



Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Duín
Newry, Mourne and Down
District Council

LAST ORDERS THE FC STORY

F.C. MURTAGH

BAR & LOUNGE

OFF SALES

HARP
LAGER

LOUNGE

F.C. MURTAGH



Compiled by
James McArey

Photo Credit: George Connolly





Newry Maritime Association.

Vision.

Our vision for the waterways in Newry is that all those who come to Newry, be they visitors or residents, will have the opportunity to share the “Newry Waterways Experience” This, an experience which brings the rich history of Newry's Maritime past back to life, celebrates the people, the events and the contribution of Maritime activity to the growth and development of Newry.

Mission Statement.

Newry Maritime Association (NMA) is a not for profit community interest organisation and registered charity whose aim is to revitalise the Newry Canal and its associated waterways and environs as usable public space. Our motto, “Giving the canal back to the people of Newry” is a metaphor for instilling social awareness and civic responsibility for a valuable resource which was pivotal to the social and economic development of the greater Newry area.

Our mission is to safeguard and commemorate the rich history and heritage of Newry's waterways and Maritime past and ensure that this public resource is protected and developed for the benefit of future generations.

James McArevey, Chairman
June 2022



Introduction:

This booklet reprises the history of the licensed premises at 25 Bridge Street, Newry which came to be known as “FC Murtagh” and is an element of a project dedicated to what was a communal hub.

This project also showcases effective and cohesive partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors whilst highlighting the excellent relationships which Newry Maritime Association (NMA) has built in the community. NMA has forged strong bonds across the political, religious and social divides and is acknowledged as having a strong cross-community ethos which is reflected in our programme of events.

The “FC Murtagh” project is indicative of our cooperative outworkings.

The engraved “FC” cornertones which graced the front facade of the building for over 170 years play a key role. Their salvage was achieved through the diligent care of Tinnelly Demolition when they were clearing the site and now thanks to LIDL they will be returned to their original home in Bridge Street. A vital link to the history of the area will be retained.

We were privileged to call on the services of the renowned historian and genealogist, Maud Hamill, and Maud delivered a detailed tranche of research on the main players, the Connor and Murtagh families. The Heritage Officer at the Newry branch of Libraries NI, Chris Cassidy, once again was on hand to assist and advise. Chris is always a “Great to go-to man” for help with developing projects.

Local historian, Claudine Níc Giolla Chomhaill, completed our research team who collated almost two centuries of historical facts related to the premises and its incumbents. Claudine also played a key role in shaping the narrative for this booklet.

We wish to sincerely thank Maud Hamill, Chris Cassidy and Claudine Níc Giolla Chomhaill for their invaluable help and assistance in uncovering the “FC Story”

FC STORY

Connor and Murtagh Families

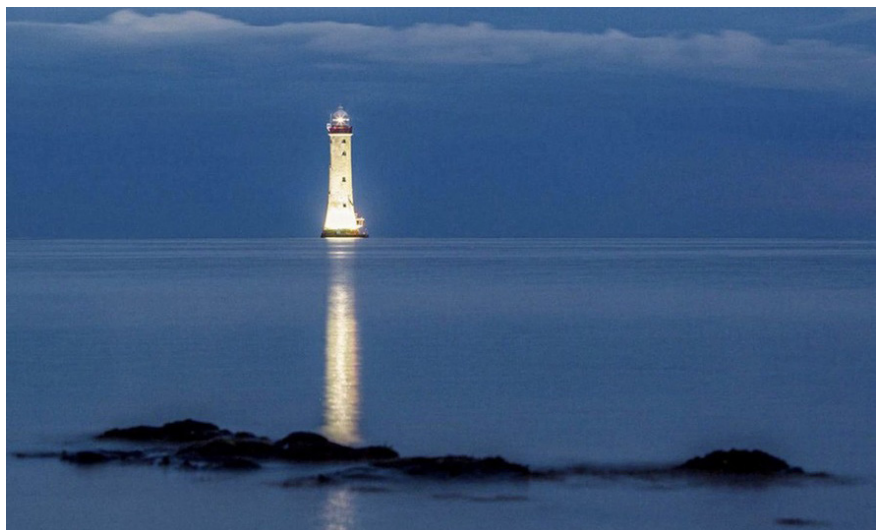
By Claudine Níc Giolla Chomhaill

The earliest evidence of a Public House at 25 Bridge Street appears in the Newry Urban Council Rates Collection Book of 1829 with Moses McKevitt recorded as the proprietor of the business. The location was prime for this type of business with the bustling and prosperous Newry docks located only a few hundred yards from the front door. The canal had been reconstructed and improved between 1801 and 1811 resulting in a huge increase of exports from Newry as recorded in an 1837 report that the “exportation of butter from this town [Belfast] is not increasing owing to the great extent of the trade in Newry.”

The first section of the Ship Canal had been completed in 1767 and ships could transit the Fortescue Lock at Lower Fathom. The lock was named after the architect in charge of the project, John Fortescue, whose family lived in Ravensdale and were affluent landowners.

The completion of this section of the Ship Canal gave ships access to deeper water and they no longer had to navigate the Clanrye River to reach the Port of Newry.

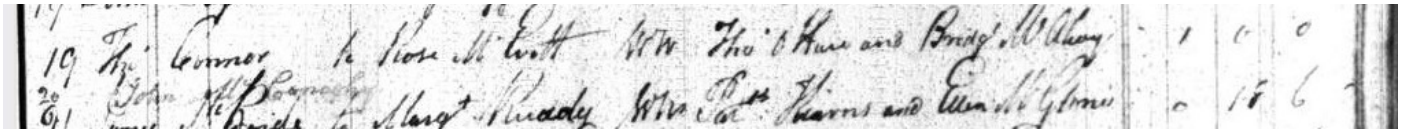
In 1808 the Earl of Kilmorey relocated the butter crane to the Quay along the canal which carries its name today. Further evidence of the increasing importance of the Port of Newry was reflected in the granting of a request by Newry merchants to have a new lighthouse built at the entrance to Carlingford Lough. The project, led by the famed engineer, George Halpin, took 7 years to complete and the first light was exhibited from Haulbowline Lighthouse in September 1824. Almost two centuries later, the lighthouse is still a key aid to ships navigating the Lough. The focus of trade was now centred on the canal. A major feat of engineering was carried out between 1842 and 1850 by the eminent English architect, Sir John Rennie, and the celebrated Irish



Sir John Rennie

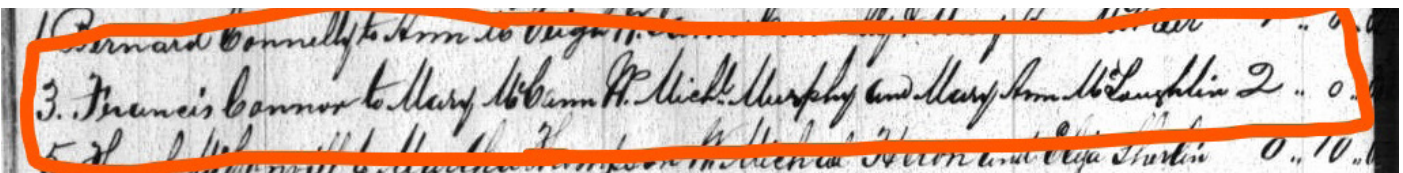
engineer, William Dargan. These men constructed the Albert Basin, Victoria Lock and a 1.5 miles extension of the waterway. This gave us the infrastructure as we know it today, connecting the Port of Newry to Carlingford Lough, the Irish Sea and oceans of the world. Sir John Rennie is reputed to have utilised the inhabitants of Newry Workhouse as navvies to deliver the project. The Workhouse was a key provider of labour with over 1200 inmates as the Famine ravaged the country. The cost of the project was £40,000 and the Victoria Lock became operational in April 1850. The Port of Newry became a hub of global trade and dockside publicans like Francis Connor were well placed to reap the benefits.

