

We have quickly put together this self-guided walking tour of Sligo Town.

On this tour, we shall be giving you a brief history of the following locations.

- 1 Mac Diarmada Station.
- 2 The Inner Relief Route.
- 3 Western Wholesale Building.
- 4 The Methodist Chapel.
- 5 Michael Quirke's Shop.
- 6 Sligo Town Hall.
- 7 The Famine Monument.
- 8 The Post Office.
- 9 Yeats Memorial Building and Hyde Bridge.
- 10 The Ulster Bank and Yeats Statue.
- 11 Sligo Library & The County Museum.
- 12 The Model Arts Centre, The Masonic Lodge and The Calry Church.
- 13 The Garavogue River.
- 15 Sligo Abbey.
- 16 Sligo Courthouse.
- 17 The Site of Sligo Castle.
- 18 The Lady Erin Monument & The former Bank of Ireland Building.
- 19 The Presbyterian Church.
- 20 The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.
- 21 The Cathedral of St John the Baptist.

We've decided to start our walking tour of Sligo Town at the combined bus/railway station as this is a place where a lot of visitors will start and end their visits to Sligo.

MAC DIARMADA STATION.

Sligo Railway Station, officially called the Mac Diarmada station after the Irish patriot Seán Mac Diarmada, was opened on 3rd December 1862, with the completion of the Midland Great Western Railway's 58 mile extension from Longford to Sligo Town.

The station consisted of two passenger platforms with a small loading dock on the 'up' side and two storage sidings between the platform lines.

Outside the station were the engine sheds, a locomotive turntable and of course the signal cabin.

In it's heyday, Sligo Railway Station handled railway traffic for three different companies.

The Midland Great Western Railway which ran passenger and goods traffic from Dublin to Sligo Town.

The Sligo Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway which operated regular passenger and goods traffic from Enniskillen to Sligo Town and The Waterford and Limerick Railway which operated passenger and goods traffic on the Claremorris to Sligo Town section of the line between Limerick and Sligo Town.

If you walk outside the railway station you will notice the station is on a very elevated site from which you can see quite a few of the landmarks around Sligo Town.

Looking South you cannot fail to see the great spire of The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

look East and you will see the Town Hall and in the distance The Courthouse and the Calry Church.

What you may not immediately notice is one of the first of the attractions we shall take in on our walking tour, and that is the Western Wholesale Building. Have another look at the spire of the Town Hall, now look slightly to the right and you will see a building with a small tower on the roof, this is the Western Wholesale Building.

As you leave the station, turn left and walk along the left hand side of Lord Edward Street toward the traffic lights.

THE INNER RELIEF ROAD.

Here we can see the four lane dual-carriageway known officially as The Inner Relief Route which was without question, the best thing ever to happen to Sligo Town.

At a cost of €73 million, The Inner Relief Route was opened to the public on Friday 2nd of September 2005, by the then Minister for Transport Mr Michael Cullen.

The Inner Relief Route runs from Carraroe roundabout, about two and a half miles south of here, and ends at Hughes Bridge which is just out of sight to our left.

The Inner Relief Route relieved Sligo Town of it's crippling traffic problems practically overnight. Unfortunately, in their wisdom, just as soon as Sligo's traffic chaos had ended, Sligo Borough Council decided to pedestrianise O'Connell Street and channel all the traffic towards to The Inner Relief Route, once again clogging up the towns main thoroughfares and casting Sligo Town back into the bad old days, with traffic chaos once again on a daily basis.

WARNING Take extreme care when crossing the dual-carriageway, use the pedestrian lights at the crossing, don't take any chances, and remember to look RIGHT on the first carriageway, and LEFT on the second one.

THE WESTERN WHOLESALE BUILDING.

After crossing the Inner Relief Road we soon come to some more traffic lights from where we can view the Western Wholesale Building on our right, which is unfortunately NOT open to the public.

This impressive three storey building features random coursed local limestone with brick dressings, with 8 windows facing onto Wine Street

and 3 windows facing onto Adelaide Street, and Overhanging eaves with cupola, three stone pilastered doorcases with entablatures.

