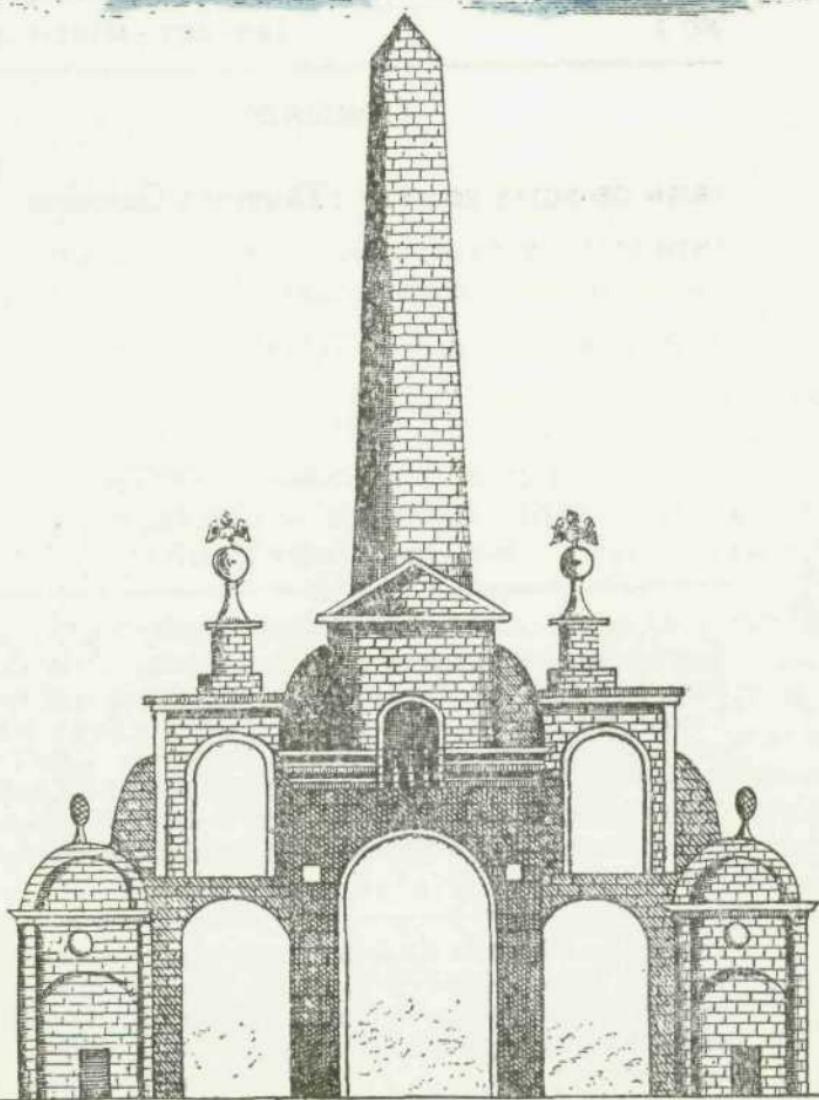


IRISH GEORGIAN SOCIETY



The Obelisk *near Castletown* 140 feet high

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COVER : the Conolly Folly

The Obelisk on our cover is an early engraving of the Conolly Folly, built during the famine of 1740 by the widow of Speaker Conolly, and designed, supposedly, by Thomas de Burgh. It stands on a rise in the ground at the back of Castletown, Celbridge, at the end of a long vista cut through the trees, and this is a landmark for miles around. For years it has been in danger of collapse and the weather has taken a bite out of the tapering spire about a yard from the top.

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IRISH GEORGIAN SOCIETY

BY DESMOND GUINNESS

IN 1908 the original Georgian Society was formed here by Dr. Mahaffy, and the first of six memorable volumes on Georgian architecture which they produced was prefaced in these words:

'It requires no intimate knowledge of Dublin to perceive that it is not a provincial town, but a fading capital'.

It goes on to say that while Dublin's houses can boast stately reception rooms, noble staircases, and highly ornamented ceilings:

'Alas! most of these monuments of a brilliant society are doomed to decay and disappearance; many have already vanished'.

Exactly fifty years have passed since Dr. Mahaffy wrote these words, and what prophetic words they were! In 1957 alone Dublin has lost half of Dominick Street, a Prince among streets where each interior was a work of art, and the remaining two old houses in Kildare Place (see photos). There was a terrific outcry in the Press about the Kildare Place houses, which showed that public opinion was strongly opposed to their destruction. It was then that I decided to revive the old Georgian Society, in the hope that where individual protest had failed, an organised body with some funds behind it might have more chance of success.

