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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.

Powerscourt's Poor Literary Rich Girl...

ANNE ROPER

I had wanted to make a television documentary about the Viscountess, Lady Powerscourt since the late 1980's. Those were the days of film cameras and large crews so expense was one obstacle. But in truth, amid the Troubles in Northern Ireland, no one was much interested in the story of a fading Anglo-Irish woman poet. Undeterred, I grabbed a borrowed audio cassette recorder, travelled to the Ticino in the Alps where, in a penthouse overlooking Lake Maggiore, I taped a final interview with the wealthy but invalided Sheila Wingfield. That recording sat in a drawer for twenty years.

In the meantime, someone invented the internet. I can't remember what I was looking for at the time, but I was trawling through the Movietone website, that trove of early archive film footage with such historical interest. Suddenly I noticed a clip shot in 1933 entitled: *Irish Couple Receive Medieval Welcome*. And there it was: Sheila Beddington Wingfield arriving home to Powerscourt House with her new husband Pat following their wedding in Jerusalem—a Hollywood couple if ever there was one. Maybe the small clip might engender new interest?

I dug out the old interview. In the 1980's few people knew of Sheila Wingfield's aspirations as a poet. But from her bed in the Italian Alps, she would tell me her story and how, much as she loved Powerscourt from that first day to the end of her life, the role of chatelaine became far too difficult a one for her to cope with.

"You won't mind, dear, that I've had a brandy to steady my nerves," she asked as I put batteries in the tape machine.

In 1980, Sheila Wingfield was in her 80's. The reclusive and bed-ridden poet was about to publish her final book, *Ladder to the Loft*. Over the next three days I would learn how great a role nerves had played in her life and her eventual downfall: succumbing to fear was largely the reason for her obscurity as a writer.

How Sheila coped with her fears only emerged years later: the crippling addictions to drink and drugs; the rages that blighted relationships; the charade of dutiful wife and

loving mother. But in the end, it was fear that isolated her, that kept her from entering the very literary world she craved.

In 1906, when she was born Sheila Beddington, the future seemed much brighter. Beauty, brains, breeding - even money - Sheila had it all. Her mother, Ethel Mulock, was from good Irish Protestant ascendancy stock, “but we were Catholics much further back, real Irish!”

The Mulock’s Ballycumber and Bellair estates lay in County Offaly. There, Sheila spent childhood summers and holidays. Sheila’s mother was cultured, blue stocking and a literary groupie, friendly with both Yeats and Shaw. Sadly, Sheila and her mother did not get on. Sheila feared her mother’s high standards and cold temper. She feared her humiliating punishments.

“My mother lived for admiration and nothing else. She was mean and cruel and I was only too glad when I didn’t see her.”

On the other hand, Sheila adored her father. Major Claude Beddington had been away for much of Sheila’s childhood, leading British troops in the First World War. His substantial London-based wealth had been built in the tobacco trade. But while Claude was upwardly mobile, he aspired to traditional Edwardian values. He was a dominant character pitted against an equally headstrong wife. Caught in the crossfire, Sheila felt it safer to side with her father.

But Claude saw worrying similarities between mother and daughter. He disliked Sheila’s early bent towards the literary, fearing it might ruin her chances of netting a high-society husband. When she was young, he forbade her to read.

Trying to meet both parents’ exacting but conflicting standards was the springboard for Sheila’s first brush with anxiety. Writing at night and in secret became a way of calming the turmoil. The strain had the unexpected result of making her a poet.

“The compulsion came with adolescence: the absolute and overwhelming need to put things down in verse. My father wasn’t keen. I got no encouragement,” she says.

This early brush with deceit also proved thrilling. Sheila had only one ally in her secret life — her beloved older brother, Guy.

“Guy was musical and charming and I can’t say too many good things about him.”

Sadly, Guy caught TB while at university. Sheila’s mother refused to visit him. Ethel claimed boys with consumption were dissolute, that they brought disease on

themselves through Bohemian pursuits like jazz. But the sick room mellowed Claude. He was devoted to Guy's recovery. The Swiss sanatorium where Guy lingered soothed young Sheila: a sick-room comfort she would try to recreate in later years. When Guy finally died aged only 23, Sheila was bereft.

I think Odysseus, as he dies, forgets
Which was Calypso, which Penelope,
Only remembering the wind that sets
 Off Mimas, and how endlessly
 His eyes were stung with brine;
 Argos a puppy, leaping happily;
And his old father digging round a vine.

After Guy's death, Sheila's parents separated. Ethel refused to speak to Sheila for taking her father's side. The emotional pressures on Sheila, who was not yet 20, were overwhelming. She distracted herself by playing Claude's hostess at dances and dinner parties. She occupied herself with a debutante's life.

But the double life of writing by night and acting dutiful daughter by day led to stress and depression. Sheila turned to cocaine to get by. It was common enough 'medication' in the Twenties. Opiates and stimulants were available over the counter in Harrods. But it was a habit that would have devastating consequences for Sheila.

On the surface, Sheila was glamorous and enchanting. Behind the facade lay a lack of confidence. She attended hunt balls and grouse shoots and point-to-points across England and Ireland. She briefly went to art school in Paris. She was accepted at university but turned it down to please her father. Claude despaired she would never marry. Then suddenly, aged 27, Sheila met what her biographer, Penny Perrick, calls "the husband from central casting". Best of all, Pat Wingfield was heir to the great Powerscourt Estate in Co Wicklow.

"I fell in love with him then and there," remembered Sheila: "this handsome young man with blond hair and blue eyes."

However, a deception Claude had urged on Sheila years before threatened to end the young socialite's dreams of marriage. In the anti-Semitic 1930's, Claude hid the fact

that his family was Jewish. To her death, Sheila held fast to the secret, always feeling an outsider, denying the truth even to her own children. But Pat Wingfield knew and it didn't matter. He loved Sheila passionately. So much so he even ignored her odd habit of writing. When their engagement was finally announced, Pat's father famously ran into the Kildare Street Club shouting: "He's done it! She's Jewish, but she's rich!" Ironically, the couple married in Jerusalem, where Pat was serving as police officer with the British Mandate.

By the time the young couple began that long carriage ride home to Powerscourt, the House was facing financial ruin. The new Free State government had crippled the estate with high taxes and compulsory land purchase. While the marriage would gain Sheila an aristocratic title, Powerscourt House gained a crucial benefactress.

The first cracks in their fairytale romance came not long after. "It was a happy marriage to start with, but it soon began to deteriorate. I can't consider myself as having been a happy wife. I hope I was a good one, but I wasn't very happy."

Sheila fulfilled her duty of providing Powerscourt with an heir. There were three children in all: Grania, Mervyn and Guy, the last named after her dead brother. But what Sheila really wanted was recognition as a poet. Her first submitted verse appeared in *Dublin Magazine* alongside Patrick Kavanagh's. Lady Ottoline Morrell invited Sheila to her influential literary salon. Literary success seemed within Sheila's grasp.

"But I made the mistake of taking my husband along. Pat was very un-bookish. The only thing he read was the *Farmer's Weekly*. He was very put off by the poets we met at Ottoline's. He made me promise never to have anything to do with a literary crowd again."

"He was so severe and stern about it I thought I'd better stick to my promise - but imagine my grief, because being on your own and writing without the help and friendship of other writers is excessively difficult."

Penny Perrick thinks this story is another of Sheila's deceptions. So does Sheila's daughter, Grania. They describe Pat as a kind-hearted man who would have let Sheila do as she pleased. But Sheila's son, Guy, and I both think there is truth in Sheila's story. The salon incident occurred when Pat and Sheila were not long married. Sheila was arrestingly beautiful and sparkled amongst the male writers. What husband wouldn't feel a flash of jealousy?

But Sheila may have imposed the critical voices of her parents onto Pat. She may even have used her husband's anger to bow out of a literary world she felt unequal to.

"My father loved my mother," Guy remembers. "But I think he resented her intelligence, and the fact that she held the purse strings."

Then, an untimely and unseemly row with WB Yeats threatened more damage to her literary chances. Yeats had praised Sheila's early poetry in private correspondence. When the publisher of Sheila's first collection used Yeats's comments on the book's jacket, a literary scandal erupted:

"Mrs Wingfield," Yeats wrote, ". . . that you who have not the excuse of ignorance or poverty should do this vulgar thing fills me with regret . . . If I could keep you out of it, I would bring the matter to the Society of Authors."

This stress, combined with Sheila's desire to please, was a dangerous cocktail. On the eve of the publication of *Poems* in 1938, Sheila suffered the first of a series of breakdowns. She was drinking to calm her nerves and taking morphine. The doctors blamed her poetry habit. They said a sensible wife should pay more attention to her children. Grania and Guy were suffering in the fallout.

"My mother had no maternal instinct at all," Grania says. Guy, who was born deaf, speaks movingly of Sheila's cruelty. His description is almost a mirror image of Sheila's childhood abuse at the hands of her own mother.

"She would mock the way I spoke and if I didn't improve she beat me around the head. Her bedroom was at the end of a long corridor and when she called me I felt not only a physical, but a psychological distance."

Guy thinks Sheila's recurring illnesses were psychosomatic. Every time one of her ten books was about to be published, she would relapse. More tablets were prescribed and more injections. Delia Meacle, one of the Powerscourt staff, blamed the doctors who "were getting well paid" to keep Sheila on her medication. She also recalls Sheila's many kindnesses and how eager she was to help out when any of the staff were ill ("although she probably used the meeting with the doctor for more prescriptions.")

My theory is that illness gave Sheila the solitude and permission she needed to write. It excused her from public duties expected of the future Viscountess Powerscourt.

So it is no surprise that Sheila's most prolific period of writing came during the Second World War. Pat had joined the fight and was captured in Italy. Fearing internment in a concentration camp, Sheila and the children sought safety in Bermuda. There,

Sheila felt a freedom she'd never known. *Beat Drum, Beat Heart*, the two thousand-line poem she wrote about the war and the women left behind, is considered her masterpiece.

