

November 2016

In Search of Identity: an Exploration of the Relationship Between Guinness's Advertising and Ireland's Social and Economic Evolution Between 1959 and 1969

Patricia Medcalf

Technological University Dublin, patricia.medcalf@tudublin.ieFollow this and additional works at: <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/icr> Part of the [Communication Technology and New Media Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Medcalf, Patricia (2016) "In Search of Identity: an Exploration of the Relationship Between Guinness's Advertising and Ireland's Social and Economic Evolution Between 1959 and 1969," *Irish Communication Review*. Vol. 15: Iss. 1, Article 3.

doi:10.21427/D7Z591

Available at: <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/icr/vol15/iss1/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals Published Through Arrow at ARROW@TU Dublin. It has been accepted for inclusion in Irish Communication Review by an authorized administrator of ARROW@TU Dublin. For more information, please contact yvonne.desmond@tudublin.ie, arrow.admin@tudublin.ie, brian.widdis@tudublin.ie.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License](#)

In Search of Identity: an Exploration of the Relationship Between Guinness's Advertising and Ireland's Social and Economic Evolution Between 1959 and 1969

Patricia Medcalf (Institute of Technology, Tallaght)

Introduction

The end of the 1950s and the 1960s signified the start of immense change in Irish cultural identity: it was an era when the country opened its doors to outside influences. At the same time, one of Ireland's most established and iconic companies, Guinness, adopted a more formalised approach to its marketing and advertising in its domestic market, with the intention of creating a distinct brand identity in Ireland. A record of the company's print, television and cinema advertising has been archived, and is held at The Guinness Archive, based in the Storehouse at the St. James's Gate Brewery in Dublin. An analysis of the first decade of Guinness ads in Ireland between 1959 and 1969, furnished the author with insights into two distinct yet interrelated areas: firstly, the advertising themes that Guinness espoused when building its brand identity, and secondly, the societal backdrop against which the ads were communicated. Further research, seems to suggest that while the Irish macro environment influenced Guinness's early ads, it is likely that many of Guinness's ads were catalysts for societal

change. Such is the wealth of material available in the Guinness Archive, the advertisements from each decade will be analysed, in conjunction with an examination of the prevailing Irish cultural identity. This approach facilitates greater scrutiny, and marks a departure from many pieces of research that grouped a number of decades together into periods such as 'post-war' or 'post-Millennial'. This paper concentrates on the period when Guinness first started advertising in Ireland. It explores how societal, economic and cultural changes between 1959 and 1969 provided campaign themes for Guinness's advertising that would resonate with its Irish consumers. It will be argued that this approach supported, reinforced, and in some cases, helped shape the changes that occurred in Ireland's evolving society. It should be noted, that none of this research would have been possible without The Guinness Archive, which generously provided access to the adverts.

The late 1950s: laying foundations for economic and societal change

Up until the late 1950s, Ireland's formative years as a Republic were characterised by protectionism and an ambition to go it alone. However, despite efforts to build and assert its identity, its infrastructure (for example, the justice system, and its language), and trading orientation ironically gravitated towards its old adversary, the United Kingdom. According to Thornley (1964) some aspects of Irish culture did move on as

the old class structure disappeared, and the Anglo-Irish aristocracy faded into the background. In its place, the GAA flourished, an Irish literary revival took place, and the majority of the population adhered to the Roman Catholic religion. Government policy was formulated by many of the key players in the War of Independence, a cohort of extremely nationalistic politicians who believed that Ireland could succeed as a self-sufficient, independent nation. This merely resulted in an extended period of economic stagnation and, as observed by Haughton (1987: 34) protectionism meant that Ireland in the fifties had become 'too inefficient to export successfully.'

One politician with impeccable Republican credentials was Seán Lemass, but as Minister for Industry and Commerce between 1957 and 1959, he consciously decided to adapt a radically different approach to that of the protectionist era. The 1958 economic programme entitled "First Programme for Economic Expansion" was largely informed by the then Secretary of the Department of Finance, TK Whitaker. His policy document "Economic Development" is credited with being the catalyst for Ireland's transformation into a small, open economy, enthusiastically securing business contracts with its European neighbours. Also, it marked what might be described as an irreversible disruption to Irish society as its workforce increasingly found employment in the industrial and services sectors of the economy as opposed to agriculture. In their analysis of the

Central Statistics Office (CSO) data, Kennedy and Giblin (1987) observe that in 1961, 34.5% of the Irish workforce was employed in agriculture, and that by 1971 this had fallen to 25.9%, despite the labour-intensive nature of the work. Nolan's (1987) assessment of the CSO's data on sectoral growth between 1961 and 1973 shows annual growth in the industrial and services sectors was 6.2% and 3.7% respectively, while agriculture grew at a rate of just 1.7%. This shift in production and employment led to a very different way of life for many, a life influenced by urban backdrops and the challenges and opportunities that they presented. Lee concluded (1982) that this era marked the start of a societal evolution as Irish people were faced with many of the same problems, and opportunities encountered by people in other countries, while Rottman and O'Connell (1982) go so far as to describe 1958 as a watershed in the structure of Irish society.

