

My granny Bernie was born in 1927 in Ballineen so she grew up in a time when the new state was in its early years. Luckily for her, she has no direct memories of the troubles and enjoyed a happy childhood in the village.

There were 12 in the family so there was always a huge rush every morning to get everyone out to school. The school was at the other end of the village so it was quite a walk for the small ones.

They lived by the Bandon river and the railway line so she and her siblings would go fishing in a small flat bottomed boat or watch trains whizzing past.

They used to play hopscotch in school and skipped with skipping ropes every day – no T.V. There was a forge quite near their house in the village of Ballineen and they used to stand watching the Blacksmith make and put shoes on horses and donkey. It was a small stone building and the blacksmith would make horse shoes from iron and fit them on horses. They would heat the iron over fire in large and shape the shoes.

Bernie loved babies and would always ask if she could take them for walks in their prams up and down the street.

In the evening the family always said the Rosary in the dining room in front of the fire and the youngest ones would answer from their beds upstairs. They always had a cup of cocoa before bed.

Everyone dressed in their best for mass on Sunday and sang in the choir on Sunday evening for Benediction.

My granny completed national school in Ballineen to Bandon on train everyday to secondary school.

My granny's dad owned Fehily's general warehouse in Ballineen. They sold everything from tobacco to agricultural implements to clothing. He didn't notice any big change during the troubles, but he was much more watchful and cautious of unknown customers. Some products were also more difficult to come by.

By Fionn O Connor

Told by Bernie O'Connor

February 2017



The shop where my granny grew up - it
is still in the family today.