

# 'Tourism Survival, Differentiation and Growth through Sustainable Development and Social Responsibility ..... a case study from Leitrim'

2018 TOURISM POLICY WORKSHOP

Joe Dolan

24<sup>th</sup> November 2018

# Leitrim

## Economically

- High emigration
- Poor agricultural land
- Low Industrial base
- No urban centre
- CoS pop 5000
- Remainder is rural or in centres <1500
- Poor Access - Perceived
- Retail shrinking
- Increasing unemployment '18

Yet .....

% Personal income from tourism is considerably higher more developed tourism areas  
30 years ahead tourism >>> agriculture

In essence viable vehicle for economic and employment growth  
Passionate community, social, economic sport anything Leitrim

## Touristically:

- Poorest Performing Tourism Region
- Regionality, access etc
- High domestic dependence, VFR's etc
- Seasonality
- Sparse on Product (clusters)
- No Iconic Attractions
- Lowest % Overseas visitors
- Highest UK dependency (lo yield), 20km to border
- Unbranded (to date)
- Little/no corporate or off season business
- I



.....Challenging!

# At the tourism coal face:

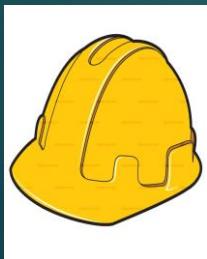
## Share

- ▶ initiatives, experiences and sentiments that we implemented
- ▶ Positive impacts...compliance, cost savings.
- ▶ Tangible feel good (customers, employees suppliers & me!)
- ▶ Competitive marketing advantage arising
- ▶ Ultimately the improved performance sustainability, viability and profitability
- ▶ i.e. Survival, Differentiation and Growth through Sustainable Development and Social Responsibility

Me



UPPER SHANNON ERNE  
FUTURE ECONOMY PROJECT  
• CAVAN • LEITRIM • LONGFORD • ROSCOMMON



# Bush Hotel

est 1793

- ▶ 3 Star catch all
- ▶ High street, 4 acres, garden, 166 car spaces
- ▶ 60 rooms, 60-80 employees
- ▶ Extensive F&B
- ▶ Banqueting Conference
- ▶ Local base.....'Meat & 2 veg'.
- ▶ Circle of life
- ▶ 'Peoples Hotel'...
- ▶ Old world charm with many memorabilia from past.....(BHH)
- ▶ 'Stereotype' traditional Irish family rural hotel  
.....fast disappearing,

However whilst exceeding av regional performance

- ▶ Low occupancy 55%
- ▶ Flat rates 2008 v 2018
- ▶ Seasonal incl W/E
- ▶ High cost base
- ▶ Town centre 'doughnut' syndrome



..... viability and sustainability of this hotel stereotype is very challenging

..... could/should have closed post tiger?

*'Tourism Survival, Differentiation and Growth through  
Sustainable Development and Social Responsibility  
..... a case study from Leitrim'*

## **Textbook' Sustainable Tourism**

- Environmentally
- Socially
- Economically

- (not quite true!)

*'so .....to clear my conscience'*

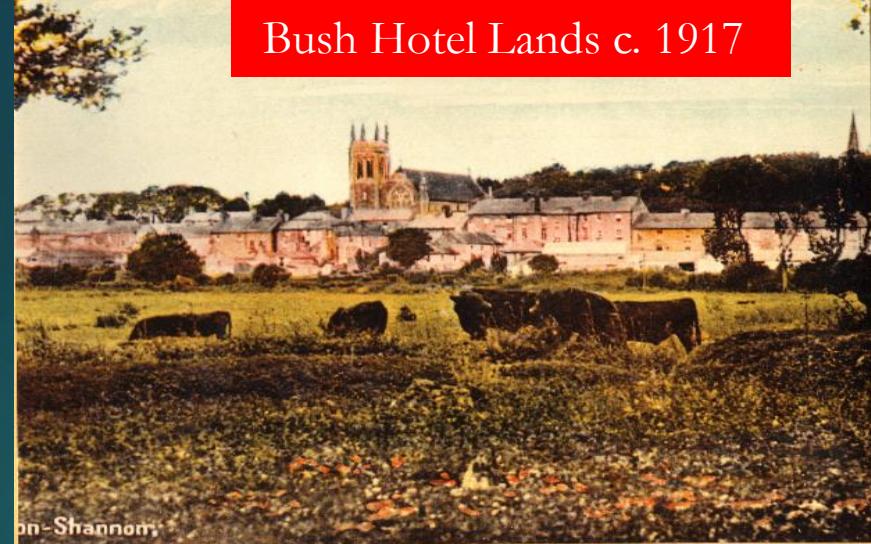
# Corporate Social Responsibility

Taking responsibility for maximizing positive Impact of our business activities on our community:

- ▶ Economic, social, and environmental
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Arts
- ▶ Sport
- ▶ Disadvantaged
- ▶ Community: Customers, employees, suppliers

.....Benefit society whilst boosting my brand

Welcome to the historic Bush Hotel which is one of the oldest in Ireland. The Hotel started its life as an Inn and Resting Post for tired travellers and their weary horses on the old Bianconi Stage Coach route between Dublin and the Northwest.



In the early 1900's the Hotel backed onto 4 acres of pasture and gardens with stables (and bedding for guests' Horses) and was largely self sufficient in fruit and vegetables, poultry, beef, lamb, pork and bacon.



(11) 1905  
the Bush Hotel and McDermott's butcher shop. The man on the left is Tom McDermott, the one on the right is William Callaghan the butcher.

- ▶ Surplus meat from the Hotel's farm was sold in the Hotels own butcher shop (McDermott's) which is now the Coffee Shop.
- ▶ .....sustainable!

.....1912

Guest bedrooms were dimly lit by gas lamps (the original gas pipe lines still exist).

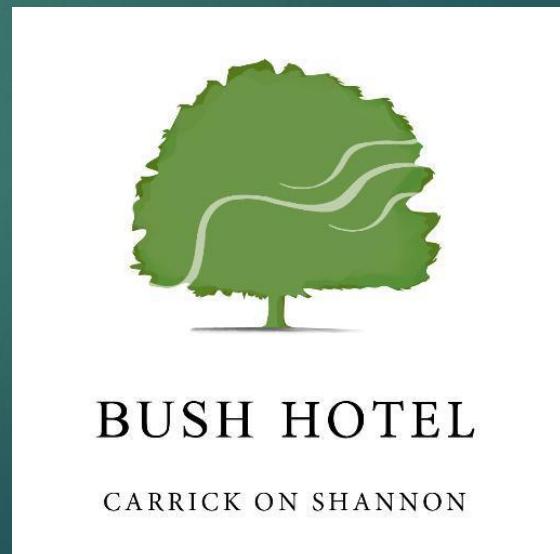
Heat and hot water came from local fire wood and low grade coal from the adjacent Arigna Mountains (15km from the Hotel).

Each bedroom had its own fireplace  
Guest bathrooms were shared (c 2. per corridor) and a hot bath was pre booked and filled by the night porter but at an additional cost 2 (old) pence in 1918!

In modern terms Bush was self sufficient and environmentally self sustaining with a very low carbon footprint indeed.

.....2018

Today the strong tradition of inn keeping and guest comfort continues but so also does our environmental responsibility which is one of the core values we also share from the past and this we regard with no less importance than any of our other business activities



# The Green Bush Hotel

- European Ecolabel
- European Ecolabel Communication Award
- Georgina Campbell Winner
- Green Ireland Hospitality Award
- Chambers Ireland finalist CSR 2014
- Floral Pride Awards 2015,16

# The Green Bush Hotel



Vodafone Award 'Passion for the World Around Us'  
presented to the Bush Hotel

# The *Green* Bush Hotel

The Bush Hotel is the first Hotel in Ireland to receive the EU Eco-label Award 'Flower' for Tourist Accommodation

84 very specific and technical criteria to comply with

.....Not necessarily cutting edge technology!

- Energy (electricity, oil, gas)
- Water
- **Waste (food)**
- **Awareness, Education & Communication**
- **Innovation**



## We Minimise incoming waste by:

- Refusing to accept Pallets, shrink wrap, bubble wraps, polystyrene, etc.
- Fruit, Veg, Meat, Fish and Bread suppliers must collect their packing at designated collection points.

