



Madams: Bawds & Brothel-Keepers of London

Fergus Linnane

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At a time when there were almost no career openings for women a group of intrepid and gifted females scaled the heights of what was literally a man's world - they became bawds. Mrs Berkely was a famous flagellant. Mother Clap - women bawds were often known as Mother - ran male brothels, or Molly Houses. Elizabeth Holland had an immense moated mansion built on Bankside and for thirty years entertained the aristocracy, including royalty. When troops attempted to stop her trade and eject her from the house, she and her girls drove them off. The Georgian bawd Charlotte Hayes held a 'Cyprian Fete' at which gentlemen 'of the highest breeding' first watched athletic young men copulating with nubile whores and then joined in themselves. Fergus Linnane reveals the other side of London's years of pomp and splendour, painting a vivid picture of the bawds, their girls and their clients. Drawing on a rich variety of sources - court records, pamphlets, newspapers, diaries, letters - Madams is fresh and original, offering humour, insight and a very candid view of the sexual behaviour of Londoners through the ages.



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