As the government's new policies took hold in the 1960s, the economy grew stronger, and the tide of emigration that had dogged Ireland in the 1950s was stemmed. In what he referred to as Ireland's demographic transformation, Walsh (1972) drew attention to some very significant changes that took place between 1958 and 1970. The annual rate of marriage increased steadily from 15,000 to 23,000, a trend that he attributed to greater prosperity and economic stability. He discovered that while the rates of first and second births rose steadily, 1964 was the year

when births to women with already at least three children fell. Even as early as 1972, he surmised that as a result of the rise in the number of women having no more than two children, an opportunity existed for them to exert greater influence on society and the economy. Improved prospects opened up for many people, and the class structure changed markedly in the sixties. Rottman and O'Connell's (1982) analysis of the censuses conducted in 1951, 1961 and 1971 showed a marked increase in the numbers of upper middle class Irish people (higher and lower professions, managers, and salaried employees) from 47,780 to 58,934 to 84,512 respectively. Similarly, the lower middle class and skilled manual classes all rose significantly, while as already stated, numbers working in agriculture fell. Much of this change can be attributed to the strengthening economy, and the implementation of the second Programme for Economic Expansion of 1963 that set out to improve educational opportunities for everybody.

It was against this backdrop that Guinness officially started advertising in Ireland for the first time in 1959. This was thirty years after the first national ad for Guinness was published in Britain, but due to a confluence of factors, 1959 was considered the right time to start advertising in Ireland. 1959 marked the 200th anniversary of the brewery's foundation, a remarkable feat for any company and one that was deemed to be worth celebrating. More significantly, the company was entering an era of

competitive pressures – up to that point Government protectionist policies had provided Guinness with considerable shelter from competition. It enjoyed a 75 per cent market share in its home market as against a paltry 5 per cent in the United Kingdom where it faced stiff competition from British breweries (Yenne, 2007). Just as Guinness would benefit from a more open regime from an exporting perspective, it would have to face up to competition from lagers in its Irish market, thereby necessitating advertising in order to keep its name to the forefront of its customers' minds.

Guinness set out its stall in its very first ads published in the Irish press. By highlighting its long heritage, it seems to be saying that having survived two hundred years, it would be around for a long time to come. The years 1759-1959 are used to frame the ad in a stucco-style decoration, and a defiant and celebratory headline declares '200 years of Guinness – What a lovely long drink!'¹ (Figure 1a) It seems to warn potential competitors, who would inevitably arrive in Ireland that the famous brewery has been around for a long time and would be there for many years to come. The ad poses the question: 'Do you imagine that our great-great-great-great grandfathers when they tasted their first Guinness two hundred years ago, realized that

¹ All copy from print and TV ads cited in this paper is reproduced with permission of the Guinness Archive, Diageo Ireland. Guinness adverts have changed over the years and they are continually evolving to take into account the changing society, advertising rules as well as the internal standards that make Diageo a responsible business. These adverts may contain historical product claims that are not now endorsed by Diageo. In making those adverts available, the intention is not to promote benefits of drinking but to show Guinness advertising over more than 60 years.

it was to become Ireland's favourite drink?' A framed portrait of Arthur Guinness himself flanks the copy, his attire and wig bearing witness to the brand's longevity. Interestingly, the copy evokes a time when 'Irish brewing was suffering severe competition from abroad,' a situation that was destined to return due to the policies of Lemass. Again, Guinness seems to be saying that it has nothing to fear from competition. Pride in its Irish heritage, the use of home-grown ingredients, and the employment of an Irish workforce are emphasised – 'brewed by the Irish for the Irish, almost entirely from Irish barley, Guinness caught the fancy of the Irish people.' The ad signs off with the iconic phrase, 'Guinness is good for you,' a declaration that would not be allowed in later years.

