County Galway and County Donegal during the same period. It shall become apparent that the formation of Festival dancing in 1954 and the formation of the Irish dancing body Comhdháil Muinteoirí na Rincí Gaelacha (Irish Dancing Teachers' Association) in 1969 have been influential in determining costume styles worn by dancers.

Dress Design 1930 - 1995

Figure 9 illustrates girls from St Louis Convent School, Ballymena, who competed in the senior and junior reel dances at the Cushendall Feis, County Antrim in 1930. As all the girls are seen to be wearing the same style of dress, it is evident that this is their 'class costume'.

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

1914

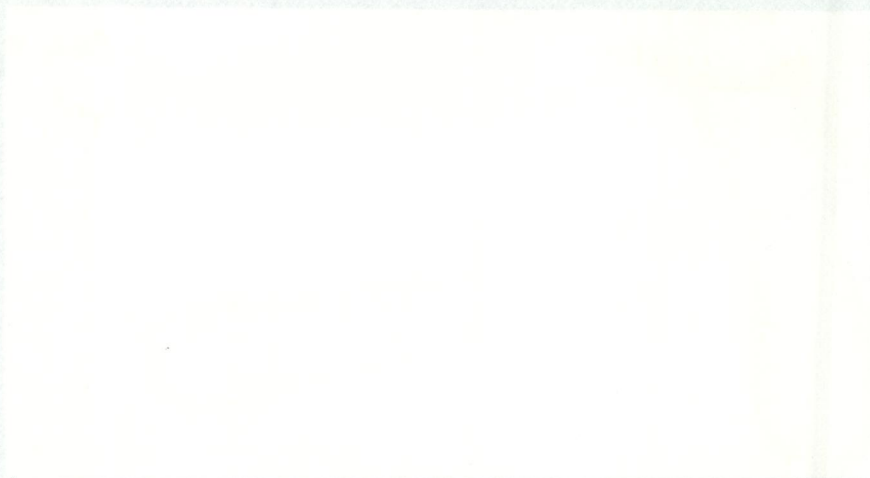
1914



Fig 9 Girls from St. Louis Convent Ballymena, dressed in 'Irish Costume', who competed in senior and junior reel dances, Cushendall Feis 1930. Ballymena Weekly Telegraph, Saturday, July 5, 1930.



Fig 10 Mary Carey's sister wearing green pleated dress: class costume Johnston School, Belfast 1938/1939.



The dresses worn were consistent with contemporary fashion. According to a report in the Ballymena weekly newspaper of Saturday, July 5th 1930, the girls are dressed in "Irish costume". This, I suggest, is due to the fact that they are wearing brats reminiscent of those worn in ancient Ireland.

Pleated knee length dresses in the style of those illustrated in Figs 10, 11 and 28, and not pleated at the front of the skirt, were commonly worn as class costumes in Ulster until the late 1950's. They were still being worn in Galway in 1982 (Carty, 1987, p 47). It could be suggested that the pleated style of dress was inspired by a combination of the kilt, as worn during the Celtic Revival period and evidence as provided by Derricke confirming that a style of pleated dress had traditionally been worn in Ireland during the 16th century (McClintock, 1950, pp 30-31). In accordance, pleated dresses worn for dancing are of symbolic significance.

By the 1930's dresses worn for dancing had become shorter in length than those worn at the beginning of the 20th century as illustrated in Fig 9 and 10. This change reflected contemporary fashion and facilitated easier dancing movement.

I have no evidence to suggest that female dancers in Ulster ever wore kilts as part of their class costumes. However, it is apparent that girls in other regions of Ireland, including Cork, wore kilts for Irish dancing at least until the late 1940's (Traditional Music Archives, Dublin, photographic collection). According to Maura Power of Birr, County Offaly, her dancing costume in the 1940's included a saffron kilt, fringed over the left knee. Bolero jackets were commonly worn with kilts for dancing (Power, telephone interview, September 1994). Alternatively, they were worn over dresses as illustrated in Fig 11 and reflected concepts of national dress expressed by supporters of Gaelicism as discussed in Chapter 1.

THE STATE OF TEXAS,
COUNTY OF DALLAS.

I, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for the State of Texas, do hereby certify that the within and foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original of the same, as the same appears from the records of my office.

NOTARY PUBLIC

[Signature]
My Commission Expires _____

WITNESSED my hand and the seal of my office this _____ day of _____, 19____.



Fig 11 Eoghain, Eamonn, Úna, Máire and Anna McRuaidhe, members of the McAleer School of Dancing, Belfast. The girls wear pleated knee length dresses embroidered on bodice and front of skirt. Tara brooches, belts, lace collars and cuffs and black bolero jackets are worn. Photographed C. 1955.



By the 1940's dresses with a circular flare style of skirt were being worn by dancers in Ulster (See Fig 12). It is reported that girls at the Tír-na-nÓg school, in Belfast wore green dresses in this style (Rodgers, letter, 23 October 1994). Dresses with a circular flare style of skirt were a common feature of Irish dancing costumes worn in the 1950's as is evident from Fig 13 illustrating girls who competed in dancing events at the Ballymena Festival in County Antrim 1953.

A significant event in the history of Irish dancing took place in 1954. Commission dancers refused to dance in front of Queen Elizabeth II when she visited the North of Ireland (Gillan, interview September 19⁹⁴**). As a consequence Patricia Mulholland, a dancing tutor at the time, led a breakaway group and Festival dancing was born.²

Up until the late 1970's the style of dresses worn by Commission and Festival dancers was similar. In comparing the Belfast Commission class costume illustrated in Fig 14 and worn in 1969, with the Coleraine Dunlop Festival Class costume illustrated in Fig 15 and dating from the same period, it is clear that both dresses are of the circular flare variety and that both feature round necks. This style of dress continued to dominate Commission dancing during the 1970's (Rincé The Annual of Irish Dancing, 1973 - 74 p 1) and Festival dancing up to the present day. Refer to Fig 41.

² Festival dancing is confined to Ulster. There is a distinct difference in the style of dance performed by Commission and Festival dancers. Commission dancing involves a high kicking action whereas Festival dancers keep legs and feet closer to ground level.

CHOC

CHOC



Fig 12 Costume made for E. Donaghy of Ballymoney County Antrim. C. 1945.
Features include circular flare style skirt and flared cuffs.



Fig 13 Agnes Gray and Tillie Burnette, winners in dancing competition, Ballymena Festival.
Ballymena Weekly Telegraph, Friday February 20th 1953. Dresses feature circular
flare skirt



MS



Fig 14 A Belfast class costume (commission) C.1969, featuring a circular flare type of skirt



Fig 15 Class costume, 1969 Dunlop School (Festival) , Coleraine, County Antrim, featuring a circular flare type of skirt.



During the 1980's the inverted pleat grew in popularity as a style feature of Commission Class and Solo Costumes.³ Anne McErlean of Ballymoney, County Antrim, who attended the De Glin School of Commission Dancing in Derry in the late 1970's and early 1980's, wore solo costumes of this variety as illustrated in Figs 16 and 17. Fig 47 illustrates a similar style of costume dating from 1986. The inverted pleat style of dress is worn today as a class costume by younger members of the Gillan School of Commission Dancing in Dunloy, County Antrim. Refer to Fig 18.

A further development in design of Commission costume was the adoption of the box pleat. The box pleat is sometimes referred to as 'the apron front' as its shape is reminiscent of aprons worn in rural parts of Ireland during the 19th and early 20th centuries. This feature is common in both class and solo costumes worn in the 1990's. Refer to Figs. 19, 20 and 44.

The most recent innovation in dress skirt design has been the introduction of the inverted box pleat. Costumes featuring this type of pleat are favoured by many contemporary Commission solo dancers, including those attending the Gillan School in Dunloy, County Antrim, and those attending the Elaine Doherty School in County Derry in Figs 21, 44, 49 and 54.

According to Susan Fahy, the inclusion of pleats on dresses facilitates the contemporary high kicking action of Commission dancing, allowing more freedom of movement (Fahy, letter, 14 September 1994). The addition of pleats is also used for a decorative purpose.

³ Solo costumes which evolved in the 1950's (Cullinane, 1994, p 67) are seldom worn by Festival dancers and can be considered as the most avant garde style of Irish dancing costume worn today. A solo costume is worn, of course, by a dancer when she performs alone. The style of a solo costume is dictated by the dancer's own personal choice of design, motifs, embroidery and colour preference.

1909

1909



Fig 16
Solo Costume featuring
inverted pleat, worn by Ann
McErlean, De Glin Schoc
(Commission), Derry, lat
1970's



Fig 17
Solo Costume featuring
inverted pleat, worn by Ann
McErlean, De Glin School
early 1980's





Fig 18 Class costume featuring inverted pleat, adopted by the Gillan School (commission), Dunloy, County Antrim five years ago and still worn by younger members.



Fig 19 Contemporary class costume featuring box pleat 'apron front', Gillan School (commission), Dunloy, County Antrim.





Fig 20 Contemporary class costume featuring box pleat 'apron front', worn by members of Elaine Doherty School (commission), Battenn, County Derry.





Fig 21 Solo costume made in velvet 1990, featuring inverted box pleat, Gillan School (commission), Dunloy, County Antrim.



Fig 22 demonstrates how a lining fabric of a contrasting colour can be inserted into the pleats. Whilst in dancing motion, this insert shall become visible, adding to the overall attraction of the dress. It is evident that it is not only dancing style which has prompted the rapid development of Commission costumes. Commission dancers enter county, national and international competitions. The highly competitive standard of dancing encourages girls to seek costumes which are innovative and individual in style and which will appear effective and eye-catching whilst performing on stage.

The changes in costumes worn by Festival dancers are less apparent. It does seem that more style features evolve relative to competitive level. Festival dancers compete at provincial level only. According to Mrs. Doherty, a costume designer in County Derry, Festival dancers are just beginning to incorporate more style features such as inverted pleats into the design of their dresses as illustrated in Figs 23 and 24 (Doherty, interview, September 1994). Perhaps this is due to growing fashion concerns amongst dancers and tutors. In Festival dancing, the legs are not kicked as high as in Commission dancing style. Therefore, the pleats are not necessarily to facilitate dancing movement.

Due to a dispute within the Irish Dancing Commission a split faction was founded in 1969. An Comhdháil dancing groups are located all over Ireland. Dancers compete at county and national level and, on occasion, feiseanna are held where both Commission and an Comhdháil dancers compete. An Comhdháil class and solo costumes have developed in similar way to Commission costumes, competitive level and dancing styles of an Comhdháil and Commission dancing being comparable. Figs 25 and 26 illustrate an Comhdháil solo dancers at the Janet Coyle School in Carndonagh, County Donegal. The dresses worn feature box pleats and inverted box pleats.

1. The first part of the report is a general
description of the project and its objectives.
2. The second part is a detailed description
of the methods used in the study.
3. The third part is a description of the
results of the study.

