

Danescourt House

Danescourt House is located off the Main Street of Athboy, to the south of the town. The house is known by various names including Danson's court, Dunstan's court and Dnacescourt. The two storey house was erected about 1770 and has a double height hall addition to the east and an older block set perpendicularly to the west. In 1901 the house had seventeen rooms, twelve windows at the front and ten outbuildings. Athboy Cricket club had its grounds in Danescourt demesne.

Danes court was erected on the site of the Carmelite monastery of Athboy. The Carmelites came to Ireland about 1260, and one of their four chief houses was in Athboy. The monastery included an hospital and a house of hospitality. In 1540, the Abbot of Athboy was forced to surrender the property, which boasted a church and belfry, a cloister, a stone tower, a mansion, eight messuages (houses) and four acres of meadow at Adenstown called Friars' Meadow. In 1543, the monastery was granted to Thomas Casey and it was later turned into a horse mill.

In the 1830s Danescourt was described as a good two storey house. In the 1850s John Webb was leasing Danescourt from Mrs. Warner.

In the 1870s Thomas Willet Donaldson lived at Danescourt. His daughter Rosalie Mary married James Brunton Stephen's, a Scotsman who achieved fame in Australia for his humorous poems.

In 1901 Ivon Price, district inspector, R.I.C. and his family were living at Danescourt and owned the property. In 1911 the house was the property of Catherine Moore and was lived in by Archibald Rutherford.

Dangan Castle



Dangan Castle



One of the bridges at Dangan

Dangan castle, the family home of the Duke of Wellington, has been in ruins with over two hundred years. The shell of the house stands in parkland to the north of Summerhill village. During the 1740s the old house at Dangan burned down and was replaced by a new house of plain design. The house had a large hall where music, dancing, shuttlecock, draughts and prayers took their turn. The chapel and library at Dangan were attributed to Francis Johnson. In the 1730 and 40's canals and gardens were created. The canals were replaced by a lake.

In 1739 the grounds had twenty five obelisks, a fort with a cannon and a lake with three ships. The obelisks at Dangan are attributed to the design of Richard Castle. Only two brick obelisk now survive from the extensive gardens. The farmyard, stable block and a number of bridges survive today.

The lands at Dangan belonged to the Cusack family in medieval times. In the fifteenth century the property came into the hands of the Wellesley family.

Garrett Wesley was portreeve (mayor) of Trim in 1694 and M.P for Trim, Athboy and Meath. He died childless in 1728 to be succeeded by his cousin Richard Colley of Carbury, Co. Kildare. Richard took the name, Wesley, to inherit the estate. He developed the demesne erecting obelisks, canals and lakes. The house was re-built after a fire in 1748. Richard Colley Wesley, was a musician – he played the violin.

His son, Garret, was elected the first Professor of Music of Trinity College in 1764. A number of his tunes still survive. He represented Trim in parliament in 1757-8. In 1760 he was created Viscount Wellesley, of Dangan Castle and Earl of Mornington. He married The Anne Hill-Trevor, eldest daughter of the banker Arthur Hill-Trevor, 1st Lord Dungannon. They had a number of distinguished children with four sons being created peers. The eldest, Richard, became viceroy of India and 1st Marquess Wellesley. William took the additional name Pole in order to inherit lands and became 1st Baron Maryborough. Henry became 1st Baron Cowley. The second eldest son, Arthur, died in early childhood and in 1769 when a son was born he was named Arthur. There has been a lot of discussion over the years as to where and when Arthur was born because he went on to be the Duke of Wellington. One of his reputed saying was “To be born in a stable does not make one a horse” but would an Irishman say anything derogatory about a horse.

Arthur was raised in Dangan, Dublin and London. Arthur managed to be elected at the age of nineteen to the Irish House of Commons for the family seat of Trim but waited two years before he made his maiden speech. He publicly declared his opposition to the Corporation of Trim's decision to confer the freedom of the place upon Henry Grattan, the Irish patriot.

Richard mortgaged the family's estates in Meath on their father's death. In 1793 the house and 900 acres of lands were sold to Captain Thomas Burrowes M.P. who added two wings containing a chapel and library.

In 1799 Burrowes leased Dangan to Roger O'Connor. O'Connor, a United Irishman, had been made an honorary general by Napoleon. He is said to have had planned to entertain Napoleon at the house. By 1807 the house was dilapidated, trees cut down. The Duke did consider purchasing the estate at one stage. The house was burned in a fire in 1809. The library and chapel were torn down. The chapel window was installed in Agher church. In 1796 Roger O'Connor, from Dunmanway, Co. Cork was charged with high treason and imprisoned. Following this imprisonment he had to sell off his property in Cork and moved to Dangan Castle. In 1813 when O'Connor paid the rent to the agent of Burrowes the agent was robbed of the rent money within minutes of leaving O'Connor at Dangan. In 1817 he was implicated by two convicted criminals in the 1812 robbery of the Galway mail coach. Some of the mail bags were discovered at Dangan. The trial began in Trim in August 1817. It was alleged that O'Conner had planned and supplied the weapons for the robbery. One of the informants admitted that he had committed more robberies than he could remember. O'Connor was found not guilty. In 1822 O'Connor published a two volume work on the history of Ireland from “original manuscripts in the Phoenician dialect of the Scythian language.”

In the 1830s the house was still then property of Colonel Burrowes but was now a ruin. The occupier of the house, Peter Allen, showed visitors the room in which the Duke of Wellington was born. The fine timber which had formerly beautified the place had all been cut down.



Dardistown Castle



Dardistown Castle, located near Julianstown, was described by Casey and Rowan as ‘an intriguing amalgam of medieval and modern buildings’ being made up from a 15th century castle with additions and alterations in each succeeding century.

Dardistown castle was erected by John Cornwalsh in 1465. The castle was constructed on a similar plan of Dunsoghly castle in Swords but on a smaller scale. There are turrets at each corner with each turret differing in size from the others. The southeast turret contains a garderobe (toilet). The word gives its name to the word

'wardrobe' because this was where the clothes were hung. The ammonia and waste fumes kept the clothes free from lice and infestation. The main entrance door was on the northside but this has been blocked up and the entrance is now on the southside. On the ground floor, the main room and the smaller rooms in three of the turrets all have pointed barrel vaults. Following a native Irish technique, woven wicker mats resting on timber beams were used to support the vaults during their construction and at Dardistown bits of the wickerwork may still be seen embedded in the undersides of the vaults.

An extension was added to the west wall of the tower in 1583. In the hallway there is a magnificent fireplace and it was here the Osborne family, who lived in the castle for four generations from 1692 to 1970,

Dame Genet Sarsfield, widow of Sir John Plunkett of Dunsoghly, modified part of the castle in 1586 and created a hall. Genet Sarsfield was the daughter of John Sarsfield of Sarsfieldstown, just south of Gormanstown. She married five times. Her third husband was Robert Plunkett, Lord Dunsany, her fourth was Sir Thomas Cusack of Cushinstown, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, while her fifth was John Plunkett who died in 1582. Reputedly the tallest woman in Ireland the doorways at Dardistown were raised to allow Dame Genet entrance. A plaque placed at the rear wall of the drawing room stated that the chamber had been constructed by Dame Genet Sarsfelde of Donsanie in 1586. Dame Genet died in February 1597 and her memorial tablet may be seen in the chancel arch in the old church at Moorchurch.

The Battle of Julianstown in 1641 is said to have taken place on the front lawn of Dardistown. The castle was added to by the then owners the Talbots. The Osborne family came into ownership in the late seventeenth century. Francis Osborne was MP for Navan in 1692 and 1695. Henry Osborne, Dardistown, bequeathed £1,000 to the establishment of the Bluecoat School, Dublin and reserved the right to nominate ten boys to be educated there. This right was left to the Bishop of Meath in his will. The original Blue Coat School is now the Law Society, Blackhall Place while the school is amalgamated into the Kings Hospital School in Palmerstown. The writer and scientist Thomas Molyneux dedicated one of his volumes to Henry Osborne of Dardistown.

The hall was extended and a new entrance front created. The present front hall, drawing room and dining room date from around 1750. The main Dublin-Drogheda road was moved away from the front of the house about 1800. The upper floors at the back were also added about this time while the upper rooms at the front were added about 1860.

Henry Osborne of Dardistown was the proprietor of Cooperhill Brickworks and supplied red bricks to many of Drogheda's buildings, including Saint Joseph's Convent. Henry Osborne died at Bath in 1828 but the brickworks continued to operate until 1920.