By the end of the war, Sheila's marriage had changed irrevocably. Guy remembers his father returning shell-shocked. "The war simply pulled the trigger."

"They'd grown apart over the five years," Grania says. "They fought a lot."

During Sheila's 'well' periods, there were bursts of non-literary energy. When Pat inherited Powerscourt in 1947, Sheila threw herself into the mammoth task of launching the house into the 20th century. She bought carpets, installed en-suite baths, painted and decorated. She dreamed of literary salons at Powerscourt but Irish writers in the 1950's stayed away. As Penny Perrick says: "It was all just too grand."

During the 1950's, Sheila won the Poetry Society Book Choice. She wrote a memoir of her time at Powerscourt which included several pen portraits of the staff she loved so much. Her work was praised by Betjeman and TS Eliot. But her success was ephemeral. A patrician woman didn't fit the image of an Irish poet in the New Ireland. Her themes and language were not shared by readers and publishers of Kavanagh and O'Faolain.

Sheila immersed herself in public duties: heading up the Irish Girl Guides and helping Chester Beatty catalogue his collection. There were horse shows and charity galas to support. She opened Powerscourt House for the filming of *Captain Lightfoot*, a Hollywood epic starring Rock Hudson. When ill, she would even hire an ambulance for shopping in Grafton Street's Switzers.

But by 1963 her marriage was over. Sheila left Pat, taking her money. The family was forced to make the painful decision to sell Powerscourt. The estate had been in the Wingfield family for more than 400 years. "It devastated my father," says Grania.

After that, Sheila began a life of wandering. She moved from hotel to hotel, from Bermuda to London and from Dublin to Switzerland. She struggled with recurring, mysterious pain. She tried coming off drugs and failed. Loneliness pursued her but it brought a change of heart. By the time she died in 1992 in a nursing home outside Dublin, Sheila acknowledged her failures and her cruelties. She apologised for "causing rents that would never mend". To the end, there was bravery in the face of crushing fears, to the end she was writing.

Irish poet, Eavan Boland, remembers meeting the same frail Sheila propped up in a bed in the Gresham Hotel in the 1960's. Eavan was a young student with her own literary ambitions. In Sheila, she was staring at one kind of future.

“The conversation I had with her that day has stayed with me all my life. She was the first woman poet I ever met. I saw somebody out of their life say to me: ‘I’m a poet and I’m a woman.’ Nobody else had ever said it to me.”

“Yet I had a sense of how vulnerable she was. She was quite open about how hard her life had been as a writer, and quite disappointed about not making her way in it. Here was this woman hiding in plain sight, yet she was still full of courage and determination. That impressed me.”

I made friends with Sheila Wingfield more than twenty years ago and started writing about her shortly after. I wanted to make an invisible woman visible. I wanted to bring readers to her marvellous poetry: the snapshots of Irish rural life and Wicklow; epiphanies of love and grief; minutiae of a woman's life from a time now lost. I finally got to make that documentary in 2007—and included the clip from Movietone. Sheila's life is now commemorated fully on film.

Still, I know there will be those wondering why anyone should bother with a writer like Sheila Wingfield. What could an ascendancy woman, whose hey-day was Depression era 1930's, possibly have to say to modern Ireland? All I can answer is that the world is always more complex than we imagine. Every day, new voices rise to the surface and add richness to established cultures. They bring fresh perspectives into the light. Familiar or not, each voice has something of value to say - enough value to make us listen.

Eavan Boland agrees: “We don't want the easy people whose backgrounds we approve of, whose stories we recognise, to represent us as artists. We want the people who have a story to tell out of their humanity. We want to put aside our sense of race and class and history and listen to those people. And Sheila Wingfield is one of them.”

Anne Roper is a documentary maker and Head of the RTÉ TV Documentary Unit

Petty Sessions at Enniskerry Courthouse

ÚNA WOGAN

A fascinating, often overlooked, source of information about the residents of Enniskerry and the surrounding areas, and the way of life in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can be found in the records of the Petty Sessions Court of the village. The Petty Sessions was the lowest rung of the judicial structure practiced in Ireland during this period and it served largely to adjudicate on what were considered misdemeanours and common or civil law matters.

With the Act of Union in 1800, Ireland's judicial and legislative practices - already influenced by England - became totally dominated by the now central government at Westminster. The structure of the system, and much of the legislation enacted in England, found its way into the legal system here. The High Court, based in Dublin, was the most superior court. Next was the Court of Assize which heard serious crimes such as murder and treason and sat twice a year on circuit. The lower court, the Court of Quarterly Sessions was held four times a year and were based in most counties.

Cases presented to the Quarterly Sessions were presided over by Justices of the Peace and a sworn-in jury. The office of Justice of Peace evolved from a centuries old custom whereby the King of England swore in 'Keeper's of the Peace', officers ensuring peace was upheld by his subjects throughout the kingdom. Initially they were granted power to bind a person to the peace, and over the years various laws were enacted to extend their powers to the point at which they were given the authority, within their own county, to summon and judge those who were deemed to have broken the law. The office was an unpaid one and very much seen as a duty as subjects to the crown, and the office-holders were "men of ample fortunes who administered the communities in which they resided."

These were men who didn't necessarily have a legal background. They had to be landowners with a certain level of income and so in Ireland they were for the most

part members of the gentry, the (usually) Protestant landowners. In addition the Constabulary Act (Ire) 1836 established the office of Irish Residential Magistrates (Irish RMs) and these officers also presided over the Quarterly Sessions.

In the early 1800's Justices began to hold more frequent court sessions within their own local districts — the cases overseen were viewed as too 'petty' for even the Quarterly Sessions. The first of these Petty Sessions was held in Cork in the 1820s and the idea was quickly adopted in other parts of the country in subsequent years. It had a distinctly rural aspect with local magistrates and justices presiding over cases involving people living in districts in which justices themselves owned the majority of the land. Over the years from 1827 onwards various pieces of legislation shaped the workings of the lower court; the Petty Sessions (Ire) Act of 1851 saw the consolidation of these earlier laws and statutes.

As a rural area with a high number of residing gentry living in the county, Wicklow was divided into fourteen Petty Session regions. An extract from '*An Illustrated Hand Book to the County of Wicklow*' written by George O'Malley Irwin in 1844 is given below which lists the Petty Session courts in the county, the day they were held, and the name of the court clerk for each.

PLACE WHERE HELD	DAY	NAME OF CLERK
Arklow	Second Thursday	W. Manifold
Baltinglass	Second Friday	Peter Douglass
Blessington	Second Tuesday	J. Mooney
Bray	Second Saturday	J. Montgomery
Carnew	Second Monday	J. S. Graham
Coolkenno, Carnew	Second Monday	J. Graham
Dunlavin	Second Wednesday	J. Woodman
Enniskerry	Second Friday	Michael Mc Ginty
Newtown Mount Kennedy	Second Saturday	William Rutledge
Rathdangan	Second Monday	Peter Douglass
Rathdrum	Second Thursday	T. W. Manning
Rathnew	Second Monday	Henry Harwood
Redcross	Second Wednesday	Thomas Elliot
Tinnahely	Second Wednesday	Joe. S. Graham

Petty Sessions at Enniskerry Courthouse

The sessions were held fortnightly in each division and were presided over by two or more justices or magistrates. Most villages holding Petty Sessions had a purpose-built court house to accommodate proceedings and Enniskerry was no exception. According to the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, the court house in the village, now the Pandan Court Restaurant, has been dated between 1815 and 1825.

As dictated by legislation, cases before the Petty Sessions were recorded and retained and it is these records - surviving copies from 1859 up until 1916 are now held in the National Archives of Ireland - which offer a wonderful insight into life in the village for this period of history. The Court Clerk would record the date, the complainant and/or witnesses, the defendant, the charge and the verdict. Not only do the cases heard provide a fascinating glimpse into the lives of those living in the area at the time but the laws themselves illustrate a way of life and attitudes of the day. The national and local newspapers also reported court room events giving further glimpses of the villagers' daily lives, often with a more insightful record in their descriptions of the demeanour of those taking part in proceedings than the proceedings themselves.

The Resident Magistrates and Justices of the Peace mentioned in various directories and newspapers as presiding over the Enniskerry sessions, particularly in the later years of 1800s and early 1900s, include:

Sir George Hodson Bart, Hollybrook	A Chatterton JP, Kilgarron
Henry Sandys Esq, Dargle Cottage	Mr Barrington RM
Charles D Fox Esq	A Meldon RM
Lord Powerscourt	Robert Hodson Bart
QJ Brownrigg Esq	Hon. Captain Harry de Vere Pery RM
Sir Robert Hodson Bart	Mr R St Clair Ruthven
Lord Monck, Charleville	Mr O Sullivan RM

As in other parts of the country many of the magistrates and justices living and practicing in Enniskerry had absolutely no background in law. Captain Harry de Vere Pery, for example, who practiced as a justice in Ireland from 1885 up until 1914 had a career in the Navy and as an "*Instructor of Musketry*" with the Royal Munster Fusiliers, Mr A. Chatterton was an engineer. Their appointment was simply that their status in life that was considered to give them the credentials to judge the cases before them in the courtroom.

Because of the lack of experience and knowledge regarding the laws being practiced, there were various guides produced for the courtrooms to help identify legislation and relevant punishments, including *Justice of the Peace for Ireland* by Edward Parkyns Levinge, Barrister of Law, in 1860 and a similarly named book by Henry Humphreys. These were extensive works, effectively an ‘A to Z’ of every conceivable crime that might be presented to the court. A review of the second edition of Levinge’s book (1867) by the *Dublin Evening Mail* stated that:

The new edition, recently published, contains a compendium of the entire law, as at present in force in Ireland, affecting the powers and duties of Justices of the Peace.

