

THE PARISH OF POWERSCOURT  
A CENTENARY LECTURE

REV A. E. STOKES

1963

WITH ANNOTATIONS BY  
MICHAEL SEERY  
2013

## *Foreword*

This lecture was delivered by Canon Stokes in 1963 as part of the centenary celebrations of the completion of the new church at Powerscourt Gate. The purpose of re-issuing it is both to celebrate the 50th anniversary of that lecture and to make it available to a new audience.

It is a hallmark of the work that must have gone into preparing this lecture that the content still informs today, five decades later. Its breadth is impressive; the history of the locality is surveyed from pre-Christian times to the early twentieth century. In order to complement the material presented by Stokes, I have included some additional footnotes that highlight what material he may have had available to inform him at the time, and add any new information that may have come to light since. The purpose of these notes is to provide those interested in pursuing the history of our area further with some useful leads to begin their work.

The publication of the reprinted lecture is set to coincide with the third anniversary of the website: [www.enniskerryhistory.org](http://www.enniskerryhistory.org), where more information is deposited and where interested readers can continue the conversation on the many topics initiated by Canon Stokes.

Michael Seery  
December 2013

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### A CENTENARY LECTURE

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Ireland is an agricultural country, and her true history is written in the story of ownership of her land. Three names dominate that story – St Patrick, Strongbow and Mr Gladstone. St Patrick superimposed Christianity upon the tribal system by which the Celts held land. This lasted until the coming of the Normans when Strongbow introduced the landlord system, which depended upon feudal law. This survived until the nineteenth century when Mr Gladstone, by means of the Land Acts, bought the farms of Ireland from their landlords and entrusted them to the farmers who actually worked them.<sup>1</sup>

Our Parish of Powerscourt is an agricultural parish, and within her boundaries the same story is repeated. The names of St. Moling, of Walter de Ridelesford, and of Richard Wingfield, sum up her history. St Moling was an early abbot of Glendalough, and before the coming of the Normans much of the farmland in the Dargle Valley belonged to that abbey or to the see of Glendalough.<sup>2</sup> To de Ridelesford, Strongbow granted what land here did not belong to the Church, and it was from a descendant of Richard Wingfield, the first Viscount Powerscourt, that in 1923 the Land Commission compulsorily purchased the majority of the farms of our neighbourhood on behalf of those who work them today.

### THE NAME POWERSCOURT.

The reason why our parish is called Powerscourt is because for over twenty years at the beginning of the fourteenth century, before the coming of the O'Tooles, Eustace Le Poer, (an ancestor of the Marquis of Waterford),<sup>3</sup> and his heir, Geoffrey le Poer, were the last effective Anglo-Norman governors of the king's castle of Balytenyth, which stood at the end of the granite ridge where Powerscourt House now stands, high above the fields of gorse which still run down to the Dargle below. Teithne is an Irish word for furze. Amid the gorse of the river meadow five hundred years later, in 1784, Henry Grattan converted an old coaching inn into his mansion of Tinnehinch.<sup>4</sup>

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1. For more on the Land Acts in the early years of the Free State, see Terence Dooley (2004) *Land and Politics in Independent Ireland, 1923-48: The Case for Reappraisal*, *Irish Historical Studies*, 34(134), 175-197.

2. The National Monument Service describes the St Moling's Well as being "situated in a wet area at the SE foot of a steep hillock. Circular shaft (dims. 0.85m x 0.8m; D 1.3m) with a lining of small granite stones. There appears to be a stone base to the shaft. A circular cut slab with one flat and one domed face has been wedged into the shaft near the base." For more information on Holy Wells in Wicklow, see Geraldine Lynch, *The Holy Wells of County Wicklow: Traditions and Legends*, in *Wicklow: History and Society*, pp. 625 – 648.

3. For more on the Le Poer lineage, see Ciarán Parker (1995) *Paterfamilias and Parentela: The le Poer Lineage in Fourteenth-Century Waterford*, in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C*, 95C(2), 93-117.

4. A contemporary painting by Jonathon Fisher showing Tinnehinch hangs in Fota House, Cork. It shows what is likely the coaching inn that existed there before Grattan built his new home. Several sketches of Grattan's House are in the National Library of Ireland.

## THE SOURCES OF OUR KNOWLEDGE.

The sources of our knowledge of the history of our neighbourhood are to be found in the list of books at the end of this lecture.<sup>5</sup> In particular we can find out a great deal about the pattern of landowning in the Dargle Valley, in days gone by, if we follow up the references and other clues which Judge Price gives in his “*Place Names of County Wicklow*”. Part V of this, which deals with our barony of Rathdown, is the best 2s. worth that I know.

