

SHOP TALK

Celebrating Leitrim's shopfronts and their cultural heritage

A Leitrim County Council Heritage + Creative Ireland project

Foreword

In Leitrim, our traditional shopfronts are an important part of our architectural heritage and contribute significantly to the identity and character of our built heritage. The architecture of Irish shops has developed over centuries and was shaped by social and economic forces. Traditional shop fronts survive across Leitrim in a variety of designs, colour and materials.

Many survive from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and had little more than a simple window with the name of the owner, either painted or built up in plaster, overhead. Many of these original shop fronts still exist, even if the business has long since ceased.

There are many examples throughout the county of early twentieth-century shop fronts and a number with increasingly rare, mid twentieth-century frontages incorporating mosaic tiles. There are also fine examples of garages and shops in Leitrim which incorporate corrugated iron, often located in rural locations.

As many changes of use occur to historic buildings in both rural and urban locations, there is an opportunity to raise awareness of the significant contribution traditional shop fronts make to our built environment and to acknowledge the social value that the local shop played in people's lives.

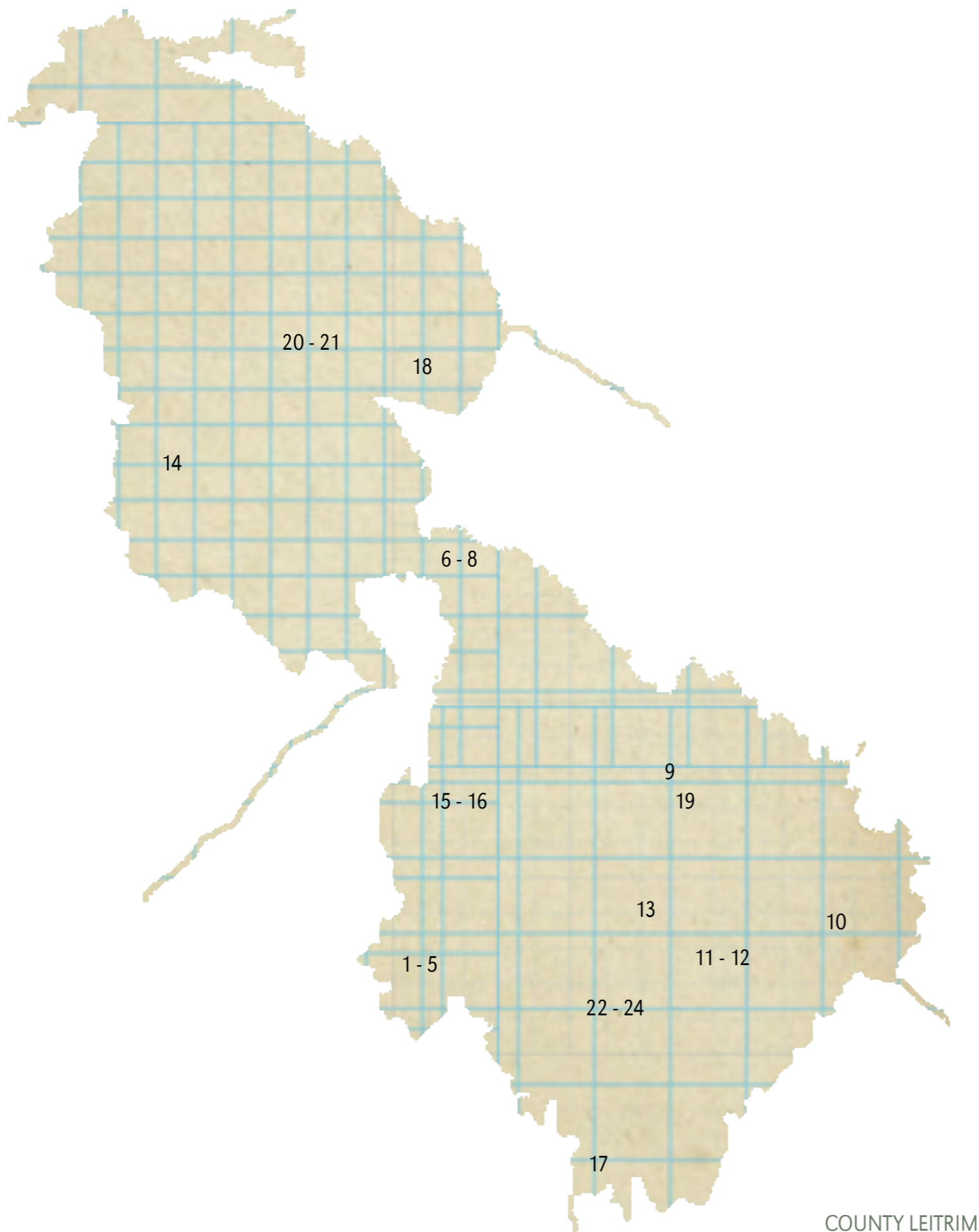
SHOPTALK is a Leitrim County Council project, funded by Creative Ireland. The project aims to celebrate the traditional shop fronts of Leitrim by documenting them and by looking at the people, stories and events associated with these important social spaces. In addition to this publication, SHOPTALK will also engage the public in conversation on the topic of shop fronts and their cultural value and importance by hosting an exhibition and events, a specially curated library on the topic and a series of creative activities that will serve to engage the public in the physical elements of the shop front such as sign writing and mosaic design.

