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INTRODUCTION

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Brookeborough Papers (D3004 and D998)

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Summary

The Brookeborough papers comprise c.3,500 documents, c.115 volumes and 6 outsize photographs and formal documents, 1575, 1639 and 1658-c.1975, deriving from the Brooke family of Colebrooke, Brookeborough, Co. Fermanagh, baronets and (from 1952) Viscounts Brookeborough.

D998 is, basically, the Colebrooke Estate Office archive, 1713-1951. D3004 also contains some estate material, particularly title deeds and leases, 1575 and 1639-1896 (D3004/A), but its principal and more important component is family and political papers, the majority of them deriving from Sir Basil Stanlake Brooke, 5th Bt, created Viscount Brookeborough in 1952, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, 1943-1963. Five minor previous deposits have been incorporated in it: D1029, T1358, D1478, D2316 and T2389. Another, larger previous deposit, T1042, has not been incorporated in D3004, although it has been superseded by it. Effectively, therefore, PRONI's holdings of Brookeborough Papers are now to be found at D998 and D3004.



Family history

The best, single source of Brooke family history is chapter one of Brian Barton's *Brookeborough: The Making of a Prime Minister* (Belfast, 1988), to which has been added extracts from Raymond Brooke's *The Brimming River* (Dublin, 1961), a source on which Dr Barton himself draws extensively.

'... The first Basil Brooke [1567-1633] ... was a soldier-adventurer who came to Ireland in the late 16th century He came as a captain in the English army bringing reinforcements to Ireland [in 1597], and later commanded a cavalry regiment under Sir Henry Docwra in the conquest of Ulster. He distinguished himself as a servitor during the Tyrone wars and was one of those selected by the King for a proportion of the plantation. He was knighted in 1619, styled of Magherabeg and Brooke Manor, [Co. Donegal], became a Governor of [Co.] Donegal, and later was a member of the commission ordered by Charles I to enquire into how thoroughly the undertakers had fulfilled the conditions of their grants.



Plantation Donegal

Thus the Brookes first entered Ireland under English arms and initially held their property in Donegal and not Fermanagh. The former was never really colonised. Due in part to its wildness and inaccessibility colonists proved reluctant to attempt settlement. In addition, Sir Arthur Chichester described its native population as a "people inclined to blood and trouble". In 1619, Pynnar recorded of estate after estate that nothing was built and that there were no British tenants. [According to] one historian ... : "it was the pluck, skill and tact of hard-bitten, experienced soldiers such as Sir Henry Folliott and Sir Basil Brooke, that held Donegal quiet and so gave protection to the infant colony". Certainly, the latter appears to have been an energetic, determined and resourceful planter, eager to establish himself permanently in his adopted home.

Sir Basil's grant of 1,000 acres was in a rugged precinct set aside for servitors and natives, and was "to be held forever ... as of the Castle of Dublin, in common socage and subject to the conditions of the plantation of Ulster". The land was of poor quality, the barony in which the land was located being described in the Book of Survey and Distribution fifty years later as "mountainous, boggy, rocky and with many ... ways hardly passable". By 1622, however, Brooke was reported as having repaired a round bawn of lime and stone, 13 feet high, 7 feet thick and 220 feet in compass, within which a house was standing which had been occupied by an English settler in 1619.

He also acquired other property. One of the written complaints of the Earl of Tyrconnell was that the Lord Deputy had appointed Capt. Brooke to live in his castle, and "constrained the Earl to accept such rents as he had given order of to the said Captain to pay and to pass a lease thereof and four acres of the best lands thereunto annexed, for one and twenty years unto the said Captain". By 1611, with the help of a royal grant, Brooke had repaired the castle, voluntarily built a bawn to enclose it, and a strong house of lime and stone adjacent to it. This relatively secure and less isolated dwelling he occupied with his English wife. Thirty-five British men were said to be present in Donegal town in 1622, their houses constructed "after the manner of the Pale". That same year a commission suggested that if Brooke had "the inheritance of the castle, he would make it a strong and defensible place for his Majesty's service as he affirmeth". He was in fact appointed constable of the castle and given the ownership of it and the town of Donegal, both of which were inherited, with his other property, in 1633 by his only son, Henry, who was then married and of full age.

The latter fulfilled the confidence which the commissioners had earlier expressed in his father. During the rising of 1641, he was successful in "preserving from plunder" the town and castle and the surrounding district. He afterwards fought on the parliamentary side in the Civil War, serving as a captain of foot. In consequence, he acquired a substantial area of land, worth more than £900 yearly, mostly by grant "for his said personal services and for arrears thereof services [sic]", and one-third of it by purchase, selling in the process some of his Donegal property.



The Brookes come to Fermanagh

These new estates lay in the adjacent counties of Monaghan and Fermanagh, and had become available through the forfeitures of property by two leading local native landholders. In Monaghan, Henry gained possession of some of the lands of Hugh MacMahon in the barony of Cremorne. In Fermanagh he acquired most of the confiscated estates, including the old ancestral home at Largie, of Lord Maguire, who had been hanged at Tyburn and whose family had ruled the county for most of three centuries from their base at Lisnaskea. The latter's property, [comprising most of the barony of Magherastephana and amounting to c.30,000 statute acres], which had until then survived "as a little bit of Gaelic Ireland left untouched", now became the basis of the future Colebrooke estate. [It was confirmed to Henry by royal patent in 1667.] Despite this slightly belated entry of the Brookes into Fermanagh as major landowners, only two of its leading early 20th-century estate-holders could claim earlier links with the county. Of the names of the original British undertakers, only one survived, the Archdales, and the Coles represented the only servitor to survive

Henry, who became high sheriff, Governor and member of parliament for [Co.] Donegal, was knighted in 1664, and died seven years later. He was succeeded by Basil Brooke [d.1692], eldest son of his marriage to his first wife, Elizabeth Wynter [daughter of John Wynter of Dyrham in Gloucestershire]. Soon afterwards a legal dispute arose between Basil and [Major] Thomas Brooke [d.1696], eldest son of Anne St George, whom Henry had married in 1652. The former, who was Chancellor of Oxford University, claimed all of his father's property, both the "ancient inheritance" in Donegal and also the land in Fermanagh and Monaghan, mainly under the entailment clauses contained in a deed of enfeoffment drawn up by his grandfather in 1630. In 1680, he accordingly initiated proceedings in the Chancery court. During the following year, in an Exchequer bill, Thomas claimed that it had been agreed by a settlement, in 1652, just before Henry's marriage to Anne, that he "would settle on his children by her all his new estate".

Eventually, the issue was resolved, and articles of agreement were drawn up under which Basil swore to "acquit and release all his right, title and interest" in Henry's estates in Co. Fermanagh, and that "his heirs and assignees ... [would] ... never pretend, sue for, or molest the said Thomas Brooke, his heirs or assignees or any of the issue of the said Anne". A financial settlement was also entered into whereby the value of the disputed land in Monaghan was shared.



