

HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE
MAYO NORTH HERITAGE CENTRE
FORTLAND SAW MILLS

In 1930 a sawmilling business was started by Henry William Cooke on his farm at Fortland, Crossmolina. The machine used to power the mill was a steam engine and initially there were two men employed.

In later years there was a big export trade for eggs and turkeys to Britain, so the production of egg and turkey boxes commenced. There was also a good home market for timber in the making of carts and other items.

In the 1940s when business was at its peak 52,000 boxes made with employment rising to 40 men full time.

During this time the steam engine was replaced by a Ruston diesel engine costing £500 with diesel costing 5 pence a gallon.

The mill ceased full time operation in the 1960s but engine and saw bench is still intact.

PJ Lynn, with thanks to Billy Cooke.