## THE VERY EARLY HISTORY.

The very early history of the parish is difficult to make out. “The Children of Kings” by W. O’Byrne contains an imaginative account of the life here in the early Christian period, but the henge, or stone circle, at Parknasilloge and the cromlech at Glaskenny show that the district was definitely inhabited in the Bronze Age before the introduction of Christianity in 432.<sup>6</sup> It is, however, from the eighth century onwards that we can begin to reconstruct what really happened. Then we find the family of Macgiollamocolmog, who ruled over the tribe of the Ui Dunchada, governing both halves of the barony of Rathdown, in County Dublin south of the Liffey, and in County Wicklow. From 841 onwards, Macgiollamocolmog had to share his principality with the Danes of Dublin, who, out of it, carved a kingdom of their own.<sup>7</sup> One of the southerly outposts of this kingdom, a defence against the Wicklow tribes, was a settlement in the middle of our parish where the Dargle, Glencree, Annacrevy and Shopriver streams all meet. This settlement they called Stagonil after Gunhild, the wife or daughter of one of the sons of Turchil, from whom Curtlestown gets its name.<sup>8</sup> That a settlement probably existed here, even before the time of the pagan Danes, is indicated by the fact that while its priest was appointed by the Danish bishop of Dublin, it contained church lands which were claimed by the Irish bishops of Glendalough. Further north, between the Enniskerry river and the Scalp, another settlement, probably Irish, existed around Killegar, which there were lands belonging to the abbots of Glendalough, who also held land on the south bank of the Dargle stretching towards Kilmacanogue. In Norman times, when both the see and the abbey of Glendalough were united to the see of Dublin, these lands passed into the possession of the archbishops, whose tenants are listed in an account of the archbishop’s manors in 1326.<sup>9</sup>

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5. As well as Price's *Place Names*, he wrote an earlier monograph: Liam Price (1934/1935) *The Ages of Stone and Bronze in the County of Wicklow*, **Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Section C**, 42, 31-64.

6. The henge at Parknasilloge (marked Cromlech on the OS map) was referred to by O'Curry in his Ordnance Survey letters, in 1838: *There is first a square enclosure of 36 feet in length, by 18 broad. Ten of the large stones which formed this enclosure remain, those on the south side having been removed. Immediately within this is a small circular enclosure, unbroken and consisting of ten large stones, some laid flat but deep in the ground, others set on edge. In the centre of the circle is the Cromleck*". None of this remains. The only evidence of its presence are three support stones and a covering stone. Similarly, a large cromlech or dolmen at Glaskenny, (called the Great Cromlech by le Fanu in 1893) has all but disappeared, with a suggestion by Price that some of the stones were used to make a fence running along the site in the mid-nineteenth century! See T. P. Le Fanu (1893) *The Royal Forest at Glencree*, **The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland**, 3(3), 268-280; Christiaan Corlett and John Medycott (2000) *The Ordnance Survey Letters - Wicklow*, Kestrel Books. (Eugene O'Curry wrote the letter mentioned in 1834). As well as henges, there is other archaeological evidence. Five urns, composed of baked clay were found at Powerscourt in the mid-eighteenth century, reported in the Dublin Penny Journal, 1832, and a flint arrow was found on Powerscourt mountain in 1920s. See Anon., *Ancient Irish Sepulchral Urns*, **Dublin Penny Journal**, 1832, Vol. 1, No. 14, p. 108.

7. For some more detail, see John Bradley (1995), *Scandinavian Rural Settlement in Ireland*, **Archaeology Ireland**, 9(3), 10-12.

8. Stagonil, the ancient settlement near Powerscourt, was proposed by Price to be derived from a Norse name Gunhildarstaðir. The old Norse word 'star' meaning a place or dwelling, and Gunhildr - a Norse woman's name. This has been challenged—along with the suggestion of a similar origin of Kilmalin (Stamolting)—by a counter-argument which states that "Sta-" may reflect a later Norman (French) speakers who had difficulty saying the 't' in teach (house). Therefore Kilmalin is more likely to derive from teach Moling. See: Colmán Etchingham, *Evidence of Scandinavian Settlement in Wicklow*, 1994, in K. Hannigan & W. Nolan (Eds.), *Wicklow: History and Society*. Dublin: Geography Publications; Geraldine Stout, *The Archaeology of County Wicklow*, **Archaeology Ireland**, 1989, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 126-131; John Bradley, *Scandinavian Settlement in Rural Ireland*, **Archaeology Ireland**, 1995, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 10-12; Margaret Murphy and Michael Potterson, 2010, *The Dublin Region in the Middle Ages*, Four Courts Press: Dublin, pp. 57-72.

## THE COMING OF THE NORMANS.

The coming of the Normans under Strongbow marks the real beginnings of recorded history about our parish. Henry II, when he granted the kingdom of Leinster to Strongbow, kept in his own hands most of the lands in the neighbourhood of Dublin, including Donald Macgiollamocolmog's principality. In 1173 he gave to one of Strongbow's barons, Walter de Ridelesford, what amounted to a speculative grant of lands south of Dublin. It included our district in these terms—"Brien and the lands of the sons of Turchil, so that he may have the fee of five knights; and what may be wanting there, I shall provide him on one side and the other side of the water of Brien."<sup>10, 11</sup>

About fifteen years later, when the conquest was complete, de Ridelesford got a fresh charter which defined this land of "Ui Briuin in the honor of Bray". It shows that his possessions had, by then, been limited in the interests of two parties, the Church and the Crown. The Church was too influential to be disturbed in its pre-conquest possessions at Stagonil, at Killegar and at Kilmacanogue. The Crown seems to have taken back into its own hands the Glenree valley, out of which a royal forest was formed,<sup>12</sup> and those lands in the upper Dargle valley on either side of the vill of Stagonil, which did not belong to the Church. The royal manor of Obrun frequently appears in the State Papers of the thirteenth century. For instance in 1204 we find Matthew Juvenis being confirmed in possession of his farm at Balicurit'd, which was almost certainly Curtlestown.

