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# **INTRODUCTION**

# **MacGEOUGH BOND PAPERS**

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# MacGeough Bond Papers (D288)

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## Summary

The MacGeough Bond papers of c.2950 documents and c.100 volumes, 1678 and 1962-1977, relating to the family's estates and houses in Co. Armagh (Drumsill, near Armagh City, and The Argory, near Moy, on the Armagh/Tyrone border), at Ballytristan, Co. Down, at Churchtown, Co. Westmeath, and at Water Eaton, Fairford, Gloucestershire, and also relating to the political, professional and collecting activities of individual members of the family from c.1785, particularly Sir Walter Adrian MacGeough Bond of The Argory, a judge in Egypt from 1888 to 1916.

The archive was deposited in PRONI in two unequal instalments, separated by nearly sixty years (in 1931 and 1989 respectively). The first instalment consisted of over 250 documents and 12 volumes 1692-1861, mainly title deeds, leases, wills and case papers. After the curious practice adopted by PRONI in its early years, all documents which were not strictly speaking originals (even though they were contemporary or near-contemporary manuscript copies) were separated from the rest and given a T (for 'Transcript') reference number. In this instance the original documents were arranged and listed in strict chronological sequence under D288, and the 'transcripts' under T524. Because these two parallel lists are very detailed and the referencing system established by them has been extensively cited, the 1931 arrangement has not been disturbed. The 1931 deposit will be found at D288/1-D288/176 and T524/1-T524/71, and the 1989 deposit, which constitutes the bulk of the archive, at D288/A-H. In addition, and excluded from the foregoing calculations and description, there is among the Corr & O'Connor solicitors' archive a substantial quantity of MacGeough Bond estate and legal papers, 1748-1926 (D3012/2/2).



## Family history

Two useful and brief family histories of the MacGeough Bonds have appeared recently: the first, by Gervase Jackson-Stops, in *Country Life* for 30 June and 7 July 1983; the second, by P.O. Marlow, in the National Trust guidebook to *The Argory*, 1984. The following particulars are taken from a combination of these two sources.

'... A late-18th-century document among the family papers describes the ... [founder of the family fortunes], Joshua McGeough, as: 'an Old Gentleman of the County of Armagh [who] had by laudable industry, acquired a small Real Estate, and a considerable personal fortune worth in the whole about £100,000'. ... The earliest document linking *The Argory* lands, then known as *Derrycaw*, with the MacGeough family dates from the 1740s, when Joshua foreclosed the mortgage on the property from a family named Nicholson, who stayed on as tenants. The Land Steward's House, dated 1698, was therefore built by a previous owner. Joshua McGeough's principal house was *Drumsill*, near Armagh, now rebuilt as a hotel. He married Anne Graham, and their son William, the first of six children, first married Elizabeth Bond, the daughter and heiress of Walter Bond of *Bondville*, Co. Armagh. ... On ... [Joshua's] death in 1756, his house and estate at *Drumsill* ... passed to his elder son, William, who had married ... Elizabeth Bond, while *Derrycaw* went to his youngest son Samuel.

The latter, 'a Great Man, though only bred a Merchant, a Perfect Master of Dissimulation and Hypochrissy', raised large mortgages on *Derrycaw* in Dublin, and the estate was finally bought in 1779 by his nephew, Joshua MacGeough, William's only son. It was Joshua who rebuilt the house at *Drumsill* between 1786 and 1788, apparently to the design of the master-mason, William Lappan, and who commissioned Francis Johnston to add wings to it in 1805-1806, shown in two signed drawings now at *the Argory*.