4. The fourth part is a discussion of the
results and their implications.
5. The fifth part is a conclusion.

6. The sixth part is a list of references.
7. The seventh part is an appendix.
8. The eighth part is a glossary.

9. The ninth part is a list of figures.
10. The tenth part is a list of tables.

11. The eleventh part is a list of
acronyms and abbreviations.
12. The twelfth part is a list of
symbols.

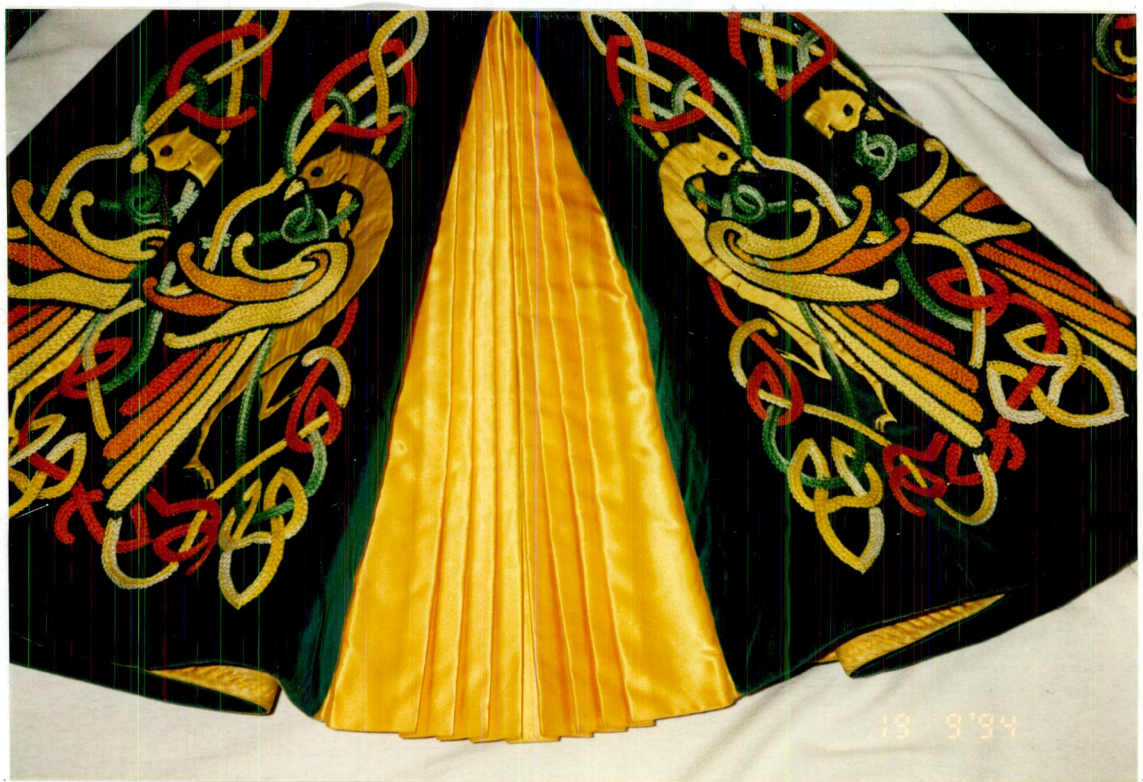


Fig 22 Contemporary solo costume made in velvet. Inverted box pleat has lining of a contrasting colour featuring accordion pleating.



Fig 23 Class costume
Loughguile School
(Festival) Co. Antrim.
Made in Tranra
featuring inverted pleat.



Fig 24 Class costume
Seven Towers School
(Festival), Ballymena,
Co. Antrim, features
inverted pleat.





SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS
VOLUME 10
BY
JAMES H. HARRIS
1911



Fig 25 Solo costumes Janet Coyle School (An Comhdháil), Cardonagh, County Donegal. Made in velvet and tranra featuring inverted box pleats and box pleat.



Fig 26 Solo costumes, Janet Coyle School (An Comhdháil), featuring inverted box pleats.



Brat Design 1930 - 1995

Linda Ballard has stated that competitive dancing influenced the development of Irish dancing costumes, at one point in the 1930's, competitive judges made complaints that '*costumes concealed the carriage*' (Ballard, 1994, p 2). I would suggest that this is why the wearing of the cloak associated with the early colleen image was realised to be too cumbersome for dancing (Cullinane, 1990, p 64). Thus the wearing of the brat, which was a smaller garment facilitating more ease of movement, grew in popularity. Numerous styles of brat evolved. Fig 9 illustrates the wearing of rectangular shaped brats during the 1930's. They are draped over both shoulders and secured at each side. From the photographic information which I have collected, it appears that this style of brat was not popular for any length of time. It is not worn by contemporary dancers and was probably again considered to be too cumbersome for dancing.

During the late 1930's members of the Johnston School of Irish Dancing in Belfast wore a brat which was attached to the dress with Tara brooches at both shoulders, as illustrated in Figs 10 and 42. This style of brat was also worn by members of the Hasson School of Dancing in Cork during the late 1940's (Traditional Music Archives, Dublin, Photographic Collection).

Maeve Brogan of Loughuile, County Antrim, dancing from 1937 to 1942 wore a triangular shaped brat. It consisted of a square of cloth folded in two. One corner was attached to the right-hand shoulder and pinned to the waist at the left-hand side (Brogan, telephone interview, September 1994). A similar style of brat worn in 1942 by dancers in Ballymena, County Antrim, is illustrated in Fig 27.

SONG

2000-2001

The style of the brat continued to vary throughout the 1950's. Figure 30 illustrates Margaret McErlean of Ballymoney, County Antrim, wearing a brat which appears to be rather bulky and reminiscent of those worn by the dancers featured in Fig 2. Fig 28 demonstrates the wearing of a brat which is much neater in style, simply hanging down the back of the dress.

The triangular brat worn by a class of Commission dancers in Belfast in 1969 as illustrated in Fig 31 was of the same style as that worn by Festival dancers attending the Dunlop School of Festival Dancing in Coleraine, County Derry (Refer to Fig 32).

The brats worn by Anne McErlean, a Commission dancer, at the De Glin School of Dancing in Derry during the 1970's and 1980's, were similar in style to the brat worn by Maeve Brogan in the 1940's. Each is square in shape. When folded in two the brat shape is triangular. Refer to Figs 16 and 29. It appears that this style of brat is not as commonly worn today. The most popular forms of brat worn by contemporary Commission and an Comhdháil dancers are those of the turn back triangular variety as illustrated in Figs 33, 34, 35 and 36 and the kite shape style of brat as illustrated in Figs 34, 36, 37 and 38. These often incorporate a decorative scalloped edge. The kite shape brat is the most recent innovation in brat design.

The earliest evidence I have of a kite shape brat being worn is on a costume worn in the North of Ireland and dating from 1988 (refer Fig 38). Comparing contemporary kite shape and triangular brats with brats worn for dancing in 1906 (Refer to Fig 2), 1930 (Refer to Fig 9), 1956 (Refer to Fig 30) and 1980's (Refer to Figs 16 and 29) it is clearly evident that brats worn by Commission ^{and an Comhdháil} dancers have become neater and smaller accessory garments. According to Máire Stafford, a costume designer in Galway, the size of the brat has been decreased in order to reduce weight and facilitate the vigorous movements of dancing. (Stafford, interview, August 1994).

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY
1215 EAST 58TH STREET
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637
TEL. 733-4331

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 10/1/80 BY SP-10/1/80

EXEMPT FROM AUTOMATIC
DECLASSIFICATION
REASON: 25X(1)

DATE 10/1/80 BY SP-10/1/80

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 10/1/80 BY SP-10/1/80

EXEMPT FROM AUTOMATIC
DECLASSIFICATION
REASON: 25X(1)

DATE 10/1/80 BY SP-10/1/80



Fig 27 B. McCoy and E. Vaughan
(prize dancer), Co. Antrim
Championship event. Friday
July 10 1940. Ballymena
Weekly Telegraph.



Fig 28 Marlene Dunlop Co. Antrim
1956. Pleated style dress.



Fig 29 Solo costume worn
early 1980's by Anne
McErlean, De Glin
S c h o o l
(commission), Derry.
Brat is square in
shape and folded in
two forms a triangle.

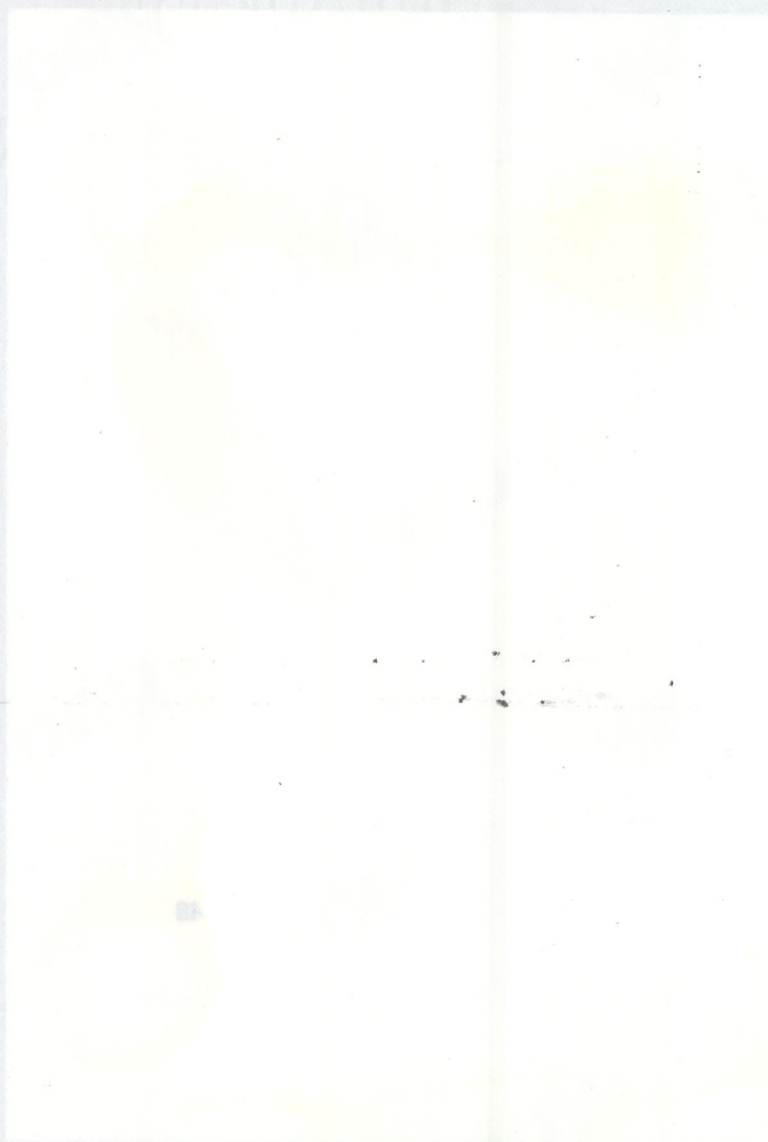
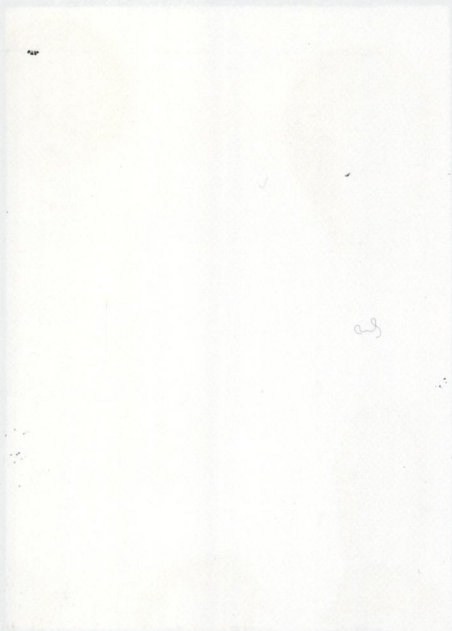




Fig 30 Central figure is Margaret McErlean member of Shiels School of Dancing, Ballymoney, Co Antrim, mid 1950's.





Fig 31 A Belfast Class Costume (Commission) C.1969, featuring triangular shape brat.



Fig 32 Dunlop School Class Costume (Festival) Coleraine, Co Antrim, 1969.



Fig 33 Comtemporary Class
Costume, Gillan School
of Dancing (Commission),
Dunloy, Co Antrim. Made
in travira, costume
features triangular turn back
brat.



Fig 34 Solo Costumes, Gillan
School, made in travira
and velvet featuring
triangular and kite shape
brats.