## ANGLO-NORMAN POWERS AT ITS HEIGHT.

The rule of de Ridelesford and his successors lasted for 150 years from the Conquest until it collapsed in 1316 as a result of the unsuccessful, but destructive, Bruce invasion of Ireland. From existing documents of the period it is still possible to reconstruct the ownership of land as it was until then. De Ridelesford's son, Walter II, had succeeded him at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and when his sister Basilia married Richard de Cogan (a nephew of the conqueror of Cork), they were given a marriage settlement grant of lands which included all the de Ridelesford inheritance here.<sup>13</sup> This mentioned Balibedan, which was probably all the land, other than Church land, north of the Clodach, (or Enniskerry River), and Balycogan, which was probably everything between that river and the old high road running from Fassaroe Ford at Kilcronney to the centre of the present demesne. Balycogan was much larger than the present townland of Cookstown, and almost certainly included the north-eastern part of the present demesne.

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9. For more on this period, see the essay by Mrs M. K. Turner (1979) *Rathmichael: A Parish in the Pale*, **Dublin Historical Record**, 32(3), 82-93.

10. Liam Price's work on the grant to de Ridelesford in 1173 has shed some more light on the lands involved in the transaction. See Liam Price (1954) *The Grant to Walter de Ridelesford of Brien and the Land of the Sons of Turchil*, **The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland**, 84(1), 72-77; Margaret Murphy and Michael Potterson (2010) *The Dublin Region in the Middle Ages*, Four Courts Press: Dublin, pp. 88-89.

11. Five knight's fee would have been a considerable portion of land—the largest given by Strongbow at this time—and this would ultimately be de Ridelesford's downfall. When his son, Walter II attempted to get confirmation of the lands from Prince John, Lord of Ireland, after his father's death around 1200, he was refused "because the king suspects Walter's character". The uncertainty in the meaning of the original grant was used as grounds for refusal. The size of the land may have been perceived as a threat. They managed to retain a smaller portion of land around Bray.

12. Soon after conquest in the 12th century, and certainly by 1229, a Royal Forest was established at Glenree; see T. P. Le Fanu (1893) *The Royal Forest at Glenree*, **The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland**, 3(3), 268-280; T. J. Westropp (1913) *Earthwork near Curtlestown, Co Wicklow*, **The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland**, 3(2), 183-185; Margaret Murphy and Kieran O'Connor (2006) *Castles and Deer-Parks in Anglo-Norman Ireland*, **Eolas: The Journal of the American Society of Irish Medieval Studies**, 1, 53-70; Margaret Murphy and Michael Potterson (2010) *The Dublin Region in the Middle Ages*, Four Courts Press: Dublin, pp. 376-377.

13. For more on the de Ridelesfords and de Cogan, see E. St. John Brooks (1951) *The De Ridelesfords*, **The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland**, 81(2), 115-138; and *ibid.*, (1952) 82(1), 45-61.

## DE COGAN'S GRANT TO ST THOMAS' ABBEY, DUBLIN.

Most of the Norman conquerors of Ireland had on their conscience the murder of Archbishop Thomas à Becket by Henry II. In expiation they founded an abbey in Dublin in his honour which they vied with one another in endowing with lands. Many of these the abbey retained until the Suppression in the sixteenth century. Richard de Cogan and Basilia his wife, in 1216, about ten years after their marriage, made a grant to this abbey of St Thomas of all their lands in the honour of Bray.<sup>14</sup> We must visualize the abbots of St Thomas' as landlords of the greater part of the northern half of our parish for at least the next one hundred years. I am certain that this is why much of this land is still called Monastery. Documents still existing showing how adjustments were made in the rights of de Cogan's former tenants, Hamo de Gynes and Alexander Camerarius, and how difficulties concerning the boundaries in the mountain land above the ford at the Devil's Elbow, between this abbey and another abbey, that of St Mary, the owners of Glencullen, were resolved shortly after 1230. Balibedan and Balycogan do not appear in the "Extents" of St Thomas' monastic possessions at the time of the Reformation. Embedded amid these lands, which belonged first to de Cogan and then to St Thomas', were the lands of Killegar belonging to the Archbishop. One farm he leased to Nicholas Taf who exchanged it with the Templars for land in County Louth. One farm he leased to the Prior of Christ Church Cathedral, and one small farm he put into the possession of the family of Jordan Walrant. The ruins of the church, which served the whole community north of the Clodach, may still be seen at Killegar.<sup>15</sup> For a time the Archbishop put it in the charge of the Chancellor of St Patrick's Cathedral.

## THE KING'S MANOR OF OBRUN.

South of the lands of de Cogan and St Thomas' Abbey was the king's manor of Obrun, where we find the village of Stagonil nestling under the shadow of the castle of Balytenyth. In the centre of this village, all traces of which have disappeared, although the traditions of an "oldtown" persist, was the church dedicated to St Beccan. The ruins of this church may be found at Churchtown, above the north bank of the Dargle, near the Annacrevy gate.<sup>16</sup> As early as 1192 the first Norman Archbishop of Dublin linked this church with his newly founded cathedral of St Patrick's, and from 1303 until 1874 one of the Prebendaries, or Canons, of St Patrick's was always rector of Stagonil or Powerscourt. An almost complete list of these gentlemen will be found in Dean Lawlor's "Fasti of St Patrick's."<sup>17</sup> The rectors since 1874 have been Archdeacon Galbraith (1874), the Rev J. D. E. Newcombe (1905), the Rev H. C. S. Mecredy (1907), the Rev J. H. Alcock (1924), the Rev. M. B. A. Byrn (1934), the Rev J. D. Murray (1949), the Rev I. R. Kirkpatrick (1953) and the Rev A. E. Stokes (1956). At Stagonil, a weekly fair was held on Saturdays, the profits of which were granted to the Archbishop by King Henry III, who also granted to him the village, which seems to have been surrounded by the Archbishop's farmlands. The two ploughlands of these which the Archbishop leased to Reginald de Bernevalle are possibly the townland, now known as Churchtown, between the Annacrevy River and the Shop River. Three acres he leased to Augustine FitzRoger, who let them to Richard of Balicogan, and then took them back to grant to the abbey of St Thomas for the good of his soul. Are

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14. See E. St. John Brooks (1951) *The De Ridelesfords*, **The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland**, 81(2), 115-138.

