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INTRODUCTION

ELY PAPERS

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Ely Papers

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Summary

The Ely papers, as the quantity of reference numbers cited above would suggest, are not one but a host of scattered deposits in PRONI, amounting in total to c.1,550 documents, covering the period 1630-1928 and documenting the estates, mainly in Cos Fermanagh, Wexford and Dublin, the business affairs and the frequent accessions of peerage honours of the Loftus family, from 1751 Barons and Viscounts Loftus and Earls and Marquesses of Ely.



Early family history

The Loftus family originated in Swineshead, or Swineside, parish of Coverham, Yorkshire. The first to achieve greatness was the Rev. Adam Loftus (c.1534-1605), who came to Ireland as a viceregal chaplain in 1560, was appointed Archbishop of Armagh in 1563 and moved to the archbishopric of Dublin in 1567. A *protégé* of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, he was made Keeper of the Great Seal of Ireland in 1573 and Lord Chancellor in 1578, holding this latter office and the archbishopric of Dublin until his death in 1605. He served three times as a Lord Justice of Ireland (in the absence of the Lord Deputy) – 1582, 1585 and 1597-1599. In the 1580s he was an advocate of 'temperate and peaceable government' as opposed to draconianism. He was the main promoter of the foundation of Trinity College, 1592, and from then until 1594 served as its first Provost. The future Earls and Marquesses of Ely descend from a younger grandson of this Lord Chancellor Adam Loftus.



Adam Loftus, 1st Viscount Loftus of Ely

Very confusingly, there was another Lord Chancellor Adam Loftus, who was a nephew of the first one and founded a completely distinct family. This Adam Loftus was appointed Lord Chancellor in 1619 and was removed from that office in 1638, following his celebrated clash with Lord Deputy Wentworth. In 1622 he was created Viscount Loftus of Ely, and he died at Middleham, Yorkshire, in 1643. His Irish estates were located at Monasterevan, Co. Kildare, and – just across the county boundary- at Mountmellick, Queen's County, now Co. Leix.

The viscountcy conferred on him became extinct with the death of his grandson, the 3rd Viscount Loftus of this creation, in 1725. Although the viscountcy of Loftus was re-created in 1751 for the other branch of the Loftus family in Ireland, no part of the Monasterevan and Mountmellick estates passed to them. Instead, these descended through the 3rd Viscount Loftus (of the first creation)'s only daughter, Jane, to her son, Henry Moore, 4th Earl of Drogheda, whose nephew, the 6th Earl and 1st Marquess of Drogheda, re-modelled the house at Monasterevan, originally a mediaeval abbey, in Strawberry Hill Gothick in 1767, and called it Moore Abbey. By 1767, Lord Drogheda's rental from the former Loftus estates stood at £5,425 a year.



The Loftuses of Rathfarnham



Philip, Duke of Wharton

To return now to the Lord Chancellor Adam Loftus who died in 1605: he had built himself in 1583 a magnificent seat at Rathfarnham Castle, Co. Dublin. His great-great grandson, another Adam Loftus, was raised to the Irish peerage as Baron Rathfarnham and Viscount Lisburne in 1685, but was killed soon afterwards in the Williamite War. Rathfarnham Castle and the accompanying estate passed to his only daughter and heiress, Lucy, who married the raffish Duke of Wharton, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1708-1710. Wharton, ever insolvent, sold the property to William Conolly, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, for £62,000 in 1723.

At that time it comprised 3,682 acres of arable, meadow and pasture and 2,442 of mountain with a rental of £2,171 a year capable of an increase of £1,228 a year. In 1782, by which time (as will be seen) Henry Loftus, Earl of Ely, was tenant of the castle and demesne, the rental of the Conolly family's Rathfarnham estate was £4,084 a year. [For these details, and for title deeds, legal papers, etc, relating to the Rathfarnham estate, see Conolly papers, PRONI, T2825/C/4/1-11.]



The Loftuses of Fethard and of Loftus Hall

The ancestor of the future Earls and Marquesses of Ely was the uncle of Adam Loftus, Viscount Lisburne. He was Nicholas Loftus of Fethard, Co. Wexford (1592-1666), and the Ely papers in PRONI include (D3805/1/A/1-11) title deeds to his manors of Fethard and Kilcloggan, parishes of Fethard, Hook and Templetown, barony of Shelburne, Co. Wexford, 1637-1668, including a recovery of those manors, dated 1646, containing a fine, 'primitive' royal portrait of Charles I.

He was succeeded by his elder son, Sir Nicholas Loftus of Fethard, whose children all pre-deceased him, and who was therefore succeeded, in c.1713, by his younger brother, Henry Loftus of Loftus Hall, Fethard (1633-1716). From the early 17th century to c.1700 the Loftuses live in the old 15th-century castle in Fethard, which was modified and extended to make it more suitable for domestic accommodation. (Though now a ruin, it was tenanted and lived in until 1922.) In c.1700 they moved south to Loftus Hall, which stands almost at the tip of Hook Head. Henry Loftus's successor was his elder son, another Nicholas Loftus (c.1687-1763), MP for Co. Wexford, 1710-1713 and 1715-1751, in whose favour the viscountcy of Loftus, extinct since 1725, was revived. He was created Baron Loftus of Loftus Hall in 1751 and Viscount Loftus of Ely in 1756. By a strange irony, he married as his second wife the widow of the 3rd Viscount Loftus of the first creation. He was succeeded as 2nd Viscount Loftus by his elder son, another Nicholas Loftus (c.1707-1766), MP for Bannow, Co. Wexford, and subsequently for Fethard, 1737-1763, who was advanced to the Earldom of Ely in 1766, a week before his death.