I hope that you enjoy the images and narratives in this publication and that they encourage you to stop and notice the beauty of our shop fronts and the value that they add to our town and village streetscapes, to our rural roads and to the communities who live there.

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Name: Heslins
Address: Bridge Street, Carrick-on-Shannon
Type of Business: Shoemaker/ Antique shop
Status: In Business
map ref: 1

Heslins Bridge Street, Carrick-on-Shannon

Heslins antique shop on Bridge Street, Carrick on Shannon was once owned by the Whyte Family. The current owner Frank Heslin's grand uncle (also Frank Heslin) took out a 100 year lease on the property in 1927 for 50 pounds. Such arrangements were common at the time as landlords leased property in a bid to keep their estates going. The property is now in the ownership of the Heslin family.

Before the Heslins took over the premises, a family of architects, the Thiefels, had occupied it, as Frank Heslin uncovered years ago when he was stripping paint off a door. The original Frank Heslin was a shoemaker and his son Michael took over the business in 1945. They made shoes for men and women and boots for farmers at a workshop. The leather was steeped in water to make it soft and was hand-stitched. There were big rollers on the premises for drying it out. No nails were used in the process. As factory-made shoes became popular, the shoe-making trade gradually died out. Frank's father made his last pair of shoes in the 1960's and then went into repairs full-time.

Frank, the current owner, was raised over the shop and still lives there. He took over the business in the 1970's and while he still repairs shoes, his main business is antiques. He remembers playing football on Quay Road at a time when no cars went up or down, and Fair Days being the busy days in Carrick on Shannon with shops putting up wooden shutters onto the windows for protection as animals went along the street.



Name: Cryan's - Teach Ceoil
Address: Bridge Street, Carrick-on-Shannon

Type of Business: Pub & Restaurant
Mosaic tiles c. 1960'
Status: In Business
map ref: 2

Cryan's , Bridge Street, Carrick-on-Shannon

Bill and Mai Cryan bought the property in 1954. At the time there was a small grocery in the front and the bar was just a fraction of its current size. The Cryan's raised eight children over the shop/pub (five of whom were born in the house) including Frances, who in 1980 became the first woman to represent Ireland in rowing in the Olympic Games.

Liam Cryan currently runs the pub and it was Liam's father, Bill, who created the unique mosaic exterior in the 1960's. When the grocery shop was open it sold all the essentials and customers routinely got credit, with goods going into "the book" until they were in a position to pay the bill. Frances Cryan used to run a restaurant on the Bridge Street premises. The family bought the adjoining "Holts" shop and turned it into a beer garden.

The Carrick on Shannon regatta, as well as the Fair Days, were always the shop-keepers' and publicans' busiest day. Liam's pub is now a popular music venue and customers have included Shane McGowan and Packie Duignan.



Name: Geraghty's
Address: Main Street, Carrick-on-Shannon

Type of Business: Shop
Mosaic tiles c. 1950's
Status: In Business
map ref: 3

Geraghty's, Main Street, Carrick-on-Shannon

At one stage Geraghtys was famous as a place where you could buy anything from a pint of Guinness to a guitar or a harmonica. When the Geraghty family moved in, in 1953, it was a bar with a cosy snug.

Over the years Mrs Kathleen Geraghty has sold everything from bicycles, to fishing tackle and musical instruments and pottery, alongside running the busy bar. The building dates back to the 1800's with its intricate mosaic exterior dating back to the 1950's.

Former Taoiseach Charlie Haughey was known to linger over a drink with political cronies in the back lounge beside the pot bellied stove and Mrs Geraghty also recalls renting out a bicycle to a young Bertie Ahern long before he became Taoiseach.

There used to be stalls underneath the shop where horses were kept during the horse fairs. The pub is now closed but the shop is still a favourite with visitors to the town.



Name: Dunne's
Address: Main Street, Carrick-on-Shannon

Type of Business: Jeweler
Status: For sale at time of publication
map ref: 4

Dunne's, Main Street, Carrick-on-Shannon

Built around 1830, the traditional shopfront on this former jewellers is a "fine example of an intact Victorian commercial premises" (National Inventory of Architectural Heritage).