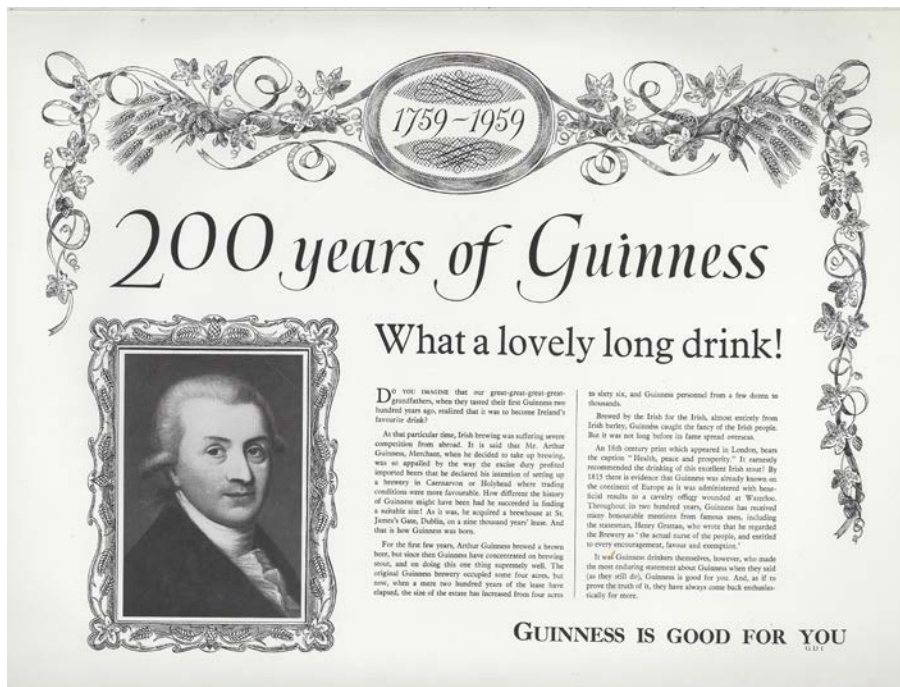


Figure 1a: 200 Years of Guinness, press ad 1959

In another black and white press ad from 1959 (Figure 1b), the years 1759 and 1959 resemble speech bubbles behind two figures, one from the 1750s, wearing pantaloons, jacket, waistcoat, scarf and hat, and the other dressed in a contemporary (for the 1950s) suit and trilby hat. Both are clutching a Guinness, one in a ceramic tankard and the other in a glass. The text proudly recalls how ‘just before the advent of Guinness..., Ireland was being flooded with English porter. But Guinness soon altered all that. Within a few years, the tables were turned, and England was clamouring for the infinitely superior Irish brew.’ Again, the copy highlights Guinness’s confidence in its ability to capitalise on the radically new economic policies of Lemass when it states:

Today, the St James’s Gate Brewery in Dublin supplies the world with Guinness, and many thousands of Irish men and women are engaged in the good work. Yet in spite of this great export industry, Ireland is the home of Guinness, and it is here that it is truly appreciated.



Figure 1b: 200 Years of Guinness, press ad 1959

Very tellingly, the final line of the copy in this ad demonstrates a real desire by Guinness to stake its claim as an integral part of Irish society and identity when it concludes ‘the people of Ireland who found Guinness so much to their liking when Arthur Guinness first brewed it, 200 years ago, still enjoy it as much as ever today.’

The final ad in the 200 years of Guinness series (see Figure 1c) celebrates Guinness’s connection with the farming community in Ireland. This time, the years 1759 -1959 are decorated with a garland. The style of the ad simulates a newspaper article and features a quote from the barley harvest: ‘I expect you’re off to Guinness as usual.’ This serves to underline the importance of Guinness to the Irish agricultural economy at that time and reflects the assumption held by barley growers that Guinness would buy their crops.



Figure 1c: 200 Years of Guinness, press ad 1959

The ad copy allays any doubts that might have been held by farmers and says: ‘Today, 800,000 tons of malted barley – including the roasted barley that gives Guinness its unique colour – are needed to brew over 2 million barrels, that is one year’s supply of Dublin stout.’ Guinness signals its continued commitment to barley farmers when it declares in the ad ‘to satisfy the ever-growing appetite of the huge kieves at St. James’s Gate, Irish farmers have now under cultivation over 70,000 acres. And the acreage is increasing all the time.’ The rural scene in the ad features two farm workers aboard a combine harvester, bringing in the barley harvest. Despite the fact that Ireland’s dependence on the agricultural sector was set to diminish in the sixties, the ad clearly shows that it still had a significant contribution to make to Guinness and a changing Irish economy.

Guinness: a key player in Ireland’s economic success

Throughout the sixties, Guinness continued to support the agricultural sector as evidenced in the 1965 press ad that depicts a conversation between a cattle breeder and a Guinness drinker:

“It’s a fine head” the breeder exclaimed.

“Wait ‘til you taste it” I said, taking a deep drink....

“Taste the head?” he said, looking surprised.

I don’t know what he thinks the head on a pint is for!”

In the background of the ad, there is a poster for an annual livestock show featuring a bull, while various glasses and two bottles of Guinness are in the

foreground. In 1966, a number of press ads feature images of malting barley blowing in the wind. The accompanying headline in one states proudly (Figure 2): ‘75% of Ireland’s malting barley goes into Guinness.’ The body copy concludes: ‘So Guinness does the farmer good in more ways than one.’ Later that same year, a similar press ad is published but this time the headline is ‘80% of Ireland’s malting barley goes into Guinness.’ Both versions highlight Guinness’s importance to a sector that was no longer as dominant in the Irish economy. A vibrant Guinness brewery had the ability to provide security and a steady income stream to barley farmers.



Figure 2: 75% of Ireland’s malting barley goes into Guinness, press ad 1966

Also in 1966, Guinness advertised its support of the Cork Summer Show, and the Kildysart Agricultural Show. By publishing these ads, Guinness reassured farmers and rural dwellers that unlike many policy makers, it would not turn its back on them, despite the fact that the economic importance of urban centres was growing. Workers are consumers, so by creating copy aimed at farmers, farm labourers, and their families, Guinness displayed a willingness to invest in maintaining this important customer base.

Meanwhile, it is evident from many of its press ads in the 1960s that Guinness wanted to position the brand alongside the rising fortunes of the Irish economy. In 1966, one ad proudly states (Figure 3): ‘Every day well over five million Guinnesses put new heart into who knows how many Guinness drinkers the world over.’

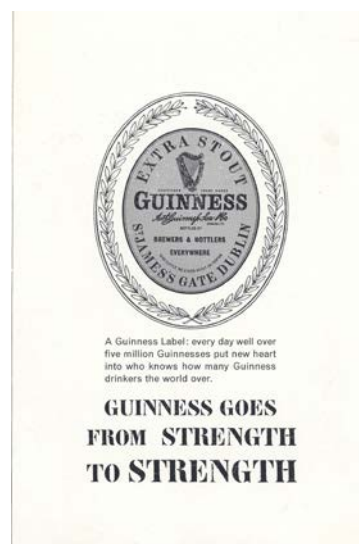


Figure 3: Five million Guinnesses, press ad 1966

In the same year, other press ads (Figure 4), this time in the style of newspaper articles, draw attention to Guinness's contribution to the Irish Economy: 'They (Guinness) are proud to be the largest private employer in the Republic, with almost 4,000 staff and employees. It is their policy to buy Irish materials and services wherever possible.'



