

Stories of the Mart - Josie

"I remember before there was ever a mart in Mallow. There used to be a big field at the top of O'Brien St. called Carthy's field. There was a stream there and I used to go running down that stream to the glen. I used to catch collies there. There were stone steps in the field that led down to the Three Dogs. That was back when they used to have the cure in the Spa water.

There used to be three black sheds in the field that belonged to Mortells. They used to kill turkeys there and other birds there. There was a small hut as well that a family lived in, and there was a stone hut that they made into part of the mart, when they built it. They were always busy in the field at Christmas, because that was where Mortells sold their turkeys from. There were always children playing there too.

There was no St. Pat's in this time either. That was built before the mart, but before either of them was built, that was a field too. It used to be used for fairs. It was only ever farmers who went to the fairs. The field would be divided into pens, and you'd fit about 5 or 6 sheep in a pen. The farmers would share the trucks and divide up their animals when they got off the truck. It was always fairly busy."

Stories of the Mart - Bunton

"When the mart was being built, my husband was the tiler. He was very proud of it because it was one of the biggest jobs he ever did. We'd often be watching the television and we'd see other marts around the country. My husband would always point out to me that the tiles in the other marts had fallen off or had been knocked down. No tile ever fell off in Mallow.

Mallow was different when the mart was being built. There were 90 pubs and lots of bakeries. Most of the pubs are gone now, and all of the bakeries are gone. There used to be a flower-mill where you'd get calf and chicken feed. The only thing still around today is the Town Hall. There used to be fourpenny hops on there.

Once a week, you could go up to the mart and buy potatoes, and every Christmas, that's where you went to get your turkey. You'd go to the creamery to get milk for bread. It's all different now."

Stories of the Mart - Molly

"I remember the mart back in the '70's. I was married to a farmer, and he used to go to the mart every week. One week, my husband was very sick and we needed money, so I had to go in to the mart to sell 4 calves. We were selling up our farm at that time because there was no money in it any more. We couldn't even live off it any more because it was so expensive. When we bought one of our fields, it cost us £5, but when we were selling it, it had gone up to £300.

I got up early that day and walked in with the calves. I wasn't really sure what to do, but I got some advice from some of the men there, and I got a great price for the calves. When I came home to my husband, he couldn't believe how much I had made.

It's a pity the mart has closed. The farmers have to travel far now to sell their livestock."

Stories of the Mart - John

"I was working as a train driver in those days. I remember the farmers used to bring their cows and bulls down to the mart on the train and walk them across the bridge and through the town up to the mart. At the end of the day, they'd walk back to the station to go home. Everyone in the station was always nervous when the farmers were bringing bulls, because you never know what a bull was like.

One time, two young lads were bringing a couple of bulls back from the mart. I think there was about four of them. They led them into the carriage and they were tying them up to each corner. Well one of the bulls got free and he caught one of the lads and pinned him up against the wall. The other lad was so scared that he jumped right out of the carriage. As it happened, the lad against the wall got free and was alright, but the lad who jumped out broke his leg. After that, I always made sure I was in my cabin before the bulls arrived."

Stories of the Mart - Margaret

"I used to sell sheep in the mart. I'd drive there in my car and have the trailer towing behind me, but some of the farmers who lived out in the country would have to wake up at 1 or 2 in the morning and walk a couple of miles to the mart on Fair days. There were different Fairs in different places, so they might have to do that again the next day.

All the buyers used to stand in one corner while the sellers would set up their animals. If there was someone selling who didn't know what they were doing, one of the truckers or one of the dealers would help them out. They'd go around to the sellers telling them how good this person's livestock was, and then the sellers would get a good price. The buyers usually left early and the sellers would clear up.

It's a huge loss to the farming community and to Mallow."

Interviews by
- *Kevin Conlon*
Freelance Writer
Mallowtown.com