

If my wife Audrey no legal rights over

SAME-SEX couples with children feel they are being 'ignored' by the State since the historic marriage equality referendum.

With a protest outside the Dáil on the horizon for next week, same-sex married couples with children have highlighted the uphill battle they face to legitimise their families and obtain parental rights equal to heterosexual couples. One of the most upsetting issues for same sex

By **Claire Scott**

couples is that birth certificates do not currently give parents the option of listing the names of both mothers, or fathers.

In the case of lesbian same-sex couples, only the woman who carries the child as a result of a sperm donation is officially recognised as the

parent – but not her married wife. And in order for a child to be given an Irish passport, the birth mother has to sign a declaration of sole guardianship and renounce any rights of anyone else having guardianship of her child, as birth certificates do not currently give parents the option of listing the names of both mothers – nor both fathers who adopt a child.

In Westmeath, Trisha Gormley and her wife Audrey have been struggling with the lack of legislation since the birth of their daughter, who will be one year old at the end of this month.

Trisha met Audrey, who is originally from Mexico, in 2004 and the pair moved to Spain where, in that same year, marriage equality came into law. In 2008, they tied the knot in Spain. Then happily married, Trisha and Audrey decided to move back to Ireland as they were heartened to know that marriage equality was finally on its way here in 2015.

Around this time, the Children and Family Relationships Bill was signed by President Michael D Higgins to regulate families who chose donor-assisted pregnancies.

However, to this day, crucial parts of this legislation have not commenced which has resulted in the non-biological partner of the birth

'I can't understand how there's been such a delay'

mother having no parental rights.

'There was such euphoria following the referendum and we took it for granted,' Trisha told the Irish Mail on Sunday. 'We thought the Government would put all these laws through and that it would be a priority for them, because people had come out to vote.'

'It was clear that people wanted these laws to be commenced. I can't understand how, three years on, there's been such a delay.'

At the time of their daughter's birth in 2017, Trisha and Audrey didn't realise what lay ahead for them.

'I had my suspicions at the hospital because the paperwork just had "Mother" and "Father" on it. I thought that was disheartening, but I just thought they needed to update the paperwork. It wasn't until six weeks after we tried to register our child's birth certificate that we were told I wouldn't be included as a co-parent.'

'When I contacted Simon Harris's office and asked why the law hadn't been put through yet, we kept hearing words like "shortly" and "imminently" but nothing was happening.'

In the eyes of the State, Trisha is not recognised as a parent of her child. If Audrey died, she would legally have no parental rights over their daughter and their child could go into the care of Audrey's next of kin.

'Under the law, it would be my wife's family who would be recognised as next of kin for our daughter.'

'I was told in two years' time I could go before a judge and ask if I could be put down as the guardian of my daughter and show that I've been looking after my own daughter for two years, which is crazy. It's a ridiculous situation.'

'It's frightening to think there are so



many gay families out there who have to wait two years to be given guardianship of their own children.'

One of the most difficult things the parents faced was applying for their daughter's passport.

'Because the laws recognising me as a parent have not commenced, they can't put my name on her birth certifi-

What is the issue?

Prior to the Marriage Equality Referendum in 2015, President Michael D Higgins signed the Children and Family Relationships Bill which would provide same-sex couples with equal parental rights to heterosexual couples. It would also provide sufficient rights for the parents of children who had donor-assisted reproduction. As a result of the Bill going through, many lesbian couples began planning their families believing that once the child was born they would both be recognised as its parents. But crucial parts of the legislation still have not commenced meaning a donor-conceived child's mother

died I would have our baby daughter

Despite the fanfare over same-sex marriages, the State is ignoring the status of gay parents and their children, say families

TRISHA AND AUDREY (WESTMEATH)

'It's frightening to think there are so many gay families who have to wait two years to get guardianship.'

RANAE AND AUDREY (WITH BABY AVA)

Ranae was forced to sign an affidavit saying she was the sole parent and didn't know who the father was.



cate and as my wife is not Irish, our daughter can't claim her citizenship through me.

'We were told our daughter isn't an Irish citizen and she'll have to wait three years of residency and then two years to apply for citizenship, so she'll be five years old before she'll be able to have an Irish passport. The

cannot have her same-sex spouse recognised as a parent until she applies for guardianship after two years.