Joshua McGeough died in 1817, leaving a curious will by which his eldest son William was given only £400 a year, while *Drumsill* was left to the second son Walter and the three daughters. Walter was not, however, permitted to live there after his marriage as long as two of his sisters remained unmarried. Isabella died later in the same year, leaving Walter her jointure of £10,000, but Mary Ann and Eliza lived on as rich spinsters at *Drumsill* (with £20,000 each) for the rest of their lives. ... Walter McGeough, who had become a barrister after graduating from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1811, must have realised that his sisters were unlikely to marry, or to give up *Drumsill*. He therefore lost no time in adding to the land he had inherited at *Derrycaw*, and building a new house there - later to be known as *The Argory*. Work was begun in 1819, and the main block and offices were more or less complete by 1824, when he assumed the additional name and arms of Bond, from 'affectionate regard to the family of his deceased grandmother'.

Francis Johnston would have been an obvious choice of architect for Walter McGeough's new house. Not only had he designed the alterations to *Drumsill*, he was also a native of Armagh, and a relation of Walter's mother, Anne Johnston of *Nappa*. But Johnston had by this time retired from his practice, and was devoting his

last years to collecting, and to promoting his brainchild, the Royal Hibernian Academy. Almost certainly on his recommendation, McGeough therefore approached two young architects in Dublin, John and Arthur Williamson, at the same time employing Thomas Duff of Newry, a capable architect in his own right, to oversee the contractors and act as an independent assessor and measurer of the work done. The main series of drawings and building accounts were probably destroyed in the fire of 1898, which gutted the octagonal library at the northern end of the house ... . But several of Duff's letters to Walter McGeough survive, describing the progress made, referring to the Williamsons as 'your architects', and also to Francis Johnston acting as the arbitrator in 1823 in a dispute with the Dublin stonemason, Ballantine. ...

Walter McGeough Bond ... was High Sheriff [of Co. Armagh] in 1819 ... . He married Mary Joy of Belfast in 1816 but she died in 1829. They had one daughter. The following year he married Anne Smyth of Gaybrook, Co. Westmeath, and by her had six children. ... Since his eldest son, Joshua Walter, had already inherited Drumsill from his spinster aunts, The Argory was left to the second, Ralph, who adopted the additional name of Shelton, after a distant relation who may have left him some money. Captain Shelton is memorably recorded in Burke's Landed Gentry of Ireland as having 'survived the wreck of the troopship 'Birkenhead' by keeping his trousers on (the sharks having first attacked those without protection)', and the steam yacht which he kept on the river Blackwater was appropriately christened the 'Birkenhead' to commemorate this lucky escape. ... In ... [1873] he married Caroline Molesworth, and it was under his ownership that most of the alterations to the house were carried out in the late 19th century.

When Captain Shelton died without issue in 1916, Walter Adrian MacGeough Bond, who had already inherited Drumsill in 1905, inherited The Argory. He moved much of the contents of Drumsill to The Argory and sold Drumsill in 1917. He was a lawyer, ending his career as Vice-President of the Court of Appeal in Cairo, and was knighted for his services. In 1901 he married Ada Marion, daughter of Charles Nichols of Dunedin, New Zealand, a founding partner of Dalgety, Nichols and Co. Their son, Walter Albert Nevill MacGeough Bond, was born in 1908 and attended Eton and King's College, Cambridge. He ... [was] one of the Deputy Lieutenants for Co. Armagh. Long a student and patron of the arts, his and his family's interest in music is reflected throughout the house. He ... formed a large personal art collection, including many works by Ulster artists'.