Henry Humphrey’s book is a large volume that today might be labelled “*The Law for Dummies*”. It is a wonderful resource, giving great insight into the laws of that time and punishments faced by those coming before the courts. The extract opposite (from the third edition, 1867) shows a typical page which lists the offence, the statutes covering the offence and the “*Extent of Jurisdiction*” — the punishment for said offence.

The right hand column gives the maximum punishment to be meted out if found guilty including fines and imprisonment, with or without hard labour (HL). It also tells the court whether one or two justices must be present to hear the case, 1J or 2J. This particular extract deals with the question of apprentices, their behaviour and the treatment of them by their master. An entry in the Enniskerry Petty Session record book in April 1861 shows that my own great-great-grandfather Michael Wogan, Boot-maker, was summoned to appear in court due to an accusation made by his apprentice Pat Gorman. The charge:

That you assaulted the complainant and refused to keep him in your employment on the 21st March 1861 he being your indentured apprentice at the time.

Luckily for Michael his apprentice didn’t turn up in court and the case was dismissed, if found guilty he could have been given a hefty five pound fine.

Although Humphreys’ compendium provides instruction for the crimes that are dealt with by statute and legislation there was a range of offences that came under what was termed Common Law. Humphreys helpfully explains;

The laws of England are of two kinds: the Statute or written Law, and the Common and unwritten Law. The Statute Law depends on the will of the Legislation of the Kingdom. Common Law is a rule of justice throughout the Kingdom

SUMMARY JURISDICTION.

5

Offence, or cause of Complaint.	Statute.	Extent of Jurisdiction.
APPEAL—continued.		
By Malicious Injuries Act, under like circumstances.	24 & 25 Vic. c. 97, s. 68.	Special power and conditions of appeal.
Under Reformatory Act, where offender is ordered to be sent to Reformatory School.	21 & 22 Vic. c. 103, s. 7.	Offender, parent, or guardian may appeal.
Under Public Health Act.	18 & 19 Vic. c. 121, s. 15, 16, 40.	
APPRENTICE :		
<i>Ill-behaviour.</i> —Apprentice guilty of any misdemeanor, miscarriage, or ill behaviour in service, and upon whose binding no larger sum than £5 fee paid.	25 Geo. ii. c. 8, s. 4. 29 Geo. ii. c. 8, s. 13. (Irish).	Imprisonment not exceeding 1 month H.L.; or Justices may discharge the apprentice, 1 J.
<i>Eloping, &c.</i> —Apprentice eloping, running away, or wilfully refusing to learn or work.*	31 Geo. iii. c. 23, s. 3. (Irish).	Imprisonment not exceeding 3 months. 1 J.
<i>Cruelty.</i> —With whom only £5 paid, on complaint against master for misusage, refusal of necessary provision, cruelty, or other ill-treatment.	25 Geo. ii. c. 8, s. 3. 29 Geo. ii. c. 8, s. 13. (Irish).	Justice may, by warrant or certificate under his hand, discharge the apprentice. 1 J.
With whom not exceeding £10 (fee) paid on complaint against master for ill-usage.	59 Geo. iii. c. 92, s. 5.	Fine not exceeding 40s.; in default, &c., imprisonment not exceeding 10 days. 2 J.

* The other portion of the section, that is, the offence of malicious mischief by “defacing or spoiling work,” is repealed by 9 Geo. iv., c. 53. The offence can now be dealt with under the Malicious Injuries Act, 24 & 25 Vic., c. 97, ss. 52 & 59.

Apprentices differ in many respects from other domestic servants. “Apprentices (from the French *apprendre*, to learn) are a species of servants who are usually bound for a term of years, by deed *indented*, or by indenture, to serve their masters, and be maintained and instructed by them.”—*Black. Com.*

By 8 & 9 Vic., c. 106, deeds are made effectual as indentures, though not indented.

Exemptions from Stamp Duty.—Indentures and assignments of apprenticeship in Ireland, where premium does not exceed £10: 5 & 6 Vic., c. 82, s. 3.

Indentures of apprenticeship to sea-service—17 & 18 Vic., c. 104, s. 141; title, Merchant Shipping Act; and also under 14 & 15 Vic., c. 35, s. 5, where bound by Poor Law Guardians to the sea-service.

The Act of 25 Geo. ii., c. 8, as amended by 29 Geo. ii., c. 8, are both made perpetual by 5 Geo. iii., c. 15, s. 52.

and is constituted of the Laws of nature, of nations, and of religion... They have grown to use and have acquired their binding force and power by immemorial usage and general reception.

In Common Law defendants were charged with a breach of their civil duty. The victim or injured party could summon the accused to court and a tort or compensation could be awarded. The fact that you could be monetarily rewarded may have played a part in the enormous number of cases heard for trespass of animals on the property of neighbours in the petty session's record books. It was your neighbour, not the authorities, prosecuting the case when your animals strayed onto their land.

The national newspapers generally found these cases too petty to bother reporting but there were some that made it to print. One case, in the *Freeman's Journal* in 1908 involved Mrs Elizabeth Burton of Kilmolin who summoned her neighbour Mr Kiely for allowing his goats to trespass on her land and Mrs Kiely for using abusive language and throwing holy water on Mrs Burton's daughter. In her defence Mrs Kiely claimed:

"Mrs Burton's daughter's language to her was so abominable that she thought the only thing for it was some holy water."

The resulting verdict was that the Kielys were fined three shillings and six pence for the trespass with the abusive language charge dismissed. In November 1908 what was reported as an "*Amusing Case at Enniskerry*" in the same publication involved Henry Sutton summoning a Thomas Bain for the trespass of an ass and two goats on his land. The newspaper account reported much "laughter" in the court room as Mr Meldon and Mr Chatterton, Justices of the Peace, questioned Mr Bain to try and determine who in fact owned the animals. Thomas Bain claimed that although he used the donkey it belonged to a Pat Doyle who also lived in his house. Mr Meldon JP stated it was sufficient to say the ass belonged to the house itself and therefore Mr Bain. The defendant replied:

*Is it sufficient that I should be fined for the ill deeds of another man's donkey?
If it is, the law is a bigger ass than the donkey.*

On ruling that that all three animals did in fact belong to Mr Bain, he was fined a total of one shilling and six pence. Another case from 1911 saw farmer James M'Guirk summon William Hicks for permitting nineteen sheep at Cloon to trespass on his new

meadow land:

Mr M'Guirk said that the sheep belonged to a women named Burton and were grazing on Hicks land.

As Hicks was responsible for the sheep and also for the keeping of the fences, the court imposed compensation of three shillings and two pence and ordered the fences to be repaired. Awarding compensation where damage to crops or vegetables occurred is understandable — however in most cases there was no consequence other than the animals being present on the land. It certainly didn't encourage good neighbourly relations. It must have been very tempting to seek a few shillings in this way, particularly if you weren't too fond of the next-door neighbours.

For safety reasons there was a whole range of statutes that came under the heading of "*Nuisances on Public Roads, and Streets*" and looking through the Petty Session records you'd be forgiven for thinking the village and surrounding areas were overrun with cows, asses, pigs and dogs. There were numerous such cases. In court on 6th August 1859 Frederick Gibbons, Mary Hicks, Richard Coogan and James White, all at Kilmolin, were each charged with allowing their asses to wander on a public road on 29th July. The complainant in all four cases was Constable Joseph Richards. At the next session of the court on the 19th August Robert Harper of Ballinagee, Patrick Clarke of Annacrevy, and Thomas Flynn of Ballybrew were charged, again by Constable Richards, with allowing a mule, a cow, and an ass on a public road. The cases maybe give us an indication as to the nature of Constable Richards, furiously darting around trying to spot loose animals, than the carelessness of the local residents.

A large number of cases throughout the country before the Petty Session court pertained to drink and drunkenness. As far back as the 1600s the British government had at various times tried to tackle the problem of drunkenness. The 1605 "*Act to Repress the Odious Loathsome Sin of Drunkenness*" introduced the first fines for being drunk in public. By the time of the emergence of the Temperance movement in the 1800s there was strong political pressure for laws to tackle what many people saw as the sin of drunkenness. The nineteenth century saw the introduction of several pieces of legislation to Parliament that attempted to moderate the consumption of alcohol by the masses. The Beerhouse Act of 1830 saw the introduction of licenses for the sale of alcohol. The Refreshment Houses Act of 1860 extended licenses to those selling wine

and also spelled out the punishment to be administered to those found drunk.

...every person found drunk in any street or public thoroughfare, and who is guilty of any riotous or indecent behaviour, shall upon summary conviction before two Justices, to be liable to a penalty of not more than forty shillings for every such offence, or may be committed, if the Justices or Magistrate before whom he is convicted think fit, instead of inflicting on him any pecuniary penalty, to the House of Correction for any time not more than seven days.

The very first entry in the surviving Petty Sessions book for the Enniskerry court dated 13th May 1859 lists the defendant John McEvoy charged for “*being drunk on a public road at Monastery.*” He wasn’t alone. There were five similar cases heard on the same day including poor John Neil of Glencullen, who had to face five witnesses for the prosecution, Joseph Richards (RIC Constable), Michael Behan (RIC), Michael Wogan, John Byrne and James Lenihan. Another case saw John Botts of Enniskerry convicted of “*being drunk on a public street*” on the 1st of May, the 2nd of May and the 9th of May 1860. He was sentenced to forty days in gaol and six shillings costs.

The fines administered were generally a lot less than the maximum allowed, often one or two shillings. However if you consider the wages of the time for many workmen was probably less than ten shillings a week even a fine of one shilling could inflict hardship on a family. The convictions for drunk and disorderly were so common that the national papers, although attending the court, didn’t report the cases; often commenting, as in the *Freeman’s Journal* 1901, that the cases were “*of a trifling and uninteresting character.*”

The Sale of Liquors on Sunday Act (Ire) 1878 dictated that most public houses were to be closed on the Sabbath. However in certain parts of the country public houses and hotels could open their doors for refreshment to *bona fide* travellers who had travelled a distance of at least three miles. The interpretation of what defined a *bona fide* traveller appears to have raised great a debate within legal circles of the time. The *British Law Journal* of 1881 raised the issue and reported one justice in Ireland as having said that just because a person travels from one town to another three miles away with the purpose of buying drink it does not make him a *bona fide* traveller. He is quoted as saying that if this was the case then;

All the people in Maynooth may go to Kilcock and drink as hard as they

like on Sunday and all the people of Kilcock can drink as hard as they like in Maynooth.

