



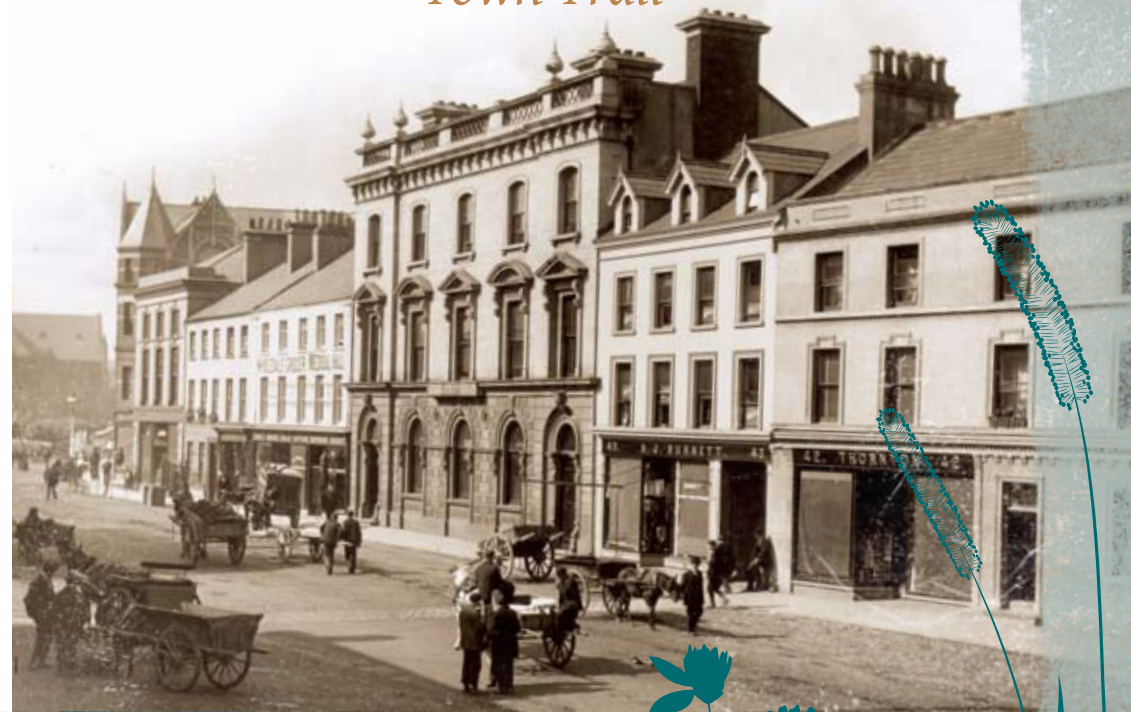
Take the Portadown Town Trail...

"The residents of Portadown have considerable taste. This fact soon becomes manifest to the stranger in going through the streets. Most of the buildings are well constructed and sightly, and the places of worship, in architectural outlines and internal decoration, are very much above the average."

(G.H. Bassett, County Armagh Guide and Directory 1888)



Portadown Town Trail



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Take a journey

through the years of our past...

Portadown

Town Trail

Image: Charles P Friel

P O R T A D O W N T O W N T R A I L

Welcome

to the Portadown Town Trail...

Portadown takes its name from the Irish: Port an Dúnáin meaning:

“port of the small stronghold”

Our trail starts and finishes in the car parking area near Shillington’s warehouse (now part of Haldane Fisher’s premises) by the River Bann, in Castle Street at the foot of the town, but you can of course start and finish where you please.

The map (centre pages) marks 37 sites of interest; our trail text tells

you something about each of these in numerical order.

The Craigavon Historical Society first devised this trail in 1997 to record some of the most important and/or interesting buildings in the town. Regrettably, some of the buildings recorded in the original trail have been lost through redevelopment.

However, for the most part, the essential character and attractiveness of Portadown’s streetscape have been preserved.





Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

At Shillington's warehouse, Castle Street (1), now Haldane Fisher, you see the main reason for Portadown's position and prosperity: this is a place where for hundreds of years people travelling east-west by road have come to get across the River Bann which was itself at various times a major artery for transport, particularly via Lough Neagh to the north.

Over the Bann bridge

The three bridges

The river flows north-west from the Mountains of Mourne, some 30 miles away, towards Lough Neagh some 5 miles to the north. Three bridges cross it. On your right is the "old" road bridge or Bann Bridge carrying traffic into town from the Lurgan direction, but more of that later.

On your left is the newer "Shillington" road bridge on concrete stilt pillars, built in 1970 to carry the Northway urban motorway, a key element in the plan for the "new city" of Craigavon, designed to provide a high-speed road link between Portadown and Lurgan. The bridge is 700 feet long and after spanning the river continues westward as a pillared viaduct over Castle Street.

Beyond Northway is the railway bridge, which carries the main railway line between Belfast and Dublin. The Ulster Railway Company had reached the newly constructed station at Portadown (on the other side of the river) by 12th September 1842, much delayed by soft ground.

In 1845 work on the line to Armagh began and the hardest part was the construction of the bridge across the Bann. So poor was the ground that a timber structure was built with five 39 ft spans. In 1871 this was replaced by the present bridge with its cylindrical uprights and iron spans which were replaced in 1990 with stronger steel beams.

The line to Armagh was opened in 1848; it was later extended to Monaghan and Clones, giving a link to the Dundalk/Enniskillen line.

The Dungannon line, opened in 1858, was later extended to Omagh where it joined up with the Londonderry and Enniskillen Railway. These excellent lines of communication allowed Portadown to claim the title "the hub of the North" and helped form the basis for its development as a major centre for manufacturing.

Beyond the railway bridge can be seen the tall brick chimney of the Castle Island factory of Ulster Carpet Mills, a Portadown firm with a world-wide reputation for quality and innovation, and across the Garvaghy Road from the factory is the People's Park, Portadown's fine if underused park. But back to the trail ...

