

[Free] The Irish Sweep: A History of the Irish Hospitals Sweepstake, 1930-87

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Marie Coleman

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Marie Coleman : The Irish Sweep: A History of the Irish Hospitals Sweepstake, 1930-87 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Irish Sweep: A History of the Irish Hospitals Sweepstake, 1930-87:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. History of the Irish Sweep phenomenonBy Helen n masonI have to admit a personal reason for buying this. book as one of the protagonist is my Grandfather.Its good to read a well

researched book, rather than the other more sensationalist efforts. The Sweep was a phenomenon its time, popular with everyone, a bit like the lotto now. It helped fund many hospitals, which the fledgling new Irish State could ill afford. Its honest with its summary of when greed became involved as time went on. A well researched volume for anyone interested in the Irish Sweep. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I think my dad would enjoy the book By Helen Harnett Fascinating. Note that print is very small. I think my dad would enjoy the book, but the print is too small.

The Irish Hospitals Sweepstake, initially established to provide money for voluntary hospitals in Dublin, provided funding for Irish hospitals for over fifty years. But that was not the whole story. This book reveals scandals, skulduggery, and gangsterism, which all played their part in the sweepstakes, exposing the blind eyes that were turned to its shortcomings and exploring the extent to which these failings ultimately damaged the Irish health services by postponing necessary reforms.

'Hugely impressive... always engaging, often fascinating, original, fluidly written and very well researched.' Diarmaid Ferriter 'Marie Coleman's history of the Irish Hospitals Sweepstake gives a fascinating picture of mid-20th century Ireland - still somewhat closed off from the world and with economic activity sluggish. An Irish get-rich-quick scheme had romantic, not to say illicit, connotations abroad, and produced beneficial results for the health system at home, as well as providing employment for 4,000 clerical workers at Ballsbridge. The quickest to get rich were the sweepstake's promoters, who enjoyed wealth beyond the conceiving of most of their fellow citizens. Marie Coleman's carefully researched book is a work of history - she is a lecturer at Queen's University Belfast - she shows how the illegality of sweepstakes in the US fed into a general sense of bending the rules (the American operation was controlled by two men with close links to the IRA; and the Irish postal service connived in getting around obstacles). And a clear picture emerges of how the Sweep, a private company once too big to be disciplined, became an embarrassment to the State whose legislation allowed it a lax attitude to accounting.' Irish Times John S Doyle 11 Dec 2009 'In a week after staff at Mullingar Hospital were left reeling by further bed cuts at the hospital, it's worth recalling that it was money from across the world - through the Irish Hospitals Sweepstakes - that built the hospital, back in the 1930s. The story is told in a new book 'The Irish Sweep: a history of the Irish Hospitals Sweepstake 1930 - 1987', written by the Castlepollard-born historian, Dr Marie Coleman. Dr Coleman ... is a graduate of UCD, and now works as a lecturer in Irish History at Queens University Belfast.' Westmeath Examiner 28 Nov 2009 So, what's your best read of 2009? The Irish Sweep: A History of the Irish Hospitals Sweepstake, 1930-87, by Marie Coleman, (UCD Press, A28), is a comprehensive warts-and-all history of the Irish Hospital Sweepstakes, which focuses on its economic and social importance. Marie Coleman is one of Ireland's finest up-and-coming historians. The Sweepstakes emerged in the 1930s because our newly emerging state did not have the financial capacity to sufficiently invest in hospitals and our healthcare system. The Sweepstakes was a means to bridge that gap. It was an Irish solution to an Irish problem. It became a feature of public health funding for over half a century in modern Ireland. At a time when Ireland was pursuing policies of economic self-sufficiency, the Sweepstake brought millions of punts in foreign currency into the country. Its success abroad was such that during the Economic War the British government introduced legislation to curb the vast amount of money leaving Britain for Ireland and the Sweepstake. The Irish Sweep brilliantly analyses the controversies and the contribution of the Sweepstakes to the development of our health services. It is both a serious work of history and an immensely readable account of an iconic Irish institution. Bertie Ahern Sunday Independent 19 December 2009 Short of gift ideas this Christmas? Jennifer Ryan asks society's movers and shakers for their favourite books of the year - Keeping abreast of non-fiction, Ferriter recently launched The Irish Sweep: A History of the Irish Hospital Sweepstake by Marie Coleman, 'plagued by gangsters, corruption, and forgeries.' Irish Independent 20 December, 2009 'The van driver put his hands in the air and whistled innocently. The customs officer flung him to one side, leapt into the van and heaved one of the laundry bags onto the dockside. Another officer slit it open. Sure enough, the sack was stuffed with thousands upon thousands of Irish Sweepstake counterfoils. As the smugglers were rounded up, the customs officer must have mused upon the futility of his task. For every book of tickets that his team busted, a dozen more were still slipping through the system undetected. Those pesky Irish. Would they ever give up? The Irish Hospitals Sweepstake ran from 1930 to 1987 and raised the equivalent of A170 million for the Irish health service, creating a network of over 400 hospitals, clinics and medical centres across Ireland. Its' rather more covert aim was to provide its three founding directors with an income that spiralled them into the upper echelons of Europe's wealthy elite. And if that required a little bit of systematic insider dealing from time to time, then so be it. There are also increasingly sure-footed suggestion that profits from the Sweep, a lottery to which millions of people from Ireland, the USA and the British Isles subscribed, were being channelled directly into the coffers of the Irish Republican Army at a time when the IRA was forging major links with Nazi Germany. Small wonder that the Reader's Digest declared the Sweep 'the greatest bleeding heart racket in the world'. This is a story that needs to be told and told it is in Dr. Marie Coleman's fascinating and brilliantly researched new book, The Irish Sweep.' Historian - Turtle Bunbury Irish Daily Mail December 2009 'Coleman, a lecturer in history at Queen's University, Belfast, could have written a racy, sensational account of the sweepstake and its place in folk history both Irish and American, but she has presented a

