

DRUMSNA of YONDER YEARS

Maureen Quigley takes us on a trip down memory lane

IN THE DRUMSNA of the 40's and early 50's, there was no electricity, no television and no mobile phones; only the Post Office and the Barracks had a telephone, but we did have many things that we don't have to-day:

The Hall

Situated between Daly's and the new Garden Centre the hall was lit with oil lamps. I can't remember when it closed, but I do know I attended some functions there.

The last play performed; "The time of the Tans" was written by John Joe Maxwell (Séan), Dristernan, while he was interned in the Curragh Internment Camp, Co. Kildare. I remember going to the hall with my late father and heading up the three entrance steps. I recall hearing a loud bang, which I learned later, was the explosion when the carbine was put into a tin and lit with a match, as they reactivated the fire from the Tan guns.

School

Sadly we lost our school, when it closed its doors in 1965. Thankfully, it still stands to-day, a monument to all the teachers who taught in it and every child who attended, and may it remain standing for generations.

Parochial House

Situated in Gortconnlon it is no longer the residence of the Parish Priest of the day. I can remember seven of them; Fr Cosgrove, Fr Larkin, Fr McGory, Fr Flynn, Fr Moynagh, Fr Prunty, Fr Sullivan and Fr Wall — all of



them serving the people of Drumsna well. The memories of the Parish Mission still sticks out in my mind, when as children we viewed all the religious stalls outside the church.

Garda Barracks

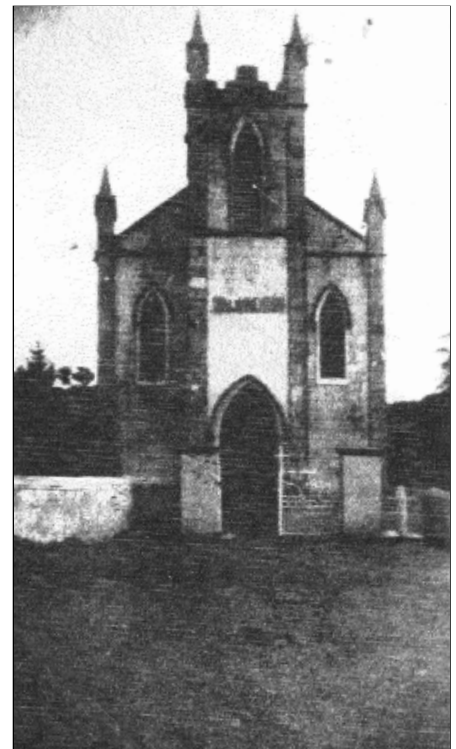
The building was in Main Street, where the Sergeant lived, with his family. I can recall three; Sergeants O'Connell, Walsh and Conway. We also had three Garda; two living in Main Street; Garda Donoghue and Garda Glancy, and one in Quay Street; Garda Reid. We were a well protected community then.

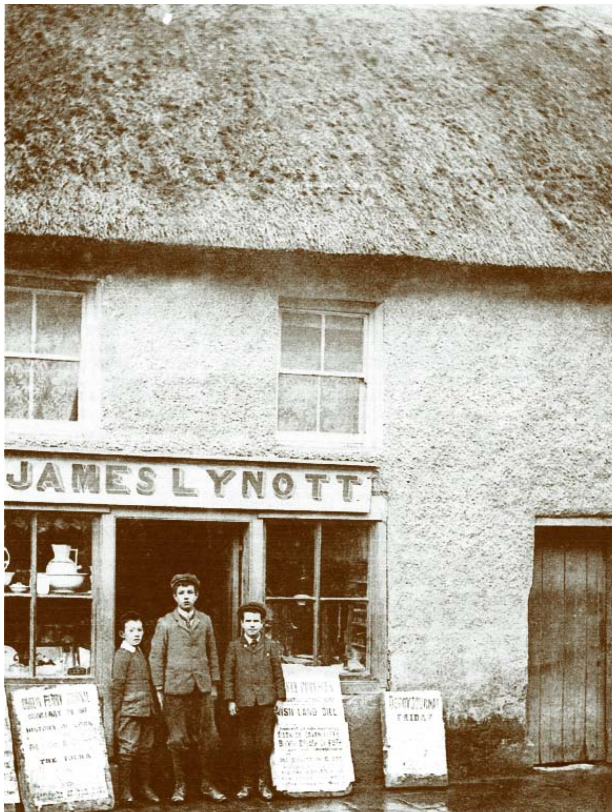
Bakery

Situated at Quay Street, the shop and bakery was owned by Johnnie McManus and his wife. In later years their sons; Joe and Jerry took over the running of the business. Many a time, as a child, I went up the back way, by the Flanker and stood at the bake house door, watching the bakers with their white hats and aprons getting the dough ready to be baked in a wood burning oven. The bread was

