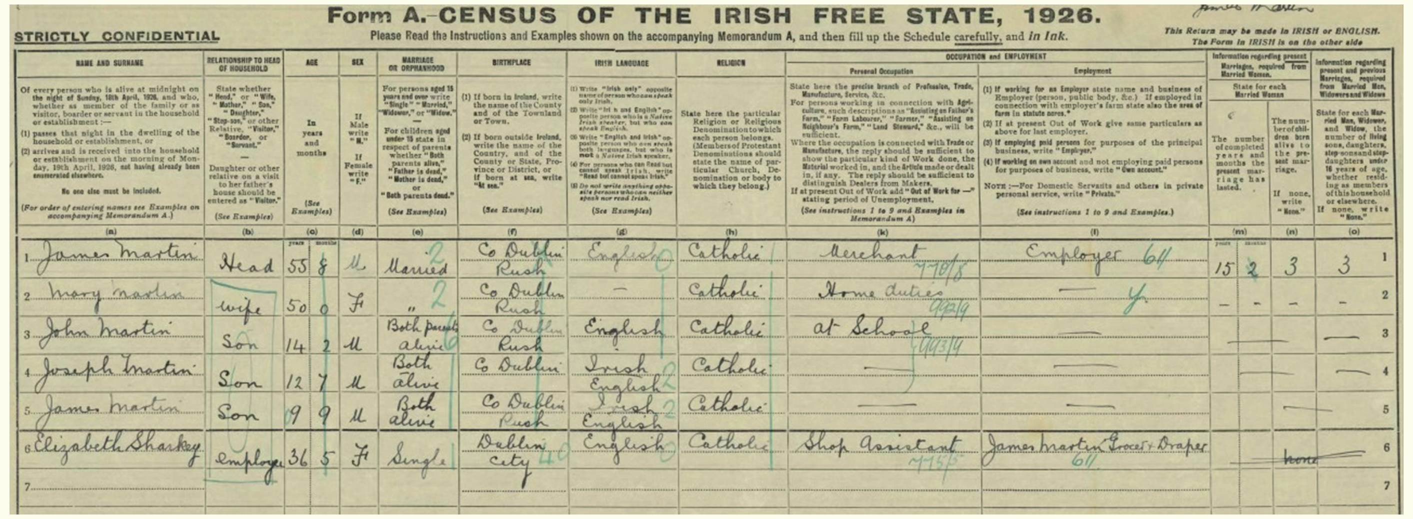
The Martin Family

Another example of how the same names continue to appear throughout Rush's history is the Martin family. Joseph Walsh and Mary Ann Weldon's daughter, Mary Walsh, married James Martin, and together they owned Martin's Shop, a business remembered fondly by generations of Rush people. Their son Joseph married Ivy McGuinness, and their own son, also Joseph, continued running the shop until it was sold to Fingal County Council in the early 2000s. Although the building now serves as the Rush Multi-Purpose Youth Centre, ask almost anyone in the village where it is, and they'll still call it "Martin's Shop." Some names become part of local history and simply refuse to disappear.

Martin's Bar courtesy of NGossan Agri



Form A. CENSUS OF THE IRISH FREE STATE, 1926.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Please Read the Instructions and Examples shown on the accompanying Memorandum A, and then fill up the Schedule carefully, and in Ink.

James Martin

This Return may be made in IRISH or ENGLISH. The Form in IRISH is on the other side

	Name and Surname	Relationship to Head of Household	Age (years)	Age (months)	Sex	Marriage or Orphanhood	Birthplace	Irish Language	Religion	Personal Occupation	Employment	(m) years	(m) months	(n)	(o)
1	James Martin	Head	55	8	M	Married	Co Dublin Rush	English	Catholic	Merchant	Employer	15	2	3	3
2	Mary Martin	wife	50	0	F	"	Co Dublin Rush	—	Catholic	Home duties	—	-	-	-	-
3	John Martin	Son	14	2	M	Both parents alive	Co Dublin Rush	English	Catholic	at School	—	—			—
4	Joseph Martin	Son	12	7	M	Both alive	Co Dublin	Irish English	Catholic	—	—	—			—
5	James Martin	Son	9	9	M	Both alive	Co Dublin Rush	Irish English	Catholic	—	—	—			—
6	Elizabeth Sharkey	Employee	36	5	F	Single	Dublin City	English	Catholic	Shop Assistant	James Martin Grocer & Draper			none	
7															

1926 Census - The Martin Family, STAT/1/12/72, Mill Views, Rush, Residents of a House Form. Reproduced with the kind permission of the Director of the National Archives

Main Street c.1910-1939 ©National Library of Ireland, Eason Photographic Collection

Rush Village

The Walsh family is only one example. Similar stories can be told about many of the old Rush families. The Palmers, Fagans, Kellys, Delaneys, St Lawrences, Hoares, Martins, Weldons and many others appear repeatedly throughout the census returns, parish records and local histories. Other descendants of the Walsh family are Coyles, McGuinness' and the Kanes of Hands Lane. Their descendants still live in the village, continuing traditions that stretch back well over a century.

