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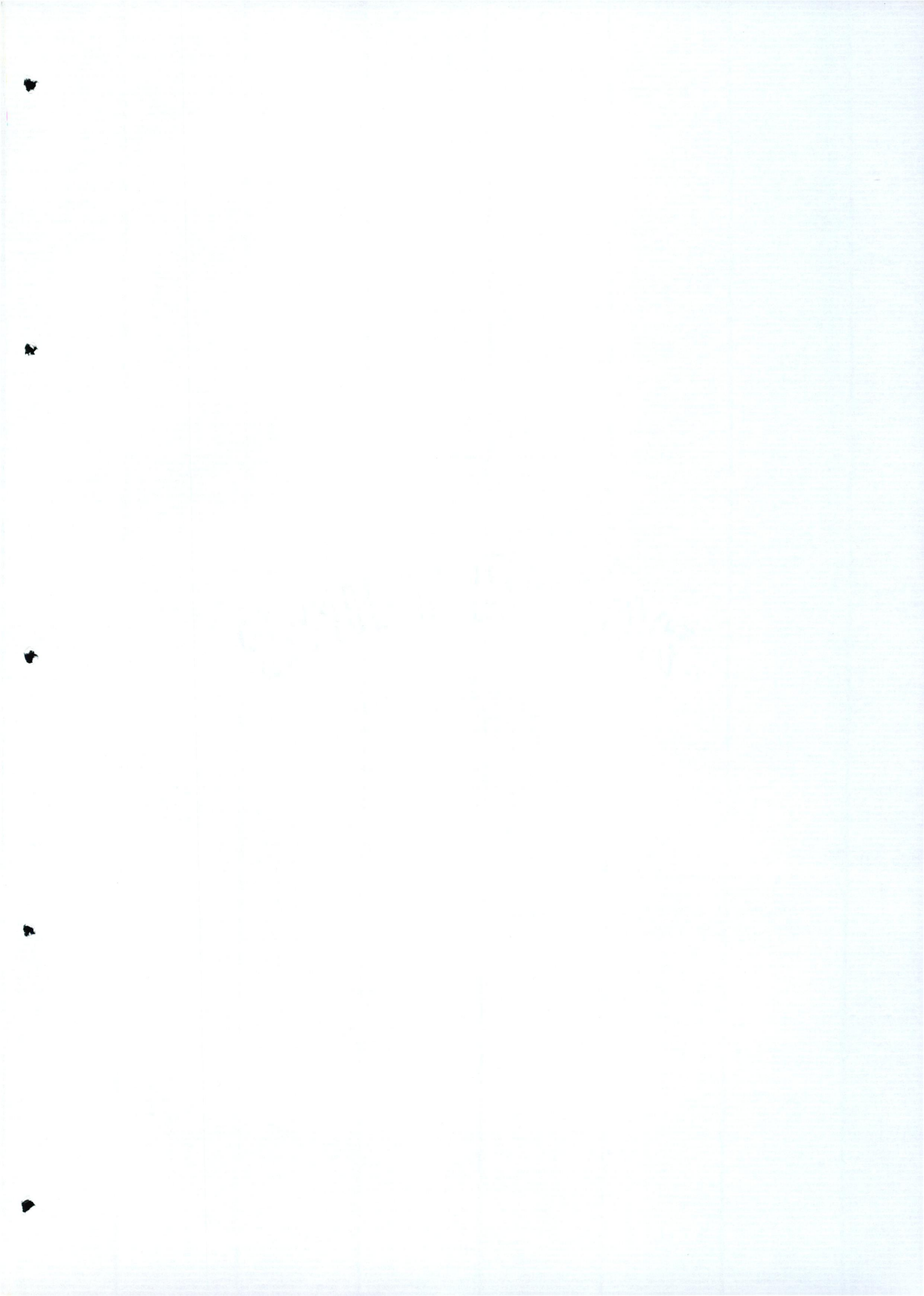
Shop Signs in Carrickmacross Today

By

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in Candidacy for the Degree of Bachelor of Design, 1994**

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



Emilio Poma

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Thanks also to the National library for providing me with copies of photographs of Carrickmacross, dating back to the turn of the century.

I would like to thank members of the population of Carrickmacross, including some of the shop proprietors for taking the time to fill out my questionnaire.

Finally, my appreciation to Mr. Larry Martin, a local signwriter, and his wife Delia for allowing me to interview them in their home.

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## Introduction

The development and quality of design as a specialised activity requires particular skills. Design is a part of everyday life, and writing, including sign writing is essentially design. Some of the functions of design deal with commemoration, expression and symbolism, while also being concerned with the transmission of ideas. These are the fundamental functions of sign writing. Design has an influence on the way in which we think. If a particular design, concept or idea appeals to society, then that idea will flourish. Design is related to society, and through a number of questionnaires and interviews I will establish a number of people's views on hand painted signs.

Throughout the course of my thesis I will be examining the face of Irish shop fronts today, particularly those in Carrickmacross, County Monaghan. I chose Carrickmacross as the model for my thesis because it is a small, rural town, so typically Irish. It is also cluttered with many beautifully decorated shop fronts, some dating back as far as the turn of the century.

In chapter one, visuals of the town will be provided. Some of these photos will be ninety years old, and others will have been taken in 1993. Both sets of photographs will look at the town from the same angles, showing that the overall structure has not changed in the last ninety years, and posing the questions related to why this might be.

In chapter two, some of the town's shopfronts will be identified, and the fact that some of their signs have remained unchanged will be shown. It will become clear that certain styles and designs are associated with different types of shop, and it is possible to determine what styles are associated with these shop fronts in Carrickmacross. The importance of these signs is assessed, some of which identify a family with a style and tradition. Chapter three will be theoretical, explaining how our traditional shop fronts are related to postmodernism. Frederic Jameson's argument that the key elements of postmodernism are *pastiche and schizophrenia* will be considered.

George Brown



There was legislation introduced in the development plan of Carrickmacross in July of 1993 which deemed plastic signing systems illegal. Chapter four explains this legislation, and through a series of surveys, establishes whether the proprietors in Carrickmacross were influenced by the legislation or whether it was purely taste that made them choose a hand painted sign. Interviews with the proprietors indicate what type of sign these people had over their shop before their current one, and also if they felt that that particular type of sign said anything about their business.

Some signs have been in the town for the last sixty or so years. These shops have been closed down and since converted to houses, but fortunately, for some reason, some of these houses have maintained the original shop sign. Reasons for this have been given by some members of the families who own these houses. Chapter five will be concerned mainly with responses from an interview with a local signwriter, Mr. Larry Martin.

"Design refers to the look of things, and involves notions of beauty." (Forty, 1986, Pg. 6)  
It can also refer to the conditions of their making. For example, the design of a hand painted shop sign is really an artform, and art objects, like hand painted signs are usually conceived by one person, the signwriter. Both conceiving and fabricating something gives free expression to creativity and imagination. A lot of artistic design is lavished on the designs of the traditional shop signs in Carrickmacross today.

SMALL ROOM

*'The plan of the town is the relationship of buildings, streets and spaces to each other and its relationship with the surrounding landscape whether it be mountains, rivers, the sea, or just small fields.'* ( Shaffrey, 1975, pg. 28.)

Carrickmacross, a small rural town in the heart of county Monaghan, is prosperous and steeped in history. The physical fabric of the town was built in the 18th century. The overall structure has remained unchanged. Drumlin topography dominates the landscape. The skyline is predominantly horizontal, with only the church spires breaking the pattern, thus reflecting the typical North-Eastern Irish town. The distinctive feature of the architecture of Carrickmacross is precisely the uniqueness expressed in the massive, grandiose and vernacular quality of the buildings. There is a strong sense of enclosure in the town even though it is situated on the main Dublin to Derry road. The Main street dominates the town with its strong classical pattern of tall buildings. The street is enclosed by prominent landmarks at each end: The Courthouse to the North; St. Finbar's Protestant Church to the South. The Market Square, situated beside the Courthouse, provides an interesting variation of the streetscape forming the transept of a cross at the North end of the Main street.

The physical appearance of the town is one main street acting as the town's civic centre with three radiating side streets. The streetscape of these side streets is narrow, in contrast with the Main street which is very wide. Windows are vertically proportioned and contribute to a vertical rhythm along the street. The slated roofs of the tall buildings lean back from the street, giving way to slight glimpses of the countryside. The beauty of the town can only be appreciated by strolling through this vertical rhythm. Only then can the drama and atmosphere of the town be appreciated to the full extent. The use of stone contributes significantly to the character of the streetscape in Carrickmacross. The town is a good example of how a simple design with attention to proportions and detailing create a sense of character and quality.



Carrickmacross, being situated in south Monaghan, is not close to the sea, and even though the landscape is hilly, there are no mountains. It is a town where there is almost perfect harmony between the streetscape and the landscape. The colour and vitality of the streets lend to the richness of the land. The stone buildings bring a natural element into the town centre. (Fig 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 1.4)

Carrickmacross prospers as a service and retail centre functioning as a district centre for South Monaghan. In terms of turnover and sales, the town ranks second in the county, with most commercial businesses being concentrated on Main street and O'Neill street. The town centre is surrounded on the northside by four recently established factories, namely Bose, Oxfresh, Barford Meats and Rye Valley. Fortunately these factories do not in any way encroach upon the character of the centre of Carrickmacross. They are part of an industrial area located in a valley north of the town. There was a danger however, that the dominant role and vitality of the town centre could be eroded by the development of these factories. Careful planning went into this industrial zone. The hub of the town is preserved, with the traditional trading patterns still concentrated in that area. In retaining the existing town centre, the character of the town remains.

Carrickmacross does not have a big enough population to sustain its number of shops and therefore relies also on surrounding areas such as Magheracloone, Killannev, Inniskeen, Corduff and Donaghmoynne. Carrickmacross is principally an agricultural town, with thursday being traditionally market day and friday fair day. These days have always been so for the last hundred years. Large tracts of backland sites, ripe for development, supplement the commercialism of the town centre.

Extending in a north easterly direction from the town centre is Shirley's estate, a forested area once owned by Major Shirley. Of all the natural elements that add character and distinction to a town none perhaps is as common as trees. They are a source of raw material. This is unfortunate in many respects, because they can be felled at any time without hassle. Even though the different varieties of tree are being felled, new species are planted annually.

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Fig 1.1 The police station,  
Main Street, Carrickmacross.



Fig 1.2 Ward's Meat Market,  
Monaghan Street, Carrickmacross.







Fig 1.3 The Bank of Ireland,  
Main Street, Carrickmacross.



Fig 1.4 The Shirley Arms Hotel,  
Main Street, Carrickmacross.



The only major drawback to the entire town is its situation geographically. As I previously mentioned, Carrickmacross is part of the main Dublin to Derry road, the NP2. The heavy traffic flows and careless parking continue to affect accessibility to the shopping area, with additional disruption on thursday, the town's market day. Haphazard use of parking and double-parking conceal the vitality of the Main street. Cars cannot be excluded from the town, but there is a clear need for control and for an increase in the level of regulation and driver education. One solution would seem to be a by-pass around the town. This should achieve the necessary separation of through and locally generated traffic. 'The reduction of traffic flows along Main street should further reduce congestion at junctions, thereby easing access to the central area of the town for the consumer,' according to members of the Urban Council Offices.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately the problem of car parking in Carrickmacross does not help or alleviate the problem of the high volume of traffic proceeding through the town via the Main street. The careless parking and through traffic lead to obstruction and chaos. The haphazard use of car parking goes back many years and has become a traditional habit, even to when horses and carts cluttered the town. This bad habit, in one way, lends to the character of the town, that of a small but busy trading centre.

*Parking adds to the effective carriageway width, reduces visibility, creates hazards, and results in points of friction between pedestrians.*  
( Carrickmacross Urban District Development Plan, July 1993, Pg. 12.)

Car parking is slightly more regulated now than in previous years with a new car park open to the rear of the shops at the southern end of the Main street. The market square has been divided into plots for car parking also.

One of the principle features lending to the character of the town is the concentration of activity in the streets as well as the constant flow of traffic. Leaving Carrickmacross in and proceeding in the Dublin direction, you can observe the Convent lands on the left while further on the same road is one of the major hotels in the area, the Nuremore hotel. Both landmarks sandwich Lough Naglach, an area of ecological value and an important tourist attraction. While being a very attractive lake, its wooded shore-line is linked to the main thoroughfare by a tree-lined pedestrian walk.

<sup>1</sup>Mr. Tony Mc Donagh, Town Clerk, Carrickmacross Urban Council Offices

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Course fishing is a popular sport in the vicinity of the town and is especially concentrated around Lough Naglach. The grounds of the Nuremore hotel act as a recreational and amenity resource. The hotel stands along side the NP2 with its newly developed 18-hole golf course in front.

Other lakes surrounding Carrickmacross include Lisanisk lake to the south west, and the Corcrin lake, also in the same direction. Species such as bream, pike, trench, rudd, perch and trout can be fished here, and fish-stands and car parking facilities have been provided at these lakes. However, these lakes are not large enough to perform water sport activities.

Carrickmacross is a closely-knit town which has been influenced only by gradual developments over the last number of years. Generally speaking, the town still retains the natural element of long ago. It could be described as a town of fresh paint and natural stone. The stone provides hardly any colour, but a wonderful texture of old. This is balanced with the exuberant colours of the shop fronts and pubs along the streets. It is this balance of cold stone and warm colours which make Carrickmacross such an interesting place to explore. It is a small, well-preserved town with a friendly population of four thousand and a joy to visit in order to escape the traumas and inconveniences of city life.

I have included a selection of photographs to provide a visual idea of what Carrickmacross is and was like. The black and white photographs were taken of the town centre ninety years ago. The colour photographs were taken at the end of 1993. As can be seen, both sets of photographs are taken from the same angles of the town. The town structure has virtually remained unchanged in the past ninety years. The town has under-gone no road widening schemes or any other such insensitive development.

O'Neill street has been transformed into a one-way system and can now only be approached from the Main street. The architecture along the street is virtually the same as can be seen in Fig: 1.5 and Fig:1.6 The arch on the left hand side is still evident as is the brick work surrounding it.



