



Public Record Office
of Northern Ireland

INTRODUCTION

BARRETT LENNARD PAPERS

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Barrett Lennard Papers (D1232 and MIC170)

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Summary

The Barrett Lennard papers in PRONI comprise microfilm copies or originals of c.1,200 letters and papers relating to the Co. Monaghan estates and the political activities of the Barrett Lennard family of Belhus, Essex, and Clones, Co. Monaghan, 1581-1866.



Family history

The family of Barrett Lennard originated in Essex. The name was an amalgam of the Barrett and Lennard families after Richard Barrett took the name Lennard in consideration of the manor of Bell House (Belhus) in Essex, bequeathed to him by Sir Edward Barrett, Lord Newburgh who died in 1696. It was originally Lennard Barrett until 1755 when Thomas Barrett Lennard, Lord Dacre transposed the order of the names. The Barrett Lennards were the absentee landlords of the Clones estate (comprising 7,920 statute acres in 1876), which originated in confiscated church lands. Sir Henry Duke was granted the Abbey of Clones by the Crown in 1587 and died in 1595. Anne Loftus, his great-granddaughter, married the Richard Lennard who later took the name Barrett under the will of Sir Edward Barrett Belhus.

Prominent members of the family included the Earl of Sussex, who in August 1674 married the thirteen-year-old Lady Anne FitzRoy (alias Palmer, the family name of the Earl of Castlemaine), natural daughter of Charles II and Lady Castlemaine, afterwards the Duchess of Cleveland. The King and her mother spent the first night of the Restoration together and she was born nine months later. The King acknowledged her as his child and granted her the royal arms with the baton sinister.



The desolation of the 1690s

The family weathered the storms of the 1640s and 1690s in Ireland and held on to the Clones estate, continuing to live in the safety of Essex while receiving reports from agents on the ground, such as the following from William Westgarth, written in July 1690 (T2529/6): 'The whole country from Kells to Clonnish, except a few at Cavan being only a wilderness, with a few houses uninhabited. The town of Clonnish is something [? better] what escapes burning being for most part inhabited either by townspeople or strangers. As for your estate it is also waste except Mr. Hamilton's lands & one Anderson's which they lie on. The cabins are much ruined but most of those in the country standing. Those in the town that were ruined in it are much destroyed by the townspeople for firing. The mill of Cumber is quite destroyed, that of Analore standing but the front gone. The castle wants a deal of slating, and one of the joists above the dining room floor is come from the wall. It was I am told full of dung but is now clean & a part of it inhabited by Ensign Lee ...' Westgarth's letters, of the 1680s-1690s, which give a vivid picture of the desolation caused by the Williamite War, the difficulty of finding tenants except on exorbitant terms, etc., etc., are probably the most important component of the archive.



A resident proprietor

The family were generally absentees who rarely if ever visited Clones. There was one notable exception to this. In c.1690, Dacre Barrett became alienated from his father, Richard, through the machinations of a retainer called Seacombe and his accomplice called Owen, who were 'managing' the old man to their own advantage. In April/May 1691 Dacre obtained a commission of lunacy in order to rescue his father, and his father's estates, out of the hands and management of these shady characters. This commission was successfully quashed, largely following the intervention of Richard's daughter Anne. Dacre and his family, having been turned out of Belhus, had no alternative but to go to Clones.

The following year was eventful for Dacre Barrett. He was put into the Co. Monaghan commission of the peace, in September he was elected MP for Co. Monaghan, and in August 1692 he married for a second time. His new wife was Elizabeth Moore, daughter and co-heiress of Thomas Moore of Knockballymore, Co. Monaghan. Unfortunately having borne him a son who died in infancy and a daughter, she died just two years after their marriage.

Over the next few years Dacre Barrett tried unsuccessfully to effect reconciliation with his father. But the difficulties of travel to and from Ireland, as well as the interference of other family members, meant that they were still estranged when his father's death was announced on 28 April 1696. Dacre Barrett immediately set off for England, spurred on by the news that his father had left him the nominal sum of 2s. 6d. and that Owen was disposing of farm stock and household goods left him in the will. He brought an action to overturn the will on the grounds that his father was not compos mentis. However a procession of reputable witnesses was produced to show that the old man was of sound mind and the will was admitted to probate. This did not affect Dacre Barrett's inheritance of Belhus and Clones, which were already settled on him and could not be alienated from him by will. He eventually established himself at Belhus, having married for a third time.