## Title deeds

The title deed material among the papers amounts to more than 150 items, 1678, 1713-1818 and 1892, as follows: deeds/leases relating to Allistragh, 1678 and 1774-1778, and Tirgarve, 1763 [parts of the Drumsill estate]; deed of mortgage and one other paper relating to Lislea, Co. Armagh, 1747 and ND; leases and deeds relating to Ballyheridan, Co. Armagh, of which the Graham family [into which Joshua MacGeough I, grandfather of Joshua MacGeough of Drumsill, married] were head tenants under the see of Armagh and the MacGeoughs sub-tenants, 1748, 1756 and 1846 (the sub-lease of 1748 containing a fine integral map by John Bell of Cootehill, [Co. Cavan]; original and copy deeds and related papers concerning Derrycaw/The Argory, 1761 and 1777-1818, acquired by Joshua MacGeough of Drumsill in 1779 via mortgages raised on the property by his uncle, Samuel MacGeough; deeds, etc, relating to Tullyvallen Tipping, 1765-1800, and fine of the whole Mounthill estate, Co Armagh, 1794, recently sold by Francis Tipping of Bellurgan Park, Co. Louth, to Joshua MacGeough for £22,845; deeds, etc, relating to the inn and other premises in Armagh City, 1757, 1820 and 1826; deeds, etc, relating to 'Tiretragh alias Tiragh', Co. Armagh, 1768-1771 and 1791; two deeds of mortgage to William MacGeough [of Armagh, father of Joshua] and to Joshua respectively, of 'Drumgallow', Killylyn, etc, Co. Armagh, 1783 and 1791; and original bundle of deeds relating to Joshua Walter MacGeough Bond's purchase of Drumcairn, Co. Armagh, 1892.

The non-Irish title deeds comprise: numerous non-contemporary copies of deeds and settlements relating to the estates of the Fox, later Fox-Strangways, family, Earls of Ilchester, mainly in Dorset and Wiltshire, but including the Water Eaton estate, Fairford, Gloucestershire, [subsequently acquired by the MacGeough Bond family], 1713, 1737 and 1779-1802.



## **Leases under the see of Armagh**

Because the MacGeoughs and their connections were prominent tenants of the see of Armagh, their title deeds also include c.200 leases of lands in Co. Armagh from successive Archbishops, as follows: two leases of Kilcarn, Eglis, etc, to Joseph Johnston, 1764 and 1771; lease of 'Tiretragh, alias Tiragh', to the executors of Edward Bond deceased, 1777; lease of Tireagerty to the same, 1777; five leases of Kilcarn, Mullantur, etc, to Joshua MacGeough, 1790-1795 (no. '81'); 14 leases of Lislea, etc, to William MacGeough, 1769-1795 (no. '127'); 15 leases of Tirgarve, Drumsill, etc, to William MacGeough, 1769-1795 (no. '129'); 18 leases of Ballyheridan, etc, to Joshua MacGeough, 1771-95 (no. '130'); 81 leases of the lands hitherto leased separately in nos. 81, 127, 129 and 130 above, to Joshua MacGeough and Walter MacGeough Bond successively, 1796-1862; 39 leases of Ballymartrim, etc, to William MacGeough, Joshua MacGeough and Walter MacGeough Bond successively, 1769-1826; and 11 leases of Umgola to John Scott of Umgola, 1797-1812.



## **Leases granted by the MacGeough Bonds**

The leases from the MacGeough Bond family run from 1759 to 1930, as follows: c.15 leases of part of Ballyheridan, 1759, 1817, 1824 and 1862-1875; 25 leases of Drumarg, alias Down, outside Armagh City, 1780-1873; c.15 leases, with related correspondence, of Allistragh, 1792, 1824 and 1873-1876; six leases of Tirgarve, 1819-1859; three leases of Altnamackan and other parts of the Mounthill estate, 1824, 1858 and 1864; five leases, etc, of Cortamlet, mainly relating to a site for a Presbyterian church, 1856-1862; and 11 leases of miscellaneous townlands, including Eglis, Killyman and Tullyelmer, 1793, 1819-1886 and 1930.