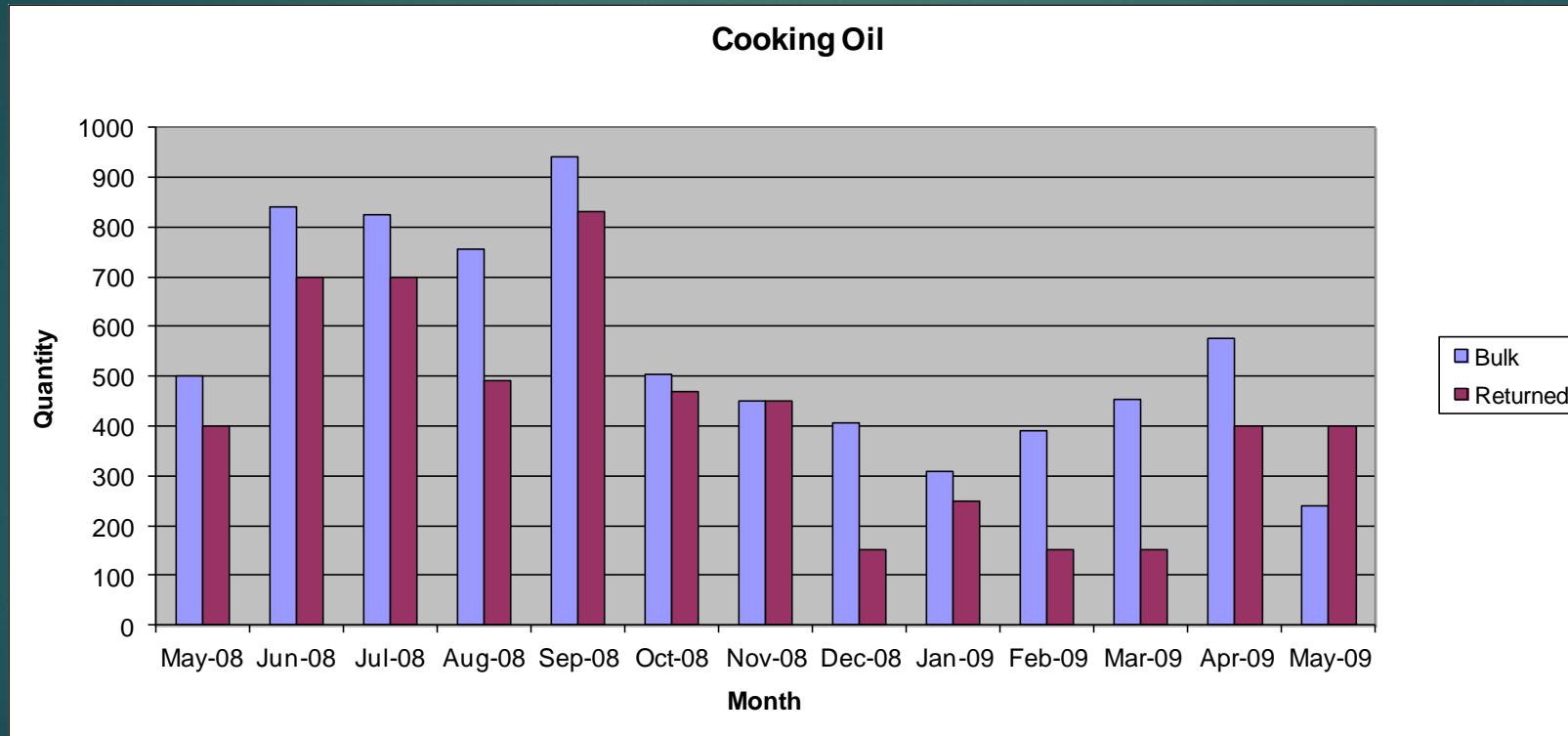
### Eliminated:

- Individual toiletries, gels, body wash, lotion shampoos, etc
- Butter Foiled wrapped pads
- Sauces (ketchup, mustard, brown sauce, mayonnaise, vinegar)
- Preservatives (jams, honey, marmalades etc)
- Sugars



# The Green Bush Hotel

## Cooking Oil: delivered/waste oil recovered (litres/month)



## FOOD & Waste

New Buzz word in tourism; why?

- ▶ Organic, 'Slow' food,
- ▶ Authentic local speciality e.g. boxty
- ▶ Local Distilleries, Breweries Craft beers
- ▶ Food waste & the Sharing 'Collaborative' Economy. Retail
- ▶ 'Healthy' (?) directives from EU (e.g. allergens, calories and now acrylamides!)

### Sustainable Food Process:

The stages/ considerations ..... Farm to left overs

- Sourcing: Local, Irish Ethical (e.g Fair Trade)
- Packaging, Delivery, Storage, Stock Rotation
- Nutrition, healthy options: healthy options especially for kids
- Preparation and cooking
- Portion Control
- Food Recycling & Waste
- Related Costs

Source locally



## Healthy Options

- Celiac
- Vegetarian
- Vegan
- Organic

## Traditional

- Irish Stew
- Irish Coffee
- Boxty etc

# Portion Control at Bush Hotel :



## Observations:

- Smaller plates
- Smaller Spoons
- Presentation Order
- Little & often!

## Banquets : WR/DDs etc

- ▶ Smaller portions followed by seconds
  - Modern banqueting All on plate
  - Pre prepped & plated Nutritional Value?
  - High Waste content
  - Low Food Rescue
- ▶ Solution Serve separately!





## Own Brand



- Jams, Marmalades
- Chutneys
- Dressings
- Pestos
- Mayonnaises, etc
- Gifts, hampers, spot prizes
- Rosie's brown bread

## Reduced Overcooking: Why?

- ▶ Shrinkage
- ▶ Nutritional loss
- ▶ Loss Texture & Taste
- ▶ Associated Energy Waste & Cost thereof
- ▶ Reduced Margin & Profitability
- ▶ Reduced Customer Satisfaction

## Food Waste Costs:

Most expensive waste type (charged by weight, hi liq content  
Costs and risks of storage, rodents, odours

# Sustainable Food Service

Assume c. 100,000 plated meals P.A

- Assume 8% waste equivalent to 8,000 meals
- Ingredients Purchased
- Prep & Cooking Costs, Labour, Energy etc
- Service costs, waiting, banqueting staff etc,
- Disposal costs

## Why Rescue Food?

- Absolute business sense
- Ensuring compliance
- Social & corporate responsibility,
- Image, employee and customer satisfaction,
- Cost Reductions, improved margins and profitability
- Marketing Opportunities & Competitive advantage



