

Hamwood House And Gardens



Hamwood House

Hamwood is a mid Georgian house erected for Charles Hamilton in 1779 at a cost of £2500. A simple square three-storey house was constructed but it was so cold and draughty that it was decided to erect pavilions and curving corridors to serve as entrances to the house. The timber was imported from Memel in Russia and it was one of the first houses in Ireland to be roofed with dry slating. Hamilton's employer, the Duke of Leinster, supplied some thinnings of his plantation to make a shrubbery and the wood. Another family of Hamiltons settled at Ballymacoll, Dunboyne.

The first Hamilton to live at Hamwood was Charles, the fifth son of Alexander Hamilton, who was a major landowner near Balbriggan, north County Dublin. Charles, a Dublin wine merchant, acquired lands at Dunboyne and also lands in Westmeath. The name Charles was repeated in each generation of the family for the next two hundred years. The first Charles became land agent for the Dukes of Leinster after the 1798 rebellion, a position held by each succeeding generation until 1975. The Dukes of Leinster lived at Carton about three miles away in county Kildare.

The Hamiltons had a trading business base in Liverpool. Due to Napoleon their timber supply from the Baltics dried up. George Hamilton, the third son of Charles, became a lumber baron and government official in Canada. He and his brother William established themselves in the timber trade, exporting lumber and supplying shipbuilders. Backed by the prestige of the Liverpool firm, George had been welcomed quickly into upper-class Quebec society. His model of local leadership was the English squire, which did not go down well with the democratic Americans who lived locally. Timber was a source of conflict and there were major disputes between the Hamiltons and other loggers about the legality of their activities. George Hamilton was among the first of the great timber barons who played an important part in the public life of British North America in the 19th century.

Hamwood is a treasure trove of artefacts with most of its original contents intact. The diaries of Lady Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsoby were discovered in Hamwood. The two ladies who met in Kilkenny eloped to Wales in 1778 where they purchased a cottage and became known as the 'Ladies of Llangollen'. They became a celebrated example of 'retirement', leaving society for a rustic idyll. One of the interesting items on display in the house is the gavel of the Hell Fire club. This group met in the Dublin

mountains to the south of the city and were reputed to worship the devil and participate in great banquets and orgies. One of the Hamiltons attended these events until divine intervention resulted in the building being struck by lightning and burning to the ground. The ruins still stand today. In the small sitting room there is a view of Dunboyne and the 'Big Tree' by Eva Hamilton.

During the Famine there was a soup kitchen at the gates of Hamwood to feed the starving. Later in the nineteenth century Mrs. Hamilton made up cures for people living in the locality. Medicines were concocted to treat rheumatism, chest complaints, lumbago, burns and other ailments.

G.J. Hamilton, grandson of Charles Hamilton of Hamwood, was awarded the Distinguished Service Order in 1935 for conspicuous gallantry in the face of the enemy, on the North-West Frontier of India. This area would approximate to Pakistan which continues to be unsettled to this day. Hamilton led two platoons of soldiers against an attack of massed tribesmen. A relative of his Walter Hamilton was awarded the Victoria Cross in the 1870s. Another relative had died in the Indian mutiny of 1857-8 as an officer of the Bengal light cavalry.

Hamwood was the home of the artists, Eva and Letitia Hamilton and today its walls are covered with their paintings. They both studied at the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art and in London at the Slade School of Fine Art. Letitia won a bronze Olympic medal for a sports painting in 1948. Letitia and Eva are buried in the Church of Ireland graveyard at Dunboyne.

The gardens contain a rare collection of trees and shrubs collected in the nineteenth century. The gardens are divided into three parts: a pine walk, a rose garden and a walled garden with a lily pond. The pine walk contains giant Californian redwoods and Japanese maples. The rock garden which has been restored dates from 1802. The pine walk, one of the most notable features of Hamwood, was laid out in the 1860's. There were seven glasshouses, and two vineries all of which had to be heated by a central boiler. In the nineteenth century workmen were sent to the bog of Prosperous to bring back peat to fill beds created with cobbles and slate for the growing of rhododendrons and azaleas.

Harbourstown House

Harbourstown House, sometimes called Herbertstown House is located in east Meath, in the parish of Stamullen and near Balbriggan.

Harbourstown House was described by Bence-Jones as a handsome two storey late-Georgian house. Dating to probably the early 1800s the house stood on grounds developed in the 1760s suggesting that there was an earlier house. The house was demolished in the 1940s. A group of derelict outbuildings with a carriage entrance and bellcote and the remains of a walled garden dating from about 1760 survive today. A hexagonal-plan gazebo, is set on an artificial mound, occupying a prominent position in the surrounding landscape. The demesne was split into smaller holdings.

The burial tomb of the Caddell family is in the old Stamullen churchyard. Thomas Cadell was vicar of Stamullen in the 1530s. His brother Edward Caddell was listed as one of the major gentry of Meath at the time.

The Caddells family were long established at Harbourstown and the Naul, being recorded there in the late 1500s. The will of Thomas Caddell of Harbourstown was proved in 1588. The Caddells lost their estates temporarily during the Cromwellian period. Richard Caddell of Harbourstown died in 1742. He was succeeded by his son,

Thomas, who married Celia Farrell of Roscommon, who became heir to the estate of Ulick Burke of Galway.

