

# An Additional List of Limerick Shop-Signs

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Over forty years ago, Robert Herbert published an article in this *Journal* on Limerick Shop-Signs of the Eighteenth Century. Herbert painstakingly gleaned most of the information from contemporary newspaper advertisements. As he pointed out, the files of Limerick newspapers for the period in which shop-signs were most extensively used, are incomplete. Nevertheless he identified and listed 75 different signs which were used by Limerick traders in the 18th and early part of the 19th centuries. He included one from the 17th century, The Globe Inn, run by Francis Whitamore in the Englishtown and mentioned by Thomas Dineley in 1680.<sup>1</sup>

In the 19th century, Maurice Lenihan had collected a great deal of material for his "History of Limerick" and for projected histories of Clare and Tipperary. Much of this material appeared in various series of articles published in Lenihan's own newspaper, *The Limerick Reporter and Tipperary Vindicator*. The longest and most wide-ranging series was entitled "Reminiscences of a Journalist" and printed in the 1860s. "Old Newspapers about Old Limerick and Old Times" appeared in 1874, "Sign Boards" in 1882 and "The Informer Foiled" in 1883 and 1884. Lenihan had several references to Limerick shop-signs scattered through his articles, particularly in his series on "Old Newspapers" and in the articles on "Sign Boards." For much of his information he relied on 18th century newspapers. In most cases he indicated the date of the paper which he was quoting, but he never gave the name, although, sometimes, he told us the measurements of the pages! My references are to Lenihan's newspaper and not to the 18th century originals from which he got his material. It is clear that Lenihan had access to some of the newspapers later used by Herbert.

In some cases Lenihan did not give a source or state a definite date for a particular sign. These have been included because, although the information on them is incomplete, they were presented by him as part of a serious contribution to the study of the antiquities of his adopted city.

Included in the following list are those signs mentioned by Lenihan which have not appeared in Herbert's list. There is one exception. The Sign of the Plough (No. 51 in Herbert) has been included because Lenihan gave some extra information about it. Since I hope that this short list will be regarded as supplementing Robert Herbert's detailed article, I have taken the liberty of copying his method of presentation. Thus, I begin with the sign, followed by the trade and name of the owner; then the address and, finally, the date.

## 1. Anchor and Sugar Loaves/Grocer/Jasper and John White/Above the Market House/Irishtown/1772.

Lenihan found the advertisement in a newspaper of Monday, 25th May, 1772.

"Jasper and John White take the liberty to inform the public they have taken the shop their father lately occupied, at the sign of the Anchor and Sugar Loaves, above the market-house, Limerick; where they have laid in, on the best terms, a large and fresh assortment of every article in the GROCERY BUSINESS which they are determined to sell on the lowest profit by wholesale and retail &c. They also sell Mr. Sexton's paper on Commission."

<sup>1</sup>*Nth. Munster Antiq. J.*, 2 (1940-41), 156-166.

In Ferrar's *Directory* of 1769 William White William is listed as a Linen Draper at the Market House, while William White John was a merchant in John Street. Lenihan noted that Joseph Sexton had a successful paper mill on the banks of the Mulcair, at Ballyclough.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Black Boy/Public House/—/Near the Tipperary Road/From the 17th century onwards.

Was the name "Black Boy" merely a corruption of Bealach Bui which suggested a name for his tavern to some imaginative 17th century or 18th century owner, or did the sign of the Black Boy give its name to the locality and the turnpike? It is clear that Lenihan believed that the sign came first. He wrote:—

"I must not forget to refer to the sign of the 'Black Boy' which gave a name to a once celebrated public house and carman's stage, and a very old turnpike which led out to the great highway between this city and Tipperary. The 'Blackboy' Turnpike, the 'Blackboy' public house and Carman's stage may be said to have existed at a period so remote that they were said to be there before the Siege of Limerick in 1690-91. It is not many years since the 'Blackboy' figured on the sign board at Mollowney's public house.... The 'Blackboy' has disappeared and the sign board too, but we may describe the figure which has given a permanent name to the locality as that of a negro in the highest spirits with legs across a barrel and indulging in a broad grin, whilst the legend ran—'Massa out—blackboy very dry.' The Blackboy is supposed to have got into the beer cellar and to have taken an exhaustive draft of Johnny Connell's best October brew and to have exhibited in his appearance the influence it had on him.... In reference to Johnny Connell it need scarcely be told that that celebrated character.... resided about three hundred yards from the Blackboy...."<sup>3</sup>