An island has been developed towards the right hand side of the Main street, as can be seen in Fig: 1.8 This is to provide extra room for parked cars, something which was not necessary ninety years ago. The arched windows on what is now the Ulster Bank have been preserved. (Fig: 1.7 and Fig: 1.8) The brick work in the buildings has also been preserved as can be seen in the toll house in the foreground of Fig: 1.9

It is interesting to see the similarities and differences in both sets of photographs, but it is especially interesting to know that the similarities outweigh the differences.

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Fig 1.5 O'Neill Street, Carrickmacross, looking towards St. Joseph's Catholic Church. The photo was taken at the turn of the 20th century.



Fig 1.6 O'Neill Street, Carrickmacross, looking towards St. Joseph's Catholic Church. The photo was taken in December 1993.





Fig 1.7 Main Street, Carrickmacross, looking North towards the Courthouse. The photo was taken at the turn of the 20th century.



Fig 1.8 Main Street, Carrickmacross, looking North towards the Courthouse. The photo was taken in December 1993.

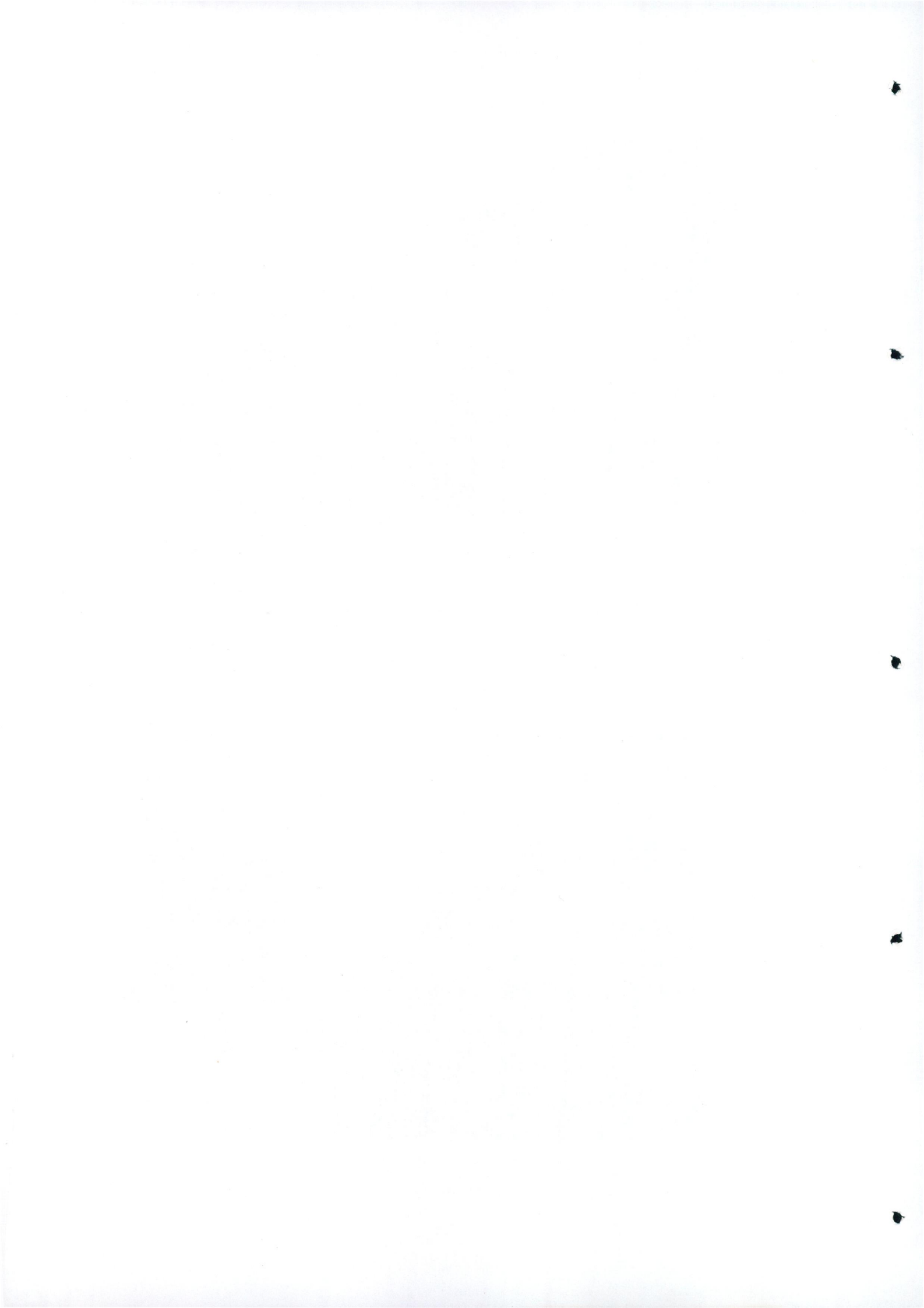




Fig 1.9 Main Street, Carrickmacross, looking South towards St. Finbar's Protestant Church. The photo was taken at the turn of the 20th century.



Fig 2.0 Main Street, Carrickmacross, looking South towards St. Finbar's Protestant Church. The photo was taken in December 1993.



All signs have an underlying function, that of communication and identification. Signs require the same range of expression as the spoken word: they may be witty and amusing, bold and serious, or charming and beautifully delicate. In this respect, signs give messages. Signs are of fundamental importance because they convey information about the type of shop which they are decorating. They are a major communicator of corporate identity. The sign is the most important feature of any shop front. All the small columns and glass panels combine into this facade which bears the name of its owner. These ornamented facades are covered with details from many periods and styles of architecture. It is a pity then that signing systems are so often left to the last minute. William Morris, active from 1856 to 1875 as calligrapher and illuminator, created many new scripts and new forms of ornamentation, by imitating medieval, Gothic and Renaissance manuscripts. It was he who revived the art of handwriting.

Carrickmacross, a world of wonderfully freshly painted signs, is experiencing the banishment of plastic and neon. Like most other typical Irish towns, Carrickmacross went through a pattern of hand painted shop signs, followed by plastic shop signs, and a return to hand painted shop signs. The plastic signs became evident in Carrickmacross in the early seventies. Towards the end of the eighties the re-introduction of the freshly painted signs came about.

Today the trend is continuing, and painted signs are becoming increasingly popular. The tall gray buildings along the Main street of Carrickmacross, with their slated gray / blue roofs, now serve as a backdrop for the exuberant colours of the town's shop fronts and pubs. This change of shop signs throughout the decade is the only real gradual development to have taken place in this town. This development has proved very important to the face of the town, but has not disfigured or disrupted the structure of the town, which is precisely the beauty of Carrickmacross.

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Having experienced the plastic phase, we have now surrendered ourselves to traditions and ideas from the past of hand painted signs. If the plastic phase had not been introduced, then probably most of the signs in Carrickmacross would be originals, some perhaps touched up just a little. We are fortunate in having some original signs in the town however. One such premises is that of *Shevlin's* pub, (Fig 2.2) situated on the left hand side of the Main street. This premises has been run by Shevlins for the last hundred years, but not always by the same Shevlin family. Since 1933 this pub has amassed a goodly number of patrons for a variety of reasons. The main reason is that the pub has established a character for itself and is renowned as a *young adult's* pub, where one can frequent and have some *ceol agus cráic* around its two homely fireplaces. Another reason is the authentic exterior of the pub. Visitors are drawn to a pub with such a dated, traditional front. This traditional exterior reflects the interior of the pub, and has certainly contributed to its popularity.

This pub has always had the same sign. Granted, the front has been altered, but in a very sensitive way so as to harmonise with the existing sign. The proprietor, Mr. Tom Shevlin, says that the only changes he has made with the sign is in getting it re-touched, but in the same manner it has always been, and by the same family of signwriters, the Martins. The last time Mr. Shevlin changed his shop front, he asked the craftsman to leave an outline of the existing lettering on the sign so that the signwriter could trace his father's style of lettering. The only other change has been his placing of small spotlights over the sign. These lights show the sign off to its best, without looking garish or crude. The brass finish to the lights blends in sensitively with the combined stone and timber front. The overall colour is a light brown. The design is attractive and warm, thus drawing a crowd. It conjures up ideas of coziness, friendliness, and lots of chat, notions which typify most Irish pubs today.

Names and signs are very important in identifying a family with a style and tradition. Two proprietors interviewed have had members of their family trading in the town for the last sixty years. These two proprietors are Mr. Tom Shevlin, who runs the aforementioned *Shevlin's* pub, and Mr. Jim Hand, who runs a shoe shop (Fig 3.8). These two families take particular pride in the sign over their shops. Both signs are hand painted and remain fine examples of the work of a local craftsman and signwriter.





Fig 2.1 Overall view of Shevlin's pub, Main Street, Carrickmacross. The mixture of plastic signs and hand painted signs is clearly evident.



Fig 2.2 Front view of Shevlin's pub, Main Street, Carrickmacross. The natural brown slate is a distinguishing feature.

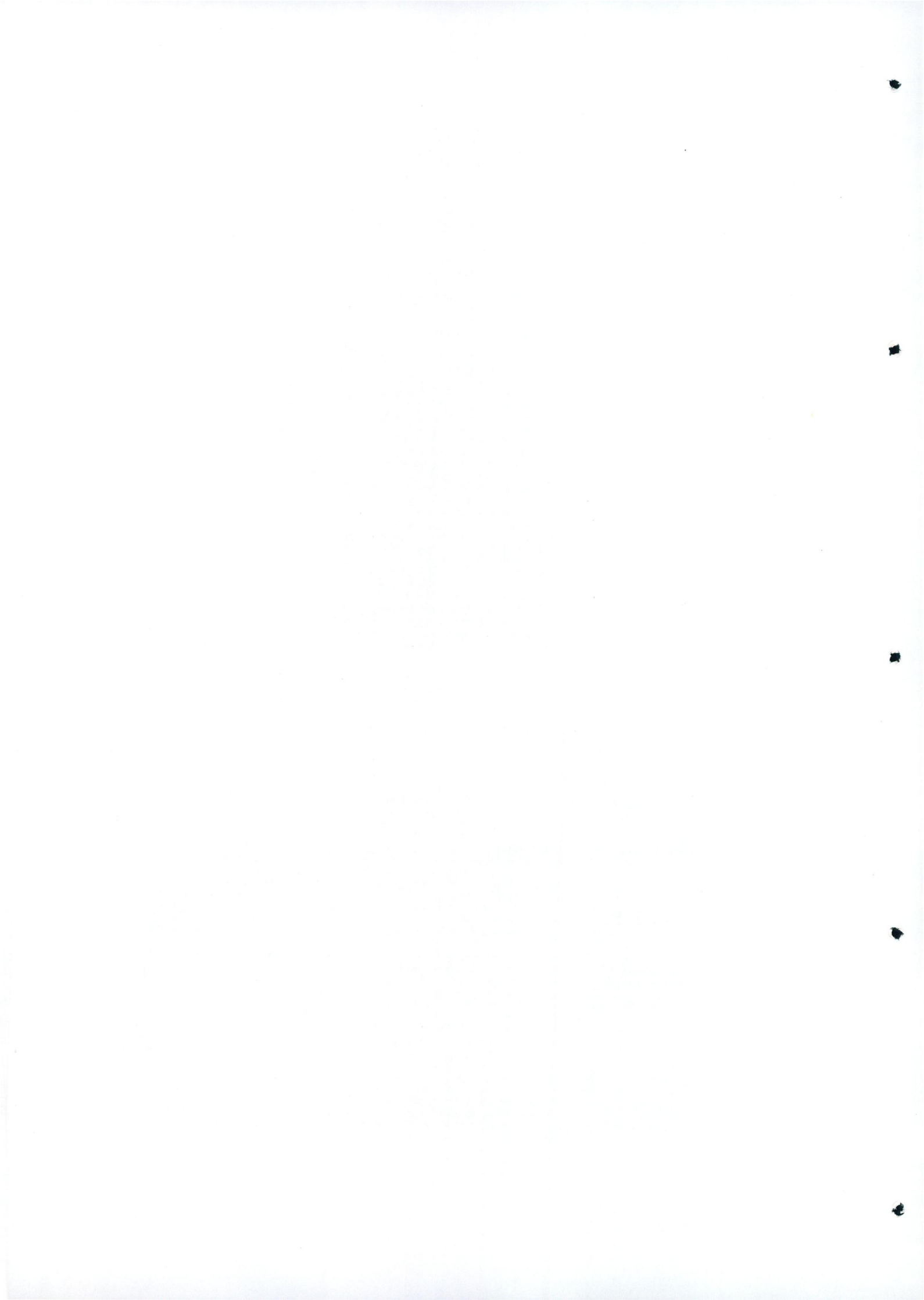




Fig 3.7 The Hairdresser and Footsteps, Main Street, Carrickmacross. Both shops have windows divided by thin strips of timber. Spotlights are visible.

