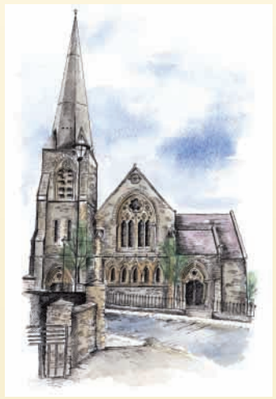
....historic trail around the town of Omagh



KEY (Map & details are not to scale)

- Tourist Information Centre
- 14 Historic Interest
- Tourist Trail
- Building Illustrated
- P Public Car Parks
- T Public Toilets
- Pathway

7. In 1777 the Mervyn Family built ***St Columba's Parish Church.*** Bishop Knox added a tower and spire. Enlarged in 1820, the interior boasts a series of fine stained glass windows and wall plaques in memory of local dignitaries.

8. ***The Sacred Heart Church,*** designed by William Hague and dedicated by Cardinal Logue in 1899, was built on the highest point in the town replacing the old chapel of St Peter and St Paul built in Brook Street in 1829. The Rose Window with the High Altar below was provided by parishioners, who had emigrated to New York, as a memorial to the late Archbishop Hughes, First Archbishop of St Patrick's Cathedral, New York. It has been recently re-furbished.

9. ***Castle Street,*** sometimes called Dry Bridge Street and named after an imposing residence that stood on the site of the present courthouse.

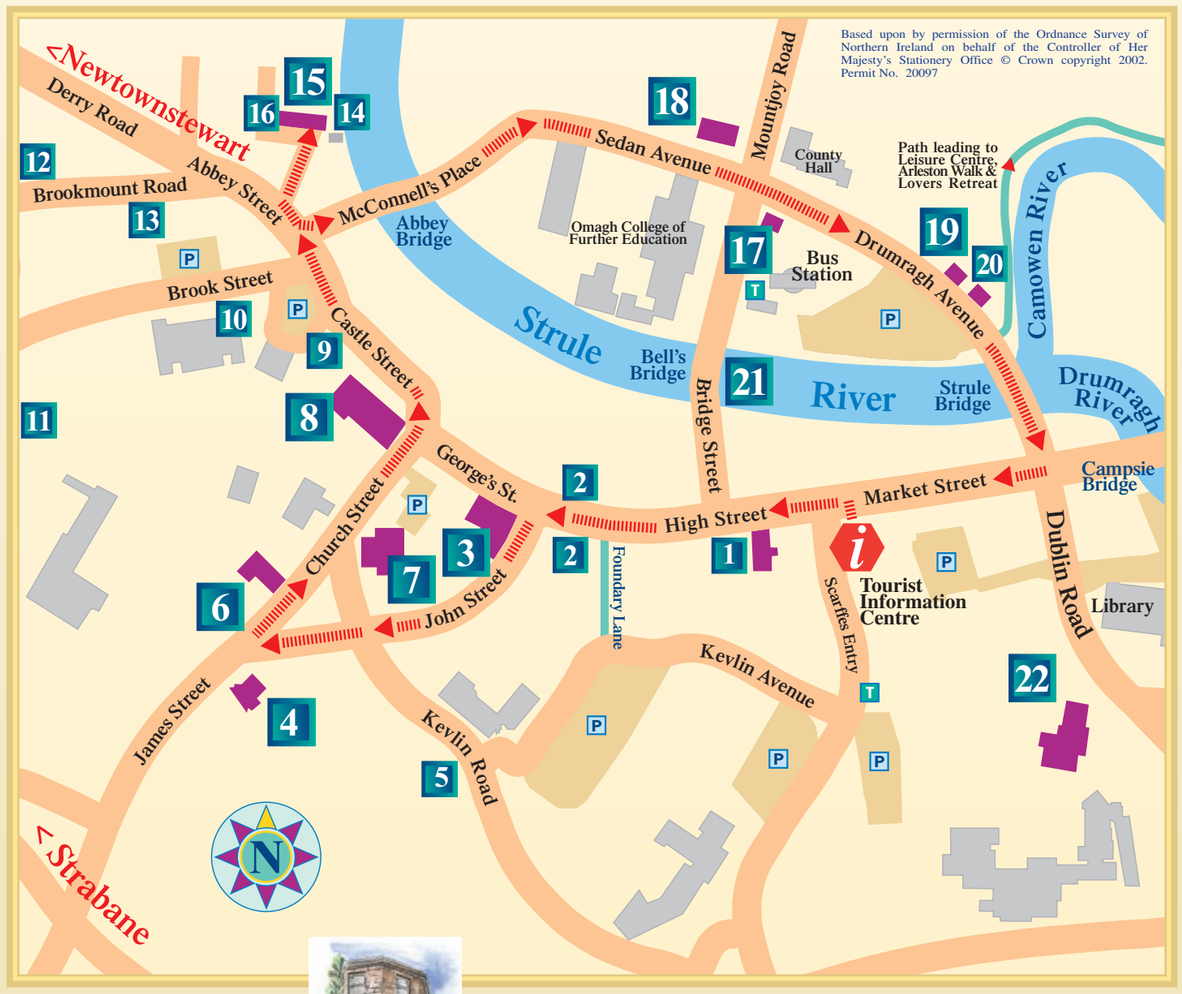
10. ***Brook Street*** is named after a brook that formed part of the defences of a fortress built on the site of the Friary. Once one of Omagh's populous streets, it contained the Catholic Church and a fever hospital in the 1800s. There are now no dwellings on this street.

