

GLIMPSES OF THE PAST:

Bigger and McDonald Collection – Selected Images



Libraries NI and Foyle Civic Trust 2010

GLIMPSES OF THE PAST: Bigger and McDonald Collection

The images used in this exhibition are exclusively from the Bigger and McDonald collection of photographs and glass negatives, a unique pictorial archive of the City and the North West recently acquired by Derry Central Library. The exhibition is a tribute to the conservation work carried out by David Bigger and Terence McDonald who worked tirelessly over many years to preserve the collection. The images are drawn mostly from the *Derry Standard* newspaper taken between 1927–1947, supplemented with photographs from the studio of Hugh Kerr (originally of 51-53 Carlisle Road) whose work dates from the 1880s.

It was the integrity of David Bigger and Terence McDonald which ensured these photographs were not lost forever. They saved 14,000 original glass negatives from destruction in 1968 when they rescued them from a skip at the former premises of the *Derry Standard* (1836-1966). A lot of work was needed to save the original photographic emulsion from further deterioration and damage and to rejoin broken glass plates where possible. Research was done to track down captions for published photographs and gather other valuable information on people, events and places shown.

Photography featured regularly in the *Standard* from April 1927 and continued up until 1966, recording major and minor events in the City's history. The images provide us with a remarkably detailed account of life before the outbreak of the Second World War and comprise the only photographic archive for this period which has survived in Northern Ireland.

We have selected images which look at all aspects of life in the City and beyond and tried to capture the vitality of the people as they went about their daily lives. Thanks to Annesley Malley, John Bryson, Mark Lusby and Phil Cunningham for research; Dick Sinclair and Brian Keenan for graphic design; Partridge Peartree for image production; and Joe McAllister of Guildhall Press for booklet design.

The Central Library, part of Libraries NI – in partnership with the Foyle Civic Trust and funded by the Heritage Lottery – is delighted to host this exhibition, which represents only a small section of a very extensive collection. We have included some well-known images as well as many photographs which may not have been seen before. We hope you enjoy this nostalgic trip down memory lane.

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The effort made by staff to make the wards festive at Christmas is obvious from this picture. (HO 2-4)



A challenge was issued to anyone who could ride a "message-boy's bike" up Moore Street, off Spencer Road. In this picture, a man has taken up the challenge and is cheered up the street for his efforts. (CY 1-1)



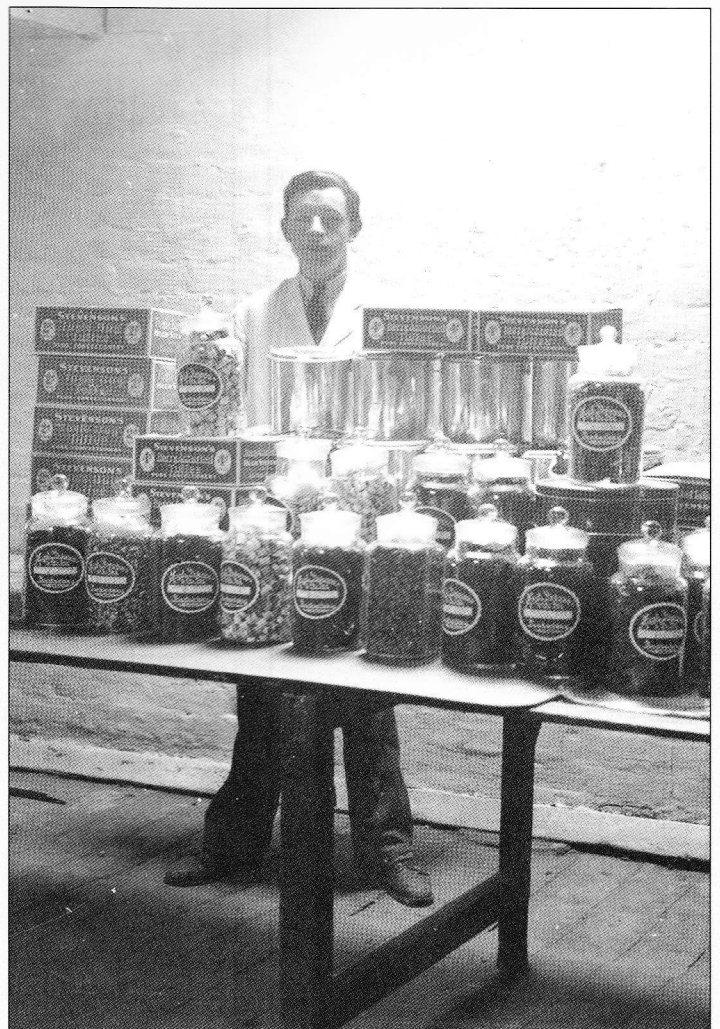
Culmore Public Elementary School was established in 1867 as a two-teacher school. It is still going strong today having grown to 75 pupils by 2007. (SCH 5-12)