The building is the most notable building associated with the poet William Butler Yeats in Sligo Town and is currently occupied by a firm of solicitors, though in it's heyday it was part of an extensive property belonging to the Pollexfen family, operating under the name of The Pollexfen Shipping Line which belonged to William Pollexfen, the grandfather of William Butler Yeats (on his mothers side).

Around a century ago the Pollexfen's and the Middleton's were the largest ship owners in Sligo Town, and Mr Pollexfen would regularly aim his telescope from the lookout tower on the roof of the building to watch his ships sailing in and out of Sligo Harbour.

Now turn slightly to the right and look diagonally across the road junction, where you will see the Bus Eireann bus garage.

This garage stands on the site of the former Sligo Saw Mill's which was one of the finest mills in the British Kingdom.

This firm was established in the 1850's by the prominent local businessman Mr Peter O'Connor, who being a devout Roman Catholic, donated the chimes, clock, bells and high altar to The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception which we shall be seeing later in our Walking Tour.

Upon leaving The Western Wholesale Building, keep walking in the same easterly direction along the left hand side of Wine Street until you reach The Gaiety Cineplex.

THE METHODIST CHAPEL.

The Methodist Chapel, which is situated opposite the 12 screen Gaiety Cineplex in Wine Street, and is officially known as "The Wesley Chapel".

Methodism is believed to have been introduced to the Sligo area in 1757 by a Methodist preacher from Castlebar who was invited to preach in a house in Sligo Town. This resulted in the opening of a Methodist Meeting House, which was a small building with a thatched roof situated in Bridge Street in 1775.

Larger premises were built for the Methodists in 1802. These premises served the society until 1832, when the present day Methodist Chapel was built here in Wine Street at a cost of £800.

The Methodists founder "John Wesley" visited Sligo Town 14 times between 1758 to 1789.

Continue along Wine Street, then cross over at the pedestrian crossing, and continue another 50 metres until you reach Michael Quirke's shop opposite Quay Street.

MICHAEL QUIRKE'S SHOP.

Michael Quirke is well-known by Sligo visitors who have visited his quaint little shop here in Wine Street.

Michael came originally from "Down South of the country" to put it in his own words, coming to Sligo Town as a young lad, he became a butcher in 1957 in these very premises.

However, in 1970 his butchers shop took on a dual role, as Michael also started carving figures out of wood, and sold these as well as his meat.

This dual arrangement continue until 1988 when the butchers side of the business was dropped and the carving became full-time.

Michael, who has certainly got the gift of the gab, carves figures from Irish mythology and local people such as the world renowned poet W.B. Yeats.

Now turn around and look across the road at Henry Lyons Shop

This substantial and well-known Sligo landmark has operated from these premises since 1878.

This fine building, still retaining its original, attractive leaded lights, mosaic tiles and its distinctive traditional shopfront, is of special importance because family-operated individualistic department stores are rapidly disappearing throughout Ireland.

Now cross Wine Street and walk up Quay Street, as far as the large building on the right hand side.

SLIGO TOWN HALL.

Sligo Town Hall must certainly rank as one of the highlights of our walking tour of Sligo.

The siting of Sligo Town Hall at its present location was suggested by F.M. Olpherts, agent for John Wynne of Hazelwood House, on April 10th 1861.

This was to be on the site of a Cromwellian Stone Fort which dated back to 1646, part of these lands, known locally as the 'Old Fort Plot' were owned by Mr Owen Wynne.

The lease for the building of Sligo Town Hall was signed in May 1864 and the foundation stone was laid by the then Mayor of Sligo, William Abbott Woods on 12th October 1865

Sligo Town Hall was designed by the Dublin architect William Hague and was built by the Dublin firm OF Crowe and Brothers for the sum of £5,000. Crowe and Brothers were no strangers to Sligo Town, having just finished construction of Sligo Railway Station.