BUSH HOTEL

CARRICK ON SHANNON



## Environmental Awareness/Communication:

- ▶ Employees
- ▶ Customers
- ▶ Suppliers



## Employee Awareness/Communication:

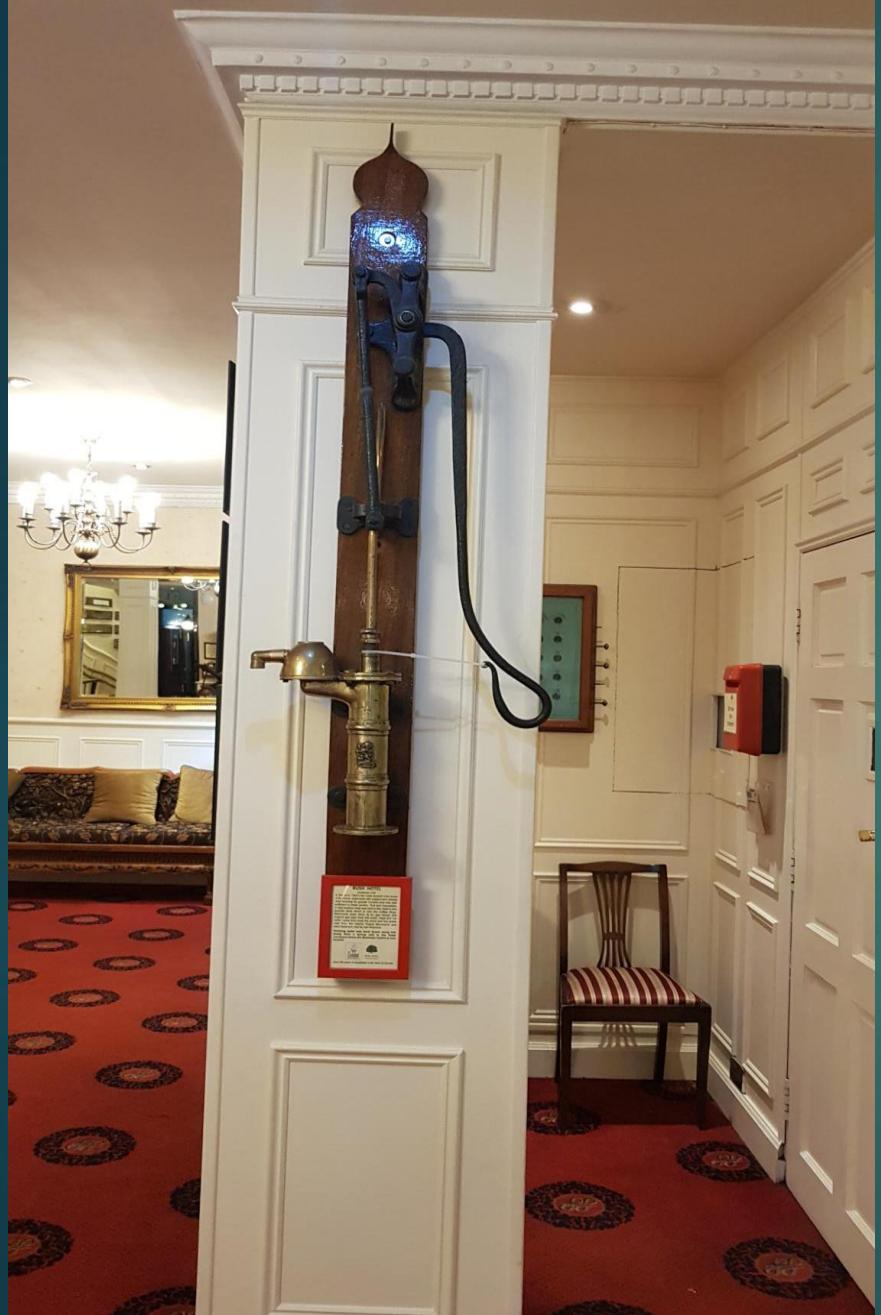
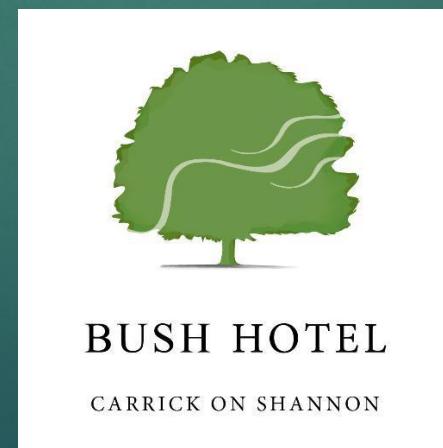
- ▶ **Environmental culture** (*Induction, contracts, job description etc*)
- ▶ **Mandatory Training** (*2 days incl in English Classes*)
- ▶ **Employee Environmental Notice Boards** (*incl. Financials, guest comment*)
- ▶ **Signage** (*policy & care*)
- ▶ **Participation:** (*house hold waste, lost property etc*)
- ▶ **Departmental plans** (*development & implementation*)
- ▶ **Monitoring performance**
- ▶ **Incentives**
- ▶ **Employee Environmental Management Manual**



## Guest Awareness/Communication:

- ▶ Rebranded to the '*green* Bush Hotel' (e.g. entrances)
- ▶ Signage (*policy & care*). Visit behind scenes (*by arrangement*)
- ▶ Guest environmental info booklet
- ▶ Environmental PPP on Foyer
- ▶ Flower Logo & Flag
- ▶ Marketing: web, brochures, stationary,
- ▶ Guest info on biodiversity, public transport, bicycle hire,
- ▶ Guest info on local & organic food products
- ▶ Environmental questionnaire/comment cards
- ▶ CD rom
- ▶ Guest Environmental Notice Boards (*excl. financials*)
- ▶ Formal presentation (like this one!)
- ▶ We invite/encourage guests to support our environmental management

# Restored by Carrick on Shannon's Men Shed





# Supplier Awareness/Communication:

- ▶ Supplier activities have a major impact on the Hotels environmental footprint so it is logical that the Hotel communicates and emphasises our high standard environmental practices to and expectations from our suppliers
- ▶ Most waste generated originates from suppliers
- ▶ Suppliers Code of Practice whilst Delivering to the Bush Hotel (*mandatory*)

## Suppliers Charter:

- We regret we can not accept deliveries before 8.00am and later than 7.00pm daily (with exception of newspapers). Only deliveries to the Hotel are permitted from our private car park.
- Please switch off your vehicle engine and vehicle radio/music whilst delivering to Hotel (noise also impacts our conferences) and minimise noise (horn, revving engine, rolling kegs, pallet trucks, etc). Maintain vehicle in PMO, clean etc.
- Please park responsibly having due regard to other Hotel Guests (vehicular and pedestrian) but particularly disabled persons, their parking spaces and vehicles and safety in general.
- Please refrain from smoking on Hotel property.
- Suppliers of chemicals/hazardous (e.g. caustic detergents, heating oil etc) must take extreme environmental care whilst delivering at the Hotel
- In so far as possible, packaging which are not reusable or recyclable must be returned to the supplier. We do not accept pallets, shrink wrap or bubble wraps, polystyrene. All goods must be delivered to appropriate stores. It is not acceptable to leave inside back door'. If in doubt ask!
- Hotel personnel are not permitted to assist in unloading goods.
- HACCP and general good practice require we inspect the delivery vehicle in which the goods we purchase are transported
- We welcome any comment from our suppliers on our environmental care/behaviour which can be directed to Anne Marie McHugh, Green Bush Team c/o Reception. We particularly welcome comment on areas where we can improve. Green Comment Cards for Guests are also available to suppliers which are located throughout the Hotel.
- Suppliers are invited to consult our Environmental Management Policy available from reception. Our employee Environmental Notice Board is also available to consult.....just ask



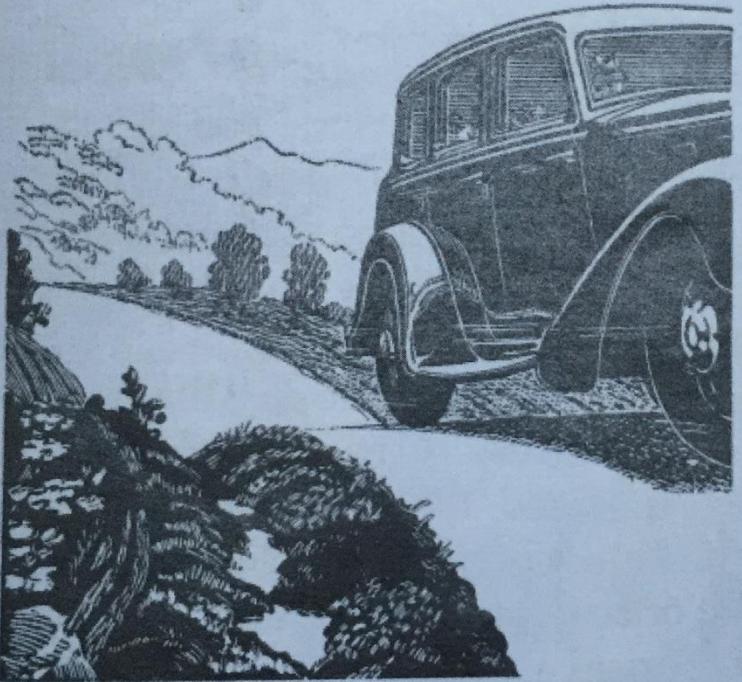
# INNOVATION



# INNOVATION



**Bush Court (adjacent to Bush Hotel)** : these buildings have been constructed largely using recycled building materials: Roof... Windows.... Floors..... Fascia/Soffet..... Guttering.... Floors..... Lighting...etc



## MOTOR CARS & GOOD ROADS

bring hungry people nowadays to out-of-the-way places—and even to places not so out-of-the-way but at out-of-the-way hours—looking for a good meal. If the Hotel or Restaurant has installed Electric cooking appliances the visitors will go on their way cheered and refreshed by a good meal and happy in the discovery of a good place to eat.