Mr. Cadell of Harbourstown took Fr. Michael O'Hanlon, curate at Slane, as his chaplain on a tour of the Continent. While staying at the Irish college in Paris they heard that a Colonel Conyngham was being held by the authorities. O'Hanlon spoke at the Military Tribunal and Conyngham and his family were spared. In 1796 Colonel Conyngham succeeded to the inheritance of Slane. Fr. O'Hanlon went to congratulate him but was turned away at the door. When the Colonel remembered who O'Hanlon was he gave him the site for the church in Slane.

Thomas's son, Richard, succeeded to the estate at Harbourstown but also to the estates in Sligo, Roscommon, and Galway of his uncle James Farrell, and assumed the name Farrell. Richard died unmarried in 1811 and his brother Robert Caddell Farrell succeeded him. Robert died in 1818 and was succeeded by his son, Richard O'Ferrall Caddell, who was born in 1780. The Caddells sold their county Galway estate of 4,816 acres in the Encumbered Estates' Court in 1858. In 1806 Richard O'Ferrall Caddell married Paulina Southwell, daughter of the 2nd Viscount Southwell of Castle Mattress, Co. Limerick. In 1837 Harbourstown was described as the property of Mr. O'Farrell Caddell, a handsome modern mansion with demesne comprising more than 400 acres tastefully laid out and well planted, and commanding an extensive view from the summit of a tower within the grounds, which forms a conspicuous landmark for mariners.

Richard and Paulina died in 1856. The only son, Robert Caddell, was High Sheriff of Meath in 1873 and died unmarried in 1887. Robert O'Farrell Caddell held 1372 acres in county Meath, 3464 in Sligo, 3341 in Roscommon and 7 acres in Dublin, a total estate of 8184 acres. He was succeeded by his sister, Sophia Mary Margaret.

Another sister, Cecilia Mary Caddell, was born at Harbourstown. A lifelong invalid, she became an author of religious and historical fiction written from a Catholic point of view. Her most popular work was *Blind Agnese or Little Spouse of the Blessed Sacrament*.

Sophia Mary Margaret Caddell married Admiral Arthur William Jerningham in 1836. Their children were Paulina, Agnes Mary and Cecilia Mary. Admiral Jerningham died in 1889 as did his wife. Paulina became a nun. Agnes Mary inherited Harbourstown in 1899 following the death of her mother. She was married to Stanley Edward George Gary, of Devon and assumed the name Caddell by Royal Licence in 1900. Cecilia married Captain Iltyd Thomas Mansel Nicholl in 1862.

Lt. Cdr. Robert Nicholl-Cadell was born in 1900 in the Assam, India where his father Bernard was District Commissioner. In 1920 Robert inherited Harbourstown from his grandmother, Cecilia Nicholl. Robert was not interested in Harbourstown. Robert had three children, Bernard and two girls. Robert's grandson now lives in Australia. Robert served in the Navy in both World Wars, working on radar in the Second World War. Robert gained the rank of Lieutenant-Commander and was killed in action in 1941. The trees in the estate were cut for timber and the house pulled down in the mid 1940s.



Photo Courtesy of Benton & Curtis Collection © 2002.

Harcourt Lodge

Harcourt Lodge is located in the townland of Bellewstown in the parish of Trim, to the west of the town. Nearby stands Higginsbrook and Waterloo Lodge. Possibly dating to 1760 Casey and Rowan describe Harcourt Lodge as a small and very charming two-storey gabled house.

Rev. William Lightburne, Dean of Derry (1593-1671) married a daughter of Nicholas Stafford, Bishop of Ferns and Leighlin. They had three sons, Richard, William and Stafford. Richard was born in 1670 and became curate of Killucan and vicar of Kilclonfert and later Killaderry. William Lightburne, born 1654 at Trim, became rector of Kilberry and died in 1689 at the camp in Dundalk where the Williamite army was overwintering before marching south.

Stafford, born in 1662, graduated from Trinity College in 1679 with a B.A. and died in 1697. Stafford Lightburne was portreeve or mayor of Trim in 1677, 1682-4, 1686 and 1691. Stafford is listed as one of the Justices of the Peace for Meath in 1667. Stafford Lightburne was Member of Parliament for Trim 1692-3 and 1695-7.

His son, Stafford, born 1690, was curate at Laracor 1722-1733, Rector of Churchtown 1733-47 and vicar of Rathgraffe 1747-51. Rev. Stafford Lightburne was also curate of St. Michans Dublin 1716-21. In 1704 he married Hannah, second daughter and co-heiress of Willoughby Swift of Hereford and Newcastle, Co. Meath, a first cousin of Dr. Jonathan Swift. Swift employed Stafford Lightburne, as curate at Laracor from 1722-1733. He was in line for a substantial estate but it was tied up in litigation. Swift appealed to the Lord Lieutenant on behalf of Stafford and also intervened with the House of Lords on his behalf successfully so that Stafford inherited the estate. Stafford Lightburne was buried at Trim. His children included Willoughby, Harcourt, John, Stafford, Deborah and Mary Hannah. Willoughby was Lord Mayor of Dublin 1773-4. Stafford was vicar of Rathgraffe from 1751 and died at Trim in 1759.

