

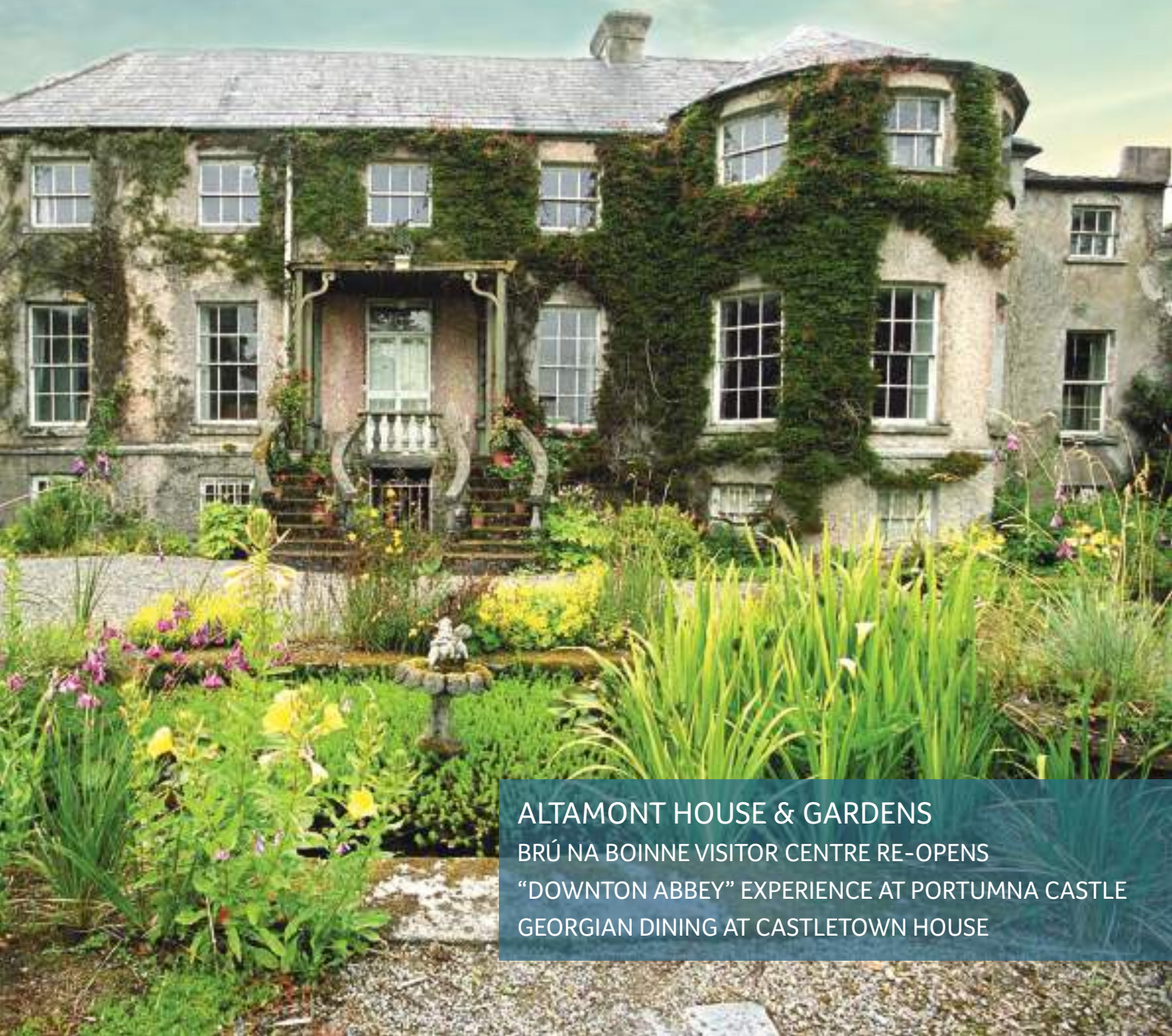
# Heritage Ireland



**OPW**

Oifig na  
nOibreacha Poiblí  
Office of Public Works

Issue 12 SUMMER 2020



ALTAMONT HOUSE & GARDENS  
BRÚ NA BOINNE VISITOR CENTRE RE-OPENS  
“DOWNTON ABBEY” EXPERIENCE AT PORTUMNA CASTLE  
GEORGIAN DINING AT CASTLETOWN HOUSE

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# Welcome

We are delighted to welcome you back.

We continue to work to gradually reopen the historic places we care for. Our priority remains the safety of our staff, visitors and local communities. Some of our sites are now open and more will open on an ongoing basis.

Our staff are working hard to adapt our sites for reopening. We are introducing a range of measures to help adhere to social distancing guidelines and hygiene standards. There will be some changes to the visitor experience for the safety of our visitors and our staff. Each site will have specific measures in place to keep everyone safe, which may include specific routes to follow, a limit on the number of visitors and not opening certain parts of some sites. Visitors are strongly encouraged to avail of pre-booked ticketing at our most popular sites to ensure access and avoid disappointment.

We would like to issue a warm welcome to our new Minister of State, Patrick O'Donovan. An initiative just launched by Minister O'Donovan to stimulate domestic tourism sees many of our sites introduce reduced or free admission until the end of the year to encourage people to stay at home and take staycations and short breaks within Ireland, particularly over the next six months. In addition to this we have a range of fantastic offerings to tempt you. Come and see the state-of-the-art visitor centre at Brú na Bóinne following its recent facelift. It's so good it's a destination all by itself.

Heritage Week will be a very different experience for many of us this year. While we will have a very limited number of onsite activities we will have an extensive range of online events, activities and exhibitions. Keep an eye on our social media and websites for full details of what promises to be an exciting and diverse programme.

Full details of proposed reopening dates and changes to the visitor experience at each site are available on our website [www.heritageireland.ie](http://www.heritageireland.ie) where you will also find details of which sites have reduced or waived admission fees for the rest of the year.

We want everyone to be able to enjoy our sites safely, and so we ask that you respect the procedures in place at each site to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all.

**Maurice  
Buckley**  
Chairman  
OPW



**John  
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Commissioner  
OPW Heritage  
Services



# Heritage Ireland Ezine Contributors



**THOMAS NELLIGAN** has a PhD in ancient Greek literature from the University of Limerick and published his research in 2015. Since 2016 he has been a guide with the OPW, first at Roscrea Heritage and now at the Rock of Cashel. He also runs a blog about heritage sites in Ireland ([www.thestandingstone.ie](http://www.thestandingstone.ie)) on which he has published over 400 articles.



**PAUL O'BRIEN MA**, a military historian and author, works for the Office of Public Works and is currently based at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham. The author of fifteen books, he has written extensively on the 1916 Rising, the British Army in Ireland and a number of local histories. He lives in Santry, Dublin with his wife, daughter and two cats. Stay up to date with the author at: [paulobrienauthor.ie](http://paulobrienauthor.ie)



**JOE PATTISON** is a guide at Castletown House and helped create a heritage week event called "Georgian Dining at Castletown".



**SARAH CLOHESSY** is from a village nearby the Rock of Cashel, commonly known as the Ragg, and an English and History graduate from the University of Limerick. She is currently working her fourth season at the Rock of Cashel.



**EMMA COLLINS** is Head Guide at Ormond Castle. She holds a BA in Economics and Politics and an MA in Politics from UCC. With the OPW since 2008 she has also worked in Cahir Castle and Kilkenny Castle. She has particular interest in women's history.



**MARK KING** is a guide with the Office of Public Works at the Rock Of Cashel, a complex of medieval church buildings and one of the most visited heritage sites in Ireland.



Charles Fort Kinsale. Image © OPW

## CHARLES FORT

**Charles Fort will re-open to the public on Saturday 11th July 2020.**

In order for you to have a safe and enjoyable visit the following visiting procedures are in place:

- Open daily from 11am to 4pm. All visitors are required to be off site by 4.30pm
- Free admission.
- Self-guided visits.
- One-way directional route around the 12 acres (signs in place).
- Queueing system in operation outside the fort. An OPW guide will be on hand to welcome you and to explain our operating procedures.
- We regret that our Exhibition Centres are temporarily closed.
- Tearooms will remain closed for the 2020 season.

Charles Fort is a classic example of a late 17th century star-shaped fort. William Robinson, architect of the Royal Hospital in Kilmainham, Dublin, and Superintendent of Fortifications, is credited with designing the fort. As one of the largest military installations in the country, Charles Fort has been associated with some of the most momentous events in Irish history. The most significant of these are the Williamite War 1689-91 and the Civil War 1922-23. Charles Fort was declared a National Monument in 1973. Across the estuary is James Fort designed by Paul Ive in 1602.

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**OPW**

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# Opening of The Lady Kildare Room at Castletown House

**T**he Office of Public Works (OPW) together with the Castletown Foundation, was delighted to officially open The Lady Kildare Room at Castletown House recently as part of its programme to open additional spaces within the House and to further enhance the visitor experience at this magnificent architectural gem located only 30 minutes from Dublin. Castletown House is considered by many to be Ireland's grandest Palladian mansion and is a flagship property in the OPW Heritage Services portfolio.

The room, aptly named, will house a portrait of Emily FitzGerald, the Duchess of Leinster along with an important collection of portrait miniatures, silhouettes and drawings.

The portrait of Emily by Sir Joshua Reynolds was painted in 1774 and shows Emily looking stately in a pink dress and ermine shawl, within a painted oval. Lady Emily had a fascinating life, married to James FitzGerald the first Duke of Leinster, she was referred to as the "Queen of Ireland" for her role as a political influencer. The painting originally hung in the Dining room of Carton House, and will now be displayed in Castletown House, home of her sister Lady Louisa Conolly.

The collection of portraits miniatures, silhouettes and drawings consist of predominantly Irish personages from the 18th and 19th centuries which has been generously loaned by the Irish Georgian Society and includes such interesting characters as Frances Edgeworth and Marguerite Gardiner, Countess of Blessington. The portrait miniature was a personal item, often given as a gift and, in an age before photography, were often used as a visual memorial of a loved one which could be carried on the person. These were mostly designed to be worn as a piece of jewellery and often incorporated a lock of hair. They could be worn on a chain as a locket, hanging from the waist on a chatelaine or even on as small an item as a ring.



▲ Above: Pictured at the launch in March (L-R) are Commissioner John McMahon, Chairman Maurice Buckley and Rosemarie Collier OPW.

▼ Below: Castletown House, Celbridge, County Kildare. [www.castletown.ie](http://www.castletown.ie)





# BRÚ NA BÓINNE VISITOR CENTRE

## RE-OPENED AFTER MAJOR REFURBISHMENT

**26 years after the 'Archaeological ensemble of the Bend of the Boyne or Brú na Bóinne' was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a new state-of-the-art visitor experience has opened at the Brú na Bóinne centre.**

This follows a major investment of €4.5 million by the strategic partners of Fáilte Ireland, the OPW and Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Fáilte Ireland provided a grant of €2.6 million under the government's Project Ireland 2040 strategy with the aim of driving sustainable growth in the Irish tourism sector and higher revenue and job creation around Ireland.

The building on the banks of the Boyne River, near Donore in Co. Meath, has become famous as the entry point for the renowned Neolithic Passage Tomb complexes of Newgrange and Knowth.

The new immersive visitor experience showcases the archaeological and historical heritage of Brú na Bóinne in a way that is evocative, absorbing and entertaining for visitors. It tells the story of how the Neolithic Passage Tomb at Newgrange was constructed around 3,200 BC, and the way it aligns with the rising sun at the time of the Winter Solstice on 21 December. It transports visitors back 5000 years to the pinnacle of

▲ Top: The new immersive visitor experience at Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre

► Facing page: (Top) Brú na Bóinne, Knowth, Co Meath © Noel Meehan, Copter View Ireland.