Joe Osborne of Dardistown was the owner and trainer of "Abd-El-Kader" who won the 1850 and 1851 Grand Nationals. The horse was named after Abd-El-Kader who was a political and military leader who led the struggle against the French invasion of Algeria. He was seen as a national hero by the Algerians. Osborne had discovered the horse's mother pulling a coach from London to Holyhead. Spotting the mare's potential he purchased her. Osborne was the compiler and proprietor of "The Horse-breeder's Handbook" and "The Steeplechase Calendar," and became famous as a racing correspondent.

Henry St. George Osborne was born in 1839 and in 1876 is recorded as owning 970 acres in county Meath. His son, Henry Ralph, was a magistrate and a major in the 5th Battalion of the Leinster Regiment.

The Osborne family continued to live in the house until the 1970s when the property came into the ownership of the Armstrong family. In the 1980s the castle became home to the Allen family who renovated and refurbished the building. It has been lived in now for over 500 years.

Delvin Lodge

Delvin Lodge is located on the Delvin river in the parish of Stamullin. Delvin Lodge is a plain three storey house with gables and dormer gables. In 1911 the house had thirty six rooms, thirty windows to the front and thirty outbuildings.

In 1837 Delvin Lodge was the residence of the Shaw family and described as being beautifully situated on the banks of the river Delvin, which here separates the parish from the county of Dublin. There are records of Mr. Shaw uncovering ancient skeletons on his lands during excavations.

John Jameson acquired the Bow Street distillery in 1780 and by 1800 Jameson's were the second largest producer of whiskey in Ireland and one of the largest in the world. James, the second son of John Jameson of Prussia Street, Dublin, established himself at Delvin Lodge. In 1862 James Jameson was living at Delvin Lodge. James Jameson married Lucy Cairnes, daughter of William Cairnes of Stameen. She died in 1907.

By 1883 their son, Robert D'Arcy Jameson, was living at Delvin Lodge. In 1901 Robert D'Arcy Jameson, a Justice of the Peace and Maltster was living at Delvin Lodge with his family. With young children in the house there were ten servants. Robert married firstly Maud Smith and then secondly Eva Harrison. Robert bred horses and pedigree Kerry, Hereford and Aberdeen Angus cattle at Delvin Lodge. His most famous horse was Croaghpatrick. He was very involved in hunting and racing circles. In 1911 Katherine Eva and her daughter Ethel Lucy were living at Delvin Lodge. Miss Lucy Jameson and her husband Dr. Hunt were responsible for the erection of the Cottage Hospital in Drogheda after the First World War. Lucy was a social worker in Drogheda. R.D. Jameson died in 1927, aged 74. He was succeeded at Delvin lodge by his son, Henry. In 1942 Delvin Lodge was put up for sale. On ninety acres the house had electricity powered by a wind charger. The gate lodge, stewards house and five cottages were included in the sale. Stabling included twenty boxes. The gardens included a vinery, forcing houses and vegetable and fruit gardens. George McAvoy lived at Delvin Lodge for a period. The house was put for sale again in 1947. In 1955 Delvin Lodge was sold for £5000.

In 1957 the Sisters of St. Clare acquired Delvin Lodge and opened a guest house for ladies needing a place for retirement but not requiring nursing care. The house was extended in the 1960s. The property is now in use as a privately operated nursing home.

Derlangan House

Derlangan House is situated just south of the Athboy-Dunderry Road. John Flood was born at Derlangan House about 1780. In 1816 Derlangan was held by the Battersby family. In 1836 Derlangan was the residence of Mr. Tew and described as a good two-storey house. The townland of Derlangan was the property of the Earl of Darnley. In 1911 the house had nine windows at the front, six rooms and eight outbuildings. This house seems to have been completely demolished in the twentieth century.

In 1854 Constantine Flood lived at Derlangan House, leasing a house and 78 acres from the Earl of Dartnley. The flood family were originally merchants in Dublin,

having premises on the corner of King and Smithfield streets in Dublin. The farm contained a fine two storey slated house, containing a drawing room, dining room, hall, kitchen, scullery and four bedrooms. The outbuilding consisted of an inner and outer yard, stables, cow houses, coal house, dairy, barn and car house. There was also a large fruit and vegetable garden. In 1911 Mary Flood, farmer, aged 60, was living at Derlangan. The farm was sold when Mary Constance Flood passed away in July 1926.

Dollanstown

Dollanstown or Dollinstown house is situated in the civil parish of Roddanstown, near Kilcock. An eighteenth century house of two storeys the roof dates from 1828. The outbuildings, some modern, are in use as a stud farm. In 1911 there were fifty one outbuildings, twenty one rooms in the house and eleven windows at the front of the house.

In 1775 Richard Jones was one of the Justices of the Peace for County Kildare. In 1765 Richard Jones was M.P. for Killybegs from 1761 to 1768 and M.P. for Newtown Limavady 1768 to 1778. Richard died in 1790. Richard was keen on hawking, hunting and country pursuits. Richard married Mary Cunningham. His ancestor, Roger Jones, was granted 200 acres to lay out the town of Killybegs by James I. Arthur Young, the English improver, visited Dollanstown in 1776 when he was the guest of Roger Jones.

In 1814 Dollanstown was the residence of Cunningham Jones and his wife Charlotte. In 1835 Dollanstown was the residence of Mr Gledstones and described as a good two storey slated house with the land neatly planted with fir and ash trees. In 1834 Ambrose Upton Gledstones was one of magistrates for County Fermanagh. In the 1850s Henry S. Jones held the land and Ambrose U. Gladstone was leasing the house but not living in it.

In 1901 Alexander McNeil and his family lived at Dollanstown. In 1911 Peter Purcell Gilpin was the owner of Dollanstown and Catherine Jane Newtown, caretaker and domestic servant, was residing in the house.

Dollardstown House

Dollardstown House stood near Beuparc, just off the road from Navan. Casey and Rowan described Dollardstown as a large and impressive stone and redbrick house designed in 1734 for Arthur Meredyth by Richard Castle, which stood as a derelict ivy grown shell until 1986 when it was completely demolished. Maurice Craig said Dollardstown was a remodelling in red brick, probably by Richard Castle of an earlier late seventeenth century house. On each side of the main house were tower-like wings. There is photo in Maurice Craig's book. The three storey over high basement house had very fine interior plasterwork. The house was still roofed in the 1950s but demolished in 1986. The cut stone doorcase and other details were saved.

The local names of Dollardstown and Painestown derive from Adam Dullard and his relative Paganus Dullard who were given grants of land by Hugh de Lacy in 1175. Sir Gerald Aylmer was granted Dollardstown in the reign of Henry VIII.

Arthur Meredith held 382 acres of Dollardstown, barony of Duleek, and the 200 of Cristown, barony of Kells, from the Crown in 1683. Born in 1639 Arthur was High Sheriff of Meath and M.P. for Navan from 1692 to 1713. He purchased 1070 acres in Co. Meath from the Commissioners for Sale of Forfeited Estates between 1702 and 1703. Dying on 1732 at age 93 years he was buried at St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

His son, Arthur Francis Meredith born about 1706, served as MP for Meath from 1751 to 1761. High Sheriff of Meath in 1736 he married Mary Waller and lived at Dollardstown.

Richard Jones M.P. for Killybegs 1761-8 and M.P. Newtown Limavady 1768-76 resided at Dollardstown.

Arthur's daughter and heiress, Mary, married Sir Richard Gorges in 1775. Richard Gorges was the only son of Hamilton Gorges who was from the Kilbrew Gorges. He took the name, Meredith, and was created a Baronet in 1787, by the name of Richard Gorges Meredith. He received the third penny of tolls and customs of Navan and half toll of corn. Mary died in 1809. Sir Richard's only daughter and heiress, Mary Anne Meredyth, married Sir Marcus Somerville in 1801. Sir Marcus was M.P. for Co. Meath in Irish Parliament in 1800 and in London Parliament 1801-31. Their son, William Meredyth Somerville, born about 1802 became 1st Baron Meredyth of Dollardstown and 1st Baron Athlumney. He lived at nearby Somerville House. In the 1830s Dollardstown House, described as a spacious mansion was occupied by a farmer.

Dollardstown was resided in by the O'Brien family and the Shields family. A copper mine operated at Dollardstown in the early twentieth century. The poet, Francis Ledwidge, was a miner there. After the O'Briens died out the house was lived in by the Laffin family. A native of Tipperary, Patrick Laffan acquired Dollardstown when it was being divided by the Land Commission. Patrick Laffan had married a widow, Hannah Brackan, the mother of Brendan Bracken. The house was somewhat dilapidated and Hannah Laffan described the house as 'that old barracks.' Brendan Bracken attended Mass at Yellow Furze while living at Dollardstown.