In 1809 Joseph Lightburne is listed at Harcourt Lodge. In 1810 he married Miss P. Meadows of Newbury, Co. Wexford. Joseph Lightburne of Harcourt Lodge died in 1831 aged 73 years and was buried at Trim. His daughter, Ellinor Olivia, died 1842

aged 11 years. Maria Lightburne, who was born 1812 at Harcourt Lodge, married Mark Leland Tew of Trim in 1840 and emigrated to Canada where she died in 1892. Stafford Lightburne graduated from Trinity College, emigrated to Canada where he was called to the bar. He then moved to St. Louis, Missouri. Stafford Lightburne stated that he had seen Roger Tichborne in St. Louis in 1860. In that year the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Newcastle visited St. Louis and Lightburne and a number of witnesses visited the Duke with the story.



Roger Tichborne

Roger Tichborne was born in 1829 in Paris into a prominent and wealthy Catholic Hampshire family. Raised in France he joined the British army and served with the 6th Dragoon Guards in Dublin. Leaving the army Tichborne went to South America. In April 1854 Tichborne boarded the ship "Bella" bound for New York. The ship sank with apparently no survivors. Tichborne's mother refused to believe he was dead and launched an international hunt for him. In 1865 she received a letter from an Australian lawyer claiming to have found Tichborne, living as a butcher in Wagga Wagga. The man was brought to England where his mother accepted him as her son. However a number of the family did not. When Tichborne's father died the man from Australia claimed his inheritance but a trial was held to establish his right to the estate. The civil and criminal trials which followed held the record as the longest court case in British legal history until the 1990s. The country was divided, with the Establishment opposing the claimant but many ordinary people supporting a man who they regarded as being deprived of his rightful inheritance. Following a very celebrated trial the man was found to be a fraud and was imprisoned.

In the 1850s Harcourt Lightburne held lands at Townspark North while Penelope Lightburne held lands at Bellewstown and at Chambers Street and Scarlet Street in Trim town. In 1850 Harcourt Lightburne had a house at 19 Talbot Street, Dublin and in 1862 Mrs. Harcourt Lightburne is listed as of 66 Gardiner Street. Harcourt

Lightburne was a contributor to the memorial clock in the church tower in Trim in memory of Dean Butler.

Jemima Lightburne lived at Harcourt Lodge. A couple of Potterton sisters lived with her there. There is a chalice and paten in St. Patrick's Church of Ireland cathedral which were gifted to the church by Mrs Mary Lightbourne and Mrs. Jane Lightbourne.

Today Harcourt Terrace in Trim commemorates the family. Harcourt Terrace is a small stretch of the street between Emmet Street and Watergate Street.

Harlinstown House

Harlinstown House is located near Slane. In 1836 it was described as a neat ground floor slated farmhouse at the intersection of the road from Slane to Drumcondra and at a crossroads called Harlinstown. There was a village of a few mud walled cabins nearby in the 1830s.

The house originally belonging to the Slane Castle estate. In 1854 John Bolton was leasing the house and 140 acres of land from the Marquis of Conyngham. It was purchased by the Macken family in 1939 from the estate of the Dowager Marchioness Conyngham after her death. The Slane Farm Hostel has been developed at the farm in recent years by the Macken family.

Harristown House

Harristown House is located near Castlejordan, Kinnegad. In the 1830s the townland was owned by the Marquess of Landsdowne and leased to tenant farmers. Harristown House is a two-storey over basement house, erected about 1850. The farm courtyard also dates from about 1850. On the Ordnance Survey map of the early 20th century there is another house also called Harristown House to the west of the one being dealt with.

In the 1920s Robert H. Smith lived at Harristown House. In 1934 George G. Smith of Harristown House died. In the 1950s George E. Smith and family lived at Harristown House. In 1981 Harristown House on 227 acres of land was put for sale.

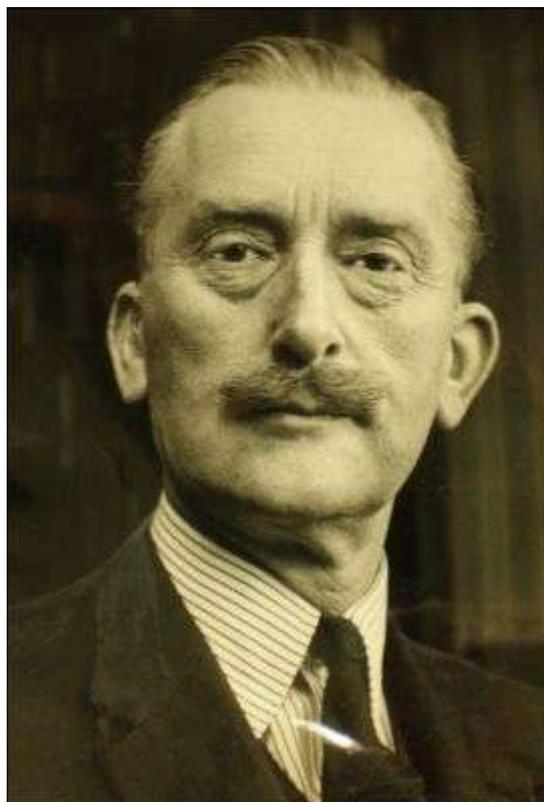
Hayes House

Hayes is situated to the east of Navan, not far from Yellow Furze and Beau Parc. Casey and Rowan describe Hayes as an attractive smaller country house from about 1770. The porch dates to the nineteenth century. A large white marble chimneypiece was brought to Hayes from Sommerville House. Gardens and pleasure grounds surrounded the rough cut stone, two storey, over basement house.