The children in the picture are learning the practical skills of vegetable cultivation in the 1940s. The Master keeps a watchful eye over them. (SCH 23-4)



The Rock Mills had a Bakery Department supplying shops and houses with bread, cakes, pastries and biscuits. This is one of their delivery vans with driver and helper on the quay beside the Mill buildings. Note the two-wheeled van had been made by a local coachbuilder, another trade which has disappeared in the last 50 years. (C&V 4-3)



In 1933, Hugh Stevenson and Co of William Street expanded their business and began manufacturing confectionery as well as bread. The photograph shows their sweets packaged in tins and jars and include their popular "Derry Assorted" and "Foyle Boy" toffees made in the plant. (FAC 6-4)



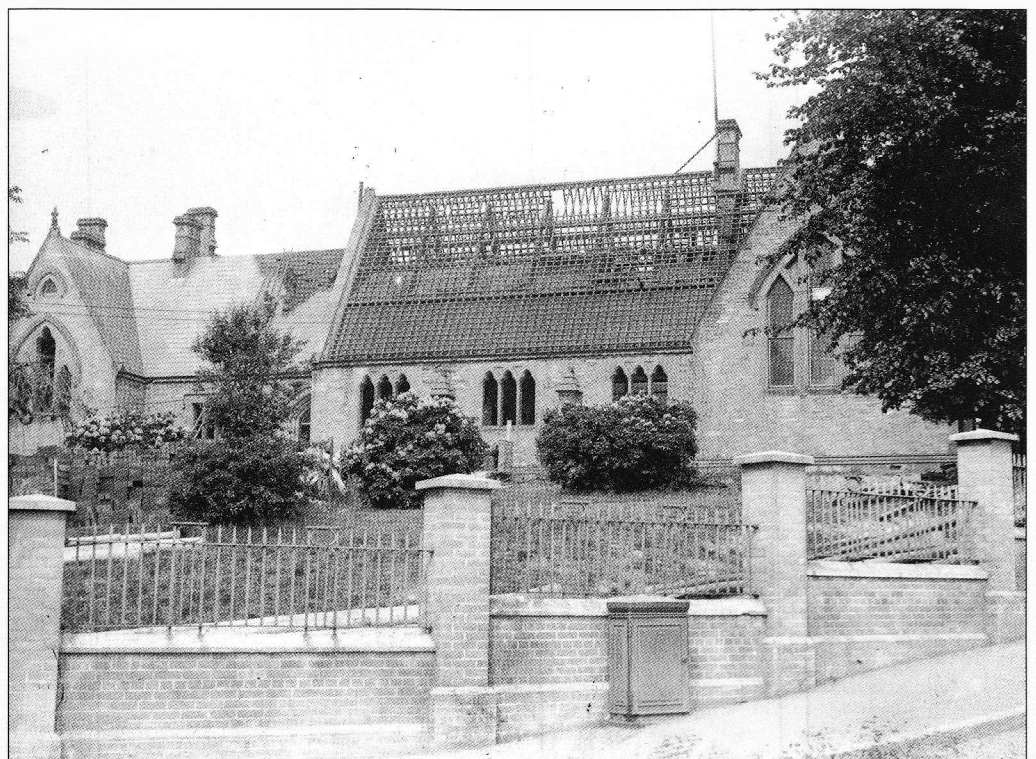
By the mid-1930s, hiring fairs were on the wane and had become more of a "day out" than a serious attempt to find employment. For centuries though, fairs were held around the 12th May and 12th November every year to hire farm servants for terms of six months. Young people, we would now call many of them children, stood clutching their bundles of clothes waiting to be inspected and hopefully hired by farmers. Servants judged how well they were treated by the food they were given; wages were low "£6 or £7 for young lads" in 1934. (DSS 2-1)



