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THE PLANNING AND USE OF SPACE IN IRISH HOUSES 1730 to 1830

VOLUME 1 OF TWO VOLUMES

TEXT

A thesis submitted to the University of Dublin
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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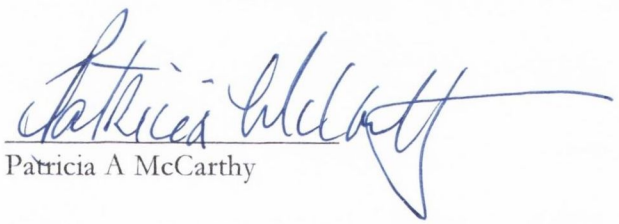

Patricia A McCarthy

SUMMARY

Much has been written about eighteenth- and nineteenth-century country houses, in both Ireland and Britain. One of the most important books among the wealth of information about British houses is Mark Girouard's seminal work, *Life in the English country house* (1978), that blends the architecture of the house (the style and the plan), with its social life. Girouard shows how the plan of the house was used by those who lived in it, and by those who visited it. To date, however, there has been no such comprehensive study made of the subject as it relates to Ireland. In recent years much scholarship has been published by Irish writers on various aspects of the house, in both town and country, and it seems like a good time to redress that balance somewhat. By taking just one hundred years (1730 to 1830) as a time span, this thesis is an effort to gather some of this together, adding evidence gleaned from contemporary inventories and literature, and primary sources such as correspondence, diaries, novels and travellers' observations.

An important aspect of this thesis is to look at Irish houses, and draw comparisons with those in England, architecturally and socially. Spaces such as the first-floor 'Irish' lobby, vestibules and other lobbies, and service tunnels are examined. Rooms and room names will be analysed, as will architectural spaces. Only plans with original annotations are used and it will be seen how room names changed over the period: the 'all-purpose' parlour becoming an old-fashioned name in country houses by the end of the eighteenth century, but remained as a room name in town houses. The flexibility of spaces in houses is notable – rooms became whatever was required of them. Alterations and extensions to the house yielded more space for the sometimes extravagant entertainments put on by Irish hosts, including in some cases, amateur theatrical presentations. The house as a stage for entertainment, and the question of ease or otherwise of circulation for guests is examined. The formal rooms of the house were seen by the owner and, perhaps more importantly, his visitors, as a measure of his success, wealth and good taste. Therefore, much expense and consideration were given to the contents, the decoration, and the furnishings of these rooms. The comments made by house tourists – people who came to look at the house, often without previous warning – on the architecture, interiors, furniture, fabrics, and even on the owners themselves, are valuable for the information they impart.

Furniture inventories explain the contents of rooms. They give us numerous clues as to what activities were carried on there, and the type and quality of furniture used. They frequently mention fabrics and colours thereby making it possible to see shifts in fashion, especially for formal rooms, throughout the period under discussion.

Other matters dealt with are the sleeping arrangements for servants; public and private spaces, and the issue of privacy and the family. Attitudes towards the family and children changed during the period under consideration, something that is evident in architectural plans for houses, built particularly in the early nineteenth century. The specificity of spaces in houses, beginning at this time, culminates in the later, Victorian, house.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks must go firstly to my husband Fenton, without whose constant encouragement, not to mention financial aid, this task would have been impossible. He and our children, Simon, Ross and Kate and, indeed, our grandson Ben, sustained me throughout. Special thanks to Ross for reading each chapter, and offering valuable suggestions. My colleague in TRIARC, Antoinette Dornan, provided me not only with crucial solutions to technological problems, but kept me going with her wonderful sense of humour: I cannot thank her enough. Valued and on-going support has been much appreciated from my colleagues, John Montague and Livia Hurley, who frequently smoothed my path along this journey.

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I cannot overstate the help, support and enthusiasm that I have received from my supervisor, Dr Edward McParland. While the thesis has been relatively long in the making, his encouragement to 'read promiscuously' for the first few years, was valuable at many levels: it familiarised me with research institutions, their staff, and how they worked, and provided me with a great deal of information, much of which appears in this work. I offer my thanks to him for always being available for me, and for the many

introductions to experts working within my field (often over rather delicious suppers in his rooms). It was he who suggested the topic as a possibility. I hope I have done it some justice.

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INTRODUCTION

THE PLANNING AND USE OF SPACE IN IRISH HOUSES 1730 TO 1830

The aspect of the Irish house that has been chosen for this thesis is a broad one, with many tantalising avenues that might be pursued, but it has been necessary to curtail those inclinations as far as possible. This study, which includes town and country houses, is based on two core sources: original, annotated architectural plans, and contemporaneous household inventories. Throughout the thesis these are used as points of reference to a rich collection of contemporary diaries, correspondence, tourists' observations and novels. The dates I have chosen, 1730 to 1830, have been dictated by the availability of plans, and of inventories. With regard to plans, the 1730s mark the beginning of the architect Richard Castle's country house practice with designs for Carton, county Kildare and possibly, for Castle Coole, county Fermanagh. It roughly coincides with the development of the palatial terraced houses in Henrietta Street, Dublin. The study ends in 1830, when the Georgian era (or the 'the long eighteenth century') was passing, and a less interesting period in domestic architecture, in my opinion, was becoming established. Only architectural drawings that include room names are used in the study, unless otherwise specified. These plans have not all been executed; some of the houses have disappeared, or have been greatly renovated, but the drawings give an idea of how the house was meant to function at a certain time. From sources such as the Irish Architectural Archive, the National Library, and various publications, a total of two hundred plans, mostly of the ground floor, have been collected for fifty-six houses.

The second area to be investigated are household inventories, sixty-six of which have been gathered from sources that include family and estate papers in the National Library of Ireland, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, the National Archives, and Trinity College Dublin. Included are some estimates and invoices for furniture and furnishings bought and, importantly, listed for specific rooms. Not included except for context are the seventeenth-century Ormonde inventories, nor are auction lists from newspapers, unless they specify furniture in named rooms. The inventories date from 1645 to 1852 and, like the architectural plans, those that are dated earlier and later than the core years, will be used for the purposes of context. In an ideal world the houses on plans would match those in the inventories, but that would make the task too easy. However, there is a

valuable run of inventories for Killadoon, county Kildare, dating from 1807 to 1836 (and later) that shows how furniture, pictures and *objets d'art* are collected over a period of time, and how fashion in fabrics changes.

Ideally one can get an idea of the plan from the way an inventory is taken. The number of windows, for example, can be gauged if curtains are mentioned, though 'two curtains' can mean either a pair on one window, or two windows. So an amount of caution is required in the interpretation of inventories: much depends on the route taken by the assessor around the house, how good an eye he had for the quality or otherwise of the contents, and whether every space is mentioned. In the case of Stackallan, county Meath, for example, the house had not been lived in for a number of years, and the contents were sparse, and worth little. Importantly, are the room names those used by the family or assumed by the assessor?

A range of house types is quoted, from 'big' houses such as Castletown, county Kildare, Castle Coole, county Fermanagh and Ballyfin, county Laois, to villas such as Lucan House, county Dublin, and Mount Kennedy, county Wicklow, to the rather makeshift 'extremely small shabby' house belonging to Mrs Chambers, mentioned in Chapter 4.

Other sources such as letters, diaries, journals, account books and novels of the period have yielded immense riches. Accounts of tours around Ireland and the hospitality extended to tourists, for example, the Beaufort family, Robert Graham of Redgorton, John Bernard Trotter and Benson Earle Hill, are valuable for architectural descriptions and use of rooms. The ubiquitous Mrs Delany with her keen eye for detail, regularly goes so far as to give measurements of rooms. The Castletown Foundation's uncatalogued Conolly (Bunbury) Papers, currently held in the Irish Architectural Archive, are an informative source, as are the published letters of Lady Emily FitzGerald of Carton, Lady Louisa Conolly of Castletown, and their sisters. The novels of Maria Edgeworth, Lady Morgan, Sheridan Le Fanu, Elizabeth Hervey, Anthony Trollope and others are important at many levels, particularly from the point of view of social history. It must be noted, however, that some of these novels, whilst written in the nineteenth century, are set in the eighteenth century.

The thesis aims to examine the plans with a view to establishing how the owners and architects visualised the house being used, not only on a day to day basis, but also as a stage for entertaining. Did the design determine the function of the spaces

or did a perceived function determine the design? From information yielded by the inventories, it might be seen that the plan, as used, does not concur with that on paper. In addition and, importantly, the thesis will draw analogies and comparisons with similar practice in England in an effort to establish whether or not there were differences in the way the plan worked in Irish houses. The most important publication for the purposes of this study has been Mark Girouard's seminal *Life in the English country house*, published in 1978, which links two disciplines, architectural history with social history, and extends from medieval times to the twentieth century. To date, however, there has been no such comprehensive study made of the subject as it relates to Ireland. This study is an effort to redress that balance somewhat by taking a less ambitious time span, and adding evidence gleaned from contemporaneous inventories. By putting together primary sources, such as those listed below, the aim of the thesis is to create a picture of how people lived, and used the spaces, in the Irish country and town house, in the 'long eighteenth century'.

The history of the English country house has been well served by historians such as Girouard and Gervase Jackson-Stops. The late John Cornforth's articles in *Country Life* and his books, particularly *Early Georgian interiors* (2004), deal mostly with British houses and their interiors, but he makes a point of including Irish houses too. Peter Thornton's *Seventeenth-century interior decoration in England, France & Holland* (1978) and *Authentic décor* (1984) are essential for the study of the interior. Much of the information contained in these publications can be extended to Ireland, as there was constant travelling and exchanges of ideas between the two countries.

Turning to the history of the Irish house, two sources were the obvious starting points, Maurice Craig's *Classic Irish houses of the middle size* (1976), and *A guide to Irish country houses* by Mark Bence-Jones (1988 edn). Edward McParland's many articles on architects and houses yield a great deal of information, as do the six wire-bound 'Notebooks' kept by him as he travelled around Ireland in the 1970s. In these are plans and descriptions of houses that he visited, with details of their decoration - an important historical record, now lodged in the Irish Architectural Archive. Christine Casey's definitive *Dublin* (2005) was constantly referred to; Toby Barnard's numerous articles and books on material culture and social history were invaluable, particularly *Making the grand figure* (2004); and Finola O'Kane's *Landscape design in eighteenth-century Ireland* (2004) was particularly helpful for Chapter 1. *Irish Furniture* by the Knight of Glin and James Peill (2007) yielded not just furniture

history but, in addition, many anecdotes of social history and, for early inventories, Jane Fenlon's *Goods & Chattels* (2003) was important. The piece on the library in Chapter 5 was informed by the fascinating 'Rooms, books and reading in Irish country houses', in *18th-19th century Irish fiction Newsletter,* by Rolf Loeber and Magda Stouthamer-Loeber. In 1996, Mark Bence-Jones' *Life in an Irish country house* was published and, while it gives an amount of social history in specific Irish houses, neither the architecture nor the contents of the houses are dealt with.

Much has been written about eighteenth-century Irish houses, from *The Georgian Society Records*, published in the early twentieth century, to the present, but in recent years, as can be seen above, an amount of rich material on the subject has been produced not only by architectural historians but also by those writing on such subjects as material culture, art history, landscape design, history and furniture. This study puts my research together with some of this scholarship, in an effort to paint a fuller picture of the Irish house and how it worked, in town and in the country.

The first chapter looks at aspects of the approach to the Irish house, that is, in the case of those in the country, from the walls of the demesne, through the gateway and up the avenue to the main entrance. In the case of town houses, mention will be made of the various forecourts of free-standing mansions in Dublin, such as Kildare (later Leinster) House. The country house in its surroundings was of great interest to visitors who were the conduits for relating information on owners' improvements to others, so the first impression had to make a strong impact, announcing as it did the importance, the permanence, the taste and the money of the owner and his family. How a positive reaction was achieved, or otherwise, from the gateway to the house will be examined, as will the question of how popular in Ireland were, for example, flights of steps to the main entrance, and porticoes or *porte-cochères.* Was the main entrance used only on important, formal occasions or was it in general use? How characteristic of Irish domestic architecture were lodges located across the road from the main gateway rather than next to it, or underground tunnels to keep servants out of sight? Also examined here will be the preparations for, and the arrivals of, various groups of people to the house: the owner and his family, the new bride, and the vice-roy. While the arrival and entertainment of invited guests will be dealt with in Chapter 4, a note on the departures of guests with regard to vails, or tips, to servants, a topic that occupied the minds of many in the eighteenth century, is apposite in this chapter. Vails are also mentioned by another category of visitor to the house – the 'tourist'.

Much has been written of the house-tourist in England, but how prevalent was this type of visitor in Ireland, and how discerning were they?

As the first room experienced by the visitor, the hall is important and sets a standard for the rest of the house. The first part of Chapter 2 deals with the hall, together with the staircase, with corridors or passages, vestibules and lobbies, and the location, size and decoration of these spaces. This creates a type of architectural skeleton that will be fleshed out in the course of this survey, as more rooms are studied. The articulation and shapes of halls will be examined, as will two-storey halls with galleries and columnar screens, and the various configurations of staircases. As a space that is frequently mentioned by visitors and tourists alike, it is interesting to see how architects and owners reacted to the challenge of creating a positive first impression. The location of the hall in relation to the staircase and to its adjoining spaces will be examined, as will the importance of lighting, and the material used for floors. 'Vestibule's and 'lobbies' are terms used for similar spaces on the plans and an effort will be made to discern any real difference between them. However, the function – if it had one - of the 'Irish lobby', that first-floor, self-contained top-lit space that is so common in Irish houses, may remain a mystery.

The second part of this chapter will look at how the hall was used – was it simply a route to other rooms, or a waiting room, or did people use it as they did other spaces? Inventories can give us an idea about this, but because halls can be places where items of furniture can be temporarily stored, a fuller picture can perhaps be given by such aids as contemporary letters and novels, and even architectural theorists. From the inventories, it can be seen that lobbies and vestibules and often corridors were either ignored by the assessors, or that they contained little or no furniture worth mentioning. But halls acquired more furniture as the period of the survey progresses, and as people return from grand tours. Changes in fashion regarding furniture and flooring can be discerned and, in the earlier inventories, a preoccupation with locks, bolts and keys.

Chapter 3 will examine the rather complex subject of parlours, and the more formal dining room. These are examined together because in some cases, often up to the 1770s, 'dining' or 'eating' *parlours* can be formal rooms in which the owner entertains his friends. As such, they are furnished as appropriately as the formal 'dining *room*'. The parlour will be looked at first. Plans and inventories show

numerous parlours with, usually, a prefix that can only sometimes give a clue as to its function, as in 'eating' parlour, so it is relevant to define it, and to ask why houses had multiple parlours. These points and questions such as how formal was a parlour, was there a difference between country and town parlours, and at what stage did the room assume another name, will be examined. The breakfast parlour, a relative latecomer to the lexicon, will be included, and the inventories should shed some light not only on room function, but also on furniture, colours and fabrics used.

The second part of Chapter 3 will look in some detail at the formal dining room under a number of headings. The earliest appearance of the 'dining room' as a room name in Ireland, its location on the plan and whether or not it increased in size over the period of the survey will be examined. Other architectural details, such as how close was the dining room to the back stairs and kitchen, and the practical use of the columnar screen during the serving of dinner, will be aired. Colours, fabrics and furniture for the dining room will be examined and changing fashions noted. It will be seen that some owners had furniture made 'in-house', others ordered it specially-made to fit into particular spaces while others had their architect design it. As the hour for dinner moved gradually to 6 pm or even later by the latter part of the eighteenth century, lighting and its effects on silver, mirrors, glass, china and even dress ornament, played an important role not just in the appearance of the room itself, but of the people in it.

Flexibility in room use is one of the main themes to be examined in Chapter 4 where the formal rooms of the house are examined. How did the change in entertaining habits, moving from the strict parade of guests up and down the enfilades in houses, to a more flexible, circulatory amble through the reception rooms, manifest itself in plans from the second half of the eighteenth century? Saloons and drawing rooms will be looked at to see if any discernible difference is found in their location on plans, how they looked and how they were used. Were ballrooms and great rooms similar to drawing rooms and saloons? In addition to these rooms, other formal spaces - ante-rooms, dressing rooms and boudoirs - will be examined to see how they fitted into the formal suite. It is hoped that the inventories will yield information on whether these suites tended to have a particular colour or fabric used throughout, or to pinpoint a predominance of either found in any of these rooms. Much has been written of the amounts of china or porcelain collected in Britain, particularly by women, throughout the period of this survey. The inventories might tell us whether women in Ireland

followed this trend. Tea-drinking and its necessary equipage is also dealt with in this chapter, and its popularity is underlined by a number of rooms called tea-rooms and coffee-rooms found in plans and inventories.

A section on how the formal rooms were used will follow. Information gleaned from diaries, letters and novels help flesh out some details as, for example, how was the departure of ladies from the table after dinner looked upon at the time, and did everybody agree with it? The taking of tea and the playing of cards are often associated more with women than men. In the case of cards, it was possibly because many men were vociferous in their condemnation of what they saw as such an unsuitable pastime for women, but it will be seen that at least one male member of the household (the butler) was in a position to gain, sometimes substantially, from the ladies' card games. The numbers of card tables per house among the inventories, confirm the popularity of this occupation. The crowds entertained in Dublin houses during the season, and the different types of entertainment provided by the leading hosts and hostesses in the capital will be looked at. The final section will deal with amateur theatricals, held in private houses and gardens in different parts of Ireland. Begun at Dublin Castle in the early years of the eighteenth century, these were performances put on by the owner and his family, together with close friends, and produced for the benefit of themselves, their wider circle of friends and acquaintances, and sometimes their servants and tenants.

Chapter 5 is concerned with the less public side of the house, and deals with servants, the family, and their private lives. The first section, on servants, looks at their accommodation, as seen on plans, in particular, their sleeping accommodation. Much has been written about the numerous servants to be found in Irish houses, and so the numbers of bedrooms allocated to servants on plans, might not be sufficient to cover the entire complement, even making allowances for servants living locally. The hierarchical separation of upper and lower servants was of great importance at the time, and evidence for this will be shown in where they slept, where they ate and even where they went to the WC. In some houses powdering rooms, dressing rooms, the odd bathroom and even a library, were provided for servants. In Chapter 1 one of the main perquisites for them – vails – were discussed in terms of guests' departure from the house. Here we will look at other methods available to servants to supplement their meagre incomes: board wages, cast-off clothing, bequests and card money.

In Section II of Chapter 5, the private rooms of the family will be dealt with, beginning with the library. This is a rather 'liminal' room, that hovers between being formal and informal, and was used for both purposes. Much has been written about the absence of books and the ignorance encountered in house owners throughout Ireland and it is hoped that the material used for this survey will address these issues. Were well-known libraries, such as those of Lord Charlemont, the Edgeworths and Christopher Bellew, very much in the minority? How prevalent were libraries or book rooms in other Irish houses and is there a discernible increase in their numbers over the period of the survey? Did people really have books to put into them, or was it simply a desirable and prestigious space to have? For what other purpose(s) was a library used, and how was it decorated and furnished?

It will be seen that, as the eighteenth century progressed, bedrooms moved upstairs from the ground floor. The question of whether a couple shared a bedroom or occupied single rooms is examined and, as children began to be seen and heard from the second half of the century, the proximity or otherwise of nurseries and children's bedrooms on plans will be raised. The couple's personal spaces – dressing room(s), a boudoir, closets, WCs and bathrooms - will be looked at in some detail. It will be seen that a couple usually had a dressing room each and that the man's dressing room was not always next to the bedroom, nor even on the same floor. The contents of these rooms will be examined to see if there is a difference in how women and men used their dressing rooms. Were they furnished differently, and how private were they? For women generally, privacy was seen to be essential. While it could be found in the dressing room, for which there were unwritten rules about admittance, the importance of that small and interesting space for women, the closet, is underlined in many literary sources as well as in personal correspondence.

This leads to the final section of the chapter, which is the issue of privacy. Quite how private the family quarters were is debatable. Privacy from members of their own class and from one another was not difficult to achieve. Was the presence of servants considered an intrusion, or were they even noticed? Was there a change in attitudes on both sides during the period under consideration? Was the architectural plan devised by Roger Pratt successful in putting servants 'in their place' in the Irish context? And was their 'place' in the subterranean world of that very Irish of spaces, the tunnel?

A recurring theme throughout the thesis is the flexibility in the naming of rooms: the same room, for example, a saloon, can be referred to as a drawing room, a gallery, a ballroom, or a great room. Often rooms retain a room name long after it has changed its use, or indeed, its colour scheme. At Howth Castle in the mid-1700s, the evidence gleaned from the inventory indicates that the 'Great Dining-room' was used as a drawing room, and at Ballyfin, the same space is called a vestibule on one of Morrison's plans, and a saloon in another (both dating to 1822), and the 'Blue room' at Knapton, county Laois (1763) had green bed curtains and red window curtains.

Finally, it is necessary to comment on the quality of the images of plans in Volume II of the thesis. Many of the plans are in good condition and, therefore, there is no problem in reproducing them. Others have not been so lucky and their condition makes it difficult to reproduce the image with clarity. Every effort has been made to procure the highest quality reproduction and, in cases where there is difficulty reading the annotations of room names, a key to the spaces mentioned will be provided.

(NOTE: Throughout the thesis, the spelling in quotations is as originally written, only when it is thought particularly apt has '[sic]' been used.)

CHAPTER 1

APPROACHING THE HOUSE, AND ARRIVAL

Arrival at a country house or a mansion in the city invokes in the visitor feelings of anticipation and expectation. The walls surrounding a demesne or a house protect the mystery and exclusivity of the place and the privacy of its owner. Some houses in town, for example on Dublin's St Stephen's Green, have steep and long ascents to the front door.[1] Drama in the design of the approach route to the country house became increasingly important as the eighteenth century progressed. From the gate and its (often eye-catching) lodge, picturesque snapshots revealed themselves along an avenue with tantalising glimpses of follies, bridges, lakes and plantations that culminated in the appearance of the house itself.

This chapter will look at Irish country houses, and some of the large free-standing Dublin houses, in terms of their being destinations, that is, points of arrival not just for the owner and his family who took up residence on their estate and at their town house only at certain times during the year, but for visitors, welcome and unwelcome. Apart from those formally invited to stay, the country house extended overnight hospitality to friends (with their servants) travelling to and from other parts of Ireland. There too, unexpected visitors bearing letters of introduction were generally welcomed, fed and given a bed for a night. Hospitality came at a price, however, in the form of vails, or tips to servants, disbursed on departure. Another type of visitor was not quite as welcome, particularly when the family was in residence in the country: the house tourists, strangers who sometimes arrived without warning, requesting permission to view the grounds and often the interior of the house.

The approach to some of the larger houses in Dublin will be discussed first, followed by a more detailed look at the country house, where the lodge, gates and approach routes from the public road to the house changed and evolved over the eighteenth century. Forecourts in town and country will be commented upon as

[1] Unlike those in Dublin's St Stephen's Green, London terraces do not tend to have such a flight of steps.

will the question of entrances to the house - front, back and side, for both the 'quality' and the servants. Secondly, the arrangements that were put in place to cope with the various arrivals, from the family itself to a visit from the viceroy, will be examined, as will the thorny question of vails on visitors' departure.
Where appropriate, comparisons will be made with contemporary practice in England in order to explore whether differences can be discerned in the way people living in Ireland arranged and used their spaces from the gateway and lodge to the house itself. The interior of the house will be looked at in another chapter. Comments from contemporary sources will help to flesh out the bones of many of these points: journals, family letters and newspaper reports yield a good deal of information about the formalities and customs that prevailed when honoured guests and new brides were greeted by their hosts.

Approach to Dublin houses

It has been pointed out that many peers looking for a Dublin residence purchased ready-built townhouses or built as part of a terrace. These were fronted by red stock brick and unadorned save for pedimented limestone doorcases.[2] Little need be said about the approach to the Dublin terraced house in the context of this chapter other than to remark on the immense flights of steps to some. But a number of free-standing stone-built mansions were built in Dublin that were set back from the street giving them often a rather grand approach. In 1740 Marcus Beresford, Viscount (later earl of) Tyrone engaged the services of the architect Richard Castle to design Tyrone House on Marlborough Street. Together with Castle's Kildare (later Leinster) House on Kildare Street (begun 1745), built by the eponymous 20th earl (later 1st duke of Leinster), the Provost's house at Trinity College (from 1759), Charlemont House on Palace Row (Parnell Square, from 1763), designed by Sir William Chambers and built for the 1st earl of Charlemont, and the last great private house built in Dublin, Aldborough House (begun 1793) for the 2nd earl of Aldborough, they can, or could, boast of forecourts leading to their main entrances. Another mansion built during this period is Powerscourt House (1771-74) on South William Street, designed by Robert Mack. Described by Christine Casey as 'a lumbering granite-fronted essay in last-gasp Palladianism' it is without a forecourt, originally having a Doric porch approached by a perron (both removed in 1791).[3]

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[2] Christine Casey, *Dublin,* (New Haven and London 2005) pp 34-35.
[3] Casey, *Dublin,* pp 34, 509.

Originally Tyrone House was flanked by curved quadrant walls with an open forecourt, but a wall was later erected to enclose it, with a carriage entrance at each end. There was a separate entrance from Marlborough Street leading to the stable yard to the west of the house, with an opening to the forecourt. Kildare House and the Provost's House were originally planned with walled forecourts and rather monumental gateways. An early plan by Castle for Kildare House shows it flanked by four-bay colonnades that continue round the forecourt to the gate, similar to that of Burlington House in London.[4] The colonnades along the side walls were not carried out, instead a screen wall with rusticated piers was built, with pedimented arched gates to the north and south, the latter leading into the stable yard. The entrance gate on Kildare Street took the form of a triumphal arch, that incorporated accommodation for a porter in the upper storey and to the sides. In John Rocque's engraving of 1757 (**Fig. 1.1**) the gate is flanked by two bays of the screen wall with rusticated piers, and continues as a lower, plain wall, with rusticated gateways to a small yard to the north and to the stable yard to the south.[5] Kildare House and its gateway terminated the vista up Molesworth Street, giving the visitor a sense of its grandeur, and a frisson of anticipation (**Fig. 1.2**).

Another Burlington connection with Dublin's mansions is the façade of the Provost's House at Trinity College, which is a copy of Lord Burlington's design of 1723 for the garden front of General Wade's house in Mayfair. This imposing two-storey, five-bay Palladian mansion,[6] with its low pedimented pavilions, occupies a site to the south of the college's west front, and is linked to the college by a curved corridor. The main entrance is from Grafton Street through a high, rusticated gateway into a generous forecourt that is screened from the street by a high wall (**Fig. 1.3**).[7] The stables, like those at Tyrone House and Kildare House, were located to one side of the house.[8] Nothing is known of the entertainments that took place here, but Provost Francis Andrews, for whom the house was built, mixed in the highest of circles both here and abroad, so it is probably safe to say

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[4] David J Griffin and Caroline Pegum, *Leinster House* (Dublin 2000), p 5, plates 36-38.
[5] Griffin and Pegum, *Leinster House,* frontispiece; vignette from John Rocque, *A survey of the city, harbour, bay and environs of Dublin* (Dublin 1757).
[6] The façade of the Provost's House masks the fact that the flanks and rear of the building are of three storeys.
[7] The wall was topped by a railing in the 1840s. Edward McParland, 'The Provost's House Stables, Trinity College Dublin', in Yvonne Scott and Rachel Moss (eds), *The Provost's House Stables: building and environs, Trinity College Dublin* (TRIARC 2008), pp 12-21.
[8] These were demolished in 1841 at the Provost's House to facilitate the widening of Nassau Street, and stables designed by Frederick Darley replaced them in a similar location. McParland, 'The Provost's House Stables', pp 12-21.

that the forecourt was the scene of many a procession of carriages and sedan chairs 'on those infrequent occasions when he was not abroad'.[9]

Apart from the façade of the Provost's House being a design dating back to 1723, by the time it was being built, from 1759, Palladianism was being challenged by neo-Classicism. The Casino at Marino, designed by Sir William Chambers, and begun in 1758 for Lord Charlemont, was a combination of both styles. When he decided to build a townhouse in Dublin, Charlemont again employed Chambers for the elegant neo-Classical mansion that occupies a central position on the north side of Parnell Square. It is a three-storey house, five bays wide with single-storey curved quadrant walls to corner piers, described in 1778 as standing 'upon a little eminence, exactly fronting Mosse's hospital and between them are those beautiful gardens [Rotunda gardens] where the genteel company walk'.[10] The pair of obelisks that flank the middle three bays formerly supported ornamental lamps.[11] The forecourt is quite shallow as Chambers explained in a letter to Charlemont in 1763, 'As you cannot have a Court deep enough to turn carriages in without throwing the house too far back to be an ornament to the street or to receive any advantage from the fine prospect', he designed two entrances with 'plain' piers, one each end of the forecourt, 'and the space between them may be closed with an iron grille which will look well and show the house to advantage'.[12] These were not executed.

A smaller version of that was intended for Aldborough House, as can be seen in an engraving by William Skelton of 1796 (three years before it was completed) (**Fig. 1.4**). A print shows how the entrance front looked in 1821, when it was no longer a private house.[13] The engraving shows an impressive seven-bay, three-storey house with a three-bay breakfront, and a single-storey Doric portico. Curved quadrants with balustrades and urns link the main house to the pavilions, and an Apollo Belvedere stands on a plinth in the centre of the spacious forecourt. A rather low curved railing, punctuated with lamps separates the house from the street, while a pathway on the street side is edged by bollards. The railing, which is without newels, has three gaps or voids – one to the front, the others by the pavilions. The two side openings appear to be for carriages, as the image shows wheel marks

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[9] McParland, 'Cherishing a Palladian masterpiece: the Provost's House, Trinity College, Dublin' part II, *Country Life,* clx, 21 Oct 1976, pp 1034-37.
[10] Quoted in Casey, *Dublin*, p 149.
[11] *The Georgian Society Records of eighteenth century domestic architecture and decoration in Dublin,* 5 vols (Irish University Press 1969 edn), iv, p 30.
[12] Quoted in Cynthia O'Connor, *The pleasing hours: James Caulfeild, first earl of Charlemont 1728-99* (Cork 1999), p 206.
[13] Illustrated in Aidan O'Boyle, 'Aldborough House, Dublin: a construction history' in *Irish Architectural & Decorative Studies,* vol iv, 2001, pp 102-141, plate 9.

curving into the courtyard, and the centre one, in this engraving at least, is used for the conveyance of a sedan chair. By 1821, the house looks basically the same, there is no rustication on the quadrants or on the pavilions, nor is there as much decoration as in the earlier image. The railings have been replaced with a plain wall with two pedestrian doorways cut into it and rusticated gate-piers. It is not known if these railings had been put in place, but it seems that the wall may have been built for protection in about 1798, due to the political turmoil.[14] The stable buildings were located, not within the forecourts, but in a separate yard (or *basse cour*[15]), as at the other houses discussed, with the exception of Charlemont House.

Approaching and gaining access to the immediate vicinity of houses like these in a city or town was fairly straightforward. The forecourt provided space for a carriage to deposit or collect its occupants at the main entrance to the house and either circle back to the gateway, in the case of Kildare House and the Provost's House, or exit by the second gateway, as at Tyrone House and as was intended at Charlemont House and at Aldborough House. If space allowed, the carriage could wait in the forecourt, continue to the stables, or wait in the street.