The Bourke family, whose head was the Earl of Mayo, held the estate of Hayes. In 1781 John Bourke was created Viscount Mayo of Moneycrower and in 1785 Earl of Mayo. The seat of the Earls of Mayo was Palmerstown House, Naas, County Kildare. In 1876 the Earl of Mayo owned 559 acres in county Mayo, 4915 acres in county Kildare and 2360 acres in county Meath. In 1836 Haystown Demesne was the seat of R. Bourke. The house was described as being in the north of the townland and being a good dwelling house.

Henry Lorton Bourke, seventh son of Robert Bourke, 5th Earl of Mayo, lived at Hayes. Born in 1840 he married Constance Una Elizabeth Lambart of Beau Parc. He died in 1911 and was succeeded by Henry Legge-Bourke. Henry was born 1889, the only son of Sir Henry Legge and his wife Amy Gwendoline Lambart, daughter of

Gustavus Lambart of Beauparc. Henry assumed the name when he succeeded to the estates of Henry Bourke of Hayes and assumed the name Bourke in 1911. Their son, Nigel Walter Henry Legge-Bourke was killed in action 30 October 1914 during the First World War.



Sir Harry Legge-Bourke

His son, Major Sir Edward Alexander Henry Legge-Bourke was born on 16 May 1914. Queen Alexandra was sponsor at his baptism. Known as Harry Legge-Bourke, he held the office of Page-of-Honour to HM King George V between 1924 and 1930. He fought in the Second World War and served as Aide-de-Camp to the Ambassador to Egypt between 1941 and 1944. After the war he became a Conservative M.P. In all the twenty eight years he spent in the House of Commons he never spoke a word. Conor Brennan recalled that when Harry Bourke stayed at Hayes, he was a bit of a tyrant and the local clergyman said it was a disgrace the language he shouted at decent people. In the early 1960s the Legge-Bourke family decided to sell Hayes and the Land Commission acquired the lands.

His grand-daughter, “Tiggy” Legge-Bourke was nanny, later companion, to Princes William and Harry and a personal assistant to Prince Charles from 1993 to 1999. Princess Diana did not like Tiggy and even accused her wrongly of having an affair with Charles.

Colonel Stephen Hill Dillon was tenant at Hayes in the mid-twentieth century. The Colonel kept a stable of racehorses. One of his horses, “Yellow Furze,” won the Galway Plate in 1935. The Colonel sold Devon Loch, the horse which fell in the Grand National. The Queen Mother's Devon Loch sprawled spectacularly 50 yards from the post in the Grand National of 1956. Jockey Dick Francis subsequently went on to become one of the most prolific thriller writers of all time. The mystery of why the horse stopped has never been solved but has led to many theories. Devon Loch was trained at Hayes House before being sold. Devon Loch ran twice as a five-year-

old, both outings in January 1951. Lord Bicester selected and bought Devon Loch for the Queen Mother. The chief work rider at Hayes is said to have recalled that the horse had sprawled on a rideout shortly before the horse went to England. When Hayes was sold in the 1960s the Hill-Dillon family left..

Headfort House



Headfort House is located just outside the town of Kells on the banks of the Blackwater River. The house has always attracted criticism for its very plain exterior while its Adam's interior has been highly regarded. Headfort House was erected in the 1760s by Sir Thomas Taylor, first Lord Headfort, based on the designs of George Semple, a Dublin-based architect and engineer. The interiors were designed by the famous Scottish architect, Robert Adam. Headfort is Adams's only significant surviving work in Ireland and therefore the interiors hold a unique place in Ireland's architectural history.

The fourth Duke of Rutland, Viceroy of Ireland, described Headfort in 1795 as 'a long range of tasteless building' while three years later it was described as "more like a college or an infirmary" than a private home. Bence-Jones described it as a large and severely plain house while Casey and Rowan said Headfort was "straightforward to the point of monotony."

The house is immense with the main front, including the wings, running for 150 metres. The main part of the house is three storeys over basement with the east wing being single-story over a basement and the west wing being two storeys.

The house is no longer a private residence with the main building and one of the wings now housing Headfort School, the stable yard developed for residences and the parkland as a golf course. A book on Headfort House by M.D.C. Bolton gives a good description of the house and grounds as well as a history of the family.

Originally from Sussex, Thomas Taylor assisted William Petty in surveying Ireland so that Cromwell could allocate lands to his supporters. After the mapping was complete the two surveyors, Petty and Tylour, were two of the biggest landowners in Ireland.

Thomas Taylour purchased the town of Kells from a Cromwellian soldier who did not wish to take up his grant in Ireland. By 1660 Taylor had secured 21,000 acres of land in Cavan and Meath, and settled outside Kells.