Who does this affect? After the referendum result parents were told it would take a year to commence the legislation but three years on, nothing has changed. The lack of rights for same-sex parents who choose donor-assisted pregnancy specifically affects lesbian couples

other crazy thing, even if the birth mother is Irish but categorised as "married" on the child's birth cert they can't issue the passport because whom the mother is married to is not on the child's birth certificate.

'So, in order for a child to be given an Irish passport, the birth mother must sign a declaration of sole

as the parent who does not carry the child is not recognised as a guardian or parent by the State. **What does it mean for families?** It's possible that if the birth mother dies, the co-parent of the child will not have any legal rights to keep their child. The birth mother's next of kin will be more eligible to raise the child than her surviving parent.

What is the passports issue? Parents face difficulties applying for passports for their child. As the birth mother is registered as married on the child's birth certificate but her spouse isn't named, she is asked by the State to sign an affidavit stating she is the sole-parent guardian. In effect,

guardianship which means you renounce any rights of anyone else to have guardianship of your child.

'Out of all the upsetting things that have happened to us, that was the most. To actually be told by the Department, "Dear parents – sign this form saying you're a single parent" was just bizarre and very dis-

for a child to be given an Irish passport, the birth mother must renounce any rights of anyone else to have guardianship. She is also the only person who can legally be the decision-maker during medical emergencies involving the child. **What about same-sex male couples and their children?** They have also been affected as there is no legislation

on surrogacy. A Bill was meant to be brought forward by the Department of Health in 2017 but has yet to materialise. If same-sex male couples choose to adopt, they are not permitted to access the same adoption leave rights as other parents. **What's next?** For same-sex couples who want both their names on their child's birth cert, Minister Simon Harris will bring legislation to the Dáil next week, which he says will be brought in this summer.

SUPPORT: President Michael D Higgins

on the way. They say after three years they never thought they would still be fighting for equality for their family.

Speaking to the MoS, Ranae said: 'We always knew we wanted kids, but we decided we were ready to go through IVF in early 2015. We attended a clinic in Dublin first, but we quickly found out we wouldn't be allowed to do reciprocal IVF in Ireland. [This is where you use one partner's eggs, donor sperm and the other partner carries the baby.]

'So we decided to go to Spain and were successful by November 2015 when I got pregnant on our second round of IVF.'

Ranae said they had no idea the legislation giving equality to her family hadn't commenced and that her wife wouldn't have equal parenting rights over their child.

'From the moment Ava was born, it was made very clear to us that Audrey was not seen as Ava's parent. When we registered her birth, Audrey was not allowed to be registered and they would not even speak to her directly, only to me.'

'I am a single mother in the eyes of the law'

'Same story when we got her passport. I was forced to sign an affidavit declaring that I was the sole guardian and didn't know who the father was. Any form or permission that has been needed for Ava since day one can only be legally signed by me. I am technically a single mother in the eyes of the law... even though I am married and even though Ava clearly has two parents.'

Given that Ranae was forced to sign an affidavit stating she is a lone parent, it's unclear if Audrey's parental rights will be immediately reinstated when the law is commenced.

Ranae said: 'There is no one who has been able to give us definitive answers to any questions like this. So we are quite in the dark until it's actually put into practice and we can see where we stand.'

'We feel so let down by our Government's lack of care for our family. Everyone looks at Ireland as an amazing place which has done so much for the LGBTQ community in recent years. But in reality, until our families are equal, how can this be the case?'

When asked about the delay in commencement of the 2015 bill and the lack of communication with concerned same-sex couples, a Department of Health spokesman said: 'A number of technical drafting issues have come to light in relation to Parts 2 & 3 of the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015.'

'Consideration of a resolution to these issues and the likely need for primary legislation are close to conclusion and the Department expects to be in a position to progress the matter shortly.'

news@mailonsunday.ie

UP TO
**HALF
PRICE**
on our new Spring Collection

**ENDS
TOMORROW
on this sofa**



now save
up to
€350
when you buy 2 or
more products

**NOW ONLY
€2079**
SAVE €1040

The Sublime
corner sofa
after event €3119

€57.75
a month for 3 years
0% No deposit and
no interest - ever!