The origins of the name 'Ely'

The name 'Ely' came originally from the Gaelic territory of Elye O'Carroll in King's County, now Co. Offaly. Adam Loftus, 1st Viscount Loftus of Ely (Lord Chancellor, 1619-1638), had sat for King's County in the parliament of 1613; in his patent of peerage, he is described as Viscount Loftus of Ely, King's County; and a cadet Loftus later in the 17th century definitely owned land in Elye O'Carroll. The 18th century Loftuses and Tottenhams for whom various Ely titles were re-created, did not own land in King's County, and indeed the 1766 and 1771 earldoms are described as being of Ely, Co. Wicklow! This has served to obscure the territorial origin of the title.

The 18th century Elys presumably liked the name because it sounded grand and non-Irish, and so did not seek a title which was more appropriate to their own territorial possessions. It was reported in 1800 that Lord Ely was going to be made Marquess of Wexford; however, if this is true, he would have been forestalled by the fact that an Earl of Wexford already existed in the person of the Earl of Shrewsbury. In present-day Dublin, Ely Place and Ely House are always pronounced with the emphasis on the last syllable, and this is almost certainly how the family would have pronounced it in the 18th century. After the Union, with their increasing Anglicisation, they began to pronounce themselves as in the Isle of Ely, Cambridgeshire, and Ely Cathedral. That this was a gradual post-Union development is suggested by the fact that the territorial designation for the U.K. barony of Loftus granted them at the time of the Union was not Ely in Cambridgeshire, but a possibly fictitious 'Long Loftus' in their native Yorkshire.



The Wexford boroughs

This rapid advancement in the peerage to heights undreamt-of by the more distinguished Lords Chancellor Loftus of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, is attributable to a variety of factors. First, the early Stuart period was one of great profusion in Irish peerage-creation, but the honours so bestowed were mainly for the benefit of outsiders from England and Scotland. Second, the Loftuses were in political alliance with the extremely powerful John Ponsonby, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons and first cousin of the 1st Earl of Ely. Thirdly, and much more important, the Loftus Hall branch of the Loftuses enjoyed great parliamentary patronage.

They controlled a number of seats in the Irish House of Commons for rotten or pocket boroughs in Co. Wexford: Bannow (where the Normans had landed in 1169), which had been overtaken by coastal erosion, and was later described as 'a mountain of sea sand, without a single inhabited house'; Clonmines, which had one inhabited house, but otherwise was simply the ruins of a once important ecclesiastical site; and Fethard, which for a time had as its mayor and returning officer Lord Ely's butler at nearby Loftus Hall, and as its 12-man corporation other domestic servants. In addition, Lord Ely nominated to one seat for the important county town of Wexford, and John and Charles Tottenham of Tottenham Green and New Ross, Co. Wexford, who were brothers and both of whom married sisters of the 1st Earl of Ely, between them nominated to one seat for the borough of New Ross. John Tottenham was created a baronet in 1780 (a photostat of the patent is among the Ely papers D3130), and his son succeeded to the Loftus estates and ultimately was created 1st Marquess of Ely; Charles Tottenham, who married the heiress to the Ballycurry estate, Co. Wicklow, succeeded to the Tottenham family's share of the patronage of New Ross. This meant that Lord Ely could command eight seats in a parliament of 300, to which might be added, if things went well, a seat for the county of Wexford.

From their first ennoblement, the Loftuses of Loftus Hall combined with this great parliamentary influence an inability to produce heirs male and so to prevent their peerages from dying out. They therefore devoted their energies during the near-half century between 1751 and the third re-creation of the earldom of Ely in 1794, to huckstering over their ennoblement, promotion and re-ennoblement, advancing themselves twice in that period from commoner to viscount and three times from viscount to earl, and crowning their achievements at the Union in 1801 with an Irish marquessate and a barony in the new peerage of the United Kingdom.



Nicholas Hume Loftus, 2nd Earl of Ely (1738-1769)

The short-lived 2nd Earl of Ely succeeded to the title and estates in 1766 and died, unmarried, in 1769. He bore the name Hume in addition to that of Loftus, and his father had assumed the additional name of Hume, because of his father's marriage into, and succession to, the estates of the Hume family in Co. Fermanagh and elsewhere. In 1736, the 1st Earl, then simply Nicholas Loftus, had married Mary (d.1740), elder daughter and heiress of the Rt Hon. Sir Gustavus Hume, 3rd Bt, of Castle Hume, Co. Fermanagh, who had died in 1731. Under a Hume family settlement of 1729 and the terms of Sir Gustavus's will, Mary, the elder daughter, inherited the entire landed estates of the family, with a rental of £3,000 a year, and Alice, the younger daughter, £5,000 and Sir Gustavus's personal estate. Nicholas Loftus, now Hume Loftus, thus came into immediate enjoyment of the Hume estates, which passed to the only son of the marriage, Nicholas Hume Loftus, 2nd Earl, in 1766, along with the paternal estates in Co. Wexford.



