

railway line, each with 10 beds & a stove. There were 4 here in Leam .

Fish caught on Lough Corrib were brought to the London Fish Market while, cattle, sheep, ponies, animal feed , grocery & Public House provisions were also carried on the train. The train service was also a great attraction for tourists & anglers esp from Britain. It took 2 hours to go from Galway to Clifden, going at 15mph, the Quiet Man Bridge being the half way mark. Many young men also left by train when going off to fight in the First World War .

The line closed in 1935 due to improvements in roads , faster deliveries by trucks & the cost of refurbishing the line & stations. The last train left Clifden at 5 pm on 27th April 1935

(4)The Gatekeeper's Cottage

The MGWR constructed 18 of these 2 bedroom , 1 living room, cottages along the line. The occupant's duty was to open the railway gates & to regularly inspect the line.

(5) Connemara Ponies - Quietman Stud.

The owner breeds Connemara ponies which are a distinct breed of pony usually grey or a dun colour. They are well known for their ease of handling, hardiness , jumping & dressage ability. The origin is unclear but native Celtic ponies are said to have bred with horses from Spain, Morocco & /or Norway.

"**Cannon Ball**" was a famous local Connemara pony. Born in 1904, he grew to 13 hands 3ins (140cm) and was the first stallion registered by the Connemara Pony Breeders' Society in 1926. Harry O Toole (Honri), his owner, raced him at Oughterard, Clifden and Roundstone where he was never beaten. He even beat the Railway train from Oughterard to Leam (4 miles). Cannon Ball died in 1926 (30 years) & is buried close to the two houses on the hillside to your left. Two of Harry O'Toole's grand nephews live here in Leam and continue to breed Connemara ponies

Dry Stone Walls.

These can be seen from Leam back to Oughterard & not that much towards Clifden as there was less stone. They were used as a means of removing stone from the reclaimed fields & retaining animals. The more stones to pick meant the smaller & the more numerous the fields.

Iron Gates

Blacksmiths made many of the old iron gates which you see at some places along the mile. A lot were made from the iron that held timber casks together.

Hedgerows

The hedgerows are typical Irish hedgerows. A wealth of native trees and shrubs – brambles, gorse, fuchsia, hawthorn, ash, sycamore, heather, rowan, sally and oak . Many of the plants have seeded naturally in the shelter of the stone walls.

(6)Famine Ridges. Dotted on the hillside are the outlines of numerous Famine Ridges (Lazy Beds). These were the potato ridges that provided "*Food for our forebears till dread famine stalked this land.*" from 1845-1848 which caused the death of 1 million people & the emigration of approx 1 million more. Until quite recent times, local farmers continued to grow potatoes in such ridges.

(7)Blanket & (8) Raised Bogs

The high rainfall and the cool climate of the area provide ideal conditions for the Blanket bogs (mountain) of the landscape. They are shallow bogs of 1.5m in depth. Long ago turf was cut by hand with a special tool called a 'sleán' and was later raised up or footed to dry in the sun and wind. Large baskets called 'creels' and animal drawn carts were used to transport the turf. Nowadays machines are used to cut it while tractors and trailers are used to take it home. The bogs which formed where lowland lakes became overgrown with vegetation (mainly moss) & eventually became raised in the middle are known as Raised Bogs. They are deeper than the Blanket Bogs.

Pictures on walk

- Scene from "The Quiet Man" (1952) showing John Wayne sitting on the famous bridge.
- Turf cutting by hand using the Sleán. Mike O' Halloran & daughter Mary Josephine, Letterfore. Circa 1952
- Oughterard Railway Station circa early 1930s

Please note that your safety is your own responsibility. No liability can be accepted by the producers of the walks for any loss, injury or damage to or in respect of any property or persons in connection with these walks.

We hope you enjoyed your walk. No litter please.

Produced by Oughterard Culture & Heritage Group. 2010.

Míle Órga Léim

(Golden Mile , Leam)

Welcome to Leam , from the Irish meaning to jump (Leim), as one had to jump to cross the river until the famous bridge was built. This is the famous bridge (1), on which John Wayne sat in a scene from "*The Quiet Man*" (1952 Film)

Mountains & Lakes:

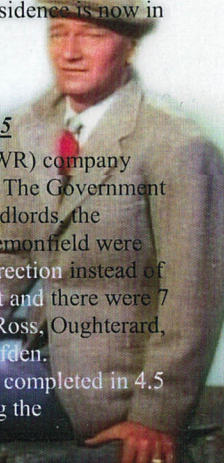
Looking westward from the bridge, you can see the Maam Turk mountains in the distance and beyond them the Twelve Bens. To the East are Drumlins , little hills formed during the Ice Age, an age which also formed 3 main lakes Lough Bofin (West), which flows into *Lough an Droichid*, then into Lough an Grafa Ard, forming the Owenriff River which flows through Oughterard eventually reaching Lough Corrib.