Moses McKevitt had three surviving daughters at the time of his death in 1832 and in his Last Will and Testament he left the business at Bridge Street to be operated and shared between them equally. One of the daughters, Rose, married Francis Connor in 1841. The Newry Urban Council Rates Collection Book



Marriage certificate for Francis Connor and Rose McKevitt.

of 1843 lists Francis Connor operating as a Publican at the address 25 Bridge Street. Rose and Francis had eight daughters, of which six survived, but sadly at the young age of 35 years old Rose died in 1854. Francis Connor continued to run the Public House in Bridge Street after his wife's death and in 1856 he married Mary McCann from Newry. The second marriage brought another two daughters and two sons to add to the young family from Francis' first marriage.



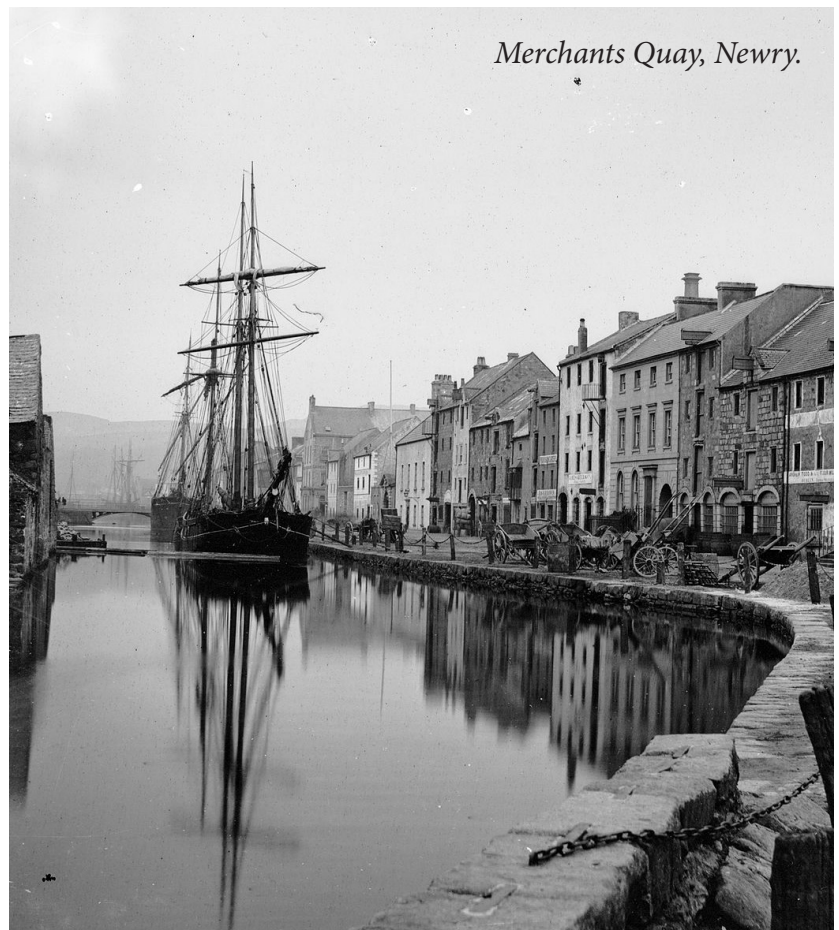
Marriage certificate for Francis Connor and Mary McCann.

In 1876 the Dundalk and Greenore Railway Service was extended to include Newry, with the main station being located at the junction of Bridge Street and Albert Basin, where the Quay's Shopping Centre is located today. The addition of the railway service to accompany the already thriving port would have made the Public House in Bridge Street an extremely convenient and busy watering hole for the workers at the docks and visitors arriving on the ships or by train.

In 1881 a spur was built to extend the Greenore line to Edward Street Railway Station. Trains could now access and egress the main Belfast/Dublin line at Goraghwood.

On the other side of the canal was the rail link to Warrenpoint which had opened in May 1849. The area was now a key industrial hub with merchants like James Fennell, Joseph Lupton and Hill Irvine employing large numbers in their nearby mills. With the Canal and railways on their doorstep, they had easy access to the import of raw materials and the export of their finished goods and Connors Public House was strategically placed to cater for a large volume of thirsty customers.

The enlargement of the Newry Canal in 1884, which allowed for ships of up to 5,000 tons to access Newry, is testament to Newry's position as a thriving commercial hub in Ireland at the time.



Merchants Quay, Newry.

In November 1878 Catherine (Kate) Connor, the fourth child of Francis Connor and his first wife Rose, died in Belfast after a fortnight's illness. Kate's remains were brought by train to Newry and she is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery with her mother. The following year Francis Connor donated, in memory of Kate, the Altar of St. Joseph which remains in situ at the left hand side of the main altar in the Dominican Church, Newry. Such was the occasion of the unveiling and dedication of the marble altar that the ceremony was performed by Rev. Pius Leahy, Bishop of Dromore Diocese at the time.

The Dominicans, based in Dominic Street, had just completed their new church and continue to minister to Newry, some 150 years later.

It proved a seminal event for the Dominican Order and the people of Newry when 3 priests and a lay brother arrived in the town on 7th March 1871 to set up a foundation. They moved into a house in Mc Allisters Terrace, now named St. Colmans Park, and remained there for 3 months until "The Hermitage" in Upper Chapel St. was ready for them.

The Dominicans took over St. Marys, the "Old Chapel" and ministered from there until their new church was built. A wealthy Newry hardware merchant, Mr John Quinn, offered the friars a quarry field which he owned in Ballybot on a 999 years lease at an annual rent of £20. The eminent Cork born architect, George C Aislin, designed the magnificent edifice on Dominic St. known as the Church of the Sacred Heart and St. Catherine of Sienna. The foundation stone was laid and blessed on 23rd May 1873 in the presence of the Prior, Fr. TA O Callaghan, later to become Bishop of Cork. The new church, complete with spire, was dedicated on 17th October 1875 by Dr Leahy and 30 priests. The preacher was the Bishop of Cashel, Dr Croke after whom the GAA named their stadium in Dublin.

By late Autumn 1879 the church was finally completed and thanks to the generosity of the people of Newry, through weekly collections, the church was declared "free of debt" in 1889. Finally, the most momentous occasion came on Saturday 4th August 1906 when the church was consecrated by Dr. Henry O Neill, Bishop of Dromore and after whom O Neill Avenue is named. The daughters of John Quinn gave the rights of freehold forever to the Dominicans and also that of the large garden opposite the church Over the last 149 years the Dominican order has served our community faithfully and we, in turn, have supported them in their ministry. They have been with us in good times and bad, for the happy occasions and perhaps, more importantly, the sad ones.



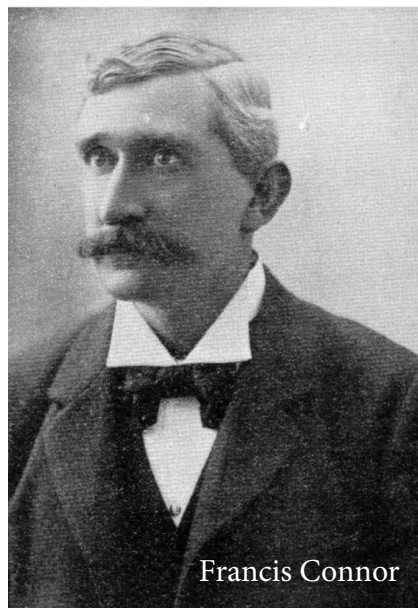
Altar of St. Joseph.