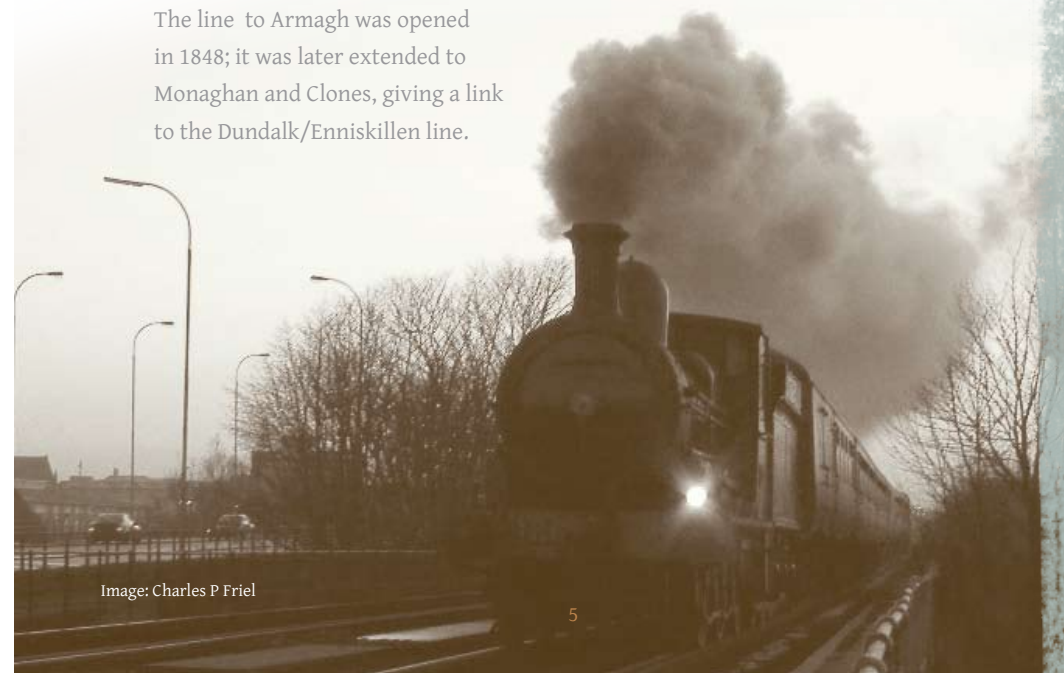


Image: Charles P Friel

Navigation on the Bann

The river has long been an important route for transport. The Viking called Thorkils, whom the monks Latinised as Turgesius, ruled most of Ireland in the 9th century from his fleets on Lough Neagh and the Shannon; the Bann river would have been an important route inland. 14th or 15th century dugout canoes, made from black oak, have been discovered during excavations along the river banks. In the Elizabethan wars there were rival fleets on Lough Neagh and again in the wars of 1641 to 1647.

In more recent times, shallow-draft barges, known locally as “lighters”, carried coal, timber and other heavy products between the Lough and Newry along the Newry Canal, which joins the Bann about a mile upstream. The Newry Canal was built primarily to carry coal from the Tyrone coalfields down to Carlingford Lough and thence to Dublin. Started in 1731 and opened in 1742, its first engineer, Richard Cassels, was replaced by Thomas Steers. It was

the earliest “summit-level” canal in the British Isles, having a total of 14 locks that enabled boats to navigate through hilly country. The canal gave Portadown a role as an inland port, linked directly with Newry, and via Lough Neagh to Coalisland along the Ulster Canal system and to Lisburn and eventually Belfast along the Lagan Canal. But from the mid 19th century the railways put the canals into terminal decline and the last barge sailed from Portadown to Newry in 1936.

Now the only boating on the Bann is recreational or for coarse fishing. But the Ulster Way, signposted here, will let you walk along the river bank and then the old canal towpath all the 18 miles to Newry – at the “Point of Whitecoat” about one mile out of town, the canal and rivers Cusher and Bann all converge. If you prefer to cycle, the towpath also forms part of a 20 mile section of Route 9 on the National Cycle Network.



Lighter being launched on the River Bann from Portadown Foundry

Portadown Foundry

Take a look across the river before you start to walk. In the low buildings on the other bank, the barges or “lighters” which plied the Newry Canal were built. Behind are the taller remains of the Portadown Foundry buildings, where iron brought in by water or rail was cast by a local firm between 1844 and the 1970s. The Foundry employed many tradesmen – such as blacksmiths, welders, fitters and structural steel-workers – as well as specialist foundry workers such as moulders and patternmakers.

About 20 small houses were built nearby to house them. The Foundry also had its own boat slipway, and four or five other quays were connected with Foundry Street, such as a coal quay and a sand quay etc.



The Foundry employed many tradesmen - such as blacksmiths, welders, fitters and structural steel-workers - as well as specialist foundry workers such as moulders and patternmakers.



Shillington's warehouse

Shillington's (now Haldane Fisher), on your right, has been supplying building materials and hardware of every kind to the town and surrounding areas for nearly two centuries.

Thomas Shillington (1767-1830), a Methodist from Aghagallon in Co. Antrim, acquired the quay at this location in 1801; it later became known as Shillington's quay. His trade concentrated upon the purchase of grain from the surrounding farmers and its sale to millers, together with the import of coals, timber, slate and iron.

On Thomas's death, his son Thomas Averell Shillington (1800-1874) succeeded to a healthy and prosperous business, which he steadily pursued, founding TA Shillington & Son only a few years later, and developing it until he died. These buildings, like many others in the town, were solidly made (for the lower part at least) of

blackstone, a black basalt known locally as whinstone; often the door and window surrounds would be faced with brick in different colours.

The main warehouse is approximately 75m long and the windows and entrances which formerly opened out on to Shillington's Quay have been blocked off. The Shillington family played a central part in the 19th century history of Portadown and Methodism, and later generations also served their country in a variety of key public roles.

Walking further along the river bank, towards the Bann Bridge, the neat red-brick edifice on your right, erected in 1929-30, is the Pump House (2) which originally pumped the town's sewage across the river to the treatment works at Seagoe – a large metal pipe carrying the sewage was suspended from the side of the bridge, spoiling its fine appearance.

Now only used for storage, the pump house suffered a further indignity when one end was demolished, destroying the symmetry of the graceful, rather Oriental, curved roof line. But at least the sewage pipe has gone.

A plaque on its landward side records the names of Portadown's Urban District Councillors for that year - many of them well-known business people locally - and the civil engineers for the works, Taylor and Wallace of Newcastle upon Tyne.

As you approach the north face of the Bann Bridge you may admire the well-dressed granite of the handsome five-arched structure put up in 1835

(architects Arthur Williams & Sons of Dublin). Walk under the bridge (3), and you will notice that half-way along the roof changes from a stone to a reinforced concrete arch. This marks the start of the widening scheme carried out in 2005 to ease traffic flow over the bridge. The new stone facings and parapets of the widened bridge lack the character of those used on the original part of the bridge but they are a great improvement on the utilitarian metalwork which had been added when the bridge was previously widened in 1922 as an unemployment relief scheme; many of those employed were ex-servicemen of the 1914-18 war.



Lighter being unloaded at quay beside Shillington's warehouse

Obins castle

Portadown's first bridges, though narrower, must have been longer, for the river used to be substantially broader and was more liable to flood over the flat and marshy lands along its banks. The level of Lough Neagh has been artificially lowered in stages over the past 150 years by a total of three metres, so the Bann is lower now too. The original shore line on the town bank would have been near enough the traffic lights at the end of Bridge Street, where the main street starts to rise up the hill.

Portadown's first bridge seems to have been built in the 1630s by the Obins family, who had acquired land here from some of the estates granted by King James I in 1610 to Plantation settlers from England and Scotland. During the 1641 rebellion this wooden bridge was destroyed and the town was captured and pillaged by Captain Toole McCann, acting under the orders of Sir Phelim

O'Neill. Some of the settlers were thrown into the river and drowned. In 1645 Obins Castle nearby was burned by Irish troops on instructions from General Owen Roe O'Neill. Records from this time of civil unrest are not very full, but it seems that by 1682 Portadown was again "a pretty village", with (according to the Rector of Drumcree) "a fair wooden bridge near upon 1000 feet in length".

The Obins family was keenly concerned to develop the area, and as early as 1703 Anthony Obins was involved in the first survey for a canal to connect the Bann with Newry and the sea.

