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INTRODUCTION

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Summary

The Kenmare papers deposited in PRONI, which include most of the former contents of the Estate Office at Killarney, Co. Kerry, amount to well over a ton of records, 1587-1958, comprising c.475 volumes and files (53 of them of huge proportions) and c.3,520 documents (of which over 400 are outsize maps, plans and surveys).



Kenmare Coat of Arms

The papers include - in the description provided by the late Dr Edward MacLysaght in *The Kenmare Manuscripts* (IMC, Dublin, 1942) '... a remarkably full series of rental ledgers and estate account books, a considerable volume of correspondence, many hundreds of Chancery bills, briefs and other legal documents, a very large number of conveyances, leases, etc, together with various interesting miscellaneous items, the majority but not all of them relating to the Browne family and the Kenmare estate ... [in Cos Kerry, Limerick and Cork, and, to a lesser extent, Cos Carlow, Kilkenny and Queen's County]'. Much of the description which follows is taken, *mutatis mutandis*, from Dr MacLysaght's introductory comments. However, as his cut-off point in most respects was

1795, and as he concentrated on the choice rather than the bulky parts of the archive, a good deal of additional information has been required and is now provided.



Gaps in the archive

'... Although the Browne family was already firmly established in Co. Kerry before the end of the 16th century, comparatively few original deeds or papers belonging either to that or the next century survive. ... [The earliest original] documents in the collection are two Stuart grants, dated 1620 and 1637, and a certificate of Knighthood conferred in 1648 by Pope Innocent X on Sir Nicholas Plunkett, the Chairman of the Confederation of Kilkenny, who was one of the many distinguished Irishmen related by blood or marriage to the Brownes of [either] Killarney or Hospital [Co. Limerick].

No doubt the reason for the preservation of so little relating to the estate or its owners in the 17th century was their adherence to the cause of James II, with the consequent attainder and forfeiture which followed the surrender of Limerick; for the Brownes were driven into exile and penury and a break occurred then in the continuity of their actual possession of the family estates in Cos Kerry, Cork and Limerick. ...'



The part of the archive at Muckross House

Long subsequent to Dr MacLysaght's time, and specifically in the period 1956-1985, further gaps have opened up – at any rate in the archive as received by PRONI. In 1956, when the then representative of the Kenmare family, Mrs Beatrice Grosvenor, moved to a new house in Killarney and sold her former house to the late Mr John McShain, she left behind a quantity of papers previously described by MacLysaght. Later, a further quantity found its way into the Castlerosse Hotel, Killarney, another property owned by Mrs Grosvenor. When the bulk of the archive was transferred from the Kenmare Estate Office to his house in Norfolk by Mrs Grosvenor's nephew and successor, Mr E.W. Dawnay, these detached parts of the archive remained behind but, fortunately, were preserved and have been deposited in the Research Library of Muckross House, near Killarney. The material at Muckross amounts to c.90 boxes (equating to c.40 PRONI boxes) and 23 volumes, running from the late 17th century to 1959 (the volumes run from 1874 to 1959). In addition, c.245 files and documents, 1783-1958, were in the possession of the London solicitors of the Kenmare family, Farrer & Co., who followed Mr Dawnay's example by depositing them in PRONI.

Quantification of the loose Muckross material is difficult, because its state of physical conservation is poor. Since 1995, the documents have been going in relays to a commercial firm of conservators in Dublin, who have been carrying out a programme of minimal repair combined with encapsulation. The encapsulated documents take up considerably more space than they would have done originally, and at the time when PRONI visited Muckross House, c.20 boxes were away in Dublin with the conservation firm. Following conservation, where conservation was necessary, the documents and volumes have been/are being microfilmed. They have also been/are being listed, mainly in exhaustive, document-by-document detail, according to a classification system explained at the beginning of the Muckross House list. This list is in continuous flux. As documents which could not be handled and listed prior to conservation, return from conservation, they are listed and take their place in the classification system. As a holding measure, a copy of the Muckross House as it stands (February 1998) has been placed at the end of the PRONI list. But it will not be possible to establish precisely what is held at Muckross until the conservation and listing are completed. For present purposes, it suffices to say that it seems that almost all the material described by MacLysaght and not received by PRONI is at Muckross.



Family history

MacLysaght's description resumes: '... The connection of the family with Ireland dates back as far as the first year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth: Sir Valentine Browne [of Crofts, Lincolnshire] was appointed Surveyor General in 1559, and after spending forty years in this country as an important official of the Crown found his last resting place in Dublin. The sons of his second marriage became landed proprietors in Munster but, unlike most of the English settlers since the Reformation, the Brownes soon reverted to the old religion, and though they can hardly be said to have become Gaelicised they were at least sufficiently identified with the old Gaelic aristocracy to be coupled with the great Irish families in a 17th-century Irish poem eulogising the old order.

Beginning with this Sir Valentine's eldest son Nicholas, who married the daughter of O Sullivan Beare, in the next few generations the Brownes made matches with the leading Catholic families in Munster and Leinster - O Sullivan Mór, Fitzgerald of Desmond, MacCarthys, Butlers, O'Briens, Plunketts and many others, details of which will be found in a pedigree held among the Kenmare Papers in PRONI. By these marriages they consolidated their position as undisputed members of the Catholic aristocracy and at the same time as the possessors of the vast estate which they had in various ways obtained.



The build-up of the family estate, 1588-1684

As this estate was one of the largest in Ireland, and was held during the severest period of the Penal Laws without the smallest compromise being made in matters of religion, a brief summary of the ... means by which it was acquired and retained may be given here. It began with a simple mortgage of some lands in Co. Kerry belonging to that MacCarthy who was for a time Earl of Clancare, till he relinquished the title and went into open hostility to Queen Elizabeth. (... [The earldom of Clancare], which was created by Elizabeth in 1565 and was renounced and became extinct in 1597, is sometimes confused with the earldom of Clancarty, conferred on another branch of the MacCarthy family by Charles II in 1658) ... The title to this estate was in 1588 confirmed by a grant from the Crown, and a further patent of James I covered all the lands they had acquired in Co. Kerry up to 1620. The grantee in this case was the grandson of the first Sir Valentine [another Valentine, of Molahiffe, Co. Kerry, who was created a baronet in 1622. The 1620 patent gave him the right to hold fairs at Killarney - he already could hold fairs at Molahiffe under a patent of 1613.]

Meanwhile, his younger son, Thomas, had come into possession of the Hospital estate, ie, the lands confiscated on the dissolution of the monasteries, two generations before his time, from the Knights of St John of Jerusalem. He did this by his marriage [in 1603] with Mary Apsley, the heiress of the estate which, it must be explained, included a considerable area of Cos Cork and Kerry as well as ... [the Manor of Hospital, Kiltely], Co. Limerick. Mary Apsley was herself Irish on her mother's side, for ... [she] was the daughter of John Browne, known as the Master of Awney, and her mother was an O'Ryan. ... This lady ... was co-heiress of the Hospital estate with her sister Joan, the wife of Richard, 1st Earl of Cork. Joan dying without surviving issue, and her niece Barbara Boyle having married Mary's son, John Browne, the whole of this estate passed finally into that branch of the Browne family. In the two succeeding generations Browne heiresses of Hospital married Kerry cousins, and by the marriage in 1684 of Helen Browne and Nicholas, 2nd Viscount Kenmare, both branches of the Browne family were united and their estates combined. ... The settlements made at the time of these marriages sowed the seeds of protracted and expensive lawsuits, which were not finally disposed of for almost 100 years. ...

A word should be said here about the fortunes of the Brownes during the Cromwellian upheaval. The Kerry Browne was a minor at the time and was reinstated after the Restoration as an innocent Papist; the Browne of Hospital fought in the war and attended Charles II in exile and ... was not among those who had cause to complain of his ingratitude. ...



A titular viscounty?

As ... already mentioned, Sir Valentine Browne, 3rd Bt [(1638-1694), who was captured at the battle of Aughrim, where his regiment was virtually annihilated], and his son, Nicholas [?-1720], were devoted supporters of James II. That King in May 1689 conferred on Sir Valentine the title of Viscount Kenmare.



James II

The creation of this title is in itself of interest because it was one of eight created by King James after he had been deprived of the throne of England but was still at least de facto King of Ireland; and the patent was duly entered on the rolls in Dublin, from which it was never erased. The remaining seven peerages referred to either lapsed or became merged in others about the validity of which there was no question: the Kenmare Viscounty, which was thus not on a par with those subsequent Jacobite creations termed "titular", went on from father to son, recognised for all practical purposes both in England and Ireland, even by the Lord Lieutenant, legal documents usually adding the words "commonly called Lord Kenmare" to the name of Nicholas, Valentine or Thomas Browne.

It may be remarked here that this title is derived from Kenmare Castle, near Hospital, part of the Co. Limerick estate of the Browne family, and not, as might naturally be supposed, from the town of that name, which, though not actually on the Browne estate, is quite near to its outlying portions. The ancient name, of course, of the place where Petty built the town he called Kenmare was Neidin.



The forfeited life interest in the Kenmare estate, 1700-1720

Once we reach the 18th century very full records of everything relating to the estate and the family are available [either in PRONI or in Muckcross House], for the same reason that those of an earlier period are not so plentiful: the forfeiture which was the cause of dispersing the greater part of what had been preserved up to that time gave rise, in turn, to endless litigation, some of it dragging on for over seventy years.

The forfeited estate was vested in the Chichester House Trustees, but the claim of Valentine, Nicholas's heir, then a child, to a reversion in tail male was allowed [in 1700], so that the Trustees could only dispose of a life interest in it, ie the life of the attainted Nicholas, 2nd Viscount Kenmare. This was bought for a little over £3,000 by the notorious John Asgill, on whose extraordinary career further light is thrown by the papers In the introduction to the poems of ... O'Rahilly some pages are devoted to a not unjust description of the sharks who attempted to make money and acquire land out of the fallen fortunes of the Brownes. The ogres there depicted in the persons of John Asgill, Richard Hedges, Mortagh Griffin and the rest come to life, and often reveal quite human and even pleasing traits, when one peruses these original Kenmare papers in which they are constantly appearing. O'Rahilly himself, however, is mentioned only once - as the impoverished author of a song for "Master Tom", ie the 4th Viscount. ... (Though Gaelic words appear here and there, the Irish language is very seldom mentioned in these papers: one of the few references to it will be found in the 4th Viscount's "[Book of] Observations" [D4151/S/4/B/1].)

John Asgill married the eldest Browne girl of the pre-forfeiture generation, who was brought up in England as a Protestant: the only one in the family, apart from her sister Fanny, who "turned" in 1724 after marrying Ned Herbert [of Muckcross, Co. Kerry. According to the Retrospections..., 1770-1806, of their granddaughter, Dorothea Herbert (new ed., Dublin, 1988, p.1) she '...exemplified the force of love by going off with him privately and marrying him against her religious prejudices and against the injunctions of her only brother, Lord Kenmare, whom otherwise she so dearly loved that she lost her senses at his Lordship's death some years after, and never retrieved them to her own death...'. Eventually, Asgill was forced by financial pressure to hand over the Hospital estate to Melchior Levallin, Lady Kenmare's brother-in-law. He ruined himself - passing] ... the last thirty years of his life in or practically in the Fleet Prison - and nearly ruined the Brownes.
Valentine, 3rd Viscount Kenmare (1695-1736)

Valentine, the 3rd Viscount, came of age in 1716, but the inheritance to which he succeeded when his father died in exile four years later was engulfed in debt through Asgill's mismanagement, and the family residence at Ross, where the dwelling house (whose ruins can still be seen adjacent to the castle) had just been completed in 1688, was in the occupation of a military garrison. The difficulty experienced in meeting the heavy encumbrances on the impoverished estate had the effect of fostering disputes in the family and driving close relatives into law with each other, much of which was both protracted and costly.