Sligo Town Hall is of a modern Italian Renaissance style and has a double faced frontage with dressings of Limestone and with Freestone which came

from Mountcharles, County Donegal, which contrasts well with the colour of the masonry. The caps of the shafts and the spandrils of the window arches are of Portland stone.

The Harbour Commissioners had the Clock Tower erected at a cost of £975 pounds by local builder Patrick Morris. The Clock Tower afforded the Harbour Master an impressive view of the harbour so as to monitor the progress of shipping entering and leaving the harbour.

Construction of this fine building took almost seven years to complete, being hampered from time to time by lack of money, mainly due to the building costs exceeding the the original contract amount by about £6,000.

Sligo Town Hall has been described as "a beautiful building", regarded by people qualified to judge as the most graceful hall devoted to municipal purposes in Ireland.

In front of the Town Hall stands a statue of Mr P.A. McHugh, the Nationalist owner of 'The Sligo Champion' newspaper.

P.A. McHugh was elected Lord Mayor of Sligo for five successive years and became a Member of Parliament for North Leitrim in 1892.

Mr P.A. McHugh died in 1909 with this statue being erected in his honour in 1916.

This statue originally stood outside the main Post Office in Sligo Town, which we shall be visiting shortly on our walking tour.

Continue walking down Quay Street, past the Taxi Rank, and on down to the Garavogue River and in the cark park there, you will see a haunting statue dedicated to the memory of the victims of The Famine

THE FAMINE MONUMENT.

The Great Famine which devastated Ireland between 1845 and 1850 was certainly the most terrible tragedy ever to occur in Ireland.

Sligo Town and County were particularly badly hit with more than 52,000 local people either dying of starvation or disease, or through emigration in a five year period.

The cause of the famine was the failure of the potato crop, a cheap, easily grown, vitamin packed food which was the stable food of most of the population of Ireland at that time.

News of the disease came in 1853 from newspapers which carried news from America of a disease which was attacking potatoes there.

Two years later, in June 1845, reports were coming in the Belgium and other European countries of the same disease which was attacking their potato crops.

The disease finally spread to England in August 1845 and to Ireland during the following month, though the extent to which the disease had effected the Irish crop was not evident until the crop were being dug up during the month of October.

Initially the disease had no name, though it was known as "the potato blight", "the rot", "distemper" or "the blackness" and eminent botanists were unable to either identify the disease or to find a remedy for it.

During the month of November, the Poor Law Guardians reported that the disease was widespread, with a half of the total crop of potatoes in Ireland being lost, even potatoes which were in good condition whilst being dug, were rendered useless after only three weeks due to the disease catching hold of them.

The Famine Monument is located opposite The Harp Tavern in Quay Street, and was erected here in July 1997 in memory of all those who died and suffered during the famine.

It depicts a family in the depths of despair, starving and with no hope for the future, yet the child, a young girl can be seen pointing towards the ships, one of which would carry them to a new life in America or Canada.

Now continue back the way we came and at Henry Lyons shop, turn left and go to the red bricj building on the left hand side.

SLIGO POST OFFICE.

The main post office in Sligo Town is situated here, facing O'Connell Street, Sligo Town's main shopping street.

The Post Office is a modest two storey red-brick building built in 1959, until a decade ago, this building also housed Sligo Town's mail sorting facilities.

The tall thin building which can be seen a few yards down the side road to the right of the post office, was the manual telephone exchange, another casualty of modern times, and to its right is the main entrance to the plush new Glasshouse Hotel.

Many years ago, the statue of Mr P.A. McHugh, which we saw outside the Town Hall, stood here, in front of the Post Office.

Continue a few yards and on the opposite side we shall see another red-brick building, the Yeats Memorial Building.

THE YEATS MEMORIAL BUILDING.

The Yeats Memorial Building was erected by the Belfast Banking Company in 1895, which went on to become part of the Allied Irish Bank group in 1970, with the building being donated to The Yeats Society in 1973.

The Yeats Memorial Building is the headquarters of the Yeats Society which was established here in 1958 to preserve the artistic heritage of the Yeats family.