Located in the centre of Carrick-on-Shannon, the premises were bought by John Dunne, a watchmaker, in the 1920's. He was a brother of Pat Dunne who owned the Leitrim Observer newspaper based on nearby George's Terrace. The Dunnes had been raised on Main Street, Carrick-on-Shannon in a thatched single storey house opposite the present Allied Irish Bank, which was a lodging house. John is reputed to have learned his trade by standing over a German refugee watchmaker who stayed there.

Pat Dunne steered the Leitrim Observer through turbulent political times and incurred the wrath of the notorious Black and Tans who, in 1920, burned down part of the newspaper office and also shot at his brother's shop. The following year the offices of the Observer were burned to the ground, interrupting production of the newspaper for some time. John Dunne assumed responsibility for maintaining the town clock, one of Carrick's landmarks. In 1927, he and his brother Pat bought the pub next door to the jewellers and Dunne's bar became a favourite haunt of local county councillors who gathered there after council meetings. The Dunnes children worked in the pub, bottling stout and the Observer where their job was to fold the newspaper.

John's son Gregory (Gregg) took over the Leitrim Observer after the passing of his brother Pat in 1968. His sister Patricia Leyden, who lived in the US for many years, returned to run the jewellers after her father's death in the 1970's.



Name: Armstrong
Address: Bridge Street, Carrick-on-Shannon

Type of Business: Pub + Shoeshop
Status: Vacant at time of publication
map ref: 5

Armstrong, Bridge Street, Carrick-on-Shannon

A traditional Irish pub, Armstrongs was unusual in that it was also a shoe shop. An end-of-terrace two-bay three-storey house, it sits alongside another landmark building, or Leitrim's "Taj Mahal", the Costello memorial chapel. This is reputed to be the second smallest chapel in the world, erected by Edward Costello to mark his devotion to his wife, who died in 1877 at the age of 46. Armstrongs was built around 1840 and the compact ground floor shop and public house date back to the early 1900's.

It retains many attractive traditional features including timber sash windows with stone sills, a timber panelled front door with spoked fanlight, and the shop front comprising a double battened timber door flanked by display windows with stucco fascia board and cornice. Before Tony Armstrong bought the pub, it was owned by the Feeley family. Ernie Feeley, one of 12 children, was, for many years, a printer in the Leitrim Observer who operated the Heidelberg Platen Printing machine bought by the paper in 1938, one of the first modern printing presses of this era.

Long after the shoe shop closed, patrons of Armstrongs pub were still able to admire the footwear on the shelves. The small pub, a favourite with locals and tourists alike, closed some years ago.



Name: A Mulvey
Address: Ballinaglera, Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Pub and Grocery
Status: In Business
map ref: 6

A. Mulvey, Ballinaglera

Mulvey's pub in Ballinaglera is believed to be as old as the nearby Catholic Church, St Hugh's, which was dedicated in 1842.

Owned by Tony and Mary Mulvey, the business, which until recently operated as a grocery as well as a pub, has been in the family for generations. Before Tony, there was his father Arthur, who took over from his father John. His grandfather was Eoin, who may have started the business many years before. The Leitrim-born 1916 leader Sean MacDiarmada, once addressed a pre-election political gathering from steps leading to a loft outside the pub. MacDiarmada, who was born outside Kiltyclogher, had attended night classes in Irish and book keeping at Tullynamoyle primary school near Dowra and therefore was no stranger to the area.

The steps where Sean MacDiarmada stood outside Mulvey's were removed by Arthur Mulvey who, having witnessed some heated political debate in his time, decided it was safer to keep the politicians on the ground.

The Mulvey family lived over the shop until 2004, when they briefly leased the premises, but came back to the business in 2012 where they focussed on the pub. The traditional atmosphere and memorabilia means the pub continues to be a favourite with visitors.



Name: John Rynn's
Address: Ballinaglera, Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Pub and Grocery
Status: In Business
map ref: 7

John Rynn's, Ballinaglera

John Rynn's traditional pub and grocery is a landmark for anyone travelling from Drumshanbo to Dowra along the eastern shores of Lough Allen.

Kay Rynn has been behind the counter since 1970, running the family undertaking business as well as the pub and shop. The family once owned a horse drawn hearse but Kay now leases a mechanically propelled hearse as required. The grocery shop is on one side of the premises facing a bar on the opposite side, with an inviting pot-bellied stove between the two. Kay, a former maths teacher, tots the bills in her head or uses a pencil, although there is a cash register for those assistants less comfortable with mental arithmetic.

The stock in the shop has changed over the years. Once upon a time, loose tea was weighed out for individual customers with wellingtons and rope hanging from hooks on the ceiling and four stone bags of flour available for those who baked their own bread and cakes.

Before Jim Rynn took over, it was his father's name John Thomas Rynn, whose name is over the door, although many people know the pub as Skerry Rynn's, a nickname used to distinguish the family from the other Rynns in the neighbourhood.