15. See Professor Stokes (1891) *Killeger Church*, **The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland**, 1(6), 443-449. Killeger Church is also home to some Rathdown Slabs. See P. Ó hÉailidhe (1957) *The Rathdown Slabs*, **The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland**, 87(1), 75-88; Thomas Drew, (1869) *Proceedings and Papers*, **The Journal of the Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland**, 1(2), 435-458.

16. Churchtown is recorded in the Hearth Money Rolls; See Liam Price (1931) *The Hearth Money Roll for County Wicklow*, **The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland Seventh Series**, 1(2), 64-178. Stagonil had an alias of Temple Beacon, see Benjamin W. Adams (1881) *Antiquarian Notes, Etc., of the Parishes of Santry and Cloghran, County Dublin*, **The Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland, Fourth Series**, 5(46), 482-498.

17. This was published in 1930 and is available in the National Library of Ireland.

these “the Abbey lands?”<sup>18</sup> Another farm, that around Kilmolin (which probably included Ballybrew,) the Archbishop leased to the le Poers, as perhaps to earlier governors of the king’s castle of Balytenyth. With the castle naturally went its demesne lands, so that in 1292 we find that Eustace le Poer, who was one of Edward I’s Irish judges, succeeded William le Deveneys in possession of most of the arable lands to the north of the king’s royal forest of Glencree, “the lands of Baliokathil, Baltened, Balicolman and Dunderg”. South of the Dargle, in the territory around the Great Sugar Loaf, all which was known as Glancap,<sup>19</sup> most of which was also in the king’s manor, the Archbishop held the lands of Ballyornan and Kilmacanogue. Ballyornan he leased to four farmers, while further east the Prior of Kilmainham had possession of his lands of Kilmacanogue, including Kilcronee.

## THE COLLAPSE OF NORMAN POWER IN IRELAND.

**T**he collapse of Norman power in Ireland took place during the early years of the fourteenth century at the time of the unsuccessful invasion of Ireland by Edward Bruce. In 1316, the O’Byrnes from Glenmalure invaded north Wicklow, burning Bray and the neighbouring villages, including Stagonil and Killegar. By 1326, the Archbishop described all his possessions in our parish as “now worth nothing, because waste through war” and the king’s castle of Balytenth was in ruins. This state of affairs continues right through the rest of the middle ages up to 1600.



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18. A large field in Onagh townland is known as "The Abbey Lands".

19. Glencap is mentioned by Price in his essay on early place names. See Liam Price (1937/8) *The Place-Names of the Barony of Newcastle, County of Wicklow: Their Early Forms Collected*, **Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C**, 44 139-179.



## THE COMING OF THE O'TOOLES.

So desperate did the situation become, that in the middle of the century, in 1355, the government took the drastic step of employing the O'Tooles from West Wicklow as mercenaries, to protect the city of Dublin from the fury of the O'Byrnes. As an experiment, Odo (or Aedh, died 1736) O'Toole with twenty horsemen and forty footmen was brought into the Dargle Valley for forty days. They and their descendants remained in possession for over two hundred and fifty years, and the greater part of that time our parish is practically without recorded history. "Wasted and destroyed by the king's Irish enemies". (1482).

## THE KILDARE SUPREMACY.

A slight change began to come on the scene towards the end of the fifteenth century. The period 1477 to 1534 is usually called "the Kildare Supremacy" when the Great Earl, Garrett More, and his son Garrett Oge, ruled Leinster more in their own interests than those of the Crown.<sup>20</sup> To Richard FitzGerald, one of the brothers of Garrett Oge, a grant was made of much of North Wicklow, including our valley,<sup>21</sup> where his father had taken in hand the rebuilding of the old castle, which local memory now called Power's Court rather than Balytenyth. He also built the castle of Fassaroe, remains of which still stand. Richard FitzGerald farmed out his possessions to a gentleman from County Kildare, John Sutton, who was in what nominal possession of them the O'Tooles would allow him until FitzGerald was executed after Silken Thomas' rebellion. An Inquisition, taken in 1538 to ascertain what lands Richard FitzGerald held of the Crown at the time of his attainder, gives the earliest full list of townlands on both sides of the Dargle which we possess. Everything north of the Dargle is described as being in the territory of Fercullen, everything to the south as in the territory of Glencap. This document appears to be the basis of all legal documents in which grants were made, either to the O'Tooles or to the Wingfields.

## THE O'TOOLES GRANT.

Shortly after the fall of the House of Kildare Henry VIII adopted a new policy towards the native Irish. Instead of treating their chieftains as outside the law, and fit only to be exterminated, he tried to come to terms with them in the policy of "Surrender and Re-Grant". The negotiations between the crown, and Tirlaigh O'Toole of Powerscourt, (and his two sons Brian and Felim who in turn succeeded him), were the model for similar legal proceedings in many parts of Ireland, and had it not been for world events outside Ireland, the O'Tooles might have remained in undisputed possession of our valley for another two hundred and fifty years.

