



The History of Clonakilty Food Co.

Discover the full story behind the making of Ireland's favourite black pudding





The Beginning

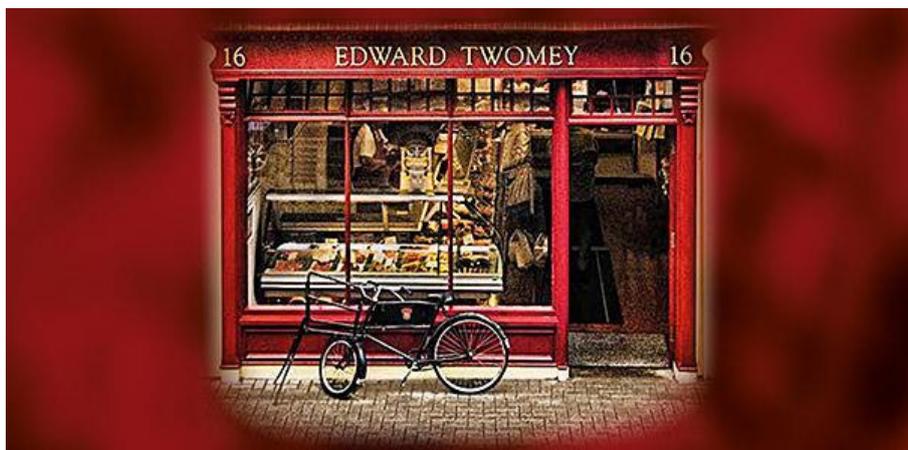
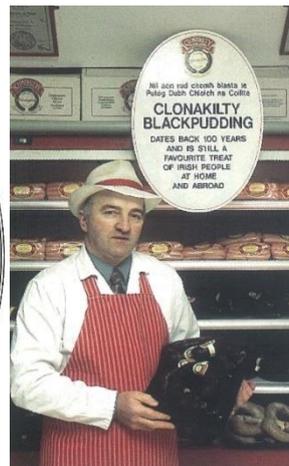
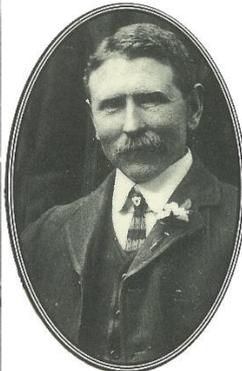
Our story begins in the 1800's in Philip Harrington's butcher shop in sovereign street Clonakilty. Johanna O'Brien a farmer's wife from Sam's cross wanted to subsidise the household income by making blackpudding for Harrington's butcher shop.

The Secret Recipe

When Johanna retired Philip Harrington continued to make the popular blackpudding. The recipe which included a secret spice mix was faithfully handed down to Philip's family and for over a century, the black pudding was made by Paddy Allman, Dan Harrington and Con O'Callaghan.

Not only was it sold from the butcher shop it was sent in parcels to Clonakilty people both at home and abroad.

In 1969 the butcher shop was sold as a going concern to Patrick McSweeney, in 1976 the butcher shop which included the black pudding recipe was bought by his nephew Edward Twomey. To this day the recipe for the Blackpudding remains the same.





Butcher Shop to Farm Yard

The Butcher Shop

Edward initially had no interest in making blackpudding when he first took over the butcher shop in 1976 and saw it as a chore more than anything else. Edward was far more interested in the meat side of the business and even attempted to stop production of the blackpudding at one stage. However, the customers did not agree and when Edward saw the demand, he had realised it was best to continue making the blackpudding.

The Potential

It was evident how popular the blackpudding was as people travelled from all over Munster to buy it from the butcher shop. Pensioners used their free bus passes to travel on the early bus to Clonakilty from Cork City and beyond to stock up on black pudding for themselves & neighbours before getting the return bus home in the afternoon. These valuable customers effectively spread the word of this great tasting black pudding and week by week it became more and more popular. Edward knew the importance of guarding the secret spice recipe for this reason either he or his wife Colette, were the only people to mix the spice.

The Logo

As the customer base extended beyond the local area, it was decided to label the blackpudding. A local sign writer named Tomás Tuipéar was asked to draw a logo for Clonakilty Blackpudding which would incorporate the heritage and the tradition of the blackpudding and include the Harrington name.

Maroon and cream were selected as company colours.

