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(g) 1968 The Irish Georgian Society

Cover: The sphinx gates at Castletown, Celbridge, Co. Kildare, headquarters of the Irish Georgian Society, from Sir William Chambers' "Treatise on Civil Architecture" (1759). The gates were the work of John Coates, stonemason, Maynooth—the 'two sphynkes . . . £16 18 6.'—his bill is preserved in the house. Castletown is Open to the Public on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from April 1st to September 30th 1968, 2-6 p.m. (Telephone: Celbridge 288252).

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PRICE TEN **SHILLINGS**

# MRS. DELANY & LANDSCAPING IN IRELAND

by  
Edward Malins

Except for Horace Walpole and Mary Wortley Montagu, no eighteenth century writer produced a fuller autobiography and set of letters than Mary Granville (Mrs. Delany), 1700-88.<sup>1</sup> She has been denigrated by subsequent critics, for she had neither the waspishness nor eccentricity that seems to be essential for an interesting diarist or letter-writer. By modern standards she was not especially well-read, and she was incorrigibly virtuous and good-natured, so she disappoints those who look for polished writing or witty gossip. Yet she is invaluable as a chronicler of contemporary landscaping as she had an artist's eye for the country, and an appreciation of 'improvements'. Her background and family connections were aristocratic, her uncle being George Granville, Lord Lansdowne, and cousin, John, Lord Carteret, afterwards Earl Granville. Unfortunately, her father, a younger brother, was implicated with the Tories when Lord Lansdowne was thrown into the Tower for suspected treason at the same time as Lord Oxford, at the accession of George I. This resulted in her family being forced to live in the country at Buckland, near Broadway, Oxfordshire. Perhaps it was during their time there, when they received few visitors and lived in comparative poverty, that her love of the countryside was encouraged. She later describes Buckland as having

'a front which faces the finest vale in England, the Vale of Evesham, of which there is a very advantageous view from every window: the back part of the house is shaded by a very high hill which rises gradually; between lies the garden, a small plot of ground, but well stocked with fruit and flowers. Nothing could be more fragrant and rural: the sheep and cows came bleating and lowing to the pales of the garden. At some distance on the left hand was a rookery; on the right a little clear brook ran, winding through a copse of young elms (the resort of many warbling birds), and fell with a cascade into the garden, completing the concert. In the midst of that copse was an arbour with a bench, which I often visited and I think it was

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1. **The Autobiography and Correspondence of Mrs. Mary Delany**, ed. Lady Llanover, London, 1862.





Mrs. Delany (engraving by Joseph Brown)

(Courtesy of the National Gallery of Ireland)



Dr. Delany from the bust in T.C.D.  
(Reproduced by kind permission of the Librarian, Trinity College, Dublin;

impossible not to be pleased with so many natural beauties and delights as I there beheld and enjoyed around me.'

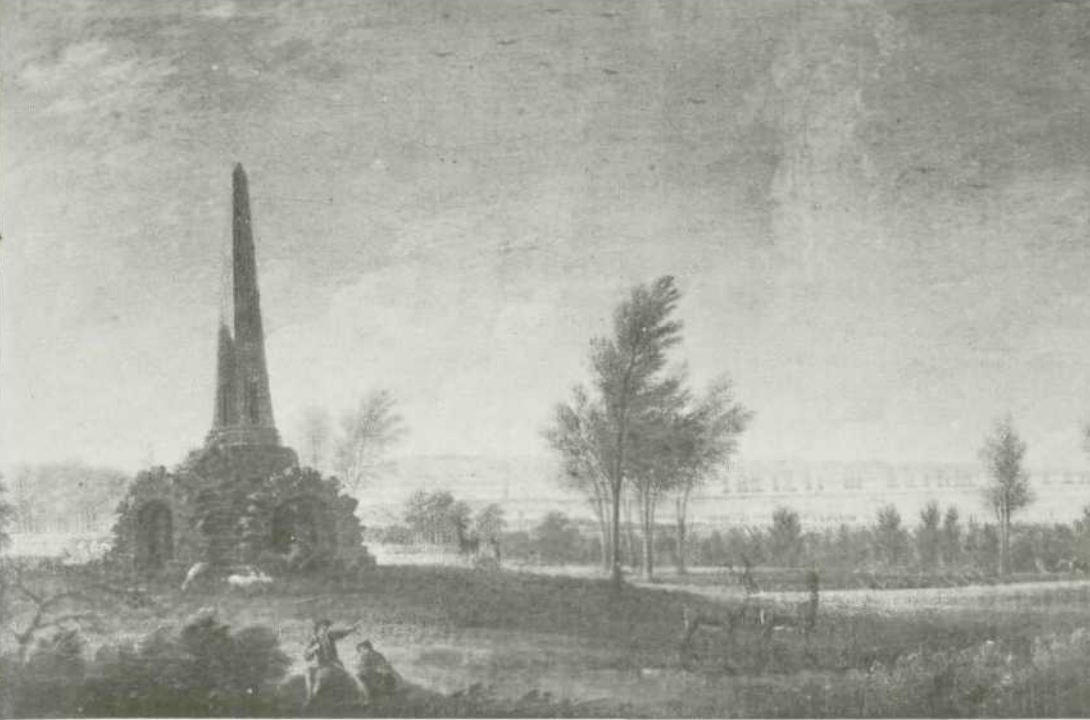
But she was not able to enjoy them for long, as two years later, at the age of seventeen, she was forced into marriage with Alexander Pendarves, a rich but aged Tory landowner of Roscrow, near Falmouth. When she met him at Longleat, her uncle's house, she thought him 'ugly and disagreeable; he was fat, much afflicted with gout, and often sat in sullen mood.' Although he was nearly sixty, she was told by her uncle that she should marry him because of the possibility of inheriting his estate, though Lansdowne was really more interested in Tory supporters in Cornwall. On receiving this virtual command, she locked herself in her room and wept. Married life proved to be the failure one would expect, especially as Pendarves drank excessively. After seven years he died, and although she did not inherit his money, she had enough to live on in London, and there she led a gay yet virtuous life, mixing in Court circles. During this time she was unsatisfactorily courted by Charles Calvert, 6th Lord Baltimore, who was her contemporary. Eventually, after an abrupt desertion by him, which seems to have been partly her fault, she decided to go to Dublin where she had relatives and friends, and where Lord Carteret had recently completed his Lord Lieutenancy.

So on 10 September 1731 she found herself waiting for a passage to Dublin in the *Pretty Betty* which was to come alongside Park Gate on the north bank of the Dee estuary. As it was a fine day and the *Pretty Betty* was not due in, she visited Eaton, Sir Richard Grosvenor's estate in Cheshire. Her description of it reveals her up-to-date attitude to landscaping: it was 'laid out in the old-fashioned taste with cut-work parterres and wilderness enclosed in hedges.'" By 'old-fashioned' taste she was referring to gardens laid out in the Dutch style, before the time of either Charles Bridgeman or William Kent. One of the features of Bridgeman's typical garden planning was an abandonment of walls, unless concealed as in a ha-ha, and a consequent opening up of the surrounding country. Similarly he sometimes discarded cut-work parterres, regularly shaped, near the house. This freer treatment of landscaping had been recommended by writers for some years previously: indirectly by Shaftesbury in his *Characteristiks* (1711), by Addison in *The Spectator* (1711-12), by Pope in *The Guardian* (1713), by Stephen Switzer, the royal gardener, in his *Ichnographia* (1718). Pope's garden at Twickenham had certain formal features such as a quincunx, a mount and *ronds points* from which *allies* led axially; but there was a freedom from confinement in the bounds, and a range of wild planting, in which, as Addison said of Kensington Palace grounds, there was 'the beautiful wildness of nature, without affecting the nicer elegancies of art.' And this was the landscaping which Mary Pendarves

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2. To Mrs. Ann Granville, 10th September, 1731.





