

GLENFARNE SHOPS

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THE SUBJECT OF country shops has a particular interest for me as many of my ancestors were involved in shop keeping. I know that my great grandfather travelled around the country side with a hamper selling groceries during the mid 1800s, operating in the Loughroos, Ardmoonenn, Loughy Barr, Glenfarne and the Cornmore area of Kiltyclogher, later opening a shop in Cornmore. My grandfather and grandmother opened a shop at Lissinagroagh in the late 1920s and this shop operated until 1952, closing when I was seven years old. I learned my alphabet and how to write my letters from the old ration books left over from the war.

The shop sold groceries, including oatmeal, flake meal and red Indian meal or maize, animal feed and paraffin oil.

People brought in eggs and there was up to forty dozen in the eggstore each week. The introduction of traceability meant that a docket was put around the first egg from each supplier with their name address and dated delivered.

Recycling, often thought of as a new phenomenon, was central to the operation of shops during this period. The tea came in tea chests and was weighed into white bags; sugar came in ten stone bags weighed into brown bags; tobacco came in large blocks and was cut into the weight requested by the customer; salt came in blocks three foot long and a foot square

and was cut to request. Tea, sugar and soda bags were brought back to the shop time and again to be refilled. All glass jam jars were returned to be refilled. Flour packs were washed and sewn together to make sheets and pillowcases.

I would have helped my grandmother to weigh and bag the goods from the age of three. By the age of five, I felt I had completed my apprenticeship and when a road supervisor called for cigarettes one day when my grandmother closed the shop for dinner I decided that I alone would serve him. He asked for twenty woodbine. Unable to open the shop I ran to press in the house where cigarettes were stored and instead of looking for a box of twenty I got four boxes of five plus his change and set off out to make my first sale telling nobody in the house what I was doing. In my haste to ensure the customer was satisfied and didn't have to wait too long in the rain I tripped and fell sending cigarettes and change in all directions, cutting my nose in the process and destroying the cigarettes in the puddle they fell into. It goes without saying it was a while before I next attempted customer service.

Shops in Glenfarne

In the parish of Glenfarne there is now only one shop, Clancy's groceries and post office run by Jim and Assumpta Clancy. However, as can be seen from the list below

there has been at one time or another since the 1800s over 50 shops in the parish including travelling shops, shops attached to pubs, shops that consisted of a room or a corner of room in a house and more substantial shops that would have stocked hardware and seasonal goods, animal feed, seed potatoes and seed corn, manures when in season, bluestone and washing soda for spraying potatoes. Other items sold included turf spades, wheelbarrows for the bogs, rakes and pitchforks during the hay season, scythes and scythe stones which were produced locally in Upper Glenfarne. Local produce such as butter was also sold.

The local shop was the hub of the community and there was no more than a distance of two miles between each shop, some being even closer, as close as half a mile apart as people travelled primarily on foot. For example in the '50s from Clancy's to Glenfarne village a distance of less than a mile there were eight shops.

By night, shops that were attached to houses became social spaces where the news—local, national and international was exchanged, debated and discussed.

Between the end of the Second World War and the early 1960s many of the shops in the area closed. A number of things contributed to the decline in the number of local shops including

the arrival of the motor car and greater access to bigger towns; rural population decline due to emigration and the population becoming more urbanised.

As a result shops in the towns now had greater buying power and could price their goods more competitively, bringing about the closure of smaller rural shops in the same way large supermarket chains swallow up smaller independent shops today.

The social focus changed from meeting at the local shop to going into town on a Saturday afternoon to do the shopping and then go for a few drinks to a ‘singing lounge’ that night. People’s horizons were expanding with the rise in ownership of radios and later televisions.

With increasing affluence people now bought larger quantities of groceries and paid for them at the time of purchase whereas in the past people got goods regularly on credit from the local shop and paid the bill when they had money such as when an animal had been sold. Eggs too were often exchanged for goods. Sometimes if the grocery bill couldn’t be paid a family might have had to sell a field in order to settle up. Often family members who had emigrated would send money home to pay the bill and in some cases the shopkeeper may even have lent them some or all of the fare.