Moira House on Ussher's Island, Dublin (built *c.* 1752) had an unusual, and unattractive, entrance and entrance front. Set back forty feet from the street, and with no main entrance doorway in the main block, access to the house was gained by way of one of the arched and pedimented doorways of its street-front pavilions.[16] The latter were linked to each other by an eight-foot wall along the street, behind which was probably a court. One door concealed offices, the other led into a covered entranceway that brought one into the house. Isaac Ware, writing in 1756 would have disapproved of this: he believed that the doorway at the centre of a house should be answered by a central gateway to the street, rather than looking out on what he called 'a dead wall', particularly one so high as eight feet.[17] From an inventory taken in 1808, it appears that Moira House had another unusual feature for a town house: it had a porter's lodge, something that was more common in the country.[18]

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[14] Conversation with Aidan O'Boyle, April 2006.
[15] Edward McParland, paper entitled 'Stable buildings' read at conference 'The eighteenth-century Dublin townhouse: form, function & finance', 26-27 May 2008, and forthcoming article.
[16] Quoted from Rev. G T Stokes, 'Moira House' in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries in Ireland,* 29, 1899, pp 113-15. Hamwood, a small country house in county Meath, also had its main entrance through the pavilion of its west wing.
[17] Isaac Ware, *A complete body of architecture* (London 1756, 1768 edn), p 320.
[18] PRONI, Granard Papers T/3765/L/4 (part), Inventory of Moira House, Dublin, taken by Zach Foxall, Arran Quay, Dublin on 7 May 1808.

Approach to country houses

The lodge at Moira House[19] was not unique in Dublin: Kildare House had one incorporated into its arched gateway. This had the dual effect of creating a barrier between the street and the house, unlike other Dublin houses, and for the visitor who was obliged to wait for permission to enter, it heightened a sense of anticipation of what was beyond. In the country, even before arriving at the gates, the country house is apparent from the distance by a change in the landscape, when lush and dense plantations of trees are observed even before coming to the stone walls that enclose the demesne. In many cases there was a relationship between the town and the demesne's entrance, such as that at Strokestown Park, county Roscommon, where the exceptionally wide main street in the town, laid out by the 2nd Lord Hartland in the early nineteenth century, terminates with an impressive Gothic triumphal arched gateway that leads to the house. Other examples of some degree of formal planning in the relationship of entrance and village are found in Mitchelstown, county Cork, Castletown and Carton, both county Kildare, and Glin Castle, county Limerick. The gates and lodges of a country house 'were not merely garden structures, they were designed as entrances, garden buildings on the perimeter to lure respectable visitors to view similar pleasures within' and they played an important role as 'a public face to the more private house at a time when image and appearances were of great importance'. [20] It is not the function here to examine the architectural variety of lodges and gateways in Ireland as they have been dealt with elsewhere, but to view them as the prologue to the main event, in this case, the house.

Lodges and Gates

Often there was more than one entrance to a large demesne, which allowed for a certain amount of architectural variety in gateways and lodges. Rockingham, county Roscommon has a two-storey castellated main entrance gateway and lodge combined, and a classical subsidiary entrance gateway behind which is what is called the 'Tiara' lodge with its curved pediment. The architectural style of the main entrance did not necessarily reflect that of the house to which it belonged, as was the case with the gothick gateways at Ardfert Abbey, county Kerry, Castle Martyr, county Cork and Tollymore Park, county Down. Daniel Augustus Beaufort, a 'gentleman architect', who made a number of tours in Ireland sometimes accompanied by his wife Mary and their daughter Louisa, described the

[19] The porter's lodge may have been part of the entrance pavilion.

'large Gothick gateway' at the entrance to Ardfert Abbey in 1788 as 'not of a piece with the rest of this oldfashioned place'. And he pulled no punches about Lord Shannon's gothick gateway at Castle Martyr, 'lately built in a very bad stile', nor about the approach and the house itself

> The Coupe d'oeil on the first entrance is very pleasing but as you advance, the river…appears too artificial, the grounds too flat, the woods too young and the adjacent country too poor and flat. The house is very large but not at all handsome – Regular at the front, but not at all so to the lawn….[21]

The triumphal arch was a popular style of gateway, which at houses such as Russborough, county Wicklow, reflects the classicism of the house itself. The most common style of gate lodge was the classical temple form, usually to be found, as the majority of lodges were, tucked away inside the gate or, as happened frequently, as at Killua Castle, county Westmeath, and Loughcrew, county Meath, located on the opposite side of the public road and facing into the gateway.[22] The latter location for lodges was one way of solving the problem of single lodges for the Georgian mindset that was ruled by symmetry.[23] It had the advantage of announcing ownership of the land on which it stood, which could hardly fail to impress. Lodges to Lyons, county Kildare, Ballyhaise, county Cavan, Johnstown Castle, county Wexford, and a rear entrance to Pakenham Hall (Tullynally Castle), county Longford were all similarly located. It was an idea that gained some favour but was rare outside Ireland.[24] The other option was to have a pair, such as those at Beardiville, county Antrim where the single-storey lodges with large Diocletian windows are linked by a pedimented archway.[25] A drawing for Emo Court, county Laois by James Gandon dated 1780 shows what looks remarkably like a pair of lodges (complete with smoking chimneys, **Fig. 1.5**) linked by a classical arched gateway, and a design for a 'Lodge and Entrance to the Cottage and Plantations at Waterstone' on the Carton demesne in county Kildare, by Thomas Owen (quite Gandonian in style) shows a plan of the twin rectangular lodges (**Fig. 1.6**).[26] At

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[20] Tim Mowl and Brian Earnshaw, *Trumpet at a distant gate: the lodge as prelude to the country house* (London 1985), p 71, quoted in James Howley, *The follies and garden buildings of Ireland* (New Haven and London 1993), p 70.

[21] TCD MS 4030, Daniel Augustus Beaufort, Journal of a tour 3 July-17 September 1788, ff 87-8. On a return visit here in 1806 he reiterated his dislike of the house and its 'tasteless imitation of Gothic' gateway. Representative Church Body Library, Ms 49/3-4, 'Beaufort's Journal of Irish Travels 1806', vol. 4, f 73.

[22] Howley, *The follies and garden buildings,* pp 83, 85.

[23] J A K Dean, *The gate lodges of Ulster* (Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, 1994), pp x-xi.

[24] Conversation with David J Griffin April 2006; and with Dr Kevin Nowlan May 2006. Dean, *The gate lodges of Ulster*, p x. Kevin Mulligan, in conversation with the author, has also identified a number of other lodges in this position: Loftus Hall, county Wexford, Harmony Hall, county Westmeath, Oaklands, county Meath (lodge designed by D A Beaufort), Balbigh, also in county Meath.

[25] Mark Bence-Jones, *A guide to Irish country houses* (London, 1988 edn) p 34.

[26] IAA, Photograph collection, 'Emo Court: design by James Gandon 1780, for entrance gates'; 'Carton: South Front and plan for a Lodge and Entrance to the Cottage and Plantations at

Portumna Castle, county Galway a Gothic gateway with twin lodges was installed before 1808 at the end of the axial approach.[27] Another example can be seen in a painting by Robert Woodburn, *The Gates of Belline* (1800, **Fig. 1.7**) which shows the gates attached to two octagonal two-storey stone buildings with central chimneys, from one of which smoke is emanating, and a woman is entering, indicating that at it was lived in.[28] Referred to as 'inkpots', there was a pair at Ballymenoch, and at Belvoir Park, both in county Down.[29]

When Beaufort visited Baronscourt, county Tyrone in 1787, he took the 'old' approach to the house, 'drove down to [Lord Abercorn's] ancient lodge a singular one of a single storey and walked from there down winding paths to the new house...'. He was sufficiently impressed to make a drawing of the 'old lodge', a three-bay structure with a pedimented portico. On the same trip he described a gateway at the bishop of Derry's house, Downhill, as 'a sort of chinese wooden one only between two piers of two columns and a niche each' which is perhaps more likely to have been the Lion Gate, with statues of lions on top of the piers, than the elegantly classical Bishop's Gate (*c.* 1784) that has a lodge placed at right-angles to it.[30] His daughter Louisa, writing in 1807, compared the view of Downhill from three miles away to 'an hospital on the top of a bare hill' and found 'the Avenue most absurd, steepness and length of the ascent to the house, is dangerous...a few trees at the gate which is handsome, but', she adds, 'the Lodge is gothick'.[31]

Avenues

The eighteenth-century country house was the nexus of a planned landscape within a demesne that included buildings such as stables, outbuildings, follies, a walled garden, gardens and, often, a planned village at or close to one of its entrance gates. The house in its landscape has been described as 'a great composite work of art', a collaboration between architects, landscape theorists, practical gardeners, poets, politicians and artists, where 'layered images, frames and views contrived to

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Waterstone'. Gandon's triumphal arched gateway to Carriglas, county Longford is also flanked by matching lodges. *The Georgian Society Records*, vol. v shows twin gate lodges in Ballyclough, pp 7-8. Caledon, county Tyrone and Castle Dillon, county Armagh are two other examples.

[27] Jane Fenlon, 'Portumna restored' in *Irish Arts Review*, Autumn 2003, pp 110-17.

[28] Illustrated in Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, *Ireland's painters 1600-1940* (New Haven and London 2002), p 168, plate 213. Maurice Craig mentions 'ink-pot' wings at Belline, referring to them as the 'totally detached' type, one of which 'was designed as a dovecote'. Craig, *Classic Irish houses of the middle size* (London 1976), p 28.

[29] Dean, *The gate lodges of Ulster*, pp 62, 65.

[30] TCD MS 4028, D A Beaufort, Journal of a Tour through part of Ireland begun August 26, 1787, ff 7, 30; Howley, *The follies and garden buildings*, plates 108, 125, 146.

[31] TCD MS 4034, Louisa Beaufort, Journal of a tour to the north, made October, 1807, f 23. This must have been the Bishop's Gate and lodge.

augment the intellectual and sensual experience'.[32] The approach to the house, therefore, became very important.

In her book on eighteenth-century landscape design in Ireland, Finola O'Kane refers to changes made to many avenues of approach from the early years of the century. The axial approach to the baroque house gave way at this time to a more picturesque one, usually from one side, with the house ultimately revealed to the visitor, such as at Russborough and Castletown House, county Kildare.[33] Mrs Catherine O'Brien, who managed the O'Brien estates in county Clare during her son's minority, was not, therefore, at the vanguard of fashion at Dromoland House where, in about 1720, she 'designed a straight Avenue to ye Hall door'.[34] The approach to the old house at Stradbally, county Laois as depicted in a painting dating to about 1740 (**Fig. 1.8**), was similarly designed,[35] and the axial arrangement can still be seen at Portumna Castle, county Galway where the approach is 'through a progression of three courts entered by stone gateways of different architectural periods'.[36] At Breckdenston, Swords, county Dublin the approach to the old house was an axial one from the west which, in 1716 (probably the same time that the Palladian house was built), was replaced by Robert Molesworth as the principal approach by a curving route from the southwest of the demesne, lined with lime trees, where curved walls and gates were set back from the Dublin road.[37] A lodge was constructed at the gates '...as 'tis done in places of 40 times greater resort all about London and Hampton Court',[38] which indicates that a gate lodge must have been an innovation at this time – that is in times of peace, as the gatehouse has a long history in terms of defence. All of this served to give not only greater privacy to the house but to manage the approach route in such a way that visitors, as they make their way to the house, will be impressed by the improvements made by the owner.

Unlike at Breckdenston, where Molesworth chose not to link his house directly to the village of Swords, Castletown House (begun 1722) and Carton (remodelled

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[32] Finola O'Kane, *Landscape design in eighteenth-century Ireland* (Cork University Press 2004), p 1.
[33] In conversation with the Knight of Glin, April 2006.
[34] O'Kane, *Landscape design*, p 86. A drawing of Dromoland: 'Ichnographia Dromolan' of the lay-out, c. 1740 (on vellum) may give an idea of this avenue in O'Kane, 'Leamaneh and Dromoland: the O'Brien ambition, part II' in *IADS*, vol. vii, 2004, pp 80-105.
[35] Illustrations of other houses with axial approaches such as Tentore, Queen's County (c. 1715), Barbavilla, county Westmeath (c. 1730), and Pakenham Hall (Tullynally), county Westmeath (1736), may be seen in Toby Barnard, *Making the grand figure; lives and possessions in Ireland, 1641-1770* (New Haven and London 2004), pp 195, 207 and 233.
[36] Fenlon, 'Portumna restored' pp 110-17.
[37] O'Kane, *Landscape design*, pp10, 12, Fig. 5.
[38] Letter from Robert Molesworth to his wife dated 13 October 1716, quoted in O'Kane, *Landscape design*, p 12.

1739 by Richard Castle), both in county Kildare, are connected by avenues of lime trees to their respective estate towns of Celbridge and Maynooth. Both originally had axial approaches from the south (**Fig. 1.9**).[39] In the 1750s Emily FitzGerald, the young countess of Kildare, wrote that her husband had recently 'cut down the avenue south of the house' at Carton, making 'a very fine lawn before [it]', and in the 1760s a new approach route from Dublin was created, diluting the importance of the Dunboyne avenue to the east, which then became a service entrance. Lady Louisa Conolly built the Batty Langley lodge in 1772 at the entrance to Castletown from the Dublin road, making this the main entrance from the capital, and one that meandered sufficiently to gave visitors ample opportunity to admire their surroundings.[40] Such an approach was experienced by a visitor to Bellamont Forest, county Cavan in 1778 who described the avenue there as 'more than a mile long…on the right a small but pleasing lake almost surrounded with wood and when you lose sight of that a river on your left opens to your view and forms itself into a vast lake…'.[41]

The lime trees that had frequently lined early avenues like rows of soldiers became unfashionable in the face of the more informal, though still contrived, landscapes. Lord Chief Baron Edward Willes however, wrote in 1762 that the two-mile-long avenue leading to Rockfield, Seapoint in county Dublin had 'a cut-hedge on each side'.[42] This sounds rather unusual but hedging was often used to camouflage the shoots that frequently grew from the trunks of lime trees.[43]

First impressions

Many visitors remarked on the actual location of the house, the views it had, and a general, or frequently particular, impression of the architecture. George Hardinge compared Irish seats favourably to those in England, 'I see as much taste and as much neatness without or within to the full as in England accompanied with more beauty of exterior for they are all of them white and grey – slated at the top seldom irregular and hardly ever ill situated'.[44] A few, such as the Beauforts, left interesting accounts of buildings that sometimes included comments on the interior layouts.

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[39] That at Castletown can be seen on maps by Noble & Keenan of 1752 and John Rocque of 1760; Carton's axial avenue can be seen in Johann van der Hagen's *A view of Carton House, c.* 1738; O'Kane, *Landscape design*, Figs 19, 20, 49.
[40] O'Kane, *Landscape design,* pp 73, 102, 103.
[41] Canon C C Ellison, 'Remembering Dr. Beaufort', *QBIGS*, vol. xviii No.1, Jan-Mar 1975, pp 1-36.
[42] James Kelly (ed.), *The letters of Lord Chief Baron Edward Willes to the earl of Warwick 1757-62* (Aberystwyth 1990), p 101.
[43] Conversation with Finola O'Kane, May 2006.
[44] 'Two Tours in Ireland, in the years 1792 and 1793…By George Hardinge, Esq MA. FRS FSA. Chief Justice of the Counties of Brecon Glamorgan and Radnor'. Original in the possession of the Shirley family of Lough Fea. Notes kindly supplied by Dr Edward McParland.

They, however, were only a few among many visitors who commented on the general appearance of a house within its landscape. Mary Beaufort records her disappointment at her first view of Portumna Castle, which they approached along a gravel walk from the church ('an immense pile of Building'), but liked the forecourts and gates, especially the 'Gate of entrance from the road, very pretty and light'.[45] Her daughter Louisa was economical with words regarding Gosford Castle, county Armagh in 1807: 'house seems indifferent, gateway frightful…stands low, has no view of the mountains, great number of rooms in house, very old, plan odd, ill furnished…'.[46] In an amusing passage in Frances Power Cobbe's memoir she contrasts the appearance of Newbridge House, her home in county Dublin with Turvey, a house belonging to Lord Trimleston on the adjoining estate, in anthropomorphic terms: '[Newbridge was] bright and smiling and yet dignified; bosomed among its old trees and with the green, wide-spreading park opened out before the noble granite *perron* of the hall door…it has as open and honest a countenance as its neighbour has the reverse'. Turvey, she states, 'is really a *wicked-looking* house with half-moon windows which suggest leering eyes…'.[47]

A visitor to Ireland in the second decade of the nineteenth century, John Bernard Trotter, wrote a rather lyrical description of his visit to the early eighteenth-century Dromoland, built for the second baronet, Sir Edward O'Brien in county Clare:

> We very soon reached the beautiful lodge and entrance to Dromoland… The lodge is one of the best taste and chastest execution we have seen, well-suiting the grandeur of Dromoland. From thence the avenue sweeps through extensive grounds and woods to the house. This venerable mansion stands on a gentle eminence, surrounded by noble trees, and overlooks a large and beautiful lake beneath the windows. The opposite hills rise gracefully above it, and form a lovely amphitheatre circling round and blending with the groves and verdant meadows of Dromoland…The ancient appearance of the mansion-house…was pleasing to us….[48]

Before moving on to the entrance to the house itself, mention should be made of the forecourt at Curraghmore, county Waterford (1740) designed by John Roberts, seat of the marquess of Waterford, described by Craig and Glin as the finest in Ireland.[49] Beaufort admired it too: 'The Entrance now is through the double row

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[45] TCD Ms 4035, Mary Beaufort 'A Journal of our Tour to the Westward to inspect the Charter Schools 1808', ff 113-17.
[46] TCD MS 4034, Louisa Beaufort, Journal of a tour to the north, made October, 1807, f 4.
[47] Frances Power Cobbe, *Life of Frances Power Cobbe. By herself,* 2 vols (London 1894), I, pp 8-9.
[48] John Bernard Trotter, *Walks through Ireland in the years 1812, 1814 and 1817* (London 1819), p 382
[49] Maurice Craig and the Knight of Glin, *Ireland observed* (Cork 1970), p 37.

of Magnificent Offices each side containing 26 doors and windows one great gate and four coach houses'.[50] It dates from the mid-eighteenth century, is French in style and quite unique in Ireland and, according to Bence-Jones, it has one or two counterparts in Britain.[51] The pedimented end pavilions that face to the front are joined by a railing with a gate in the centre.[52] The effect of the house with its central three-storey tower (crowned with a stag, the family emblem), wings projecting forward, and the stable ranges on each side with massive central triumphal arched gateways, is truly Vanbrughian.

Porticoes and portes-cochères

Mrs Delany was another eagle-eyed reporter on architectural details. In 1744 she described her own house, Delville, Glasnevin, in a letter to her sister:

> ...it stands on a rising ground, and the court is large enough for a coach and six to drive round commodiously. The front of the house is simple but pretty – five windows in front, two stories high, with a portico at the hall door, to which you ascend by six steps, but so well sheltered by the roof of the portico that it is secured from rain.[53]

This gives much information: the house is on a height lending it an air of grandeur and has an ample forecourt; it is a five-bay, two-storeyed house with steps leading to a hall door that is under a portico. From a drawing of the house dated 1754 the pedimented 'portico' is one bay wide and would indeed appear to project over the steps, but is similar to what later might be called a porch. She underlines the practical value of her portico that shelters visitors from rain, enabling them to step out of their carriage at the foot of the steps directly into her portico and up to the door. Craig makes the point that not many owners of 'middle-sized' houses could afford a portico.[54] It was the feature of the great English Palladian houses that gave them their air of grandeur, and, as it was designed for an Italian climate, it was an asset in sunny weather when one could sit beneath it, shaded from the sun. Furthermore the shade it provided protected the furniture and furnishings in the rooms behind from fading, but it had drawbacks that may have been observed by the Irish. In the wet Irish (and English) climate, it made the rooms behind it dark, and it dripped rain, creating a slippery flight of steps for the visitor.[55] McCullough and Mulvin believe that a tripartite elevation, the central part of which is 'packed

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[50] TCD MS 4024, Daniel Augustus Beaufort, Tour of England and Wales (via Waterford), 9-30 August 1779, f 46.
[51] Bence-Jones mentions Seaton Delaval in Northumberland by Sir John Vanbrugh. Bence-Jones, *A guide to Irish country houses*, p 97.
[52] Bence-Jones, *A guide to Irish country houses*, p 98.
[53] Angelique Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland, Mary Delany 1731-1768* (Belfast 1991), p 158.
[54] Craig, *Classic Irish houses,* p 23.
[55] Bence-Jones, *A guide to Irish country houses*, p xiii.

with architectural detail' was preferred to a giant order of columns or a portico,[56] a treatment given to many of his houses by the architect Richard Castle. But eighteenth-century examples of the free-standing portico were to be found at Bellamont Forest, county Cavan (*c.*1730) and at Seafield, Donabate, county Dublin (begun between 1737 and 1741).[57]

Before moving on to look at the prevalence of the portico in the early nineteenth century, a proposed plan by the Scottish architect James Byres for Charleville Forest, county Offaly which dates to 1789 shows a solution that eliminates any problem that wind and rain might bring. The plan is inscribed 'Passage with a landing under cover for Carriages': the carriage could make its way across the broad forecourt and into an opening in the curved and covered corridor that linked the house with the stable pavilion, deposit its visitors and continue into the stable yard (**Fig. 1.10**).[58] Porticoes became a little more common in the following century at houses like Garbally, county Galway (1819), Ballyfin, county Laois (1822), Loughcrew, (1823) and Annesbrook, both in county Meath. Towards the middle of the century, many porticoes were added to houses that their owners believed were old-fashioned, lending them a stylish neo-Classical air.[59]

The double height portico at Mount Shannon, county Limerick (re-modelled after 1813) was large enough to act as a porte-cochère, as was that at Rockingham, county Roscommon (added *c.* 1822), and at Baronscourt, county Tyrone (*c.* 1835). Both Beaufort and his daughter remark on the porte-cochère at Killymoon Castle, also in county Tyrone (1803) which they visited in 1807, but it made more of an impression on Louisa: 'the grand entrance is a portico so large that the carriage drives under it and receives its company dry, it is formed by two highly ornamented pillars, fluted and supported by octagonal bases of rougher free stone, the pillars are dressed smooth…'.[60] The north-facing entrance front at Lissadell, county Sligo (1831-33) has, as McParland describes it 'a classical temple front adapted, and naturalised, to Atlantic instead of Mediterranean conditions'.[61] The porte-cochère was designed to lessen the effects of such weather by being, if

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[56] Niall McCullough and Valerie Mulvin, *A lost tradition: the nature of architecture in Ireland* (Dublin 1987), p 61.
[57] Brian de Breffny and Rosemary ffolliott, *The houses of Ireland* (London 1975) p 98.
[58] IAA Photograph Collection, Charleville Forest: 'Sketch of a Plan for the Principal Floor of Mr Bury's House' by James Byres (1789).
[59] Bence-Jones, *A guide to Irish country houses*, p xix.
[60] TCD MS 4033, D A Beaufort, Tour of north of Ireland 9 October-18 November 1807, f. 11; TCD MS 4034, Louisa Beaufort, Journal of a tour to the north, made October 1807, f. 9.
[61] Edward McParland, 'Lissadell, Co. Sligo' in *Country Life*, 6 October 1977, pp 914-17.

necessary, entirely enclosed, as the architect Francis Goodwin explained in his account of Lissadell published in 1834:

> ...because the violence of the wind on this coast is at times so furious, that it was necessary to provide shelter against it; and it is accordingly intended that whenever such is the case, one of the gates shall be closed, in order that visitors may alight without being annoyed by it...[62]

Shortly after it was built Robert Graham visited Lissadell where he was impressed with the design: 'There is a most comfortable covered landing place for carriages (with folding doors and 3 windows) so that your horses may wait for the ladies in great comfort, if the wind and rain come from the north and south at the same moment. You descend upon a marble slab and marble steps lead up to the door'.[63] One can only imagine the discomfort of both ladies and gentlemen endeavouring to mount flights of steps in pouring rain on arrival at houses such as Castletown, Santry Court and Russborough.[64] Casey notes a single example of a porte-cochère in Dublin, at number 9 St Stephen's Green.[65]

Entrances

In the painting of Stradbally House (**Fig. 1.8a**), which may date to as late as the 1740s, a carriage and entourage can be seen (bottom right) making their way from the road, along an avenue leading to a gateway which gives access to the main avenue (**Fig. 1.8b**). At this point a sweeping entrance with a curved wall and two gateposts, leads to the gardens and the house. This straight avenue, on axis with the house, has a low wall on each side, and leads to a gateway to one side of the house into a large courtyard beyond which are the stables.[66] The parkland and garden, it will be noted, are designed to emphasise the new house as its centrepiece, shifting the old-fashioned tower and its tower house to one side. This gave the house two entrances, one of which is in the tower house while the grander one, to the new house, is approached through a gateway in the wall separating the old from the new forecourt.

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[62] Quoted by Josslyn Gore-Booth in 'Lissadell', *Irish Arts Review,* Summer 2003, pp 112-19.
[63] Henry Heaney (ed.), *A Scottish Whig in Ireland 1835-38: the Irish journals of Robert Graham of Redgorton* (Dublin 1999), p 282.
[64] According to Kersey's Dictionary (1708), quoted by Wikipedia, an umbrella is described as a 'screen commonly used by women to keep off rain'. Apparently it was not very common in the first half of the eighteenth century: a correspondent, writing from Paris in 1752, speaks of the umbrella used there for sun and rain, and wonders why it is not used in England.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umbrella.
[65] Casey, *Dublin,* pp 535-36.
[66] Illustrated in Crookshank and Glin, *Ireland's painters,* p 67, plates 87, 87A.

In *Early Georgian interiors* John Cornforth makes the point that in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century houses the main doors were surprisingly little used, and that most visitors entered through a side door or at a lower level. This left the forecourt free from the sounds and smells of horses and from the marks of coach wheels, and the windows free from overlooking it all. He also believes that it was convenient from an interior planning point of view as it gave 'more direct access to the everyday and working parts of the house, leaving the parade rooms undisturbed'.[67] There is not much documentary evidence for any of these points regarding Irish houses of such early dates. However, Stradbally has been mentioned above, and it would appear from the painting that only the most formal occasion would warrant an arrival at the main door, with the forecourt almost closed off with what look like two rectangles of grass, and terminated by a canal. Another depiction of an early house is an undated painted panel at Mount Ievers Court, county Clare (completed 1737).[68] The panel shows a curved walled forecourt with a garden behind the wall to one side balanced by what looks like a stable yard to the other. At the gateway are tall stone gateposts with ball finials; it is not clear if there is access to the stable yard from the forecourt. In a painting of Howth Castle**,** county Dublin (**Figs 1.11, 1.12**), a generous forecourt can be seen, extending from which is an ornamental garden with pond and gravel walk terminated, as at Stradbally Hall, by a canal. Some people on horseback have already entered the forecourt and look as if they are about to ride across it to the opposite gate, while a lone horseman approaches the first gate. The man standing just inside the gate at the arched doorway of a square tower (behind which is, presumably, the stable yard) may be the stable hand or groom, prepared to take the horse from the rider.[69]

Roger North, writing at the end of the seventeenth century, adverts to entrances other than the principal one while making it clear that he does not approve of 'keeping company from the forecourt', thinking it absurd that a stranger on arrival at the house, finding the main entrance closed, has to find another. He believes that the forecourt 'calls for an higher pitch of neatness than a stable yard, and yet not such as you afford to your garden' so it should 'endure comon using, according to the intent of it'. He is also in favour of a back entrance, not alone for the servants 'to make constant use of', but important for the master who can survey

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[67] John Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors* (New Haven and London 2004), p 19.
[68] Illustrated in Jacqueline O'Brien and Desmond Guinness, *Great Irish houses and castles* (London 1992), p 48.
[69] The *View of Howth Castle* is in a private collection. Photograph in TRIARC - Trinity Irish Art Research Centre, Crookshank-Glin Archive.

the comings and goings of his staff, and 'transact with them, and other mean persons, without concerning his guest, or anoying the principall, and enterteining part of his house'. Stressing the need for the back entrance to be 'cheerfull and aiery' as it would be used by the family 'at private times', he says that it should be located so that, in the event of 'great raine', a coach can conveniently draw close to it and pick up or deposit a visitor.[70] Cornforth makes the point that North was writing at a time before the Palladian plan with a main block and two wings came into fashion in the 1720s in England.[71] Castletown, county Kildare was the first Palladian mansion built in Ireland and was begun in 1722: its pavilions house the kitchen to one side and the stables to the other, the purposes for which Palladio intended for them in his villas in the Veneto in the sixteenth century, a custom that was followed in Ireland, and not generally in England.[72] Here, 'for such guests as arrived late on horseback, or required a meal before making an early start', there was a doorway from the stable yard into the arcade leading to a room possibly in the east pavilion.[73] Beaufort mentions entering the bishop of Derry's house, Downhill, county Derry (built from early 1770s): 'The entrance is usually by the back door under the staircase which is of portland and gilt iron rail, the lobby above supported by four columns of very fine Derbyshire marble. This door by a few steps leads into a corridor the whole length of the house'.[74] While North promotes a back entrance that can be used during 'great raine' by the visitor, Cornforth refers to a side entrance for family and informal occasions, or one 'at a lower level', a point that deserves a brief look.

The 'lower level' is understood to mean in this case, the ground floor of a house, or 'the rustic[k]' as it was frequently called in England, where the *piano nobile* is on the first floor and a flight of steps leads to the main door at that level. This was not at all common in Ireland, where the 'lower level' meant a basement. In Britain, family rooms and rooms for informal entertaining were often at ground level, leaving the rooms of parade upstairs for formal use. An example of this was Colen Campbell's Wanstead House, London (from 1713) where a doorway is placed at the centre of the rusticated base, and a staircase on each side leads to the temple

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[70] Howard Colvin and John Newman (eds), *Of building: Roger North's writings on architecture* (Oxford 1981), pp 127-28.
[71] Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors,* p 20.
[72] Isaac Ware encouraged his English readers to follow this example, as quoted in Craig, *Classic Irish houses*, p 27.
[73] Christopher Hussey, 'Castletown II' in *Country Life*, 22 August, 1936, pp 196-201. Dr Patrick Walsh, who is completing a study of Speaker Conolly, believes this room to be in the main block of the house.
[74] TCD MS 4028, Daniel Augustus Beaufort, 'Journal of a tour through part of Ireland begun Aug 26 1787', f 33.

front and the main door.[75] Isaac Ware describes a basement that is 'not under ground entirely, it is let in some feet below the surface and usually and very properly built in front with rustick work'. This is a kind of half-basement that keeps the first-floor apartments 'wholesome' and free from damp, while the lower floor 'conveniently holds all the common apartments' [i.e. for everyday family life] and 'keeps the servants near the body of the house'.[76] It seemed of no concern to Ware that the family might have to endure damp quarters. Craig believes the Irish basement to have a triple origin – partly defensive, partly as a type of damp course and, thirdly, as a plinth. In classical architecture the plinth supports the order, but, as Craig explains, in Ireland that is 'usually "notional" rather than expressed by columns or pilasters, but still present in spirit'.[77] An exception is perhaps at Powerscourt, county Wicklow , where the main entrance is to the centre of the rusticated plinth that supports the order, and the *piano nobile* is on the floor above.

