



## MULLAN VILLAGE TRAIL

### HISTORY OF MULLAN

Mullan is a picturesque 19th Century mill village located just to the north-east of Emyvale and has similarities with some of the other planned mill villages such as Bessbrook and Sion Mills. McCutcheon describes the Ulster Mill Village in his book 'The Industrial Archaeology of Northern Ireland' as 'a compact cluster of regular terraced housing'. In each instance the character of the village usually reflected the nature and the outlook of the proprietors who built them or alternatively provided the finance to do so.

Mullan's central location had many advantages with good access to both the Clogher Valley and the Great Northern Railways. It was also well connected to the Ulster Canal and the main Belfast- Enniskillen road whilst the river provided the opportunity of providing water power for the mill.

### BLACK WATER REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

The Blackwater Regional Partnership is a Cross Border Joint Committee between Armagh City and District Council, Dungannon and South Tyrone District Council and Monaghan County Council aiming to develop and implement a sustainable integrated rural development strategy through a partnership approach and to encourage cross border co operation between the three Councils, the private and community sector.

### FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Blackwater Regional Partnership is part financed by the European Union through the Interreg IIIA programme managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by the ICBAN Partnership.



Project part financed by the European Union

Mullan VILLAGE

BLACKWATER HERITAGE TRAIL

## 1. LINEN INDUSTRY

Mullan was originally developed in the 18th and 19th centuries as a centre for linen manufacturing. Charles Powell Leslie built the flax mill and a small terrace of housing known as the 'White Row'. He added an additional red brick terrace, which became known as the 'Red Row', at a later date. The overall complex included a mill race which helped to power machinery and became well known for the manufacture of 'Bullock Irish Serge'. Unfortunately the Linen mill closed in the early 20th century after which most of the buildings fell into disuse.

MULLAN MILL BOOT FACTORY



## 2. MULLAN MILL BOOT FACTORY

Mullan Mill Boot Factory was established as a private company in 1924 and expanded quickly to employ over 80 people a year. It specialised in the manufacture of heavy industrial footwear, notably the 'Mill' and 'Border' brands. The factory was very successful and even supplied footwear for the Irish Army.

## 3. IMPACT OF THE 'TROUBLES'

As a border village Mullan suffered greatly during the 'troubles'. Following the closure of the boot factory the population declined and most of the existing mill buildings fell into disrepair. By the nineties many of these had been abandoned however recently the village has been totally transformed with the restoration of the existing Mill Terrace and the extension of the village to include 20-30 new homes all of which have been designed to a very high standard and incorporate best environmental practice.

NEW HOMES



## 4. SMUGGLING

As a border village smuggling was very much part of the local scene and a way to help make ends meet. This was an ongoing battle of wits between local people and the Customs Officials on both sides of the Border as illustrated in this anecdote supplied by Seamus McCluskey from Emyvale.

*'During World War Two, I was caught smuggling loaves of white bread from Clarke's Shop across the Blackwater River at Ballagh Bridge. Coming past the Boot Factory a Customs Patrol Man stopped me and confiscated the bread. This was the same official who lodged in my mother's house who on realising that he might not have white bread for his tea that evening, quickly changed his mind, returned the bread and told me to be on my way'*

## 5. DANCE HALL

During the 1950s Mullan was able to support a popular Dance Hall which hosted the popular 'Clarrie Hayden Show', a touring light entertainment show where the popular entertainer Val Doonican made his name. As the case with other similar venues throughout Ireland during the 'Ballroom of Romance Era' it quickly established itself as a social hub for both the village and the surrounding area.

## 6. FORMER SCHOOL

One of the buildings within the White Row was also previously used as a School. This was not a National School but one which was established by the mill owners.

## 7. THE CURVED STONE BENCH

You can spot this unusual curved seat on the main road as you enter the village from Curlough.

## 8. THE WATER PUMP

There is still an old working Water pump within the village.

THE WATER PUMP