St. Catherines Church and Priory, Newry.





Dennis Doherty



Francis Connor

Francis continued to run the business in Bridge Street until his death in 1885, at which time seven of his twelve children were still alive. In his Last Will and Testament, Francis left the business to his only surviving son, Francis (Frank) Connor (jnr). Shortly after his father's death, Frank opened an auctioneer business on Hill Street, Newry but by 1890 the local newspaper, the Newry Reporter, notes that Frank had relocated to Australia, and along with another Newry local, Denis Doherty, they were operating a highly successful Pastoralist business in

the Kimberley Region of Australia. The two men arrived at the right location at the right time as in 1884 the Western Australian Goldrush began. Frank and Denis opened a Cattle Station in the Northern Territory of Australia which was 2,500 square Km (965 sq. miles) and named it 'Newry Station' after their home town in Ireland. Even today, Newry Station operates as highly successful Pastoralist business. Frank went on to also carve out a highly successful political career becoming a member of both houses of the Parliament of Western Australia, the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council.

While Frank resided in Australia, his sister Margaret and her husband, Arthur Treanor from Glenn, ran the Public House on Bridge Street as agents for Frank. In 1897 two of Frank and Margaret's siblings initiated court proceedings against Margaret and her husband Arthur. The plaintiffs in the case, sisters Mary-Ann

Business Notices.

FRANK CONNOR,
AUCTIONEER AND VALUATOR, PROPERTY BROKER, CATTLE
SALESMAN, &c., &c.

OFFICES:—No. 70 HILL-STREET, NEWRY.

F. C. CONNOR WISHES TO INFORM THE PUBLIC OF NEWRY AND SURROUNDING
Districts that he has taken out an AUCTIONEER'S LICENSE, and is prepared to conduct
Sales intrusted to him with despatch, and on

STRICTLY CASH PRINCIPLES.

Having secured the services of an experienced Assistant, Probate Valuations, &c., will be attended to
punctually. Recognising a want long felt in Newry, F. C. has established a

MONTHLY SALE OF HORSES,
CATTLE, SHEEP, VEHICLES, HARNESS, &c.

The NEXT SALE will take place at his Sale-yard, BRIDGE-STREET, NEWRY,
ON TUESDAY, 17TH FEBRUARY, 1885.
Particulars of Sale shall appear in due course.

FOR CASH ONLY!

HAVE YOU PAID A VISIT LATELY TO THE

Advertisement for Auctioneering Business.



Headstone for Francis Connor, his wife Rose and some of their siblings in St Marys Cemetery, Newry.

and Bridget Connor, claimed that under the will of their grandfather, Moses McKeivitt, the premises in Bridge Street had been left to his three daughters, their mother being one of these daughters. The sisters claimed that they did not receive their share of the monies that were due to them from the business.

Arthur Trainor continued to run the Public House in Bridge Street until his death in January 1907. In April of the same year the Newry Reporter announced that Frank Connor had returned from Australia on a visit to Newry.

Arthur Trainor was an alcoholic and died of Cirrhosis of the Liver. He and his wife, Margaret Connor, had run into serious financial difficulties. Now, 3 months after Arthurs death, Francis Connor returned from Australia to sort out his affairs in Newry. As a very successful businessman and politician, Francis Connor was a pragmatist with little time for sentiment. He had plans for the future and they did not include his sister Margaret. Instead, he looked to Belfast and a young married nephew and two months later Francis Connor Murtagh arrived in Newry.

He applied for the transfer of Licence for the premises in Bridge Street. Francis Connors plan was now in full flow. Sadly this was would be Frank Connors last visit to Newry.

Having established himself as a foremost licensed vintner, Frank diversified his business interests with the purchase of the Imperial Cinema in March 1917 from its founder, Mr John Casey.

Just like his bar in Bridge Street, Frank made a success of this venture also with the "Newry Reporter" noting in his obituary in March 1937,

The "Imperial Cinema", under his guidance, became one of the most popular and successful theatres of its kind in the North of Ireland. Following the death of his father, Terry Murtagh assumed control of the cinema and continued to run it until it was sold to the Liptons grocery chain in 1964. In August 1916 Frank Connor's life came to a sudden end one afternoon when he was at home in Benger, Australia, cleaning his gun in preparation for an afternoon of hunting that he had arranged with the local priest. Frank's wife came into the room to inform him that the priest had arrived and as she opened the door it is believed that she startled Frank and the loaded gun went off and instantly killed him.

F.C. Murtagh was the son of Mary-Ann Connor, eldest child

* CONFIRMATION OF TRANSFER.

NOTICE OF APPLICATION TO QUARTER SESSIONS FOR CERTIFICATE FOR PUBLICAN'S LICENSE.

TAKE NOTICE, that it is my intention to apply at the next Annual Licensing Quarter Sessions of the Peace to be held at Newry, for the Division of Newry, and County of Down, on the 8th day of October, 1907, for a Certificate to entitle me to receive an ordinary License for the Sale of Beer, Cider, and Spirits by retail, in my house situate **at 25 Bridge Street, Newry**, to be consumed in said house, and which said house is my residence and place of abode, and is situate in the townland of Ballinlare, in the town of Newry, in the Parish of Newry, in the Barony of Upper Orier or Lordship of Newry and County of Down aforesaid, and on or adjacent to the high road leading from Dundalk to Banbridge.

Dated this **22nd day of August, 1907.**

FRANCIS C. MURTAGH,

Applicant.

To J. L. Devenish Meares, Esq.; John J. M'Arevey, Esq., Justices of the Peace for the County of Down. To George L. MacLaine, Esq., Clerk of the Crown and Peace, Peace Office, Downpatrick; and to William Irwin, Esq., District Inspector of Royal Irish Constabulary, Newry.

HUNTER MOORE,

Solicitor for Applicant,
38 Hill Street, Newry.

8267

IMPERIAL PICTURE PALACE.

OPENING UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT.

1917

On next Monday night the Imperial Picture Palace will open under new management, the concern having been taken over from the Newry Picture Palace Co., Ltd., by Mr. Frank C. Murtagh, who has bought out the property, and who intends to run the Palace on thoroughly up-to-date lines.

The change of ownership will be noticeable at once by the public, as the best, and only the best, in the picture world will be shown.

Of next week's programme we will have more to say in next issue, but the new contracts will include the most thrilling dramatic fare, as well as the re-appearance of Charles Chaplin, who has been suffering from war-scare since the super-tax went on.

Prices of admission, too, have been altered to include 5d seat-holders. We are now to have seats at 2½d, 5d and 7d, so that the second-class passengers will have a show.

It will be the public's own fault if they are unappreciative of the efforts made to cater for them. Under the new management it will be the care of the proprietor to cater for all, and, therefore, all should rally to his support.

of Francis Connor and his first wife, Rose McKeivitt and half sister to Frank Connor of Australia. Mary-Ann married Thomas Murtagh from Newry and all their married life they ran a Public House in Castle Lane, Belfast.

The couple who married on 9th August 1864 had 8 children, 4 boys and 4 girls. Their 6th born child is of major interest in connection with this story. Francis Connor Murtagh (FC) was born on 12th April 1879 and was baptised in St. Malachys Belfast where his parents were married.