In the last few decades there have been dramatic changes. Sunday mornings after Mass were traditionally hectic in both the shop and the bar. As there is now no Mass in the nearby church on Sundays, it has quietened down; but the business's novelty value and atmosphere make it a popular stopping off point with visitors to the area. In 2017, during the Iron Mountain Literary Festival, London-based Imam and sean nos singer Muhammad Al-Hussaini performed there with a host of Leitrim musicians, reflecting the popularity of Rynns with locals and strangers who seek it out.



Name: P.S. Loughlin
Address: Dowra, Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Pub and Grocery
Status: In Business
map ref: 8

P.S. Loughlin, Dowra

There was a time when you could buy everything from cattle medicine to long johns in P.S. Loughlin's in Dowra. Known locally as Patrick Stephen's, the Loughlin family have been there since 1954, a time when the village was thronged on Fair Days.

Patrick Stephen and Katie Loughlin not only sold groceries, watches, drapery and animal medications, they also ran an "eating house" on the premises for Fair Days, when visitors would pop in for roast dinners or a "meat tea". Katie was a district nurse and midwife who carried out home deliveries throughout the parish, while Patrick Stephen, a carpenter by trade, was renowned for selling tomatoes and strawberries grown in his own greenhouse.

Dowra had changed significantly by the time their son Patrick and his wife Christine took over the business in the 1990's. The courthouse has closed, as has the Bank. While the local population has plummeted and the fair days are gone, the Loughlin's picture postcard traditional shopfront and blend of quality giftware and groceries means that the shop, now specialising in Belleek, Galway Crystal, locally produced artisan food and everyday grocery items, is still a busy place. Tourists enroute to nearby attractions such as walking trails, sweat houses or the Lough Allen Adventure Centre, come from far and wide.



Name: John Fox's
Address: Ballinamore, Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Garage
Status: In Business
map ref: 9

John Fox's (garage), Ballinamore

John Fox's garage was once owned by John McGahern's uncle Pat McManus, who played an important role in the writer's life, and who is fondly remembered in McGahern's "Memoir". As a young man, John Fox started working in the garage for Pat and the pair are believed to have inspired the characters, "the Shah" and "Frank Dolan", in the McGahern masterpiece "That They May Face The Rising Sun".

Pat McManus lived beside the garage, which has changed little since his time, and invested in petrol and diesel pumps and started repairing cars and tractors once WW2 ended.

In "Memoir" John McGahern recounts how his Garda sergeant father Frank, who raised his children in the barracks at Cootehall, Co Roscommon after their mother died, wanted to invest in this garage but was firmly rebuffed by his brother in law. A bench commemorating one of Ireland's most admired writers, who died on 30 March 2006, faces the garage whilst on the other side of the square, the writer's aunt Maggie ran a grocery shop. Tourists regularly pause there to take photographs and often take the opportunity to pop across the street to chat to John about his connection with the family.



Name: JJ Dolan
Address: Carrigallen Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Pub
Status: No longer in business
map ref: 10

J.J. Dolan, Carrigallen

Built around 1800, this public house and family home had a thatched roof until 1926. The pub, which is now closed, was part of an end-of-terrace five-bay two-storey house, which was remodelled around 1930. The thatch was replaced with a pitched tiled roof in 1926.

The traditional timber shopfront with fluted pilasters, console brackets and fascia with raised lettering, combine to make it an attractive part of the streetscape of Carrigallen.

The J.J. Dolan over the door refers to John Joe Dolan who inherited the pub from his father Con, a native of Kildallen, Co Cavan. Con started his working life in Patrick Smyth's drapery store on Main Street, Carrigallen and married a local school teacher, Roseanne O'Reilly. John Joe, their son, was a local legend as a member of the Leitrim Minor Team which won the Connacht Minor Football Championship in 1945. The following year he was a member of the Leitrim Connacht Junior Championship winning team.

As a student in St Patrick's College, Cavan, John Joe was an Ulster College's McRory Cup Medal winner in 1943 and represented Ulster on the Colleges Interprovincial team in 1944 as well as winning a Leitrim Senior Championship medal with Tully in 1945.



Name: Dillon's Bridge House
Address: (near) Cloone, Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Grocery Shop
Status: No longer in business
map ref: 11

Dillons Bridge House, (near) Cloone

John Dillon built the family home and grocery shop in the townland of Esker around 1920. He had learned his trade from his grandfather, Charlie Pope, in the nearby village of Cloone. Bridge House, as it was widely known, was built on the site of an old creamery and John Dillon used the old creamery buildings and outhouses as he built up his flourishing business.