## Legal case papers

The MacGeough Bonds, particularly Joshua MacGeough of Drumsill, seem to have been litigious even by Irish standards. In consequence the archive contains c.130 case papers, counsel's opinions, bills of cost, etc, in connection with litigation in which members of the family were engaged, 1746-1902. In bulk, nearly one-quarter of this material consists of case papers, 1763-c.1795, over the Bondville estate, Co. Armagh, disputed between William and Joshua MacGeough [respectively husband and son of Elizabeth Bond (d.1765), the Bondville heiress], on the one hand, and illegitimate Bonds on the other; and another quarter consists of case papers in *Townley v Bond*, 1823-1843, a lawsuit over the townland of Altnamackan, Co. Armagh, purchased by Joshua MacGeough in 1794 as part of the Mounthill estate, Co. Armagh, of Francis Tipping of Bellurgan Park, Co. Louth, and hinging on the status of an anterior lease granted by the Tipping family.

Several of the other case papers and lawsuits likewise concern leases, and also wills, settlements, a bankruptcy (that of Thomas Knox Hannington in 1816), etc, and they include a largely original bundle of case papers and accounts relating to 'Ballynacross' and Ballytristan, Co. Down, 1817-1829, and a bill of costs of 1886 to Capt. E.S. MacGeough Bond amounting to £1,226 incurred as a result of the successful divorce proceedings which he took against his wife.



## **Marriage settlement and wills**

Another c.130 documents, 1756-1902, consist of marriage settlements and related papers, and wills and testamentary papers. The former include: the settlements made on the two marriages of Joshua MacGeough of Drumsill, in 1781 and 1785 respectively, the first of which produced a dispute over the share of his wife, Elizabeth Johnston of Nappa, Co. Armagh, in that property, 1783; the settlement on the marriage of Walter MacGeough Bond of The Argory and Mary Isabella Joy, 1826; and two subsequent legal papers about settlements, 1872 and 1874.

The wills and testamentary papers are almost all post-1858, but they include the probate (1756) of the will (1755) of Joshua MacGeough I (grandfather of Joshua MacGeough of Drumsill), the probate (1791) of the will (1788) of William MacGeough of Armagh, and a bundle of executorship papers and counsel's opinions, 1815-1817, 1829 and 1840, concerning the idiosyncratic will (1817) of Joshua MacGeough of Drumsill (of which there is a draft and a copy in the bundle).



## **Formal documents**

There are also c.60 formal documents, with related correspondence and accounts, 1776 and 1819-1953, in connection with the shrievalty, commission of the peace and deputy lieutenancy for Co. Armagh, all or some of which offices were held by successive generations of the MacGeough Bond family, and to the military commissions held by various members of the family, notably Capt. Ralph MacGeough Bond Shelton.



## **Architectural material and inventories of contents**

Perhaps the most significant section of the archive, granted that The Argory is now a National Trust property, is the architectural and household material. This consists of 11 volumes and c.175 documents (inventories, household account books, bills, accounts, receipts and correspondence), mainly relating to The Argory and Drumsill and their contents, 1771-1909 and 1968.

It includes a miscellaneous account book of Joshua MacGeough, partly recording foreign travel, 1771-1778, re-used by his second son and principal heir, Walter MacGeough [later MacGeough Bond], as a servant's wages book [for The Argory], 1819-1827, two subsequent servants' wages books, 1827-1840, and another account book of Walter McGeough Bond, 1814-1822, which includes, under the year 1822, a payment of '£45 to Mr [Thomas] Kirk for sculpture'; a bundle of estimates, bills, receipts, correspondence and inventories relating to the building of Drumsill and the purchasing of furniture, plate, etc, for it, 1783-1817, most of them involving the master mason and architect, William Lappan of Armagh or his client, Joshua MacGeough; two further inventories of Drumsill, 1857 and 1894; c.10 accounts and letters to Walter MacGeough Bond about his building work on the New Inn, English Street, Armagh, 1820-1824; six letters or bills to Walter MacGeough Bond from John Dwyer of Upper Camden Street, [an architect?], and others relating to the staircase, hall, stove, and other building works [at The Argory], 1821 and 1823-1827; eight letters and a detailed account from Thomas Duff of Newry [acting as overseer rather than architect in this instance] to Walter MacGeough Bond relating to the building of The Argory, 1823; c.15 accounts for building and carpentry work on The Argory, 1825-1826; two letters about a bridge [Bond's Bridge at The Argory?], 1827 and ND; lists, etc, of furniture and other objects purchased by Sir Walter MacGeough Bond in Cairo, 1909; letter to Sir Walter from the painter, Robert Ponsonby Staples, about the latter's portrait of Capt. Shelton, 1924; and details, 1979, of the private collection of the late W.A.N. MacGeough Bond as it stood in 1968.