There can be no doubt that in the majority of cases there were side entrances into houses for the use of the family and those calling on business, but there is not much evidence to support this in the architectural plans under consideration. There are also very few back or garden entrances on the plans, which might lead one to the conclusion that these were implied, that a window opening was easily converted into a doorway and a rather decorative one at that. The Scottish visitor, Robert Graham, mentions a separate entrance into the family apartments at Castle Coole, county Fermanagh from 'the western arcade without coming thro' to the hall of general entrance' which can be seen on the drawings by both Richard Johnston (1789) and the architect who replaced him, James Wyatt, in 1790 (**Figs 1.13, 1.14**).[78] Living quarters for the family in the wing were common in England, not in Ireland. In an early drawing for the same house by Richard Castle, dated to after 1730,[79] there are doorways from the stable yards into the sides of the house. Furthermore there are gateways leading into the yards from the avenues of approach (**Fig. 1.15**).[80] Some plans for Carton, county Kildare, also show side entrances. An early one by Castle (c. 1739, **Fig. 1.16**) shows a break in the quadrant wall from the stable yard, but no subsidiary entry to the house is discernible. In a plan purported to be by the marquis of Kildare and dated to 1762, access points to

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[75] Palladio placed similar doorways at the same place at the Villa Piovene (1539-40) and Villa Malcontenta (1559-60).
[76] Ware, p 322.
[77] Craig, *Classic Irish houses*, p 19-20.
[78] Heaney (ed.) *A Scottish Whig*, p 290; IAA Photograph Collection, Castle Coole, co Fermanagh.
[79] David J Griffin, 'Richard Castle's designs for Castle Coole, Co Fermanagh' in Terence Reeves-Smyth, Richard D Oram, C E B Brett (eds), *Avenues to the past…* (Belfast, Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, 2003), pp 135-42.
[80] IAA Photograph collection, Castlecoole, county Fermanagh, 'Plan of a house by R Castle'.

the house from the stable yard are clear (**Fig. 1.17**),[81] and in a plan that was closest to what was built the house has acquired a doorway and flight of steps to the centre of its west side (**Fig. 1.18**).[82] In their Dublin home, Kildare House (also designed by Castle), the stables and kitchen yard were to the side of the house, where there was a doorway into the offices (presumably for the use of servants and tradespeople) and another via the colonnade into the kitchen court (**Fig. 1.19**). A doorway into the house can be seen from the left colonnade.[83] Another plan by Castle, for Headfort, county Meath (**Fig. 1.20**) shows the 'Great Gate into the Stable yard' to the right of the forecourt (A), and a 'back entry' (B) from the 'arcade of communication' (C) on that side, leading into the east wing.[84] A plan by Sir William Chambers for Headfort (**Fig. 1.21**) shows side entrances to the house from the forecourt, one in each quadrant, up double flights of steps, as well as access from the stable yard to the house via a curved passage behind the east arcade.[85]

Often the owner of the house would ensure that his dressing room or study was close to the side or back entrance so that people coming to the house on business were not required to use the main entrance. This occurs at Headfort in two plans by Castle (**Fig. 1.20**),[86] at Lucan House, county Dublin,[87] at Townley Hall, county Louth in plans by both Johnston and by Blayney and Anne Balfour,[88] at Pakenham Hall (Tullynally), county Westmeath[89] and at Killeen Castle, county Meath.[90] At Ardbraccan House, county Meath, the plan of the principal or ground floor has a door on the east side, leading into a 'small hall' (I, **Fig. 1.22**), off which to one side is a WC (O), and to the other a 'Coffee Room' (E) where one might be tempted to think that the bishops of Meath might have conducted some business, rather than bringing visitors to the library and dressing room (A, B) at the far side of the house.[91]

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[81] IAA Photograph collection, Carton, county Kildare, 'First Duke's ground floor proposal 1762': Lord Walter FitzGerald, 'Carton' in *JCKAS* No. 4, 1903-05, pp 3-34, illustration of 'The proposed restoration of the House at Carton by James, 20th Earl of Kildare in 1762'. The marquis of Kildare was created first duke of Leinster four years later in 1766.
[82] IAA Photograph collection, 'Carton: proposed ground floor plan by Richard Castle'.
[83] Griffin and Pegum, *Leinster House*, plates 34-38.
[84] IAA, Photograph collection, Headfort, county Meath.
[85] John Harris, *Headfort House and Robert Adam* (London 1973) plate 6, plan of the ground floor.
[86] IAA, Photograph collection, Headfort, county Meath.
[87] NLI, AD 1590 and 1589.
[88] IAA/EMcP, Mitchell/Crichton drawings, M11 and M14.
[89] IAA Murray Collection of drawings. Tullynally (Pakenham Hall) drawings 1197 and 1198.
[90] IAA, Photograph collection, Killeen Castle, county Meath.
[91] NLI, Collection Lord Farnham, AD 2780.

Servants' entrances

Finally a word should be said about servants' entry to the house. The house was their workplace and, in many cases, where they lived. They could gain access to it through the kitchen and stable yards. Most country houses had farms attached to them, often literally, and it would not do to have various errands connected to the running of the farm displayed in full view from the elegant interiors of the mansions. Underground tunnels were provided to prevent such eyesores. One leading from the area to the offices is indicated on Pearce's plan for Bellamont Forest, an early example of what became by the end of the century 'a well established Irish device'.[92] It was not, however, unknown in England: examples were to be found at Petworth, West Sussex; Wolterton Hall, Norfolk and Belton House, Lincolnshire. Food at Uppark, Sussex, was taken from the kitchen pavilion on wheeled trollies with charcoal heaters along the tunnel, and up the basement stairs to the serving lobby by the dining room.[93] At Ardbraccan the stable and farm yards are joined by a tunnel running under the garden terrace: one leads from the kitchen in Castle Coole to stables and offices, and there is a similar arrangement at Strokestown House.[94] Also in Roscommon, Rockingham, designed by John Nash, a house that, like Bellamont Forest, was designed to be seen 'in the round', had a complex series of subterranean tunnels. One led from the house to the lakeside where fuel arrived by boat, another was for goods arriving by land whose entrance was 100 yards away and the third was for servants.[95] Robert Graham describes how the turf made its journey to the fireplaces of the house:

> There is a canal of communication with the bog, from which the supply of turf comes and which is brought in through the lake by a subterranean communication, which ends at a square shaft by which the fuel may be hoisted up by machinery thro' the interior of the house.[96]

Maria Edgeworth in *Ormond* (1817) describes how, after his death, Sir Ulick's body was carried through the underground passage that led to the stables, and out by the lane to the churchyard.[97] At Pakenham Hall (later Tullynally Castle), a special tunnel was created that by-passed the stable yard in order to prevent flirting between laundry maids and stable-hands.[98] In Dublin a passage below garden level

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[92] Maurice Craig, *The architecture of Ireland: from the earliest times to 1880* (Dublin 1997 edn) pp 186n, 245.
[93] Trevor Lummis and Jan Marsh, *The woman's domain: women and the English country house* (London 1993 ed), p 128.
[94] There were also underground tunnels at Lucan House, county Dublin, Florence Court, county Fermanagh, Lissadell, county Sligo, Drumcree House, county Westmeath and Killua Castle, county Westmeath.
[95] P Somerville-Large, *The Irish country house a social history*, (London 1995) p 198.
[96] Heaney (ed.), *A Scottish Whig*, p 284.
[97] Maria Edgeworth, *Ormond* (London 1972 edn), p 388.
[98] Valerie Pakenham, *The big house in Ireland*, (London n.d.), p 107.

connected the house at 5 Upper Merrion Street (formerly 25 Merrion Street) to the mews at the rear.[99] Access for servants to the terraced Dublin houses could be twofold: sometimes from the front through a gateway in the area railings and down a flight of stone steps to the basement, and via the stable block at the rear stable lane.

Much of the business of servants was out of sight when it came to the activity surrounding the arrivals of family members to reside at their country and town houses, to which we now turn. Included in this section will be the arrivals of brides to their new homes, and the visits of viceroys to Delville, Mount Shannon and Charleville Forest. These will be followed by a section on another type of visitor, the house tourist.

Arrivals - family

Families moved from the city to the country (or vice versa) or from England to their Irish house at different times in the year, for example staying in Dublin when parliament was sitting, when they could enjoy the social whirl that went hand-in-glove with it; and moving to the country for hunting, shooting and, usually, to celebrate Christmas. Moving from one house to another meant travelling as a small cavalcade with servants. Often items such as linen and pieces of furniture and furnishing were transported in advance. When Lord Buttevant (heir to the earl of Barrymore) and his lady were removing from Dublin to Castle Lyons, county Cork in 1738, he travelled with a friend in a chaise and six and Lady Buttevant with her maid in a landau and six, 'with led horses alongside and three or four servants'.[100] Dean and Mrs Delany travelled from their Dublin home to that in county Down in three conveyances – they in their chaise, the cook and housemaid in the coach and four, and another maid 'in a car we have had made for marketing and carrying luggage when we travel'.[101] But sometimes the cavalcade was not so small. According to a newspaper report on the Hamilton's month-long journey between Baronscourt, county Tyrone and London, their suite consisted of 33 persons in a cavalcade of four carriages and ten outriders. The latter comprised grooms and footmen whose job was to go in advance of the carriages to ensure that all was in

[99] H M Hyde, *The rise of Castlereagh* (London 1933), pp 197-198. It is unclear how many Dublin houses had a similar facility. Among the Elton Hall drawings is a plan for a town house by Edward Lovett Pearce showing an underground passage beneath the garden, leading to the stables and coach house to the rear. H. M. Colvin and Maurice Craig (eds), *Architectural drawings in the library of Elton Hall by Sir John Vanbrugh and Sir Edward Lovett Pearce* (Oxford 1964), cat. 65.
[100] Constantia Maxwell, *Country and town in Ireland under the Georges* (Dundalk 1949 edn), p 59-60.
[101] Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland*, p 203.

order at the various inns at which they stayed: the major domo and cook would arrive at the inn in the morning.[102]

In anticipation of one of his rare visits to Baronscourt, the 8th earl of Abercorn, an absentee landlord,[103] wrote from England to his agent at Strabane in September 1745 with instructions for his arrival due to take place in the late spring or early summer, following a week or so spent in Dublin. He was to 'employ either one of the workmen's wives whom you can trust, or some other discreet body, to make fires once a week, or as often as there may be occasion, to keep the house well aired all this winter'.[104] In February 1745/6 turf was to be cut for fires in the house 'that it may be dry early', and the following month a ship had been secured that could take his coach and if not all, most of his horses to Dublin. Ale and small beer was to be brewed at the house, two maids engaged, and the earl urged his agent to check that the 'road from Newtownstewart is complete so that there may be no difficulty for the coach'.[105] Securing suitable accommodation for the family's stay in Dublin was difficult, not only because parliament was sitting when prices 'are vastly extravagant', but 'especially as they must be furnished with table linnen which is as I am informed seldom expected, and will much enhance the price'. His Dublin agent was eventually successful, and gave instructions 'for hay, straw, beer, and coals to be laid in and…that the bed chambers be aird a day or two before I expect your arrival…'.[106] In April 1749 the earl instructed his agent at Baronscourt to buy two cows and 'to order all sorts of poultry to be got and fatted for me and I would have fires kept in the salon and my bedchamber every day till I come'.[107] Similar instructions were sent in advance almost sixty years later by his nephew and heir (created 1st marquis of Abercorn in 1790) in 1807. Along with fatting the calf and filling the cellars, more mundane orders had to be fulfilled, such as the 'half a ton of good soap to be seasoning against yr Lordship's coming over, which with 8

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[102] Lord Ernest Hamilton, *Old days and new* (London 1923) p 35. No date is given for this event but it would appear to have occurred in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

[103] Though an absentee, his correspondence in PRONI reveals him as a well-informed landlord with, as Anthony Malcolmson writes in his abstract of the Abercorn Papers, 'a sympathetic, practical and flexible approach to the problem of estate management'.

[104] John H Gebbie (ed.), *An introduction to the Abercorn letters (as relating to Ireland, 1736-1816)*, (Omagh 1972) p 260, letter from 8th earl of Abercorn to his agent dated 20 September 1745.

[105] Gebbie (ed.), *An introduction to the Abercorn letters,* letter from earl to agent dated 13 February 1745/6, p 262; letters from agent to earl dated 22 March 1745/6, and 12 May 1746, p 16; letter from earl to agent dated 1 April 1746, p 263.

[106] Gebbie (ed.), *An introduction to the Abercorn letters,* letters from agent in Dublin to earl, dated (8) 22 March1745/6 and 12 May 1746, p 16.

[107] Gebbie (ed.), *An introduction to the Abercorn letters*, letter from earl to agent dated 22 April 1749, p 269. References to fires being kept going in houses, sometimes day and night, are made in the Rockingham Papers, NLI, Letter from John Lynn to Lord Lorton 16 September 1813 MS 8810, Part 7(1), and 27 September 1815, Part 7(2).

hundred weight sent before, will…be a pretty good stock', and six hundredweight of 'different sizes of candles to be drying'.[108]

Cold and damp were persistent problems in houses at this period and many references are made in journals and correspondence by travellers regarding damp beds both in inns and in houses.[109] At Dublin Castle in 1758 the Surveyor General, Thomas Eyre, worried that the new state apartments would not be sufficiently dry for the viceroy, the duke of Bedford's, return. As soon as the roof went on he kept fires in every room day and night and even had workmen sleep in the rooms, as a test. A further test involved the use of paper: 'I find that Paper pinned against the Wall all Night, contracts so little Dampness or Moisture therefrom, that it is perfectly dry and fit to be wrote upon the Next Day without the Ink sinking into it…'.[110] Emily, dowager duchess of Leinster implored her daughter Lucy to delay her arrival at Leinster House in Dublin until her bed there had been aired by the housekeeper, who was instructed to sleep in it 'a week before you go'. Following that, a maid should sleep in it for a couple of nights after which she should bring word to Lucy of its condition.[111] Carton was the much-loved home of the FitzGeralds, on which Emily spent time and money creating a comfortable and beautiful home and demesne for her family. Lady Isabella FitzGerald, her granddaughter, remembers with fondness the 'extacy' of the family's arrival at Carton every spring, describing it as 'remarkably well situated…a pleasing object from every part of the Park where it could be seen'.[112]

Because his Dublin house in Kevin Street was lived in by his motherless young daughter, Alicia, together with a governess/companion and a full staff, there were no such worries for Edward Synge, bishop of Elphin, county Roscommon. He ran the house from his bishop's palace by proxy through numerous letters to Alicia. A man of taste and learning, his main concern for his homecoming to Dublin was for the provision of food and silver for his table, and the brewing of quantities of ale for his cellar where his discerning taste in wine and champagne was evident. His instructions regarding the brewing were very precise in the letter about his

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[108] Gebbie (ed.), *An introduction to the Abercorn letters,* letter from agent to earl dated 26 April 1807, p 379.

[109] John Andrews, Lord Londonderry's agent, assured his employer that 'there can be no doubt of the apartments destined for her Ladyship being perfectly dry, warm, and healthful' for the forthcoming arrival of both to Mount Stewart, then building in 1847, and that fires will have been burning for some time to ensure their comfort. Anne Casement, 'William Vitruvius Morrison's scheme for Mount Stewart, county Down: was it ever realised?' in *LADS*, vol. vii, 2004, pp 32-63.

[110] McParland, *Public Architecture*, pp 109-10.

[111] Brian FitzGerald, *Emily, duchess of Leinster 1731-1814,* (Dublin 1949) p 234.

[112] Memoir of Lady Isabella FitzGerald, wife of Vicomte Rohan Chabot, daughter of 2nd duke of Leinster. My thanks to the Knight of Glin for notes on this.

imminent arrival in September 1750. The brewer was to 'lay in some Ale…try to prevail on him to brew some Ale on purpose, such as you know I like, pale, soft, smooth, and not too bitter and lay in some, three or four half Barrels, as soon as brew'd and continue afterwards to lay in one every week to be ready to succeed them'.[113] Synge's stay in Dublin each autumn prompted a similar letter in advance: John (his steward at Kevin Street) was to be given the receipt from 'one of the little Drawers in the Scriptoire' with which to collect the 'Plate-chest' from Lennox's (where it was presumably in safe-keeping); beef must be ordered, and (in his letter in 1749) Will (Alicia's man-servant) must 'secure Hamilton the Corn-cutter to be with me on Sunday morning. Both my Toes and Hair will want his hand'. On the day of his arrival, he tells his daughter, he will dine with her at about 4 pm, 'some Sole, Whiting, or other good Sea Fish will be a treat' but there must also be roast mutton and 'a couple of roasted Fowl'. She must 'provide plentifully for the Servants who will be hungry'. He cautions her against a youthful, enthusiastic welcome for him, telling her not to run out into the courtyard to greet him but to 'have a good fire in the great parlour, and there receive me'.[114] His letters to Alicia are very tender, as he, conscious of her lack of a mother's hand, gently guides her into adulthood and maturity, and, of course, towards a suitable marriage.

In June 1836, the earl and countess of Dunraven, on their return to Adare from a two-year tour of the Low Countries and Germany (during which they purchased numerous carvings for the gallery of the newly-built Adare Manor), were greeted with 'glad faces all the way and much love and gratitude' and illuminations and bonfires were lit in the village where they remained until almost midnight. The countess was delighted with the new building 'very much struck with the beauty and grandeur' and 'admired its style more than any I had seen…the rooms promise to be very comfortable'.[115]

Arrivals - brides

In 1733, the newly-married Lady Anne Conolly arrived in Ireland with her husband, William, and proceeded to Castletown, county Kildare, the house that William was to inherit on the death of the formidable Mrs Katherine Conolly, widow of his uncle, Speaker Conolly. No description of her arrival at the house has come to light but she apparently settled in remarkably well, according to a letter

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[113] Marie-Louise Legg (ed.), *The Synge letters: Bishop Edward Synge to his daughter Alicia Roscommon to Dublin 1746-1752* (Dublin 1996), Letter 117, 11 September, 1750, p 248.
[114] Legg (ed.), *The Synge letters,* Letter 80, 29 September 1749, p 173; Letter 128, 20 October 1750, p 265; Letter 81, 3 October 1749, p 173; Letter 43, 30 September 1747, p 92.
[115] Mark Bence-Jones, *Life in an Irish Country House* (London 1996), p 3.

written by William to her father after their arrival: 'Lady Anne and I have continued here with the good old Lady, ever since we landed and I can with pleasure say that your daughter has quite got the length of her foot'.[116] Bearing in mind Lady Anne's background - her father was the earl of Strafford and her country seat was Wentworth Castle in Yorkshire, her description of Castletown at about this time is of interest as the house was begun eleven years earlier:

> '[It] is so very unfinished without doors, I don't think the place very pleasant, though the house is really a charming one to live in...[the] front is quite without ornaments of any sort, not even so much as pediments over the windows...altogether it looks very well. At least here it does, where there are but few places any way like a seat....[117]

For many young brides the strain of being the centre of attention and an object of potential criticism was a lot to cope with when arriving at her husband's home for the first time: not all were as self-possessed as Lady Anne Conolly apparently was. This is evident in a letter from Lady Theodosia Crosbie to her sister on her journey to Ardfert Abbey, county Kerry, the seat of her husband's parents, where she was to meet Sir Maurice and Lady Anne Crosbie for the first time in July 1746. Stopping overnight at Castletown, she found it difficult to sleep for the fleas in her bed, though they were even worse where she stayed in Limerick. There, the party was greeted at the town gate by the army, bells were rung and guns were fired and, to crown it all, they were forced to dine in the home of a wine merchant whose wife piled food on her plate and insisted that she eat it, leaving Theodosia in a state of grave discomfort for the rest of the day. She was not much improved by the time she reached her destination when Lord Kerry (one of her party) introduced her to Sir Maurice who greeted her at the door of her coach. Having 'craved his blessing...I proceeded to Mother, who was at the door of the house and I did the same by her, without being sure it was she, for Lord Kerry was not come up [to introduce them]'.[118]

Such a modest and haphazard homecoming was not for Edward Augustus Stratford, the 2nd earl of Aldborough who, in 1788, wrote to his agent at Belan, Ballitore, county Kildare, that he, together with his new bride (and second wife)

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[116] Quoted in Lena Boylan, 'The Conollys of Castletown: a family history' in *QBIGS* , vol. xi, no.4, October-December 1968, pp 1-46.
[117] Brian FitzGerald, *Lady Louisa Conolly 1743-1821*, (London 1950) pp 21-22.
[118] Knight of Glin, 'Three eighteenth century letters from Lady Theodosia Crosbie'. *Journal of the Kerry Archaeological & Historical Society*, 17 (1984), pp 77-88.

and some of her wealthy family,[119] would be coming to Belan and would expect an appropriate welcome. The party were to be

> 'received at Ballimore *[sic]* by a small corps of Light Horse, at Stratford by a ditto of Light Foot, at Baltinglass, by a ditto of Artillery, and escorted from thence to Belan by a ditto of Grenadiers and Light Horse; or the Grenadiers at Ballimore, and the Light Horse to go from Baltinglass...they need not consists of more than twelve each corps and the officers'.

Anxious not to lose face before his new in-laws, he goes on to list the entertainment required, beginning with theatricals: 'two Tragedies, two Comedies, two Musical and two other farces, the choice I leave to yourselves, but beg you'll all be up in your parts, and no disappointment'. While amateur theatricals, with parts played by the members of the family and their friends, were very popular in the latter part of the century, the players in this case would appear to be from among his company of soldiers.[120] He required 'balls as usual, some Concerts, and a Fête Champêtre...I hope my towns of Stratford and Baltinglass will make a figure as they pass through, be neat and clean, the...church covered in, and Baltinglass new bridge completed'. With a month's notice, it seemed a rather tall order for the agent, but then the new countess brought with her 'Fifty thousand pounds hard cash down, and will at her Father's and Aunt's death succeed to one hundred and fifty thousand more'.[121]

To impress his bride, the 2nd Lord Cloncurry, who was returning to Ireland in 1805 after a sojourn on the continent, planned a somewhat different arrival at his house, Lyons, county Kildare: it was to be at night. His agent was instructed to 'have every front window in the house illuminated with five candles in each, which will make 220 candles. Those in the eating room and library should be wax so that makes 30 wax candles and 190 tallow. That will cost about £40 or thereabouts'.[122] But it meant that the local populace - tenants, villagers, servants and labourers - were deprived of the more customary, daytime arrival of a bride, when all could see her.

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[119] Anne Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Henniker, and niece of the Duchess of Chandos, married the earl in 1788.

[120] It became quite common for soldiers in garrisons around the country to put on plays for their own amusement, and often in local hospitals, and in theatres where they would perform in aid of a charity.

[121] 'T.U.S.', 'Letter from Edward, 2nd Earl of Aldborough, to his Agent at Belan', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, vii (1912-14) pp 333-34.

[122] David Large, 'The wealth of the greater Irish landowners, 1750-1815' in *Irish Historical Studies* 15, (1966-67), pp 21-47.

The future countess of Dunraven in July 1812[123] wrote of her arrival for the first time at Adare, county Limerick, accompanied by her husband and baby son, where they were, as she noted in her journal:

> met four miles from the house by all Windham's tenants…the horses were broken from the carriage and were drawn by 40 men…the mob round it so great the military had to interfere to prevent the people from getting under the wheels. They carried garlands of flowers before us with a band of music and…saluted us as we passed…The Adare infantry were drawn up before the drawingroom windows and when we got out of the carriage they fired three times and gave us every possible mark of their affection…my beloved husband is beloved by his tenantry.[124]

The house was 'much better than expected and the grounds most beautiful but [I] was too much fatigued to walk about much that night'.[125]

Arrivals – the Viceroy

It was considered a great honour to welcome the viceroy to one's house. Sometimes it was intended as an informal visit, such as dropping in to Mrs Mary Delany's house for breakfast with little notice, and at other times it was a formal arrival, complete with lavish entertainment (and huge expense) laid on. Mrs Delany was not too perturbed when the viceroy and his wife, Lord and Lady Chesterfield, sent word early on 21 October 1745 that they would like to breakfast with her and Dean Delany at Delville, Glasnevin, at eleven o'clock that morning:

> To work went all my maids, stripping covers off the chairs, sweeping, dusting, and by eleven my house was as spruce as a cabinet of curiosities, and well bestowed on their Excellencies, who commended and admired, and were as polite as possible. They came soon after eleven in their travelling coach, with only two footmen [and two guests]…They staid till near two, and my Lord Lieut and the Dean had a great deal of conversation…we are going this morning to court to return thanks for the honour they did us…[126]

Before his departure from Ireland in April 1746, Lord Chesterfield desired to bid a personal farewell to the Delanys by dining with them, for which they had one days' notice, received while dining at the bishop of Clogher's. 'I immediately dispatched a messenger to Delville, with a note to my housekeeper,' she wrote to her sister, 'to

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[123] Caroline Wyndham, from Dunraven Castle in Glamorganshire, Wales, heiress to large estates there, married Lord Adare's elder son in 1810. Her father-in-law took the name Dunraven for his title when he was made an earl in 1822, and the family name was changed to Wyndham-Quin, in deference to his daughter-in-law.

[124] UL, Dunraven Papers, Journals of Caroline, countess of Dunraven, D/3196/E/2/10, 27 November 1811-18 February 1813.

[125] UL, Dunraven Papers, Journals of Caroline, countess of Dunraven, D/3196/E/2/10, 27 November 1811-18 February 1813, 22 July 1812.

[126] Day (ed.) *Letters from Georgian Ireland,* pp 38-39.

tell her she must prepare the dinner for next day of seven and nine [the number of dishes, two courses], and a dessert…my dinner turned out very well…He came at three…was extremely civil, agreeable, and cheerful, and staid till nearly eight'.[127] His successor (and half-brother, William Stanhope, earl of Harrington) also breakfasted with the Delanys. He came in October 1747 with two attendants, and was met at the 'street-door' by the dean, 'and I at the bottom of the stairs'. Again she went to the Castle to thank the viceroy for honouring them with a visit.[128] In 1752 Mrs Delany proposed to invite the duke and duchess of Dorset to breakfast rather than dinner providing the weather is fine. Dinners, she feels, 'are grown such luxurious feasts in this country that we do not pretend to show away with such magnificence, and our viceroy loves magnificence *too well* to be pleased with our way of entertaining company'.[129]

The marquis of Abercorn was not at home when the viceroy, the Marquis Cornwallis, and his suite spent three days at Baronscourt in August 1800. His agent reassured him that 'everything in our power was done for his comfortable entertainment and he left us highly satisfied; his Excell. spent all day Saturday in viewing the grounds about New Town Stewart'.[130]

In the autumn of 1809 the lord lieutenant and his wife, the duke and duchess of Richmond, together with a large retinue, made a prolonged tour in the south of Ireland, lodging as guests with families in each area. At Mount Shannon, county Limerick, the seat of the late lord chancellor, John FitzGibbon, earl of Clare, his widow, with the seventeen-year-old 2nd earl, hosted the party for four nights in early October. A newspaper description of the visit was given under the heading 'The Irish Court at Mount Shannon';[131]

> This princely mansion, so often visited by the reps of his Majesty in this country, was now again dignified by the reception of the illustrious House of Richmond and the Irish Court, while, on the part of the accomplished Countess who received them and of her noble son nothing was wanting that was due to such a visit, to themselves or to the magnificent memory of the late Earl of Clare.

As was customary for distinguished guests, the earl, his mother 'and their suite', accompanied by 'leading gentlemen of the neighbourhood' met the party on their

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[127] Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland,* p 40.
[128] Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland,* p 42.
[129] Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland,* p 51.
[130] Gebbie (ed.), *An Introduction to the Abercorn letters,* letter from agent to earl, 27 August 1800, p 354.
[131] University of Limerick, Dunraven Papers, MS D/3196/D/3/64. 10th October 1809, newspaper account from *The General Advertiser.*

way to Mount Shannon, and accompanied them to the house. Another house visited on this tour was Charleville Forest where, on arrival, the horses were removed from the viceroy's carriage and it was dragged by hand from the lodge at the gate of the park to the house where two bands played *God save the king.* Yeomanry were ranged on either side of the hall door, officers and people on horseback walked about and the crowds cheered. The cost of such a visit in time, effort and money must have been substantial. In a letter to her son prior to the visit, the countess of Charleville wrote, 'Magnificent full dress liveries have been made for the servants & a uniform of Blue and Scarlet for the upper men; in short it ought to go off handsome for money has not been spared'.[132]

Before a discussion of another and quite different category of visitor, the house tourist, it might be of interest to look at one aspect of the departure of invited guests from the house, that is, the problem of vails.

Vails are defined by the *OED* as 'a gratuity given by a visitor on his departure to servants of the house'.[133] The giving of vails became a problem from the first half of the century when there was a feeling among employers that it had got out of hand. Vails - 'tipping' as we would call it – appears to have been well established by the eighteenth century. It is not clear how it came into being, but it obviously had the tacit agreement of employers for as long as it suited them. The customary scene in the hall as their guest waited for his carriage or horse to be brought to the door, embarrassed many.[134] Hosts pretended not to notice guests fumbling in their pockets to find shillings and half-crowns to distribute to servants, who had lined themselves up expectantly. Whether the motive for allowing it was to salve the collective conscience of the employer at paying such low wages, is not clear.[135] The giving of vails was not confined to great houses, it was also expected in more modest establishments, though the amounts given were less.[136]

For potential guests it led to a situation where in many cases it became prohibitively expensive to accept invitations either to dine or stay overnight. Richard Griffith from Bennetsbridge, county Kilkenny, complained in *c.* 1760 in a letter to his wife that

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[132] R Warwick Bond, *The Marlay Letters 1780-1820* (London 1937). Letter to her son, J T T Tisdall from the countess of Charleville, 7th October [1809], pp 128-29.
[133] *The compact edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* 2 vols, (Oxford University Press 1971) is the version used throughout this work.
[134] D Marshall,'The domestic servants of the eighteenth century' in *Economica,* vol. 9, April 1929, pp 15-40.
[135] Bridget Hill, *Servants: English domestics in the eighteenth century,* (Oxford 1996), p 77.
[136] Marshall, 'The domestic servants', pp 15-40.

> an heavy and unprofitable Tax still subsists upon the Hospitality of this Neighbourhood... In short while this Perquisite continues, a Country Gentleman may be considered but as a generous Kind of Inn-holder, who keeps open House, at his own Expence, for the sole Emolument of his Servants...this Extravagance is not confined, at present, solely to the Country...; for a Dinner in Dublin, and all the Towns in Ireland, is become...an expensive Ordinary. Nay, if you have any Sort of Business to transact, even in a Morning, with a Person who *keeps his Port*, you may levee him fifty Times, without being admitted by his Swiss Porter. So...I shall consider *a great Man* as a *Monster*, who may not be seen, 'till you have *fee'd his Keepers*.[137]

Griffith was by no means alone in believing that he was being 'punished' by the porter or butler for the paucity of his vails or perhaps his refusal to 'pay his way'. An unfortunate guest in England in 1754 found his punishment truly humiliating. 'I am a marked man,' he wrote,

> if I ask for beer I am presented with a piece of bread. If I am bold enough to call for wine, after a delay which would take its relish away were it good, I receive a mixture of the whole sideboard in a greasy glass. If I hold up my plate nobody sees me; so that I am forced to eat mutton with fish sauce, and pickles with my apple pie.[138]

Perhaps the servants at that house had taken to heart the advice offered to them in Swift's ironic *Directions to Servants* (1745). Swift suggests such methods, in the event of a gentleman who often dines with their master and gives no vails, 'to shew him some Marks of your Displeasure, & quicken his Memory', and he concludes 'By these, and the like Expedients, you may probably be a better Man by Half a Crown before he leaves the House'. He further urges those servants who expect vails

> always to stand Rank and File when a Stranger is taking his Leave; so that he must of Necessity pass between you; and he must have more Confidence or less Money than usual, if any of you let him escape, and according as he behaves himself, remember to treat him the next Time he comes.[139]

For the servants it was a well-established way of increasing their income (often by fifty per cent or more) and something to which they believed they were entitled. An army officer describes how much his visit to the house of a friend would cost him:

> The moment your departure is known, all the domestics are on the *qui vive*; the house-maid hopes you have forgotten nothing in packing up, if so, she will take care of it till you come again; this piece of civility costs you three ten-pennies; the footman carries your portmanteau...to the hall, three more; the butler wishes you a pleasant journey – his great kindness in so doing of course extracts a crown-piece; the groom brings your horse, assuring you 'tis an

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[137] R and E Griffith, *A series of genuine letters between Henry and Frances*, iv, (London 1770), 3rd edn, letter dxii, pp 142-43.
[138] Quoted in Marshall, 'The domestic servants...pp 15-40.
[139] Jonathan Swift, *Directions to servants in general* (London), pp 33, 14.