In 1692 Thomas Taylor's estate was inherited by his son, Thomas, who consolidated his father's wealth and elevated the family's status in post-Cromwellian Irish society, serving as a Member of Parliament for Kells for 15 years. In 1704 the family received their first title when Thomas Taylor was designated a baronet of Ireland. His grandson, the third Baronet, Thomas, also sat for Kells in the Irish House of Commons. In 1760 Thomas, the third Baronet was raised to the peerage of Ireland as Baron Headfort, of Headfort in the County of Meath. Two years later he was created Viscount Headfort and in 1766 he was even further honoured when he was made Earl of Bective.

No trace remains of the first house constructed by the Taylors but from 1750 onwards plans were under way to build a new country seat suitable for the family's rising status.

The plans were created for Headfort House by the leading eighteenth and early nineteenth century Irish and British architects. The first architect consulted was Richard Castle who made proposals for the new house as did John Ensor, neither of the plans were executed. The second baronet did not like Richard Castle's plans and noted on them - "Mr Castle's plan and a damn bad one." Richard Castle is now regarded as one of the leading architects of the time. Another noted architect, Sir William Chambers, was paid 40 guineas for the unexecuted designs for a house. Thomas Cooley may have acted as overseer for George Semple and designed a bridge in park. Francis Johnson designed battlemented bridge over Blackwater and made design for proposed gothicisation of house.

A Dublin based builder and self taught architect, George Semple, designed such buildings as St Patrick's Hospital in Dublin and became the chosen architect. The house has near similar front and rear elevations of grey Ardbaccan stone only relieved by the pedimented doorways. In 1771 Thomas Taylor requested the Scottish-born architect Robert Adam to produce decorative schemes for a suite of rooms in the newly completed Headfort. Adam, who never visited the country, designed the dining room, hall and stairs, plans which was partly executed for Taylor. The Eating Parlour (ballroom) is the largest of the principal rooms, accommodating about 200 people seated. As well as the ceiling, the walls of the Eating Parlour also show Adam decorations. The room itself was formed from four smaller rooms, two from the floor above, where there are blocked windows visible on the south front of the house.

Thomas Taylor, the third Baronet, died in 1795 and he was succeeded by his son, yet another Thomas. He had represented Kells in parliament from 1776 to 1790. In 1800 he was made Marquess of Headfort. The Tower of Llyod was designed by Henry Aaron Baker for the first Earl of Bective in memory of his father Sir Thomas Taylor and is sometimes described as the only inland lighthouse in the country.

Thomas, Lord Headfort, was an officer in the Meath Militia and served in Limerick. While there he made the acquaintance of the Rev. Charles Massey and his beautiful young wife. Despite a thirty year age-gap an affair took place and one Sunday morning just after Christmas 1803 while Rev. Massey was away conducting church service Mrs. Massey and Lord Headfort eloped. Mr. Massey took a case for damages against Lord Headfort and won compensation of £10,000.

The second Marquess assumed the surname of Taylour in lieu of Taylor; the family did not wish to be associated with the more common name. Lord Headfort served as a Government whip during the government of Lord Melbourne from 1837-41 and was

also Lord Lieutenant of Co. Cavan from 1831 -1870. The Headforts held a considerable amount of lands in Cavan, particularly around Virginia. In 1883 the Marquis of Headfort held 7,544 acres in Meath, 14,251 in Cavan and also lands in England totalling in all 42,754 acres.

The Tylour family mausoleum was constructed at Headfort in 1869 just a year before the death of the second Marquess of Headfort. An austere octagonal shrine the building was consecrated by the Bishop of Meath in 1870.



Geoffrey Thomas Taylor inherited the title and estates in 1894. He served as a Senator in the Free State parliament from 1922 to 1928. In 1900 he married Rose Boote, a showgirl of the chorus of the Gaiety Theatre in London, which caused a sensation. The match was widely opposed, including by Queen Victoria. The Marquis was deprived of his commission as a lieutenant in the First Life Guards as a result of the marriage just as he was about to embark for South Africa to fight in the Boer War. However, Rosie conducted herself in a faultless manner and was soon accepted by society. There was a tremendous welcome in Kells for the couple.

After the Second World War the 5th Marquess made a self contained house in one of the wings and he leased the remainder of the house as a preparatory school, keeping the state rooms for entertaining.

The 6th Marquess of Headfort was educated at Stowe and served as a 2nd lieutenant in the Life Guards before going up to Christ's College, Cambridge, where he joined the university air squadron. He became a fellow of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and also qualified as a commercial pilot.

In 1958 he married Elizabeth Nall-Cain, the only daughter of Lord Brocket, with whom he was to have a son and two daughters. After his first marriage collapsed in 1968, he became embroiled in legal disputes with members of his family that were to last for the rest of his life. For a time Marquess Headfort lived in Hong Kong, where he was an honorary Inspector of Police and in his latter years he moved to the Philippines, the home of his second wife, Virginia Nable, a friend of Imelda Marcos, whom he married in 1972. He established himself on Lugan Island, and was active in the coastguards.

Headfort's interest in Irish politics led him to run for the Senate on the improbable nomination of the Irish Georgian Society in 1973, but he got only a handful of votes. He came to wider attention when he was escorted by police from the Isles of Scilly, after what was claimed to be an abortive attempt to murder Harold Wilson. In 1982 he disposed of Headfort for a sum in excess of £1 million to a Canadian multi-millionaire B.J. Kruger. He died in 2005 at the age of 73 and was succeeded by his son, Thomas, 7th Marquess Headfort.