We can see the effect of this law in a number of cases in Enniskerry reported by the national papers of the time. In one case James Brady of Killegar was prosecuted for obtaining drink at Mr Johnston's Public House in Enniskerry on Sunday, December 15th, "*he not being a bona fide traveller*". It was stated by District Inspector Molony of the RIC that:

this was one of the cases where a man travelled Sunday after Sunday, for the purpose of obtaining drink.

Mr Brady lived outside the three mile limit, but the onus lay upon him to prove that he was a *bona fide* traveller. Sergeant Duffy, in evidence, stated that:

He had found the man in Johnston's bar frequently on Sundays.

A fine of two shillings and six pence was imposed. On the same date a similar case at the same licenced house saw Charles Neill, also of Killegar, being fined in two shillings and six pence and costs. Some aspects of Irish life obviously haven't changed too much over the years — however there were so many "*drunk in a public place*" charges on record I'd wonder how drunk was drunk. I'd like to think that perhaps RIC Constable Joseph Richards, the complainant in many of the early cases, was a bit stringent, maybe he lay in ambush outside the doors of the public houses in the village waiting for people to stumble or show any sign of having taken a drink.

The laws against cruelty to animals were enacted quite early in the nineteenth century. The earliest British legislation was passed with The Cruel and Improper Treatment of Cattle Act 1822:

That if any person or persons shall wantonly and cruelly beat, abuse, or ill-treat any Horse, Mare, Gelding, Mule, Ass, Ox, Cow, Heifer, Steer, Sheep, or other Cattle, and Complaint on Oath thereof be made to any Justice of the Peace or other Magistrate within whose Jurisdiction such Offence shall be committed, it shall be lawful for such Justice of the Peace or other Magistrate to issue his Summons or Warrant.

According to Humphreys' court guide the maximum fine that could be imposed was "*five pounds*" and/or "*imprisonment not exceeding two months*". With the establishment of the Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in 1824, stronger lobbying

to the parliament at Westminster began and further laws followed. The first SPCA inspectors were employed in 1830 and their investigations led to many convictions under the cruelty to animal legislation.

A case of cruelty to an animal reported from the Enniskerry court in 1878 saw Constable John Hewitt of the RIC charge John Moran with ‘*cruelty to a horse*’. Mr Moran was fined the maximum five pounds, which was a considerable sum of money in 1878. In later years when the Irish SPCA was established, it was they who summoned the defendants into the courtroom.

In 1914 SPCA Inspector John Anderson charged John Hyland (Ballybrew) with “*ill treating a donkey*.” Mr Hyland was fined “*10s and costs*”. Another case brought to the court in 1915. Inspector J Anderson of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals prosecuted James Gormley, a farm labourer, for ill treating a cat by leaving it without food. He charged that the cat had been left in an old burned-down house in the Rocky Valley. In his defense Gormley said that he gave the cat goat’s milk and bread morning and evening and he could not afford to buy meat for it adding that the cat:

was 25 years in the world, and wanted an old age pension and a rest for she was blind and getting bald.

Veterinary surgeon Mr Barbour gave evidence that the cat was emaciated and suffering from starvation. The defendant was fined one shilling and costs to which he declared: “*I will go to the front before I will pay it.*”

It is thought provoking to think of the protection given to animals of the time when you consider, according to Humphreys’ court guide, that the punishment for ‘*simple larceny*’ for a male child under fourteen years of age could include ‘*whipped strokes not to exceed 12, with a birch rod*’ or ‘*imprisonment not exceeding 3 months*’. The animals appear to have been awarded more protection than children.

Children feature in an array of cases heard in the courtroom after the enactment of the Irish Education Act of 1892. From this point on education was free and it became compulsory to send children between the ages of six and fourteen to school. Parents were summoned to the court if their children had had been absent more than the maximum days allowed. The court could issue an attendance order which compelled them to send the children to school or face a fine. In May 1909 a case involving Richard T Fox of Kilmurray was reported in the *Freeman’s Journal* and it illustrates how

few concessions were given to those in rural areas who had to travel long distances to school. Mr Fox was summoned to the court because of the non-attendance of four of his sons to Calary School for the required amount of days. Mr Fox in his appeal to the court stated that his children had to cross a mountain to school, he stated

Cuthbert is only a young boy, and he cries that he is unable to walk over such a distance to Lord Monck's school in Calary, and that sometimes they do be drenched and the master puts them round the fire.

The court didn't accept the excuse and an attendance order was imposed with Mr Meldon RM reminding the courtroom that under the new Children's Act in certain circumstances when boys "mitched" the magistrates had the power to send them to industrial school. Another similar case in 1911 saw attendance orders made against Thomas Sherry for the non attendance to school of his two children Joseph and Anasthasia. Thomas had missed 41 and Anasthasia 51 out of 111 days. The journey from Kilgarran to the village we bemoaned as children suddenly doesn't appear so bad when you consider the return trip from Kilmurray to Calary Richard Fox's children had to make every day.

More serious crimes were certainly presented to the Enniskerry courthouse. However most were advanced by indictment to the more superior Quarterly Sessions or Court of Assize, held in Wicklow town. One such serious charge, that of embezzlement, was made against a young man named Foley by his employer Charles Sutton of Golden Ball in 1861. Mr. Sutton said that Foley was employed as a driver on one of his bread carts. He accused Foley of embezzling a "*considerable sum of money.*" Foley was committed for trial and sent to Wicklow Gaol. A spree of burglaries and robbery headlined as "*Highway Robbery Near Enniskerry*" in *The Irish Times*, 1905 saw John O'Brien, of many aliases, being charged with robbing James Smith an "*under gardener*" of Lord Powerscourt and taking his watch and a shilling. He was also charged with taking a double barreled gun, a razor and articles of clothing from Andrew Foster of Ballyoney, and a quantity of bacon from Mr Frank Douglas of Coolakay. During his arrest O'Brien was said to have drawn a knife and tried to stab Constable Reynolds, RIC. As O'Brien had been said to be accompanied by others during his spree the case was adjourned so that further evidence could be collected.

By today's standards the whole structure and workings of the court of Petty Sessions would be deemed totally unethical. Landlords judged their tenants; alleged poachers faced judgment by the very landowners they were charged with stealing from. The men judging and sentencing the accused had, for the most part, no legal training and there was no legal representation for the accused in Petty Sessions until well into the early 1900s. The very laws themselves were unjust. According to Humphreys' court guide, under the Game Laws you were only 'qualified' to shoot game if you had a personal estate of at least one thousand pounds a year. You could not keep any type of setting dog, pointer, hound, beagle, greyhound or land spaniel unless you had a freehold worth at least one hundred pounds. However, when considered in the context of the time through which it did exist, the Enniskerry Petty courtroom and its justices was not the harshest of these lower courts. I have read cases in other jurisdictions where children, as young as six years of age, were sentenced to one month of hard labour for taking apples for an orchard. Other areas, particularly in parts of England, were very fond of whipping with birch rods. Looking through the first few years of the surviving court records, I haven't come across such serious punishments. Maximum fines were rarely administered and in several cases I have read how landowners ask the justices to show leniency towards poachers so that the accused could look after dependant family members.

For anyone with an interest in the history of the village, life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and/or their own genealogy, the surviving court records really provide a wealth of information and help to paint a vivid picture of everyday life of the time. In my own case my great-great-grandfather, previously just a name to me, came to life when I came across the three entries (so far) in the records where either he or his apprentices were summoned for bad behaviour towards the other. The conclusion I've reached is that he had very bad luck with his apprentices or, more than likely, he was a very difficult man to work under. It is details like this that add another dimension to the information already provided by church and census records — the Petty Session records are held in the National Archives and it is worth a visit to check if your own ancestors ever appeared in front of the local justices and magistrates.

Úna Wogan is a native of Enniskerry studying the genealogy of several local families. You can find out more about the Petty Sessions Project at www.enniskerryhistory.org.

Looking back to 1911

BRIAN WHITE

1911 was an exciting time in Enniskerry. The Census had just been taken that showed some 200 souls living in the village and its hinterland. Lord Powerscourt designed a Tower in the grounds of his estate based on pepper pot used on his dining table. The two room Library was built in 1911 and funded by the Carnegie Trust. The built in the Arts and Crafts style, it was opened to the public on 22nd February 1912 by Lord Powerscourt. The building was designed by Rudolf Maximillian Butler and constructed by Messrs Archer Bros.

My father, Peter White, was born in Dublin in July of 1911 but within a few years, he and his brother Christopher were living in the village. His two sisters Bridget was born in 1907 and Gretta (Margaret) in 1909. Shortly after Christopher was born, their father died. The two boys were sent to live with Mr John Smyth his wife Anne and their two children Annie and Joseph. John Smyth was a labourer, and after he died, he was buried up in Curtlestown graveyard. Each July my father would tidy the grave before the Blessings of the Graves ceremony at Curtlestown Church and Graveyard. Peter and Christopher both were educated in the library building, where Mr O'Rourke was the schoolmaster. In 1939 the new national school was built in the grounds of St. Mary and Gerards' Church.

My father got a job as telegram messenger boy with the Department of Post and Telegraphs (P&T) at Enniskerry Post Office. He delivered Telegrams to the landed gentry and to the various hotels in the district. He also delivered telegrams that went under the address of "Enniskerry 6 Miles". This was the telegram address of Glenree Reformatory. My father would say they forgot the other 6 miles the return journey to Enniskerry even if it was all downhill. The road to Glenree was not surfaced with tarmac until 1942 and punctures to his bicycle were common-place. My father got

married in 1952 and moved to work in the Bray Post office but kept his close links with Enniskerry. Just before he retired in the early 1970s, he delivered parcels and mail to the Glenree valley.

