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No Complaints: *A Memoir of Life in Rural Ireland and in the Irish Public Service.* Maurice O'Connell (ed. *J Anthony Gaughan*) Dublin: Kingdom Books . ISBN 9781916476431.

This is a gem of a book, beautifully written, full of rural wisdom, and an insight into the working of the Irish public service.

I have to declare an interest at the outset. I worked with the late Maurice O'Connell in the Irish Department of Finance, prior to his becoming Governor of the Central Bank, and I admired him greatly.

Let me start with the cover, a joy and a sadness. The joy to see the real Maurice there as I knew him. The sadness that he is now gone from us.

The book is quite short. It is a memoir that Maurice wrote in 2010. The first half recounts his life as a youth in Moyvane, near Listowel, his period in Maynooth, and his brief teaching career. The second half deals with his years in the Irish Public Service, mostly in the Department of Finance and then in the Central Bank.

It might not be the thing to say nowadays, but in my day Maurice could have been called a “spoiled priest” because he left Maynooth while still a seminarian. That could have been a cause of shame for the family in the day, but Maurice recounts the reaction of his Parish Priest when he returned home from Maynooth. He feared the worst. However, much to his surprise, Father Dan complimented him on his courage and suggested that Maurice might now be mature enough to share a drink with him. I mention this in particular as I have encountered many former seminarians in the Civil Service, and my view has always been to admire them for their original decision to give the priesthood a go.

The book is a great read throughout. The Civil Service teaches you to boil a text down to its core but Maurice brings that extra element, imbibed from the Listowel air no doubt, that of the storyteller. He has the gift of conjuring up a picture in just a few well chosen words, the legacy of his education in the classics.

The book is a wonderful, but at the end of the day, a frustrating read. You end up wanting more.

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