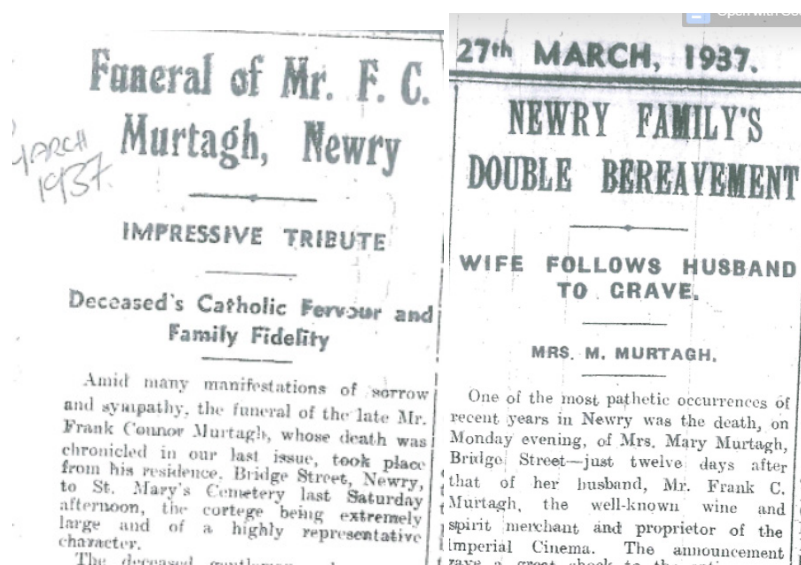
Known as Frank, he received his early education with the Christian Brothers in Belfast and laterally at Castleknock College, Dublin.

On 19th July 1903, Frank aged 24, married a Belfast girl, Mary O Hanlon, in St. Malachys and their union produced 7 children, 4 girls and 3 boys. Sadly, 3 of the siblings died in infancy.

F.C. Murtagh was no stranger to the Publican life and trade. F.C. Murtagh ran what is locally known as Murtagh's Pub at 25 Bridge Street until his death in 1937.

He was 58 years old. Death at an early age was something that bedevilled the Connor and Murtagh families. His father, Thomas had died in 1884 aged 44. Frank was then aged 5 and his youngest sibling, Rose was just 2. Mary Ann was thrust into the running of their Belfast bar alone. A tough woman in a harsh working-class environment, she passed away in Bridge Street on 10th October 1922 aged 78. Worse was to follow when his wife, Mary, passed away just 12 days later sending shock waves through the community and the family reeling from their double bereavement. The couple were buried in the Murtagh family plot in St. Marys Cemetery, Newry. They left 4 children to mourn their loss, Maureen, Eileen, Yvonne and a son, Terry.

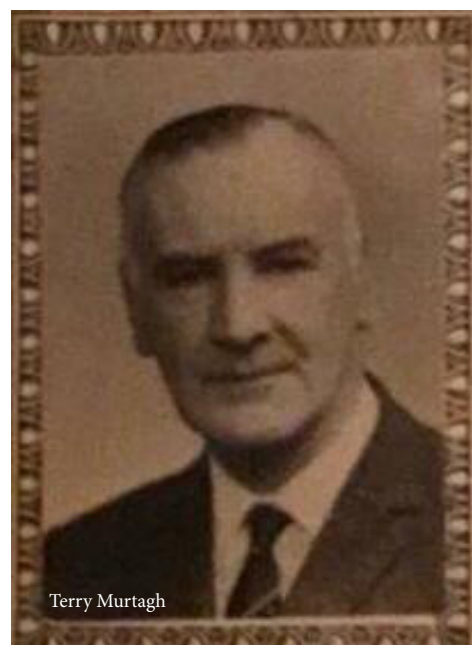
Terry Murtagh now took over the running of the family business. He was a very personable man and a sign of his affluence was the Mercedes car which he drove in the 1960s when a basic car was a luxury!!! Terry Murtagh was predeceased by his sister Yvonne who lived on the premises with him and neither married. When Terry passed away in 1971 the bar was taken over by the brothers, Dan and Tommy Mc Alinden. Originally from Shinn, they married 2 sisters from Omeath.



The Murtagh family plot in St. Marys Cemetery, Newry.

Dan married Sally Jordan and Tommy married her sister, Lizzie. They commenced the venture in June 1971 during a very turbulent period in Newry and across the North and fortunately came through unscathed. The brothers continued to trade under the FC Murtagh brand and developed the business into one of the most successful hostelrys in Newry and the surrounding hinterland, North and South of the Border.

In 1987 Dan and Tommy retired and the mantle was passed to Tommy's sons, Martin and Daniel, and the business continued on an upward trajectory. The change in the social fabric from the late 70s saw women frequenting what had previously been a male preserve, the Pub. Sports groups too aligned themselves with a particular bar and this, in turn, generated more trade and brought in a younger clientele. The premises of FC Murtagh was no exception and Park View FC adopted the bar as their base along with pool and darts teams and golfing society. The bar became the hub of the community with all age groups contributing to the customer profile. There was an ambience and terrific camaraderie about the place, helped in no small measure by the youthful proprietors. Joys were celebrated and sorrows commiserated upon in what was almost a reflection of a vibrant community centre. In 2003 Buttercrane Shopping Centre expressed an interest in buying the bar and 2 large adjacent properties to facilitate expansion. They were successful in their quest for the properties and in February 2004 the doors of FC Murtagh closed for the last time and the curtain came down on almost 2 centuries of the licensed trade on the site. Last orders were just that.



Terry Murtagh

The running of a Public House was in the blood down through the generations in the Connor and Murtagh families. The third daughter of Francis Connor and his first wife Rose McKevitt was also called Rose. In 1877 she was running the Kitchen Bar in Belfast whilst also providing rooms for women who worked in the local shops. In 1885 she married a Belfast solicitor, James Clarke but this was not to last long as James died in 1887. She remarried in 1891 to Michael O'Leary from Belfast. By 1901 the Census records show that Rose was living in Rostrevor and was the proprietor of the Glenmore Hotel, with her husband residing with his brothers in Belfast. By 1911 census Rose had returned to Belfast to live on her own in Agincourt Avenue.



In 1918 a police report referred to Rose, now aged 63 years of age as "a dangerously active Sinn Féiner bitterly hostile to England". Perhaps the Police were justified in their assumption that Rose was a formidable lady as in May 1918 Rose wrote to a Dr. Russell MacNabb stating "...They (the English) have sown 'Dragon's' Teeth – I suppose you have some spare time on your hands. You should employ it to write an essay on 'The Freedom of the Seas'..." . The Dr. MacNabb referenced here represented Sinn Féin for the Duncairn Constituency of Belfast in what is nowadays regarded as a key moment in Irish history, the 1918 December UK Election, which became the First Dáil Éireann Election, even though at the time he was interned in

Birmingham Gaol as “a person of hostile origin and association.” Rose died at Fitzroy Avenue in 1933 aged 78 years, having never had any children in either of her marriages.

An in-depth genealogy examination of the Connor and Murtagh families show that the Publican and Hospitality trades were in their blood down through many generations, with both the male and female members all being directly involved with running a Public

House, Hotel or being Wine Merchants or married someone that was directly involved in the trade.