All other images © Naoise Culhane Photography



passage tomb building when Brú na Bóinne contained some of the largest buildings in the world. The exhibits explore the seasonal nature of Stone Age society, the significance of the solar cycle, ceremonies and the monument building process.

New information on the immensely rich archaeological landscape of the World Heritage Site around Newgrange will also be brought to life at the centre for the first time, with exciting discoveries made during the summer of 2018 which have since been investigated by the National Monuments Service.

The new exhibition at Brú na Bóinne was created by EVENT and

advised by an expert team led by Emeritus Professor Muiris Ó Súilleabháin, UCD, with assistance from Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's National Monuments Service, Fáilte Ireland and the OPW.

The building project involved the complete internal refurbishment of the building, replacing flooring, ceilings and electrical systems and providing a refurbished café and kitchen environment to sustain a suitable dining experience for future visitors.

The investment made in the Brú na Bóinne Centre is one element of an investment being made in the World Heritage Site under a strategic

partnership arrangement and investment programme between the Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Fáilte Ireland and the OPW. A parallel visitor experience project has also been developed at the nearby Knowth passage tomb complex, which is also managed by the OPW and will be opened officially in the New Year. Further works are also planned at the site of the Newgrange passage tomb itself and these will be delivered later in 2020.





The new immersive visitor experience  
at Brú na Boinne Visitor Centre  
© Naoise Culhane Photography





The new immersive visitor experience  
at Brú na Boinne Visitor Centre  
© Naoise Culhane Photography

# A GENERAL MISTAKE

TEXT BY PAUL O'BRIEN

**O**n the morning of the 3rd May 1916, the volley of shots that echoed throughout the stonebreaker's yard of Kilmainham Gaol heralded the beginning of the end. British crown forces had subdued the Easter rebellion of 1916 and Dublin city lay in a smoldering ruin. It was at this point that Irish history would dramatically change and a failed rebellion would be transformed into a revolution.

As the Rising came to an end, Major General L.B. Friend was replaced by Lieutenant General Sir John Maxwell (*right*) who took up residence at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham. The British government effectively abandoned control of events to the military and to one man in particular, Lieutenant General Sir John Grenfell Maxwell. Extensive military powers enabled him to declare martial law that led to the execution of 15 rebels from the Rising in Ireland. In the short period of time between the ending of the rebellion and the subsequent executions, General Maxwell's actions worked to turn general Irish apathy into outrage. Though Irish nationalists have castigated this British officer for decades little is known of this man or his military career. For a short period of time this figure played a prominent role in Irish history and his actions would contribute greatly to the turbulent years that were to follow 1916.

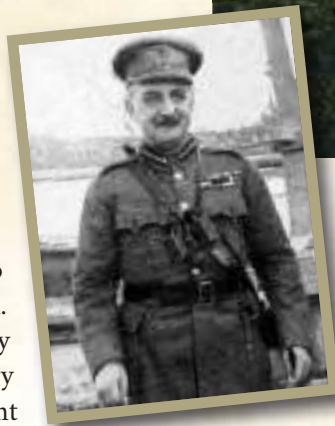
By examining General Maxwell's early military career in Egypt, one may deduce that his training, and implementation of military law in the aftermath of that country's many uprisings were to influence him greatly in his decisions in relation to Dublin in 1916. These decisions would effectively strengthen Irish opposition to British rule in Ireland and would contribute greatly to the mass support that was gathering for opponents of the British crown.

Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a place of hardship for many. The industrial revolution had widened the class divide and this was evident in many of the towns and cities throughout the country. The colonies had provided Britain with its wealth for many years and they had been protected vigorously. Many of the native populations of these lands would rise up in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century attempting

to gain independence and put a stop to British colonial rule. However, as the sun set on the empire a country nearer to Britain was to gain its independence before all others.

John Grenfell Maxwell was born into a prestigious family on August 13<sup>th</sup> 1859 at Toxteth Park in Liverpool. His mother Maria Emma was the daughter of John Pascoe Grenfell an admiral in the Brazilian navy. His father Robert Maxwell was the heir of Archibald Maxwell of Threave, a descendent of the Maxwell's of Drumpark.<sup>1</sup> His regimental upbringing and private schooling at Cheltenham College prepared him for a life in uniform and in 1879 at the age of twenty he received a commission into the British army having graduated from the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. His colleagues affectionally knew him as "Conkey". His regiment was the 42<sup>nd</sup> Royal Highland Foot later known as the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Black Watch. Between 1882 and 1900 the 42<sup>nd</sup> Foot was stationed in Egypt as part of the army of occupation.

Political unrest by the native population saw Maxwell's military career commencing in the Sudan. In the year 1881, there had risen a religious teacher, a native of Dongola named Mohammed Ahmed (Mahdi).<sup>2</sup> The fame of this man's sanctity spread and thousands flocked to his banner. The people of the Sudan who had suffered under years of extortion and oppression were easily roused against the Egyptian government. Attempts to arrest the Mahdi by the governor general at Khartoum failed and El Mahdi and his armies swept through the Sudan, isolating Khartoum and General Gordon. In 1882 Maxwell accompanied Lord Wolsley in an attempt to relieve General Gordon and the besieged garrison at Khartoum. This resulted in the battle





of Tel el Kebir. This action though fierce was indecisive but it did reveal the extent of the Mahdi's military force. Khartoum was not relieved and General Gordon was killed in the defense of the city. The combined British and Egyptian armies were to be driven by the desire to revenge Gordon in the years that were to follow. In the years 1883 to 1885 Maxwell was appointed a staff captain in the Egyptian military police and British army officers began the reorganization of the Khedive of Egypt's forces. In the months that followed Maxwell was occupied with intelligence gathering and counter insurgency against the Mahdi's forces. Maxwell developed a ruthless persona when it came to dealing with what the military termed rebels. In 1885 Maxwell served as a Headquarters Camp Commandant and Provost Martial during the Nile



▲ Above: Royal Hospital Kilmainham

Top: Formal Garden at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham

campaign. Once again he proved himself as a protector of the Queen's law.

On his mother's side he was a nephew of Field Marshall Lord Grenfell who in 1885 took Maxwell on to his personal staff. During the battle of Giniss Maxwell was noted for his audacity and was decorated with the Distinguished Service Order. During the Sudan Frontier operation that followed he continued to serve under his uncle, the Sirdar, as his A.D.C and later A.M.S.

In 1892 he married Louise Selina, the daughter of Mr. C. W. Bonyng. Though he was to have one daughter, Helena Philae Olive Virginia, family life was to be over shadowed by his military career. He was an officer in his Majestie's forces and would remain so throughout his life. However, his letters to his wife reveal a man who questions not his own judgment but the circumstances that brought him to those difficult conclusive decisions.

In the years 1896 to 1898 he served as A.M.S to Lord Kitchener during the reconquest of the Sudan. He saw action in a number of engagements such as Firkit, Atbara and at the conclusive battle of Omdurman.<sup>3</sup> He commanded various Egyptian brigades during this campaign and his skill and strategy was noted in battle.

At Omdurman his military command carried the advance on Surgham hill in what the newspapers described as a brilliant fashion. The battle was supported by gunboats positioned on the Nile that shelled the Mahdi's forces as they emerged from Omdurman. This type of military tactic was to be used by the British in a number of wars beginning in Africa and ending in Dublin, Ireland. He received thanks from both houses of the parliament and was awarded a brevet Colonelcy. Having been named Governor of Nubia in 1897 he was appointed Governor of Omdurman in 1898. However, as the Sudan crisis drew to a close, the war that was to change the British Empire was just beginning.

At the outbreak of the Boer war in South Africa in 1899 he was appointed commander of the 14<sup>th</sup> Brigade. Maxwell was involved in a number of engagements against Boer forces as his Brigade marched to the relief of Pretoria. He was under the general command of Lord Roberts who would lose a son in the Boer war. They entered in to Pretoria on June 5th 1900. Because of Maxwell's experience in military administration he was appointed military Governor of Pretoria and the Western Transvaal.<sup>4</sup> His administration is described as stern but just by the newspapers. The administration of military law during war was deemed a difficult task but Maxwell's experience on such matters pleased his superiors. It was during this period that Maxwell was involved in the erection of 450 blockhouses that were to be part of the concentration camp system that would house the families of many of Boer Guerillas.<sup>5</sup> This was an attempt to subdue the Boer by incarcerating their families and followers. On June 26<sup>th</sup> 1902 Joseph Chamberlain wrote, "For the services rendered as military Governor of

Pretoria and in particular his establishment of the camps". For this service he was awarded the companionship of the order of Saint Michael (C.M.G) and the K.C.B.

Lord Roberts's appointment in South Africa had left a vacancy in Ireland. This was to be filled by the Duke of Connaught. He summoned Maxwell to Ireland as his Chief Staff Officer. Maxwell was to serve the Duke of Connaught between 1904 and 1907 in Ireland, London and Malta. In 1908 the Duke of Connaught was given the role of Commander and Chief of the Mediterranean with his Headquarters at Malta. As 1907 drew to a close Maxwell was appointed Major General of the General staff. With this new position he was transferred to Egypt as General Officer commanding in Egypt where he was to serve until 1912. He then returned to the offices of the General staff at Whitehall in London. These were years of political change and not of military conflict. Maxwell found himself discharged from his duties as an officer and retired on half pay.

As the dark clouds of war loomed in 1914, Maxwell was recalled to duty. He expected a lucrative appointment within the armed forces, as his old friend Lord Kitchener was now Secretary of State. However, no such appointment was forthcoming. By the time war was declared in 1914 Maxwell held the rank of Lieutenant – General as he was reenlisted in to the army. In the first few weeks of the war he was sent briefly to the Western Front as head of the British mission to the French army. He was to remain in France until September 1914 after the first battle of the Marne in which the advancing Germans were held back and both sides commenced a strategy of trench warfare that would last until 1918.

Though his vast knowledge of Egypt and its affairs enabled Maxwell to advance his career in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was to hinder any advancement in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In late 1914 he was transferred to Egypt and appointed Commander of the British forces in this region. This posting was not of his choice as it removed him from the strategic decision-making that would hopefully send the Hun packing on the Western Front. He was also appointed Colonel of the Royal Highlanders and for his service to the allies he received many foreign honors and was awarded the K.C.M.G. He received the order to conduct a passive defense of the Suez Canal. His force in Egypt numbered 70,000 British troops exclusive of the Egyptian Army.

On February 3<sup>rd</sup> 1915 Turkish forces allied with Germany crossed the Sinai desert and launched an attack on the canal. Maxwell's defense of the canal had the support of the Royal Navy and their firepower devastated the attacking Turks. Only three pontoons of Turkish troops reached the Egyptian banks and these were repulsed by British rifle and machine gun fire. The Turks withdrew in to the Sinai desert but their attack by 12,000 troops on a strategic location had been noted by the British high command.

However, in January 1916 a new threat emerged in Egypt that threatened the country's stability. In the West, the

fanatical tribesmen known as the Senussi rebelled. These people inhabited the coastal plains that extend towards Tripoli. Maxwell dispatched an expedition against them and an inconclusive action was fought on January 23<sup>rd</sup> 1916. The Senussi warriors only numbered 6000 but they managed to immobilize 20,000 British troops that could be of value elsewhere. The Senussi were eventually defeated at Agagir by Major General Peyton thus bringing to an end this short lived but costly rebellion.