## THE FALL OF THE O'TOOLES.

In 1492 Christopher Columbus sailing from a Spanish port, discovered the West Indies. Five years later John Cabot, sailing from the English port of Bristol, discovered Newfoundland. There followed a century of rivalry between Spain

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20. For some interesting context on the Fitzgeralds (a descendant later married Honora O'Toole of Powerscourt), see Walter FitzGerald (1898) *Walter Reagh Fitz Gerald, a Noted Outlaw of the Sixteenth Century*, *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Fifth Series, 8(4), 299-305.

21. See Liam Price (1953) *Powerscourt and the Territory of Fercullen*, *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 83(2), 117-132.



and England for control of the sea routes to America, which turned to bitter war after the accession of Elizabeth. The queen encouraged the revolt of Philip of Spain's subjects in the Netherlands. Philip encouraged her rebellious subjects in Ireland. Because the queen feared that Ireland would be used as a base by the Spanish enemies, the English government was driven to the subjugation of Ireland in a war, the savagery of which we can understand but not condone. The conquest of Munster and of Ulster was followed by "plantation" of these provinces by landlords from England or Scotland, and much the same happened here in North Wicklow, where neither the O'Tooles nor the O'Byrnes were completely trusted.<sup>22</sup> Although a full scale military expedition in 1580 came to disaster in Glenmalure, before the close of the following year resistance to the Crown was brought to an end when Garrett O'Toole, son of Felim O'Toole of Powerscourt, was captured in Glencree and brutally executed by Captain Ned Denny, the future Sir Edward of Tralee Castle. This ruthless adventurer had come to Ireland to seek his fortune, because his sister Honora was married to a nephew of Jacques Wingfield, Master of Ordnance in Elizabeth's Irish Army.

Old Felim O'Toole does not seem to have fallen out of favour with the government, but on his death twenty years later the Crown refused to put his grandson, Tirlagh, son of the beheaded Garrett, into legal possession, and a grant was made by King James I to Richard Wingfield, a cousin of the Master of Ordnance.<sup>23</sup> Sir Richard was a soldier of outstanding ability, who had recently been appointed Marshal of Ireland. Later, in 1618, he was ennobled as Viscount Powerscourt. Portraits of the Marshal and his wife hang in Mr and Mrs Slazenger's dining room at Powerscourt.<sup>24</sup> The Viscount had no children, but his wife had a daughter by an earlier marriage. This girl, Hon. Anne Cromwell, married a cousin of the Marshal's Edward Wingfield, to whom the old man left his estates when he died in 1634. From Sir Edward and Anne Wingfield descended the Viscounts of the second (1665 – 1717) and present (1743 - ) creations.<sup>25</sup>



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22. For context with details of the Powerscourt connections, see Conor O'Brien (2000) *Feagh McHugh O'Byrne: Firebrand of the Wicklow Mountains*, **History Ireland**, 8(1), 13-17.

23. 21. See Liam Price (1953) *Powerscourt and the Territory of Fercullen*, **The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland**, 83(2), 117-132.

24. A copy of a portrait of Sir Richard Wingfield is available to view at Powerscourt.

25. Details of the Wingfield family line are explored by Turtle Bunbury and Art Kavanagh (2005) *The Landed Gentry and Aristocracy of County Wicklow*, Irish Family Names.

## THE WINGFIELD GRANT.

**B**y the grant of 27th October 1603 Sir Richard Wingfield received “the manor of Powerscourt, containing one ruinous castle... and all lands in the whole countrie of Fercullen conteining in itself 5 miles in leinth and 4 in bredth, for the most part mountaine and stonie... to hold for 21 years at a rent of £6 Ierishe”. Subsequently in 1609 he was granted the lands for ever, and in 1611 they were erected into the Manor of Powerscourt. The last grant followed an inquiry held at Newcastle, Co. Wicklow the previous year when Sir Richard’s to some of the lands, especially to “le Manister” had been questioned by tenants, whom he had inherited from the O’Toole regime. It is interesting to read the names of the townlands which this document contains, and to compare with them the list made in the Down Survey forty years later during the rule of Oliver Cromwell, when for the first time the name Glaskenny appears in place of the Kilcolm and the Kilpeter of earlier lists.<sup>26</sup> I imagine Glaskenny was originally the name of the stream that runs between the townland and Annacrevy, rather than the lands themselves. Another enquiry held at Newcastle later in the same year deals with the territory of Glencap, which was the whole sweep of country south of the Dargle of which Glencap Commons was only a small part. Glencap ran from Ballyornan (now Ballyorney) as far east as the Glen of the Downs, and south to the far end of Calary Bog. Over this area Sir Richard claimed rights, on the grounds that the owner of the manor of Powerscourt was entitled to a chiefry over these lands, the great majority of which were then held by gentlemen-farmers of the name of O’Toole.

## POWERSCOURT IN THE TIME OF CHARLES I.

**N**ot long before the death of Sir Richard, the Marshal and Viscount, Archbishop Bulkeley of Dublin held a visitation of the diocese, and the returns showed that the parish of Stagonil was by far the most effective in the neighbourhood. Sir Richard seems to have built the new church alongside the rebuilt castle, or manor house, of Powerscourt. The ruins of this church, which was in use up to 1863, are still standing. It was attended by a congregation of 200, which probably included not only tenants of Lord Powerscourt, but also tenants of the Earl of Meath, for Great and Little Kilruddery were part of our parish up to Disestablishment in 1869.