Figure 4: Buy Irish, say Guinness, press ad 1966

One of the 'articles' underlines Guinness's credentials as a global force, and recounts in journalistic style how travellers in the 19th century had found the drink in places like Brazil, Madagascar, and Russia. Another ad (Figure 5) boasts how Guinness is 'The best Selling Drink in Ireland, The Biggest

Beer and Stout Advertiser in Ireland, The Biggest Exporter of Beer in the World.’ These accolades tied in perfectly with the outward-oriented economy that Ireland had become, and they placed Guinness at the heart of its revival.



Figure 5: 3 Ways of Looking at Guinness, press ad 1966

The business journal, *Statist*, published an ad that featured a Guinness bottle with a tag attached stating £7,000,000, and body copy recounting how ‘Guinness products account for 26% of all excise revenue. Guinness is Ireland’s largest industrial export worth £7 million a year. Guinness is good

for Ireland.’ A 1967 press ad asks: ‘Who sells over half a million bottles on average daily in Ireland?, while a 1968 ad declares, ‘In over one hundred and thirty countries, six million Guinness are enjoyed every day.’

At a local level, Guinness sponsored the Galway Junior Chamber of Commerce, and celebrated the alliance in a press ad. This underlined the growing importance of the business classes in Ireland at a grassroots level on a nationwide basis. As previously highlighted, before the implementation of Whittaker’s economic policy, the agricultural sector employed more workers than industry. However, from the sixties onwards, CSO figures show that the industry and services sectors accounted for almost three-quarters of Irish employment, rising to more than 80 per cent by 1981 (Kennedy and Giblin, 1987). Guinness contributed to this transformation, and used it to create a narrative in some of its adverts, thereby enabling the brand to connect with a new type of worker.

Guinness and early TV advertising: affecting social change in Ireland

On 31st December 1961, Ireland’s first TV service was launched. Since the late 1950s, TV set owners in some parts of the country, in particular Dublin, already enjoyed access to British channels and their cultural influences. Ferriter (2005) reckons that 40 per cent of the Irish population was able to access British television broadcasts, thereby exposing viewers to diverse,

non-national influences. Allied to this, from the beginning, Irish TV relied on importing much of its content which, according to Fisher (1978), meant that it was subjected to criticism by Church authorities, in particular the Roman Catholic Church, and Irish language supporters, dissatisfied with what they considered to be a low level of Irish language programming. In a scathing attack, Thornley (1964: 13) commented that, 'no greater barrier has ever been imposed upon any attempt at either moral censorship or cultural discrimination against foreign influences than the sheer inability of the native TV network to produce enough material to fill its own schedules.' Perhaps this criticism is unfair since RTÉ lacked the budget, resources, and expertise enjoyed by the BBC, at that time acknowledged as the world leader in the creation and provision of excellent programming. Therefore, it was inevitable that insufficient home-produced programming would necessitate the buying in of programmes from channel owners in the UK and the US.

Guinness was quick to recognise the power of TV as an advertising medium. In the 1950s, it broadcast its first TV ads in the UK, made by the British advertising agency SH Bensons Limited, first appointed in the UK in 1929. Its TV debut, 'A Guinness guide to food' features an animated toucan in one ad, and an animated kangaroo in another, foregrounding how various, quintessentially British (and in most cases Irish) foods can be accompanied

by Guinness. Both ads finish with the tagline ‘Guinness goes so well with food.’ It is possible that this tagline may have been attempting to change perceptions of the heavy, appetite-sapping drink, a drink that was acknowledged as being ‘...good for you,’ but one that would have been perceived as too heavy to consume with food. Also, the foods featured are showcased in a domestic setting, reflecting the rise in popularity of alcohol consumption in the home as opposed to the pub or restaurant. In tandem with this trend, the 1960s would witness the launch of the take home pack of Guinness in the UK and Ireland.

When Guinness commenced advertising in Ireland in 1959, it was the same UK-based Bensons that was charged with creating ads specifically for the Irish market, starting with print and adding TV in 1963. The first TV ad in Ireland, ‘Bar,’ went on to form part of a campaign known as the *Sporting Series*, which ran until 1965. The series featured hurling, Gaelic football, cross-country running, and cycling. By the sixties, cycling had woven itself into the fabric of Irish society, largely due to the popularity of the long-distance cycle race known as the Rás. Daly (2003) explains how the Rás was initially named Rás Tailteann in an effort to associate it with the Tailteann Games, and that it consciously tried to associate itself with nationalism. In 1952, the inaugural route started at the GPO, and Daly recounts how a group of cyclists laid a wreath at Cúchulainn’s statue, a legendary hero who

had died defending Ireland. The cyclists were members of the National Cycling Association, a group of nationalists who refused to recognise Ireland's partition. This stance ensured that they were banned from international competition. Cycling may not be as synonymous with Irish identity as hurling or Gaelic football but this story, together with the sport's obvious popularity, may explain why Guinness wanted to associate with it. Meanwhile, Ronnie Delaney's gold medal at the Sydney Olympics in 1956 had sparked interest in athletics in Ireland. In the 1960s, the middle distance runner Noel Carroll became a very successful, high profile athlete when he won a number of European Championship medals, as well as representing Ireland at the Olympics. Therefore, Bensons' decision to feature cycling and athletics, alongside the more traditional Irish sports depicted in the *Sporting Series*, tapped into the love that Irish people have for several sports.