The early history of the Hume family

According to the Rev. George Hill in *The Plantation in Ulster, 1608-1620* (Belfast, 1877), the founder of the Hume family in Co. Fermanagh, Sir John Hume (of North Berwick, who belonged to the Hume family of Polwarth later created Earls of Marchmont), was granted the proportion of Ardgart, alias Carrinroe, in 1610, and bought the neighbouring proportion of Moyglasse from its original patentee in 1615. On the former he built what even the hypercritical Pynnar called 'a fair strong castle', Tully, and the latter he neglected. Later, in 1626, he bought from his brother, Alexander, the smaller but contiguous proportion of Drumcose. This made him the largest landowner in Fermanagh. He died in 1639, just in time to miss the 1641 uprising.

In spite of its fairness and strength, and a garrison consisting of 'all the English and Scottish settlers in the immediate vicinity', Tully was compelled to surrender in 1641. All within it were massacred, contrary to the signed and sworn articles of surrender, except for Lady Hume (wife of Sir John's son and successor, Sir George, who was absent at the time), her immediate family and the constable of the castle. Alistair Rowan writes evocatively in *The Buildings of Ireland: North-West Ulster ...* (London, 1983): '... That sense of isolation which the early 17th-century planters in Ulster must have known, is immediately excited by the sight of the roofless, ivy-covered mass of Tully Castle, rising from its knoll above the lough. Its isolation was its downfall, for the castle ... surrendered to Captain Rory Maguire in 1641 and was burnt with its inhabitants. It has since remained a ruin. ...'

The Humes eventually transferred to another site, Castle Hume, Church Hill, where there must have been some sort of house between c.1660 and the building of the important Castle Hume in 1728. Sir George Hume, who was created a baronet in 1671, is described as 'of Castle Hume'. His son and successor, Sir John Hume, 2nd Bt (also described as 'of Castle Hume'), died in 1695 and was succeeded by his only son, Sir Gustavus Hume, 3rd Bt, MP for Co. Fermanagh, 1713-1731.



Richard Castle's first Irish commission

Of Castle Hume Alistair Rowan writes: it '... holds an important place in the history of Irish classicism, for it was here that Richard Castle, who was to become one of the principal protagonists of Irish Palladian architecture, made his debut. ... By 1725 Castle had come to London, where in 1728 he met Sir Gustavus Hume, ... who brought him to Ireland that year. ... Castle Hume was his first work, built for Sir Gustavus from 1728 and burnt out by accident the next year, but completed again.

An estate map of 1768 (D496) shows it to have been a small classical house of three storeys with a pedimented centre and with pineapples and other sculpture along its stone balustrade in all similar to Castle's other small house at Hazlewood in Co. Sligo. [Actually, the 1768 map does not bear out this description at all: it gives an artist's impression of a decidedly old-fashioned house, peppered with chimney pots. Castle Hume is supposed to have been in ruins by 1793; but this seems improbable, because it



Castle Hume

was let, from at least 1781 to his death in 1797, to Hugh Montgomery of Derrygonnelly, a substantial Fermanagh country gentleman. It cannot have been abandoned in the early 19th century either, because "Capability" Brown's well-known disciple, John Sutherland, re-made the grounds c.1813 and his work was intact twenty years later.]

All that remains today is a long avenue of about thirty beech trees leading up to where the house stood, and a courtyard of stable offices. ... [They] are typical of Castle's robust manner The present court contains two main blocks linked by a range of seven arcaded coach houses. The large block, L-shaped, contained the stables, with an exceedingly fine elliptically vaulted ceiling in cut bricks supported on an arcade of Tuscan columns ...'.



The townlands in the Co. Fermanagh estate

The main component of the Hume estates, the manors of Ardgart, Castle Hume, Moyglass and Tully, mainly in the barony of Magheraboy, Co. Fermanagh, comprised the following townlands:

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Ardees Lower | Ardees Upper | Ardgart |
| Aughameelan | Aughamore | Aughrim |
| Ballinakill | Ballustybeg | Ballustymore |
| Ballustymore Mountain | Ballygonnell | Ballyhose & Levally |
| Banagher | Blackslee | Boheaveny |
| Bonohone | Bowara | Brecah |
| Broghas | Brollagh | Callaghean |
| Car Island | Carnadarwin | Carranmore |
| Carrickreagh | Carrowbeg | Carry East |
| Carrygoola | Cassycon | Church Hill |
| Cleens | Clenows | Coagh |
| Concaroe | Corgarry | Corkeel |
| Corrymore | Crawfordshill | Croaghum |
| Crogahan & Drummohan | Cullen | Derrydoon |
| Derrynacross | Derrynaeska | Derrynamew |
| Derryvara | Dodgebran | Donegal |
| Drumbadmeen | Drumbadrevey | Drumberry & Drumboovy |
| Drumgrow | Drumilisaleen | Drummeenaghmore |
| Drummohan | Drumnassareene | Drumnatoffin |
| Drumreask | Drumsillagh | Enaghan |
| Fardrum | Farn Cassidy | Fassow |
| Fassow Island | Garryross | Gillyholm |
| Glen (East) | Glen (West) | Gortnaleo |
| Gortnaleo | Gortnamonaghan | Gurteen or Garrison |
| Kelaghan | Killymore | Kilmore Bog |
| Knockaraven | Largan | Largylinny |
| Laughill | Leenagh | Legg |
| Leglehid | Lenaghan | Lenaghan House |
| Levally | Lockhart | Lurgandarra |
| Magheragannon | Magho | Mangermoohan |
| Mangermore | Meenaelybane | Minrin |

| | | |
|----------------|------------------|---------------|
| Moneendogue | Moneywilkin | Moyglass |
| Muckinah | Muckinash Island | Muglinagrow |
| Mullaghanilly | Outer Ross | Portmush |
| Portnaclyduff | Rabraan | Ratona |
| Ratona Land | Rooskey | Roscor |
| Shean | Shruanure | Slavin |
| Ternagheramore | Ternagherbeg | Tonagh |
| Toneypull | Tully | Tullyloughdan |
| Tullymore | Wheathill Glebe | Whitehill |



The battle over the Hume estates

It is ironical that, just over a decade after the estates of the extinct Viscounts Loftus had been carried off by another family, the Loftuses of Loftus Hall should have carried off the estates of the Humes. However, this magnificent accession of property was to cost them dear.