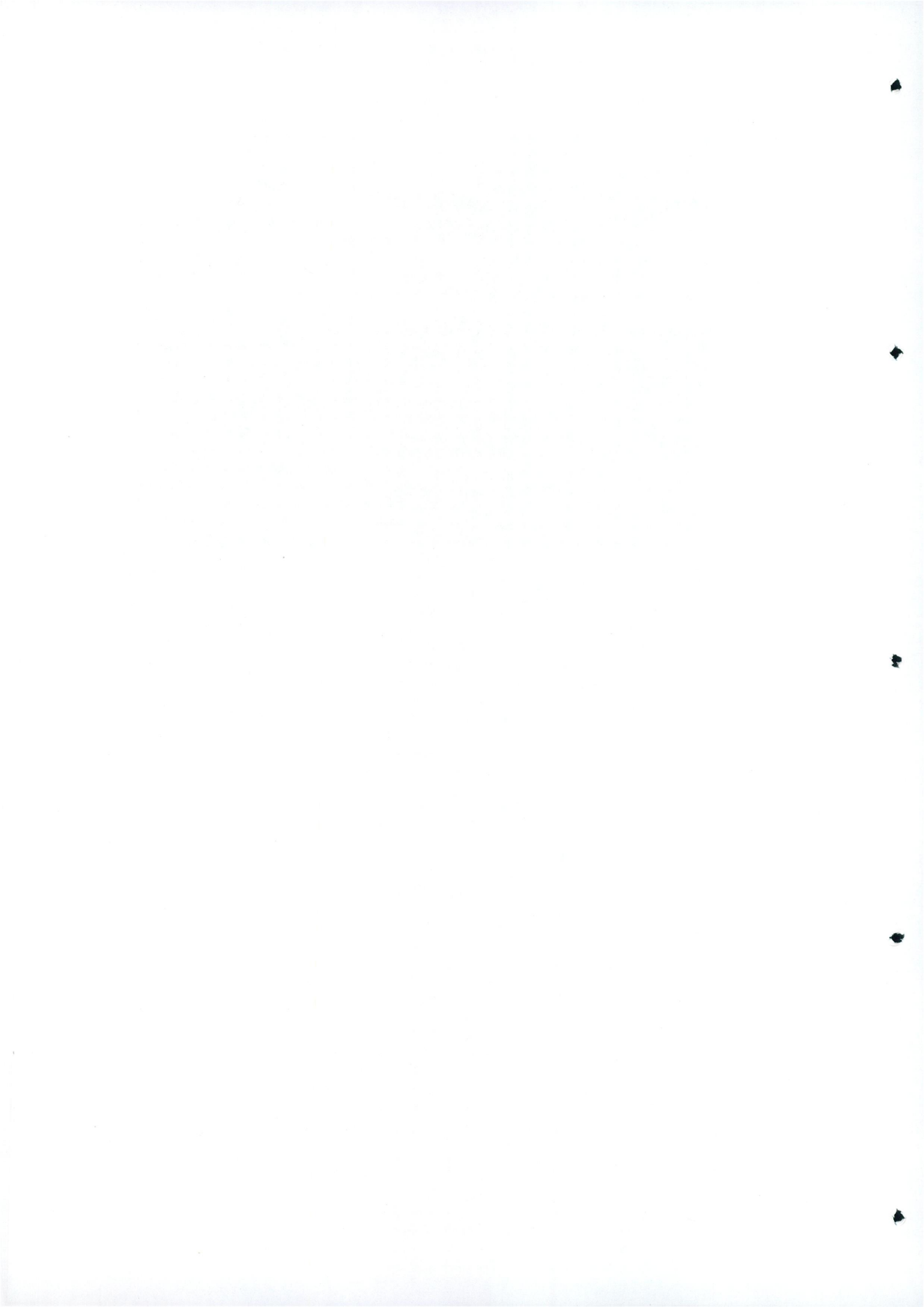


Fig 3.8 View of Footsteps and Hand's shoe shop, the one shop with different fronts.





Fig 3.9 The original sign over Hand's shoe shop, Main Street, Carrickmacross.





The two men felt that the preservation of their signs says a lot about their businesses. Both proprietors agreed that their shops were traditional Irish premises, continuing from the past. The sign over Shevlin's pub has been the same sign since 1933, having only undergone minor repair jobs over the years.

Certain styles and designs are associated with different types of shops. The traditional Irish shop front dates from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Smaller shops had simple, classical columns, made from timber. These were usually interpreted according to local tradition. The lettering on the signs involved many variations of classical and other alphabets. These shops were usually brightly coloured in an uninhibited way. They gave a genuine character to the whole street. The majority of the 127 shops in Carrickmacross are small. Small shops and pubs would seem to spell tradition also.

There are seventeen pubs in Carrickmacross, fifteen of these are located on the Main street, with thirteen of these located on the left hand side of the street, as you approach the town from a northerly direction. The reason for this is because the right hand side of the street is owned by Major Shirley, and it wouldn't be feasible to purchase a premises on that side. Of all the premises in the town, pubs would make the most profit. Major Shirley would have been well aware of this profit, and would therefore charge much more rent for pub owners. Pub owners wouldn't even consider looking for a premises on the right hand side of the street, because the ground rent and the roof rent charged by Major Shirley would be phenomenal. The pub would perhaps be the most traditional looking premises in any whole town. They are usually fronted with timber and decorated with bold but intricate lettering.

This happy, friendly atmosphere is also evident in the other pubs in the town. Two of the pub fronts feature drawings. The *Valley Lodge*, (Fig 2.3) situated at the south end of O'Neill street, features three panels with drawings of food, drink and musical instruments. The drawings are illustrated in a very loose, painterly style, reflecting the relaxation and happy atmosphere that pub has to offer. The other pub, situated at the north end of the Main street, *The Stables*, (Fig 2.5) features illustrations of horses, thus reflecting the name and theme of that particular pub. *The Stables* play ceili music most nights of the week.

*[Faint, illegible handwriting on a grid background]*



Fig 2.3 The Valley Lodge, O'Neill Street, Carrickmacross.  
The three front panels are illustrated with drinks, food and music.

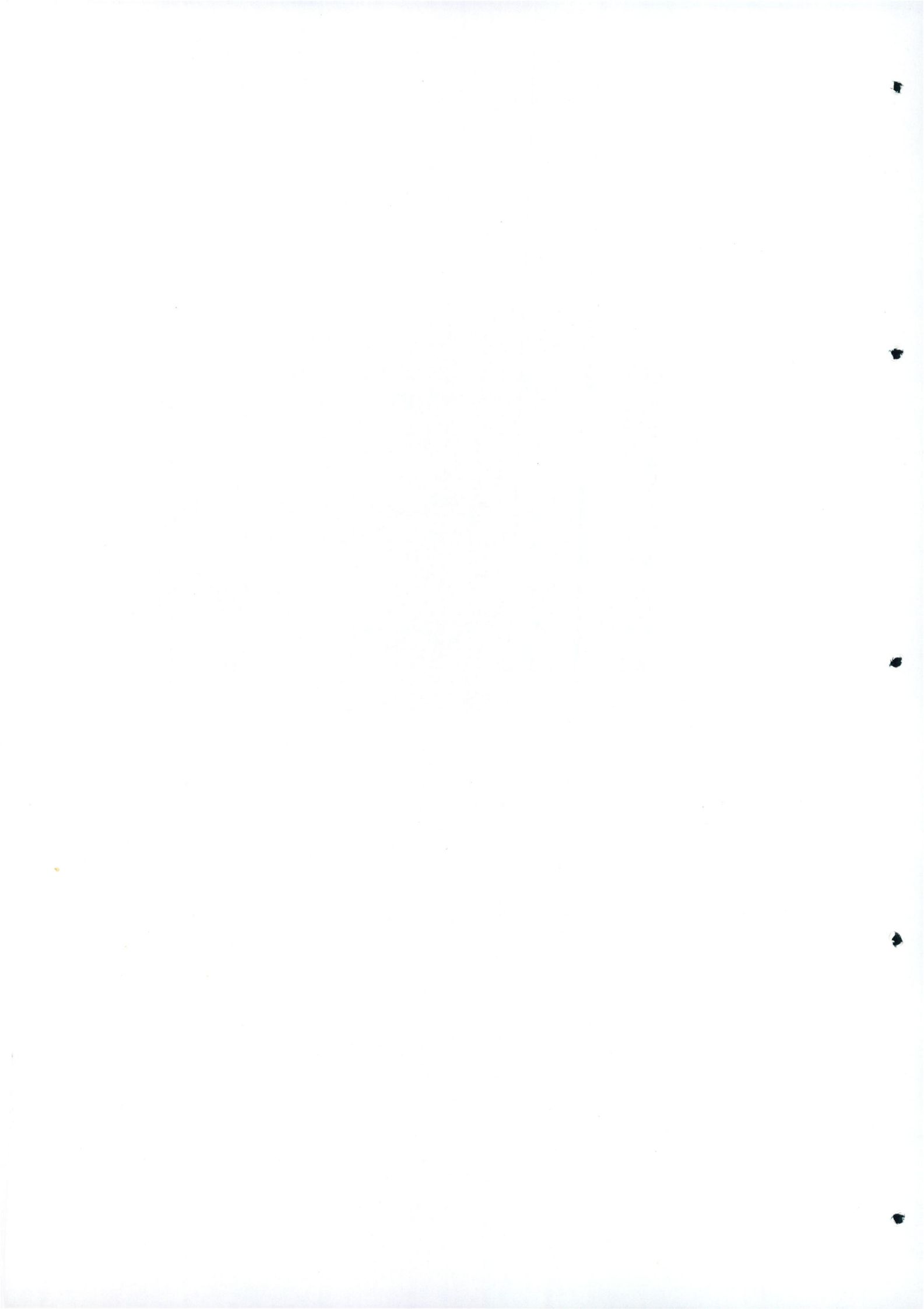


Fig 2.4 The Valley Lodge, O'Neill Street, Carrickmacross.  
Spotlights are clearly visible, as is the plastic sign on the side of the building.





Fig 2.5 The Stables Bar, Main Street, Carrickmacross.  
The lettering is carved out of wood and painted black,  
set on a rich salmon pink backdrop.  
The two panels are hand written.



The style of script used on the shop signs in Carrickmacross reflects the usage of the premises. The script used in the signs of pubs is a very old and ornate style of lettering. It is usually gold letterforms on a coloured background. There are lots of flourishes and details, portraying a busy, crowded ambience. In general, the pub is a place to go to relax and to enjoy oneself, and to escape the pressures of work. These ideas are all summed up in the signs on the pubs of Carrickmacross.

Drapery and clothing shops, on the other hand, are more elegant with many panels of glass divided by slender, timber columns and arches. The sign is usually comprised of hand carved letters painted in vivid colours. In the case of drapery stores, the natural character of the wood is covered over with a bright blue, green or red colour. Some of the clothing shops do have letters painted directly onto the wood. The style of the lettering is usually thin and elongated, and in some cases, italicised. This is to indicate a classical, sophisticated type of shop.

Most of the shops in Carrickmacross are resorting back to a traditional, hand painted sign, but each shop has its own unique style of lettering.

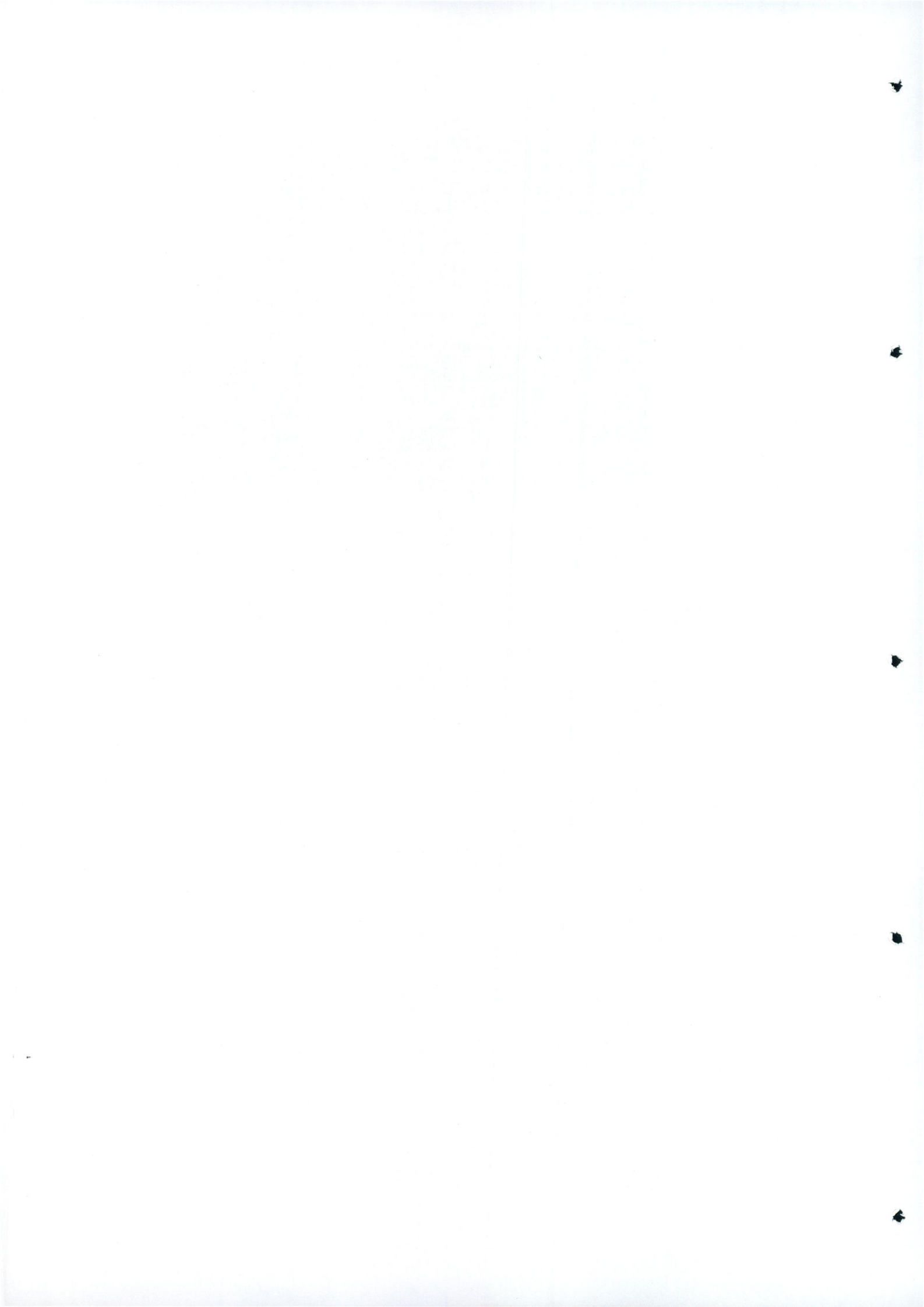
Depicting a national scene, many premises display signs on their walls. Examples are mainly found on pub walls with signs such as *Guinness for Strength* and *Guinness is good for you*. On a local level, newsagents in Carrickmacross still display some similar signs from the past on the walls of their shops. These signs are in fact advertisements for products such as *Players cigarettes* and *Fry's chocolate cream*. These significant little signs or advertisements add style and individuality to a shop, and are an important part of our heritage. The preservation of these signs form a bond for us with our past. Examples can be seen on Keegans newsagent (Fig 2.6) at the south end of the Main street.