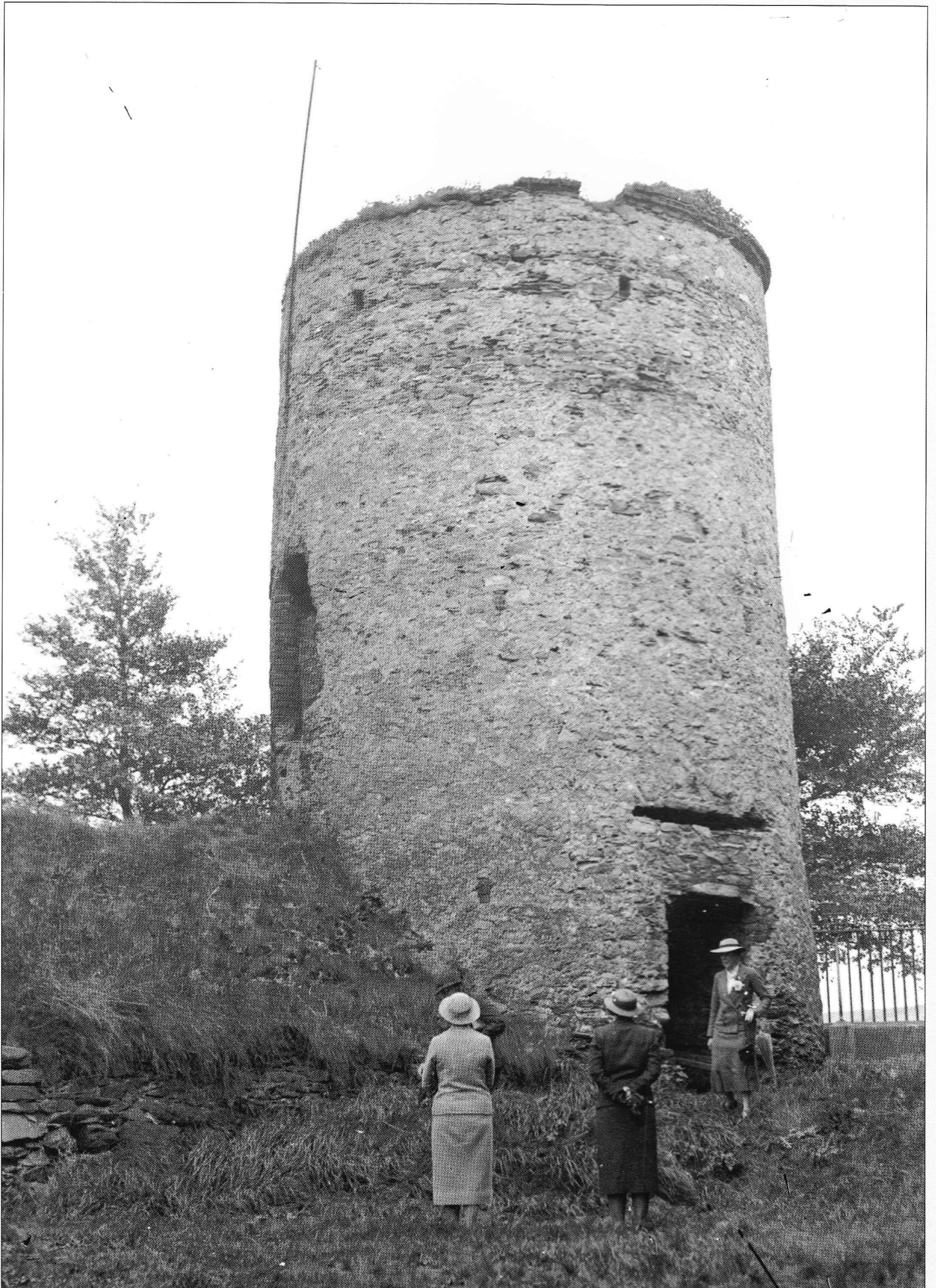
Miss Jane Clark of Raphoe, aged 95 in September 1927. For many years she cut and gathered in her own corn crop. Before the introduction of horse-drawn reaping machines, all harvesting of grain crops had to be done by hand with scythes, as here, or with sickles. (AGR 21-10)