The *Sporting Series* of TV ads lived up to its name, and variously feature athletes from hurling, Gaelic football, cycling, and cross-country running, competing hard before retiring to the bar for what Guinness describes as a well-earned Guinness. They were produced in fifteen-, thirty- and sixty-second formats, and in the sixty-second versions, a caption appears after six seconds saying: 'Inside sport with Guinness,' a clear signal that Guinness was keen to align its brand with sport. For approximately forty seconds, the

focus is on the athletes as they compete in a landscape that is evocative of Ireland (Figure 6a). The cross-country and cycling routes take the viewer through scenes of rugged Irish countryside. The Gaelic football and hurling matches are played out in what appear to be country clubs, and the soundtrack in all of the sports scenes of the ads consists of feet running, the breathing of the athletes, the clash of the ash, the bicycle wheels rotating, and some spectators urging their teams or men on. All of the scenes seem to suggest exertion and effort as the athletes compete to win, an early sign of intent that the Guinness brand imbued excellence.



Figure 6a: Cross Country, *Sporting Series*, 1963-1965

The ads then cut to a bar scene (Figure 6b). The barman brings two glasses of Guinness in Wellington, tulip-shaped glasses over to two customers, most likely two of the cross-country runners. Interestingly, one of the men smokes a cigarette, something that would never be associated with sport today or, of course, permitted in an ad. One of the men puts down a newspaper before picking up his Guinness – it might be the *Irish Press*, a Dublin-oriented newspaper that is a good fit for Guinness’s heritage. The voiceover declares dramatically in one version, ‘And now, the best moment of all – a Guinness. That puts the strength back into a man. You’ve earned that Guinness’ or in another version, ‘When you’ve worked up a real thirst, you need a Guinness.’ Throughout, the imagery and the copy are overtly masculine, and play on the relationship between sacrifice and reward. It is interesting that the bar in the ad is the domain of men only, thus reflecting the lowly status of women in Irish society at that time, especially when it came to pub culture. It was not until the second half of the decade that women appeared in Guinness’s TV ads set in bars.



Figure 6b: Cross Country, *Sporting Series*, 1963-1965

In 1964, the copy in Guinness's press ads reinforces the messages in the *Sporting Series* of TV ads, and features head and shoulder shots of individual males bringing Wellington or tankard-style glasses of Guinness towards their mouths (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Guinness – that's a drink and a half, press ad 1964

In all cases, their attire reflects the social change that had gathered momentum in the sixties, the migration from rural to urban dwellings, the growing numbers of middle-class, and the move away from agricultural work. In this particular series, the men are dressed like office workers,

(sometimes) with glasses, tweed jacket, and shirt and tie. In the sixties, this would have been considered a very contemporary, almost aspirational, image.

In 1964/5, and running in parallel with the *Sporting Series*, a series of cartoon ads was broadcast. They all depict workers that might have been more or less associated with a changing Ireland – a bricklayer, an office worker (Figure 8), a sculptor, and a window cleaner. All are shown surveying their completed work, be it a brick wall, an emptied in-tray, a sculpture or a high-rise building of clean windows.