The last of the Donegal Brookes

The Donegal estates of the senior branch of the family passed by direct descent through three generations to Henry Vaughan Brooke, member of parliament for the county in the late 18th century In 1807, he died intestate, leaving his paternal property to a nephew, Thomas Grove [of Castle Grove, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal], "on condition that he took the name and arms of Brooke". However, their identification with the original plantation grant was only briefly prolonged, as on the death of the latter's wife in 1863, the estates passed to her nephew, James Wood, who was not bound by the earlier conditions of inheritance. [In any case, his natural identification was with the Groves, in whose house (built c.1730 and re-modelled c.1825) he lived.]



The Brookes of Colebrooke, c.1685-1761

The "issue of ... Anne", the younger branch of the family, have survived on their Fermanagh property through ten succeeding generations. Thomas married Catherine, daughter of Sir John Cole, of Newlands, Co. Dublin, and from this marriage came the name Colebrooke, given later [pre-1718] both to the estate and to the house. Prior to the Williamite wars, then a soldier in the army, Thomas was dismissed by Tyrconnell, later reinstated by William III, and his name together with about 120 other Fermanagh landholders, as well as that of his half-brother, Basil, appears on bills of attainder passed by the parliament of James II. In the more settled times that followed, the family made useful marriages and consolidated their position Colebrooke was then regarded as a good estate and the Brookes as having, with the Archdales, the "principal interest" in Fermanagh.



Sir Arthur Brooke, Bt (c.1715-1785)

In 1761, however, Thomas's grandson, Sir Arthur, [one and only baronet of the first (1764) creation, succeeded. He proved to be] a spendthrift, unconscious of the value of the money and a gambler on a large scale, [who] wasted his patrimony. ... [He] married in 1751 Margaret, daughter of Thomas Fortescue of Reynoldstown, Co. Louth, and sister of Lord Clermont. They had two daughters – Selina, who married Lord Knapton (afterwards) [1st] Viscount de Vesci), and Letitia, who married Sir John Parnell, [2nd] Bt, and so was great-grandmother of Charles Stewart Parnell, MP, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Both young ladies were well known for their beauty and charm, ... [but their unpaid marriage portions of £5,000 each, and Sir Arthur's gifts and bequests to them, placed a considerable strain on the estate].

Sir Arthur ... was sheriff of Fermanagh in 1752 and was created a baronet in 1764. He was also a Privy Councillor and Custos Rotulorum of the county. It would seem that he took an independent line in politics. The government manipulators complained that Sir Arthur was ready to accept any favours to be had, but when the time came to produce the help which they expected in return, nothing was forthcoming. In Sir John Blaquiere's "Members of the House of Commons 1770-1773, Notes on Same 1773", the entry under Fermanagh is: "Sir Arthur Brooke, Bt, has the principal interest in the county and will continue to do so while he unites with Archdale. He has the character of being one of the worst tempered men living and very stingy. ..."

Sir Arthur Brooke's portrait by Hugh [Douglas] Hamilton ... [does] not in any way suggest a bad-tempered man. Certainly, his successors would have been better pleased if he really *had been stingy*. ... Though he had inherited through his grandmother's brother, Lord Ranelagh, large and valuable property [either in possession or reversion], in the city of Dublin, Tipperary, Clare and Wiltshire, at his death in 1785 ... [little] was left but Colebrooke, denuded of trees and heavily encumbered.



Major Francis Brooke (c.1720-1800) and his family

Francis Brooke of Drogheda's Horse, afterwards the 18th Light Dragoons [succeeded his brother, Sir Arthur, in 1785]. He arrived at Colebrooke with his wife, Hannah Prittie, sister of the 1st Lord Dunalley, and a family of six sons, Henry, Arthur, Francis, Thomas, Richard, and George Frederick, as well as six daughters – Selina, ..., Maria (afterwards Mrs Webster), Caroline (who became Mrs Trant), Letitia (Mrs Howard), Harriet (Mrs Leeson) and Elizabeth (Mrs Carter). ...

[A] letter [dated 4 December 1786] preserved among the family papers ... [from] Abbeyleix, reveals one of the difficulties facing the Major - the raising of money wherewith to pay off the sums charged on the Colebrooke estate to provide the marriage portions of his nieces, Sir Arthur's daughters - Viscountess de Vesci and Lady Parnell ... [and a mortgage debt of £4,000, dating from 1765, also charged on the estate]: "I have had a thought, if practicable, of getting an Act of Parliament to sell the Tipperary estate for the payment of yours [Lord de Vesci's] and Sir John Parnell's demand, though that estate on the expiration of leases will probably rise treble the present income. ..." [The Tipperary estate must eventually have been sold; but it was still there in the early 19th century.]

... The eldest son, Henry [1770-1834], later created a baronet, ... followed his father in the work of restoring the Colebrooke estate and when he died left a very prosperous property behind him. His eldest son, Francis, was killed at Waterloo. His body was never found. Sir Henry was succeeded by his next son, Arthur [Brinsley], and his property and his baronetcy went from father to son in direct line down to Victor, Arthur Douglas, ... Sir Basil Brooke, ... [later] Viscount Brookeborough, ... [and so down to the present (3rd) Viscount Brookeborough]. Viscount Alanbrooke was a son of Sir Victor Brooke, and so uncle of the Prime Minister [though they were near-contemporaries, great friends and very alike in appearance].



General Sir Arthur Brooke (1772-1843)

[One of] Major Frank's next ... [sons, General Sir] Arthur, has the distinction of being, ... [until the 1st Viscount Brookeborough], the only member of the family who has found his way into *The Dictionary of National Biography*. He served in the 44th Foot and commanded the 1st Battalion in Sicily in 1809 and at the capture of Ischia. He also served in Egypt in 1801 and received from the Sultan the gold medal of the Order of the Crescent. In 1814 he was in command of the Battalion in America where it was brigaded with the 4th Foot. Colonel Arthur Brooke was in Command of the Brigade and his brother, Colonel Francis Brooke, C.B., was commanding the 4th Foot. Major-General Ross of Bladensburg was in command of the army and when he was killed at Baltimore, Arthur Brooke succeeded to the command. A few days before this they had occupied Washington and burnt the Capitol and all the public buildings.

Arthur Brooke retired as a Lieutenant-General and a KCB. Having retired, he married – late in life - and settled down at Scribblestown, not far from Dublin, where he was much harassed by his small son, Arthur, known as Atty. ... A portrait of Sir Arthur, wearing the Sultan's Gold medal and other decorations, painted by Martin Cregan, P.R.H.A., ... [is in the possession of another branch of the family].



Colonel Francis Brooke (c.1770-1826)

There were two more soldier sons, Francis and Richard. Francis served, during all his career in the army, in the 4th, the King's Own Regiment of Foot. That regiment bears on its colours the battle honours of Corunna, Badajoz, Salamanca, Vitoria, San Sebastian, Nive, Peninsula, Bladensburg and Waterloo. And with the exception of Nive and Bladensburg (when he was recovering from wounds) Colonel Brooke was present at every one of these engagements and commanded the regiment in most of them. He joined in 1791 and retired in 1819. When he left the regiment in 1819 the officers presented Colonel Frank Brooke with a gold cup.