The Obelisk at Stillorgan (Ricciardelli)

(By kind permission of the Ulster Museum)

thought desirable. But, as far as one knows, she had not seen Pope's five acres at Twickenham nor Bridgeman's work at Stowe before 1731. Yet she may well have looked in at Kent's work at Esher for Henry Pelham, and for Lord Burlington at Chiswick in the 1720's when she was living in Chelsea. Much of the landscaping in these gardens was still influenced by the French, but nothing of the Dutch remained. None of the 'rows of trees paled in gravel walks, fine cut hedges, flower-pots on walls, terraces, statues, fountains, basins, grass squares and exact uniform plots' noted by Celia Fiennes in the 1690s.<sup>3</sup> Even at Stowe, Lord Perceval, an Irish friend of Mary Pendarves's, had remarked in 1724 of Bridgeman's landscaping, that 'nothing is more irregular in the whole, nothing more regular in the parts, which totally differ the one from the other. This shows my Lord's good taste . . . What adds to the bewty of the garden is that it is not bounded by walls, but by a ha-ha, which leaves you the sight of a bewtifull woody country . . ." In fact, Mary Pendarves was as up-to-date in her tastes in landscaping as she was in her love of Handel's contemporary music.

3. *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes*, ed. Christopher Mcorris, London, 1949.

4. Letter to his brother-in-law, Daniel Dering, 14 August 1724. Hist. MSS. Comm. Egmont, VI.



The garden at Stillorgan (Ricciardelli)  
(By kind permission of the Ulster Museum)



Leixlip Castle, Co. Kildare (attr. Ashford)  
(Courtesy of the National Gallery of Ireland)



By 22 September she was staying with Mrs. Clayton, the wife of the bishop of Killala, at No. 30 St. Stephen's Green. She walked much on the Green and rightly guessed that it was larger than Lincoln's Inn Fields, and its twenty-two acres made it the largest square in Europe. It was then a fine level expanse of turf on which cattle grazed, and had gravelled perimeter walks under great beech trees. The present-day lay-out is an uncomfortable jumble of flower-beds and shrubberies, with a few ill-placed busts. Soon Mary Pendarves had entered the social round centred on Dublin Castle, by attending events like military reviews in the Phoenix Park which she described as 'a large extent of ground, very fine turf, agreeable prospects, and a delightful wood, in the midst of which is a ring where the beaux and belles resort in fair weather; indeed I never saw a spot of ground more to my taste—it is far beyond St. James's or Hyde Park.' On 9 October she met her future husband, Dr. Patrick Delany, a Protestant clergyman, and tutor at Trinity College. He was fifteen years older than she, intimate with Swift and Pope; in fact, Swift had described him to Pope as 'a man of the easiest and best conversation I ever met with in this Island, a very good listner, a right reasoner, neither too silent nor talkative, and never positive.' He owned a small estate north of Glasnevin on the other side of the Tolka, called Delville. At that time he was landscaping in the 'modern style', as Mary Pendarves would have said, and he could rightly claim to be the first to introduce the style into Ireland; a style in which Pope had taught him 'to soften into a curve the obdurate and straight line of the Dutch, to melt the terrace into a swelling bank, and to open his walks to catch the vicinal country.'<sup>1</sup> It was rare in Ireland to find a country estate landscaped by one of moderate means, as the small country house, typical of the English scene, was almost unknown. Mary Pendarves was charmed by Delville; but she does not say more in 1731 either about the landscaping or its creator. So agreeable was her Irish visit that she stayed for eighteen months, during the course of which she frequently recorded her comments on the estates of friends whom she visited.

In October 1731 she spent a day at Stillorgan, then about five miles out of Dublin, from which she drove in a coach and six, enjoying 'a fine and charming prospect of the sea all the way, like the harbour of Falmouth. On a rising ground in the park there is erected an obelisk, very well-built; . . . gardens laid out in old-fashioned taste, but capable of being made a fine thing.' (Did Lancelot Brown adopt from her this phrase after which he was nick-named?) The obelisk had been erected a few years before in a severe famine to give employment; it is still in good repair. The Knight of Glin points out the influence of Bernini's obelisk in the Piazza Navona,

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5. Swift to Alexander Pope, Dublin, May 2nd 1730.

6. J. Cooper Walker, *Essay on the Rise and Progress of Gardening in Ireland*, Dublin 1791.



The Temple at Delville, Co. Dublin (painted by Rose Barton, for Geo. Soc. Vol. V)

Rome.<sup>7</sup> This Egyptian obelisk is smaller but it has a similar rustic base, in which there are openings. Lord Allen, the owner of Stillorgan in Mary Pendarves's time, although younger than she, had not kept up with landscaping developments, but was content with a Williamite garden to match his house. Perhaps the splendid prospect across the bay to the great rock of Howth was sufficient.

As the Spring brought better weather she went further from Dublin. One such visit was to Dangan, the Wesleys' estate near Trim, Co. Meath, where in a flat and bare countryside Mr. Wesley was making improvements by planting trees and digging canals. On each of these canals he had a boat on to which they 'carried their music', hoisted their flag and rowed away, 'most harmoniously'. Mary Pendarves played the harpsichord well, and she was joined by Mr. Wesley on the violin. Her godson, Mr. Wesley's son (not then born), later the second Lord Mornington, inherited his father's two greatest loves—landscaping and music. When Mary Pendarves visits the estate seventeen years later we shall see how this young man is progressing, and how his father's estate has been improved. In the Spring of 1732 she wended her way westwards, on roads that were 'better than in England.' Eventually, after a call at Sir Arthur Gore's near Killala, Co. Mayo, where she admired the shady walks with aged forest trees overhanging, through which she had a fine view of the Bay and several pleasant islands, she arrived at the bishop's at Killala. There she indulged in a life-long hobby, the construction of a grotto of shells. Every morning at seven o'clock she would make her way to a natural grotto in the grounds where she would adorn the walls and roof with shells in elaborate and intricate patterns. The bishop had a fine collection of shells, some from the local beaches, and others from the tropics. The art of shell-work, which is now rarely practised, can be seen, in the 2nd Duchess of Richmond's shell-room at Goodwood, Sussex, which is contemporary with Mrs. Pendarves's work. It required a sense of design and a knowledge of shells which the makers of these rooms certainly possessed, and a pertinacity in completing their task. The Goodwood shell-room took seven years before the exquisite mosaics of coloured shells, with mirrors inlaid, was finished by the Duchess and her daughters. In addition to designing and drawing carefully, the cleaning of the shells and mixing of the mortar must have been hard work. Mary Pendarves thought shells were as interesting as flowers in their history and variety, and she was prepared to pay a sum of fifteen guineas for a rare tropical nautilus. During her long life she finished grottoes of Irish shells at Clogher for the Claytons when he was bishop there; for her brother at Calwich Abbey, Ashbourne, Derbyshire; for her uncle, Sir John Stanley at Northend near Fulham, as well as at Delville after she had married

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7. Catalogue 'Irish Houses and Landscapes Exhibition' p. 29, Dublin, 1963.



Patrick Delany.<sup>8</sup> The grotto at Killala had seats in it for four people, with an extensive view over the ocean and the islands. It must have been a delightful spot and suitable for Mary Pendarves and her friends who admired picturesque landscape, like subsequent Jane Austen heroines. Later she remarks, 'I walked over the bridge by moonlight along a walk of tall elms which leads' to a ruined house they call Black Castle, from a vulgar tradition of its being haunted: it lies over the Blackwater, has a vast number of trees about it, and seems to have been very pretty.' And at Cabra castle in Co. Meath what pleased her most was 'a rivulet that tumbles down from rocks in a little glen, full of shrub-wood and trees'; and again, at Cootehill, Co. Cavan, the 'copsewood which is cut into vistas and serpentine walks that have the softest sods imaginable, and here and there overgrown forest trees, in the midst of them is jessamine, woodbine, and sweetbriar, that climb the trees.' These passages might well be written later by Fanny Price or Marianne Dashwood, those avid readers of Cowper.

While Mary Pendarves was at Killala, Patrick Delany married a Mrs. Tenison, a rich widow. But Mary Pendarves, in a letter to her sister, makes no comment. At the age of thirty-two she evidently was not considering a man of fifteen years her senior as a future husband. In April 1733 she returned to England, where she divided her time between her house in London and visiting friends, especially the Duchess of Portland at Bulstrode, with whom she shared lifelong interests in natural history, rare stones, shells and flowers. But she never lost touch with her Irish friends including Dean Swift to whom she wrote in October 1733 when on a visit to Bathurst's at Cirencester that they 'did not forget to talk of *Naboth's vineyard* and *DelviHe*.' Nor did Mary Pendarves lose touch with Dr. Delany, who, in April 1734, wrote he had celebrated the birthday of his patron, Lord Carteret by whom he had been given the chancellorship of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin. A year later, Delany had given up his town house and had gone to live permanently at Delville, to the regret of Swift who found it expensive to hire a coach to visit him.<sup>10</sup> In 1741 Delany's wife died. Two years later, and exactly ten years after Mary Pendarves had left Ireland, Delany came over to England to stay with his friend Sir Clement Cottrell at Rousham, Oxfordshire. The landscaping there by William Kent was much to Delany's taste, and it was considered by Pope, and later by Horace Walpole, to be Kent's finest work. 'Gothic buildings, Arcade from ancient

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8. All her shell and plasterwork was destroyed when the house was demolished in 1951. It is described in detail in C. P. Curran's **Dublin Decorative Plasterwork**, pp. 21-24. London, 1967. The use of shells was very similar of that in the hall at Powerscourt, Co. Wicklow.