The first step towards placing the estate once more in a sound financial position was taken when certain portions of it were sold, including a large area of woods in the Bantry district; but it could not be done without procuring a special act of parliament, the passage of which in 1728 was largely due to the efforts of Lord Kenmare's aunt, Mme da Cunha, a lady of great personality, who figures very prominently in the ... [papers]. From this on the position steadily improved: in 1729 Valentine could afford to live at the rate of £1,200 a year without getting into debt; in 1736, when he died, the net value of the estate was about £2,900 a year; fifty years later, thanks even more to the prudent management of his successor than to the general rise in rents throughout the country, the rentroll amounted to approximately £10,000; and ... during the greater part of the 19th century it was above £30,000. ...'



The Kenmare estates

Apart from a (probably short-lived) estate in Co. Clare which is documented in the archive and came into the Kenmare family's possession through the marriage in 1822 of the Hon. Thomas Browne (later 3rd Earl of Kenmare) and Catherine, daughter and co-heiress of Edmund O'Callaghan of Kilgory, Co. Clare, the Kenmare estates were located as follows: in the baronies of Clanmaurice, Corkaguiny, Iveragh and Magunihy, Co. Kerry; in the parishes of Hospital and Knockaney, barony of Smallcounty, and elsewhere (baronies of Connello Lower and Coonagh), Co. Limerick; in the barony of Bantry, Co. Cork; and in the province of Leinster.

The following is James S. Donnelly Junior's description of most of them ('The Kenmare Estates during the 19th Century' in *The Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society Journal* [a 3-part article published in 1988, 1989 and 1990]): '... The estate of the Browne family ... was the third-largest in Kerry in the 1870s. Their vast domains, a fairly compact bloc of some 91,100 acres, stretched in a south-easterly direction from the top of Slieve Mish, 3 miles south of Tralee, to the summit of Caherbarnagh Mountain, 4 miles west of Millstreet. This immense property, comprising the greater part of the barony of Magunihy, was some 30 Irish miles in length and from 10 to 12 miles in breadth. Besides the Kerry estate, the family owned two smaller properties, one of 22,700 acres near Bantry in south-west Cork, the other of 4,800 acres around and including the town of Hospital in east Limerick. ...

While almost all of the Hospital estate ... consisted of excellent pasture in the famed Golden Vale, ... both the Kerry and Bantry properties were largely unproductive. Of the 22,700 acres near Bantry, fully 15,000 were either mountain or bog Similarly, peat bogs (especially between Killarney and Rathmore) and mountain land covered almost a third of the Kerry estate, though extensive lowlands to the north and north-west of the family seat at Killarney provided reasonably good pasture Occupying these estates during the 1870s and 1880s were more than 2,500 tenants, 2,100 of whom were on the Kerry property alone. Many of these, however, were town tenants, lot holders, or cottage dwellers. Still, there was a small army of strictly agricultural tenants numbering at least 1,800 on the Kerry and Cork estates in 1886. ... Farms on the Hospital property were large and valuable enough to enable the tenants there to prosper, but both the Kerry and Bantry estates, especially the former, were seriously overcrowded. ...'

In addition there was a 'Leinster' estate, consisting of several townlands in each of the counties of Kilkenny, Queen's County and Carlow, and also in Tipperary (which of course is in Munster). This estate was sold in 1858 for something like £94,000. It had formerly belonged to the Cooke family of Painstown, Co. Carlow, and came into the possession of the 4th Viscount Kenmare in 1788 (though it features in the rent ledgers from 1783). In 1750, Lord Kenmare had married Anne, daughter of Thomas Cooke of Painstown. An agreement of 1753 and other papers [MacLysaght, pp. 427-428: Muckross House, K.39.E.1] suggest that Thomas Cooke found difficulty in paying her marriage portion of £4,000, and by 1784 the affairs of his only son, and successor, William Cooke, who had taken up residence in France, were in such confusion that Lord Kenmare took over responsibility for the administration of his

estate. Painstown itself was sold, but in 1788, on William Cooke's death, Lord Kenmare, as residuary legatee (and probably also as a major creditor) succeeded to such of the Cooke lands as constituted the 'Leinster' estate (with a rental c.£1,000 a year at that time, probably subject to debts over and above those owed to Lord Kenmare himself).



The townlands in the Kenmare estates

The following is a list of the townlands in each of the counties where the Kenmare estates were situated, alphabetically arranged within county. The list is probably slightly incomplete, because it is derived from the leasebooks and leases in D4151/B. There is therefore at least one reference in the archive to each townland listed, and any townland which does not feature in the archive (for whatever reason) is not included in the list which follows.

Co. Kerry

Aghalee More	Aglish	Allanes [?]
Anablaha	Annaghbeg	Annaskirtown
Ardagh	Ardaeneaning	Ardnamweely
Ardevoanig[?]	Ardshanavooly	Ardywaning
Avenue	Ballinillane	Ballinvarring
Ballybane	Ballybrack	Ballycasheen
Ballyclontea [?]	Ballycullane	Ballydeenlea
Ballydowny	Ballydribbeen	Ballyfinnane
Ballynacarrig	Ballynamaunagh	Ballyshacommene
Banard	Baslickane	Bawnard
Beheenagh	Bellaghcummane [?]	Bohereens
Boolacullane	Breanohagh	Buddaghauns
Bushmount	Caher	Cannigar
Carhoearagh	Carran	Carrigeencullia
Castlefarm	Clash	Clasheen
Clashganniv	Clashnagarrane	Cleedagh
Cleeny	Cliddaun	Cloghereen
Cloonlara	Cloontees	Cloonts
Cloontubbrid	Clydaghroe	Connigar
Coolavorheen	Coolbane	Coolbaun
Coolbawn	Coolcaslagh	Coolclieve
Coolcorcoran	Coolegrean	Coolgarrin
Coollick	Coolnagarrahy	Coom
Corbally	Cottage	Deanaghmill [?]
Deerpark	Derreen	Derreenacullig
Derrycunihy	Doocarrig Beg	Doocarrig More
Dooneen	Doonryan	Drom
Dromadeesirt	Dromdoohig More	Dromhale

Kenmare Papers

Dromore	Dromdeagh	Dromickbane
Emlagh	Fairhill [?]	Farranaspig
Farranfore	Faugh	Fieries
Fossa	Freemount	Garraun
Garranearagh	Gearha	Gearhanagoul
Glangristeen	Glena	Gneevgullia
Gortacareen	Gortacarhinbeg [?]	Gortacoveen
Gortagullane	Gortalassa	Gortanahaneboy
Gortavallin	Gortderrig	Gortdromakiery
Gortdromerillagh	Gortfadda	Gortnacarriga
Gortnagane	Gortnaglogh	Gortnaprocess
Gortnatona	Gortroe	Gortshanavogh
Gowlane	Grafeens	Govin
Grenagh	Groin	Gullane
Gullaun	Gurteenroe	Inch
Inchee	Incheens	Inchicloon
Inchicorrigan	Inchinveema	Inchycullane
Islandearagh	Keelties	Kilbrean Beg
Kilbrean More	Kilcarra	Kilcoolaght
Kilcummin	Killahane	Kelleagh
Killeen	Killreanmore [?]	Kilnanare
Kilquane	Kippagh [?]	Knockacappul
Knockacarrea [?]	Knockacullig	Knockaderry
Knockalibade	Knockaneacoolteen	Knockanina ne
Knockataggle Beg	Knockataggle More	Knockanncore
Knockbrack	Knockdoorah	Knockearagh
Knockeenduff	Knockeenalicka	Knockmanagh
Knocknageeha	Knocknahoe	Knocknaman
Knocknamucklagh	Knocknaseed	Knocknaskeha
Knockreer	Knocks [?]	Lackabane
Leamnaguila	Leamyglissane	Leanamore
Lecarhoo	Lisheen	Lisheennacannina
Lisnagrane	Lisnagree	Lisroe
Lissyconnor	Lissyviggeen	Longfield
Lyre	Mastergeehy	Maughantoorig
Maulyarkane	Maulykeavane	Mausrower
Meennagishagh	Meentoges	Minish

Mounthenry	Moyeightragh	Nunstown
Park	Rahanane	Raheen
Rathbeg	Rathmore	Reaboy
Readrinaugh	Reanasup	Reavaun
Ross	Rossanean	Rossmore
Rosborough	Rusheen	Scart
Scartaglin	Scarteen	Scartlea
Scrahan	Scrahanaveal	Scrahanfadda
Scrohanagullaun	Shambles	Sheans
Sheheree	Shinnagh	Shrone Beg
Shrone More	Skahies	Stagmount
Teernaboul	Thaines [?]	Tooreencahill
Tooreenamult	Toormore	Toornanaunagh
Tralia	Tullaha	Tullorum
Woodlawn		

Co. Limerick

Analack [?]	Anye [?]	Ballinlough
Ballycahill	Ballyvouden	Baunmore
Cahercornry	Castlefarm	Coolalough
Coolscart	Corbally	Croagh
Croom	Drinagh [?]	Farrangare [?]
Gaultown [?]	Gortadrohid [?]	Gotoon
Hospital	Kilmallock	Kilteely
Knockainy	Limerick	Lodge
Loughfarm [?]	Millfarm	Newtown
Oldtown	Rathkeale	Rathwood

Co. Cork

Ahil Beg	Ahil More	Allanes [?]
Ards Beg	Ards More	Ballylicky
Borlinn [?]	Cappanabrick	Cappycludindil [?]
Charleville	Clashdarigan [?]	Claunigorman [?]
Coomleagh	Coorloun	Currakeal
Curramore	Derreenkealig	Derryarkane
Derryclogher	Derryduff	Derryduff Beg
Derrynafinchin	Dromacappul	Dromaclarig

Dromclogh	Dromdaniel	Dromnafinshin
Dromsullivan	Dunnamark	Glanareagh
Glanbannoo	Gortagarry	Gortnacowly
Gurteenroe	Kealcoum	Kippagh
Knockanecosduff	Lahadane	Laharan
Laharanshermeen	Maularaha	Maulikeeve
Monearmore	Newtown	Ranagaroe
Rathgoggan	Reen	Reenydonagan
Shronageehy		

Co. Kilkenny

Aghkieltane [?]	Ballycabus	Ballymurragh
Barnaviddaun	Cevaraghlane [?]	Curraghlane
Garryleesha	Gorteen	Neigham
Tyncause [?]	Ullard	

Queen's County

Ballynagall	Clonagh	Coolnagour
Curragh	Curnahatheetha	Killimy
Rossena	Towlerton	

Co. Carlow

Ballyellin	Clomoney	Oldtown
Tomdarragh		

Co. Tipperary

Brownstown	Clogharaily	Graiguefrahane
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Co. Clare

Lisbarreen



The most important survivors of the Penal Code

Dr MacLysaght resumes: '... How, it will be asked, was a Catholic family able to retain almost unimpaired this great estate, exceeding 130,000 acres in extent, despite the Penal Code? The answer, though not obvious at first sight, is actually quite simple. ... Indeed, the peculiar character and special interest of this ... [part of the archive is that it enables us to] read at first hand of the problems which confronted Papists in the Penal times, particularly Papists of property and position; we come across pictures of daily life in well-to-do Catholic households; and we have ... [the] story of an aristocratic family which, without exhibiting the least trace of bigotry, never slackened in their allegiance to the proscribed faith ...'.