Brendan Bracken

Brendan Bracken was born in Templemore, Co. Tipperary in 1901 to Joseph K. Bracken and Hannah Ryan. Joseph died when Brendan was three and his mother married Patrick Laffan. Bracken made a successful career from 1922 as a magazine publisher and newspaper editor in London. Bracken founded the modern Financial Times in 1945. He was an ardent opponent of the appeasement of Adolf Hitler and a supporter of Winston Churchill. Brendan Bracken, was Minister of Information under Winston Churchill during the Second World War. He was briefly First Lord of the Admiralty in 1945. He was created Viscount Bracken in 1952, the title became extinct on his death in 1958.

Patrick Laffan was a member of the Farmer's Party and was elected to Meath County Council in 1925. Patrick Laffan also represented Fianna Fail on Meath County Council. His second wife, Catherine Moran, was a native of Trim. A son, Pat Laffan,

became a distinguished Abbey actor. Pat Laffan featured in “The Snapper” and Fr. Ted. Pat Laffan was director of the Peacock Theatre and also directed in the Gate Theatre. He has appeared in around 40 films.

After the death of Mr. Laffan in the 1950s, the property was purchased by Dan Connell. The house was then been demolished. A stone carving bearing an image of Our Lady and dating to the 16th century was uncovered in recent years in Dollardstown on the lands of the Connell family.

Dolly's Grove



Dolly's Grove stands about four miles from Dunboyne, on the Maynooth side of the village. Also known as Staffordstown, Dolly's Grove, is a two storey late Georgian house and has an oval staircase. The house may be dated to the 1820s or slightly earlier. The house has a neo-classical gateway and in modern times its own private airstrip.

The house is associated with the Hamilton and Gaisford families. In 1809 Dolly's Grove was the residence of Christopher Robinson. In 1814 James Hamilton was living there. One of the Hamilton's had the public roadway re-routed away from the house. In 1837 Dolly's Grove was described as is a gentleman's seat with an extensive demesne and some ornamental ground. The townland was in the ownership of Mr. Hamilton

John William Gaisford settled at Dolly's Grove in the 1850s. The Gaisford family originated at Bulkington, Wiltshire with the earliest record of the family being in 1302. The Gaisfords were the local squires and made their money from land and wool.

John was the second son of Thomas Gaisford, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford. Thomas Gaisford became professor of Greek at Oxford in 1811 and then became a clergyman there. He was Dean of Christ Church from 1831 until his death. Thomas was curator of the Bodleian Library and principle delegate of Oxford University Press. In 1843 his 21 year old son, William, drowned while swimming in the Thames. John William Gaisford purchased a commission in the 72nd Highlanders and served with them for twenty four years. He commanded the regiment for a few months

during the Crimean War before selling his commission in 1855 and retiring to Ireland. He married Mary Jane Vaughan, daughter of Dean Cotton, Dean of Lismore, a family associated with India. He had three sons, Cecil Henry who was killed in the Afghan War; Douglas, Colonel of the South Wales Borderers and Algernon, Lieut. Seaforth Highlanders and two daughters; Lady Sandeman, wife of the late Sir. R.G. Sandeman died 1912 and Mabel. There was also a step-daughter, Miss Montizambert. In 1876-Lieut.-Col. Gaisford of The Grove, Dunboyne held 113 acres in County Meath. In 1882 Helen Kate, daughter of Lieutenant Colonel John William Gaisford married as his second wife, Sir Robert Groves Sandeman, an officer in the Indian army and administrator. In 1878 he was appointed the governor-general in Baluchistan. John William Gaisford died in 1889 and was buried in Dunboyne churchyard.

Colonel Douglas Gaisford married Esme, daughter of General Sir Archibald Alison. Their children were John William, Robert Sandeman and Jane Esme. Douglas retired from the Army as a major in 1901. John William Gaisford, joined the Royal Artillery in 1914, was wounded Gallipoli but survived the war. He served in World War II primarily in East Africa and the Middle East. After the end of the war he retired at the rank of brigadier and settled in America. His brother, Robert Sandeman Gaisford, became a Captain in the Royal Flying Corps. He was killed over enemy lines, Italy, when engaged with four hostile machines in January 1918. The aeroplane was shot down in flames by Austro-Hungarian anti-aircraft fire over the Piave Sector of the Italian Front. A message was dropped from an Austro-Hungarian aeroplane to let his comrades know that the plane had been shot down and that the casualties had been buried with military honours. This act shows how in some case the First World War was treated as a war between gentlemen. Douglas Gaisford died about 1940.

About 1990 Dolly's Grove became home to Conor and Pat Crowley. They developed a stud farm at the property. Conor was a businessman and Pat a fashion designer. Pat Crowley studied fashion design with the Grafton Academy in Dublin. In 1968, she launched her own range of knitted and crocheted fashions. In the early seventies, Pat employed six hundred knitters, dotted around the country. Pat Crowley used Carrickmacross lace in her designs. She dressed many women in Irish society and counted the Kennedy women in America among her clients. In 2001 Dolly's Grove was sold for £3.35 million by the Crowley family.

Doolistown

Doolistown or Doolystown is two storey three bay Georgian house with a good doorcase, located near Boardsmill, Trim.

John Grierson of Doolistown was the son of Robert Grierson of Newtown, Co. Meath. John known as 'Honest Johnnie Grierson' married Elizabeth Higgins in 1728 and died 1775 aged 68. He and his wife are buried at Laracor graveyard. John left Doolistown to his youngest son, William, his oldest son James only got 5 shillings and was not to 'pretend any claim to Doolistown.' William lived at Doolistown but he was also a merchant operating in Dublin selling tobacco at 40 Meath Street. William married Abigail Higgins of Higginsbrook. When William died in 1793 he was buried at Laracor and after his death his widow carried on his merchant business in Dublin.

Doolistown appears to have been transferred to the ownership of the Grierson's relatives, the Fox family. Matthew Fox married Elizabeth Grierson, daughter of John Grierson of Doolistown. Matthew, born in 1745, died in 1808 leaving issue James, John, Joseph and William and five daughters. The third son, Joseph, succeeded at Doolistown. In 1807 he married Frances D'Arcy of Hyde Park, Co. Westmeath and

they had three daughters. In 1835 Doolistown House was the residence of Mr. J. Fox. He died in 1855.

In the early part of the twentieth century Doolistown was home to the McDonagh family.



Terence Hanbury White

For six years Doolistown was the home of Terence Hanbury White, author of ‘The Once and Future King’, filmed as Camelot, and his beloved dog “Brownie”. His father, Garrick Hanbury White, a former Royal Irish Constabulary man from Co. Meath, had joined the Indian Civil Service. The name, Hanbury, is associated with Trim and Laracor. In the late 1930s the owners of Doolistown House were approached and asked would they take in White as a lodger. In February 1939 White moved to Doolistown where he lived out the international crisis and World War II. White took lessons in Irish and attended the religious devotions of the family almost converting to Roman Catholicism. In 1940 he began work on ‘Candle in the Wind’, the third book in his trilogy. T.H. White was a sad and lonely man and while at Doolistown he suffered ill health and depression. His fantasy ‘The Elephant and the Kangaroo’ is loosely based on his time at Doolistown. Trim Castle may have been the model for the room in the ‘The Queen of Air and Darkness’. White’s ‘The Elephant and the Kangaroo’ is very critical of the Irish people and the people at Doolistown were offended by their portrayal. Vincent Eivers of Roristown was an acquaintance of White’s and said his book was ‘a desperate thing.’ White taught him how to divine water and took him on hawking expeditions. Marie Mac Sweeney wrote an article on Terence Hanbury White in Meath in the 2004 issue of *Ríocht na Midhe*.

J.R. H. Greeves wrote an article on the Griersons of Co. Meath in the *Irish Genealogist* in 1959.

Donacarney House

Donacarney House is located on Mornington Road, Mornington, Drogheda. It is a two-storey over basement house, constructed about 1860. The house has a two-storey addition and a single-storey extension to west. There is a glazed porch and to the south is a timber glazed summer house erected about 1880, with a veranda and terracotta tile roof. There was a walled garden to the west of the house. There are also three ranges of outbuildings. The red brick Tudor style gate lodge dates to about 1910. In the 1830 there was a house called Little Mornington to the east of the present house. In 1899 Henry J. Daly of Donacarney House was High Sheriff of County

Louth. Henry was one of the founders of the Island Golf Club at Donabate. In 1911 George Henry Daly, Justice of the Peace and Auctioneer, lived at Donacarne with his wife and son.