Looking through the 1901 and 1926 Census returns, it becomes clear that Rush has always been more than a collection of houses. It has been a farming and seafaring community where neighbours became friends, friends became family and family connections spread across almost every road in the parish.

Children grew up together, married locally, inherited farms, opened businesses and helped shape the village their parents and grandparents had known before them. Today, Rush continues to grow. New housing estates stand where market gardens and farmland once flourished. Modern businesses have replaced old shops, while busy roads carry traffic where horses and carts once travelled. Yet beneath those visible changes lies a remarkable continuity. Many of today's residents can trace their roots to families recorded in the earliest census returns, while familiar surnames continue to appear in local schools, sports clubs, businesses, and community organisations.

Perhaps that is what makes Rush so special. Heritage is not only found in old buildings or historic monuments. It lives in the stories passed from one generation to the next, in familiar family names, and in the businesses that continue to serve the community decades after they first opened their doors.

Rush has certainly changed over the last hundred years. Its landscape has evolved, its population has grown, and its buildings have found new purposes. But the heart of the village remains the same – a close-knit community built by generations of families whose stories continue to shape Rush today. The greatest reminder of our past is not simply the buildings that remain, but the people who still call Rush home.

View from the Square c.1910-1939 ©National Library of Ireland, Eason Photographic Collection

Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall
Fingal County Council

Ceangal
Clár den Chomhairle Oidhreachta
A Heritage Council programme

RUSH Tourism

Changing Fingal

Stories from my Place...

Main Street, Rush, c.1900-1939
© National Library of Ireland, Eason Photographic Collection

RUSH

The Village has Changed....
the Families have Stayed

Changing Fingal-Rush, the Village Has Changed...the Families Have Stayed

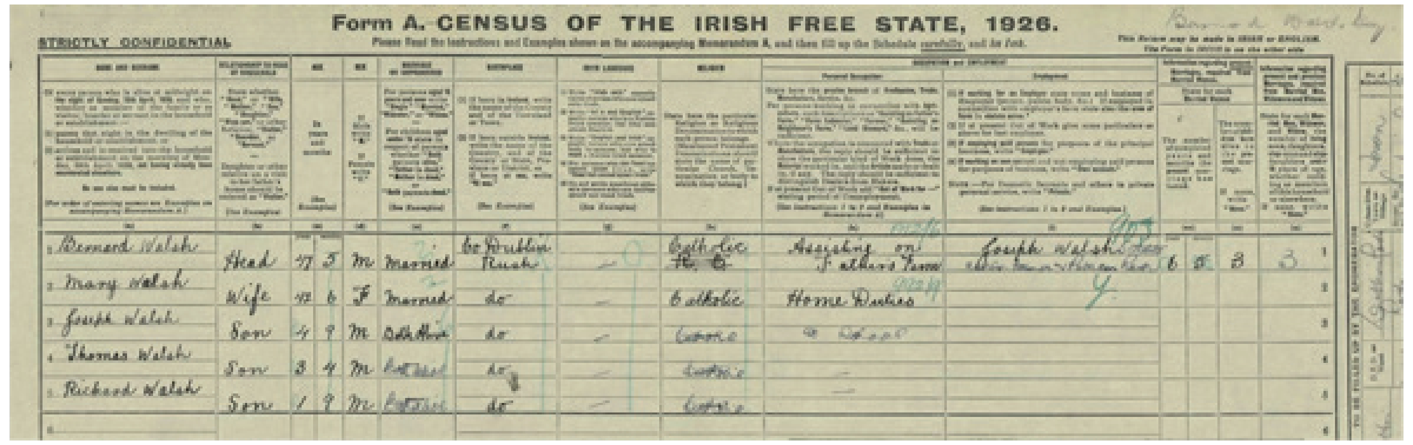
Introduction

Stand on Main Street in Rush today and it is hard to imagine just how much the village has changed over the past century. Housing estates now stand where fields once stretched towards the sea. A youth centre occupies the building once known to generations as Martin's Shop. Hoare's Garage has become Rush Service Station, while Walsh's Pub continues to welcome customers much as it has for well over a hundred years. The streetscape has changed, businesses have evolved, and the population has grown, but one thing has remained remarkably constant – the families who have called Rush home. The release of the 1926 Census, alongside the 1901 Census, provides a fascinating snapshot of life in the village. Looking through the records, many of the names are still instantly recognisable today. They remind us that the history of Rush is not simply told through its buildings, but through the generations of people who lived, worked and raised their families here.