serious study of its operation and impact in a detailed book with diagrams and statistics. The photographs however give a hint of the glamorous showbiz aspect of the sweepstake, which brought hope and cheer to many a drab and difficult times. With recent controversies over the funding of the health service, this is a timely book reminding us of one imaginative solution to the problem that was successfully practised for decades.' Books Ireland February 2010

A Tax on Foreign Fools An unkind economist once referred to lotteries and sweepstakes as 'taxes on fools'. What distinguished the Irish Hospital Sweepstake, the subject of this fine book, is that so much of its income came from abroad - from foreign fools, in fact. At the beginning of the 1930s two-thirds of the money gambled came from Britain. This was generally regarded in England as rank hypocrisy while de Valera was grandstanding his refusal of the Annuities, so the laws against illegal lotteries were tightened. By the end of the 1930s half of the Sweep's income was coming from America and Canada. So this was big money, and virtually all of it coming from abroad. For various reasons 1932 was a high spot, but the Sweep itself went on for another 55 years. In that time, as Marie Coleman tells us, the fat flow of money attracted all sorts of dodgy characters, like flies to carrion. It also provided sorely needed employment for thousands in Dublin; supplemented the dress allowances of respectable middle-class housewives who sold tickets to British friends, and built over 200 hospitals. Historians tend not to be polite about the Sweep, adducing the dubious practices (a lot of smuggling and bribes) necessary to sell tickets in Britain and the USA where lotteries were illegal; they point enviously at the fortunes made by the organisers; and they denounce (with reason) the mean-spirited ending of the organisation. Now Marie Coleman has written the definitive account of this ambiguous but important national institution. In her conclusion she describes the Sweep as one of the greatest missed opportunities in the history of the state, a chance to create a superb medical service based on a three-legged model of hospitals, community medical services and an upgraded GP service (as brought forward in the Department of Health's 1945 plan, and still on the HSE's agenda). That this did not happen she blames on a combination of the factional interests of the medical profession and the voluntary hospitals scratchily relating to an unimaginative government service. So no change there.

