



TAKE A WINDING GUIDED WALK ACROSS CORK CITY

AND LEARN ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF TRAILBLAZING WOMEN WOVEN INTO THE HISTORY AND TOPOGRAPHY OF THE CITY AND THEIR GREAT WORK CHALLENGING SEXUAL AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES TO BUILD SAFER AND FAIRER SOCIETIES FOR ALL.



KEY: 1 Cork County Gaol 2 Viewing point for: 2a Good Shepherd Convent 2b Cork City Gaol 2c Cork District Asylum 3 Erinville Hospital 4 Cork Penny Dinners 5 Court House 6 Sexual Health Centre 7 Cork Alliance Centre 8 Sexual Violence Centre 9 Traveller Visibility Group 10 Katie O'Donoghue's tree OTHER REFERENCED SITES: Cork Migrant Centre & Elizabeth Fort

1 CORK COUNTY GAOL

Cork County Gaol served the county area outside Cork City boundaries, with its sister prison, Cork City Gaol, acting for city prisoners. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the County Gaol served as a temporary prison for convicts sentenced to be transported to Australia.

Under the 1878 General Prisons (Ireland) Act, the City Gaol was designated as a female-only prison for the city and county, while the County Gaol was reorganised to house men only. On the day the act came into force, the women from Cork County Gaol were marched over to Cork City Gaol, and vice versa for the men in Cork City Gaol.

During the 1940s, the Cork County Gaol was used as a borstal for boys and later as a remand prison.

Learn more about prisoners who were incarcerated here including republican prisoners Alfred O'Rahilly, then a Professor of Mathematical Physics at University College Cork and a Lord Mayor of Cork, Terence MacSwiney.

2(a) THE GOOD SHEPHERD ASYLUM

From the foundation of the State in 1922 until the closure of the last Laundry in 1996, the McAleese report (2013) claimed that approximately 10,000 women were known to have entered the Magdalen institutions.*

Cork City's third asylum was established in early 1870 following the Contagious Diseases Acts as the 'Good Shepherd Asylum' at Sundays Well, which was supported and managed by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

Its aim was to reform 'fallen women' and train them in 'useful' skills, but it soon began receiving women and girls from a variety of channels, including the judicial system and transfers from other institutions such as Industrial Schools.

We discuss how women who transgressed were treated, through containment, confinement, and 'industry', and the importance of recognition and justice for the women and their families.

We introduce the Good Shepherd Asylum's most famous child resident, Little Nellie of Holy God.

* Numerous advocacy groups such as Justice for Magdalenes Research, point out, the official statistics significantly underestimate the number of women and girls confined.

2(b) CORK CITY GAOL

Cork City Gaol was built to replace the medieval, overcrowded gaol at North Gate Bridge, Elizabeth Deane's construction firm was contracted to build the new gaol. Elizabeth's son, Thomas Deane, was commissioned to design the gaol. In 1824, the building was completed and accepted its first prisoners.

The Great Famine (1845-1852) resulted in many starving and impoverished men, women and children incarcerated for crimes of poverty.

Learn more about Cork City Gaol's history, prison conditions and its prisoners including women and young children incarcerated for lengthy spells for crimes driven by poverty; and revolutionary woman, politician and activist Countess Markievicz sentenced to four months for a 'seditious speech'.

Dr Lucy Smith, the second female to graduate in medicine from Queen's College Cork, was the visiting physician when it operated as a female-only prison until c. 1922.

2(c) OUR LADY'S PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL

Due to overcrowding and harsh conditions at Cork Lunatic Asylum, a new asylum named Eglinton Asylum was commissioned in Cork and opened in 1852.

The asylum was one of the largest in Europe. Built to house five hundred patients, at various stages, there were up one thousand patients here. In 19th century Ireland "Social problems were pressing; institutions were the answer; and the mentally ill were among those most desperately in need of care." (Brendan Kelly, 2016: p.43).

From 1864 onwards the asylum became overcrowded with conditions deteriorating and by 1872 occupancy at the asylum reached 661. With issues of overcrowding, the asylums in Ireland struggled to cope with the level of demand placed upon them.

In 1926 Cork District Lunatic Asylum was renamed Cork Mental Hospital and in 1952, the hospital's name was changed to a more socially acceptable title: Our Lady's Psychiatric Hospital. Our Lady's Hospital closed its doors to its last patient in 2002.

3 ERINVILLE HOSPITAL

Cork Lying-in Hospital (later known as Erinville) has its origins at the very end of the 18th century and came about because of the "voluntary efforts of a group of energetic women and men" (St.Leger, 2006 p.25) and the reforms and developments in science, medicine and maternity practices.

Dr Lucy Smith, the second female graduate in medicine from Queen's College Cork, worked as a physician

in the Erinville Maternity Hospital for 28 years from 1901 to 1929. Alongside her dedication to maternity work, she also treated women prisoners in Cork City Gaol. A memorial in the form of a bed was dedicated to Dr Lucy E. Smith at the Erinville Hospital and a room on the fourth floor of The Hub, UCC.

Erinville is also a maternity hospital where symphysiotomy was practised.

"An estimated 1,500 symphysiotomies were performed in Ireland on two generations of women, mainly in private Catholic hospitals, from 1944 to 1987. Survivors of Symphysiotomy (SoS), the national membership organisation for casualties of this operation, formed in 2002. SoS continues to campaign for truth and justice for women and their families, given the nature of this involuntary, unjustified and harmful practice". (Marie O'Connor 2024).

SoS-Survivors-of-Symphsiotomy can be found on Facebook.

4 CORK PENNY DINNERS

Penny Dinners is one of Cork's oldest caring organisations. Its roots can be traced as far back to the soup kitchens run by the Society of Friends (Quakers) during the Great Famine in the 1840s.