The Penal Laws enacted that a Catholic might not purchase land, nor might he take more than a comparatively short lease and that only at its true value; and it is certain that evasion was made difficult by the encouragement of "Protestant Discoverers". He might inherit land, but a Catholic's estate must be divided at his death equally between his sons, with provision for the sole inheritance of a Protestant son, should one conform. It is true that these and various other harsh clauses of the Penal Code were sometimes evaded with the help and connivance of friendly Protestants, but no such aid was invoked by the Brownes, except to a certain extent in the matter of guardianship of minors.

Their survival as great landed proprietors was due in the first place to what must be regarded as a fortunate chance, doubly fortunate in that it was repeated in two generations. There were two critical times: on the death of Nicholas in 1720 his successor Valentine was an only son, for his brother, Thomas, had died young; and again in 1736, when Valentine died, he was succeeded by his only surviving son, Thomas – and so the principle of gavelkind did not operate. The providential tendency of the Browne family to have more daughters than sons was not, however, alone enough to save the situation. The character of those two men, particularly of the latter, was also a decisive factor in it.



Thomas, 4th Viscount Kenmare (1726-1795)

Thomas, the 4th Lord Kenmare, showed very early in life the scrupulous attention to truth and honour which, together with, no doubt, a lively faith and - until the Lord Chancellor got hold of him [c.1740-1747] - a sound upbringing, made him a man whom it is impossible not to respect very highly, even though he often shows an irritating tendency to be both punctilious and pompous. He was a prominent figure in his day, being the leader of the aristocratic section of the Catholic Party, but he was ill-suited for public life: he disliked anything savouring of strong measures and was reluctant to take any step which would seriously embarrass the government; and it was men like Keogh and O'Connell who were needed to bring the Catholics out of bondage. A Catholic writer, Sir Thomas Wyse, ... speaks very scathingly of him ... [in *The Catholic Association of Ireland* (London, 1829), vol. 1 p.102], calling him "cold, unconciliating, timid, yet fond of petty power, hanging between Catholic and Protestant"

In these papers, however, it is not the politician but the man we meet. Among them is the manuscript of a panegyric sermon preached on his death in 1795 [D4151/V/4]. Of course allowance must be made for hyperbole in an oration of that kind, but the picture it presents of an exemplary Catholic, a beneficent landlord and a friend of the poor, is borne out by too many other sources to be dismissed as exaggeration. Apart from private letters the most personal document in the collection is a "Book of Observations" kept by this Lord Kenmare [D4151/S/5/1], wherein he expresses his opinions about his tenants [particularly middlemen, whom he eliminated whenever opportunity offered], the gentry of Kerry, Catholic disabilities, estate management, etc, with all the frankness of a private journal

[The correspondence of the 4th Viscount shows] ... that, though being Papist constituted no insurmountable handicap to the Brownes, they were seldom free from apprehension that something might happen to endanger their property or their freedom – a new bogus Plot, fresh anti-Popery legislation, or perhaps another abortive attempt on the part of the "Pretender". Though, in fact, no such major misfortune did befall them, they were constantly hampered, and at times placed in a humiliating position, by the direct operation of the Penal Laws and their indirect consequences. ... Mme da Cunha ..., who acted in effect as the guardian of her [great-]nephew, ... [the 4th Viscount], of course could not, as a Catholic, do so legally. ... As his guardian she was principally concerned with combating the direct attempts made to induce him to forsake his religion - how overjoyed she must have been when the Master of St Mary's Hall, Oxford, finally abandoned what he decided was a hopeless task. In the case of his father, to whom she was even more devoted, her anxiety was rather regarding the dangers of a possible "mixed" marriage. ...'



Valentine, 5th Viscount and 1st Earl of Kenmare (1754-1812)

Thomas, 4th Viscount Kenmare, died in 1795 and was succeeded by his son, Valentine. The new Lord Kenmare had married, in 1783, Mary, daughter of Michael Aylmer of Lyons, Co. Kildare, by whom he had four sons, the first two of whom succeeded in turn to his estates and the titles which were soon to be conferred on him.

The second half of the 1790s was the period when the government made an annual grant to the newly founded (in 1795) seminary for the education of the Irish Catholic clergy at Maynooth, Co. Kildare, and came near to making state provision for the payment of the Catholic clergy. In that spirit, Valentine, 5th (Jacobite) Viscount, was created, in 1798, 1st (Hanoverian) Viscount, Kenmare. Normally, a man was raised one step in the peerage at a time, but under the special circumstances of Lord Kenmare's case, it was decided that, being already commonly called a viscount, he could not now be created a baron. There was also a desire, in the words of that celebrated Kerryman, Judge Robert Day (letter of 22 February 1798 [Talbot-Crosbie papers, NLI]) to distance him from a subsequent Catholic creation, that of Baroness Ffrench of Castle Ffrench, Co. Roscommon, a '... dame with one eye and vulgar person and manners ..., who never paid a visit in her life, who never went for a ride except on a pillion ... [and who belonged to a family] keeping up no society with any gentry and possessing at most about £2,000 a year ...'!

In 1800, following his support and that of most of the leading Catholics of Ireland for the Union, Lord Kenmare was advanced to the earldom of Kenmare and viscountcy of Castlerosse. The patent creating the earldom is present in the archive (D4210/A/2/3). Thereafter, he spent much of his time in England, mainly taking the waters at Cheltenham (a favourite health resort of his father, the 4th Viscount), and died in 1812.



'Squalor, dilapidation and dirt'

It was probably the 1st Earl of Kenmare who, inadvertently, was responsible for the 'squalor, dilapidation and dirt' of the town of Killarney, which was later (in 1888) strongly complained of (see D4151/F/4) and which ill became a property boasting 'the loveliest scenes in Ireland At the end of the last [18th] century, ... [Lord Kenmare], anxious to improve Killarney, granted a lease forever of a plot of ground to anybody who built a slated house in the town. No restrictions as to subletting or anything else were inserted in these leases, the consequence being that almost every man who obtained a plot and built a house in this way, subsequently relet the garden attached to his house to some enterprising person to construct a cabin upon. As the land upon which the lanes of cabins thus erected is practically freehold, ... [the 4th Earl of] Kenmare cannot move a finger ... [to repair] the evil done by his ancestor's generous mistake ...'.

In other respects, the 1st Earl's policy was even more mistaken. According to J.S. Donnelly, he failed '... to proceed with the ouster of middlemen which had been well begun during the second half of the 18th century ... [and in 1811] leased large portions of his property to middlemen for a term of 3 lives or 41 years, whichever lasted longer. ...' Wakefield reckoned in 1812 that the Kerry estate had a rental of £8,000, and would re-let for £40,000; so that the leasehold interests under Lord Kenmare were worth £32,000 a year.



Valentine, 2nd Earl of Kenmare (1788-1853)

The 2nd Earl of Kenmare succeeded his father in the title and estates in 1812. In 1816, he made the first-ever marriage of a head of the Browne family to a non-Catholic. His wife was Augusta Ann, daughter of Sir Robert Wilmot, [2nd] Bt, of Osmaston, Derbyshire. Following the passing of Catholic Emancipation in 1829 and the abolition of the old governorships of Irish counties in 1831, he became the first Lord Kenmare to hold the office to which his ancestry and his possession of one of the largest estates in the county entitled him, but from which he had so far been debarred by his religion, the Lieutenancy of Co. Kerry. This he held from 1831 till his death in 1853. He was succeeded as Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of Co. Kerry – after an intermission between 1853 and 1871 – by his nephew and great-nephew, the 4th and 5th Earls of Kenmare (see D4151/V/7). In 1841, the 2nd Earl had been created a UK baron, also as Lord Kenmare. This title died with him, but was re-created in 1856 for his younger brother and successor as 3rd Earl.



Co. Kerry elections, 1835-1841

It was in the 2nd Earl's time that the family first found themselves bitterly alienated from their tenants and co-religionists in Co. Kerry, who voted against Lord Kenmare's wishes at the 1835 general election, under the influence of Daniel O'Connell (whose home was Derrynane, near Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry), the priests and the local Roman Catholic Bishop, Cornelius Egan. The events of this election are fully documented in the papers of the candidate whom Lord Kenmare supported, Maurice FitzGerald, Knight of Kerry (PRONI, MIC639/15). On 13 January 1835, Lady Kenmare wrote to Maurice FitzGerald: '... The priest, Mr Toumy, addressed his flock from the altar on Sunday ..., harangued them in the most violent manner ..., told them that in voting for you "they were voting against their God and their country", called Gallwey [the agent] a tyrant and Lord K. little better ..., and ended by denouncing all the shops in Killarney kept by people who go with Lord K. and ordering the well-wishers of their country to deal exclusively with the tradespeople who have given in their allegiance to O'Connell! ... It is certainly very mortifying, though not surprising considering the outrageous means used to inflame the minds of the people; and though one grieves to show one's weakness, still, Kenmare rejoices at the part he has taken and at having had an opportunity to assert his independence and show that he would not submit to the dictation and system of oppression and intimidation adopted by Mr O'Connell to attain his ends ...'.

Even O'Connell - described in these letters as 'O'Horrid' and the 'roaring lion' - had earlier conceded that Lord Kenmare, whatever his limitations as a political figure, was 'honourable', 'amiable' and 'respectable' (letter of 17-19 September 1828, published in *The O'Connell Correspondence*, vol. 3 (IMC, Dublin, 1974)). This being O'Connell's attitude, he worked hard to bridge the election rift. In 1840 he used his influence to get the Kenmare agent, Christopher Gallwey (who had been dismissed from the Kerry magistracy for a technical over-stepping of his duty) reinstated on the bench, and later, in 1845, when O'Connell's Repeal of the Union agitation was in full cry, O'Connell went out of his way to prevent scenes distasteful to Lord Kenmare from occurring in Killarney. In 1841, Lord Kenmare's brother, the Hon. William Browne, was elected to parliament for Co. Kerry in tandem with O'Connell's nephew, Morgan John.



The building of Killarney Cathedral



Monumental brass in the Kenmare Chapel of Killarney Cathedral

Moreover, Lord Kenmare and Bishop Egan soon found themselves with a common object - the building of Killarney Cathedral, which took place in the period 1842-1856 (interrupted by the Famine in the years 1848-1853) and a considerable proportion of the cost of which was defrayed by Lord Kenmare. Although he is buried there and commemorated by a remarkable mediaeval-revival monumental brass, Lord Kenmare died two years before the consecration of the building in 1855. The spire was not begun until 1908.

In *A Companion Guide to Architecture in Ireland, 1837-1921* (Dublin, 1994), Jeremy Williams describes this as 'The Irish masterpiece of A.W.N. Pugin, standing in for all the unbuilt cathedrals which would have brought the English back into the Catholic faith. Killarney should have exceeded the cathedrals of England in the wooded grandeur of its setting, as Lord Kenmare ... had promised a site on his estates. But Lady Kenmare [who was not herself received into the Catholic Church until 1852] objected, and was not pleased when one of their tenants offered a site without permission opposite her front gates. History does not record if she was mollified by this vision of Salisbury, for Killarney was Pugin's personal homage to his favourite cathedral. ... His inspiration was [also] the ruined medieval predecessor of his cathedral, Ardfert [Co. Kerry] It is extraordinary that such a sense of Irishness should be achieved by a Huguenot convert to the Church of Rome. ...'