Tony Farmar The Irish Catholic 1 April 2010 'The Irish Sweepstake which ran from 1930 until the arrival of the National Lottery ('he Lotto' in 1985 was one of the most successful Irish businesses ever. Not only did it make certain individuals rich, but sweepstake money also helped other businesses develop such as Waterford glass. Added to this it was an international phenomenon that was celebrated in Hollywood movies and gave a new meaning to the old saying, 'the luck of the Irish'. And the amazing thing is that it was actually illegal in other countries and relied on a smuggling network established by the IRA to sell tickets abroad and get the money back to Ireland. This all makes for a sensational story and it would have been easy to write a racy, sensational account of the sweepstake. However it was also a very serious enterprise which supported hospitals throughout the Irish state. Coleman is an academic historian who approaches the history of the sweepstake in a matter-of-fact manner. She sets the scene by explaining that lotteries of one form or another had existed in Ireland from as early as 1621 and from the eighteenth century onwards it was not unusual for lotteries or sweepstakes to be used to support hospitals, even at a time when lotteries were technically illegal. It was their popularity and the need to finance hospitals, most of which were run by religious orders and voluntary institutions, which led the government to pass an act in 1930 establishing the Irish Sweepstake. While Coleman does not lay stress on it, it is difficult to ignore the social impact of the sweepstake at home and abroad. Apart from the fact that it held out hope of instant riches during the Great Depression, it introduced glitz and glamour like Ireland had never seen before. Each ticket draw was a showbiz event with huge razzmatazz involving a parade through Dublin, sweepstake staff in theatrical costumes and celebrities in attendance as tickets were drawn from the drums. The sweepstake draw was a tourist attraction in its own right with visitors and the world's press coming to Dublin to witness it. However, there was a dark side to it also. Although sanctioned by an act of the Oireachtas, the Irish sweepstake was illegal in Britain, the United States and elsewhere. This meant that the sweepstake agents were breaking the law in these countries. In both Britain and America the authorities attempted to stop importation, usually by post, of tickets and applications for them being sent to Ireland. In response, as Coleman reveals, the sweepstake resorted to a network of agents, many of them in the IRA or associated with it, to set up an elaborate smuggling operation to get tickets into these countries by any means and likewise to get the dollars and pounds paid for tickets back to Ireland. The meant in effect that hospitals in Ireland were being financed through a criminal enterprise. One kind of illegality breeds another and Coleman recounts cases of fraud, embezzlement and forged tickets which became unwanted features of the sweepstake operation. In her assessment of its impact, Coleman is not very positive about it. She implies that overall it was a corrupting influence on society and that although over the decades it raised millions for Irish hospitals it was in fact an inhibiting factor on reform of the health services. The easy money for the sweepstake meant there was no proper planning or coordination in providing services across the hospitals. Similarly the sweepstake's success prevented the rationalisation and reform of the health service, a legacy with which Irish society is still coping to this day. Coleman has given us a well written and researched overview of its history, highlighting the major features and the individuals involved, and raising key issues relating to the sweepstake and its operation. - Where Coleman has been a pioneer and laid the groundwork, other historians are sure to follow.'

Tony Canavan Books Ireland May 2010 'While there has been recent work on the scandals and corruption involved, this is the first book to look at all aspects of the Sweepstakes. Coleman argues that the money brought in by selling

tickets, particularly (and illegally) to the Irish diaspora helped to establish a hospital system throughout Ireland and provided thousands of jobs. - She also points out the lack of oversight of the funds given to hospitals and other bureaucratic lapses that kept needed reform from being established. This is a fascinating, balanced study of a legendary institution.' Book News US August 2010 'Marie Coleman has a varied, complex and often startling story to tell, and she tells it very well indeed. The book is meticulously researched and its many tables provide a great deal of fascinating financial information. The book is also full of revealing anecdotes, and it contains a cast of striking characters. - The history of the Sweep throws new light on many aspects of politics and finance during the decades after independence, as well as on the government's willingness to turn a blind eye to questionable business dealings if they proved profitable - plus ca change - and the Sweep was extraordinarily profitable for long periods of time.' Irish Studies August 2010 'This is an economic, organisational and political analysis of the sweeps and of their impact on hospitals in Ireland - a fascinating study, and well worth a place on university bookshelves.' International Journal of the History of Sport Sept. 2010 'Coleman has given us a well written and researched overview of its history, highlighting the major features and the individuals involved, and raising key issues relating to the sweepstake and its operations - Where Coleman has been a pioneer and laid the groundwork, other historians are sure to follow.' Books Ireland May 2010 'The book has several impressive aspects, the first being its transnational focus. The overseas reach of the Irish sweep is a major theme in Coleman's work, and she researched in Canadian, Irish, British, and American archives in order to take the story of the sweep beyond Ireland. Irish diasporic communication networks were used to sell tickets, and prominent Irish-Americans, such as longtime Clan na Gael mandarin Joseph McGarrity, promoted the sweep. - The book's second major strength is its analysis of the sweep's effects on Irish hospitals. - the book provides a well-written, informative, and entertaining account of an important Irish institution that has been heretofore neglected by historians.' Canadian Journal of Irish Studies 36 (1) 2010 About the Author Dr Marie Coleman is a lecturer in Irish history in the School of History and Anthropology at the Queen's University of Belfast.