

Kenny's and the Leitrim connection

ON THE second day of November 1940 Maureen and Desmond Kenny opened a bookshop in High Street, Galway. They had little money, and less desire to leave the country. They were given some books by their friends and relatives, borrowed some more, and with the loan of some money, commenced trading. They lived at the back of the shop.

For years it was a question of survival. They tried different ideas to attract customers – a lending library, school books, selling Irish crafts, opening at night, selling paintings. It was not



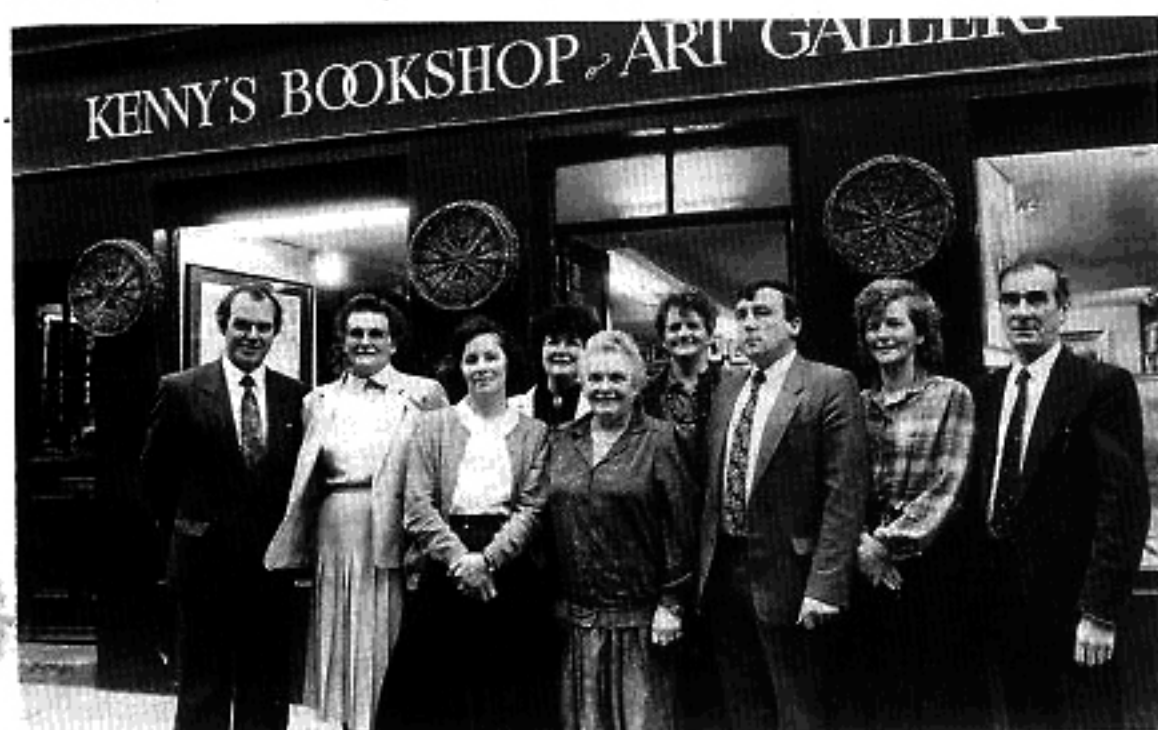
Kenny's was one of the winners of the Bord Fáilte Ambassador Awards for having established an international reputation and having figured on television worldwide. Our photo shows Mrs Maureen Kenny with another winner, Terry Wogan.

(Picture: Senan Ronan O'Reilly)



Leitrim People in Galway . . . Left to right: Sonny Murray, Sheila Flynn, Michael Sweeney, Bertie O'Rourke, Gretta Griffin, Maureen Kenny, Myra O'Leary, Ann Rooney, Veronica Morris, Eddie Wrynn.

Bertie O'Rourke, Chairman Leitrim People's Association, presenting a Galway Crystal fruit dish to Maureen Kenny, celebrating fifty years in business bookselling in Galway.



Committee, Leitrim People's Association in Galway . . . Left to right: Eddie Wrynn, Gretta Griffin, Ann Rooney (Hon. Secretary), Veronica Morris, Maureen Kenny, Myra O'Leary, Bertie O'Rourke (Chairman), Sheila Flynn, Michael Sweeney (Treasurer).

enough, so Desmond had to go elsewhere to work, but Maureen stayed put, slowly building up the business, and changing its character. Desmond spent much of his spare time on the road buying up libraries, slowly building up the stock. Eventually, he came back into the business in the early nineteen-sixties. Things now began to change quickly – their children gradually entered the business, they built an Art Gallery and a Book Bindery, they opened a shop specialising in antiquarian maps and prints, they expanded the bookshop.

Eventually, in the early nineteen-eighties, they were able to purchase the High Street premises and an adjoining building in Middle Street. They welded these together to form the complex that is Kenny's Bookshop and Art Gallery today.

Mrs Kenny is formerly Maureen Canning from Mohill. "The Leitrim Guardian" congratulate the family on their achievements and thank them for their sustained interest in Leitrim and its people.