

16 of 1000 DOCUMENTS

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## Floggings and 'sadistic cruelty'

**SECTION:** IRELAND; Child Abuse Report; Pg. 12

**LENGTH:** 1701 words

**OTHER INSTITUTIONS:** St Conleth's Reformatory School, Daingean, Co Offaly

**Opened:** 1940

**Status:** Closed 1973

**Management:** Oblates of Mary Immaculate

DAINGEAN WAS, according to the commission, different from all the other institutions into which it inquired. Unlike the children in industrial schools, most of the residents had been convicted of criminal offences that would, in the case of adults, have been punishable by imprisonment. The boys were aged between 12 and 17.

A report of some 83 pages outlines serious physical abuse such as flogging, which was administered in a cruel, sadistic and excessive manner designed to maximise the terror of all the boys. Black eyes, split lips, and bruising were reported by complainants. There was no control of staff in the infliction of punishment.

The Department of Education displayed an ambivalence to the use of violence in Daingean, even as late as 1969. A Br Enrico administered severe ad-hoc punishments as well as the more ritualistic floggings.

He was described as brutal and unpredictable. There was sexual abuse of the boys by Brothers and lay staff, and sexual abuse of boys by other boys.

The commission concludes that the Department of Education knew that its rules were being breached in a fundamental way but Daingean operated the system of punishment in the knowledge that the department would not interfere.

The Oblate Congregation in its submissions to the commission have not admitted that sexual abuse took place or even considered the possibility.

ELAINE EDWARDS

**Our Lady of Good Counsel**

**Lota, Glanmire, Co Cork**

**Opened:** 1939

**Closed:** 1999

**Management:**Brothers of Charity

THE EVIDENCE heard in respect of Lota, run by the Brothers of Charity, focused mainly on sexual abuse. The commission says the extent of the abuse perpetrated against dependant and vulnerable children was not solely a result of the actions of predatory sexual abusers but also due to the extraordinary ambivalence of the congregation to sexual abuse when committed by one of its own members .

The institution was founded in 1938 as a school for children with learning disabilities. Two Brothers of the congregation were convicted of sexual abuse of children resident in Lota in the period 1952 to 1984. There were 12 complainants and three were heard by the commission in 2002. It found that when sexual abuse was discovered, management failed to take action .

They chose to protect the institution and the reputation of the congregation rather than the children.

A Br Guthrie perpetrated sexual abuse for 32 years with at least 100 victims. When Br Guthrie was removed from his duties in 1984, supervision of him was so inadequate that he still took children from another school on camping trips, and made persistent and unwelcome contact with a boy he had been abusing, to the point of taking him away on further excursions .

The congregation kept records about sex abuse allegations concerning lay people, and routinely involved the gardaí . But the situation was different for Brothers.

ELAINE EDWARDS

**Marlborough House Glasnevin, Dublin**

**Opened:**1944

**Status:**Closed, 1972

**Management:**Dept of Education

PERSONNEL CHANGES were recommended at a short-term detention centre for boys in north Dublin to avoid scandal and criticism of the Department of Education and not to protect the needs of its residents, the report states.

The employment of unsuitable, inadequate and unqualified staff resulted in a brutal, harsh regime with punishment at its core for boys who stayed at Marlborough House in Glasnevin.

The report says the behaviour of the department in respect of the home, for up to 50 boys aged seven to 17 who were on remand or awaiting transfer to industrial schools at any given time, was indefensible .

No concern was expressed by Department [of Education] officials at the appalling treatment and care they knew the boys were receiving.

The report concludes that the department was negligent in its management of the facility and that its attitude caused neglect and suffering to the children who were forced to live in a dangerous environment.

STEVEN CARROLL

**St Joseph s Industrial School**

**Greenmount, Co Cork**

**Opened:**1871

**Status:**Closed, 1959

**Management:**Presentation Brothers

THE DEPARTMENT of Education failed to supervise and was insufficiently objective in addressing the harsh regime of excessive corporal punishment implemented at Greenmount Industrial School in Cork.

The report says evidence of mistreatment of boys who attended the facility was ignored by both the Presentation Brothers and the department and that residents were physically, emotionally and sexually abused by members of staff.

The 1955 investigations into sexual abuse revealed grave failures on the part of the congregation and the diocese, and let two persons who were believed to be guilty of sexual abuse to continue careers dealing with children.

A total of 3,592 boys passed through Greenmount between 1871 and when it was closed on March 31st, 1959. It was the only industrial school operated by the Presentation Brothers.