Christopher White began working for the Wicklow Hills Bus Company as a conductor from 28/5/1930 to 5/12/1931 and 4/6/1932 to 1/11/1933. His starting pay was £1 per week and on 6/4/1931 he got a raise and the new rate was £2 per week. The foreman mechanic, Duke Stephenson, was earning £4 per week. A driver on the bus was earning £3-10s-0d per week. Drivers from Enniskerry included James Rafferty, Laurence Byrne, Charles Olley, Patrick Nolan. Other conductors along with Christopher White from Enniskerry was Michael Windsor and Patrick Mooney.

In March 1927 cyclist named Peter Young from Rathfarnham was killed in an accident with a Wicklow Hills Bus at Dundrum, Co. Dublin. In July 1928 District Justice Reddin at Dundrum accused the Wicklow Hills Bus Company and the Robin Bus Company of Bus "relay Racing on the Enniskerry Road near Ballally."



When the Wicklow Hills Bus company ceased operation at Easter 1936, my uncle went to work for the Lucan Dairy, delivering milk in the Greystones area, first using a horse drawn float and then a motorised vehicle. My uncle's spare time was taken up with the Red Cross and St. Mary's GAA Club. He would ferry players to various parts of the county as well as the country. Lady Powerscourt in 1939 was appointed to the first council of the Irish Red Cross. Christopher was a driver of the Red Cross Ambulance and the ambulance was used to take invalids to Dublin Airport for the

annual Dublin diocese's pilgrimage to Lourdes. The Red Cross assisted when many of the films were made in Enniskerry "Irish Destiny", "McKenizes Break", "Henry V", and "The Blue Max " at Calary. The rescue of 10 climbers at Powerscourt Waterfall in 1953 involved the Red Cross, Civil Defence , Gardai and some inhabitants of the village.

In 2011 Prince Albert the son of Princess Grace and Prince Rainier of Monaco paid an official visit to Ireland. Forty years earlier, Princess Grace and Prince Rainier visited to Dublin. Their visit to Powerscourt is still recalled in the village and is regarded as one of the highlights of the social life in Enniskerry was when Princess Grace and Prince Rainier of Monaco attended the ball of the Petits Lits Blancs, the French Hospital charity, at Powerscourt on 8th July 1965. This was only the second time the ball was held outside France. Footage of the Ball can be seen on the British Pathe website, in addition to coverage of two motor car rallies at Enniskerry on 21/4/1932 and 27/4/1950. The Car Rally in April 1959 had over 50 entries. In 1964 a car went out of control coming down Kilgarran Hill and crashed into the front door of my uncle's house. The front door was never locked.

The ultimate event in Enniskerry was held in 1964 for home-coming of Charlie Keegan as world ploughing champion. Four years later in 1968 in Denmark, Christopher was a World Ploughing Judge. My uncle was a member of the Powerscourt Ploughing Society along with families with long association with Enniskerry and the hinterland, Williams, Keegan, Sutton, Smith, Fenlon, Leeson, and many more.

In 1969 my uncle contested the County Council elections for Wicklow, but failed to be elected, within a year he was co-opted to replace a councillor who died. He remained a councillor until his death in February 1971. When he died we had to search for the key of the front door of the house as it was the first time the door was locked in over 60 years. In the house was a clock bought at the auction of the artefacts of Tinahinch House, the former home of Henry Grattan.

My aunt decided to erect a seat at the clock tower in honour of the brother Christopher (Parkie) White, which is there to this day.

Brian White is a local historian and is Secretary to the Bray Cualann Historical Society.

Estate Management at Powerscourt 1847 - 1857

NUALA HUNT

Richard Wingfield, 6th Viscount Powerscourt died from consumption in August 1844. His son and heir Mervyn was a boy of eight at that time and as a minor was unable to succeed to his father's estates. When a minor inherited an estate, he became a ward of court, until his succession the Court of Chancery was legally in charge of the administration of the estate. The court then appointed a board of trustees or guardians to look after the welfare of the minor and delegated to them certain responsibilities concerning the management of the estate. Between 1844 and 1857 spanning famine and post-famine years the Powerscourt estate was managed by the guardians of the 7th Viscount. These were Lord Powerscourt's uncle the Reverend William Wingfield, his maternal grandfather the Earl of Roden and his mother the dowager Viscountess Powerscourt, who had remarried in 1846 Frederick Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh.

Four minute books provide an insight into the running of the estate during the minority years.¹ Originally a set of five (volume one is now lost) they cover the period between February 1847 to October 1857 and contain no less than 1,113 entries. Each volume contains an alphabetical index, all information concerning tenants including the date, their name, request and occasionally the townland in which they lived are found on left hand pages, the guardians decision appears on the right hand page opposite. The guardians met on an infrequent and irregular basis: in 1847 and 1857 they held four meetings, six each in 1852, 1854 and 1855, and in 1851 and again in 1853 they met eleven times. It was neither essential for all three guardians to approve a decision nor did they need to attend these meetings.

It is William Wingfield's signature which appears most frequently in the minute books, although the Earl of Roden was a consistent contributor. However, from January 1852 these two guardians played a lesser part having given up the management of the House, Demesne Park, Game and Planning management to Lady Castlereagh

for the benefit of her son.² What is surprising is the fact that Lord Powerscourt was at the time actively involved in the estate. Though he did not, as the Wicklow Newsletter suggested, succeed to the estate at the age of thirteen, it is likely that he was from that age onwards familiarising himself with the running of his property.³

The keeping of minute books was an uncommon practice within the Powerscourt administration; usually lease, deed, account and rent books were sufficient. It was undoubtedly the changed circumstances of the minority inheritance that necessitated the strict keeping of accounts “so that the minutest detail gets recorded”.⁴ The minute books do not provide a domestic guide to the running of the Powerscourt estate. It is the leasing, tenancy, renting, improving, and disputing of land which dominate these books. On a national scale, these issues combined to form the Irish Land question, which was to dominate Irish politics in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The Wingfield family owned land in four counties; Wicklow (40,986 acres), Wexford (11,641 acres), Tyrone (9176 acres) and Dublin (634 acres).⁵ The Wicklow estate was by far the largest and most important. The Wingfield family lived in Powerscourt House on a demesne of 700 acres near Enniskerry village.⁶ It was also the administrative centre where the agent lived and had his offices, which were later moved to the village.⁷ The Commission of Inquiry which reported on the occupation of land in Ireland late in 1845 is an important documentary source, providing detailed information on the varied complexities of the land problem which existed on the eve of the famine. The commissioners and chairman travelled throughout the country hearing evidence from witnesses which included landlords, agents and tenants. In this instance Lord Powerscourt’s agent on the Tyrone estate, Captain George Darley Cranfield and a tenant on the Wexford estate, Robert Dowse gave evidence before the Commission. Their commentary provides a valuable insight into the condition and management of Wingfield property North and South in pre-famine years. The report is widely referred to as The Devon Commission, borrowing its title from the Earl of Devon, the chairman of the Commission.

A key figure involved in running Powerscourt property during the minority years was George Cranfield. As agent, he was responsible for administrating and managing the estate. Cranfield, who was an army officer on half pay, worked during the minority years of the 6th Viscount as a moral agent on the Tyrone estate.⁸ Later, in 1836 he was

employed as land agent on the same estate.

At the guardians' request Captain Cranfield acted as agent to the Wicklow property during the minority years of the 7th Viscount. In July 1852, he states that when he succeeded to the agency of the Wicklow estate the guardians granted him a profit rent of £15 a year, and he also became a free holder of the county, thus being eligible to serve on the grand jury.⁹ Indispensable to the guardians, Cranfield was next to them the most important person involved in managing the estate. Consequently, the agent had to be a man whom the guardians could trust. George Cranfield's integrity was beyond doubt. The guardians asked for and acted on his advice in all matters concerning estate administration.

Cranfield appears to have possessed those qualities to which a nineteenth century landlord sought when employing an agent; namely tact, acceptance and integrity.¹⁰ Army officers were a favourite source of recruitment as agents, as landlords assumed them to bear the characteristics of gentlemen.¹¹ Agents had an important role within the agrarian community. Indeed it was upon the conduct of this numerous class that the comfort of a large population and the tranquillity of a district frequently depended.¹² In former times an agent was primarily concerned with the "letting of farms and enforcing the payment of rent".¹³ A better practice was beginning to prevail by the time the Devon Commission reported in 1845—accordingly they had witnessed that most agents "now think it their duty to acquire more intimate knowledge of the property and the condition of the people".¹⁴ The agent's new obligation to acquaint himself with the local tenantry was yet another facet of a varied though sometimes mundane career. As one agent reminisced, their duties comprised "a great deal of office work, drawing up agreements with tenants, receiving rent, superintending agricultural and all landlord improvements, sitting as magistrates and representing the landlord when the latter is absent at poor law meetings, road sessions and on grand juries".¹⁵

In January 1853, Joseph Kincaid (surveyor) and George Cranfield prepared a report on the condition of Powerscourt demesne which included a review of the role of various employees. Considering the changed circumstances of the minority inheritance the duties of the agent were "much interwoven with the care and management of the demesne and the oversight of the works which from time to time may be carried on therein". The agent was also responsible for "the payment of wages and other ordinary outgoings of the place".¹⁶ Usually the responsibilities of an agent increased enormously

during a minority period, thereby enhancing his importance, power and influence within the community.¹⁷ Assisted by clerks, bailiffs, accountants and a host of other officials, the agent effectively ran the estate for the guardians. He reported, analysed, edited and judged all material presented to him, leaving the guardians to make the final decision, albeit in accordance with the agent's advice.