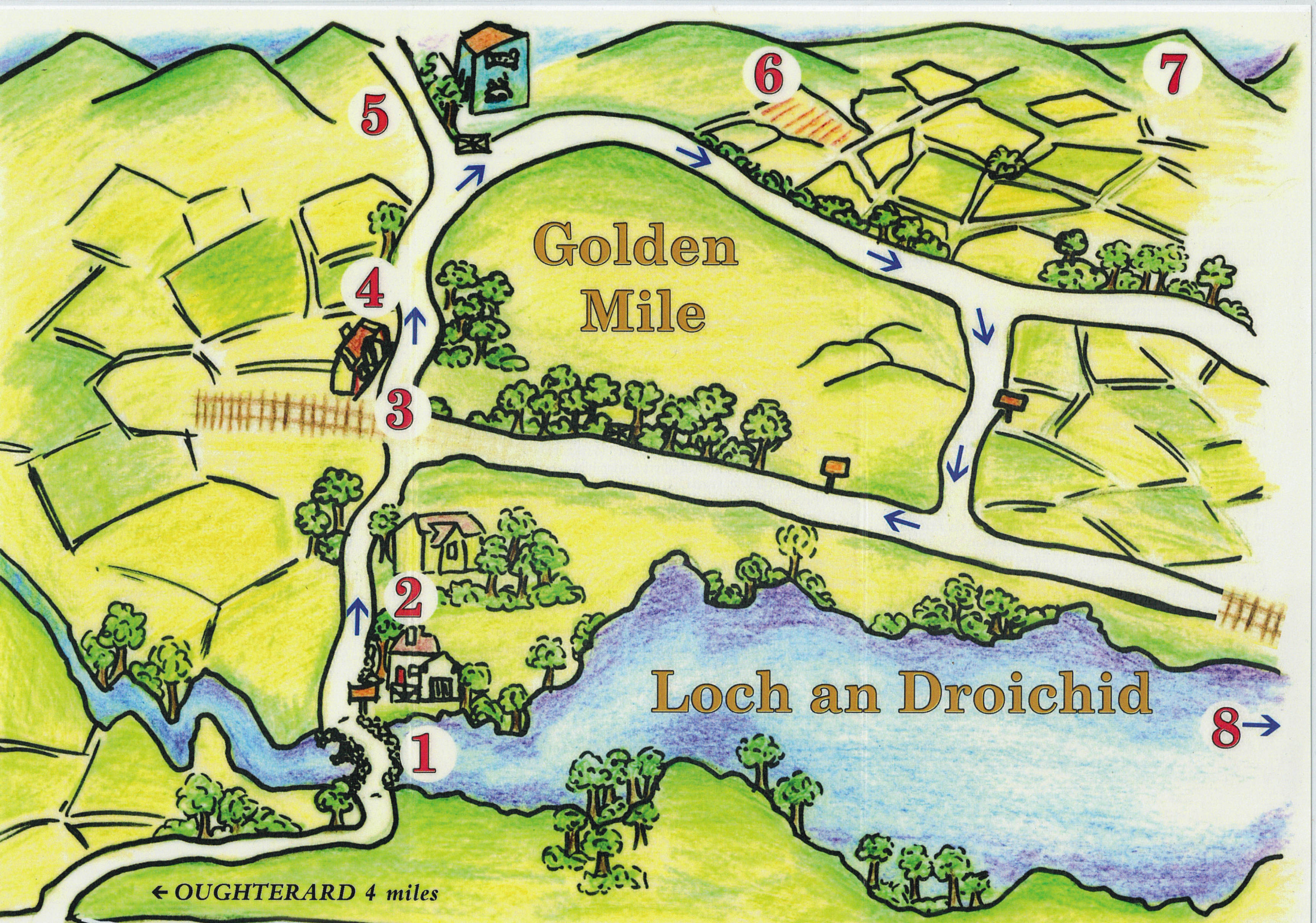
(2) Old School House and Teacher's Residence.

In 1852 the landlord Christopher St George gave a site to Fr Kavanagh, PP of Oughterard, for the purpose of erecting a new school. It was opened in 1877. Prior to that 100 children attended school in a nearby mountain cabin while others attended Glengola Lodge (Irish Church Mission). From 1881 to 1867 an average of 69 children attended at Leam. Irish was the spoken language and the curriculum included English, singing, geography, drill, drawing, religion, needlework, laundry & maths. The little stone shed at the rear of the building was the outside toilet. Using chalk, the children did much of their work on slates and, when copies were used, the local shopkeeper recycled them to make paper cones to hold sweets. One qualified teacher and two monitors(assistants of 15-16 years)were employed. Leam School closed in 1959, replaced by Derryglin School (on main road). Leam school was later used as a church. The teacher's residence is now in private ownership.

(3) Galway Clifden Railway Line 1895-1935

The Midland Great Western Railway (MGWR) company opened the Galway to Clifden line in 1895. The Government provided a grant of £264,000. The local landlords, the Martins of Ross and the O' fflaherties of Lemonfield were influential in bringing the railway in this direction instead of by the coast. The line was 48 miles 550 feet and there were 7 stations about 8 miles apart – Moycullen, Ross, Oughterard, Maam Cross, Recess, Ballynahinch and Clifden. Approx 1500 men were employed & it was completed in 4.5 years. Builders Huts were constructed along the





Golden Mile

Loch an Droichid

← OUGHTERARD 4 miles