Sir Richard Wingfield, to whom Viscount Powerscourt left his property in 1634, died only four years after his succession, and was followed by his son, another Richard, then aged seventeen. Before Richard came of age he married Elizabeth, daughter of Lord Folliott of Ballyshannon.<sup>27</sup> We remember this good lady every Sunday, for when she was an old, old woman in 1704, she gave to the Church of Powerscourt the graceful flagon of Irish silver in which the wine is brought to the Lord’s Table.<sup>28</sup>

## THE REBELLION OF 1641.

**T**he discovery of the New World flooded western Europe with American gold, which caused a steady rise in prices. This inflation led to a breakdown of government in England and to the Civil War between Cromwell and Charles I. The conflict spread to Ireland and a rising against the Scottish planters in Ulster was followed by similar outbreaks in the

26. Details of the Down Survey maps have been compiled on the Trinity College Dublin website: <http://downsurvey.tcd.ie>.

27. This marriage, on 7 May 1640, likely arose out of the Battle of Kinsale, where Sir Henry Folliott Bt. and Marshal Wingfield fought together. See John McGurk (2001) *The Battle of Kinsale, 1601*, **History Ireland**, 9(3), 16-21.

28. Elizabeth bore Richard one son, Folliott., 1st Viscount Powerscourt of the second creation. After Richard’s death, she remarried twice, and her third husband was Sir John Ponsonby.

south. With a few exceptions the O'Tooles of the Dargle Valley rose against their new landlord, Richard Wingfield, and the list of those among them who were subsequently outlawed still exists.<sup>29</sup> Powerscourt and many other houses were burned out, and Sir Richard, who hurried to join the army of Ormond in the king's cause, died in his service in 1645 leaving an heir Folliott who was only three. Long before this child came of age the whole Irish scene had been completely altered by Cromwell's conquest of Ireland in 1649. When the Cromwellian land settlement, and the subsequent Restoration settlement of 1660 were complete, Folliott Wingfield is found back in possession of the estates which his father and grandfather had inherited from the old Marshal, whose title he was granted in 1665. He was the only Viscount Powerscourt of the second creation until his death 52 years later in 1717. He seems to have had no difficulty in re-establishing the Wingfield position north of the Dargle. But, he, or perhaps his guardian and father-in-law, Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, was faced with the responsibility of establishing the Wingfield claims to Glencap against those made by Sir William Flower.

### THE MONCK ESTATES.

Flower was a Cromwellian officer who had been granted Glencap in consequence of the outlawry of those O'Tooles who lost possession in 1641. I have not yet been able to trace the subsequent litigation but when it was complete, we find Lord Powerscourt back in possession of the greater part of the territory south of the Dargle, except for certain lands, which passed on Flower's death first to his son, then to the daughter, of his sister Lady Stephens. The daughter married Major Walter Hitchcock, and their daughter, Agneta, married Charles Monck, whose mother had been the heiress of Sir Thomas Stanley of Grangegorman. Their son, Charles Stanley Monck, was ennobled as Viscount Monck at the time of the Union (1801). The second Viscount was created Earl of Rathdown in 1822. He had no son, but one of his nine daughters married her cousin the fourth Viscount who became the first Governor-General of the Dominion of Canada, and was one of Gladstone's chief agents in the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland.<sup>30</sup> The present mansion of Charleville replaces an earlier house, on a different site, which was burned down in 1792.<sup>31</sup>

How came it that Flower and his relations the Moncks managed to hold on to about a thousand acres at Glencap? The answer is probably to be found in the mediaval register of the Archbishops of Dublin. In the thirteenth century Ballyornan, part of which is Charleville, was see land, as was much of Kilmacanogue including Kilcronney. Over church possessions the manor of Powerscourt could have no "chiefry", and so, whoever may have had a claim to these lands against Flower or Stephens or Monck, it was not Wingfield of Powerscourt. It is amusing to speculate what would have happened had Archbishop King gone to law over the former church lands on the north side of the Dargle, as he once threatened to do.



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29. Details of the 1641 depositions have been digitised and are available on the Trinity College Dublin website: <http://1641.tcd.ie>.

30. For more on the 4th Viscount Monck, see W. L. Morton (1973) *Lord Monck and Nationality in Ireland and Canada*, *Studia Hibernica*, 13, 77-99.

31. A sketch that could be the original house at Charleville by Henry Brocas is the only clue to what this house may have looked like.

## POWERSCOURT IN THE TIME OF CHARLES II.

It is to the fifty year regime of Folliott, Viscount Powerscourt, that we owe much of the pattern of life in the parish which we still possess. Most of the former tenant families, whom we find in the Inquisition of 1610, had disappeared. It would be interesting to discover what parts of Wales the new tenant farmers, many of whose descendants still attend our church, were brought in, either by Folliott, or by Orrery his father-in-law. The names of some of these tenants are to be seen in our parish registers which date from the Restoration of Charles II. As was natural in a fairly new community marriages come first...1662...with names still familiar, Williams, Jones and Summers. Burials began the following year with names which include Hicks and Burton. No baptismal records are available until 1677 when the first of the large family of Bethel and Bridget Burton was brought to the font in the church beside Powerscourt House.<sup>32</sup>

### THE VESTRY MINUTES.

Perhaps the most important records in our Church safe are those meetings of the Parochial Vestry. The earliest period covered continuously by these minutes (1695 – 1807) almost coincides with the age between the Boyne and Waterloo, when the course of Irish history was governed by England's constant fears of a French invasion of Ireland. The struggle between England and France for the eighteenth century trade routes to India and North America is the background to the infamous Penal Laws, which were framed in fear of a French invasion in support of the exiled Stuarts. Later the attempted Napoleonic invasion of Ireland during the Rebellion of 1798 (after which the Military Road and Glencree Barracks were built) was made the excuse for Union in 1801.