He married a daughter of George Burdett of the Health House, Maryborough. As a result of his wounds, the Colonel had not enjoyed very good health and was supposed to live sparingly. His wife limited him to one glass of port but he occasionally insisted on a second, and to meet her unavailing protests he invariably said "My dear this is Salamanca night" (or Vitoria or Badajoz or whatever name came into his head) - "I must drink a toast!" He died in 1826, without issue, and aged about 56. His widow gave his gold cup to his eldest brother, Sir Henry, at Colebrooke



Major Francis Brooke's other children

The last soldier brother was [Major-General] Richard [Brooke (c.1780-1836)], who served in his father's regiment, the 18th Light Dragoons. His brother officers used to chaff him, saying that the regiment had been moved from Windsor because Princess Charlotte had fallen in love with him. (As the Princess was probably twenty years younger than Richard, the story was most unlikely, quite apart from the difference in their social position.) ...

Major Frank's next son was ... the Rev. Thomas [Brooke (c.1775-1854), Rector of Urglin, Co. Carlow] There does not seem to be a great deal known about him, except that he was more of a horse copper than a parson, and ... his eldest brother, Henry, [and he] for years ... were not on speaking terms.

Major Frank's youngest son, George Frederick [later of Summerton, Co. Dublin], was born in 1779. ... After his father's death in 1800, George Frederick lived in Dublin with his mother. ... He bound himself to a wine merchant in Dublin and set up business on his own account at No. 1 Gardiner's Row in 1806. This action of his gave the family a shock. It was the first breakaway from a family tradition (held in common with many other families of the same kind at that date) that only the Navy, the Army, the Church or the Law were open to younger sons. Commerce was taboo. ... Being a younger son in a family of twelve, where there was not a great deal of money, George had not sufficient capital. His patrimony was £2,000 and he borrowed their share, £2,000 each, from two of his sisters, so that he started with a capital of £6,000, two-thirds borrowed, on which he paid 5%. He died in 1865, fifty-nine years later, leaving an estate of close on £250,000. ...

George Brooke was ... elected a Director of the Bank of Ireland in 1828 and continued to serve on the Board until 1861. In 1859 the Board was dissatisfied with the government which was refusing to relieve the Bank from a restriction in the Charter which prevented it from advancing money on the security of land. ... [George Brooke, in spite of his advanced age, was one of the Directors chosen to lobby the Lord Lieutenant and, next], the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who finally brought in and passed the required Bill. ... [George Brooke had] married, in 1814, Jane, daughter of Richard Grace of Boley, Queen's County. She died in 1835. The Graces were a very old family in Kilkenny and Queen's County, being descended from Raymond le Gros who came to Ireland with Strongbow. ...

Of the daughters [of Major Francis Brooke, one], ... Selina, lived in rooms which would probably now be described as "a flat above a shop" in Nassau Street, Dublin. There she received a stream of visitors - mostly elderly beaux from [the] Kildare Street Club just around the corner.

[Another daughter], Letitia married [in 1799?] Colonel [Robert] Howard of Castle Howard in Co. Wicklow; his house, on high ground near Avoca, overlooked the Meeting of the Waters and "Thomas Moore's Tree". Letitia had a long career fairly full of incident. Both she and her husband had hot tempers and the marriage was not a happy one. There were no children. ...



Recovery over two generations, 1785-1834

[In spite of Sir Arthur Brooke, Colebrooke] remained, in the words of an informed contemporary in 1783, "a good estate but involved", and in the years preceding the Act of Union the family continued to be regarded as having one of the chief interests in the political life of the county. Sir Arthur's immediate successors, his brother [Major] Francis, and ... [Francis's] eldest son, Sir Henry, first baronet of the 1822 creation, diligently set to work to restore the fortunes of the estate, living frugally, and investing rents in land drainage and replanting. ...

Gradually, also, the quality of its soil was improved. The barony of Magherastephana was described in a Book of Survey and Distribution at the time of the original grant as "part mountain and part lowland, the mountain is for the most part pastureable, and the lowland is intermingled with many bogs, loughs and heathy grounds". Though the house and property were described as "well improved and elegant by a contemporary traveller in the 1730s, a professional survey by [William] Starrat, commissioned at this time [1722], indicates that the overall quality of the land had changed little from the earlier assessment. However, two generations later, Sir Henry could write that Starrat was "not entirely to be relied upon The several distinctions are very faulty, there being more bog set down than there is on each farm, and the same of mountain and moor. Most of what is called moor ... is now brought in and is good land".

Sir Henry ... spent £10,000 [in 1820-1823] on rebuilding Colebrooke [to the design of William Farrell] on the site of the original house, and the Ordnance Survey memoirs suggest that he was one of the most enterprising landlords in the county. They commented that by his attention to the habits and comforts of the tenantry, [he] ... went far towards giving his dependants an opportunity of raising their general standards. The effect is evident in the very respectable appearance of the present occupiers of the district". This evaluation is confirmed by an improbable source, *The Impartial Reporter*. Though bitterly anti-landlord, it described Colebrooke in 1874 as "one of the most prosperous and cultivated ... [estates] ... in the Kingdom"... . At the time of the 1876 return of owners of land in Ireland, its size was recorded as almost 28,000 acres, the third-largest in the county, only slightly smaller than Crom or Florence Court. ...



The military tradition of the Brookes

Over the past three hundred years, the Brookes have established a remarkably consistent record of military service. In that period, through each successive generation, they have served with every leading regiment and in every major British theatre of war in Europe, the empire and elsewhere. It is the most outstanding feature of the family's long recorded history. The army was the almost inevitable career of their younger sons and the sons of younger sons, few entering either the Church or the professions. Unless when war came to Ireland, such service was less common for the eldest son, and in any case [was bound to be] disrupted at some stage by the inevitable burdens of inheritance. Their function was rather to use their influence to launch younger relatives in military careers, and meanwhile preserve eternal vigilance and preparedness at home, "encouraging the loyal, and never taking their eyes off the doubtful". ...

The Brookes [had] acquired their estates in the 17th century at the expense of three of the province's leading native families and mainly as a reward for military service. In the Williamite wars Thomas Brooke served in the regiment raised by his brother-in-law, Lord Drogheda, Basil helped to defend Donegal against Sarsfield's army, and his brother was staff officer to the Duke of Schomberg, whilst three of their relatives, a colonel, a lieutenant and a pikeman, helped to defend Derry during the siege. In the Napoleonic wars, Sir Henry Brooke [as has been seen] had three brothers holding high military rank. ... Sir Henry's second [but first surviving] son, Arthur, served in the Royal Navy and succeeded as the second baronet of Colebrooke. Typical of the family were the five sons of his younger brother, George, three of whom joined the army and two the Royal Navy. Characteristic, also, were the family of Sir Arthur Brooke's second son, Sir Henry Brooke of the 92nd Highlanders. Two of his sons died in their father's regiment in the Great War, one winning the Victoria Cross, another was wounded in operations with the Indian army, and a fourth, the youngest, was killed in 1917, whilst serving in the Royal Navy. ... A total of twenty-six Brookes of Colebrooke served in the Great War and twenty-seven in the war of 1939-1945, and in those wars or from wounds received in them, twelve died. Of the four who died in the second world war, two, Julian and Henry, were the sons of Sir Basil Brooke, [5th Bt, and future 1st Viscount Brookeborough].