### MODERN TIMES, MODERN WAYS IN IRISH HOTELS, ELECTRICITY PAYS

The following Hotels and Restaurants have recently improved and increased their electrical equipment:—

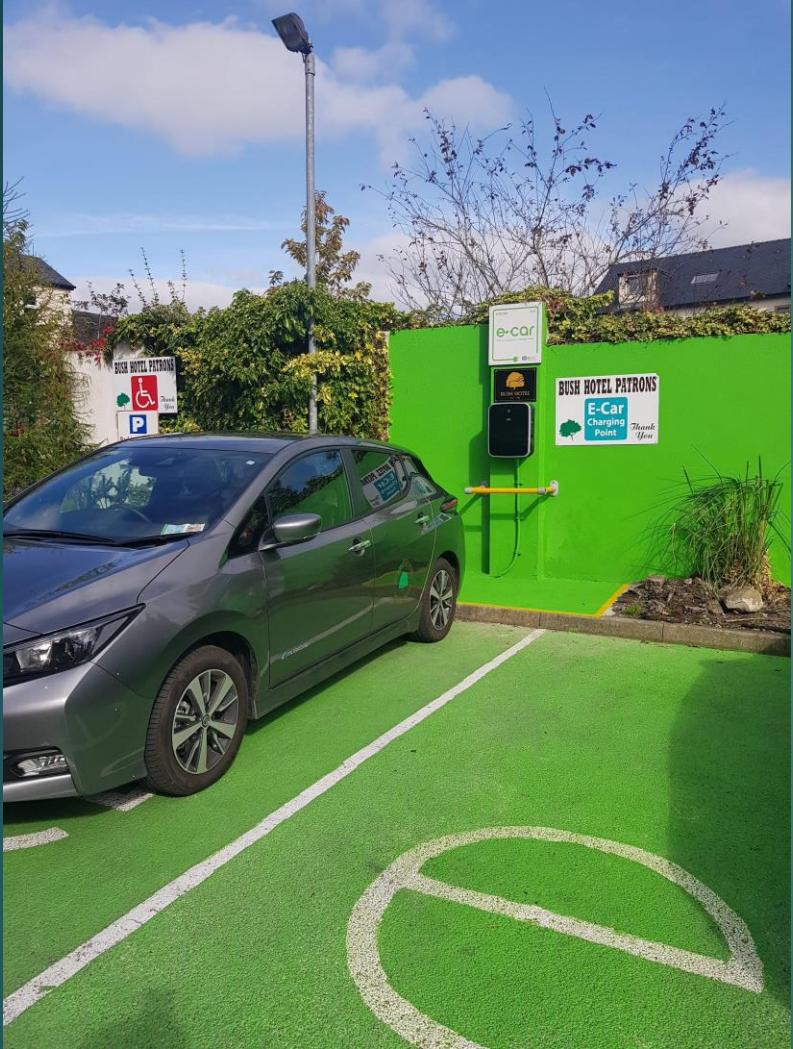
Bush Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon.  
Cahir House Hotel, Cahir.  
Capitol Restaurant, Dublin.  
Central Hotel, Exchequer Street, Dublin.  
Connacht Hotel, Galway.

Lydon's Cafe, Galway.  
Lyons' Cafe, Sligo.  
Majestic Hotel, Tramore.  
McConnon's Hotel, Blackrock, Dundalk.

Advertisement by  
the Electricity  
Supply Board in  
May 1939 extolling  
the benefits of their  
appliances for hotels  
and restaurants  
catering for motoring  
holidaymakers.  
*Courtesy of ESB  
archives department.*

THE IRISH TIMES

1939



Bush Hotel Courtesy Car  
& 2 rapid chargers



## Sustainable Tourism ....Social issues in Leitrim:

- Gender Employment balance (> 60% female)
- Disproportionate dependency Part-time and casual employment
- Child care cost
- Pay : NMW etc ;low pay sector

Also....

- Proliferation of Holiday Homes
- Air BNB, Loss of community integration
- Hens Stags & issues

## Social Impact : Hens & stags



Limerick.....Stag City?



**Fáilte Ireland**  
National Tourism Development Authority



However Environmental management, however good, will **not** in itself drive or accelerate Tourism Survival, Differentiation and Growth

### **Corporate Social Responsibility**

- In addition to our environmental responsibility Bush Hotel is hugely respectful and appreciative of our COMMUNITY
- After all many of our customers, suppliers, employees are from the community.
- In short they give us livelihood

Being a (relatively) larger business within the community we place much emphasis and resources on supports to our community ...

- Sports
- Arts
- Culture
- Heritage
- Music
- Education
- Welfare *disadvantaged groups etc*
- Pride of place.

.....Community, community & community

...and for this we get a huge return on our investment!

# Bush Hotel, Leitrim Tourism and Leitrim GAA



Post match , DD's club events etc



## Using Sport to Market Tourism

Leitrim 34k pop; diaspora : 2.5 million people!

Never lost an All Ireland

# LEITRIM V LONDON JULY 2013



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# Leitrim v New York

## May 2014

### Gaelic Park



## Search for Leitrim Ambassadors launched in New York

Fiona Heavey

The search for ambassadors was officially launched at an event in New York last weekend. About 150 people attended the event which saw famous Leitrim born writer and actor Seamus O'Rourke perform.

Commenting at the event, Joe Doherty, Chairman of Leitrim Tourism, said: "There has been a lot of focus on the Gathering this year on the fiftieth and we're hoping that this initiative will give longevity to that and help to develop tourism in Leitrim and County Leitrim's open for tourism business beyond 2013."

The initiative encourages people who come from Leitrim and are now living in New York, and the USA, to return to their home town to become advocates of their native county by creating awareness of what's on offer and encouraging others to consider the county for future holidays.

"There are many Irish people from County Leitrim living in the United States some of whom have never returned to county in many years and for various reasons won't be able to make it home for the Gathering.

"This initiative lets them know they are very welcome at any time and that there is plenty to do in County Leitrim."

"We are well aware of how important word of mouth is particularly when advertising on holidays. We are encouraging Leitrim people to spread the word about the great county we live in."



Author and playwright Seamus O'Rourke at the launch in New York.

Photo: Niall Donnelly

cas a year-long festival programme of events will be held throughout 2013 incorporating the 400th anniversary of the town of Carrick on Shannon being granted a charter by King James I.

For the latest news on or for follow Leitrim Tourism on Facebook or Twitter <https://www.facebook.com/EnjoyLeitrim> and [@leitrim](https://mobile.twitter.com/leitrim)



London Irish Centre  
Camden Aquare



## Leitrim Tourism and Music

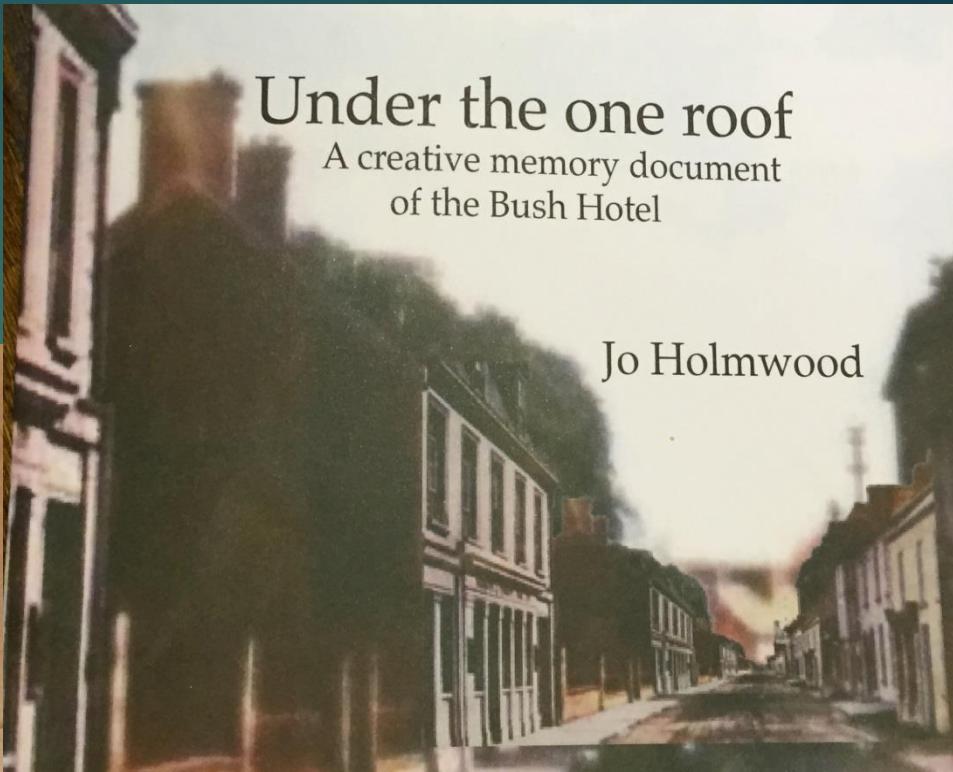


**Milwaukee Irish Music Festival 2013**

## Supporting Education

- Work placements Policy
- Site visits, tourism groups, hotels, etc
- IOTs Sligo, Athlone, Killybegs
- ETB's course developments & contents
- FI education & training modules