The following is not an exhaustive list and the information given here is to the best of the author’s recollection.

Shops

- Matthew McGuire, Bronagh—was a shop about which we have very little information.

- Frank Mawn, Bronagh—was a major shop and the ruins of the building are still there to this day and the crossroads that it’s located at is called ‘the shop’

- John Keaney, Sravannies—this shop was situated to the east of Glenfarne village on the left hand side after crossing the bridge and the building is now owned by a Mr Walsh.

- John Gilgunn, Meenkeeragh—this shop was later carried on by his son Myles Gilgunn and remained opened until the Gilgunns emigrated to England in the 1960s

- Michael Keaney, Brockagh Upper—this shop dealt mainly with animal feeds and the like. Michael took over this role when Glenfarne Creamery closed. Operating first from his home in Meenagh and later moved to Hosey’s store at Glenfarne Station

- Lawrence Keaney, Brockagh Lower—this was the shop and post office until the 1950s. The building still stands and is now the holiday home of Larry Keaney, London.

- Paddy Cullen, Brockagh Lower—This small shop can still be seen on the same side of the road as the Rainbow Ballroom and was also a barber’s shop.

- Brian Clancy, Brockagh Lower—this was a shop and pub, now owned by Ben McHugh. This became a fully licensed pub with the introduction of the new licensing laws of the 1870s approx and continued selling groceries until the 1950s.

- John Clancy, Brockagh, Lower—now Jim Clancys, *see above*.

- Peter McHugh, Ardmoneen—this shop was on the Glenfarne Kiltyclogher road just across from Loughross school. The shop is no longer there.

- Philip Gilgunn, Brockagh Lower—Philip operated this shop close to where the Rainbow Ballroom is situated. Prior to that he had a small shop in Cornaman. He closed the shop and emigrated to America.

- Hugh Gilgunn, Brockagh Lower—Hugh Gilgunn’s shop was just past the Rainbow Ballroom on the opposite side of the road. He brought the post to and from Kiltyclogher and prior to the introduction of school buses he drove pupils from Glenfarne to Kiltyclogher Vocational School. He was a brother of Myles Gilgunn.

- Paddy Cullen, Sranagross—the premises in still to be seen in the village, it ceased being a shop in the late 1960s/early 1970s.

- Jimmy Burns, Sranagross—this is the pub which is now in operation as Ketty’s pub in the village. It was a coachhouse in the 18th and 19th centuries and is noted on the Ordnance Survey maps as a hotel.

- Frank Keaney, Sranagross—this was a pub, grocery shop and the post office from 1900 to 1930 and was also the dispensary for the local doctor for many years. This is no longer a commercial premises.

- Eileen Harte, Cloonaghmore—had a small shop near where the late Peter Gilgunn lived in Cloonaghmore.

- Hosey’s Store, Brockagh—this was a major wholesalers and part of a group of stores that had branches in Dromahair and Manorhamilton also. This shop was connected by rail in order for carriages to be loaded and unloaded. This store was located near Glenfarne railway station.

- Johnney Farrell McDermott, Lissinagroagh—this was a shop attached to a dwelling house and probably closed in the 1930s.

- Bob Nixon, White Rock—this shop operated in the early 1900s and closed in the 1950s before the last of the Nixons, Willie, immigrated to Australia in 1956.

- Nana Walsh, Cornavannogue—this was a major shop in its time and probably closed in the 1940s.

- Mullaun Creamer—a major store selling groceries, footwear, light hardware and farm supplies and was a

branch of Killasnet Co-op and therefore most goods could be ordered and delivered to the creamery.

- Francis McManus, East Barrs—this was a shop on the Barrs line. The author does not know when it operated.

- Peter Clancy, East Barrs—this shop was on the main N16 and East Barrs post office was at this location until the 1960s.

- Tommy McGourty and later Gerry Keaney, Cullentragh—Tommy McGourty had the shop at this location c.1940s. This shop was closed and then reopened by Gerry & Tessie Keaney c. 1960/61. The post office closed in 2002 but Tessie continued to run the shop until 2012.

- Owen Mc Partland, Mullaun—this shop was at Mullaun, quite close to the creamery, the ruins of the house are still there.