Fig 2.6 Keegan's Newsagent, Main Street, Carrickmacross.



Bay windows proved quite popular years ago. Today, proprietors are simply inserting glass into their shop front to serve as a window. Fortunately, *Birdy's newsagents*, (Fig 2.7) located in the centre of the Main street has maintained their bay window. This type of window harmonises perfectly with the style of writing used on the facade. The ornamented Roman letters bend around with the shape of the window. The window is divided into four separate panes by thin strips of timber. Mr. Birdy has since extended the sign to go over the door and an extra window. This is quite a modern approach, but it actually works very well in tandem with the bay window. The extension is subtle and doesn't in any way distract from the design of the shop. The script lettering on the panels is perhaps a little bit crowded and difficult to read from a distance, as can be seen in Fig 2.9. Mr. Birdy did feel however, that he gave the signwriter too much information for too small a panel. The letters are conceived in bright blue and golden colours, reflected against a rich maroon wooden background. The overall appearance is cheerful and friendly.

Mr. Howell, one of the jewellers in Carrickmacross, told me that he has observed that many other jewelry shops throughout the country seem to use a dark backdrop for gold lettering. He wanted to continue this tradition. (Fig 4.1) The gold is a rich colour, depicting the products he sells, and according to him, black is one of the deepest and best colours to set off gold.

Some of the plastic signs remaining in the town belong to those of electrical shops and a certain amount of drapery shops. With regard to the electrical shop, *Keenan Electronics*, (Fig 3.0) the proprietor felt that a hand painted sign would not suit his type of business. Electrical products are advanced and modern and would therefore not merit a traditional, ornamented sign. The proprietor did, however, not like his present plastic sign, but he felt it was more in keeping with the type of business he ran. He said that perhaps when they would change the sign they would choose a vitreous enamel one, or a glass sign which could be painted from behind.



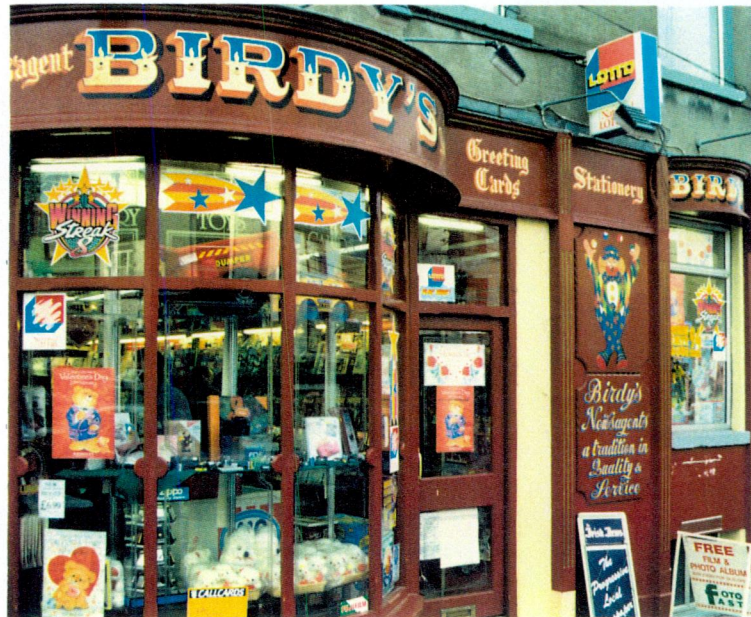


Fig 2.7 Birdy's Newsagent, Main Street, Carrickmacross.  
The bay window acts as a perfect backdrop for the hand painted letters.

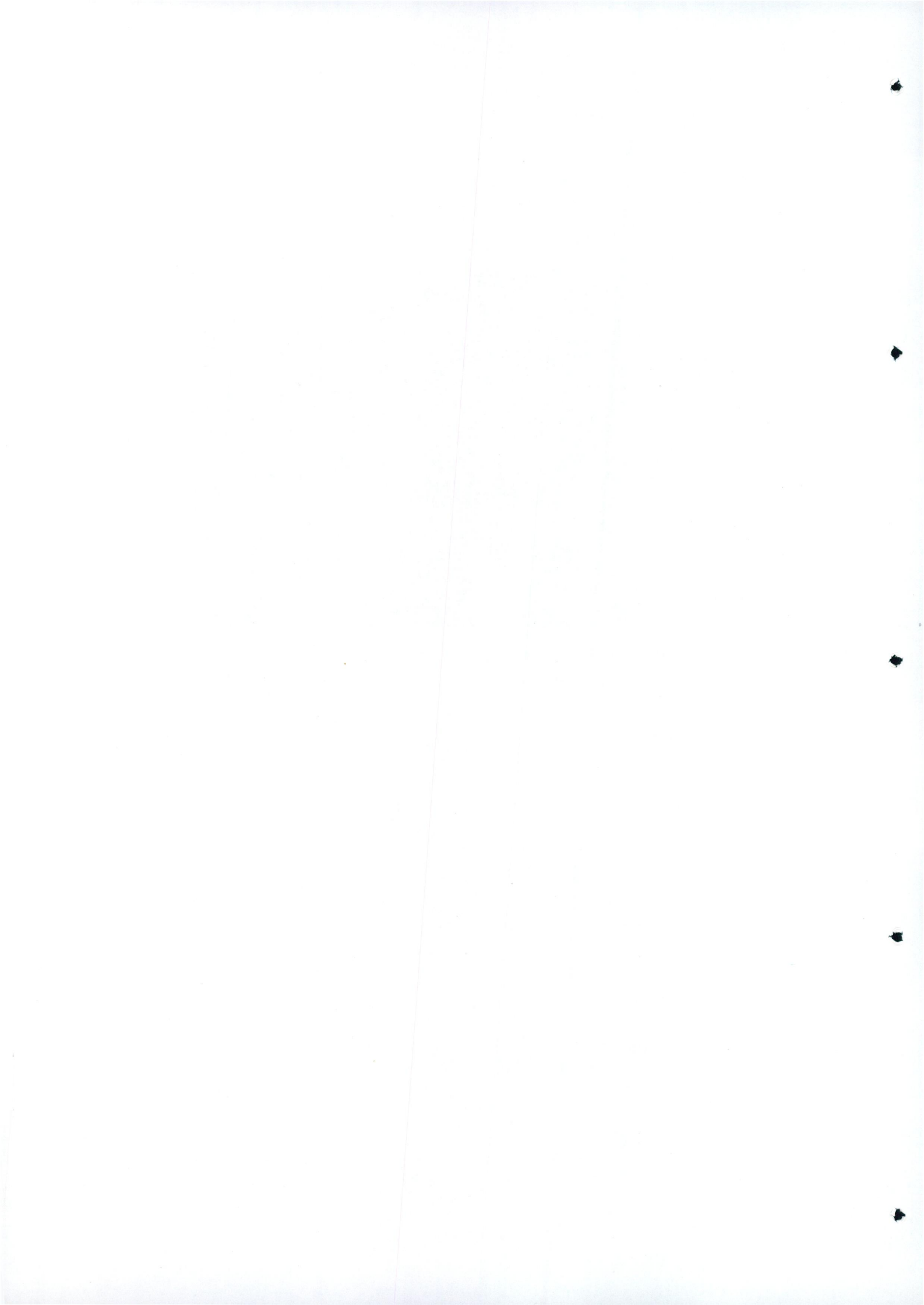




Fig 2.8 Close-up view of the lettering on Birdy's Newsagent, Main Street, Carrickmacross, painted by Mr. Larry Martin.

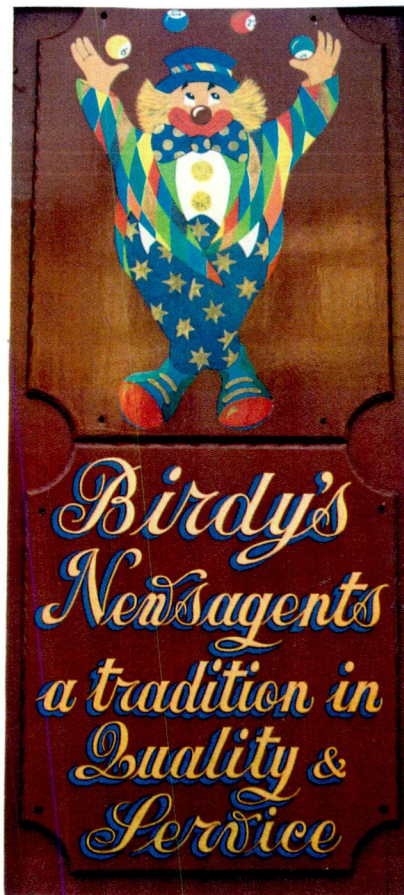


Fig 2.9 Two of the panels on the front of Birdy's Newsagent, Main Street, Carrickmacross. The clown was illustrated by Miss Lawlor. The script writing was painted by Mr. Larry Martin.







Fig 4.0 Close-up of the lettering on Howell's jewellers, Main Street, Carrickmacross.



Fig 4.1 Howell's Jewellers, Main Street, Carrickmacross. The letters are painted in an old English script, reflected against a rich dark background.





Fig 3.0 Keenan's L.T.D. Main Street, Carrickmacross. Spotlights are also evident. The letters are plastic, and mounted on a vibrant yellow wooden background.



Fig 3.1 Markey's restaurant, Main Street, Carrickmacross. The letters are boldly carved out of plastic.



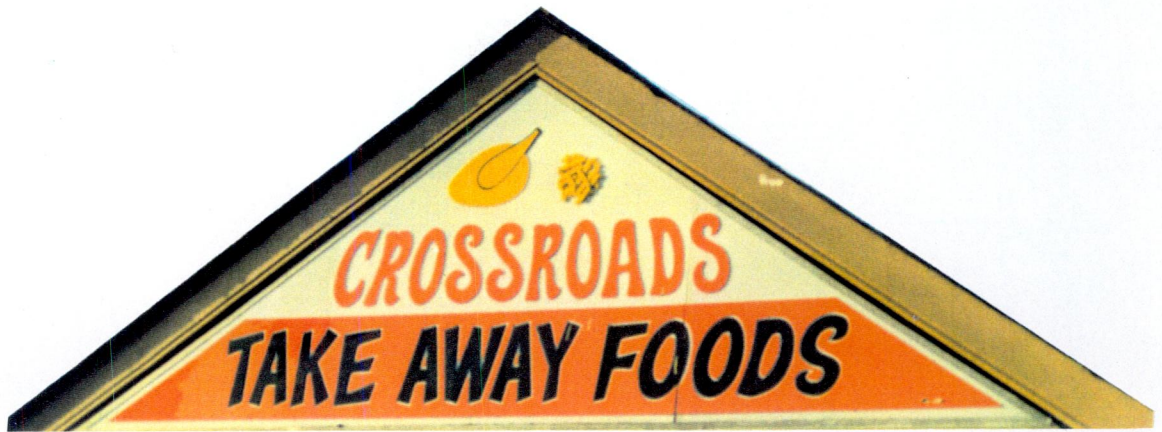


Fig 3.2 The Crossroads, Farnley Street, Carrickmacross.  
This is a plastic sign which is illuminated by bulbs from behind.



Fig 3.3 T.W. Stores, Main Street, Carrickmacross. The sign is lit by overhead bulbs.  
The letters *T.W. Stores* are carved out of plastic and mounted on a plastic background.



### ***Hand Painted signs: Mandatory or Choice?***

According to legislation, shop front design in Carrickmacross should respect the scale and proportions of traditional shop fronts, and should respect the existing grain of development along the street. Shop proprietors are urged to use traditional materials like slate, stone and timber. The shop front designs must respect their setting within the building and the existing design framework. The original stone buildings in the town contribute attractively to the townscape. The town planners and the Urban Council are trying to preserve these time-honoured edifices.

The use of tiles and imitation stone is not permitted. These produce a reflective surface while also looking tasteless, flashy and gaudy against the true stone buildings of the town.

It is also preferred to hand paint the fascia board and the sign on the fascia. The vacuum-formed plastic signs are undesirable and unattractive. A shop in Carrickmacross getting a new sign will almost certainly be refused planning permission for plastic and neon. The colours used in the sign must be sympathetic, both to the building on which they are displayed and to the surrounding buildings. These signs should integrate with the streetscape without being visually obtrusive.

Most of the shop owners in Carrickmacross are abiding by this legislation. As a result of their co-operation, the streetscape is unified. There also seems to be a theme developing. This theme is one of convention and tradition. There is a definite sense of the past throughout the town, especially on thursdays and fridays, market days and fair days respectively.

The chains of retail shops along the Main street in Carrickmacross are increasingly packaged with surprising and old-fashioned shop fronts. Fortunately now, the disposing of the plastic signs gives us glimpses of imagination from the past.

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In an article by Mitzi Sims, she says that if we abuse the hand painted lettering of today, we degrade the environment, and deny future generations the richness of the past. (*Design*, March 1987, Pg. 32) Happily, original lettering on shop signs is being done well today by a number of signwriters. A sensitive and flexible approach is being achieved by these crafts people. Mr. Bernard Bush of Bush Designs<sup>2</sup> believes that "the trend is towards traditional styles and individual signing... There is such an increase in demand for signwriting that there is a shortage of signwriters to carry out the work." (*Design*, March 1987, Pg. 35)

It is really the subtlety of the signing system and its appropriateness to the environment which give character and appeal to a town like Carrickmacross.

A survey conducted for the purpose of this thesis during the summer of 1993 with the proprietors who had hand painted signs over their shops set out to show whether or not it was because of the legislation they had a hand painted sign over their shop. Out of the 127 shops in Carrickmacross, 49 are hand painted. Sixteen of these people were interviewed and only two admitted to being influenced by the legislation, feeling obliged to put up a hand painted sign. (Fig 3.6) One of the proprietors, who wishes to remain anonymous, said that she simply could not get planning permission for a plastic sign, and therefore had to commission someone to design a hand painted one. Another proprietor felt that the legislation was a nuisance and he felt restricted in having to comply with such a law. The other fourteen members of the interviewed group said that it was purely taste that made them choose a hand painted sign.