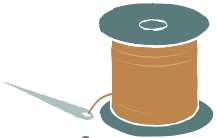
Getting across the Bann itself was also a problem. A new wooden bridge was needed in 1708. In 1750, the bridge was described as being "low and flat", so that "in time of flood boats are obliged to wait 5 or 6 weeks before they can pass under"; four years later, floods swept it completely away.

Portadown's first stone bridge was built in 1763-4 and in 1765, with more floods, three of its seven arches collapsed. Repaired, and then rebuilt after more flood damage in 1786, it was finally replaced by a stronger 13-arch stone bridge. A drawing of this survives (in the Public Record Office) from 1820, when a survey of the area was made because the Obins family were selling their lands to their relations, the Sparrows of Tandragee; it was demolished in 1839, after the present granite bridge had been built. One local tale is that the present bridge was constructed on dry land, after which a new bed was dug to bring the river under it; perhaps that is one reason why it has lasted so much better than its predecessors.

Crossing over the Bann Bridge (4) on a clear day you may see the Mountains of Mourne far away on your right. Closer

at hand, facing you on the Edenderry bank of the river across from the town, is the red brick factory building known as Hamilton Robb's - once one of many linen businesses hereabouts. The Robb family used to live in Bann House, between the factory and the bridge, with their own riverside quay where peat was brought in by lighter to power the factory. Their house was much extended in the 1920s to become Portadown College, and it is these school buildings which you see now behind the stone rubble wall, rebuilt in 2005 (with considerable loss of character) as part of the bridge widening scheme. When the College moved further out in 1962, the site was used first as a Technical College and then as a Music Centre for schoolchildren from a wide surrounding area. The remains of the old house burned down in 1981.





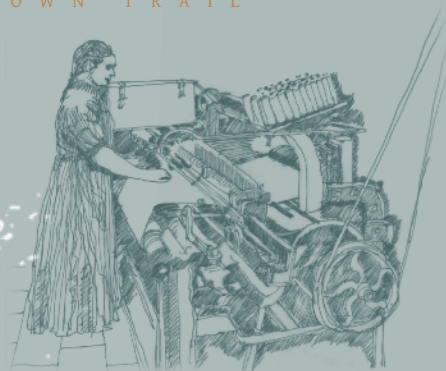
Linen businesses

The main weaving firms here included Watson, Armstrong & Co. of Railway Street; J & J Acheson & Co. and Castleisland Linen Co. of Castle Street; and Grimshaw & McFadden (later William Ewart & Son Ltd) of Armagh Road.

But from 1872 on there were also many hemstitching factories, making up linen handkerchiefs, pillow cases and sheets - including Hamilton Robb and Andrew J Lutton & Son in Edenderry; Thomas Dawson at Corcrain House; William Cowdy of Thomas Street; and Spence Bryson & Co. in Meadow Lane.



Spence Bryson's factory on Meadow Lane



Portadown firms were proud of their finest sheer cambrics and lawns for luxury handkerchiefs, and their heavy patterned linen damask fabrics for table-cloths and napkins.

Now that linen has been largely replaced by synthetic fibres such as rayon, nylon and polyester many of these old linen factory buildings have fallen into decay, unless an enterprising management has found some other product to diversify into. Some of them, like the old canal warehouses, can still be glimpsed down side alleyways or behind modern shops.

Once over the bridge into the Edenderry district, the street widens a little, and then narrows down sharply at the place where the old road toll-gate used to be.

Look over the street at the stately columns of the First Presbyterian church (5) but, unless the traffic is unusually light, we do not recommend trying to walk across here. This imposing building was erected in 1858 in front of an earlier church (built 1822). It was enlarged in 1882, when a gallery was added; the

side extensions were a later addition in 1891. The architect was W. J. Barre (1830-67), who also worked in Newry and Dublin. Here he created a fine rendered neo-classical facade with a pediment, two fluted Corinthian columns and four matching pilasters. It has been described by the architectural historian Dr Paul Larmour as having a front reminiscent of a villa by the Italian master architect Palladio. We will not go to Watson Street which is only a little further and site of the former Wade Factory. The fine original Portadown railway station (below) was built at the end of this street but only its entrance pillars remain as a poignant reminder of our loss.

Now go back over the bridge to Bridge Street (6), passing the former Regal Cinema building on your left and a little further on, after Meadow Lane, the building which housed the "Picture

House". The houses you see on the opposite side of Bridge Street form a handsome line in the Victorian tradition of local brick-building; some may date back to the 1820s. Most are plain in style, three storeys high and two or three windows wide. Towards the centre, one rather taller and grander, with painted façade and projecting eaves, may have been a hotel. There are varied modern shop fronts at pavement level and one of the original arched entry ways through which a horse and cart could reach the back yard of a house. There are still some of the original chimney pots, and even a few wooden sliding sash windows, hinting at what the terrace once looked like. The house fourth along from the bridge has the date "1852" on a plaque high up, with the initials "J.J.M." - presumably Mr John Joe Marley, who owned these properties. (Many years ago there was a "Marley Street" of smaller houses which ran down into what has now been cleared for use as a car park.)





Town hall

Moving uphill towards the town centre, the Ulster Bank, 20 High Street (7) is, as befits a bank, solid and prosperous-looking in grey stone, with carved coat-of-arms and urns on the parapet and embellishments round the entrance and ground-floor windows. The architects (Blackwood and Jury of Belfast) designed this three-storey, four-bay symmetrical building in 1933 to replace an older and less grandiose bank on the same steeply-sloping site. They kept the old carriage arch at the right, now opened for pedestrians as Meadow Lane (on either side of this, note the cast-iron wheel-guards at pavement level, proudly labelled "Portadown Foundry Ltd"). They also retained the tradition of the bank manager living with his family in the upper storeys over the bank.

The buildings next up the hill, shops at 19, 18, 17 High Street (8) are each three

windows wide, but otherwise very like the Bridge Street shops; they too were designed for trading on the ground floor, with living accommodation upstairs. Nowadays shop and bank managers go home at night, sometimes many miles away, robbing town centres of the vitality they must once have enjoyed.

Turn into Edward Street, the first street on your left, where you will find several public buildings. First on your left is the old Town Hall (9), now superseded as the seat of local government by the Craigavon Civic Centre some three miles away over the river, but still used for performances and exhibitions - and since 1923 for the annual Festival of Music, Speech, Drama and Dance. It was built in 1890 (see plaque) of red brick and



terracotta: its twin gables have dragon finials which recall the coat of arms of the Dukes of Manchester, then the owners of much of the town. The architects (T&R Roe of Belfast) were very up-to-date in choosing the Dutch artisan - mannerist style popularised by the English architect Norman Shaw in the 1880s. The interior was extensively modernised in 1992 to provide disabled access and improved theatre seating. This Town Hall replaced a more modest building (since redeveloped) on the far side of the main street on Woodhouse Street corner.