William Butler Yeats is recognised the world over as one of the greatest poets of the English language, a prominence which was acknowledged by his confirmation as Nobel Prize Winner for literature in 1923.

Yeats's works have always been closely associated with County Sligo, the culture and landscape of which influenced him greatly during his formative years.

This fine two-and-a-half-storey red-brick building was designed as the Royal Bank by Vincent Craig, brother of the first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Lord Craigavon.

Built in 1899, The Yeats Memorial Building overlooks the Garavogue River, lending itself perfectly to the host of cultural and informative services provided by The Yeats Society.

HYDE BRIDGE.

Hyde Bridge, named after the first president of The Republic of Ireland, Dr Douglas Hyde, (1860-1949), was built by the local architect and engineer Sir John Benson, and the County Surveyor of Sligo, Noblett St. Leger, this fine five arched, cut limestone, main road bridge links the east and the west sides of Sligo Town.

Built between 1848 and 1853, the bridge was originally called Victoria Bridge, dedicated to Queen Victoria, but has since been re-named Hyde Bridge after Ireland's first President, Dr Douglas Hyde.

After leaving the Yeats Memorial Building, cross the river via Hyde Bridge, at the far side turn to your right and cross the zebra crossing to our next point of interest on our walking tour.

THE ULSTER BANK & YEATS STATUE.

The Ulster Bank is a fine detached five-bay two-storey sandstone ashlar classically-styled bank, was designed by James Hamilton architects of Belfast and Glasgow and was built in 1863.

One of the more notable features of this building, which occupies its commanding position at this busy junction in Stephen Street is its rich ashlar Scottish sandstone.

The appearance of the building is enlivened by the high quality stone masonry which has decorative artistic detailing. The bank is significant, attesting to the prosperity of Sligo town in the late nineteenth century.

In front of the Ulster Bank stands Sligo's most popular, and most photographed tourist attraction, a statue devoted to the well documented world-renowned poet W.B. Yeats

Leave The Yeats Statue by looking at the front of the bank and walking to the right-hand side of the bank, then turn left up Holborn Street, one of Sligo's oldest streets, where we can see on Number 5 (on the right hand side of the road) a plaque remembering another very different famous figure, this house was once the childhood home of the world famous comedian Spike Milligan.

Return back down to Stephen Street and turn left, walk for a further 40 metres where you will come across a building which looks like a church

SLIGO LIBRARY & COUNTY MUSEUM.

Sligo Library and County Museum are located together, with the library being housed in a former Presbyterian Church, designed and built by architects Lanyon, Lynn and Lanyon in 1851.

This small Gothic Revival Church was converted in 1954 into the Sligo Town Library.

The Manse, situated beside the Library, was built in 1867, and was converted into the Sligo County Museum (admission free) in 1955.

The Sligo County Museum contains a fascinating collection of exhibits detailing Sligo's rich stone-age history, including a large firkin of 100-year-old bog butter.

The Yeats Room here is full of manuscripts, photographs, letters and newspaper cuttings associated with the local poet William Butler Yeats including a copy of his 1923 Nobel Prize winning medal and a complete collection of his poems from 1889 to 1936.

Also in the museum you will see paintings by Irish artists George Russell, Sean Keating and Jack. B. Yeats, brother of the poet William Butler Yeats.

There is also a display of artefacts and memorabilia associated with Countess Constance Markievicz and her sister Eva Gore-Booth.

Leave the Library & Museum by turning left at the gate onto Stephen Street, when its safe to do so, cross to the other side and continue to the zebra crossing, cross the zebra crossing and continue straight up The Mall until you reach The Model Arts & Niland Centre.

THE MODEL ARTS CENTRE.

The Model Arts Centre is housed in an 1862 building designed and built by the architects James Owen and McCullough Mulvin.

Formerly known as "The Model School", the Model Arts Centre is the principal arts and cultural centre for the North West of Ireland.

As with other Model School's established in the latter part of the 19th century, it is an institution established to provide instruction for

children of different denominations, in the principle of combined secular and separate religious instruction.