A Clones education

Meanwhile, he had left the children in Clones in the care of the agent Westgarth, while he attended to affairs in Essex. Their education was not neglected, the services of a schoolmaster John McCollin being enlisted. The following is a letter of 24 December 1696 from the teacher to the father, begging proper remuneration, by way of a report on the children's progress: '... As for myself within a week after yor going away I came to this towne, and did my endeavor to teach the children to write before they went over, as yor honor may see that I did my best to teach them, and indeed it was very difficult art first, but now they are admired by all, that being so young & little should do so well, but they would be in more Awe if they were wth yor self. ...' Dacre Barrett, to his credit, took good care of McCollin. He was grateful to have had this responsibility removed while he discharged others.

After this interlude at Clones, the Barrett Lennards resumed their previous pattern of absenteeism, keeping control of the estate and their political influence in Co. Monaghan by a judicious choice of agents.



Thomas Barrett Lennard, 29th Lord Dacre (1717-1786)



Lord and Lady Dacre painted (somewhat spookily) with their dead daughter, Barbara, by Batoni while they were in Rome in 1749

Dacre Barrett died in 1725, having been predeceased by his son and heir, Richard. Richard had married in 1717 his cousin, Lady Anne Lennard, youngest daughter and co-heiress of Thomas, Earl of Sussex (and 27th Lord Dacre). By Anne Lennard, he had one posthumous child, Thomas Lennard Barrett, who inverted the order of the names on his mother's death in 1755, when he succeeded as 29th Lord Dacre. In 1739, Thomas married Anne Maria Pratt, sister of the 1st Earl of Camden.



Anne Maria, Lady Dacre, caricatured in her widowhood and old age by James Gillray, 1802



Lord Dacre as an Irish landlord

Thomas Barrett-Lennard writes, in *An Account of the Families of Barrett and Lennard* (printed for private circulation, 1908): '... The obituary notice of Lord Dacre in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1786, says: "In politics he was, to use his own words, a true and zealous friend of liberty and the Protestant religion". If this description of Lord Dacre's political views was accurate, the following extract from the letter of an Irish agent to him shows how great is the difference between what in the eighteenth century was considered "liberty" and our ideas on that subject.

There had been an election in Co. Monaghan, and apparently Lord Dacre had not wished his tenants to vote for a Mr Corry, who was one of the candidates, and nevertheless some of them had done so. The agent, Noble, writes on September 6th, 1768: "... As to the Moorheads, and some others of your tenantry, who I think did not behave well towards you on the last election, I shall show a proper resentment as you desire for such their behaviour, and shall call on them for a year's rent against November to distinguish between them and your other tenants, who showed a proper regard to your recommendation; in short a most extraordinary spirit, or I may say infatuation, prevailed on the late elections throughout most parts of the kingdom among the lower sort of freeholders, and which I believe was in order to show the power and strength of the Non-Conformists, without any regard to the least subordination; and where these things may end it is hard to say."

John Todd, who was Lord Dacre's agent in Ireland previously to Noble, wrote in 1748: "... I acquainted Alderman [Richard] Dawson of the directions you had given me for all your freehold tenants to vote for his son to represent our county in the room of Colonel Willoughby deceased, for which he told me he would write you a letter of thanks. ..." It was ... [a] common thing, until a very much later period, for landowners to consider that they had a right to direct their tenants how they should vote Lord Dacre also appears, from the following extract of a letter, written by his Irish agent, E. Mayne, in July 1778, to have viewed with great dislike any form of Protestant religion [i.e. the 'Non-Conformists' castigated by Noble in 1768] except that of the Established Church, for Mayne asks: "... By what your Lordship mentioned of Mr Westly [*sic*], the preacher, am I to understand that a meeting house must not be built by them in the town?"