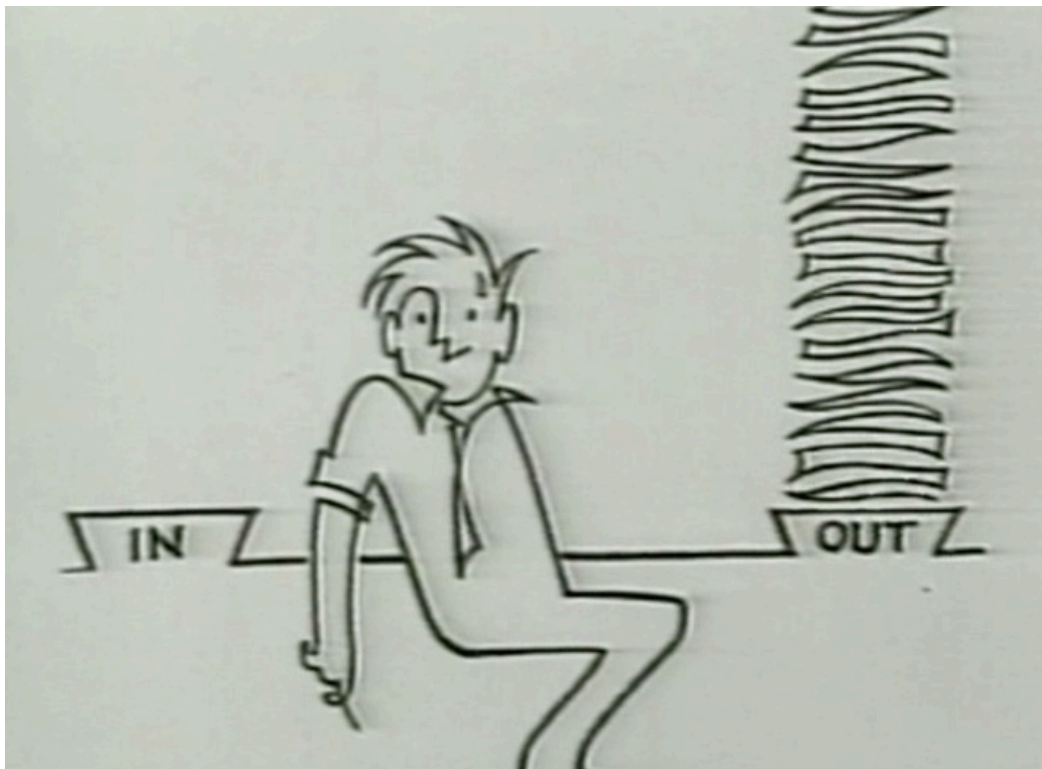


Figure 8: Office Worker, *Cartoons* series, 1964-1965

The voiceover seems to chat to the cartoon figure throughout: 'Done a good job? Done a job and a half? Well then, you need a drink. You need a drink and a half.' At this point, the ad switches to a real person, a man clad in a jacket, shirt and tie, picking up a glass of Guinness stout, and bringing it to his lips as the voiceover purrs: 'Guinness – mmm-marvellous! That's Guinness.' With eyes closed, he takes a generous sip of the stout, before putting the glass down again, and licking his lips in a satisfied manner. The closing shot shows a bottle of Guinness Extra Stout, a glass of stout, and the tag line, 'A drink and a half,' also uttered by the voiceover artist. The music is jaunty and light, bearing no cultural relationship to Irish musical references. The occupations featured in the ads could have been carried out in any urbanised society, and were not peculiar to Ireland. Perhaps that is what Guinness was trying to convey – by 1964, Ireland's economic and social transformation was taking hold, and its population was just as comfortable in an urban setting, as it had been in a rural setting.


While the accent of the voiceover artists in the TV adverts was Irish, it was typical of the type of trained voice adopted at that time by newsreaders and commentators on the fledgling national broadcaster. Taking its lead from the experienced BBC, RTÉ coached its staff in a delivery style that imitated the intonations and inflections used by its British counterparts. It is clear from these ads that Guinness followed suit, and employed voiceover artists

capable of reproducing the ‘RTÉ accent.’ This enabled the ads to fit in with environment in which they were being viewed.

Television was not the only significant cultural influence in Ireland in the 1960s. Ferriter (2005) refers to the democratisation of travel and notes that in 1964 visitors to Ireland from Continental Europe and the United States increased fourfold. Similarly, at the same time, Irish people embraced the concept of holidays, and as well as the rise in popularity of the foreign package holiday, domestic tourism grew. Changing employment patterns facilitated travel because, unlike agricultural jobs, industrial and service jobs did not tie the worker to the workplace. Therefore, this growing cohort of domestic and international tourists was looking for attractions to enhance their holidays in Ireland, so Guinness used this as an opportunity to promote visits to the St. James’s Gate Brewery.

The 1965 ad (Figure 9) ‘Ireland is famous for’ identifies some of Ireland’s most famous exports, including ‘Tweed from Donegal,’ ‘Linen from Belfast,’ ‘Crystal from Waterford,’ and of course, ‘Guinness from Dublin,’ before alerting tourists to the fact that ‘the Guinness Brewery in Dublin is a famous sight.’ By aligning itself with other famous Irish products, Guinness positioned itself strongly as an essential inclusion on any tourist’s itinerary, be they domestic or foreign.

IRELAND IS FAMOUS FOR



TWEED
from Donegal

LINEN
from Belfast

GUINNESS
from Dublin

CRYSTAL
from Waterford

AND THE GUINNESS BREWERY IN DUBLIN IS A FAMOUS SIGHT

To visit the home of Guinness and see how this world-famous Irish stout is brewed is an unforgettable experience. The Brewery is so vast that it is often referred to as 'a city within a city'. Conducted tours are regular daily features between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. (Not Saturdays, and no children.) Come and have a famous time!

GUINNESS IS GOOD FOR YOU

G.D.218

Figure 9: Ireland is famous for, press ad 1965

The following year, the company published more press ads in domestic and international newspapers, inviting tourists to visit the home of Guinness.

They feature a cartoon drawing of the brewery, and a couple standing outside saying ‘So this is where the Goodness comes from,’ or in the case of the German version (Figure 10), ‘*Daher kommt also die Gute!*’ In 1968, more press ads inviting visitors to visit the Guinness Brewery at St James’s Gate were published in Ireland, France and Germany. The headline is ‘Guinness (just look at it!),’ ‘Guinness (*Mais regardez-la donc!*)’, and ‘Guinness (*Sieh’ dir das an!*)’.