# Artist in Residence



Comhairle Chontae Liatroma  
Leitrim County Council

## 100's old world photos of Bush Hotel from 1800





BUSH HOTEL  
CARRICK ON SHANNON

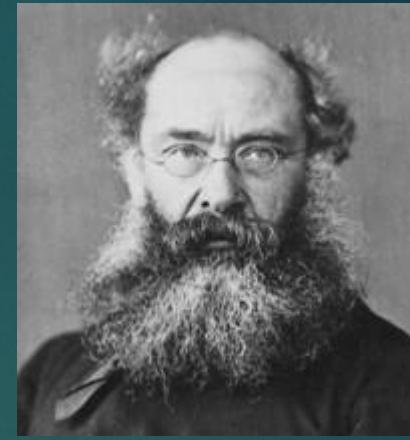
# Conference Rooms named after local Literary Figures



- John McGahern\*
- Susuan Mitchel
- Anthony Trollope\*
- MJ McManus

(\*Summer schools)

## Anthony Trollope (1815-1882)



Bedroom theming:  
'old room syndrome'

Michael Collins visited Carrick on Shannon in the Summer of 1917 to establish Sinn Fein Clubs in Gowel, Carrick on Shannon and Drumlion as noted in the intelligence reports from the local police (Royal Irish Constabulary). He stayed in Room 1 at the Bush Hotel on the Night of the 18<sup>th</sup> August 1917



Michael Collins (1890 -1922)



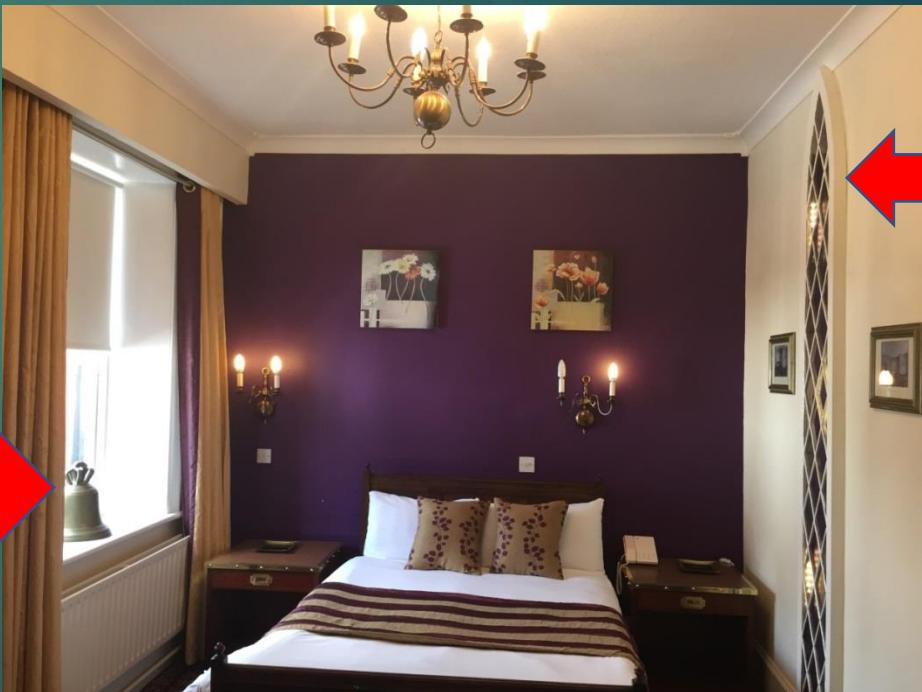
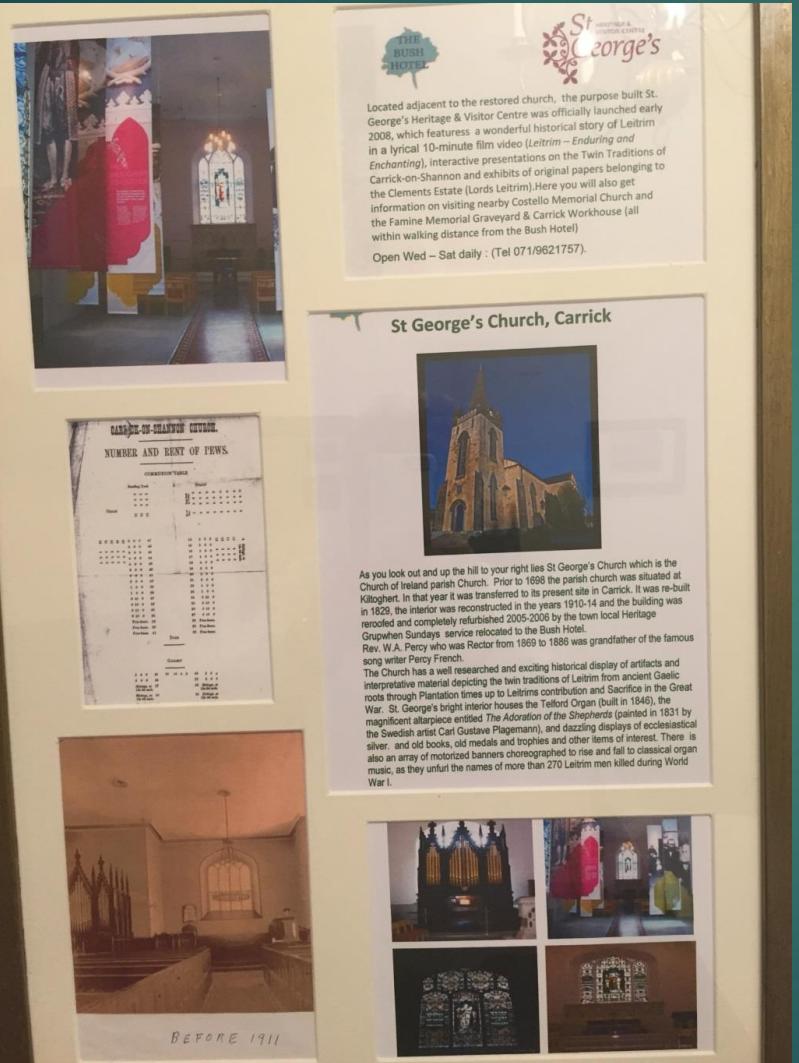


