

This is a useful and timely volume. It will be of use to those interested in British military administration in Ireland and also those who wish to understand how this military activity had an impact across Irish society.

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A DUBLIN MAGDALENE LAUNDRY: DONNYBROOK AND CHURCH-STATE POWER IN IRELAND.

Edited by Mark Coen, Katherine O'Donnell and Maeve O'Rourke. London: Bloomsbury Publishing. 2023. £21.99.

Donnybrook Magdalene Asylum was the first in Ireland to change from being 'an institution under lay management to one located within, and controlled by, a convent'. So, as Coen, O'Donnell and O'Rourke note, it is the 'template for what would become the archetypal Irish Magdalene laundry', both owned by and supervised by nuns (p. 6). Therefore, *A Dublin Magdalene laundry* is both a vital study of one laundry in Dublin and an investigation into much larger and pervasive culture of 'social and gender inequalities' across the Ireland and the world.

The book is in three sections. Section one, entitled 'Political, cultural and social contexts of Donnybrook Magdalene Laundry', builds a picture of the laundry and the society in which it was created and operated. Mark Cohen contributes two chapters, constructing the history of the order who would go on to own and operate Donnybrook, charting the Religious Sisters of Charity from their foundation in 1815, their major works and their governance, as well as the accusations of child abuse, institutional abuse and controversy around the adoption processes utilised in the asylum. His second chapter is a useful history of Donnybrook itself, which he calls 'emblematic of the long nineteenth century of Irish Catholicism' (p. 92).

Chapter two, written by Lindsey Earner-Byrne, is an excellent 'history of respectability', a 'key element in defining and deciding moral and social worth' (p. 42) which in turn normalised the institutionalisation of women. Earner-Byrne also identifies a 'hierarchy of women', in which the 'deserving' poor were separated from unmarried mothers and sex-workers (considered, by some, to be unworthy or incapable of saving). Chapter four, by Katherine O'Donnell, has the vital job of introducing the oral history and the survivor narratives that inform the history of Donnybrook. O'Donnell strove to 'generate a rich collection of narratives that would inform future generations, inspire artists, and provide enough material for the work of historians and social scientists in their analyses of the interviews' (p. 111). Given the government's disregard for oral testimony, as documented in the introduction, O'Donnell demonstrates a crucial understanding of the nuance and unique perspectives of oral testimony, and ensures it stands strong amongst the other methodologies used in the book.

The second section, 'Social, commercial and legal significance of Donnybrook Magdalene Laundry', looks at the functionality of Donnybrook as an asylum and a laundry. Chapter five is an exploration of the architecture of Donnybrook, which examines further the 'architecture of containment', asking how much architects knew 'of the abuses perpetuated by with and enabled by their designs' (p. 145) and whether they could or should have known the repercussions of their labour. These questions are refreshing and uncomfortable and epitomise the book's holistic approach to understanding these institutions. In one particularly haunting conclusion, Chris Hamill writes:

it is clear from the architect's drawings and the very purposeful way in which the circulation of various occupant groups was directed by the site's architecture, that the person at the drafting table knew, at a minimum, there was a subordinated class of women within this complex, and that this group were required to work in the laundry (p. 144).

In chapter six, Mairead Enright considers the importance of charitable bequests in running Donnybrook, ascertaining that ‘within the “divine economy” ... gift-giving produced symbolic capital for the benefactor; capital rooted in concepts of faith, gratitude and women’s sinfulness and redemption’ (p. 154). This reciprocity served to legitimise the presence of institutions and the money allowed them to function. Enright also draws a parallel with the new National Maternity Hospital in Dublin, which attracted protests because of its ties to the Religious Sisters of Charity who had not contributed to a redress fund. This chapter emphasises that charity of this nature ‘served to perpetuate social and gender inequalities’ (p. 12) and underlines how the Magdalene laundries cannot be relegated to the past until we establish how these inequalities manifest in the present.

Chapter seven is co-written by Brid Murphy and Martin Quinn, and focuses on the commercial laundry at Donnybrook, concluding that perhaps, some factors notwithstanding, the business produced a surplus due to the unpaid labour of the Magdalenes. Chapter eight examines entry pathways to the Donnybrook Laundry through criminal proceedings for crimes such as infanticide. Lynsey Black emphasises that Magdalene laundries existed separately from prisons, offering themselves instead as places of rehabilitation and redress. Women could spend decades or lifetimes behind the walls on the basis of a two-year sentence, because, as Black so rightly asserts, this lack of oversight allowed women to ‘disappear into a shadow penal system which ... render[ed] their fate unknowable’ (p. 197).

The final section of the book, ‘Heritage and memory’, examines the physical resources that can be used to understand the asylum and how it can be memorialised for remembrance and education. In chapter nine, Laura McAtackney looks at the relationship between archaeology and survivor perspectives, and the importance of material relics and sites of industrial abuse in investigating, understanding and memorialisation. Chapter ten, by Brenda Malone and Barry Houlihan, considers the marginalised histories missing from display throughout the twentieth century, and asks how to walk the line between evidencing and educating the public, and the risk of retraumatising survivors, whilst also recognising that memorials can be read as closure that has not yet been achieved. It also examines the ‘archival legacy’ of Donnybrook, concluding that the laundry was well organised, profitable and ‘connected to the highest echelons of the Irish state’ (p. 233). The chapter generates a set of crucial further questions, about how to work with survivors to construct museums that amplify their voices, represent the experience of the institution, and recognise past and ongoing human rights ‘failures’ in Ireland.