## **Correspondence, 1747-1862**

In addition to the correspondence included among the architectural and household papers, there are c.750 letters, mainly of a business nature, for the period 1747-1862.

Apart from the more run-of-the-mill estate correspondence, these include: c.eight letters and papers of Joshua MacGeough relating to the Drumsill Yeomanry, 1798-1804; c.12 letters and bills to Miss Eliza MacGeough of Drumsill, 1822-1858, including two from her brother, Walter MacGeough Bond, one of them referring to the Armagh City election of 1832, the other complaining of Orange partisanship in the magistracy of Co. Armagh, 1835; three letters to Walter MacGeough Bond about The Argory school, 1833; and c.40 miscellaneous letters and receipts to Walter MacGeough Bond, 1819-1862, including one of 1821 about the Presbyterian clergy's address to George IV (and describing the MacGeough Bonds as 'one of the most respectable Dissenting families', one from T[homas] R[omney] Robinson of The Observatory, Armagh, 1823, one from John Hancock [agent to Lord Lurgan] (about Lough Neagh drainage), 1844, and one from [the 3rd Earl of] Gosford, 1850.

There are c.45 letters and papers of the Shanahan family (the family of Albertine MacGeough Bond, who married Joshua Walter MacGeough Bond of Drumsill in 1856, and was the mother of Sir Walter MacGeough Bond), 1811-c.1886, including: military papers of a Shanahan ancestor mainly relating to the Peninsular War, 1811-1814, French university degrees awarded to various Shanahans, 1839-1844, letters to Albertine MacGeough Bond from the 1st Marquess of Bristol (who stood godfather to her son, the future Sir Walter), c.1856-1857, etc, etc. (From the association with Lord Bristol, it is clear that this Shanahan family is connected with Michael Shanahan, clerk of works in the late 1770s and the 1780s to Lord Bristol's father, the Earl-Bishop of Derry, at Downhill, Co. Londonderry.)



## **Correspondence, 1877-1953**

The correspondence, etc, of a subsequent head of the family, Sir Walter William Adrian MacGeough Bond of The Argory (1857-1945), is almost as voluminous (c.475 items).

It consists of c.120 letters, case papers, diaries, newspapers, etc, relating to his official career as a barrister in Paris and London in 1884, a barrister in Egypt, 1885-1888, Judge of the Court of Appeal in Cairo, 1888, and Vice-President, 1899; the papers principally relate to his career as a judge in Cairo and include correspondence with Lord Kitchener over the setting up of a court of revision, 1912-1913, but also include a certain amount of material, mainly relating to Northern Ireland, subsequent to his retirement in 1916.

In addition, there are c.250 letters to Sir Walter MacGeough Bond from Beauchamp & Orr, his Dublin solicitors, Corr & O'Connor, his solicitors and agents at Crossmaglen, Co. Armagh, etc, etc, about estate and business affairs, 1916-1931; together with c.45 bills of cost from Beauchamp and Orr, 1906-1927, in connection with the sale of Drumsill House in 1917 and the sale, under the Land Acts, of Co. Armagh tenanted land at Drumsill, The Argory and Mounthill; and c.60 family and personal letters and papers of Sir Walter MacGeough Bond and his wife Ada, 1877-1953, including a couple of letters to his uncle, Capt. Ralph MacGeough Bond Shelton of The Argory, letters from Capt. Shelton to Sir Walter, letters to Sir Walter from a French nephew called Hector Recorbet who served in the 1914-1918 War, an account by Sir Walter of his early life, covering the period 1877-1878, etc, etc, etc.