Indisputably, the greatest soldier to emerge from the family's records was Alan Brooke, one of four soldier sons of Sir Victor Brooke, and recently described as "the best Chief of [the] Imperial General Staff ever produced by the army and ... produced at the vital hour". ... Churchill recalled how at the outset of their wartime partnership he had "a personal link" with Brooke "through his two gallant brothers, the friends of my early military life"... .



Politics and local government

The Brookes of Colebrooke, as with most of the Anglo-Irish gentry, made little contribution to the intellect and to the imagination of the province, though this is less true of collateral branches, notably the Brookes of Dromovana. They did, however, exercise and preserve an important governing role, particularly at county level, acting as governors, sheriffs, lieutenants, deputy lieutenants and magistrates, as well as sitting on various county committees and councils, and as members of parliament. Partly in recognition of such services, two members of the family were knighted, and two separate baronetcies created [in 1764 and in 1822].

If the political tradition of the Brookes over the centuries is less sustained, less illustrious and altogether less impressive than the military, it is nonetheless an important aspect of the family's history and of its significance. From the late 17th century, they held one of the leading political interests in Fermanagh, and particularly in the years prior to the Act of Union they competed with success for the county's two seats in parliament. The continuity of their parliamentary representation, nonetheless, compares unfavourably with such families as the Archdales, who successfully contested the county without disruption from 1731 to 1885, and the Coles and the Crichtons who controlled the boroughs of Enniskillen [Co. Fermanagh] and of Lifford [Co. Donegal] respectively, and who normally provided the county's second member.

The most consistent period of Brooke parliamentary representation occurred in the years up to 1785. For a short time in the 1690s, Thomas Brooke was MP for Antrim borough. His son, Henry, after sitting briefly for Dundalk, [Co. Louth], represented Co. Fermanagh between 1727 and 1761 and was thus the first of his family to do so. He was succeeded in the seat by his son, [Sir] Arthur, who defended it successfully to 1783. ... In later years he sought a peerage, without success. Both the Crichtons and the Coles were ennobled in the 1760s, ... [and Sir Arthur's] urgent requests for a peerage in the early 1780s were prompted, [partly by county rivalry, and partly], a contemporary observed, by his being afraid of losing the county. If this was the case, such fears were realised. In the 1783 election when he and Colonel Mervyn Archdale were opposed by Viscount Cole, eldest son of the 1st Earl of Enniskillen, Archdale and Cole were returned. However, Sir Arthur did succeed in retaining a seat in parliament. Sir John Parnell, who married his daughter, Letitia, ... brought him in for Maryborough ... which he represented until his death in 1785. Nonetheless, the pattern of Brooke representation of Fermanagh was broken. Sir Arthur's successor, his brother Major Francis, failed to regain the seat in 1790.



Sir Arthur Brinsley Brooke, 2nd Bt (1797-1854)

Between 1783 and 1929, the only member of the family to represent the county in parliament was Sir Arthur [Brinsley] Brooke, ... [eldest son of Sir Henry, whom he succeeded in 1834]. In April 1840, he replaced Viscount Cole who succeeded to his father's peerage, so leaving one of the county's two seats vacant, and was returned unopposed until his death in December 1854. He was a voluble and not ineffective parliamentarian and a deeply committed conservative, who spoke with all "the opposition in [his] ... power" against the Maynooth College grant in 1845, and protested the following year against corn law repeal. He was nicknamed "good Sir Arthur" by his tenants for his generosity during the famine, having become Chairman of the [local] Board of Guardians in 1840.

He was also closely identified with the revival of the Orange Order in Fermanagh. Following a government order in February 1836, the county grand lodge had formally disbanded in April, Sir Arthur seconding the motion of dissolution. However, by the 1840s, what were regarded as "concessions to the popish party", ... led to local pressure to reorganise the movement. Initially it was led mainly by local clerics. Though threatened with the withdrawal of electoral support for their candidacy in future elections, some of the local aristocracy were reluctant to commit themselves openly at first. In September 1845, however, The News Letter, described Sir Arthur as "one of the champions of the cause" and reported his agreement at a conference held in Enniskillen to a series of resolutions which it referred to as "a plan for future protestant organisations"



Sir Victor Brooke, 3rd Bt (1843-1891)

The Brookes did not remain for long at the centre of political affairs in Fermanagh. When Sir Arthur Brooke died in 1854, his eldest son, Victor, was then aged eleven and attending school in Cheshire. The seat reverted to the Cole family for the next generation.

[Victor Brooke had had a most promising début: his mother, then the Hon. Julia Henrietta ('Nora') Anson, had been a maid of honour to Queen Victoria, who was Victor's godmother and after whom he was called.] In February 1853, Victor had written home to his father promising "to do ... [his] ... best to get on". ... [But] soon after leaving Harrow, ... [he] began to travel, first in Scandinavia, and later in the Far East. When his coming of age was celebrated at Colebrooke in 1864, he was hunting in India.

He was a keen and versatile sportsman for whom the exhilaration of shooting and hunting, particularly for big game, proved irresistible. The German tutor of his children described him as "a Siegfried figure of perfect proportions ...; noble winning features, blue eyes, blond beard". He had also a consuming interest in natural history and zoology, fostered through contact with William Fowler in the 1870s, and wrote prolifically in the recognised journals. His grandson, Sir Basil Brooke, commented with some recrimination, "he lacked that love of Colebrooke which I had developed as a small boy", tending to regard it "as a shooting lodge to be visited occasionally". Its rooms, filled with trophies of the hunt, and the well-stocked deerpark, testify eloquently to the owner's priorities.