9. In a letter to Alexander Pope, from Dublin, July 8th 1733, Swift described Naboth's vineyard, his estate in Dublin, as the same size as Pope's 'green plot that fronts the Thames and another about 200 yards further, larger than your great garden and with more air; but without any beauty.'

10. Miss Anne Donellan to Swift, 10th May, 1735.

baths, temples, old bridges, Palladian do.; river, slender stream winding in a stone channel through grass walks in wood; cascades overgrown with ivy, grove of Venus of Medici; the whole, sweet." Soon Mary Pendarves received a letter from Delany proposing marriage, which she accepted despite opposition from the Granvilles, who were unable to overlook the fact that Delany had been born the son of a servant and was not a rich man. Her family were blind to his generosity, his warmheartedness, and to the fact that he had many interests and friends in common with his future wife.

In June 1743 they were married, and took up residence at Delville the next year. It was a small but pleasant estate on rising ground from the Tolka. On a bright day the masts of the ships in Dublin harbour could be seen, and a few spires and towers of the city churches pierced the skyline, with the Wicklow mountains as a backdrop to the south. Round the house was a small parterre on which they successfully grew orange trees.<sup>12</sup> To the north a walk led to an Ionic temple, adjoining the Protestant church, and above the portico was the inscription 'fastigia despicit urbis', a derisory pun attributed to Swift, which 'neatly finished' the outside. On the inside Mrs. Delany 'prettily painted' a fresco of St. Paul, and a medallion of the bust of Stella, who in past years had dined at Delville with Swift. Nearer the house were walks lined by fruit trees, a bowling green, flowers and sweet briars. At the end of one of these walks was a grotto-cave with a seat in the opening to admire the view from. Pleasant paddocks, in which browsed deer and cattle, sloped down to a stream flowing into the Tolka. Temples, rustic bridges, aged elms and ever-green oaks enlivened the scene, which must have been very similar to parts of the nearby Botanic Garden to-day, especially in the treatment of water in the glen. It was the *ferme ornée* ideal as described later by Thomas Whately in writing of Philip Southcote's farm at Wooburn, Chertsey.<sup>TM</sup> Subsequently writers have included the Leasowes of William Shenstone in this category, (indeed the terrain was very similar to Delville) and often stated, for a variety of reasons, that it was an impossible compromise between utility and pleasure. Yet the *jerme ornée* has been much followed since, and there are many successful modern examples. For an owner of limited means it was perfect. The fields were used as pasture for cows, and the grass paths and walks meandered round them. The garden led out into fields and woodland, and, by judicious planting in these paddocks, a series of vistas and key points could be made which did not interfere with agricultural practice. And this is exactly how the Delanys laid out Delville.<sup>14</sup>

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11. **Journals of Visits to Country Seats.** The Walpole Society, Volume 16, 1928.

12. The neighbourhood is in a belt with a mild climate. Certain rhododendrons flower in mid-March in the nearby Botanic Garden.

13. Thomas Whately, **Observations on Modern Gardening**, 1770.

14. Not a wrack remains. The huge brick Bon Secours hospital replaces it.



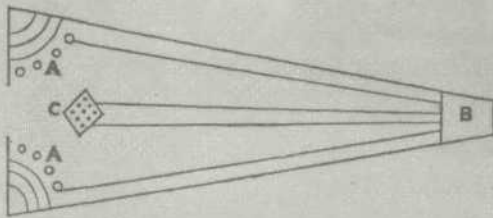
Delville in 1754

On 22 October 1745 they were visited by their friend Lord Chesterfield, the Lord Lieutenant, who 'could not have said more pleasant things had it been my Lord Cobham's Stowe.' By that date Delany had been given the deanery of Down, whither he and his wife went for part of the year, and where he gave money to build a new jail in order that men and women prisoners might be separated and live in better conditions. Lord Chesterfield had similar humanitarian ideals which he put into practice. He was a brilliantly successful Viceroy, who sided with the Irish, and in 1745 refused to be panicked by the Jacobite Rising. Noting that Ireland had more to fear from poverty than papacy, he initiated many schemes to improve the condition of the poor. At the suggestion of Mrs. Delany, it was his command from the Castle that all who accepted the Vicereine's invitations should wear material woven in Ireland—she wore green poplin. Chesterfield also arranged for extensive replanting in the Phoenix Park to give employment, and was responsible for the design and erection of the fluted stone column of the Phoenix burning in her nest.<sup>1</sup> In 1747 he opened the park (the largest city park in the world) to the public, a popular action which typified his period of office in Ireland.

15. Based on an etymological solecism: 'phoenix' is derived from 'fionn-uisge' meaning 'clear water'.



blowing articles; it is upon the whole of a triangular form, long and narrow, much like this scratch.



AA, the blow-houses on pillars. B, the summer-house or temple. C, frame for nine pins.

The walls to be covered with evergreens, and room enough for borders of flowers. It was originally designed for a nursery for flowers, but the walls are too close, it is very near the house, and will make a special nine-pin alley, which I think a *very merry exercise*. We had thoughts of having a bowling-green before our house in the garden front; but the hill, which descends gradually to the brook, looks so natural and pretty as it is, that it would be a pity to make it level: and so we determine to keep it a lawn, and to have sheep.

The wall; to be covered with, evergreens, and room enough for borders of flowers. It was originally designed for a nursery for flowers. but the walls are too close, it is very near the house, and will make a special **nine-pin alley**, which I think a *very merry exercise*. "We had thoughts of having a bowling-green before our house in the garden front; but the hill, which descends gradually to the brook, looks so natural and pretty as it is, that it would be a pity to make it level: and so we determine to keep it a lawn, and to have sheep;

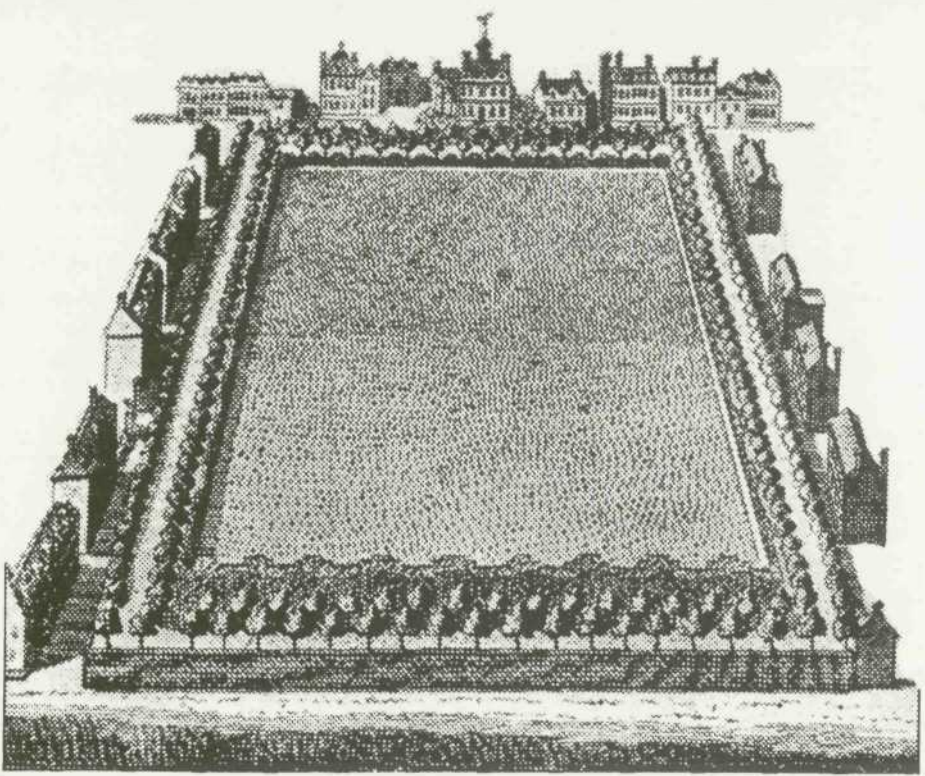
The Bowling Green, Delville

For twenty-five years, until Delany died, they divided their time between visits to England, Downpatrick and Delville. A consistent love of the Picturesque stayed with her, and shows in her accounts of the places she visited: a day at Leixlip in June 1747, visiting a Mr. and Mrs. Lowe at 'their bleachyard' is described in a letter to her sister:

"They have a pretty cabin there, and gave us some fine trout caught out of their brook just at their door. I wished you were there, it was so new a scene; and the men at work laying out the cloth, etc., on the grass in our view was very pretty, the machine for rinsing the clothes is very curious."