Visiting Killarney in September 1852, Harriet Martineau (*Letters from Ireland ...* [London, 1852]) was far from impressed by the then state of '... the grand cathedral begun by poor Pugin It is a melancholy sight, that half-developed edifice, standing on the bright sward, unused and unusable. It has cost from £9,000 to £13,00 (there is no making out anything nearer than this), and it would require - some say £6,000, some say £10,000 - to finish it; and nobody sees where the money is to come from. ...' Regrettably, the Kenmare family's financial contribution to the building of Killarney Cathedral is virtually undocumented in the archive (there is a Papal receipt of 1856 [D4151/U/2] extolling it); this appears to be because it was paid for out of the family's 'private resources', not out of estate income, and so did not fall to be accounted for in the Estate Office system.



Thomas, 3rd Earl of Kenmare (1789-1871)

When Lord Kenmare died childless in 1853, he was succeeded as 3rd Earl by his younger brother, Thomas. In the following year, the 3rd Earl's wife died. According to a counsel's opinion of 18 February 1858 (Muckross House, K.41E.1), the 3rd Earl soon afterwards made over Kenmare House and the estates to his son and heir, Lord Castlerosse (1825-1905), the future 4th Earl, in return for an annuity of £6,000. In 1858, this arrangement was formalised in a deed of settlement.

In the same year, 1858, the 'Leinster' estate in Cos Kilkenny, Queen's County and Carlow was, as has already been mentioned, sold for c.£94,000. Why this was done, and what the money was used for, are very good questions. Because of the prevalence of middlemen on the Kenmare estates, the 2nd Earl's income had been only temporarily affected by the Famine (arrears of £27,805 in 1850 were mostly paid off, or the estate received an equivalent as a result of re-letting). An enormous amount of money – by coincidence £95,000 between 1851 and 1880 – was spent on permanent improvements to tenanted land, and though much of this was borrowed (with dire consequences in the years to come), some of it may well have come from the proceeds of the sale of 'Leinster'. Furthermore, the 3rd Earl, Lord Castlerosse and the agent, Thomas Gallwey, practised a very relaxed style of landlordism, doing little to raise rents even when opportunity and economic reality permitted: possibly the family lived to some extent on capital in order to finance this benign regime.

Some of the proceeds of the sale of 'Leinster' must undoubtedly have been spent on Killarney Cathedral; after 1850, though Pugin himself was dead, the nave of the cathedral was extended and other additions were made to the building. In 1856 David Moriarty, who had been coadjutor since 1854, succeeded as Bishop of Kerry. As he was a staunch upholder of the British connection and the British Empire, relations between the Kenmare family and him can only have been harmonious (the only letter from him in the archive, dated 1863 [D4151/U/2], is affable and accommodating). Appropriately, he too is commemorated in Killarney Cathedral by a monumental brass. Together, the four brasses (there are ones to the 3rd Earl and his wife as well as to the 2nd Earl) constitute what must be the finest set of 19th-century brasses in Ireland.

In 1856, the 3rd Earl went to the House of Lords as Baron Kenmare. Lord Castlerosse had been in parliament as MP for Kerry since 1852, and continued to sit for Kerry until his father's death in 1871. Although an Irish MP, he moved mainly in English high society. His wife, too, was English: in 1858 he married Gertrude Harriet, daughter of Lord Charles Thynne and granddaughter of the 2nd Marquess of Bath. He also entered Court circles - as Comptroller of the Household to Queen Victoria, 1856-1858, Vice-Chamberlain, 1859-1865 and 1868-1872, and Lord Chamberlain, 1880-1885. It was because of his position at court that Queen Victoria and Prince Albert paid their



Elm State Bed

because of his position at court that Queen Victoria and Prince Albert paid their

celebrated visit to Killarney and the lakes in August 1861, staying first at Kenmare House and then at Muckross. In Kenmare House, they slept in an elaborately carved, elm state bed, specially made for the occasion, and depicting in the carving on its sides an allegory of the coming of the Brownes to Co. Kerry and another of the deeds of valour performed by the 3rd Earl of Kenmare in his youth as a captain in the Peninsular War. The royal visit put Killarney on the map as a tourist resort and set the scene for the prosperity and popularity it enjoys today. It must also have been the Queen and Prince's last tour together, as the Prince died in December 1861.



Valentine, 4th Earl of Kenmare (1825-1905) and the building of Killarney House

In 1872 Lord Castlerosse, immediately after succeeding as 4th Earl of Kenmare and to the family estates, decided to abandon the existing house at Killarney. This dated – with later extensions - from 1726 and according to Mark Bence-Jones was old-fashioned even for that date, having been designed by the 3rd Viscount Kenmare himself, and having, as the papers clearly show (cf D4151/S/1/D/1 and S/6/1), also been a re-working of an older, 17th-century house. A century earlier, in 1788, the Rev. Dr D.A. Beaufort had described it dismissively as 'an old, plain, rough-stone building with thirteen windows in front'.



Killarney House, c.1880

The 4th Earl's new 'Killarney House' was a large, red-brick, Elizabethan-Revival manor house on a more elevated site (supposedly selected by Queen Victoria during a visit to Killarney) with views over the lakes and to the mountains. The cost was well over £100,000. This house was supposed to have been instigated by Lady Kenmare and inspired by Lord Bath's genuinely Elizabethan seat, Longleat, Wiltshire (which is not red-brick); but it was not unusual for the descendants of

Elizabethan or Jacobean settlers in Ireland to assert their comparative antiquity in this period by building Jacobethan houses. The architect was George Devey but, according to Jeremy Williams, '... that feeling of being built up over the centuries that distinguished Devey's work was entirely lacking, partly due to the job being supervised by W.H. Lynn [the Belfast architect] at his most relentless ... The western-most gate lodge, gabled and galleried, [which survives, is] Devey at his most delightful.' The house, which in addition to its other defects apparently did not sit happily in the landscape, was burnt out twice - once in 1879, just after its completion, and again, and finally, in November 1913.



The Co. Kerry by-election of 1871

From soon after the 4th Earl's succession, the Kenmare family again found itself alienated from their tenants and co-religionists in Co. Kerry. A Home Ruler was successful at the by-election caused by the 4th Earl's succession to the title in 1871, although the inappropriateness of the cousin and candidate set up by the 4th Earl was a contributory factor. (Maurice FitzGerald in 1835 had been an excellent candidate on both local and personal grounds, and his only fault was that he had joined the Tories: James Arthur Dease, the Kenmare candidate in 1871, was unsuitable from most points of view, because he was not a Browne and not a resident or landowner in Kerry.) Nevertheless, the fact remains that Lord Kenmare's cousin and candidate was not only defeated in 1871 but was so knocked about in an election affray at Castleisland, Co. Kerry, that he died - from this and other causes - at an early age in 1874. It would seem that Lord Kenmare was the last member or candidate of his family to be elected for Kerry or any post-1884 Division of Kerry.



Unequal, unpopular and unsuccessful rent increases

It was not, however, retaliation after electoral defeat, but the cost of building the new Killarney House, which gave rise to the serious trouble on the Kenmare estates in the period 1880-1890 ably and vividly documented by James S. Donnelly Junior in his long, three-part article in *The Kerry Archaeological and Historical Journal*, 1988-1990. (Professor Donnelly seems to have been one of the last, and one of the few, people to have obtained access to the Killarney Estate Office prior to the transfer of most of the archive to Norfolk and thence to PRONI.)

In brief, Donnelly has demonstrated that the need to raise money for the building of the new house determined estate management policy from the succession of the 4th Earl of Kenmare in 1871. Large sums of money were borrowed to build the house, on the assumption that these borrowings could be met out of increased rents and other money-raising schemes off the estate. When the existing agent, Thomas Gallwey, failed to deliver the anticipated (in all senses) increase, he was replaced in June 1874 by the more vigorous and certainly the more voluble S.M. Hussey. Hussey did in fact achieve an increase of 11.8%, to £37,549 per annum, by 1879. But because these increases were in glaring contrast to the laissez faire approach of the pre-1871 era, because they coincided with a depression, particularly in the butter trade, in the late 1870s, and because they fell unevenly and very heavily on certain groups of tenants (particularly on the Bantry and Hospital estates), they were productive of great bitterness and some resistance. Moreover, the modest increase in the rental by no means kept pace with the 4th Earl's unabated expenditure on agricultural improvement and on his demesne (he employed between 300 and 400 labourers, and his labourers' bills sometimes exceeded £450 a week).



A bankrupt estate

The consequence was that by 1882 he found himself indebted to the tune of £227,000 (or six times the rental, had it been properly paid, which it had long since ceased to be). Far and away his biggest creditor was the Standard Life Assurance Company. In 1882, the Company insisted that the estate be placed under trusteeship (though, to judge from the composition of the trustees, they were likely to have been sympathetic rather than hostile to Lord Kenmare, only one of them, William Bentham, being a representative of the Company). From then on, the agent reported, not to Lord Kenmare, but to the trustees.

Killarney House had been shut up in November 1880 and the train of labourers dismissed, following a threat against Lord Kenmare's life; but the trustees now insisted on further economies, and in the end Lord and Lady Kenmare had to close even their London house (in Grosvenor Place) and go to live on the Isle of Wight. For approximately the decade 1880-1890, Lord Kenmare was actually bankrupt, in that he was unable to service his debts and he owed more than could possibly be realised by a sale of his assets. When his son and heir, Lord Castlerosse, married the Hon. Elizabeth Baring (who brought with her a gratifyingly large marriage portion of nearly £16,000) in 1887, at the height of the trouble on the Kenmare estate, Lord Kenmare was unable to offer any part of it as security for Lady Castlerosse's jointure of £1,250. Instead, he had to resort to an estate in Suffolk which, fortuitously and fortunately, he had inherited, probably in the same year, under the will of an aunt who had died in 1840.



The Plan of Campaign

During the unhappy decade 1880-1890, the Kenmare estates were the scene of a series of bitter struggles with, first, the Land League, then the National League and finally, from 1888, the Plan of Campaign. Tenants were murdered, bailiffs were shot at and resigned en masse, Hussey's house was dynamited (in November 1884) and at one point no less than 22 RIC men stood guard over Killarney House all round the clock, at a cost to the tax-payer of some £2,000 a year. Hussey, who was on bad terms with the trustees and the Standard Life Assurance Company, and was considered too provocative, was replaced by his assistant in the Killarney Estate Office, Maurice Leonard, at the end of 1885. Due to fairly skilful tactics on the part of Leonard, lack of concerted action among the tenants (who included many very different interest groups), the extreme forbearance of the Company and a general upturn in the agricultural economy, the Kenmare estate survived the decade and certainly saw off the Plan of Campaign.



Partial victory and psychological defeat

From c.1889, arrears, which at one point had amounted to one year's rent, were slowly but almost entirely recovered. However, there were permanent losses in the form of heavy legal costs, heavy interest charges and, most serious of all, the inexorable reduction of the rental as a result of a series of unfavourable Land Court decisions in fixing Judicial Rents from 1888 onwards. By March 1889, the rental had been reduced to £31,000, and between then and 1893, in particular, much worse was to come. As Donnelly puts it: '... The accumulation of discouraging and painful events ..., and the evaporation of public respect for their once esteemed family, eventually prompted the Earl of Kenmare and his eldest son, Viscount Castlerosse, to consider seriously what a decade earlier would have been unthinkable: sales to the tenants. ...' Only the impossibility of getting the tenants to accept reasonable terms prevented a total sale of the estates in the period 1889-1892.