Donore House

Donore Donover, or Dunorver house stood in the townland of Dunore, Moynalty. Dunore House stood near the bridge at Moynalty. In 1803 Thomas Barnes and his family were living at Donover. In the 1830s it was the property of Thomas Barnes, a resident magistrate who sat at the Moynalty Petty sessions. William Garnett, son of Rev. George Garnett of Williamstown House leased the property from the Barnes family. The Barnes family erected the new house of Westlands in Donore townland, just west of Donore House. It was also used as a police barracks. The chief officer was a brother of Edward Carson, the leader of the Irish unionist party. The house has been demolished.

Dowdstown House, Kilshine.

Dowdstown House is located in north-east Meath, in the civil parish of Kilshine, 2 kilometres north west of Clongill Crossroads. According to Casey and Rowan Dowdstown is a gentleman farmer's house, erected in 1793 by Francis Crewe, whose initials are inscribed on the datestone. The house is a simple gabled block, two storeys over basement. Rowan and Casey describe the doorcase as being "very fine."

Dowdstown House is in the south centre of the townland. The townland in 1835 was the property of Mr. Cruice of Belgard, Co. Dublin. In the 1850s Thomas Blake was renting the house and lands from Patrick H. Cruice. Alterations to the house and its environs have occurred since it was constructed. A new entrance from the south east has been constructed and the woodland near the house has been removed.

Dowdstown



Dowdstown House is located to the south of Navan on the old Dublin road and can be accessed via Dalgan Park.

The house was described in the 1940s as having an imposing entrance on the Navan-Dublin Road with beautifully wrought and impressive iron gates hung on giant piers

of ashlar limestone. The avenue was bordered by sylvan woodland and then emerging into verdant parkland. The house was described as pseudo-Tudor in style having turrets, gables and square headed four light windows. The cut stone facade was described as beautiful. Inside there is some magnificent oak panelling. The house, formerly the home of Captain Taylour, became the headquarters of the Maynooth Mission to China in 1927. Overlooking the Boyne the house has a fine panorama. Erected in a neo-Jacobite style the house had a splendid interior of carved wood. James Shiels drew up plans for alterations by General Robert Taylour in 1820 and 1834. Joseph Bateman drew up plans in 1831 but these were not used. An extensive baronial design was drawn up about 1870 by Lanyon, Lynn and Lanyon, possibly with the assistance of S.P. Close.

Dowdstown came into the possession of Robert Rochford after the Battle of the Boyne and it was then purchased by the Taylour family of Headfort, Kells.

Robert Taylour was the third son of Thomas, first Earl of Bective and third Baron of Headfort. He joined the British army in 1783 and rose to the rank of general by 1819. Robert served in Flanders and Germany in the early 1790s. He was M.P. for Kells from 1791 until the Act of Union in 1800. During 1798 he was based in the west of Ireland where the French army landed. At the Battle of Ballinamuck in September 1798 he was second in command to General Lake. The Battle of Ballinamuck marked the defeat of the main force of the French incursion during the 1798 rebellion. General Taylor was supposed to be one of the three Meath generals who fought at Waterloo. The trees on the estate were planted in the layout of the armies which fought at Waterloo. In the 1830s General Taylour had his seat at a cottage style house in a demesne of 590 acres of which 240 was wooded. The demesne includes a haha. Robert died in 1839. In 1835 the entrance would appear on the opposite side to which it is today. There was extensive woodlands with walk ways.

His nephew, Thomas Edward, inherited Dowdstown. In 1855 Dowdstown was held by Col. Thomas E. Taylor who lived at Ardgillan. An M.P. for Dublin from 1841 to his death in 1883 he held many high offices in the Treasury.

His brother, Richard Chambre Hayes Taylor, served in India during the Indian Mutiny. He began his military career in Gibraltar in 1846 and then fought at the battle of Alma, during the Crimean War. Richard was one of the leaders of the attack on Lucknow in 1858. Richard was appointed Governor of Sandhurst Royal Military College, a position he held until he retired in 1886. He died in 1904 aged 85. In 1863 Richard married Lady Jane Hay, daughter of the 8th Marquess of Tweeddale, and they lived at Dowdstown on occasion. The house at Dowdstown was often rented out to visiting sportsmen. Geoffrey Hone, the uncle of Evie Hone and famous cricketer, resided at Dowdstown for a period. In 1901 and in 1911 William Dugald Stuart and his family were living at Dowdstown House.

Richard and Jane had five daughters and a son. The son, Richard Edward Montagu, was born in 1871 and went on to become a lieutenant in the East Surrey Regiment. He served in the Boer War and the First World War. The estate at Dowdstown was purchased under the Land Acts in 1916 and the house was disposed of in 1927. Richard married but died without an heir in 1953.

In 1927 Dowdstown House was purchased by St. Columban's Missionary Society. Since 1927 Dowdstown House has been the headquarters of the society. In June 1937 it was proposed to build a new college and work began. In 1941 there were 106 students and professors at the Dowdstown. The name, Dalgan Park, came from where the St. Columban's first settled in 1918 in Shrule, Co. Mayo. The college was called Dalgan Park. In 1984 Dowdstown house was taken on lease by Bishop McCormack as

a pastoral centre for the dioceses of Meath. The building has now been developed as a conference centre and retreat centre. Counselling and bereavement support are major works of the centre.

During archaeological investigations in preparation for the M3 an extensive multi-enclosure site was identified by geophysical survey at Dowdstown, immediately south of the River Boyne.

The house website has more extensive information on the house and family and was used as a source for this article.

Dowth Hall



Dowth Hall is located to the east of Slane, near Dowth passage grave. Dowth Hall may have been designed by Robert West or George Darley. The plasterwork is similar to that of Newman House in St. Stephen's Green, Dublin. The drawing room has a remarkable display of plasterwork. The entrance hall is large with a grand staircase. The joinery is similar to Dunboyne Castle. Bence-Jones described Dowth Hall as 'a small and extremely elegant mid-eighteenth century house.' The splendid interior plasterwork was possibly by Robert West who may also have been the architect according to Bence-Jones. Mulligan also suggested West for the plasterwork but says that George Darley is more likely as architect.

A conservatory with views to the west was added to the two-storey over basement house. A range of stables, set out around a central courtyard, date to 1760. The gate lodge dates to about 1830.

An ornamental temple erected on top of Dowth mound allowed Lord Netterville to attend Mass at the nearby chapel without actually being in the building. He could not then be accused of being a Catholic and having his lands confiscated.

The Nettervilles were the lords of Dowth from the fourteenth century and lived at Dowth Castle to the west of the present house. Nicholas Netterville was created Viscount Netterville of Dowth in 1622 by James I. Nicholas Netterville, the fifth viscount, succeeded to the title following the death of his Catholic father in 1727. He conformed to the State religion and took his seat in the House of Lords in 1729. In 1731 Nicholas married Catherine Burton of Burton Hall, Carlow. He was described at the time as a 'fool and a fop, but a lord with a tolerable estate.' In 1743 he was indicted for murder but acquitted the following year. The mansion was erected before

1731 and the demesne was created over the following twenty years. The new house was partitioned from the old castle, church and tumulus by a plantation of trees. To the east of the house stands a large embanked enclosure. So much funds were expended on the house and demesne that the Nettervilles had to sell off some of their lands in Westmeath and put some of the Dowth lands into trusteeship. It would appear that this house lasted for about fifty years with a new house or a complete renovation taking place fifty years later about 1780.

Dowth House was erected about 1780 by John 6th Viscount Netterville. His father had been tried by the Irish House of Lords for murder and found innocent. He settled at Dowth after leaving the army. George Darley is believed to be the architect as he designed the Netterville townhouse in Dublin in 1767. In 1812 he let the house and demesne to Roger Hamill for a term of 31 years. In the same year he made his will leaving Dowth to a charity for six poor widows and six poor orphan boys. He died unmarried in 1826. His successor, a distant cousin, James had to take a case to the House of Lords to secure the title. As a result of the cost of court cases in order to secure the title Netterville was forced to sell Dowth in 1845.

In 1835 Dowth was occupied by Mr. Blake. A racecourse was developed at the east end of the demesne but it was dangerous as there was a sheer drop into a limestone quarry. The house was described as a modern three-storey slated house with a demesne of 259 acres. The house and demesne were not in a good state as a result of the ongoing legal dispute. In the south end of the demesne was a deerpark. The demesne also included the Neolithic tomb of Dowth.

Richard Gradwell purchased the house in 1845. The Gradwells originally came from Preston but also held lands at Carlanstown, Co. Westmeath. The family also held Mullaghmean, now a forestry plantation on the borders of Meath and Westmeath. His older brother, John Joseph Gradwell, purchased nearby Platten Hall about 1870.