After Mr Kruger's death, the estate was split into three lots, a farm, the woodlands and the school and its environs. In 1994 the estate was purchased by a consortium. The school now own the building with the exception of the east wing and 66 acres of land. The farmyard has been developed as housing.

“The Butcher Boy” was filmed at Headfort. In 2004 the World Monuments Fund placed the house on its list of 100 most endangered sites. During 2008 the movie “Cracks” was made at Headfort. The Eating Parlour was restored with aid from the Irish Georgian Society and other groups and re-opened in 2009.

Higginsbrook House



Higginsbrook House is a Georgian house, on the banks of the River Boyne, upstream from Trim town. It is located in the townland of Bellewstown.

The house was erected in 1743 by Ralph Higgins. A corn mill was situated nearby. Joseph Higgins was a local magistrate in the 1770s. Joseph Higgins of Higginsbrook died in 1798.

In 1835 Higginsbrook was the residence of Mr. Joseph T. Higgins, coroner for the county and owner of the corn mill.

Frederick Higgins, the son of Joseph and Anne Higgins, was born in 1804. In 1854 Frederick Higgins held a house, outbuildings and 53 acres of lands from Patrick Russell. Frederick Higgins married Frances Anne Mooney in 1855. Frederick Higgins died in 1882.

In 1901 and 1911 Higginsbrook was home to Frederick and Elizabeth Higgins and their six children. Frederick George Higgins was born in 1857 to Frederick and Frances Anne Higgins. Frederick George married Elizabeth Daly about 1888. Frederick was listed as a farmer. The house had seven rooms, five windows to the front and eleven outbuildings. Frederick died in 1926.

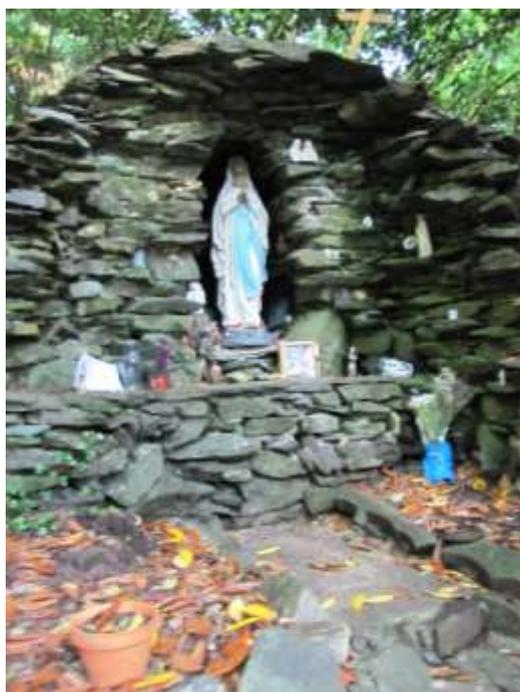
The house was home to Frederick Robert (F.R.) Higgins. Higgins was born in Foxford, Co. Mayo, the son of Joseph Higgins of Higginsbrook and Annie French. Higgins grew up in county Meath. He became a poet and was a close friend to W.B. Yeats. He became Managing Director of the Abbey in 1935. In his poem 'Auction' he writes about Higginsbrook. Higgins died in 1941 and is buried in Laracor churchyard.

In 1982 Eleanor Higgins of Higginsbrook, aged 82, died and was buried in Trim.

Higginsbrook was used as a film location for the movie 'Becoming Jane'. The film tells the story of a possible relationship between Jane Austen and an Irishman, Jeffrey Lefroy. Higginsbrook also featured in the ITV series 'Northanger Abbey'.

Hilltown House

Hilltown House was located near Bellewstown in east Meath. A two storey house Hilltown had a courtyard of outbuildings and stables dating from a similar period as the house. Bence-Jones described Hilltown as a well proportioned house of two storeys erected by Nicholas Boylan about 1810 although another source dated a house at Hilltown to 1760. One of the demesne gates opened directly onto the Bellewstown Racecourse.



Hilltown Grotto

Opposite the gates to Hilltown House is the entrance to the well and grotto which was erected by the Boylans after the apparitions at Lourdes in 1858. Busloads of holiday makers from the Red Island holiday camp at Skerries regularly visited the well during their summer vacations in the 1950s and 60s.

Hilltown house was vacated by the Boylans in the 1980s and fell into disrepair. The Bellewstown Heritage Group recorded that the house was dismantled stone by stone. One of conference rooms in the Customs House, Dublin contains the plaster work from the library of Hilltown House. A modern house was erected on the site of the original house.

According to 'The parish of Duleek and over the ditches' the Boylan family came from Cavan and initially resided in a house at Ratholland, which is now in ruins.

Thomas Boylan of Hilltown died in 1720. His eldest son was Thomas who was succeeded by his son, Patrick. Patrick was succeeded by his son, Nicholas. In the early 1800s Nicholas Boylan of Hilltown was a close friend of Daniel O'Connell, who presented Nicholas with a framed hand-written address describing him as "a patriot and a truehearted Irish gentleman." The mass repeal meeting on the Hill of Tara held on 15th August 1843 was chaired by Nicholas Boylan.