Due to the failure of the Gallipoli campaign and the stalemate that had followed Egypt was once again seen as a target for the Turkish forces. The passive defense of the Suez Canal was no longer seen as an option and by March 1916, 400,000 allied troops had been assembled along the canal's banks. The assemblage of such a large amount of troops and munitions were allotted to three independent British officers. Sir John Maxwell was G.O.C Egypt based in Cairo. Sir John Archibald Murray was refitting the troops from Gallipoli at Ismailia and Major General Altham was in charge of a war office creation dubbed "H.G Levant Base" at Alexandria. Maxwell found only frustration with the command structure in Egypt and thought himself reduced to the role of Quartermaster with no influence in strategy or operations in Egypt. His frustration was augmented by the appointment of Murray as overall commander of the new Mediterranean Expeditionary force with Altham as his subordinate. By early spring 1916 Maxwell was disillusioned with events in Egypt and asked to be relieved of his command and he returned home to Britain.

On Easter Monday 1916 members of the Irish volunteers under the command of Patrick Pearse seized a number of key buildings in Dublin city and declared an Irish Republic. The British crown retaliated by means of force and the battle to retake Dublin was to last one week.

Maxwell's return to England coincided with the outbreak of the rebellion in Ireland and he was recalled to duty and appointed Commander and Chief of the forces in Ireland and was dispatched to the country with full powers of military governance. On the night of Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> of April 1916 he arrived in Dublin. The scene was one of carnage. The city was ablaze and the crack of rifle fire echoed throughout the streets. The gunboat "Helga" was shelling the General Post Office illuminating the city's skyline. Maxwell and his command made the hazardous journey to his headquarters at The Royal Hospital Kilmainham. On his arrival General Lowe briefed him of the situation and the military plan to retake the city. A cordon had been thrown up around the city preventing the volunteers from being reinforced. British troops would then move in retaking the city by isolating the rebel positions.

The Rebellion was to be crushed within a week and on the Saturday Patrick Pearse unconditionally surrendered to General Lowe. Pearse's forces of 1500 had immobilized a British force of 20,000 troops. The Irish Volunteers were taken to Richmond Military barracks where they were to

undergo trial by court martial. Pearse was first taken to the Royal Hospital Kilmainham to meet Maxwell and then to custody at Arbor Hill detention barracks.<sup>6</sup> The British government effectively abandoned control of events to the military. The government's representatives in Ireland, Lord Wimborne, Mr. Birrell and Sir Mathew Nathan had resigned their positions after the cessation of hostilities. Maxwell's appointment as Commander-in-chief and military governor of the forces in Ireland placed him in the overall position of Lord of Ireland answerable only to the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith.

The prisoners were to be tried by military court. However, they were not to be tried by a General court martial but by a field court martial. The difference between these military courts is that a general court martial is presided over by a judge advocate assisted by thirteen officers. This type of court is the highest form of military court. The field court martial was chosen because it was easier to convene. The bench consisted of only three officers. No legal qualifications were required and the most senior rank required was a captain or higher. The sentence of death required the agreement of all three officers. The confirmation of the death sentence had to be sanctioned by the Commander-in-chief of the Crown forces.<sup>7</sup> On the Western front it was Generals Haig or French but in Dublin Ireland, it was General Maxwell. It was decided to hold the proceedings behind closed doors as it was considered "a critical period" as a Rebellion had just been put down.

Military law was applied throughout Ireland as it had been in Egypt in time of insurrection. It was the government's Defense of the Realm Act that stated, "doing an act... prejudicial to the public safety or the defense of the realm... For the purpose of assisting the enemy"<sup>8</sup>. On the 26<sup>th</sup> April 1916 the British government had proclaimed Martial law in Ireland. This act suspended the right of a civilian to be tried by a civil court with a jury but by a military court with General Maxwell as its judge and jury.

Transcripts of the trials that resulted in the executions of 15 volunteers in Ireland have recently been published. Maxwell's confirmation of the sentences and his governing of Ireland under martial law gained him the title "Bloody Maxwell".

He had been sent to Ireland with powers vested in him by Asquith to deal with the immediate crisis that was unfolding in Ireland. These powers did not extend to the civil domain. As the Lord Lieutenant, Secretary and Undersecretary had all resigned, Maxwell had been left as overall governor of Ireland, a position he felt was exposed. Throughout his career he had acted as military governor to a native population; he believed in force. The British Government was imperial in its deliverance of rule over seas. Many British colonies were experiencing political upheaval as the people rebelled against what they deemed occupational rule. They had killed native populations with impunity, failing to

provide reasonable justice in its many colonies forcing the natives to rebel. The British Government's answer to these problems was to send in the army. The might of a modern army had quelled these uprisings with considerable force, modern weapons and tactics being no match for native weaponry and strategy. In the months after the Rising in Ireland the Irish law officers of the crown were in the opinion that..."there is no present justification for the exercise of any special power under martial law". However, the tactics employed in Dublin were the same that had been used in the colonies and had proved successful in the past. However, the British Government and the military failed to realize that Ireland was not a colony and that it was much nearer to the British mainland where the British population could easily witness the outcome of emergency law. Ireland was not seen as a separatist state. Social conditions in Dublin were one of the worst in Europe. It had been compared to Calcutta in India in 1913. The inadequate housing conditions and poor labour relations fueled political and social unrest. The lockout of 1913 had highlighted the plight of the working classes in Ireland. The British army was actively recruiting Irishmen for the war in Europe and many women were receiving money from the British government through war pensions. This was one of the few sources of income available to many families. Maxwell was prejudicial to Ireland and its people. He wrote to his wife claiming that "Ireland was cold and cheerless and the poverty appalling". He found the country difficult to govern and claimed "its political difficulties insoluble". He believed that "Ireland seems to live entirely in its past, brooding over its wrongs and never looking to the future and that the Irish would never settle down to any kind of government". His opinion was that "the Irish had a keen desire to get everything they can out of the British".<sup>9</sup>

Maxwell realized very early that the executions had been a mistake. His actions were to alter public opinion in Ireland. In June he had written to Asquith stating that a feeling of revulsion had set in against the authorities and one of sympathy was developing for the rebels. The Press, Irish Members of Parliament and the clergy increased that feeling and created martyrs of the executed leaders and patriots of the interned.

Maxwell's actions caused him to be a subject of an attack in the House of Commons led by John Redmond, the Home Rule leader.<sup>10</sup> On Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May 1916 Redmond demanded that the Prime Minister put an immediate stop to the executions. Redmond's demands reflected the attitude of the liberal press and also the sympathetic public at home and abroad. Asquith replied that he would not interfere with the military administration and that the government had sent Maxwell to Ireland in order that he might suppress a dangerous insurrection, exact the necessary penalties and lay a solid foundation for the re-establishment of law and order. Asquith also informed Redmond that Maxwell was in direct personal communication with the cabinet and was doing this responsible work to the satisfaction of the

## FEATURE "A GENERAL MISTAKE"

government. Maxwell's actions in Ireland created a tide of anti-British feeling that swept throughout the country. He is accredited in his obituary with bringing home to Irish nationalists that a repetition of the Easter outbreak might prove a hopeless and perilous venture in the future.<sup>11</sup> However this accreditation is incorrect as his actions fueled Irish Nationalism and already its leaders were considering a new strategy. Maxwell's awareness of the Irish political situation is reflected in a letter he wrote in September 1916 where he predicts the demise of Redmond and his home Rule party.<sup>12</sup>

His letters to his wife during his posting to Dublin reveal the poverty and squalor that Irish citizens suffered.<sup>13</sup> He blames the British Government's inaction at the formation of Carson's Ulster Volunteer Force in 1912.

During the Home Rule crisis Ulster Unionists decided to establish a paramilitary organization, as they believed their demonstrations against Irish self-government were having no impact on Westminster. The British government who viewed this course of action as blackmail and bluff dismissed this action. Nationalist members of Parliament also viewed it as forceful and like the government chose to ignore this growing threat. It was the establishment of the Ulster Volunteer Force that prompted a reaction among Irish nationalists to establish the Irish Volunteer Force to exert similar pressure on the British government.

Maxwell saw this as a major contributory factor to the Rising of 1916.<sup>14</sup>

The Royal Commission into the origins of the uprising claim that "the main cause...was an unchecked growth of lawlessness and the fact that Ireland for several years had been administered on the principle that it was safer and more expedient to leave the law in abeyance if collision with any faction could thereby be avoided".<sup>15</sup> Maxwell favored the appointment of a political executive that would attempt to repair the relationship between the Irish people and the British crown. However, before this could be undertaken Maxwell was given new orders.

In November 1916, Maxwell was transferred to the northern Command at York as General Officer Commanding-in-Chief. Maxwell in a letter to Asquith made it clear that he was disappointed at what he saw as a demotion. The post at York was unimportant and mainly occupied with the training of recruits. He expressed his desire for the post of high Commissioner in Egypt but this posting was not forth coming. He vacated his appointment in 1919 and was a member of a special commission sent to Egypt in December 1919 to investigate an upsurge in Egyptian nationalism in the aftermath of World War One. He was promoted full general during this period and finally retired from the army in 1922.

In 1923 he returned to Egypt to visit the newly discovered tomb of Tutankhamen at Luxor. Lord Carnarvon's death had left Maxwell's late friend Kitchener, as executor of his will. As chairman of a fund established in honor of

Kitchener, Maxwell distributed Kitchener scholarships to the sons of officers and men in the armed services.

General Sir John Grenfell Maxwell died at Capetown in South Africa on February 20<sup>th</sup> 1929 aged 70 years.

In conclusion General Maxwell's career was over taken by the events of Easter 1916 in Ireland. His implementation of a military strategy that had served him well in the past failed in Ireland. The British government's decision to send in the military to quell unrest in Dublin and also to administer military law was the beginning of mass resentment against the crown in Ireland. Maxwell's decision to execute the leaders of the 1916 Rising and his continuance of Martial law contributed greatly to turning public opinion against the British crown. His realization of these mistakes came too late as the British government transferred him to York in October of 1916.

It is perhaps the author Max Caulfield who best sums up Maxwell's career in the following lines, "he had washed the government's dirty linen for it, and this was his thanks... Thus in bitterness and disappointment ended his career".<sup>16</sup> Today, one can visit Kilmainham Gaol and the Royal Hospital Kilmainham and travel back in time to this turbulent period in our nation's history.



Engraving: *Dublin Penny Journal* Vol. 4, 9th January 1836 p. 217

<sup>1</sup> Times, The, Obituaries, Friday, February 22 1929

<sup>2</sup> Asher, M, Khartoum, Viking, London, 2005

<sup>3</sup> Steevens, G.W, With Kitchener To Khartoum, Nelson, London

<sup>4</sup> Centre for First World War Studies/ Maxwell

<sup>5</sup> Arthur, G, General Sir John Maxwell, John Murray, London, 1932

<sup>6</sup> Barton, B., From Behind A Closed Door, Black staff, Belfast, 2002

<sup>7</sup> [www.1914-1918.net/crime.htm](http://www.1914-1918.net/crime.htm)

<sup>8</sup> Barton, B., From Behind A Closed Door, Blackstaff, Belfast, 2002

<sup>9</sup> Papers, Maxwell, Box 2/6 Princeton University, May – July 1916

<sup>10</sup> Times. The, Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 1916

<sup>11</sup> Times, The, Obituaries, Friday, February 22 1929

<sup>12</sup> Arthur, G, General Sir John Maxwell, John Murray, London, 1932

<sup>13</sup> B 10, 1916 Louise Selina Bonyngé Maxwell.

<sup>14</sup> Caulfield, M., The Easter rebellion, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1995

<sup>15</sup> Hardings commission, Pro W/o 35/69

<sup>16</sup> Caulfield, M., The Easter Rebellion, Gill & Macmillan Dublin, 1995

# SKILLS

'The future is what you make it'



We were delighted to see Robbie Donnelly, 4th year Apprentice Stonecutter/Stonemason with the OPW, as one of the faces of @thisisfet (Further Education and Training) projected onto the OPW site at The Rock of Cashel and in Barnardo's Square, Dublin.