Fig 35 Solo Costume 1994 made
of velvet featuring triangular
turn back part. Gillian School
(Commission) Dugloy,
Co Antrim

Fig 36 Solo Costumes made from
tweed and velvet
featuring kilt shape
triangular turn back part
Janet Coyle School
(Commission) Cardonagh,
Co Donegal

Many Festival dancers continue to wear large, full and flowing brats which are attached to dresses at both shoulders as illustrated in Figs 39 and 40. The Dunlop School of Festival Dancing in Coleraine, County Antrim, adopted the wearing of a new class costume in 1994 which includes the wearing of the kite shape brat (see Fig 41). I would suggest that this is more for reasons of fashion than related to the style of dancing. As said before, contemporary Festival dancing does not incorporate the same degree of vigorous movement as involved in Commission dancing.

Style Features

The cuff on Irish dancing costumes is seen to have had many changes of shape. A flounced cuff was fashionable on costumes worn in Ulster during the 1940's as illustrated in Figs 10, 12 and 42. It is likely that this resulted from the knowledge that wide sleeves were often a feature of Irish dress during the 15th century (McClintock, 1950, p 64). Short sleeves were a feature of costumes worn in County Antrim during the 1950's as illustrated in Fig 43. Embroidery is a decorative feature of the cuff and lower sleeve area of contemporary costumes as illustrated in Figs 44. Sometimes accordion pleats (which can be inserted into skirt pleats as illustrated in Figs 22) are a style feature of cuffs. The turn back cuff, sometimes embroidered, which was a feature of many dresses in the 1970's, is fashionable again today, as illustrated in Figs 37 and 49.

Lace cuffs and collars have been a common feature of Irish dancing costumes since Lily Comerford introduced them as a form of decoration on class costumes in Dublin in the 1920's. Fig 11, 19, 23, 25 and 44 illustrate the presence of lace collars and cuffs on costumes. Lace collars are most often white but may be of any colour including red and gold as illustrated in Figs 16, 17 and 45. Although many dancers still prefer to wear a lace

BOUND

SMITH BROS

Fig 37 Class Costume, Janet Coyle
School (An Comhdháil)
Cardonagh, Co Donegal.
Made of travira featuring kite
shape brat.



Fig 38 Solo Costume made of
travira featuring kite shape
brat, 1988, Ulster.





Lent from B. Gillan Dore

5/6 yrs old Transvaal

3/10/94

Fig 39 Class Costume
Loughguile School (Festival)
Co Antrim, featuring cape
style brat.

Fig 40 Class Costume, Seven
Towers School (Festival)
Ballymena, Co Antrim
featuring cape style brat.





BO
SHIFT



Fig 41 Contemporary Class Costume, Dunlop School of Dancing (Festival), made of travira, featuring circular flare style skirt and kite shape brat.



Fig 42 Mary Carey wearing class costume, Johnston School Belfast 1938/39. Dress is in pleated style featuring flounced cuffs, made from Foxford Surge



Fig 43 The Graham School Ballymena, competing at Coleraine Musical Festival. Pleated style dresses feature short sleeves and embroidery on front of skirt. Ballymena Weekly Telegraph, Friday May 26th 1950.



collar, the mandarin style collar, as illustrated in Figs 21 and 44, is becoming fashionable. The decreasing popularity of lace collars may be due to the fact that handmade lace is less available today.

The crios/belt which was commonly worn in ancient Ireland and adopted as part of the Irish dress worn by the three girls illustrated in Fig 2, at the beginning of the 20th century, has formed an important part of many dancing costumes worn throughout this century. There is evidence to show that it was commonly worn in Ulster during the 1950's as illustrated in Figs 11, 28 and 30. Today it appears to be more commonly worn by Festival dancers as illustrated in Figs 23 and 41.

Medals

The practice of wearing medals to adorn costumes for festive and exhibition occasions began at the turn of the century as illustrated in Fig 2. Figs 10, 42 and 46 also demonstrate this custom. In the past dancers attached medals to sashes or the bodice fronts of their dresses to demonstrate success. Figure 10 illustrates the wearing of the All-Ireland Championship belt in 1938/1939. The practice of wearing medals to adorn costumes is uncommon today. Now the medals are of poorer quality and, because of an increase in the number of competitions, a dancer may have so many medals that she will not have sufficient area on her costume to display them.

Fabric

Early class costumes were made from linen, poplin or wool. Mary Carey, a member of the Johnston School of Dancing in Belfast during the late 1930's, wore a green costume made

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY
1100 EAST 58TH STREET
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637
U.S.A.

CHICAGO

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY

Fig 44 Solo Costumes, travia
box pleat 1990 and velvet
inverted box pleat 1992.
Costumes feature mandarin
and lace collars. Gillan
School (Commission)
Dunloy, Co Antrim.

Fig 45 Solo Costume
travira, featuring red lace
collar, Ulster 1988.





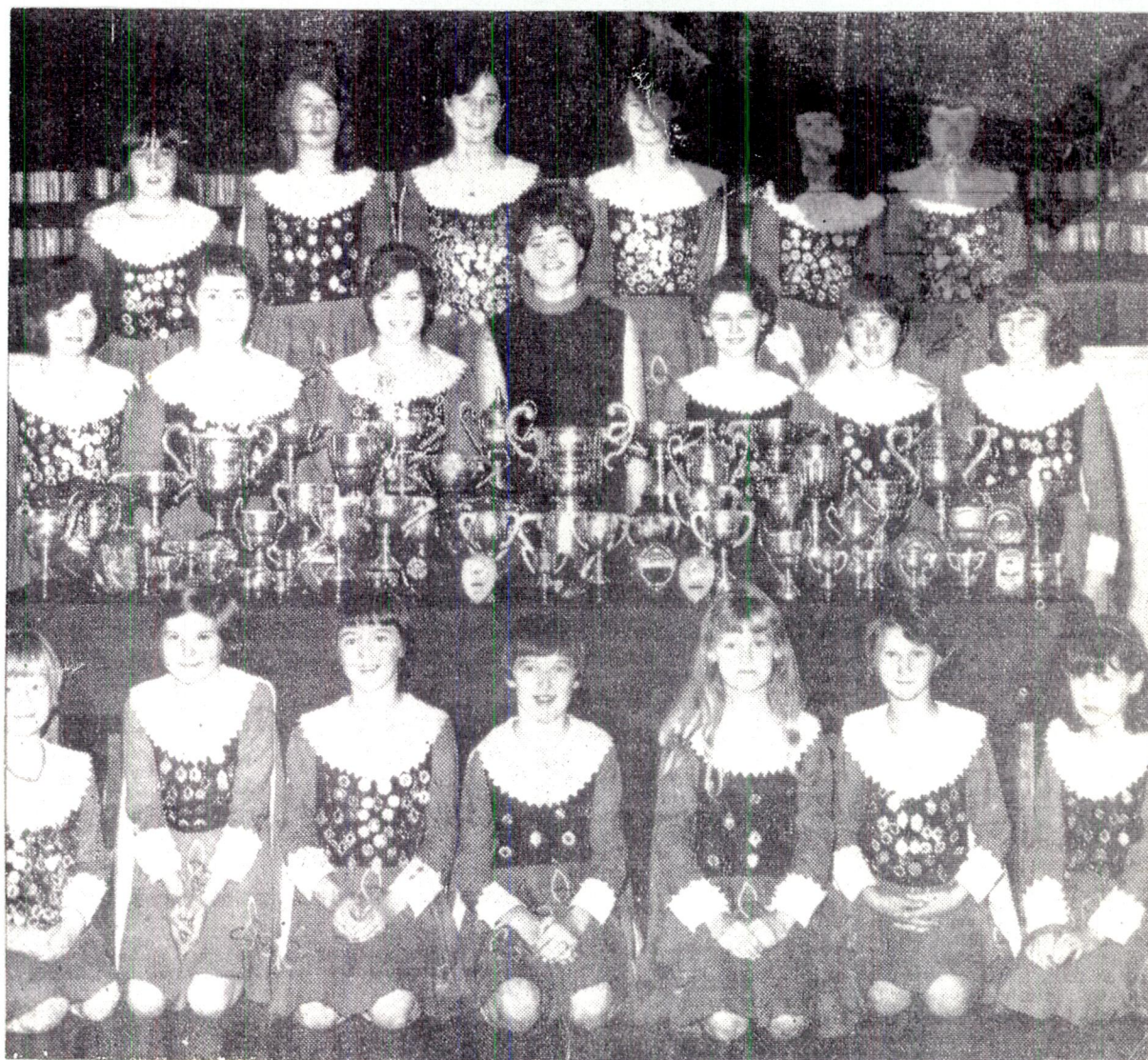


Fig 46 Graham School of Dancing 1960, displaying medals and trophies won.



from Foxford serge (Carey, interview, September 1994). At the same time Maeve Brogan of Loughguile, County Antrim, wore a dark green poplin dress (Brogan, telephone interview, September 1994). During the 1940's Maura Power of Birr, County Offaly, wore a saffron kilt made from poplin with a fine linen finish (Power, telephone interview, September 1994). Costumes worn during the 1930's and 1940's were commonly green, saffron or white (Refer to Fig 12).

This follows the wearing of green skirts, green cloaks, green and saffron kilts and unbleached linen dresses for dancing during the first thirty years of the 20th century. These colours are symbolic and reflect those incorporated into the Irish flag when the new Free State was formed in 1922.

With the invention of synthetic fibres such as terylene in 1941, the linen industry in Ireland declined. New synthetic fabrics, which were machine washable, lighter in weight and cheaper to buy, began to revolutionise the manufacture of Irish dancing costumes. According to Mrs Carey, herself a dancer during the 1940's, the disadvantage of linen was that "*it crushed easily*" (Carey, interview, September 1994).

An example of a woollen costume dating from 1987 is illustrated in Fig 47. For several reasons, fewer costumes are made from woollen fabric today. Perspiration causes woollen material to felt and disintegrate. Secondly, it is a heavy fabric and, with the addition of stiffening (which is commonly found in contemporary Irish dancing costumes) costumes

BOND

Smith Bros Co

would become too heavy for the activity of dancing. Pelmet stiffening has been used in Commission and an Comhdháil dresses for about eight years (Doherty, interview, September 1994). It makes the dresses sit out and display the decorative embroidery (see Fig 50). The purpose of stiffener becomes apparent in the comparison of two solo costumes; one worn by Anne McErlean, a Commission dancer in Derry during the 1980's and the other worn by a contemporary Commission dancer in Dunloy, County Antrim. Due to the lack of stiffener, some of the embroidery on the costume worn by Anne McErlean is hidden from view as illustrated in Fig 48. Stiffening which is used in the dress worn by the Dunloy Commission dancer, illustrated in Fig 49, shows off the embroidery fully. A lighter weight of stiffening is sometimes used in Festival costumes as demonstrated in Fig 23.

Currently, travira, made from polyester fibre invented in 1967, is the fabric most often used in the manufacture of class costumes in the County Antrim area. Solo costumes are often made from velvet as illustrated in Figs 21, 22, 25, 26, 49 and 51. Gaberdine, Polyester Twill, Lirelle and Terylene have also featured in the making of Irish dancing costumes. Dresses and brats are usually lined, often with a contrasting colour of satin as illustrated in Figs 21, 22 and 49. Contemporary costumes are seen in all colours including black, blue, white, red, green and purple. Black costumes have been popular for many years. According to Máire Stafford, black background fabric shows off coloured embroidery best (Stafford, letter, August 1994). Panelling is a feature of some costumes worn today whereby more than one fabric is used as the base material of a dress.



Fig 47 Solo costume made from woollen fabric featuring inverted pleat, 1986 Ulster.



Fig 48 Solo Costume featuring inverted pleat, no stiffening, Anne McErlaen, De Glin School, (Commission), Derry Late 1970's



Fig 49 Solo Costume, velvet featuring inverted box pleat, turn back cuffs, machine embroidery and appliqué. Made 1994, Gillan School (Commission) Dunloy, Co Antrim





BOND
SMILE



Fig 50 Class Costume Janet Coyle School (An Comhdháil), Cardonagh, Co Donegal. Made in travira, circular flare style of dress, stiffening added.