- Michael McGuire, Ardvarney—this substantial shop was in operation until the 1960s. It was known locally as Mick Terry's shop.

- James McMorrow, Farrow Bar- this shop was still in operation until the 1960s.

- Ned Walsh, Ballaghnahehy—this was a big shop in the area but has been closed since the 1950s.

- Henry Travers, Kilmakerrill—this shop was situated at the entrance to Kilmakerrill Graveyard. It was a major landmark and a substantial concern, It closed about sixty years ago.

- James Evans, Loughaphonta—this shop ceased trading in the 1930s. The house is now occupied by his grandson, also called James Evans.

- Alan Stevenson, White Rock—one of the great characters of Upper Glenfarne. Alan was involved in many entrepreneurial endeavours over the course of his career including farming, water divining, bone setting, taxi driving (in the 1920s!), charging wet batteries for radios and he also tried unsuccessfully to set up a

hydroelectric scheme on the river at Mullan.

- Thompson's of Cornacloy—this was a massive business at what was known as Thompson's cross. It was a major egg collection centre for export. Not only is Thompson's shop gone but the new road has bypassed the cross-roads as well!

- Benny McGourty's, Lissinagroagh—this shop operated from c.1956 and housed Lissinagroagh Post Office. It closed in 2002.

- Thomas William Stevenson, West Barrs—This was a hardware, grocers and bakery. Alan Stevenson, Thomas' great-grandson now lives here.

- Jim Travers, Cullentragh—this was a small shop located close to the present day Cullentragh Centre. Closed c.1950.

- John P McDermott, Camderry—this shop operated until the 1970s. John's brother Tommy operated a travelling shop out of this premises also.

- Across from Keaney's shebeen (*see Shebeens*) there is cluster of houses (the ruins of some still remain today) one of which was a shop operated by Charlie O'Hagan and later by Jack McMorrow who then moved to Manorhamilton. His grandson Sean still runs a butcher shop in Manorhamilton. The last owner was a Mr Murphy who worked for the Land Commission and lived there in the 1930s.

- Gordons of Ardvarney—A country shop that operated for about 30 or 40 years

- Felix Clancy, Tawnyunshinagh—this shop was operated by Felix and his sister Ellen out of their kitchen. This shop was beside the old Tawnyunshinagh School. When the school closed in 1958, the shop closed soon after.

- Elliots of Moneenlom—this was a

major shop in its day and carried hardware and farm supplies.

- Maggie Smith, Lagoon—operated a small shop from her cottage on the west side of Glenfarne village. Both house and shop are unoccupied today. The shop closed in the 1970s.

Shebeens

- Keaney's of Mullaun had a shebeen—there was a small cluster of houses at the top of the bog road. It closed with the tightening of the licensing laws post the First World War.

- John McGuire, East Barrs, operated a shebeen and shop near where Murray's house in now on the N16 probably in the field known as 'the island' which is situated between the main road and the river.

- There was another shebeen located just west of Glenfarne village on the N16 across the road from a house known locally as Tom Pat Cullen's. This was a large stone building and the ruins stood until round 10-15 years ago when it was demolished.

Travelling shops

- There was a travelling shop operated by Joseph Rooney, New line Manorhamilton, where Killasnett Co-op now has its supermarket. He covered Upper Glenfarne. When he ceased operating in the late 1950s, Killasnett took over and ran the shop for 20 years.

- Tommy Cullen, Kiltyclogher had a travelling shop one day a week in Glenfarne. He closed his shop in Kiltyclogher and moved to Sligo and John Cullen from Rossinver took it over and ran it for a number of years.

- Armstrong from Blacklion covered a small area of Glenfarne for a number of years as did Ruadh McGoverns from Glengevlin.

Mohill Chair Yoga Group

MALO'S CHAIR YOGA GROUP attending their weekly class in Action Ability Centre Mohill. This group of active yoga enthusiasts from the Mohill area enjoy their weekly class which is a social outing but also brings the benefits of exercise and inner harmony.



Ballroom of Romance!



■ John McGivern at the Ballroom of Romance, Glenfarne



■ Nathan Carter at the Ballroom