Carbery Meats

A van displaying the new logo was put on the road delivering black pudding throughout the entire Munster region. These included butcher shops' independent shops and Supervalus.

By now the new business had out-grown the butcher shop, and the making was moved to Twomey's farm on the edge of Clonakilty town. Carbery Meats was the name chosen for the business, Carbery being the barony name of the area and a drawing of the farm was included on the Carbery Meats logo.

Clonakilty Blackpudding Co.

The Carbery Meats van carried Clonakilty Blackpudding, in 1986 Clonakilty Whitepudding was created which was soon followed by Clonakilty isipini. These along with a selection of fresh meats were delivered by the Carbery meats van. Later the trading name was changed to Clonakilty Food Co.

The Twomey's wanted to make Clonakilty Blackpudding available to all who wanted it from their local shop. Edward's personality and belief in the product helped propel Clonakilty Blackpudding to get the recognition it deserved. The business got branded t-shirts, hats, bags and aprons made up with the company logo and the taste and quality of the black pudding, word of mouth did the rest. It wasn't long before Clonakilty Blackpudding was being mentioned in the press and media.



The Clonakilty Collection

We are always looking for ways to enhance our product range. As the years went by, our product range has expanded to include Clonakilty Whitepudding, Clonakilty Sausages, Clonakilty Rashers and Clonakilty Bacon Joints.



Clonakilty Blackpudding

One thing that will remain untouched is the Clonakilty Blackpudding secret recipe.

Clonakilty Whitepudding

In 1986, with the help of the food facility at University College Cork, Colette Twomey created a white pudding to complement the now successful Clonakilty Blackpudding. The Clonakilty Whitepudding recipe is an original Twomey creation and enjoyed instant success when it was introduced. Using the wholesome ingredients supplied by Irish farmers, Clonakilty Whitepudding was, and still is made using traditional methods combining pork, oatmeal, onions and a blend of spices. This special blend of ingredients, the texture and the spicy taste of Clonakilty Whitepudding have made this delicacy an Irish favourite.



Clonakilty Sausages

Clonakilty Food Co. first produced a traditional sausage in 1986 using 100% Irish pork. These were initially sold from the counter in the butcher shop, and as a result of their popularity they were packaged and sold in shops all over Ireland.

Today, the Clonakilty Sausage range has greatly evolved to satisfy all customers' tastes and includes: Clonakilty Ispíní Sausages, Clonakilty Cocktail Sausages, Clonakilty Butcher Style Sausages, Clonakilty Traditional Irish Pork Sausages, Clonakilty Gluten Free Sausages, Clonakilty Gluten Free Ispíní Móra and Clonakilty Blackpudding Sausages.

Clonakilty Blackpudding Sausages were launched in March 2017, they are the latest addition to the sausage range. Bringing together the best of Clonakilty, this sausage combines the traditional flavour of our Clonakilty Sausages with the unmistakable texture and flavour of our famous Clonakilty Blackpudding.

Clonakilty Rashers

Clonakilty Rashers were the last step to completing the Clonakilty Breakfast. In 2003, Mild Cure Clonakilty Rashers were launched. Later, in 2007, the Dry Cured and Oak Smoked Rashers were introduced, followed by a thick cut smoked rasher in 2009.

Clonakilty Slisíní Rashers contain no added water and are made from specially selected premium pork that has full traceability and is 100% Irish. Just like all of the Clonakilty products, our rashers are made using traditional methods and the finest of local ingredients.

Clonakilty Bacon Joints

In 2010, the Clonakilty Bacon Joint was launched and is available in three variations: Boiling Bacon Joint, Roasting Bacon Joint and Smoked Roasting Joint. We use prime cuts of 100% Bord Bia Quality Assured Irish Pork which have been cured and smoked authentically to give a beautiful flavour and succulent texture to our bacon joints. Just like all of the Clonakilty Collection, Clonakilty Bacon is a true mark of Irish farmers' quality produce and our passion for quality, taste and tradition.

Gluten Free Range

Due to numerous requests and our customer's ever-changing dietary requirements, our gluten free black and white puddings were launched in 2011. Our gluten free range has proven to be extremely popular and in 2017 was awarded a Bronze Free from Food Award for Innovation. In 2017, Clonakilty black and white gluten free mini puddings became available to buy on Ocado, a dedicated online grocery retailer in the UK.