If any scholar sets out to reconstruct the pattern of local government in eighteenth century Ireland these Vestry minutes are a mine of information. They contain churchwarden's accounts and other details of parish expenditure which show how, even then, the value of money was slowly dropping. They tell of the purchase of the chalice still in regular use, bought in 1695 for £3 10s. They give details of the salaries of the sextons and parish clerks, of the cost of everyday church requisites, of the fee of £1 10s. paid to the schoolmaster John Rowden in 1732 for copying older records into the book we now possess, of the cost of stopping the draughts in the church by closing one door and putting a porch over another (and you can still see the date 1736 on the ruins in the old churchyard), of recasting the bell in 1723 (it now hangs in the farmyard at Powerscourt), and of the arrangements for policing the two Constablewicks of Powerscourt and Kilmacanogue. There, too, you can read details of the very considerable rebuilding of the old church just after the appointment of Michael Sandys as Rector and Prebendary in 1775.<sup>33</sup> He continued in charge for almost forty years and was succeeded by Robert Daly (1814 – 1842) a noted Gaelic scholar, who was subsequently Bishop of Cashel.<sup>34</sup> In Daly's time as rector over a thousand pounds was spent on repairs to the old church. The old glebe house [Clonroe],<sup>35</sup> Annacrevy Schoolhouse,<sup>36</sup> and the Parochial Hall, then known as "the Repository," were also built.

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32. For details of population at this time, see Liam Price (1931) *The Hearth Money Rolls for County Wicklow*, **The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland**, 12), pp. 164-178.

33. A copy of a letter written by Michael Sandys to Henry Grattan, outlining the living conditions of parishioners in the late eighteenth century is available in the National Library of Ireland.

34. Daly had a long and active career. For one perspective, see E. Broderick (2006) *Bishop Robert Daly, Ireland's 'Protestant Pope'*, **History Ireland**, 14(6), 23-28.

35. Clonroe lies at the top of the Ballyorney road on the edge of the parish. In *The Moncks and Charleville House*, Elizabeth Batt suggests that Richard 6th Viscount Powerscourt did not like Daly, so it was left to Lord Monck to provide a site for the glebe house. Daly and the Viscount eventually became friends who shared a mutual strong faith.

36. Annacrevy schoolhouse was probably the first purpose-built schoolhouse in the parish, and was considered the parish school.

The Vestry minutes also contain Cess Tables of 1695, 1700, 1747, 1767, and seating plans of the Church in 1709 and 1776, and by using these and the registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, it is possible to reconstruct most of the pattern of landholding in the district for almost two centuries.

Of more than local interest are the entries between 1796 and 1807 showing how the householders were obliged to raise considerable sums of money to pay their share of the costs of the Wicklow Militia during the troubled times in Ireland after the French Revolution.

Between 1726 and 1762 the vestry minutes record the “six days labour” which had to be done on the roads including those from “Darby’s Grace” at “the far end of the paddock” to “John Neale’s holding” near “Barnaslingan Hill.” In 1762, as can be verified from Nevill’s map of Wicklow (1760), and Rocque’s Map of County Dublin (1765), the main road to the city was still that over the hill east of the Scalp, and not the new road through the Scalp which had come into use by the time of Taylor and Skinner’s Book of Road Maps in 1778.<sup>37</sup>

## GEORGIAN POWERSCOURT.

The Vestry minutes do not mention a number of events of the period which we must record. They do not tell that on the death of Folliott, Lord Powerscourt, he was succeeded by his first cousin, Edward Wingfield, whose son, Richard, first Viscount Powerscourt of the present creation built Powerscourt House, as it is today, between 1729 and 1743 with the assistance of Cassel the architect. They do not record who it was on Christmas Day 1730 gave the Paten still in use at the Communion, nor do they record how Richard the third Viscount granted the lease of Tinnehinch to Grattan, although they do record that Grattan was churchwarden in 1793. They do not tell how in 1798 Richard the fourth Viscount at the head of the Powerscourt Cavalry and the Glencree Pioneers defended Powerscourt House, nor how Holt (one of the Protestant leaders of the rebellion) surrendered to him at the Dargle,<sup>38</sup> nor do they record his abrupt refusal of the offer of a Marquisate if he would vote for the Union.<sup>39</sup>

The surviving vestry minutes unfortunately come to a stop in 1807 just before an interesting even in our history, the building of the present village of Enniskerry, including the school. This took place just before the death, in 1823, of the fifth Viscount whose son erected the Town Clock in 1843 to commemorate the centenary of the creation in 1743. Richard the fifth Viscount was celebrated for the entertainment which he gave to George IV in 1821. The throne made for the king is still at Powerscourt. A memorial to this viscount, bearing the names of the two Theodosias whom he married, was transferred from the old church to the present church in 1918, as were several other Wingfield memorials.<sup>40</sup>

## VICTORIAN POWERSCOURT.

It was the building of the village, may of the inhabitants of which could attend worship only in the evening, which was probably responsible for the erection of the present church, the centenary of which we are now celebrating. After the railway from Dublin to Bray opened in 1851 the whole neighbourhood began to develop. Kilbride Church was consecrated in 1859 and Christ Church, Bray in 1863. In 1857 Elizabeth, Marchioness of Londonderry, whose first husband had been

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37. These maps are still in existence and are available to view at the National Library of Ireland and Trinity College Dublin Map Library.