The cheerfully polychrome brick building - former Institute (10) dates from 1883 or earlier. Built mainly in yellow brick, it has window and door

facings in red brick and ornamental lines of black brick on the door arches, chimneys and under the eaves. The painted cast iron pillars by the main doors have cast iron capitals which seem to have been forgotten at first and hastily added later - upside down! Perhaps this is why no architect's name is recorded. The modern ultra-secure metal window frames look incongruous enough among this Victoriana. Its first use was as a Young Men's Institute or club, with a reading room, assembly hall and so on; it also offered a temporary home to the public library between 1893 and 1904. Since then the building has been used in turn by the Methodist church, the local income tax authorities, and is now part of the police station.

Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland





Carnegie library



The two-storey Carnegie Library building (11), completed 1904, combines red brick and stone, with fine bulging columns by the door and a heavy oriel window upstairs. On the lower storey, every 6th course is recessed and a thinner clay tile used in place of brick to give the effect of strength and solidity. The building was designed and built by locals (architect J W Walby), using money provided by the Scottish-American millionaire Andrew Carnegie who financed free library/reading rooms all over the British Isles.

Before this, Portadown had a reading room or library from as early as 1828 onwards, in a variety of different premises. The first person appointed to run the new purpose built Carnegie Library was Mr Thomas Gardiner, at a salary of £20 a year. His name can still be seen on the letter box in the main door. The library building was converted to office use when it was replaced by the new library in Church Street.

Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland



Quaker meeting house



The oddly cottagey-looking front to Sprott's offices (12) was originally built as a "Catch-my-Pal" Hall, a social centre for this temperance organisation of the late 19th century. Two hands clasped in friendship, a symbol of the Catch-my-Pal movement, can still be seen near the top of the pillars on both sides of the door. During the 1930s the building became the Savoy Cinema - one of three in the town then; today there are none. It burned down in 1960 at a time when audiences were deserting the cinema for television. Since its rebuilding it has been used as offices for William Sprott Ltd, a long established local pork processing firm which set up on this site in 1925.

Giving a pleasing end to Edward Street, Friends' Meeting House in Portmore Street (13) is a modest red-brick building with wooden glazed entrance porch, set in a garden. The date-stone records its erection in 1905: at that time Portadown was growing fast and the local Friends (Quakers), who had previously worshipped in the long-established meetings at Lurgan and Moyallon, decided to build their own Meeting House. The architect was Joseph C Marsh and the builders Collen Bros.

Portadown was growing fast and the local Friends decided to build their own Meeting House.





Methodist churches



Turn right up Portmore Street, where the whole block on your right forms part of the Thomas Street Methodist church (14) complex. The façades along Portmore Street, set behind fine cast-iron railings, are in 1990s red brick, or in 1860s fine blackstone rubble walling brought to courses with brown brick dressing to doors, windows and quoins. But on Thomas Street, the 1860 architect (Mr Boyd of Belfast) really let himself go. His rendered façade has a portico whose four columns have composite capitals and pilasters behind; the pediment above and the eaves have heavy console brackets.

Inside there is an oval gallery resting on 14 ornamental cast iron pillars, with an ornate and colourful compartmented plasterwork ceiling by Wyatt of Dublin. Adjoining the church to the left are two rendered manses for ministers, also built

in 1860 - nos. 33 and 35 Thomas Street. A few steps past the manses will take you to the Old Methodist church (15) erected in 1832. It is a two-storey blackstone building, with plain stone dressings at the corners and round the doors and windows, which have arched glazing bars. The basement (lit by windows at ground-level along the sides) housed a large school-room and smaller meeting rooms. To the left is a three-storey brick dwelling-house for the superintendent minister, with 2 small rooms on each floor.




St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church



Both buildings were sold after the church moved to its new larger premises; they were afterwards, for a time, used as offices for a wholesale grocery firm. This church was in turn preceded by an older, smaller one. The first Methodist church, built in 1802 in Church Lane, was the town's first formal church of any kind.

Now go back along Thomas Street and turn sharp right at the corner into William Street where St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church (16) is on your left.

This is a simple blackstone church, built in 1835, with a pinnacled tower and transepts added in 1861. Inside, extensive alterations to the sanctuary were carried out in 1982-3 following the Second Vatican Council. The high altar was retained and original mosaics of the

sanctuary were cleaned, repaired and extended. Over the high altar is suspended an eight-foot high wooden cross painted by Malachy McGonagle after the manner of the Pisan School. Carved wooden Stations of the Cross stand out effectively against the smooth rendered walls.