This is very Gilpinesque—a love of the scene for its human aspects in addition to the local industry. On the same day she also called at Mr. Conolly's at Leixlip, on the top of the hill round which the river winds:

"laid out into fine grass walks well planted, and set with all sorts of forest trees, and flowering shrubs; openings here and there that show the



St. Stephen's Green, Dublin from Brooking's Map (1728)

There is an essential aesthetic consistency and rightness in her judgement of landscaping. She will have nothing of 'virtuoso epicuroso' improvements such as at Air. Justice Singleton's at Drumcondra, where a certain Mr. Bristowe had 'conceit' rather than judgement 'cutting down full-grown elms and planting twigs', and turning out fine evergreens. Yet she appreciates the charming fancies of Lord Orrery, Pope's friend at Caledon, Co. Tyrone, where he had been planting and landscaping extensively in a style much influenced by Pope's Twickenham. She was intrigued by the hermit's root-house with pebble floor. Inside, on a wooden table, were placed a manuscript, a pair of spectacles, a leathern bottle, an hour-glass and mathematical instruments; also a shelf of books, wooden platters and bowls; a couch of matting completed the imaginary hermit's cultural and practical needs. Here was a conceit which did not interfere with nature, but was a terminal point in a walk taking in a series of gardens round his house: an orchard, a flower-garden, a physic garden and a kitchen garden.

At Ardsalla, Co. Meath, Dr. Delany had designed a garden in an old stone quarry which she described as wild and romantic, although the rest of the garden there was laid out by Mr. Ludlow, the owner, in 'old taste with high hedges and straight walks.' In the summer of 1746, when in England with her husband, she had sketched a stone quarry at Cornbury, Oxfordshire, where Lord Cornbury had carried out a similar conversion.

It had 'winding walks, mounts covered with tree-flowering shrubs, rocks covered with moss, hollows filled with bushes intermixed with rocks, rural seats and shade, and in the valley beneath a river winds and accomplishes the beauty.'<sup>18</sup> Once again she visited Dangan where she had not been for seventeen years. By now her godson was showing interest in both music and landscaping. He was eventually to become founder, president and conductor of the Dublin Musical Academy, and ruined his family by his landscaping schemes at Dangan. Arthur Young,<sup>10</sup> usually concerned with agricultural statistics, in 1770 noticed the increased size of the lake, from twenty-six to one hundred acres, and an organ in a chapel. When Mornington died in London in 1781 he was heavily in debt, and his third son, Arthur Wellesley, afterwards the first Duke of Wellington, started his army career with a negligible personal income, and the family was never able to return to their Irish home.

Back at Delville the Delanys had eighteen head of deer in the fields, and the orange trees thrived, and in summer they used to breakfast out-of-doors, amid the roses, jasmines and pinks, or sometimes under the shade of the nut trees with an Irish harper playing old tunes to them. Among small improvements she constructed a nine-pin bowling alley, a 'very merry exercise' along a terrace in a nook of the garden, with 'houses built up for blowing auriculas at the end.' Her shell-work extended to a chandelier for the grotto, and in a room in the house she completed a delicate cornice of shells in 'the manner of stucco.' By eighteenth century standards its eleven acres were small for an estate, and at his death Delany was said to be

'Quite ruin'd and bankrupt, reduc'd to a farthing  
By making too much of a very small garden.'

Swift had foreseen his ruin earlier:

But you forsooth, your *All* must squander  
On that poor Spot, called *Delville*, yonder;  
And when you've been at vast Expences  
In Whims, Parterres, Canals and Fences,  
Your Assets fail, and Cash is wanting  
For farther Buildings, farther Planting.

'An Epistle upon an Epistle.' 1730.

Yet it had been the first of its kind in Ireland, and a model for many on a larger scale.

After her husband's death, Mary Delany could not bring herself to live alone at Delville, so she went back to England. She lived her remaining

18. 'Highdown' at Goring-by-Sea near Worthing is a splendid modern example of the conversion of a chalk pit into a scene of enchanted planting.

19. A **Tour in Ireland** . . . London, 1776.



years with vigour, and even at the age of seventy she was prepared to make a detour in her chaise in order to climb Cooper's Hill to show the prospect to the Duchess of Portland who had never seen it.

'My eye descending from the Hill, surveys  
Where *Thames* amongst the wanton vallies strays.'

Then having seen the fine view of Windsor Castle, they went on to their hosts, where they read and criticized 'Cooper's Hill', Sir John Denham's poem, which in 1640 had so much of the Picturesque in its theme. Was it Denham's early days in Dublin which had given him this feeling for the landscape which was to become so popular later, even in Mrs. Delany's time?

*Edward Malins would welcome information regarding Irish landscaping and gardens for a book on which he is tvorkhig. Send care of The Irish Georgian Society, Leixlip, Co. Kildare.*

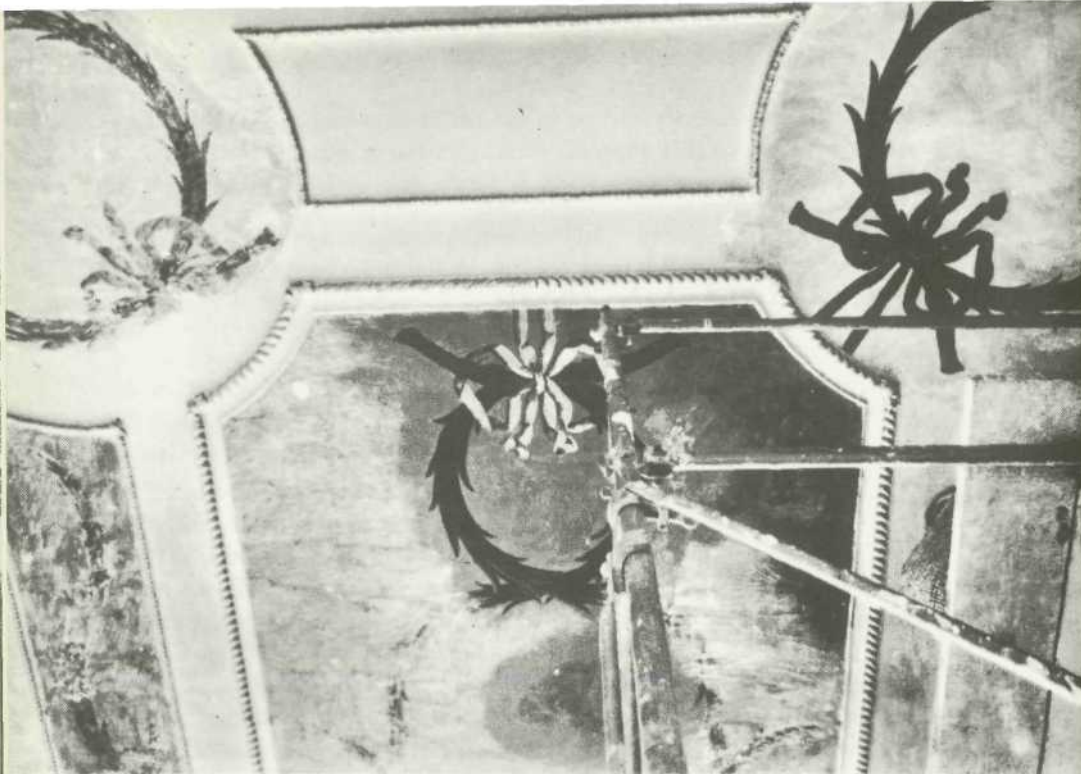
# IRISH GEORGIAN SOCIETY

## Progress at Castletown

The seemingly endless task of restoring Castletown has continued all through this summer. Many visitors have come to the house, including Mr. Henry Dupont of Winterthur; there have been plays, concerts, lectures, as well as outdoor traditional music. Furniture has arrived to fill the rooms—the most important gift has been the magnificent set of tapestry furniture from Headfort, Co. Meath, which had been sold along with the Chinese paper and even the mantel made for the room, an act of unparalleled sacrifice. Many people have been kind enough to lend us things, notably Lady Pamela Paulet; Miss Rose Marquess, Gerald Kenyon, R. McDonnell and others have presented furniture, books and other objects such as dolls to Castletown, and their generosity is much appreciated. The Conolly Folly, now in the final stage of its restoration by the Society, has been bought from the Carton estate and presented to Castletown by Mrs. Rose Saul Zalles of Washington, D.C., in honour of her Irish ancestors, the Maguires of Tempo, the Willoughbys and the Sauls. Thus the Obelisk belongs to Castletown, the house for which it was built, for the first time in history, through the generosity of our Washington benefactress.