The shop projected out from the four bay house and the roof of the shop served as a balcony where bands played at a time when outdoor ceilis were held at this crossroads, known as Dillons Cross. The exterior of the detached four-bay two-storey with attic house has remained largely unchanged. The simple traditional shopfront, embellished by stucco consoles, has been freshly painted and the house retains many original features such as sash windows which make it stand out as a landmark building.

Family legend has it that John took the measurements of his grandfather Pope's house in Cloone and modelled his own house on it. He also had a travelling shop which was on the road from morning until late at night. Many of the customers were women who traded their eggs to buy goods in return. The Dillons had an egg store at the back of their home and the eggs were collected once a week by lorry. John bought two neighbouring farms where he reared pedigree Aberdeen Angus cattle and was also regarded as a talented horse man. He was famous for having two bulls - a red one and a black one, and beside the shop he had an office full of jars holding medications which farmers bought for their animals. He also worked as an undertaker and at one stage had a horse drawn hearse. There was a shed with stairs up to the loft where coffins were stored while the hearse was parked underneath.

He and his wife Lizzie Doyle, a native of Drumhalla townland, had 11 children. The last of John and Lizzie's children to run the shop was their daughter Bridget Mary, who closed the business in the late 1970's. The premises is no longer in the Dillon family.



Name: O'Higgins
Address: Cloone, Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Grocery Shop
Status: In Business
map ref: 12

O'Higgins, Cloone

The shop and post office have been run by the O'Higgins family for over 100 years. When Patrick O'Higgins the postmaster died in 2010, the post office was closed but his family continues to run the grocery shop. Patrick had succeeded his father, also Patrick, as postmaster.

In the 1900's there were a number of grocery shops in the village and business was thriving as people tended to shop locally. When trends changed and people became more mobile, travelling to supermarkets in bigger towns became more common and small village shops like O'Higgins were impacted. Two shops in Cloone have since closed, however O'Higgins continue to provide a service for local people.



Name: W Murphy
Address: Gorbagh, Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Grocery Shop
Status: No longer in business
map ref: 13

W. Murphy, Gorbagh

In the late 1880's William Murphy bought the shop in Gorbagh. His family built it into a thriving business, with "Murphy's Egg and Fowl Exporters" employing up to 30 people during the busy Christmas season.

Tom Wrynn who started driving for Murphy's in 1932 (the year of the Eucharistic Congress), remembered sometimes having to make two runs to Dublin in one day. In a history of the half parish ("Gorbagh 1677 - 1987") he recalled that around this time as many as 1000 cases of eggs a day (with 300 eggs in each case) were delivered to the Dublin docks. The eggs came from all over Leitrim, Sligo, Cavan and Roscommon but especially from around Mohill and Ballinamore. Murphy's had two lorries in Gorbagh and two in Dublin at the time. The lorries came back to Gorbagh loaded up with flour, meal and other goods. Tom recalled selling eggs to the Gresham Hotel and other leading hotels in Dublin. Tom Wrynn estimated that up to 10,000 turkeys passed through the business from October to December. All these birds had to be slaughtered and plucked by staff.

Old account books for Murphy's "Grocer and Provision Merchant" show that groceries such as tea, sugar, tobacco, flour and bread were sold there. One ad dated October 28th 1939, noted that 1,000 turkeys were delivered to Murphy's between October 30th and November 4th. "One shilling per pound will be paid for best quality straight breasted young turkeys fasted from night before day of delivery. Second quality or old birds not wanted. No birds will be accepted after 3pm on each day of buying". The business eventually closed its door in 1985.



Name: W H Parke & Son
Address: Dromahair, Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Draper & Footware Shop
Status: No longer in business
map ref: 14

W.H. Parke & Son, Dromahair

In the 1930's, local man William Henry Parke built the drapery and footwear shop in Cleen, at a busy crossroads opposite the old Dromahair creamery. The detached single storey building with its distinctive corrugated iron roof, timber shopfront and painted lettering is a talking point and regarded as a picturesque addition to the locality.

There were two grocery shops, Lattens and Clintons, nearby and its proximity to Dromahair train station on the Sligo to Enniskillen line ensured that there were always people passing. At the time there was another rural drapery shop, Travers, about a mile away and a number of drapery shops in Dromahair village. William sold clothing for men and women but the shop was geared mainly to farmers, selling outdoor clothing and wellington boots, although some women and children's clothing, fabric and curtains were also sold.

As people started travelling to larger towns to shop by car, demand for small rural drapery shops dropped and Parke's, which was taken over by William's son Oswald, eventually closed in the 1980's. Oswald continued the business on a small scale travelling to local marts selling to farmers.