Here the children from the Model School are keen to get home or to class, not minding the building work. Nicholson Terrace can be seen in the background. (SCH 2-12)



The first Model School on the Northland Road was completed in 1862. The picture shows it being demolished in 1933 to make way for the current building. The original foundation stone, dated 1861, can still be seen. (SCH 1-15)



About 1650, Samuel Hobson (Senior) got a lease on the land around Hogg's Folly from the Irish Society agent. It was rent-free on the condition that he built a windmill for the city. On a 1622 map, a portable windmill is shown; this solid structure was put up sometime before the siege in 1689. The little stone building beside the windmill, though not connected to it, has been described as an ice house, but there is no real evidence to support this. (NFC 1-10)

A family about to start their journey from the city to the New World. This is a photograph long associated with the Bigger and McDonald collection and is a typical example of many of the emigrants who left from Derry Quay. (POR 14-9)



A young girl on board the tender which would bring her to Moville to meet the liner to go to America. (POR 14-14)

A family on board one of the steamers, just before setting off for Moville to meet up with the liner. (POR 14-11)



The Old Woollen Warehouse, opposite the current Tower Hotel, and the site of the Calgach Centre built in September 1997. (DSS 7-12)



The original four houses (numbers 20-23) built by Samuel Law Crawford, a solicitor who began the development around 1858 but who died in 1861. The development of the Square continued into the 1870s. (DSS 2-13)



The International Hotel was next to the former Sir Edward Reid's market. By this time, the Rialto Cinema (1919-2005) had taken over the site of the market. The Rialto was used as a theatre for both music concerts and plays in which many local authors and playwrights, including Brian Friel and Eddie Kerr, showcased their work. (DSS 5-15)



The Rialto was first a cinema and later a theatre and concert hall, now replaced by Primark. In 1864, the former mayor Sir Edward Reid opened a general market, both covered and open air, on what had formerly been a vegetable and fish market. This was converted to a cinema in 1919. In 1959, the cinema was rebuilt, reorientated and renamed the ABC Cinema but remained known locally as the Rialto. In 2005, the Rialto was demolished. (CIN 4-1)