We have mounted several displays of photographs by the Green Studio to publicise the work of the Society at Castletown. The first was at the home of William Ryan near Boston, the second was at the New York Antiques Fair, the third in Brown Thomas, Dublin, the fourth in Ireland House, New York, and the fifth in the Irish Pavilion of the World's Fair in Montreal. There is a permanent photographic display at Castletown as well as at Riverstown House near Cork. The Society has also organised an exhibit at the National School, Leixlip and at Robertstown, Co. Kildare for the Grand Canal Festa, based on the architecture of Leixlip. The main exhibition this year is a mammoth Exhibition of Irish Architecture which includes architectural drawings, models, paintings, water-colours, engravings and photographs, for display at the New Library, Trinity College Dublin in September. Exhibitions such as these have proved a great help in gaining new members for the Society; there are now over five thousand.

The Society has enjoyed tax exempt status in the U.S.A. since May 1968. There is to be a world premiere benefit in New York on October 9th

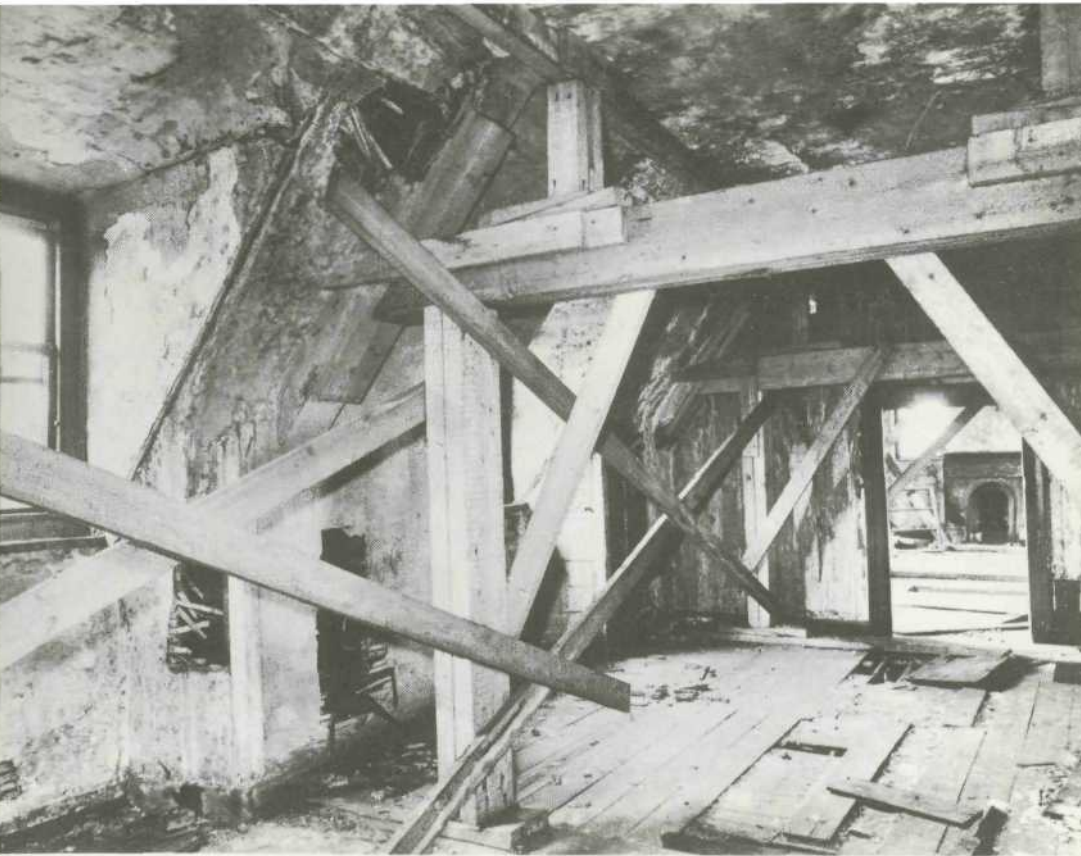


Restoring the ceiling of an upstairs room at Castletown which had been smothered in green paint, a lengthy and tedious task being undertaken by Mrs. Garner, who has already restored the texts in the old kitchen

of "Finian's Rainbow", a new film with Fred Astaire, Tommy Steele, Petula Clarke, etc., in aid of Castletown and Tailors Hall. This benefit and the Society's activities in the U.S.A. are being handled by Joseph Ryle (455 E. 51st Street, New York, N.Y. 10022) who visited Dublin this summer to learn about our problems at first-hand.

**MOUNTJOY SQUARE.** Mr. Gallagher, the developer who has been quietly buying up the square and knocking his houses down, has offered to sell all twenty of his properties to us for preservation and/or reconstruction at a figure of £68,000 17d. 6d. We have at last found enough interested purchasers to be able to form a company (Mountjoy Square Estates Ltd.) and take him up on this offer. Donations to cover legal and other costs will be gratefully acknowledged! Should we succeed in acquiring Mr. Gallagher's houses and sites, we will apply to the Minister for Local Government for a preservation order for the whole square.





Tailors Hall, Dublin. The attic will eventually be turned into a caretaker's flat

**TAILORS HALL.** Work has started on the roof, and we hope to have the hall restored by the summer of 1969, if sufficient funds can be raised to keep on with the work. Huge metal plates have secured the ends of the enormous beams which had become completely rotten. The roof alone will use up half of the funds collected. The Bolton Street Technical School have offered to make the windows for us if provided with materials. Further contributions are needed more than ever, and may be sent to the Hibernian Bank, Dundrum, Dublin 14.

**GILL HALL.** The Ulster Architectural Heritage Society have declined to take the responsibility for preserving Gill Hall off our shoulders. This magnificent 17th century house, only 20 miles from Belfast, should be saved and lived in once again—houses of this date in Ireland are too rare to lose without a struggle.