Name: Berry's Tavern
Address: Drumshanbo, Co Leitrim

Type of business: Pub
Status: In Business
map ref: 15

Berry's Tavern, Drumshanbo

Famous for its exterior decorated with shells, Berry's Tavern on High Street, Drumshanbo is a protected building. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage suggests that the terraced five-bay two-storey house was built c.1850. It refers to the shells "set decoratively in render", describing the house as "an interesting addition to the streetscape with a façade that is not only unique to Drumshanbo but a rarity generally". At one stage the pub was known as 'The Murhaun Inn', Murhaun being the name of the Drumshanbo parish (Catholic). The decorative cockle shells were collected in Strandhill, Co Sligo by former owners Michael and Peter Giblin. The "Drumshanbo and District News" in the Leitrim Observer of May 30th 1931 reported that Peter Giblin was building a shop and dwelling house for his brother Michael, who had recently returned from the USA, on a site where Patrick Lynch had formerly ran a business. Michael, who retired and sold the business in 1967, had named it The Broadway Bar, presumably because of his New York connections.

Berry Campbell and his wife Nessa bought the property in 1976. The couple had previously run a busy grocery and hardware shop in Crossdoney, Co. Cavan and over the years have entertained many well known personalities on the premises which, as well as a pub, is a B&B with a function room and meeting rooms.

Callers over the years have included former Mayor of London Ken Livingstone, TV personalities Ant and Dec, former Taoiseach Garret Fitzgerald, President Michael D Higgins, and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar. The Mayflower ballroom in Drumshanbo was attracting large crowds when they added a lounge to the property. The closure of Lairds jam factory and the Arigna coal mines were major setbacks but there has been progress too - the building of the vocational school, the opening of the food hub, the Shannon-Erne waterway and the Acres lake boardwalk to name but a few.



Name: M.T. Moran
Address: Drumshanbo, Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Pub + Grocery
Status: No longer in business
map ref: 16

M.T. Moran, Drumshanbo

M.T. Morans on Convent Avenue, Drumshanbo was a business where you could buy everything from lamps to hard liquor, groceries and coffins. The grocery, pub, hardware shop and undertakers, built in the 1960's, replaced an older premises next door, now demolished. The original business was previously run by the Noone family and was bought by Michael and Mary Moran, who had returned to their native Leitrim after running a pub on Newtownards Road in Belfast in the 1920's.

Their son Timmy and his wife Roisin took over the family business which, like many local establishments, was particularly busy on Fair Days in Drumshanbo. Once the pressure of buying and selling was over, farmers would quench their thirst in Morans and were welcome to tether their animals in the yard across the road until they were ready to be loaded up. The existing Drumshanbo mart was then the Fair Green but as there was a fee for keeping animals there, many were tethered on the street on Fair Day resulting in a major clean-up once they left.

Timmy and Roisin's sons Declan and Michael remember a time when women could not be seen in the pub, but would discreetly sip bottles of stout or glasses of sherry in the snug. They were born in the old house and then moved next door when their parents built the new shop with its distinctive mosaic exterior in the 1960's. One of the advantages of the mosaic tiles, which became fashionable in the 1960's, was that that they were easier to hose down after a busy fair. The Arigna miners, many from the Drumshanbo area, used to frequent Morans, not just for the hospitality, but also to buy carbide for the lamps which replaced candles on those treacherous journeys inside the mountain. M. T. Morans also sold animal feed, delph, pots and pans and a range of groceries. Michael still runs the family undertaking business and Declan continues to keep the Moran family at the heart of trade in Drumshanbo, running a bicycle shop across the road from the former family home.



Name: J Reynolds,
Address: Knockadrinan, Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Pub + Grocery + Farm
Status: No longer in business
map ref: 17

J. Reynolds, Knockadrinan

The Reynolds story in Knockadrinan started with a romance when Michael Reynolds, a Catholic from Ballinalee Co Longford, eloped with his sweetheart Frances Peyton from the Newtownforbes area who came from Protestant stock. Neither family approved of the match and in the early 1700's the pair fled to Johnstonbridge where the river Rinn separates the counties of Longford and Leitrim. Robert's son, James, one of six children, who was born in 1818, is reputed to be the J. Reynolds whose name is still over the door of this historic building. James' son John, born in 1866, took over the family business. John, who had 13 children, had a bar, grocery, bakery and a farm, all based at Knockadrinan. Neighbours who had sick cattle regarded him as a bit of an expert and they came for cures for such diseases as "white scour" and "red water". His children later recalled him making up medications for the cattle on the kitchen table.

Freshly baked loaves from the family bakery were delivered in a horse and cart to nearby village shops and also to family homes. John Gerard was the first Reynolds baby born in the "new" two storey house in 1914, which replaced a thatched cottage, adjoining the pub and shop. He inherited his father John's knack for treating sick animals and took over the family business when his father died in 1943. John Gerard's son Tom and his wife Mary still live in the family home.

Tom, a farmer, who was also regional manager with Lakeland Dairies, closed the pub in 2008, the bakery and shop having shut many years before. According to the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, the L-shaped multi-bay two storey house was built around 1890. But the main dwelling house is more recent than the two-storey pub/grocery which included a "tap room" where women once drank out of sight of the public bar.