> ilegant baste, and has fed well' – three more ten-pennies go; the helper runs after you with the curb-chain, which he has 'till this moment carefully secreted – two more; making a total of seventeen, or, in English money, upwards of fourteen shillings. A heavy tax for visiting a friend![140]

But the giving of vails was expected not only on departure from the house of a friend: as will be seen, they were also disbursed by 'house tourists' to whichever servant showed them around - in most cases an upper servant.[141]

This custom of vails-giving was the subject of much argument in the printed medium in England.[142] The writer Daniel Defoe abhorred the idea and newspapers ran numerous articles and letters giving both sides of the argument.[143] In the *London Chronicle* a correspondent wrote in 1762 that 'Masters in England seldom pay their servants but in lieu of wages suffer them to prey upon their guests.[144] George Mathew of Thomastown, county Tipperary, a man famous for his hospitality was, according to *Anthologia Hibernica,* one of the first employers to ban that 'inhospitable custom' of giving vails to servants, and to compensate them by increasing their wages. This was apparently as early as the 1730s. His servants were warned that if they disobeyed, they would be discharged: at the same time he informed his guests that he would 'consider it as the highest affront if any offer of that sort were made'.[145] A crusade against the giving of vails began in Scotland in 1760 where 17 counties issued appeals to abolish them. By 1764 the movement had spread to London resulting in riots there by footmen, the servants who stood to lose most.[146] It was probably at about the same time that employers from a number of counties in Ireland agreed among themselves to abolish vails to servants.[147] It seems likely that among these gentlemen was the marquis of Kildare. Like George Mathew before them, he and a number of other employers decided to increase staff wages in an effort to compensate them for loss of earnings. In March 1765 he issued a directive from Carton to members of his household stating that

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[140] Benson Earle Hill, *Recollections of an Artillery Officer* 2 vols (London 1836), vol. I, pp 55-56.
[141] Horace Walpole's house, Strawberry Hill, in England was so popular that he joked that he could recoup some of the money laid out on the house by marrying his housekeeper there as she made so much money. Quoted in J. Jean Hecht, *The domestic servant class in eighteenth-century England* (London 1956), p 171.
[142] Bridget Hill, pp 76-77.
[143] Daniel Defoe wrote *The behaviour of servants* and *Everybody's business is nobody's business* in 1725.
[144] Quoted in Bridget Hill, p 77.
[145] *Anthologia Hibernica*, vol. I, May 1793, (Dublin 1793), p 357. No date is given for this account, but 'Grand George' Mathew, who died in 1737, was the man described, who was host to Jonathan Swift at Thomastown in the 1720s, a visit described by Thomas Sheridan (1719-1788) in *A life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift* (Dublin 1785).
[146] Marshall, 'The domestic servants…', pp 15-40.
[147] Griffith, *A series of genuine letters,* footnote to letter dxii, p 142-43: 'An Agreement entered into among the Gentlemen of several Counties in Ireland, not to give Vails to Servants.'

> In Consideration of Vails &c, which I will not permit for the future to be received in any of my Houses upon any Account whatsoever from Company lying there or otherwise I shall give in lieu thereof…

five pounds per annum each to the housekeeper, 'Maitre D'Hotel', cook and confectioner; three pounds per annum each to the steward at Carton, the butler, valet de chambre and groom of the chambers, and two pounds to the 'Gentleman of Horse'.[148]

Arrivals – the house tourists

The suggestion is made by Gervase Jackson-Stops that the royal progresses of Queen Elizabeth I to noblemen's houses throughout her kingdom had the effect of encouraging a building mania among her courtiers, and instituting a custom that continues to the present-day, that of country house visiting.[149] John Harris, however, is of the opinion that country house tourism was unknown until the Restoration, when social change and the rise of a wealthier class encouraged a new desire to travel for its own sake.[150] By 1700 it was evident from the publication of travel journals and diaries by people like John Evelyn and Celia Fiennes, that country house tourism in England was established and conducted not alone by the aristocracy, but by the gentry too. Roads were being improved by this time, gazeteers were making their appearance, and between 1715 and 1725, Colen Cambell's three volumes of *Vitruvius Britannicus* promoting neo-Palladianism as an architectural ideal for the English country house, was published.[151] Architecture became a recreational pursuit for men and women, as house owners vied with each other in building or altering their houses and improving their demesnes. As early as 1718 Robert Molesworth advised his wife to view the Southwells' landscaping at Clontarf, because 'they are well laid out and worthy of our imitation in due course'.[152]

From the beginning of the century in England, steady streams of visitors familiarised themselves with the building progress of large country houses. At Blenheim in 1711 it was found necessary to place a man at every doorway 'to keep people back from Crowding in with my Lord Duke', while small fences were put in

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[148] Alnwick Archives, Duke of Northumberland MS 670, 'Rules for the government of the Marquis of Kildare's (Duke of Leinster's) household 1763-1773'…', f. 56-57. Photocopy kindly loaned by the Knight of Glin.

[149] Gervase Jackson-Stops, 'Temples of the Arts' in Gervase Jackson-Stops (ed.), *The treasure houses of Britain: five hundred years of private patronage and art collecting* (New Haven and London 1985), pp 14-21.

[150] John Harris, 'English country house guides, 1740-1840', in John Summerson (ed.), *Concerning architecture: essays on architectural writers and writing presented to Nikolaus Pevsner* (London 1968), pp 58-74.

[151] Harris, 'English country house guides, 1740-1840', pp 58-74.

[152] Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p 203.

place in front of windows to protect the glass.[153] Pole Cosby of Stradbally Hall, who visited Blenheim with his father in 1721, found a printed guide to the as yet unfinished house.[154] That intrepid house tourist, the duchess of Northumberland, remarked in her journal that at Knole (in about 1766) she and her party 'had our cold loaf with us and eat it in the gateway'.[155] By the 1770s the 'Tour of Norfolk', that included houses such as Houghton, Holkham, Blickling, Felbrigg and Raynham, had become obligatory for the curious, while at Kedleston a hotel for visitors was built at the same time as the house, overlooking the park.[156] From the comments of Lady Beauchamp Proctor regarding her visit to Blickling Hall in Norfolk in 1772, it appeared as if some house owners in England at least felt it almost an obligation to have perfect strangers, albeit well-presented, tramping around their houses. Having been shown around by a 'a very dirty housemaid with a duster in her hand' she found that the owners

> had breakfasted, and My Lord's horses stood at the door, though the servant told us he was gone out. We saw no other traces of her Ladyship than two or three workbags and a tambour; I believe we drove her from room to room, but that we could not help.[157]

At Stratfield Saye, the home of the duke of Wellington, a notice was posted on the front door in the early nineteenth century that read 'Those desirous of Seeing the Interior of the House are requested to ring at the Door of entrance and to express their desire. It is wished that the practice of stopping in the paved walk to look in at the windows should be discontinued'.[158] The countess of Kildare, in July 1757, encouraged her husband to take a look at houses in Yorkshire while he was there: 'You will get so much pleasure in seeing all those fine seats; at least if I judge of you by myself for to my taste there is no entertainment equal to it, particularly at this fine time of the year'.[159] One person who was very dissatisfied and disappointed in his effort to see Lord Guildford's seat at Wroxton in England, was John Byng (later Viscount Torrington): 'unluckily for us Lord Guildford was just arrived from London and denied us admittance. Very rude this…let him either forbid his place entirely; open it allways; or else fix a day of admission but…don't refuse travellers, who may have come 20 miles out of their way for a sight of the

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[153] Jackson-Stops, ' Temples of the arts', pp 14-21.
[154] D M Beaumont, 'An Irish gentleman in England – the travels of Pole Cosby c. 1730-35' in *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, vol. cxlix (1996), pp 37-54. How detailed this guide was is not known, but it is not mentioned among the early guides listed by Harris in his article 'English country house guides, 1740-1840'.
[155] Victoria Percy and Gervase Jackson-Stops, 'From parterres to precipices: the travel journals of the 1st duchess of Northumberland-III' in *Country Life*, 14 February 1974, pp 308-10.
[156] Jackson-Stops, ' Temples of the arts', pp 14-21.
[157] Jackson-Stops, ' Temples of the arts', pp 14-21.
[158] Jackson-Stops, ' Temples of the arts', pp 14-21.
[159] FitzGerald (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily*, i, p 59.

place'.[160] Visiting houses in England was one way in which architectural and landscaping ideas were disseminated in Ireland: like many others, Pole Cosby was influenced by what he saw and put many of these ideas into practice at Stradbally. A note of caution for potential house tourists in Ireland was sounded in *The Dublin Journal* of 1725 when it reported that 'On Sunday last Mr Butler, a gentleman belonging to his Excellency the Lord Cartert, fell for a Scaffold and dashed his Brains out, as he was viewing the fine house at Castletown, now building by the Rt Hon William Connolly, Esq.' [sic].[161]

It was not until the middle of the eighteenth century that house tourism became popular in Ireland, but never to the extent that it did in England. It should also be borne in mind that for those living at a distance from Dublin, for example in places like counties Galway, Clare and Sligo, the occasional visit from any respectable-looking traveller was a godsend, and they were more than happy to offer hospitality, and to conduct tours of their property personally. It was also a way of letting others know of the architectural and landscape improvements that were being made by a great number of owners. In Ireland too, travel was easier – roads had improved and maps were available, carriages were more comfortable and post-chaises and horses could be hired – and by the end of the century mail or stage coaches connected many towns. Swift's declaration that the English knew little more of Ireland than they did of Mexico might not have been true by the end of the eighteenth century.[162] Travellers like John Loveday and Richard Pococke made tours in 1732 and 1752 respectively; Lord Chief Baron Edward Willes wrote his account of Ireland in a series of letters between 1757 and 1762, and the account of Richard Twiss's Irish tour was published in 1776.[163] Most of these earlier tourists concentrated on the antiquities and geology of Ireland, and made general comments on the state of the country, both politically and geographically. Arthur Young was particularly interested in the agricultural improvements (or otherwise) being made by landlords throughout the country in his account published in 1780,[164] and he was warmly welcomed and given tours of their estates by those who were making efforts to improve their land. But not many writers gave details of the houses they visited, apart from comments on their location and

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[160] C Bruyn Andrews (ed.), *The Torrington Diaries,* 4 vols, (London 1934), I, p 231.
[161] *The Dublin Journal,* 17 August 1725. Transcription of items from the *Journal* in TRIARC – Trinity Irish Art Research Centre, TRIARC/1/21.
[162] Constantia Maxwell, *The stranger in Ireland from the reign of Elizabeth to the Great Famine*, (Dublin 1979 edn), p 133.
[163] John Loveday, *Diary of a tour in 1732* (Edinburgh 1890); George T Stokes (ed.), *Pococke's tour in Ireland in 1752,* (Dublin 1891); James Kelly, (ed.), *The letters of Lord Chief Baron Edward Willes, 1757-62* (Aberystwyth 1990); Richard Twiss, *A tour in Ireland in 1775*, (London 1776).
[164] Arthur Young, *A tour in Ireland* (Dublin 1780).

aspect within the demesne and in the context of the surrounding countryside, noting the plantations and other physical features, and the type of stone used in the building. However, there are some travellers' accounts that yield much interesting information on the country house and its use.

It was not difficult to gain entry to houses and gardens so long as one was well-dressed and well-mounted, unlike the 'unpretending appearance' of the German Prince Pückler-Muskau and his friend who were 'most discourteously denied admittance' to Kilruddery, county Meath in 1829.[165] Robert Graham had no such problem there six years later, noting in his travel journal how impressed he was with the housekeeper, 'a very sensible woman…almost the only housekeeper I have met with who would not take money for a great deal of trouble in showing her charge'.[166] It was usually sufficient to tip the housekeeper or gardener, or both, to gain entrance, but sometimes there were systems in place to control the numbers. At Rathfarnham Castle, Dublin, a silver ticket in the shape of a coin, dating to 1780-90, was inscribed 'This ticket admits four persons to see Rathfarnham on Tuesdays only' on one side and, below Lord Ely's coronet on the reverse, 'This ticket to be left at the porters lodge'.[167] The English habit seems to have been that a book was kept in the porter's lodge into which the names of those in the party and the date of their visit were entered,[168] and it is possible that this system was used in Ireland too. Castletown was open to the public on Sundays from 11am to 3pm and at Bellevue, the La Touche seat in county Wicklow, visitors were admitted to view the grounds on Mondays.[169] By the 1850s Sir Charles Domville of Santry House, Dublin had special cards printed admitting parties of four or less to view his house on Tuesdays and Fridays between 2pm and 5pm.[170] Robert Graham provides more information on how the system worked when he visited Luggala, the La Touche hunting box at Roundwood, county Wicklow where he encountered

> a party of ladies and gentlemen who had arrived in a coach-and-four, but not being armed with the right of entry, could not venture farther. Mr Latouche is ready to give access, and even the liberty of fishing, to any gentle party who asks for it [presumably in advance], but he is most exclusive to other intruders and interdicts his servants from any power of admission. The Powerscourt family, in the same way, require special applications and printed notices are

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165 Quoted in Crookshank and Glin, *Ireland's Painters,* p 52.
166 Heaney (ed.), *A Scottish Whig,* pp 37-38.
167 Crookshank and Glin, *Ireland's Painters,* p 51.
168 John Harris, 'English country house guides', pp 58-74.
169 Rolf Loeber and Magda Stouthamer-Loeber, 'Dublin and its vicinity in 1797' in *Irish Geography* 35, (2002), pp 133-55; Judith Flannery, *Christ Church Delgany 1789-1990: between the mountains and the sea: a parish history* (Delgany, 1990), p 62.
170 NLI, Domville Papers, MS 9391.

> put up, stating that the servants are debarred from taking money under the penalty of dismissal.[171]

Whether it was due to the numbers arriving at Carton or because produce was being stolen or trampled upon, the duke of Leinster in 1767 was forced to erect a notice at Carton with instructions that none were to be admitted into the kitchen garden.[172]

The novelist Anthony Trollope, in *The Kellys and the O'Kellys* (1848), wondered why Lord Cashel would advertise the fact that his house was open to the public on two days a week between eleven and four o'clock, given the nature of the attractions there, which in his opinion were negligible. Furthermore, he explained, those who hand over half-a-crown to the housekeeper 'for the privilege of being dragged through every room in the mansion', were sure to be disappointed and frustrated by the fact that one room, that of Lady Selina, daughter of Lord Cashel, was kept locked: 'many a petitionary whisper is addressed to the housekeeper on the subject, but in vain; and, consequently, the public too often leave Grey Abbey dissatisfied'.[173]

Whether the family was in residence or not while these tours were going on did not seem to matter greatly at most houses in Ireland. When Beaufort and his party arrived at Muckross, county Kerry in 1788, the family had just departed for England, and as one of the party expressed a wish to see Mr Herbert's collection of drawings, permission was granted by a neighbour who accompanied them back to Muckross, where they spent two hours 'enjoying the works of Sandby, Rowlandson, Calendar, Tomkins and Dominic Serres'. He added with surprise 'The Housekeeper would take nothing!'.[174] Robert Graham walked through Lord Kingsborough's house in his absence, 'with the exception of his book rooms, which, his attendants say, no one must enter'.[175] At Carton, on the other hand, he and his party were rushed through the principal rooms 'for by this time it was near the dinner hour and two gentlemen were already in the library where they meet before dinner. There was a very small dinner table so we concluded that the duke only was at home…'.[176] Lady Clanrickarde was also at home at Portumna Castle when the Beauforts visited it in 1808: back in the hall after the housekeeper had

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[171] Heaney (ed.), *A Scottish Whig*, p 51.
[172] Alnwick Archives, 'Rules for the government…', f 83.
[173] Anthony Trollope, *The Kellys and the O'Kellys*, (Oxford University Press 1978 edn), p 133.
[174] TCD MS 4030, D A Beaufort, Journal of a Tour in Ireland 3 July-17 September 1788, ff 13v, 14.
[175] Heaney (ed.), *A Scottish Whig*, p 107.
[176] Heaney (ed.), *A Scottish Whig*, p 46.

shown them around, she wordlessly 'crossed the hall graciously bowing as she passed'.[177]

Any discomfort that the owners might experience with these visitors would have been increased had they been aware of the business-like approach adopted by the duchess of Northumberland who, in 1760, began one of her travel journals with a sizeable questionnaire to help in her observations of the houses she visited. As Jackson-Stops explains, her queries began with 'what is the situation of the House good or bad sheltered or exposed', continues to 'Is the Furniture rich plain neat mean Elegant Expensive' and, 150 queries later 'How much meat wine malt liquor coals charcoal corn butter do they usually consume'.[178] While most visitors to houses in both countries might not have taken such a clinical approach, nor had so many questions to be answered, these were, and indeed still are, the details that are savoured by not only tourists, but visitors to the house. The duke of Roxburghe commented rather cynically in 1745 after a gathering in his house, 'I hope the curiosity of my friends was fully satisfied in seeing Floors House, and that it would serve them at least for one days Table talk to find fault with every thing they saw, as is usuall in those cases'.[179]

Perhaps the inquisitive tourist would have had second thoughts about producing a list of questions when their tour guide was the owner. Many landlords took pleasure in personally showing off their houses and grounds to visitors. In Waterford in 1752, Lord Grandison took Richard Pococke in his carriage to show him the town he had created near Dromana, Villierstown. At Hazelwood in Sligo, in the absence of his father, the eldest son showed him over the house 'and pressed me to stay dinner, & invited me to stay two or three days'.[180] Charles Topham Bowden remarked of Lord Milltown at Russborough that 'he takes a pleasure in shewing his house and paintings himself to all who have curiosity to see them.[181] At Dunsandle, county Galway in 1787 the owner Denis Daly, showed Beaufort and his party over his house and demesne, and insisted they stay to dine,[182] and the following year at Castle Bernard, county Cork 'upon alighting at the stables, a tall well dressed young man in his slippers' who turned out to be Mr

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[177] TCD MS 4035, Mary Beaufort, 'A journal of our tour to the westward to inspect the Charter Schools, 1808', f 118.
[178] Quoted in Jackson-Stops, 'Temples of the arts', pp 14-21.
[179] Quoted in James Macauley, *The classical country house in Scotland 1660-1800* (London 1987), p 116.
[180] John McVeagh (ed.), *Richard Pococke's Irish Tours* (Dublin 1995), p 73.
[181] Charles Topham Bowden, *A tour through Ireland,* (Dublin 1791), p 70.
[182] TCD MS 4026, D A Beaufort, Journal of a Tour through part of Ireland begun August 26, 1787, f 26.

Bernard, came out to ask what they would like to see, and he conducted them through the house himself.[183] In 1807 Mr Stewart, owner of the newly-built Killymoon Castle, county Tyrone, did the same and invited them to stay the night.[184]

Passionately interested in architecture and probably largely responsible for its design, the spendthrift 2nd earl of Aldborough and his heiress wife spent most of the spring and summer of 1798 showing off their almost-completed Dublin house to visitors. Aldborough House was the last of the grand free-standing Dublin mansions to be built, begun in 1793 and completed in 1799 at a cost of more than £40,000.[185] Obviously none the worse for having served only six weeks of a twelve-month sentence in Newgate prison for libel against the lord chancellor, Lord Clare, Aldborough was released at the end of March 1798, spent 27 April 'showing [the house] all day to Company' and the following day 'showing it to the the Elys, Baldwins, Loftuses, Grahams & Tottenhams'. On 5 August he had a party to 'view the docks, and fortifications' in Dublin bay, presumably from the leads on the roof (and despite the remark in the *Dublin Evening Post* of 3 June 1794 that 'the situation [of the house] is rather low for prospect'[186]), and the following day he relates in his diary that he 'Showed it to a tenth batch this summer; today the number 50'.[187]

Undoubtedly many of his visitors were not what might strictly be called 'house tourists', but rather family, friends and acquaintances of the earl's, but all would have been curious to see the house, its decorative interiors, and the theatre and chapel that made up the Palladian-style pavilions. For all visitors to houses, that first impression - the approach to the house either in the city or in the country, its aspect and its appearance - is important enough to be recorded in letters, diaries, journals and books.

Conclusion

Increasingly, as the eighteenth century progressed, house owners became more conscious of the appearance to visitors not only of their houses, but of their gardens and demesnes. 'Natural' landscapes were tailored to the requirements of the cult of the picturesque from the mid-century, when follies and rustic cottages

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183 TCD MS 4030, D A Beaufort, Journal of a Tour in Ireland (1788), f 56.
184 TCD MS 4033, D A Beaufort, Tour of north of Ireland 9 October-18 November 1807, f 11.
185 Casey, *Dublin,* pp 170-171; O'Boyle, 'Aldborough House', pp 102-41.
186 Quoted in O'Boyle, 'Aldborough House', pp 102-41.
187 Ethel M Richardson, *Long Forgotten Days (leading to Waterloo)* (London 1928), pp 321, 324.

were built to create interest. The strategic placement of these in laying out walks and the creation of new routes for the entrance avenue all contributed to what was virtually a theatrical experience and a manipulation of viewpoints for visitor and occupier alike. There was little to be done to the approach to the Dublin house though Thomas Malton's rather skewed depiction of Powerscourt House shows that it could be improved, albeit in an image. It has been seen that in Dublin, Kildare House and the Provost's House indicated their importance and desire for privacy by enclosing their forecourts with walls and monumental gateways. The appearance of Moira House was different; while it too had its wall and gateways, its forecourt, and its entrance from the wing lacked generosity and a sense of grandeur. Like other Dublin mansions, a railing would have been sufficient. But it was grand enough to have a porter's lodge, like Kildare House, and like country houses.

In the country a variety of gate lodge types have been looked at that demonstrate that owners did not feel it necessary to mimic the architectural style of the house that they guarded. As in England, a great diversity is to be seen in their designs, but locating a lodge across the public road from the entrance to the house appears to have been peculiar to the Irish, and was not at all uncommon. Neither was the idea of twin lodges, as has been seen.

Robert Molesworth copied the idea of a lodge at one of the entrances to Breckdenston from some he had seen in the environs of London in the second decade of the eighteenth century and, at about the same time, he created a curved avenue of entrance from the road replacing the axial one to his house. Serpentine avenues became fashionable throughout the century and we have seen that the earl of Kildare swept away the axial route to Carton, created a lawn in its place, and a meandering entrance route to show off his improvements.

Moving on to the house itself, entrances were examined, and there is not much evidence to show that the main one into a house was exclusively for formal use. That may, however, have been taken for granted particularly as extensive use must have been made of subsidiary and more convenient entrances. Of note in this context is Castle Coole which has a doorway from the colonnade into the family quarters, an English practice. There are other differences that can be discerned between Irish and English houses of the period. Porticoes and porte-cochères were discussed and it has been seen that while the former were not at all common in the eighteenth century, they became a little more so in the following one, and they had

their use in an Irish climate. The porte-cochère remained sufficiently rare for its appearance to be commented upon by travellers. While there are examples of rusticated ground floors in Ireland, the 'rustic' or ground-level basement in Britain, with its mix of family quarters and domestic offices at that level, was not at all common in Ireland. It was from the sunken basement that servants in Ireland would gain access to underground tunnels that, while not unknown in Britain, as has been seen, were fairly common in Ireland from the early eighteenth century.

Regarding entrances to the house, while it can be taken for granted that the main and the garden entrances were for the use of the family, and that there was a back or a side entrance (or entrances) for servants, there was frequently a less formal entrance to the main body of the house for the use of family and friends. It is difficult to ascertain whether servants might also have used this, but it is likely in many cases.

The domestic arrangements put in place to prepare for expected arrivals, whether it is the family, a bride or a viceroy, were fairly standard. Correspondence between owner and steward (or housekeeper) gives a good idea of the minute detail of the instructions given: it seems in many cases that nothing was left to chance nor even to common sense. For the bishop of Elphin, booking the corncutter was just another important item. The viceroys' visits were always taken seriously whether it was an 'official' visit as at Mount Shannon and Charleville Forest, or an informal one, as to Dean and Mrs Delany's house.

The expectation by servants of vails from guests on their departure has been discussed: one of its numerous effects was that friends who were short of cash were prevented from accepting invitations to dine. Other perquisites for servants, and their relationship with their employers, will be examined in Chapter 5. It should be noted, however, that the issue of vails played a major role in changing that relationship between master and servant in the second half of the eighteenth century.

The history of the house tourist is a long one stretching from the present day to the early eighteenth century, and earlier in England. In the period under discussion, he or she came from every class, except the lowest who would not be admitted. It was a pastime (as it is today), a way of gathering material for publication, or the fashionable eighteenth- and nineteenth-century pursuit of filling one's journal. While staying in a house in the north of Ireland, one writer tells us that she visited

three seats in one morning.[188] Remarks from travellers and tourists can be remarkably frank, and on the whole, they do not differ greatly from each other in their descriptions of houses and demesnes. They were viewed in different ways by the owners of houses – some did not admit strangers; others found them a necessary evil whose visits had to be endured (after all it is flattering if someone is curious or interested enough to desire admittance to see the interior) but who brought with them the possibility of relaying news of new building or improvements made to others; or they were delighted to have the company.

Visiting houses and taking note of the architecture, furniture, furnishings, pictures, sculptures, garden layouts etc. was the way information was disseminated, and gave ideas to others. There was an amount of rivalry involved, friendly or otherwise, and with the prevalence of grand tours and the rise of connoisseurship, there was a great deal of interest not only in architectural pursuits, but in collections. But there were always the curious and acquisitive like the formidable Lady Beauchamp Proctor who, having been handed a 'rusk' from 'a most elegant little Birmingham vehicle' that was produced with a cup of chocolate at Holkham in England, declared 'I made Mr. Fetch-and-carry [the footman] tell me where it was bought, and am determined to have one'.[189]

[188] A lady, *The Irish Guardian: a pathetic story in two volumes* (Dublin 1776), i, p 253.
[189] Quoted in Jackson-Stops, 'Temples of the Arts', pp 14-21.

CHAPTER 2:

CIRCULATION SPACES

Originally the hall was a room of entertainment where the family, guests and servants gathered together to eat and to enjoy music and dancing. But by about 1670 servants had been moved to the basement, and the hall had become a room of entry, and a means of gaining access to other parts of the house.[1] As such, it became an important introduction to the house, particularly to its public rooms. This new arrangement, which incorporated passages or corridors in the plan, created some flexibility with regard to the location of the staircase: it further allowed for new types of furniture to be created specifically for these spaces. This chapter will be in two parts: firstly, the hall and staircase as architectural shells, and secondly, as space that was lived in.

The first section will look at the hall as the main point of access to the house and how visitors viewed it. These comments are important as first impressions are often revealing. The shapes of the hall, including those of double-height, its lighting and its location on the plan will be analysed, together with its relation to the main staircase and a brief look at what rooms are located next to the hall.[2] It is anticipated that in the course of the thesis, this latter aspect will be fleshed out as more rooms and their uses are analysed. The staircase too and the types of staircases, and the material used, will be examined. So too will spaces that connect with halls and staircases, such as corridors, vestibules and lobbies, including the 'Irish lobby', a phenomenon that apparently does not appear in English houses.

In the second part of this chapter inventories will be used to trace developments in furniture and furnishings that in turn will supply clues as to how the families who lived in these houses used the spaces. Was the hall merely a means of entry to the rest of the house, or did people eat and entertain in it, as Mrs Delany has related, and as would seem evident from the furniture listed in the inventories? Was it a storage area used to supply items like card tables to other rooms or were cards actually played in the hall? These are some of the questions to be examined. In the

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[1] The design of Coleshill, Oxfordshire by Roger Pratt (begun *c.* 1650) was considered ground-breaking for its flexible and balanced plan and its ordering of rooms. See Mark Girouard, *Life in the English country house* (Middlesex 1978 edn) pp 123-25; John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530-1830* (New Haven and London 1993 edn) pp 137-39.

[2] Service staircases will be looked at in this chapter only in relation to an unusual configuration that affects the main stairs and/or hall

course of this quest, there will be discussions on different types of seat furniture, the value attached to 'brass locks' and other types of security, arms and sports equipment, as well as lighting, curtains, colours, types of floors used, and floor coverings. The question of pictures, or their absence in halls, and *objets d'art* found there, will be enhanced by the unique run of inventories, from 1807 through to 1855 for the Clements' house at Killadoon, county Kildare, which is of immense value as the collection can be seen to form over these years.[3]

Not every item appearing in the inventories will be aired, many will be dealt with further in the context of other rooms, and a number of the subjects that are mentioned will be expanded upon elsewhere in this study.

Part I

Halls and staircases

For the visitor arriving at a country house and, having negotiated the gateway, the lodge with possibly a porter, and the avenue (that meandered from the mid-eighteenth-century), expectations of a climax in the form of the house, must have been high. As the room of entry, it was important that the impact on the visitor made by the hall would be positive and impressive. Francis Goodwin, however, who designed Lissadell, county Sligo (1833) urged caution:

> The entrance hall offers a richer architectural *coup d'oeil* than it is always advisable to make at first; because whatever may be urged in favour of first impressions in architecture, they may be rendered too forcible and too favourable, and so occasion comparative disappointment in what follows.[4]

As a rule, that impact was made more by the architecture of the space than the contents. While William Flower at Durrow (1716-18) announced the importance of his hall by the use of oak panelling, using deal in the rest of the house,[5] knowledge of the classical orders and their use, frequently in the hall, increased as the eighteenth century progressed, with the availability of treatises, books on architecture and foreign travel.[6] From the 1730s the great reformer, Samuel Madden, promoted the use of stucco decoration for walls and cornices in place of timber wainscoting as it reduced the risk of fire, praising the owner of Ballyhaise,

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[3] Clements Papers, Killadoon.

[4] Quoted in McParland, 'Lissadell, co. Sligo' in *Country Life*, 6 October, 1977, pp 914-917. A Scottish visitor to Lissadell in 1836 was critical of Goodwin's plan: after the grandeur of the 'splendid music gallery…the effect here is to kill the series of living rooms to which leads, an ante-room, the drawing room, a middle room, and a dining room, which are all nothing more than good, lodgeable and moderately sized apartments'. Heaney (ed.), *A Scottish Whig*, p 281.

[5] IAA, Knight of Glin, unpublished thesis 'The Irish Palladians'.