▲ Drumsna Fair Day 1950s (Note all the bicycles) Mrs Higgins car, Tom McLoughlin's car Topsy, May Tansey's dog on the foot-path with Martin McLoughlin.

▼ Church of the Immaculate Conception, Drumsna





▲ *Lynotts 1903. Standing at the door of Lynotts Shop, Drumsna, were James N Dolan (later elected Sinn Féin TD for Leitrim in the 1918 election), James Lynott & Francis Lynott. On the 'Weekly Freeman' news board outside the window, we are told of the death of Gavan Duffy, which took place in Nice in January 1903.*

delivered in vans throughout Leitrim, Roscommon, Longford and Cavan. I can remember nine men working there.

Drapery Shop

This was situated in Main Street and owned by Margaret Tuohy and later by her daughter Dotie Kilgallon. Everything was sold here; bed linen, wool, blankets, clothes and footwear for ladies, gents and children.

Grocery, Drapery & Hardware

One shop in Quay Street was owned by Gerry Dunleavy and sold groceries and drapery items. Another grocery and hardware shop situated in Main Street was owned by Alfie Ferguson and later by Dick Tansey.

Butcher Shop

Situated in Main Street this business owned by Thomas James McLoughlin commenced in the late 40's. The slaughterhouse then was located in Jimmy Murray's yard—an outhouse kindly loaned for the purpose. The shop supplied beef, lamb and bacon for many years, as it states on the bill head;

*'No order too big and
None too small'*

Sweet shops

Any pennies we had were not all spent in the one shop as we were spoiled for choice. We had Bridgie Daly's in Quay Street, Mahoney's and Fitzmaurice's opposite the church, McManus's in Belmont,

Tansey's and Beirne's in Main Street.

Cobbler

There were several and they all carried out their business in Quay Street. I can remember three; Jim Fanning, Jack Regan and Tom Reeves. Their job was to keep a good sole and heel on our boots and shoes. Watching them use the hemp and awl was most interesting. They could even make a bubble patch for anyone with bunions.

Blacksmith

The Forge, owned by Willie Gilroy was situated in Quay Street. Spring was the busiest time, as farmers were bringing in their horses to get them shod in preparation for the hay-making season. It was an education watching Willie making the horse shoe; taking some of them straight from the fire and banging away on the anvil, which was standing on a huge trunk of a tree. With sparks flying and bellows blowing the shoe soon took shape.

Post-Office

Again located in Quay Street with the

Postmistress Baby Healy. As this was a busy place in the 40's and 50's, she was helped by her brothers Charlie and Sonny. Later the Post-Office transferred to Teresa Moran. Sadly it closed in August 2003.

Pubs

Drumsna had four pubs back in the 50s and the same number are still there today

Drumsna Railway Station

Known as Corlara and situated a mile or so, from the village, up the Dangan Road, in County Roscommon. The Station opened in 1863 and closed in 1963 and was part of the Midland Great Western Railway. Back in the 50's and 60's it was a busy station. Apart from the passenger numbers, it had a busy freight service. The sides of bacon from O'Mara's in Limerick, barrels of Latex for Drumsna Rubber Factory, leather, boxes of clothes, wool, etc. (for the drapery shop), Guinness, coal, flour, etc. all had to be collected at the station and taken by road to the village. A special carriage was reserved for the mail. Willie Costello, the Drumsna Post-man and later his son Liam, collected the mail with his pony and trap.

Rubber Factory

In the 50's this factory commenced business and was owned by Tommy McCarthy and his wife. It was a great employer when few jobs were available in Drumsna. I'm sure much work went into starting the business as everything required for the manufacture of the balloons, toys, gloves, beach balls etc. had to be imported and transported by rail to Corlara and then by road to Drumsna.

The editor is very grateful to Mrs Quigley for her hard work in compiling the above information. This is just a small section from her research. We hope to continue with her nostalgic trip down memory lane in the next edition.