## Michael Collins Room

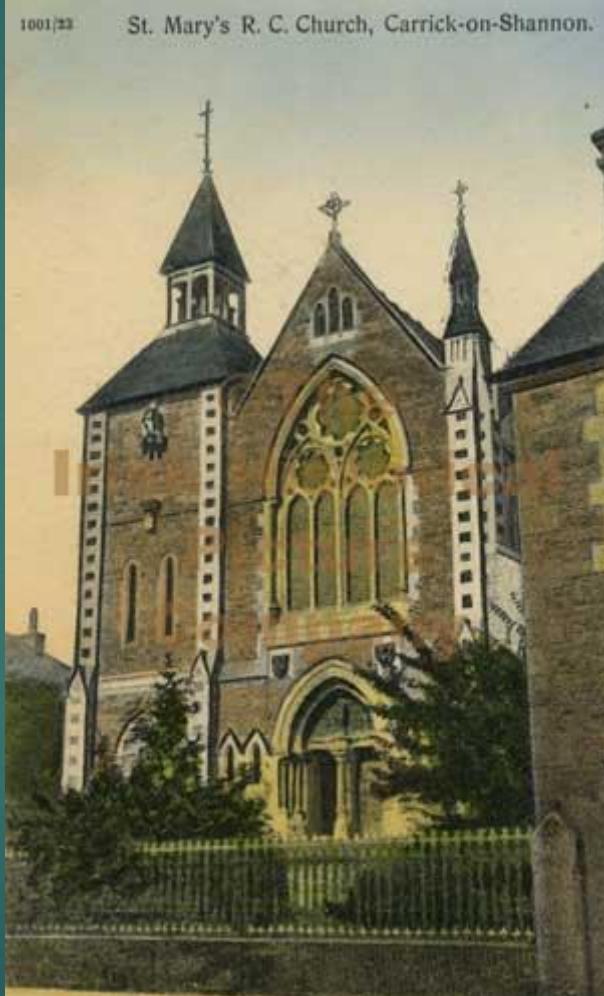
Room 1

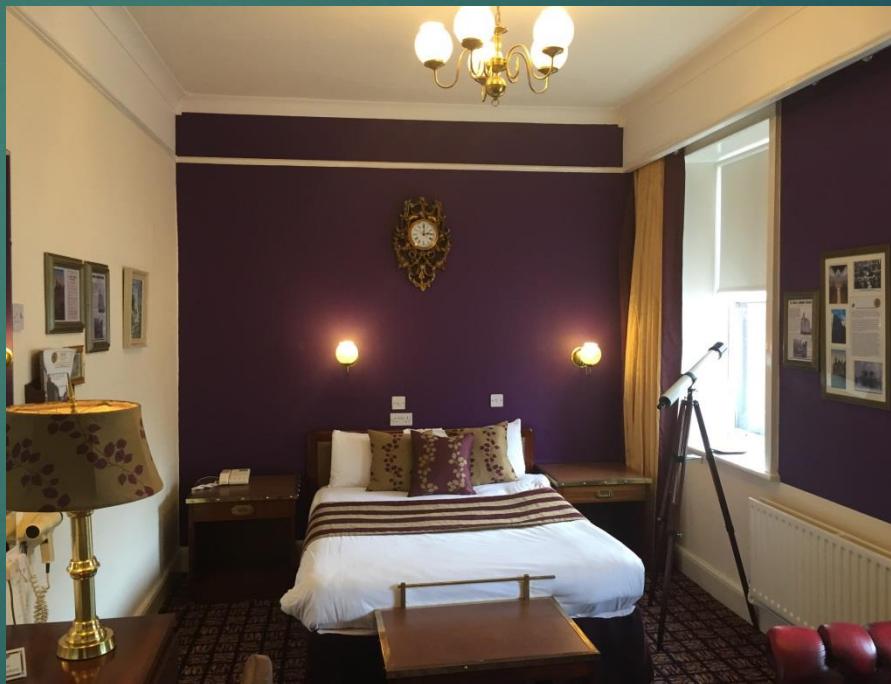
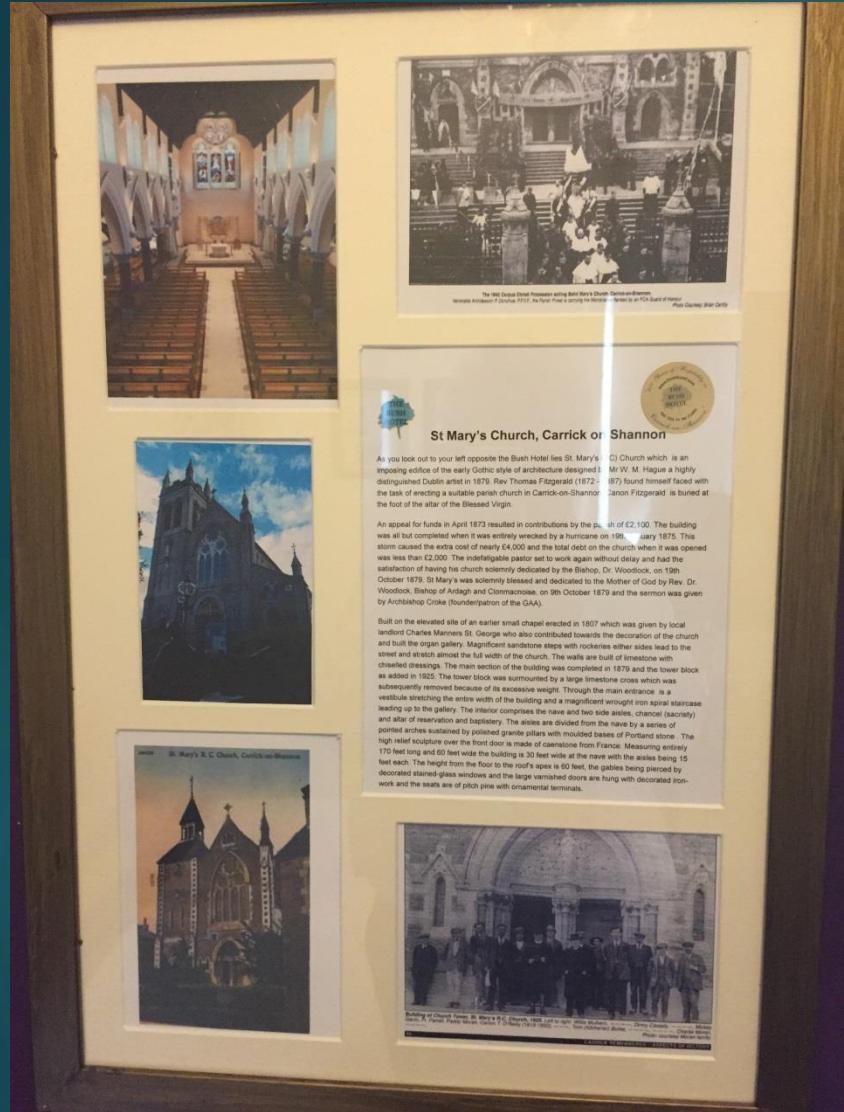


# Room 5



# Room 11





2009 inhouse mass facility in Bush Hotel!

Conference room dedicated to River Shannon,



The







## Visitors Lounge:

- Old Gaol
- Marist Convent
- Carrick Castle
- Carrick Bridge
- Visitors Book from 1900



# Community

- ▶ Meeting rooms policy FOC
- ▶ Residents associations
- ▶ Sporting organisations
- ▶ Disadvantaged
- ▶ Political parties

## Weekly

- ▶ Bridge, Toastmasters, knitting
- ▶ Ballroom dancing
- ▶ Carparking policy



## Leitrim Person of Year Awards



# Carrick on Shannon Tidy Towns Awards

## Hotelier halts auction of distressed farm

Co Leitrim hotel owner cheered after stopping sale of neighbour's property

MARESE McDONAGH

A Co Leitrim hotel owner who dramatically halted an auction on his premises was cheered and applauded by more than 100 people, many of them there to support a local farmer whose property had been put on the market against his wishes.

Joe Dolan, owner of the Bush Hotel in Carrick-on-Shannon, told the crowd: "You are very welcome but not under these circumstances."

He added: "Such events might be commonplace in the Shelbourne Hotel, but they are not in the Bush Hotel and never will be."

The auction last Friday was attended by members of the New Land League, which campaigns against evictions and has intervened in a number of auctions, as well as by many of the farmer's neighbours and supporters.

Seamus Carthy, the auctioneer involved in Friday's sale, insisted yesterday he had withdrawn the farm from the auction last Wednesday, having learned the previous day of the "issues" surrounding it. He said he had confirmed this in writing to both his client, the receiver, and to the New Land League organisation.

"I have never been involved in the sale of a family farm which was not consensual," said Mr Carthy.

But Jerry Beades, spokesman for the New Land League, said as far as the family

til the previous evening of the nature of the event and felt compromised and embarrassed.

"I apologise to my community," he added.