Out of the sixteen shops surveyed, eight displayed a plastic sign before erecting their existing hand painted one. (Fig 3.5) Four of the shops were new premises in the town and this was their first sign, while the remaining four shops had hand painted signs before also. The overall evidence, with the exception of the two who were influenced by the legislation, showed that the hand painted signs were considered to be more traditional and attractive looking, dressy and elegant, while also maintaining the image of the structure of the premises.

<sup>2</sup>Bush Signs Group, Bush House, Old Shoreham Road, Hove, Sussex. BN3 7DZ



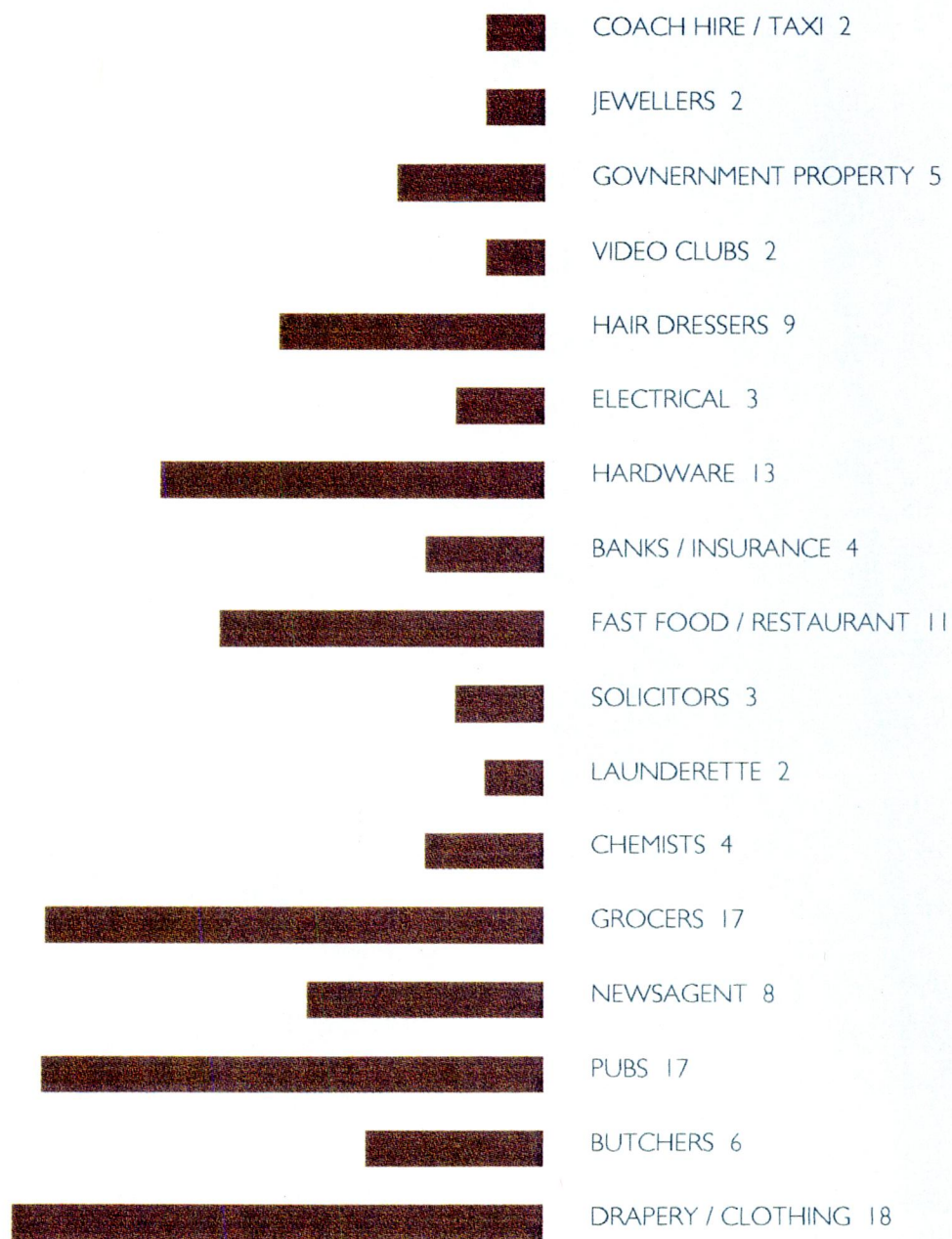
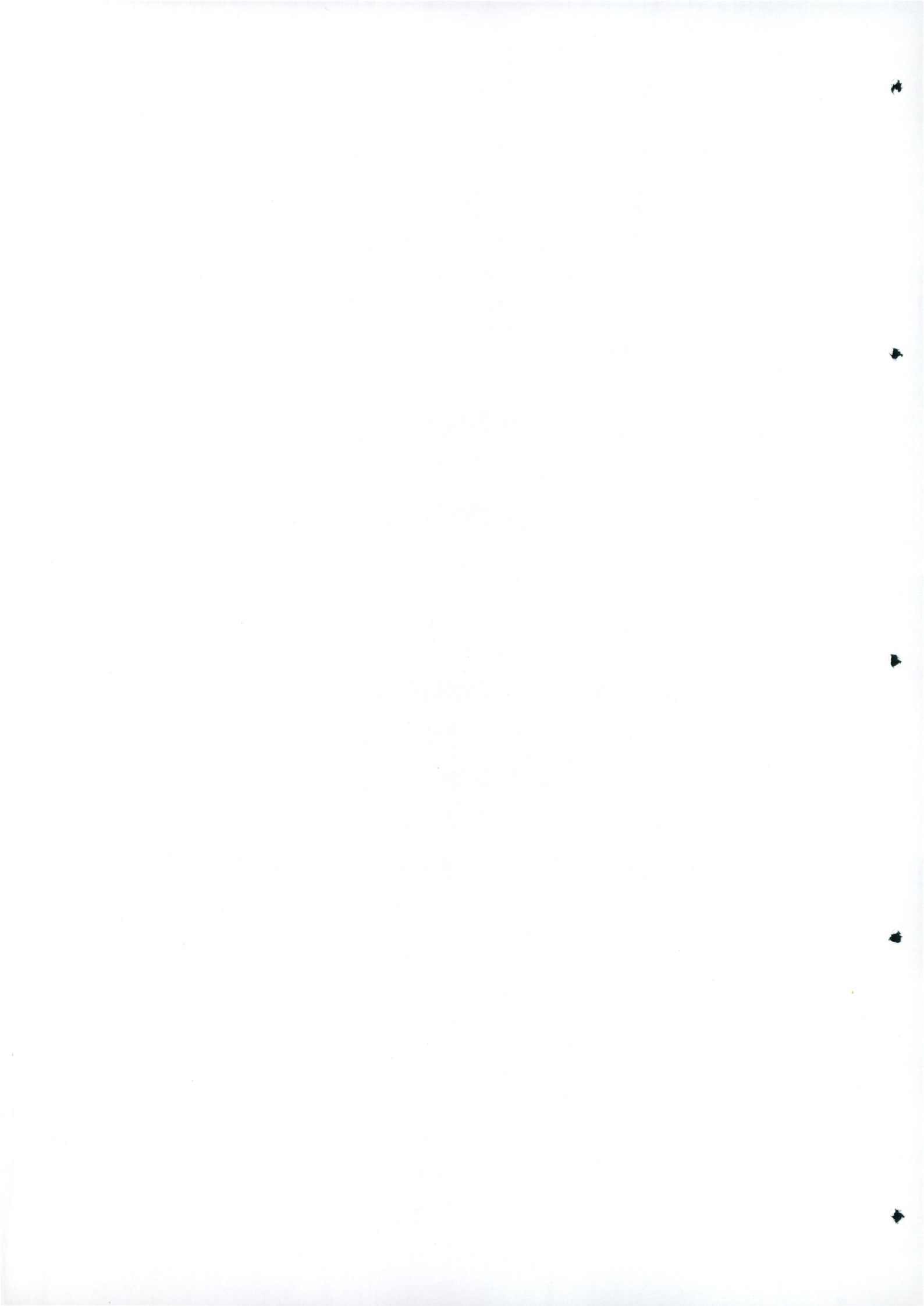


Fig 3.4 The variety of shops in Carrickmacross, County Monaghan, as on the 25th November, 1993.






















	Hand Painted		O'Reilly's Shoe Repairs
	Plastic		Footsteps
	New Premise		Bits and Bobs
			The Bellview
			Birdy's Newsagent
			Keegan's Newsgent
			Frankie Fashions
			Sean's Delicatessen
			Value Tile
			Carrickmacross Credit Union
			Howel's Jewellers
			Mc Cabe's Video Club
			Valley Lodge
			Shevlin's Pub
			Pearl Fashions
			Carrick Sports

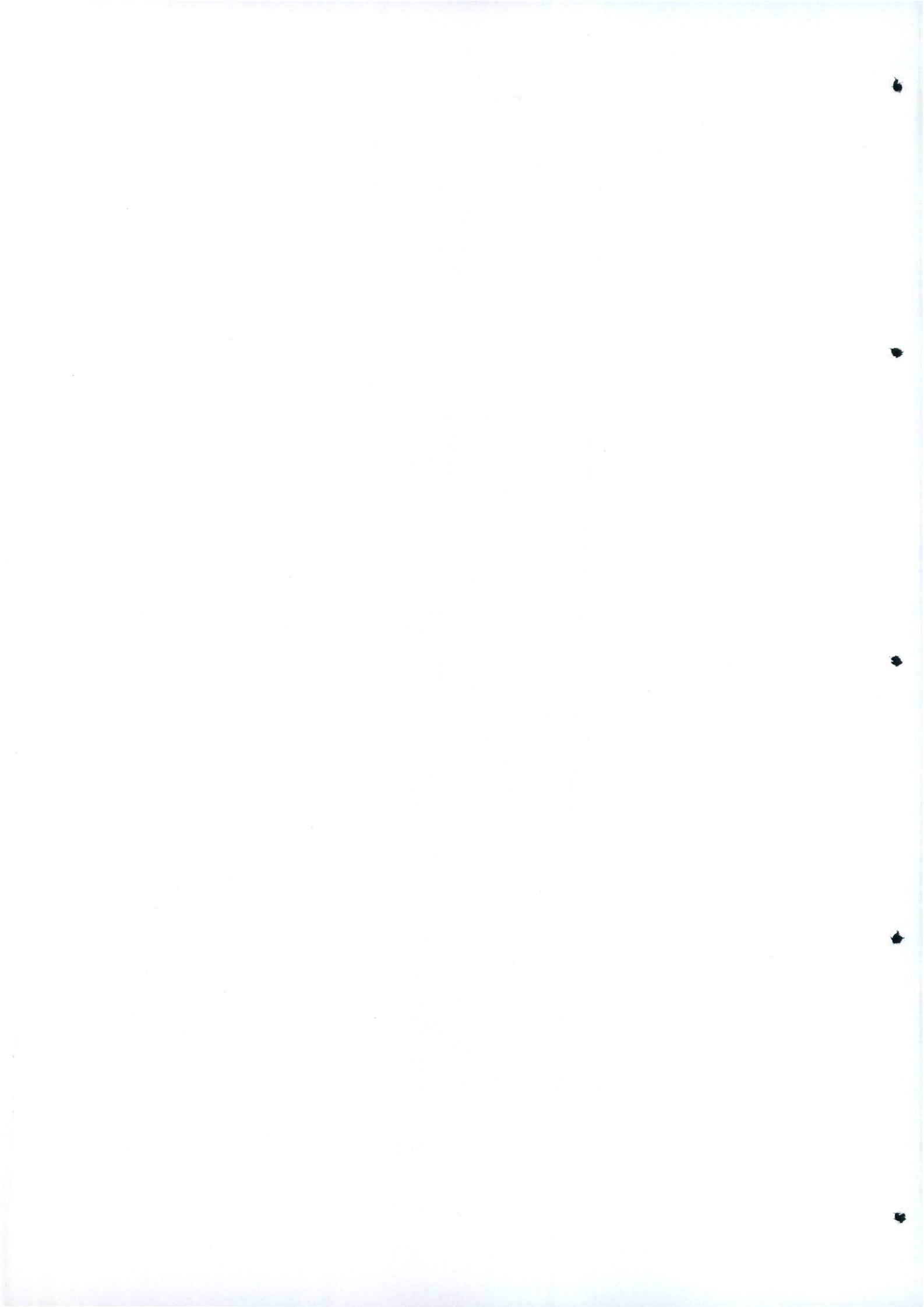
Fig 3.5 The above is a selection of shops in Carrickmacross which presently display a hand painted sign. The coloured boxes are an indication of the type of sign displayed before the existing one.



<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Influenced by Legislation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	O'Reilly's Shoe Repairs
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Costly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Footsteps
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bits and Bobs
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Bellview
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birdy's Newsagent
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keegan's Newsagent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Frankie Fashions
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sean's Delicatessen
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Value Tile
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carrickmacross Credit Union
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Howel's Jewellers
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mc Cabe's Video Club
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Valley Lodge
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Shevlin's Pub
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pearl Fashions
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carrick Sports

Fig 3.6 The above is a list of the shops whose proprietors I interviewed. The red boxes indicate which proprietors were influenced by the Legislation, deeming plastic signing systems in Carrickmacross illegal.

The blue boxes indicate those proprietors who considered hand painted signs costly, but worth the price.





Fourteen of the group of sixteen indicated that they had given a certain amount of input into the designing of their sign. They felt that it was very important that they understood the fashion in which the signwriter was going to paint their signs. The sign would have to say something about the business, and this had to be clearly indicated to the signwriter. The illustrations on the *Valley Lodge* pub, display different themes, and the ideas behind these illustrations were carefully collaborated between the client and illustrator. Many other proprietors provided an input into the colour schemes and actual form of the letters.