Nicholas Boylan of Hilltown was succeeded by his eldest son, Thomas, who was born in 1808. Thomas served as High Sheriff of Meath in 1862. A year earlier, in 1861 Thomas married Charlotte Mary Thunder, the marriage was conducted by Dr. Cantwell, Bishop of Meath. They were succeeded by their eldest son, Thomas, who married Cecilia Mary Cary. Educated at King's College, London, he served as High Sheriff of Meath in 1894. In 1876 Thomas Boylan of Hilltown House held 2,914 acres in County Meath. He died in 1926 and was succeeded by his son, Brigadier Edward Thomas Arthur George Boylan, who had been born in 1894.

There is a story that when one of the Boylans lay dying he had all his valued possessions gathered about him and even his herd of cattle brought up to the lawn where he could see them through the bedroom window and cried "Hilltown, oh Hilltown! How can I ever leave you! Heaven can never be like Hilltown...". After his death the house was haunted by his ghost. A priest was called and he confined the restless spirit to an outhouse on the estate.

Edward Boylan served in the First World War where he was mentioned in dispatches. He was awarded the Military Cross and Companion, Distinguished Service Order in 1918. Edward retired from the military in 1927 on the death of his father but he re-joined at the start of the Second World War, being evacuated from Dunkirk. Promoted to Brigadier in 1942 he landed in France shortly after D Day and was with one of the first British corps to cross the Rhine in 1945. He retired from the military in 1945 and was invested a Commander, Order of the British Empire in 1946. He was Keeper of the Match Book to the Irish Turf Club from 1945. Brigadier Boylan died in 1959 aged 65. He was succeeded by his son, Major Edward Anthony Boylan. Born in 1925 Edward was educated at Ampleforth College, Yorkshire and gained the rank of Major in the service of the Royal Artillery and King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery. He followed his father's interest in equine matters and became a successful showjumper, winning the Badminton Horse Trials in 1966. Eddie Boylan passed away in 2005. Hilltown farm had a large dairy and sold bottled milk into the Dublin market. The estate was wound up in 1975 and the lands divided. Part of the lands were put up for a prize in a raffle which was said to be the first time this had been done in Ireland.

Hurdlestown House,

Hurdlestown house is on the Kells-Navan road west of Bloomsbury cross. In 1835 Hurdlestown was described as good two storey house, the residence of Mrs. Rothwell. In 1854 Arthur Radcliff was leasing the house and 258 acres of lands from James W. Cusack. In 1901 William Perkins Radcliff, his brother, Reginald, and sister, Lydia, were living at Hurdlestown. The house had thirteen rooms, nine windows to the front and fifteen outbuildings. William Perkins Radcliff died in November 1910. His coffin was carried from Hurdlestown House to Marty graveyard by the people of the locality. In 1911 Reginald Radcliff was living at Hurdlestown. In August 1920 Reginald died from fright when he was confronted by armed raiders looking for arms. The property was acquired by Michael Foley. Michael Foley died in 1985.

Jenkinstown House

Jenkinstown House is located on the Summerhill-Dunboyne road. In 1835 Jenkinstown house was described as a good farm-house, two storeys high and slated, the residence of Mr. Gannon. Mr. Gannon held about 106 acres. In 1854 Patrick McGerr was leasing a house and 169 acres from Henry White at Jenkinstown. In 1911 W. G. Jamieson was the land owner and the house was occupied by groom, Robert Charles and his family. The house had ten rooms, six windows to the front and eight outbuildings.

Johnsbrook House

Johnsbrook house is located near Fordstown, Kells. It is just to the north of Drewstown House. Casey and Rowan described Johnstown as a handsome gentleman farmer's house of 1770 but much altered and extended at rear. There was supposed to be a secret room in the attic for hiding priests during the penal times.

In 1800 John Tandy lived at Johnsbrook. In 1802 Thomas Tandy of Johnsbrook, married Mary Tighe at St. George's Church, Dublin. In 1828 Thomas Tandy of Johnsbrook supported the speedy resolution of the Catholic question. The Act of Emancipation was passed a year later.

In 1835 Johnsbrook House was described as a neat house of two storeys and basement with a small demesne attached. It was the residence of Mr. John Tandy. There was a small lake of four acres in the southern part of the townland. In 1854 Thomas Tandy held the house and the entire townland of Johnsbrook, amounting to 172 acres. In 1864 J. Tandy held Johnsbrook.

In 1876 Thomas Tandy, address Jonesbrook, Clonmellon, held 623 acres in county Meath. In 1879 Thomas Tandy was shot dead as he was entering his house. The killing was thought to be associated with land agitation.

In 1901 Sarah M. Tandy, widow, aged 81, was living at Johnsbrook. Commander Dashwood Goldie Tandy R.N. died in 1883. His son, Reginald Dashwood Tandy, inherited Johnsbrook. In 1911 Reginald, his wife, young son, his mother and uncle were residing at Johnsbrook. The house had twenty one rooms, fourteen windows to the front and seventeen outbuildings. Reggie served as High Sheriff of Meath in 1912. In 1906 he had married Valerie Wellesley. Captain Tandy leased the lands rather than farmed them. Major Tandy served with the Derbyshire Territorial Hussars during World War I.