Motifs

Commonly the Book of Kells has been the source of design motifs for embroidery . Motifs on costumes worn during the 1930's were often of a simple Celtic interlace design and usually decorated a small area of the dress bodice and/or brat as illustrated in Figs 9, 10 and 42. By the 1950's the application of motif designs on the skirt appears to have been widespread throughout Ulster as illustrated in Figs 11, 12, 13 and 42. Indeed at this stage motif designs had begun to cover a larger area of the costume. The costumes worn by the McAleer School of Dancing in Belfast during the 1950's incorporated a design embroidered on the bodice and on the centre of the front pleat of the dress. According to Máire Rodgers, the brat had a design down adjacent sides (refer to Fig 11 Rodgers, letter, 23 October 1994). In contrast the Irish dancing costume worn by Margaret McErlaen of Ballymoney in the mid-1950's incorporated a motif design on the bodice of the dress only. It consisted of two circles of embroidery with the initials SD (referring to Shiels Dancing School) embroidered in the centre as illustrated in Fig 30. According to Annie Wark, a dressmaker in Ballymoney, who made the dress, embroidery was often of a simple design to cut the cost of the dress (Wark, interview, September 1994).

Making a comparison of a Belfast Commission costume worn in 1969 with the Dunlop Festival class costume dating from the same period, it is evident that the motif designs covered proportionately the same area on both dresses (refer to Figs 14, 31, 15 and 32). In each case embroidery was applied to the bodice, skirt and brat. If the comparison is made between the Dunlop Festival class costume of 1969 with that worn in 1995, it becomes

BOND

McGraw-Hill

apparent that design motifs do not cover a larger area of the dress than before (refer to Figs 15, 32 and 41). Where embroidery was applied to the bodice of the 1969 model there is now no embroidery on the bodice of the class costume worn today. Embroidery decorates the dress skirt in both cases.

In contrast, if motif designs cover a larger area of contemporary Commission costumes than before. Making a comparison of the Belfast Commission costume illustrated in Figs 14 and 31 with the modern class costume worn by members of the Gillan School in Dunloy the difference is clear (refer to Figs 19 and 33). Design motifs are now embroidered on to a much greater area of the bodice and front of the skirt. As illustrated embroidery now decorates a large area of the back hemline of dresses.

One member of the Dunlop School of Dancing in Coleraine has now adopted the wearing of a solo costume. If her costume is compared (refer to Fig 51) with those worn by contemporary Commission dancers (refer to Figs 21 and 49). It is seen that the design motifs on the costume worn by the Dunlop School dancer again cover a much smaller area of the dress. The design motifs, on an Comhdháil costumes cover a similar area of dress as those on costumes worn by Commission dancers as illustrated in Figs 25 and 26.

The Book of Kells continues to inspire many Celtic interlace and zoomorphic motifs found in contemporary Irish dancing costumes. The designs are often much freer in style than as drawn in the manuscript. Other designs show the use of loose loops instead of interlace scroll

as illustrated in Fig 54. Birds are a popular form of zoomorphic decoration on costumes (refer to Figs 21, 25, 26, 44 and 49). According to Máire Stafford, a motif designer in Galway, birds provide scope for "*a varied use of colour*". One of the bird designs she uses is taken from the Irish two-penny coin. (Stafford, interview, August 1994).

According to Seven Gates Designs, Drogheda, County Louth, popular contemporary motifs including hounds, (refer to Fig 25) snakes, harps (refer to Fig 29) the Tara brooch, (refer to Figs 16, 40 and 41) and torc neck pieces. Celtic monograms feature on same costumes (refer to Figs 17 and 24). Family, county, city or provincial crests are also common particularly on the brat. (Refer to Fig 36) The shamrock is a popular motif (refer to Fig 39). (Seven Gates Designs, Drogheda, telephone interview, September 1994).

Máire Stafford describes the application of ^{shamrock} motifs to costumes as being too "Stage Irish" (Stafford, letter, August 1994). Her opinion reflects that of the Celtic Renaissance Generation who regarded the application of Shamrocks in the decorative and applied arts as portraying "a shallow, sentimental and ineffectual feeling for Ireland" which was often used in the souvenir trade or on viceregal uniforms. (Sheehy, 1980, p.92)

The earliest evidence I have found of an Irish symbol (ie shamrock, wolfhound, harp, round tower, sunburst) being incorporated into the decoration of a costume dates from the period of 1937 to 1942. Maeve Brogan of Loughguile, Co Antrim embroidered a harp design on to the bodice and brat of her costume using gold thread. From the photographic record gathered,

BOND

SHIRLEY BOND



Fig 51 Solo Costume Dunlop School (Festival) Coleraine, Co Antrim 1994.



it is evident that Irish symbols and motifs did not appear on costumes as decorative motifs until after the creation of the Free State in 1922. At this time there was a certain degree of reaction against Celtic ornamentations. (Sheehy, 1980, p 175) The application of the harp on costumes echoes the incorporation of the harp into the new Free State coinage and its use as a symbol of the Irish government. Thus its application as costumes is of symbolic and political significance.

According to Eileen Plater of Irish Dancewear, Rochdale, Lancashire, her designs are primarily inspired by the Book of Kells but are not always of 'Irish origin'. She is inspired by a wide range of objects including "jewellery, wallpaper, postcards, books on birds and Japanese art." (Plater, Letter, August 1994)

Motifs are designed to fit the various areas of the dress. It is recognised amongst dancers that a good design is one which is triangular in shape with the apex at the waist. This creates a good slimming shape as illustrated in Figs 19, 21, 25 and 49.

According to Maeve Brogan of Loughguile, County Antrim, dancing from 1937 - 1942, she transferred a harp motif onto her costume copying from a book and using chalk. (Brogan, telephone interview, September 1994). Máire Stafford of Stafford Designs, Galway and George Kilkie, a motif designer in Derry, continue to draw motifs on costumes by hand with the help of paper templates or cardboard stencils. By this technique a motif which is unique can be applied to a costume. This process of motif design transferral is often therefore preferred by solo dancers.

1903

1903

The production of motif designs has become an increasingly commercial process. The Seven Gates Designs in Drogheda produce a limited annual range of heat sensitive transfer designs. Artwork is sent to companies in England and converted into transfer designs. Currently no company in Ireland has the facility to carry out this process. Transfers are then ironed onto costumes before embroidery is applied.

Embroidery

As was the case at the beginning of the century hand embroidery is still being used to decorate contemporary costumes. It is often carried out by the dancers themselves, family or friends. In this way a costume is less expensive. The service of hand embroidery is provided by many dressmakers and Irish dancewear companies. Popular use of chain stitch is illustrated in Figs 19, 20, 24, 25, 41, 50 and 53; alternatively satin stitch may be used. Máire Stafford advises a black stem stitch outline as illustrated in Fig 52, in this way the design will be defined and show up clearly.

Dressmakers and dancewear companies are using an increasing amount of machine embroidery and appliqué to embellish contemporary costumes particularly those worn by Commission and Comhdháil dancers. Eileen Plater of Irish Dancewear, Rochdale takes into consideration "the use of texture, as well as designing for lighting and the effects of distance". (Plater, letter, August 1994) The embroidery on class costumes, worn during the 1930's and 1940's, often incorporated the application of saffron, green and gold threads. (Carey, interview, September 1994) These colours mirrored those colours used in the Irish flag and

SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL

harp insignia of the newly formed Irish Free State in 1922. Thus, they were of symbolic significance. Although colours of nationalism are still used in the decoration of costumes (refer to Figs 21 and 22), a freer use of colour is more often implemented.

Machine satin stitch up to 12mm can be applied. Threads used include 40' rayon, neon polyester and lamé 100%. The predominant use of synthetic threads contrasts with the indigenous flax threads used in the application of 'Kells Embroidery' at the beginning of the 20th century. Synthetic threads chemically dyed, are brighter and thus create a good stage effect. Appliqué work is carried out by Commission and an Comhdháil dancewear companies using satins (refer to Figs 21, 25, 49, 54 and 55), acetate satins, velvet and metallic lamé. Rhinestones and diamanté stripping are often used as additional embellishment on dresses. (Refer to Figs 53 and 54).

Figs 19 and 53 illustrates the exclusive use of hand embroidered chain stitch on the contemporary class costume worn by Commission dancers in Dunloy, County Antrim. Figs 21, 25 and 54 illustrate a combination of chain stitches, appliqué and machine satin stitch used in the decoration of modern Commission and an Comhdháil dancing costumes. In contrast Figs 49 and 55 feature the exclusive use of appliqué and machine satin stitch on the 1995 solo costume worn by a Dunloy Commission dancer.

Today the average price of a class costume is £60 - £100; a solo costume £300. According to Eileen Plater of Irish Dancewear, Rochdale, dresses can cost up to £700 if heavily

BOARD

Spencer B. B. B.

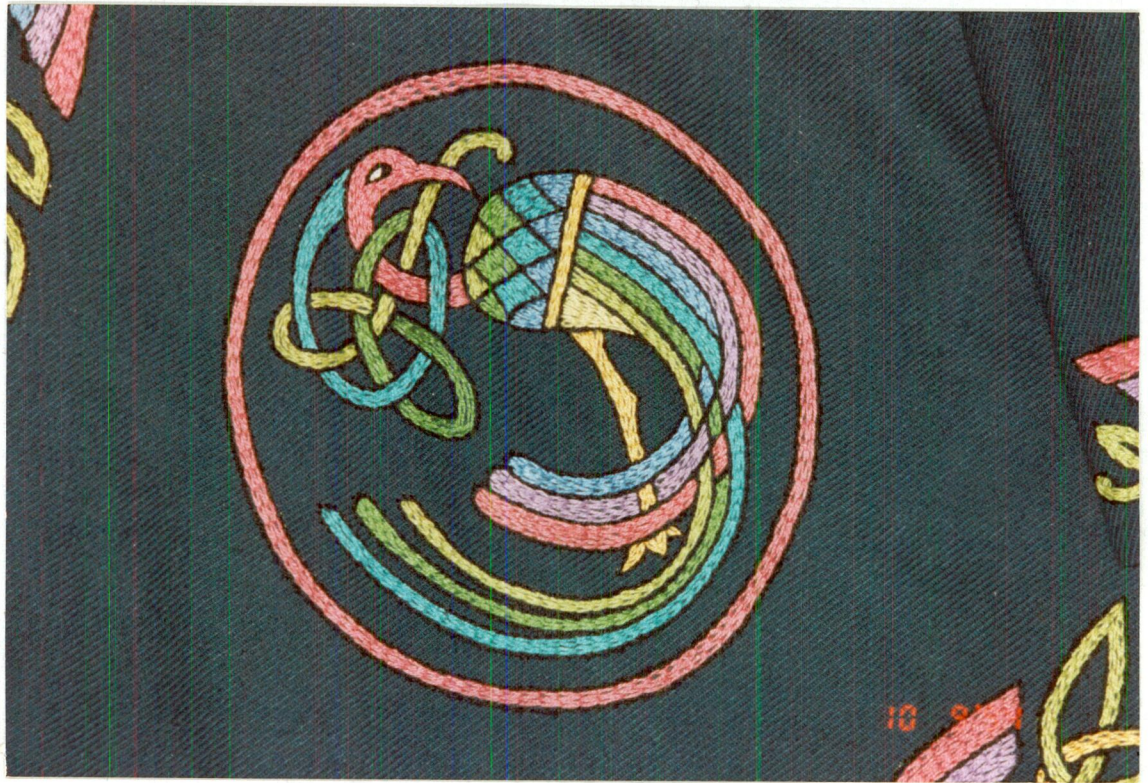


Fig 52 Detail of Solo Costume worn by Anne McErlaen, De Glin School (Commission), Derry, late 1970's. Embroidery features black stem stitch outline.