11. ***The Loreto Convent*** had its origins in George's Street while Dublin builder, J. Neville, constructed the present building in 1859. Its gothic design makes it one of the finest buildings in the town. The Chapel has some fine stained glass by Mayer of Munich. Rose Kavanagh, the famous poetess from Killadroy, Beragh, attended the school. She is buried in the graveyard of the Forth Chapel, Augher, where there is a stained glass window in her memory.

12. A Plaque on Pretoria Terrace on the Brookmount Road was the birthplace of ***Jimmy Kennedy*** (26th July 1902) song writer of many popular songs before and after the second world war, including "Red Sails in the Sunset", "The Teddy Bears' Picnic", "The Isle of Capri" and "South of the Border", to name but a few.

13. ***Michael Street*** is the shortest in Ireland and the owner, a local publican, Michael McGlinchey, built one house.

14. ***Franciscan Friary*** (1464-1603) The old ivy covered wall along the riverbank is said to be part of an old monastic foundation. *(As seen from Abbey Bridge)*



15. ***Omagh Gaol*** once stood where the Courthouse is today. The present Gaol was built in the 1790's and opened in 1804. It closed one hundred years later in 1904. The entrance was via the still existing pointed archway.

16. The Keep or Governor's residence, which stands in the centre of the site, consists of an octagonal three-storey sandstone block built by Hargrave in 1823. It has a gallery around the first floor in order to allow the Governor to walk around and view the prisoners from above, the females on the left and the males on the right.

17. ***The Cenotaph*** is a granite obelisk on three dressed granite steps. It was unveiled on the 28th September 1927 by the Duke of Abercorn the then Governor of Northern Ireland. Its full title is the County Tyrone War Memorial, representing the County's 2000 dead in the First World War. 18. Opposite is the ***Orange Hall,*** built in 1869.

19. The Duchess of Abercorn unveiled the ***Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers' South African War Memorial*** on the 25th November 1904 in High Street where it remained until the 1960s, when it was considered as a traffic hazard and resited to Drumragh Avenue. In grey granite, it is a memorial to the men of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers who fell in the Boer war 1899 - 1902. The central pedestal supports a bronze angelic figure with support on either side bearing a seated bronze angelic figure by Sidney March. The copper casts with names are by Elkington and Co.

Drumragh Avenue leads to Strule Bridge built in 1966, at the confluence of the Camowen and Drumragh rivers, which come together to form the river Strule. 20. Following the bomb atrocity in Omagh on 15th August 1998, a ***Memorial Garden*** was constructed close to the site in the grounds at County Hall. It is a place of quiet reflection in an otherwise bustling market town.

There is a pleasant riverside walk from the Strule Bridge to the Leisure Centre, which passes the rear of Millbank House and Scotts Mill, which is over 150 years old.

The Arleston Walk brings you past the weir, which fed water to the mill and leads to the Old Mountfield and Arleston Roads. Fine views of the Camowen River are seen from this walk and because of its remoteness you may be lucky to spot herons, kingfishers and other rare birds that make their homes by the quiet riverbank.

Lovers Retreat is a public park, not far from the town centre, with a weir and salmon leap. Its name comes from a weeping willow, which stands in the middle of the park. When in full leaf, it is said that lovers would retreat within its branches out of sight of preying eyes. The weir supplied power to Donnelly's Flax Mill during the 19th century.

21. *(Front Cover)* Why is Bell's Bridge so called? The popular theory is that the name was given because you can see the bell towers of both the Sacred Heart and St Columba's Churches from the bridge. While this is in fact true, the bridge, which was built sometime between 1883 - 1886, is actually named after James Bell a baker and grocer who had his original premises opposite Strain's Bar on Bridge Street.

22. ***First Presbyterian Church*** There has been a Presbyterian house of Worship on the Dublin Road since 1673. The Rev. Andrew Macafee, who was installed on the 10th April 1887 devised the scheme for the erection of the present church buildings. The building cost an estimated £6,000 and opened for public worship on 30th May 1897.