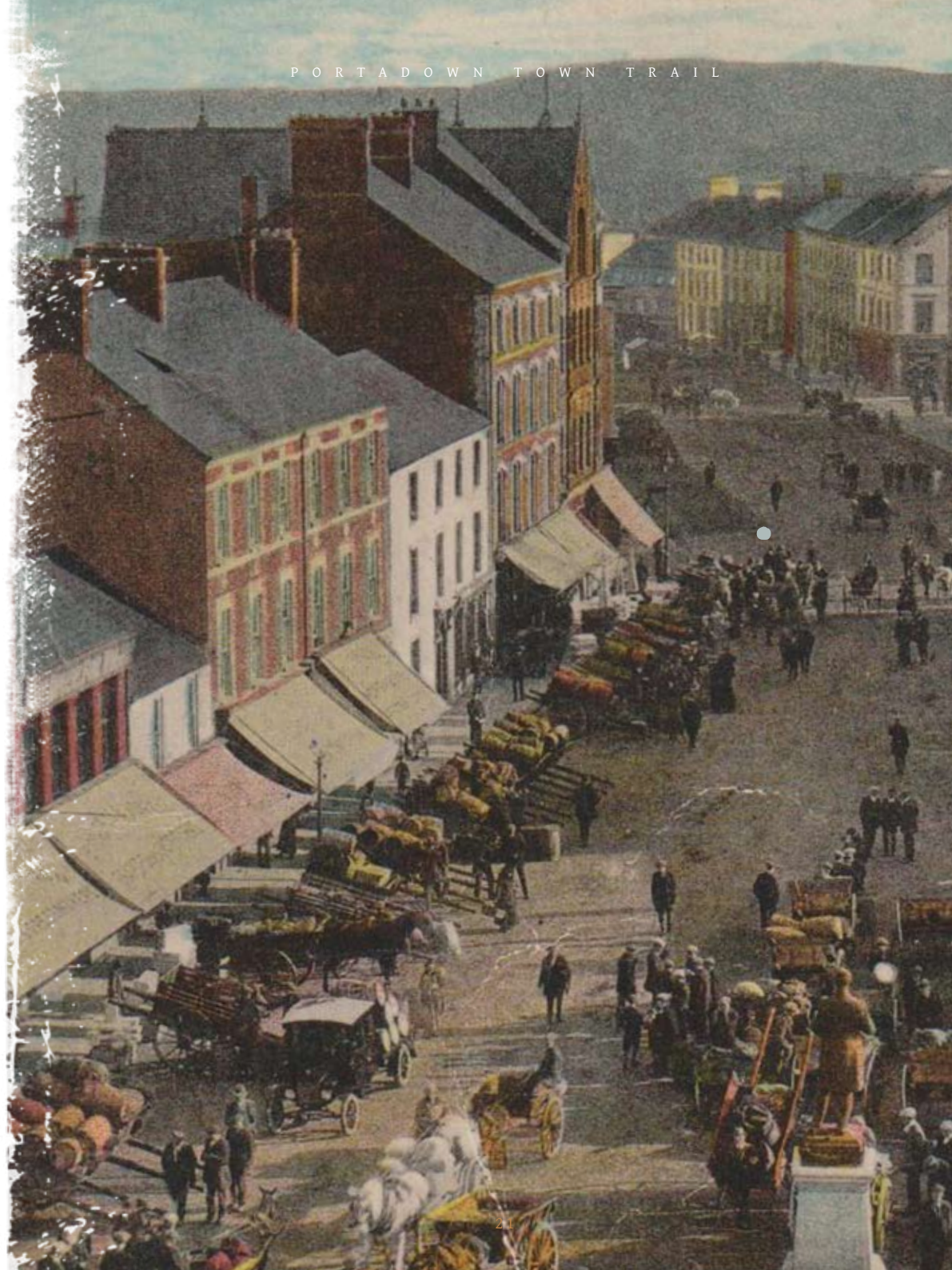
Market building

Just beyond the Catholic Church, 41 William Street or Whitten House (17) is a substantial three-storey house with rendered facade and attractive painted ornament round the windows and door frame. At the right an old wooden gate closes off the entry into the yard behind. This was originally the Parochial House for St Patrick's church. In 1882, Sisters of the Presentation Order came to the town and ran a school here. In 1901 the school transferred to a newly-built Convent in Thomas Street and this building once more became the Parochial House. When the Parochial House was transferred to Obins Street in 1958 these premises were sold and have since been used as offices.

On your right at the end of the street is the red-brick old market building (18) with stone facings; nine plain pilasters and arched windows run along the street frontage. This, with new market accommodation at one end and adjoining public toilets, was erected by the Town Council in 1929. Inside, the high open roof was a feature, the steelwork for which came from



Portadown Foundry. This is now rather obscured by the recent addition of a mezzanine floor which houses the town's vibrant new Millennium Court Arts Centre. At its far end, this building connected with one built a century earlier: the old shambles and market was one of the first buildings to be erected by the first Town Commissioners, appointed in 1828. If you turn right at the corner into Market Street you will still see the Commissioners' narrow archway entrance (18), now the entrance to a shop, with elegant low fanlight window above; it forms the end of a run of attractive two-storey shops and dwellings. The covered market still houses stalls selling fruit, vegetables, produce, flowers, clothes etc. every Friday and Saturday. All sorts of markets were also traditionally held in the open streets, with the different products grouped at different parts of the town.





Old photograph showing original tower
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland



St Mark's church

St Mark's Church of Ireland church (19) opposite occupies the most prominent position in the town, but it is a relative newcomer. The two original parishes here were Drumcree, to the west of the River Bann, and Seagoe to the east. St Mark's parish was carved out of Drumcree in the 1820s, when the population of Portadown really began to grow.

The church was built in 1826 on open ground which formerly contained the town stocks and gibbet (last used for a hanging in 1809). Cruciform in plan, it is

in blackstone with sandstone dressings. It was apparently first dedicated to St Martin, but later re-dedicated to St. Mark. It was enlarged around 1860, and further extended in 1885 (architect J. F. Fuller).

There were further alterations in 1909; and in 1928-30, as a memorial to all the local people who had lost their lives in the 1914-18 war, its original low tower was replaced with the present taller one. This houses a carillon of 15 bells, and a clock paid for by the local council.

Portadown

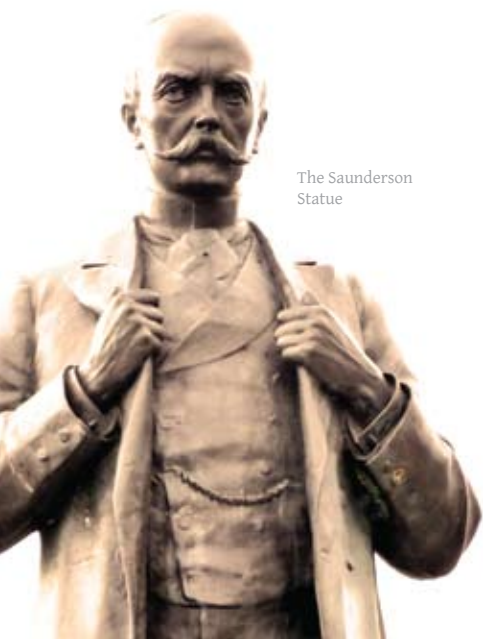
Town Trail

1. Shillington's, the three bridges; Newry Canal and Foundry
2. Pump House
3. Under the Bann bridge
4. Over the bridge (also: Linen businesses)
5. First Presbyterian church; Bridge Street
6. Bridge Street
7. Ulster Bank, 20 High Street
8. Shops at 19,18,17 High Street
9. Town Hall, Edward Street
10. Former Institute, Edward Street
11. Carnegie Library, Edward Street
12. Sprott's offices, Edward Street
13. Friends' Meeting House, Portmore Street
14. Methodist church and manses, Thomas Street
15. Old Methodist church and manse, Thomas Street
16. St Patrick's Roman Catholic church, William Street
17. 41 William Street
18. Market Building, William Street
19. St Mark's Church of Ireland church
20. War Memorial
21. Saunderson statue
22. Church Place
23. Warehouse behind Church Place
24. Fergus Hall, corner of Church Street
25. Millicent Terrace / 15-23 Church Street
26. Carleton House, 25 Church Street
27. Armagh Road Presbyterian Church
28. Orange Hall, Carleton Street
29. St Columba's school, Carleton Street
30. Mandeville Street
31. McConville's public house, Mandeville/West Street
32. The Temperance Hall, 38 West Street
33. West End Bar
34. 15-17 Market Street
35. Market Street/Woodhouse Street corner
36. 50-43 High Street (Woodhouse Street to Bank of Ireland)
37. Mallon's shop

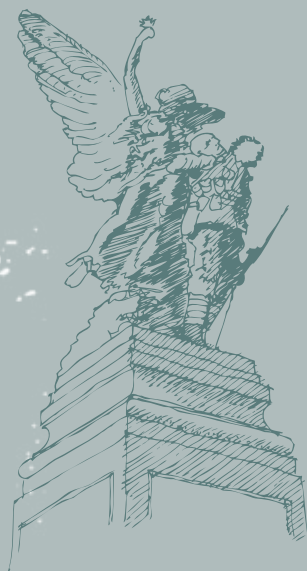


the War Memorial

The War Memorial (20) records the names of 253 officers and men who died in the war of 1914-18 - 194 of them serving with the Royal Irish Fusiliers, the county regiment - and 66 men and women in 1939-45. It was first dedicated on Friday 13th November 1925, and memorial wreaths are laid here every year on Remembrance Day.



The Saunderson Statue



On an Irish granite pedestal, the bronze statue (sculptor H.C. Fehr FRBS) represents an angel of peace placing a wreath on the head of a wounded soldier in the battlefield, symbolised by sandbags and a fallen gas-mask.