The aims of the new Trish Georgian Society are:

- I To awaken an interest in Ireland's Heritage of Georgian Architecture.
- 2 To investigate reports from members on any Georgian buildings in danger of demolition or decay, and, where necessary, fight a campaign for their preservation.
- 3 To arrange expeditions to buildings of interest, which might eventually be made open to tourists.
- 4 To continue the work of the old Georgian Society in recording Georgian Architectural features, and later to publish a book of houses as yet unknown to the public.
- 5 To arrange lectures on Architecture, 18th Century decor, gardens, etc. Also discussions on repair and uses for problematical buildings.
- 6 To publish a quarterly bulletin, of which this is the first Number.

In spite of everything, Dublin can still boast a quantity of really first-rate Georgian buildings. Many of these are in the careful hands of one religious order or another, who look after them very well and will usually welcome anyone showing a serious interest in them. In fact compared with London which lost nearly all its beautiful streets and houses during the last seventy years of 'progress', Dublin has escaped lightly. Furthermore, slum dwellings have been reconditioned and turned into flats in the Gardiner Street area, under an enlightened town planning scheme which deserves nothing but praise and encouragement but receives none. The experts merely occupy themselves in finding fault with the detail. The result may well

be that the other half of Domnick Street will be rebuilt with ugly horizontal windows which will blend badly with the rest. A model example of what can be done today is Mr. Desmond Fitzgerald's brilliant reconstruction in Fitzwilliam Square.

One great difficulty with the terraced houses is that there is nowhere to put shops. The planners have quite rightly avoided having them on the ground floor in Gardiner Street, for example, because they would have broken the clean sweep of houses as they mount the hill, but the tenants object to the distance they must walk. Surely the answer is to have the shops in the basements, as they do in Denmark and Holland? The shopkeepers could live over them, so there would be no question of their being unfit to live in. The situation in the country is however very sad, as so many fine mansions have been deserted since the old Georgian Society visited them. But a few lovely houses still remain, and these are very much the concern of our Society.

Tudenhamp, near Mullingar was destroyed in 1957, and Dunsandle, Co. Galway is about to go: both great country houses designed by Richard Castle. Building costs are high; Ireland needs good country hotels. The Spanish Government uses beautiful country houses for its' "Paradors", or State-owned hotela. These are designed for motorists and off season are run by a couple; local people come in to help when needed in the summer. They have proved a great success, and people love staying in them because they are country houses.

INDUSTRY AT CELBRIDGE COUNTY KILDARE

SOME NOTES FOR AN ARTICLE BY
THE LATE THOMAS ULLICK SADLEIR

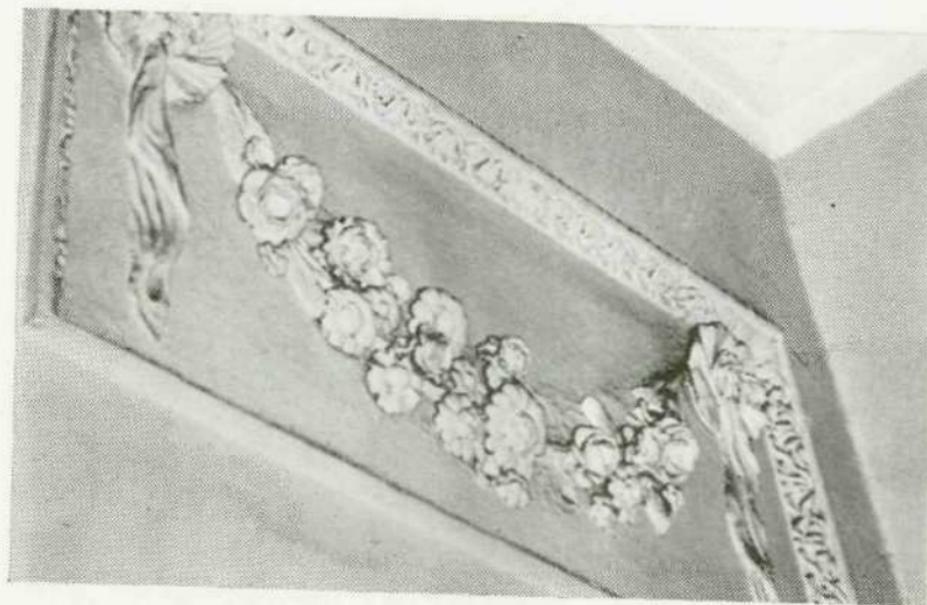
THE first commercial venture at Celbridge was apparently that of Bartholomew Van Homrigh, a Drogheda miller of Dutch origin. In 1700 he leased from the Conolly family the premises now known as Celbridge Abbey, where he erected a flour mill and built a dwelling for himself. Little did he know that his daughter Esther was to influence the destiny of one of the greatest figures in literature, the ever memorable Dean Swift, and that his daughter would one day demise her Celbridge property to one of the greatest figures in philosophy, the Celebrated Bishop Berkeley, to whom she had never spoken! As the Lady became endeared to Swift her name lapsed into 'Esther Van', which for poetic purposes was rendered as Vanessa - a name which has become famous throughout the civilised world.