The landlord entrusted his agent with considerable power, which he could abuse or use to his own advantage. The abuses of which the profession was accused included the acceptance of bribes, gratuities and failure to reside on the estate where a landlord was absent or appearing only when rents were due for collection.¹⁸ However, a good agent was an invaluable asset both to a landlord and his estate. An agent who was professional ran the estate in an effective and efficient manner, but also enhanced its reputation by showing the landlord to be a fair man who did not rack-rent nor improperly remove his tenants. This type of policy tended to attract tenants who proved more reliable, solvent and willing to improve their holdings. While it would have been possible for a landlord to endure a handful of disreputable tenants on his land, an untrustworthy agent would prove much more injurious to the reputation of the estate. Unfortunately due to the limited material available at the time of writing, it is impossible to provide an accurate bibliographical profile of George Cranfield. However by combining Cranfield's Devon Commission interview with his later frequent contributions to the minute books during the 7th Viscount's minority years, it is possible to assess his influence and power as an agent on Powerscourt property between 1842-1857.

In nineteenth century Ireland, land, its ownership, occupancy, tenancy, leasing, renting, and improvement were contentious political issues. It was the teasing out of these problems that led to the enactment of a series of Land Acts which in the late nineteenth century effectively transformed the face of land ownership in the country. Before the changeover was effected the Irish land system presented a number of festering problems which when left unchecked combined to form a disastrous situation, subletting and/or subdivision. As early as 1815, the subletting and subdivision of farms had in one agent's opinion produced a "national evil of the most serious nature", which was "an agricultural population more than four times as numerous as the cultivation of the country requires".¹⁹ The causes, culprits, and the solution to these problems are still a matter of debate. Yet, it is undeniable that the population increased rapidly from

the mid-eighteenth century until the Famine halted and reversed the process. What is disputable are the factors which caused and contributed to that rise and the order of significance in which they should appear.

Firstly, what is certain is that subdivision and subletting occurred, but that it was more prevalent and potentially more dangerous in the poorer regions. Secondly, the potato became an increasingly important component in the diet of the poorer classes – the labourers and cottiers, whose numbers increased steadily in the pre-Famine period. Thirdly, high prices during the Napoleonic years (1793 – 1815) increased the value of land and encouraged farmers to sublet. Lease holding tenants were among the primary offenders in the subletting and subdivision of land. In cases here the landlord had granted long leases of thirty-one years or for three lives, unless there was a covenant or stipulation preventing it, then the tenant could sublet the land. Often these leases lasted twice as long as the thirty-one year period laid down in the lease. Thus large parcels of the landlord's property were removed from his control. Not only was the landlord deprived of additional rent, but he also had to suffer the damaging consequences that resulted from his land being overworked. These farmers who benefited most had obtained leases at low prices and sublet at a considerable profit when market prices improved.

Subletting was not confined to the leaseholder; yearly tenants and tenants at will took on cottiers and labourers. According to Captain Cranfield, this latter group were a “very ill-treated class of people who paid a high rent for a miserable hovel and a rood of land”.²⁰ The labourers were underemployed and underpaid, while their landlords failed to keep their houses in a good state of repair. These labourers could also be described as cottiers, since they paid a “portion of their rent in labour, deriving the balance from the produce of their land”.²¹

The guardians objected strongly to cottiers and under-tenants on their property. In their opinion, the majority of these tenants were disreputable characters whose only service was to clutter the estate and injure the reputation of the neighbourhood. The guardians vehemently opposed all those who attempted to introduce or become cottiers on the estates. When a certain John Cross returned to Northern Ireland from America and sought permission to become a cottier on Hugh Montgomery's farm he was informed that the guardians “will by no means suffer the introduction of cottier tenants on the Tyrone estate”.²² This was a clear warning to other tenants who as times

improved attempted to bring back cottiers who had cleared off the estate at the time of the potato failure. On the eve of the Famine, there had been 276 families of cottiers, a total of 1189 persons on Wingfield's Tyrone property.²³

The guardian frequently reiterated their opposition to and disapproval of subletting, yet this "evil" practice persisted. In June 1848 John Harrick requested permission to sublet part of his farm in order to raise money for a mortgage and was refused, as the guardians "could not allow any farm in the Powerscourt estate to be let for the purpose of subletting".²⁴ Later, in March 1853, the guardians were anxious that the practices of subletting should be "entirely discountenanced by them".²⁵ If there were to be any exceptions to this rule, then the individual would have to apply to the guardians for approval. The guardians assumed that all tenants would "adhere to their request".²⁶ Captain Cranfield was instructed to enter any violation of the guardians' decision into the record books.

The Powerscourt family had for many years attempted to prevent and discourage the practice of subletting. According to Captain Cranfield, the subletting and dividing of farms was not permitted on the Tyrone estate.²⁷ Where it occurred, a tenant was threatened with expulsion, or else they refused to acknowledge the person as an under-tenant. In the case of leaseholders the rent was demanded on the day it was due. If the tenant failed to pay it, then he could be ejected for non-payment of rent. However, it was difficult and expensive to prevent leaseholders from subletting and this resulted in landlords granting fewer leases.

The process of change on the Powerscourt estate was slow, as the property was twice in Chancery in the space of twenty years. First during the minority years of the 6th Viscount (1823-36) and again between the minority years of the 7th Viscount (1844-57). This made it increasingly difficult to regulate and eradicate the problem of subletting. The 6th Viscount's attempts to grapple with the problem were thwarted by his early death, although he did reduce the length of leases and any long leases that fell out during his lifetime were renewed for a shorter period of twenty-one years or one life. Leases which contained covenants were another precautionary measure adopted by landlords. Indeed, one of the covenants in the new twenty-one year leases granted by the 6th Viscount was "against subletting".²⁸ However, stipulations of this kind were unusual and not always effective. Indeed, Captain Cranfield admitted that the covenants

contained in leases were “never enforced”.²⁹ Consequently, tenants continued to sublet and subdivide with the knowledge and acquiescence of their landlords. The Devon Commission survey found that the practice had diminished but was “not uncommon” in Ireland by the 1840s.³⁰

The limited success of the precautionary measures adopted by landlords was but one of the determining factors in bringing about change. In post war years (1815 onwards) the demand for grain slackened, it appeared to many that a more prosperous future lay with livestock farming. This form of farming lent itself to larger farms, the process of consolidation and clearance which began in pre-famine year was aided by the blight. Between 1845 – 1851, the number of farms above fifteen acres rose from 276,618 to 290,401, while the number of smallholdings under fifteen acres decreased from 493,083 to 279,977 in the same period.³¹ It was the small farmers, labourers and cottiers who were most affected by the potato blight. The majority of these were not leaseholders and therefore less secure in their tenure. Many of these tenants were unable to sustain a living from the small plot of land they rented. The failure of the potato crop presented them with a crisis. Mounting arrears which they were unable to pay resulted in their eviction, emigration or entry into the poor house, leaving the land to the more secure tenant farmers.

Where possible the guardians compensated tenants or assisted them to emigrate. During the famine years employment on the Powerscourt estate was limited to drainage works. Whenever possible the guardians employed people, reduced and abated rents and struck off arrears. Yet the estate was not a charitable institution – it was impossible to provide assistance for all who requested it. However, it was in the landlords’ interest to reduce the number of small-holdings and cottages of less than £4 valuation.³² While this was the ulterior motive behind the actions of some landlords, it was not the sole reason for the clearing of an impoverished tenantry from an estate. Nonetheless, the guardians were anxious to reduce the number of small holdings as they believed it would be of great advantage to the estate.³³ Thus they took advantage of every instance in which a farm became vacant to increase the size of the adjoining holding.

George Cranfield admitted that some consolidation had taken place on the Tyrone estate in pre-Famine years. Since he became agent, seventy-one farms of less than ten acres had been disposed of in this way.³⁴ The majority of the defaulting or ejected tenants emigrated to America. It was neither the guardian’s nor Lord Powerscourt’s

intention to drive tenants off the estate in order to consolidate holdings nor to form large grazing farms. What the Wingfields objected to was untrustworthy disreputable, unreliable and insolvent tenants, be they lease holders, large or small farmers, cottiers, labourers or undertenants. Whatever their tenancy, they were unwelcome on the estate.

Altogether, there were 1135 families on the Tyrone estate, of which 305 held leases, and the remainder, 830, were tenants at will.³⁵ This type of occupancy, though least secure in its tenancy, was very common on Irish estate and was the most frequent form of tenancy granted by landlords. Where it existed alongside the tenant right custom it gave the occupying tenant comparable security with the lease holder. The tenant right tradition was almost exclusive to the Ulster counties and was commonly referred to as the Ulster Custom. Where the Custom was in operation, the tenant benefited from greater security of tenure and could sell his interest in his holding to an incoming tenant. Elsewhere, tenants at will were in a more precarious situation. Whereas a yearly tenant had to be given six months notice to quit, a tenant at will could be ejected from the holding he occupied without warning.

A tenant at will depended on the good will of the landlord and his agent for continued security of tenure. This form of tenancy, though common, was unpopular where tenants were not protected by the Ulster Custom. The insecure nature of their tenancy acted as a disincentive toward improvement, so that tenants at will as well as yearly tenants were less likely and more reluctant to invest in their holdings. This attitude of uncertainty contrasted sharply with the situation which existed on the Powerscourt estate in Tyrone where the majority of tenants who held at will were not deterred from making improvements, as they were so certain of retaining their land they would make improvements whether at will or lease holding.³⁶ If the tenure system were graded, then the lease holder and tenant protected by the Ulster custom would appear first, while the majority, eager for occupancy, accepted the least secure but most common form of tenancy, namely yearly tenancy or tenancy at will.