The Saunderson Statue (21) is a bronze standing figure sculpted by Goscombe John R. A., on a granite pedestal. It was originally in a central position outside St Mark's but was moved to leave room for the war memorial. It was erected in 1910 to the memory of Colonel the Right Honourable Edward James Saunderson (1837-1906), a Cavan man who was elected MP for this North Armagh constituency 1885-1906 and was also leader of the Irish Unionist Party 1886-1906.

Church place

Now leave St Mark's on your right and turn away from the town centre towards the Armagh Road. Starting at the corner of William Street, on

your left, begins a run of handsome shops/dwellings in Church Place (22), now nearly all used for business purposes. The first two were built about 1810; the three-storey facades are rendered and painted, and thankfully the sliding sash windows survive to the first floor. The larger three-storey building next to them was the Victoria Temperance Hotel until 1912; its gated side entry leads through to stabling for horses in the yard behind. Next come four wider red-brick buildings with dormer windows providing a fourth storey and Victorian bay windows at ground-floor level. These were used by professional people such as Mr Sidney Bright, solicitor, (following E. D.



Portadown 1. With the exception of the ground floor, all of the sliding sash windows to these properties have been retained, greatly enhancing their appearance.

Off to the left behind Church Place, at the side of the new library built in 2000, is one of only a small number of 19th century warehouses (23) which survive in the town. This one is a solid three storey building in blackstone with dark brick facings. Not much trace of its former use is visible now, except that a bracket for the external hoist to its upper floors is still in place. There may have been stabling for horses at ground floor level, with grooms' quarters above.

Atkinson) in no. 10; Mr Liddell, dentist, in no. 12; Carleton, Atkinson and Sloan, solicitors, in no. 14. Mr Bright had the first local telephone, installed around 1900 with the number



Fergus hall

On the next corner opposite, at the end of Mandeville Street, Fergus Hall (24) is a dignified rendered building with two storeys in three bays, the centre bay recessed with a small gable above.

The date plaque of 1889 refers to a rebuilding: it was first built in about 1845 as a school, with separate twin entrances for boys and girls. It has tall windows to let in plenty of light, and six pots on its slender central chimney. Originally a “National” school, it was known as the Duke’s School after the Duke of Manchester. Later it became St Mark’s or the Church Street School, but since 1970, when this (with the Thomas Street Primary School) was replaced by the new Millington School on a larger site, it has been used as a general hall by St Mark’s church. It was named the Fergus Hall after a member of their congregation.

Beyond Fergus Hall stretches another rather grander terrace of three-storey

red-brick houses. They now have Church Street numbers, but when first built in the 1820-30s were known as Millicent Terrace (25), after Miss Millicent Sparrow, whose family had acquired the land from their relations the Obins and who made a very grand marriage in 1822 to Viscount Mandeville, later the 6th Duke of Manchester. The bricks for these houses may have been made on site, or close by, as a nearby street was called Brick Lane. They are laid in the decorative Flemish bond, with alternating headers and stretchers in the same course.

Nos. 15 and 17 next to Fergus Hall, and no. 21, have very austere and elegant frontages with handsome doorcases. No. 19, the tallest, has yellow brick window surrounds and fine cast-iron balconies at first and second-floor level; it also boasts two fine Georgian-style street doors, of which the smaller would have been a service entrance. For many years, this house was a doctor’s residence and surgery with the smaller door used by the patients.

Carleton house

No. 23, known as Lismore House, was built later (1876) by Dr William Stewart, who had a family of five daughters. It has a rendered facade with a projecting central section capped by a pediment and flagpole; the original yard entry gate survives at the right. Inside, a graceful double staircase can be seen at the far end of the spacious entrance hall. For some years it used to house the local council offices.

The last of the terrace, Carleton House, (26) is later still (1897-98) and more ornate, with a decorative roof balustrade enclosing fourth-storey attic windows and a corner tower topped with a copper domelet. It was built for Miss Kate Carleton, the only child of a solicitor in the town. In 1917 she generously presented the house to the people of Portadown as a maternity and child welfare centre. Renamed the Carleton Maternity Home in 1923, and Carleton Maternity Hospital in 1948 when the National Health Service began,

it remained the town’s only hospital facility until the new Craigavon Area Hospital opened in 1972. Many Portadown people first saw the light of day there! Thereafter it became a nurses’ home, and in 1993 was converted into apartments by the Craigavon and District Housing Association.

Just beyond Miss Carleton’s garden is a modest blackstone Armagh Road Presbyterian church (27), built in 1868 for a new congregation by a local contractor Mr John Collen (architect Boyd of Boyd & Batt in Belfast). In 1904 it was extended by the same firm (architect Thomas Houston of Belfast), when among other changes the present central door was inserted in the facade to replace the two former side doors, now made into windows. The church was also lengthened and given a gallery inside, and buttresses were put up to support the side walls.



Armagh Road Presbyterian church

A second Presbyterian church was needed to supplement the Edenderry one (Trail no. 5), partly because of the effects of the country-wide Religious Revival of 1859, and partly because of Portadown's continued rapid expansion. It seems that in 1866 the citizens organised a petition asking for the town to be made a Parliamentary seat; they claimed that the growth in its population from 820 in 1820 to 7,000 in 1866 was the largest percentage increase in Ireland.

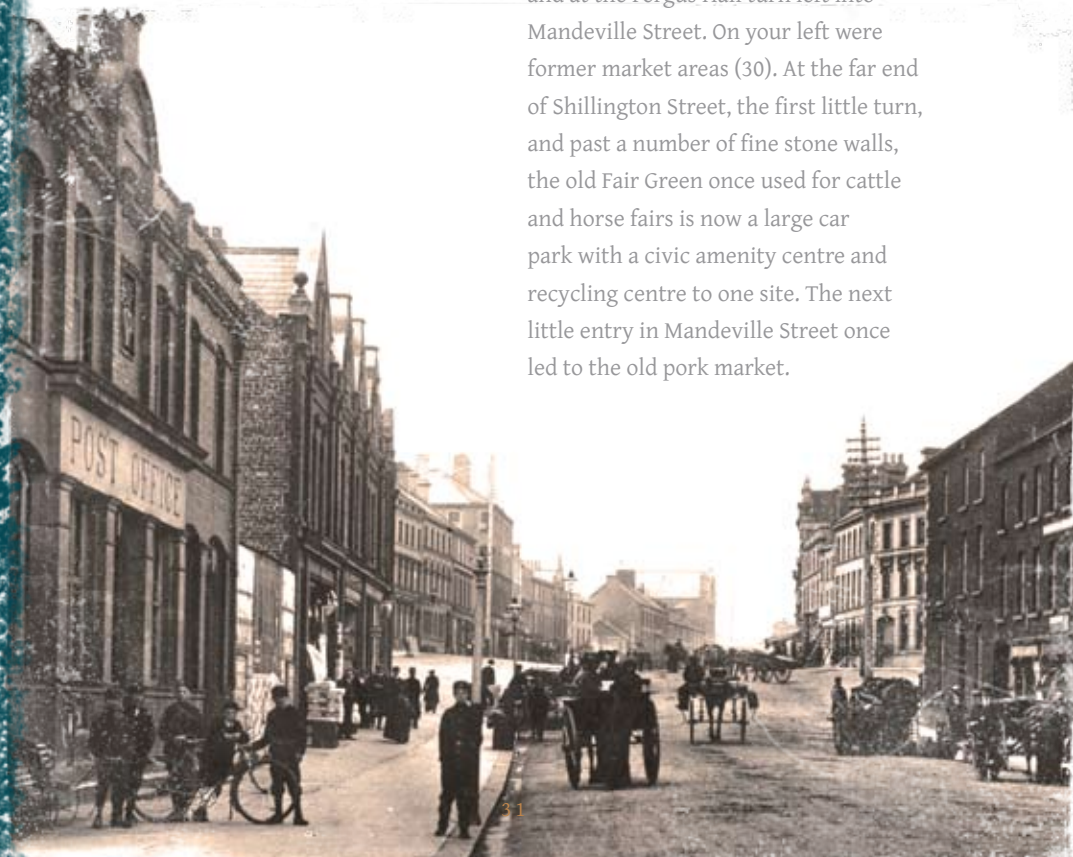
Cross the Armagh Road (pedestrian button at the traffic lights), turn back towards the town and take the next right turn into Carleton Street. The striking bi-coloured building