Nicholas, the future 2nd Earl, proved to be feeble-minded and early earned himself the nickname of 'Nicholas the Idiot'. The only surviving portrait of him, which is in the manner of a Grand Tour portrait by Pompeo Batoni, represents him as a vacuous fop, but not as an idiot, far less a lunatic. However, it was alleged in the course of subsequent legal proceedings that almost the only things he could remember were 'a few national toasts taught him by the father, who was himself a great proficient'. Because of the question mark over his mental capacity and the improbability of his marrying and having children, his aunt, Alice Hume, now wife of George Rochfort of Rochfort, Co. Westmeath, took legal proceedings in 1758 to have him declared a lunatic and incapable of managing his own affairs. Had she succeeded in this, she would, in the event of his dying without legitimate issue, have succeeded to the Hume estates under the Hume family settlement of 1729. In anticipation of victory, her husband, George Rochfort, and their son, Gustavus, both assumed the name Hume. But in the event the Rochfort Humes failed in this first round of the legal battle. They made a second, and also unsuccessful, attempt in 1766.



Nicholas, 1st Earl of Ely

Nicholas, 1st Earl of Ely, who died in that year, had always treated Nicholas the Idiot with coldness and even brutality. But his younger brother, Henry Loftus (1709-1783), the new Earl's uncle, behaved like a father to him and earned his affection and trust. Influenced by this, and by the Rochfort Humes' attempts to get him declared a lunatic, Nicholas the Idiot executed in 1767 a re-settlement of the Hume estates in favour of Henry Loftus, who was heir presumptive to the viscountcy of Loftus (though not the earldom of Ely) and to the Wexford estates. Nicholas the Idiot himself died, young and unmarried, in 1769, whereupon the Rochfort Humes contested the re-settlement of 1767 on the ground of his alleged lunacy.



The longest-running and most celebrated of all Irish lawsuits

The cause célèbre of Loftus -v- Hume, which had started in 1758 and was perhaps the longest-running and most celebrated of all Irish lawsuits, was ultimately settled by a decision of the Irish House of Lords (to which the supreme appellate jurisdiction in Irish legal cases had just been restored) in 1783. The decision was in favour of Henry, 4th Viscount Loftus, who in 1771 had been created Earl of Ely (of the second creation). The case, indeed, brought the newly restored appellate jurisdiction into disrepute, because one indigent peer, Lord Strangford, unsuccessfully offered his vote to the highest bidder. It must also have saddled the Fermanagh estate with enormous legal costs and made its administration virtually impossible during the period 1769-1783, when the tenants did not know to which landlord they should 'attorn' and pay rent, and some of them probably paid rent to neither.



The extent and value of the Hume estates

The Hume estates were well worth fighting for. In 1713, Sir Gustavus Hume's estate had been credited with the same rental as that of Sir Nicholas Loftus of Fethard – £1,500 a year. In 1729 the former had a rental of £3,000, and in 1736 the latter had a rental of the same amount. A schedule to the settlement made on the second marriage of Henry, Earl of Ely in 1775 gives the following figures for the Hume acreage and rental: the manor of Hamilton, Co. Leitrim (later known as the Glenfarne estate), containing 17,384 (Irish) acres at a rental of £2,115; the manors of Tully and Ardgart, Co. Fermanagh, containing 17,810 acres at a rental of £3,331; and the manors of Castle Hume and Moyglass, Co. Fermanagh, containing 4,122 acres at a rental of £2,153. This makes a grand total of 38,317 acres at a rental of £7,498, subject to 'fees' (which presumably include head rents) of £345. Glenfarne had come into the family through the marriage of Sir John Hume, 2nd Bt (d.1695) and Sidney (d.1686), daughter and co-heiress of James Hamilton of Manor Hamilton. It was later, probably c.1806, settled on Lord Robert Ponsonby Tottenham, second son of the 1st Marquess of Ely, Bishop of Killaloe, 1804-1820, of Ferns, 1820-1822, and of Clogher, 1822-1850.



The end of Castle Hume

The main casualty of Loftus -v- Hume was the house and demesne of Castle Hume. When the Rev. Richard Twiss was rowed along Lough Erne in 1775, it was still the most 'conspicuous' seat adorning the lough. '... "What a spot to build on and form a retreat from the business and anxiety of the world": such were the thoughts of Arthur Young [quoted by Alistair Rowan], as he [too] was rowed past Lord Ely's wooded estate in Sir James Caldwell's barge in 1776. He envied the proprietor, who then used the estate simply to derive a periodical profit, felling the trees with "sacrilegious axe" and ignoring its picturesque potential. ...' Obviously, Young whose Tour was of the whistle-stop variety, had not bothered to obtain basic information from Sir James Caldwell, who owned the neighbouring estate of Castle Caldwell, near Belleek, and would have been able to tell him all about Loftus -v- Hume. Castle Hume, as has been seen, was neglected until c.1813, and it would seem that the Elys had no proper Fermanagh seat until the 1830s. This was not just because of the cost of the lawsuit; it was also because of the cost of their lavish building enterprises in the Dublin area.