Since the launch of Clonakilty Gluten Free Black and White Pudding, the gluten free range has grown significantly and now also includes: Gluten Free Clonakilty Sausages, Gluten Free Clonakilty Ispíní Móra Sausages (Traditional style) and Gluten Free Clonakilty Ispíní Beaga (Cocktail) Sausages. The Clonakilty Gluten Free range are indistinguishable from our original products and do not compromise on taste or quality.



West Cork to The World Stage

Shows and Exhibitions

In the 1980s, Edward and Colette Twomey wanted to share the taste of Clonakilty Blackpudding, Whitepudding and sausages and so a road show began. They attended the Cork Show, Bord Bia cookery nights and the RDS Spring show to name but a few. These shows were used as a platform for consumers to taste their products but they also helped increase awareness of the Clonakilty name, Consumers started to ask for Clonakilty Blackpudding and Whitepudding at their local shops.

One of the big breaks for the business was when the owners of Cromleach lodge in Sligo served the black pudding to a guest for breakfast. He really liked the pudding and it turned out he was one of the directors for the Quinsworth chain of supermarkets after that everybody wanted in. Superquinn and Dunnes Stores made contact and so it continued until all major supermarkets were stocking Clonakilty Blackpudding. The rest is history!

Today the company continues to grow but one thing that will remain untouched is the Clonakilty secret recipe.

Soon the supermarkets were centralising their distribution so Clonakilty Food Co needed to drop its products to one location.

Moving to little island

In 1992 the company needed department of food approved licence facility as none was available to rent in Clonakilty production was moved to Little Island on the outskirts of Cork City.

In 2005 Edward Twomey passed away after achieving so much, Colette had the difficult decision of whether to sell the business or to hold onto it. With 3 children who might be interested in being part of the business, Colette decided to ensure that they would have that option.

In Little Island, Clonakilty Food Co expanded further and entered the UK market. In 2012, listings in the UK multiples commenced and in August of 2017, Woolworths in Australia began selling our black pudding.

The business has grown over time and Colette and the company have embraced the challenges and they continue to focus on improving and innovating. She has not forgotten her roots and where it all began. Today Clonakilty Food Co is still very much a traditional family business and the butcher shop is still trading at 16 Pearse Street Clonakilty.

In recent years, Clonakilty Food Company has continued to attend shows and exhibitions throughout Ireland, the UK and even Australia. These include the Ploughing Championships, Taste of Dublin, Women's Mini Marathon, Taste of London, Foodie Festivals, BBC Good Food Shows, Ideal Home Show London, and much more. You can keep an eye on our UK page to see where we'll be heading next!



Awards

The first National award we received was in 1989 at the Butcher's Association National Awards with Clonakilty Blackpudding and Clonakilty Whitepudding winning first prize in their respective categories which in turn gave them national recognition. Clonakilty Food Co has won awards in Ireland, the UK and France ever since.

Our awards include Great Taste Awards, Blas na hÉireann, Agribusiness Awards, Free from Food Awards, Ulster Bank Business Achievers, National Irish Food Awards and Commanderie des Fins Goustiers du Duché d'Alençon, to name but a few.

The Present Day

Back to where it all began

As business continued to grow, we once again outgrew our production facility in Little Island this led to us looking for a suitable site closer to home. The big undertaking was completed when a brand-new custom-built production facility was opened in Clonakilty in October 2017. The new production facility also includes administration offices, new product development facilities and distribution.

It will also host a new visitor centre which is due to open in 2020. The vision for the centre is to immerse visitors in the history and tradition of Clonakilty Blackpudding, to offer them an opportunity to see how it's made, and to highlight the company's pride in the town it originates from.



Today

When Clonakilty products were first launched, there was a trend in the market for traditional homemade foods, with no artificial colours or preservatives, 'like our grandmother used to make'. Customers and chefs alike realised the potential of our products and the flexibility they offer. While traditionally served as part of a breakfast, the Clonakilty range can also be a special addition to enhance any starter, salad or main course.



Clonakilty Food Co. will continue to build on the values held by owner, Colette Twomey, the team at Clonakilty and their belief in the product. This will be achieved through consistent focus on quality, not forgetting our traditions or roots and remaining loyal to local suppliers. Today, the secret of the Clonakilty Blackpudding spice mix is known only to Colette Twomey and remains a closely guarded secret.