The Office of Public Works recognises the importance of handing on traditional skills and experience and our Apprenticeship Scheme for stonemasons, stonecutters and carpenters offers the opportunity to develop a unique set of skills to ensure that the expertise necessary to maintain our National Monuments into the future is retained and developed.

# GEORGIAN DINING

## *at CASTLETOWN HOUSE*

TEXT BY JOE PATTISON

**O**n Wednesday 21st of August, 2019, a Georgian Dining presentation was held at Castletown, the brainchild of Catherine Victory and Pauline Flanagan. Its aim was to explain the dining experience in a Georgian great house: the procession, the pomp and the ceremony. I became involved after a conversation with Pauline about table settings in the Georgian period. She lamented the fact she had no suitable cutlery for her presentation. I have been a magpie collector since childhood and offered to supply cutlery, crystal, silver and props. This in turn lead to a conversation about coffee drinking in the Georgian period, and I offered to supply props for that too. A few days later I was asked to do a table setting and coffee presentation as part of the event.



The evening of the presentation was very wet, but we still had a good attendance in spite of the weather. The presentation started in the entrance hallway. Catherine and Pauline explained the preparation the ladies made for the evening: skin care, makeup and related health hazards in the 18th century due to the use of heavy metal ingredients. This was followed by the use of beauty spots and the coded messages they conveyed. Clothing, underclothing, hoops and paniers were all explained.



The visitors were shown into the green drawing room with its spectacular elegance. Each visitor drew a piece of paper from a bowl with the name of a dinner guest invited by Louisa and Tom Conolly. The protocol for the procession to the dining room was explained: seniority of social rank and status, age and family connection. The visitors engaged and contributed to the debate before processing to the dining room in the agreed designated order.

Catherine and Pauline explained the menu for the evening: courses, desserts and wines; the roles of the butler and footmen; the unusual dishes of the period such as pressed cow's udder and other delights.

Then it was my turn, as acting butler, to explain the use of flatware (as cutlery was called in the Georgian period), the planning by the butler, housekeeper and cook to ensure the correct place setting for the menu, the use of a wooden measuring stick with spacing's for each knife, fork and spoon and the first plate of the meal. Each place setting had to be identical for the desired effect. I went on to explain the glasses used, and silver goblets, which were the domain of the menfolk, and had a volume of half a pint. I mentioned the vast amounts of wine and port consumed. It was only at the end of the meal, when dessert was served, that children were allowed to join the adults. The ladies then withdrew to the drawing room for tea, coffee and polite conversation. The men stayed for port and tobacco in clay pipes, followed by coffee. I explained a brief history of coffee and its place





in society in the 18th century. The grinding, making and serving of coffee were mentioned as well as the servants' perk of reusing the coffee grounds to make a second pot of weaker coffee for themselves.

What started as an impromptu idea and a whirlwind of preparation, worked out extremely well. The visitors were entertained and informed. They expressed their thanks for what was a thoroughly enjoyable evening for Catherine, Pauline and myself. But that's what Castletown was built for – enjoyment.

◀ Facing page: The Green Drawing Room (top) Castletown House; Flatware (cutlery) spaced with a wooden measuring stick.

▲ This page: The Long Gallery; A Silver Goblet; Tea & Coffee set in the Drawing Room; The Red Drawing Room at Castletown House.

Images © Castletown House / OPW



# The Royal Tug of War

TEXT BY THOMAS NELLIGAN

**The National Folklore Collection (NFC) – housed at UCD – has the arduous task of collecting, preserving, and disseminating the oral tradition of Ireland. A fascinating treasure trove within this archive is the Schools’ Collection which was initiated by the Irish Folklore Commission.**

The scheme ran from 1937-1939 and over 50,000 school children participated throughout this period collecting folklore from their communities. What resulted is an invaluable collection of over 740,000 handwritten pages recording folklore, legends, riddles, proverbs, and jokes. It represents a phenomenal social history giving an insight into the lives and pastimes of those involved. Within this collection are stories surrounding Ireland’s heritage sites. The collection reveals the way these heritage sites were viewed when the collection was being compiled and the stories that surround them. This collection has now been digitised and is available to view on [Duchas.ie](http://Duchas.ie).

In Cashel two schools participated, Scoil na mBráthar and Clochar na Toirbhirte. From the latter comes a story called “The Royal Tug of War”

concerning Cellachán who was the King of Cashel in the mid-10th century.

The story goes that a challenge came from the men of Meath to the men of Cashel to test their endurance on the rope. Cellachán accepted and selected 21 brave and powerful men of Cashel to compete with “...the best that Royal Meath could put against them.” After winning the toss the Cashel men chose the Devil’s Bit Mountain as the place for the contest. The story goes on that on the 29th June, Saints Peter and Paul’s Day, the competition took place. From all across the country Kings, Princes, Chieftains, and Gallowglasses came to watch in addition to bards, harpists, trumpeters, and pipers. The citizens of Cashel who could not travel to the Devil’s Bit swarmed the Rock of Cashel in their thousands to catch a glimpse of the competition. The monks allowed them to scale the buildings of the Rock to view; they scaled the round tower, the Vicars’ Choral, the parapets, and the cliffs around the Rock. The cheers were said to travel the 18 miles to the Devil’s Bit and were heard by the men of Cashel and Meath.

At the sound of a bugler the competition began. The strain of the men was so strong that the mountain shivered beneath them. Suddenly all 21

of the Meath men collapsed. The best doctor in Cashel was called for who said it was beyond the knowledge of human science to say what had happened to the men. A sudden thunderstorm began and “...it seemed as if the flood-gates of the heavens were opened.” People fled the Devil’s Bit and the sick men of Meath were taken back to the Royal Hospital in Cashel in the chariots of the Princes of Cashel.

Months passed by and the men of Meath made no signs of recovery. One day a small woman appeared, only 3 and a half feet tall, claiming to be the grandmother of two of the men. Once inside the hospital she took out a small bottle containing a magic medicine and poured a drop into the right ear of each man. Each man made an instant recovery and the woman disappeared. The men later found out that this woman was the “Witch of the Devil’s Bit,” and had put a drop in their left ear the night before the contest, causing their sudden illness. The witch had done this at the request of a Princess from Offaly who was the wife of the Chief Bard of Tara, a Meath man. She lived unhappily with this man and wished to disgrace the Royal Men of Meath “...with woman’s vengeance.” While the men of Cashel were afforded

▼ Main image: Devil’s Bit ©John Cash

► Facing page: Rock of Cashel and Cormac’s Chapel © Government of Ireland National Monuments Service Photographic Unit



the victory in the tug of war, they were unhappy with having won in that fashion.

This is a fascinating story with lots of talking points. Where this story originated is not clear. It does not appear in the various annals that have been preserved. Also, it is not recorded in the *Caithréim Cellacháin Chaisil* ('The Victorious Career of Cellachán of Cashel'), a 12th century text about Cellachán's wars with the Vikings. Wherever the story originated if not for the work done on preserving folklore in the 1930s it may have been lost forever. What we do know of



Cellachán mainly comes from the above mentioned text and a few scattered references in the Annals. The *Caithréim Cellacháin Chaisil* was composed long after Cellachán's reign under the patronage of Cormac MacCarthy between 1127 and 1134 which makes it contemporary with the building of Cormac's Chapel. The text can be viewed as a piece of MacCarthy propaganda in which the exploits of an ancestor are glorified to reflect positively on Cormac MacCarthy and legitimise the return of the Eóganacht to Cashel. Therefore, it should be taken with a large pinch of salt.

Cellachán had a rather violent career. He led repeated attacks on Clonmacnoise in 936, 951, and 953. With the aid of Norse Gaels from Waterford he launched an attack on Meath, plundering both Clonenagh (in Laois) and Killeigh (in Offaly) on the way, taking their abbots hostage. In 941 Cellachán came into conflict with the High King, Donnchad Donn, but this time Cellachán was on the losing

side and became a hostage of Donnchad for several years. He was offered as a hostage by his own people which indicates he was far from popular. However, by 944 he was back in Munster and defeated Cennétig Mac Lorcáin (the father of Brian Boru) at the Battle of Gort Rotachain. According to the *Caithréim Cellacháin Chaisil* Cellachán died at Cashel in 954.

Returning to the story of the tug of war we can now see certain elements of truth shining through. The notion of the rivalry with Meath makes sense as Cellachán had attacked Meath and been held hostage there. However, the story is wonderfully anachronistic in nature. Cellachán ruled in the 10th century, but the story mentions that people trying to watch the tug of war were sat upon the round tower and Vicar's Choral, neither of which were built at this time. The mention of monks is also interesting as the site would not be handed over to the church until 1101. There is also

mention of the singing of the national anthem before the contest. The name of the anthem is given as "Brian Boru's March." There would have been no national anthem at this time and if there were, it certainly would not have been Brian Boru's March, as Brian Boru would only have been a child during the time this tug of war is alleged to have happened. There is, however, confusion in the story about Cellachán as he is referred to as "Dalcassian" which would refer to the dynasty which Brian Boru belonged to. Cellachán was of the Eóganacht Chaisil, the bitter rivals of the Dalcassians. The mention of Gallowglasses is also anachronistic as these Scottish mercenaries didn't arrive in Ireland until the middle of the 13th century.

Of course, the misfortunes of the men of Meath come down to the vengeance of a spiteful woman, the unnamed Princess of Offaly. While the virtuous men of Cashel do everything they can to aid their rivals, it can only be undone by the magic of the witch. The Princess of Offaly is a character that fits into the age-old stereotypical mould of the dangerous woman like Jezebel or Clytemnestra. While the men are described as brave, strong, gallant, and with honour, the women are described as spiteful, vengeful, and unhappy.

However, while the men of Cashel were awarded the victory, it can hardly be said to be fair. Now that more than a millennium has passed by, maybe it is time for a rematch. Since the time of kings has ended a suitable rematch could be between the guides of the Rock of Cashel, and the guides of Trim Castle.

Time will tell...

# RATHFARNHAM CASTLE

Many battlefield sites throughout Ireland are hidden from view. Urban developments have concealed many, yet there are those places and buildings that still exist and have a story to tell.

**R**athfarnham House, situated on the outskirts of Dublin city, is the earliest recorded, and indeed, one of the largest and most impressive, of the fortified houses built in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> The defensive structure was constructed c. 1538 for the Anglican Archbishop of Dublin, Adam Loftus. This building would, over a period of four centuries, not only change ownership but also change its role. During the confederate wars of the 1640s, the castle would be fought over and occupied on numerous occasions, evidence of its strategic importance on the outskirts of Dublin city.

The Irish Rebellion of 1641, began as an attempted coup d'état by Irish Catholic gentry who tried to seize control of the English administration in Ireland to force concessions for Catholics. The subsequent war that followed became known as the Irish Confederate Wars and would last over a decade and is considered one of the most destructive wars in Irish history.

By the summer of 1649, James Butler, the Duke of Ormond, commander of the confederate forces in Ireland, was preparing to attack and retake Dublin City from Parliamentary troops.

James Butler,  
1st Duke of Ormond



TEXT BY PAUL O'BRIEN

Two years earlier in 1647, the Duke had been forced to relinquish the city when Archbishop Rinuccini supported by General Owen Roe O'Neill seized control of the Supreme Council (an elected body of 24 members, representative of all the provinces who managed affairs and governed the state) and prepared its forces to march against Ormond and seize Dublin. By June 1647, acting without the King's consent, Ormond was sufficiently alarmed by the deteriorating situation to withdraw and hand over the city to English Parliamentary troops under the command of Michael Jones rather than lose it to Rinuccini's army. Heading into exile in France, Ormond's only consolation was that the city was held by Protestant rather than Catholic forces.