This same principle continued on these lands until recent years in The Sligo School Project which was housed in pre-fabricated buildings situated to the rear of The Model School, before being moved some years ago to new premises across the Garavogue River, in an empty former school building beside the old Gaol (or Jail).

In recent years The Model School was renamed the Model Arts Centre, then after a tastefully carried out refurbishment, became The Niland Centre, housing a permanent exhibition of Jack B Yeats paintings, as well as housing touring exhibitions and featuring a wide range of cultural activities, including literary and musical festivals.

Leave The Model Arts Centre by turning left at the gate on The Mall and walk to the building next door.

THE MASONIC LODGE - NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

The Freemasons Society, which originated in the medieval craft guilds of the stone masons, built their first Lodge (No 355) in County Sligo in December 1760, though it wasn't until 1856 that a purpose built meeting place, or lodge, was proposed in Sligo Town.

39 years later in 1895, after countless fund-raising events and bazaars, The Masonic Lodge was built at the cost of £1,525 on The Mall in Sligo Town.

The Masonic Lodge was designed by the architect Mr Henry Seaver from Belfast and was built by Sligoman Mr George Kerr, described as being the Old English style, with the outer walls being faced with red perforated bricks, the upper storey being roughcast and the roofing being of green slates (the green slates are no longer on the building).

There is a lovely tower with bell shaped eaves rising over the main entrance to the building, which consisted internally of the principal lodge room (40ft X 20ft) a dining hall (40ft X 20ft) and a number of smaller rooms which were used for craft purposes, joined onto the two large rooms.

Successive members of the Dodd family lived in The Masonic Lodge as caretakers from the opening of the building in 1895 until 1951.

Continue to our next point of interest by crossing over The Mall to the nearby church.

THE CALRY CHURCH.

Proposals to build a chapel for the growing protestant population in March 1817, the result of which is The Calry Church.

Construction of The Calry Church and a Glebe House was carried out by the local building contractor John Lynn.

The Calry Church was constructed to a plain Gothic style with a tower and a lovely spire commands a demanding position on a height overlooking the flowing waters of the nearby Garavogue River.

The stones used in the construction of the church was quarried on the spot, which would explain the somewhat low cost of £5,246.15s for the building works, of which £823.00 was raised by subscription and by the sale of pews.

After the church was consecrated in June 1824, its first Curate was the Rev William Armstrong, who ministered until his death in March 1840 at the age of 46.

There are a number of vaults beneath the church which had remained virtually unused since the construction in 1824, until renovation works were carried out in recent years, when the vaults were finally put to use.

To the side of The Calry Church furthest away from the town, there is an alleyway, continue down this alleyway to a pedestrian footbridge crossing over The Garavogue River.

THE GARAVOGUE RIVER.

This curving footbridge follows the contour of a small weir in the river. whilst crossing the river, if you look into the water, you may be lucky enough to see a salmon swimming by, as the salmon season in these waters is very long indeed.

There is an ancient manuscript which states that Saint Patrick met two fishermen here and asked them for a salmon, the fishermen explained that there were no salmon here in the winter months, however they cast their nets into the river and to their surprise found a large salmon from their nets, which they presented to Saint Patrick.

In return Saint Patrick is said to have blessed the river and imparted to it the privilege of yielding salmon all the year round.

On reaching the other side of the river, turn right, and walk past an Asian shop, then there is a second shop (closed at the time of writing), here you must cross the road and walk up the side road until you get to a small grassy area in the middle of the road, here you must turn right, a further few paces you will come across The Sligo Abbey on your right-hand side, just opposite a car park.

SLIGO ABBEY.

Although commonly known as Sligo Abbey, the correct title for Sligo's only surviving megalithic structure is The Convent of the Holy Cross and was in fact a Dominican Friary.

The difference between an Abbey and a Friary being that where Friar preachers live in a Friary and invited the general public to worship in

their church, Monks would have lived in an Abbey and would have generally confined their vocation to worship through prayer and meditation.

Sligo Abbey (as it is most commonly referred) was built around 1252-1253 by the Norman Baron and leading Geraldine of that era Maurice Fitzgerald who is also credited with being the "real founder of Sligo".