The Walsh Family

Few families illustrate this better than the Walsh family. Their story begins with Matthew Walsh, born in 1770, who lived in Hoare's Cottage opposite what is now the soccer club. Matthew worked as the foreman carpenter on the Kenure Estate, one of the largest employers in the area. As foreman carpenter, he helped construct and maintain many of the estate buildings and cottages. In many ways, he helped shape the physical landscape of Rush long before his family became woven into the commercial life of the village.

His son, Bernard Walsh, married Mary Kearns of Featherbed Lane and, during the mid 1800s, relocated to the premises we know today as Walsh's Pub. It was far more than a public house. Like many village businesses of the time, it also served as a grocery and general shop, supplying local families with everything from flour and tea to conversation and community. Long before supermarkets arrived, shops like Walsh's were the heart of village life.



Form A. CENSUS OF THE IRISH FREE STATE, 1926.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

1 Bernard Walsh	Head	47	5	M	Married	Co Dublin Rush	—	Catholic R.C.	Assisting on Fathers Farm	Joseph Walsh [illegible]	6	5	3	3
2 Mary Walsh	Wife	47	6	F	Married	do	—	Catholic	Home Duties					
3 Joseph Walsh	Son	4	9	M	[illegible]	do	—	Catholic	[illegible]					
4 Thomas Walsh	Son	3	4	M	[illegible]	do	—	Catholic						
5 Richard Walsh	Son	1	9	M	[illegible]	do	—	Catholic						

1926 Census-Bernard Walsh and family, STAT/1/12/72, Main Street, Residents of a House Form. Reproduced with the kind permission of the Director of the National Archives

Lower Main Street c.1910-1939 ©National Library of Ireland, Eason Photographic Collection

When Bernard died at a young age, his wife Mary took over the business, raising her family while keeping the shop and public house operating. It was an enormous responsibility, but one shared by many strong women whose contribution to village life often went unrecorded. Eventually, Mary handed responsibility for both the business and the family farm to her eldest son, Joseph Walsh.

Joseph married Mary Ann Weldon from Lower Main Street, linking two well-known Rush families. In those days, marriages often united neighbouring farms and businesses. There was an old saying that "land married land," and in Rush there was more than a little truth in it. Good farmland was precious, road frontage was valuable and, if a public house happened to be included, so much the better. Their son Bernard married Mary Farrell, whose family home stood on the site now occupied by Adam & Eve. The 1926 Census records Bernard as a farmer working on his father's land. Those fields once stretched across what is now Tayleurs Point and other areas of modern Rush. Looking at today's housing estates, it is difficult to imagine crops growing where families now live, but that is exactly how the landscape has changed over the last hundred years.

Not every member of the Walsh family married. Bernard's brother Matthew remained a bachelor, while sisters Annie and Bridget also remained single. Together they devoted their lives to running the family business and helped ensure that Walsh's Pub remained a familiar part of village life for another generation.

Eventually, Bernard and Mary's surviving sons continued the family traditions. Joe took over the public house, while Thomas took responsibility for the glasshouses. Today, Walsh's Pub remains in family hands, while descendants of the family still live in the original home behind Adam & Eve and on parts of the land once farmed by their ancestors. Few businesses can claim such an unbroken family connection.

Walsh's Pub and Upper Main street c.1910-1930 © National Library of Ireland, Eason Photographic Collection

Walsh's Pub courtesy of Rush Tourism

The Hoares

The Walsh family story also helps explain another familiar landmark in Rush. Matthew Walsh and his wife Ellen Hanlon had a daughter, Elizabeth, who married Captain Thomas Hoare. Their descendants established Hoare's Garage, a business that evolved with changing times into today's Rush Service Station.

The horses and carts disappeared, motor cars replaced bicycles and tractors became larger than anyone in 1901 could ever have imagined, but the family remained rooted in the same location. It is another example of how businesses have adapted while families have stayed.

Elizabeth Walsh who married Thomas Hoare courtesy of John Walsh

The Strand Pub

Bernard Walsh and Mary Kearns' daughter Judith married Joseph St Lawrence, but both died at a young age, leaving a large family of children. As was common at the time, relatives stepped in to care for them. One such relative was Bridget St Lawrence, who was married to Thomas O'Hara, proprietor of the Strand Bar. Bridget later left the premises to her nephew Patrick St Lawrence (1867–1958), whose son Patrick continued the family tradition of running the business. Today, descendants of the St Lawrence family still live in Rush, proving once again that while addresses may change, family roots often remain firmly planted.

The Strand Bar courtesey of NGossan Agi, 23 July 2026