Owen Roe O'Neill

After spending a few months at the court-in-exile of Queen Henrietta Maria in Paris, Ormond returned to Ireland in October 1648 with weapons and supplies financed by the French. Ormond gathered a considerable force through the Second Ormond Peace Treaty which created an uneasy alliance between the Irish confederates, Lord Inchiquin's Munster Protestants and the Royalists. The only force that did not sign was that of Owen Roe O'Neill's Catholic Ulster Army.

With the execution of Charles I and the proclamation of Charles II as King, Ireland became a Royalist rallying ground and within a short period of time Ormond had brought much of Ireland under Royalist control. The Republicans had

been pushed back to Derry, Dundalk and Dublin and were in need of reinforcements and supplies.

On 1 June Ormond gathered his forces at Carlow and was joined there on the 14 June by Lord Inchiquin and his troops from Cork. Ormond was fighting a war on two fronts, the Catholic Irish under Owen O' Neill as well as the forces of Parliament. In order to launch his campaign against Parliamentary forces, Ormond had to push back O' Neill's army. Concerned at the threat posed by Owen O' Neill's Ulster Army, Ormond ordered Lord Castlehaven to seize several towns in Leinster that were garrisoned by the Ulster Forces.

This action forced O'Neill's army to withdraw, leaving the way clear for Ormond to attack Dublin without hindrance. Inchiquin was ordered to move north and engage Republican forces driving them from their strongholds except for Derry, Dundalk and Dublin. Drogheda fell and later in July, Ormond's forces attacked the port of Dundalk which was held by George Monck. A relief column under the command of Richard O' Farrell was routed by Inchiquin. After two days under siege, the garrison of Dundalk mutinied and switched sides, handing over the town to the Royalists.

Inchiquin continued his campaign securing other towns such as Trim, Newry and Carlingford before returning to join Ormond. These actions, though time consuming, secured the surrounding areas for Ormond, enabling him to march on Dublin.

Ormond moved his forces via Naas, setting up a staging post at Finglas before moving his army south of the city to Rathmines on the 25 June. He left Lord Dillon at Finglas to cover the northern approaches to the city. Arriving in Rathmines, Ormond set up camp and prepared for his assault on Dublin.

Behind his lines stood the strategically located Rathfarnham Castle, a fortified building that was



Above: The Mercator map of 1570 and the Down Survey Map of Ireland

occupied by Republican Forces. In order to continue with his plan, Ormond knew he could not leave a Republican post behind his lines so he decided to eliminate this threat to his line of withdrawal.

The castle at the time consisted of a square building four stories high with a projecting tower at each corner, the walls of which were an average of 5 feet (1.5m) thick. On the ground level were two vaulted apartments divided by a wall nearly 10 feet (3.0m) thick which rises to the full height of the castle.

The castle was held for parliament by Dudley Loftus with a garrison of an estimated 500 personnel, many of them family and friends.

It is interesting to note that there are three different versions as to why the castle fell into confederate hands.



In a letter to the exiled Charles II, Ormond states that command of the attacking force against Rathfarnham Castle was given to Thomas Armstrong along with his Regiment and Sir William Vaughan's to take and hold the house of Sir Adam Loftus in Rathfarnham. The building was secured by confederate forces within 24 hours with much treasure taken. All were made prisoners and there were no casualties on either side.

Parliament's version of events differs greatly as a contemporary pamphlet tells of a fierce attack with many casualties. It was only when Lord Inchiquin's troops got close to the castle walls that they discovered a way to breach the castle's defences. A brook ran into the castle and by following this they managed to gain entry into the castle yard.

Above: Sir Adam Loftus

Left: The Battle of Rathmines, 1649.



So those within were forced to fly into the Towers, to treat for quarter, which was granted them upon Treaty. Dr Loftus and his brother, and all that were there then taken prisoners, and there were only 50 armes and some small proportion of powder and bullet, which the enemy took. But the house is one of the most stateliest in all Ireland, some 2 miles from Dublin, in which was some hundred pounds worth of goods which the enemy took.<sup>2</sup>

Dudley's own account of the action states that the garrison were betrayed by someone who had sought sanctuary within the castle. However, Dudley and Ormond were friends and it is possible that Dudley capitulated to his old friend rather than engaging in a prolonged battle which would have many cost lives and the destruction of the castle.

Ormond's subsequent attack against the city failed with the battle of Rathmines and confederate forces were forced to go on the defensive for the remainder of the war.

Rathfarnham Castle was re-occupied by Parliamentary troops and it was reported that Oliver Cromwell held council at the castle before commencing his campaign in Ireland and before heading south to besiege Wexford. Adam Loftus who recovered his castle from confederate occupation, fought alongside Cromwell's troops and was killed in action at the siege of Limerick in 1651.

Today, Rathfarnham Castle stands as it did many centuries ago, a stark reminder of one of the most turbulent and violent periods in our nation's history. A must for the military history enthusiast, visit this magnificent edifice and travel back in time on a guided tour.

***Many thanks to Eoin O' Flynn  
and Catherine O'Connor***

<sup>1</sup> Office of Public Works, *Rathfarnham Castle Guide Book* (Printrun, Dublin,)

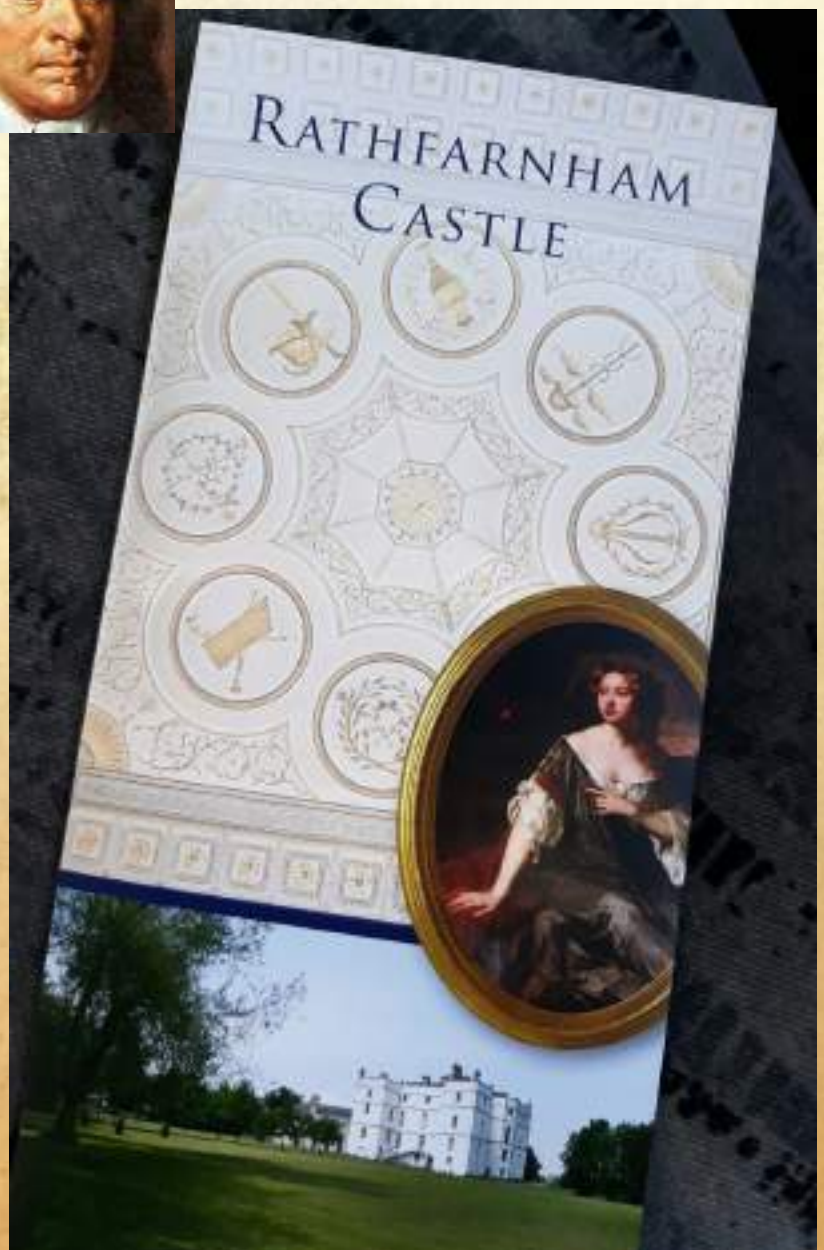
<sup>2</sup> Loftus, S., *The Invention of Memory*, (Daunt Books, London, 2013)



Above: The Battle of Five Forks was fought on April 1, 1865.



Left: Portrait of Oliver Cromwell.





## *Under the Moon and Stars at Knowth*

Some brilliant photos from a great night out in early February under the Moon and Stars at Knowth by Anthony Murphy Mythical Ireland. Many thanks to Irish Astronomical Society for their expertise and telescopes.





# THE DEATH MASK OF DANIEL O'CONNELL

Presented to the OPW  
by the Countess of Dunraven

**A** death mask of Daniel O'Connell, regarded as one of the great figures of modern Irish history, was presented to the Office of Public Works (OPW) on the 24th August 2019 by the Countess of Dunraven at Derrynane House, the family home of O'Connell.

The presentation of the death mask, which has been in the custodianship of the Dunraven family for over 160 years, was made at the Daniel O'Connell Summer School which took place in Derrynane House in August 2019.

O'Connell died in 1847 in Genoa, Italy, while on a pilgrimage to Rome at the age of 71. At the time of O'Connell's death, it was not uncommon that a death mask would be made of a person's face. Death masks were often used as a reference by sculptors and artists when creating busts and paintings and are also highly valued in their own right.

The Earl of Dunraven was a title in the peerage of Ireland created in 1822. The Dunraven and O'Connell families have a strong connection over many generations and it is believed the mask came into the care of the family over 160 years ago.

Derrynane House, the family home of O'Connell, is now dedicated to his life and achievements, under the care of the OPW. Following any restoration or conservation works required to the mask, the OPW will place the mask on public display at Derrynane House, where it will join a large and rich collection of items relating to O'Connell's life.



▲ The Countess of Dunraven presenting the death mask of Daniel O'Connell to Maurice Buckley, Chairman of the OPW at Derrynane House, Co Kerry. (Photos: John Allen/PA)

Mr. Kevin 'Boxer' Moran, T.D., Minister of State with responsibility for the Office of Public Works (OPW) and Flood Relief said *"As the custodians of Derrynane House and on behalf of the Irish State, the OPW is honoured and delighted to accept this generous gift from Countess Dunraven."*

Accepting the mask on behalf of the OPW, Chairman of the OPW Maurice Buckley said *"Derrynane House was one of the great influences on Daniel O'Connell's life, it was his childhood home and later his country residence. Today Derrynane House is much more than a museum, it is a space that tells the story, from the cradle to the grave of the Liberator. This mask will be an incredibly valuable addition to the collection here and we look forward to making it central to the collection."*

FEATURE O'CONNELL DEATH MASK  
DERRYNANE HOUSE



Above and below:  
Derrynane House  
and Gardens.

Far right:  
The Library at  
Derrynane House.

Right: Portrait of  
Daniel O'Connell  
(1775-1847)

Images  
© Government of  
Ireland National  
Monuments  
Service  
Photographic Unit



*"Downton Abbey" experience at Portumna Castle*



# DOWNTON ABBEY at Portumna Castle





Wedding of Princess Mary and Henry Lascelles 6th Lord Harewood in 1922.