[6] Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p 22.

county Cavan for doing this.[7] The size of the hall and often how well it was lit provided the overall impression for the newly-arrived, followed by its architectural decoration which might include the use of orders, niches, galleries and chimneypieces. Visitors like the Rev William Henry and the Beaufort family were quite knowledgeable on matters architectural, and were not slow to give their opinions. Henry described the hall at Hazelwood, county Sligo in the 1730s shortly after it was built: 'The Hall is about 20ft square lighted by a large Venetian Window, whereof the Hall Door is the middle part. The Floor Chequered with Marble. The sides and Ceiling of this, as of all the rooms, Stucco Work with Cornishes of different orders, all exceedingly well executed'.[8] Mary Beaufort was struck by just two things in the hall at old Muckross House in 1810, describing it as 'small and floor'd with brick'.[9] The hall at Portumna in 1808 was 'capacious' and she describes how 'an ornamental skreen had been begun of carved wood to separate the doorway and keep off any wind from the fireplace' - a practical comment.[10]

Rather than the combined layout of hall and stairs within the one space, most of the plans show, for the hall, a preference for a self-contained square or rectangular space, located to the centre of the front of the house, flanked by windows. Isaac Ware, quoting Palladio in 1756 says regarding the shape of halls 'the nearer they approach to square the better'.[11] Some houses had asymmetrical entrances into halls at, for example, in Dublin 85 St Stephen's Green (from 1738), the Provost's House at Trinity College (from 1759), Charlemont House (from 1763), Marlay, county Dublin and Coolattin, county Wicklow. Other entrances were on the short side of the house, as at Rockingham, county Roscommon (1809), Roxborough Castle, county Tyrone (1841), and Cangort Park, county Offaly (1807). Not many copied the shape of James Gandon's hall at Emo Court, county Laois (*c* 1790) which is rectangular with curved ends, nor the circular domed hall proposed by James Lewis for Coole House in the 1780s.[12] The oval halls (on the long axis)

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[7] Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p 23.

[8] National Archives, M.2533. W. Henry, 'Hints towards a national, typographical [sic] history of counties Sligo, Donegal, Fermanagh and Lough Erne'.

[9] TCD MS 4036, Mary Beaufort 'Tour from Upton to Killarney and Limerick, on to Dublin, 1810', f 17.

[10] TCD MS 4035, Mary Beaufort, 'A Journal of our Tour to the Westward to inspect the Charter Schools, 1808', f 113.

[11] Ware, p 336.

[12] James Lewis, *Original designs in architecture consisting of plans, elevations and sections for villas, mansions, town-houses etc. and a new design for a theatre* (London 1797), Book II, Plates xxix and xxx, 'Plans for Coole House in the county of Galway, seat of Robt. Gregory esq.'. This is annotated 'This house to be erected within four miles of Gort (town)', and that the hall is one and a half storeys high with half columns and four niches.

created by Richard Morrison at Castlegar, county Galway (1801) and by James Byres at Charleville Forest, county Offaly (1789) did not blaze a trail either.[13]

Mary Beaufort's daughter Louisa, in 1807, gave her first impression of Killymoon, county Tyrone, where

> The Hall into which you first enter is small square and somewhat dark – opposite the great door you go to the staircase, it is of Portland stone, very handsome, and lighted from the top by four gothick windows which form a Lanthorn with painted narrow border of violet and yellow round each window.[14]

Her comment about the hall is interesting anticipating Goodwin's comments (above) made years later. She regards it as rather dull compared with the brightness and quality of the staircase and stair hall that revealed itself to her as she progressed into the house. This type of 'prelude' to the main event was achieved at Ballyfin, county Laois. There, Richard and William Vitruvius Morrison's aim of delaying spatial excitement until the entrance hall had been passed through was annotated on one of the plans: 'The saloon, vestibule and Grand Staircase united, make a Room 80 feet in length, lighted from above – the effect of which will be very striking'. In the large number of drawings for Ballyfin, dating to *c.* 1822 (the chronology of which is sometimes unclear), the hall is consistently rectangular and centrally placed: as built, it is not at all dark, but it does not prepare the visitor for the treat to come. It is worth looking at a few of the plans to see how that goal was achieved. The owners, Sir Charles and Lady Coote, worked with the architects adjusting and fine-tuning the design to get what they wanted.

The hall at Ballyfin remains behind the portico in all of the drawings, and varies only slightly in size. The earliest shows the centre of the house taken up by the hall (with a door to each side giving access to reception rooms), a 'Vestibule' behind a screen, with an imperial staircase in a deep projection to the rear (**Fig. 2.1**). A later drawing shows the staircase pulled into the main block, a spacious 'Gallery or Inner Hall' with columnar screens on all four sides, and no vestibule (**Fig. 2.2**). As built, the hall has symmetrically-placed niches, no fireplace, and no access to the adjoining rooms (dining room and 'Music Room or Anti-Room'[15]) (**Fig. 2.3**). The door on axis to the entrance leads into the large 'Inner Hall or Saloon' from which a screen of columns to the right leads to the staircase and left to a circular

[13] Other oval halls are at Bear Forest, county Cork, and Kilpeacon, county Limerick.
[14] TCD MS 4034, Louisa Beaufort, 'Journal of a Tour to the North…1807', f 10.
[15] According to the plan, there is no visible means of access to the latter room.

Vestibule,[16] continuing into the bow-sided 'Library and Living Room'.[17] In all of their proposals for the house, the Morrisons used either top-lighting for the Grand Staircase or it was lit by a Wyatt window. This conformed with their preference for the drama of a staged process through a building, reinforced by the small single-storey unpretentious hall in which a single door leads to the sumptuous double-height top-lit saloon and enfilade that he had admired so much.

Before looking at two-storey halls, the low ceiling of the hall at Powerscourt, county Wicklow is of interest. Mention was made in Chapter 1 of the main entrance into the 'rustics'. This led into a long, low, arcaded hall with a coffered ceiling. Lord Powerscourt's study was on axis with the entrance rather than the saloon.[18] To the right on entering was a waiting room, beyond this an opening to the great staircase. Daniel Robertson's plan (1843) shows this ground-floor level as the private part of the house, and where business was conducted. Privacy and business will be looked at in later chapters.

Double-height halls

The two-storey saloon and hall had been advocated by William Chambers in his *Treatise* published in 1759: 'The usual method, in buildings where beauty and magnificence are preferred to oeconomy, is to raise the Hall and Salon higher than the other rooms, and make them occupy two Stories'.[19] Ware agrees with Chambers that height is important, particularly 'in the country, where there are other ways into the house, the hall may be an elegant room, and it is there we propose its being made large and noble'.[20] The two-storey hall manifested itself in the last quarter of the seventeenth century and into the following one in a number of the great houses of England such as Chatsworth, Castle Howard and Blenheim. It was a feature of baroque architecture that went out of fashion in England in the 1740s. According to Christopher Hussey, in a house 'of any pretension' (in the early Georgian period), the entrance 'was directly into a great hall of two-storey height, and richly decorated'.[21]

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[16] Mulligan makes the point that this circular space did not move from its location in all the plans. Kevin V Mulligan, 'Ballyfin, county Laois: architectural history, First report, February 2002', p 35, footnote 159. My thanks to him for loaning me a copy of the report.

[17] 'Living room' is an unusual room name at this date (1822) and does not appear on any other of the plans under discussion. It is interesting to note here also the variety and the ambiguity in room names.

[18] The saloon was on the first floor, above the hall together with the main reception rooms.

[19] William Chambers, *A treatise on civil architecture* (London 1759), p 82.

[20] Ware, p 335-36.

[21] Christopher Hussey, *Early Georgian 1715-1760* (London 1965 edn), p 17.

There are no houses in Ireland to match the scale of those mentioned above, but it is no surprise to see double height halls in big houses such as Castletown and Leinster House. What is interesting is the number of two-storey halls in houses that would seem unlikely to contain them because of their small size. Much space was required, the decoration was expensive, and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to heat. However, it is worth looking at some of them, many of which are remarkable for the variety of their architectural handling including their galleries.

Among these the earliest is at Beaulieu, county Louth built in the 1660s, but largely rebuilt between 1710 and 1720 to designs by John Curle.[22] Old-fashioned for its date, the decoration at Beaulieu has a baroque, even Scottish, feel to it with carved wood military trophies in the spandrels over two of the doors in the hall[23] and an amount of heraldry, not only on the walls but also in the tapestried chairbacks. Two other overdoors contain trophies of musical instruments, all reminiscent of those probably carved by James Tabary at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham 1680-84.[24] An impressive central doorway leads to the saloon at the rear.[25] The staircases adjoin each side of the saloon, the principal one leading to the first floor only.[26] As the hall is self-contained, and has a massive chimneypiece (in which is set a reputedly Van der Hagen view of Drogheda), might it have been used by its owners as a music room, and/or a sitting room? As the first-floor gallery is closed, having sash windows that overlook the hall, it would be a fairly comfortable room.

The two-storey hall at Castletown was certainly the most elegant, designed by Edward Lovett Pearce in the mid-1720s. Aptly described by Cornforth as 'both monumental and festive',[27] the three-bay hall has a gallery carried on a screen of Ionic columns and a complete entablature is supported by this and by half-columns. The upper storey is unexpectedly different: the tapering square columns with baskets of flowers in place of capitals that support a carved frieze and cornice suggest a certain playfulness in juxtaposing two different moods. A doorway on axis

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[22] See discussion on dating for Beaulieu in Christine Casey and Alistair Rowan, *North Leinster,* (Middlesex 1993), pp 154-56.

[23] In a letter to the English poet William Shenstone in 1748, Lady Luxborough tells him that when her brother decorated his villa near Uxbridge 'which he chose to call a Farm' he had 'all the implements of husbandry placed in the manner one sees or might see arms and trophies in some General's hall; and it had an effect that pleased every body', Henrietta Knight, Baroness Luxborough, *Letters written by the late Right Honourable Lady Luxborough to William Shenstone, Esq.* (Dublin 1776), Letter ix from Barrells, 28 April, 1748.

[24] Edward McParland, *Public architecture in Ireland 1680-1760* (New Haven and London 2001), pp 54-56.

[25] In the early twentieth century a billiard room was attached to the rear of the house, taking all natural light out of the saloon, reducing it in many ways to an ante-room to the other.

[26] The main staircase leading to the first floor only is common practice.

[27] Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors,* p 30.

with the entrance leads into what was probably the Great Parlour or Saloon.[28] The space extends seamlessly through an opening to the right of the entrance leading into the staircase hall creating a spectacular *coup d'oeil* for the visitor. The Palladian hall gives way to the Lafranchini rococo decoration of the stair hall, and the black and white stone floor flows into both spaces. Here the family portraits incorporated in the plasterwork look down on their visitors as they mount the elegant Portland stone cantilevered staircase with its simple brass banisters.[29]

Later than Castletown are Gloster, county Offaly (*c.* late 1720s) and Seafield, Donabate, county Dublin (probably late 1730s). At Gloster the hall is panelled with strongly-articulated plasterwork with niches for busts on the upper part. A three-bay arcaded gallery (at first floor level) opens, unusually, into an upper hall to the rear decorated in the same style, this time with a Doric entablature and a barrel-vaulted coffered ceiling.[30] The three-bay hall at Seafield spans the full depth of the house, lit by windows to the front and rear, and fluted Ionic and Corinthian pilasters separate a series of painted grisaille Classical figures on both storeys, probably added later in the eighteenth century.[31]

Behind the arcaded screen that separates the hall (a 32 feet cube) from the imperial staircase in John Aheron's plan for Dromoland House, county Clare (*c.* 1740s), are doorways into the formal rooms to the left and into the private wing to the right (**Fig. 2.4**). The screen supports a balustraded gallery and an arcade articulated with doubled Corinthian pilasters on plinths (**Fig. 2.5**).[32] The lower arcade is rusticated, an idea that might have come from Edward Lovett Pearce's Court of Requests at the Parliament House.[33] The hall at Dromoland, and that at Roundwood, county Laois (*c.* 1750) are the only two-storey halls under discussion that contain staircases, both of which are on the imperial plan.[34] At Roundwood (**Fig. 2.6**) the staircase is

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[28] John Cornforth's views on this will be explained in Chapter 3.

[29] The staircase at Castletown was admired by C R Cockerell (1788-1863) who cited 'the geometrical steps the boldest, lightest and best I believe to have seen. The brass balustrade completes the whole giving an effect of elegance quite new to me'. Brass banisters can be seen on the Townley Hall staircase by Johnston (from 1794). They became popular in Ireland in the early nineteenth century through Richard Morrison, and Cockerell used them in England and at Kinturk, Castlepollard, county Meath. John Harris, 'C R Cockerell's *Ichnographica Domestica*', in *Architectural History,* 14, (1971), 5-29.

[30] Craig, *Classic Irish houses…*, pp 72-73: Bence-Jones, *A guide to Irish country houses*, p 141.

[31] Bence-Jones, *A guide to Irish country houses*, p 255.

[32] It is difficult to know from the drawing whether, like Beaulieu, the upper level has windows within the arches, or if these were the windows behind the staircase itself.

[33] The staircase hall in the Old Library at Trinity College is also rusticated. While built by Burgh, both it and the hall were finished by Richard Castle. Also at Trinity College, the hall, inner hall and staircase hall of the Provost's House (1759) are rusticated, as are the staircase halls of Lord Powerscourt's houses in Wicklow and Dublin.

[34] Another two-storey hall that contained a staircase was Platten Hall, county Meath (*c.* 1700, dem. *c.* 1950). Panelled throughout with fluted Corinthian columns along the gallery, which were superimposed on the fluted Ionic columns of the ground floor. Bence-Jones, p 232.

immediately visible being on axis with the entrance. Here the returns of the staircase are blocked by panelled doors, but it is the gallery and its fretwork rail that gives the space its charm. This floats over the lower flight of stairs, the sides project into the hall and curve into the side walls, allowing access to the first-floor front rooms. This type of bridge or 'flying' gallery occurs in at least three other houses: Ballinlough Castle, county Westmeath, Drewstown, county Meath and Raford, county Galway.[35]

Before examining staircases in a little more detail, a look at the spaces that adjoin the hall might put into context the route taken by visitors to the house. Many houses had a saloon adjoining the hall to the rear on the short axis, such as has been seen at Castletown and Beaulieu.[36] These are the earliest examples of this configuration, together with two plans dating to *c.* 1750 by Richard Castle (**Fig. 1.20**) and one by John Ensor (after 1751) for Headfort. An early drawing for Carton by Castle (*c.* 1739, **Fig. 1.16**) shows a variation of this treatment: the hall takes up a four-bay space to the right on entering: on axis with the entrance is a door through which the three-bay saloon is similarly to the right. Halls with screens had the desirable effect of the columns framing the centralised doorway into the saloon. This survey indicates that the configuration of the centrally-placed hall and saloon was most popular in houses designed from the second half of the eighteenth century.[37]

The information gleaned from annotations on the plans about the location of rooms to each side of the hall is inconclusive. No real trends appear over the 150-year period, apart from the prevalence of the 'parlour' (that can be on either side of the entrance) a space that seemed to metamorphose into a 'breakfast' or 'morning' room by the beginning of the nineteenth century when the 'parlour' all but disappears in country houses. There was an increase in rooms called, variously, 'study', 'own room' and 'office', also from 1750, all for the same purpose, added to which could be the 'book room' or 'library', spaces that the master of the house might use as a study. With a study to the front of the house it meant that any

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[35] Bence-Jones, *A guide to Irish country houses*, pp 18, 107, McParland 'Notebooks', 1.52.

[36] Others were Carton (1762), Headfort (1765), Lucan , Mount Kennedy, Castle Coole (1789 and 1790), Carriglas, Ballycurry and Castle Dillon. The word 'saloon' or 'sallon' or 'salon' were in use from about 1715, according to the *OED*. Castletown's plan is not annotated: no plan for Beaulieu has yet come to light.

[37] Other examples among the plans in this period were for Ardbraccan, where the 'vestibule' leads into the saloon, Richard Morrison's plan in his *Useful and Ornamental Designs in architecture* (Dublin 1793), plan 9 and 10. Added to the other nineteenth-century plans is the Morrison's plan for Ballyfin of 1822 (as executed).

visitors could wait in the hall, rather than having them wander through the house. This will be examined in more detail in Chapter 3.

While the hall was the first space encountered in the house, the staircase was also important and it too merited comment by the Beauforts, as has been seen. Louisa judged the staircase at Hazelwood to be 'large and handsome', while her father voiced his reservations at Castlegar, county Galway, 'The new house very pretty but unfinished, with much too fine a staircase – for its purpose'.[38] It is not clear what he meant by this comment: was a 'fine staircase' unnecessary because all the reception rooms were on the ground floor? Was it too grand for a house of its quite modest size, as has been suggested?[39] Or was there a perception that the Mahons were getting above their station?

The location of the main staircase varied slightly during each fifty-year period from 1700 to 1850 according to the 109 ground-floor plans under discussion. [40] Between 1700 and 1750 a slight majority favoured either side of the hall to the front of the house, the left side preferred, followed closely by a location directly behind the hall to the rear. During the following period, 1750 to 1800, a majority favoured the spinal corridor for the staircase, evenly divided between left and right, while the location directly behind the hall was the second favourite. But between 1800 and 1850 the great majority preferred it directly behind the hall.[41] Most staircases took the shape of the open well design, and Aheron's imperial design for Dromoland found only a few followers, probably because it took up an amount of space and was more expensive. The first known house in Ireland to have an imperial staircase was Eyrecourt Castle, county Galway, built in the 1670s, where the rather low hall and the staircase behind it took up the entire centre or one-third of the house. The grandeur of such a large space, and the exceptionally fine carved woodwork of the staircase with its broad steps and its gradual ascent must have impressed visitors as they made their way to the reception rooms which were on the first floor.[42]

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[38] TCD MS 4034, Louisa Beaufort, 'Journal of a Western Tour…1808', f 75; TCD MS 4033, D A Beaufort, 'Observations in the course of Visiting Charter Schools 1808', f 88.

[39] Auction catalogue for Castlegar House, Christie's 24-25 May 1988, introduction by The Knight of Glin.

[40] Ware recommended that the staircase 'should present itself immediately beyond the hall'. Ware, p 325.

[41] While, as Craig has pointed out, the position of the staircase in the block plan is variable, he notes that it is frequently immediately inside the front door, but more often to the rear which 'is increasingly common towards the end of the century'. Craig, *Classic Irish houses,* p 10.

[42] John O'Connell and Rolf Loeber, 'Eyrecourt Castle, co. Galway' in *Irish Arts Review* yearbook, 1988, pp 40-48. The staircase eventually found its way to the Detroit Institute of Art, where it now languishes.

John Ensor proposed an imperial staircase for Headfort, possibly in the 1750s; at Castle Coole both Richard Johnston and James Wyatt included them in 1789 and 1790 respectively, and it appears in two designs in Richard Morrison's book.[43] At Ballyfin one appeared in two early drawings by Morrison and, in 1833, Francis Goodwin designed one for Lissadell. A visitor to Lissadell shortly after it was built was critical of it:

> The great staircase is of black marble, supported upon high and solid pilasters below. The roof of the larger landing place, which you come to upon going up one centre flight, which becomes a double flight against the walls, is supported by very handsome pillars of the same material. The aim of this staircase gives you the idea of a house the size of Althorp at least and, in point of material, is only to be met with I suppose, in the foreign palaces. Though a very handsome thing in itself, is totally out of keeping with the series of very nice small comfortable bedrooms that it leads to.[44]

These were interesting observations in view of Goodwin's comments mentioned earlier. The hall at Lissadell is one of the few among the plans that has no light flowing directly into the space, due to the porte cochère. Natural light, however, comes from the roof over the staircase, to the left of the entrance. The same writer admired the progression of spaces on entering Rockingham, county Roscommon (**Fig. 2.7**), from a 'small hall of entrance' to a 'grand gallery [or 'gallery of communication' as John Nash annotates on his plan of 1809], lighted from above with stained glass' to the centre of which on the right was the 'handsome' imperial staircase.[45] Other such staircases are at Colebrooke, county Fermanagh, Dunkettle, county Cork, where it is framed by a wide elliptical arch in the hall, and Kilmore See House, county Cavan.[46] A reverse imperial staircase, on axis with the entrance hall, is found in the late eighteenth century at Glin Castle, county Limerick.

A handsome cantilevered service staircase built in 1759 is to be seen in the Provost's House. Interestingly, the main staircase that goes from ground floor to first floor only is of wood, while the back staircase that rises in four complete ovals from the basement to the attic, is of Portland stone. At the Provost's House an exciting route similar to that at Castletown progresses from the entrance through the hall, and through an inner vaulted hall, to the octagonal staircase hall that leads up to the superb saloon.[47] In this sequence the rococo plasterwork blends with the

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[43] Richard Morrison, *Useful and Ornamental Designs,* numbers 5 & 6, and 7 & 8.
[44] Heaney (ed.), *A Scottish Whig*, p 281.
[45] Heaney (ed.), *A Scottish Whig*, p 284. The progression of spaces at Rockingham is similar to that at Ballyfin, mentioned earlier.
[46] McParland, 'Notebooks' 1.4, 4.4, 3.5.
[47] Other houses with outer and inner halls are Garbally Court, county Galway, Ballyfin, county Laois, Kanturk Manor, and Turbotstown, both county Westmeath. McParland 'Notebooks', 1.55, 1.26, 3.74.

Corinthian order that continues from the first-floor lobby into the saloon. It should be noted that both Castletown and the Provost's House, like Eyrecourt Castle, had public rooms on the first floor.[48]

Arguably the most spectacular cantilevered main staircase is at Townley Hall, county Louth (1794) by Francis Johnston. The staircase is contained within a rotunda lit by a glazed dome, and an elegant restraint is maintained in the decoration where on the upper level it is largely architectural with apses, niches and arched recesses.[49] Others are at Kilshannig, (1765-6) and Vernon Mount (*c.* 1784), both in county Cork, Farnham, county Cavan, Pollacton, county Carlow (both *c* 1802), and Castle Howard (*c.* 1811), county Wicklow.[50] Equally spectacular is the free-standing flying staircase of wood with wrought-iron balustrades at Woodbrook, county Wexford (1827).[51]

Screens and corridors

The double height hall almost disappeared after the mid-eighteenth century,[52] but the columnar screen, seen first at Castletown, gained in popularity throughout the period under discussion. Plans show that during the second half of the century Lord Kildare proposed one for Carton in two drawings dating to 1762 (**Fig. 1.17**); Sir William Chambers' plan shows one for Headfort (1765, **Fig. 1.21**); Davis Ducart provided one at Castletown Cox, county Kilkenny (1760s) as did Agmondisham Vesey for his house at Lucan[53] (1770s). The screen at Glin Castle, county Limerick (1780s) is unusually, to the front of the hall, possibly to allow no obstruction to the view of the two flights of stairs that curve up to a landing where they transform to a single flight leading to the first floor. The screen also appears in James Wyatt's plan for Mount Kennedy (1781), in plans for Castle Coole by both Johnston and Wyatt (1789 and 1790 respectively, **Figs. 1.13, 1.14**), and in James Gandon's proposal for Carriglas, *c.* 1794-96. In the first half of the nineteenth century they appear at

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[48] Public rooms on the first floor applied largely to Dublin houses where the plasterwork on staircases was and is quite stunning, e.g. 20 Lower Dominick Street, 56 St Stephen's Green, 12 Merrion Square, and many others.

[49] Though Russborough had no public rooms on the first floor the staircase hall is enthusiastically covered with stucco decoration.

[50] Also at Laughton, and Cangort Park, both county Offaly, Mount Congreve, county Waterford, Ballynatray, county Cork, Baronscourt, county Tyrone and Vernon Mount, county Cork. McParland, 'Notebooks', 1.71, 1.72, 2.31, 2.73, 3.15, 4.9.

[51] Illustrated in Craig, *Classic Irish houses,* p 11. At Rosegarland, also in county Wexford, there is a curved and cantilevered wooden staircase dating to the late eighteenth century. J P Colclough 'The staircase in Irish Georgian architecture', unpublished study in IAA. Of note too is the staircase at Russborough, which Brian FitzGerald claims, in the first part of his article on that house in *Country Life* (23 January 1937), is the only one in Ireland made entirely of San Domingo mahogany.

[52] One was created by Samuel Hayes at his house, Avondale, county Wicklow in 1779, and much later by James Shiel at Pakenham Hall (Tullynally Castle) *c.* 1820.

[53] Having consulted architects Sir William Chambers, James Wyatt and Michael Stapleton.

Ballycurry, county Wicklow (1807 and 1808); Roxborough Castle (1841) and Castle Dillon, county Armagh (1842). Richard Morrison, at Mount Bellew (before 1820), and with his son William at Fota House, county Cork (*c.* 1825) opened the existing halls to the rooms on each side, creating lateral screens of columns in place of the walls.[54] At Carton in the early part of the nineteenth century, the house was turned back to front, creating a central entrance into a four-bay hall and billiard room through a screen of columns to the left, and the staircase through a doorway to the right.[55] The earliest plan by the Morrisons for Ballyfin shows a columnar screen, the area behind it called a 'vestibule', that continues to the east and west as a corridor (**Fig. 2.1**).

Other features that Castletown shares with Kildare House are the axial vaulted corridors[56] that appear on all floors, lit by windows at each end of the house, the mid section of which at ground level runs behind the screen, and both have their main staircases located in adjoining spaces, though hall and staircase are integrated in Castletown and not in Kildare House.[57] The earl's plans for Carton, those for Castle Coole and Chambers' plan for Headfort show a similar corridor in which the main and secondary staircases are located.[58] Castle Coole's takes up more space as the staircases are on the imperial plan. Castle Dillon's (1842, **Fig. 2.8**) main staircase is located to the right of the transverse corridor, but the service staircase is located behind a WC that occupies the west front bay of the house, adjoining the Morning Room. Having a service staircase or a WC take up the space behind a window to the front of the house may seem odd, but such a staircase appears at Ballycurry, county Wicklow in 1808, between the hall and the owner's 'Own Room' or study,[59] and at Mount Kennedy in 1781[60] (**Fig. 2.9**).

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[54] Ann Martha Rowan (ed.), *The architecture of Richard Morrison and William Vitruvius Morrison* (Irish Architectural Archive 1989), pp 93, 127.

[55] McParland believes this was undertaken by Francis Johnston (see Rowan (ed.) *The architecture of Richard and William Morrison*, p 50). It was a similar arrangement to that designed by Castle on the opposite side of the house, a four-bay hall and a two-bay staircase hall with their positions reversed. The two screens of columns were added.

[56] The word 'corridor' was sufficiently novel in 1716 for Vanbrugh to explain its meaning in a letter to the duchess of Marlborough: 'The word Corridore Madam is foreign, and signifys in plain English, no more than a Passage, it is now however generally us'd as an English word'. Charles Saumarez Smith, *The building of Castle Howard* (London 1997 edn), p 54.

[57] At Castletown the area containing the staircase lies to the right of the hall, while the opposite is the case at Leinster House.

[58] This refers back to Roger Pratt's double-pile Coleshill of the 1660s where the house is divided on its long axis by a spinal wall or corridor, and the central element of the plan, the hall and saloon, are next to each other on the short axis, flanked by the staircases. Hussey, *Early Georgian*, p 14.

[59] IAA, Murray Collection, Ballycurry, Ashford, county Wicklow, 'Plan of Principal Floor of Mr Tottenham's House, April 1st, 1808', and two other unexecuted plans in 1805 and 1807, by Francis Johnston.

[60] NLI, Mount Kennedy Drawings, AD 3568(42).

Two plans for older houses show transverse corridors running the full width of the house between two ranges of rooms: at Barbavilla, county Westmeath (*c.* 1730, **Fig. 2.10**) it is 2.5 meters wide;[61] it contains a staircase and would appear to terminate at each end with a door to the garden. At Portumna (dating to *c.* 1760)[62] is another ample corridor that contains staircases. Other plans have corridors or passages that did not run the full width of the house and, in some cases, could be referred to as vestibules or lobbies rather than as corridors, such as at Ballycurry. In Lucan House the main staircase is located behind the screen and through a doorway to the right, and at Carriglas, county Longford (**Fig. 2.11**) the main staircase (interestingly, there is no service stair on Gandon's plan) is similarly located but to the left. Wyatt allows access to the main staircase at Mount Kennedy to the left of the hall, just before the screen (**Fig. 2.9**). From the hall on the opposite side is a narrow corridor where there is a small spiral stair alongside a WC, presumably to service the bedroom suite to the east of the house. The Morrison plan for Carton (1815) combines a hall with, behind a screen of columns to one's left on entering, a billiard room, and the staircase is located to the right. Quite different from any of the above plans was that for Roxborough Castle, county Tyrone where the entrance (a rather gradual one) was under a portico at a low, basement level, and one progressed through a screen of columns, up a flight of steps, through a second screen of columns where the main staircase was located to the left, with a further screen leading to the rest of the house **(Fig. 2.12).**

Vestibules and lobbies[63]

References are made in many of the plans to vestibules and lobbies (in one case the hall is called a vestibule) that need to be addressed and if possible, clarified. Roger North, writing in the 1690s, described a 'moderate sized room which the French call a *vestibule*' where visitors may adjust their clothes before entering the hall.[64] It sounds like a reasonably good idea, particularly if guests or visitors have to make their way up a long flight of steps in pouring rain to get to the door. But in practice, certainly in Ireland, the few houses among the plans under discussion that

[61] Casey and Rowan, *North Leinster,* p 151.
[62] According to Fenlon, 'Portumna restored', pp 110-17.
[63] The earliest mention of a vestibule among the inventories in this survey is at Caledon in 'London 1st May 1783 Estimate of Furniture for my Caledon House', possibly from Mayhew & Ince, who subsequently invoiced James Alexander for furniture in 1785, PRONI, Caledon Papers, D/2433/A/2/4/1-19. The hall at Ardbraccan is annotated 'Vestibule' in a plan dating to *c.* 1776. The earliest lobbies are listed among the Ormonde inventories at Clonmel (1685), Dublin Castle (1678) and Kilkenny Castle (1684), in Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels*, pp 85, 102, 104; and, among the plans, on Richard Castle's for Carton, *c.* 1739.
[64] Colvin and Newman (eds), *Of building*, p 126.

had long flights of steps[65] did not possess such a facility, leaving visitors with no choice but to arrive in the hall possibly in some disarray from travel, and/or dripping rain onto the (hopefully) stone floor. However in plans for Ardbraccan, county Meath by both Thomas Cooley and by Daniel Augustus Beaufort, dated 1774 a narrow 'vestibule' leads on axis from the main entrance to a large rectangular hall, located to the rear of the house between the library and the breakfast room.[66] Beaufort's drawing (**Fig. 2.13**) shows a highly decorated vestibule with niches and engaged columns that would be in line with North's suggested decoration for this space, 'the ornaments most proper to it are niches, and statues'.[67] These two rooms together were probably seen as a waste of living space. The year before, in 1773, Cooley had produced a drawing showing a reversal of these spaces with a canted hall to the front, and a narrow vestibule to the rear of the house beyond a columnar screen, that allowed access to the three-bay dining and drawing rooms (**Fig. 2.14**). In a drawing of the plan as executed, no 'hall' appears, but the narrow 'vestibule' to the front of the house is retained (with no access to the adjoining rooms, as at Ballyfin), playing the part of a hall, that leads on axis into a saloon (**Fig. 1.22**).[68] The vestibule would not appear to be well lit, with a small rectangular window over the entrance door, and light transmitted from the rear window through the internal fanlight over the door to the saloon. These plans show a certain consistency: the four rooms required were a breakfast room and a study as well as the two reception rooms, the latter two being three bays wide: the problem was how to arrange them.

The words 'vestibule' and 'lobby' are used in other plans to indicate small spaces that communicate with rooms or apartments in the house (not dissimilar to the purpose of the hall). However it should be noted that the sizeable 'hall' at Killeen Castle is referred to as 'lobby' in Francis Johnston's plans of 1802/3, a name that must go back at least to 1735/6 when it is mentioned in the inventory of that

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[65] Castletown, Russborough, county Wicklow, Seafield and Newbridge House in county Dublin, Powerscourt House, Dublin and Sir William Chambers' plan for Headfort. Seafield has the benefit of a portico in antis, which might have helped.

