

Old Mohill

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I ONCE READ somewhere that some of the best ideas are often the simplest, this certainly seems to fit the idea I had last year when I set up the Facebook group "Old Mohill" as a means to connect with people who had lived, worked or went to school in the town over the years but now were scattered across the four corners of the globe for one good reason or another.

I never would have imagined that over a year later our group had swelled to nearly 2,200 members and is still growing.

The concept behind it was simple, I was aware that while many of these people had grown up in the town their connection with Mohill was now severed as they had moved away and lost contact. Now through the Old Mohill group they have an opportunity to reconnect with their old hometown and validate the connection they had while they lived there.

Often times people might ask of the whereabouts of certain families who had



played an integral part of the fabric of life in Mohill but had since moved away and were no longer living locally. Now through Facebook these connections were re-established. People have a wealth of knowledge and when others enquire its fascinating what information turns up.

■ **Santa arriving at Paul's in Mohill about 1969/1970** See if you can spot: Gerard & Seamus O'Callaghan, Paul Logan, Stephen Flynn, Mary Logan, Luke Early, Tom Melia, David Logan, Eamonn Duignan, Joe Dorr & Lloyd Donnelly. *Front Row: Fiona Slevin on the end at the front right.* There are plenty more if you study the photo closely.

■ *(Right): Ivy Tree Darts team final winners 1982*
Back Row; Tommy McCaffrey, John Dunleavy, Sean O'Connor & Liam Creamer
Front Row: Sean Bannon, John Mc Gushin & George Booth 1982

■ *(Below: Pat Mc Hugh Upper Main Street with Eilish and Saran O'Callaghan at the door of their pub and grocery in the mid 80's*



Gilmartins Forge, Mohill Co Leitrim.



■ (Above Left): Mick Gilmartin working at his forge with his father Jimmy looking on in 1950. The forge was situated to the right of Walpoles garage where the fuel pumps were located. Many an interesting hour was passed watching the bellows blowing and shoes being formed as he went about his work.

■ (Above Right): Mohill Town Developers Association 1962

Back Row: Tony O'Reilly, John O'Sullivan, Bill Boddy, Jim Guckian, Paddy Logan, Chris Reynolds, Eamonn Duignan, Jim Gannon, Walter Dugdale, Pascal McKeon, Patsy McManus, Kevin Brady, J J Kelly NT, Robert Logan, Mick Cox & George Booth.

Front Row: Aidan McGovern & Jack Kelly

■ (Below Left): Gerry Bohan, Lough Rynn with his cousin Brid Creamer taken outside Paul's Main Street in 1969

■ (Below Right): Mohill publicans trip to Dundalk Harp Brewery in the 70's—included in the group at the back is PJ Carroll, Jack Kelly & Kevin Brady. In the middle is Luke Early snr, Larry Moran, Glebe St, Paschal McKeon, Alf Rowley & John Dolan. Towards the front is Mrs Nicholson Hyde St, Paul Greenan's mother and front right is Mrs Nora Beirne



With the advent of Facebook in the last few years, suddenly searching for long lost neighbours, classmates or work colleagues became a reality.

I had great memories about growing up in the town of Mohill from the 60's into the 70's and 80's, the shops and pubs, the characters that lived and worked in the town were all part of the day to day routine of a rural town in South Leitrim.

As my father Tommy ran our family barbershop I met and knew all the local characters and everyone from around the town and surrounding parishes.

As anyone will testify Mohill was a thriving country market town during my youth with plenty of employment, a great farming community and a lively social scene at the weekends.

I always had an interest in photography and much to the annoyance of others at times I would be attempting to capture some historic moments around the town

on film. I quickly realised nobody likes to pose for cameras!

So many of my developed films had plenty of stickers on the prints from the developers explaining the errors of my photography attempts. Unlike the digital photos on the foolproof cameras and smart phones of today, a lot of the prints we took then were consigned to the waste paper basket for being out of focus, no flash or God knows what other malfunction.

Over time though, I accumulated a reasonable archive of Festivals, events and Mohill Shows through the 80's and 90's.

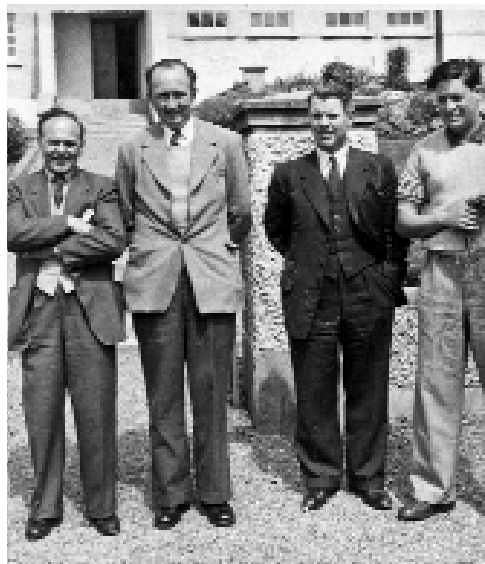
What I began to realise and its quite relevant to the "Old Mohill" page today is, that a random shot of a street gathering or Festival or Football match might have no real point or meaning at the time when its taken, but years later it suddenly starts to jog our memories when a familiar face, long forgotten pops out of the photo.