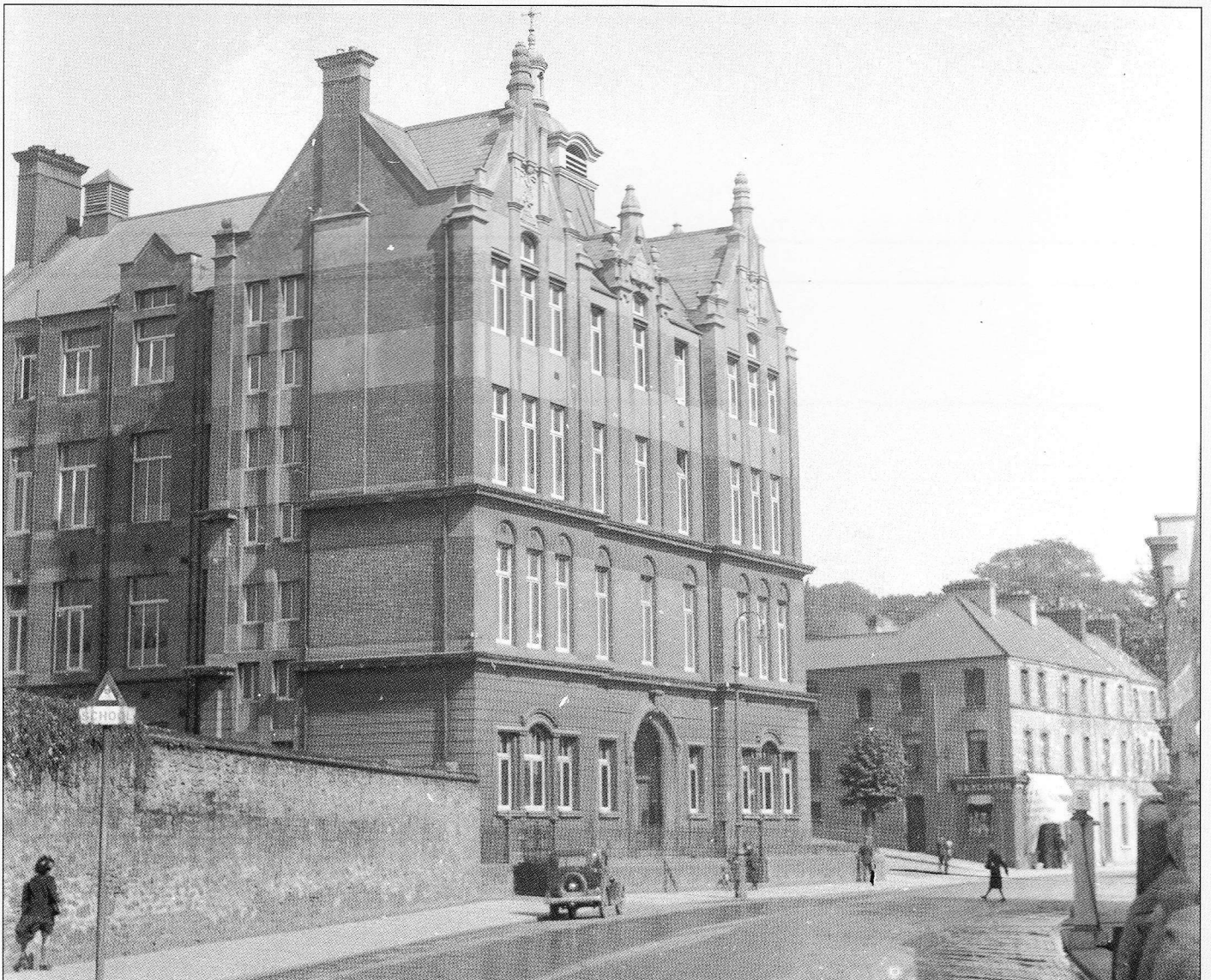
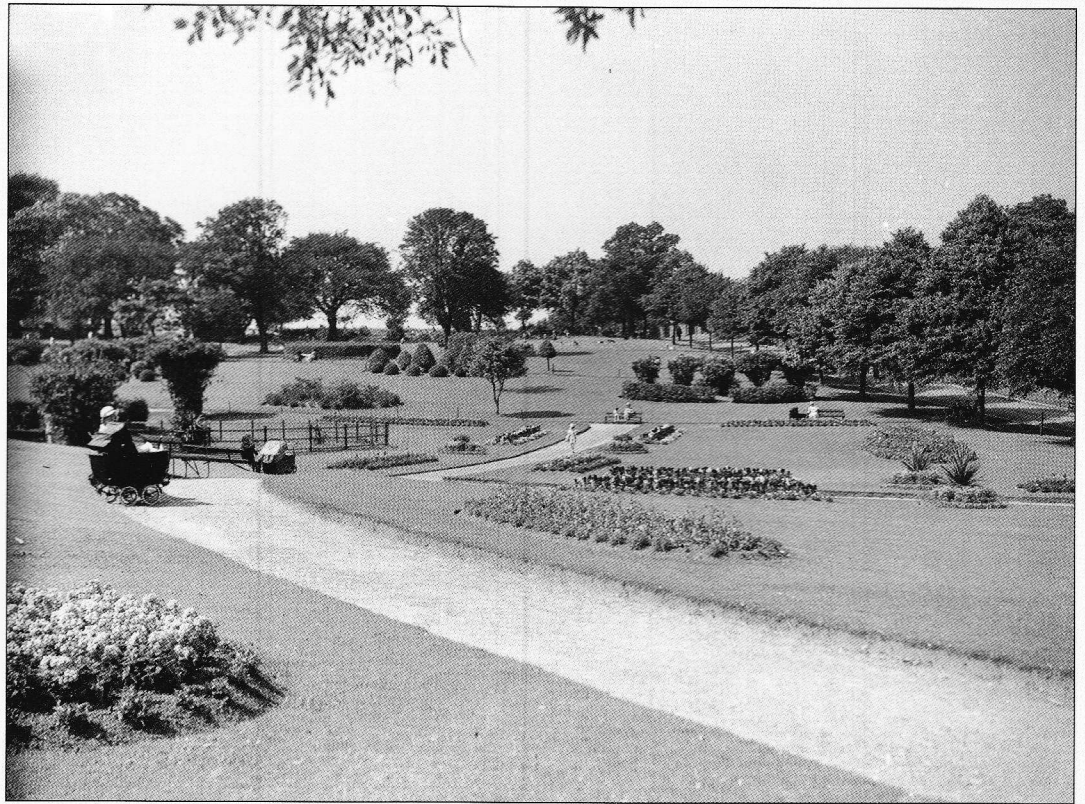