DFS at Carrickmines and Blanchardstown, Dublin, Mahon Point, Cork and Limerick
DFS at The Park, Carrickmines, Dublin. Tel: (01) 294 6484.
DFS at City Gate Park, Mahon Point, Cork. Tel: (021) 435 9306.
DFS Limerick, Ballysison Road. Tel: (061) 439 678.
Opening hours: Mon to Wed: 9am - 8pm, Thur and Fri: 9am - 9pm (9am - 8pm Cork and Limerick), Sat: 9am - 6pm, Sun: 11am - 6pm.
For Ireland's largest sofa collection, visit your nearest store, order direct at dfs.ie or call free on 1800 535 580 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Sublime corner sofa, two scatter cushions and one bolster included. To qualify for the up to €350 off, orders must comprise of at least one made to order sofa when bought with any other piece of made to order upholstered furniture. The Spend and Save offer expires at midnight on Monday 16th July 2018. The offer can be used against new orders only and cannot be combined with any other voucher offer. One Spend and Save discount per household. Orders must be placed by telephone or in-store. Credit subject to acceptance. Credit is provided by external finance companies as determined by DFS. 3 years interest free credit from date of delivery. Delivery charges apply. After event price applies from 26.06.18 - see in-store or online for details. DFS is a division of DFS Trading Ltd. Registered in England and Wales No 01739590. Redhouse Interchange, Doncaster, DN6 7NA. dfs.ie

dfs

The boy who

By Claire Scott

THAT St Patrick's Guild falsified birth records is no surprise to Tim Murphy – one of many who endured years of heartache resulting from the scandal of the export of 'illegitimate' babies from Ireland.

Tusla is expected to contact the 126 people whose births were falsely registered by the Dublin adoption agency over the coming weeks.

The State agency said it will approach those affected – many of whom are in their 60s and 70s – in a 'sensitive' manner. It is estimated that almost 100 of these may not know they are adopted.

Many adoptees have spent decades searching for information about their origins.

One of these is Tim, now 71, and married with two daughters in Beavercreek, Ohio, in the US. He spent almost 12 years from early 1987 trying to find information about his birth mother.

Despite his lengthy search, he never gave up hope.

Tim's birth cert was fraudulently registered on October 28, 1949, after his mother Ellen was brought to the now notorious St Patrick's

'My mother went home alone after she had me'

Guild by his grandmother to give birth and have Tim adopted out.

Tim's birth certificate and his baptismal certificate were registered under a false name, Anthony Kelly.

His birth mother was in a relationship with a Protestant man named Billy Butterfield, whom she loved but, because she was from a Catholic home, her mother Kate found this unacceptable.

Tim believes Ellen would have married Billy if he had been allowed to and, until her death, his birth mother kept a picture of him with her.

Tim's birth certificate bears no mention of his father and his birth mother's real surname was replaced.

Up until the mid-90s he falsely believed his mother's name was Ellen Kelly.

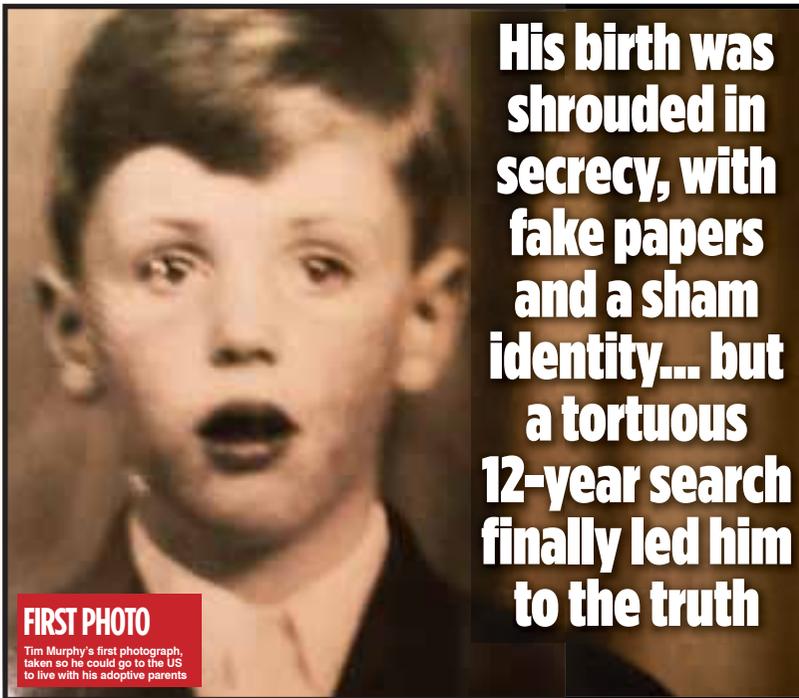
He also believed his birth name was Anthony Kelly but that too turned out to be incorrect.