It should be noted that a William Molony had a public house at Black Boy in the 1860s.<sup>4</sup>

## 3. Boiling Kettle/Eating-house/John O'Dea/Near old Baals Bridge/"A long time ago".

Lenihan quoted a legend which was written on the sign:—

"Kettles hot all the day  
By John O'Dea  
Who sells good Tay."<sup>5</sup>

Old Baals Bridge was taken down in 1830.

## 4. Brittania/Public House/—/Thomondgate/18th Century.<sup>6</sup>

## 5. Clock/Clock Maker/Charles Harrison/Quay Lane/1772.<sup>7</sup>

The sign was a clock painted on a wooden board with, in Harrison's case, the hands pointing to 12.15.<sup>8</sup> In 1769 his shop was in Mary Street, near the jail, which stood on the site of the old Tholsel.<sup>9</sup> The relevant entry in Ferrar's *Directory* reads: "Charles Harrison, Watch and Bit maker, Bookseller and Stationer, Main-street, Englishtown." He was

<sup>2</sup>*Limerick Reporter & Tipperary Vindicator*, 22nd May, 1874.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 14th April, 1882.

<sup>4</sup>*Slater's Directory of Ireland*, 1870.

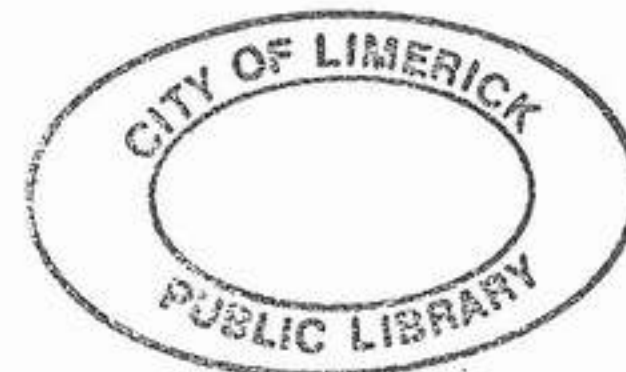
<sup>5</sup>*Limerick Reporter & Tipperary Vindicator*, 14th April, 1882.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 24th March, 1882.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 15th May, 1874.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 26th June, 1874.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 24th March, 1882.



celebrated for his brass clocks, musical clocks and novelty timepieces, some of which were still in use when Lenihan was writing.<sup>10</sup> His stock-in-trade also included "horizontal sundials, brass and iron jacks, polished steel bits and stirrups."<sup>11</sup> While in Quay Lane, now Bridge Street, he became a man of property and, in a newspaper of the 7th May, 1772, he advertised to be let "for lives with renewals forever, a large new well finished house, next the Speaker's in Newtown Pery, with a good garden well planted and a handsome turret &c., commanding the most extensive and pleasing prospect of any in Newtown Pery."<sup>12</sup>

**6. Clock/Watch and Clock Maker/Robert Latch/Nicholas Street/1766.<sup>13</sup>**

His shop was, like so many others, near the Exchange and his clock showed the time at 11.45. After a period of illness he informed the public that "having had the misfortune to be afflicted with sickness for some time and fearing during his indisposition there was not as much content in his shop as if he was present, this is to acquaint the public that he is able to attend now and also has got a good workman from Dublin as an Assistant and that he will make it a study to give general satisfaction to all those that are pleased to employ him."<sup>14</sup>

The entry for Latch in Ferrar's *Directory* for 1769 reads: "Robert Latch and Son, Watchmakers, Main-street, Englishtown."

**7. Clock/Watch and Clock Maker/Malachy Ryan/Near the Exchange/1766.**

Ryan, who had come from Dublin, sold his wares under the sign of the Clock the hands of which pointed to 12.20.<sup>15</sup> The house had been previously occupied by Andrew Pitman, Whipmaker, according to Lenihan.<sup>16</sup> The following entries appear in Ferrar's *Directory*: "Malachy Ryan, Watch-maker, Main-street, Englishtown," and "Andrew Pitman, Whipmaker, Exchange."