Mr Dolan later confirmed he knew the owners of the family farm, who were "from my parish", describing them as neighbours and friends who were involved in the same GAA club as his sons.

**'Community rallied'**

He added it was a small rural community where people shared each other's pain and happiness.

"The community rallied around my family when we had our own tragedy," said Mr Dolan.

His 20-year-old son Andrew died on New Year's Day 2012 after an unprovoked assault.

"Shame on us if we did any-

**66 Such events might be commonplace in the Shelbourne Hotel, but they are not in the Bush Hotel and never will be**

**Joe Dolan**  
owner of Bush Hotel,  
Carrick-on-Shannon

thing else," he said yesterday.

Mr Beades said the New Land League had contacted

## NEWS

### Hotel owner's intervention in auction goes viral

# Hotelier becomes internet sensation

**THE ORCHARD ROOM**  
Banqueting & Business Centre



Pictured are some of the protesters who attended the auction at the Bush Hotel on Friday. The event was...  
Photo: Willie Doherty

It is only just a few minutes long but a video of Carrick-on-Shannon hotelier, Joe Dolan, has gone viral racking up thousands of views since it was put online late last week.

The video was uploaded following a protest at an auction set to be held at The Bush Hotel last Friday.

Over 120 people turned up at the auction in a show of support for a Roscommon farming family whose property had originally been listed for sale on order from their bank.

The Leitrim Observer understands that the previous Wednesday the Auctioneer, REA Carthy, had withdrawn the property for sale following communication with the family involved.

Concern over the possibility the property could still be considered for sale led to a massive protest with neighbours, friends and family travelling from Croghan and Drumlin to show their support.

Representatives of the New Land League, a group which campaigns against evictions, were also in attendance as were representatives of Agri Aware and IFA.

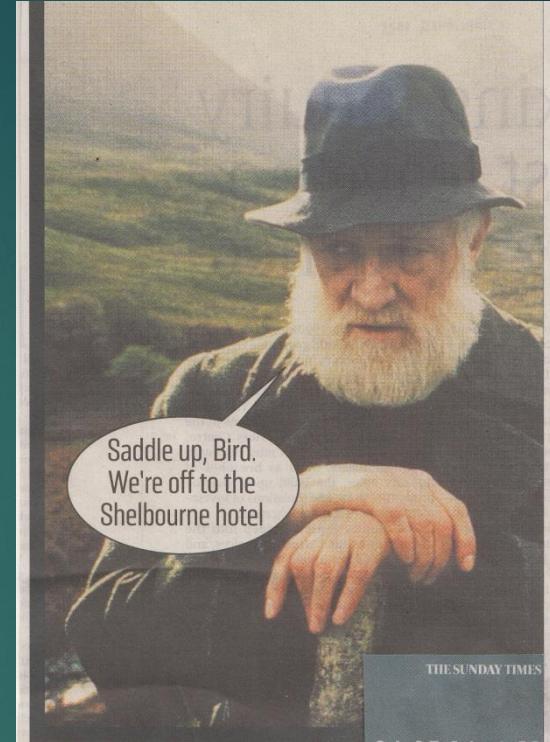
Speaking before the auction, the auctioneer, Seamus Carthy, pleaded with those in attendance to extend him and the other bidders present the same respect he had shown them in previous

til the previous evening.

He said that he and his family were "very embarrassed" in such a situation and noted that "such an event may be common in the Shelbourne Hotel but they are not in the Bush Hotel and never will be," he said to massive applause.

He acknowledged the legal contractual obligation he had to the auction organisers but said he felt that this had been superceded by health and safety concerns arising from the sheer number of people in the conference room.

Addressing the crowd, Bush Hotel owner, Joe Dolan, adding that he had contacted the gardaí and the



04.05.14 / 11

## New twist to an age-old story

It is inevitable that any incident involving the sale of repossessed farmland in a rural Irish community will prompt comparisons with John B Keane's *The Field*, in which an outsider is the only one to bid against Bull McCabe for a property he considers rightfully his own.

The reluctance of neighbours to capitalise on another's misfortune, and to bid in a bank sale of farmland, is still perceived as the only hindrance to the banks' ruthless enforcement of their rights over indebted farms. Until last week, at least.

As soon as Roscommon hotelier Joe Dolan realised he was hosting the auction of a neighbour's land against his will, he

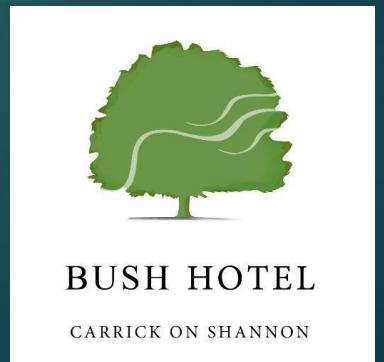


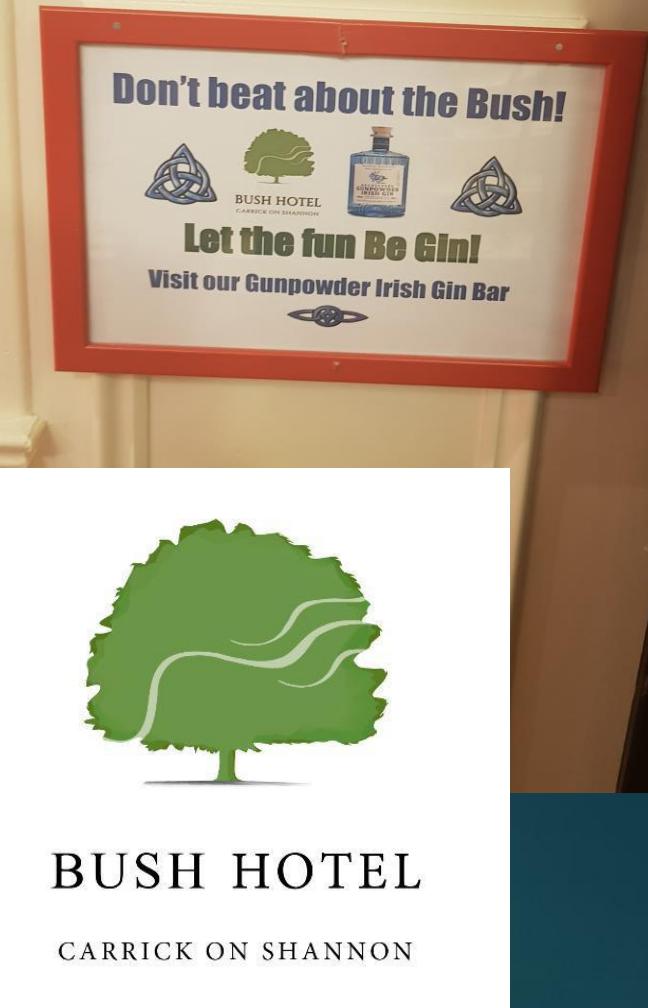
THE SUNDAY TIMES

THE IRISH TIMES  
2011

## Supporting local business & economy

- Purchasing policy, e.g. feature our food suppliers on menus
- Local fresh produce, Boxty, homemade bread
- Chamber of Commerce, IBEC , Tourism Organisations etc
- Providing significant employment
- Referral policy
- Supporting local infrastructure: *Rates, Utilities etc*

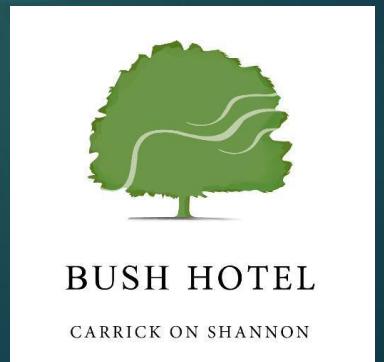




BUSH HOTEL  
CARRICK ON SHANNON

# Employment: Happy People Making People Happy

- Locally sourced
- Friends and Family
- Highest retention and lowest absentism
- 1993 (11) >>>>> 2018 ( 65) 8 of original 12 , 2 decsd
- Strong HR Policies (empowerment, appreciation respect etc
- Pay Base level but incentivised **all** the way !
- Very unorthodox, multiskilling ; everyone does everything incl. me
- Prof & personal development (CEB, ETB , Skillsnet, FI etc)
- Work life balance
- Social Club t/o €25k pa
- We like to party





