

Reminiscence notes on  
**HENRY IRWIN - draper's shop,**  
74 Main Street, Limavady  
By Moyra Keatings

Proprietors - Henry Irwin, Wollendraper and Matilda Irwin (nee Boyd), Milliner and Dressmaker.

Henry died August 1938, his obituary states he was a son of Mr John Irwin of Glen Mills. Henry was at the time of his death the survivor of six brothers. "Mr Irwin served his apprenticeship to the drapery trade, and over half-a-century ago [ie 50+ years prior to 1938] entered the business on his own account, conducting some of the largest establishments in the town with much success."

His sons were Robert, (USA, Philadelphia). Harry, Walter and Frank (England, Derby).

Matilda died July 1941. She was in many local associations and clubs, and on many committees. Her favourite charity was the British Sailor's Society, and she was honorary secretary and treasurer of this last for twenty years before her demise. I especially like the following quote: "The cortege, which included mourners from over a wide area, was fully representative of the professional and business life of the community and of all creeds and classes.

Within the shop the ladies garments were to the right as you entered with Matilda at the counter, and gentleman's garments to the left with Henry at his counter. In the shop there was naturally a mannequin and tall shop chairs for customers. To the rear there was a workroom with sewing machines where millinery, dressmaking and alterations were carried out, there would have been 2 or 3 other employees. Behind Matilda, a door led to the hallway with stairs to the living quarters. There was also a separate front door (which can be seen in the photograph). Beyond the workroom were the kitchen and pantry. There was also a live in maid, Molly Martin.

My aunt Mrs Pauline Mac Cartney, who will be 90 in August, remembers them both well. She has especially fond memories of "Granny Irwin", who as well as being a very clever woman was warm and affectionate. Matilda went on buying trips to England on her own, Pauline often describes her as "ahead of her time". Certainly very unusual for an Edwardian woman!