**8. Golden Cup, Pearl and Ring/Jeweller and Goldsmith/George O'Halloran/Near the Exchange/1766.**

"Just returned from London, GEORGE HALLORAN, Jeweller and Goldsmith, who keeps his shop and Warehouse at the sign of the Golden Cup, Pearl and Ring, near the Exchange, Limerick." His stock included "chased tea kettles, lamps and stands, chased and plain tea tables, chased and plain waiters of different sizes, double bellied, fluted, chased, embossed and polished coffee pots, Turkey polished ditto, Diamond rings, saphyr, ruby, emerald, amethyst, Moco, garnet and fancy do., buckles..."<sup>17</sup>

O'Halloran's shop was next door to Malachy Ryan's.<sup>18</sup> In Ferrar's *Directory* he is listed as a silversmith.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 26th June, 1874.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 15th May, 1874.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 24th March, 1882.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 26th June, 1874.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 19th June, 1874.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 24th March, 1882.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 19th June, 1874.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 24th March, 1882.

**9. Hand and Mallet/Pewterer/Francis Russell/Irishtown/1769.<sup>19</sup>**

Russell's shop was in Broad Street.<sup>20</sup>

**10. Hat and Feather/Woolen Draper/Philip Russell/Near Baals Bridge/1769.<sup>21</sup>**

**11. Last and Slippers/Leather Seller/O'Mahony/Black Boy/—.<sup>22</sup>**

**12. Pestle and Mortar/Apothecary/Robert Lynch/Near Market House, Irishtown/Late 18th Century.<sup>23</sup>**

Ferrar lists a Robert Lynch as a Haberdasher in John Street in 1769.

**13. Plough/Merchant/Mark Coughlan/Creagh Lane, Englishtown/Mid-18th Century.**

The shop was later owned by Laurence Mahon, according to Lenihan.<sup>24</sup> It is included in Herbert's list (No. 51), with Mahon as owner in 1774. Laurence Mahon was a prominent Limerick merchant.<sup>25</sup> It was on the site of the "Sign of the Plough" that Fr. Thomas Walsh established the Augustinian Chapel in 1778. In 1780 the landlord, William John Purdon, gave a lease to Fr. Walsh. It was registered on 1st May, 1780 and Lenihan quoted the endorsement: "William John Purdon, Esq. to Thomas Walsh, gentleman, lease of tenement in Creagh Lane in the city of Limerick, on which a Mass house is built, for 999 years from 1st May, 1780 at the clear yearly rent of £11. 10s."<sup>26</sup>

In Ferrar's *Directory* Mahon is listed as a merchant in Main-street, Englishtown.

**14. Royal Garter/Inn/Matthew Kelly/Quay Lane/1769.<sup>27</sup>**

Kelly sold steaks and chops at three halfpence per lb. He also "prepared dinners at the shortest notice and received dieters by the year, month or week. Neat wines and the best of liquors."

The entry in Ferrar's *Directory* reads: "Mathew Kelly, Publican, Quay-lane."

**15. Shakespeare's Head/Bookseller/John Ferrar/Quay Lane/Late 18th Century.**

Lenihan said that Ferrar used the sign of Shakespeare's Head some years before it was adopted by William Goggin.<sup>28</sup> Goggin's sign is No. 61 in Herbert's list. "John Ferrar, Printer, Bookseller, Stationer, and Publisher of this Directory, Quay-lane."<sup>29</sup>

**16. Ship/Linen Warehouse/Benjamin Unthank/New Mall/18th Century.<sup>30</sup>**

Ferrar's *Directory* lists "Benjamin Unthank, Merchant, George's-quay."

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>Ferrar's *Limerick Directory*, 1769.

<sup>21</sup>*Limerick Reporter & Tipperary Vindicator*, 24th March, 1882.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 14th April, 1882.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 24th March, 1882.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>M. Lenihan *History of Limerick*, Limerick 1866 (reprinted Cork 1967), p. 624, fn. 3.

<sup>26</sup>*Limerick Reporter & Tipperary Vindicator*, 24th March, 1882.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>Ferrar's *Limerick Directory*, 1769.

<sup>30</sup>*Limerick Reporter & Tipperary Vindicator*, 24th March, 1882.