Rathfarnham Castle

Henry, Earl of Ely, was a pivotal figure in family history, not just because he grimly fought and won Loftus -v- Hume. In 1767, Nicholas the Idiot had acquired for £17,500 from the great-nephew and successor of Speaker William Conolly a perpetuity lease of the oldest Loftus family property in Ireland, Rathfarnham Castle. It was, however, Henry, Earl of Ely who completely re-modelled the house (now being restored to its c.1770 splendour by the Office of Public Works in Dublin).

His work has been fully described by Dr Edward McParland in an article on Rathfarnham Castle in *Country Life*, 9 September 1982. His architects were no lesser figures than Sir William Chambers and James ('Athenian') Stewart, Angelica Kauffman did some of the decorative painting (and also painted a number of family portraits for the house) and another artist, John Baptist Cuvillie did the rest. In this new mansion Henry, Earl of Ely entertained in a grand style, endeavouring to inveigle the newly widowed Lord Lieutenant, the 3rd Viscount Townshend, into marriage with Lady Ely's niece.



Angelica, Kauffman



Ely House, Dublin



Ely House



He also, in 1771-1772, built himself a large and magnificent Dublin town-house, Ely House, in Ely Place, off Hume Street and St Stephens Green. It has been since 1922 the Irish headquarters of the Knights of St Columbus, who have restored it to its original splendour. Its location, and the fact that the 1st Marquess of Ely had a house in Hume Street, where he died in 1806, shows that it was part of a Hume estate in Dublin City. Ely House itself passed to Henry, Earl of Ely's widow, who sold it in 1809.

Henry, Earl of Ely in Irish politics

Henry, Earl of Ely also played a significant role in the political advancement of his family. He had been M.P. for Bannow, 1747-1768, and for Co. Wexford, 1768-1769, and was a Governor of both Cos Wexford and Fermanagh, and Custos Rotulorum for Co. Wexford. These were purely local achievements. In the sphere of national politics, Henry, Earl of Ely was the first head of the family to establish a separate Loftus party in the Irish House of Commons.

This was symptomatic of events during the prolonged political crisis which characterised the Lord Lieutenancy of the 4th Viscount Townshend, 1767-1772. Townshend found himself compelled to break the power of the so-called 'undertakers' or major power-brokers, including the Loftuses' cousin and erstwhile patron, John Ponsonby, Speaker of the House of Commons. Townshend courted and rewarded the minor interests at the expense of the major, and Henry, 4th Viscount Loftus's reward for deserting Speaker Ponsonby was the re-creation of the Earldom of Ely in 1771. Where, however, the Loftus party differed from most of the others which were advanced in this period was that – with the command of at least eight votes in the House of Commons – they were actually a major interest in their own right. They acted as such for the rest of the life of the Irish Parliament.



Charles Tottenham Loftus, 1st Marquess of Ely (1738-1806)

When Henry, Earl of Ely died, with no surviving issue, in 1783, all his peerages became extinct, and the family went back to the beginning again. The heir to all his estates was his sister's son, Charles Tottenham, who assumed the name of Loftus, and began the painful process of using his electoral interest to secure the re-creation of the family honours. In this endeavour he was the most successful Loftus of all, attaining the new height of a marquessate and a U.K. barony in 1801.

Much remains to be learned about his role, as Governor and Custos Rotulorum of Co. Wexford and a leading landowner in the south of the county, in the troubled times before and after the '98 Rebellion. He seems to have kept free of violent partisanship and ultra-loyalism (which some of the Tottenhamams did not). Indeed, he was looked upon as an ally by 'liberal' Protestants like Cornelius Crogan (later executed for his reluctant participation in the rebellion) and by the local Catholic bishop, Dr Caulfield. In other respects, it is hard to find much to admire about Charles Tottenham Loftus, 1st Baron and Viscount Loftus, 1st Earl and Marquess of Ely, and 1st Baron Loftus in the peerage of the U.K.



*Charles, 1st Marquess
of Ely*



The 1st Marquess and the Act of Union

At the time of the Union, he deservedly earned the contempt of both sides by remaining 'undecided' for as long as possible, in order to extort higher bounty - in his own case the marquessate and the U.K. barony, and jobs innumerable for his sons and political followers. The Union yielded them the immediate cash benefit of £45,000, in compensation for the disfranchisement of the boroughs of Bannow, Clonmines and Fethard. But this loss of political real estate deprived subsequent Marquesses of Ely of their best hope of well-remunerated office for themselves and other family members, such as the office of Joint Postmaster-General for Ireland, which the 1st Marquess held between 1789 and his death in 1806, the Lordship of the Irish Treasury held by his elder son (in consequence of a Union 'engagement') between 1800 and 1806, and the bishopric conferred on his second son in 1804 (also in consequence of the Union).