The youngest child of Francis Connor and Rose McKevitt, Ellen, emigrated to America and married Thomas Conlon in New York. They had two daughters, Alice and Rose Conlon. In the 1901 Ireland census Rose Conlon is listed as an American who was residing in Rostrevor at the previously mentioned Glenmore Hotel which was run by her Aunt Rose Connor. By the 1911 Ireland Census, sisters Rose and Alice Conlon are listed as residing at the Imperial Hotel in Bangor, Co. Down. Alice was born in New York, married a Daniel Morgan in Belfast in 1901 and subsequently she became the proprietor of the Imperial Hotel in Bangor, Co. Down. When Alice died in 1958 she left £49,000 in her Last Will and Testament and the running of the Imperial Hotel in Bangor was taken over by her daughter Kathleen Frances Morgan. When Kathleen died six years later she left a fortune of £57,000 in her Last Will and Testament.

The Murtagh side of the family tree were equally, if not more successful in the Hospitality and Liquor trade. F.C. Murtagh's father, Thomas, had five brothers and they were all born in Newry. Patrick was a Spirit Merchant in Mill Street, Belfast; John was the Proprietor of the Cliftonville Hotel on the Crumlin Road in Belfast; George was the Proprietor of numerous Pubs in Belfast; Felix was a Wine and Spirit Dealer at Mill Street in Belfast; and Michael owned a Grocer's Shop and a Public House on Market Street in Newry. Michael's son, Daniel Murtagh, was Town Commissioner of Newry in 1899 and was also a Poor Law Guardian in the town. He inherited the Public House on Market Street in 1893 when his mother died, which he then sold in 1906. All of the Murtagh brothers were brought back to Newry when they died and are all buried in St. Mary's (Old Chapel) Cemetery.

Newry Maritime Association are delighted to have received the two corner stones from the front facade of 25 Bridge Street when it was being demolished to make way for the recently opened Lidl store. The initials F.C. are engraved on the cornerstones and in obtaining possession of the stones Newry Maritime Association have ensured that they will be preserved for posterity and not lost as so many other artefacts of Newry's history have succumbed to over time.



Before



After

We wish to thank:

Tinnelly Demolition
Modern Fireplace Company and Monumental Works
Michael McCaul Signs
Ben Wilson Steel
Maud Hamill

For enabling us to deliver this key local heritage project.

New Beginnings

The bar and the adjacent properties lay in ever-increasing decay until 2021 when an announcement was made that Lidl was relocating from their Castle Street site and building a new £5 million flagship store on the Bridge Street site and incorporating some of the Buttercrane floor space.

Demolition began in October 2021 and a decision was taken to try and acquire the 2 engraved cornerstones which were sited at each end of the front of the bar. The letters, “FC” referred to Francis Connor after whom a grandson and future landlord would be named. We felt that given that the bar was an integral part of the port infrastructure for several generations and also a key player in the community it would be most appropriate to refurbish the stones and then return them to their home on Bridge Street.

We approached LIDL and requested permission to site the stones back where they had been in place for over 150 years. The senior management of LIDL was very pleased to learn of our project whilst explaining the importance they placed on the preservation of local history and heritage and they acceded to our request. Now, with an agreement in place with Lidl the first priority was to ensure the salvage of the stones.

The demolition was being carried out by Tinnelly Demolition, part of John Tinnelly & Sons, an NMA Corporate Member. We received a very positive response when we approached Tinnellys and were directed to the site foremen. John Cunningham and Brian Campbell were very helpful and enthusiastic to help whilst emphasising that they could not guarantee the safe recovery of the stones.

The team on site took great care and some 10 days later came the phone call to say the stones were safe and sound and we wish to thank all involved for their diligent care and attention with the salvage operation. The next step was the removal of the artefacts and specialist remedial work. Our Corporate Member, Modern Fireplace Company and Monumental Works undertook the operation and the Keenan family carried out the task at their Greenbank workshops. When this work was completed the stones were removed to Carnbane where Michael Mc Caul Signs, another Corporate Member, were waiting to deliver the next step in the process.

The engravings, “FC”, were to be gold-leafed, a specialist task, and the stone casings painted with a high-quality granite finish. This task was entrusted to Michael Mc Caul (Snr), a master signwriter, painter and decorator with over 75 years experience, yes 75 years !!!



*A stunning image of the new flagship LIDL store at Buttercrane.
Picture credit, Pak Aerial Media.*



Mickey, as he is fondly known is now in his 91st year and thankfully in fine fettle. Having meticulously cleaned the stones, Mickey now began the painting process and when completed the letters were gold-leafed to perfection. The end product was the stones were restored to pristine condition, a tribute to the skillsets of Mickey Mc Caul.

A steel frame, fabricated by Ben Wilson & Sons, will carry the stones on display in Bridge Street. All at NMA wish to thank our Corporate Members who have helped us deliver this most noteworthy heritage project, Tinnelly Demolition, Modern Fireplace Company and Monumental Works. Michael Mc Caul Signs. Ben Wilson Steel.

Regina Remembers

We are reprinting three articles, first published in 2013, which reflect on life in “Sailortown” back in the day.

Remembering Queenie



In loving memory of

Ann Quinn

who died on
20th August 2020
Aged 95 years

Rest in Peace



Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to Thy Protection, implored Thy help or sought Thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto Thee, O Virgin of Virgins, my Mother; to Thee do I come; before Thee I stand; sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in Thy clemency, hear and answer me. Amen.



Remembering Eddie



In loving memory of

Edward Quinn

who died on
28th December 2020
Aged 96 years

Rest in Peace



Our Father,
Who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.



Two tired eyes are sleeping
Two willing hands are still ;
The one who worked so hard for us
Is resting at God's Will.

Very sadly, two of our “Walking reference books” passed away within 18 weeks of each other in 2020 after 66 years of marriage. For over 20 years, Eddie Quinn and his wife, Queenie, lived in Rooneys Terrace just behind Murtaghs Bar.

In this article from 2013, Queenie recalls life growing up in the close-knit Thomas St. / Rooneys Terrace community and provides an excellent cameo from a community long since consigned to the mists of time.

Gone but not forgotten. RIP Eddie and Queenie.

The Port Of Newry and the mills were the traditional avenues of employment for generations of Newry people with often 3 or more family members earning a living there. The tightly knit community that was based in Thomas Street reflected this and almost all the 52 households were sustained by the wages of millworkers, dockers or seamen. Many families were visited with injuries and fatalities associated with employment in these sectors where the work was arduous and often dangerous due to the harsh labour conditions prevailing. The emphasis lay with the cost effective completion with the job in hand and really, very little else.

There were small houses lining the left side of Thomas Street faced by a uniform row of 2 storey houses, Rooneys Terrace, on the right. These 25 houses were known jocularly as Quality Row.

The residents of No 43 were indicative of the employment culture of the area at the time. They also provide a unique cameo of the family tree with 4 generations living in the family home.

The Matriarch was Mrs Brigid Mc Evoy, a lady whose life was scarred by personal tragedy. A native of Carlingford, Brigid married Robert Kerr and they had 2 children, Robert and Emma.

the eldest of whom, Stephen, died in childhood. Arthur died in 1938 as a result of severe injuries incurred when he fell into the hold of SS Rowan (Fisher Fleet) whilst travelling to Victoria Locks. Emma received a widows pension of 18s per week to rear her children. Her eldest child, Brigid, got a job in Bessbrook Mill and she was followed by 14 years old Ann Regina, forever known as Queenie, who earned 5s a week often working a 14 hour day. She is keen to point out that her tram fares and lunches had to be paid for from this frugal amount. Social activities revolved around the Confraternity in St Catherines and a strict 9pm curfew imposed by her mother who also had a rota of chores for the young weaver. The little community was devastated in December 1952 by one of the worst domestic tragedies in living memory in Newry.

