

Press Release:

From unmarried mothers to vagrants-what was life really like under the Irish Poor Law?

Virginia Crossman provides a fresh perspective on the Poor Law in Ireland between 1850 and 1914

(19th July 2019, Liverpool University Press): *Poverty and the Poor Law in Ireland, 1850–1914* by Virginia Crossman does not adopt the traditional historical focus on the measures taken to relieve poverty and their political context. Instead, this book investigates the experience of being poor and identifies the strategies adopted by poor people to negotiate an inhospitable economic and social climate in Ireland.

Crossman's aim was to produce a book of great value to scholars and students interested in the Poor Law (est. 1838), and nineteenth-century Irish society. Crossman facilitates the integration between the analysis of contemporary understandings towards poverty and the discussion of local relief practices to uncover the attitudes and responses of those both giving and receiving relief during a key milestone in Ireland's socio-economic history.

She achieves this through numerous local case studies that offer a deeper and more wide-ranging assessment of the Irish poor law than any study previously undertaken. For instance, these case studies explore key issues such as entitlement and eligibility, as well as the treatment of so-called 'problem' groups such as unmarried mothers and vagrants. In effect, Crossman gives a voice to those members of Irish society who endured such gruelling hardships at the time.

'This is an important and timely book. Professor Crossman's analysis is empathetic, robust and engaging. It sheds important light on the nature of the Poor Law from a variety of perspectives and this is to be welcomed' (***Irish Studies Review***).

If you are interested in purchasing this book can do so via [Liverpool University Press official website](#)

Virginia Crossman was Professor of Modern Irish History at Oxford Brookes University until her retirement.