



J.M. REIDY'S - The Story Behind the Icon

The 1870s were eventful years: General Custer took his last stand, Queen Victoria became Empress of India, the telephone was invented, and J.M. Reidy's was built on Main Street, Killarney.

One of Killarney's most photographed buildings and the star of many a postcard home, this iconic institution on Main Street was once home to three shops. Number 3 was a hardware shop and agricultural supply store,

number 4 was a grocer's, and number 5 was a bakery and flour merchant. Horses stabled behind the shops used two gates on Main Street and one on New Street to make deliveries around the town. The business was a bustling hub of trade in the town, selling both local and imported goods to the public, traders, farmers, high-profile hotels, and local religious institutions.

A Pint and a Loaf of Bread

John M. Reidy returned from his adventures in Australia in the late 19th century to take over the family business, and it was renovated in 1890 to include the decorative pilaster shopfront so beloved of souvenir hunters today. Reidy's grocery department had one feature that you won't find in many modern supermarkets, it incorporated a bar. Here, patrons could sample imported wines and

spirits from Britain and the rest of Europe. The bar soon became a magnet for the social life of the town and the most important element of the business.

When Reidy died, he left the business to Callaghan and Delia Sheehan, who managed the operation until 1974, when it passed to their children Michael and Marie Sheehan.

Aging Gracefully

J. M. Reidy's is a building with a history. Listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, it is a protected structure and a living bridge between Killarney's fascinating past and its exciting future. Behind the familiar façade, the shops and grounds cover a deceptively large area, running parallel to New Street. The shops lead back to the old bakery ovens, bottling sheds, and the buildings

where they used to store flour and seed and stable the delivery horses.

You won't find flour stored or horses stabled in J. M. Reidy's today, but you will have the opportunity to explore the history and enjoy a unique building that will take you back in time, in the heart of Killarney.