Speaking with the Irish Mail on Sunday, he said: 'In order to maintain the secrecy, Kate [his grandmother] more or less did all the arrangements.'

'She brought Ellen from their home in Mayo to St Patrick's Guild in Temple Hill, Blackrock. She stayed in a small apartment on Gardiner Street nearby before she had me.'

'After I was born, my mother had to travel back to Co. Mayo alone and, after that, no words were spoken of what happened. It was all very secretive.'

Following his birth, Tim was sent



His birth was shrouded in secrecy, with fake papers and a sham identity... but a tortuous 12-year search finally led him to the truth

FIRST PHOTO

Tim Murphy's first photograph, taken so he could go to the US to live with his adoptive parents



IN THE DARK Maria Dumbell has met a brick wall in her search

to several different foster homes in Dublin, and in Enniskerry Co Wicklow, until he was seven years old when he was adopted by an American couple and his name was changed from Anthony Kelly to Tim Murphy.

His first photograph was taken for his visa and passport photo, so he could travel to the US.

Jim had to trace their roots. 'He had been searching for so long and had not got very far. The injustice of his situation really got to me

'Decades later, I have no birth cert

ONE woman whose birth certificate was falsified – and who is still struggling to get information about her birth family is Maria Dumbell, 68, who is now living in Liverpool.

Maria, pictured opposite page as a child, was illegally adopted and has spent decades trying to fight for records held by adoption agencies in Ireland to be made public. After searching since she was a teenager for her real birth certificate, Maria still hasn't made any headway.

She feels she could be one of the

adopted family but was curious about his origins in Ireland, and began asking questions in 1987.

Years went by without answers until Tim met researcher Jim Jackman, now based in Castleknock, Dublin, who has helped many adoptees, particularly the so-called 'Banished Babies' sent to the USA, attempt to trace their roots.

Jim had to trace their roots. 'He had been searching for so long and had not got very far. The injustice of his situation really got to me

and I decided I was going to go all the way with this and leave no stone unturned.'

Both Jim and Tim tracked down Tim's childhood foster parents, Henry and Mary Byrne.

Henry confirmed in a letter that the name on Tim's birth certificate, Anthony Kelly, had been falsified and was used to issue him with a passport.

'They also spent years trying to get

information from the Guild but it wasn't until a 'kindly nun' gave out a piece of information that opened up a new line of inquiry.

Tim said: 'The main clue came from the fact that they got a new nun – a younger nun who wasn't so set in her ways.'

'She was able to produce a letter written by my grandmother that detailed the events of my mother going to the hospital – all the details

were in the letter.'

That letter featured a name and an address in Birmingham, England: 'I focused all my attention on this address,' said Jim. 'This was factual information and with the help of British civil servants and librarians, which eventually led to the successful finding of Tim's mother.'

Tim discovered he also had a half-sister, Eileen, with whom he made

contact in 1997. In 1998, he and his wife Connie made the trip to Birmingham to see his birth mother for the first time.

Remembering this long-awaited meeting with his birth mother and half-sister, Tim said: 'They both met us at the airport and gave us flowers. They were very welcoming and

very receptive. It felt very fulfilling – something I'd hoped for all my life. It was one chapter where a lot of the mysteries of my birth were resolved.'

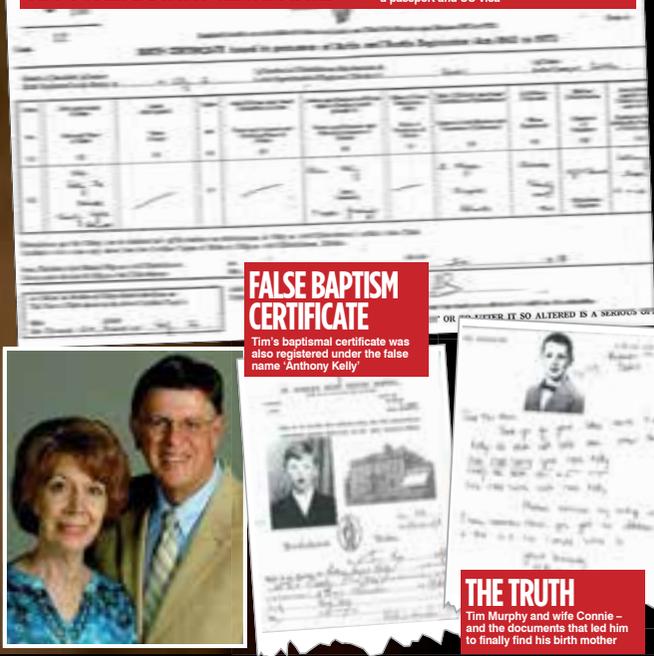
'My mother had nice things to say, she always expressed regret and she always thought about me.'