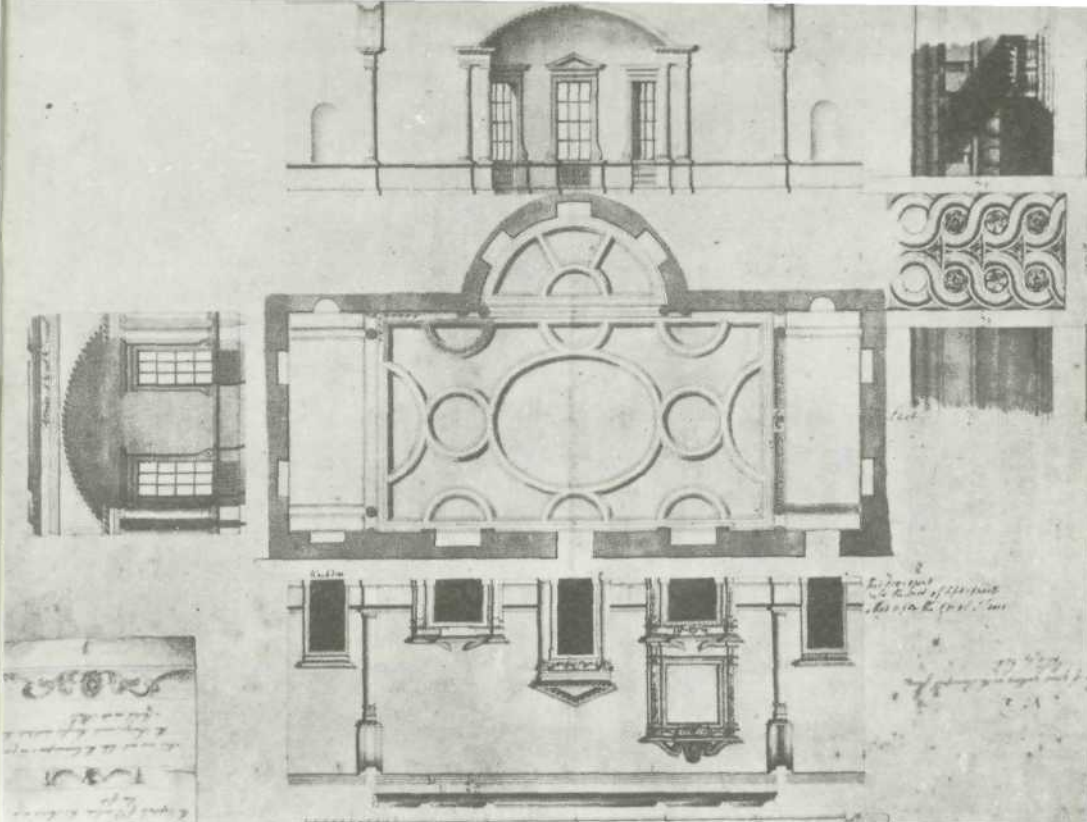
**THE TEMPLE, BELAN, CO. KILDARE,** probably designed by Richard Castle, is being made safe by the Irish Georgian Society and the Tourist Board.



The Temple at Belan, Moone, Co. Kildare which is being made safe by the Society.

### HOUSES OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

In 1962 a group of Irish house owners elected a committee to request financial aid from the Government for those who were prepared to open their doors to the public. It was felt that there was little point in opening unless to ensure the preservation of the house, and that the actual income in half-crowns taken at the door would be insufficient for this. Owners of the principal country houses were urged not to 'jump the gun' and open to the public until a satisfactory *quid pro quo* had been obtained from either the Department of Finance or the Tourist Board. Six years of negotiation have led virtually nowhere, and in 1968 several houses were open to the public for the first time, in spite of the 'ban'. Pakenham Hall, now known as Tullynally Castle for some obscure reason; Bermingham House, Tuam; Clonalis, Castlereagh; Lough Rynn, Mohill; Lissadel, Sligo (1967); Westport (1960) and Bantry (1950) are all open to the public and still occupied by the original family. As well as this there are three castles near Shannon which have been roofed and are used for entertainment. There is Rivers-town, Glanmire, Co. Cork, restored by the Irish Georgian Society on account of its plasterwork and open to the public by courtesy of Air. John Dooley, the owner. There is Castletown, the Society's headquarters, which



Drawing for Leinster House, possibly by Chambers, part of the exhibit of architectural drawings at Castletown

besides being a house museum has offered plays, concerts, recitals and lectures to the public during 1968.

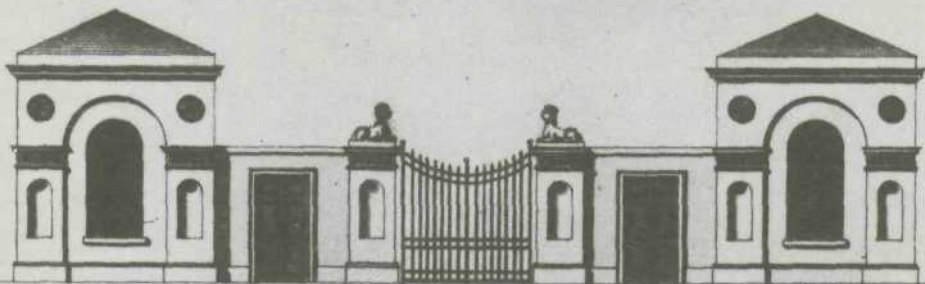
Longfield, Cashel, Co. Tipperary is at present being restored by the Society with the help of Bord Failte, and will be opened to the public officially in 1969 (Mrs. Bianconi has always admitted interested persons). Although there is a nucleus of family portraits and mementoes of Charles Bianconi, the transport pioneer, in the house, objects of interest such as would be found in an Irish country house will be most gratefully accepted for display there.

The Ponsonby chapel at Fiddown, Co. Kilkenny; the Dromana Gates, Cappoquin; the Conolly Folly, Maynooth; the Temple at Belan, near Moone, which have of late been restored by the Irish Georgian Society, will soon carry some distinctive plaque or sign to indicate this.

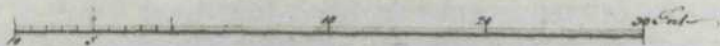
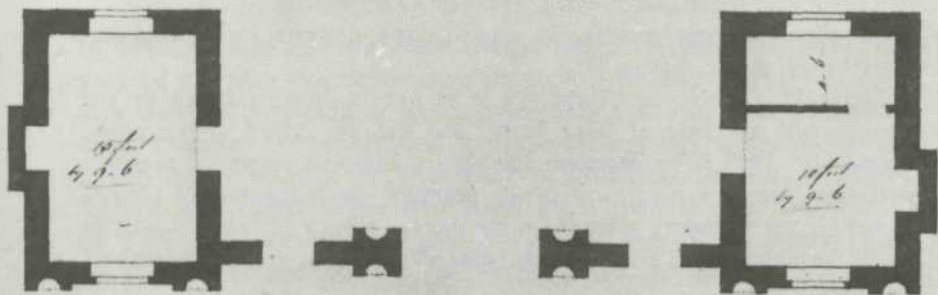
COUNTRY MUSEUMS. The Irish Georgian Society would welcome information on small museums throughout Ireland with a view to listing them for the benefit of visitors bored with ruins. Robertstown, Co. Kildare, has a good permanent collection of canaliana, but it is not generally known if or when it may be visited. Youghal has a museum, and Enniscorthy.



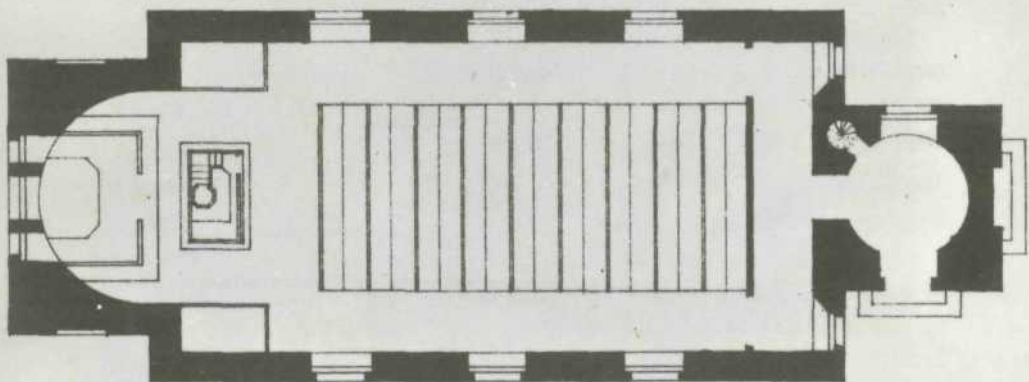
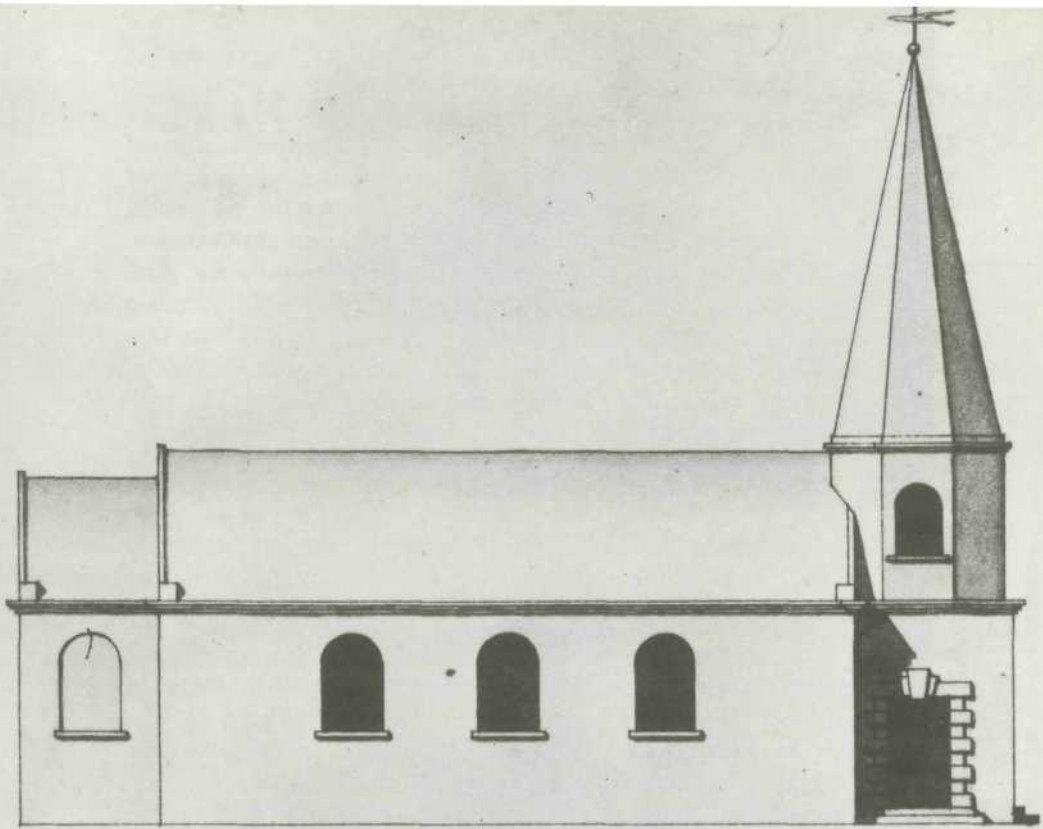
3. South Front and Plan for a Lodge and Entrance  
to the Cottage and Plantations at Waterstone  
Carton Park