The Kenmare papers document the 'discouraging and painful events' in very great detail, and in the form of the rentals and accounts introduced by Hussey in 1874 which, according to Donnelly, are 'models of clarity, completeness and precision', as well as of overlapping series of Estate Office letter-books. The 4th Earl held the title from 1871 to 1905, which approximately coincides with the period of the Irish Land Acts and is also the most densely documented period of the Killarney Estate Office archive. The abundant survival of all this hard evidence is of extreme importance, granted that the Kenmare estate was such a cause célèbre in the 1880s and a focus for the propaganda warfare of that decade (in which S.M. Hussey, who published *Reminiscences of an Irish Land Agent* in 1904, was as active as the Nationalists and Land Leaguers). The Killarney Estate Office archive is an important survival, and the Kenmare estate a crucial case study, for the additional reason that the Earls of Kenmare did not conform to the stereotype of Irish landlords divided from their tenants and the locals by a difference of religious persuasion.



Valentine, 5th Earl of Kenmare (1860-1941)

The 4th Earl of Kenmare died in 1905 and was succeeded by his son, the 5th Earl, who (as had been seen) had also made an English marriage - to the Hon. Elizabeth Baring, a daughter of the 1st Lord Revelstoke and a member of the Baring banking family. The 4th Earl had been famed for his feats of gourmandising - a characteristic which was to re-appear in the next generation. But the 5th Earl, by contrast, was a fine figure of a man, something of a dandy and a superb horseman. As Lord Castlerosse, he had been Master of the Horse and held other Household appointments in Dublin Castle under the Conservative Lords Lieutenant who preceded his accession to the title, and from 1905 he was State Steward to the Liberal Earl of Aberdeen. Royal, as well as Viceregal, connections were kept up, with Edward VII and Queen Alexandra and, later, George V and Queen Mary paying visits to Killarney House in the years before the First World War. Lord and Lady Kenmare had three sons (who will be referred to in due course) and two daughters: Lady Cicely, who married Colonel Thomas Vesey, younger brother of the 5th Viscount de Vesci, in 1911; and Lady Margaret, who married Lord Edward Grosvenor, youngest son of the 1st Duke of Westminster, in 1914.



A bewildering succession of Kenmare Houses

Following the disastrous fire of 1913, the 5th Earl converted and occupied the still-surviving stables of the 1726 house, apparently being advised by no lesser architect than Sir Edwin Lutyens (who certainly did work for Lady Kenmare's brother, the 3rd Lord Revelstoke, at Lambay Castle on Lambay Island, Co. Dublin). The converted stables were called Kenmare House (as the original house on the site had been); but



Mrs Grovenor's Kenmare House, 1956

Lord Kenmare and his wife did not live there much, residing instead in London or in Hertfordshire (and legally giving up their Irish residency altogether in 1936). This Kenmare House was later abandoned and sold when a new Kenmare House, built confusingly on the site of the former Killarney House, was constructed in 1956, only to be replaced by a third Kenmare House less than twenty years later, in 1974. This last Kenmare House was built on the Killorglin Road out of Killarney, beside the Killarney golf course and the Castlerosse Hotel. Its sale in 1985 effectively marks the end of the Kenmare family's proprietorial connection with Killarney.



Valentine, 6th Earl of Kenmare (1891-1943)



*Lord Castlerosse,
6th Earl of Kenmare*

The 5th Earl died in 1941 (and his widow in 1944), and was succeeded, briefly, by his two surviving sons. The first, Valentine, the 6th Earl (who, however, was always known as Lord Castlerosse), was a celebrated gossip columnist, bon viveur and scratch golfer (until overtaken by obesity), and the friend and business associate of Lord Beaverbrook and Henry Longhurst. He was a sometime director of *The Daily Express*, *The Sunday Express* and *The Evening Standard*. But, charmingly feckless in everything to do with money and business, he was a considerable disappointment to his parents. His mother's favourite had, in any case, been her second son, Dermot (1894-1915), who was killed in action in 1915 - Lord Castlerosse, too, had served in the First World War, as a captain in the Irish Guards, and had been wounded.

His abject performance as an employee of Baring Bros., and his marriage beyond the pale in 1928, alienated his mother's bachelor brother, the 2nd Lord Revelstoke, from whom until then Lord Castlerosse had had great expectations.

Golf and gourmandising

There had been a Killarney Golf Club since at least 1914, and from that date all or part of the golf course was situated in the former deerpark, which the club leased from the 5th Earl of Kenmare. His son, Lord Castlerosse's, most enduring achievement was the conversion of the western demesne at Killarney into a world-famous course, designed for him by his friend, Henry Longhurst, and the leading golf course architect of the day, Sir Guy Campbell, and opened by the Bishop of Kerry in 1939. However, the war - in Southern Ireland 'the Emergency' - ensured that it did not become a financial success in Castlerosse's lifetime. He died, a victim of his famously unhealthy lifestyle, in 1943 and, because he had no children, was succeeded as 7th Earl of Kenmare by his only surviving brother, Gerald (1896-1943), a lieutenant in the 1st Dragoon Guards, and an A.D.C. to the first Governor-General of the Irish Free State from 1921.



From 1943 to the present day

The 7th Earl died in the following year. With him the family titles all became extinct, and what Land Purchase had left of the property passed to his sister, Dorothy Margaret (d.1961), who had married Lord Edward Grosvenor, a son of the 1st Duke of Westminster. Following Lady Dorothy's death, it passed to her elder daughter, Mrs Beatrice Grosvenor (who had reassumed her maiden name following the annulment of her marriage in 1945). Mrs Grosvenor (1915-1985) is the last of the family to be buried in the Kenmare chapel in Killarney Cathedral. At her death, the small remnant of the estate passed to her nephew, Mr E.W. Dawney, second son of her younger sister, Rosemary Helen, and Major the Hon. George William Dawnay, MC. Nothing now remains except the archive, part of which is at Muckcross and most of which was deposited in PRONI by Mr Dawnay in 1997 or by Farrer & Co., the London solicitors of the Kenmare family, in 1998.



*The Kenmare arms set in encaustic tiles,
Chapel, Killarney Cathedral*



The Kenmare papers

In the description of the contents of the archive which follows, Dr MacLysaght's introductory comments are again the starting-point. It is always important to remember that many of the documents and volumes described by MacLysaght, and in particular many of those transcribed by him in full, have not been received by PRONI but seem to be at Muckross. In such cases, it would have led to confusion to have omitted MacLysaght's descriptions, because they are of the very documents and volumes which are familiar to scholars and will be among the first to be enquired after. Moreover, if it transpires that the originals of some of this material have not survived, MacLysaght's descriptions - particularly when they are transcriptions - assume an especial significance. Accordingly, it is PRONI's intention to scan them into the list of the archive.

Some microfilming and/or photostating of the material covered by MacLysaght was done for the National Library of Ireland in 1954 (NLI, n.3169-3174, n.5430, 16 H 32 and MS 2770). PRONI has obtained from NLI a microfilm copy (MIC643) of this material, and this has at least filled one gap in the PRONI originals (D4151/K/69A: MIC643/7).



Title deeds and deeds of settlement

These are far fewer in number – than those described by MacLysaght, and it would appear that the balance are held by Muckross. The earliest document in PRONI is dated 1587 but is represented by a non-contemporary copy. The two Stuart patents of 1620 and 1637 respectively are present in the original, the James I patent being especially fine. Present also are the marriage settlements of the 1st and 2nd Earls of Kenmare, dated 1783 and 1816 respectively, and the marriage settlement of the Hon. William Browne, third son of the 1st Earl, 1826.

The numerous mid-19th century (or later) certified copies of early patents, title deeds, deeds of settlement, mortgage, conveyance, wills, etc, beginning in 1556, which MacLysaght describes, have not been received by PRONI. Another missing item is the large volume he mentions entitled 'Memorials of the ancient and noble family of Browne of Molahiffe in the county of Kerry and Browne of Hospital, in the county of Limerick, Earls of Kenmare', compiled by Ulster King-of-Arms, Sir John Bernard Burke, in 1876. This would be valuable, not only for family history purposes, but more particularly for the convenient abstracts it provides of patents, title deeds and other such documents from 1588 onwards.



Leases and leasebooks

These constitute probably the largest section of the archive and certainly the largest section of the PRONI list.

Although there are some leases at Muckross, the vast majority are in PRONI. These latter amount to 2,210 leases, 1633 and 1680-1951, plus seven leasebooks which, in effect, give a series of 'snapshots' of the leasehold structure of the Kenmare estates at various points in time between 1778 and 1865, plus 4 small volumes of caretaker agreements, 1878-1907, plus 3 large volumes of grazing agreements for the Killarney area, combined with details of rent payments received from the lessees, 1881-1901, 1891-1909 and 1914-1939.

One of the leasebooks, dated May 1795, records leases on the Kerry, Limerick and Cork estates at the time of the death of the 4th Viscount Kenmare (and was probably drawn up in connection with the winding-up of his estate). Like the others, it is actually an all-purpose volume, in that it records rents as well (a total of c.£14,500 in 1795); additionally, the 1795 volume gives details of the annual charges on the estates, the annual out-goings, etc. However, as this kind of information is available elsewhere in the archive, the main significance of the volumes is as leasebooks, because they record the date and terms of each lease, name the lives in the case of leases for lives and, where up-dating has been carried out, record the dates on which the lives dropped.

Included among the 2,210 original leases are two (plus one set of articles of agreement) relating to coal and iron mines on the Co. Kerry estates, 1722, 1731 and 1755. During the Penal Era, the lessor is always discreetly described as '... commonly called Lord Viscount Kenmare' and the leases are for terms of years up to 31 (and so comply with 1704 Act to Prevent the Further Growth of Popery), although one lease for lives, dated 1765, has been noted.

In addition, there are c.500 Irish Land Commission papers, c.1880-c.1925, relating to the sale of tenanted land to the tenants concerned under the successive Irish Land Acts.



Wills and testamentary papers

Dr MacLysaght describes these as follows: '... The paucity of originals or copies of wills is notable Those of Owen Ferris [of Lahard, 1725,] ... and William Weldon [of Dublin, 1727, are the earliest ...', but have not been received by PRONI.

Later - but still pre-1858 - wills listed by MacLysaght include: Prerogative administration granted to Thomas, 4th Viscount Kenmare, to the goods of his sister, the Hon. Helen Wogan, who died intestate, 3 March 1784 [not received]; Prerogative probate, with will annexed, of Thomas, 4th Viscount Kenmare (will dated 10 March 1778: probate: 10 November 1795) [not received]; copy will of Valentine, 1st Earl of Kenmare, 1 July 1806; Prerogative probate (27 June 1815) of the will (4 July 1811) of Valentine, 1st Earl of Kenmare [damaged]; Prerogative grant of administration to the 2nd Earl of Kenmare to the goods of Catherine, Countess de Civrac, 14 December 1823 [not received]; copy Prerogative probate (13 September 1827) of the will (13 November 1825) of Daniel Cronin of Park, Co. Kerry; and Prerogative probate (22 December 1853) of the will and codicil (15 and 27 August 1845) of the 2nd Earl of Kenmare.

The only pre-1858 will or testamentary paper so far listed by Muckross is another copy of the 2nd Earl's codicil of 27 August 1845 (K.39E.2) and a further codicil of 8 May 1847 (K.41E.2).