'She expressed regret that she missed a big part of my life. It was very heart-warming to hear those comments from her.'

never gave up

TIM'S FALSE BIRTH CERTIFICATE

The name on Tim's birth certificate, Anthony Kelly, had been falsified and was used to secure a passport and US Visa



FALSE BAPTISM CERTIFICATE

Tim's baptismal certificate was also registered under the false name 'Anthony Kelly'

THE TRUTH

Tim Murphy and wife Connie – and the documents that led him to finally find his birth mother

COMMENT page 21

information from the Guild but it wasn't until a 'kindly nun' gave out a piece of information that opened up a new line of inquiry.

Tim said: 'The main clue came from the fact that they got a new nun – a younger nun who wasn't so set in her ways.'

'She was able to produce a letter written by my grandmother that detailed the events of my mother going to the hospital – all the details

were in the letter.'

That letter featured a name and an address in Birmingham, England: 'I focused all my attention on this address,' said Jim. 'This was factual information and with the help of British civil servants and librarians, which eventually led to the successful finding of Tim's mother.'

Tim discovered he also had a half-sister, Eileen, with whom he made

contact in 1997. In 1998, he and his wife Connie made the trip to Birmingham to see his birth mother for the first time.

Remembering this long-awaited meeting with his birth mother and half-sister, Tim said: 'They both met us at the airport and gave us flowers. They were very welcoming and

very receptive. It felt very fulfilling – something I'd hoped for all my life. It was one chapter where a lot of the mysteries of my birth were resolved.'

'My mother had nice things to say, she always expressed regret and she always thought about me.'

'She expressed regret that she missed a big part of my life. It was very heart-warming to hear those comments from her.'

information from the Guild but it wasn't until a 'kindly nun' gave out a piece of information that opened up a new line of inquiry.

Tim said: 'The main clue came from the fact that they got a new nun – a younger nun who wasn't so set in her ways.'

'She was able to produce a letter written by my grandmother that detailed the events of my mother going to the hospital – all the details

were in the letter.'

That letter featured a name and an address in Birmingham, England: 'I focused all my attention on this address,' said Jim. 'This was factual information and with the help of British civil servants and librarians, which eventually led to the successful finding of Tim's mother.'

Tim discovered he also had a half-sister, Eileen, with whom he made

contact in 1997. In 1998, he and his wife Connie made the trip to Birmingham to see his birth mother for the first time.

Remembering this long-awaited meeting with his birth mother and half-sister, Tim said: 'They both met us at the airport and gave us flowers. They were very welcoming and

very receptive. It felt very fulfilling – something I'd hoped for all my life. It was one chapter where a lot of the mysteries of my birth were resolved.'

'My mother had nice things to say, she always expressed regret and she always thought about me.'

'She expressed regret that she missed a big part of my life. It was very heart-warming to hear those comments from her.'

information from the Guild but it wasn't until a 'kindly nun' gave out a piece of information that opened up a new line of inquiry.

Tim said: 'The main clue came from the fact that they got a new nun – a younger nun who wasn't so set in her ways.'

'She was able to produce a letter written by my grandmother that detailed the events of my mother going to the hospital – all the details

were in the letter.'

That letter featured a name and an address in Birmingham, England: 'I focused all my attention on this address,' said Jim. 'This was factual information and with the help of British civil servants and librarians, which eventually led to the successful finding of Tim's mother.'

Tim discovered he also had a half-sister, Eileen, with whom he made

contact in 1997. In 1998, he and his wife Connie made the trip to Birmingham to see his birth mother for the first time.

Remembering this long-awaited meeting with his birth mother and half-sister, Tim said: 'They both met us at the airport and gave us flowers. They were very welcoming and

very receptive. It felt very fulfilling – something I'd hoped for all my life. It was one chapter where a lot of the mysteries of my birth were resolved.'