Calends 57, Feet



Thomas Owen's design for a gate lodge at Carton, Maynooth^ on display at  
Castletown



Richard Castle's design for Newtownbreda Church, near Belfast, on display at Castletown

Dublin should have at least one of its great town houses furnished in period with some of the magnificent furniture which is so shamefully displayed in the National Museum. Information as to houses open to the public, follies, grottos, gardens, etc. would also be most welcome for inclusion. Surely some of the convents or similar institutions that occupy our great houses would welcome the income from visitors? Apart from a certain peeress and a diplomat who tried to avoid payment, and shall be nameless, every visitor to Castletown has paid his 5/- which helps with the cost of upkeep. Institutions surely need have no fear of losing privacy. The Irish Georgian Society will help find furniture. Only a few rooms need be shown, and the house would draw visitors and prosperity to its neighbourhood once again.

#### MICHAEL THOMAS PLEADS FOR THE MAGNIFICENT ORGAN IN ST. MARY'S, DUBLIN

The seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries produced some of the most famous instrument makers. Two great names that are remembered are Smith and Renatus Harris, who held a competition, "The Battle of the Organs", at the Temple in London.

Little of their work remains. The Temple has been bombed and most of the other organs "modernised" in such a way that they are no longer suitable for the contemporary music. Much of the work of Harris, and Byfield who continued after him, was in Ireland. Even the organ in Wolverhampton, which contains most of the extant Harris work, was intended for Ireland.

St. Mary's Church behind the G.P.O. in Dublin, still contains one of the finest Harris organs, which has hardly been altered. The original pipes have not had tuners added, the action is still there. It would be the nearest thing to a fine classical organ remaining in Britain or Ireland. The case too is magnificent. But the grandeur it would add to the music, if it were playing, would be more important than anything else.

Something must be done about it before this last chance to preserve one is lost. I have had an organ builder who specialises in renovating tracker actions look at it. It would cost no more than £3,500 to overhaul it and to make it play again.

#### JIGGINSTOWN HOUSE, NAAS

By Captain Costello

Under the auspices of the Co. Kildare Archaeological Society, a party of 29 International Students spent three weeks during last summer cleaning up the ruins of this early 17th century house at Naas. Bord Failte and the Eastern Regional Tourism Organisation Ltd. gave financial assistance, and the Board of Works contributed technical assistance. The students were entertained by many local Societies and individuals, including the Irish Georgian Society at Castletown. Now the great brick structure, built





Jigginstown House, photographed by Anne Fitzsimons

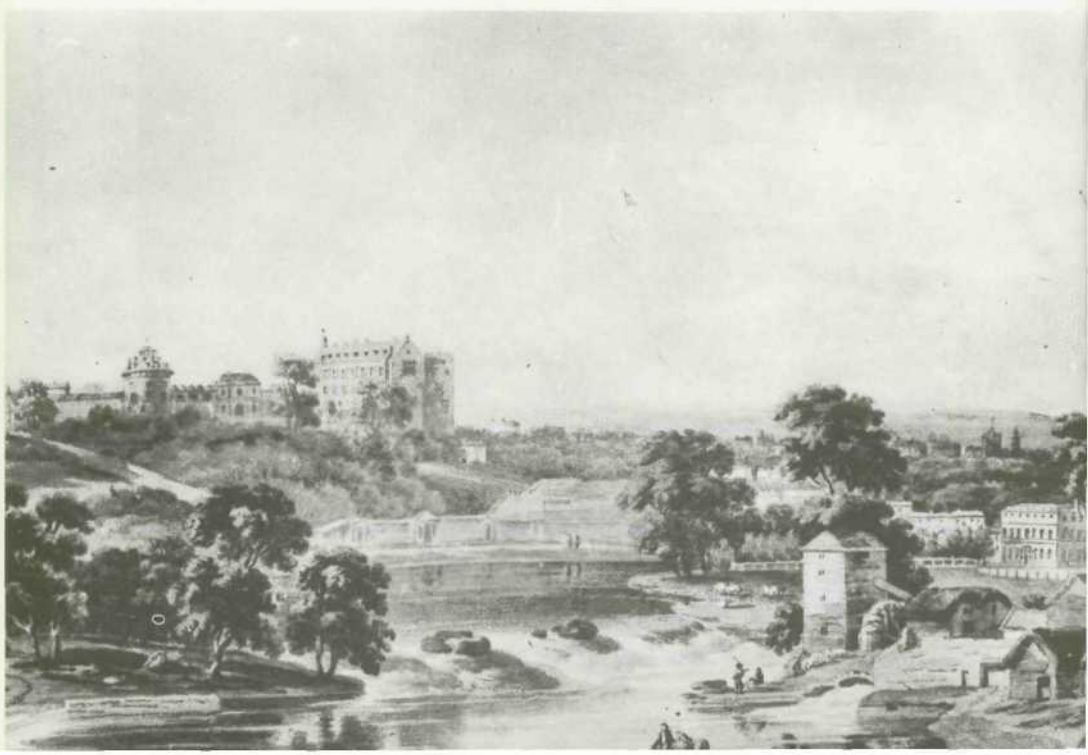
by the Earl of Strafford, is again visible, but its future is in doubt. The owners of the property have offered it to the Nation, but so far no decision has been reached by the Board of Works. It seems a pity that so much effort should go to waste and that Jigginstown might again be shrouded in ivy.

### THE RESTORATION OF KILKENNY CASTLE

(Architect: Martin Burke, Board of Works)

With the help of a £20,000 grant from an English benefactor, the Kilkenny Castle Restoration Committee have made great progress during 1968. The roof is now watertight, the dry rot eradicated, and infected areas treated to prevent further outbreaks. When restored, the committee hopes that the main rooms will be furnished and made open to visitors, and that a home will be provided here for mementoes of the Butler family, whose stronghold it has been for so many centuries. Contributions are urgently required so that the work can go on, and may be sent to the Kilkenny Castle Restoration Fund, Kilkenny.

Kilkenny Castle, one of a set of four watercolours of Kilkenny by T. S. Roberts, recently purchased by the Castletown Trust for £150. Would some kind benefactor like to make them a gift in his or her name?





## THE RESCUE OF CASTLE UPTON, CO. ANTRIM

By Lady Kinahan

For 12 years we had driven past the walls of Castle Upton, near Templepatrick and wondered what the house inside was like. Then, one day, it came on the market and we went to have a look. My husband loved it immediately but I thought it was exactly like one of Her Majesty's disused State penitentiaries—very tall and grey, with no garden; an iron fence right up to the front door; on one side a brokendown shrubbery (a mass of nettles and tree trunks); on the other, a wilderness of laurel and box which had once been a knott garden, a dozen apple trees and a ruined fountain in the middle.