Figure 10: So this is where Guinness comes from, press ad 1966

Guardians of Irish culture

Numerous efforts were made by the authorities to curb the spread of outside influences. There was what Ferriter describes as Archbishop McQuaid’s

crusade against ‘foul books,’ and the GAA’s ban on what they perceived as foreign sports, which remained in place until 1971. The Irish language was languishing, as evidenced by the Commission on the Restoration of the Irish Language in 1965 (Brown, 2004). So, in 1966, De Valera used the fifty years commemoration of 1916 to try and revive it. Once again demonstrating its awareness of current affairs, press ads published by Guinness that year supported Irish cultural events, while others contained Irish text. For example, the brand advertised its support for the Sligo Feis, an event that is committed to protecting Ireland’s language and cultural heritage. Another advert in 1966 assertively states ‘Guinness – gan dabht’ meaning ‘Guinness – without doubt.’ Another ad, aimed at theatre enthusiasts advises audiences in Irish ‘Cosaint Tine – Síos le Guinness amháin i rith gach léiriú,’ – when translated it means ‘Fire protection – down a Guinness during every performance.’ It is worth noting that before and after the year of the attempted revival, Guinness published Irish language ads. Once again, this supports the argument that it did not merely follow trends, but led them. In a 1961 press ad, a glass of Guinness is featured with the accompanying headline ‘An leann dub as dublinn – Guinness’ (Figure 11) which means ‘The black beer from Dublin Guinness.’ In 1968, another Irish language press ad was published simply stating ‘Guinness maitheas ó fhréamh,’ which means ‘Guinness goodness from the roots.’

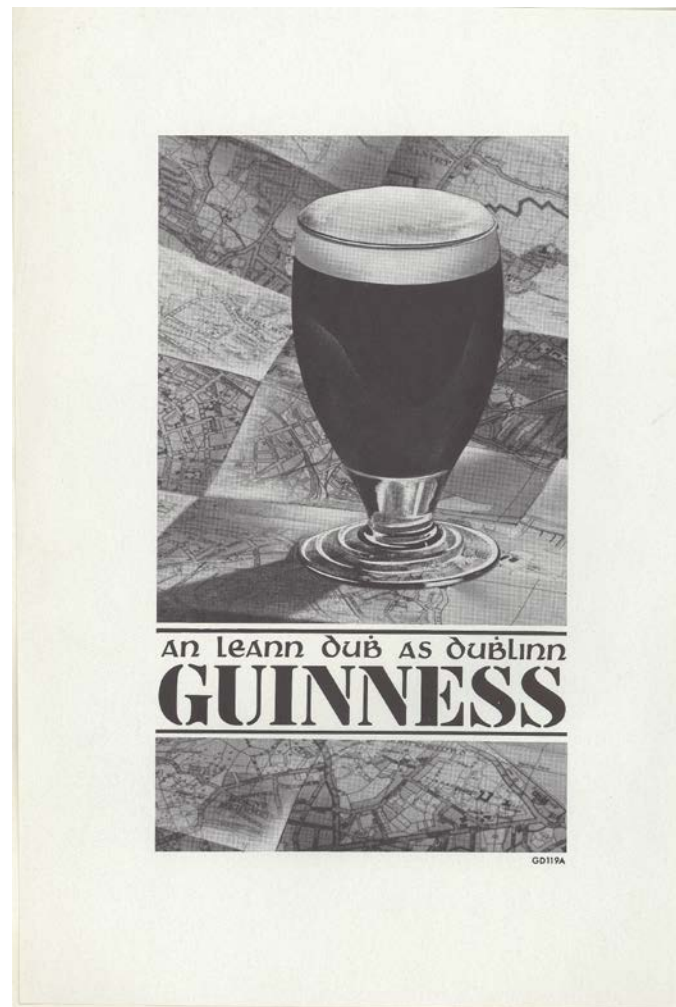


Figure 11: An leann dub as dublinn, press ad 1961

Also in 1968, two versions of the TV ad 'Festival' were broadcast, one featuring a voiceover at the end declaring 'Guinness – the most natural thing in the world.' The Irish language version uses the same imagery but signs off with a voiceover in the Irish language saying, 'Dúchas d'ól duit,' which can be translated as 'The homeland of drink'. This line emphasises Guinness's sense of place and deep association with Ireland, whereas the

English language version focuses on the product and its ingredients. As the name given to the ad suggests, the ad itself is set at a festival in a rural Irish town, and it features people participating in various games, typical of that time. As well as incorporating the Irish language into the ad, the visual imagery celebrates Irish culture, and the importance of community to the rural population at that time. Again, women are cast in a passive role, mere spectators at the festival, whereas the only participants in the games are men. To the twenty-first century viewer, this seemingly blatant sexism arouses indignation, but at that time, it was the norm and would not have raised an eyebrow.

Breaking down barriers: portraying women in the pub

In the latter half of the 1960s, tentative signs of women's changing societal status emerged. Female membership of trade unions rose, ownership of domestic electrical appliances became more widespread, and between 1966 and 1971, the numbers of married women at work rose by around 60% (Ferriter 2005). Conversely, he stresses that the pace of change was frustrated by various political and legislative roadblocks, not least a refusal by the 1968 government to adopt the 1952 UN convention on the political rights of women by not waiving the law preventing married women from working in the civil service. As if to reflect these tentative changes, Guinness began to reach out to women with their ads. A press ad in 1966

highlights Guinness's support of the Soroptomist Club, founded in 1966 to advance the lot of women in management and professions.