[66] It is possible that the hall referred to here to the rear of the house might have been intended to be a saloon. John Aheron, in a builders' dictionary in his treatise defines a saloon as 'a Kind of Hall in the Middle of a House, or …a large Apartment, which ought to have a Symmetry on all sides…'. *A general treatise of architecture in five books…By John Aheron, architect* (Dublin 1754). Book iii includes a *Builder's Dictionary* (unpaginated).

[67] Colvin and Newman, *Of building*, p 127.

[68] This is the only example found in the plans under discussion. The substantial hall with screen in Rokeby Hall, attributed to Francis Johnston, is called a vestibule. McParland, 'Francis Johnston, architect, 1760-1829' in *BIGS*, vol. xii, nos. 3 and 4, July-December 1969, pp 61-139. The Scottish architect William Adam, in his ground-floor plan for Duff House, Banffshire, calls the large three-bay hall a 'vestibule'. James Macauley, *The classical country house in Scotland 1660-1800* (London 1987) p 79.

date.[69] And John Aheron defines a lobby as an 'Anti-chamber' where, in noble houses, 'Strangers stay till such time as the Party to be spoken with is at Leisure'.[70] They seem to mean something similar, both being forms of ante-rooms but the plans show that the 'vestibule' is often a larger space than a 'lobby' which can frequently take the form of a short corridor, as in two plans by Richard Castle for Carton, one by Richard Morrison for Castle Howard (*c.* 1811, **Fig. 2.15**), and later (1833) in Francis Goodwin's plan for Lissadell. Yet at Headfort (*c.* 1750, **Fig. 2.16**) Castle, using the traditional double-pile layout,[71] describes as a 'lobby' the fairly generous space at the centre of the house between the entrance hall and the saloon. Here a screen of columns gives access on one side to the main staircase, and a doorway opposite the screen leads to the back stairs. At Cloncarneel, county Meath in 1801, Francis Johnston used 'lobby' to indicate the space in which the back staircase was located, as did Daniel Robertson at Powerscourt, county Wicklow in 1843.

The 'vestibule' was a space that appealed to Richard Morrison though he uses both it and 'lobby' to describe a similar space in two of his designs published in 1793 (**Figs 2.17, 2.18**).[72] He provided a space for 'Vestibule and Billiards' behind a screen of columns to the rear of the centrally- placed staircase at Castlegar, county Galway (1801, **Fig. 2.19**) and in another drawing for the house locates a vestibule with curved ends behind the hall's columnar screen.[73] At Mount Bellew in the same county in *c.* 1810 (**Fig. 2.20**) he proposed an oval vestibule that linked the Library with the Book Room, giving access to stairs leading to the gallery of the Book Room on one side and a doorway to the garden on the other. With his son William, he created the circular, top-lit vestibule at Ballyfin that has been discussed (while in other plans he calls this identical space a saloon).

In his proposal for Castle Bernard, county Offaly (1833, **Fig. 2.21**) G R Pain shows an elongated route, similar to that at Roxborough Castle (**Fig. 2.12**) into the body of the house, from the *porte-cochère* into the front part of the hall, up a flight of six steps to the main part, continuing under an arch to the vestibule from where access could be gained to other rooms. Finally, an undated and unsigned drawing for what might be the old Townley Hall shows a small entrance hall that leads

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[69] IAA, Murray Collection of drawings: Killeen Castle; NLI, Fingall Papers, MS 1678, 'An Inventory of the Rt Honble Earl of Fingall's goods in the Castle of Killeen, March 23rd 1735/6'.
[70] Aheron, *A general treatise of architecture*, iii.
[71] The double-pile plan generally takes the form of a hall flanked by public rooms, main and service stairs in the middle on each side and three rooms to the rear.
[72] Morrison, *Useful and Ornamental Designs*, numbers 5 & 6, and 7 & 8.
[73] NLI, Mahon of Castlegar Papers, MS 24,593.

right, into an octagonal vestibule with niches, and on into the drawing room (**Fig. 2.22**). This might be seen as a reverse of the usage for North's vestibule – the small entrance hall leading into the rather grand vestibule.

The 'Irish' lobby

There is another 'lobby' that seems to be peculiar to Irish houses: John Cornforth says it is never to be seen in an English house, but he describes it as 'one of the happiest features in Irish country houses'.[74] It is a space on an upper, usually the first, floor that is not a landing, is top-lit, independent of the staircase, and from which access is gained to bedrooms and other rooms. It can be quite a spacious room, like that on the first floor at Castle Coole which is two-storeys high, lit by an oval skylight. Robert Graham describes it in the 1830s:

> There is one open space communicating to all the bedrooms on the principal floor with a gallery of communication to the rooms on the attick floor. This is handsome but, as I understand, is an objectionable arrangement in consequence of the noise of the servants passing and re-passing to the rooms in the morning.[75]

A similar type of lobby was described at Hazelwood, designed by Richard Castle one hundred years earlier:

> A small Stair Case ascends to the Attick story, and lands in an Octagon Lobby, from each side of which a door opens into a Bed Chamber. This Octagon is Illuminated by a large Lanthorn on the Roof in the midst of the Octagon is a Well, with a Ballastrade around which gives light to the Stairs.[76]

Both Craig and the Knight of Glin agree that this type of lobby was a Pearcean idea, first used by him at Bellamont, county Cavan[77] and later by Castle at Bellinter and in a plan for Headfort, both in county Meath, an early plan for Castle Coole, and at Russborough. It is a space often articulated in a very architectural manner, with the use of glass, columns, stucco and ironwork. One can be seen at Vernon Mount, county Cork, at Edermine, county Wexford, at Mount Henry, county Laois,[78] where small bedroom lobbies were located behind screens of Doric columns, at the Provost's House in Dublin, and at Mount Kennedy, county

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[74] It will be seen that the lobby is not confined to country houses. Cornforth, 'Castle Coole, co. Fermanagh', in *Country Life*, 17 December 1992, pp 28-31; Cornforth, 'Mount Kennedy – II', in *Country Life*, 11 November 1965, pp 1256-59.
[75] Heaney (ed.), *A Scottish Whig*, p 290.
[76] National Archives, M.2533, W. Henry, 'Hints towards a national, typographical [sic] history of Counties Sligo, Donegal, Fermanagh and Lough Erne'.
[77] Maurice Craig, *The architecture of Ireland from the earliest times to 1880* (Dublin 1997 edn), p 186; IAA, Knight of Glin, 'The Irish Palladians', p 94.
[78] Rowan (ed.), *The architecture of Richard Morrison and William Vitruvius Morrison*, p 131.

Wicklow. According to Craig such a lobby was not at all unusual in Irish country houses 'and even one or two in town'.[79]

Part II: Using the hall

The hall has been looked at both as an architectural space and as an impressive introduction to the rest of the house, but what of its function? The Rev. John Payne, writing in 1753, reminds his readers that 'both formerly and at this Day, the Hall, when it is large enough, was and is the chief Place of Entertainment'.[80] This refers to the hall of the country house rather than that in town, about which Ware sounds dismissive: 'In town a hall is a place of reception for servants; therefore, in this, neither magnitude nor elegance are needful'.[81] But he would be in agreement with Payne regarding the hall in the country, calling it a multi-purpose space, and this description will be used as a starting point in this discussion:

> It serves as a summer-room for dining; it is an anti-chamber in which people of business, or of the second rank, wait and amuse themselves; and it is a good apartment for the reception of large companies at publick feasts.[82]

The writer Dorothea Herbert describes the large hall at Desart Court, county Kilkenny in 1774 'where in my Grandfathers time the family met and dined round a blazing Wood fire after the Manner of Old Times', which confirms that dining could take place in the hall in cold weather too.[83] The 'blazing fire' indicates the presence of a fireplace, in common with almost all of the plans under consideration, and in some cases – Aheron's plan for Dromoland and Chambers' for Headfort – two appear, placed symmetrically opposite each other. Mrs Delany, stayed at Dangan, county Meath in 1732 and described

> a charming large hall with an organ and harpsichord, where all the company meet when they have a mind to be together, and where music, dancing, shuttlecock, draughts, and prayers, take their turn. Our hours for eating are ten, three, and ten again…We meet at breakfast about ten; chocolate, tea, coffee, toast and butter, and caudle, etc, are devoured without mercy. The hall is so large that very often breakfast, battledore and shuttlecock, and the harpsichord, go on at the *same time* without molesting one another.[84]

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[79] Craig, *The architecture of Ireland*, p 186.
[80] Quoted in Craig, *Classic Irish houses*, p 41.
[81] Ware, p 335. There are some very large halls in town houses, e.g. 45 Merrion Square, Dublin, the reason for which is not entirely clear.
[82] Ware, p 335.
[83] Dorothea's mother was the youngest daughter of the first Lord Desart. *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert 1770-1806* (Dublin 2004 edn), p 23.
[84] Day (ed.), *Letters*, p 122; quoted in Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors* p 38.

Twenty years later she found the hall at Mount Usher, county Wicklow used in a similar fashion, though apparently not for eating:

> The house is a very good one, old fashioned, convenient, and comfortable, the hall *very large,* in which is a billiard-table and harpsichord, and a large desk filled with books; within it [i.e. beyond] a large parlour, where we dine; and within that a drawing room, but the spacious hall and the amusements belonging to it make us give it the preference to all the other rooms.[85]

Cornforth observes that while there is evidence that meals were served in halls in England, there appear to be no descriptions of such occasions there. There are, however, descriptions of the amounts of alcohol consumed in Ireland at Castle Hume, county Fermanagh where Lord Ely entertained his tenantry in January 1770, as was customary once a year at Christmastime.[86] The parties were held in the hall – on 6th January the tenants from Castle Hume Manor were invited. One hundred and twenty of them drank nineteen gallons of rum, six gallons of whiskey and two barrels of ale. Two days later the tenantry from Churchill were similarly entertained, as were the Slavin tenants who had their night out on the 10th. If the Smythes at Barbavilla, county Westmeath dined in their hall, it must have given their guests a start to see the servants emerge from the basement by means of a trapdoor.[87] Dining or entertaining in the hall would have been perfectly simple to manage as they were generally spacious, and niches, frequently part of the architectural decoration of halls, could be used for the display of dishes.[88] According to sixty-six inventories dating between 1645 and 1852, to which we now turn, there was no shortage of tables and chairs there (as will be seen below). But of the musical instruments that one might expect to find from Mrs Delany's descriptions, there is a sad lack.

One cannot help feeling that the 'french horn' mentioned in 'ye Grand Hall' at Barbavilla in 1742-43, had a use other than for the provision of music, as the hall was almost a minor armoury. [89] A 'harpsichord with stand' is listed at Baronscourt (1782),[90] and an 'old' harpsichord at Ashfield, county Cavan[91] in 1843. At

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[85] Quoted in Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, p 38.
[86] George Mott, 'Eating and drinking habits in Ireland two hundred years ago' in *Irish Ancestor,* vol. v, no. 1, (1973) pp 7-11.
[87] Stephen R Penny, *Smythe of Barbavilla*, privately published, p 40. My thanks to Kevin Mulligan for loaning me this.
[88] Conversation with John Cornforth, October 2001; Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors,* pp 37-38.
[89] Rosemary ffolliott, 'The furnishings of a Palladian house in 1742-3: Barbavilla, Co. Westmeath' in *Irish Ancestor*, vol xi, no. 2, 1979, pp86-95.
[90] PRONI, D/623/D/4/1, Abercorn Papers, 'Inventory of household furniture at Baron's Court 1782'.
[91] TCD, Clements Papers, MS 7279, 'Inventory and valuation of Farming, Stock Crop, Farming and Garden Utensils etc. the Property of the late Henry John Clements, Esq MP of Ashfield,. Dated 28 Jany 1843.

Newbridge House[92] (1821) the 'Barrell Organ' in the Middle Hall completes the number of musical instruments to be found in halls among the inventories. There was a long-standing tradition in old Irish dwellings of a fiddler playing while people ate and danced or sang.[93] In an article in the *Kerry Evening Post* of 1894 the writer describes how the itinerant fiddler 'was occasionally utilized for a carpet dance in a gentleman's country house', and recalls one occasion in Kerry where the blind fiddler, whose 'garments were so shabby' was 'naturally' seated 'in the shade in the hall'.[94] In one of the Irish writer Sydney Owenson's (Lady Morgan) books, the son of an English earl describes a hospitable evening at a house in Ireland where, 'during dinner the door was left open' for a fiddler and a piper, and later after the gentlemen had joined the ladies for tea, 'the piper struck up in the hall and in a moment everyone was on their feet'.[95] Mrs Delany frequently had fiddlers and harpers to entertain her and her friends: in 1745 she wrote 'We have got an Irish harper in the house, who plays a great variety of tunes very well; he plays to us at our meals, and to me whilst I am drawing'.[96] It seems in her house that the musician took his instrument with him to different parts of the house and was not confined to the hall, assuming that he was more suitably attired than the Kerry fiddler. As musical instruments appear in the inventories in other rooms in the houses, their portability, even including harpsichords, would allow for such occasions.

Furniture: Tables and eating

Up to 1750 most halls contained tables: from the inventories the average would be three, mostly oval in shape and of oak. It is not until about 1750 that a table for a specific use is mentioned where, in the Great Hall at Howth Castle, a 'square breakfast table' of deal was to be found.[97] After this date mahogany emerged as the most-favoured wood, and in 1755 in Dromana's Marble Hall were a 'Large Mahogany two-leaved dining table with frame do.' and '2 Ovil do. of a smaller [size]', and in a passage adjoining the Hall was another dining table and a 'long two-

[92] My thanks to Mr Alec Cobbe for a printout of this.
[93] '...you shall not find a house of any account without one or two... [harps] and they always keep a harper to play for them at their meals'; quote in a footnote from Edward MacLysaght, *Irish life in the seventeenth century* (Dublin 1979), p 111.
[94] Thanks to the Knight of Glin for a photocopy of this.
[95] C Connolly and S Copley (eds), Sydney Owenson, *The wild Irish girl: a national tale* (London 2000 edn), pp 189-90.
[96] Day (ed.), *Letters*, p 259.
[97] F Elrington Ball, *Howth and its owners* (Dublin 1917), p 16.

leaved breakfast table' also of mahogany.[98] At Mount Stewart in 1821,[99] '6 Dinning [sic] Tables of different sizes' are listed, which seems excessive and begs the question of whether they were leaves rather than tables? The same might be asked of the set of four dining tables found in the Back Hall at Doneraile Court.[100] Dining tables continued to be found in halls sometimes with their own covers, 'green cloth' (baize?) and leather. Carton's inventory of 1818 lists 'Two Dinner Canterburys'[101] and 'Two mahogany wine tables' with a large oval table in the same wood in the Inside Hall and Stairs.[102] Dumb waiters were to be found in the halls at [old] Townley Hall (1773),[103] Ashfield (1843), two at Carton (1818), and a 'japanned plate warmer' at Moira House[104] (1808). The proliferation of dining and breakfast tables in the halls would seem to confirm that meals were taken there, at least sometimes. Marble topped tables appear in the hall infrequently: at Baronscourt (1782)[105]; a 'Gilt Table with marble top' is listed in the Lobby of the Great Stairs at Moira House, Dublin; two at Shelton House, county Wicklow (1816);[106] and an 'inlaid marble table' at Killadoon acquired in 1829. Carton has '2 white carved frames with composition slabs', and in an auction of furniture at Altadore, county Wicklow in 1835 were '2 elegant marble tables on stands, surmounted by large figures for lights'.[107] Apart from their role as items of furniture to impress visitors, they could have functioned as side-tables for dining purposes.

Card tables are common in other rooms but first appear in the hall in the 1755 inventory for Dromana, county Waterford; [old] Townley Hall had one in 1773 together with 'baggamon tables', Prospect (later Ardgillan) had two card tables,[108] as had Doneraile Court. Four are listed for the hall at 10 Cavendish Row,[109] but as it would seem unlikely that card parties were played in the halls of town houses, they were probably stored in the hall and taken to the parlour or elsewhere as needed. It

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[98] PRONI, T/3131/F/2/17, Villiers Stuart Papers, 'An Inventory of the Houshold…at Dromana Belonging to the Right Honourable Earl Grandison, taken August 12, 1755'.
[99] PRONI, D/654/S1/1, Londonderry Papers, 'An Inventory of the Household Furniture belonging to the Most Noble the Marquis of Londonderry taken at Mount Stewart Septr 1821'.
[100] NLI, Doneraile Papers, MS 34,104(5), 'Inventory of furniture room by room in Doneraile Court ' (no date, but probably *c.* 1830s).
[101] The *OED* defines a canterbury in the sense of furniture as 'a stand with light partitions to hold music-portfolios and the like', so it can probably be assumed that a 'dinner canterbury' was such a piece adapted to the requirements of dining.
[102] My thanks to Patrick Guinness for allowing me to copy this inventory.
[103]NLI, Townley Hall Papers, Ms 9349, 'List of Townley Hall furniture, 1773'.
[104] PRONI, Granard Papers, T/3765/L/4(part), Inventory of Moira House, Dublin, taken by Zach Foxall, Arran Quay, Dublin on 7 May 1808.
[105] PRONI, Abercorn Papers, D/623/D/4/1, Inventory of Household Furniture at Baron's Court 1782.
[106] NLI, Wicklow Papers, MS 38,574/20, Inventory and Valuation of the furniture in Shelton House, county Wicklow. Taken by L. & A. Morgan, January 4th 1816.
[107] *Dublin Evening Post,* 25 April 1835.
[108] National Archives, Taylor Documents M.7069(195), Inventory of the furniture in Prospect Castle taken 25 Sept 1795.

is, on the other hand, entirely possible that there were card parties in the halls of country houses. Only two inventories, for Newbridge House (1821) and Convoy House, county Donegal (1844), list a billiard-table in the hall:[110] Carton's (1818) is listed in the Billiard Room which was also the hall, according to the 1815 plan by the Morrisons.[111]

Chairs, benches and stools

While cane- and rush-seated chairs enjoyed great popularity in their time they were quite old-fashioned by the mid-eighteenth century but they continued to be used.[112]. The Palace of St Sepulchre in Dublin had twelve cane-seated chairs in the Big Hall in 1730,[113] Barbavilla had '6 cain Arm Chairs' in the hall in 1742-3 and at Knapton, county Laois one has to wonder at the '24 Rush Bottom Cheeres' and 'two do. Easey do. with cushions' in 1763.[114] The cushions or squabs probably had 'ribbons to tie at the corners' like those in the drawing room at Kilkenny Castle in 1684.[115] The eighteen oak chairs in the Great Hall at Howth Castle, while numerous, would seem appropriate for a castle.[116] Six oak hall chairs to be found in 1801 at Antrim House,[117] six four years later at North Great George's Street, both in Dublin, and two 'black oak seats with cane seats'[118] in the lobby of the staircase at Mount Stewart in 1821 might signify an appreciation of old furniture at this late date, bearing in mind that by the middle of the eighteenth century the hall chair, with the family crest emblazoned on its back was a most desirable item of hall furniture. Ten of these, with a crest and Lord Londonderry's coronet, were also to

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[109] British Library, Cockburn Papers, MS Add. 48314. Thanks to Jane Meredith for this.
[110] TCD Ms 11258, 'Inventory for Convoy House, county Donegal, *c.* 1844', with thanks to Professor Anne Crookshank and Edward McParland.
[111] In Carton's fairly comprehensive inventory there is little listed under 'Inside Hall and Stairs', which is the only mention of a hall, therefore the list of items under the heading 'Billiard Room' will be used to describe this dual-purpose room.
[112] Burton Hall's inventory of 1686 shows thirty-six 'cain bottom'd chairs' divided between the hall and the parlour. Cane-seated chairs became popular in England after the Restoration, sought-after 'for their Durable, Lightness, and Cleanness from Dust, Worms and Moths which inseparably attend Turkey-work, Serge and other stuff chairs and couches, to the spoiling of them and all furniture near them', Rosemary ffolliott and Brian de Breffny, 'The contents of Burton Hall, Co. Cork in 1686' in *Irish Ancestor*, v, No. 2, (1973), pp 104-13. Rush-seated chairs (sometimes called 'Dutch chairs') were being made in Flanders from the beginning of the 17th century, and possibly in England by the end of the century. Peter Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration in England, France & Holland* (New Haven and London 1983 edn), pp 202, 206.
[113] TCD MS 1995-2008/2438, *c.* 1730. My thanks to John Montague for this reference.
[114] NLI, De Vesci Papers, MS 38,905, 'An Inventory and valuation of the furniture, Cattle, corn, Hay and Brewing Eutencials of George Pigott Esq. at Knapton Sept 9 1763'.
[115] Quoted in Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century interior decoration*, p 180; Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels*, p 108.
[116] The four Howth Castle inventories date from 1746 to 1752. A compilation of these is to be found in Elrington Ball, *Howth and its owners*, pp 164-66.
[117] PRONI, D/2977/5/1/7/2, Earl of Antrim Estate Papers, 'An Inventory of the Furniture &c. of Antrim house taken by Wm Segiour & Michl Campbell this 19th day of August 1801.' My thanks to Dr Toby Barnard for this.
[118] TCD, MS 7344/32, 'Valuation of furniture in Nth Gt Georges St Dublin: Property of Mrs Clements in her late dwelling house, April 17, 1805'. It is not clear whether these are chairs or stools.

be found in the lobby at Mount Stewart, while eleven stood proudly in the entrance hall.

This type of chair designed specifically for use in the entrance hall was usually hard, with a shaped back bearing a crest or a coat of arms, and it became fashionable from about 1730, according to John Cornforth.[119] The earliest mention of chairs with crests among the inventories is at Dromana, county Waterford in 1755 where there were fourteen in the hall. An estimate for Caledon, county Tyrone, James Alexander's newly-built house, dated 1783, lists for the hall and vestibule '8 Hall Chairs painted, Crests &c in the backs' at two guineas each.[120] Less sophisticated and half the price were the '8 mahogany Hall chairs with painted crests' at £8.9.0d, bought in 1808 by Thomas Hynes (who had just purchased Brook Lodge, county Galway), from Eggleso's of Dublin.[121] Crested chairs also appear at Lord Leitrim's Killadoon, county Kildare (1807); Lord Wicklow's Shelton House, county Wicklow (1816) and at the Cobbe family's Newbridge House, county Dublin (1821) where sixteen chairs are divided between the Entrance and the Middle Halls. It is surprising that crested chairs do not appear in the Carton (1818) inventory where, in the Hall and Billiard Room there are '8 mahogany X [curved] chairs'. Other rather different chairs were at Moira House (1808) where '6 folding hall chairs' are listed in the Porter's Lodge, and '4 folding chairs' in the Hall (presumably these were also 'hall' chairs) and, uniquely in the inventories, an 'Exercising Chair' was located in the Great Stairs and Lobby area.

Hall chairs are usually associated with servants though, as Cornforth points out, it is unclear whether this means the servants of the house or the servants of visitors as there are no descriptions of these chairs in use.[122] But they were used also for people who came to the house on matters of business on which they would wait to see the owner. There existed, at least in some cases, a pecking order as to where people waited. In recommending a ground-floor location for a man's dressing room (later generally referred to as a 'study' or 'own room'), Isaac Ware states that next to it should be a waiting room where business callers with a previous appointment, and 'of better rank than to be left in the hall', waited to see the

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[119] Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, p 36.
[120] PRONI, Caledon Papers D/2433/A/2/4/1-19, 'London 1st May 1783, Estimate of Furniture for my Caledon House', and is headed 'Estimate to James Alexander Esq. for furnishing the principal Story in Caledon House'. Other correspondence indicates that this is from the firm of Mayhew & Ince, London. Alexander was created Baron Caledon in 1790, Viscount in 1797 and 1st earl in 1800.
[121] National Archives, Ballyglunin Papers, M.6933 Parcel 20, 59b.
[122] Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, pp 36-37.

master.[123] Visitors included those coming on matters of business, national and local politics, estate matters, meetings with the agent and/or steward, tenants, petitioners, tailors, peruke-makers and tradespeople in general. According to John Philip Kemble's biographer, the Irish playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan, who was constantly in debt, worked this system to perfection in his London home, presumably with the help of his servants:

> Sheridan's habit was to keep his visitors distributed variously, according to their rank and intimacy with him. Some, like ourselves, penetrated into the library; others tired the chairs in parlours; and tradesmen lost their time in the hall, the butler's room and other scenical divisions of the premises. A door opening above stairs moved all hopes below; but when he came down his hair was drest for the day, and his countenance for the occasion; and so cordial were his manners, his glance so masterly and his address so captivating, that the people, for the most part, seemed to forget what they actually wanted, and went away as if they had only come to look at him.[124]

It is evident that the more important the visitor, the more comfortable were their surroundings and particularly the seat on which they waited: those seated on the hard hall chairs were being kept in their place.

Other types of seating, such as benches and stools, were to be found in the hall. William Kent designed in the 1720s benches with panelled backs for the Stone Hall and staircase at Houghton, inspired more by the seventeenth-century garden seats found at Ham House than by the richly carved Dutch models.[125] He created a simple version of the Italian Renaissance *sgabello* for his hall seat that became standard in England throughout the century.[126] Little information is gleaned from the inventories for these types of seating: the earliest mention of a bench or a 'form'[127] is at the duke of Ormonde's house at Clonmel in 1675 where there were 'Two jointed formes long' and 'three short forms' in the hall.[128] Powerscourt, county Wicklow[129] had a large deal bench 'with back'; there was one in the hall at the Ingoldsby house on Mary Street (1731)[130], and two in Lord Howth's hall at St Mary's Abbey (1751)[131], both in Dublin. At Stackallen, county Meath in 1757 there

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123 Ware, p 408.
124 Quoted in Linda Kelly, *Richard Brinsley Sheridan a life* (London, 1998 edn), p 178.
125 Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, p 37.
126 Thornton, *Authentic Décor: the domestic interior 1620-1920* (London 2000 edn), p 89.
127 Often spelt 'forme' meaning a long seat without a back, according to the *OED*.
128 Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels*, p 85.
129 NLI, POS 6071, 'A catalogue of the Goods & Stock of the late Edward Wingfield, Esq. at Powerscourt, & at his house in Dublin, to be sold by Auction. 25 Feb 1728-9 and to continue'.
130 NLI, Smythe of Barbavilla Papers, Ms 41,581/8, *A catalogue of the Household Goods, Of the late Henry Ingoldsby, Esq: Deceas'd. To be Sold by Auction in Mary's-street, on Monday the 29th day of November, 1731.*
131 J P Mahaffy, 'An inventory of the household furniture of the Rt. Honble. Lord Howth, in St. Mary's Abbey, April the 23rd, 1751' in *The Georgian Society Records*, iv, pp 1-9

were '2 raled Seats painted Green' in the Stone Hall, and another in the Great Staircase Hall,[132] two green benches appear in the hall at Prospect, county Dublin (1795); and one made of deal at North Great George's Street, Dublin (1805). Stools in the hall are quite rare in the inventories, appearing in 45 Kildare Street (1762)[133], at Baronscourt (1782) and Killadoon (1807 and 1812). In an estimate for hall furniture for Castlegar, together with a large mahogany table 'for [the] centre' of the room, were '8 roman Chairs' and '4 roman stools'.[134]

Sedan chairs, security, sport and sleeping arrangements

Before leaving the subject of chairs, it should be noted that sedan chairs were to be seen in Dublin from the mid-seventeenth century. The earl of Kildare kept one in the hall of his house in Dublin in 1656.[135] Later examples are the 'Sedan Chair lin'd with blue Cloth and Poles' at the Ingoldsby house in Mary Street, a chair and poles at St Mary's Abbey, one 'with curtains and cushion' at 45 Kildare Street and 'A Sedan Chair Tassells & Poles & Green Cover' at 10 Cavendish Row (1765). They were not, however, confined to Dublin, it seems: in the newspaper article referred to above about fiddlers, the writer remembers a lady

> who always went to evening parties and balls in Tralee in a sedan chair as late as 1844 – her health being delicate – in order to avoid exposure to night air. The chairmen carried the sedan into the hall of her house for her to enter it, and then carried her, still seated, into the hall of her entertainers.[136]

Brackets for the poles of these chairs have survived in the entrance hall at 52 St Stephen's Green and elsewhere, where they could be stored and locked.[137] Owners were security-conscious: some of the earlier inventories list locks, bolts and keys which were important and probably costly items. At Dublin Castle the duchess of Ormonde, when supervising the removal of the Ormonde goods after the duke was relieved of his duties as lord lieutenant in 1669, was optimistic that her husband's replacement would buy for his use 'the bedsteads for servants, tables and such lumber…all the locks and keys I likewise paid for, and particularly those

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[132] National Archives, Stackallen Inventory, M.1148/5/3. It is not clear if these are chairs or benches.
[133] David J Griffin, 'The building and furnishing of a Dublin townhouse in the 18th century' in *BIGS*, vol. xxxviii, 1996-97, pp 24-39.
[134] Estimate from Morgan is not dated, but was presumably sent in 1791 when M. Morgan of Henry Street supplied drawings of furniture arrangements for the oval room and the drawing room at Castlegar. MS notes from Mahon Family Papers concerning furnishings, seen and extracted by Edward McParland at Castlegar in 1973. My thanks to him.
[135] Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels*, p 40. According to the *OED*, the first use of the expression 'sedan chair' was in 1635. The earl of Kildare lived in Dame Street until 1716 when he moved to Suffolk Street, according to John Coleman, 'Evidence for the collecting and display of paintings in eighteenth-century Ireland', *BIGS*, vol. xxxvi, 1994., pp 48-62.
[136] Thanks to the Knight of Glin for a photocopy of this.
[137] Simon Lincoln, *Mansions, museums and commissioners* (IAA and OPW 2002), p 65, plates 81-82.

belonging to my Lord's closet and my own chamber…'.[138] In England the duchess of Marlborough, having fallen out with Queen Anne, was forced to give up her lodgings in St James's Palace but was careful to remove from them the brass locks 'of my own buying and which I never heard that anybody left for those that were to come after them'.[139] The typical Irish hall-door lock that can be still seen in many city and country houses is of mahogany with decorative brass mountings.[140] The architect John Wood the Elder noted with approval in the first half of the eighteenth century in England that 'doors in general were not only made thick and substantial, but they had the best sort of brass lock put on them'.[141] At Conyngham Hall, county Meath in 1710 not only were the hall locks listed but so was the door knocker.[142] They were a selling point in an advertisement for the sale by raffle of Lady Eustace's house at Montpelier in Dublin in 1724.[143]Apart from brass locks and bolts mentioned in the inventories, '2 iron barrs with screwes to windows' were in each of the two halls at Dromana, where the hall door was armed with '2 iron barrs three bolts with a stock lock & key and large brass knocker'. And the servant on the settle bed in 24 Chancery Lane, Dublin must have felt secure between the 'large lock & key on the Street Door, an iron chain and two bolts on do. …and an iron lock & key and Iron Bolt on the Back Door'.[144]

A number of the halls contained arms and sports equipment, used as much for decoration as for recreation or defence. Jonah Barrington described his ancestral home at Cullenaghmore, county Laois: 'The walls of the large hall were decked (as was customary) with fishing-rods, fire-arms, stags' horns, foxes' brushes, powder-flasks, shot-pouches, nets and dogs' collars; here and there relieved by the extended skin of a kite or a king-fisher, nailed up in the vanity of their destroyers'.[145] At Newbridge House a basement corridor was hung 'from end to end with arms intended for defence in case of attack'.[146] The trophies of arms as depicted in wood carvings over the doors at Beaulieu have already been mentioned, but the real thing was at Tarbert House, county Kerry where there are carved wooden bayonet

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[138] Historical Manuscripts Commission, Ormond MSS NS 3, 16 February 1668/9, p 441.
[139] Ophelia Field, *The favourite: Sarah, duchess of Marlborough* (London 2002), p 301.
[140] Made in Dublin and Limerick and possibly elsewhere from mid-eighteenth century. Craig, *Classic Irish houses*, p 36.
[141] Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London 1982), p 237.
[142] IAA, Castletown Deposit, Section F, Box 4, 'Inventory of goods in dispute at Conyngham Hall, Slane, 1710'. Thanks to Livia Hurley for this reference.
[143] Quoted in P Fagan, *The second city: portrait of Dublin 1700-1760* (Dublin 1986), p 96.
[144] NLI Wicklow Papers, MS 38,564/14, schedule attached to Lease of an House &c. on the East side of Chancery Lane, City of Dublin, Rt Honble Robert Lord Viscount Wicklow to Messrs Curtis and William Crofton, 28 April 1791;
[145] Quoted in Maxwell, *Country and town in Ireland*, p 95.
[146] *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, p 10.

holders with the Leslie coat of arms over each of the four doors leading off the hall, in which arched elements secure the bayonets creating fan effects as overdoors.[147] Barbavilla had a large array of arms including 'mahogany shields with 12 pistols...gun racks with 20 guns...3 yew bows and arrows, 1 ross bow, 2 halberts and 4 half picks', while at Howth Castle, apart from the 'great sword of Howth' and a couple of other swords and '47 bayonets' there were '5 pairs of stags' horns...2 pairs of elk horns' and '3 pieces of old armour'. Stackallen had an elk's head 'with many of the bones', and in Dublin pistols and swords were kept in the hall at Cavendish Row, and 17 'musquets' and 18 bayonets were in the Great Hall at 10 Henrietta Street.[148]

With such decoration the hall might not have been the most comfortable place to wait in for the visitor nor, indeed, to sleep in for the servant. One of Lord Kildare's servants slept on a settle bed in the hall of his Dublin house in 1656. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, however, beds for servants were not commonly found in halls: at Powerscourt, county Wicklow there was a deal settle bed in the Boarded Hall and one in the Stone Hall, one of oak in Antrim House, another in 24 Chancery Lane, both in Dublin, and a 'table bed' in the lobby of Killeen Castle, county Meath (1735-36).[149] While sleeping accommodation for servants was at a premium in Dublin houses, with the result that some slept wherever they found a space in the service area, a servant sleeping in the hall possibly indicates a security measure that together with the presence there of arms, allowed the family to rest easy.