Inside the Main Hall, all was brown paint and porridge walls, but half-way up the stairs the sun poured through an old stone sashed window, behind an archway, and I suddenly felt I could make this house beautiful.

Originally an 11th Century Bawn, with two towers and a courtyard, on the site of an old Church where St. Patrick taught, the property was acquired in 1135 by the Knights of St. John as a training place for young knights and Men of Arms and they founded a Castle or Priory to train fighting men for the Crusades. Of this, only the Refectory is left. The South Wing of the house was built in 1611 by Sir Humphrey de Norton



who was granted the Priorate of the Castle, but his only child ran off with a Serjeant O'Lynn and he sold the house in 1625 to Capt. Henry Upton, who henceforth called it Castle Upton. The Uptons prospered and in 1793 had two wings built on to make the house U-shaped, building a banqueting hall above the Refectory and incorporating kitchen and servants' hall into the old courtyard, which had in its time withstood two sieges. Happily, the Upton of that day was a personal friend of Robert Adam who came over and supervised the carrying out of his designs for the house, and, in addition, built an exquisite crenelated double yard with clock tower, and a mausoleum in the graveyard.

As it had originally been built as a fortress, the ground floor was loop-holed for musketry, so Adam made all the reception rooms on the first floor and enlarged the windows. This must have been quite a job as the walls vary from 2-5 feet in thickness. The yard is supposed to be an exact copy of the old Fish Market in Edinburgh, built by Adam and destroyed 40 years ago.

Beautiful pleasure gardens and a lake were built by this Viscount Upton and the Park was planted with unusual and varied trees. Even the river banks were strengthened and the pools stocked with crawfish! But by 1920 the house had suffered a long period of neglect and the roof was leaking badly, and the whole place was sold to a timber merchant who sold £23,000 worth of timber and two years later sold it for £9,000 to a farmer called Smith, in the bacon business.

Mr. Smith took the top storey off the house and built a very sound but very ugly, new roof, with no crenelation and no turrets, on the South Wing, and allowed the rest to fall into disrepair. The rubble from the top storey was used to fill in the lake, which was turned into pasture, and so was the A\ acre walled garden. The exquisite Adam yard was filled with, and surrounded by, pig styes for 1,000 pigs, silos and sheds, and the roofs and doors slowly decayed.

As historical buildings are so rare in Ulster, we felt we *had* to save it. The property became ours in June 1963, but the previous owner hadn't found anywhere else to live, so for the first three months we devoted all our time to the garden. We dug out all the laurels, restored the fountain, surrounded it with rose beds and planted herbaceous borders. There were two narrow flights of stone steps leading up a bank on either side and these we moved to the centre and placed side by side to form a wide flight of 5 steps. The stone slabs were 4 feet long and 8 inches deep and 1 foot wide—extremely heavy. So, the curious sight was to be seen of me lying on my back and pushing the slabs over a series of round iron bars laid on the ground, with my feet. The only way to escape straining one's back.

On the other side of the house, we cleared away old tree stumps from a ruined shrubbery; got a bulldozer to bring 12 loads of soil from a hump in the parkland (which once covered the entrance to a secret passage) and

arranged it to make a water garden. We dug a 20' x 9' x 2' pond; got it lined with cement and piped water through the earthworks from a stopcock at the kitchen door, to flow out in a little stream through the garden into the pond. As the soil is very limey, we had to put large quantities of peat under nearly all the shrubs, but this garden has never looked back and is now the greatest joy to me, with the Adam yard as a backdrop, and water lilies, iris and primulae flourishing at the front.

We cleared the pig styes out of the first yard and repaired the two houses in the corners, but the timber in the roofs is like tissue paper and there was nothing we could do but shut the doors and paint them and the windows. The stables we use and the clock happily keeps good time, although water was pouring through the tower before we mended it. The central tower is in a terrible state, as is the second yard, and we hope to start opening the gardens in aid of it this year under the auspices of the Irish Georgian Society.

We had great difficulty in getting any builder to climb the rotting roofs, especially in the decayed U-wings of the house, where elderberry and elm trees grew out of the walls, and white owls nested in the ballroom chimney, and ivy festooned the fallen beams and crumbling walls. It was all exceedingly dangerous and we had four small children.

Eventually we found a stalwart builder from Ballymena who cleared it all back to the original refectory and outer walls of the courtyard. We got plans for rebuilding the ballroom above the refectory and the winding stairs connecting it to the courtyard, up the inside of one of the smaller towers. Just as this job was nearing completion, one of the builders noticed a lot of powdery dust coming out of the stones; he stepped outside to call another man to come and look, and at that moment the entire tower collapsed in a heap of rubble at his feet. When we came into the yard, we found him draped across the tractor shaking like a leaf. He had missed death by a hairsbreadth and we were about three months and at least £1,000 further from our ultimate goal. The old flue up the side of the tower from the kitchen stove had been made of brick and unable to take the stress of repairs like the large stones.

Our builder rallied and with no previous experience rebuilt the tower, with the same pointing and stonework as the original, and even made and dyed the bricks himself for the ornamental work near the top, so that they exactly matched the rest of the Adam work.

For the ballroom, I had the great good fortune to find a huge 17th Century Italian carved marble fireplace from the ruins of Downhill ("The Edifying Bishop" of Derry's Palace near Portrush) in a scrap yard in Ballymena: getting this huge and delicate piece of marble up to the first floor took twelve men, two lorries and a variety of pulleys and much ingenuity. There it lay awaiting the building of roof and walls and was a constant anxiety to me for fear some falling scaffolding or masonry would chip

the delicate carved figures. I kept putting heaps of sacks and coats over it which the workmen kept taking to use for something else. But, at last, it was in place and a clever fibrous plasterer took moulds from the carving which we used for the fresco round the top of the ballroom and over the pelmets. The beautiful circular boudoir with the domed ceiling, off the ballroom, tragically fell to pieces while we were building a roof over it to save it. The frosts of 1962 had put it just beyond saving point.

Inside the house we painted all the woodwork white and the change was unbelievable, especially in the panelled hall. We picked out in colours the Crusaders horses and their gold trappings on the ceilings, and we restored the dining room with its graceful pattern of curves and Maltese crosses on the ceiling, and curious plaques on the walls, to its original dimensions. It had been divided into three rooms—one of which was a lavatory, which however convenient was not in keeping with the rest of the decor. The Smiths had made a delightful kitchen in the Tower beside the dining room, whose windows look over the courtyard and water garden, and we are now quite used to going outside and down 15 winding steps to get to the larder below it.

We found a huge bell which had been used to summon the farm workers and had it erected outside the kitchen door, as looking for someone in the garden or yard could take hours. It had exactly the same note as the clock chime so at first greatly confused the people within earshot in the village!

We also discovered one beautiful Adam urn surviving in a mass of ivy on the wall of the walled garden, which we brought round and put beside the pond.

Another bonus was a bust of Hermes, which was lying on its side in the hen house with a very nice plinth: it now stands in the hall by the Adam stairs.

Most of the Adam mantelpieces had been replaced by Victorian ones, but three remained in the bedrooms, so we brought one down and put it in the drawing-room with a lovely circular brass fireplace beneath it which we got from an old Georgian rectory.

The refectory has been painted white and a door made into the fountain garden from it, and we are using it as a garden room and for picture exhibitions.

None of the ghosts have appeared yet and the house is most thoroughly lived in and appreciated by all the children. I wonder if I had known that a fifth child would make its appearance a year to the day from the day we moved in, if I would have taken the house on, but in a way it gives more of a feeling of belonging and using the ballroom as a part-time nursery makes the rebuilding of it seem less of a folly.

The Mausoleum in the graveyard was given by Mr. Smith to the National Trust just before he died and has been beautifully restored to its original



state, but most visitors seemed to think Mausoleum means Museum and tend to come on to our house to see the curios there. So, we had reluctantly to put up a private notice or we would never have been able to get on with our own restoration programme.

## HOUSES FOR SALE



MILLMOUNT, MADDOXTOWN, KILKENNY, must be one of the most elegant and original houses in Ireland. Mrs. Murphy is at present seeking a purchaser, and will answer any enquiries.