+



= c. 1200 reviews  
scoring 86%

## Consistently No 1 Hotel in Carrick

2. Employees genuine , warm friendly and professional
3. Old world charm

*(local interest, history, photos, memorabilia)*

**(1. Location)**



## Threats/Challenges to sustainable in Leitrim & Border Counties

- Seasonality
- Regionality
- Competitiveness
- High Cost Base
- Brexit
- Lack of Government investment (-40%)
  - Product & Infrastructure
  - Marketing
  - Skills Training & Professional Development

*'.....car running on empty'*

# Broad Context & Extremes:

## Regionality

80% of all tourism revenue generated in just 6 counties  
(*Dublin, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Clare & Galway*)

## Seasonality:

As little as 9 weeks e.g. seaside resorts with hi domestic dependence

Weekday v. midweek (60% of business 6 on Fri and 3 on Sun... ‘*Sat night fever syndrome*’)

- Peak congestion insufficient capacity .....however critical mass precluded expansion

### Features

- Generally rural location
- Higher cost base e.g. rates, insurances etc  
Lower margins & profitability  
Lower capacity to reinvest & grow  
Typically more smaller enterprises
- Slowest post Tiger recovery

# Regionality: features

- ▶ To a point - broad correlation between remoteness and regionality
- ▶ Tourism is generally stronger in coastal counties :
  - More rugged dramatic scenery
  - Traditional with m. culture & heritage,
  - More water based activities, population centres,
  - Tourist accommodation base & general infra structure greatest
  - Population entertainment
  - Access points to the Island on coast
- ▶ Northwest 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest performing region (revenue & visitors) after midlands and Shannon corridor
- ▶ Lower spend! broad correlation with seasonality
- ▶ Greatest decline in B&B sector

# Seasonality: features

- (Weekend v Mid week)
- Least prevalent in Cities
- Broad correlation between remoteness and seasonality
- Border and Midlands: lowest performing region
- Greatest where high domestic dependence e.g. seaside resorts e.g. Tramore, Kilkee, Ballybunion
- Greatest decline in B&B sector
- Social issues: Unhealthy & disproportionate dependency P/T & casual employment

# Impediments

## Seasonality

- weather
- Daylight
- Regulatory issues. Water levels
- Closed seasons (e.g. salmon)
- Limited Access (limited public transport)
- Limited availability product: accommodation attraction & activities
- School term, Habit! Lifestyle etc.
- Perception: perceived remoteness & isolation

## Regionality

- Access : real & perceived
- Existing product and capacity and infrastructure
- Higher dependency on Car
  - hire (availability & price)
  - Ferries (relatively expensive)
- Higher dependency on public transport
- Perception & Habit!
- Limited availability product: access, accommodation attraction & activities (Chicken & Egg)

*Potential:*

*Product, the capacity and the infrastructure present*

*No capital investment required!*

## COMPETITIVENESS!

- VAT
- ZERO Rate Travel Tax

### Overheads

- Insurance Costs
- Utility Cost
- Property Tax
- Payroll Costs (....40%)

## Brexit?

- ▶ UK nearest & largest market
- ▶ Deepest rural/regional penetration of all overseas visitors
- ▶ Broadest seasonal spread
- ▶ Northwest and border counties particularly vulnerable
- ▶ Shopping breaks , weddings etc



County	Total	UK	% UK
Kerry	1026	166	16%
Limerick	212	47	22%
Clare	597	110	18%
Kilkenny	267	52	19%
Galway	135	243	18%
(Dublin)	4938	1593	32%*
Longford	8	5	63%
Leitrim	15	9	63%
Monaghan	28	18	64%

So in context of BREXIT Border counties like Leitrim:

- already regionally & seasonally challenged
- already have a disproportionately high dependency on disproportionately lower yielding UK sector

..... now seriously under threat re overseas tourism

However.....

Despite resourceful/innovative market and products development initiatives sustaining viable tourism is hugely challenging in areas with high regional and seasonal dependence

Tempting or even essential to look at alternative revenues streams or other sectors which are not compatible with existing tourism product , quite simply out of economic necessity as the alternatives is unemployment, emigration, etc



# Solutions?

Successive years of under investment (-40%)

Bizarrely less investment faster the growth....driving on empty

To Control our our vdestiny rather on fortuitous external factors

Require further and significant Investment :

- Infrastructure & product development
- Marketing (domestic & overseas)
- Training & Development

# What not to do!

## □ SEASIDE RESORT SCHEME

- 16 resorts, Achill, Kilkee, Bundoran, Ballybunion, Tramore
- Poor design/construction

*'worst excesses of mass tourism and insensitive development, '* Frank McDonald, Irish Times

## □ UPPER SHANNON RURAL RENEWAL SCHEME

- S23 type relief Leitrim, Roscommon, Longford, Apartments & holiday homes
- Poor physical and social infrastructure e.g. schools, creches

## □ Accelerated Capital Allowances for Investors in Hotel

New hotel in wrong places Over capacity of 15000 hotel rooms

Viable Hotels forced to close at the expense unsustainable hotels being kept open

## RESULT

- ▶ Distortion of market in housing/tourism accommodation
- ▶ Ultimately/cumulatively led to property crash & banking collapse
- (GRANTS Incentives ..... n/a)

Tax breaks for tourism: Have we forgotten?

# Consider:

- ▶ Tax incentivise marketing initiatives in seasonally//regionally disadvantaged sectors?  
*(similar to R&D supports in pharmaceuticals, medical devices, IT sectors)*



Ideally the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend of April Please!



 **Sarah Breen**  
@SarahJayBee

 Tourists in this restaurant trying to order wine. Denied. "Not even beer?" they plead. Lads, you're in Catholic Ireland now

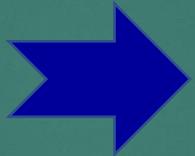
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1 FAVORITE

◀ ▶ ★

Lock Paddys Day BH to a w/E start domestic tourism

## Opportunities: Dublin's difficulty is rural Ireland's opportunity!



## Opportunities: Ireland Hidden Heartland



- ▶ Innovative and Resource full Product development  
Blue ways & Green ways

Center parcs, Tayto Park



### Creation of a specific tourism product :

- Focused on senior target groups (over 55)
- travelling in low/medium season (seasonality!)
- small inland river and lakeside towns (regionality!)
- 5 European countries (Italy, Macedonia, Slovenia, Ireland and Spain share €233k marketing grant in first instance – more in pot !



The Upper Shannon Erne Region of Cavan, Leitrim, Longford & Roscommon was delighted to host 50 Italian senior citizens from the 20th – 23rd of September as part of an EU LAKtive Tourism project.



Northern Periphery and  
Arctic Programme  
2014-2020



EUROPEAN UNION

Investing in your future  
European Regional Development Fund



## ‘Slow Tourism’

- (SAINT) Slow Adventure in the Northern Territories
- 3 year EU program for The Northern Periphery and Arctic 2014-2020 areas
- 7 partners: Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Highlands of Scotland and Leitrim and Derry

- An antidote to the increasingly faster global activities for those who want to slow down and are fed with pace.
- Slowing down while being on holiday is described by the term ‘slow travel’ or ‘slow tourism’ and is an emerging market segment that is forecasted to grow annually 10% in Western Europe during the next five years.
- Furthermore, it has been concluded as ‘a significant alternative to ‘sun and sea’ and cultural tourism

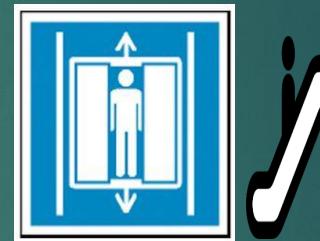


X

X

X ↗

Quality and pace of life!



X

X

X

X

- ▶ Concluding:
- ▶ Infrastructure, access existing etc
- ▶ Product and, capacity and availability existing .....(bedrooms are perishable!)
- ▶ Skilled trained labour available
- ▶ No capital outlay required!
- ▶ **Fact:** Investment in sustainable tourism generates the highest fastest and cleanest return to the economy, the exchequer and employment growth and in Leitrim tourism is the only viable vehicle
- ▶ So Sustainable tourism
  - Appreciate it
  - Respect it
  - Protect it
  - Spread the word ...(positively!)
  - Q's?

*Thank You!*