Legal case papers

'... The constant litigation involving the family from the date of the forfeiture of the estate in 1691 until in 1768 Thomas, 4th Viscount, finally got clear of encumbrances, resulted in the accumulation of a great quantity of papers relating to the various lawsuits in which he and his father were engaged. While many have, no doubt, been lost and a large number of those which survive have become almost obliterated by damp, there still remain, apart from letters ..., nearly a thousand documents [of which only some three dozen have been received by PRONI but, apparently, a high proportion by Muckross] comprising Chancery and Exchequer bills and answers, briefs and miscellaneous legal papers. Each of the principal causes actually consists of a series of suits in which the names of the plaintiffs and defendants undergo constant variation, though the questions at issue remain substantially the same. Each has its origin in a 17th century settlement.



The misdeeds and mismanagement of John Asgill

The first involves John Asgill, Richard Hedges, the two Londonders, James Cardonnell and William Lilly, and several relatives and connections of Lord Kenmare. ... In October 1711, Richard Hedges filed a bill in the Court of Chancery, England, against Asgill, Cardonell, Lilly and others touching the disposition of rents and profits of the forfeited estate, Hedges being tenant or lessee under Asgill of a great part of the estate. In January 1711/1712, a bill was filed in the same Court by Valentine and Frances Browne (by Anthony Hammond [of Somersham, Huntingdonshire], their guardian), William Weldon and Elizabeth, his wife, and Margaret Browne, against Asgill, Cardonell, Lilly and Hedges, claiming the reversion of the estate and £400 a year pension, [and] praying a discovery of the encumbrances on the estate and general relief. Both causes were heard on 24 November 1713 by the Lord Chancellor who ordered reference to a Master to determine what was sold to Asgill, to examine the encumbrances and state their priority, to state accounts of receipts by Asgill and amount of arrears of rent and how far the encumbrances were satisfied by the sale of the woods and otherwise. After many delays, chiefly occasioned by Asgill and Hedges, the Master on 10 March 1723/1724 certified that Asgill had received up to May 1706 enough to satisfy the encumbrances bought by Cardonell and Lilly. Pending proceedings Nicholas died, Asgill's interest determined and Asgill became insolvent. ...



Creditors and Discoverers

A great part of the voluminous documents connected with ... [the second] cause are devoted to the depositions of persons living in Co. Limerick concerning the occupation and value of lands there, and of persons living in Co. Cork concerning the extent and value of timber felled. Among the depositions is a copy of Colonel John White's before the Chichester House Trustees on 15 August 1700. Many other documents deal with the accounts [and lawsuits] between the Lords Kenmare and the Whites and these include a bundle of original receipts from the Whites, numbered 1 to 73. Twenty letters [none of which have been received by PRONI] are quoted verbatim [in the case papers], ... written at various dated between 13 May 1738 and 1 September 1750, for the most part by Elizabeth White to Edward Herbert, while he was agent during the 4th Viscount's minority. All, including one dated 5 March 1740/1741 from Mme da Cunha, relate to payments of money to the Miss Whites and clearly indicate that these were made regularly. ... [For his part, the 4th Viscount Kenmare believed that the Whites' alleged] encumbrance on the estate ... had been fully discharged. The lawyers were kept busy with this during a period of more than seventy years [1692-1768]. The case is of considerable family interest, and the documents in it also illustrate the working of the Penal Laws as late as the 1760s, since it was complicated by the intervention of a Protestant Discoverer [one James Ward] ...'.



Later case papers

The later case papers (and lawyers' bills of costs) consist of a quantity of documents and bundles, c.1880-c.1930, including case papers in various Civil Bill proceedings, a large bundle of case papers in the Marquess of Lansdowne -v- Killarney Town Commissioners, case papers to do with early 20th century lawsuits between the Earls of Kenmare and one Michael T. Fleming, and between the Kenmares and Killarney District Lunatic Asylum, and papers relating to malicious damage claims, 1922-1923, in respect of the 5th Earl of Kenmare's house at Lisnagree, near Charleville, Co. Cork, as well as property in and near Killarney. There are many case papers of this period at Muckcross.



Maps, surveys, plans and valuations

'... Immediately after the recovery of the estates by Valentine, 3rd Viscount Kenmare, in 1720 an elaborate survey of these was undertaken on his behalf. It took five years to complete, the surveyors being William Raymond and Thomas Ledman for the Kerry estate, and Richard Bourke for Co. Limerick. The survey for the Co. Cork (Bantry) estate, if any was made at the time, does not appear to have survived [unless it is D4151/S/2/A/2-17. The volume for Co. Kerry is D4151/S/5/1 and a microfilm copy exists on MIC643/7. Only 2 maps from the Co. Limerick survey of 1720 have been received (a third is listed by MacLysaght [p.457], but may not have survived and was not copied by NLI). PRONI also holds a 1724 map of most or all of the Limerick estate by George Huish.] The total acreage of the estates was in 1721:

Co. Kerry	107,650 (statute)
Co. Limerick	4,632 (statute)
Co. Cork	24,532 (statute)
[according to a later survey]	
Total	136,814 (statute)

To this must be added certain portions unsurveyed or otherwise omitted.

The maps are very carefully finished with the boundaries of the various denominations shown in five different colours. The roads then existing are clearly marked and the different qualities of the land comprised in the survey are indicated with their respective acreages, the whole being summarised as regards Co. Kerry in an "alphabetic index" at the end of the book containing the maps; the Limerick maps, however, are on loose sheets. Another interesting and valuable feature of this survey is the manner in which dwelling houses, churches and other buildings are shown: they are depicted so as to give a rough idea of their actual appearance. In a few place names of rivers, etc, have been added in later hand, and one or two corrections as, for example, in the shape of an island, pencilled in at a later date. The title page is very elaborate, as too are the surveyors' pages of preliminary explanation. The actual maps of the Kerry survey number 34, each covering a double page and measuring approximately 22 in. x 17 in. ...

[The already-mentioned "Book of Observations" (D4151/S/5/1) of Thomas, 4th Viscount Kenmare is dated 1755-c.1760 and contains] ... his "remarks" on the tenants of his estates in Cos Kerry, Cork and Limerick and his observations on estate management. The greater part of the observations on the Kerry estate were written down between 1755 and 1757, those on the Hospital and Bantry estates a couple of years later. This book, bound in green cloth, measures approximately 15½ in. x 6½ in., and contains 163 pages of matter, all in Lord Kenmare's own hand, as well as indexes, and lists of leases (mostly in [the first] Christopher Gallwey's hand). ...' He was agent for the Kenmare estates from 1747 and grandfather and namesake of the agent from c.1812 to 1851.



The Co. Kerry estate

The Co. Kerry estate maps and surveys, c.1720-1938, received by PRONI total c.300, including 2 hand drawn maps dating from 1720 and approximately 50 dating from 1750 to 1799, surveyed by Finan Mangan, Richard Linnegar and John Sullivan. A further 120 hand drawn maps date from the 19th century, many of them surveyed by John Mangan at the request of Christopher Gallwey. The majority of the maps delimit tenants' holdings on the estates of Lord Kenmare and, in some mid 19th century instances, those of Henry Herbert of Muckross, his neighbour at Killarney. There are also approximately 100 Ordnance Survey maps, dating from the mid 19th century until about 1930, and some late 1930s maps showing Killarney golf course and the layout of the holes and greens. In addition, there are c.5 early 19th-century estate maps at Muckross and some later material about the golf course.



The Co. Cork, Limerick and 'Leinster' estates

Co. Cork estate maps, 1720 and 1813-1900, number 53, including 16 hand drawn maps dating from 1720 and surveyed by John Tobin Furvey. A further 14 hand drawn maps date from the period 1813-1848 and are the work of Richard Manning, John Mangan and John McGowran. There are also a further 24 printed OS maps. Co. Limerick estate maps, c.1720-1900, number 17, including 2 hand drawn maps dating from 1720 surveyed by Richard Bourke, 3 hand drawn maps surveyed by Edward Vaughan (1748), Richard Frizzell (1766) and John Gilhooly (1780), and 9 hand drawn maps surveyed by Richard Manning and John McGowran, 1813-1843. There are also 2 printed OS maps. 'Leinster' estate maps, etc, 1762-1858, number 9, including one 19th century hand drawn map for Co. Carlow, 2 hand drawn maps for Queen's County dating from 1762 to c.1850, and 2 19th century hand drawn maps for Co. Kilkenny.



Architectural material



Kenmare House, 1729

Architectural material comprises: a damaged map of the Killarney deerpark in 1729, whose most striking feature is a vignette elevation of the recently remodelled Kenmare House; a 'groundplan of a hothouse', [1770]; an elevation of the Classical front of some fairly grand house, [c.1830]; c.6 plans (on tracing paper) of the various floors of the new Killarney House, [1872-]1878, one of them relating to the water supply; a building contract between the 4th Earl of Kenmare and Messrs John, Thomas, Richard and Joseph Collen of Portadown, Co. Armagh, apparently for completing Killarney House, 1876; 5 designs for stained glass windows for an unnamed church in Co. Kerry (possibly the Franciscan Friary, Killarney, where Phillip Deegan of the Harry Clarke Studios was responsible for at least one window in the 1920s, although these designs are if anything later); and c.20 architects' plans, c.1938-1957, including some for the proposed golf clubhouse at Killarney, and some for the proposed house at Killarney for Mrs Beatrice Grosvenor designed by Pollen & Jebb in 1956. Muckcross House also holds clubhouse plans.



Tithe applotment and valuation material

In addition to the general map, plan and survey material, there are records specifically relating to tithe applotment and valuation, 1824-1908. These include a slim, soft-bound tithe applotment of the parish of Molahiffe, Co. Kerry, c.1830, together with later valuation material. Amongst this latter are two large Valuation Books for the electoral division of Rathmore, Co. Kerry, 1882, three volumes of Kenmare estate, Co. Kerry, Valuation Books, 1892, arranged by electoral division (No. 1, Aghadoe, AGLISH, Coolies, Coom, Doocarrig, Flesk and Headfort; No. 2, Kilcummin, Killarney, Kilnanare and Knocknahoe; and No. 3, Molahiffe, Muckcross, Rathmore and Rockfield), and papers about the valuation of the bogs on the Kenmare estates, 1908.



Rentals

'... The ledgers, etc, in which ... [the rentals] were kept are of an elaborate nature, and all except the first (which is much damaged by damp) are in an excellent state of preservation. The earliest complete volume of these dates from 1736, but there are other detached rentroll summaries for earlier years None survives from the time before the estate was forfeited in 1691, but some particulars are given retrospectively in isolated cases regarding 17th century tenures

The estate, which even after the sale of 1728 still comprised upwards of 120,000 acres, ... [increased in annual rental value, thanks to the 4th Viscount's] prudent management, aided by the general rise in rents which took place in the 18th century, ... from £3,000 to nearly £12,000 per annum within fifty years of his coming of age. It may be remarked here that the disastrous famine of 1741 had little effect on the collection of rents for the Kenmare estate, the arrears, never at that period very great, being approximately the same in 1742 and 1743 as in 1740. ... [On the evidence of the archive, the Kerry rental in 1783 was £7,072 and the Limerick £3,416, out of a total (including Cork and 'Leinster') of £11,392, and in 1795 the equivalent figures were £7,235 and £3,421 out of a total of £14,355 (ie the great rise in this period took place outside Kerry and Limerick).]

In 1814 the rentals (with 1850 figures in brackets) were:

Kerry	£12,825	(£16,677)
Cork	£1,108	(£2,899)
Limerick	£4,327	(£5,846)
Kilkenny)		(£781)
Queen's Co.)	£3,389	(£1,464)
Carlow)		(£1,010)
	£21,659	(£28,677)

At the time of the Great Famine the annual rental of the Kenmare estates, including those in Leinster ... [was £27,282 in 1845 and] £28,677 [in 1850]. The position regarding arrears may be seen by comparing 1845, a normal year, with those at the end of the decade.