Queenie vividly remembers the tragedy unfolding after she noticed something amiss at No 9 Thomas St, home of the Byrne family, after returning from mass on Sunday 7th December. Mrs Mary Byrne and her unmarried sister Catherine Rice were daily massgoers and on Sundays they attended 7am mass in the Cathedral without fail. So when Queenie noticed their blinds still closed before noon, she intuitively knew something was wrong and informed



Brigid suffered the loss of her husband at an early age and later young Robert went to sea and was one of those lost when the coal boat SS Dingle was torpedoed in the English Channel on 20th February 1916.

Brigid remarried becoming the wife of Thomas Mc Evoy who was a coachman with a local physician, Dr Mc Mahon. Daughter Emma married a young Belfast seaman, Arthur Mc Conville and they had 4 children,

her Granny. Her Granny, Bridget then instructed her to contact some of the neighbours across the street and 2 local men broke through the back door of No9.

There was an overpowering smell of gas and on going upstairs they found Mary and her sons, James and Edward, and her sister Catherine, dead, overcome as a result of a gas tap being inadvertently being left on. Both men were employed as dockers and their colleagues formed an impressive guard of honour at their funerals to St Marys. 59 years ago Queenie



S.S. Rowan
A fatal accident on the S.S. Rowan transformed life in
43 Rooney's Terrace forever

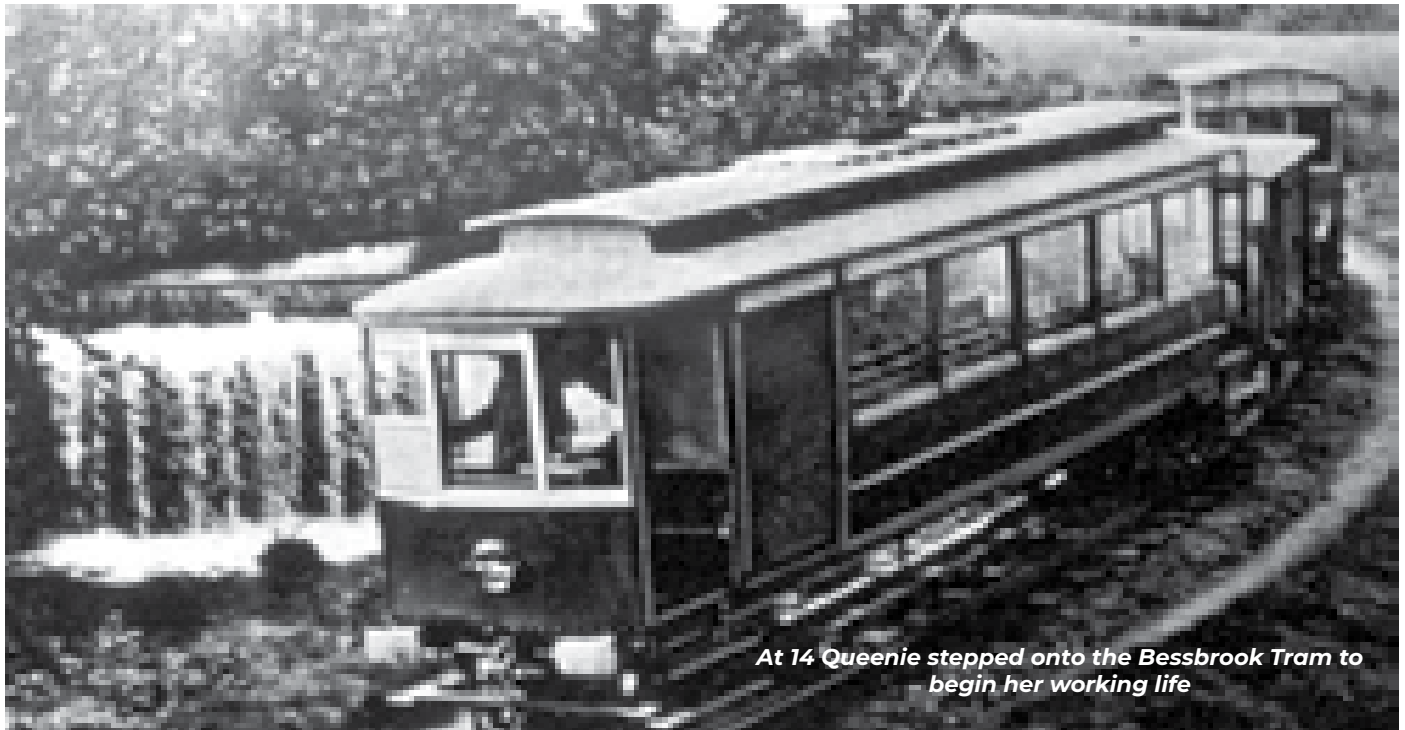
married Fathom man Eddie Quinn in 1954. The 4th generation arrived in No 43 with the birth of their daughters, Geraldine and Connla, themselves proud mothers today and a unique genealogical timeframe was created.

Queenie and Eddie lived in Rooneys Terrace until demolition in the mid 70s in what she still refers to as, "The best street in the country"

The Quinns and their memories acquired over their long lifetimes provide us with an important and insightful view of times past and those who created them. Today whilst, they regret the loss of the camaraderie which welded communities and helped forge lifelong bonds, they miss little else." Good old days? There was nothing good about them" says Queenie and who can argue with a lady who lived through those days.



Bessbrook Mill
The mill employed hundreds, mainly women, from
Newry. On payday they would link arms and sing as they came back down the Camlough Road back into town



A Boy's Impressions

Michael O'Hare

..... the silence broken in Abbey Yard as the few became the crowd
..... flights of feathers struggle for height among the pounding feet
..... Bizz Quinn stands in the tiny shop doorway hoping to catch the
remaining pennies like a spider in a web

..... three boys share a fag at McCourt's, a penny each to qualify.....

..... McClellan's fruit shop is at the corner. Mouth waters
..... pictures in my mind of exotic places

..... a bell ringing!
..... the railway gates closing at the Dublin Bridge Station

..... Charles McGrath's new barber's sign is like a big screw going
nowhere.....

..... don't like that new clinic, can still smell ether. I shudder.....

..... Jack McAteer puts petrol in a Morris van with a big dinge in the front mudguard
.....

..... pipe swings from the wall, "Why does it not leak?".....

..... a docker with coal-blackened hands staggers from the Dublin
House cursing after burning his nose lighting a butt he had
snigged earlier.....

..... hear the train huff, huff, huff run to the foot bridge smoke and steam
my clothes smell

..... see the signalman hand over the baton to the driver as the train
crosses the canal on its way to Edward Street Station.....

..... cattle, sheep and pigs in the stock pens waiting to board the
Dundalk berthed at the steam packet, bound for England on the
tide.....

..... timber boat discharging new timber from Finland, smells good! A man with a
moustache is cross as I pick up scraps for lighting the fire. I escape with my bundle

..... coal dust everywhere, the black faces with big shining shovels.
The Oak must be discharged.....

..... steam engine pushes coal wagons from the Provincial gates
down alongside the canal some run on and smash into the
buffer with a resounding crash!

..... all the Drumalane children turn off for home. Suddenly I'm
alone.....

..... the smell of wood smoke coming from the tinkers camped on
the old Greenore railway getting closer tap, tap,
tap, tap, tap, tap as the tinker puts up a new bottom in a tin
bucket

..... grubby children play, swinging on the big wooden railway gate.....