Carlisle Road looking down towards the Salvation Army building. This street was named after Lord Carlisle, who also gave his name to the Carlisle Bridge, opened by him in 1863. On the left of the picture is the Methodist Church which relocated to Carlisle Road in 1903. (DSS 8-8)



The Opera House opened in 1877 and closed in March 1940, after it was destroyed by fire. It hosted many of the major acclaimed theatre companies in its heyday but for the last 20 years operated mostly as a cinema and is now a car park. (DSS 3-8)

Brooke Park was created as the "People's Park" in 1900 and was enjoyed by those who simply wanted to sit and admire this well laid-out inner city facility. (BP 4-4)



Architect E J Toye designed this building, known locally as the Tech, in 1908. A prolific architect, Mr Toye was also responsible for Saint Columb's Hall (with James Croom), Saint Columb's College (now Lumen Christi), and finally Saint Patrick's Church, Pennyburn. (DSS 6-1)



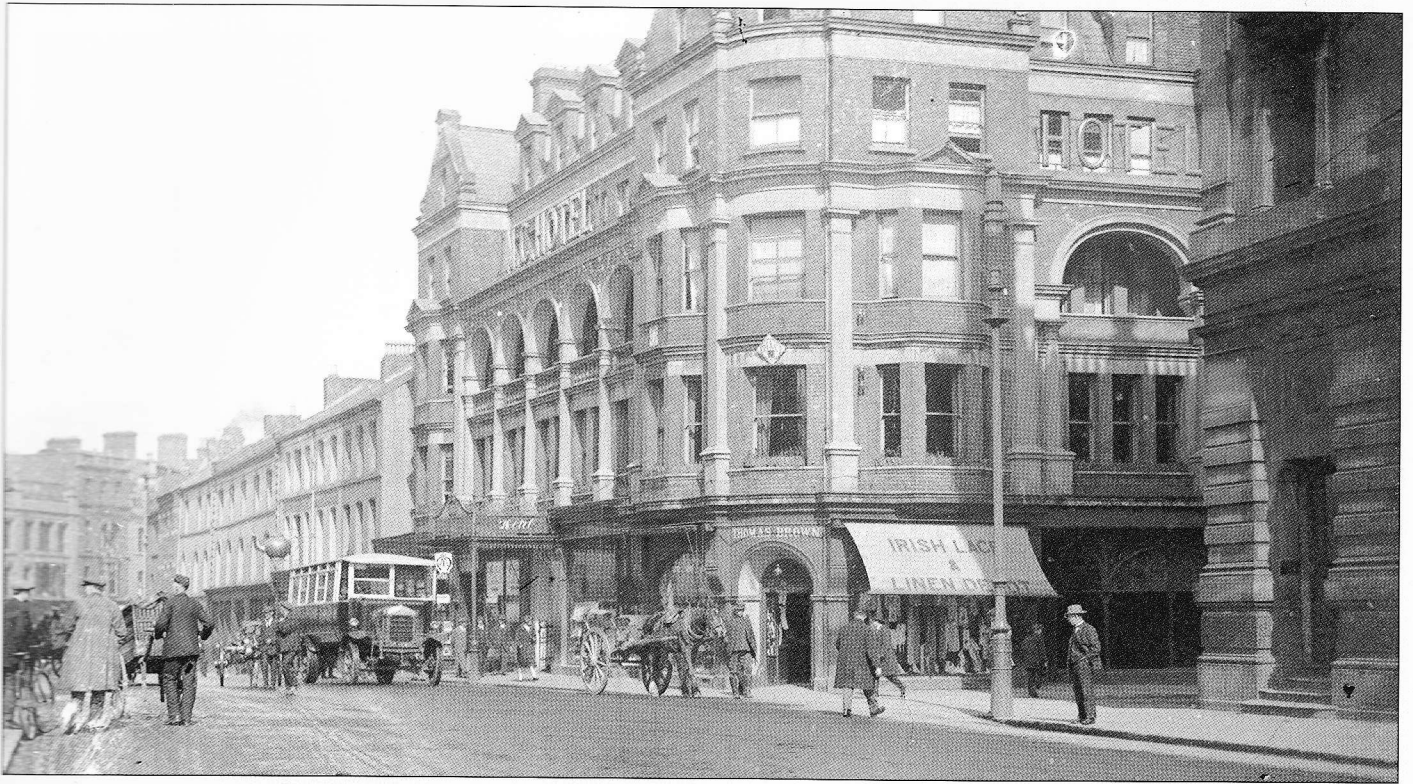
Waterloo Place, circa 1939.