Maurice Fitzgerald introduced into Ireland the two great religious orders, the Franciscans and the Dominicans, though it is undoubtedly as the conqueror of Connaught in 1235 that he is best remembered.

The Friars were in residence at The Convent of the Holy Cross for five very turbulent centuries, until they left in 1760, moving their Order to the nearby Holy Cross Friary in High Street which survives to this day.

Admission to Sligo Abbey costs only €3 per adult, and half that for children, which is excellent value for money and well worth the visit, letting you gain a valuable insight into how our predecessors lived some 8 centuries ago.

The visitors entrance is through a small building, where you will be given a photocopied guide to the main features to look for in the Sligo Abbey.

Leave Sligo Abbey by turning right outside the exit, walking in a Westerly direction, towards Sligo Town centre, at the junction, use the pedestrian crossing to cross the street, then turn left and continue until you almost reach the Sligo Courthouse.

SLIGO COURTHOUSE.

Sligo Courthouse was built in 1878 on the site of a former courthouse, part of which has been retained as a link with Sligo's turbulent history.

The architect of Sligo Courthouse was J. Rawson Carroll, a consultant architect from Dublin who had previously designed Classibawn Castle in Mullaghmore, with the construction work being carried out by Patrick Morris of Union Place in Sligo Town.

The exterior of Sligo Courthouse was built largely of sandstone which had been brought in from the quarries of Mountcharles in County Donegal, and has been described as "a full-blooded Victorian Gothic building" which include a number of exterior features being modelled on those of the Law Courts of London.

This fine building which was officially opened on February 26th 1879, comprises an arcaded main entrance with three front arches leading directly into the hall, a turreted breakfront and an octagonal ventilation tower with its elaborate pointed roof and dormers rises to an impressive 110 foot above street level.

Inside Sligo Courthouse there is the entrance hall, two courtrooms seperated by a large public hall, chambers for the judges and upstairs are a number of consultation rooms, offices and various chambers.

At a cost of only £17,000, Sligo Courthouse has been described as "the most impressive High Victorian building outside of Dublin"

Parts of an eighteenth century gaol still survive within the confines of The Courthouse, with a history which includes that of eight men who, in 1818, were sentenced for robbery with violence at Tireragh and were publicly hanged in the street outside the front of the courthouse.

Sligo Courthouse is situated in Teeling Street which was named after Bartholomew Teeling, hero of the battle of Carrignagat (Collooney) which took place during the 1798 Insurrection.

When you leave Sligo Courthouse, return towards the pedestrian crossing, but don't cross it, turn left into Castle Street,

THE SITE OF SLIGO CASTLE.

You should now be standing outside Foley's pub, unless you're crafty and have nipped in for a quick pint. If you look up on the out of the building, you will see a painting and an information board declaring this to be the site of Sligo Castle.

Sligo Castle was built here in 1245 and a Dominican Friary was founded in 1295. In 1310 a new castle was built and a new town laid out by Richard III de Burgo, the Red Earl of Ulster.

This castle was destroyed in 1315 by the O'Donnells. The O'Connor's in Sligo then had effective control of the town throughout the 14th century. In the 15th and 16th centuries the town's prosperity owed much to the proximity of the herring shoals.

The later war's of the 16th century, principally between the O'Neills and the O'Donnells against Queen Elizabeth I, devastated the town. However, after 1603 and the end of the war's the settlement began to prosper once again.

In 1641 the town and Friary were sacked by the Parliamentarian, Sir Frederick Hamilton. In 1645 the town was captured by the Cromwellian - Sir Charles Coote II. In 1689 it was seized by Williamite rebels under Lord Kingston, but was retaken by Patrick Sarsfield for King James.

Continue along Castle Street towards our next point's of interest:

THE LADY ERIN MONUMENT AND THE FORMER BANK OF IRELAND BUILDING.

Overlooking the Market Cross, one of Sligo Town's busier shopping areas, is the Lady Erin Monument, which was erected in 1899 to honour the centenary celebrations for those men who had fought in the Insurrection of 1798.