..... I see the beaten path up the field to Mickey Moore's well for
clean water

..... the Oak catches up with me at the quarry on her way to the
Victoria Locks to await the tide.....

..... I take off my shoes and socks and feel the warm dust between
my toes

..... a sudden light summer shower and the fresh smell of rain on
warm tar as I pop the bubbles with my big toe

..... stop at the hidden place for a drink, pushing the ferns aside. It's
cool! Lift down the small school milk bottle from the flat stone,
rinse and fill. It tastes good.....

..... Mrs Kelly is hanging washing on the hedge. I say "Hello".....

..... I meet Peter the lamplighter. He is trimming the wicks and
filling the navigation lamps with paraffin oil.....

..... round the corner and home. My belly grumbles as I smell the
fresh bread Mamma has baked. A big hug and a piece of soda
farl with homemade rhubarb jam. So good to be home!

Maritime Heroes

During World War Two the Ministry of War Transport (MOWT) could take control of any vessels as required and merchant seamen from Newry found themselves not only crossing the dangerous Irish Sea but also getting involved in the fighting at Dunkirk and Normandy. Six in particular were officially recognised for their gallantry.

Two men who received joint recognition were Terry O'Hanlon and Barney Murphy. From Fathom and Killeavy it was inevitable that they would follow in the footsteps of previous generations and take to the sea. Barney Murphy, from Killeavy, had worked for the Great Northern Railway Company before commencing his sea career as an engineer. Both he and Terry were employed by the Liverpool firm Richard Hughes and Sons, who ran a fleet of coastal steamers.

In the early months of 1940 the German army had relentlessly pushed the British forces right back to the coast of Europe. The British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, decided to evacuate his forces before they were decimated. Operation Dynamo swung into operation. MOWT called for every available vessel to assist with the rescue of the beleaguered men. Ships of all makes and sizes responded. Coal boats, fishing smacks, trawlers, pleasure craft and freighters all participated in what was to be the biggest ever evacuation of men by sea. In nine days, 338,000 men were taken off the beaches at Dunkirk and repatriated.

One of those "little ships at Dunkirk", also known as "the ships who saved an army", was an elderly tramp steamer, the S.S. Dorrien Rose. She was a member of the Hughes fleet, a 1000-tonne coaster mainly deployed in the coal trade. She carried a crew of thirteen men, among them, Murphy (Chief Engineer) and O'Hanlon (Mate).

The little ship and her brave crew defied German bombardment and aerial attacks to rescue 900 men. They brought them to safety and were returning to Dunkirk when they came on S.S. Queen of the Channel, a River Thames pleasure boat, in serious difficulties. They succeeded in rescuing the 700 men on board and landed them safely in Folkestone.

Every member of the crew of the Dorrien Rose was decorated for their incredible feats of bravery.

Terry O'Hanlon and Barney Murphy were each awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC).



Terry O'Hanlon DSC and Barney Murphy DSC
(Courtesy of Eileen Murphy)

Terry, later a captain, on retirement from sea, served as lockmaster at Victoria Locks from 1951 to 1968. Barney retired to the family farm and later also received an MBE. Neither man ever spoke much about the horrors they experienced.

Near neighbours of the O'Hanlon's were the McParland family. Mrs Ellen McParland was the sub-postmistress of Fathom Post Office. She had a family of nine to support. Again, following the tradition in Fathom four sons, Paddy, Jack, Jimmy and Eddie went to sea.

Eddie had an incredible escape from death when his ship was torpedoed off the Kent coast during WW1. The S.S. Dingle was on passage from Sunderland to France on Government service when she was sunk. The survivors clung to an upturned lifeboat. Aged just seventeen, Eddie was the sole survivor. He managed to cling to the lifeboat for fifteen hours. After this tragedy he carried on with his career at sea, becoming a captain along with his three brothers. Paddy worked for Fishers of Barrow. This was



Dunkirk – Operation Dynamo – The Heroism of Little Boats



lifelong employment and although he qualified with a Master's Ticket Paddy declined the responsibility, preferring to remain as First Officer.

During the War, S.S. Empire Jill was one of the ships Paddy served on. A collier, she was one of "the coal scuttle brigade". Most of her time was spent ferrying coal to the North Atlantic convoys on the Firth of Forth, and the naval base at Loch Ewe. It was dangerous work and Paddy survived being torpedoed. He was awarded an MBE in 1942. He said the honour was in memory of and in tribute to his shipmates who perished. Paddy lived in Preston. He died in 1985 after almost forty years at sea.

Jack McParland, a respected captain with Fishers of Newry, died at an early age. In 1950, his son John joined the Fisher fleet as a deck boy. He too became a Captain and served with Esso Petroleum for 30 years.

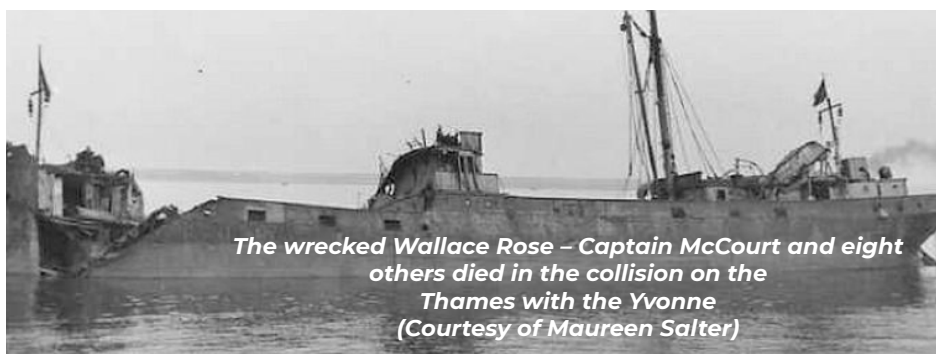
Another of our decorated seamen was Leo McCourt from Bridge Street. Leo was born at Mountbagenal, his mother's place, on the Cooley Peninsula in County Louth. He was the eldest of four children and was named after his father, Patrick Leo. His father was a sea captain who, in his later years, worked for Joseph Fisher. In 1898 he was in command of S.S. Herbert, a Leith registered sailing ship. On route from Liverpool to Sligo the ship foundered off the notorious Strangford coast. Just like Eddie McParland, the Captain, Leo's father, survived by clinging on to a lifeboat for an unbelievable 17 hours. The remaining crew, including two Newry men were lost.

Young Leo followed in his father's footsteps starting a career at sea with Joseph Fisher and Sons. They were located just around the corner from his Bridge Street home. He moved to the Larne firm of Howdens and then he accepted a position as master with the prominent Liverpool firm of Richard Hughes and Co. On June 6 1944, as Master of the MOWT-requisitioned S.S. Wallace Rose, Leo was involved in "Operation Neptune", the Allied invasion of Normandy. It was the largest amphibious operation

ever undertaken, when over 155,000 men and their equipment were landed from a fleet of ships. Eventually, over two million men were transported across the Channel using over 800 ships.

Captain McCourt ferried supplies to Normandy and despite four days and nights of German bombardment he held the line. The cargo was discharged and Captain McCourt's ship withdrew safely. Captain Leo McCourt was awarded the DSC.

In January 1954, alas, despite courageously surviving the Normandy invasion Leo died tragically in the



The wrecked Wallace Rose – Captain McCourt and eight others died in the collision on the Thames with the Yvonne (Courtesy of Maureen Salter)



Leo McCourt DSC (Courtesy of Maureen Salter)



Normandy Invasion - The largest ever amphibious operation and Newry men were in the middle of it

River Thames. He had arrived in London from France with a cargo of slag for a power station. The Wallace Rose was lying at anchor when she was struck by the Dutch Coaster, Yvonne, and sank. Leo and seven of his crew died.