A family struggling to keep up

After the Union and his death in 1806, his successors gravitated towards England, mainly because most of their Irish political influence had vanished with Union disenfranchisements. But with a total (seriously encumbered) rental of only £24,000 from all their Irish estates in 1873, and little hope of supplementing their income by obtaining office, they were able only with difficulty to sustain the rank of marquess. Their further difficulty was that their Irish estates were located at opposite ends of the country, with the result that, if they were to play the part which was their due in county society and politics, they really required family seats in both Wexford and Fermanagh. In the early 19th century their success in County Wexford elections ran out; and the Great Reform Act put paid to their post-Union nomination to a seat for Wexford borough in alternate parliaments. As a result, Co. Fermanagh became as politically inviting to them as Co. Wexford in the years after 1832.



Ely Lodge, Co. Fermanagh

In the 1830s, the lack of a seat in Co. Fermanagh was made good, when, as Bence-Jones writes in *Burke's Guide to Irish Country Houses* (London, 1978), '... a new house was built a couple of miles away [from the ruin of Castle Hume], on a promontory in Lough Erne, by the 2nd Marquess of Ely and named Ely Lodge. To provide stone for it, the main block of Castle Hume was demolished' 'Ely ... [Lodge, Rowan resumes, was] a large classical house, for which William Farrell prepared a number of schemes before the house was begun. The main front was a five-bay, two-storey, stuccoed block with Tuscan pilasters and a central, columned porch. On either side were single-storeyed bowed wings. ...' The building of Ely Lodge was accompanied and indeed made possible by the abandonment of Rathfarnham Castle, Co. Dublin; Bence-Jones notes that '... By 1837 the castle had been emptied of its furniture and pictures, and its then owner, the 2nd Marquess of Ely, was planning to demolish it ...'. Lord Ely certainly moved some of the pictures - perhaps all of them and the furniture too - to the newly built Ely Lodge.

Ely Lodge lasted for just over thirty years. In 1870, for a series of possible reasons summarised by Rowan as '(i) an unwelcome visit from Queen Victoria, (ii) the discovery of the agent's fiddling, and (iii) the building of a bigger and better house, it was blown up as the climax of the festivities that marked the coming-of-age of the 4th Marquess, who had succeeded to the estate as a boy of eight. ...'

'In the event [concludes Bence-Jones], the new house was never built, doubtless for the reason that the ... [4th Marquess] spent too much money on rebuilding his other seat, Loftus Hall, Co. Wexford. ...' But the stable block at Ely Lodge was converted to domestic use by at least 1884 (because of the way it is described in the 4th Marquess's will, which was made in that year), and the converted building was called Ely Lodge and became in time a seat of the family until sold by the 7th Marquess in 1947. All that remains today, of the 1830s Ely Lodge are two of Farrell's gatelodges.



Loftus Hall, Co. Wexford

Mark Bence-Jones describes the new Loftus Hall as '... A gaunt, three-storey mansion of 1871, with rows of plate-glass windows and a balustraded parapet, incorporating parts of the previous house here, which was late 17th century or early 18th century. [This earlier house was] gable-ended and of two storeys and nine bays, with a dormered roof and a steep pediment-gable. It was fronted by a forecourt with tall piers surmounted by ball finials, and had a haunted tapestry room. The ... [site of both houses is] near the tip of the Hook Head, and [they] must have been ... [among] the most wind-swept noblemen's seats in the British Isles. "No tree will grow above the shelter of the walls", Bishop Pococke observed of Loftus Hall in ... [1752] and the same is true of the place today. ...'



*Jane, Marchioness of
Ely*

Bence-Jones is kind in his comments on the interior of Loftus Hall. In his *Companion Guide to Architecture in Ireland, 1837-1921* (Dublin, 1994), Jeremy Williams observes, perhaps more aptly: '... Some traces survive internally of the 17th century house it replaced. All the front rooms are grouped around the top-lit staircase hall, where a heavy, carved and inlaid Jacobean-style staircase rises laboriously to a surrounding gallery with columns of stunted Corinthian ...' made of wood. Although the bleakness of the site defeated this purpose in advance, the house – particularly on the inside – looks as if it was intended to be an Irish Osborne, and was probably built very much under the influence of his mother, Jane, Dowager Marchioness of Ely, who was Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Victoria, 1851-1890.



Increasing Anglicisation

The family had other residences to maintain as well. The 1st Marquess of Ely was probably the last to maintain a Dublin town-house, and thereafter the town-house was in London. At some point, too, a property called Kearsney Abbey, near Dover, Kent, worth £600 a year in 1883, was acquired.

The 2nd Marquess of Ely (1770-1845) made an English marriage, to a daughter of Sir Henry Watkin Dashwood, 3rd Bt, of Kirtlington, Oxfordshire, who held household appointments under Queen Charlotte and Queen Adelaide. His portrait, after Lawrence, hangs today in the dining-room at Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire, now a property of the National Trust, because his daughter Charlotte, married the 1st Lord Egerton of Tatton. His son, the 3rd Marquess (1814-1845), married a Scottish wife, Jane, daughter of J.J. Hope-Vere of Craigie, Midlothian, who was widowed young, in 1857, and was the long-serving and influential Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Victoria. Her son, the 4th Marquess (1849-1889), who succeeded as a minor at the age of eight, died young and childless in 1889, pre-deceasing his mother by a year.