His itinerant instincts were confirmed when he married Alice Bellingham [of the Castle Bellingham, Co. Louth, family] in 1864. After a few years living at Colebrooke she developed symptoms of delicacy. Thus they spent a growing proportion of their time abroad and eventually bought a villa in the south of France at Pau. It was an international town and winter resort with varied leisure and sporting activities; "as expensive as the Riviera", he wrote, "but to my mind infinitely preferable The climate suits my wife as well as Italy". [At Pau he maintained a pack of foxhounds and established a famous golf course.] During his long absences the estate was looked after at first by his uncle, and later his brother He did, however, fight a series of court cases in an unsuccessful attempt to prove that "Ulster Custom" did not apply to his property

Throughout his life, his political opinions, though infrequently expounded in public, were, like his father's, fervently conservative. In the 1860s, it was said that he had supplied all the tenants that he considered to be "sound, with very superior rifles" in response to the growing levels of Fenian activity. In the 1880s he was one of the largest subscribers in the division to the South Fermanagh Registration Association. He spoke with conviction and considerable force against Church Disestablishment, and against Home Rule at meetings of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, and the Landlords' Convention in Dublin. He also addressed, occasionally, gatherings of the Orange Order. He became a member, somewhat belatedly, in 1872, when his absences from Colebrooke were already becoming more frequent and prolonged

In 1891 he died of pneumonia at Pau, never having fully recovered from a hunting accident sustained four years before. Characteristically, in his last years he had continued to travel, to Egypt in 1888, and finally to the United States, seeking to invest in the latter some of the proceeds of recent land sales. In the long term, these sales which, by 1914, had reduced the estate to 1,300 acres, were bound to erode the family's local influence. More immediately, Sir Victor's absenteeism from the 1870s, as well as the electoral reforms of 1884 which placed Colebrooke in the constituency of South Fermanagh, a division which was for Unionists unwinnable, necessarily curtailed the political role of the Brookes during these vital decades. ... Nonetheless, ... a land agent who lived in Ashbrooke [next-door to Colebrooke], and a cousin of Sir Victor's, whose father had looked after the estate during the latter's minority, ... [stood unsuccessfully for the constituency in 1885 and again in 1886]



Sir Arthur Douglas Brooke, 4th Bt (1865-1907)

In April 1887, Sir Victor Brooke began handing over responsibility for running Colebrooke to his eldest son, [Arthur] Douglas, who was then aged twenty-one It was a responsibility Douglas seems willingly to have accepted, and one for which he was by no means unprepared.

After attendance at Marlborough ..., considered by Sir Victor to be "the best school in England", he had gone to Sandhurst, and had then for a time ranched at Calgary in Alberta, Canada. In 1887, he took up residence at Colebrooke, with his wife, Gertrude Isabella [('Lilah') Batson, daughter of Stanlake Batson of Horseheath, Cambridge], whom he had married in the summer of that year. Thereafter, they lived together on the estate virtually all year around. Within twelve months, Basil, the first of their five children, was born into the somewhat austere, disciplined family atmosphere favoured by their father. Sir Douglas enjoyed shooting, fishing and natural history, but indulged these interests mainly within the confines of his property. He had a genuine interest in farming, and worked to build up the stock on the home farm which had been so neglected by Sir Victor.

He perpetuated the family's tradition of public service, particularly at a local level. He served on the Fermanagh Farming Society and the Agricultural Committee, and was a member of the Royal Dublin Society. He was a justice of the peace, a deputy-lieutenant and a sheriff for the county, and represented Maguiresbridge district on the County Council, for a time acting as its vice-chairman He was also a strong supporter of the Church of Ireland, active in the temperance movement and a vice-chairman of the Clogher Valley Railway Company. In addition, he ... became one of the leading figures in the [Orange] Order, acting as district master for Brookeborough district, regularly attending meetings of Fermanagh Grand Lodge, sitting on county deputations and serving as an Orange delegate to the Ulster Unionist Council.



Sir Douglas Brooke and Fermanagh politics

Sir Douglas was also active politically. In 1893 he made known his intention of standing as a parliamentary candidate for South Fermanagh. He did so not in the expectation of victory, but partly, as *The Fermanagh Times* states, "out of a sense of duty" In order to counteract suggestions that he was the nominee of the landlords, Sir Douglas's election agent, Charles Dudgeon, had stressed throughout the "necessity" of his candidate being "selected at a thoroughly representative meeting ... [of] delegates duly chosen by the electors ... in the several polling districts". In May 1884, such an assembly resolved the issue, in favour of Brooke, after "heated discussion". The essence of his policy could be distilled into three words "no Home Rule". He was, he said, its "bitter and determined opponent"; he stood, "not as a politician, but as a loyalist". Unionist tenants who attended local land agitation meetings, were castigated as the "dupes and laughing stocks of the rebels", deluded into imagining that the Home Rule danger was past. The land issue was, he suggested, "a red herring".

Sir Douglas's defeat was inevitable, given the size of the nationalist majority Shortly before the succeeding election in 1900, ... [he] indicated that it was his intention not to stand; no one else came forward and the seat was uncontested. Throughout these years he continued to serve as chairman of the South Fermanagh Registration Association, and was one of the leading subscribers to party funds in the division. ... [Sir Douglas died in 1907 and his widow in 1918.]



Committed Unionists

... [The Brookes' uncompromising hostility to Home Rule was by no means typical of] the gentry of Fermanagh. Indeed, large sections of the county's landowning aristocracy responded to the threat from the Home Rule movement with a remarkable degree of hesitancy and inertia even on a constitutional level. Total Parnellite victory in the elections of the mid-1880s reflected in no small measure the apathy and dilatoriness of local conservatives in devising adequate party structures in response to changing circumstances. During the spring of 1893, when Gladstone introduced his second measure granting Ireland self-government, once again the level of agitation in the county was minimal when compared with other parts of the province. Though the volume of protest increased later in the year much of it was orchestrated by the improving Unionist party organisation in Belfast rather than the product of local initiative. Similarly, throughout the early stages of the Third Home Rule crisis Fermanagh's Unionist leaders responded with by now customary lethargy. Police and press reports confirm that it was not until the latter part of 1913 that the pace and militancy of the county's organised resistance quickened and subsequently did not falter until after the outbreak of world war.

It was only in this period that the leading landed families abandoned their caution and contributed to the marked increase in Unionist Club and Orange Order activity and the acceleration in recruitment for the Ulster Volunteer Force. In the course of this latter crisis the differing nature and levels of reaction within Fermanagh's landed class are clearer. The most aggressive leadership came, then, not from the county's nobility, the Ernes and the Enniskillens, but from sections of what might be described as the upper squirearchy, the Archdales, the Irvines, the Porter-Porters and, of course, the Brookes. Such families, for example, openly and actively encouraged the formation of the U.V.F. in Fermanagh from its inception in December 1912. ... In the post-war years, when the crisis, still unresolved, re-emerged, the landed families which provided leadership were again drawn from the upper squirearchy. The role of individuals like Sir Basil Brooke and his older neighbour, E.M. Archdale, was enhanced by the non-participation of their noble neighbours. In Sir Basil much of the tradition of the Anglo-Irish gentry and many of the attitudes and unspoken assumptions of his own family were preserved and cherished into the third quarter of the 20th century.'



Sir Basil Stanlake Brooke, 5th Bt, 1st Viscount Brookeborough (1888-1973)

The following information is taken from the *DNB*, 1971-1980: Sir Basil Brooke '... was born in 1888 at Colebrooke ..., the eldest of the five children (three sons and two daughters) of Sir Arthur Douglas Brooke, 4th Bt, of Colebrooke, and his wife, Gertrude Isabella, only daughter of Stanlake Batson, of Horseheath, Cambridgeshire. He was educated at Winchester and the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, succeeded his father as 5th baronet on 27 November 1907, and served with distinction during World War I as a captain in the 10th Hussars, being awarded the MC (1916) and croix de guerre with palm.