There were two survivors. "Big Leo" as he was known was buried in St. Mary's cemetery, Newry, alongside his parents.

As we have seen the port of Newry is associated with courage and hard work. Paddy Mallon personified these virtues. Born in Mayobridge, Paddy grew up in Castle Street. He married Mary McAteer from Boat Street and together they raised a family of seven children. Unlike most seamen Paddy did not take to the sea on leaving school. He first worked in Dempsters Mill, Cornmarket, but was made redundant as a result of the 1930's depression.

With young children to support Paddy joined Fishers of the Albert Basin. He sailed on the S.S. Palm where he spent over 14 years as a fireman, stoking to build steam. The job was gruelling. A typical trip to Liverpool involved shovelling 5 to 6 tons of coal in temperatures of 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Being slight of frame, in cramped conditions, Paddy was better suited than a heavier man to this back-breaking work. Through the war years, the men in

the engine room, deep below the waterline, had the added mental anguish of knowing they most likely would perish in the event of something going wrong. Paddy completed his service on the S.S. Rowan. He was awarded the MBE at the end of the war. His award is unique. King George VI presented it at Stormont, whilst on a visit to Belfast.

Perhaps the most iconic personality in the story of the port is Captain Harry Hollywood. Harry was born and reared in Hawthorn Cottage on a site overlooking the Newry Canal, on the Omeath Road, in the townland of Fathom. He was born in 1876, just 26 years after the canal had been extended and Victoria Locks and the Albert Basin built. At the age of 14, like his father Paddy, Harry embarked on a career at sea. Standing at just over 5ft. tall he was known universally as "Wee Harry". He earned this cognomen because he needed to stand on a box to see over the ship's wheel.



S.S. Palm (Courtesy of John Clarkson)

However, what Captain Hollywood lacked in height he made up with his skill as a seaman, his courage and decency. The safety of his crew and their vessel was paramount and he won the total respect of all those who worked with him.

His long career saw him sail through both World Wars. Following World War One he received letters of commendation from Admiral Beatty. During his distinguished career he experienced the eras of sail, steam and motor ships. He became Commodore Captain of the Fisher Fleet, which peaked with 17 vessels. "Wee Harry knew his job inside out", commented Mickey Fearon who sailed with him. He was known across Ireland, Britain and North West Europe. Interviewed in Brest, France in 1950, whilst loading tomatoes for England, he remarked that it was his thirty-fifth visit to that port.



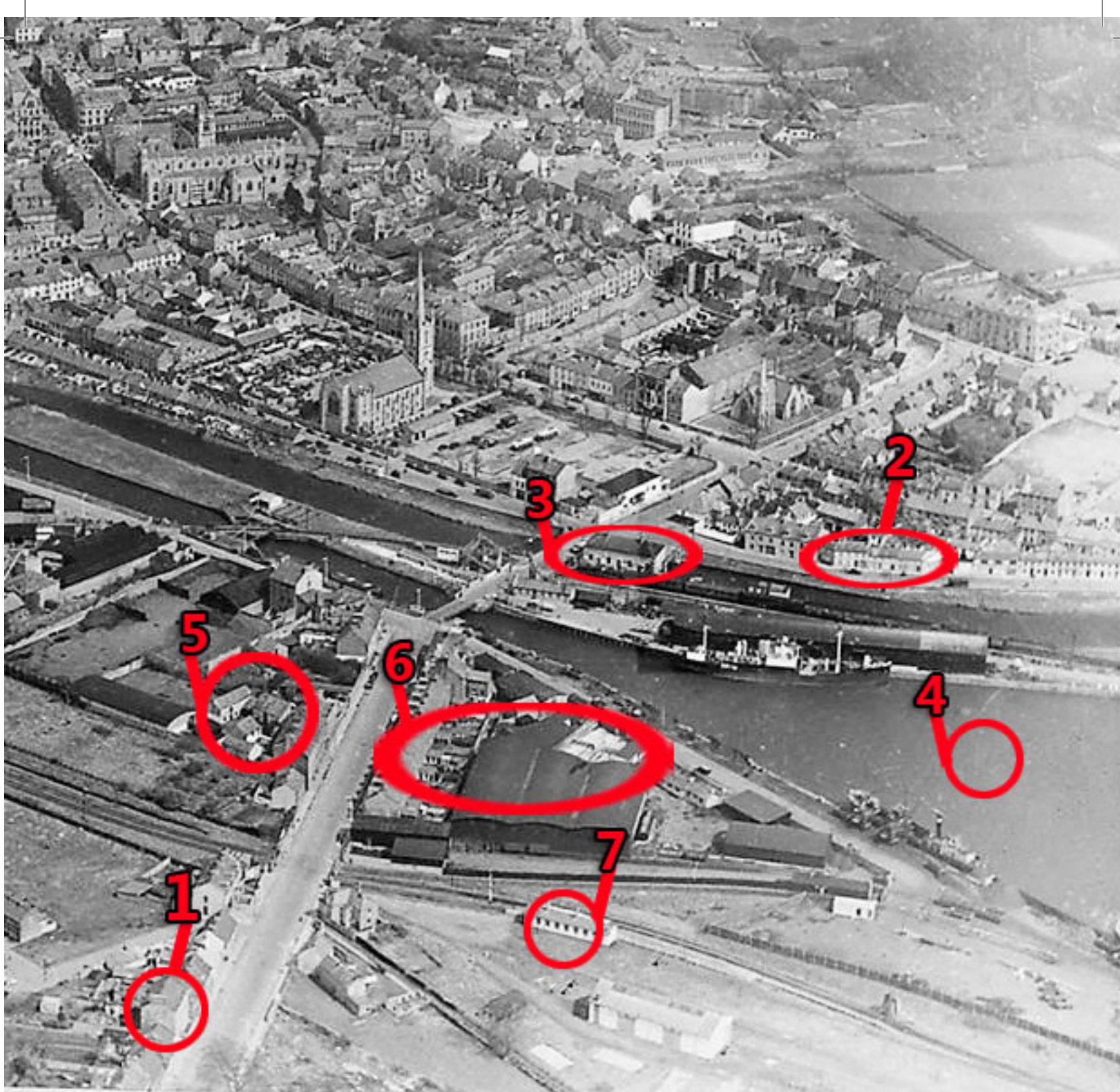
*Captain Harry Hollywood MBE
(Courtesy of Eamon Tolan)*

He took command of his last new ship for Fishers, S.S. Balsa, in 1947. He retired in 1953 and died barely a year later in 1954, aged 78. Captain Hollywood had spent more than six decades at sea. He had worked with the founder of the Fisher firm, Joseph. He then worked alongside Frank Fisher, through his 49 years in charge from 1902 to 1951.

The port has gone and with it all the firms which congregated around it.

The seamen, their ships and the dockers are now fading memories. Where once, to quote Captain John McParland, "almost every house in Fathom had at least one seaman", today there are none. In June 2013, Hawthorn Cottage was demolishedtruly an end to an era.





Aerial photograph of Newry depicting the area as it was in the 1940s

1. Max Blaneys Family Home, 65 Bridge Street, Newry
2. Raymond Kellys Family Home, 7 River Street, Newry
3. Dublin Bridge Railway Station, Warrenpoint Railway
4. Newry Port
5. FC Murtaghs Bar & Former Stabling Yard
6. Joseph Fisher & Sons
7. Bridge Street Railway Station, Greenore Railway.