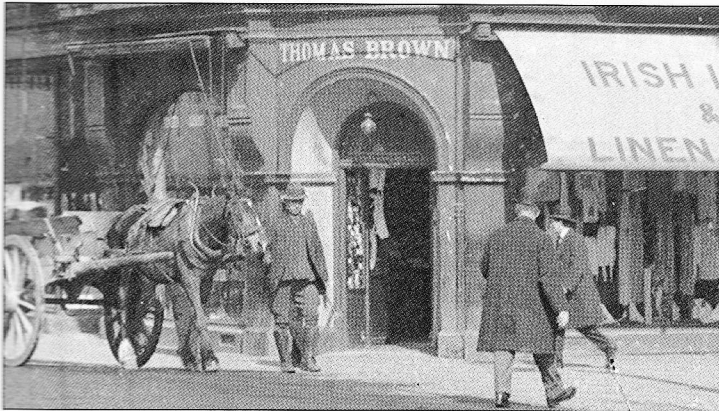
Waterloo Place, 2009.



The City Picture House on William Street, now the site of Kam House Chinese restaurant, ran from 1935 until the late 1960s. Tragically in 1942, on a wet August afternoon, two young children queuing for admission to this cinema were knocked down and killed by a "Yankee Lorry". An Art Deco design like the Strand, but with less luxury, it became run-down as the years went by, closed down and was destroyed by fire in 1970. (CIN 4-2)



Northern Counties Hotel, circa 1930.



Northern Counties Building, 2009.





Snow on the quay and ice in the river with *Hercules*, the Foyle dredger, tied up near the Rock Mills, approximately 200 yards from where the Council's Pontoon is now. The cannon has since been restored and moved to the Walls. (POR 1-4)