The building retains many original features including the timber sash windows and a timber panelled door with bolection moulding, but "the most notable feature", according to the inventory, is the original pub front. Described as simple in its design, but exemplifying the type of rural public house once commonly found throughout Ireland, the ceramic lettering is praised for adding artistic interest to the site.



Name: J. McHugh
Address: Glenfarne, Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Pub + Grocery
Status: No longer in business
map ref: 18

J. McHugh, Glenfarne

Set back off the road, McHugh's pub in Glenfarne is just eight kilometres from the border. It was once on the side of the main Derry to Sligo road and horse drawn carriages pulled in there for refreshments in the late 1800s, when the first landlord known as Brianey Clancy was in charge.

The business operated as a grocery as well as a pub until John McHugh took over in the 1940's and decided to focus on the bar. The premises was licensed in 1873 but was mostly likely operating as a public house even before the licensing regime was introduced in the 1870's.

The pub has always been in Ben McHugh's family. He inherited the business from his father John McHugh and before John took over, it was run by his wife Mary Josephine's family, the Clancy's. Ben has been told that there was a saying "Brianey's - where the beef is boiling", suggesting that in the 1800's the house had a reputation as somewhere where weary travellers could get a bite to eat. Food is off the menu now and the era when Glenfarne was synonymous with showband royalty is long gone, but McHugh's pub hosts monthly singing sessions courtesy of the Rainbow Singing Circle and is considered a gem by those looking for a quiet pint with plenty of old world atmosphere.



Name: McKenna
Address: Edentenny, Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Pub + Grocery
Status: No longer in business
map ref: 19

McKenna, Edentenny

Andrew McKenna was born in this house and still lives there. His father Patrick bought the house and pub at Edentenny (near Ballinamore) in 1953 along with 26 and a half acres of land. It also housed a shop, which sold everything from paraffin oil for lamps, to tea and flour. The pub has a long history on this site; it's believed that long before there was a pub, a shebeen operated here in the 1800's.

Andrew's father was a Monaghan man and had been home on holidays from England when he spotted the premises for sale. He had been visiting relatives and was out looking at cattle when he came across it. Patrick had met his wife Nora in England but they made Edentenny their family home. Nora, who died in 1963, mostly ran the bar as Patrick worked at other jobs. It was eventually leased to another family but has now been closed for many years.



Name: Connolly's
Address: Manorhamilton, Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Pub
Status: In Business
map ref: 20

Connollys', Manorhamilton

Connollys' bar in Castle Street, Manorhamilton has been slaking the thirst of its customers for 150 years. Synonymous with sing songs and famous for its old world atmosphere, the bar boasts an open fire and space for little more than 20 customers. The absence of a television and the quality of its Guinness are talking points for those who call, many of them musicians in town for gigs at the nearby Glens Centre.

Joe and Ita Connolly took over the small pub in 1971, but the Connolly name goes back much further. The first landlord was John Crown who is believed to have opened "The Crown Bar" around 1868. Records show that John Crown was also a grocer and a baker. On his death in 1885, the business passed to his wife Mary who kept the pub going through turbulent historic times, including the 1908 North Leitrim by-election, the 1916 Rising, the First World War, the War of Independence and the Civil War. Their son Jack took over in 1928 followed by John Crown's grand-daughter, Mary Ellen Connolly, in 1945 and in 1971 Joe and Ita bought the premises.



Name: Thompsons
Address: Manorhamilton, Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Garage
Status: In business
map ref: 21

Thompsons, Manorhamilton

Thompson's Garage, with its distinctive barrel vaulted roof, was built on a green-field site on New Line, Manorhamilton in the 1920's by local entrepreneur T.R. Armstrong, and initially rented from him by the Thompsons.

Jimmy Thompson started his bicycle business around the turn of the last century in the front room of the family home just up the street from the existing premises. A 1907 advert in the long defunct local newspaper, The Leitrim Guardian, stated: "Cycle repairs promptly executed and outfits provided". Jimmy, whose grandson Harold and great grandson David are involved in the business today, had a passion for motorbikes and had a hackney for hire. Jimmy's son Georges was driving to Sligo and Bundoran in the hackney at the age of 13 and Georges' son Harold was allowed to drive it when he was "11 or 12" and remembers struggling to reach the pedals.

David says that when his great grandfather started out, the only people with a car were likely to be the local doctor and priest. When Jimmy started selling petrol, the "Pratt's Petroleum" came in two gallon cans which were sold for one shilling and three pence and demand was slow in the beginning. But by the early 1930's he had two petrol pumps on the street. Today David sells diesel only. The corrugated-iron garage was traditionally cream and red but Harold changed it to blue and white. When David decided to give the garage a facelift he returned it to the original colours without realizing that they were the same colours that had been favoured by his great grandfather.