Two of the most important characteristics which a landlord sought in a tenant were reliability and solvency. It was the absence of such essential qualities in the character of Thomas Costello, a tenant on the Wicklow estate, that resulted in the guardians refusing his request to obtain his brother's portion of the farm they shared. In January 1851 the agent reported that Costello "is not solvent and refuses to pay for improvements".³⁷ Unfortunately for Costello, had he been a "more solvent person" than William

Wingfield would have approved the application as “he preferred him as a tenant”³⁸

The whole issue of improvements was central to the land debate as Irish tenants, regardless of their class of occupancy, were responsible for all improvements and repairs on the property they rented. In England the onus lay with the landlord to improve and repair his own property. The majority of Irish tenants were non-leaseholders. The insecure nature of their tenancy tended to discourage them from investing in improvements as there was no guarantee they would be compensated or remunerated for the outlay should they be asked to quit the land they rented. In short, most tenants were unwilling to incur the risk of making improvement without adequate return through continued occupancy or compensation.³⁹

The term ‘improvements’ was broad ranging and covered a variety of building repairs and land improvements. On many Irish estates, it was common practice for the landlord to assist tenants to make improvements. This was the case on the Powerscourt estate where tenants were responsible for their own repairs, while the landlord supplied a number of materials such as timber, lime and slates. This custom of giving assistance to tenants making repairs was not unusual though there were restrictions imposed by the estate. Tenants frequently applied to the agent for building materials to carry out repairs to their houses or farm offices and in each case they submitted a detailed account of the type and quantity of materials required. The tenants’ request was then assessed in accordance with his past record and resources as to whether or not he should be allowed the materials. In July 1852, Thomas Burton was putting a new roof on his large two storey house and requested:⁴⁰

22 couple and ceiling joists, 10ft long.	3 door cases.
18 stair steps, 4ft wide.	2 beams, 16 ft long.
Flooring and joists for 3 rooms, 14’x14’.	Making of 3 gates.
3 window sashes and frames, 5x4.	

Later in August, Thomas Kavanagh of Ballybrew requested timber to roof a cow house and asked for the following:⁴¹

4 principals and collar braces, 14ft long.	1 door frame.
3 dozen of ribberies, 16ft long.	2 sides for door, 6ft long.

The bulk of tenants who requested materials were assisted by the estate in making repairs.

Assistance was not in itself sufficient. From the tenant's point of view, security of tenure, compensation or remuneration were important. The question of improvements was central to the land debate, it encouraged the tenant to question his position and his rights in relation to the land he occupied and renter from the landlord.

Prior to the Land Act of 1881, there was no guarantee that a tenant who carried out improvements would not be disturbed from his holding and the improvements he made confiscated without compensation, nor that his rent would be changed. In cases of removal, it was not the landlord but the incoming tenant who paid any compensation. Consequently Lord Powerscourt found that his Ulster tenants "were generally willing to effect improvements themselves on the strength of custom".⁴² In contrast, there was a notable absence of improving tenants on the Wicklow estate.

The protection afforded under the Ulster Custom was an obvious discrepancy that existed between northern and southern estates. Yet the tenants on the Wicklow property were provided with materials to carry out repairs and improvements. Furthermore, Lord Powerscourt did not put "any obstacle in the way of a tenant erecting buildings for himself nor charge him by raising his rent for any building erected by himself".⁴³ Notices to quit were not frequently served on tenants and were only followed up in cases of "bad tenants" who had accumulated arrears and were insolvent.⁴⁴ If this were the case, why then were tenants reluctant to improve; was it because they lacked the resources or did they, despite the practical security they enjoyed, remain insecure? In Lord Powerscourt's report to the Poor Law Commission he stated that "while some tenants improved a little, unfortunately very few tenants were able or possessed sufficient capital to effect any considerable improvements".⁴⁵

On the Powerscourt estate a tenant who was willing and had the resources to improve was encouraged to do so. Indeed the three or four tenants on the Wicklow estate "who have improved more than any, have no leases", though Lord Powerscourt intended giving them leases once the Land Bill had been passed to his satisfaction.⁴⁶ On this estate, a tenant's future security depended on the capital and resources he expended on improving his holding. Hence Matt Noble's application for a lease in March 1847 was submitted after he had improved his farm and built a two-storey house.⁴⁷ George Posnett agent to the Wicklow estate in 1870, found that tenants who held farms from year to year were more improving than the tenant who holds under a lease.⁴⁸ Yet Robert Dowse, a tenant on the Wexford estate was convinced that the longer the tenure the

more improvements, as there was in his opinion “a confidence and encouragement for the outlay of capital”.⁴⁹ Clearly those who did not have leases believed their tenancy was less secure if they invested capital in improvements; they feared this would result in an increase in rent. Familiar fears of ejection without compensation were added to when the farm was revalued and the tenant was not given a fair allowance for improvements. Undoubtedly the reputation and creditability of an estate, its landlord and agent, provided the tenant with a sense of security and encouraged an atmosphere in which improvements could be undertaken. However such personal characteristics were neither permanent nor did they have the force of law.

In most instances where landlords granted leases it was to tenants who had a reputation as being solvent, of good character and possessed capital enough to make improvements. However the fact remains that, prior to the Land Act of 1881, it was the tenant who risked his capital on improvements, he expected but had no guarantee he would be remunerated if he were disturbed from his holding.

In the event of a new landlord or agent taking over the management of an estate there was no obligation toward existing tenants. So those tenants on the Powerscourt estate who had carried out improvements during the lifetime of the 6th Viscount at their own expense, were not compensated by the guardians unless there was a written agreement which included an entitlement to compensation. While it is undeniable that security of tenure was essential to improvements, it is debatable whether a secure tenant would make improvements. Viscount Powerscourt’s policy of granting leases to improving tenants encouraged tenants to improve and a lease holder who improved was preferable to a lease holder who did not.

Another important contentious issue in running an estate was the question of rents as all tenants were bound to pay for the land they occupied – failure to do so inevitably led to distraint or ejection from the property. The method by which the rents of an estate were fixed was a crucial decision of policy for an Irish landowner.⁵⁰ Rents could be fixed either by public auction or valuation. The public auction of tenancies caused discontent, as the tenancy was granted to the highest bidder, by letting to such candidates the landlords were “ruining their estates”. In the long term this practice benefited neither the landlord nor the tenant, the latter often got into difficulty after having paid a high price for the property he was not in a position to carry out

improvements.

In pre-famine years, many landlords had adopted the method of valuation as a fairer means of fixing rents on their estates. On the Powerscourt estate rent was fixed by valuation. Individual valuations were usually carried out before a farm was re-let and valuations of the entire estates were carried out at regular intervals. The Tyrone property was valued in 1837 and a decade later the Wicklow estate was valued twice; firstly by Sir Richard Griffith and secondly by Brassington and Gale. The latter were ordered by the Master of Chancery to carry out another valuation of the entire estate in 1853.⁵¹ According to Brassington and Gale, as the estate varied in “quality and character”, naturally the valuation and rents reflected the nature of the property.⁵²

When valuing land, factors such as the type, amount, and potential yield of the land were taken into account. Griffith’s valuation contains a more detailed description of the soil than the later Brassington and Gale survey, though the latter included important observations about farm management as well as suggestions for improvements. Brassington and Gale were particularly critical of farms held in rundale or intermixed ownership. The townland of Ballybrew was held by three tenants whose dwellings and farms were “so intermixed as to render their profitable occupation quite impossible”.⁵³ Consequently they suggested a totally new division of the townland “on the falling in of the leases”.⁵⁴ Similarly tenants in the townland of Ballyreagh held very small divisions in a “scattered and intermixed manner”.⁵⁵ They considered this practice to be “highly objectionable” and advised that the holding be consolidated and enlarged.⁵⁶

On the question of improvements they maintained that the acquisition of capital “whether possessed by the tenant or supplied by the landlord” was essential.⁵⁷ Therefore, they advised that in the case of yearly tenants, the landlord should supply the entire capital, charging a percentage upon the outlay in addition to the value of the land. Where the tenant was a leaseholder, then the cost should be borne by the landlord and tenant, the amount varying in proportion of the length of the lease. Leaseholders unable to afford this expenditure were to be “treated as yearly tenants”.⁵⁸

Rents rose steadily from the mid-eighteenth century and increased rapidly during the war years (1793 – 1815). The post-war slump forced many landowners, who had taken advantage of the high war time prices to increase their rents, to suffer a reduction in their rental income. A similar, though much more acute, situation existed in pre and post famine Ireland. Captain Cranfield frequently requested permission to strike

off substantial but irrecoverable arrears. In April 1850 rents lost on the Tyrone estate amounted to £175 11s 9d. One year later arrears of £1222 1s 4d were struck off as the defaulters had left the estate. This considerable sum had accumulated during the years 1844 – 1851.⁵⁹ In April 1853, irrecoverable arrears on the Tyrone estate amounted to £370 11s 2d, in the same year there was a loss of £271 4d 5d on the Dublin and Wicklow estates.⁶⁰ The final year for which figures are available is 1857. Fortunately arrears on both estates had decreased – on the Tyrone property, there was a loss of £40 3s 8d, while the combined arrears for the Dublin and Wicklow estates was £96 4s 7d.⁶¹

Tenants frequently requested discounts, abatement or a reduction in rent. In December 1849, Captain Cranfield reported to the guardians that on the Tyrone estate “distress was general and destitution extensive” and he recommended that a discount of 20% be given to tenants.⁶² This discount was applicable for the year’s rent due in 1850. In the following year Cranfield reported that on the Tyrone estate “the potato disease is at least as bad as last year, that the wheat crop is not so good,” and he advised the guardians to recommend that a discount of 10% be allowed to the tenants on the payment of one year’s rent due in March 1852.⁶³ Again, in October 1853, the agent recommended that tenants on the Tyrone estate be granted a 5% discount.⁶⁴ However when the bailiff Mr. Hore reported that a few tenants had “endeavoured to agitate for a reduction in rent”, Cranfield withdrew his recommendation and consequently the Earl of Roden disapproved his original decision.⁶⁵

