

# The man who made Shannon, Brendan O'Regan, is brought to book

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IT IS no exaggeration to state that Brendan O'Regan is one of the singularly most important – yet relatively unknown – figures of 20th century Ireland.

He was a serial innovator recognised for his role in the opening of the world's first duty-free airport shop and the invention of Irish Coffee. Other O'Regan initiatives include Ireland's first industrial estate, hotel school and new town, a development agency for overseas aid, a community development agency and three separate peace organisations – most notably Co-Operation Ireland.

He chaired Bord Fáilte and Shannon Development, which he established as the country's only regional development agency. What T.K. Whitaker was to public and civil service, Brendan O'Regan was to the semi-state and private sector.

Now, for the first time, the Sixmilebridge man's extensive and far-reaching contribution is fully explored and recounted by Brian O'Connell and collaborator Cian O'Carroll.

This authoritative biography of Brendan O'Regan sets out his legacy in a well-researched and compelling narrative. It is essential reading for anyone seeking a well-founded and original perspective on the evolution of Irish industry, aviation and tourism over the last seventy years.

O'Regan combined a benign Irish nationalism with a concern for others. The former drove him to show what the first generation of free Irishmen could achieve and the latter to generate sustainable employment both in Ireland and the developing world. His tireless work for reconciliation and social justice, was fittingly marked when Co-operation Ireland, hosted the event where the historic handshake between the British monarch and a former IRA leader took place.

Brian O'Connell, and collaborator, Cian O'Carroll, knew Brendan O'Regan well through their own involvement with Shannon Development. With good foresight, they persuaded him to record orally his personal memories of the events and the many prominent personalities in Ireland and abroad he met and dealt with.

O'Connell's biography combines this account with interviews of nearly 100 of O'Regan's contemporaries, in addition to extensive original material from Irish state archives. Brendan O'Regan – innovator, visionary and peacemaker is an invaluable new contribution to the history of those key transitional years between the era of creating statehood and modern Ireland.

Reprinted in full from here:

<https://www.limerickpost.ie/2018/05/12/shannon-brendan-oregan/>