That Lord Dacre took a great interest in the management of his estates is shown by the very considerable number of letters which remain from both his Norfolk and his Irish agents [the fact that he was an absentee from his Norfolk estate is a salutary reminder that absenteeism was not a uniquely Irish phenomenon.], giving him full accounts of all the details of their management. In 1740 he paid a visit to Ireland for the purpose of looking after his property. ... From a letter written to him by Todd, his agent, towards the end of 1739, he appears to have intended to go there about May 1740. Only twenty-three years of age, and recently married, he was greatly interested in his intended visit, and anxious to show to his bride his town of Clones and the considerable estates which he owned surrounding it, for whose improvement he was no doubt enthusiastic Todd

did not give him an encouraging account of his house at Clones, called, like so many Irish mansion-houses, "the Castle". Surely, even in that country of exaggeration, the title of "Castle" can never have been more inaptly bestowed than in the case of "The Castle of Clones". Todd says that it contained only "one parlour and three bedrooms with fireplaces, and three other little rooms without fireplaces or any furniture". The best thing in the place seems to have been "in the cellar a hogshead of old French claret, very good, if not spoiled with this long frost". He added: "... I am sure all the people of Clones will rejoice to see you and your consort". ...

The following letter to Lord Dacre from Todd [of 11 October 1744, written from Dublin] shows that, in spite of the difficulty of travel, he was again in Clones some four years later: "... Yesterday brought me the favour of yours of the 2nd instant, which gave me the greatest pleasure imaginable to find you got safe home, and in such high spirits ever since you left this I got no account of your safe landing during my stay in the country, although I sent often to Monaghon [*sic*] hoping to find a letter there, because yours from Dublin was directed for me at Clones in the county of Monaghon, and by mistake lay in Monaghon post office near 10 days before I heard of it, whereas had it been directed to Clones only, it would have come directly to me. I am more particular in mentioning the want of an English letter because all the town as well as the people round about it, were every post enquiring for you, both high and low, rich and poor; and as every post still left us in the dark, we assembled in the evening, drank a good health to you, your Lady and Miss Barrett, wishing that we or our posterity may never want you, or some of your successors, to rule over us, and praying for your safe journey. I don't wonder at all this, as you have made all your tenants happy and easy, by which you have daily not only the praises of the rich, but the prayers and praises of the poor. ...'

I find no further references to Lord Dacre going to Clones, and I think that after his illness in 1745 he probably felt unequal to the fatigues of such a journey; but he was kept constantly posted up [*sic*] by his agent in all that went on there. ...'



Sir Thomas Barrett Lennard, 1st Bt, (1762-1857)



Sir Thomas Barrett Lennard,
1st Bt

Sir Thomas Barrett Lennard, born 6 January 1762, was Lord Dacre's natural son and testamentary heir. The following is another extract from *An Account of the Families of Barrett and Lennard* by Thomas Barrett Lennard (great grandson of the 1st Baronet), in which he recounts the remarkable story of Sir Thomas's upbringing and inheritance.

'Lord Dacre had two natural children by a person whose name was Elizabeth FitzThomas. The elder, christened Thomas, was born on January 6, 1762, and the younger, christened Barbara, on July 2, 1766. Both these children were brought up at Belhus by Lord and Lady Dacre, and were treated by them in all respects as if they had been the legitimate offspring of their marriage. The family tradition of events which led to the adoption of young Thomas by Lady Dacre ... sounds more like fable than fact, but, however that may be, Lady Dacre did act as a mother to the boy, and as an exceptionally good mother too. There was also a tradition that Lady Dacre, knowing she could have no more children, connived at this intrigue for her husband's sake as he was so extremely anxious to have a son to whom he might leave the properties he had taken such care to nurse up.'

The two natural children were given the education and upbringing that would prepare them to assume the rank and status of the Barrett Lennard family. In his will Lord Dacre requested of his wife that she should 'take upon herself the guardianship of his two children, who he directed were to assume the names of Barrett and Lennard and the arms and crests belonging to those families'.

Even after her husband's death about 1786, Lady Dacre supervised the progress to adulthood of the pair.

Thomas Barrett Lennard married in 1787 Dorothy, daughter of Sir John St. Aubyn, Bt, by whom he had seven children. After his first wife's death in 1830, he married secondly in June 1833 Georgina Matilda, daughter of Sir Walter Stirling, Kt, and had by her a son. Thomas was MP for South Essex, was created a baronet, 30 June 1801, and died on 25 June 1857. As an absentee, wishing to see the close links between Britain and Ireland maintained, he supported the Act of Union. He was also a cautious supporter of Catholic Emancipation.