A bankrupt marquess

The successor to the marquessate was a remote cousin, who was declared a bankrupt in 1882 and was still a bankrupt in 1894, and so was debarred from his seat in the House of Lords. This is surprising, granted that almost all the 4th Marquess's estates in Cos Wexford and Fermanagh passed to his successor in the title. However, they were charged with debts of c.£120,000 and a jointure of £3,000 a year to the 4th Marquess's widow, who lived until 1917 (the third Ely widow to saddle the estates with a jointure over an unusually long period of time). According to information provided by the present Marquess of Ely, his branch of the family lived for much of the 20th century on a property in North Wales which they owned or inherited, and therefore did not bother much with the dwindling Irish estates. The 7th Marquess, however, who succeeded in 1953, was in great demand at Fermanagh hunt balls because of his prowess as an amateur trumpeter.



An ignominious end

In this ignominious way, one of the great political families of 18th-century Ireland petered out. Its political influence had been used on the whole for venal rather than for any constructive purpose, and a good deal of its dirty linen had been washed in public in the course of Loftus -v- Hume. Nevertheless, it had thrown up two considerable politicians in the persons of the two Lords Chancellor, two distinguished patrons of architecture in the persons of Sir Gustavus Hume and Henry, Earl of Ely, and a significant courtier in the person of Jane, Marchioness of Ely.



The Ely papers

As already noted, there is no one major deposit of Ely papers: instead, material has been deposited seriatim in PRONI by two different firms of solicitors and a bank, and older and more significant material than usual is to be found in the section of the Northern Ireland Land Registry archive which relates to the Ely estate.



The Enniskillen solicitor's archive

The estate office type archive deposited piecemeal by the Marquess of Ely's Enniskillen solicitors, Messrs Cooper & Cooper (D496, D527, D535, D580 [part] and T1041/20), relates mainly, but not exclusively, to the Fermanagh estate, 1641 and 1724-1844.

It includes: a photocopy of the will of William Hore of Harperstown, Co. Wexford, 1744 (T1041/20); 2 Wexford estate leases, of Rath and Richfield (Henry, Earl of Ely's former seat) respectively, 1761 and 1763; a petition from the corporation, merchants and traders of Wexford to the Commissioners of the Revenue seeking the establishment of lighthouses on the south side of Dublin Bay, 1766; a recovery suffered by the [2nd] Earl of Ely of Knocknegad, Queen's County, Trinity 1767; a renewal to him by the Rt Hon. Thomas Conolly of a perpetuity lease of the castle and park of Rathfarnham, Co. Dublin, 9 November 1767 (all bearing reference D580); and a bundle of solicitor's correspondence, abstracts of deeds, abstracts of title, pedigree of the Loftus family, etc, 1844, all relating to the possibility that the 2nd Marquess of Ely is the rightful owner of various advowsons (e.g. Kilcloggan), in Co. Wexford (D527). There are also some later Ely documents of title in D580 relating not exclusively or at all to the Fermanagh estate, and the original of a will of the 2nd Marquess of Ely, 3 May 1813.

One isolated item relating to the Hume, formerly Hamilton estate in Co. Leitrim is a power of attorney from Sir John Vaughan of Londonderry to Sir Frederick Hamilton of Manor Hamilton, Co. Leitrim, 1641 (D580/1).

The Fermanagh estate material includes: a rental of the Hume estates in Co. Fermanagh, the property of Nicholas Hume Loftus Esq. (later 1st Earl of Ely), 1742-1743 (D535); the important maps of Castle Hume and adjacent townlands, by Richard Frizell, 1768, which provide the best surviving evidence for what the Richard Castle house looked like (D496 - the remaining documents to which reference is made will be found under D580); c.75 leases of the Fermanagh estate from Sir Gustavus Hume, 3rd Bt, and Nicholas Hume Loftus, 1724-1748; a series of c.60 maps of parts of the Fermanagh estate, made in May 1769, obviously with a view to a re-letting; a series of 115 new leases granted by Nicholas Hume Loftus, 2nd Earl of Ely, May-June 1769; a further series of c.85 leases, 1770-1807, the first of them granted by Henry, 4th Viscount Loftus, and the last by the 2nd Marquess of Ely; a grant of administration to Henry, 4th Viscount Loftus, 'of the goods and so forth of Nicholas Hume, Earl of Ely, deceased ..., pending suit ...' instituted by George Rochfort Hume and his wife, Alice, 26 December 1769; and a rental of part of the Fermanagh estate, 1793.



The Dublin solicitor's archive

The Barrington & Son papers deposited in PRONI (D3805) run from 1630 to 1932, and derive from Northern or Co. Louth clients of this (now defunct) Dublin and Limerick firm of solicitors, including the Marquesses of Ely.

The Ely papers comprise title deeds, deeds of settlement and leases of the Loftus estates in the parishes of Fethard, Hook and Templetown, Co. Wexford, 1637-1928, and at Rathfarnham, Co. Dublin, and in Dublin City (the site of Ely House in Ely Place, off Hume Street), 1767-1770, and to the Hume, subsequently Loftus, estates of Ardgart, Castle Hume, Church Hill, Drumcose, Moyglass and Tully, Co. Fermanagh, and in Cos Leitrim and Mayo, 1630 and 1706-1928. They also include a rental of the Hume estates in those three counties, 1775, and Fermanagh and Wexford rentals of the 4th Marquess of Ely, 1873. The earliest title deed is not present in the original, but is a non-contemporary of a patent from Charles I to Sir George Hume, 1st Bt, 1630, re-granting him lands in Co. Fermanagh. This is part of a bundle of papers about drainage and fishing rights in connection with Lough Erne, Co. Fermanagh, 1879-1925. In addition, there are Irish Land Commission sale papers for both the Fermanagh and Wexford estates, c.1880-1930.