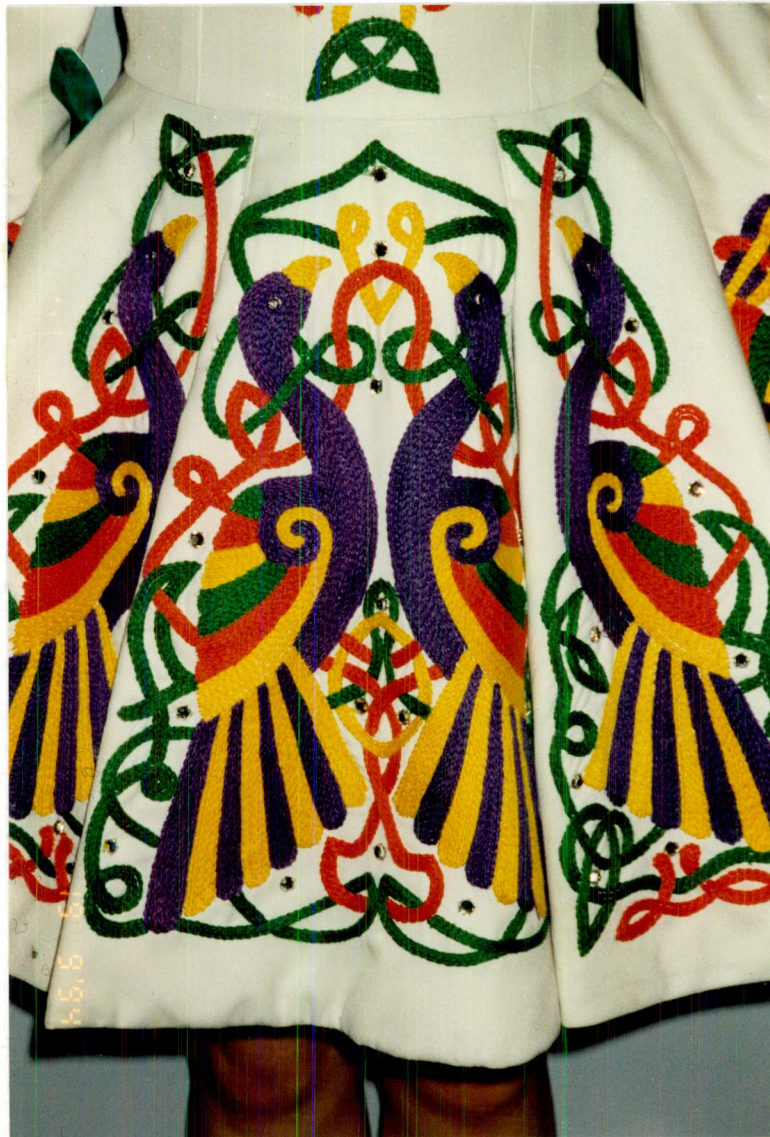


Fig 53 Solo Costume, Gillan School (Commission) Dunloy, Co Antrim. Embroidery features exclusive application of chain stitch, also glass rhinestones, travira fabric 1991.



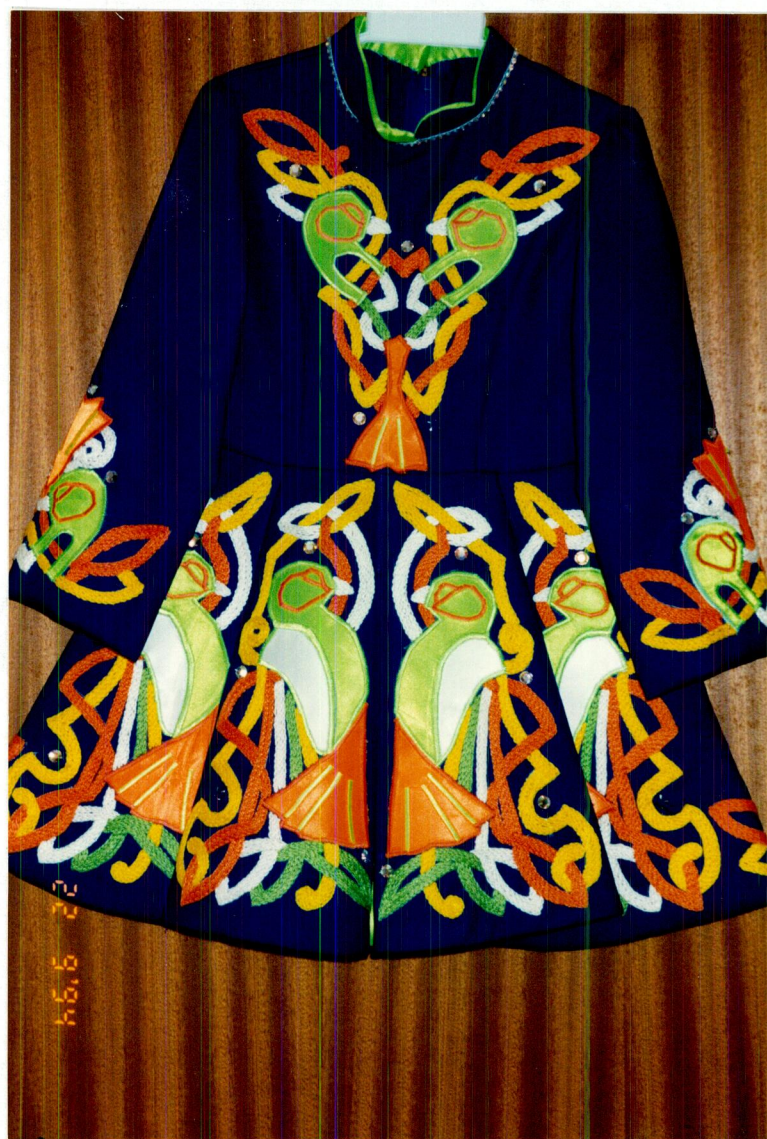


Fig 54 Solo Costume, Elaine Doherty School (An Comhdháil), Ballerin, Co Derry. Embroidery features chain stitch, glass rhinestones and diamanté stripping. Lirelle fabric, 1995.





Fig 55 Solo Costume, Gillan School (Commission), Dunloy, Co Antrim 1994. Appliqué and machine satin stitch embroidery.



embroidered, carrying diamantés and style features. An increasing number of Irish dancewear companies have been established in the last 10 years. They include 'Irish Dancewear', Dublin, 'Threads of Green' Kilkenny and 'Eileen Plater, Irish Dancewear', Rochdale, England. Machine embroidery and appliqué implemented by these firms have been significant in the apparent trend of elaborating and altering the decorative appearance of Irish dancing costume. Since 1930, the style, colour, fabric and decoration of costume has changed dramatically.

BOND

SMITH BROS

Chapter 3

Irish Dancing Costume: Concepts of Traditional and National Identity

"In central Europe the role of tradition has been a determining factor at critical historic periods, such as at the turn of the Century" (Gerle, 1993, p 143)

Dr John Cullinane, a well known adjudicator of Irish dancing and author of "Aspects of the History and Development of Irish Dancing", submitted a document to the Irish Dancing Commission in November 1991, proposing that the decoration of solo costumes be restrained and that class costumes should be *"along the broad lines of the old traditional class costume"*. (Cullinane, 1993, p 4)

This chapter shall examine Cullinane's assertion that the older style costumes can indeed be considered as traditional. My discussion shall assess the expressed need for re-establishing a living tradition in Ireland at the turn of the century, and shall investigate why rural peasant dress of the 19th and early 20th centuries, associated with the colleen style image, was not more influential in determining styles of Irish dancing costume.

It is evident that contemporary costumes reflect the modern machine age whereas, hitherto, costumes were more reflective of the Irish Arts and Crafts Movement which was promoting and improving the practice of the 'Artistic Handicrafts in Ireland' (Gordon Bowe, 1987, p 24). Although Irish dancing costumes do still reflect Ireland's mythical and historic past, it can be

5

State of New York
County of ...
In SENATE
January 10, 1900
BOND

said that 'Irishness' of a contemporary Irish dancing costume seems to be of much lesser significance than the dramatic, decorative qualities the costume may have.

Finally, I shall discuss how the evolution of contemporary Irish dancing may affect the styles of costumes worn in the future.

Defining the meaning of tradition as being an opinion, belief or custom which is handed down, can we clearly define the class costumes worn earlier in this century as being truly traditional? As has already been stated in Chapter One, it was Lily Comerford who was responsible for adopting 'Irish costumes' as class costume for her dancing pupils. The earliest class costumes, and indeed those worn earlier in the century by Mazie McCarthy for example (see Fig 2), evolved as a result of growing national romanticism relative to the Celtic Revival which was taking place during 1880 - 1930.

Rather than being by definition traditional, I would argue that class costumes evolved as a result of efforts to invent tradition. In Ireland, there was a certain degree of breakdown in the practice of traditions. This was due in part to the suppression of Irish culture and traditions during the long period of English rule. Nationalists had a desire to re-establish tradition and, as a result, new traditions emerged. Hobsbaum assesses 'invented' tradition as being of a *"ritual or symbolic nature, which seeks to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past."* (Hobsbaum, 1983, p 1).

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY

1950

1951

1952

1953

1954

1955

1956

1957

National aspirations to re-establish a living tradition in Ireland was in common with those in countries such as Hungary, Finland and Norway who were also seeking political independence at the same time. Irish nationalists wanted to rebuild the *"Irish nation on Irish lines rather than English lines"* (Mac Conuladh, 1980, p 13). The creation of symbolic costumes worn for Irish dancing was one manifestation of the growing spirit of national consciousness and the idealisation of Ireland's ancient and vernacular past, which had been given substance by archaeological, philological and antiquarian research carried out from 1840 onwards. (Gordon Bowe, 1993, p 185) It is evident that, through recreating elements of that past, nationalists were attempting to present visible and tangible proof that the Irish had a unique identity and heritage of their own.

Whereas symbolic Irish dancing costumes and early class costumes were inspired by knowledge of the dress of ancient and indigenous Irish, Irish dancing costumes were solely adaptations of older forms of Irish dress styles, such as the brat and léine. In the past, the wearing of the brat and léine was not associated with expression of political involvement. It can be determined therefore, that a 'new' tradition or 'invented' tradition of wearing adaptations of ancient Irish dress styles began during the Celtic revival period.

"The presence of a living tradition in everyday consciousness and practice" was *"an existential condition for many nationalists at the turn of the century"* (Gerle, 1993, p 143).

Invented traditions helped to regenerate national confidence and pride and represented the hope that Ireland would again become an independent unit. Their invention can be

My dear Mr. [Name],

I have just received your letter of the 10th inst.

and am glad to hear that you are well.

I am writing you to let you know that I have

just received your letter of the 10th inst.

and am glad to hear that you are well.

I am writing you to let you know that I have

just received your letter of the 10th inst.

and am glad to hear that you are well.

I am writing you to let you know that I have

just received your letter of the 10th inst.

and am glad to hear that you are well.

I am writing you to let you know that I have

just received your letter of the 10th inst.

and am glad to hear that you are well.

I am writing you to let you know that I have

just received your letter of the 10th inst.

and am glad to hear that you are well.

I am writing you to let you know that I have

just received your letter of the 10th inst.

and am glad to hear that you are well.

I am writing you to let you know that I have

just received your letter of the 10th inst.

and am glad to hear that you are well.

considered as an attempt by nationalists to promote social cohesion in Ireland and to rebuild a homogeneous Irish culture. The invention of the wearing of symbolic costume was an overt expression of national unity and defiance of English suppression of Irish culture and identity.

The Gaelic League was inspirational in stimulating the revival of Irish culture. The creation of the Feis movement in 1899 can be considered as another example of invented tradition. According to Liam De Paor *"since the island of Ireland has never been a political unit in the full sense of the term, the desire to become so, awakened in the 19th century, has had to gratify itself with the idea that it had once so been, creating that powerful dialectic between Celtic Eden and an unobtainable United Irish Utopia which has dominated almost 200 years of our national life. If tradition does not exist, it is necessary to invent it."* (Deane, 1982, p 374) Discontinuity in Irish tradition, due to English suppression of it, provoked the Irish to invent traditions.