As befitted a descendant of a Protestant Anglo-Irish family who had occupied lands in the border areas of Ulster since the late 16th and mid-17th centuries, Brooke spent most of his life as a country gentleman and Unionist politician in Northern Ireland. ... He ... much preferred country pursuits, especially fishing, to the work of government As a politician, his distinguishing characteristics were a certain indolence and a commitment to traditional unionism - the British connection, the partition of Ireland, and Unionist ascendancy in Northern Ireland. He was one of the founders of the Ulster Special Constabulary in the troubled years 1920-1922. He was appointed CBE in 1921. He sat in Stormont for over forty years, as Senator, 1921-1922, and MP for the Lisnaskea division of Fermanagh, 1929-1968; and he occupied high office for thirty years.

He was Assistant Parliamentary Secretary, the Ministry of Finance, and Assistant Whip, 1929-1933, and, as Minister of Agriculture, 1931-1941, he became known for his anti-Catholic speeches and absences from Belfast, being content to leave affairs in the hands of his civil servants. Nevertheless, their energy in modernizing Northern Ireland agriculture in the 1930s established Brooke's reputation as an effective Minister, thus paving the way for his appointment as Minister of Commerce and Production, in 1941-1945, and, following a Unionist Party revolt, as Prime Minister in 1943 with a threefold programme: to maintain the constitution; to maximize Northern Ireland's flagging war effort, and to prepare for post-war problems. ...

During Brooke's long premiership, thanks mainly to changes in Britain, Northern Ireland's economy became more diversified and its standard of living improved so dramatically as to reinforce its separation from the Irish Republic and enable it to survive a prolonged but ill organized campaign of violence by the Irish Republican Army, 1956-1962. Despite being created viscount in 1952 for his services to Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom, Brooke never became a national leader. He remained a Unionist Party boss and helped perpetuate the long-standing and ultimately fatal sectarian divide in Northern Ireland politics by failing to recognize the changes taking place in Catholic social and political attitudes after World War II and by refusing to support those liberal Unionists who sought accommodation with Catholics. For him Catholics remained beyond the pale, because of their religion and commitment to Irish nationalism: "There is no use blinking the fact that political differences in Northern Ireland closely follow religious differences. It may not be impossible, but it is certainly not easy, for any person to discard the political conceptions, the influence and impressions acquired from religious and educational

instruction by those whose aims are openly declared to be an all-Ireland republic. "He resigned as Prime Minister in 1963, ostensibly because of ill health but largely because of criticism in the Unionist Party of his failure to combat rising unemployment and stop the drift of Unionist voters in Belfast to the Northern Ireland Labour Party. He retained his seat in parliament until 1968, was created KG in 1965, and developed commercial interests as chairman of Carreras (Northern Ireland), a director of Devenish Trade and president of the Northern Ireland Institute of Directors. He was honorary LLD of Queen's University, Belfast.

In 1919 he married Cynthia Mary, second daughter and co-heir of Captain Charles Warden Sergison, of Cuckfield Park, Sussex; they had three sons. The eldest and youngest were killed in action during World War II but the second son, John Warden, also a soldier, survived the war and later entered Northern Ireland politics. Cynthia Brooke served in World War II as senior commandant of the Auxiliary Territorial Service and was created DBE in 1959. She died in 1970 and in the following year Brooke married Sarah Eileen Bell, ... widow of Cecil Armstrong Calvert, FRCS Brookeborough died at home at Colebrooke [on] 18 August 1973 and was succeeded by his only surviving son from his first marriage.'

Dr Barton, whose research and two-volume biography of Brookeborough post-date the *DNB* entry, reaches different conclusions: '... Brooke has not been well served by posterity. His importance in the history of the Northern Ireland state arguably ranks along with that of Carson or Craig. ... Historians have preferred to focus their attentions on the inception of the state and on the present "troubles", neglecting the period of his premiership altogether or dismissing it as a time of "change without change". ... Brooke's successors to the premierships have passed conflicting verdicts on his talents. Brian Faulkner said of him: "One could not have asked for a more loyal or courageous chief. Lord Brookeborough had the ability to concentrate on things that were important; the details he left to others. ...' However, the most influential and certainly the most damaging reflection ... was that provided by Lord O'Neill [of the Maine]. ... A recent authority reiterated O'Neill's assessment and, citing him as evidence, commented that Brooke was "a lazy man of limited ability" who, as Prime Minister, "proved his limitations and his partisanship".

In relation to his overall career, such an assessment is both inadequate and inaccurate, relying too heavily on sources that are far from being objective, and with regard to his early years in office it is unhistorical. Senior officials, including those at Agriculture and Commerce, as well as Cabinet colleagues and party members, testified frequently and eloquently to his talents as a Minister. His critics would of course allege that his career was flawed throughout by his distrust of the Roman Catholic minority and obsessive commitment to the Union and the Empire The was due in part to the disillusioning reality that the nationalist community in the province persisted in its unwillingness to accept, identify with or fully participate in the institutions of the state. Brooke also found it distressing that these attitudes were fomented and fostered by successive Southern governments. ... With obvious justification, *The Irish Times* in August 1973 concluded that "In assessing Lord Brookeborough ..., it is salutary for his critics, especially in the Republic, to ask themselves if, in [his] lifetime those who aspired to unity of the people of Ireland, themselves did much to frame conditions which favoured such an outcome". ... '



John Warden Brooke, 2nd Viscount Brookeborough (1952-1987)

The following information is taken from W.D. Flackes and Sydney Elliott, *Northern Ireland: A Political Directory, 1968-1993* (Belfast, 1994): '... As Capt. John Brooke, he succeeded his father as Unionist MP for Lisnakea in 1968, and held the seat until the dissolution of the Stormont Parliament in 1972. He was Parliamentary Secretary, 1969-1970, at the Ministry of Commerce, and to the Prime Minister, James Chichester-Clark. Next he served as Government Chief Whip, 1971-1972. He represented North Down in the Assembly, 1973-1974, and the Convention, 1975-1976. While the UPNI was in existence, he put forward that party's views in the Lords, where he concentrated on security, farming and EC issues. At home in Fermanagh he was deeply involved in the promotion of tourism and in 1985 became president of Fermanagh Unionist Association. He was a strong opponent of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and attracted widespread criticism in January 1987 for a remark in the Lords that Cardinal Ó Fiaich was an "evil prelate". His son Alan succeeded to the title.'



The townlands in the manor of Brookeborough/the Colebrooke estate

The following is a list, alphabetically arranged, of townlands in the manor of Brookeborough/Colebrooke estate, or at any rate of those which feature frequently in the archive, particularly among the maps, surveys and leases. Some townlands listed in the c.1685 survey (D3004/B/1/1) may not feature because they were sold or in effect alienated by long-leasing. In any case, the spelling in the c.1685 survey is, to say the least, quaint.