Cork Penny Dinners is a symbol of hope and compassion for the people of Cork. Friendly volunteers produce fresh, nourishing meals seven days a week and offer support to the homeless community, families, the elderly and all those in need. Cork Penny Dinners relies entirely on voluntary contributions to operate, and all its services are free of charge.

Caitriona Twomey, another of Cork's inspirational women, is a volunteer coordinator and Trustee at Cork Penny Dinners. Over the last twenty-plus years, Caitriona has overseen the expansion of Cork Penny Dinner's range of services and social inclusion programmes, helping people address addiction issues and supporting positive mental health.

www.corkpennydinners.ie

5 CORK CITY COURTHOUSE

Cork City Courthouse an imposing building on Washington Street, is described as "one of the best examples of Neo-Classical public architecture in Ireland". At this landmark, our guided walk pauses to consider the experience of women in the criminal justice system.

Many women incarcerated in Ireland are either remanded pre-trial or sentenced to non-violent, minor offences such as non-payment of fines, road traffic or theft-related offences.



We explain how issues like overcrowding in the prison system and the gendered pains of incarceration in a system designed for men, affects women. We look at the stigma, shame and societal judgement of women incarcerated in Ireland, especially mothers, but we also examine their strength, resilience and courage in accessing support, and breaking the cycle of disadvantage and crime, often with little societal support.

6 CORK SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE, DR JAMES BARRY & GENDER REBELS CORK

At the site of the Sexual Health Centre in Cork, we highlight the importance of the Centre's ethos of 'No Bias, No Judgement, No Exception', especially in relation to addressing sexual inequalities, sexual health and providing a warm welcome to all.

The Sexual Health Centre provides "Up-to-date information, support and education in the areas of: Sexual Health; Wellbeing; Sexuality and Healthy Relationships in an inclusive, welcoming and confidential environment".

We also connect with Gender Rebels Cork and the work of historians, writers and activists on gender non-conformity and the trans movement and trans-specific history, who place Dr James Barry as a significant figure in that history.

www.sexualhealthcentre.com

7 SHEILA CONNOLLY & THE CORK ALLIANCE CENTRE

The Cork Alliance Centre was established in 2003 with the support of the Probation Service. It works with both men and women on release from prison.

With the overarching vision of desistance from crime, it seeks to facilitate the process of personal recovery and empowerment, alongside ongoing support and motivation. The Cork Alliance team believe people have the power and commitment to change their lives.



The inspirational Sheila Connolly, Chief Executive (CEO) of the Cork Alliance Centre, worked for many years in East Africa. After moving back to Cork, Sheila worked alongside the Probation Service as a Training Employment Officer for The Linkage Programme, now known as IASIO (Irish Association for Social Integration of Offenders), before being offered a position setting up the Cork Alliance Centre project.

www.corkalliancecentre.com

8 MARY CRILLY, SEXUAL VIOLENCE CENTRE CORK & THE COMMUNITY HUB

Sexual Violence Centre Cork was set up on International Women's Day in 1983 by the trailblazing feminist Mary Crilly to provide services to victims of all forms of sexual violence in Cork City and County.

Mary was awarded the highest Civic Honour, 'Freedom of the City of Cork' in 2022. The Community Hub was launched in 2024 to provide a welcome space, hospitality and community building events and workshops.

The Centre has two main aims: to work towards the elimination of sexual violence in society and to provide the highest quality of services to victims of sexual violence.

The Centre supports victims, free of charge, in person or online. Support is also offered to friends, families and professionals who are supporting people subjected to sexual violence

www.sexualviolence.ie

9 TRAVELLER VISIBILITY GROUP

Traveller Visibility Group is a Traveller-led Cork-based organisation that brings the settled community and Travellers together to facilitate community development work for the Traveller community.

The Traveller Visibility Group was set up in 1992 by three pioneering Traveller women: Anne Bürke, Helen Casey and Chrissie O'Sullivan, who came together to advocate on behalf of their community, which at the time were living in unofficial sites throughout the city without basic services like water and electricity and toilets.

At this time, there was no seat at the table for Traveller's and their

voices were mediated by others, who spoke for them rather than with them.

The three women who co-founded TVG set out to change this and TVG is founded on the principles of community development as well as 'Nothing About Us Without Us'.

TVG supports Travellers throughout the city and in collaboration with the Cork Traveller Women's Network and other local and national organisations ensures Traveller voices are heard and are well represented in all decision-making forums.

www.tvgcork.ie

10 KATIE O'DONOGHUE'S HAWTHORN TREE

In March 2017, Traveller activist Katie O'Donoghue and the Lord Mayor of Cork planted a hawthorn tree to mark the year that the Irish state began recognising Travellers as an ethnic group with a unique and valuable heritage, language, identity, and culture.

Katie O'Donoghue was a trailblazing Traveller woman who, until her death in 2020, was a rock of wisdom and support to the two Traveller organisations here in Cork. She was a founding member of Cork Travellers' Women's Network and campaigned for Traveller cultural and human rights for over 40 years.

See more on the website: www.feministwalkcork.ie

We do not visit Cork Migrant Centre on this walk (see *Feminist Walk 1*) but draw attention to the trailblazing work of Naomi Masheti and her team in advocating on behalf of migrant children, families, and communities through a strengths-based approach and in addressing the harms of the Direct Provision System.

Elizabeth Fort was at one time a convict depot where women (some with their children) awaited transportation to Australia and the island of Tasmania (Black and Associates, 2019).

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Maggie O'Neill and Conach Gibson Feinblum, July 2024.



To find enhanced information about the project, walk stops, references and the incredible women of Cork, please visit www.feministwalkcork.ie

Contact: maggie.oneill@ucc.ie



USE YOUR PHONE TO SCAN THE QR CODE & VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION...

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