I could never have imagined that photo





■ (Above Left): Mohill Badminton Team early 80's
 Back Row Vincent Moran, Dermot Mc Keon,
 George Dugdale & Luke Early
 Front Row: Lourda Mc Gowan, Jackie Cusack,
 Loretta Kilrane & Mairead Mulhern



■ (Below Left): Mr & Mrs Bill Boddy with their
 son John taken outside their premises in Bridge St
 Mohill in the 60's

memories of events in the 80's and 90's back around the town would ever have reached the global audience that are able to see them today with advent of the internet.

I thoroughly enjoy when a seemingly random unimportant photo is uploaded and it turns into a Pandora's box of memories for many people. Faces are recalled, car makes and models are identified, locations are named and connections are made with the past from the scene in the photo.

The Facebook comments also allow people to make their connection with the town and share their memories from that time.

What is completely heartening is the amount of people of all ages that are enjoying the Old Mohill group. People who barely knew how to turn on a computer are whiling away the hours looking at the thousands of photos that have been uploaded.

Some people are seeing loved ones for

■ (Middle Right): The entrance to Mohill Vocational School in the late 60's with Dr Michael Farrell and Paddy Keating Principal second and third in the photo

■ (Right): Mohill Town

■ (Below Right): Gallagher's pub: 'The Parting Glass', on Main Street

the first time in years as someone else might have shared a photo they never knew existed.

Of course the secret to the success of the group is trying to encourage the 2,200 members to open their own photo albums or pop the lid on that 'biscuit tin' full of



photo memories that every household has and not leave it to the few regular contributors to keep it fresh.

Some absolute gems of memories of our town have also appeared on old cine film and video that were uploaded also.

Noel Mc Keon's Aunt from Gortvagh arrived in Mohill on vacation from the USA in 1950 armed with a colour cine camera. A lifetime ahead of her time she recorded street scenes and characters from the town during her visit.

Its amazing to see familiar businesses and buildings from nearly 70 years previous in full living colour. I was personally delighted to see my own grandfather Pete Donnelly, barber, on Hill St outside his barber shop.

As technology becomes less intimidating and more intuitive its much easier to pull out those old photos from their dusty confines, take out your iPhone or Samsung and take a photo, then share it on the Old Mohill page for the world to see. No scanners or degrees' in computing are needed!

My simple advice is "If your not sure how to do it just ask a young person to show you" I know I do!

Like many rural towns in Ireland Mohill has suffered in the last few years, with the downturn in the economy and its dwindling population,

But in Mohill there is a great core of individuals (and you know who you are!) who are beavering away in the background

involved in a great number of committees and groups keeping the town alive and putting it out there for all the world to see.

Through their voluntary and tireless efforts they keep flying the flag for the town with their involvement in GAA, Summer Festival , Agricultural Show, Spirit of Mohill, Honda 50, Angling, Town developments and a host of other clubs I've not even thought about.

It gives me great pride to think our little town is well able to hold its own and punch above its weight with the best of them going forward.

It's wonderful to celebrate our glorious past and look forward to a brighter future.

C'mon the Faugh Ar Ballaugh!

SNIPPET

BALLINAMORE ATHLETIC CLUB

THIS A4 132 page book was launched by Athletics Ireland President Georgina Drumm in Ballinamore during the August Family Festival (*see Leitrim Observer 16/8/17*).

It contains a detailed record of the activities and achievements of Ballinamore Athletic Club since it's foundation in 1965, recounting the many County, Provincial, National and International successes in Club, School and Community Games athletics by members which included club member involvement in six Olympic Games since 1972.

The book also sketches the development of athletics and Community Games in Leitrim since the first meeting in Mohill in August 1885 down to recent times. It also outlines the progress of athletics in Connacht and countrywide since the 1880s. It deals with the divisions in Irish athletics down the years until the formation of Athletics Ireland in 2000. The growth and development of International athletics since the late 1800s and particularly since 1912 under the IAAF is outlined. The terrorist attack on Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972 and matters relating to the partial boycott of the Moscow Games in 1980 are also covered.

Connacht athletics developments since the early 1920s are outlined as are those in Leitrim. Particular attention is given to the early 1930s Leitrim progress as well as that of the late 1940s. The growth and development of Community Games is also dealt with. There are numerous photographs and an information packed index section at the end.

This book has a different style and content to other available club histories and is written both to produce an interesting and easy read as well as to provide the reader with a wide range of information, both historical and contemporary.