Agalun	Corralough/Corlongford	Killartry
Aghacramphill	Cornakessagh	Kilcarry
Aghavea	Cornamucklagh	Killybarne
Aghavoory	Cornarooslan	Killycloghy
Agheeghter	Cran	Killykeeran
Aghnacloy	Cranbrooke	Knockmacmanus
Aghnagrane	Creagh	Largy
Altagoaghan	Crocknagowan	Lisboy
Altawark	Crocknagrally	Lismalore
Altnaponer	Curraghanall	Lisnabane
Ardmoney	Deerpark	Lisolvan
Ardmore	Derrinton	Longfield
Arduncheon	Derrycrum	Lurganbane
Arlish	Derrychree	Magonragh
Ashbrooke	Derrychulla	Mullaghafad
Aughnagrawne	Derrycullion	Mongibbaghan
Ballymacaffry	Derryheely	Monmurry
[?Bannafily]	Derryloman	Nutfield
Bohattan	Derrynalester	Owenskerry
Bonnerloghy [Bunlougher]	Derrynavogy	Rafintan
Boyhill	Dooederny	Ramult
Breandrum	Doogary	Ranafely
Brobrohan	Dressoge	Raw
Brookeborough	Drombrughas	Sheebeg
Broughderg	Drumgorran	Skeoge
Bunlougher	Drummorris	Stripe
Cappanagh	Edengilhorn	Tattenaheglis
Carrickapolin	Erdinagh	Tattenalee
Cavanagarvan	Ervey	Tattenbuddagh
Cavanaleck	Eshacorran	Tattendillur
Cavans	Eshnasillo	Tattinfree
Claraghy	Eskeragh	Tattykeeran

Cleen	Foglish	Tattynuckle
Cleffany	Foydragh	Tattyreagh
Cloghtogle	Gorteen	Tireeghan
Coolcoghill	Greagh	Tirkenny
Coolrakelly	Grogey	Todragh
Cooltrane	Guderagh	Trasna
Cooneen	Grogey	Tullreagh
Corcreeny	Killabran	Tullykenneye
Corlacky	Killabreagy	Tullynagowan
Corlough		White Hill



Title deeds, etc

D998/27 comprises c.50 title deeds, deeds of settlement, mortgages, legal case papers, etc, 1706, 1765, 1792, 1799, 1815-1881 (with many gaps) and 1916. However, most of this type of material, comprising c.100 documents, 1575, 1639 and 1658-1896, will be found at D3004/A. Included among these latter are 2 title deeds relating to the late Lord Ranelagh's estate of Rathurles, Kilconane, etc, near Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, 1755 and 1758, 2 legal papers about the granting to Sir Arthur Brooke, Bt, of the right to hold a weekly market at Brookeborough, 1770, and a bundle of deeds of settlement relating to the marriage of Henry Brooke, later Sir Henry Brooke, 1st Bt, and Harriot Butler, daughter of the Hon. John Butler and granddaughter of Brinsley, 1st Viscount Lanesborough, 1792.



Pre-1858 wills, etc

The pre-1858 wills, etc, are mainly to be found scattered through D3004 and comprise: a copy of the will of George Lambert of Downpatrick, Co. Down, 1723; a copy of the will and codicil of Mrs Penelope Ellis, 1821; a copy of the will of John Macartney of 'Mountgibbon', alias Mongibbehan [parish of Aghalurcher, Co. Fermanagh], 1829; 2 copies of the will of Sir Henry Brooke, 1st Bt, 1831; and a copy of the probate of the will of Henry Ellis of Eccles Street, Dublin, 1847. At D998/27/23-24 will be found copies of the probate of the wills of the Rev. Thomas Brooke, 1854, and of Sir Arthur B. Brooke, 1855.



Leases and lease-books

D998/26 comprises 650 leases of farms in the manor of Brookeborough, Co. Fermanagh, 1713, 1733, 1740, 1747-1881, 1891, 1894, 1903 and 1916 (with gaps in the chronological sequence between 1747 and 1881, and concentrations of documentation on years when there were major re-lettings of the estate, e.g. 1833). In D3004/A/4-6 and A/9 a further 177 leases are to be found, all falling within the same period.

In addition to individual leases, there are at D998/12 3 lease-books, compiled c.1818-c.1824 (in some instances up-dated to the 1840s), and recording leases back to 1735, together with 4 registers of leases granted during the period c.1820-c.1895.

The lease and lease-book material is completed by 10 boxes/bundles of Irish Land Commission sale papers, c.1880-c.1930 (D998/24), some of them tracing title back to 1786.



Maps and surveys

The biggest single component of D998, /1 and /21, is a run of c.1,070 maps and surveys of lands in the manor of Brookeborough, 1722-1938, some of them maps/surveys of the entire estate, notably the first in the series which is by the celebrated William Starrat, 'philomath', 1722. (The earliest survey, which is verbal, not pictorial, is actually to be found at D3004/B/1/1. It is of the components of the 10,077 statute acres comprised in Charles II's patent of 1667 to Sir Henry Brooke, Knight, of the manor of Brookeborough and it is dated c.1685.) Of the c.1,070 maps and surveys in D998, few are post-1834 derivatives from the Ordnance Survey; so this is a major series of manuscript maps and surveys. Other surveyors, besides William Starrat, who feature in this part of the archive are James Leonard (1744-1755), Arthur Darling (1756-1764), Nicholas Willoughby (1765-1777), Robert Mitchel (1786), John Piers (1770-1798), etc, etc.



Rentals

D998/4 comprises 110 Colebrooke estate rentals, 1849-1929 (with some duplicate and some missing volumes), 12 summary Colebrooke estate rentals, 1854-1919, and 3 Colebrooke estate receiving books, 1876-1915. D3004/B includes a rent receipt book, 1799-1815, a volume of rentals, 1831-1844, and a rental, 1884-1885. In 1799, the rental of the estate was £5,180 per annum, and in 1831 £8,358.



Account books, etc

In addition, D998 includes 27 Colebrooke estate cash books, 1834-1875 and 1878-1945, 22 Colebrooke estate memoranda books, 1855-1876, 8 bundles of farm steward's pay sheets, 1881-1895, 7 bundles of labourers' pay sheets, 1917-1948, 2 bundles of workmen's accounts, 1876-1880, 5 registers of improvements made by tenants, of judicial rents fixed, of sales to tenants under the Land Act, etc, 1877-1915, a bundle of accounts relating to schools on the Colebrooke estate, 1865-1868, and 32 miscellaneous account books, rentals (not in particular series), etc, 1879-1963. There is also a volume containing copies of the tithe applotment books for the parishes of Aghavea and Aghalurcher, 1832.



Papers relating to Colebrooke and demesne, 1819-1889

D3004/B/8 comprises 37 documents and volumes (original and photocopy) of material relating to Colebrooke and its out-buildings and two cottages in the Colebrooke demesne, 1819-1874. This material includes: a library catalogue, 1819; contracts and correspondence relating to the rebuilding of Colebrooke by William Farrell, 1820-1823; an indemnity bond binding the contractors to Henry Brooke in œ3,000, 1820; a front elevation of the new house, 1820; two volumes of a Colebrooke cellar book, 1864-1874; and a household account book, 1864-1889.