'My mother had nice things to say, she always expressed regret and she always thought about me.'

'She expressed regret that she missed a big part of my life. It was very heart-warming to hear those comments from her.'

Some of the 126 may have died not knowing they were adopted

IT'S unknown whether a number of the 126 who have been found to have falsified birth certs have already died not knowing they were adopted,

according to the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

A department official confirmed that they do not yet know who has died out of those whose birth certificates were incorrectly registered by St Patrick's Guild from 1949 to 1969.

A spokeswoman for Tusla declined to comment on whether the next of kin or the children of any adoptees who have died will be notified that their family member was adopted.

Mike Milotte, the author of *Banished Babies* said it will be very difficult to assess the true extent of this scandal. 'None of this comes as a surprise to those in authority. They have known about these practices for, literally, six-and-a-half decades and have, for the most part, turned a blind eye.'

Moire Maguire, who has carried out significant research on Ireland's foreign adoption history

in Maynooth University, said: 'The adoptive parents knew what they were doing when they signed those fraudulent birth certificates, and one assumes that they did it with the intention of keeping the adoptions secret. It seems highly unlikely to me that many of those involved in this clandestine business will have left as clear a paper trail as was found in the records of St Patrick's Guild.'

'And we don't know that the Guild faithfully recorded every incident where the official birth register was falsified.'

'So even their figure of 126 could be an understatement.'

She said there were around 40 private maternity homes and many were involved in providing babies for adoption too. 'There is evidence that some were involved in falsifying birth records to allow people who weren't a child's biological parents to be registered as if they were,' said Ms Maguire.

On February 14, 2012, Ellen passed away. The long-lost mother and son had managed to meet each other four or five times before her death.

Tim said that if the nuns had given out the Birmingham address years earlier it would have made a world of difference for Tim and Ellen.

He said if they had just given us that information, Tim would have been able to find his birth mother

earlier... they didn't'

Considering those who will find out over the coming weeks that they were adopted, Tim said he couldn't imagine how he would deal with the news if he was only hearing it at this stage in his life.

'It would be a great shock: It changes your whole mindset when you find something like that out. Things come in stages for me, so I could absorb it and understand it and not be surprised by it.'

claire.scott@mailonsunday.ie

'A kindly younger nun gave us a letter'

earlier... they didn't'

Considering those who will find out over the coming weeks that they were adopted, Tim said he couldn't imagine how he would deal with the news if he was only hearing it at this stage in his life.

'It would be a great shock: It changes your whole mindset when you find something like that out. Things come in stages for me, so I could absorb it and understand it and not be surprised by it.'

claire.scott@mailonsunday.ie

After 40 years 'as a slave' in the Church's care one woman tells her story...

They told me my baby was still-born then they gave me shock therapy

By Claire Scott

AFTER spending over 40 years in Church-run institutions, Catherine Mary O'Connor describes her life in Magdalene laundries as that of 'a slave', and says she can only compare the institutions as being 'close' to Hitler's concentration camps.

At a reception to honour Magdalene survivors, hosted by President Michael D Higgins this week, 76-year-old Mary revealed her harrowing story of years of imprisonment and punishment and how she 'has never known love'.

Born into a family who lived on Northumberland Street in Dublin, Mary – who prefers to go by her middle name – was put into care aged three and a half.

She ran away from an abusive foster home aged 12 and was placed in St Joseph's School, a Church-run reformatory in Kilkenny.

During her teenage years she was also sent to St Joseph's Industrial School and St Anne's Reformatory School in Kilmacud, Dublin. They were established to accommodate girls considered a risk to other children due to sexual experiences.

'Closer to Hitler's concentration camps'

Most of the girls sent there – some as young as seven – had been raped or abused.

Even children who were in contact with these girls were themselves considered unsuitable for an ordinary industrial school. Mary had, at this stage, not been sexually abused but was sent there anyway.

When she turned 16 she was sent to the Magdalene laundry on Dublin's Seán McDermott Street. Before it finally closed in 1996, the laundry and the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity who ran it had a reputation for cruel treatment.

But when Mary was 19 she was sent to the laundry in Donnybrook where she spent the next 30 years of her life. That laundry had been in operation for 150 years when it closed in 1992. During that time it housed between 100 and 120 women living at any one time.

Mary says she will never forget what she endured there.