Name: Gannon & Co
Address: Mohill, Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Drapery + Footwear Shop
Status: In Business
map ref: 22

Gannon & Co, Mohill

Thomas Joseph (TJ) Gannon established the family drapery and footwear shop on Main Street, Mohill in 1896. He was a native of Annaduff and is believed to have bought the two adjoining properties from a Miss Cull. Both buildings, the three-storey drapery store and the adjoining two-storey footwear store, date back to 1840. TJ Gannon was also a shipping agent for both the Cunard and White Star lines and often told his family about the heart breaking scenes he witnessed as an “emigration agent” when people, many of them, the teenage children of local hard-pressed farm families, left for America hoping to find new opportunities and to ease the burden on their parents.

TJ’s son Jim Gannon, who was interviewed in 1993 when he was 83, remembered his father describing the harrowing scenes at Mohill train station when his charges, most of them girls who were little more than children, clung weeping to their mothers when it was time to say goodbye. Mr Gannon used to accompany the groups of 10 or 12 to Cobh, travelling with them first to Dromod train station where they would switch to the Dublin line, and then travel onto Cork. In 1940 when TJ’s health started to fail, Jim returned home to take over the family business. He and his wife Bridget (“Don”), a nurse, raised seven children over the family business which in its heyday employed up to half a dozen staff who lived over the shoe shop. As well as clothes for men and women, the shop specialised in habits for the dead. The interior changed little over the years and part of the apparatus for the pulley system used to transport cash and receipts from one end of the shop to the other is still visible.

Gannon’s is still owned by the family who currently lease it out.



Name: H. Logan
Address: Mohill, Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Butcher
Status: In Business
map ref: 23

H. Logan, Mohill

This premises in Mohill has been a butcher's shop since 1904. It was built by John Nicholson who leased the ground from the Crofton estate in 1825. In 1858 the premises was split into two houses and the "Logan side" was occupied by the Dobson family until 1904 when butcher William Cairns bought it for 220 pounds. It was taken over by the Logan Family in 1922, when Hugh Logan, grandfather of the present owner, took it over. His wife Mary Ellen is credited within the family to have bought the property at auction for 615 pounds.

The couple moved to Mohill from Drumsna where Hugh had been working as a butcher and where his wife ran an "eating house". Mary Ellen opened a similar establishment at the back of the Mohill shop and was so busy on Fair Days that she had six or seven helpers dishing out bacon and cabbage and roast beef to hungry farmers, who were served at two large "foirms" covered with oil cloths. Hugh's son Paddy was around 13 when he started to help out in the shop, providing a delivery service by horse and cart with orders for customers.

The shop next door was for many years a drapery and shoe shop run by John Redigan who purchased it in 1927. Paddy Logan bought next door in 1963 and over 100 years after it was divided, the premises were returned to one unit with the Logan family using the extra space to expand their residence. Paddy's son Hugh has been in charge since 1984 and has been joined in the business by his son Pearse, the fourth generation to work here.

Hugh and Pearse have a "farm to fork" ethos, producing their own beef and lamb on the family farm while they also have an abattoir on Glebe Street.



Name: O'Callaghan
Address: Mohill, Co Leitrim

Type of Business: Bar + Grocery
Status: No longer in business
map ref: 24

O'Callaghan, Mohill

This traditional bar and grocer in Mohill closed in 2012, but it was a well known venue for generations. It was owned by the Dolan family before Jimmy O'Callaghan and his brother-in-law Alf Rowley took over the business in the mid 1950's. After their marriage, Jim and his wife Eilish went to live over the bar and grocery shop in 1957 raising 4 children.

Punters had to go through the grocer's to get to the bar but there was some intermingling of business and Eilish often sold goods to clientele, who at closing time remembered that they needed a pound of ham or a loaf before they went home.

The bar had a snug inside the front door where women would sip sherry or port. The O'Callaghans also added on a lounge at the back and changed the original layout as customers used to have to go through the kitchen to get to the bar. Jim, a native of Limerick, was a saddler by trade and he had a workshop behind the premises. Among their regulars were the writer John McGahern and his wife Madeleine, who used to meet up with friends.

This book accompanied a project instigated by Leitrim Heritage office in conjunction with Creative Ireland and artist Vanya Lambrecht Ward.

'Shoptalk' consisted of an exhibition, library, activities, chat and a panel discussion in a then vacant shop on the main street of Carrick-on-Shannon. The project ran for the duration of two weeks in August of 2019.

This walk-in creative and social space not only endeavored to celebrate but also highlight the historic and cultural value of the older shop-front. In addition to this it served as a starting point for discussion around conservation, economy, planning, craft, shops as important social spaces and the life and retail in a small towns in rural Ireland in 2019.

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