IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:31 Page 374

research to influence the mass coverage of the centenary of 1914. If they do not, then the public will be left largely informed in its view of August 1914 by voices such as that of Lieutenant The Honourable George Colthurst St Barleigh in *Blackadder goes forth* (1989). That character left us all with a vivid picture of 'Myself and the fellows leap-frogging down to the Cambridge recruiting office, then playing tiddly-winks in the queue'. That view speaks for some, but far from all.

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EXHUMING PASSIONS: THE PRESSURE OF THE PAST IN IRELAND AND AUSTRALIA. Edited by Katie Holmes and Stuart Ward. Pp 304. Dublin: Irish Academic Press. 2011. €45.

This collection originated in workshops held in Canberra and Dublin in 2009–10 and is composed of fourteen chapters, plus an introduction, written by eighteen historians of Australia and Ireland. Unlike most books that deal with the two countries, *Exhuming passions* is not concerned with migration or diaspora. As the subtitle indicates, it aims to investigate what the editors term the 'pressure of the past' which they define as 'the resort to history as a means of waging contemporary conflict' (p. 2). Thus the chapters focus on recent controversies rather than on history *per se*. Part One addresses 'Legacies of Loss', that is 'trauma' and the 'recovery of marginalized voices', and it contains chapters on child abuse in Ireland, the removal of indigenous children from their families in Australia and official apologies (p. 11). Part Two is concerned with 'Legacies of Empire', particularly the 'eclipse of the European imperial order since the 1950s and 1960s', and it considers First World War commemoration, monarchy, the environment, monuments in Canberra and Dublin and the treatment of history in some recent novels and films (p. 12).

The book, however, seeks 'no simple correlation' between Australia and Ireland as 'post-colonial societies'; rather it aims to employ both as 'case studies' of a 'peculiar brand of bitterly disputed remembrance' (pp 13, 2). In an interesting introduction, Holmes and Ward readily acknowledge that the collection is a contribution to the field of memory studies, specifically to what Jay Winter has termed the 'second memory boom' originating in the 1970s (p. 10). Nevertheless, they are rightly sceptical of formulations like 'collective memory' and 'social memory', suggesting that 'the pressure of the past is more a matter of perception than verifiable proposition' (p. 6). They also draw attention to the 'performance of memory', arguing that examples include the peace process in Northern Ireland and the reconciliation process in Australia. These have sought 'mutual accommodation' among 'divided people' by remembering the past, but with the stated aim of not 'reigniting the very enmities that needed to be bridged' (p. 5).

Anne Dolan begins the collection with a chapter asking: 'What do we do with Doris Hunt, and the many Doris Hunts?' (p. 34). In 1921 Hunt, as a child of about ten, had witnessed the killing of her policeman father in a Dublin hotel room by the young gunmen of Michael Collins's squad. In 1934 she appeared as a 'sad case' before the London courts with a history of convictions for shoplifting. The chapter amounts to an eloquent plea for the 'disjointed and discomforting voice' of victims like Hunt to be heard. Yet, at the same time, Dolan acknowledges the historian's dilemma of 'how to deal with past hates when hatred simply does not fit the wider political agenda' (pp 34, 31). Mark Finnane's chapter takes up the issue of political agendas by investigating 'apology politics', or the 'ways in which the state's responsibility for the harms done to those in their care has escalated into a matter of sovereign state responsibility in recent decades' (p. 93). He then proceeds to consider why some groups in both Australia and Ireland have received apologies while others have not. In her contribution, Lindsey Earner-Byrne asks uncomfortable questions about responsibility, particularly with regard to the thousands of impoverished and

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IHS vol 38 no 150 dec 2012:IHistS7.qxd 04/12/2012 09:31 Page 375

neglected Irish children who were committed to industrial schools. She is not satisfied that all the guilt for the abuse of such children rests with church and state. On the contrary, she portrays Irish society as wholly complicit in the criminalisation of poverty and the development of what other writers have termed a system of 'penal welfare' and 'coercive confinement' in which sexual predators were allowed to flourish (p. 58).

In the second part of the book, several chapters consider the 'adaptability' of national myths, particularly in terms of the First World War, Gallipoli, the 1916 Rising and the Somme (p. 160). Roisín Higgins charts from the 1960s onwards the 'changing fortunes' and 'reinvention' of commemorations of 25 April 1915 – Anzac Day in Australia – and 24 April 1916 – the start of the Easter Rising in Ireland (p. 145). Just as celebration of the latter reached new heights in Ireland in 1966, the former was coming under attack in Australia in the context of the Vietnam War; and, whereas in 1991 an Irish taoiseach was playing down the significance of the latter in the context of the Troubles, in 1990 an Australian prime minister had gone in person to Turkey for the first time to lead the commemoration at the actual site of the Anzac landings. The other key date here is, of course, 1 July 1916. The collection focuses more on the Republic than on Northern Ireland, but in a chapter entitled the 'Deficit of Remembrance' Dominic Bryan and Stuart Ward pay some attention to the Somme. They note that its commemoration was taken up during the Troubles by Protestant paramilitary organisations, notably the Ulster Volunteer Force. But they also examine how the Republic has recently come to embrace 1914–18 as 'our war', with the 1917 battle of Messines featuring prominently because it offers 'a more inclusive narrative than the Somme' – a narrative that northern unionists and southern nationalists can celebrate together (p. 177).

There is not space here to consider all fourteen chapters, half of which deal with Australia or Ireland, while the other half compare the two. But this is an original and stimulating collection. Many of the individual chapters offer insightful reflections on important and difficult contemporary issues. However, the book is more than the sum of its parts because, collectively, it signposts important new roads for the comparative study of the past and the present in both countries.

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RETURNING HOME: IRISH EX-SERVICEMEN AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR. By Bernard Kelly. Pp ix, 240, illus. Dublin: Merrion. 2012. €45 hardback; €17.99 paperback.

Bernard Kelly has written an engaging and timely study of the tens of thousands of Irish citizens who volunteered to fight for Britain during the Second World War. He draws attention to the scale of volunteering which was unprecedented when compared to other neutral states (pp 5–6). The main focus of Kelly's book is on the experience of ex-servicemen at the end of the war, though he also provides important insights into other aspects of the volunteers' experiences. He includes an assessment of attitudes and motivations, as well as discussing issues such as health, finance and remembrance.

The book also features a careful review of the controversy surrounding those members of the Irish Defence Forces who deserted during the Emergency. Their experience has been overlooked for the most part and it is only during the past fifteen years or so that attention has been paid to them by historians. Kelly draws on this existing literature and adds significantly to our knowledge of the topic while perceptively interrogating a number of themes and questions that the phenomenon presents to the historian. His own interviews with veterans, as well as other oral histories, are at the heart of this study and Kelly judiciously draws on individual views to illustrate the key themes of the book. This approach makes for a vivid narrative and the author successfully links this with his

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