'It was so cruel; it was so cruel to treat us that way. They wouldn't want their children to be treated like that if they were in those places. It was closer to Hitler's concentration camps than anything.'

'If I refused to clean, the nun put me up to my room with no clothes on me, just bed linen and no food for two days.'

'I was cleaning without being

SURVIVOR:
Mary O'Connor, 76, spent almost all her life in institutions



CRUEL: Mary spent 30 years in the Magdalene laundry in Donnybrook

clearly recorded on Mary's file and the only mention of a still-birth is in a Sister of Charity report of the incident. Notes from Holles Street refer only to a baby being born to an O'Connor. There is no reference to the cause of death or gestation at birth, or any other information.

The still-birth register wasn't set up until 1995, which may explain the lack of information. However, Glasnevin cemetery records confirm a baby O'Connor was born at Holles Street with no mention of the name of the mother.

At the time a still-born baby would usually be buried the day after birth – several days later at most. Mary was told her daughter was buried in Glasnevin's Angel's Plot on June 3 – nine days after birth.

Mary was distraught after losing her baby. 'It was horrific. I was devastated. So, they sent me to St Brendan's.' This was not her first time in the psychiatric facility in Grangegorman in Dublin. She had been sent there aged 14 for electroconvulsive treatment. After losing her baby the same treatment was administered before she was returned to Donnybrook.

More than a decade later she was sent to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Sunday's Well in Cork where it is thought a laundry was still operating into the 1990s.

Mary remembers one nun, Sister Brendan, would let her out for cups of tea in the 1990s and how she treasured this taste of freedom.

In 1996, Mary was transferred into the care of the HSE and says she now enjoys her life and independence. But the month of May is always a difficult time.

'I do feel sad in May. I think of the baby. It's good to talk about it, I feel brave talking about it. I saw a friend of mine from Seán McDermott's talking about it on the television and I thought, "If she can do it, I can do it."

'People need to know about the homes and what happened to us.'

claire.scott@mailonsunday.ie

paid, we were really slaves. In the laundry, we used to have to wash with a washing board and the top of your knuckles were all skint and bleeding. If you had to go to the nun to dress them, she'd say, "Go on and do your washing." It makes me sad to think of it.'

On her 30th birthday, Mary was sexually assaulted by a delivery man employed by the nuns.

'I didn't want it. It was my birthday and there was a group of

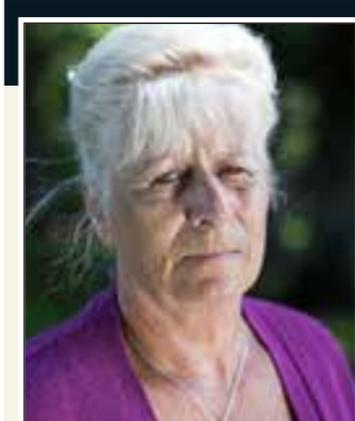
friends I was working with. This fella comes over and he does the delivery in the convent and he said, "Come on," and I said, "No, I know what you want." I kept pushing him away. Then, he went off and got drunk and came back. Grabbed me. That's when it happened.'

Mary became pregnant and was moved to Ardmore mother and baby home in Dunboyne, Co. Meath. It was run by the Good Shepherd Sisters, who at the time managed

the four largest mother and baby homes in the country.

On May 26, 1972, Mary was transferred to Dublin's Holles Street maternity hospital to give birth. She was 'put to sleep' for the procedure and was told by staff when she awoke that her baby girl was still-born. She was then told she could not attend her funeral.

The recording of the circumstances surrounding the birth are suspiciously scant. Nothing is



ACTION: Julia Sweeney, 58

We must ensure this doesn't happen again

MAGDALENE survivors have said President Higgins's words of apology this week are 'not enough' to ensure future generations never suffer as they have.

President Higgins, addressing over 220 survivors from across the country, the UK, the USA and Australia at an honorary reception this week, said 'Ireland had failed' them and apologised to them.

Many of the women said the event was a healing experience but that more must be done to remove Magdalene-like

institutions across the world.

Julia Sweeney, 58, was put in the Donnybrook laundry at age 15 because she ran away from home. She said: 'It's alright hearing those words but action speaks louder. Don't let this happen again... Educating people is so important. Stop developing these institutions in other parts of the world and learn from these mistakes.'

The Galway woman said: 'It's hard for me to tell my story today, but I feel more Traveller women like me need to share their stories.'