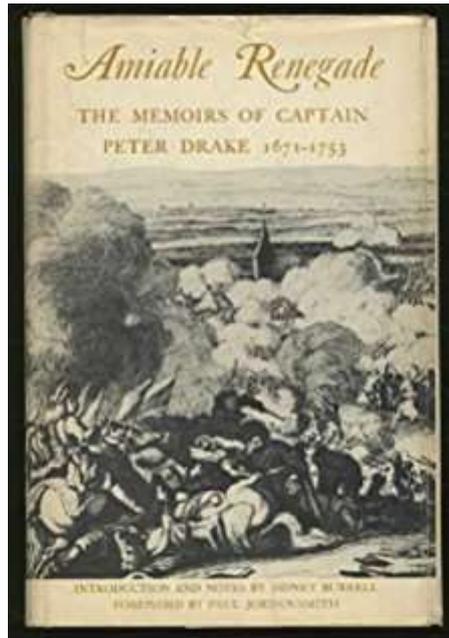
Richard married Maria Theresa, eldest daughter of James McEvoy of Tobertynan House in 1852. In 1876 Richard Gradwell of Dowth Hall held 845 acres in County Meath and 3169 acres in Westmeath. Richard Gradwell died 1884 aged 60 years and was buried in the vault in St. Andrew's Church, Westland row, Dublin. Maria Gradwell of Dowth Hall died in 1914 aged 88 and she too was buried in the vault in St. Andrew's Church, Westland row, Dublin. Richard was succeeded by his son, Robert, who was appointed High Sheriff of Meath in 1892. Robert married Lady Henrietta Plunkett, daughter of the Earl of Fingal in 1884.

Robert died without an heir in 1935 and the property went to his cousin, Francis Gradwell of Beltichburn House, Drogheda, who was living in the house in 1941.

The house was sold about 1951 to Clifford Cameron family and then the Pidgeon family purchased the property.

Drakerath

Drakerath Castle in north Meath was home to the Drake family from medieval times. Drakerath House was constructed prior to 1900. Drakes came from Worcestershire to Ireland in the 13th century. Richard Drake of Drakestown was High Sheriff of Meath in the 1370s. In 1640 John Drake was the proprietor but was dispossessed during the Cromwellian plantation.



Peter Drake, the Amiable Renegade, was the grandson of William Drake of Drakesrath. Peter's mother was Elizabeth Stanley, sister of John Stanley of Fennor, Slane. Peter's father, Michael Drake was a candidate for the borough of Navan in the parliament of James II about 1689. The family then settled in County Kildare. Captain Peter Drake joined the Wild Geese and fled to France. Drake was captured by the British in 1706 and brought to trial in the Old Bailey. He was saved through the intervention of his brother and went on to fight again. In his old age Peter Drake returned to Ireland and resided with the gentry of Meath including Lord Trimleston, Lord Gormanston, the Cusacks, the Dowdalls and also visited Drakesrath. He met the Earl of Fingall and Lord Delvin at the hot wells in Bristol. 'The Amiable Renegade – The memoirs of Captain Peter Drake, 1671-1753' was published originally in Dublin in 1755. He got up to all sort of activities and his book was very scandalous and when it was published the Drake family attempted to suppress it.

The eldest daughter of Columbus Drake married William Cruise of Moydorrhagh in the early 18th century. Peter, son of Columbus Drake was born in 1712 and married Frances, third daughter of James Reilly of Roristown. Their son, Columbus Drake, of Drakerath and Roristown died 1807 aged 57 years and was buried at the Histy graveyard, Staholmog. His son Christopher was born in 1790 and married Mary-Anne Gannon of Ballyboy, Meath in 1816. Christopher Drake of Roristown died in 1854 and was also buried in Histy. His monument was erected by his son, Alexander James Drake of Rathvale.

In 1835 Drakerath was the property of Mr. Cruise. The ruins of a small castle was still visible in the middle of the townland. In 1835 it was described as a small tower about 30 feet high and overgrown with ivy. The 1837 OS map shows the castle remains surrounded by a wood. All that remains today is a slight rise in a field which indicates the castle site.

In the 1850s Joseph Garrigan (Gargan?) was leasing over 800 acres from Miss Ellen Cruise at Drakerath. Joseph Gargan married Maria Ellis. Joseph Gargan purchased 505 acres at Drakerath from the estate of William Cruise in 1870. In 1876 Joseph Gargan of Drakerath held 907 acres in County Meath. Joseph Gargan died 1885 aged 61. Drakerath House was constructed after 1854 and prior to 1909. The house had more than thirteen rooms and had eight windows to the front. The house was constructed near the Carlanstown-Ardee road.

Noel French's Meath Houses

In 1901 Maria Theresa Gargan and her family lived at Drakerath. Maria Theresa was aged 69, a widow, and born in Co. Kildare. Her son Patrick, aged 41 and her daughters, Jane, Emily and Agnes also lived at Drakerath. All of the family were residing at Drakerath in 1911. Patrick Joseph Gargan died at his residence in 1912. Agnes Gargan, youngest daughter of Joseph Gargan, died in 1938.

In 1914 Dan McArdle purchased the estate. He was succeeded by Dr. Bradley, whose wife was a relative of Mr. McArdle. Mr. Smith from Scotland purchased the property in 1950 but he put it up for sale in 1962. Mr. Hugh Brophy of Ardlonan, Carlanstown was the auctioneer and an American relative of his purchased the property. About 1964 the estate was sold to a German couple. About 1970 Johannes N. Kolin and his wife disposed of Drakerath to the Land Commission. Local farmers were disappointed at the slowness of the disposal of the estate and launched a protest.

M.J. Turley and his family purchased the house and a small amount of land surrounding the building.

Thank you to Rosemarie Smith for the more recent information on Drakerath.

Drewstown House



Drewstown house situated on the road between Athboy and Oldcastle was home to the McVeagh family. Described by Casey and Rowan as an eccentric mid 18th century house of some pretension the house was constructed about 1745 to plans by Francis Bindon for Barry Barry, the then owner. The plan of the house was very old fashioned. There are some signs that the designer was not familiar with large-scale domestic design. Similar problems at nearby Ballinlough Castle suggest the same architect for both. A three storey house the staircase rises behind a bridge gallery, which is a rarity in Irish houses. A stained glass window dating to 1872 lights the entrance hall. Almost all the early Georgian joinery in the entrance hall survives. To the east of the house is the lake with a pretty rock work bridge and the remnants of the plantings of a picturesque walled garden. There is another lake to the front of the house. One was the White lake and the other was the Black lake. The ranges of former stables set around a central courtyard, date from 1745, 1850 and 1870. The gates of

Drewstown with their limestone piers dating from 1745 are notable as they stand at a road junction.

The name Drewstown is said to be derived from a druid's altar in the estate. The Plunket family held Drewstown in the middle ages. The Tandys then acquired the lands. In 1684 James Naper of Loughcrew married Elizabeth, daughter of James Tandy, of Drewstown. The lands at Drewstown were inherited in 1685 by the Napper family as a result of a marriage with a Tandy heiress. The United Irishman and rebel, James Napper Tandy, was descended from the Tandys of Drewstown and the Nappers of Loughcrew. James was a grandson of John Tandy of Drewstown.

Barry Barry is traditionally said to be the person who erected Drewstown house in 1745. The English agriculturalist and improver, Arthur Young, visited Drewstown when the Maxwell family were in occupation in 1776.

Drewstown was purchased in the 1780s by Major Joseph McVeagh, who married Margery, daughter of Governor Alexander Wynch. Wynch was Governor of Madras from 1773 to 1775. Joseph McVeagh was High Sheriff of Meath in 1790. He was succeeded by his son, Ferdinand.

An officer in the Inniskilling Fusiliers Ferdinand Meath McVeagh was High Sheriff of Meath in 1817. Ferdinand McVeagh married Charlotte Brooke and he died in 1866. They had a son Ferdinand McVeagh who was born in 1813. Their daughter, Flora Harriet, married Francis Ralph Sadlier, a clergyman who was the last Protestant curate of the parish of Kilallon. In 1837 Drewstown, the residence of F. McVeigh, Esq., was described as a handsome house in a highly improved demesne.

In 1847 Ferdinand McVeagh married Marie Rotherham of nearby Triermore in Athboy church. After the wedding the couple returned to Triermore where there was a splendid dinner, the evening concluded with a dance. The poor were not forgotten on this happy occasion, a substantial dinner being provided for them by Mr. Rotherham.

