



FRANCIS CARVILLE (1800-1845)

Entrepreneur and Philanthropist

Francis Carvill was among the greatest self made entrepreneurs in the history of Newry. He came to Newry from Mourne and was in his day the largest employer and most extensive trader in the port. He owned sawmills and a spade factory on Merchants Quay where the Canal Court Hotel now stands. He was the first entrepreneur to introduce shipbuilding to Newry. His 'shipyard' was on the 'middlebank'; the space between the river and canal now used as a car park. The schooner *Mary Anne* was the first vessel built in his yard. He owned several vessels himself and some of these sailed between Warrenpoint and America. The Carvill Company acted as an emigration agent for those going to North America during the worst years of the Famine. His administrative office was at 9, Sugar Island.

There was hardly a major development in the town in which Carvill was not involved. He was a promoter and director of the Newry and Enniskillen Railway Company; which opened the port of Newry to the middle of Ulster and as far as the Atlantic port of Sligo.

In 1845 Carvill went to London to negotiate with the absentee landlord, the Marquess of Anglesey, for land rights to allow construction by the Newry and Carlingford Railway and Dock Company. His vision was to build the Greenore Sea Dock and to service it through Newry.

He was a man of great civic spirit. He was one of the main fund raisers for the building and construction of the Convent of Mercy. He was the chairman of the relief fund for the wife and family of John Mitchel transported to Van Dieman's Land. He appears also on the list of subscribers to the Unitarian Church built on William Street in 1852.

Francis Carvill died in 1845 and was buried in St Mary's cemetery.

Patrick Devlin