It is interesting to consider why peasant dress of the 19th century *"which has as much claim to be an Irish national costume"* was not as influential as the kilt and Gaelic/Irish costume in determining the styles of Irish dancing costume. (O'Neill, 1977, pp 44-45) According to Donal O'Sullivan *"it would be well" if Irish dancers "cold return to the simplicity of rural dress of the early 19th century"*. (O'Sullivan, 1952, p 58)

It is evident that peasant dress lacked the distinctive symbolic qualities which were essential to supporters of Gaelicism who were more interested in adopting a form of national dress,

The first of these is the fact that the...

second is the fact that the...

third is the fact that the...

fourth is the fact that the...

fifth is the fact that the...

sixth is the fact that the...

seventh is the fact that the...

eighth is the fact that the...

ninth is the fact that the...

tenth is the fact that the...

eleventh is the fact that the...

twelfth is the fact that the...

thirteenth is the fact that the...

fourteenth is the fact that the...

fifteenth is the fact that the...

sixteenth is the fact that the...

seventeenth is the fact that the...

eighteenth is the fact that the...

nineteenth is the fact that the...

twentieth is the fact that the...

twenty-first is the fact that the...

twenty-second is the fact that the...

twenty-third is the fact that the...

twenty-fourth is the fact that the...

twenty-fifth is the fact that the...

twenty-sixth is the fact that the...

twenty-seventh is the fact that the...

twenty-eighth is the fact that the...

twenty-ninth is the fact that the...

thirtieth is the fact that the...

such as the Irish costume and kilt. It is also apparent that middle class Gaelic Leaguers did not want to adopt the wearing of a national costume associated with rural peasant society, a practice which might let slip their middle class social standing. The art and style of clothing worn in Ireland at the beginning of the 20th century was indicative of social class. (O'Kelly, 1992, p 78) Furthermore the Irish were often caricatured in peasant garb. (O'Neill, 1977, p 44)

Early in the 1900's, viceregal society was involved in promoting the small industrial associations which embraced the manufacture of Irish textiles, lace making and embroidery. The romantic and picturesque portrayal of the Irish colleen performing these Irish crafts, household chores and dancing at the two Irish villages of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 has been responsible largely for captivating a patronising sense of Irish rural naïveness. The romantic image of Irish colleens was appealing and successful in marketing Irish products, as was proved by profits shown at the Exposition. (Sheehy, 1980, p 148) Similar village scenes were established at exhibitions held in St Louis in 1904, Dublin in 1907 and in 1909, when the village of Ballymaclinton was erected at the Imperial International Exhibition in London by the makers of Ballymaclinton soap. This was to be a marketing device (refer to Fig 56). The quaint, appealing image of Irish village life, inclusive of Irish colleens in peasant dress, *"reinforced stereotyped visions of Ireland as a backward peasant society, whose depressed inhabitants needed help from their better-educated and sympathetic patrons"* such as Lady Aberdeen at the Chicago Exposition of 1893 (Harris, 1992, p100).

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

3. The third part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

4. The fourth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

5. The fifth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

6. The sixth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

7. The seventh part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

8. The eighth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

9. The ninth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

10. The tenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

11. The eleventh part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

12. The twelfth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

13. The thirteenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

14. The fourteenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

15. The fifteenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

16. The sixteenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

17. The seventeenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

18. The eighteenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

19. The nineteenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

20. The twentieth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

21. The twenty-first part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

22. The twenty-second part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

23. The twenty-third part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

24. The twenty-fourth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

25. The twenty-fifth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

26. The twenty-sixth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

27. The twenty-seventh part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

28. The twenty-eighth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

29. The twenty-ninth part of the document is a list of names and addresses.

As a result of the patronising connotations connected with rural peasant dress of the 19th century, this form of dress was not readily acceptable to members of the Gaelic League as a suitable style of national dress. The Gaelic League wanted to adopt a national costume which would be of symbolic significance, expressive of national pride and new found national confidence, and to which the stigma of English patronage would not be attached. Thus it is evident that rural peasant dress of the 19th century was not as important as the kilt and Irish Gaelic costumes in the sequence of styles evolving in Irish dancing costumes.



Fig 56 Postcard of the Imperial International Exhibition, London 1909. Scene from the Irish Village of BallymacClinton erected by the makers of MaClinton's soap.



The significance of the Irish dancing costume has changed during this century. By the application of Celtic style 'Kells' embroidery (Fig 2), early Irish dancing costumes of this century were reflective of the ideologies of the Irish Arts and Crafts Movement, which was intent on promoting and improving 'the practice of the Artistic Handicrafts in Ireland'. Hand made production of early costumes reflected the arts and crafts philosophy which was not sympathetic to machine production. Celtic interlace designs of embroidery applied to costumes and the use of indigenous fabrics, such as linen, reflected a search for vernacular forms of expression. This was in common with other nations at that time. (Gordon Bowe, 1993, p 11).

Competitions for the prettiest Gaelic costume were encouraged at feis events as evidenced at Ballymena Feis of 1931 (Fig 57). Irish dancing competitions took place at the same feis. Dancers were undoubtedly aware that a competition for prettiest Gaelic costume was being judged. This suggests that there was an awareness of the historic significance of Irish / Gaelic costume and thus, by inference, of Irish dancing costume.

Amongst contemporary dancers today, there is very little awareness of the historic origins of their costume. Today costume is designed in response to fashion concerns within Irish dancing circles. To an extent, the significant 'Irishness' of earlier dancing costume has been lost. For example, Celtic interlace is less recognisable as derivative of the Book of Kells. Costumes are now made from synthetics instead of indigenous fabrics of Irish manufacture. Many incorporate the application of machine produced transfer designs for machine embroidery. This contrasts with the Arts and Crafts philosophy. Since Irish dancing is practised as far afield as Canada, America, New Zealand and Australia, as well as England, the demand for costume has allowed a commercial development in supply. Dancers today

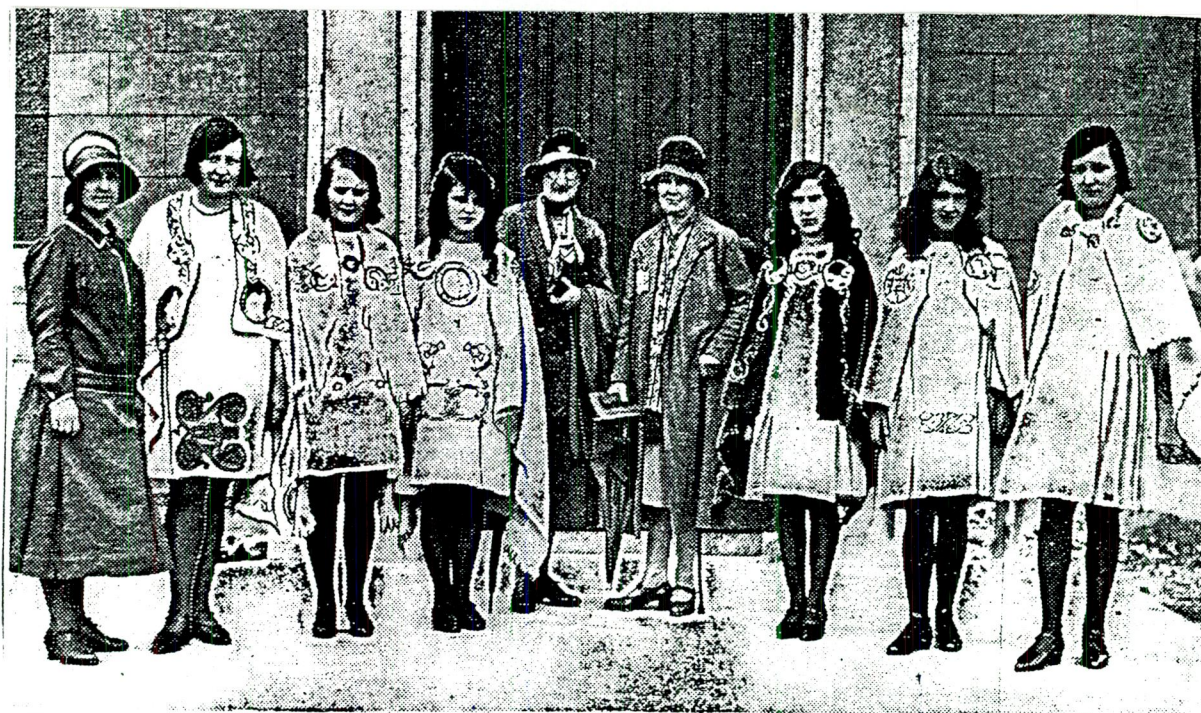


Fig 57 1931 Ballymena Feis Competitors in class for prettiest 'Gaelic Costume' with judges Miss Dobbs, Miss R. Young and Miss N. Logue, one of the organisers. Ballymena Weekly Telegraph

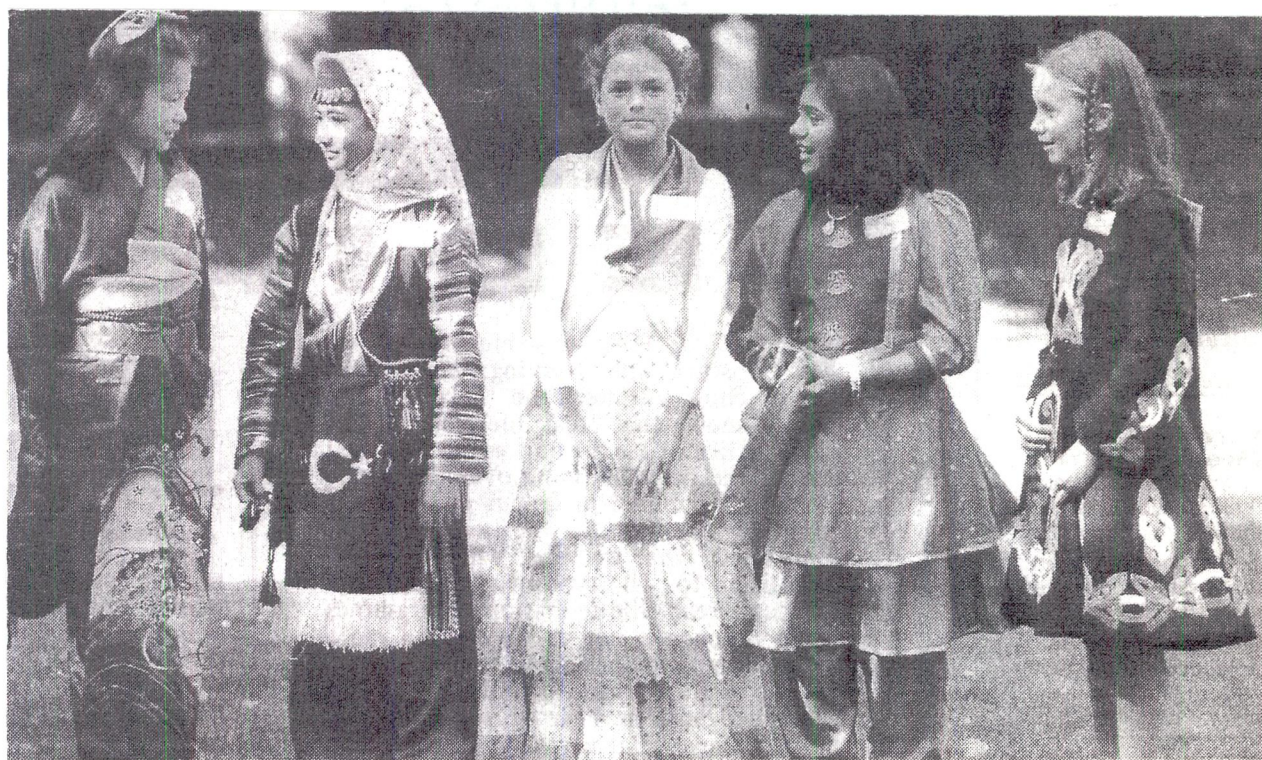


Fig 58 Daughters of diplomats in Dublin, dressed in National Costume. Photograph Joe St. Ledger, Irish Times, 14th September 1994.