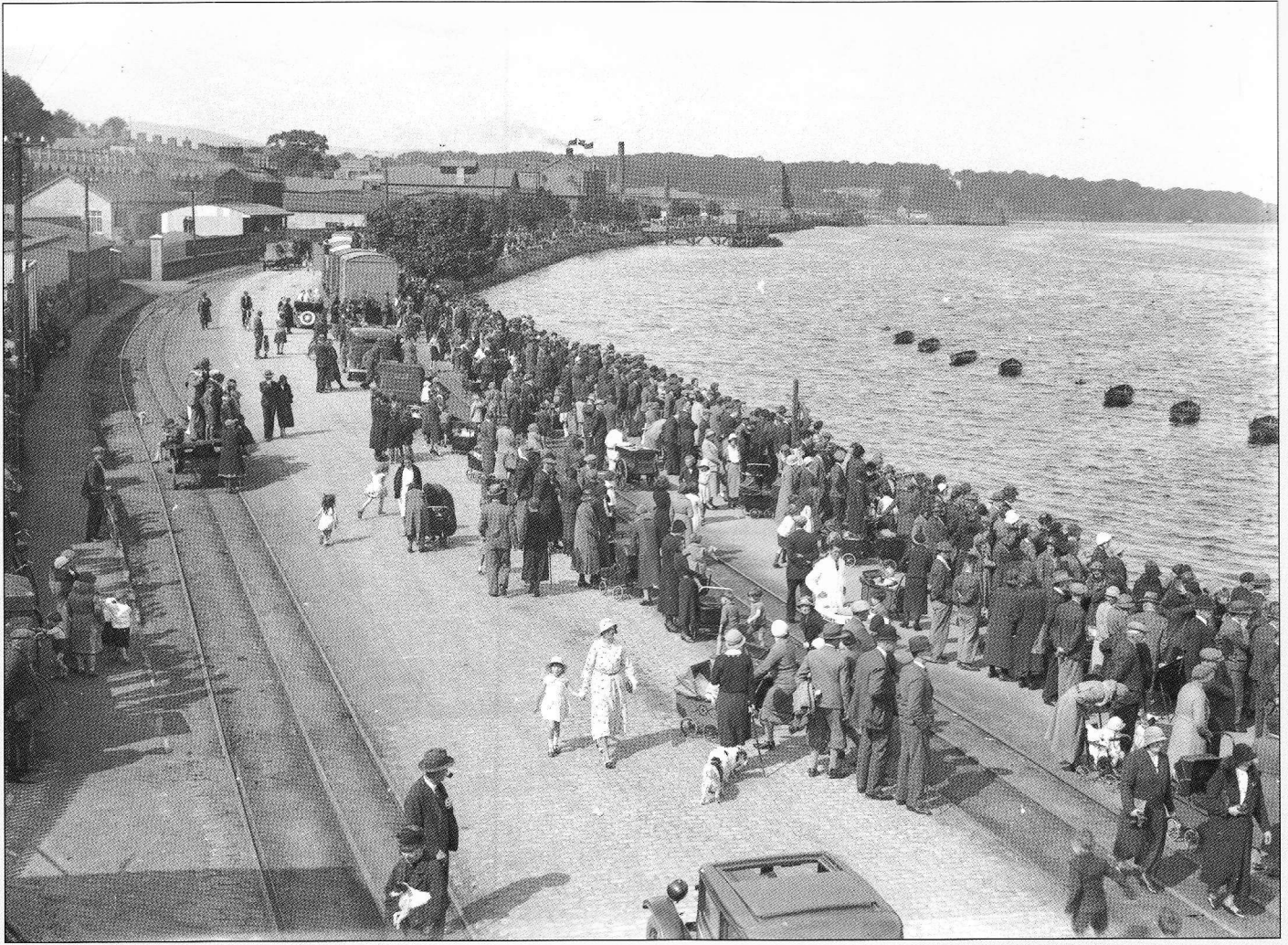
A general view of Ferryquay Street with the War Memorial in the distance. There is a notable lack of traffic on the street, in comparison to modern times, but a large number of pedestrians. (DSS 4-12)



In the 1920s, the shirt industry was one of the most important industries in the City. There were over 40 shirt factories which employed some 8,000 people, mainly women. Most of these factories did their own laundering. After soaping, rinsing and blueing, the shirts were starched and sent to the drying rooms where they were then folded. (FAC 4-14)



A view of the dress circle and balcony in the Opera House, Carlisle Road, which opened in 1877 and which attracted many major acclaimed productions in its heyday. The Opera House was burnt down on 9 March 1940 and was greatly missed by the theatre-going public of the city. (CIN 1-1)



A clear view of the crowd gathered to watch the annual regatta on the River Foyle. Note the harbour railway lines, which ran south along the quay to the GNR Station and across the bridge to the Waterside. (ROW 3-7)



Walking through the snow in Brooke Park. On the left is Christchurch. (BP 2-5)



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