In the final chapter, Claire McGettrick discusses the Magdalene Names Project (M.N.P.) with the title ‘Guerilla Archive.’ McGettrick details the M.N.P.’s principles as the right to know ‘the fate of the disappeared’ (p. 237), the right to reparations, and the state obligation to investigate human rights violations, and prevent them from happening again. The M.N.P. allows survivors of institutions and their families a chance to ‘execute acts of resistance against church and State authorities’ (p. 248) by accessing information they have been refused in the past. This is a fitting end to the book, reminding the reader of the importance of information, the difficulties in navigating the official systems put in place to find information and, finally, the resilience and effort of survivors and activists in correcting these omissions and reconstructing the shameful history of the Magdalene laundries.

*A Dublin Magdalene laundry* offers an interdisciplinary look at these institutions and prioritises locating the voices of survivors in these methods where possible. This results in fascinating chapters on the intersection of oral testimony and archaeology, law, sociology, political history and architecture. The book introduces some concepts that are crucial in any study of these institutions: ‘archives of resistance’ and ‘active memorialisation’. Both concepts speak to the desire to work carefully to uncover and honour the experiences of survivors with care and respect, as well the chronology of the journey towards redress for the Magdalenes, which is stilted and complicated further by a lack of access to records and the disregard for survivors’ oral testimonies. A phenomenally well-researched and articulated book, its key strength is the collaboration between

disciplines, which creates a full, devastating picture of the Donnybrook Magdalene asylum and, by extension, the ‘architecture of containment’ endured by so many women across Ireland.

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THOMAS DREW AND THE MAKING OF VICTORIAN BELFAST. By Sean Farrell. Pp 360, illus. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press. 2023. \$85.00 hardback; \$39.95 paperback.

Sean Farrell has produced a well-written and thoughtful study of the Rev. Thomas Drew, one of Belfast's most polarising figures. Drew's public career is used by Farrell to explore the complex relationships between urbanisation, politics, religion and sectarianism. On the one hand, Drew was a dedicated and attentive pastor who wanted to improve the lives of his parishioners; on the other, he was an anti-Catholic and Orange firebrand forever associated with the sectarian riots of 1857. Farrell shows that the interplay between these two aspects of Drew's career explains his success but also placed significant limits on his wider influence amongst evangelicals and political conservatives.

Perhaps significantly, Drew was an outsider. Born in Limerick, he became a curate in north Antrim, before being appointed in 1833 to the newly formed parish of Christ Church in Belfast. The first two chapters consider Drew's religious vision and pastoral work. Drew was a tireless pastor who made Christ Church a success by providing for the spiritual and material needs of his parishioners, most of whom were recent arrivals from rural areas, and he was especially successful in retaining the adherence of working-class men. The other side of the process of community formation was the Orange Order, which was for Drew ‘a vehicle for moral and spiritual transformation’ (p. 84). Drew's everyday sermons were simple attempts to promote respectable behaviour and self-discipline. He rarely mentioned Catholicism or politics; his Orange sermons were very different. Drew's popular image as a champion of the Protestant poor is considered in chapter four by examining his response to the plight of handloom weavers and the devastation of the Famine. Farrell draws out Drew's paternalism and range of civic engagement, yet concludes that he deferred to landlords and businessmen and opposed collective action.

Farrell's efforts to ‘historicize’ sectarianism are well done. Rather than simply explaining it as natural Protestant bigotry, he explains how sectarianism was conditioned by time and place, and how the narrative of conflict was shaped by the logic of events and the actions of interest groups. Drew was not unique, and his opposition to Catholicism was shared by most Protestants. What distinguished Drew from his fellow evangelicals was how his anti-Catholicism moved into sectarianism because of the extremity of his language and the importance of place. Located at the interface between Protestant Sandy Row and the Catholic Pound, Christ Church offered a receptive audience for his views and placed him at the centre of sectarian tensions in the growing town. Chapter five shows that Drew's actions in 1857 occurred at this key site at particularly fraught moments and shaped how he was portrayed, even though he was not especially active in street preaching. Critical to that process of personifying Drew as the sectarian malcontent were the Catholic and Liberal lawyers associated with the riot commission of 1857. The official report and the press coverage that followed established a narrative about intercommunal relations that portrayed Catholics as victims of evangelical and/or Orange preachers.

Farrell is right to highlight the complexity of too-often stereotyped movements such as evangelicalism, Orangeism and political conservatism, though the interplay between Drew and these broader themes could be developed further. For instance, Drew's friendly relations with Presbyterian ministers are frequently mentioned, but apart from William McIlwaine, there is little sense of how Drew related to the clergy and structures of his own church.