1931 Feb 6 Mon

Went to school

1931

are concerned with the dramatic effect of costume on stage. Eileen Plater of Dancewear, Rochdale, Lancashire, manufactures costumes to order. According to her *"Irish dancing costume designers use too much detail which fades to a blur from a short distance"*. (Plater, letter, August 1994)

The Irish dancing costume is widely regarded as the national costume of Ireland. A photograph in the Irish Times newspaper of September 14, 1994 (Joe St Leger, photographer, p 9) depicts the daughters of diplomats in Dublin dressed in national costume (refer to Fig 58). From information gathered, it is apparent that in the early part of this century, 'Irish' costume and Irish dancing costumes were very similar. 'Irish' costume was adopted by all those who wanted to demonstrate their political affiliations. As illustrated in Fig 2, the three girls all wear 'Irish' costume, two of them being dancers. Like the third, one of these two dancers is also a musician, demonstrating the dual role of the costume.

In the 1920's, Lily Comerford adopted the 'Irish' costume as a class uniform for her dancing pupils. According to the Ballymena Weekly newspaper in County Antrim, girls competing at the Cushendall Feis in 1930 are wearing 'Irish Costume'. (Ballymena Weekly Telegraph, Saturday 5 July 1930, p 12). It can be said that, more recently, costumes derivative of 'Irish' costumes have been almost exclusively worn for Irish dancing.

The development of costume design has been affected by fashion concerns within dancing groups. Style of dress has been altered to facilitate dancing movement and the decoration re-

ordered accordingly. Both cut of dress and embroidered decoration have met demands of stage performance. It does not follow that contemporary Irish dancing costume can be identified as national costume.

At the Burlington and Jurys Hotels' Cabaret shows, a patronising and romanticised manifestation of Ireland, reminiscent of the images portrayed at the American Exposition in 1893, is currently being presented as entertainment for tourists. This includes traditional music, Irish songs, traditional pub and kitchen scenes. Girls dressed up as Irish colleens perform a sequence of dances. The subtext of the script is that the Irish are quaint because of their underdeveloped rural background. At the Burlington, Irish dancers, with curly, red hair and wearing class costumes, perform against a backdrop of misty mountains dotted with little thatched houses (refer to Fig 59).

This portrayal of Irish culture, with which Irish dancers are associating, is of "*sentimental and fragmentary memories*" (De Paor, 1982, p 356). It does not reflect contemporary Irish culture or society. According to one observer, "*there are 40 million Irish Americans and they want a lot of the stuff we're sick and tired of*" (Irish Times, 24 September 1994, p 8), that 'stuff' being the portrayal of quaintness, the picturesque, the sentimental and romantic notions of their roots in Ireland, as currently being offered in hotel shows.

Siamsa Tiré, the Nation Folk Theatre of Ireland based in Tralee, County Kerry experiments with a representation of Irish tradition. For the past three years, it has been producing shows

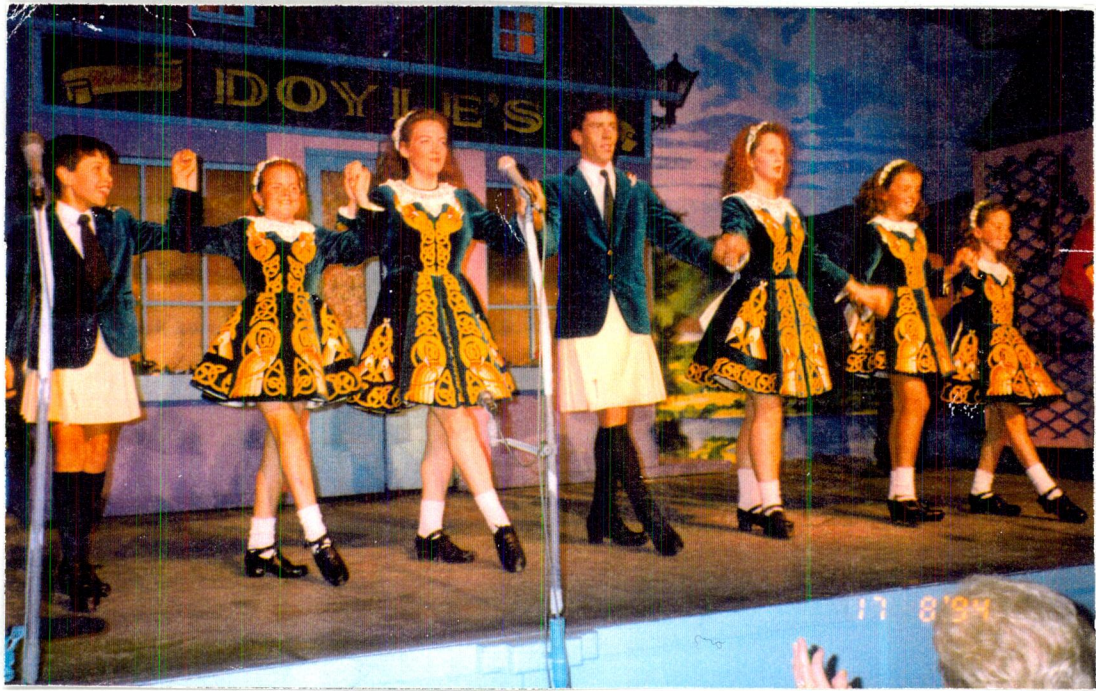


Fig 59 Irish dancers of the Crean School of Dancing performing in The Burlington Hotel Cabaret against a backdrop of misty mountains and thatched houses. Tourists, including many Americans form the audience. August 1994.



similar to 'Riverdance', the contemporary and controversial display of Irish dancing performed on the occasion of the Eurovision Song Contest 1994. The freer body movement witnessed, provoked comment. *"The revelation for many people was that Irish dancing could be sexy"* (Irish Times, 15 June 1994, p 13). The company manager and producer of 'Riverdance' Martin Whelan claims that *"there's no point in relying on commercially run shows for tourists to rehabilitate our national self confidence. But as this grows and we communicate our culture better, perhaps tourists too will want the reels without the ringlets and the lays without the leprechauns."* (Irish Times, 15 June 1994, p.13).

In choreographing 'Riverdance', flamenco style dance was merged with Irish dance patterns, thus creating an 'invented' form of dance style as movements form an expressive part of performance. It would be difficult, almost impossible, to perform these routines wearing contemporary class or solo costume. The heavy fitted style of dress would restrict movement for dancers of this new idiom. The elaborate Celtic decoration would be superfluous for a style of dancing so expressive in itself. Possibly as the 21st century gets near, this innovative, freer style of Irish dancing may be favoured by schools countrywide. This would mean that costume design would undergo change too. This costume would reflect the self assertion of a more self confident modern Ireland which continues to prove itself in traditions of music and dance; an Ireland which, from its own heritage, continues to seek a sense of national pride and identity.

BOND

Wm. B. Bond

Conclusion

A concerted nationalist attempt to demonstrate that Irish tradition and culture was distinct from that of England bore influence on the development of Irish dancing costume during the Celtic Revival. As enthusiasm for establishing a distinctive national dress style grew, likewise Irish dancing costume attracted attention. In the early 1900's costume worn for Irish dancing was reflective of the Gaelic League ideals, the Irish Arts and Crafts Movement, national romanticism and a search for the vernacular in design. The kilt, the Irish costume and peasant dress of the 19th century were of influence in determining design of Irish dancing costume.

During this century, it is clear that the style and significance of Irish dancing costume has altered. This has been due largely to the increase in competitive dancing and the effect of modern technology. The most dramatic changes have occurred in dresses worn by Members of Commission and An Chomhdháil dancing schools. Nowadays, dancers are concerned primarily with how 'fashionable' their dresses will rate and how effective they will appear during performance on stage. How 'Irish' a costume seems to be of less relevance. The concept of wearing costumes made from indigenous materials of Irish manufacture and of traditional colouring has faded. Today the majority of costumes are made from synthetic fabrics and in a diverse range of colours. Motif designs on early dancing costumes were often of a simple Celtic interlace design. Contemporary motif design often reflects inspiration from the Book of Kells. Celtic symbols are also popular. Embroidery now covers a greater area

of the dress. Costumes have been adapted to suit competitive dancing and are far removed in style from the brat and léine worn in the historic past.

The philosophy of the Arts and Crafts Movement was reflected in early dancing costume. They were made and decorated by hand. In contrast contemporary costume involves machine work in making up, embroidery and appliqué decoration using mass produced transfer designs.

An increase in the number of dancewear companies shows that production of dance costume is already commercial.

The Irish dancing costume which resulted out of a quest to express a unique Irish identity has become a significant feature in Irish dance culture. The Irish dancer attired in costume has become a symbol of Ireland, often exploited by the tourist industry to invoke romantic images of mythical and rural Ireland - but for how much longer? The production of 'Riverdance' is a contemporary presentation of Irish dancing. As the 21st century approaches, the freer style of Irish dancing which 'Riverdance' portrays may well be influential in future development of dancing styles. Adaptation of costume design would be consequent.

Is it true that there is a whole history woven into the fabric of the Irish dancing costume? (Frank Gallagher, Radio Foyle Interview, September 1994) The conclusive answer to this question now being 'Yes'.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY READING

CULLINANE, John, Aspects of the History of Irish Dancing, Cork, Ballineaspig Publications, 1994.

DUNLEVY, Mairead, Dress in Ireland, London, Batsford, 1989.

LARMOUR, Paul, The Arts and Crafts Movement in Ireland, Belfast, Friar's Bush Press, 1992.

McCLINTOCK, H.F., Old Irish & Highland Dress, Dundalk, Dundalgan Press, 1950.

O'KELLY, Hilary, "Reconstructing Irishness, Dress in the Celtic Revival 1880 - 1920", in ASH, Juliet and WILSON, Elizabeth (Eds.), Chic Thrills A Fashion Reader, London, Pandora Press, 1992.

SHEEHY, Jeanne, The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past The Celtic Revival 1880 - 1930, London, Thames and Hudson, 1980.

GENERAL READING

BALLARD, Linda, "Aspects of the History and Development of Irish Dance Costume", Ulster Folklife, Vol. No. 40, 1994, pp. 62-67.

BREATHNACH, Brendan, Dancing in Ireland, Miltown-Malbay, Dal gCais Publications, 1983.

BUTLER, Mary, "The Ethics of Dress", The Irish Monthly, Vol. No. XLV, April 1917, pp.222-8.

CARTY, Peggy, My Irish Dance, Galway, Connaught Tribune Ltd. 1987.

CROWLEY, David, National Style & Nation State Design in Poland from the Vernacular Revival to the International Style, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1992.

CULLINANE, John, History of Irish Dancing II, Cork, Ballineaspig Publications, 1990.

CULLINANE, John, "Costume Control", Céim Magazine, Eanáir 1993, p4.

DEANE, Seamus, "An Example of Tradition", The Crane Bag, Vol. No. 3, 1982, pp.373-374.

GENERAL READING cont\.....

DE PAOR, Liam, "Ireland's Identities", *The Crane Bag*, Vol. No. 3, 1982, pp.354-361.

Dublin University Press Magazine, "Irish Dancing Fifty Years Ago", Vol. No. LXII, October 1863, pp.429-439.

Dublin University Press Magazine, "Hibernian Country Pastimes and Festivals Fifty Years Since", Vol. No. LXII, November 1863, pp.581-588.