Formal documents include a freeman's ticket for the Wexford borough, 1703, an important oath roll for the borough of Bannow, 1774-1793, and a patent appointing John Loftus, 2nd Marquess of Ely, Custos Rotulorum for Co. Wexford, 1824.

The papers include a number of pre-1858 wills. These, in chronological order, are as follows: probate (1754) of the will (1753) of James Crawford Esq. of Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh; (subsequently revoked) codicil to the will of Nicholas [Loftus, 1st] Viscount Loftus (of the second creation), 1760; 'A codicil dated the 26 day of July 1763 to Lord Loftus's will, which bears date the 23rd March 1758' (a document of more than ordinary interest because of the extensive provision it makes for illegitimate children, including the Loftuses of Mount Loftus, Co. Kilkenny); prerogative grant of administration to the goods of the late Nicholas, [1st] Earl of Ely, to his younger brother, Henry [4th] Viscount Loftus, 1769; copy probate (1773) of the will (1769) of Nicholas Hume [2nd] Earl of Ely; copy extracts from the will of Henry, Earl of Ely, 1777; copy grant of probate to the will of Henry, Earl of Ely, 1783; and copy will of John [Loftus, 2nd] Marquess of Ely, 1840.



The London solicitor's archive

This bears reference T2904 and was copied by permission of Messrs Lethbridge. It comprises genealogical notes on the Loftus family, c.1500-c.1790, and schedules of Ely Settle Estates in Cos Fermanagh and Wexford, 1928.



The Ely patents of peerage, 1751-1801

The patents of peerage in D3130 constitute a remarkable sample of this art form (and of the related art form of the patent box). They comprise: the patent creating Nicholas Loftus Baron Loftus of Loftus Hall, 5 October [1751], reciting at considerable length the reasons for his elevation to the peerage, in a patent box made by John Wilson, Winetavern Street, Dublin; the patent creating Nicholas Baron Loftus Viscount Loftus of Ely, 19 July [1756]; the patent creating Nicholas Viscount Loftus Earl of Ely, 23 October [1766], with a royal portrait, full arms of the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Hertford, and of Ely himself, and abbreviated arms of the Lords Justices, Lord Chancellor Bowes, the Earl of Drogheda and Speaker John Ponsonby; the patent creating Henry Viscount Loftus Earl of Ely, 2 December [1771], with a royal portrait and full arms of the Lord Lieutenant, Viscount Townshend, and of Ely himself; a photostat copy of the patent creating John Tottenham of Tottenham Green, Co. Wexford, a baronet of Ireland, 18 December [1780]; the patent creating Charles Tottenham Loftus Baron Loftus of Loftus Hall, 28 June [1785], with a royal portrait, and the full arms of the Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Rutland, and of Loftus himself; the patent creating Charles Baron Loftus Viscount Loftus of Ely, 28 December [1789], in a patent box made by Charles Tennant at the Sign of the Royal Trunk, Merchants Quay, Dublin; the patent creating Charles Viscount Loftus Earl of Ely, 2 March [1794], with a royal portrait, and full arms of the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Westmoreland, and of Ely himself, in a patent box made by John Barnes, trunk-maker, formerly of London, now of 40 Fishamble Street, [Dublin]; and a photostat copy of the patent creating Charles Earl of Ely Marquess of Ely, 1 January [1801].



The Land Registry archive

The 14 boxes of Irish Land Commission sale papers in the Land Registry archive in PRONI which relate to the estate of the Marquess of Ely run from 1810 to 1928 and bear reference LR1/9/4A/13, LR1/9L/1-4, LR1/980/3 and LR1/1256/1. They mainly contain run-of-the-mill ILC sale papers from the 1880s to the 1920s. This all relates to the Fermanagh estate only, as might be expected. However, the abstracts of title to the Ely estates relate to those in Cos Wexford and at Rathfarnham, Co. Dublin, as well, and go back to the will of Henry, Earl of Ely, dated 1778, under the terms of which all his real estate was devised to his nephew, Charles Tottenham Loftus, later 1st Marquess of Ely.

The Ely estate material is also unusually rich in pre-Land Purchase documents. These include deeds of settlement, bonds, mortgages, conveyances and a few leases. The earliest original document is the settlement made prior to the marriage of the 2nd Marquess of Ely and Anna Maria Dashwood in 1810. A couple of conveyances of 1824 relate to the site of the new Devenish parish church. Altogether, this is a rich source for the history of the family's finances and fortunes from 1778 onwards, and some of the deeds are also useful because they provide, in the form of schedules, alphabetically arranged lists of the townlands comprising the Fermanagh and Wexford estates. In the case of the Fermanagh estate, just such a list has already been reproduced, transcribed from one of the schedules to the marriage settlement of the 4th Marquess, dated 1875.



Miscellaneous Ely papers

These comprise: a bundle of 10 maps, valuations, deeds, etc, 1815-1871, relating to the Fermanagh estate, including a tithe composition rental for the parish of Innishmacsaint, 1834, 2 maps by Robert Kerr of Teernanger Beg, 1843, and Tonagh, N.D., valuations of Ardgart, Knockravan, Church Hill and Innishmacsaint parishes (D962); and Irish Land Commission sale papers, 1875-1930, including an abstract of title from c.1800 to 1844, a file of solicitor's correspondence, 1912-1930, and other papers relating to the sale of the Fermanagh estate under the Wyndham Act of 1903 (D1096/45).