Guinness's *Irish Life* series of TV ads between 1965 and 1970 attempted to make women part of the narrative in some of the ads. Most of the bar scenes include at least one woman, and, in 1965, 'Young Man – Dublin' features a young couple going up to a bar to order drinks (Figure 12). The woman follows the man's lead, and asks for a half pint of Guinness. The presence of women drinking in bars in Ireland was a relatively new phenomenon, and reflected a change in Irish social mores.



Figure 12: Young Man Dublin, *Irish Life – The Most Natural Thing in the World*, 1965

However, an air of subservience is maintained (the man ordering the drink and influencing the woman's choice, in his case a pint, and in hers a half pint), thereby perfectly reflecting the slow, deliberate pace at which women were being liberated. One other ad in the series, 'Take Home' in 1968/9, portrays a couple in a bar having a Guinness before going home with a takeaway pack of the same libation. Again, the man orders the drinks but the woman is seen sipping from a glass of Guinness. However, most of the ads in the series focus on men drinking Guinness, while most of the bar scenes that include women show them either drinking water or nothing at all. To give women more significant roles may have alienated some of Guinness's customers. By taking an evolutionary approach that involved their gradual introduction, the concept of women in bars was not considered too shocking, and viewers grew used to the idea in the ads and in pubs themselves.

Conclusion

The first decade of ads created by Bensons for Guinness in Ireland helps paint a picture of Irish society in the 1960s, a time when Ireland and Guinness were coming to terms with a rapidly changing environment. The moment Lemass turned his back on the protectionist policies of his predecessors, he gave Irish businesses the opportunity to expand into foreign markets. In doing this, he opened Ireland's borders to foreign

companies and the competition that accompanied them. Previously unavailable job prospects opened up to Irish workers and in some instances these were enhanced as educational attainment among the general population improved. Societal structures evolved as more workers joined the ranks of the middle classes, and found employment in the manufacturing and services sectors. Guinness's ads reflected Ireland's newfound prosperity by depicting well-dressed, professional workers in many of their ads. Nevertheless, in the 1960s, agriculture remained the mainstay of rural Ireland, as regularly represented in Guinness's ads throughout the decade. However, armed with education, many young people migrated towards the opportunities afforded by urban settings.

While it might be claimed that Guinness's ads merely mirrored changing societal norms, it could equally be argued that Guinness might have had a role to play in bringing about some of these changes. As if emboldened by the decline in births to women with more than two children, Guinness might have helped their quest for equality by depicting women socialising in pubs, or drinking Guinness. This gradual acceptance laid the foundations for Guinness to print ads in the 1970s that showed women-only groups enjoying a sociable drink together. While an analysis of these ads is outside the scope of this paper, they reveal a considerable shift in societal norms.

By featuring indigenous sports like hurling and Gaelic football alongside internationally accepted sports as diverse as cricket, cycling, and bowls, Guinness may have contributed to a softening of the attitude of GAA officials towards the ban on foreign sports. Meanwhile, Guinness's decision to publish and broadcast Irish language ads revealed their understanding of the challenges facing Ireland's fledgling republic at that time. In order to grow and prosper, Ireland had to, and did become more outward looking. While, as demonstrated in this paper, this was a positive move, it posed challenges to the survival of Irish culture. Guinness's willingness to draw on themes peculiar to Irish culture is evident in many of their ads in the 1960s – indigenous sports, language, cultural events and past-times. In those early days of Guinness's advertising in Ireland, the provenance of the brand was clearly aligned to Irish culture, but it exhibited an ability to use themes that represented Ireland's transforming societal landscape. Having been around for 200 years, Guinness possessed the confidence to draw on its own past, and Ireland's rich heritage, while in many instances, being able to embrace the changes of the 1960's. It went even further than this, and at times it used its advertising narrative to influence Ireland's future. Still renowned for its advertising today, an initial review of Guinness's early ads shows concrete proof of its ability to tap into the mood of the nation at a particular time.

Bibliography

Brown, T. (2004) *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History 1922-2002*. London: Harper Perennial.

Daly, T. (2003) *The Rás: The Story of Ireland's Unique Bike Race*. Cork: The Collins Press.

Ferriter, D. (2005) *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000*. London: Profile Books Ltd.

Fisher, D. (1978) *Broadcasting in Ireland*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.

Haughton, J. (1987) 'The Historical Background' in O'Hagan, John W. (ed), *The Economy of Ireland: Policy and Performance*. Dublin: Irish Management Institute. 5th edition.

Kennedy, K.A. and Giblin, T. (1987) 'Employment' in O'Hagan, J.W. (ed), *The Economy of Ireland: Policy and Performance*. Dublin: Irish Management Institute. 5th edition.

Lee, J. (1982) 'Society and Culture', *Administration*, (30), (2), 1-18.

Nolan, S. (1987) 'Economic Growth: Theory and Analysis' in O'Hagan, J.W. (ed), *The Economy of Ireland: Policy and Performance*. Dublin: Irish Management Institute. 5th edition.

Rottman, D.B. and O'Connell, P.J. (1982) 'The Changing Social Structure,' *Administration*, January, (30), (2), 63-88.

Thornley, D. (1964) 'The End of an Era?' *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, (53), (209), Spring, 1-17

Walsh, B.M. (1972) 'Ireland's Demographic Transformation, 1958-70', *The Economic and Social Review*, (3), (2), 251-275

Yenne, B. (2007) *Guinness: The 250-Year Quest for the Perfect Pint*. New Jersey: Wiley