

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. Every sweepstake had a theme, such as the horse in Ireland, the history of flight, or Greek mythology, while artists such as Harry Kernoff and Sean Keating, were employed to design and produce scenery, posters and costumes. The sweepstake too pioneered public relations and advertising in its use of radio programmes, stories in the press, sponsorship of events and so on. Of course, just like today, the newspapers were keen to follow the stories of winners especially of the instant riches kind.

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 the 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. This 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.

Besides the criminal nature of the sweepstake lottery, American and British governments had other reasons to object to its operation. Britain in particular was angry that its citizens' money, millions of pounds, was being sent to Ireland to support hospitals there while British hospitals faced financial difficulties. Successive British governments put pressure on the Irish to stop the sale of tickets in the UK. In the 1930s and 1940s this only added to the already bad relations between the two states caused by the 'economic war', de Valera's ending of land annuities payments and Irish neutrality in the second world war. All these were bad enough without an illegal Irish authorised lottery operating in Britain.

Despite its many problems, occasional legislation to regulate the lottery and other forms of political meddling, the Irish sweepstake survived and thrived until the introduction of the Lotto in 1985, now the country's only major lottery. 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 service. The easy money from the sweepstake meant there was no proper planning or co-ordination 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.

Given the sheer scale of the sweepstake, its international

dimension and its lasting impact on Irish society, it is strange that not more work has been done on it. 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. However there are probably more in-depth studies to be done on aspects of the sweepstake and its role at home and abroad. Where Coleman has been a pioneer and laid the groundwork, other historians are sure to follow.

Constabulary duty

John Kirkaldy

THE FRA IN "a policeman's lot is not a happy one" was truly true in Ireland of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Outwardly, the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) and the Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) looked very much like their British counterparts. The reality was very different; for much of the time they were a semi-paramilitary force, an unpopular support of an often deeply unpopular system. Part of their brief was to enforce evictions, counter agrarian crime, prosecute agitation and foil any attempt to remove British rule in Ireland.

Conditions for the average policeman were poor: badly paid; slow promotion; and ridiculous regulations (a policeman in the RIC could not marry until seven years' service). Most policemen in the country were Catholic, who were often recruited from the tenant farmer class and were removed to distant stations. Barracks were strategically centred in the most likely trouble spots. Yet for poor farmers' sons with a smattering of education, joining was often a way out of the grind of rural poverty.

Inspector John Mallon was in his time Ireland's most

famous detective. He was born at a small farm at Meigh, County Armagh, six miles from Newry, in 1839. He rose through the ranks to become the first Catholic Assistant Commissioner of the DMP. His record was remarkable; backed by only about 30 G-men; he kept the lid on revolution in Ireland and

Inspector Mallon : buying Irish patriotism for a five-pound note. Donal P.

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solved some of the most notorious crimes of his day.

He investigated the Fenians, the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), Clan na Gael and the Land League. Thanks to his work, five of the Invincibles, who murdered Chief Secretary Lord Frederick Cavendish and his assistant Thomas Henry Burke in Phoenix Park in 1882, went to the gallows. He investigated the five murders of the Joyce family at Maamtrasna, County Galway, in 1882. Three men were hung for this crime and many more went to prison.

Mallon was the stuff of which legends are made. He was polite and dapper (he had been a draper before joining up); he was at home with the gentry and the poorest. He walked daily through the streets of Dublin, visiting some of the seediest bars in the Liberties and Temple Bar. He had a string of poorly paid informers, of whom he once said: "A good deal of that kind of patriotism can be bought for a five-pound note". He was a devout Catholic and a moderate nationalist. When he arrested Charles Stewart Parnell in October 1881, he was noticeably deferential, allowing the leader to write a couple of letters and finish his