In 1876 Ferdinand McVeigh of Drewstown held 2,270 acres in County Meath. Ferdinand died in 1888 and his wife Maria in 1890 and they were buried at Athboy churchyard.

George Joseph McVeigh, born in Dublin about 1866, held Drewstown in the early years of the twentieth century. His son was Major Ferdinand Annesley McVeagh who served in the Royal Irish Fusiliers during World War I. Trevor George McVeagh, born at Drewstown in 1906, played cricket for Ireland between 1926 and 1934. A superb natural athlete he also played hockey, squash and tennis player. He died in Dublin in 1968.

The house remained in the hands of the McVeagh family until 1950. The McVeagh family moved from Drewstown to Galtrim Lodge.

In 1952 Drewstown House was purchased for use as a Christian Orphanage, then in the early 1960's it was used as a Christian secondary boarding school. Since 1989 Drewstown has been used as a Christian camping and conference centre. Drewstown House is a centre made available to the public and to groups whose purpose is to advance the Christian faith. It is operated by the Drewstown House Trust.

Drumbaragh House



Drumbaragh, also spelled Drumbarrow, is located on the Oldcastle Road from Kells. Drumbaragh house is a three storey house with a large central chimneystack, erected about 1800, possibly to the design of Francis Johnston. The house was remodelled in the 1860s by architect, William Caldbeck. The house was extended at rear by architect, L.A. McDonnell, about 1900. The 1800s interiors have survived. The house was a distance from the public road with the farmyard between the house and the road. A gate lodge was erected for Robert Woodward to the design of his cousin the noted architect, Benjamin Woodward.

Drumbaragh was the seat of the Woodward family. Benjamin Woodward was confirmed in his lands at Drumbarrow in 1668 following their confiscations from the Hill and Plunkett families by Cromwell. Benjamin's son, Joseph, died in 1702 leaving a son, Charles who married three times. By his second wife he had a son, Benjamin, born in 1710. Benjamin married Judith Meredyth of Newtown in 1733. Benjamin died in 1761 and was succeeded at Drumbarrow by his second son, Charles. Charles was born in 1740, entered the church. Rev. Charles Woodward was rector of Ardee. He died in 1793 and there is a memorial to him and his family in Kells Church of Ireland church. His first wife, Esther Wade of Clonabreany, died in 1776 and his second wife Elizabeth Minchin died in 1778. Henry, son of Benjamin and Esther, succeeded to Drumbarrow. The present house at Drumbaragh was constructed in 1800 for Henry Woodward.

In 1835 Drumbarrow House was described as the residence of Mr. Woodward. Drumbarrow was described as a neat house of two storeys and basement, surrounded by a well cared small demesne. There were considerable offices. A school house stood not far from the house in the 1830s. The famous Victorian architect, Benjamin Woodward, spent his childhood at his uncle's home in Drumbarragh

Henry married Sarah-Catherine Wade of Clonabreany in 1800. Their second son, Robert, inherited Drumbarrow in 1838. Born in 1805, Robert entered Trinity College and was called to the Irish bar in 1829. His brother, Henry Thomas, emigrated and settled in Illinois, U.S.A. Robert died in 1864.

Drumbaragh was purchased by the Sweetman family in 1859 and it remained in the family's hands until 1958. John Sweetman was the eldest son of a Dublin brewer. He took an active interest in nationalistic politics. In the mid to late 1870s he took over the full running of Drumbaragh from his mother. He joined the Irish Land League and

proposed the MP for Meath, Charles Stewart Parnell for the position of President. He was one of the first Meath landowners to dispose of his estate under the 1903 land act. In 1880 Sweetman visited America and became involved in a scheme to settle poor Irish farmers in a colony in Minnesota. The family brewery in Dublin was sold to Arthur Guinness & Sons in 1891 and Sweetman decided to enter full time into politics. He was elected as an anti-Parnellite Irish Parliamentary Party MP for East Wicklow in 1892. In the general election of 1895 he stood for Meath North and was narrowly defeated. On 11 September 1895 Sweetman married Agnes, daughter of John P. Hanly of Navan.

In 1899 Sweetman was elected to Meath County Council and served as chairman 1902-8. He was one of the founders and financial backers of Sinn Féin in 1905, succeeding Edward Martyn to be the second President of the party in 1908. Arthur Griffith took over as the third President later in the year. He was arrested at his home in Meath following the 1916 Rising in which he did not apparently play any active part, and was taken to prison in England. Sweetman was an opponent of women's suffrage, and was criticised for endowing a UCD scholarship on condition that female students should be excluded from competing for it. He supported the Pro-Treaty side in the Civil War but changed his allegiance to Fianna Fail after 1927. He died in 1936. There is an article on Sweetman in the Dictionary of Irish Biography, written by Patrick Maume. The Sweetman family papers are in the National Library. John Walter Sweetman, the eldest son of John and Agnes Sweetman, married Olivia Dudley, and inherited the Drumbaragh estate after the death of his father. John Walter died in 1961.

Drumlargan House

Drumlargan House was previously known as Bloom Field House and is located outside Summerhill, just off the Kilcock Road.

Drumlargan is a two storey double gable-ended house, probably early eighteenth century according to Bence-Jones but with nineteenth century windows and a nineteenth century projecting porch. One of the reception rooms is octagonal. The original house at Drumlargan was called Bloom Field and consisted of a central block with wings each side. In the early 1700s the wings were removed and the central block enlarged to form the present house. This reconstruction took place about 1724 as there is a plaque bearing this date over the front door. Drumlargan is the site of the battle of Dungan's Hill which was fought in 1647.

The Bomfords were settled at Rahinstown. Stephen Bomford's eldest son, Robert George, succeeded him at Rahinstown. His second son, George, married Arabella Winter of Agher in 1809. George Bomford leased Drumlargan parish from Dixie Coddington in 1787, purchasing the property in 1795. As in all articles relating to Bomford houses much of the information on this house is obtained from Peter Bamford's excellent website.

Lynch's Wood in Drumlargan was obtained by Lynch from Baron Hussey of Galtrim by a trick. Lynch asked Hussey to rent it to him for the rotation of three crops. Hussey thought these would be oats or wheat but Lynch chose oak, beech and elm. It is said that the lease has not run out yet and that the Forestry Department has only just set the third crop. George Bomford probably set the second crop.

George's son also George succeeded to his father's estates at Oakley Park. George married Arabella Pratt Winter of Agher in 1832. Their eldest son, George Winter Bomford, succeeded to Oakley Park.

In the 1830s Bloomfield was described as a tolerably good house but becoming ruinous. In the early 1830s it was occupied by a Mr. Purdon and later in the decade by

a herd. About 1860 the house was improved by George Bomford for his younger son, John Francis. John was the only Bomford to live at Drumlargin House as it was then called. The porch was added at this time. John married Eleanor Bolton and they had ten children. John Stephen served with the Indian Police and died in Burma in 1891 aged 21. Samuel Richard Bomford fought in the Boer War gaining the rank of Captain in the service of the Cape Mounted Rifles. Trevor Broughton Bomford gained the rank of officer in the service of the Surma Valley Light Horse Mounted Infantry Regiment, Indian Army and emigrated to Canada in 1908. Their youngest son, William Harold, became a surgeon and served as District Medical Officer in the Fiji Colonial Service. In 1900 John Francis and his family moved to Oakley Park. Drumlargin was sold to George Wilson of Tara for a little over £3000. John Francis died in 1911 aged 73. In 1901 and 1911 William R. Orme, a retired army Captain, and his sister lived at Drumlargin. In 1876 William R. Orme held 1521 acres in County Mayo.

In the 1920s the Bomford lands at Drumlargin was acquired by the Land Commission.

Duleek House



Duleek House is situated on the edge of Duleek village. In the eighteenth century the grange of St. Michael was used as the site for the major house in the town – Duleek House. Tradition states that stones from the ruined monastery were used in the construction of the building. Duleek House was attributed to Richard Castle by the Knight of Glin and to the office of Richard Castle by Casey and Rowan. Erected about 1750 for Thomas Trotter, Duleek House is a detached three-bay three-storey over basement country house. It is attached to an earlier house to the rear dated to c.1700. Attached to the house are a range of stone built outbuildings. An entrance way from the Maudlin Bridge was created with a gate lodge at the roadway. The gate lodge was known locally as ‘Savage’s Lodge’, after the family who inhabited it but the building is now demolished. This avenue is marked on the OS maps of 1836 and 1882.