38. For information on Holt, including the details of his surrender at Powerscourt, see Ruan O'Donnell (1998) *Keeping Up the Flame: General Joseph Holt*, *History Ireland*, 6(2), 39-43.

39. Richard 5th Viscount was a strong opponent of the Act of Union, and resisted a bribe of an elevated peerage. Monck accepted a bribe and was created Earl of Rathdown.

40. The two Theodosias both had short marriages. Theodosia Jocelyn, daughter of the Earl of Roden died after a long illness. Details of their final years are recorded in the diaries of Theodosia's sister, Ann Jocelyn, available in the National Library. Richard then married Theodosia Howard, of nearby Bushy Park, but he died within a year of their marriage in 1823.

Richard the sixth Viscount, offered to the parish the magnificent present of a new church as a parting gift when she handed over her responsibilities on her son's attaining his majority.<sup>41</sup> Mervyn Edward, the seventh Viscount from 1844 to 1904, laid the foundation stone with a mallet and trowel of Wicklow silver on the day he came of age in October 1857, and a description of the day's events may be read in the contemporary *Illustrated London News*.<sup>42</sup> The church cost £3,441 9s 2d. The accounts still exist and they show why the consecration was delayed until 15 September 1863. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners were not satisfied with the slated spire, and would not accept delivery from the architect, Norton of London, until a copper spire had been erected. This spire, in its turn, had to be renewed in 1929 at a cost of £1300, as its wooden frame, which was replaced by one of stainless steel, had perished. Despite the delay in consecration the church was opened for evening worship in 1860 at a service at which the Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak preached. When the day came for the consecration Archbishop Whately was dying, and so the ceremony was performed by his friend Bishop Fitzgerald of Killaloe. The Church, which is dedicated to St Patrick, has since remained substantially unaltered, save the that in 1875 the organ was moved to the north transept. Mervyn Richard, the eight Viscount, who gave the lectern in 1914, donated the pulpit in 1932 in memory of his parents, and in 1946 he and Colonel Riall presented the choir stalls. The prayerdesks were given in 1932 by Lord Monck in memory of his grandparents. In 1919 the chancel was altered, and instead of the old wooden rail which is now at Annacrevy, brass communion rails were put in as a War Memorial. This last fact reminds us that the background to life of the present church has been the rivalry between Great Britain and Germany which resulted in two world wars, both of which have brought as many changes to our neighbourhood as has the invention of the motor car.

## THE DISESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

**D**isestablishment took place in 1869 not long after the building of the church. How our parish reorganised its finances, and came to grips with its new independence, may be studied in the very full minutes of the newly established Select Vestry. These minutes record the first major task which they undertook, the building of a new rectory (now Clonderlaw) which however was sold in 1926. There is a break in the minutes from 1885 to 1895 as the current Minute Book was in the Powerscourt Arms Hotel when it was burnt down in 1894. The proprietor (one of the fifteen Mr Buckleys of the district) was the Secretary of the Select Vestry.

As a result of the first Great War changes began to take place in the neighbourhood. Britain, which had fought the war in the defence of small nations, could not in conscience, refuse the demands of those in Ireland who were seeking independence. One of the first laws made by the new Irish Free State government was the Land Act 1923 by which the Irish Land Commission compulsorily bought farms from landed proprietors, and put them into the possession of the former tenants who now pay Land Annuities. In this way most of the land in the Dargle Valley passed out of the possession of Lord Powerscourt.

“The Troubles” that led up to, and that followed, the setting up of the Free State are still a living memory to many who remember how the bridge across the Dargle at Kilcronney was blown up, how the Police barracks was burnt out, and how the Parochial Hall was taken over as a police station. In 1923 Annacrevy ceased to be used as a school, although Sunday afternoon worship continues there.

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41. Richard, 6th Viscount, also died young. Lady Powerscourt remarried quickly to Lord Londonderry. The granite seat overlooking the Japanese Gardens at Powerscourt is known as Lord Londonderry's seat. The couple moved to Mount Stewart, in County Down.

42. See the *Illustrated London News*, November 21, 1857.

43. The hotel was rebuilt after the fire, the front similar to before, except for extra gables.



When the government vacated the Parochial Hall in order to avoid doubts about its ownership Lord Powerscourt sold the fee simple to parish trustees, and in 1925 it was vested in the Rev W. F. Boyle, Mr C. Darlington and Mr. H. Williams.

I do not propose interpreting the events of our local history since the outbreak of World War II in 1939, save to record that for half its history our parish church has served, not only our own parishioners, but also members of the Boy Scout and Girl Guide Movement, who since 1912 have been camping in Powerscourt Demesne. Their presence in church through the summer months from Easter to Harvest gives the welcome stimulus of numbers to our country congregation. For that, and for all His other blessings to us who live in the Dargle Valley we in the Parish of Powerscourt give thanks to God in the words of the Litany which has been prayed here for nearly four centuries.

*“O God we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works that thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them.”*