Designed by the Dublin sculptor Herbert G. Barnes, the memorial, which is over sixteen feet high, was unveiled on September 3rd 1898 in front of a crowd of several thousand people.

Just to the right of the Lady Erin Monument you will see the "Shoot the Crows" public house, which features painted murals on the front window and inside there are more mysterious murals and skulls surrounding the bar.

Whilst behind Lady Erin is the quaint 19th-century style Cosgrove's grocery shop, if you have a few minutes to spare, it's well worth having a look at the amazing array of foods which are displayed in a shop still living in a bygone age.

Continue a further 25 metres in the same direction, however Castle Street has now become Gratten Street a here you will see an impressive looking building on your right, this was formerly The Bank of Ireland Building.

This attractive six-bay three-storey brick and stone building was designed by architect Ralph Byrne and built in 1918, making an important contribution to the local streetscape.

It has been rumoured for many years that this building may be haunted by the ghost of a 30 year old Italian woman Rosa Di Lucia, who had been living in Sligo Town for only 2 years before she was savagely murdered in a bedroom above the ice cream and fast food premises which traded under the name of Macari & Co, which had existed on this site before the building of the Bank of Ireland building in 1916.

Rosa Di Lucia was brutally murdered on December 8th 1912, by her 30 year old husband Angelo Di Lucia, and 17 year old Ballymote girl Jane Reynolds, who had been having an illicit affair, and had planned to carry out the murder in a bid to enable the two of them to continue their relationship unhindered.

Leave the former Bank of Ireland building by continuing in the same westerly direction, and taking the next turn to your left up Harmony Hill, so named, according to local folklore, because the Garavogue River was, at one time, the place where all the towns women washed their family laundry, a place where rows often broke out. However, when Harmony Hill was first opened, it meant these women could get to the few washing spots on the river side without coming into conflict with each other, thus the town's harmony was restored.

At the crossroads at the top of Harmony Hill, turn around to admire the view back down to O'Connell Street and to Benbulbin Mountain in the distance.

Turn right at these crossroads and walk for 30 metres on your right, you will come to our next stop The Presbyterian Church and School.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHAPEL.

First on our right we shall see the Presbyterian School which was built in 1883, and right beside the school stands the Presbyterian Church which was built in 1828.

Leave the Presbyterian Church by the vehicular entrance onto the road junction, cross the road and enter the gateway (entrance) and keep to the right of the building, this will bring you into The Peace Park which is generally a nice quiet place, ideal for relaxing in. if you go more or less straight ahead through the peace park, you go through another gateway into the car park of The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The entrance to the Cathedral is located under the large clock tower.

The skyline of Sligo is undoubtedly dominated by the imposing structure of THE CATHEDRAL OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

Sligo's Catholic Cathedral was built in 1874 on land previously owned by a protestant landowner who purchased the land from a previous owner under the pretence that it was to be developed into a garden allotment, in fact the land had been purchased with the sole intention of selling it on to the Catholic Church.

Though when the previous owner of the land became aware of the true purpose for which the land had been purchased, he informed the new owners that he would only sell the land for the purposes of building a catholic church on the condition that the main doors of the church faced away from Sligo Town.

And so it was, that the main entrance doors into The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception face away from Sligo Town centre.

The Cathedral was opened in 1874, less the fifty years after the Catholic Emancipation, by Cardinal Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin.

The Renaissance Romanesque style came from a design by one of the most prominent architects of the day George Goldie from London, and was built by the then Bishop of Elphin Laurence Gillooly (1858 - 1895) after whom the Gillooly Hall sited just over the road from the Cathedral was named.

There are 9 bells in the bell tower which were made by Murphy of Dublin and donated by the prominent Sligo businessman Peter O'Connor. The largest of the bells weighs in at 1.5 tons.

When the bells were installed in the cathedral, they were initially rung rather than being struck as they are today. The practise of ringing the bells had to be discontinued very early on, as the vibrations were so strong and the noise so loud that they could be heard as far away as Grange, 10 miles to the North of Sligo Town.