on the right is a district Orange Hall (28). Portadown has long had a close association with the Orange Order, and Portadown District Orange Lodge L.O.L. no. 1 (covering initially 23 individual lodges) was the first of its kind to be formed, dating back 200 years to 21 August 1796. This hall, founded in 1873, was opened in 1882 and enlarged in 1908 (local architect J.W. Walby and builders Collen Bros.). It is the largest of six Orange halls in Portadown, and provides accommodation for 30 or 40 various local lodges and associations. During the 1939-45 war it was requisitioned to be used as accommodation for soldiers stationed in the town, notably from two Welsh regiments. Dances also used to be held here for American forces stationed locally.

A little further down the street on the opposite side, St. Columba's School (29) is the lofty grey school building partly hidden by the high blackstone wall shielding it from the street. St. Columba's School was built in 1933 (see plaque) as a public elementary (primary) school for Roman Catholic boys in the town; it replaced an earlier school in Curran Street. Being purpose-built, it incorporated many modern features

for its time such as separate, individual class-rooms on both floors. The school closed in 1995 when the boys' primary classes were amalgamated with the girls' school on the Thomas Street Presentation Convent site. St. Columba had earlier been the patron of the mediaeval parish church of Drumcree (though replaced by St John the Baptist for the Roman Catholic church built there in 1777).

Back at Church Street, cross the road and at the Fergus Hall turn left into Mandeville Street. On your left were former market areas (30). At the far end of Shillington Street, the first little turn, and past a number of fine stone walls, the old Fair Green once used for cattle and horse fairs is now a large car park with a civic amenity centre and recycling centre to one site. The next little entry in Mandeville Street once led to the old pork market.



McConville's public house



On the corner of Mandeville Street and West Street is a living reminder of the old market days. McConville's pub (31) dates back to 1865 but moved to its present site in 1900. Happily still unspoilt, it preserves original wooden "snugs" inside - hard benches on either side of a table, enclosed by wooden partitions with a wooden door, providing comfortable privacy for bargains to be struck over a pint. Outside, the three-storey rendered building has lovely etched glass windows at ground-floor level, and a pleasing iron door-canopy and lantern.

Local tradition has it that some of the Russian oak fittings in the bar were made to the same design as that used on board the ill-fated S.S. Titanic, built in Belfast in 1911-12; even older than that are the original gas light fittings, now run on bottled gas rather than the mains

gas once provided by the Portadown Gas Light and Electricity Company.

Turn left up West Street, away from McConville's pub, and you will shortly see on your left a pointed red-brick building of obviously ecclesiastical flavour, now occupied by a modern butcher and greengrocer, with a very modern frontage.

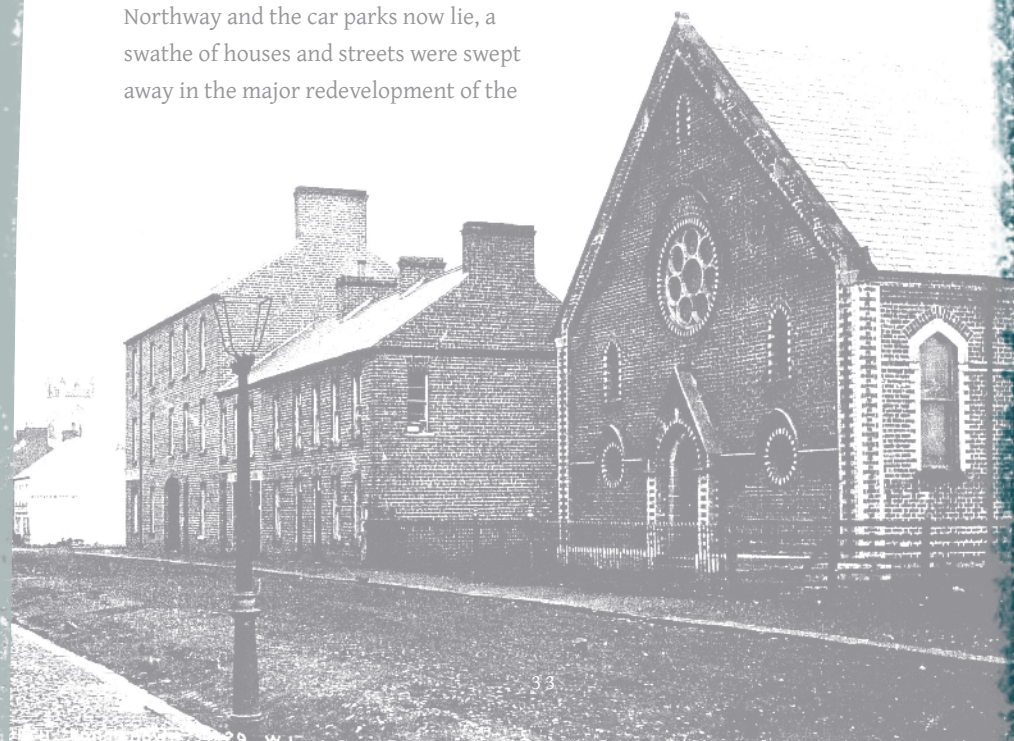
The hall (32) was built in 1869 to house a Presbyterian congregation with specifically Scottish connections, but this proved short-lived and by 1877 the hall was being used for mainstream Presbyterian Sunday School and other classes. It later became a "Temperance" hall for the Rechabites or White-Ribboners, an anti-alcohol movement which provided alternative entertainment for young people. In the late 1940s it reverted to its use as a Presbyterian church hall until the 1960s,

when it served first as a nursery school, later as an antiques/furniture salesroom and currently as a food court. The terraced houses/shops continue in pleasant Victorian style to the next corner, where the West End Bar (33) - with more patterned glass windows - was at one time owned by Pruntys (just possibly of the family which under a variant name produced the famous Bronte sisters of Haworth in Yorkshire, authors of *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* etc. : their father the Rev. Patrick Bronte came from Loughbrickland, not far from Portadown).

On the other side of this street, where Northway and the car parks now lie, a swathe of houses and streets were swept away in the major redevelopment of the

1960-70s. Only older Portadown people still remember Alma Terrace, and the handsome 1920s reinforced concrete Round House engine shed, where railway engines could be turned round.