When it came to the cost of hand painted signs, six out of the group of sixteen felt that they were more costly than plastic signs. However, two of these people told me that it was well worth the extra cost because the sign gave them great satisfaction and was admired by many passers-by.

The process of hand painting signs is a time-consuming one, and the cost lies in the effort and time that is given in painting the sign. Unfortunately these signs need to be maintained regularly, every four to five years. The hand painted sign suffers from weather conditions, and can deteriorate quite quickly. No matter what type of materials are used, there is always a tendency for the lettering to flake and fade. A wooden background would be more susceptible to weather conditions than a concrete or stone background. Despite the expenses, the hand painted sign still came shining through as an overall winner.

Hand painted signs give a character to the shops, and according to one shop owner, makes his shop a class above the rest. The previously mentioned Mr. Cathal Birdy, who runs a successful newsagent in the town said that he choose a hand painted sign because the effort to produce a hand painted sign reflects the commitment he and his staff are prepared to put into their business. Time and effort are the important elements to be considered when talking about hand painted signs.

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Just as pubs favour this particular type of signing system, so it can also be said for delicatessens and butchers. The delicatessen in the town, (Fig 4.2) serves home-made food, cheeses, cuts of meat etc. The owner feels that a traditional sign reflects the traditional, home-made produce he sells. The hand painted sign also seems to represent a clean, pure and safe environment. Again, the time and effort put into producing this type of sign relates to the time and effort put into the manufacture of home-made food.

A shop fronts universal expression is function and service. people react to certain styles of architecture. Shop proprietors in Carrickmacross stated that they choose hand painted signs simply because they attract people into their shop. These signs seem to stand out against the dull, unimaginative, passionless plastic signs. The pattern of shop signs throughout the town seems to involve gold lettering. It is a very strong, vibrant and enticing colour. Members of the public felt, when asked, they could rely on goods bought in a shop that bore a hand painted sign. They felt that if the proprietor cared enough for his shop front and shop sign, then he cared enough for the products he sold.

Even though all the hand painted signs look similar, they still have their own identity, while still complying with the general design constraints imposed by the legislation. Even though there is legislation, it is difficult to legislate for good taste. Fortunately, looking at an overall view of the streets of Carrickmacross today, the Urban Council are doing a good job in deciding what is and what is not good taste. They are tastefully conserving, in a realistic manner, many of the remaining traditional shop fronts. They are also developing new shops in a traditional fashion, in harmony with the existing ones. The signing system used on the banks today have all suffered modernisation. Some of the signs used are of the plastic box type, which disfigure the old traditional, stone buildings. Some banks now have more than one sign and some of those project out from the wall, destroying the visual character of the facade while at the same time putting an unnecessary physical strain on the building. Signs on banks need not be so prominent. A bank is not a place people would visit on impulse, and therefore these buildings would not need to be plastered with signs indicating their presence. Sand-blasting on the windows would be more appropriate.

Handwritten text, possibly a signature or name, in the center of the page.



Fig 4.2 Sean's Delicatessen, Main Street, Carrickmacross.



Fig 4.3 Hoardings outside Sean's Delicatessen, Main Street, Carrickmacross.



The legislation enforced applies to advertising also, which is in fact a stepping stone from signs. The rules being imposed are somewhat similar to those for signing systems, because signs are advertisements in themselves. It is preferred to have all signs attached to the building rather than free-standing hoardings. Free-standing hoardings or street furniture, as it is sometimes called, introduce an appearance of chaos and disorder to the average street scene. These often large, cumbersome signs can destroy the visual character of the town. Any hoardings allowed must be situated in such an area so as not to interfere with the safety and free flow of traffic.

There is one particular hoarding in Carrickmacross which blocks much of the foot-path. This hoarding is outside *Sean's Delicatessen*. (Fig 4.3) However, it is permitted because it is hand painted in a very tasteful manner and is in-keeping with the rest of the shop.

The re-introduction of hand painted signs is certainly a remarkable and wonderful feat, but there is nothing so great as original hand painted signs. There are a number of these remaining in Carrickmacross today, two prominent ones being Mc Eaney's (Fig: 4.5) and Shankey's. (Fig: 4.4) These signs are both constructed in the same manner. Both are carved wooden letters, hand painted, and mounted on wooden fascias. This reflects the era in which the shops were established, that is the early thirties. Shankey's was a grocery store to start with, and later it became a gardening shop. Shankey's is still open to the public, but for sentimental reasons more so than a business opportunity.

Mc Eaney's used to be a bicycle shop and has been closed for the last eighteen years, since the proprietor passed away. His wife still resides there, and the sign *Mc Eaney's* still reads over the shop. One of the sons of the Mc Eaney's, Mr. Enda Mc Eaney, informed me that his father cut the letters for the sign from wood, and Enda himself would paint them each summer. From the photo (Fig: 4.5) you can see that there is still a steel bar stretching across the front window. This bar was used as a support for the bicycles. It was suggested that this bar, along with the sign has remained to this day because it was too much of an inconvenience to take down, and also because members of the Tidy Town's Committee asked Mrs. Mc Eaney to leave it up in order to retain the traditional character of the street.

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The lettering on both signs is constructed in a sans serif manner. The sans serif type style dealt with the adoption of a single type font, bare of ornament and uniform in stroke, covering notions of clarity and simplicity. (Petrucci, 1993, Pg. 105). This type style had a long history behind it, but was revised by Edward Johnston in 1916, who created the signing system for the London Transport Underground. This type style became very popular and was regarded as a unique signing system at that time. This style emerged along the streets of Carrickmacross in the twenties and thirties, and *Mc Eneaney's* and *Shankey's* prove to be concrete evidence of this tradition. The sans serif met with the demands for clarity and rationality, and brought with it a much awaited desire for innovation.

Small Business



Fig 4.4 Shankey Bros., O'Neill Street, Carrickmacross.  
This shop was once a grocery store.  
The signing system is that of wooden hand painted letters.  
This is the original signing system that was used on this shop.

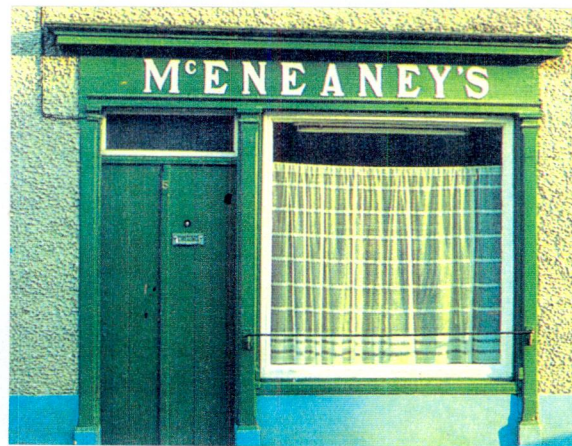
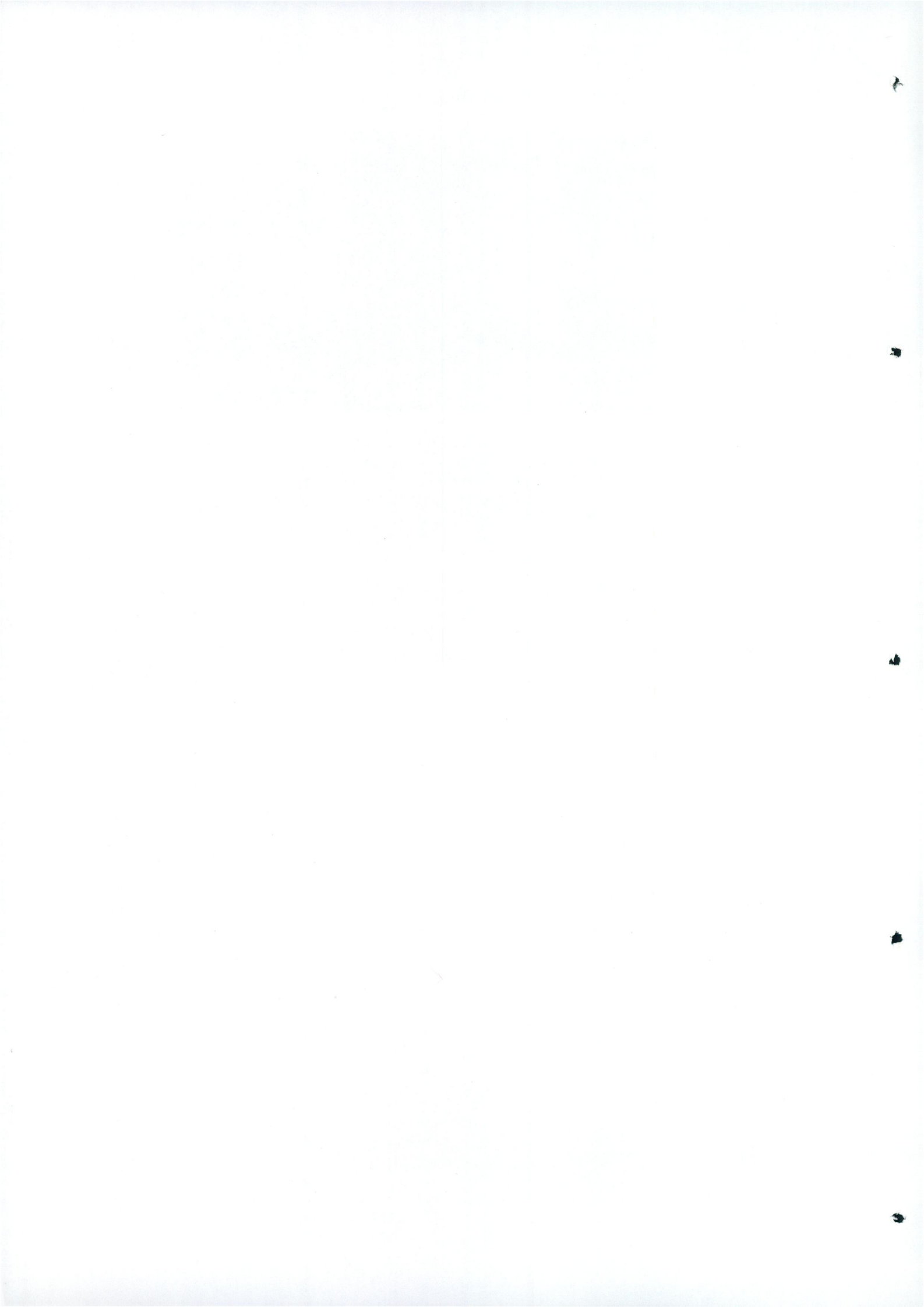


Fig 4.5 Mc Eaney's, Parnell Street, Carrickmacross.  
This shop was once a bicycle shop and is since closed.  
Like Shankey Bros., the signing system is that of wooden hand painted letters.  
This is the original signing system that was used on this shop.



The shop owners of Carrickmacross have become more and more traditional in their requirements to the designing of their premises. We are living in an age where the "high art" principles of Modernism are being left aside, while we resort back to old ideas and thoughts. This phase has been termed Postmodernist, an age beyond Modernism. Modernism saw the invention of sets of forms, and concerned itself mainly with originality and formalism. Modern art was scientific.

*It was based on faith in the technological future, on belief in progress and objective truth...the creation of new forms was its task.<sup>3</sup>*

(Levin, Oct. 1979, Pg. 2)

Modernism denied the past, and favoured the new and improved. It was a very formal period where established forms were implied strictly. The actual form of modern work was more important than the content of the work. It rejected the traditional modes of representation, beauty and precision. It craved for purity, clarity and order. Around the 1960's, when the decade of technology arrived, modernism began to slowly fall apart. It was around the time of the Vietnam war and the peace marches. Minimalism was the last of the modernist styles and it crumbled because the population wanted much more from art: technology just wasn't enough.

Modern art was becoming too specialised and too elitist, requiring a great understanding, something which most people could not give. Work began to seem authoritative, brutal, arrogant. The rejection of modernist ideas paved the way for postmodernism. In general, postmodernism has been applied to various works of art, styles in architecture, new trends in thought, and as a general description of contemporary culture. All modernist, formal work seemed to be becoming undone, and replaced by something more natural.

*Postmodernism quotes, scavenges, ransacks, recycles the past. Its method is synthesis rather than analysis. It is style-free and free-style...structured by time rather than form, concerned with context instead of style, it uses memory, research, confession, fiction with irony, whimsy and disbelief. Subjective and intimate, it blurs the boundaries between the world and the self... (Levin, Oct. 1979, Pg. 4)*

<sup>3</sup>Article was called 'Farewell to Modernism,' written by Kim Levin, printed in Arts magazine, Oct. 1979



Scattered throughout the town of Carrickmacross are shop fronts which are prime examples of postmodernism. The plastic and artificial has been replaced by the natural. The once hideous, garish, plastic signs have been striped down to make way for the natural stone and timber finishes. The fabric of the town has become that of stone and timber once again, bringing back its original character. Postmodernism refers to the changes brought about by post-industrialism and tradition.

Frederic Jameson's<sup>4</sup> has expressed that the key elements of postmodernism are pastiche and schizophrenia. According to Jameson, "pastiche is our contemporary incapability of focussing aesthetically on our own present." (O'Brien, 1989, Pg. 18) Many of our ideas now reflect many of our ideas from the past. We are a culture based on nostalgia, with a fascination for all things past. Schizophrenia, the other key element in Jameson's postmodernist theory, is described as someone "condemned to live in a perpetual present, isolated from both past and future." (O'Brien, 1989, Pg.18)

The element of pastiche can be applied to thinking today. We seem to be reflecting on the past, looking to it for ideas, instead of searching for newer ones. In larger Irish cities like Dublin and Belfast this theory is not so apparent. The cities buildings appear to have overlooked postmodernism, and are extending the plastic, formal, neon age. However, it must be understood that within an urban complex it is not so easy to suddenly change all shops into a traditional appearance. It just would not be possible. All shops would have to change to create any kind of harmony.