*Downton Abbey fever well and truly took over at Portumna Castle last October. In conjunction with the launch of the movie Portumna Castle decided to commemorate the visit of the real Princess Mary and Henry Lascelles to Portumna Castle in 1928.*

Princess Mary (Princess Royal), daughter of King George V and Queen Mary, married Henry Lascelles 6th Lord Harewood in 1922. Henry Lascelles inherited Portumna Castle along with the Clanricarde millions and intended to restore the castle which by that time was a total ruin. However, the deterioration in Anglo-Irish

relations because of the War of Independence, caused the scheme to be abandoned. Henry and Princess Mary visited Portumna Castle on one occasion in October 1928.

Visitors were invited for a "Downton Abbey" experience to avail of the "Special Royal Afternoon Tea" commemorating the visit. Guides and guests dressed in period costume with a prize for the best dressed visitor. The event included a photographic and video exhibition of Princess Mary and the roaring 1920's. The day even featured a re-enactment of the presentation of an Irish wolfhound to Princess Mary.



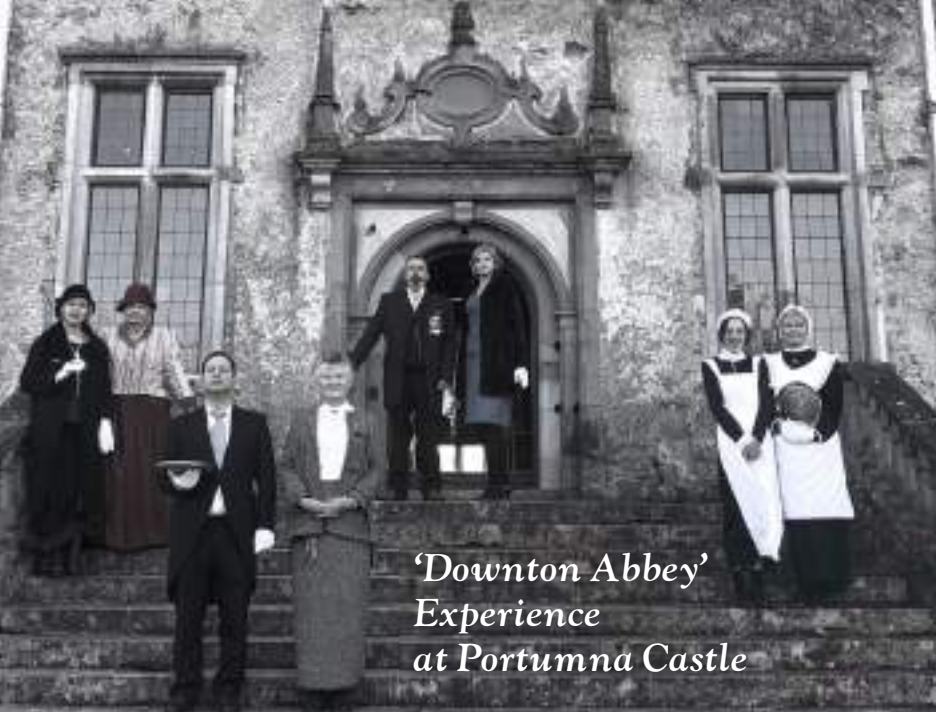
THE SHEFFIELD DAILY INDEPENDENT.  
FRIDAY, 12 OCTOBER, 1928.



Princess Mary at Portumna Castle accepting the Irish wolfhound, Patrick, from a body of well-wishers. Her visit to Ireland has evoked many tributes from the people of the Free State.

- ▲ Princess Mary at Portumna Castle accepting the Irish wolfhound, Patrick, from a body of well-wishers.
- ▼ Portumna Castle in the 1920's
- ◀ All photos of the Downton Experience © Kate Gibbs





*'Downton Abbey'  
Experience  
at Portumna Castle*





# Darwin's Orchid

**T**his Madagascan orchid, formally known as *Angraecum sesquipedale*, was first described in 1822 and was noted by Charles Darwin among others for its extraordinarily long nectar spur, 30cm or more in length - "Good Heavens what insect could suck it?"

Only many decades later was its pollinator identified - the sphinx moth *Xanthopan morgani*, which in turn has an extraordinarily long tongue or proboscis. The moth flits through the night-time forests of Madagascar in search of the flower's intensely spicy scent, feeding on its nectar and in turn transferring pollen from bloom to bloom.

When Darwin's Orchid flowered recently in the Great Palm House, visitors searched for its scent in vain - for Darwin's orchid only releases its perfume at night..



[www.botanicgardens.ie](http://www.botanicgardens.ie)

# ALTAMONT GARDENS

*“Old-world  
gardens with  
an atmosphere  
all of their  
own”*



**A large and beautiful estate covering 16 hectares in total, Altamont Gardens is laid out in the style of William Robinson, which strives for ‘honest simplicity’.**

**The design situates an excellent plant collection perfectly within the natural landscape.**

For example, there are lawns and sculpted yews that slope down to a lake ringed by rare trees and rhododendrons. A fascinating walk through the Arboretum, Bog Garden and Ice Age Glen, sheltered by ancient oaks and flanked by huge stone outcrops, leads to the banks of the River Slaney. Visit in summer to experience the glorious perfume of roses and herbaceous plants in the air.

With their careful balance of formal and informal, nature and artistry, Altamont Gardens have a unique – and wholly enchanting – character. Of particular interest each year, is the enchanting display of over 100 named varieties of snowdrops started by the late Corona North, to celebrate the arrival of spring.

Altamont Gardens, Kilbride, Tullow, Co. Carlow, R93 N882. Tel: 059 915 9444.

Email: [altamontgardens@opw.ie](mailto:altamontgardens@opw.ie) Twitter / Facebook: @altamontopw



# ALTAMONT GARDENS



# The Leper's Squint

## A LOOK INTO THE HISTORY OF LEPROSY IN MEDIEVAL IRELAND

TEXT BY SARAH CLOHESSY

**S**t. Patrick's Rock (*Rock of Cashel*) became the seat of the kings of Munster in the fourth century. In 1101 A.D, the then-king Muircheartach Ua Briain gifted the site to the church. Over the next few centuries, ecclesiastical stone buildings began to appear on the Rock. One of the largest buildings was a thirteenth century, gothic-style cathedral. It hosted centuries of history upon the site, but one of its more elusive histories stems from a small slanted window in its chancel wall. The window – known as a leper's squint – is part of a larger history surrounding the spread of leprosy within Ireland.

Leprosy is a chronic infectious disease, affecting the skin, peripheral nerves, the upper respiratory tract, and the eyes. Because of the appearance of the disease on the skin, it was common for those diagnosing individuals to use the term *leper* on those who suffered skin conditions such as eczema, psoriasis, and even syphilis; so figuring out who had an actual case of leprosy was difficult. The disease is slow acting, and the body's response to it is incredibly variable. Diagnosis, however, can be gotten from the excavating of burial sites of suspected cases and examining the bones, wherein tell-tale lesions would be left.



"The Leper's Squint." Those who suffered from leprosy could view the altar during mass from this small window opening, without mingling with the congregation.



Leprosy became a common disease within Europe by the twelfth century when a surge of leper hospitals began to be built to treat those afflicted. The same trend was seen in Ireland. One such hospital was built in Cashel in 1230 at the order of Sir David Latimer, the seneschal to Archbishop Marian O'Brien, and whose daughter was afflicted with the disease. The hospital was put under the care of the Cistercian monks who occupied Hore Abbey and was endowed with lands and two measures of ale from every brewing sale made within the town – a fair ask, as at one point, Cashel has over thirty breweries. It was common that leper hospitals, also known as Lazarus houses, were managed by ecclesiastical orders.

Hospitals were not the only structures built for the afflicted. A hagioscope – or leper's squint – was added to the architectural plans of the cathedral built upon the Rock. Sir David, with the permission of the Archbishop, had this window installed so that any afflicted persons being treated in the nearby hospital would be able to view mass and other services from this window. The window is up at a height, which may suggest that between the wall of the cathedral's chancel and the northern wall of Cormac's Chapel, a stone room may have existed there – but all evidence of it has vanished. The window is angled in such a way that those looking through it would be able to view the altar and the person delivering mass; most importantly, when the Eucharist was raised and people would make the sign of the cross. This type of window is a rare find in Ireland, with the nearest example from Cashel being in Limerick. However, it is believed that because of Sir David's daughter being one of those treated within the nearby hospital, it made the man more sympathetic towards those sick and infirm.

The window is very easily missed if one doesn't know where to look; but it provides a glimpse into a wider history. Leprosy disappeared from Ireland by the sixteenth century, as did the hospitals. While there are no ruins of Sir David's hospital left, the window in the cathedral's wall remains for modern-day tourists to come and look at; and learn about a small sliver of history that remained totally unknown until someone asked a guide why there was a hole in the middle of the wall.

# THREE BROTHERS

‘The story of three brothers who are buried side by side on the northern aspect of the Rock of Cashel. ’

TEXT BY MARK KING



***As one enters the grounds of the Rock of Cashel, one is immediately drawn to the spectacular views of the landscape, stretching out as far as the eye can see in all directions. Visitors are often heard to comment that it's easy to see why people have been drawn to the Rock for thousands of years. The Rock of Cashel had been, after all, chosen as the site of a military fortress in the 4th Century CE, given its elevated location above the land that was sacred to those Celtic people.***

The Rock has been the scene of countless captivating tales and this short article concerns one such story of three brothers who are buried side by side on the northern aspect of the Rock. They are the sons of Mr and Mrs W.P. Ryan of Friar St. Cashel. All three brothers were commissioned officers of the Irish Defence Forces and all three were laid to rest having fallen in the service of our nation.

Their names are 2nd Lieutenant Michael John Ryan (18), who died on July 27th 1940, Lieutenant Thomas A. Ryan (26), died on September 6th 1942 and Captain William J. Ryan (36), who died on May 28th 1951. Although they did not perish on combat duty, Ireland being a neutral country, they nonetheless volunteered to serve their country during a tumultuous period in

Irish, European and World history and gave their lives in the service of their country.

On July 27th 1940, the residents of Laytown, along with many people on holidays, were to witness the tragic accident of an Irish Air Corps Hawker Hind aircraft, which crashed into the sand dunes, killing the pilot, 2nd Lieutenant Michael John Ryan, who



was just 18 years of age. His gunner, Private Patrick Power (aged 20) died a couple of minutes after being pulled from the wreckage. They had been part of a formation of three aircraft which had come from the Gormanstown Army Camp direction. Eyewitness accounts stated that the aircraft seemed to be in difficulty and the engine was heard to splutter and stall. The pilot made valiant attempts to maintain flight but it was to be in vain. He did manage to steer the aircraft away from the droves of people that were on the beach on that warm July Sunday, thus avoiding any further loss of life.

On September 6th 1942, the Irish Defence Forces were on manoeuvres in Fermoy, County Cork. As this was during the Second World War, the bridge over the river Blackwater had been mined in order that it could be blown up in the event that Ireland was invaded, thus slowing the advance of troop movements. For the manoeuvres in question, members of the Defence Forces were crossing the river via a rope secured on both sides. Sadly, a number of soldiers lost their grip upon the rope in the fast moving river and two men lost their lives. They were, Lieutenant Thomas A. Ryan and Sgt J. McElligott. Lieutenant Ryan was 26 years of age.