Turn around and go back down West Street. As you pass the other side of St Mark's church, note Church Lane on your right - called not for St. Mark's but for the town's first formal church, a Methodist meeting house erected in 1802 (perhaps in the small pitched-roof building now used as McCabe's bicycle shop).





On your left in West Street you will see the 1970s shopping centre, designed by Ferguson and McIlveen of Belfast. Just beyond this is a handsome four-storey red-brick block of Victorian shops (34), with ornamental keystones on the windows and straight or wavy lines in the brickwork between reflecting the style of the brick arches over the windows.

Market street

Now pass a row of two-storey buildings: first a 1986 replacement for a Victorian block destroyed by a malicious fire, and next an early little rendered building. Then the roof levels rise again and the Victorian brickwork reappears. The next block is a handsome three-storey pair with unusual stripe-effect cream brick ornament around the first and second floor windows (which retain their old glazing pattern). After this comes a plain neoclassical facade, built in 1932-3 (architects Blackwood and Jury) for the Provincial Bank of Ireland, from whom it passed to the Belfast Savings Bank, the Trustee Savings Bank, and finally the First Trust Bank. An entry to the side used to lead to Clayton the saddler, where visitors in from the country would leave their horse-drawn traps.

Next is another four-storey block, with heavy yellow brick rims to its round-top windows. On the corner of Woodhouse Street (35) the Victorian flavour is stronger still, with windows grown narrower and roof higher



Bank of Ireland

but the decoration, apart from the tall gabled roof line, is more restrained. The splayed corner turns confidently into Woodhouse Street where the elevation, with nine bays and two high gables, is even more imposing, partly due to the narrowness of the street. Gables were clearly much in favour at the time as demonstrated by the houses visible in Thomas Street opposite.

Spare a glance as you go for the attractively varied architecture of the generally rather smaller terrace shops on the other side of the street. On the block beyond Thomas Street you will see no chimneys at all, though the roof lines are just as varied. This block was the main victim of a town-centre van-bomb in May 1993; it was carefully reconstructed, but without the old dwelling-house fireplaces. The rebuilding date 1994 can be seen by the clock on the Thomas Street corner. The new Halifax Building Society on the Woodhouse Street corner also dates from this event; it replaces a handsome

Victorian shop/dwelling, which once housed the first Town Hall.

Next but one is the grey stone dignity of the Bank of Ireland (36), solid enough to survive even a van-bomb - though it did not re-open fully until 1996. Erected in 1868 (architect Sandham Symes from Dublin), it is a five-bay, three-storey building of Newry granite with interesting detailing. The window and door surrounds have squiggly carvings or vermiculation; note also the cable mouldings and Herculean heads over the door arches.



Mallon's shop

Beyond the former Woolworth's two-storey rendered frontage is a charming old survival, the entry arch at the left almost as wide as the little shop itself. There are (just) three storeys; the roof would no doubt originally have been thatched. This has been Mallon's butcher's shop (37) for some 30 years; before that it was Totton's bakery shop, and earlier still Miss McBroom's grocery shop. How amazed Miss McBroom would be by the scale of shopping today in the glass-fronted High Street Mall, opened 1996, which stretches all along behind this side of the street. Built on the former site of Irwin's Bakery, the Mall covers some 15,000 square metres. As you go on down the slope into Castle Street, note at the right the buildings which close off the lower end of High Street. The central pair of three-storey stucco houses are dated R.M. 1839 (on the left) and C.C. 1992 (on the right). The "Castle" would have been the Obins family's fortified house or bawn, sited probably a few



hundred yards further on to the left and commanding the approach to the river. Only the name now survives - and the garden, which in 1870 was leased by the Obins' successor the Duke of Manchester to become Portadown's public park, The People's Park. Continue along Castle Street back to Shillington's.



People

Portadown consisted of only three small houses in the reign of Charles I (1619). Two centuries later, in 1814, there were 155 houses and 767 inhabitants. Today its population exceeds 20,000, with many more living in the new city of Craigavon as a whole. This growth can be traced through the official Census figures:

Year	Population	Year	Population
1821	231	1901	10,092
1831	1,591	1911	11,727
1841	2,505	1926	11,991
1851	3,091	1937	12,440
1861	5,528	1951	17,202
1871	6,735	1961	18,609
1881	7,850	1966	20,766
1891	8,430	1971	22,207

Markets

No account of Portadown's history would be complete without some further reference to its markets which generated so much of its early prosperity. These extracts are taken from G.H. Bassett's

County Armagh Guide and Directory, 1888:

"As a market for general produce it [Portadown] ranks with the foremost towns in the North of Ireland."



“The great market is held every Saturday, and although several inclosed [sic] places are specially provided for conducting transactions incident to sale and purchase, there is an overflow of odds-and-ends that has a fascination for the country people, the effect of which is quite amusing. A prominent figure in the overflow is the vendor of second-hand clothing. In style, manner and get-up he is intensely dramatic, and with every article offered, goes through a form sustained by speech and gesture to a most artistic climax. ... The warehouse windows, and the side-walks in front, on such occasions are dressed in bright colours. Indeed, nothing seems to be left undone in order to make the day one of genuine pleasure as well as of business.”

“Every Tuesday in the season a market is held for the sale of flax; grain is sold on Wednesday and Saturday; hay and straw on Wednesday; grass-seed on Wednesday from August to October; and on Saturday fowl, eggs, butter, and pork. A retail market for potatoes and vegetables is held every day. On Saturday a retail market for butcher’s meat is also held. The pork market is improving; it averaged from 350 to 400 dead pigs per week until May of this year, but this number promises to be

largely increased in the near future, for the reason that two firms, extensively engaged in curing, have recently been established in the town.”

“The market places were situated as follows:- Pork and grass-seed, entrance West-street; pigs on foot and young pigs in cart, entrance Woodhouse street; butter, eggs and fowl, entrance Mandeville street; potatoes, turnips, cabbage, etc., wholesale, in Market-street and High-street, north side; fruit in High-street, south side; hay and straw in Church-street and Market-street; retail market for potatoes, vegetables and fruit, entrance from William-street; fish, every day, in High-street, north side.”



The trail was compiled by members of the Craigavon Historical Society: Primrose Wilson, Arthur Chapman, Rosalind Hadden, Elizabeth Kerr, Elizabeth Mullen, the late George Robinson, John Trimble. It was updated in 2010 by John Trimble with assistance from Bertie Martin and Elaine Hill. John Trimble also provided the sketches. Sources include:

- County Armagh Guide and Directory by G.H. Bassett 1888
- Irish Historical Statistics - Population 1821-1971 edited by WE Vaughan and AJ
- Fitzgerald, Dublin - Royal Irish Academy, 1978
- OS Memoirs 1837
- Portadown Times and the former Portadown News (various articles)
- Reviews of Craigavon Historical Society – particularly articles by Sam Lutton & Roger Weatherup
- Ulster Architectural Heritage Society Craigavon List
- Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

Visit Craigavon Historical Society's website;
www.craigavonhistoricalsociety.org.uk
 to read more about the history of Portadown.