A city like Dublin has a different image to portray than small rural towns. Dublin has to retain a lively entertainment character. The signage system used is technically generated and is quite appropriate to the image it is trying to portray. Neon was brought into effect in the 1920's and today has remained the preferred media for cityscapes. However, many of these glitzy signs are covered with a plastic sheeting, diffusing the light, producing a more solid and subtle colour. A town like Carrickmacross would not be suited to a wild, rhythmic beat of neon because it is a small town and is more suited to tradition and ideas past.

<sup>4</sup>Frederic Jameson, Postmodernism or the cultural logic of late capitalism, *New Left Review*, Pg. 146





From speaking to a number of proprietors of shops in Carrickmacross that bore hand painted signs, it became clear that Mr. Larry Martin, or another generation of the Martin family had painted most of those signs. Mr. Martin, an elderly man, lives with his wife Delia in Farney street, Carrickmacross. Mr. Martin is still painting shop signs today, and very intricately and beautifully too. His brother Vincent is also painting signs, and some of his work is also evident around Carrickmacross.

Mr. Larry Martin is the seventh generation of his family to have painted shop signs, and unfortunately he is the last. He has two daughters, one teaching and the other nursing. He is very devoted to signwriting and has re-touched many of his father's outlines, as well as developing and creating his own designs. From when he was a little boy he always had an interest in drawing letters, particularly because he was always with his father while his father worked. He learned everything he knows today from his father. His father used to give him a piece of chalk and a blackboard and had him copy what he was doing.

There were three specific areas to work in the field of creativity when Mr. Martin was growing up around the thirties. These areas included graining, signwriting and paperhanging. Signwriting was the specialised area the Martin family chose, even though they were expert in the other two also. The doors in Mr. Martin's house were grained by his father. Graining was a time-consuming process which involved rubbing the design onto the door using a piece of fabric. Time was of no great nuisance because, just like signwriting, the finished product always provided immense satisfaction and pride.

The procedure of signwriting involved many processes. Mr. Martin explained these processes. Firstly, the letters would have to be chalked out in outline form. (Fig 4.6) The outlines would then be painted with a substance called gold size. This substance usually dried within an hour or two. The gold leaf was then applied, usually in the lower half of the letters. Gold leaf is a transfer and is usually rubbed onto the letter shapes. Other variations of colour would then be fixed. Mr. Martin uses acrylic in these instances, applied with sable brushes.

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Finally, to make the letters stand out and appear raised, shading was executed, first to the right and then to the left of each of the letters. The entire process would take up to a few days to complete, depending on weather conditions. Often Mr. Martin would produce an outline of the letters onto paper at his home, and then transfer to the bare fascia board. Other times he would work directly onto the fascia.

Mr. Martin has a distinct style of writing in the town of Carrickmacross, but he can work in any style at all, from ornamented Roman letters, to Old English writing, to script writing. Most of his work around the town (Fig 4.8 and Fig 4.9) is ornamented Roman letters. According to him, this is primarily because it is the favoured style of lettering among proprietors. People would see some of his work, and ask to get their shop sign painted in the same style. People are very much influenced by what they see around them.

Mr. Martin's style of letterforms are usually divided in two by simple, yet sophisticated, little flourishes. A bright colour seems to dominate the upper half of the letter while the gold leaf dominates the lower half. The gold leaf is quite an expensive material to work with. It is £1. per sheet of about 4 inches by 4 inches. Each fascia board would use up to about twenty-five sheets of gold leaf. Mr. Martin works mainly onto wood and this is usually grained beforehand. The most popular colours he works with are blue, green and red, simply because these colours show off the gold leaf to its best.

The shading to the left of the letter would always be lighter than the colour of the letter, while the shading to the right would be much darker. What may seem as a mild face-lift to a shop is usually a lot of work on behalf of the signwriter. Many people may not even notice shop signs and they would generally take signs for granted. But with the growing importance of hand painted signs, and the individual service and expertise of signwriters today, many people are becoming more aware of signwriting, and are in fact beginning to notice this unique artform. Signwriters generally work with meaning more so than form, and this because the tradition of organised meaning functions as authority. The strong, colourful signs by Mr. Martin, with their spacious layout, give Carrickmacross a distinctive and unique appearance. This harmony of colour asserts an importance and individuality.



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Hand painted signs are, without doubt, the concrete expression of an individual, where the sign is no longer about the individual but rather about the culture that made such an expression possible.

Even though the majority of Mr. Martin's work is created on timber, he can paint onto many other surfaces like cement, metal, glass or steel. Wood seems to absorb the paint best. Mr. Martin has also chalked out lettering before for sand-blasting onto glass. Plastic signs are limited by the number of finishes they can have, whereas there is a lot more creative potential in timber. Lettering requires an enormous amount of consideration and social responsibility. It must either echo, sympathetically respond to, or even act as an exciting counterpoint to the building. The blaze of colour and forms of the letters must also relate to the rest of the street.

All hand painted signs have to be re-touched every couple of years. This poses no problems for Mr. Martin who keeps samples of the colours he used. An example of which he told me about was that of Shevlin's pub. He has also painted signs in other Irish towns, with Skerries being one example. His style would not differ from town to town. He would usually paint in the fashion which proprietors most favoured.

Mr. Martin is the last of seven generations of signwriters. He can now only hope that his signwriting will not die off, and that in fifty or so years time there will still be some evidence of his work along the streets of Carrickmacross, just like that of his father's. There are other younger signwriters doing work in Carrickmacross, but none with a style as distinguished as that of the Martin family.



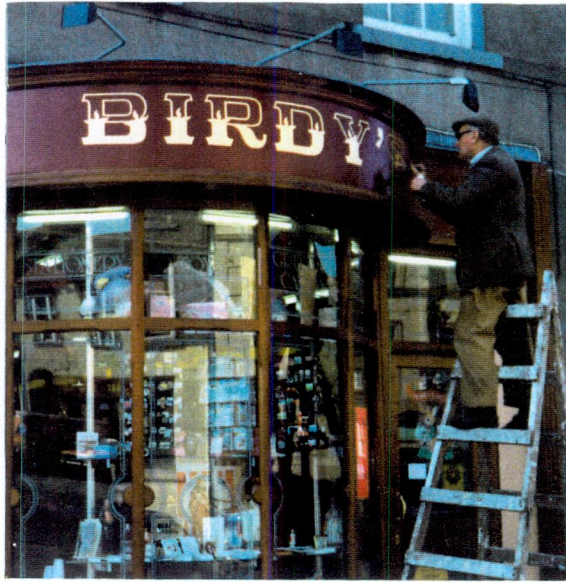


Fig 4.6 Mr. Larry Martin painting the sign on Birdy's Newsagent, Main Street, Carrickmacross.

The sign was first painted in 1990.



Fig 4.7 A selection of shops on Main Street, Carrickmacross. Spotlights are evident. The shop in the foreground, T & L Paints, was painted by Mr. Larry Martin. The windows are divided into panels by strips of timber.

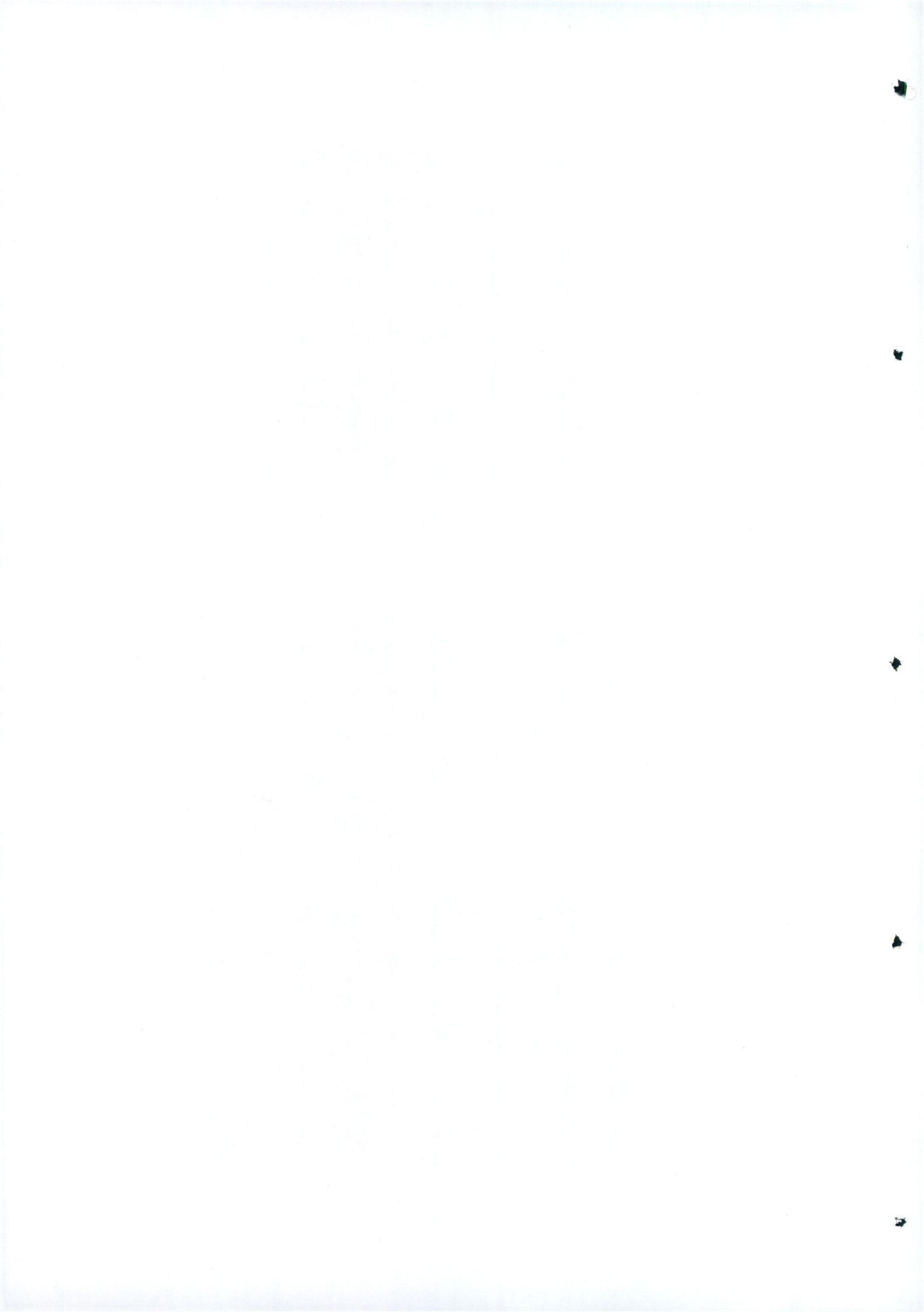






Fig 4.8 T & L Paints, Main Street, Carrickmacross.  
This sign was painted by Mr. Larry Martin. Spotlights are evident.



Fig 4.9 R. O'Hanlon's, Main Street, Carrickmacross. This sign was painted by Mr. Larry Martin.



## Conclusion

The present feelings of the population of Carrickmacross would indicate that *old habits die hard*. Traditional hand painted signs are definitely favoured over the plastic box style. The surveys have shown that this is not because of the legislation introduced in July 1993, but that two thirds of the population actually do prefer hand painted signs, purely for reasons of taste. It can also be understood that the traditional would not be suited to larger cities and towns. The character of the town can determine what type of signs should and should not be used. Equally the style of sign used can determine the character of the town. It would seem more reasonable to emphasise tradition in small, rural towns, while leaving the glitz and bright lights for the cities.

It remains quite clear that the town of Carrickmacross has barely changed in the last one hundred years, and the photographs in chapter one support this statement. With the exception of the industrial zone and a few new shops, the town still looks exactly as it did back in 1903. The introduction of cars however has resulted in slight structural renovations with areas of the streets being divided up for car parking facilities.

Even though the photographs show very little change in the structure of the town, there is indication of overhead wires. These wires are plentiful through the streets of Carrickmacross, but it is planned to bury them underground by 1995. They are a necessary structure but presently look unsightly, giving the town an electrical, unnatural appearance.

The legislation in general seems to have proved effective in providing the town of Carrickmacross with an overall character and theme. Strolling its streets there is an awareness of the past, a past of stone buildings and hand painted wooden shop fronts. This theme is certainly a beauty to behold and cherish. The style and design of the shop signs today does reflect the style and design of the shop fronts twenty years ago, but the authenticity does not seem to be apparent now. The signs today are painted in a glossy manner. Perhaps with age they will begin to fade, providing the original, genuine, traditional feel. However, the Urban Council are certainly acting in the right direction to achieve this wonderful character.

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Much of the signwriting in Carrickmacross is script, but it is written in such a way that it is decorative, beautiful, ornate and very pictorial. However, it would seem that the appearance of decorativeness and ornamentation is veering towards over-elaboration. Over-elaboration is difficult to understand and in a sense could be considered a late modernist trait, although it is more likely to be a romanticization into something magical, mystical and personal.

The character or theme of Carrickmacross has been summed up as one of old stone and fresh paint, but the question remains as to who is essentially responsible for this character. Is it the Urban County Council who have rigidly enforced legislation, declaring plastic signing systems in Carrickmacross illegal. Is it perhaps Mr. Larry Martin, who has so expertly and intricately painted many of the shop signs in Carrickmacross. Or is it perhaps the shop keepers themselves. According to my survey the proprietors collaborated to a certain extent with the sign writer, and actually contributed to the design of their signs. The question remains unanswered, but it is clear that whoever is responsible, whether it be one single group or a joint effort from all three parties, a theme is obviously evident along the streets of Carrickmacross.

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**Appendix A**

Carrickmacross Urban District Development Plan - Adopted 23rd. July, 1993.

**Section 8.4 Advertising**

In assessing applications for permission for the erection of advertising signs, the following will apply:

- (a) Advertising signs should be sympathetic in design and colouring both to the buildings on which they are displayed and to their surroundings.
- (b) Signs which are attached to buildings are preferable to those on free-standing hoardings.
- (c) Traditional style hand painted signs are preferable to the plastic box type. Spotlighting is in general more acceptable than internal illumination.