Difficulties of transport, due to boggy roads and an unnavigable river, no doubt impeded further industrial development. The road to Prosperous was extended to Philipstown in 1776, and a few years later the project of the Grand Canal, passing within a mile of Celbridge, opened up cheap and direct communication with the capital. Thus we find that about 1779 a Mr. Wadsworth, who according to the Report of the Linen Board for 1783 was a weaver of

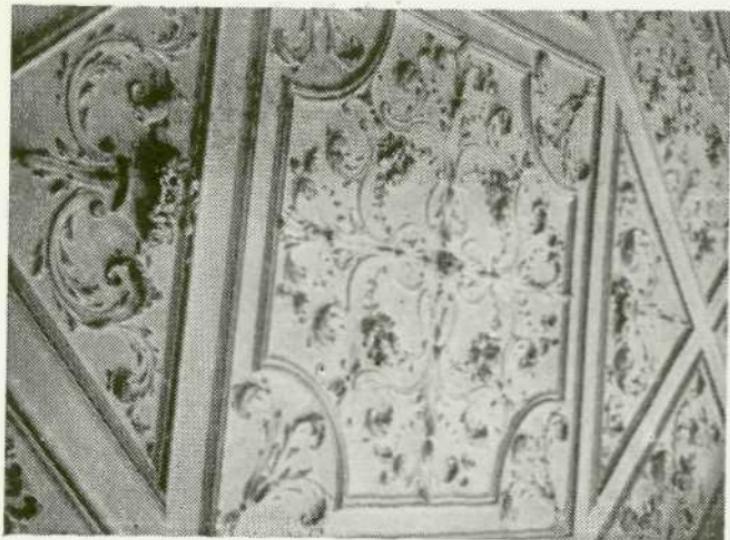
END
THIS
DESTRUCTION



*No. 2 Kildare Place,
Dublin.*



Plaster details, No. 2 Kildare Place.



Ceiling, 13 Dominick Street, Dublin.