As the bells were being rung, the campanologists became increasingly afraid that the reverberations would in fact demolish the spire.

The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception has a total of 69 stained glass windows which give a magnificent lighting effect inside. The nave and the aisles in this Roman Catholic Cathedral are connected by arches which are supported by eighteen massive stone pillars made from finely chiselled limestone and there is seating inside for 4,000 people.

The final job in the construction of The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception was to erect the cross on the top of the spire, this was performed by the steeplejack Mr Steve Scanavan and his son.

They were in the process of fixing the cross in place when the steeplejacks son suddenly shouted that he could not see the fixing holes, Mr Scanavan, realising that his son had "lost his head", made a grab for the young man, but in the process of trying to prevent his son from falling, lost his own footing and plummeted to his death in the churchyard below.

THE GILLOOLY HALL, which stands in a prominent location across the main road from the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, was built to commemorate the deceased Laurence Gillooly (1858-1895) Bishop of Elphin who was a campaigner against alcohol.

Built by the local architect P.J. Kilgallen of Abbeyville. The interior of the Gillooly Hall is in a classic Victorian style featuring polished mahogany and leaded glass. However, the exterior is grim and foreboding, and rich in masonry ornamentation crafted to a high standard.

The statue above the main entrance to the Gillooly Hall depicts the Bishop denouncing Ireland - "Ireland sober is Ireland free".

From the Cathedral Of The Immaculate Conception, leave through any of the gates and turn right, walking past the Gilholly Hall to the traffic lights where you turn right into John Street and continue for about 50 metres until you reach the final stop on our Walking Tour of Sligo Town, The Cathedral of St John the Baptist.

THE CATHEDRAL OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST.

The Cathedral of St John the Baptist is beleived to have been built on the site of an Anglo-Norman hospital or 'Alms house' dating back to 1242.

A mortuary was built here in 1637 by the then Govenor of Sligo, Sir Roger Jones of Banada.

The slab of his tomb, which dates from 1637, can be seen on the west wall of the church, and features Sir Roger Jones and his wife.

The church which stands here today was built in 1730 by the famous German architect Richard Cassels> who is also credited with designing Hazelwood House, Powerscourt House and the home of Irish politics, Leinster House and is in fact the oldest building in continuous use in Sligo Town.

The original design of St Johns Cathedral was influenced by the old basilica pattern of the early Roman architecture, though sadly, many of these original features of the church were lost during extensive renovations carried out in 1812 and in 1883, when gothic features replaced much of Cassels work.

On the wall near the pulpit there is a brass plaque dedicated to the memory of Susan Mary Yeats, mother of William Butler and Jack. B. Yeats.

Mary Butler Yeats was the eldest daughter of William Pollexfen, who married John Butler Yeats on 10th September 1863 in this very church, she died in London in 1900.

William Pollexfen, grandfather of William Butler Yeats and Jack. B. Yeats, is buried near the main gate, in a tomb with low walls and black chains surrounding it.

An unusual feature of the graveyard is the fact that it contains a peculiar kind of clay which is said to prevent the decay of bodies buried within it. Instead, the bodies are converted into Adipocere, a soft waxy substance which can last indefinitely.

The roots of the yew tree's within the cemetery were surrounded with earth brought in especially to overcome this problem.

The graveyard also holds the Thornley family plot. The Thornley name has very interesting connections with the Cholera epidemic in Sligo Town during 1832, and also with Count Dracula, as Catherine Stoker (nee Thornley) was the mother of Bram Stoker, author of the world famous Dracula novel.

The Cathedral of St John the Baptist is open to visitors in the summer season and a very warm welcome awaits both locals and tourists.

We've finally finished our walking tour of Sligo Town when leaving the Cathedral of St John the Baptist turn right and walk 100 metres until you reach the large street on your left. This is O'Connell Street, Sligo's main thoroughfare, from where you can go shopping or find a nice restaurant and continue to enjoy your stay in Sligo Town.