17. Still and Worm/Pewterer and Brazier/William End/Mungret Lane/Late 18th Century.<sup>31</sup>

Herbert (No. 60) has William End at the sign of the Seven Plates and Worm in the Irishtown, in 1774.

18. Swords (Crossed)/Fencing Master/Francis O'Connor/—/Late 18th Century.<sup>32</sup>

19. Two Grinning Heads/Public House/—/Thomondgate/"Long Ago".

The sign was accompanied by a legend:—

"Two loggerheads we be  
You are one, we all make three."<sup>33</sup>

20. Watch and Chain/Watch and Clock Maker/John Grace/Englishtown/Late 18th Century.<sup>34</sup>

Grace's shop was "Opposite Counsellor MacNamara's in the Englishtown."  
Mathew MacNemara is listed under "Barristers at Law" in Ferrar's *Directory*.

21. Whip and Spurs/Whipmaker(?)/William Oliver/—/18th Century.<sup>35</sup>

Lenihan did not give addresses for Numbers 18 and 21 but he included them with other Limerick signs.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

## The Appointment of Catholic Bishops to Killaloe Diocese, 1819-1851

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In the early part of the 19th century up to 1829 there was no precise method for the recommendation of candidates for bishoprics in Ireland. Some vacancies were filled on the recommendation of a single bishop. In other cases suggestions came from the bishops of the province, the parish priests of the diocese, or a variety of other sources. In about one-third of the appointments made during the period 1801-1829 only one name was supplied to the Roman Congregation de Propaganda Fide, which was in charge of Irish affairs. In roughly a similar number of instances one candidate was so clearly favoured by the evidence that Propaganda did not have an effective choice. Finally, in slightly less than one-third of the appointments Propaganda had to make the decision because the evidence from Ireland did not favour any one candidate.<sup>1</sup>

### Patrick McMahon

The bishop of Killaloe in 1819 was James O'Shaughnessy, who resided at Mogullane, Newmarket-on-Fergus. He had been appointed coadjutor bishop in 1798 and succeeded Michael Peter McMahon, O.P., in 1807. In 1819, when he was 73 years old, he decided to apply for a coadjutor on the ground of serious infirmity which made it impossible for him to attend to his pastoral obligations.<sup>2</sup> However, even an active man in good health would have found it difficult to look after a huge diocese which extended from Kinnitty to Loop Head. In 1834 it was the fifth largest diocese in Ireland with a population of 359,585 Catholics.<sup>3</sup>

In 1817 a proposal to regulate the method of selecting Irish Bishops was sent from Ireland to Propaganda but eventually rejected on the ground that it would place too much power in the hands of the diocesan clergy.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, when Bishop O'Shaughnessy was preparing to ask Propaganda for a coadjutor, he decided to consult the parish priests of his diocese. Because of a shortage of priests in the diocese at this period, all age groups were represented among the parish priests, many of whom had been appointed very soon after ordination. This meeting was held in the town of Killaloe on 12 January 1819 and its decisions were immediately communicated for publication to the *Dublin Evening Post*<sup>5</sup> and *Clare Journal*<sup>6</sup> by the meeting's secretary, Rev. Ambrose O'Connor, P.P. Nenagh.

The meeting in Killaloe was attended by 45 out of the 48 parish priests in the diocese, and 41 of these voted in a secret ballot for Dean Patrick McMahon, P.P. Quin. In an editorial comment on Fr. O'Connor's letter under the heading "Domestic Nomination", the *Dublin Evening Post* clearly regarded the meeting in Killaloe as a milestone. "It proves that among the Catholic Hierarchy, the principle so long advocated in this Journal, and

<sup>1</sup>John H. Whyte, "The Appointment of Catholic Bishops in Nineteenth-century Ireland", *Catholic Historical Review*, April 1962, pp. 13-14.

<sup>2</sup>*Propaganda Fide Archives, Acta*, vol. 182 (1819), 168r.

<sup>3</sup>Donal A. Kerr, *Peel, Priests and Politics*, Oxford 1982, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup>Whyte, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>5</sup>*Dublin Evening Post*, 16 Jan. 1819.

<sup>6</sup>*Clare Journal*, 18 Jan. 1819.