On May 28th 1951, an Air Corps aircraft was reported missing in the Wicklow mountains. It had been part of a formation of four aircraft that had left Gormanstown earlier that day on a training flight. It was reported that the formation encountered poor weather conditions and their commander, Captain W.J. Ryan, ordered the flight to break formation and return to base. The other three aircraft returned, where subsequently, the pilots learned of the non-return of their commander. A huge search operation commenced, involving 1,200 troops, two naval corvettes and on the following day, an American Air Force Air – Sea Rescue plane which flew directly from Wiesbaden, Germany. The wreckage of Captain Ryan's Supermarine Seafire

was located near Kilbride, County Wicklow the day after the crash, and sadly, he had lost his life in the accident. He left behind a widow and six children. Captain William J. Ryan had joined the Defence Forces in 1933, the Air Corps in 1937 and was an experienced pilot.

He was laid to rest beside his two brothers on that former 4th Century military fortress and now sacred church grounds, the Rock of Cashel, overlooking the spectacular view of the land that they served to defend and protect and in heart-breaking succession, paid the ultimate sacrifice.



▲ Above: The Sarcophagus (stone tomb) at Cormac's Chapel

▼ Below: Interior view of Cormac's Chapel at the Rock of Cashel, looking towards the chancel  
© Government of Ireland National Monuments Service Photographic Unit

◀ Facing page (main image) Grave of three fallen officers of the Irish Defence Forces situated at the northern aspect of the Rock.



# Ormond Castle

## New Findings on the buildings in the middle/lower yard

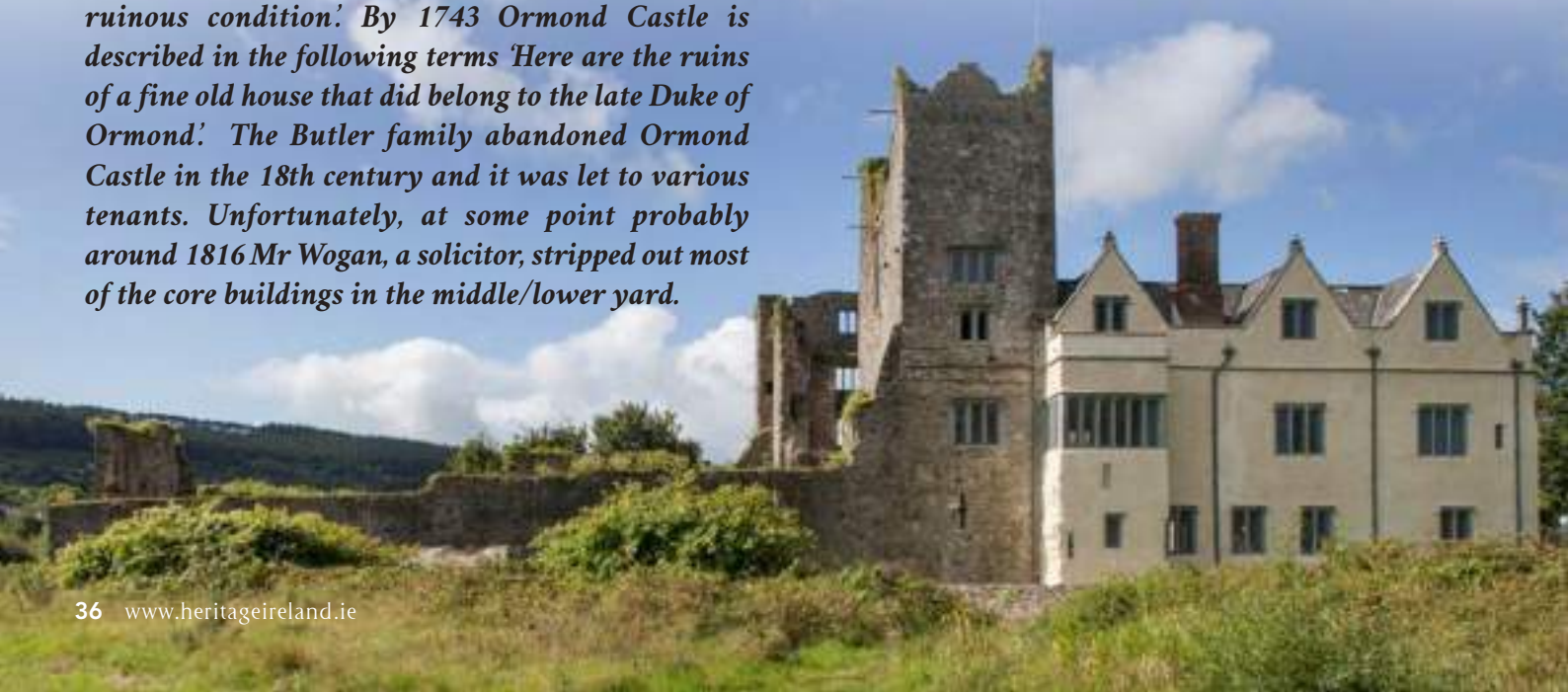
TEXT BY EMMA COLLINS

**O**rmond Castle is located on the banks of the River Suir in Tipperary. The earliest reference to a castle at Carrick is in 1315, when Edmund Butler (d.1321) was granted the castle and manor of Carrickmagriffin by King Edward II. After Edmund came to Carrick he had a castle built on the south side of river in Carrick-Beg. In 1336 James Butler, 1st Earl of Ormond, granted this castle to the Franciscans. Part of this friary church still stands and is used today as St Molleran's parish church. A new castle was built on the north side of the river in the south east corner of the medieval walled town. This consisted of a D-shaped enclosure with a watergate that fronted directly onto the river. The dilapidation of the castle started in the 17th century when it was attacked by Oliver Cromwell. How seriously the castle was damaged it is not known but in 1661 Elizabeth Butler, then Duchess of Ormonde, wrote to her agent that 'the house at Carrick is in a ruinous condition'. By 1743 Ormond Castle is described in the following terms 'Here are the ruins of a fine old house that did belong to the late Duke of Ormond'. The Butler family abandoned Ormond Castle in the 18th century and it was let to various tenants. Unfortunately, at some point probably around 1816 Mr Wogan, a solicitor, stripped out most of the core buildings in the middle/lower yard.

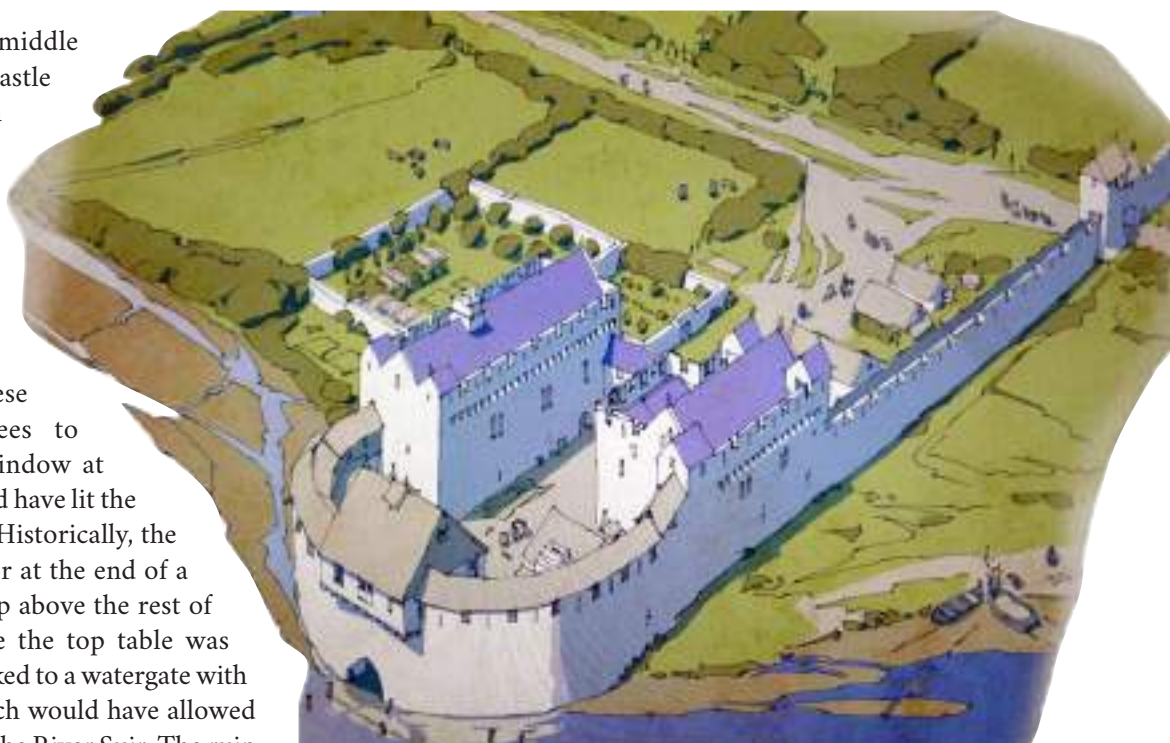


▲ Above: A view of the East Tower from the lower courtyard (1951).  
▼ Below: Ormond Castle View from the East. Photo Paul Tierney.

The castle was placed in state guardianship in 1947. Conservation works started in the courtyard in 1951 prevented any further deterioration. The surviving elements of the castle include two 15th century towers and the 16th century north range. Following archaeological investigations carried out during the recent restoration works remarkable details of previously unknown buildings in the middle and lower yards have been uncovered. This information provides a unique insight into the development of the site from the 14th century onwards.



The west side of the middle /lower yard at Ormond Castle is better understood than the east side. Here, the shells of three medieval buildings can be seen. The middle and southern bays had a vaulted ground floor and chamber above. The vaults were aligned east/west but one of these was switched 90 degrees to accommodate an oriel window at first floor level. This would have lit the dais end of the great hall. Historically, the dais was a part of the floor at the end of a medieval hall, raised a step above the rest of the room and was where the top table was located. This block was linked to a watergate with a curved curtain wall which would have allowed access for goods etc. from the River Suir. The ruin of the watergate still stands today over an arched entry. From the height of the arch we can be confident that the entry was for boats. A sudden drop near the watergate suggests the building probably had a central dock and a quay on one or both sides. There is no slot for a portcullis but hanging eyes for a pair of doors or gates can be seen on the inside. The east side of the middle/lower yard has the preserved limb of an unusual early building. It is likely that this block was also linked to the watergate with a curved curtain wall. This symmetry was later abandoned with the addition of an L-shaped, two storey block in the southwest corner of the castle. This block, with an elegant ogee window likely predates the 15th century west tower.



▲ Above: Artist impression of Ormond Castle in the 14th century.

▼ Below: Aerial view of Ormond Castle from the North-East. The Elizabethan manor house c.1565 (A) is attached to the north of two 15th century houses (B & C). The large open courtyard (D) is all that remains of the 14th century castle. The watergate (E), marooned over time by receding waters, fronted the river on the south.

It is unclear how the north side of the early castle was enclosed. No wall of sufficient thickness has been found. The 14th century castle yard may have continued north. The outside wall on the east side was originally town wall or a castle enclosure wall which met the town wall further north. Carrick's town walls were mentioned in the Ormond Deeds in 1324 and it appears that by 1344 at least half the town was enclosed. Following two attacks on the town in the early 1400's a murage grant by Parliament in 1450 paid for the town to be fully walled on the northern side of the river Suir. Approximately 150 meters of the town wall remains upstanding in the north-western corner of the castle park.

The smaller tower (c.1450) on the eastern side is five stories high. Built in two stages, it was added to an L-shaped building already standing two storeys high. The vault at the bottom of the tower is intact. An ogee window on its west face suggests it is contemporary with the L-shaped block in the southwest corner. It is likely that the second tower with a turret on its



## FEATURE ORMOND CASTLE

southwest corner was added on the west side towards the end of the 15th century. Now a shell it is also five storeys high. Several stages of building can be seen. In contrast to the east tower there is no vault over the ground floor. Both towers have been altered extensively over the centuries. The north range was too small to have functioned as a self-contained building and great care was taken to integrate the two towers into the north range in the 16th century. This process involved inserting fashionable fireplaces and large windows and doors were broken through.