The earlier house may date to the 1730s following the purchase of the site of the priory by Thomas Trotter of Dublin from the Marquis of Drogheda in 1729. Trotter was associated with the Church of Ireland church at Duleek as a statue of him stood in

the porch. The statue is attributed to the Flemish sculptor, Peter Scheemakers. The statue of Trotter was moved to the Law Society at Blackhall Place, Dublin, where it is labelled as coming from “Duleek, Co. Louth.” Thomas was a founder member of the Dublin Society now the R.D.S.

The Ram family held the parliamentary seat of Duleek from the seventeenth century until late in the eighteenth century. Abel Ram of Ramsfort and Clonattin was the patron of the borough in the early eighteenth century. Thomas Trotter married Rebecca Ram, daughter of Abel Ram, in 1710. Thomas Trotter, MP for Duleek 1715-27, died in 1745 and was succeeded by his son, Stephen, who died 1764. Stephen’s son, Thomas, died in 1802 and his daughter and heiress, Elizabeth, married William O’Brien, second Marquess of Thomond.

William, the second Marquis of Thomond, died in 1846 leaving four daughters and so his nephew, James, succeeded to the title and ownership of Duleek. He died in 1855, without surviving male issue, and on his death the Marquisate of Thomond and Earldom of Inchiquin became extinct.

The Smith family came into possession of the estate about 1854. St. George W. Smith, the third son of Henry J. Smith of Annesbrook, lived at Duleek House. There are some interesting photos surviving of a wedding at Duleek House in 1901 with the groom dressed in the uniform of 1st Bombay Lancers. In 1901 Kate A. Smith, a widow of 55, and her daughter lived in the house. In 1911 Arthur Farrell, a land agent, was living in the house. Colonel E. St George Smith served in the First World War. In 1916 Major E. St George Smith, Royal Dublin Fusiliers appointed to command the 10th Battalion. A keen sportsman he had a tennis club and cricket club in the grounds of the house. The Smith family lived in the house until the 1950s.

Dunboyne Castle



Dunboyne Castle, now a hotel, is a three storey country house erected about 1764 but also incorporates fabric from an earlier house of about 1720. A stone courtyard stands near the house. There is a fine entrance gate which forms a feature in the landscape of the village of Dunboyne. The single-storey gate lodge dates to about 1870. The ornamental gates were removed and sold to the Medical Missionaries of Mary in Drogheda. Casey and Rowan described Dunboyne as a house which belies its plain

façade with an unorthodox plan and spectacular rococo plasterwork inside. The great room or ballroom at the rear became the chapel. According to Bence-Jones the front was inspired by Charlemont House in Dublin.

Seat of the Butler family, the house was renovated and rebuilt in the 1760s. In 1759 the house was occupied by Charles Hamilton and his young bride, Sarah. Within four years of marriage Charles died and Sarah embarked on improvements to designs by George Darley. At the same time a new Lord Dunboyne succeeded and he may have been supportive of the work.

Sir Edmond Butler, was created Lord baron of Dunboyne in 1541 by King Henry VIII. He was succeeded by his son, John and then his grandson Edmond. James the fourth baron was outlawed in 1642 and was succeeded by his cousin, Pierce Butler. Pierce Butler was outlawed for his support of James II. His sons, James and Edmond, succeeded him calling themselves Lords Dunboyne but the title not being recognised as their father and grandfather had been outlawed. Edmond was succeeded by his sons, James and Pierce, and then his grandson, Pierce-Edmond.

John Butler was the Roman Catholic bishop of Cork when he became the 12th Baron Dunboyne. As the third son of the 8th Baron it was unlikely he would inherit the title and the lands. Appointed Bishop of Cork in 1763 John inherited the title, Baron Dunboyne, on the death of his nephew, 11th Baron Dunboyne. John being a priest was not married and the barony would end with him if he had no children. In December 1786, he resigned as bishop and asked the pope for a dispensation from his vow of celibacy. No dispensation was given. John converted to the Protestant religion and married Maria Butler in 1787. The couple moved into Dunboyne Castle. The couple had a daughter who died in childhood. In 1800 John Butler wrote a letter of repentance to the pope and was received back into the Catholic church before his death. He left this property to the new seminary at Maynooth but the will was disputed by his sister and only half the property went to Maynooth College and the other half to the O'Brien Butler family with the Dunboyne peerage going to a distant kinsman. Funds from John Butler were devoted to the Dunboyne establishment at Maynooth.

John Butler was the last of the Lords Dunboyne to live at Dunboyne Castle. Before his death he had leased the property to James Hamilton. Hamilton fathered 36 children while Butler could only father one who died young. The story of the Bishop is recorded in Con Costello's book 'In Quest of an Heir'. James Butler from Clare succeeded to the title. The lords of Dunboyne were outlawed in 1642 for supporting the rebellion of 1641 and in 1691 for supporting James II. In 1827 the outlawries of both peers was reversed and in 1860 Theobald was recognised as Lord Dunboyne. Patrick Theobald, Lord Dunboyne, served with the Irish Guards in the Second World War.

Dunboyne Castle passed to Mary O'Brien Butler, wife of Nicholas Sadleir. The house fell into disrepair and according to an account in the Ordnance Survey of 1834, Sadleir set about carrying out extensive repairs and renovations. In the 1830s the demesne contained 113 acres. Nicholas Sadleir died in 1855 but the family still had connections with the Castle when it was sold in 1870.

In 1870 it became the property of George Beamish who paid £7,250 for the house and 121 acres of land. The property then passed to the Mangan family. It was the seat of Simon Mangan, HM Lieutenant for County Meath, in the 1890s. The house was leased to the Koenig Family, who were German Catholics with large wine and hotel interests. It was subsequently leased to the Morrogh-Ryan family. The Morrogh-Ryan family played host to the nobility of the day. Two of the many illustrious people to

stay at the castle were the late Lord Mountbatten and Lord Fingal. Lord Fingal's visit was a consequence of the rebellion of 1916. He had been at the Fairyhouse races on that Easter weekend. Rather than risk returning to his house in Dublin, he stayed at the Castle. John Morrogh-Ryan was a very famous polo player and he and his wife lived in the castle until after the Second World War. The building and lands then became the property of a Mr. Garvey who sold it to the Wachman family. The entire property was then purchased by the North Eastern Health Board where the Sisters of the Good Shepherd established a home for pregnant unmarried girls. In 1987 there were thirty mothers and thirty babies at Dunboyne. The Sisters remained there until 1991 when the Eastern Health Board sold the property.

In 1991 Noel Keating of Kepak purchased the property and in recent decades the house was developed into a luxury hotel.

Michael Kenny has written about Dunboyne Castle in the local history “Dunboyne, Kilbride and Clonee – A picture of the Past”.

Dunsany Castle



Family traditions states that Hugh de Lacy erected a castle here. It is possibly Ireland's oldest home in continuous occupation. Casey and Rowan describe Dunsany as a long stragglng castle. The building was renovated and remodelled about 1780 and again about 1840.

A wayside cross stands opposite the main entrance to the castle. The church of St. Nicholas, known locally as the Abbey, stands close to the castle, just off the main avenue. The castle is entered through a projecting porch and a hallway with a plaster ceiling. The ground floor holds the grand dining room. The billiard room was erected in 1910 on the site of the old chapel. A fierce looking lion stands guard in a glass case to one side. The castle contains a wonderful collection of art. The castle is crammed with various collections bought by centuries of the Plunketts. Patrick Plunkett, the 7th

baron, received a cup from Elizabeth I and the cup is still in Dunsany Castle. The Dunsanys hold St. Oliver Plunkett's ring and watch. At his canonisation the family had a private audience with the Pope and were presented with gold medals to mark the occasion. The insignia and staff carried by Lord Dunsany at the coronations of George VI and Elizabeth II are on display. The library and the drawing room with its Stapleton plasterwork from 1780 are on the first floor. The Gothic Library is in Gothic Revival style and is perhaps the work of James Shiel. There was a secret priest's hole for hiding priests during the worst of the Penal days. Lady Dunsany unsuccessfully defended the castle against the Cromwellians in 1656 and a small cannon is said to date from that event. The third floor has a number of ornate bedrooms.

There are three Gothic gateways at the entrances to the estate, one in the form of a sham ruin. The mock ruin style was popular during the nineteenth century. These gateways date to the works of 1840 while the single-storey gate lodge is probably two decades earlier. The stable courtyard dates to about 1850 while the farmyard dates to 1780.

Randal Plunkett, the 13th baron had the public road re-routed away from the castle. According to Art Kavanagh in the 'Landed Gentry and Aristocracy Meath' Randal stood guard at the bridge and threw anyone who tried to travel the road into the waters below.