**Section 8.5 Shop Fronts**

- (a) Shop front design should respect the scale and proportions of traditional shop fronts and should reflect the existing grain of development along the street.
- (b) Fascia boards should be designed as an integral part of the shop front and should incorporate any advertising necessary.
- (c) The use of tiles and imitation stone are not permitted. Natural stone or plain plaster finishes are desirable.
- (d) In general box signs are obtrusive and cannot be successfully integrated into the overall shop front design. They are undesirable and will not normally be permitted. Signs that are hand painted and spot-lit are desirable.

Handwritten text, possibly a signature or name, located in the center of the page.



**Appendix B**

The proprietors of the following list of premises were interviewed

These premises all presently display hand painted signs.

O'Reilly's Shoe Repairs

Footsteps

Bits and Bobs

The Bellview

Birdy's Newsagent

Keegan's Newsagent

Frankie Fashions

Sean's Delicatessen

Value Tile

Carrickmacross Credit Union

Howell's Jewellers

Mc Cabe's Video Club

Valley Lodge

Shevlin's Pub

Pearl Fashions

Carrick Sports

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**Appendix C**

The following six pages are a selection of responses from the survey I issued to proprietors of shops with hand painted shop signs.

The six responses are from:

Howell's Jewellers

Birdy's Newsagent

Shevlin's Pub

The Valley Lodge

Footsteps

The Bellview



Who did your shop sign? LARRY MARTIN

Why did you choose that particular type of sign? DRESSY, ELEGANT  
AND IN KEEPING WITH THE BUSINESS

What type of sign did you have before your present one? WOODEN LETTERS  
PAINTED WHITE ON MAGNETIC BASE

If different, which do you prefer and why? NEW SIGN  
MORE ARTISTIC AND CONVENTIONAL

Did you have any input into the designing of your present sign? YES

If so, what suggestions did you make? COLOURING & LETTERING

Did you feel controlled in any way by the Act that was introduced making plastic signs illegal, or was it purely taste that made you choose a hand painted sign? PURELY TASTE

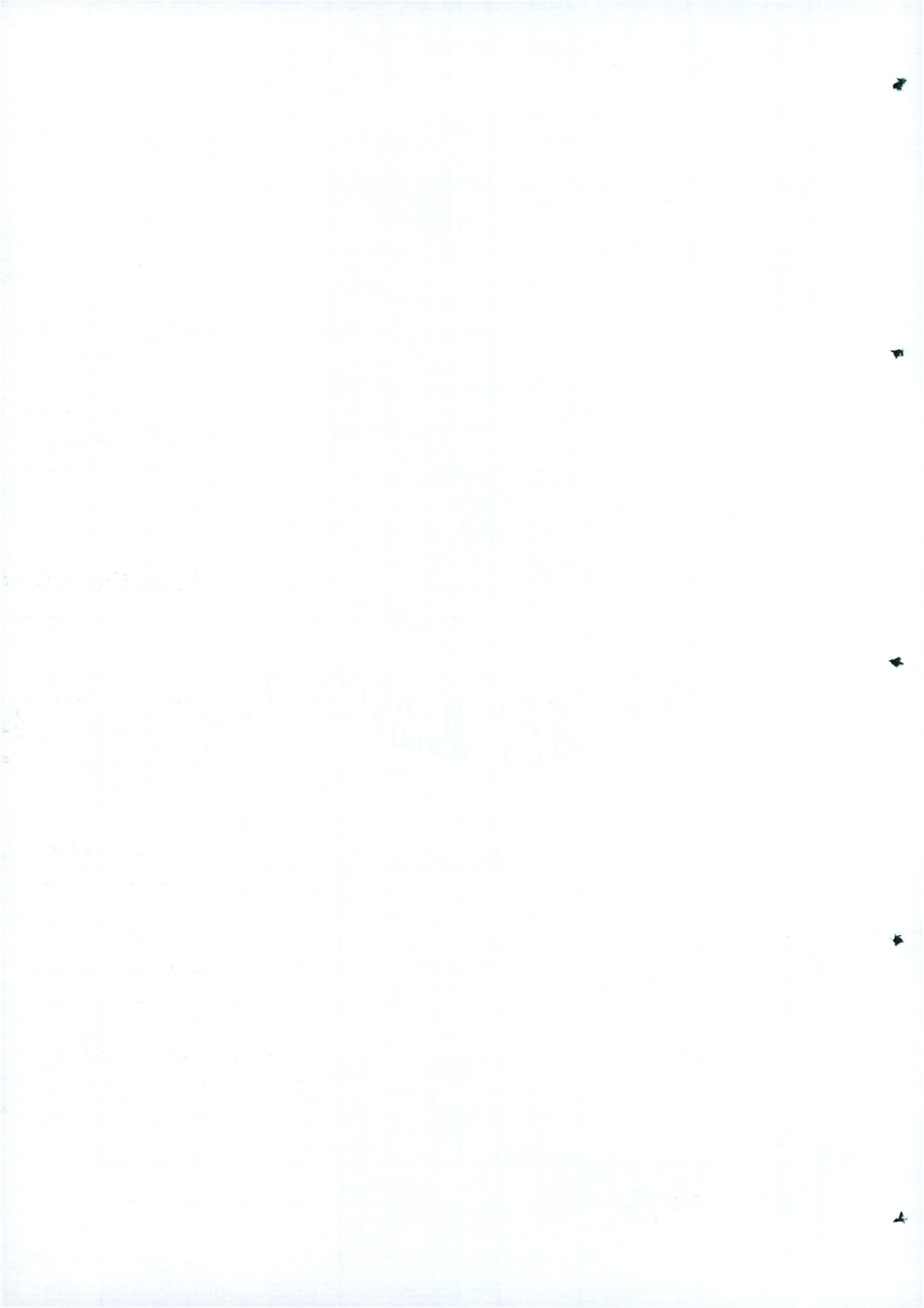
Has the Act been beneficial or a nuisance thus far? DOES NOT AFFECT US

Did you find hand painted signs were more costly than any other sign? NO

Do you feel the sign you have chosen says anything in particular about the type of shop you run? YES  
BLACK SHOP FRONT WITH  
GOLD LETTERING ADDS TO THE QUALITY OF GOODS

**Howell's Jewellers**

Thanking you for your time in filling out this form.



Who did your shop sign? LARRY MANTON

Why did you choose that particular type of sign? Because of the effort to produce that type of hand painted sign it reflects the commitment that we are prepared to put into the business.

What type of sign did you have before your present one? None.

If different, which do you prefer and why? As Above.

Did you have any input into the designing of your present sign? YES

If so, what suggestions did you make? I wanted it painted in the old English script.

Did you feel controlled in any way by the Act that was introduced making plastic signs illegal, or was it purely taste that made you choose a hand painted sign? NO, I don't feel I was controlled, it's nice to see the old traditional signs coming back.

Has the Act been beneficial or a nuisance thus far? A very great benefit.

Did you find hand painted signs were more costly than any other sign? NO.

Do you feel the sign you have chosen says anything in particular about the type of shop you run? YES. It shows that we are here for the quick buck, but here for the long haul.





Who did your shop sign? has been painted by the Martin family printer from Jersey St since 1933.

Why did you choose that particular type of sign? That sign was chosen by my late father in 1933.

What type of sign did you have before your present one? This bar has a sign in a photo taken at the turn of the century. This photo is in monochrome.

If different, which do you prefer and why? I just like hand-painted signs.

Did you have any input into the designing of your present sign? yes

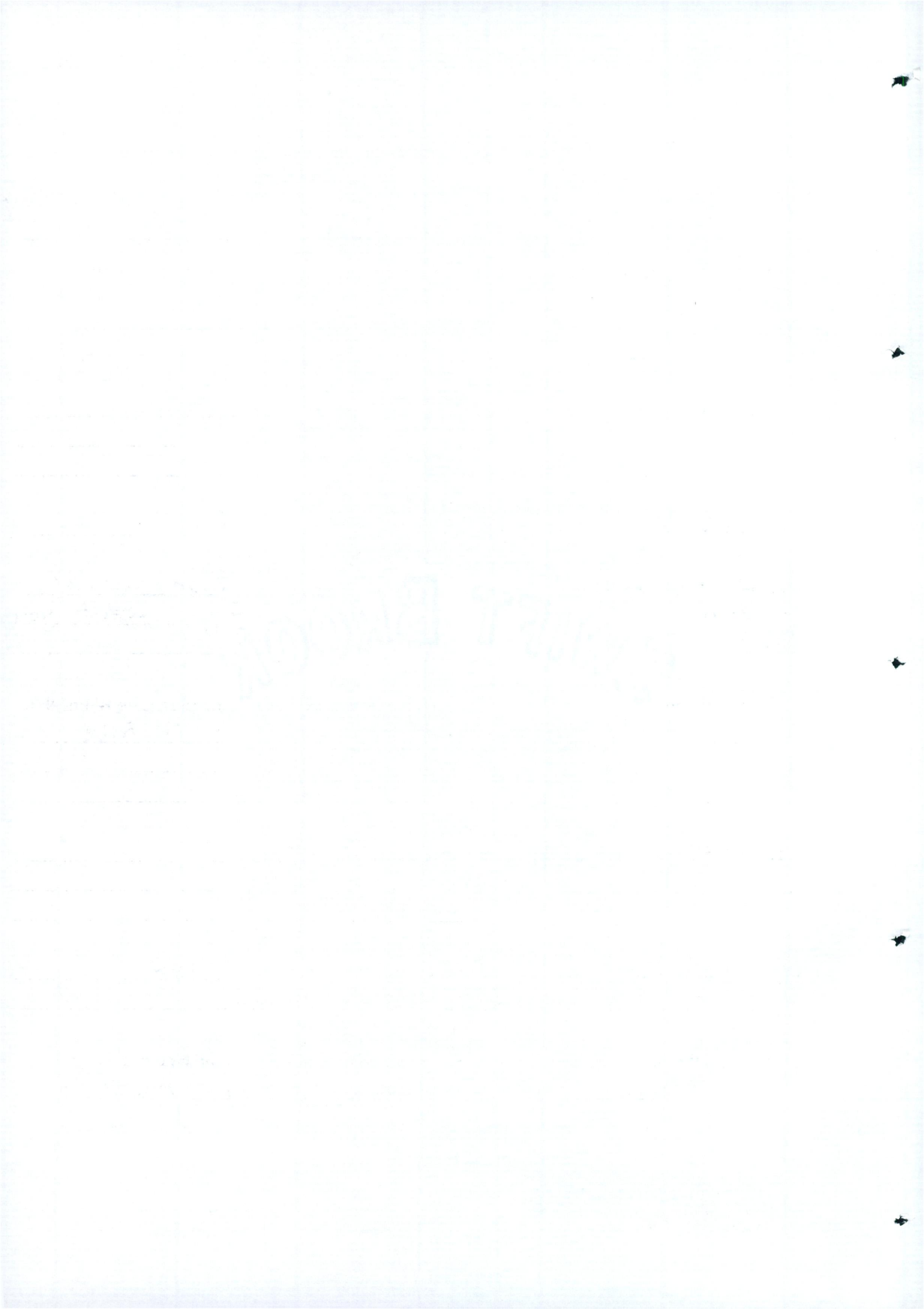
If so, what suggestions did you make? about 30 years ago when plastic signs became popular I put a lighted panel on our sign so that it would be visible from a distance at night.

Did you feel controlled in any way by the Act that was introduced making plastic signs illegal, or was it purely taste that made you choose a hand painted sign? Had had hand-painted sign before act.

Has the Act been beneficial or a nuisance thus far? has been neither good nor bad.

Did you find hand painted signs were more costly than any other sign? yes  
The up-keep of having it touched up every year.

Do you feel the sign you have chosen says anything in particular about the type of shop you run? yes. I think it says a lot because it's the sign since the turn of the century.



Who did your shop sign? Irene Nolan. (Paintings) & Larry Martin. (Lettering)

Why did you choose that particular type of sign? TRADITIONAL & CLASSY

What type of sign did you have before your present one? None

If different, which do you prefer and why? N/A

Did you have any input into the designing of your present sign? Yes

If so, what suggestions did you make? That each sign would contain a particular theme. Saying what you would get on entering the premises

Did you feel controlled in any way by the Act that was introduced making plastic signs illegal, or was it purely taste that made you choose a hand painted sign? No I hate plastic signs

Has the Act been beneficial or a nuisance thus far? No

Did you find hand painted signs were more costly than any other sign? Yes. But worth there money

Do you feel the sign you have chosen says anything in particular about the type of shop you run? They tell everything one needs to know



Who did your shop sign? MR COLE Castleblayney.

Why did you choose that particular type of sign? Existing sign was similar.

What type of sign did you have before your present one? AS ABOVE

If different, which do you prefer and why? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you have any input into the designing of your present sign? N/A

If so, what suggestions did you make? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you feel controlled in any way by the Act that was introduced making plastic signs illegal, or was it purely taste that made you choose a hand painted sign? no

Has the Act been beneficial or a nuisance thus far? N/A

Did you find hand painted signs were more costly than any other sign? no

Do you feel the sign you have chosen says anything in particular about the type of shop you run? yes Traditional family shop continuing from the past

**Footsteps**

Thanking you for your time in filling out this form.

*James H. O'Neil*



Who did your shop sign? Pat Shields.

Why did you choose that particular type of sign? ATTRACTIVE LOOKING

What type of sign did you have before your present one? PLASTIC ONE.

If different, which do you prefer and why? WOODEN ONE  
LOOKS BEST.

Did you have any input into the designing of your present sign? YES.

If so, what suggestions did you make? THE LETTERS USED  
WOULD BE IN OLD FASHION WRITING

Did you feel controlled in any way by the Act that was introduced making plastic signs illegal, or was it purely taste that made you choose a hand painted sign? TASTE.

Has the Act been beneficial or a nuisance thus far? BENEFICIAL.

Did you find hand painted signs were more costly than any other sign? YES.  
MAINTENANCE NEEDED.

Do you feel the sign you have chosen says anything in particular about the type of shop you run? MAKES MY SHOP LOOK  
ACCESS ABOVE THE REST.





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