The report says Greenmount operated a harsh regime, especially in the 1940s, and that the corporal punishment administered by a resident manager, given the pseudonym Br Arrio was excessive.

The report says a major crisis in the affairs of the school came to light in 1955, when a resident manager, given the name Br Carlito, and another Brother were at the centre of allegations of sexual abuse by residents.

It says the Brothers protested their innocence and it is not clear if an investigation found them guilty, but that the bishop and his senior clerical investigator believed the Brothers had engaged in sexual abuse of boys.

Nevertheless, the two men were permitted to move on to new positions dealing with children. There was never any question of reporting them to the Garda, the report states.

STEVEN CARROLL

### **St Mary s School for Deaf Girls**

**Cabra, Dublin**

**Opened:**1846

**Current status:**Still operating

**Management:**Dominican Sisters

ABOUT 20 women who attended a school for deaf girls in north Dublin told the inquiry that they were beaten or had their hands tied behind their back for practising sign language.

Former pupils of St Mary s School for Deaf Girls in Cabra also claimed they were neglected and physically, sexually and emotionally abused at the facility, which was run by the Dominican Sisters.

The Dominican Sisters denied that children were physically punished for signing, but accepted they may have been slapped if they persisted .

Allegations of sexual abuse were made against visiting priests and the congregation admitted that such an allegation was made against a priest, who left soon afterwards and never returned to the school.

STEVEN CARROLL

## **Mary Immaculate School for Deaf Children**

### **Stillorgan, Dublin**

**Opened:**1956

**Status:**Closed 1998

**Management:**Daughters of the Cross of Liege

FORMER PUPILS of a school for deaf boys in south Dublin told the inquiry team that they were lined up to go to the toilet without privacy each morning and given laxatives to ensure they could perform on demand.

Complainants who attended Mary Immaculate School for Deaf Children in Stillorgan also said they were force-fed and beaten for using sign language.

Many of the allegations were made against a nun, given the pseudonym Sr Ernesta in the report. She was described as a very strict authoritarian who enforced the rule against signing and the humiliating toileting regime.

The congregation did not accept that children were beaten for signing, but said they may have received a slap on the hand.

STEVEN CARROLL

## **St Patrick s Industrial School**

### **Kilkenny**

**Opened:**1879

**Status:**Closed 1966

**Management:**Sisters of Charity

A FORMER pupil of St Patrick s Industrial School in Kilkenny told the inquiry team he was beaten and forced to sit in a bath of Jeyes Fluid as a punishment for wetting his bed.

Another witness who attended the school recalled, shortly after being separated from his family, wetting the bed and having a nun come and stick my face in it .

Some 1,282 boys up to the age of 10 passed through St Patrick s during the period investigated, 1933-1966, all but 106 of whom were committed by the courts. The school was run by the Sisters of Charity.

Nine witnesses provided the inquiry team with allegations of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect.

One former pupil said the school was like an orphanage and that it had a very harsh regime as regards discipline .

He told the inquiry he remembered a boy being beaten with a billiard cue in front of an auditorium of other pupils for not remembering his catechism.

I can still hear the swish of a billiard cue. She swung it round with all her might. You could hear the wind going through the billiard cue and the little fellow screaming. It s something you wouldn t forget, he told the team.

The Sisters of Charity accepted that some excessive punishments were inevitable over the years , but no records of

them exists.

Three witnesses gave evidence of being sexually abused by a lay worker in the school.

### **St Joseph s Industrial School**

#### **Kilkenny**

**Opened:**1873

**Status:**Closed 1999

**Management:**Sisters of Charity

NUNS APPEARED to blame the victims of sexual abuse at St Joseph s Industrial School, Kilkenny, and tried to have them transferred, the report found.

The school, run by the Sisters of Charity, opened in 1873 to care for young homeless girls. In 1954, a resident manager with the pseudonym Sr Tova asked the Department of Education for permission to transfer two girls, aged 13 and 15, because of their immoral conduct and bad influence over the younger children.

The department s inspector Dr Anna McCabe was sent to Kilkenny to conduct an inspection.

Sr Tova told her the two girls had corrupted the whole school . She interviewed several girls and discovered that a painter, given the pseudonym Mr Jacobs, had sexually abused a number of girls.

Dr McCabe asked Sr Tova about Mr Jacobs and was told he was a marvellous man and the mainstay of the institution who had been employed by four reverend mothers over 30 years.

The commission found that the Sisters of Charity s position on the case was defensive and the order did not address the appalling plight of Mr Jacobs s victims.

ALISON HEALY

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