Dublin University Press Magazine, "Phases of Social Life", Vol. No. LXV, February 1865, pp.230-240.

GERLE, János, "What is Vernacular? or, The Search for the Mother-Tongue of Forms", in GORDON BOWE, Nicola (Ed.), *Art and the National Dream*, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 1993.

GORDON BOWE, Nicola, "A Contextual Introduction to Romantic Nationalism and Vernacular Expression in the Irish Arts and Crafts Movement C.1886-1925" in GORDON BOWE, Nicola (Ed.), *Art and the National Dream*, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 1993.

GORDON BOWE, Nicola, "Women and the Arts and Crafts Revival in Ireland, c. 1886-1930", in RYAN-SMOLIN, W., MAYES, E., and ROGERS, J., (Eds.), *Irish Women Artists From the Eighteenth Century to the Present Day*, Dublin, The National Gallery of Ireland and The Douglas Hyde Gallery, 1987.

GORDON BOWE, Nicola, "Two Early Twentieth-Century Irish Art and Crafts Workshops in Context : An Túr Gloine and the Dun Emer Guild and Industries", *Journal of Design History*, Vol. No. 2, 1989, pp. 194-206.

HARRIS, Neil, "Selling National Culture : Ireland at the World's Columbian Exposition", in EDELSTEIN, T. J., (Ed.), *Imagining an Irish Past : The Celtic Revival*, Chicago, the University of Chicago Press, 1992.

HOBSBAWM, Eric, "Inventing Traditions" in HOBSBAWM, E., and RANGER, T., (Eds.) *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

LOFTUS, Belinda, *Mirrors William III & Mother Ireland*, Dundrum, Picture Press, 1990.

LORD LILLANIN, *My Ireland*, London, Quiller Press, 1987.

MacCONULADH, Seamus, *The Story of Conradh na Gaeilge*, Dublin, Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha, 1980.

BOARD

SMITH BROS

GENERAL READING cont\.....

MacFHIONNLAOICH, Cormac, "Memoirs of Cormac MacFhionnlaoich, Céim Magazine, Vol. No. 16 , pp. 3 and 4.

McNALLY, Frank, "Ripples over Riverdance", The Irish Times, 15/6/1994, p. 13.

MAHON, Bríd, Irish Dress, Folens, 1975.

OAKLEY, Jason, "Get Out of It", Circa Art Magazine, Spring 1994, pp. 43-46.

O'CURRY, Eugene, Manners & Customs of the Ancient Irish, Dublin 1873.

Ó FAIRCHEALLAIGH, Tomás (Ed.), Rince The Annual of Irish Dancing 1973-1974, Dublin, The Irish Dancing Commission, 1974.

O'GRADY, Standish, "Tochmarc Begfolad", Silver Gaelica, Vol. No. 1, 1970, p. 91.

O'NEIL, Francis, Irish Minstrels and Musicians, Chicago, The Regan Printing House, 1913.

O'NEILL, Timothy, Life and Tradition in Rural Ireland, London, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1977.

O'RAFFERTY, Peadar & Gerald, Dances of Ireland, London, Max Parrish & Co., 1953.

ORAM, Hugh, "Irish Heritage A Fresh Fervour", The Irish Times, 13/8/1994, p. 22.

O'SULLIVAN, Donal, Irish Folk Music and Song, Dublin, Three Candles, 1952.

SHARKEY, Olive, Old Days Old Ways, Dublin, The O'Brien Press, 1985.

ST. LEDGER, Joe (Photographer), "Children from the Diplomatic Community in Dublin", The Irish Times, 14/9/1994, p. 9.

WHITE, Victoria, "I Can Almost See Ireland From Here", The Irish Times, 24/9/1994, p. 8.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DIVISION OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

REPORT OF THE
COMMISSIONER OF THE
BUREAU OF CHEMISTRY

FOR THE YEAR
1900

CHICAGO, ILL.
1901

PRINTED BY THE
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

CHICAGO, ILL.
1901

CHICAGO, ILL.
1901

CHICAGO, ILL.
1901

CHICAGO, ILL.
1901

CORRESPONDENCE

Helpful written and photographic information was received from the following individuals:

ANDERSON, Desmond, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, 15th September, 1994.

CAREY, Mary, Dancer Johnston School, Belfast 1930's, Ballymena, Co. Antrim, 19th January 1995.

CULLINANE, John, Irish Dance Master, Cork, August 1994.

DE PAOR, John, Dublin, 15th September, 1994.

DUBE, Colleen, Assistant Keeper National Museum, Dublin, 14th September, 1994.

FAHY, Susan, Costume Embroiderer, Dublin, 14th September, 1994.

JOYCE, Cepta, Galway, September 1994.

McCRUM, Elizabeth, Keeper of Applied Arts, Ulster Museum, Belfast, 24th August, 1994.

McMULLAN, Máiread, Waterfoot, Co. Antrim, September 1994.

PARKER, Helen, Dancer Ted Kavanagh School, Paddington, London, late 1950's, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, 29th November 1994.

PLATER, Eileen, Costume Designer, Rochdale, Lancashire, August, 1994.

RODGERS, Máire, Dancer McAleer School, Belfast 1950's, Portstewart, Co. Derry, 23rd October, 1994.

STAFFORD, Máire, Costume Motif Designer and Embroiderer, Galway, August 1994.

THREADS OF GREEN, Dancewear Company, Kilkenny, July 1994.

UÍ CHONAIRE, Rhóda, Dublin 27th September 1994.

ULSTER FOLK AND TRANSPORT MUSEUM, Belfast, August, 1994.

WHELAN, Jack, Dublin, 22nd September 1994.

OTHER PHOTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Ballymena Weekly Telegraph Archives, Ballymena Library, Co. Antrim.

Traditional Music Archives Dublin.

BOND

SMITH-BOND

INTERVIEWS

BROGAN, Maeve, Dancer Loughguile, Co. Antrim 1937-1942, Telephone Interview, September 1994.

CAREY, Mary, Dancer Johnston School Belfast, late 1930's, Interview Ballymena, Co. Antrim, September 1994.

COYLE, Janet, Tutor Janet Coyle School of Dancing, Carndonagh, Co. Donegal, Interview Carndonagh, September 1994.

DANCEWEAR IRELAND, Interview Dublin, August 1994.

DOHERTY, Mrs, Costume Maker, Interview Ringsend, Co. Derry, September 1994.

DUNLOP, Marlene, Tutor Dunlop School of Dancing, Coleraine, Co. Antrim, Interview Coleraine, September 1994.

FALLS, Maree, Tutor Loughguile School of Dancing, Co. Antrim, Interview Loughguile, September 1994.

GILLAN, Brendan, Tutor Gillan School of Dancing, Dunloy, Co. Antrim, Interview Dunloy, September 1994.

KILKIE, George, Motif Designer Derry, Telephone Interview, September 1994.

McERLAEN, Margaret, Dancer Bridie Shiels School of Dancing, Ballymoney, Co. Antrim, Interview Ballymoney, September 1994.

PATTERSON, Evelyn, Costume Maker, Ballymoney, Co. Antrim, Telephone Interview, September, 1994.

POWER, Maura, Dancer, Birr, Co. Offaly, 1940's, Telephone Interview, September 1994.

SEVEN GATES DESIGNS, Drogheda, Co. Louth, Telephone Interview, September 1994.

SEVEN TOWERS DANCING SCHOOL, Ballymena, Co. Antrim, Interview Ballymena, September 1994.

STAFFORD, Máire, Stafford Designs, Galway, Interview Galway, August 1994.

WARK, Annie, Costume Maker, Ballymoney, Co. Antrim, Interview Ballymoney, September 1994.

WRIGHT, Edwina, Tutor Edwina Wright School of Dancing, Ballymoney, Co. Antrim, Interview Ballymoney, September 1994.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY
1000 S. MICHIGAN AVE.
CHICAGO, ILL. 60607
U.S.A.

NOV 1965
ST. LOUIS

RADIO INTERVIEWS

GALLAGHER, Frank, Radio Foyle "Frankly Ann-Marie" Chat Show, Discussion on Irish Dancing Costume; Its Style Past and Present and Plea for Information, Coleraine, Co. Antrim, September 1994.

RYAN, Gerry, 2 FM Radio Show, Discussion on Irish Dancing Costume; Its Style Past and Present and Plea for Information, Dublin, August 1994.

BOND

SWIFT BROOK

APPENDIX 1

Text of questionnaire circulated to Irish Dancewear Companies including:

'Irish Dancing Costumes', Skerries, Dublin, 'Irish Dancewear', Dublin, 'Stafford Designs', Galway, 'Thomond Dancewear', Limerick, 'Threads of Green', Kilkenny and Eileen Plater, 'Irish Dancewear', Rochdale, Lancashire, England.

IRISH DANCING COSTUMES

1. How long has your company been established?
2. Do you design costumes or obtain patterns from elsewhere and make up the costumes? If the latter is applicable from where do you obtain patterns?
3. Is there a variation the style and shape of costumes which you design or make?
4. What fabric is used for the dress?
5. What colour are the costumes?
6. Is there a particular significance attached to the colour of the costumes?
7. How do you apply embroidery to the costumes? Is it hand done, machine done, is appliqué used or a combination?
8. What sort of stitches are used in the embroidery?
9. What kind of thread is used?
10. What colours of thread are used? Is there a particular significance in the colour of thread used?
11. What are the motifs which you embroider on the costumes?
12. From where do you obtain these motifs? Do you know the significance of the motifs which you use?

THE [illegible] OF [illegible]

[illegible text]

[illegible text]

BOND

EST. 1890

[illegible text]

[illegible text]

[illegible text]

[illegible text]

13. Are there any rules laid down regarding the colour and decoration of costumes?
14. Does each dance group have a specific design of dress?
15. Is there a variation of costumes within one dancing group?
16. What is the relationship between the style and decoration of the garment and its price?
17. Does price vary according to whether a costume is decorated using hand stitching, machine stitching or appliqué?
18. What is the range in price of Irish dancing costumes which you make / design?
19. Has the scale of the embroidery changed over the years?
20. Have the growing number of competitions effected the design and decoration of the costumes?
21. Does every dancer own her own dress or are they passed on from generation to generation?
22. Is a brat/cloak piece worn with the dress? Is it attached with a brooch?
23. Does the shape of the cloak piece vary? Is it decorated in any way?
24. Do you know something about the Celtic brooches which are sometimes worn?
25. Do you manufacture lace collars for the dresses?
26. Do lace collars form part of every dress?
27. What dictates the design of the lace collars?
28. Are tights or socks worn with the costumes? Does this vary according to the age of the girl?
29. Do you know something about the history of Irish dancing costumes?
30. When were they first worn?
31. What dictated their style?
32. Was embroidery always used to decorate the dresses?
33. In what way has the style and decoration of costumes changed with regard to fabric used, stitches, embroidery, thread, colour, motifs, shape etc.?

APPENDIX 2

Letter published in the Irish Times of September 14th 1994, making a national request for information concerning Irish dancing costumes. The same letter was sent to 21 other local and national newspapers.

IRISH DANCING COSTUMES

Sir, — I am a student researching the history and evolution of Irish dancing costumes. Being particularly interested in the girl's costume, I am keen to discover more about the changing style and decoration of the dress, taking into consideration the fabrics used as well as embroidery stitches applied.

My interest also lies in discussing concepts of national identity related to the costume. As far as I can ascertain, specific costumes for dancing were first worn with the beginnings of the féis at the turn of the century.

I would be pleased to hear from anyone who might have the smallest piece of information regarding any aspect of the costume, including the dress and accessories worn, *i.e.* lace collars, brooches, belts and shoes. I am keen to obtain information regarding older costumes as well as more contemporary ones. The opportunity to see photographs of costumes or actual costumes themselves would be most helpful.—Yours, etc.,

MARTHA ROBB,
85 Charlotte Street,
Ballymoney,
Co Antrim, BT53 6AZ.

