

## A FUNERAL PASSING EYRE SQUARE (24-05-12)

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There is something profoundly lonely about this photograph of a funeral procession passing the corner of Eyre Square and Forster Street. It was probably taken during the war when petrol was very scarce. As you can see, the coffin is being carried on a horse drawn cart. It might have been coming from the station but it is more likely it was on its way from St. Patrick's Church to the New Cemetery. The heavy rain makes the day even more miserable.

The pub on the corner was Number 18, Eyre Square and originally opened in 1861. It belonged to Michael J. Lydon who came originally from Knockferry. He worked for a time as a shop boy in Keane's which was beside O'Gormans in Shop Street. He was married to Nora Ruane who came from Carnmore. Their pub (which was known as 'The Castle') and grocery was one of the best in town. It had a great stand just beside the station. They specialized in Irish goods and sold groceries, teas, Irish pipes, tobaccos, wines, spirits, provisions etc. In addition, they had special boarding accommodation and a first class restaurant and they advertised heavily ....  
'When you arrive at Galway station, turn to the right, TO THE RIGHT HOUSE', 'Yes Madam, we can always guarantee best value in all our goods and prompt delivery'.

Lydon's eventually sold off the pub to the Sammon family who ran it successfully until 1981 when it was bought by Garveys. In the late 1990's, they knocked it and put up a completely new structure which opened in December 1999, 'The last pub to open in Galway in a thousand years'.

The building we see to the left of the pub was originally a vacant site which was developed by Michael Lydon. He intended to open a restaurant there but for some reason, he changed his mind. It was rented out for a few years to a Belgian company who made zippers. The Lydon family moved in there after selling the pub, and Mrs. Lydon ran a sweet shop for some years there before eventually moving down to the docks.

The building on the left of our photograph was William Fahy's pub. He had come back from America, and called it 'The Jersey Bar'. Next door to him was Joe Fahy's private house. He had a coachbuilding business in Forster Street. Next was a private house and then O'Connell's big yard where farmers left their horses and carts while shopping in town. Beside that was O'Connell's pub, then Baileys who had a bicycle shop, petrol pumps and a small hotel.

Next door to Lydon's pub, in Forster Street was Arthur Webb's house, then Miss Donohue's, Lydon's Bakery, Fahy's Coachbuilders and Johnny Wynne's pub.

Across the street, near the Fairgreen, was Bowens who had cars for sale and next door was the old tramyard where a Mr. Walsh was caretaker. Beside that was a co-op stores owned by a Mr. Kinley which later became Powells. Next door was Roches, then Durcans, Tom Byrne's, Miko Gallagher's, Mike Gannon (a coachbuilder who hired out horses and cars), Mamó Lardner's sweet shop, Mrs. Rooney's house, and finally The American Bar.

"The case of the Craughwell Prisoners" is the title of a new book written by Pat Finnegan. It tells the remarkable story of two men, Michael Muldowney and Patrick Finnegan who were wrongly imprisoned for a murder committed in Craughwell. It is a terrific study of the land war in South Galway, the social conditions of that era, how the authorities packed juries at the time and the experiences of the prisoners in jail. Published by Four Courts press @ 14.95 euro for the paperback, 35 euro for the hardback, it is highly recommended.