	Total rents received	Arrears outstanding
1845	£27,020	£1,534
1848	£22,209	£14,972
1849	£20,436	£22,892
1850	£23,765	£27,806

After this date the amount of arrears was steadily diminished. Much was remitted or written off as irrecoverable, but a considerable amount was discharged by the tenants. By 1875 the rentroll had further increased by about 25 per cent, but the total arrears in that year was only slightly more than £1,000. ...'

The rentals and similar material received by PRONI comprise: 4 runs of Kenmare estate rent ledgers, 1740-1796, 1790-1859, 1874-1889 and 1919-1959. In addition, there are 59 volumes of rentals proper, 1873-1906 (with some gaps), and 8 more miscellaneous volumes, including 4 volumes of rentals for the weekly tenants, 1907-1908, 1915 and 1925. 'Kenmare estate' in this context means the original Browne estate in Cos Kerry, Limerick and Cork. However, the Limerick estate is represented by 14 separate rentals, 1830-1900, and the Cork by 15 separate rentals, 1848-1895. There are 14 rentals for the 'Leinster' estate, which was not part of the original estate of the Brownes, 1820-1858, and 3 rentals, 1830-1851, for the short-lived estate in Clare and/or Tipperary which the future 3rd Earl of Kenmare's wife brought to the family. The only volume of this kind which has not been received by PRONI is a rental described as being of 1736-1794 (although the covering dates seem actually to be 1730-1740) - NLI, p. 5561: PRONI, MIC643/7.

Although the original of the 1736-1794 rental seems not to be at Muckcross, the Research Library there holds many early to mid-18th century rentals, accounts, bills, receipts, etc, 1688-1738 (and beyond), some of them described in and among pp. 149-178 and 389-422 of MacLysaght. Of particular note is the rental or survey of the lands and manors of Pallice and Castlelough, barony of Magunihy, Co. Kerry, belonging to the McCarthy Mór family, annexed to a report from the Auditor-General and Deputy Surveyor-General to the Chancellor, Treasurer and Barons of the Exchequer, May 1707 (MacLysaght pp. 149-155: Muckcross House, K.40E.18).

The later rent ledgers, account books, etc, 1874-1959, at Muckcross House do not seem to fill gaps in PRONI's holdings and are extremely difficult to collate (partly because PRONI's descriptions are cursory). It is noteworthy that most of the Muckcross rent ledgers relate to particular divisions of the Kenmare estate (Farranfore, Rathmore, etc); so possibly they are separate series recording the collecting done by sub-agents or bailiffs and containing information which was then copied into Kenmare Estate Office ledgers now in PRONI.



Account books and accounts

Account books, accounts, etc, come in a bewildering number of series, shapes and forms, interconnected in a way which is often not easy to fathom.

There are 7 ledgers recording receipts and disbursements for the Kenmare estate, 1740-1801, 31 daybooks recording similar information in a different way, 1751-1810, 35 further daybooks, 1873 and 1880-1908, 6 'general accounts current' ledgers, 1810-1853, 10 accounts ledgers, 1824-1859, and 4 half-yearly accounts books, 1862, 1864 and 1868. Hefty volumes specifically described as 'Killarney Estate Office', constitute several series of cash books, 1846-1936 (with some gaps), a complete series of ledgers, 1874-1936, and a series of journals (with one gap) detailing out-payments for the general running costs of the estates, 1876-1899 and 1903-1908. Finally, there are 18 wages and labour books, of a rather miscellaneous nature and none of them in substantial series, 1751-1874, 1888-1891 and 1908, and 7 volumes of game books, fisheries accounts, etc, 1897-1898 and 1902-1947.

This leaves out of the reckoning some two dozen account books of a very miscellaneous nature, most of them covering relatively short periods. Of these, the most significant is the first half of a ledger (the second half has not been received by PRONI), 1724-1727, in which the agent or steward, Daniel Sullivan, records among other things slates, stones, lime, etc, supplied for the rebuilding of Kenmare House. As already mentioned, accounts of the period 1688-1738 described by MacLysaght and not received by PRONI would appear to be at Muckcross.



Successive agents and book-keeping systems

In the second quarter of the 18th century, '... the system of book-keeping was improved under [the first] Christopher Gallwey, who succeeded Edward Herbert as agent soon after Thomas, 4th Viscount, came of age in 1747. Gallwey, whose handwriting appears as early as 1736, had been employed under Herbert in a subordinate capacity. Under Valentine, Thomas's father, the agency was in the hands of Daniel Cronin of Rathmore, who followed Charles Hume of Ardagh. It appears that under the 4th Viscount, the agent's salary, which was in effect a commission of 2½ per cent on money collected, amounted to a sum varying from £100 to £150 a year. It may be added that some years earlier, when the rents were lower, this allowance was one shilling in the pound.

During the '60s, when Lord Kenmare was resident on the Continent, he came to Ireland periodically and evidently scrutinised the accounts very carefully. On these occasions he signed the accounts dealing with the period since his last visit, after satisfying himself that they were correct. The numerous day books, which record cash transactions from day to day, contain information relating to prices ruling in the 18th century for commodities and services It may be remarked here that Lord Kenmare ..., when at home, was in the habit of having these sent up to his house for perusal



Correspondence

The most valuable part of the [18th century] correspondence is the series of letters from Mme da Cunha [Of] the remainder ..., many ... deal at great length with the complicated lawsuits which arose out of the forfeiture of the estate and the encumbrances on it. ... Three letters ... written in 1731, deal with the Danish silver robbery, to the controversy about which Froude, Hickson and others have devoted much space. Another ..., [of 1742], indicates the methods adopted to influence a Grand Jury. Serious financial failures in Cork are referred to in 1774. Ten years later there are letters dealing with the attitude of the Catholics to the Irish Volunteers and also some from several English priests in France about the same time.

Points of legal importance illustrating the difference between Irish and English practice will be met with passim, including the hold-up of a Chancery case by reason of the fact that the Master was himself incarcerated in the Fleet. Some light is thrown on the state of the roads early in the century. A horticultural controversy is the subject of three letters in June 1727, culminating in the resignation of Lord Kenmare's gardener who remarks on the difficulties of an Englishman living in Co. Kerry. A series of letters in 1730 and 1731 from Daniel Cronin describe the condition of the estate, for which he was acting as agent at the time, and mention many local residents; while several others to and from MacCarthy Mór, help to give a picture of Co. Kerry in the first half of the century. These and many others are full of personal touches. Capt. Hedges, as well as John Asgill, figures prominently in them, and even Mortagh Griffin receives in one a share of praise which is somewhat at variance with the generally accepted view of his character.

There are letters, too, which help us to form an idea of the character of the three Viscounts Kenmare who held the title between 1700 and 1795. From 1743 onwards we meet many indications of the generosity and rectitude combined with businesslike qualities of Thomas, 4th Viscount; his father, Valentine, gives a lengthy and not over-modest account of his own qualities in a vicarious love letter written in 1732; while the grandfather, Nicholas, who after his "reformation" never drank more than two bottles of wine between meals, can be visualised better from the letters written by his friends in Belgium [1714-1717 (not received by PRONI)] than by his own. ...



Da Cunha letters, 1716-1730

Mme Catherine da Cunha, who was the youngest sister of the 2nd Viscount Kenmare, was an indefatigable correspondent and being very fond of her nephew, Valentine, the 3rd Viscount, she wrote to him regularly, usually at least once a fortnight. A number of her letters, 108 in all, ... have survived. These, we may assume, are but a fraction of the total number she wrote to him even during the period covered by the correspondence now under consideration

Mme da Cunha - Catherine Browne as she was then - was married in 1702 to the Portuguese Ambassador, Don Lois da Cunha, but the marriage was not a success; and by 1716 when this series of letters commences, she was living apart from her husband. From then till her death some thirty years later she remained in England. ... She had her own establishment in London, moving house several times. She was greatly pleased with one she rented in the recently built Hanover Street, near Hanover Square. [She paid] ... occasional visits to Bath when she could afford it; she also periodically went to stay with friends such as Lady Petre at Ingatestone and the Duke of Grafton at Bagshot, where the household consisted of upwards of sixty persons. ... [Her] description of a day at Ingatestone is of value to the student of the Penal Laws and the position of [English] Catholics under the first two Georges. ...

In her earlier letters there are many references to her husband and to the possibility of a reconciliation with him, or at least of obtaining an allowance from him, but her hopes of the latter gradually dwindled and were eventually abandoned. She was entitled to an annual allowance under her father's marriage settlement, but she was in effect dependent on her nephew for her means of livelihood. This being so she has, of course, frequently a good deal to say about her own financial position; she was often in difficulties because, at least up to 1727, Lord Kenmare's affairs were extremely involved, and her annuity was, in consequence, usually much in arrears. ...

These intimate personal letters of Mme da Cunha's, couched sometimes in affectionate language which would seem almost more suitable to a lover than an aunt, reveal a lady of fashion blessed with a clear head and an abundance of wordly wisdom. Her advice, of which she is not sparing, appears to have been very sound except on money matters. ...



'Popish jobs' and Penal Laws

Though as a financial adviser she was of no help to her nephew, she was undoubtedly of great use to him in conducting the negotiations which were necessary for the success of the complicated legal and political business arising out of the forfeiture of the estates by his father. Moving as she did in the highest society circles she was able to "make interest" for him with such people as Lord Carteret, Sir Robert Walpole and other political leaders, whenever such influence was needed. ... Much of the involved and long-drawn-out litigation which followed the restoration of the estates to Lord Kenmare was in fact decided by ... [the English Court of Chancery] or by the British House of Lords, so that a great deal of the legal business was actually transacted in London; and, in addition, the special act [of 1728] to permit the sale of certain property (land and woods) to pay off the encumbrances on the estates was passed through the English Parliament not the Irish. ...

These private letters contain much personal information about various members of the family and its connections - Brownes, Butlers, Bourkes, Aylmers, Purcells, Whites, Weldons, etc. We get a picture of that gay old spendthrift, Nicholas, the 2nd Viscount, whose improvident old age in exile at Ghent was the subject of much anxiety to his sisters and children. ... His daughter, Valentine's sister, Fanny, too, figures prominently in the correspondence, first as a schoolgirl in a Belgian convent longing to get home and later when she violated the conventions of the day by marrying, against the wishes of her brother, Edward Herbert of Muckross, who was, of course, a Protestant. A reconciliation was in due course effected: later on ... Herbert became the agent for the property

Valuable though this correspondence is as a source of family history, its general interest lies in the fact that ... [it expresses] the Catholic point of view at a time when the Penal Laws in England as well as Ireland were at their severest. Despite their rigour there were still a number of Catholic families of wealth and standing, as we can see from the various matches with eligible young Englishwomen which Mme da Cunha proposed during the years before her young nephew suddenly made up his mind himself and married [in 1720] an Irish lady, Honoria Butler of Kilcash [Co. Tipperary]. That he finally chose a Catholic was a matter of great satisfaction to her, for she had strong views on the inadvisability of mixed marriages both for worldly and spiritual reasons.

There was apparently no actually persecution of Catholics of standing and position - except spasmodically perhaps - and little personal bitterness on the part of English Protestants of the governing class: Lord Carteret could, for example, send word to Mme da Cunha to tell her that he had done her "popish job". We can detect, however, an under-current of anxiety always present. For several years, especially in 1719, another attempt by Prince James with Spanish aid was constantly expected, and again much alarm was felt when further anti-Popery legislation was proposed and introduced, though fortunately the bill which most alarmed them failed to pass.