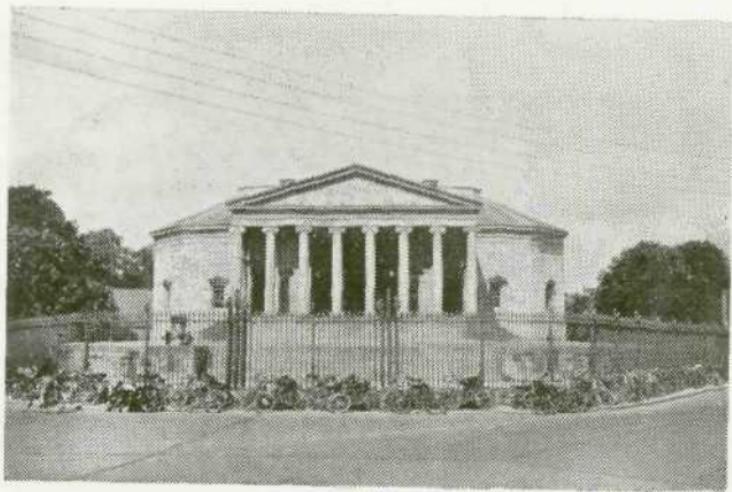


12 Dominick Street.

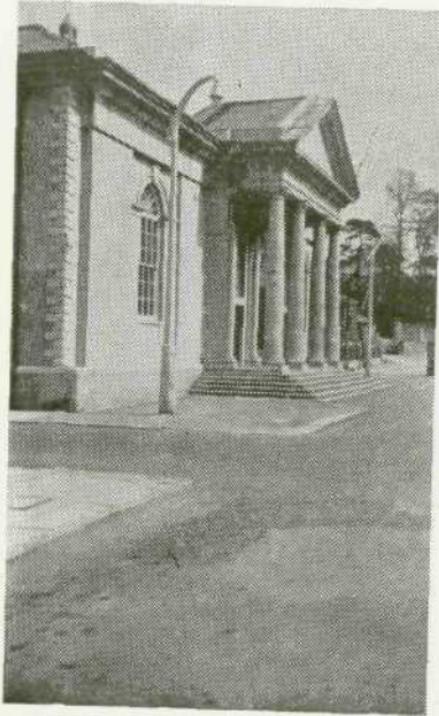
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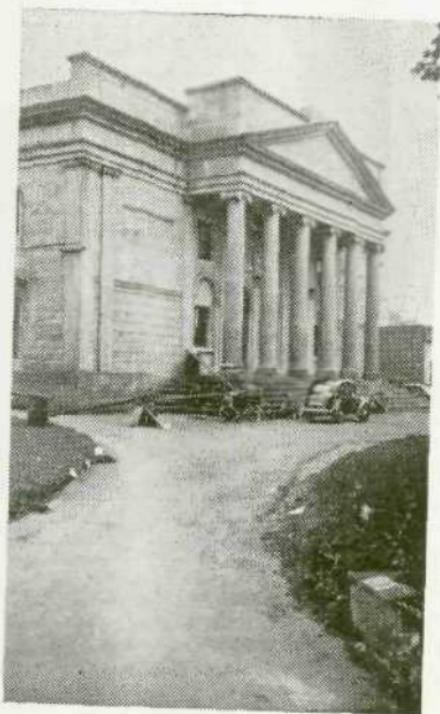
Flour Mills, Celbridge, Co. Kildare



C A R L O W



T U L L A M O R E



A R M A G H

women's chip hats', erected a loom in the village for weaving floor cloth. The philanthropic Lady Louisa Conolly, whose husband owned the whole of Celbridge, no doubt supported Wadsworth since it is known that she invented a new kind of straw hat, which under her auspices was destined to become the well known poke bonnet, so long an essential feature of the demure and mincing Victorian 'Miss'.

A second factory at Celbridge, possibly on the site of Van Homrigh's mill, was that of Messrs. Ford and Gregg, constructed for the manufacture of tape. In 1783 they employed 300 hands, but expected to double that number within a year. They also owned twelve single tape and garter looms worked by the children in the workhouse. There were, of course no state workhouses in Ireland in the eighteenth century, this institution being a charity supported by the Conolly family. The unfortunate events of 1798 brought disaster to Celbridge, many houses being destroyed and the Protestant church burned. After the Union things became more settled. In 1805 a Mr. Ashworth erected a spacious mill where he employed over 600 hands in the woolen manufacture. The business flourished for at least thirty years. By 1837 Mr. Ashworth was living at Celbridge Abbey, which he occupied as a tenant of the Grattan family.

Some years later Messrs. Haughton and Shaw were owners of the principal Celbridge mill and linen of a coarse texture was being woven.

But the greatest industry cradled in Celbridge was not weaving but brewing. It was begun at Celbridge House (now Oakley Park) by one Richard Guinness,

who seems to have been a private brewer and general factotum to Dr. Arthur Price, Bishop of Meath and eventually Archbishop of Cashel. After his patron's death Guinness is said to have brewed porter in a building in Celbridge, still pointed out, immediately behind what used to be 'The Royal Oak'. It was probably something of a novelty in Ireland, though the beverage is known to have been brewed in London in Queen Anne's reign by Alderman Parsons, its merits being extolled by Alexander Pope when he praises 'Whitbread's Ale and Parsons' black champagne'. Before his death Richard Guinness settled in Leixlip, but the fortunes of the family had so prospered that in 1768 his son Arthur was able to purchase Rainsford's brewery at St. James's Gate, Dublin, destined in our time to become the largest in the world.

A NOTE ON COURTHOUSES

BY MAURICE CRAIG

THE courthouses of Ireland are among the most impressive of the classical buildings we possess. In town after town their granite or limestone porticoes add grandeur to the scene. But, though homogeneous, they are by no means uniform, and they offer an interesting variety of plans.

They were nearly all built between 1800 and 1830, with a few exceptions such as Waterford and Ennis

which, though fully in the tradition, date from 1849 and 1852. They form a much more closely-knit group than their counterparts in England, and seem, on the whole, to be earlier. My own knowledge of them is full of gaps, but one or two interesting things suggest themselves. In the first place, they all seem to be the children of Gandon's Waterford Courthouse of 1785. Secondly, their form seems to have been greatly influenced by the Grand Jury system of local Government which flourished in Ireland until 1898 when the County Councils were created, and is not paralleled in England. On this latter subject my knowledge is even more sketchy, and one of the purposes of this short article is to elicit information on the working of the Grand Jury system.