Lighting and Curtains

Most houses had 'hall lanterns' of glass, (a couple of which mention being fitted with pulleys[150]), brass, gilt or glass sconces in the hall in addition to the lantern, and up the staircase, in which candles were placed. The descriptions of the light fittings suggested in the estimate of furniture for Caledon House in 1783 are worth relating for their sophistication:

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147 Knight of Glin, 'Tarbert House, county Kerry' in *Irish Arts Review*, Autumn 2006, pp 106-109. There are similar bayonet holders over doors in the hall at Glin Castle.

148 NLI, Gardiner Papers, Ms 36,617/1, 'A List of the Goods at Henrietta Street House which did belong to the late Luke Gardiner Esq. taken and valued by Joseph Ellis and J Kirchhoffer Novr 9th 1772'. Craig mentions pistol-loops at Lowberry, county Roscommon (possibly a late seventeenth-century house), and Kiltullagh, county Galway (late seventeenth-century to early eighteenth-century). Craig, *Classic Irish houses,* pp 58, 74.

149 Note at Killeen Castle that the hall is referred to as 'Lobby', a name that Francis Johnston uses in this space in a plan of 1802/3, Murray Collection, IAA.

150 Stackallen (1757), 'Glass Lanthorn with pulleys but no conveniency of holding the Candle'; 45 Kildare Street, '1 lantern, rope pulleys & sockets' on the Back Stairs.

4 Antique Therms with paintings in medallions on the Shafts supporting Globe Lamps mounted in brass work & burners in do. £42.0s.0d.
A brass fram'd & pendant Lanthorn & brass chain to do. £25.0s.0d.
2 Therms & lights for best Staircase £10.10s.0d.
3 bell Lamps with Arms to the handrail to back Stairs £3.15s.0d.[151]

One is tempted to think that these may have been the new oil lamps designed by Aimé Argand only the year before, in 1782, that had a cylindrical wick, and were called by his name.[152] It was said that these lamps gave light equal to that of ten candles. They became so popular in Ireland that one Dublin supplier had a cistern capable of holding two thousand gallons of lamp oil.[153] At Newbridge House (1821), the Entrance and the Middle Halls each boasted '1 Bronze Figure with Lamp Complete', and at the Provost's House (1852) '2 suspended oil light lanterns' hung in the hall while the staircase and landing had a total of six oil lamps.[154]

All of the halls and most of the staircases had a degree of natural light from either windows or fanlights. Among the inventories there are no curtains for these windows until 1763 at Knapton when they are mentioned in the hall. The Killadoon inventories are interesting (1807, 1812, 1830, 1836, 1844 and 1855) as they demonstrate how furnishings and works of art were acquired over the years. In 1807 ' 4 mahogany shutters for door & windows' of the hall are mentioned: by 1812 'scarlet moreen curtains [trimmed with black velvet] which formed a dominating continuous drapery across the entrance wall, whose colour was picked up by a scarlet hearth rug' have been added, a similar curtain on the staircase, an iron chest used as a window stool with cushion and frame covered to match the curtains, plus in 1836, a 'scarlet silk bell pull with tassel'.[155] Scarlet moreen was used also at the hall door and the stair window of Ashfield, county Cavan in 1843; at Newbridge House there was a green baize curtain on the hall door and a red curtain on the window of the Inner Hall. Similar items are to be found in other sources. An estimate for curtains for the windows and door of the hall at Castlegar from Morgans of Henry Street in *c.* 1791 show that the Mahons were enquiring about more expensive fabrics: moreen would cost £57.11s.0d.; if made of velvet, the additional cost would be £23.8s.0d.; and if 'fine Scarlet cloth' was used, it would add '£37 extra to the cost of Morin'.[156] Moreen was a hardwearing fabric suitable

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[151] PRONI, D/2433/A/2/4/1-19, 'Estimate of Furniture for my Caledon House', probably from Mayhew & Ince, London,to James Alexander dated 1 May 1783.
[152] *OED.*
[153] Mairead Dunlevy, 'Dublin in the early nineteenth century: domestic evidence' in *Ireland: art into history* (Dublin 1994), pp 185-206.
[154] TCD Muniments, (uncatalogued).
[155] The Killadoon inventories, with summary notes taken by Christopher Moore and Sally Clements, to whom I am grateful.
[156] Mahon Papers seen at Castlegar in 1973 by Edward McParland.

for a hall: in choosing it in scarlet, the Clements of both Killadoon and Ashfield combined economy with fashion. In 1821, Viscount Doneraile bought from the London upholsterers Pryer & Mackenzie 'A large size transparent blind for upper stair window with rich border' for eight guineas.[157] Finally, in the furniture auction at Altadore (1835), 'elegant Morocco hangings' and curtains from the hall were advertised. Apart from the colour scarlet mentioned (if the green baize is excluded) there is very little information on colours in a hall area, except at Carton in 1818 where the 'drab Morine curtains and cornices' in the Inner Hall and Stairs, did not add much colour, but the four windows in the Hall and Billiard Room each had a 'flower Damask festoon' curtain and a 'linen spring blind'.

Stone colour or 'buff' was generally regarded as an inexpensive, hard-wearing colour for wall paint in circulation spaces such as halls, staircases and corridors, but it would not be used in the more formal rooms in the house. As early as 1728, 'buff' was used on the staircase walls at Marble Hill, Twickenham, the quintessential villa believed to be designed by Henry Herbert, 9th earl of Pembroke.[158] A paint called 'Portland Stone' was used in Carton in 1820 for passages on the bedchamber storey, a shade that was also used, it would appear, on the 'Garret Story, Attic Story, Grand Staircase, North & South Staircases, Corridore Between Grand and South Staircase'.[159] Interestingly, the hall at Castletown has always been painted white.[160]

Floors and Flooring

The prevalence of the black and white stone floor in the halls of large houses throughout Ireland in the period under discussion reflects the situation in Britain where that style of floor had become popular from the early seventeenth century. Pattern books such as C A d'Aviler's *Cours Complet d'Architecture* published in1691, which contains Roman floor designs with advice on construction, and later designs published by James Gibbs (1728), J Carwitham (1739), and Batty Langley (1736 and 1740), wielded a great deal of influence.[161] While surviving plans of houses frequently indicate the design for the ceiling, it is not often that designs for floors are to be found: perhaps their very popularity made drawings redundant.

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[157] NLI, Doneraile Papers, MS 34,106(6).
[158] James Lees-Milne, *The earls of creation* (London 1962, edn 1986), p 71.
[159] It is not clear from the manuscript if they were painted the same colour, but it would be suitable for those areas. NA, Bolger MS IA 58 125. My thanks to Dr Edward McParland for his transcript.
[160] My thanks to Dr Patrick Walsh for this information.
[161] Jane Fawcett, 'Palaces, public buildings, houses and villas: tile mosaic, stone and marble floors, parquetry, carpets and painted floors', in Jane Fawcett (ed.), *Historic Floors: their history and conservation* (Oxford 1998), pp 129-163.

There is, however, a drawing for the floor of the hall at Kildare House, possibly by Castle and dating to *c.* 1745 (**Fig. 2.23**) which shows a diagonal pattern of large white and small black flagstones,[162] similar to that found at many houses including Bellamont Forest, Kilshannig, county Cork and Castletown Cox, county Kilkenny.[163] Another plan for 'Flagging for Genl. Cuningham's Hall at Mt. Kennedy' dated August 1793 (**Fig. 2.24**), and drawn by Thomas Cooley[164] is of interest as a working drawing indicating how the flagstones were to be arranged around crucial areas such as the columnar screen and the fireplace with its 'Portland Slab'. Similar floors to Mount Kennedy's design are at Abbeyleix, county Laois and at Florence Court in county Fermanagh. Houses such as Castletown and Newbridge, both in county Kildare, and Rathbeale Hall, county Dublin had their halls paved with alternate black and white slabs of similar size, and mention should be made of the *trompe l'oeil* (or three-dimensional effect) of the floor at Powerscourt House Dublin, of black Kilkenny marble and grey and white limestone, reputed to be unique in the city. At Leixlip Castle the terracotta squares in the hall were painted black and white to mimic this pattern,[165] as was the hall at Tarbert House, county Kerry.[166] The paving was sometimes extended to adjoining areas with the effect of uniting the halls as at Castletown, the Provost's House, Cangort Park, county Offaly and at Florence Court. At Kilshannig it extends into the axial corridor.

The elaborate geometrical design of the Portland stone floor in the staircase hall at Townley Hall is superb. Lord Leitrim recommended Portland stone for the floor of his son's hall at Lough Rynn, county Leitrim 'and a white flag which is much cheaper and which I believe comes from Yorkshire, for the kitchen and servants' room, such as I lately laid down in the kitchen at Killadoon'.[167] Stone floors give a sense of gradual transition from outdoors to indoors, and the indoor rustication seen throughout the paved area in the Provost's House underlines that feeling.[168]

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[162] Griffin and Pegum, *Leinster House,* plate 42, p 27.
[163] The white is frequently Portland stone.
[164] NLI, Dept of Prints and Drawings, Mount Kennedy drawings, AD 3568(52m).
[165] Desmond Guinness, 'Leixlip Castle, Co. Kildare', an undated pamphlet, p 4. It is likely that there was a number of painted floors, or borders of floors, in houses throughout the country during this period. Painted and stencilled floors were more popular in Scotland than in England, but while they were well documented from the seventeenth century on, few have survived. Fawcett, 'Palaces, public buildings, houses and villas', pp 129-63.
[166] Glin, 'Tarbert House, co Kerry', pp 106-109.
[167] Killadoon Papers. Draft by Dr Anthony Malcomson of the papers in the NLI. My thanks to Edward McParland for a copy.
[168] This is a feature that appears unique in Irish domestic architecture, but Cornforth (*Early Georgian Interiors,* p 35) mentions the walls of the hall and staircase hall at Davenport House in Shropshire (begun *c.* 1726) which are plastered to resemble channelled masonry also, though the rustication in the Provost's House is of wood. At Powerscourt Dublin the walls in the staircase are rusticated (in ashlar) from dado level up to the first floor.

A wooden floor in a hall is quite unusual in an Irish country house – Russborough, county Wicklow, and Belvedere, county Westmeath are both in this category.[169] Ballyfin and the Casino at Marino, Dublin, are renowned for the quality and variety of the decorative materials used throughout the buildings, and the parquetry of the floors in both (and in Russborough) is remarkably accomplished. The entrance hall floor at Ballyfin is not of wood, but of mosaic imported from Rome, surrounded by marble inlay,[170] but the circular vestibule has a richly-designed parquetry floor of Moorish influence.[171] The entrance hall floor of the Casino is equally exotic executed, like the floors elsewhere in the building, with an intricate arrangement of rare woods.[172]

Other materials, according to Ware, were frequently used for flooring, such as stucco, which 'when well worked and laid makes a very beautiful floor, some of it looking like porphiry'.[173] Stucco floors were common all over Europe and could be elaborately patterned and highly polished.[174] Plaster floors were laid in passages and in upper rooms, and *The Builder's Dictionary* of 1734 gives directions for making up the composition.[175] It would seem likely that in Ireland there were similar floors. Ware also mentions the use of brick in floors, described by Mary Beaufort in 1810 in the hall of the old Muckross House,[176] curiously described by her husband twenty-two years earlier, in 1788, as 'flagged with red and white marble of Mucrus [sic], of which there is a great Quarry'.[177] One wonders if they had been painted.

Stone and wood floors have been looked at in an architectural context, but what of floor coverings? From the early part of the eighteenth century the painted canvas floor cloth was a popular and cheap substitute for carpets and remained so until the advent of linoleum in 1860. They were widely used in halls in Ireland, where they could be painted to resemble marble pavements (as they were in Caledon (1785) '40 sq. yds of diamond matt pattern oil cloth'[178]) on stairs, passages and, as will be seen later, around sideboards to protect the floor of the dining room. They were made from wide sheets of seamless canvas which were stretched on a frame, painted on

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169 Desmond Guinness and William Ryan, *Irish houses and castles* (London 1971), p 341.
170 Kevin Mulligan, 'Ballyfin, county Laois: architectural history, First Report, February 2002', p 57.
171 Discussed by McParland in *CL*, 20 September 1973, pp774-77, and in Mulligan, 'Ballyfin', p 52. Unfortunately no drawings for the floors nor the plasterwork have survived, nor have the names of the craftsmen who executed them.
172 Drawings of the floors for the Casino were made by Alfred E Jones in 1917-18, illustrated in Sean O'Reilly, *The Casino at Marino* (OPW 1991), pp 20-21.
173 Information on these in Ireland have not as yet come to hand. Ware, p 123.
174 Thornton, *Authentic Décor,* p 99.
175 Fawcett, 'Palaces, public buildings, houses and villas', pp 129-63.
176 TCD MS 4036 Mary Beaufort, 'Tour from Upton to Killarney…1810', f 17.
177 TCD MS 4030, D A Beaufort, 'Tour of Ireland…1788', f 2v.
178 PRONI, Caledon Papers, D/2433/A/2/3/9, Invoice from Mayhew & Ince, London to James Alexander, 1785.

both sides with many layers of pigment mixed with linseed oil (hence the term 'oyle' cloth used commonly in Irish inventories) and left to dry for several months.[179] The earliest reference to these cloths in England is in 1736[180], but they are mentioned in the halls at the Ingoldsby house in Mary Street in 1731 and at Killeen Castle in 1735. For covering the Wilton stair carpet at 10 Cavendish Row (1763), were '62 yds of Market cloath tannd' and at Doneraile Court (*c.* 1830) 'tarpaulin' covered the hall floor and the stairs. In 1836 at Killadoon a 'piece of oil cloth' was kept in the passage leading to the offices, which reached from the door there to the dining room door. The first mention of carpet in the inventories is at Barbavilla (1741/2) where there was a large carpet 'in ye coridore' and a 'carpet for church'. There was an increased use of carpets from the first quarter of the century, however and, according to Ware, fitted carpets were usual by the 1750s, 'it is the Custom almost universally to cover a room entirely'.[181] Many of the staircases were covered in carpet held in place by brass rods. A note among the Mahon Papers is interesting: the stairs at Castlegar were four feet nine inches wide, on which carpet with a width of twentyseven inches 'will look much better than if it covered more of each step – handsome Portland stone stairs are I believe seldom quite covered by wide carpetting, the boarded stairs are sometimes'.[182]

Pictures and *objets d'art*

While it is not the function of this study to analyse the paintings and prints to be found in houses, they form a small part of the inventories and, just as arms appear in halls and not, for example, in other rooms in the house (excluding the male dressing room or study), so certain types of pictures tend to appear in certain rooms. Not many pictures are listed for the hall among the inventories and looking at those that are, it is almost impossible to see a pattern emerging from such a motley collection. At Manor Waterhouse, county Fermanagh the home of Rev. Samuel Madden, the hall in the 1730s was 'almost covered with fine pieces of painting, several of which are originals, done by the names that have been most famous over Europe'.[183] In the Big Hall at the Palace of St Sepulchre (*c.* 1730) at the same time were '28 prints Glazd.; 10 do. nott Glazd.'.[184] The Baronscourt inventory (1782) lists '2 heads and 4 figures over door Capes' in the 'Grate' Hall, which might mean six pictures, two bust-length and four full-length, placed over the doors. In

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[179] Fawcett, 'Palaces, public buildings, houses and villas', pp 129-163.
[180] John Fowler and John Cornforth, *English Decoration in the eighteenth century* (London 1974), p 216.
[181] Ware, p 123.
[182] Mahon Papers seen at Castlegar in 1973 by Dr Edward McParland.
[183] Quoted in The Knight of Glin and James Peill, *Irish Furniture* (New Haven and London 2007), p 62.
[184] TCD MS 1995-2008/2438, [Inventory of the Palace of St Sepulchre c 1730].

the Marble Hall at Dromana (1755) were '11 long pannels of Indian paper pictures in mahogany frames, 4 smaller do. over doors', and in the passage leading to Lady Grandison's dressing room were eleven portraits of family and others, '2 Dutch pieces', landscapes, still lives and prints. The vicereine, Lady Hardwicke, was obviously impressed with the images on the staircase at the newly-built Aldborough House, Dublin, in 1801:

> The staircase is richly adorned with paintings. Let one be in your idea a model for the rest. Imagine a large panel occupied by the 'Triumph of Amphitrite', personated by Lady Aldborough in a riding habit, with minerva's helmet, siting on the knee of Lord Aldborough in a complete suit of regimentals…[sic].[185]

One must have doubts over whether many houseowners in Ireland were as fussy as Thomas Coke who, in the course of building Holkham Hall, Norfolk, requested from his architect Matthew Brettingham a plan and section 'of every side of the staircase, that I may fix maps or views [of Sicily] etc. to be hung there', in 1737/8.[186] A small number of maps appear in the halls of Barbavilla, county Westmeath (1742/3), Stackallen (1757) and Knapton (1763), and one (of Portugal) in the staircase and lobby area at Mount Stewart (1821), where five pictures also appear. In that inventory too a number of busts appear in the hall. Circular niches (for busts?) appear in the halls at Bellamont and Russborough.

According to a visitor to Ireland in 1797, there were 'several bustos and other pieces of sculpture' in the hall of Leinster House.[187] A bust of Lord Shannon appeared in 45 Kildare Street (1762), and '2 pedestals with marble busts, 2 do. with Plaister of Paris do.' in addition to 'a P of P bird' at Moira House, Dublin (1808), four busts and brackets and '3 composition figures at Shelton House (1816) and '6 Bronze figs – Bear, Bull & Lion' in the Inner Hall and Stairs at Carton (1818).[188] The Killadoon inventories document the expansion of the Clements' collection and the influence of the Grand Tour. In 1807 there was a bronze head of Lord Chesterfield on a stand in the hall, by 1812 a bust of 'Mr Fox by Nollekens', three white marble statues including one of Apollo and one of Bacchus 'and two Egyptian granite (porphry) plinths, had been added. By 1830 china vases and jars were listed, in 1836 '3 Maltese stone sarcophagi with rich arabesque ornament', two flower stands of the same stone appear with more china, and a 'white marble

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185 Quoted in O'Boyle, 'Aldborough House', pp 102-41.
186 Christine Hiskey 'The building of Holkham Hall' in *Architectural History* 40, 1997.
187 Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, 'Dublin and its vicinity in 1797' in *Irish Geography*, 35, (2002), pp 133-55.
188 The hall at Edward Lovett Pearce's Bellamont Forest, county Cavan has oculi in which are busts of Roman emperors.

sleeping child' with bow and arrow on a slab of black marble, bought by Lord Leitrim in 1820. In 1844 a bust of Earl Grey on a marble pedestal was added to all of the above, though Lord Chesterfield's 'head' had disappeared. No paintings appear in the hall of Killadoon until 1905, but four portraits and seven views of Malta are listed in the Inner Hall in 1836. None appear either in the entrance hall at Newbridge House (1821), though along the stairs in the Middle Hall were seventeen pictures (no details given) and similarly four pictures in the Inner Hall, where two marble figures were placed in the niches.

The hall seemed a fashionable place for a clock, many called '8-day clocks', some in walnut or oak cases, and barometers. Other practical items are listed in inventories – 'hat hooks' at the entrance and back halls at Clogrenane Lodge[189], county Carlow and '2 ranges of Brass Hat Hooks' at Carton (1818); '2 brass hoops for umbrellas' at Killadoon (1829), and letter boxes and foot brushes at the latter and at Doneraile Court. Letter boxes were provided for incoming and outgoing post, the latter being delivered by a servant either personally if the address was local or to the nearest post-stage. There is no mention in country house inventories about slates in halls on which, presumably, the servant wrote the name of the visitor (or the visitor wrote his/her own name), but they do appear in three Dublin houses, Mary Street ('black slate in a frame'), 45 Kildare Street ('plate, pencil and sponge') and 10 Cavendish Row ('a writing slate for names').

CONCLUSION

The uniqueness of the hall as an introduction to the rest of the house for the visitor was underlined in 1718 by the owner of Durrow who set his hall apart from other rooms by wainscoting it with oak rather than deal, the wood he used in the rest of the house. By the 1730s wood panelling was being replaced with stucco, accompanied by an increase in the use of architectural orders. According to the plans under discussion it has been noted that the space occupied by the hall in the majority of houses was self-contained, square or rectangular and located to the centre of the front. Usually it was one storey high, but up to the mid-century there was a number of two-storey halls built: it is not surprising to find them at Castletown and Leinster House, but they appear also, in great variety it must be said, in smaller houses where space was at a premium. The configuration at

[189] NLI, Rochfort Papers, Ms 8682(3), 'Inventory of the furniture of Clogrenan Lodge…', undated, early nineteenth-century.

Gloster (albeit a fairly sizeable house), for example, with an upper as well as a lower hall, seems excessive, but points to the importance that was attached to this space. From the middle of the eighteenth century, the single-storey hall was the norm. Early in the following century some architects were providing a dramatic flourish to impress both the owner and the visitor: at Ballyfin the rather modest self-contained hall was the prelude to the Morrisons' spectacular suite of vestibule, saloon and staircase, a device that would have met with Francis Goodwin's approval. Indeed at Lissadell the hall is scarcely noticeable as the eye is immediately distracted by the dominance of the staircase to the left of the entrance, and the *coup d'oeil* provided by the Gallery and Music Room directly in front of it.

Part of the general impression on entering a house was the floor, and it has been found that black and white stone floors were the most common, and that if one was unlucky enough not to be up-to-the-minute, it was acceptable to paint an existing floor. Ballyfin's was of mosaic and, with some exceptions, there were few wooden floors of note.

Apart from the obvious use for the hall, there is strong evidence to suggest that the hall (in the country) was an eating place, taking into consideration accounts from writers like Mrs Delany, and from the great numbers of tables and chairs that were present. Ware has mentioned its use as an eating room in the summer, and with a fireplace or two, it would be probably just as cosy in the winter, as Dorothea Herbert has described. The fact that plate warmers, 'wine tables' and dumb waiters were to be found in a small number of halls might also point in this direction, or it could mean that they are at hand for use elsewhere, most likely in the dining room. Card tables were enormously popular, most houses having many due to the incessant card playing that was carried on throughout the period, and it is possible that cards were played in the hall in country houses. Billiard tables are fairly rare, but were placed in halls before the Victorian tendency towards room specialisation demanded a billiard room.

While there is not much documentary evidence to support the idea that the hall was used for the entertainment of tenants or servants on special occasions such as Christmas, it is not too wide of the mark to suggest that other landlords, apart from Lord Ely at Castle Hume, might have done so. Halls were generally quite hard-wearing spaces with stone floors, walls that were painted with a cheaper (and neutral) paint, and did not contain too many of the owners' treasures. Though not many musical instruments were found there, it was concluded that fiddles, harps,

even harpsichords and pianos might be brought into the hall from other rooms to facilitate the requirements of the company. It was noted too that if an itinerant fiddler's clothes rendered him too shabby to be seen by the company, he could sit 'in the shade in the hall' while the company danced or sang to his music.

While numerous chairs were to be found in halls (and in staircase halls and lobbies), the first appearance of the 'hall chair' proper, which became fashionable in England in about 1730, appeared in Ireland in the Dromana inventory of 1755. These were a mark of status, often with crest and sometimes with a coronet, for those who advanced that far. For those who did not, they were used to sit upon while waiting to see the master of the house on business. It was also noted that there was a hierarchical aspect as to the degree of comfort one was allowed to enjoy as one waited. Other forms of seating, benches, or 'form[e]s' as they were usually called in Ireland, stools and a small number of settle beds were also to be found in the hall.

It has been established that, in the early part of the eighteenth century, just as fire grates were portable, so brass locks and bolts were not automatically sold or leased along with the house: they were considered extras and therefore figured in the inventories. Much of the light in the hall was provided by windows on each side of the hall door and/or over it, and for dark days and night, almost all had a lantern and sconces in the hall and along the staircase. When oil lamps were introduced in the 1780s, they became an instant success that transformed rooms from the low light gained from candles. The inventories seem to suggest that curtains were not used in too many halls, and of those that had them, red was the preferred colour and moreen the fabric. At Carton the 'drab' moreen curtains in the staircase hall were relieved by the 'flower damask festoon' curtains and linen blinds in the combined hall and billiard room. Yet when it came to colour on the walls in these areas it seems that the neutral 'stone' or 'buff' shades were the preferred option, as mentioned above.

It is clear from the inventories that only a handful of houses hung pictures in the hall during this period, and these were a mixed lot. Dromana is exceptional for its panels of framed 'Indian paper pictures' on the walls and over the doors. But as time went by, pieces brought back from Grand Tours made their presence felt, particularly busts and pieces of sculpture and china that were deemed suitable for the hall. Examples of such a collection being amassed is given in the series of inventories for Killadoon.

While in general the location of the hall remained static, the staircase varied in position throughout the period under discussion. It was an element of the building that architects and owners could play with to an extent. From medieval times the grandeur of the staircase related to first-floor reception rooms that continued into the eighteenth century with the superb examples in the Provost's House and that installed at Castletown. It is notable too, that main staircases usually linked ground and first floors only (exceptions being Bishop's Palace, Kilkenny, and Castle Hyde, county Cork), with service stairs used by the whole household to upper storeys. Imperial staircases had a limited appeal, sometimes proposed, but often discarded when it came to building, as they were expensive and required much space. Superb examples of cantilevered staircases in stone were looked at, executed from 1759-60 at the Provost's House (the service stair) and installed at Castletown: that at Townley Hall, and the confident flying staircase at Woodbrook have been noted.

The inventories indicate that most houses, it would appear, had carpet on the staircase, and some had oil cloths with which to cover and protect both. Ross Mahon at Castlegar was careful that much of his Portland stone staircase remained visible when he ordered a fairly narrow strip of carpet to cover it. It was found that, while some extraordinary paintings appeared in the staircase hall at Aldborough House, it was mostly prints that were to be found on staircases, and along a passage at Dromana they are found in the company of portraits, still lives and landscapes.

Spinal corridors never became common, possibly because, like imperial staircases and double-height halls, they took up precious space, and in Ireland we do not have many really big houses. Predictably they appear in plans for Castletown, Leinster House, Carton, Castle Coole and Headfort. Apart from these Barbavilla and Portumna have corridors running the full length of the house, while in other houses shorter corridors or passages appear that complement the screen of columns in many halls. It was Castletown that set the trend for the screen which almost became *de rigueur* from the middle of the eighteenth century.

It must be said that there is no clear dividing line between the vestibule and the lobby. Further, it is used for a similar space on some architectural plans. In most cases it appears that the vestibule was closer to an ante-room than a lobby, despite Aheron's definition. There is evidence that the vestibule could take unusual shapes with architectural decoration such as columns and niches. Its function was to

effect a transition from one space within the house to another, which it did with an amount of style and interest. The purpose of the lobby was the same, but it was done with less style: it could take the form of a short corridor or passageway, and was at times linked to the staircase, making that space more a 'staircase lobby' than a 'staircase hall'. It is important to note that both vestibule and lobby could be used as waiting areas for callers to the house. Francis Johnston does not appear to have used either term much, but it is evident that it was favoured by Richard Morrison from the 1790s. A lobby of a different kind, a motif to be found in Irish houses, and not in England, is the Irish lobby, that self-contained top-lit space on the first floor. The lanterns that light these areas are often decorated with some lovely stucco-work, as at Bellamont, Russborough, and the Provost's House where Timothy Turner's fine ironwork can be seen beneath the lantern that surrounds the oval gallery of the bedchamber floor.

No pattern was found in the disposition of the rooms that adjoined the hall except for a drawing room or saloon to the rear. In many cases there was a parlour to one side, with perhaps a study for the owner of the house on the other, or often the staircase was located to one side, as has been seen.

In conclusion, and taking all of the above into consideration, there are two other aspects of the hall that are worth noting very briefly, on points that have been made or implied. The first is about the hall as a transition space, and this has been looked at as part of the discussion of floors. The transition is from outdoors to indoors and this is effected by the use, continued or otherwise from outside, of architectural elements such as the orders inside the hall. It should be stated that the orders can and are used in other parts of the house but it is the hall that is of interest here, and included in this is the screen of columns that contains the hall, and often frames the entrance into another important room, the saloon, a characteristic of which is its own use of the orders. The orders (often Doric in hall and staircase) are articulated as columns, half-columns, pilasters, or simply implied by a frieze. Furthermore, in two-storey halls and in staircase halls the link between the floors is often marked by a Vitruvian wave. All of this gives the hall a strongly architectural ambience that is further underlined by the stone floor and, in the case of two Dublin houses, the Provost's House and Powerscourt, the indoor rustication throughout the three sections of hall in the former, and in the staircase hall in the latter.