These discoveries in the middle/lower yard immediately challenged the current understanding of Ormond Castle. As part of a wonderful new interpretative exhibition commissioned by OPW Heritage Services with the support of Fáilte Ireland visitors can now view for the first time a detailed 1:90 scale model of the castle at its height. These findings have prompted many questions and will hopefully provide the basis for continued research in the future.



▲ Above: 1:90 scale model of Ormond Castle.

► Top right:  
A view of the two 15th century towers (1951).  
© Government of Ireland National Monuments Service Photographic Unit

► Centre: Middle/Lower Yard at Ormond Castle.

► Below right:  
Artist impression of Ormond Castle in the late 15th century.

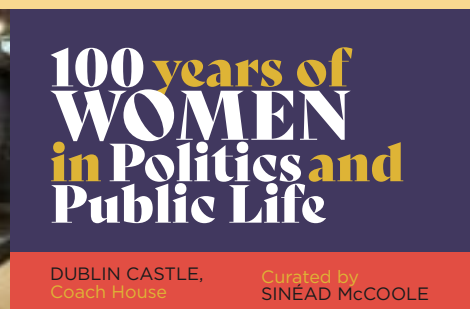


# 100 years of WOMEN in Politics and Public Life

**EXHIBITION** 8 July 2020 – 11 October 2020  
Coach House Gallery, Dublin Castle Gardens

This Pop-Up Museum explores 100 years of women's participation in politics and public life in Ireland. The exhibition shines a spotlight on the stories of very familiar and less well known women, who have contributed significantly to Irish political and public life over the past century – on the challenges they faced and the obstacles they overcame. It is told with films, interviews, interactives, objects and information panels, and looks at the individual lives of women elected to the Oireachtas over the period 1918 to 2016.

The exhibition is a wonderful opportunity to encourage people of all ages to reflect upon the journey that this country has taken, particularly over the past century. Highlighting all that has been achieved in the area of women's participation in political life over the period, the exhibition also aims to raise awareness of the considerable work remaining to be done, and will encourage discussion, debate and analysis as part of the ongoing exploration of our more recent history. The exhibition is an initiative of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht as part of the Decade of Centenaries Programme. It is hosted by the Office of Public Works at Dublin Castle and is curated by Dr Sinéad McCoole.



The 'pop-up' museum is an initiative of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht under the Decade of Centenaries 2012-2023 programme in collaboration with Dublin Castle and the OPW.

For **programme enquiries**, e-mail:  
commemorations@chg.gov.ie

For **updated programme**, see:  
www.dublincastle.ie

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www.decadeofcentenaries.com  
www.chg.gov.ie





## SPLENDOUR & SCANDAL: The Office of Arms at Dublin Castle

29 June 2020 – 24 January 2021

EXHIBITION AT STATE APARTMENTS GALLERIES, DUBLIN CASTLE

***The Office of Arms was, and in some senses still is, the oldest office of state in Ireland.*** It was established in 1552 as the Office of Ulster King of Arms, the heraldic authority for the island of Ireland and for almost 400 years it granted coats of arms to individuals, places and organisations; it maintained family trees and arbitrated on the rights of inheritance; and it stage-managed the pomp and ceremony of the State. In 1943, it became the last office to be handed over by the British Government to the Irish State, which had gained its independence in 1922. Reconstituted as the Genealogical Office, and later as the Office of the Chief Herald of Ireland, it continues its centuries-old heraldic work to this day, as part of the National Library of Ireland.

For some time before and after its reconstitution, the Office was known colloquially and simply as 'the Office of Arms' and the majority of its work remained the same either side of the 1943 demarcation. This exhibition explores its story as a single entity, looking at aspects of its history during the 150 years in which it was physically located within the walls of Dublin Castle, from 1831 to 1981. These range from the role of the Office in the organisation of state ceremonial and pageantry to its links with the disappearance of the Irish Crown Jewels; from its involvement in crafting the identities of the two states that emerged on the island of Ireland in the 1920s, to its larger role in Irish genealogy and diplomacy in the mid-twentieth century.

The exhibition is included in your entry ticket to the State Apartments.

A version of the exhibition is available online for those unable to visit in person at the current time. Further information from [www.dublincastle.ie](http://www.dublincastle.ie)



# Land/Marks

15 August – 31 October 2020

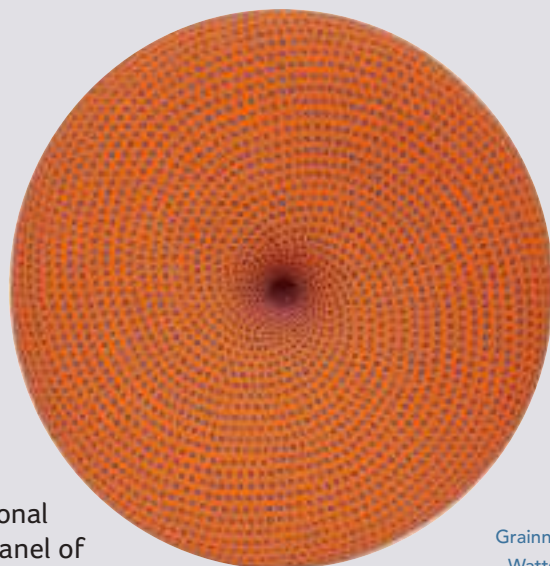
FARMLEIGH GALLERY

**Ceramics Ireland is delighted to present Land/Marks the fourth in its triennial exhibition series.** Continuing the ethos of celebrating the diverse range and breadth of contemporary ceramic work being created by makers of and from Ireland. Land/Marks will feature works that explore and challenge the material clay, investigating its malleability and pushing its boundaries.

This will be evident through a variety of sculptural forms, functional vessels and installation-based works. The independent expert panel of three selected 42 makers for this edition of the triennial series, which will

celebrate the craftsmanship and skills of these contemporary practitioners. The selected group includes new makers some at the beginning of their creative journeys – Antonio J. Lopez, Simon Kidd, Sarah Roseingrave alongside more established makers – Sara Flynn, Mark Campden and Isobel Egan.

Opening Hours: Tuesday to Sunday:  
10am – 1pm, 2pm – 5pm



Grainne Watts.



Jennifer Hickey



[www.farmleigh.ie](http://www.farmleigh.ie)



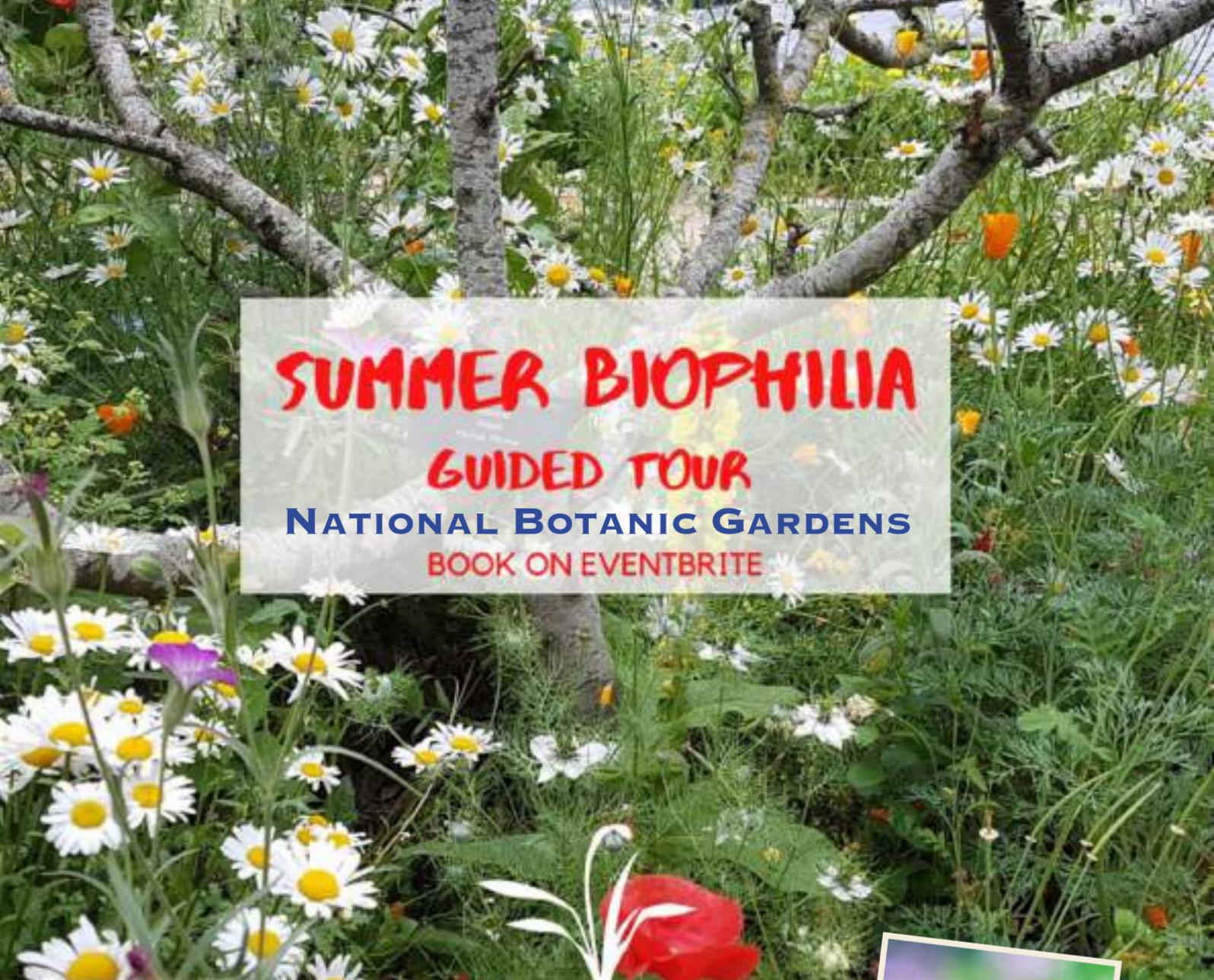
## 'Life in Still Life' Exhibition at Portumna Castle

'Life in Still Life' exhibition comes to the Portumna Castle as part of the annual cross border partnership between the Office of Public Works (OPW) in the Republic of Ireland and the Department of Finance of Northern Ireland (DoF).

The exhibition showcases 54 artworks from these public collections on the theme of still life selected by the members of The Association of Art and Design Education in Northern Ireland (AADE). The exhibition includes paintings, prints, photographs and sculpture.

Images: Portumna Castle; 'Life in Still Life' Exhibition; 'Flowers in Green Jar' - Brian Ballard and 'Morning Light' - Campbell Bruce.





**SUMMER BIOPHILIA**  
**GUIDED TOUR**  
**NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS**  
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**H**uman beings have an innate need to connect with the larger world. However, with the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been necessary to disrupt our everyday routines. Many of us struggle with the fallout of this. Increasingly, people turn to nature for solace.

With this in mind, we are pleased to bring back our Summer Biophilia tours. Get outside and be active on a summer's day with this journey around the globe and through the senses.

Find out how and why humans bond with the natural world the way we do, explore nature's myriad of gifts of physical health and mental wellbeing, and learn how we can share these benefits in our homes, gardens, and communities to help us reconnect with natural rhythms and landscapes.

Tickets €5 per person, book on [Eventbrite.ie](https://www.eventbrite.ie)



Explore Ireland's Heritage

# KIDS GO FREE\*



OPW



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Rock of Cashel



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\*Children Under 12 years old  
go free in all OPW managed  
Heritage Sites

For more information see:  
**[www.opw.ie](http://www.opw.ie)**



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