Sir Thomas and Queen Caroline

In his long and not very eventful life, one opportunity was accidentally offered Sir Thomas to make his mark on history. The impending coronation of George IV was the subject of controversy not least because the King had banned Queen Caroline from the Abbey and that lady had signalled her determination to attend. Therefore security was strictly observed. The Queen determined upon a ruse to get into the coronation, and this was where Sir Thomas became involved. The is told, with characteristic drama and no doubt inaccuracy, in *My Life and Recollections*, by the Hon. Grantley F. Berkeley, published in 1866. Sir Thomas had private access to the house of a friend, a Canon of Westminster. To escape for a moment from the heat of the abbey, he went out for air by a private door from the Canon's house.



Queen Caroline

'... At this point Queen Caroline and her Chamberlain, Lord Hood, arrived and attempted to get Sir Thomas to allow them entry by the private door, over which he was standing sentinel. ... The Queen, throwing back her veil, exclaimed, "Sir Thomas Lennard, I have seen you at Southend; know me now as the Queen of England. As your Queen, then, I command you to afford me ingress to the church by that private door." "May it please your Majesty", replied Sir Thomas, bowing at the same time very low, "though it is well known that I sympathize with your cause, the word of honour of an English gentleman ... must not be broken, and all the royalty of Europe could not make me do so. In everything else, I am your Majesty's most faithful servant. ..."

Grantley Berkley concludes dramatically: 'What might have been the upshot of the affair, had Sir Thomas yielded, and thus have brought the discarded Queen and her King face to face, the army doubtful, half the peers opposed, and the infuriated people in the streets likely to resent the browbeating of hired ruffianism, Heaven only knows. It is fair to presume that the peace of a nation trembled in the balance, and that ... Sir Thomas, by his firmness, in a very great degree contributed ... to the happy issue ... of that memorable occasion ...'



The archive

The archive is less dramatic in content. The vast majority of the papers including those relating to the Irish estate, are in the Essex County Record Office, who have provided PRONI with a microfilm copy (MIC170). The contents of the microfilm are as follows:

Reel 1

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| 1697 | Highway Presentments at Clones. |
| 1587-1717 | 3 bundles of 52 title deeds. These include the grant of the monastery of Clones by James 1. This was a confirmation of an Elizabethan grant, and there is also a Charles I exemplification. |
| 1637-1736 | 18 title deeds not included in Lord Dacre's schedule. |
| 1581-1808 | 6 bundles of 245 leases many of which are 16th century. |
| 1684-1859 | c.400 letters and reports of agents, etc., concerning the Irish estates at Clones belonging to the Barrett Lennard family in 17 bundles. These are for the most part listed individually in T2529/6. |

Reel 2 completes the last section of reel 1 covering the years 1684-1859.

Reel 3

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| 1680-1817 | 49 loose letters. |
| 1828-1830 | Volume of correspondence and other papers which includes information on Catholic Emancipation and the Irish linen industry. |
| 1817-1822 | 4 volumes of rentals of the estates of Sir Thomas Barrett Lennard in Cos. Monaghan and Fermanagh. |
| c.1600-1805 | 5 bundles of 247 documents consisting of rentals, accounts and vouchers. |

Reel 4

- 1667-1716 Bundle of receipts and a list of Dacre Barrett's goods at Clones.
- 1628-1866 26 documents, being letters of attorney and miscellaneous papers.
- 1768 Map of the town of Clones showing the Round Tower, fields and cottages with list of tenants done by John Hamilton, surveyor and architect.
- 1777 Survey of part of Drummulagh called Longhoney done by Nicholas Willoughby.

Reel 5

- c.1775 Schedule of title deeds, from 29 Elizabeth, to Lord Dacre's Irish estates, compiled c.1775.
- 1692 Oath of Allegiance taken by justices of the peace, together with commission for administering oath to Dacre Barrett on his appointment as a J.P. for Co. Monaghan.
- 1692 Extracts from the County Court of Monaghan giving complete lists of freeholders.
- 1694 Warrant for the apprehension of Thomas Morgan for assault.
- 1695 Writ in case of debt between W. Smith and Dacre Barrett.
- 1695 Court of Enquiry held at Clones before the high Sheriff of Monaghan concerning the property of William Smith[?]
- 1709 Highway Presentment at Monaghan Quarter Sessions.
c.1640 Petition to the Barons of the exchequer at Dublin.
- 1728 Commission of Thomas, Lord Dacre as Captain of an 'Independent Troop of Horse' in the Co. Monaghan Militia, signed by Lord Carteret.
- 1796 Resolution of a meeting of the principal residents of Clones concerning the danger of invasion and reaffirming their loyalty with names of those present.