Following Brassington and Gales’ valuation in 1847, several tenants, including P Keegan, R Burton, W Williamson and Widow Keegan, asked for a reduction in their rent and three of the above were granted a lower rent.⁶⁶ While the guardians demonstrated firmness with regard to the subject of rent and arrears - in January 1851, Thomas Kirk refused to pay the rent agreed upon in the 1848 valuation and was subject of the threat of eviction⁶⁷ - they also displayed leniency. A tenant Murray had by August 1849 accumulated considerable arrears and consequently gave up two of his farms. However, there were extenuating circumstances, such as the “failure of crops, the price of corn, farming stock and produce”.⁶⁸ The agent reminded the guardians that “Murray descended from old and respectable tenants for whom the Wingfields had great respect” and consequently the guardians felt justified in recommending that his arrears be struck off and that Murray “be allowed his stock and crops and given £70 in order to return himself to solvency”.⁶⁹

Rent was never paid in advance, rarely when it was due, but usually when it was demanded. By the beginning of the nineteenth century it was almost universal practice among Irish landlords to allow their tenants to owe six months on two years rent before collecting it.⁷⁰ According to the Devon Commission, this custom, known as a “running gale or hanging gale” was very prevalent.⁷¹ In their opinion, it operated injuriously against the tenant, causing him to feel insecure and leaving him susceptible to the accumulation of arrears.⁷² For most tenants this credit was essential as the practice “was dependent on economic and social forces largely beyond their landlord’s control.”⁷³

The collection of rents was the agent’s responsibility. On the Powerscourt estate, tenants were usually allowed to accumulate in excess of two years rent. According to the management, it was “neither prudent nor in the minor’s benefit that arrears upwards of two years should remain,”⁷⁴ although there were instances of tenants in arrears of three years rent. Defaulting tenants were forced to pay their rent either by distraint — that is the seizing of their crop or cattle, returning it when they paid the rent — or by serving them with notices to quit. The former method was used as a lever to persuade the defaulting tenant to pay or else give some security for a future payment. This practice was not wholly successful as it was often difficult to sell distrained goods.

Threat of ejectment was used in a similar manner and rarely followed through, due to the considerable expense incurred by the landlord and also the possibility of revenge being taken out by the incoming tenant. In September 1852, William Fox’s widow not only avoided distraint but “emigrated along with the crop and chattels before evidence could be presented to the judge to prevent her doing so.”⁷⁵ Often tenants in arrears were willing to give up their holdings and it was not necessary for the landlord to threaten them with distraint or ejectment.

Furthermore, while population pressure on the soil receded during and after the Famine, demand for land did not diminish. During the period 1847 – 1857, there were as many as fourteen and never less than four requests for a vacant farm on the Wicklow estate. Potential tenants had to be of good character, solvent and preferably holding the adjoining farm. Brassington and Gales’ confident assertion that “there was no holding on the estate which should not realise the rent at which we valued it” was comforting news for the guardians.⁷⁶ However, it failed to take into account important economic factors such as low market prices or crop failure, which caused even solvent tenants to default.

Though expensive repairs were carried out on the main house and other houses on Powerscourt property, there was no major building scheme initiated by the guardians during the minor years. Where guardians were given charge of the management of an estate in association with the Court of Chancery, there was no obligation “to improve the lands under their care but to try to preserve them as they were”.⁷⁷ Some minor vernacular buildings were erected on the Wicklow property during the minority period; a new forge and house was built in Enniskerry village for the blacksmith at a cost of £350, while lime kilns, corn, threshing and scutch mills were also built. Repairs to Powerscourt house and other houses in the village were carried out by a group of reputable architects John Louch and Mr. Roberts and builders James Phayre, E O’Kelly and David Keely.

During the 1850s, Edmund O’Kelly carried out major repairs and alterations to a number of houses in Enniskerry village. In 1853, the lease of Mrs. Toole’s house in the village lapsed for non-payment of rent. The “dilapidated houses had for a long time been a disgrace to the village, being a receptacle for persons of very bad conduct”.⁷⁸ The agent reported on the condition of the houses and recommended the guardians employ a builder to carry out improvements. The holding consisted of five houses, one of which had been built some years before by John Boyce, who requested remuneration from the guardians. The estimated cost of repairing the houses amounted to £300.⁷⁹ The guardians proposed to convert the dwellings into offices for the agent and bailiff as well as a police barracks. O’Kelly worked on the repair of Mrs. Toole’s house during July-September 1854 and was paid £370 for his labour.⁸⁰ The two-storey houses were built in a continuous row on a steep incline near the centre of the village. The builder prepared elevations and plans of the dwellings before implementing changes to the facades of the houses.⁸¹

The houses were asymmetrical in plan. O’Kelly’s elevations display decorative architectural features such as slated canopies resting on brackets above the doors, label mouldings over the windows, bargeboard decorating the eaves and dormer windows, while the irregular placing of an oriel window enhanced the picturesque quality of these estate cottages. O’Kelly was also involved in the conversion of the widow’s house and the extension to Millar’s shop in the village.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the Powerscourt estate had passed through two lengthy periods of minority inheritance. Consequently many of the buildings on the estate had been “neglected” while the offices and farm buildings were “very much out of repair”.⁸² Following the succession of the 7th Viscount Powerscourt to the estates in 1857, it was necessary to “reconstruct” the whole series of buildings. Plans for improving Powerscourt house and gardens which had been initiated by the 6th Viscount but left in abeyance during the minority years were reviewed by his son, M. E. Wingfield. Throughout 1860 – 1880 period, Viscount Powerscourt was primarily occupied with improvements to the main house and terraces. Though the question of improving agricultural labourers’ cottages remained the responsibility of the tenants on the estate, there was a notable exception where the landlord provided a handful of model cottages for tenants.

Four double blocks of single and two-storied labourers’ cottages were constructed outside the Kilmolin gate near Enniskerry village, after designs provided by the Board of Works. The picturesque cottages were built of rubble stone, dressed in brick, with attractive bargeboard decorating the eaves and label mouldings above doors and windows. According to Lord Powerscourt, the amount of accommodation provided in the two storey dwellings was excessive for agricultural labourers. The ground floor contained a kitchen open to the roof and two bedrooms. Above the latter there was additional sleeping space which the tenants used for storage. The smaller double blocks of single storey cottages contained three rooms and were more suited to the needs of agricultural labourers.

The task of managing a large and scattered estate in nineteenth century Ireland was shared by a hierarchy of individuals, arranged in descending order of importance – the landlord, agent, steward, clerks, accountants, domestic and gardening staff. When a minor inherited an estate, this meant the landlord’s position was filled by a tripartite group, consisting of the agent, guardians, and master of chancery. The burden of management increased while consultation slowed down the decision making process. It was the agent who acted as orchestrator, as he reported, advised, recommended, and guided the guardians in their actions. During the years 1847 – 1857, Cranfield was rarely criticised by the tenants, while the guardians never doubted his word. This would indicate that he was both a fair-minded man and professionally a trustworthy agent.

Improvements, repairs, remuneration, compensation, valuation, rent, arrears, distraint, ejectment and emigration were common features of nineteenth century estate management. This collection of socio-political issues also provided the essential ingredients for the land question. The difficulties of running an estate increased during a minority period but multiplied when the years coincided with a devastating famine. It was impossible for the guardians to support, assist, employ, and provide for all their tenantry. Hard times necessitated the taking of hard decisions. Reliable witnesses of the times, Brassington and Gale, concluded their valuation of the Powerscourt estate with the following credit: "we have seldom met with one estate in which good and judicious management is more strikingly displayed; the effects which are evidenced by its state after the trying times through which landed property has passed"⁸³

Nuala Hunt is a lecturer at the National College of Art and Design with an interest in the development of labourers cottages in Ireland 1860-1910.

Notes

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3. *Wicklow Newsletter*, June 11th, 1904.
4. E. Hugher, *The 18th Estate Agent Essays in British and Irish History*, eds. H. Cronne, J. W. Moody, D. B. Quinn, London, 1949.
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6. *Parliamentary Gazetteer Vol. 3*, Dublin, 1846, pp. 91 - 92.
7. Ms 16.378, Vol. 4, no. 876.
8. *Devon Commission Report of Inquiry into the state of the Law and Practice in respect of the Occupation of Land in Ireland*, Dublin, 1845, Vol 1, p.849. According to Captain Cranfield who gave evidence before the commission in April 1844, the duties of a moral agent were to look after the moral conduct of the tenants as to disputes, the treatment by parents of children and *vice versa* and to see that they attend places of worship and see children attend schools.
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10. E. Hughes, *op. cit.*, p.915.
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20. Devon Commission, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p.847.
21. *ibid.*
22. Ms 16.378, Vol. 4, no. 982.
23. Devon Commission, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p.847.
24. Ms 16.376, Vol. 2, no. 256.
25. Ms 16.378, Vol. 4, no. 890.
26. *ibid.*
27. Devon Commission, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p.847.
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33. Ms 16.377, Vol. 3.
34. Devon Commission, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p.847.
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38. *ibid.*
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49. Devon Commission, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, pp.546-547.
50. W. A. Maguire, *op. cit.*, p.41.
51. Ms 16.378, Vol. 4, no. 1334.
52. Ms 2740, p.94, National Library of Ireland, Dublin.
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54. *ibid.*
55. Ms 2740, *op. cit.*, p.23.
56. *ibid.*
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58. *ibid.*
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60. Ms 16.378, Vol. 4, nos. 892, 918.
61. Ms 16.379, Vol. 5, no. 1423.
62. Ms 16.376, Vol. 2, no. 412.
63. Ms 16.377, Vol. 3, no. 744.
64. Ms 16.378, Vol. 8, no. 839.
65. *ibid.*
66. Ms 16.376, Vol. 2, nos. 193 - 196.
67. Ms 16.377, Vol. 3, no. 576.
68. Ms 16.376, Vol. 2, no. 371.
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70. W. A. Maguire, *op. cit.*, p.52.
71. J. P. Kennedy, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p.757.
72. J. P. Kennedy, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p.758.
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74. Ms 16.378, Vol. 4, no. 944.
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79. Ms 16.378, Vol. 4, no. 1008.
80. Ms 1763, Building Repairs 1850 - 1857, National Library of Ireland, Dublin, p. 94.
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