In 1934 Colonel Tandy's estate of 307 acres was taken over by the Land Commission. Reginald Dashwood Tandy died in 1944 in Jersey. Matthew Lynch purchased the house. The house and forty six acres was purchased by the Sweetman family about 1941. In 1947 the house was burned to the ground leaving a shell. At the time it was the residence of Patrick J. Sweetman, solicitor, his wife and five children. Eleven year old Michael Sweetman smelled smoke at 3 a.m. and raised the alarm. The front stairs were impassable and the family escaped by the back stairs. Mrs. Sweetman was a member of the La Touche family, which founded the Bank of Ireland. The house was subsequently rebuilt.

Johnstown House



Johnstown house is located just outside Enfield in the south of the county. In fact the village of Enfield is in the townland of Johnstown. Jim Prendergast, who was born in Johnstown House in 1940, has written a history of the house.

The house was erected in the middle of the eighteenth century and altered in the middle of the nineteenth century. A square blockish house the house has a pedimented doorcase and four chimneystacks. One room contained a good plasterwork ceiling. There is an extensive range of stone built stabling and farm buildings.

Francis Forde, originally from Co. Down, attended Trinity College, Dublin and then joined the army. His regiment, the 39th, were the first of the King's regiments to be sent to India. When his regiment was recalled to England Forde was invited to take charge of the East India Company's army in Bengal. Robert Clive had met Forde in the Carnatic in 1756 and his high opinion of Forde's military abilities was shared by others. Forde fought the French successfully to oust them from the Northern Circars and Forde's expedition had contributed to the failure of the French siege of Madras. Forde's successes against the French were repeated against the Dutch. In 1760 Forde returned to England, where he was reunited with his wife and his children. Colonel Francis Forde purchased the lands at Johnstown in 1761 and erected the house. In 1769 he was appointed one of three supervisor to the administration of India. The ship carrying the three men disappeared in December 1769.

In 1770 a Dublin merchant, James Halpin, purchased the house and the lands of Innfield. James Halpin died in 1822 leaving the estate to his sister, Constance, who was married to Andrew Roarke. Andrew's son, James Halpin Rourke inherited the estate in 1826. Following the famine and its economic consequences Rourke was forced to lease the house and lands to Rev. James Rynd. Rev. Rynd converted one of the rooms into an oratory.

James Rourke Junior inherited the property in 1860 but within four years he was bankrupt and the estate had to be sold under the Encumbered Estates Court. The estate totalling 3071 acres included lands at Castlemartin, Tankardstown and Johnstown, Co. Meath and Tyrrellstown, Blakestown, Hartstown, Co. Dublin and Newtown, Co. Kildare.

Col. John Ennis M.P. purchased the house and some of the estate in 1864 for his daughter, Margaret, and her husband, Edmund Waterton. John Ennis was a Dublin merchant and a Governor of the Bank of Ireland.

Michael Colgan purchased the house and property in 1896. Seven years later in 1903 Thomas Rutledge purchased the house. House and estate were sold to the Land Commission in the early 1920s and it was expected that the house would be demolished. Patrick Prendergast purchased the house in 1927. When the Prendergast family purchased the house in the 1920s there were many stories about the house being haunted so a priest was asked to say Mass in the house. Patrick died in 1966. The upkeep of the house was too expensive and the property was sold in 1985. The house passed through a number of owners before being developed as a hotel.

Julianstown House

Julianstown House is located in the townland of Julianstown West, on the Laytown Road from Julianstown, opposite the church. This house is a two storey house erected about 1760. The house appears on the Taylor and Skinner maps of 1783 and was the seat of the Moore family. In 1835 Julianstown House was the residence of William Moore. In 1854 William Moore was leasing a house and lands from Anne M. Disney. In 1901 Richard Drew and his family lived at Julianstown House. The house had twelve rooms, seven windows to the front and eleven outbuildings.

Julianstown House, Nobber

Julianstown is a big rubble farmhouse, probably early 19th century, three bay, two storey over basement with attic accommodation. The house has a hipped gable roof with two chimney stacks. Overlooking the river Dee, it has a modern projecting porch.

The Owens family lived at Julianstown House in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Thomas was at Julianstown in the mid eighteenth century. His son, Simon, married Christina McGeogh in 1796 at St Mary's, Dublin. Christina's father was an Armagh merchant. In 1837 Julianstown was the residence of Simon Owens and he was a subscriber to Lewis's Topographical Dictionary of Ireland. He died about 1838 at Julianstown, Nobber. His son, Simon, married Mary Anne Hinds at Trim in 1840. In 1854 Simon Owens held 466 acres from Henry Smyth at Julianstown. The house valued at £30 was surrounded by trees and had a number of different avenues. A mill was located on one of these avenues. Simon died in 1879 and was buried in Ardbraccan where his gravestone is to be seen. The house then went to Simon's brother, Edward and then to his son, Simon Edward. Just across the road was Rockfield House, the residence of the Hopkins family. In 1854 John Hopkins held 244 acres from Henry Smyth in Julianstown townland with a house worth £20.

Dublin butcher, James Evans, purchased Julianstown before 1911. Born in England Evans purchased the property which included a weir, mill race, cornmill, farmyard and large walled garden. Roddy Evans wrote of his childhood in the house in his book "Glimpses into the past: Memoir of an Irish Anglican."