## **Correspondence, 1940-1977**

Sir Walter MacGeough Bond's son and successor, the late Walter Albert Nevill MacGeough Bond of The Argory, who presented the house to the National Trust in 1979, is represented by c.85 letters, receipts, etc, about local and Northern Ireland affairs, 1940-1961, particularly in relation to the early days of the Second World War, and about his picture collection, c.1964-1977, including an original alphabetical box file of receipts in connection with the latter.



## Rentals and accounts

As with most 'big house' archives, bound and loose rentals and accounts are numerous, amounting in this case to c.65 volumes and c.425 documents, c. 1790-1930, and ranging from accounts with agents and stewards to accounts with London, Dublin, etc, bankers.

The papers include: 'Mr Pooler's rent book', 1770-1782, which appears to relate to the Bondville estate (or that part of it which passed to William MacGeough), and includes rentrolls for Eglish and 'Glengavelin'; indexed 'interest book' of William MacGeough (continued by Joshua MacGeough), 1774-1817; folio cash book of Joshua MacGeough, 1775-1817; volume used by Joshua MacGeough as a combination of rent receiving book and general cash book, 1778-1803; c.25 average-sized volumes of rentals and accounts, together with c.350 accounts, vouchers and letters, all relating to the estates of Joshua Walter MacGeough Bond of Drumsill, Capt. Ralph McGeough Bond Shelton of The Argory and Sir Walter MacGeough Bond of The Argory, in Cos Armagh, Tyrone and Westmeath, and at Water Eaton, Gloucestershire, 1862-1930; two accounts for the estate of [the 14th] Lord Louth [in Co. Louth and elsewhere, present in the archive because one or other of his maternal uncles, Joshua Walter MacGeough Bond of Drumsill or Ralph MacGeough Bond Shelton of The Argory, acted as one of the trustees for his estate], 1883-1889; TEN Drumsill workmen's account books and estate diaries (the latter mainly devoted to the activities of the workmen and labourers), 1861-1869; further Drumsill estate diary kept by Hugh Campbell, the bailiff, 1883; further workmen's account workmen's account books, one [for Drumsill], 1885-1890, the other [apparently for Drumsill], 1911; and 17 workmen's account books (four of them outside) for the Argory, 1908-1921; and a cash book of Kinlock, steward at The Argory, 1918-1923.



## **Miscellaneous**

The material which falls into none of the foregoing categories includes: a journal and account book, 1705-1706, kept by Edward Bond [of the Bondville family], mainly while travelling round England (Bristol, Wiltshire, Cambridge, etc); c.35 surveys and valuations, 1743-1892, including a valuation of the Bondville estate, 1774, a survey of Derrycaw, alias The Argory, by Daniel Graham, 1782, a series of valuations of Tullymore, 1787, Kilcarn 1789, the Tipping estate of [Mounthill], Mullaghduff, Altnamackan, Dorsy, etc, 1792, and two further valuations of parts of Dorsy, 1795 and 1800, and a map and survey of Tullyelmer by John Henry, 1791; and a newspaper cutting book and envelope containing printed voters' lists for the Armagh City election of 1859, at which Joshua Walter MacGeough Bond of Drumsill was elected, voters' lists, printed squibs and duplicated canvassing letters, all in connection with the Co. Armagh election of 1880, and newspaper cuttings and other printed matter relating to the operations of the Land Commission in Co. Armagh, 1882.

[See also Collections T524 and D3012/2/2].

NB: D288/1-D288/176 consists of papers of all descriptions (but principally title deeds, leases, wills and legal case papers) arranged in chronological order (and not thematically, like the rest of D288). To these should be added the rest of the 1931 deposit, which will be found at T524/1-T524/71.

