

Introduction

MICHAEL SEERY

W elcome to the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Enniskerry and Powerscourt Local History*! The purpose of the *Journal* is to provide a space for articles by authors with a diverse range of interests and expertise and a shared interest in the history of Enniskerry and Powerscourt. In doing so it aims to enhance the profile of the rich local history of the area and enthuse others to get involved in studying and disseminating our shared history.

I am very excited by the four articles in the first issue — each one representing an important facet of this shared history. The four articles as a unit portray elements of life in the village and life on the estate, demonstrating the interdependence of each on the other, often regardless of class and background. As such, some traditional narratives of Irish history are challenged by this portrayal of life as it occurred in our area. As individual essays, each author has provided a rich account of their chosen area of expertise in a manner that addresses a wide audience of readers. This is no easy task, and I thank them for their efforts in this regard.

N uala Hunt's essay is on estate management at Powerscourt during the minority years of the 7th Viscount. Using original archives, she has pieced together the management of the estate by the guardians, highlighting the role of the agent, Captain George Cranfield. The strength of this work lies with the fact that local information — tenant's names, townlands and attitudes of those with responsibilities in the locality — is interwoven with national attitudes and trends, with contrast and comparison of the Powerscourt estate in Wicklow and that in Tyrone. It is a fascinating read, and gives a lot of leads to the sources of information that are available for those interested in this area. This work is an extract from the author's larger study of estate management in several Irish estates, and is reproduced here with her permission and the permission of the Library at University College Dublin. I wish to acknowledge Michael Wood, who

alerted me to this existence of this work.

Anne Roper's essay is set in the other side of the hey-day of the Powerscourt Estate, during its decline at the beginning of the twentieth century. Its subject is Sheila Wingfield, a poet and the wife of the 9th Viscount Powerscourt. Anne has previously completed a documentary on the life of Sheila Wingfield. In this essay, she uses extracts from her interviews with her to retell Sheila's life as a poet and as a Lady of the House — one of conflict arising from gender, social norms and within herself. In doing so, the story illuminates about societal expectations and life in the Big House, and the struggle as it went into irreversible decline.

Brian White's piece is a personal story of his father and uncle, who lived in Enniskerry in the twentieth century. His story begins one hundred years ago and the story he tells is that of many of Enniskerry's inhabitants - providing anecdotes and information to give context to our understanding to the lives of people living here in the last century.

Úna Wogan's essay is a discussion of the Petty Courthouse at Enniskerry which more than any higher court, provides intricate detail on the everyday lives of people in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Her article discusses the context of the judicial system in Ireland and the types of offences that were considered in the Petty Sessions, richly illustrated with cases from the courthouse as reported in the media and derived from the archival records of the Petty Sessions themselves. As these tended to be local disputes and petty offences, they are full of references to local names and places, and there represent as an as yet untouched source of very valuable information to social historians and genealogists. Úna's piece marks the commencement of a project on the documentation of these records for researchers interested in these uses.

I hope that you find these articles as interesting as I have. I wish to once again thank the authors for their time and for agreeing to contribute to this issue. I welcome suggestions for contributions to future issues. You can find out more about and share your own knowledge of the village's history at the website: www.enniskerryhistory.org.