A closet Jacobite

She appears to have been, at least outwardly, a loyal supporter of the Hanoverian dynasty: she was presented at Court and was devoted to the Princess [of Wales, later Queen Caroline], who was undoubtedly very kind to her. Occasional remarks in her letters, however, would suggest that she was at heart something of a Jacobite. Many of these contain references to the European situation in which, as sometime "Madame l'Ambassadrice de Portugal", as well as a Catholic Irishwoman, she took a considerable interest; but she has little to say about English politics except insofar as they relate to the royal family or the diplomatic corps: the strained relations of George I and the Prince of Wales are often mentioned, and her descriptions of such incidents as the arrest of the Swedish envoy in 1718 add colour to a correspondence which is never dull. ...'



Letters, letter-books and correspondence files, 1810-1958

The 19th century correspondence comprises a very few letters, although there are quite a lot more, starting in 1799 and intermingled with bills of exchange, receipts, etc, at Muckcross (eg K.34.E.1-62). The letters in PRONI include some to the 1st and 2nd Earls of Kenmare about estate business, 1810, 1827 and 1833-c.1835, among them three letters of 1833-1834 to the 2nd Earl from the Office of Public Works about developing the limestone quarries on the Crown lands adjoining Lord Kenmare's Co. Cork estate.

In addition, there are a few very miscellaneous letters to Thomas Gallwey, the Kenmare agent (from 1851, when he succeeded his father, Christopher, to 1874) and the 4th Earl of Kenmare, including a letter and warrant of 1862 appointing the 4th Earl, then Lord Castlerosse, one of the Visitors of Maynooth, in place of his father, copy resolutions from the Tralee Town Commissioners congratulating Lord and Lady Castlerosse on their escape from the Abergele train disaster, North Wales, 1868, a letter to the 4th Earl from Sir Henry Ponsonby, private secretary to the Queen, cancelling the 4th Earl's mission to St Petersburg, 1881, a printed letter about the state of affairs on the Kenmare estate (quoted from in the Introduction), 1888, a letter of thanks to the 4th Earl from Canon Brosnan, Cahirciveen, acknowledging 'a munificent contribution for the memorial church' (presumably to Daniel O'Connell), 1889, and copy correspondence of 1900, annexing copies of letters of 1780, 1793 and 1879, about the 4th Earl's right to the glebe lands of Hospital, Co. Limerick. Other letters and papers of the 3rd, 4th and 5th Earls of Kenmare about their relations with local Catholic bishops, will be found in the section relating to Killarney and its vicinity.

Letter-books for this period, by contrast, are voluminous. There is a run of 28 (out of 31) volumes of damp-press copies of out-letters, 1877-1921 (the first of which, covering the period 1876-1877, and 2 for 1889-1891, have not been received by PRONI and are not at Muckcross either), from the Killarney Estate Office, written by successive agents (principally S.M. Hussey and his successor, in 1885, Maurice Leonard) to members of the Kenmare family, their trustees, local landowners and clergy, tenants, solicitors, RIC men, etc, etc, on all manner of estate business. In addition to this main series, there are sub-series or individual letter-books, running to 9 volumes and covering the period 1885-1907; one of them, dated 1886-1903, is titled 'Estate particulars'. Further scrutiny is required to ascertain the relationship between and among these different Estate Office letter-books. The three missing letter-books, 1876-1877 and 1889-1891, are the only gaps in the archive which collation (at its present stage) of what is in PRONI with what is at Muckcross has revealed. It is conceivable that they may yet turn up elsewhere, perhaps in Norfolk.

Finally, there is a run of 73 correspondence files, 1910-1958, of the 5th, 6th and 7th Earls of Kenmare and the Trustees of the Kenmare Settled Estates, relating to loans, sales, buying and renting of English properties, and all manner of estate and financial business.



Papers about Killarney and its vicinity

This is essentially an artificial assemblage of volumes, letters and papers relating to Killarney town, public buildings, market, bridewell, savings bank, furniture factory, cathedral, churches, mansion house, market gardens, lakes, etc, 1725-1958. All the main sections of rentals, account books (of various kinds), maps, plans and surveys, etc, etc, include frequent references to Killarney and vicinity and often to the specific matters documented in the present section. The 'Killarney' section is therefore best regarded as a kind of index to Killarney references elsewhere, and certainly not as something complete in itself.

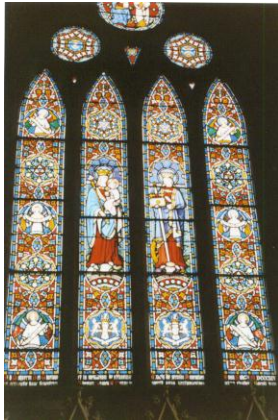


Killarney, 1725

It includes volumes relating to Kenmare/Killarney House, 1872-1946 - cellar books and other household account books for Killarney House, 1872 onwards, an inventory and valuation of the furniture, silver, objets d'art, etc, in Killarney House, 1908, and an inventory of the contents of Kenmare House, 1946. More miscellaneous letters, papers and volumes about the Killarney vicinity include: 3 copies (no original) of the papal bull of 1725 granting the 3rd Viscount Kenmare the right of presentation to the parishes of Killarney and Kilcummin; signed subscription list, headed by the 4th Viscount Kenmare and Edward Herbert, for repairs to and a steeple for Killarney Church of Ireland church, [1748?]; accounts, 1761-1764, relating to the 4th Viscount Kenmare's premium scheme for linen brought to the Killarney market (interleaved with different accounts for lime drawn from his quarries and used by tenants for land improvement, 1759-1765); accounts relating to the repair of the old chapel of Killarney, 1773, and the building of a new one, 1784; a cash book of the Killarney Savings Bank, 1824-1848, mentioning that the 2nd Earl of Kenmare was Chairman and, Christopher Gallwey, Treasurer; a copy of a precept and inquisition about the building by the Co. Kerry Grand Jury of the Killarney sessions house, 1828; receipts to members of the Kenmare family for subscriptions to Killarney institutions and charities, 1840-1845; petition to parliament from the Killarney Poor Law Union requesting a reduction in poor rates, [1847?]; a letter from Thomas Gallwey about a bequest to the poor of Killarney, 1852; and leases and papers relating to the lands of Scartleigh, Killarney, leased by the Earls of Kenmare to the Loretto nuns, 1861, 1877-1878 and 1898-1900.



Killarney Cathedral and the Kenmare oratory



*Stained glass window to
the Earls of Kenmare,
Killarney Cathedral*

Most important of all this material is a very fat bundle of letters and papers reflecting the relationship at various times between the Earls of Kenmare and successive local Roman Catholic Bishops of Kerry, and the Catholic Church more generally, 1856, 1863, 1890-1932, 1938 and 1958.

This bundle includes: letters and papers about: the Holy See's appreciation of the Kenmare family's donations towards the building of Killarney Cathedral, 1856; the extent of the financial contributions made by the 4th Earl of Kenmare to the Church in the neighbourhood of his estates (£20,600 between 1883 and 1899), 1899; references to the reduction in or cessation of these donations in the years of turmoil between 1880 and 1890, when attention had to be focused on the paying of actual charges on the estate; disputes between the 4th Earl and John Coffey, Bishop of Kerry, mainly over property, during the period 1892-1900, in which the Holy See declined to interfere (though it expressed the view that the Bishop was 'eccentric'); the rites permitted by Bishops of Kerry from David Moriarty onwards in the private chapel or oratory of the Earls of Kenmare in Killarney House and later in Kenmare House, 1863, c.1895-1938 and 1958; the 5th Earl's consent to comply with the wishes of the Bishop and with Catholic Church policy by relinquishing his right of presentation under the papal bull of 1725; the papal rescript (of which the original and a copy are present) which he received in compensation in 1927 clarifying the position in regard to his private chapel or oratory; etc, etc.

There is further material at Muckross House about some of these issues, notably the dispute with Bishop Coffey (K.27E.1).



Other Killarney events, institutions and ventures

Later material includes: a printed poem welcoming the 3rd Earl and Lady Kenmare and their children back to the Lakes of Killarney, 1869; leases and other papers about the shambles, market, etc, at Fair Hill, Killarney, 1874, 1899, 1901 and 1906-1907; a deposition relating to a robbery of the Church of Ireland church in Killarney, 1881; statements of payments made by the Earls of Kenmare for the lighting, paving and general improvement of Killarney, 1881 and 1895; small rent book for the Killarney town parks, 1893; account book recording payments for the use of Killarney town hall (originally built at the expense of the 4th Earl of Kenmare), 1891-1899, and draft lease of the hall, 1926; papers about a meeting of the Town Commissioners and ratepayers of Killarney to consider what to do about the Waterford and Lismore Railway Co., 1898; a small day book and a large ledger recording the sale and shipment of goods from a firm called Furniture Industries, Killarney (set up by Elizabeth, Countess of Kenmare, wife of the 5th Earl, to provide local employment), to numerous purchasers in Ireland and England, including the Countess of Kenmare, Killarney House, and various 'fashionables' in London; papers of 1905 relating to the origins and building of the Killarney bridewell; a volume recording sales of 'season tickets' (to the Killarney House demesne?), 1909-1911; an account book recording sales from the Killarney saw mills to numerous purchasers, 1915-1935; a printed, illustrated sales advertisement for his Killarney estate in 1930, which then comprised a 'convenient-sized residence, deerpark and demesne', 'about 10,000 acres', the Killarney lakes, mountains and forests, and 'sporting rights over some 80,000 acres' (included are illustrations of Kenmare House, Ross Castle, etc); 2 account books recording sales from the market garden at Kenmare House, 1930-1932; and counsel's opinions about the Kenmare family's title to the Lakes of Killarney, 1949.



Miscellaneous

'... The miscellaneous papers include the oldest manuscript in the collection, ... [an early 15th-century French] Book of Hours which ... has no connection with Ireland beyond the fact that it was in the possession of the Browne family [and has not been received by PRONI

Of much later date, and also not received, are the articles of association entered into in 1748 by the undersigned] ... Kerry gentlemen who ... formed a company in connection with the linen industry, the loose terms of which document are a reminder that company law was in its infancy 200 [ie 250] years ago. ...'

The miscellaneous documents which have been received include: the certificate of the Papal knighthood conferred on Nicholas Plunkett, 1648; 'A pastoral elegy on the supposed death of Ned Hussey, who was for some time thought to have been torn to pieces by McCarthy Mór's hounds in one of his annual tours round the Lake of Killarney, inscribed to the Rt Hon. the Lord Viscount Kenmare' (this is a copy, dated August 1782; the original is dated c.1750); 'A plan of Savannah together with the attack as made by the French and rebels in October 1779'; the funeral sermon on the 4th Viscount Kenmare, post 9 September 1795 (which, as MacLysaght comments, is interesting '... for the light it throws on some aspects of that nobleman's career as well, perhaps, as on the mind of the preacher...'); the patent of the Kenmare earldom, 1800 (preserved in the original patent box); and a ring-bound note book, 1911-1920, in which the 5th Earl of Kenmare has recorded recommendations made to him, as Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of Co. Kerry, of people for the magistracy and other county offices.



Epilogue

At the conclusion of Dr MacLysaght's report, there is a short appendix beginning with a sentence which could well form the epilogue to most archival endeavours, and indeed would be a fitting epitaph for an archivist: 'After this volume had gone to press, a tin box, which had till then escaped attention, was shown to me by Mr W.A. Roulston, the agent of the Kenmare estate. ...'