There is also a volume of daily weather records, 1906-1935, presumably recorded at Colebrooke (D3004/B/11/1), and 11 demesne and personal game books, 1840-1844 and 1865-1959 (D3004/B/9-10), the former mainly recording numbers and types of deer, particularly the Sika deer introduced by Sir Victor Brooke, and the latter relating to fishing as well as shooting.



Estate and business letter-books and correspondence

D998/16-7 and 13 comprise 11 Colebrooke estate outward letter-books, 1876-1930, 15 Colebrooke estate inward letter-books, 1909-1930, and 33 outward letter-books containing damp-press copies of agents' letters, 1924-1947.

Further correspondence is included in 4 boxes and 9 bundles of letters and papers of Sir Victor Brooke, 3rd Bt, Sir Douglas Brooke, 4th Bt, his wife, 'Lilah', and his son, Sir Basil Brooke, 5th Bt, c.1870-1951 (D998/23 and 25), about all manner of estate and personal financial business, including the affairs of Cooneen Cross Church, Co. Fermanagh, c.1873, and Home Guard material, c.1940.



Family, political and military papers

These include: genealogical notes relating to the Brooke family of Colebrooke over the period 1680-1739; commissions, patents of appointment and other formal documents, 1755-1969, including a commission of Francis Brooke as a cornet in the 8th Dragoons, 1755, and the patent creating Henry Brooke of Colebrooke a baronet, 1822; personal and business correspondence of Michael Harris, the Brookes' Dublin attorney, Sir Henry Brooke, Sir Victor Brooke and Sir Douglas Brooke, c.1820-1915; personal and political correspondence, 1910-1973, of Sir Basil Stanlake Brooke, 5th Bt and 1st Viscount Brookeborough, relating mainly to the Delhi Durbar, active service in the First World War, and his periods of office as Northern Ireland Minister of Agriculture, 1933-1941, Minister of Commerce, 1941-1943, and Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, 1943-1963; correspondence of Cynthia, Viscountess Brookeborough, much of which relates to the deaths of her eldest and youngest sons, Julian and Henry, in action during the Second World War, horticulture and the Colebrooke gardens, and the Ulster Countryside Committee, 1918 and 1932-1968; and political correspondence and related papers of Capt. the Hon. John Warden Brooke, 2nd Viscount Brookeborough, c.1965-1975.



Diaries, photographs, albums, memoirs, etc

These dominate the family, political and military papers. They include: a two-volume diary-cum-autobiography of General Sir Arthur Brooke, 1793-1809 and 1798-1816; travel, wildlife and hunting journals of Sir Victor Brooke, 1862-1890; typescript copies of the (very matter-of-fact and discreet) diaries of the 1st Viscount Brookeborough, 1940-1963; newspapers, newspaper cutting books and newspaper cuttings relating to various members of the Brooke family, 1813-1973, but in particular to the 1st Viscount Brookeborough, his family and Northern Ireland politics, 1907-1973; photograph albums and photographs relating to the activities of various members of the Brooke family, particularly the 1st Viscount Brookeborough, c.1870-c.1970; reels of 16mm film concerning the 1st Viscount Brookeborough, c.1950-1969; tape recordings of conversations involving him, 1955 and c.1960-1973; and a typescript copy of his memoirs, written c.1965, on which Dr Barton comments: '... The memoirs are disappointingly brief, stop in 1918, and contain only the writer's recollections of childhood, schooling and military service. There are no references to political events or to Brooke's own political attitudes. Nonetheless, for the study of contemporary political events the most valuable surviving Brooke papers [i.e. papers of the 1st Viscount Brookeborough] are classified under D3004. ...'



However, these heights of responsibility were to prove to be a double-edged sword for Brooke, as he was left with the task of justifying both the controversial sacking of Washington and explaining his own conduct at Baltimore. It was the latter, having been forced to retreat when he could not breach the city's defences, which lost him the confidence of his superiors. Doubts were cast on his failure to pursue the fleeing American force which had been defeated on the road approaching Baltimore, and which then reinforced the garrison within. In his favour, Brooke argues that it was a lack of cavalry which prevented him from doing so, and it must be said that this was a problem also met with by Ross at Bladensburg. Nevertheless, Brooke found himself superseded for the southern campaign. Embittered by this experience, and finding his own strategy for a direct attack on New Orleans thwarted, he adopts a highly critical tone towards the actions taken there. He was sufficiently aggrieved to carry out his own research at a later date, utilizing Major Lafon's topographical survey of the New Orleans environs in support of his favoured plan. Following the humiliating defeat on the banks of the Mississippi and feeling not a little sorry for himself, Brooke returned to England and retired from active military service.

Brooke was eventually rewarded with the governorship of Yarmouth. Other honours included his promotion to Major General in 1817 and admission to the Order of the Bath. Whilst his reporting of the American war must be treated with some caution, it is still an invaluable insight to the movements and motives of those engaged in battle. It is interesting that he includes two different viewpoints on the most famous incident of the war, the destruction of the capital of the United States. His own account, with its eerie description of the President's House all ready for a victory banquet, is less hesitant in its explanation than that of General Ross, given in his official report. These can be compared in turn with the Rev. George Robert Gleig's account of the same incident in his *Narrative of the Campaigns of the British Army at Washington and New Orleans under Generals Ross, Pakenham and Lambert; with some Account of the Countries visited* (London, 1821). At a later date there was to be considerable official British regret for the action, but as a participant, Brooke was adamant that it was a justifiable act of war.

As Brooke's personal fortunes decreased alongside those of the forces of which he was part, his criticism of the military and civil leadership tended to increase and we are provided with an excellent contemporary comparator for the work of Henry Adams, *A History of the United States, vol. VIII* (1891-1896), who described the same events. Adams was highly critical of the Madison administration's handling of the war, and in particular the conduct of General Andrew Jackson's preparation of the defences of New Orleans. Whilst subsequent generations have venerated the victorious military exploits of 'Old Hickory', Brooke's observations suggest that the preservation of the capital of the South owed as much to the peculiar topography of the area and to British incompetence, as to American genius.

The criticisms Brooke makes of British strategy at New Orleans and his feelings about his own treatment after Baltimore provide various indications as to the interaction between the aristocratic government establishment at home and the army in the field. The maintenance of adequate communication links, which in turn would ensure the proper dissemination of honours and promotion were of as vital importance to the smooth operation of the military machine abroad as they were to that of the political counterpart at home. ▲

Access arrangements

Access to the Brookeborough papers is not entirely straightforward. For one thing, most diaries, news cutting books, photograph albums, etc, back to Sir Victor Brooke's day have been withdrawn, at least for the foreseeable future, by the depositor. It will usually be possible to make special access arrangements, but researchers should write well in advance stating what it is they wish to see and explaining the nature of their research. Additionally, two separate periods of closure have been placed on the papers – 50 years in respect of correspondence and 30 years in respect of diaries. This, in practice, means that correspondence is closed until 51 years from the date of the last letter in the file or bundle, and diaries for 31 years from the date of the last entry in each volume.