Gandon's Waterford Courthouse has unhappily disappeared, though succeeded by the very fine one of 1849, but we know quite a lot about it. But first we must go back to the Nottingham Courthouse competition which he won in 1767. In *Vitruvius Britannicus* (1769) Gandon published both his original design for Nottingham and the cheaper and simpler design which was in fact executed. It seems certain that at Waterford he built what was virtually the original Nottingham design of his own preference, which uses a plan of type found in Sanderson Miller's Warwick Shire Hall (1758), where a large *salle des pas perbus* has the main entree in one of its long sides and the two courts opening in parallel off the other, with the passage to the Grand Jury room and judges' robbing rooms between them. This plan we may call the 'Parallel' •

plan : in the simpler plan, which we may call the 'Opposed' plan, the entrances to the courts on your right and left as soon as you enter the relatively narrow entrance-hall. In this plan the main staircase, usually in Ireland leading to the Grand Jury room, is very often in front of you, on the axis, as for example at Armagh. The ceremonial advantages of the 'parallel' plan are obvious, as the judges can proceed in state across the hall and disappear from view, only to reappear again on the bench from behind the scenes.

Most Irish courthouses are variants of one or another of these plans. The most notable survival of the 'parallel' plan seems to be Kilkenny, though externally it is among the least impressive of courthouses having no advantages of siting and a comparatively reticent elevation. But to stand at one end of its *salle des pas perdus* is to see a view almost identical with Gandon's perspective drawing of the same hall in his Waterford Courthouse. The Gandonian reference is unmistakably underlined by the circular paterae hung with unequal husk-ropes on the end-walls, a motif taken straight from the Four Courts and notoriously one of Gandon's favourite mannerisms.

I do not know who designed Kilkenny, but among the assignable courthouses the largest numbers are by Gandon's pupil Sir Richard Morrison. They include Carlow, Galway, Dundalk, Clonmel, Naas and Wexford. Carlow is probably the grandest of all, Galway one of the most charming. Tralee, for which I know of no architect, is certainly among the very best, and may well be Morrison's. Of the Johnston brothers Francis designed Armagh, and Richard

Green Street Courthouse in Dublin, in 1797, apparently the earliest surviving one. John Bowden, the architect of St. Stephen's Church in Upper Mount Street, did those at Derry and Monaghan, which sorts well with the fact that he was architect to the Board of First Fruits for the province of Armagh. As the courthouses were built by county authorities and not by the central government, an architect who was in with the local gentry was likely to get the jobs. Morrison, with his extensive country-house practice, spread his net wide. James and George Robert Pain who had at this time cornered nearly all the monumental building in Cork, both civil and ecclesiastical, were naturally responsible for the large and splendid courthouse of 1835 in that city.

This brief review treats only of the county courthouses in which assizes were held and the grandjuries met, and therefore omits the smaller sessions-houses of which some are of great note, particularly of course the Market-House at Dunlavin, built by the Tynte family, apparently in about 1765. I do not believe that it was a courthouse in the first instance.

There is a persistent rumour, which I cannot trace to its source, that the court-house at Philipstown in Offaly was designed by Gandon. Philipstown was then the county town and assize town of the King's County, and it is certainly true that externally the Courthouse there (now turned into a Parish hall as far as I remember) has a certain rude resemblance to the King's Inns. The courthouse at Tullamore which succeeded it is a typical specimen in the grand manner of about 1835, and so is Waterford

by an unknown architect, which succeeded Gandon's— I have been told that the courthouse at Lifford is signed with its architect's name and is eighteenth century but I have so far been unable to verify this by inspection.

It is obvious that about a hundred and twenty years ago the county authorities all over Ireland were consciously vying with one another in the erection of these buildings. It has since been necessary to build extra accomodation on to the back of most of them, but on the whole they are still in pretty good shape. Long may they remain so.



CONTENTS FOR APRIL-JUNE

QUAND vous SEREZ BIEN VIEILLE, a valediction to Borris by Lady Rosemary Fitzgerald. A MEMORABLE YEAR, a survey of dramatic and musical events of the season 1783-84 by Dr. H. S. Corran & THE FUTURE OF WESTPORT, by the Marquess of Sligo.