Sir Christopher Plunkett married Joan Cusack, the heiress to Killeen and Dunsany and when they died the property was divided between their sons, the eldest, John, getting Killeen and Christopher getting Dunsany. The first Baron of Dunsany was Sir Christopher Plunkett, second son of Christopher Plunkett, 1st Baron Killeen. Christopher Plunkett was created Baron Dunsany in 1439, a later date of 1461 is also given.

In the 1609 Maud Lady Dunsany was murdered and her servant, Honora Caffrey, was found guilty of the crime and burned at the stake. Not long after a man convicted of another crime confessed to killing Lady Dunsany and so an innocent woman was executed.

The eleventh Baron Dunsany supported James II and was outlawed. His son the twelfth Baron conformed to the Church of Ireland.

John William Plunkett, the seventeenth Baron Dunsany, sat as a Conservative Member of Parliament for Gloucestershire South. John William was a keen mechanical engineer and installed the first Irish telephone system and developed his own x-ray machine. A sportsman, he acquired a range of shooting trophies. He had acquired the right to drive the Irish Mail Train and regularly took charge of the branch line train from Dublin to Drumree, near Dunsany.

Horace Plunkett, brother of the seventeenth baron, was a key figure in the development of Irish agriculture and the co-operative movement. Horace established a co-operative store on the estate for the tenants and workers. The first co-operative creamery in Ireland was founded in Drumcollogher in 1889. Horace Plunkett became M.P. for South Dublin in 1892. In 1900 the Department of Agriculture (and Technical Instruction) of Ireland was established. His house was burned down during the Civil War. He spent the last years of his life in England and died in 1932.

In 1883 Lord Dunsany held a total estate of 8,400 acres of which 4,379 were in Meath.

Edward John Morton Drax Plunkett, the eighteenth Baron Dunsany, was a well-known poet, playwright and author. He wrote a number of short stories in the field of fantasy. Much of his writing was completed in a room in one of the towers. More than

eighty books of his work were published. Dunsany's most notable fantasy short stories were published in collections from 1905 to 1919. The film, *Dean Spanley*, starring Peter O'Toole, released in 2008 was based on a short story by Dunsany. He was friends with many of the writers and workers of the Irish literary revival including, George Russell, Oliver St. John Gogarty, Lady Gregory and WB Yeats. Dunsany was a major donor to the Abbey Theatre. He supported and encouraged local writers such as Francis Ledwidge and Mary Lavin. Lord Dunsany died in 1957 and memorial service was held at Kilmessan with a reading of "Crossing the Bar" which was noted as coinciding with a passing flock of geese. He had a cricket grounds constructed at Dunsany. A champion of animal rights Dunsany campaigned against the docking of dogs' tails.

The Dunsany Estate was reduced by the operation of the Land Acts but the castle is still surrounded by its original demesne.

Randal Arthur Henry Plunkett, 19th Baron of Dunsany was born in 1906 and served as a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Indian Cavalry. He married twice, firstly to Vera de Sa Sottomair and secondly to Sheila Victoria Katrin Phillips of Picton Castle, Wales. Her first husband had been killed in Italy during the war.

In the late 1940s when the new Lady Sheila Dunsany came first to Dunsany there was no electricity and very little central heating. She said "We thanked heaven for a hot bath, but the water smelt strange and upon investigation, was found to come from a disused quarry where a sheep had committed suicide." She later wrote "The sheer beauty and romance of Dunsany overrode any inconveniences." Lady Dunsany was also founder and chairperson of the Meath branch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society

Edward John Carlos Plunkett, 20th Baron of Dunsany was born in 1939 in Brazil. Educated at Eton and the Slade School of Fine Art he succeeded his father in 1999. He passed away in May 2011.

The castle is open to the public at certain times.

Durhamstown Castle



Durhamstown is located in the civil parish of Ardraccan, to the west of Navan. Durhamstown has been spelled differently over the centuries including 'Dormstown',

'Durmstown' and 'Dorreeanstown'. One of the two most populous townlands in Ardraccan civil parish, the population peaked at 713 in 1851.

Described as an old fortified residence in 1837, Durhamstown Castle is reputed to be one of the oldest inhabited houses in Meath. Mulligan described Durhamstown as comprising of an early two storey stone house with a series of vaulted compartments on the ground floor. Parts of the building date to the fifteenth century. The square tower consists of four-storeys with the ground floor having four vaulted chambers with inserted windows. The original castle is believed to have had another storey which was knocked as a result of a fire. A 19th century single storey wing was added to the north of the old house.

The original building is of medieval origin and is probably a tower house of the fifteenth century. The building is reputed to have been in the hands of Walter Devereux, 1st Earl of Essex, in the sixteenth century. For his zeal in suppressing the northern insurrection in 1572 he was created Earl of Essex. He offered to go to Ulster and establish a colony there. At that time Ulster was completely under the dominion of the O'Neills, led by Brian MacPhelim O'Neill, Turlough Luineach and Sorley Boy McDonnell. Initially Devereux was compelled to entrench himself at Belfast against the O'Neills. In October 1574 he treacherously captured MacPhelim at a conference in Belfast and had him and family members executed in Dublin. He also massacred several hundreds of Sorley Boy's following, chiefly women and children, who had hidden in the caves of Rathlin Island. While in Ireland he is said to have come into ownership of a large estate including Durhamstown Castle. Returning to England in 1575 he was determined to retire but Elizabeth persuaded him to be Earl Marshall of Ireland. Three weeks after he arrived back in Ireland he died of dysentery. The Earls of Essex continued to hold lands in the Navan area until at least the nineteenth century.

In 1598 the name Dorren or Derran is recorded at Derranstown, this is probably Durhamstown.

Thomas Jones became Bishop of Meath in 1584 and ruled the diocese for twenty one years. During his time in Meath he succeeded in acquiring for himself much of the property of the confiscated monasteries. Dean Swift described him as "that rascal Dean Jones." Residing at Ardraccan he virtually gave away or claimed all the lands which had been confiscated from the monasteries. Anti-Catholic in his stance, Jones was held responsible for the execution in 1591 of a Catholic schoolteacher, Michael Fitzsimons, whose property at Forrowes in Meath later came into his ownership. In 1605 Thomas was elevated to Archbishop of Dublin and Lord Chancellor. Bishop Jones's son, Sir Roger, managed to hold onto this alienated property including the lands which had belonged to the monastery at Navan. Roger Jones, of Durhamstown, was made Baron Jones of Navan and Viscount Ranelagh in 1628. Sir Roger Jones of Durhamstown married Frances, daughter of Sir Gerald Moore, Viscount Drogheda. Roger Jones was Member of Parliament for Trim from 1613 to 1615 and in the 1640 commanded the royal army in Connacht. His son, Arthur, married Catherine Boyle, daughter of the Great Earl of Cork, one of the biggest landgrabbers of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. Catherine was the older sister of Robert Boyle, the deviser of Boyles Law. Arthur was involved in the administration of Ireland and made a huge amount of money as he managed to obtain the entire tax take for Ireland in return for a lump sum to Charles, which was said to have been used to pay for his mistresses. Arthur's son, Richard, was Vice Treasurer of Ireland in 1674 and Paymaster General to the Army. William of Orange made him a Privy councillor in 1691. He was involved in a political row with the Earl of Essex. The Viscounts

Ranelagh had their seat at Monkstown, Co. Dublin and continued to hold property in the Navan area into the nineteenth century.

In the 1780s Gaynor Barry was in residence at Dormstown. Mr. Gibney is recorded as owner in 1802. The Roberts family became associated with Durhamstown through Rev. John Roberts who was rector of Rathcore from 1802 to 1826. John Roberts was the son of the Venerable John Roberts, archdeacon of Merioneth and lived at nearby Oatlands. His son Thomas Lewis Roberts and family were in residence at Durhamstown in 1837. The house and yard were re-developed in the middle of the nineteenth century. Few Irish people realise the influence of Ireland on the development of the game of croquet. Some of the modern rules of the game of croquet were produced by local gentry who lived at Durhamstown and two neighbouring estates in the 1850s. The game later spread from Ireland to Britain. In 1876 Thomas L. Roberts of Dormstown held 505 acres of land in Meath county. Thomas died in 1880 and he was succeeded by his son John Richards Roberts who married one of the Everards of Randlestown.

In 1911 gentleman farmer, John R. Roberts, his daughter, Maud, sister Anna and two female servants were in residence. The house had sixteen rooms and sixteen outbuildings including two stables, a coach house, a harness room, a cowhouse, a dairy, a piggery, a fowl house, a barn, a turfhouse, a potato house, a workshop, a shed and a forge.

A wonderful house, The Meath Archaeological and Historical Society paid a visit in 2010. We heard about the ghosts and the sheela na gig.