Barrett Lennard Papers

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| 1813 | 9 documents being correspondence, election, squibs, etc., relating to the Co. Monaghan election. |
| 1813 | 8 documents being Thomas Barrett Lennard's Co. Monaghan election expenses. |
| 1776 and 1806 | 2 documents being notes concerning freeholders in Co. Monaghan. |
| 1815 | Newspaper cutting regarding a petition from Co. Monaghan landowners in favour of a stringent Corn Law. |



The 1804-1817 Barrett Lennard letter-book

PRONI also holds in the original (D1232/1) a volume containing copies of out-letters from William Mayne, agent for the Barrett Lennard estate at Clones, to Sir Thomas Barrett Lennard, 1st Bt, his employer. This provides interesting insights into estate management and politics.

It includes such things as a statement of accounts, 4 April 1806, between Mayne and the Dowager Lady Dacre, showing that the half-yearly rental of the estate was £2,001.13s. 4d. A similar account of 12 October 1806, between Mayne and Barrett Lennard, [who had just inherited the property, on Lady Dacre's death], shows that the half-yearly rental was then £2,087. 7s. 1 0d.

Mayne's letters to Barrett Lennard are full of interest.

10 August 1807, Freame Mount: '... Every day I regret that you found it necessary to return without visiting Clones. No proprietor of that estate has been in Ireland since 1744, and it is now nigh thirty years since I became agent. Of course [I] should have been highly gratified in person and on the spot to have rendered an account of my administration. However, at another time I shall hope for that satisfaction.'

17 September 1807, Freame Mount: 'The death of my respected neighbour continues to create much electioneering. I find Lady Clermont proposes one of her family, supposed Lord Rossmore's brother; Lord Templetown his brother; Messrs Lucas, Corry and Madden are candidates also. I have made every enquiry as to the registering of freeholders, and find all your tenants registered in 1805 are good *until* 1809. Of course you have a strong interest. Lord Cremorne is also very powerful should that registry hold good. However, the mangled state of our election laws leaves ample room for the gentlemen of the long robe [i.e., laywers] to torture same into a thousand shapes. At present, I think Lord Cremorne can bring in for this county any person he takes by the hand.'

7 May 1808, Freame Mount: '... Please to examine the new rental. A sharp agent certainly (with the approbation of the landlord) might charge more. However, I allow, I never let land for any of my employers at the highest rate. I let it at what I think the tenant can pay without oppression, and of course the landlord receives a fair, honest rent, the tenant is content, does not run into arrear, has no cause to wish for any change in the government, landlord or agent, and an appearance of English comfort runs through the estates. The Clones rental for November 1787 was £2,510. 10s. 0d, and the November 1807 is £4,431. 16s. 10d. There has been a gradual advance, - and as leases determine, you may expect a continuance of increase [sic] rent, so as to keep pace with the times and your tenantry happy.'

December 1812, Freame Mount: 'As to elections, they are the bane [sic] of all *evil*. They are the only injury the Union did Ireland. The resident gentry spend their rents in England; their houses and domains are neglected. ... Look at your rentals and accounts for 20 years back, and you will find your rents have increased fully equal to the times, and your tenantry are thankful. My constant advice and study has been to let

to the resident tenant to keep the *middleman* out of your estate as much as possible. The old-let leases are now few. They in general are sub-divided. However, as they determine, the occupying man I constantly prefer, if of good character. I see every day lands let at a much higher rate than in my opinion should be demanded, both for the credit of the landlord in demanding such, the tenant for promising same, and the general good of the country... I at the same time allow and am proud to assert it, that all my employers are of a perfect [sic] contrary mode of acting, and happy I am in being their agent. Allow me to remark that a resident landlord who spends his rents among his tenantry, has a fair claim to require a greater rent than a non-resident, who never spends a shilling. However, this remark does not attach to you, having been always ready to assist, when demanded, most bountifully. ...'