The second point is merely an observation about the hall: it has a strong masculine feel to it. It has been seen that the commonest order used in a hall is Doric, considered the masculine order. Close to the hall, if not adjoining it, is the master's study/office, where his visitors will wait to see him. When we look at the objects that are in the halls, apart from the obvious tables and chairs, we see guns, swords and other weapons, fishing nets and tackle, heads, skins and skeletons of animals. Even the fabrics found there are strong, hard-wearing and the colour generally red. Where pictures are to be found, they are mostly maps and prints, and these, with pieces of sculpture gathered on Grand Tours, are all items that appear also in the study, as will be seen. As visitors make their entrance into the hall these possessions in this setting bear testimony to the brave, strong, sporting, cultivated and powerful men who are masters of it all. Yet, a masculine 'feel' does not make it a gendered space. Unlike the perception that the dining room is a 'male' space and the drawing room a 'female' space, the hall is neutral: it is open to, and used by, both sexes indiscriminately.

CHAPTER 3

PARLOURS AND EATING

This chapter will look at the room in which people ate that is commonly known as the dining room. Cornforth in his *Early Georgian Interiors*, however says that there is a 'strong argument for considering the common parlour first, after the hall and before the parade rooms because its situation was of key importance in the house'.[1] This is a valid point and so this chapter will include not only the so-called 'common parlour', but also other parlours in the house such as 'dining' and 'eating' parlours, in conjunction with the dining room, as there is often a relationship between these spaces. Included too will be parlours where, in the absence of a named dining room (using the plans and inventories as guides), formal eating took place.[2]

It has been seen in the chapter on the hall and stairs that the parlour is frequently the first room off the hall that is encountered on entering. An effort will be made to identify as many categories of parlour as possible and their location within the house. Questions such as when did the term 'parlour' disappear, and did the dining room or some other room replace it, will be examined, as will whether parlours in country houses differed to those in town. Clues as to their use may be gleaned from the furniture inventories. This source too will give much information on how the formal dining room was furnished.

The location of the dining room will be examined to discover whether in general it constitutes part of the so-called 'parade rooms' over the period under discussion, or is it a fairly autonomous space? Did Irish owners prefer it to the front or to the rear of the house? How true for Ireland is Girouard's statement that formal dining took place in the saloon before the dining room became established?[3] The size of the room and its proximity to the kitchen and backstairs will be looked at as will the architectural decoration of eating rooms in general. With the help of the inventories, it should be possible to get an idea of preferred colours, furniture, furnishings, and floor covering. Did some people always eat in the dining room or

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[1] Cornforth, *Early Georgian*... p 38.

[2] John Byng had no time for these separate eating rooms: 'When I enter a great dining room in the country, I am generally told 'That this is not used in common; but that the family dine in a smaller room, unless there is company'. What nonsense is this...? Because they know not how to warm their rooms; and what room is too great for, even, two people?', C Bruyn Andrews, (ed.) *The Torrington Diaries* 4 vols, iii (London 1936), p 157.

[3] Girouard, *Life in the English country house,* pp 136, 162, 203.

just occasionally? Was it a moveable feast, as Lady Wharncliffe described on visiting an English country house in 1831 where 'yesterday we dined and sat in the small rooms...today I believe we are to occupy the large ones' and goes on to record dining in the great dining room.[4] The hour at which dinner was served changed over the eighteenth century and we will look at the effects of this on the dining room and its contents.

It is proposed therefore, to look in detail, firstly at the parlour in its various forms, in both country and town. The Breakfast Parlour, the first mention of which in this study occurs in a Dublin house in the mid-eighteenth century, will then be examined, before moving on to the formal dining room as an architectural space and as a furnished room. It is not the aim in this chapter to look at the broad area of entertainment for guests that would involve activities in addition to eating: that will be examined elsewhere. Here we are concerned with how a family, with their friends and relatives, used the relevant rooms of the house on a day to day basis.

The country house parlour

The parlour has a very long history; the earliest mention of the term was in the thirteenth century, according to the *OED*. Here too we are informed that it was 'the ordinary sitting room of the family which, when more spacious and handsomely furnished, is usually called the drawing room'. It was also very much an eating room. As defined it was a room that changed over the eighteenth century from one that contained no comfortable, upholstered seat furniture, as will be seen, to being 'almost entirely a sitting room...and even disappearing altogether'.[5] Among the plans and inventories in this study the term 'parlour' has seemed to attract a qualifying adjective in Irish houses: apart from Dining and Eating Parlours, which are self-explanatory, there are - Parlours; Grand and Great Parlours; Big and Large Parlours; Small, Little and Lesser Parlours: Common, Gilt and even Out Parlours. In town houses it was more consistent: there was the Front or Street Parlour and the Back Parlour, while the Breakfast Parlour was a later addition to both country and town residences.[6] This section will concentrate on those in houses in the country, and will then take a brief look at those in town.

In contrast to the specialisation of rooms that began in the second half of the eighteenth century and culminated in the Victorian era, the parlour seemed to be

[4] Quoted in Fowler and Cornforth, *English decoration*, p 63.
[5] Cornforth, *Early Georgian...* p 38.
[6] The Breakfast Parlour will be dealt with in a separate section in this chapter.

almost a 'catch-all' term in the late seventeenth century and well into the following one. With the exception of the Great or the Grand Parlour, they (and there were sometimes up to three parlours in a house[7]) were informal rooms for the family where they ate, relaxed and received company. Smaller rooms that were easier to heat and light were necessary for comfort, particularly in large houses. It is interesting to note that in Scotland, throughout the early eighteenth century, a room often called the 'family chamber' was used in a similar way to the parlour in Ireland. The main difference between parlour and 'family chamber was that it contained a bed (beds had disappeared from most parlours in Ireland in the early decades of the century).[8]

There are numerous references to rooms as parlours in inventories throughout the century, probably due to the fact that once a room is called by one name, it can be difficult to break the habit. This might be particularly so in the case of the parlour, a family room that may not have had to endure as many changes of décor over the years as a more formal room might. In Britain this room was most popularly called the Common (in the sense of everyday) Parlour. Roger North described it thus:

> This room must not be great, but neat and pleasant, and posted so as to view the front and back avenew to the house; for, being the place of generall pastime, it is not amiss from it to see all the movements that happen neer the house. And if the walls can be brought to allow it, nothing is more usefull here than closets, cupboards, and presses, for the laying by books, swords, cloaks, and other things, which may be of quotidian use and should to avoid lumbring the room have places to lay them by in.[9]

He also was of the opinion that the Common Parlour should have at least one other door from it for the sake of privacy: 'For if wee consult convenience, wee must have severall avenews, and bolting holes, for such as are in the family and undrest, or for any other reason, to decline passing by company posted about by accident…For it is unpleasant to be forc't to cross people, when one has not a mind to it…'.[10] While the term 'common parlour' was used in Britain, the only use of the term in Ireland in the eighteenth century on the plans and inventories surveyed is at Lucan House, county Dublin and on a plan for Ardbraccan, county

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[7] Isaac Ware uses the term 'waiting room' for the space to right or left of the hall that is usually referred to as a parlour. This is in addition to 'Common Parlour' on plans.

[8] Macauley, *The Classical Country House in Scotland*, p 80; Graham, Henry Grey, *The social life of Scotland in the eighteenth century* (London 1899, 1969 edn), p 8. Macauley is of the opinion that in William Adam's House of Dun 'the day to day routine of living must have been in the linked parlour and family bedroom', p 80.

[9] Colvin and Newman (eds), *Of building*, pp 137-38.

[10] Colvin and Newman (eds), *Of building*, p 137.

Meath ,[11] both dating to the 1770s. It appears at Cloncarneel, county Meath in 1801 and Castle Bernard, county Offaly in 1833.[12]

The fact that the parlour does not appear to have moved upstairs on plans underlines its genesis as an eating room for upper servants (a small parlour) at ground level where the Great Parlour was traditionally located directly below the Great Chamber on the upper floor. While in British houses parlours were to be found at basement level, the only example among the plans and inventories examined is the 'Little Parlour below Stairs' in the inventory of the Ingoldsby house in Mary Street, Dublin (1731).[13] When John Aheron defined the parlour as 'a fair lower Room, designed for the Entertainment of Company' he did not mean a basement.[14] By the beginning of the eighteenth century few Great or Grand Parlours were to be found in Irish houses. Pole Cosby, however, proudly recorded how his father in 1699 built 'the Big house, that is the Hall, Big Staircase and Big Parlour' at Stradbally Hall, county Laois, a phrase that seemed to define 'the Big house' for him.[15] The 'Big Parlour' in this case surely ranks alongside the Great or Grand Parlours.

In England it was common practice to locate Great and Common Parlours on opposite sides of the hall.[16] This was the case at Old Castle Coole, county Fermanagh (1709) and at Dromoland House, county Clare (*c.* 1740, **Fig. 2.4**), all to the front of the house,[17] as was the Great Parlour in Conyngham Hall, Slane, county Meath (*c.* 1710).[18] Among the inventories a Great Parlour is mentioned at Powerscourt, county Wicklow (1728/9), as is a Dining Room, but apart from the fact that the Parlour had four pairs of curtains and the dining room five, there is no indication of where either was located, though the Great Parlour might have become the later Great Saloon.

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[11] Sketched by McParland from among the Farnham Drawings, now in a private collection.
[12] An estimate for furniture at Caledon House from Mayhew & Ince, London, dated 1st May 1783, and an invoice from them to James Alexander Esq in 1785, refer to furniture for a 'Common Parlour'. It is not clear whether Alexander used the term at Caledon or if it was assumed by the firm. PRONI Caledon Papers D/2433/A/2/4/1-19; D/2433/A/2/3/9.
[13] Bere, the steward at Carton, county Kildare, and the steward at Baronscourt, county Tyrone each had his own parlour (Stella Tillyard, *Aristocrats* (London 1994) p 213; Gebbie (ed.), *Abercorn Letters*.... P 7.)
[14] John Aheron, *A general treatise*, book iii (unpaginated).
[15] 'Autobiography of Pole Cosby, of Stradbally, Queen's County, 1703-1737(?)' in *Journal of the Co. Kildare Archaeological Society*, vol v (1906-08), pp 79-99.
[16] Cornforth, *Early Georgian*... p 40.
[17] It should be noted that corner fireplaces in parlours appeared in Old Castle Coole (1709) in the Lesser Parlour, not in the Grand Parlour, and at Dromoland (1730s) in the Parlour, not the Great Parlour.
[18] Illustrated in Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p 67.

It seems clear that, with its location immediately off the hall of entrance, the parlour was a convenient informal room used by the family as a living room in which, as North states, there should be space for storing items used on a daily basis, and which could also be used for the entertainment of friends, and as a comfortable waiting room for visitors.[19] The latter option seems to have been the object in one of Castle's plans for Kildare (later Leinster) House, Dublin in 1745 when he located the parlour to the right of the hall, where the earl could receive callers on business, usually in the mornings (**Fig. 3.1**). There is, however, another parlour on this plan, overlooking the garden to the east. This appears to have been part of the formal suite of rooms, between the Great Dining Room (on the garden front), and a dressing room, with a bowed end screened by columns.[20] This parlour and the adjacent dressing room would have been used on formal occasions as sitting rooms.[21]

In a plan for Castle Coole, county Fermanagh (*c* 1730), and in one from the Charleville Forest collection (undated),[22] Richard Castle locates the parlour to the rear of the house (**Figs 3.2, 3.3**). In the first plan it is directly behind the vaulted hall, and used as a drawing room (in the absence of one), as it is next to a two-storey dining room. In the second plan, the parlour is in addition to the drawing- and dining rooms, but is smaller and the backstairs next to it serve it and the Dining Room with equal ease.

There appears to be some ambiguity in architects' use of the term 'parlour' even to the end of the eighteenth century. The terms 'Parlour' and 'Dining Parlour' were used to describe the same space (i.e. the main eating room) at Headfort, county Meath in plans by Castle (1740s?) and by John Ensor (1750s?), both of whom located it to the left of the hall on their plans (**Fig. 1.20**). As there was no other named dining area on these plans, formal meals may have been served there or, as was often the case in the early part of the century, in the saloon.[23] In 1765 Sir William Chambers submitted plans for the same house that clarified the distribution slightly by leaving the parlour to the left of the entrance and locating a dining room across the hall from it (**Fig. 3.4**). In Richard Morrison's book

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[19] At Lucan House, Dublin (1770s) there was a Parlour to the left of the hall, opposite the Dining Room.
[20] The three adjoining rooms to the north of the house, the Parlour, Dressing Room and the Servants' Waiting Room (to the front of the house) had become the Supper Room by 1759.
[21] Together with the two parlours already mentioned at Leinster House, there was a room in the family quarters at the south end of the house, called the Common Eating Room.
[22] IAA Photograph collection, from the Charleville Forest Drawings collection.
[23] It must be said that there were not many saloons on plans in the first half of the century.

published in 1793,[24] it appears that either he cannot make up his mind between the terms 'parlour' and 'dining room', or he might be appealing to differing tastes. In one of his two largest house plans the eating room is called a parlour. Bearing in mind that it is the biggest room and that in the same house are a billiard room, a study and a breakfast parlour, all room names that are associated with later newly-built houses, a 'parlour' was at this time rather *passé* in the country house. In the second plan he calls the same space a Dining Room, the Study has become a Library, and the Breakfast Parlour is now a Breakfast *Room*. It might also be worth noting that, in plans for Castle Coole, Richard Johnston has a 'Breakfast *Parlour*' to the right of the hall (1789), while in his plans for the same house (1790) the English architect James Wyatt calls that space a 'Breakfast *Room*'.

Cornforth's claim that the parlour began to disappear from new houses in Britain in the 1740s, and was out of fashion by the 1750s, would not be true of the situation in Ireland.[25] One is to be found on a plan of Lucan House in the 1770s; Francis Johnston, at Cloncarneel, county Meath as late as 1801 as has been seen, has a parlour and a common parlour, the former clearly a dining room. It is also to be found on his drawings for Killeen Castle, county Meath (1803) and Pakenham Hall (Tullynally Castle), county Longford (1801-6) but perhaps like Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill in 1854, the owners wanted room names that clearly resonated with the past particularly if their house was in the castle style.[26] Among the plans examined the parlour is markedly absent from houses newly built or altered extensively after the Act of Union such as Rockingham, county Roscommon (1809), Ballyfin, county Laois (1822), Emo Court, county Laois (1821), Lissadell, county Sligo (1833) and Adare Manor, county Limerick (1834), all newly-built, and those refurbished include Castlegar (1801), Mount Bellew (1805), both in county Galway, Castle Howard, county Wicklow (*c.* 1811), and Carton, county Kildare (*c.* 1815).

Despite the ambiguity mentioned above, it appears that the parlour for informal use in the country house was usually located to the right or left of the hall to the front. A look at the furniture that was contained in 'informal' parlours might throw more light on the activities pursued there. Jane Austen's description of a visit to a 'Great House' might be a good starting point. There, paying a visit to their friends,

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[24] Morrison, *Useful and Ornamental designs*, numbers 7 and 8, 9 and 10.
[25] Cornforth, *Early Georgian*... p 40.
[26] Cornforth, *Early Georgian*... p 42.

Anne Elliot and her sister sat 'the full half hour[27] in the old-fashioned square parlour, with a small carpet and shining floor, to which the present daughters of the house were gradually giving the proper air of confusion by a grand pianoforte, and a harp, flowerstands, and little tables placed in every direction'.[28] As a room where numerous family activities took place, there is a surprising lack among the inventories of musical instruments.[29] Austen also mentions that the room is wainscoted, which seems to have been common in parlours.[30] The parlour in the Lord Mayor of Dublin's residence in Dawson Street was of 'Dantzick oak'.[31] In his specification for a house in Bristol in the early decades of the eighteenth century, the builder recommended wainscoting for the parlour, with no mention of the same for the dining room.[32] Mrs Delany, in a letter to her sister in 1750, supposes that 'when you turn your kitchen into a parlour, you will fit the wainscot of the best bedchamber there, and hang the bedchamber with paper', the latter being more fashionable by then.[33]

The Great Parlour in Powerscourt county Wicklow (1728) has already been mentioned as having four windows; these were hung with scarlet paragon. There were 24 'fine Walnut chairs with Barbary Leather Seats & loose covers of leather'; the oak dining table was oval and there was a sideboard. For relaxation the family could amuse themselves with the pair of backgammon tables, a pair of globes and a card table. The contents of the parlour at the [old] Bishop's Palace at Elphin, county Roscommon (1740)[34], were fewer but not dissimilar, with evidence for eating, drinking tea and playing cards. No curtains are listed but there was a 'looking glass', and the ten leather chairs were similar to those listed in the Dining Room. At Howth Castle, Dublin (between 1746-52), the contents of the Out Parlour, which possibly indicates its proximity to a back door, are rather ambiguous: a dining table, 14 walnut chairs covered with Spanish leather,[35] and a 'large black & white marble table, mahogany frame'. It may have been used as a waiting room and for eating in. In county Meath, Stackallen (1757) has a Small and

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[27] Was a half-hour the accepted length of a visit?
[28] As it was too early (published 1817) for Victorian clutter, Austen seems to be implying a casual approach to order in the house. Jane Austen, *Persuasion*, in *Jane Austen the complete novels* (London, 1984 edn), p 948.
[29] A 'spinett' is listed in St Sepulchre's, Dublin in the 'Little Parlour' in *c* 1730, and a piano in the 'Breakfast Parlour' at Clogrenane, county Carlow *c* 1810.
[30] The odours of food could lodge in wall hangings, tapestries, and in curtains. Cornforth, *Early Georgian*... p 40.
[31] Gilbert, J T, *A history of the City of Dublin* (Dublin 1859), iii, p 293.
[32] Hussey, Christopher, *Early Georgian 1715-1760* (London 1965 edn), p 14.
[33] Day, (ed.), *Letters*, p 162.
[34] NLI, Wicklow Papers, Ms 38,597/22, 'An Inventory of the household goods belonging to Doctor Robert Howard Late Lord Bishop of Elphin taken this 21st day of June 1740'.
[35] The chairs in the dining room were covered with calf-skin.

a Large Parlour; the smaller, with green paragon curtains on the windows, was an informal eating room with two armchairs covered to match the curtains, twelve rush-bottomed chairs, an oval mahogany dining table 'with skelliton feet', an 'old octagonal table with slate top', and a tea table. The furniture in the Large Parlour gives little information about its use; it had, apart from the '2 walnut armchairs with cane bottoms and backs', two card tables and an eight-leaved gilt leather screen, no other chairs and no curtains.[36] Nine panels of its wainscot were covered with India paper and the only picture was a portrait of 'King George'. It sounds rather like the description by Jonah Barrington of the parlours at his grandfather's house, Cullenaghmore, county Sligo, where 'A large parlour [was] on each side of the hall, the only embellishments of which were some old portraits, and a multiplicity of hunting, shooting and racing prints, with red tape nailed round them by way of frames'.[37] Finally in the estimate of furniture from the London firm of Mayhew & Ince for the 'Common Parlour' at Caledon, county Tyrone (1783)[38], it is evident that it was for family eating with mahogany dining and breakfast tables, a 'mahogany circular sideboard table between doors', six mahogany chairs with stuffed seats and two elbow chairs to match. It would seem unlikely that the chairs were covered to match the white window curtains, but perhaps they matched the trimmings, a green fringe and tassells. Whether the 'Turkey carpet' here or in the Great Parlour in Powerscourt (Wicklow) was 'small' and 'showing a shining floor' as described by Jane Austen, is not known.

The town house parlour

The parlour in town houses, and here we are discussing mostly the terraced house, was fairly straightforward in one sense: there was a 'Street' or a 'Front' Parlour, and a 'Back Parlour' both on the ground floor. But information gleaned from inventories show that the functions of these rooms varied so that not all street parlours were waiting-cum-business rooms and not all back parlours were informal eating rooms. Frequently the back parlour was where the family dined, but just as frequently it was the formal dining room, as in 45 Kildare Street, Dublin (1762), the Conyngham house in Park Street (1766), a house owned by the earl of Rosse in Denmark Street (1793) and the earl of Meath's at 34 Merrion Square (1811). Robert Adam arranged the formal rooms in narrow London houses over two floors: the parlour and eating room on the ground floor, and the other reception

[36] Rush- and cane-bottomed chairs, sometimes with backs of the same material became known as those most commonly used in parlours, though in Ireland leather covered chairs were very popular.
[37] Quoted in Valerie Pakenham, *The Big House in Ireland* (London n.d.), p 46.
[38] PRONI, Caledon Papers, D/2433/A/2/4/1-19, 'Estimate to James Alexander Esq. for furnishing the principal Story in Caledon House' dated 1st May 1783.

rooms above, to the front of the house.[39]At Antrim House on Merrion Square both parlours were formal dining rooms as the house was divided between the two daughters of the 6th earl and their husbands, Sir Henry Vane-Tempest and Lord Mark Kerr: Sir Henry and his guests dined in the Street Parlour and Lord Mark and his guests did likewise in the Back Parlour. The furniture in these types of parlours will be discussed in the section on Dining Rooms.

At Powerscourt House, Dublin (1728/9) were two Street Parlours – one 'Small' and one 'Large' – one possibly to each side of the entrance. Both had two windows on which hung 'Persian' curtains.[40] The smaller room had gilt leather hangings on which was hung the map of Ireland, and ten cane chairs.[41] There is no mention of hangings or pictures in the other room, but it had twelve leather chairs that made it more comfortable. Both rooms had tables and side tables of oak; the larger had a mahogany dining table, a card table and a firescreen, items that did not appear in the smaller. It might be concluded from this that the Small Parlour was used for people coming to the house on business, and the other was a family room where they ate and amused themselves with various activities.[42]

The Street and Back Parlours in Mary Street (1731) give us another picture. The 'Large Marble Table with a mahogany frame' and the dumb waiter, together with a dozen cane chairs included in the Street Parlour suggest a room in which to eat but it lacks a dining table, but perhaps one or both of the oval oak tables in the hall might be brought in for family meals. The Back Parlour on the other hand, with window curtains of red silk damask lined with red serge, a settee, eight upholstered chairs and two stools covered with red damask (with red serge cases to all), was the drawing room (none is listed in the inventory) where family and friends could relax and play cards on the mahogany quadrille table. At the Balfour house on St

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[39] Eileen Harris, *The genius of Robert Adam* (New Haven & London 2001), p 5. It is interesting to note that in his plans for Charlotte Square in Edinburgh (1791), Adam located the Parlour on the first floor, apparently the custom in Scotland.

[40] The *OED* describes the fabric 'Persian' as being a thin silk, suitable for lining. This would not seem to be quite suitable for an everyday room, where a fairly robust fabric such as moreen would be apposite.

[41] There was a Gilt Leather Parlour listed in the inventory for Drumcondra House, Dublin in 1773. It may have been that mentioned in a letter dated 9 July 1726 in which 'Ja' Coghill asked Mrs Bonnell (a sister of Mrs Conolly's of Castletown) to arrange for gilt leather 'to furnish a room'. He gives the dimensions: 'one piece must be seven foot one inch in height, and eleven foot three inches in length, the other piece must be eight foot ten inches in length and of the same height. The colour of the leather I chose was a pleasant blue figured with a large pattern of [unclear] and I marked the skin with the name of Dr Coghill and would have only a gilding round each Pannell…'. NLI, Smythe of Barbavilla Papers, MS 41,580/32, 1726-29.

[42] It should be noted that Mr Wingfield's Dressing Room was at ground level and had certain similarities with the smaller parlour in its furnishings: gilt leather hangings, a 'large Book of Maps' and fifteen cane chairs. With its desk and bookcase it was where business of perhaps a more private nature was carried on.

Stephen's Green (1741/2) the evidence points to the Street Parlour being a drawing room,[43] with ten chairs with tapestry seats, including two arm chairs, a Turkey carpet, a marble table with a carved frame (a pier table between the two windows?), mahogany card and tea tables and twenty-seven pictures hanging on the walls.[44] The furniture in this room was the most expensive in the house at £63.0s.0d. The Back Parlour was an informal eating room (there was a 'Dineing Room' elsewhere[45]) with much mahogany furniture including a supper and two dining tables, a sideboard and a cistern. There were twelve leather-seated chairs[46] plus one with arms; a mirror, a landscape over the chimneypiece and other pictures including twenty prints of fortifications and four hunting pieces. In contrast to the Turkey carpet in the Street Parlour, the floor here was covered with the cheaper Scotch carpet, an item that was rare in Ireland before 1752 according to Ada Leask.[47] The furniture of the Back Parlour was valued at £37.2s.8d.

Lord Howth's house in St Mary's Abbey (1751) had the same two parlours and an additional one, the 'Little Back Parlour'. Each of the main rooms contained a dozen black leather chairs, though it may be significant that those in the Back Parlour had 'Walnut Frames'. Both had green paragon 'draw-up' curtains (probably festoon) and for privacy, the front room had blinds. The Street Parlour had a pier glass and a 'marble Side-board Table', both of which might be located between the windows. A brass-mounted grate and two brass locks complete the list of furniture there. In the Back Parlour, the mahogany dining tables, 'marble sideboard', an 'oak Botle Tray' and 'wicker botle coasters' provide evidence for it being an eating room. Here also was a pier glass, a moving grate, two fire screens and three brass locks. The Little Back Parlour contained nine black leather chairs, three tables (two of oak), a mahogany 'escrutore', and items normally to be found in a bedroom or a dressing room – a dressing mirror, feather bed etc. and a deal chest. It may have been a room used by the family's steward, or butler.

The Street Parlour in the Cockburn house at 10 Cavendish Row (1763) was furnished with great care and expense – more than that spent on the Back Parlour.

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[43] There is no drawing room listed in the inventory; it does not necessarily mean that there was none.
[44] A seascape hung over the chimneypiece, two landscapes over the doors and on the walls twelve fruit 'pices' and twelve flower 'pices'. NLI Townley Hall/Balfour Papers, 'An acctt of the late Capt. Belfourt [Balfour] housd goods March 15th Plate, China, Linnin &c. sold by Auction, 1741/2', MS 10,279 and MS 9534.
[45] Furnished as a bedroom.
[46] Suitable for an eating room as they are easy to clean.
[47] Quoted in Rosemary ffolliott, 'Captain Balfour's Auction 15th March 1741-2', *Irish Ancester* vol xvi, no. 1, 1984, pp 21-31. Scotch carpets were probably a machine-made type of reversible or pile-less material, not necessarily made in Scotland, and cheap compared with e.g. Wilton. It would be more suitable than a pile carpet for an eating room.

It was impressive: 78 yards of gilt trimming on the blue papered walls, an Italian marble chimneypiece 'with guilt decorations', lots of paintings, fashionable Wedgwood vases and blinds described as 'Italian' (might this suggest that they were painted?).[48] It also contained a 'breakfast table' and a 'shaving chair' indicating morning activity, and the presence there of a writing desk with drawers, ten chairs and two armchairs, seem to confirm its use as a room in which business was conducted with visitors. The cistern and stand and a 'cooper for bottles' indicate that those visitors may have enjoyed an amount of hospitality there. The Back Parlour had three pairs of moreen curtains on its windows, fourteen chairs, a dumb waiter, a large sideboard and a stand 'for tea kettle'. It also had two dining tables, one to seat twelve, the other eight.[49] Both rooms were lit by girandoles and [with?] lacquered sockets, one in the front room and three in the back; both had Wilton carpets, mirrors and 'English paper' on the walls. The Street Parlour was a perfect place for the owner to spend his mornings, comfortably surrounded by the objects he had collected, including a great number of pictures: seventeen hanging there in 1763 (not specified, but worth £68) and 13 more[50] were acquired between 1768 and 1770. The Back Parlour was in many ways similar to it but it remained an eating room,[51] in which hung nine paintings, six of which were acquired between 1764 and 1770.[52]

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With four 'drawing rooms'[53] (as well as a 'Dining Parlour') listed at Mrs Clements' house at North Great George's Street (April 1805), it would seem rather excessive to have had another. But whether the Front Parlour here, which must have been a sizeable room to take '20 stuffed back and seat chairs with old covers, 4 sofas[54] and 6 bolsters to match', was used as a drawing room, a waiting room, or had some other function, is not clear.[55] There were no tables and little else: '2 suites of

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[48] The dining room also had blinds and so must have been on the first floor, to the front of the house, while the drawing room, like the back parlour had no need of them.

[49] These rooms were richly furnished and all of the furniture was of mahogany.

[50] The 13 were A View of the Rhine; A Sleeping Boare; A Dying Saint; 2 Fruit pices; A Dog and Dead Game; 4 small Landscapes; 2 small pices a Storm and a Calm; Diane Bathing & Acteon

[51] Though a Dining Room appears on the inventory, it was furnished as a drawing room in addition to the named Drawing Room.

[52] The nine paintings were: a Virgin and Child; A Sea Pice and a Man & Lyon; a Dutch Still Life; A Burgomaster's Wife by Bol; Flora Picture; The Rape of Proserpine; A Landscape '- over the Chimney'; Merry Conversation.

[53] Named on the inventory as 'Small Bow Drawing Room, middle floor'; 'Large Back Drawing Room, middle floor'; 'Front Drawing Room'; 'Small Front Drawing Room, middle floor'.

[54] The 'old covers' were described as 'damask' in a valuation of the furniture here 4 months later (August 1805), and in which the sofas were called 'Marlborough sofas', also in damask.

[55] Listed under 'parlour furniture' in an advertisement in 1803 for the contents of Lord Donegall's house in Belfast that had been seized by the sheriff of county Antrim were: 'thirty-one chairs, eight tables, a 'library sopha' and a pianoforte'. W A Maguire, *Living like a lord: the 2nd marquis of Donegall 1769-1844* (Ulster Society for Irish Historical Studies, Belfast 1984), p 30. There may indeed have been more than one parlour and one may have been a formal eating room.

Nassau damask festoon curtains, a large pier glass and a Turkey carpet'. An old mahogany 'Guarderine' (gardevin or cellaret) and a Japanned plate warmer may have been stored there. A 'large mahogany ovall dining table, leather cover' in the Front Hall and a card table in the Back Hall might have been brought in as needed.

Having examined the different functions of many types of parlour, it is almost with relief that the Breakfast Parlour, to which we now turn, makes its own statement.

The breakfast room-parlour and the morning room

The first is a room that appears to leave us in no doubt as to its purpose – a space in which to take breakfast. As it appears in the inventories of Lord Howth's Dublin house in St Mary's Abbey in 1751 and of Dromoland House, county Clare in 1753, it would seem that the arrival of such a specialised space was discernible as early as the 1740s.[56] Among the plans a Breakfast Room appears at Headfort, county Meath made by either Castle (who died in 1751), or John Ensor possibly in the 1750s.[57] The fact that there is then an almost twenty-year gap until the appearance of the next breakfast parlour indicates that it was not widely copied at this time. A possible development of this space emerged on a plan by Francis Johnston[58] dating to 1790, where a 'Morning Room', a large room to the right of the hall is located in a space that might be called a parlour heretofore. It was not a room name that was common in Ireland throughout the period under discussion. Morning rooms appear in only five other ground-floor plans: Castlegar, county Galway (1801), Castle Howard, county Wicklow (1811), Emo Court, county Laois (1821, in Dominick Madden's sketch[59], where it adjoins a breakfast room), Dromoland, county Clare (*c* 1826) and Castle Dillon, county Armagh (1842). But at Killeen Castle, county Meath (1803) there is one on the second floor, 'Lady Fingall's Morning Room' (**Fig. 3.5**), where it is part of the Fingall's private bedroom suite,[60] and in a similar fashion a Breakfast Room is located between two bedroom suites on the first floor at Pollacton, county Carlow (1803).[61] A morning room is not mentioned among the inventories. On the other hand the Breakfast Room had its followers with, in the material under discussion, its appearance in

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[56] Other eighteenth-century breakfast parlours/rooms among the inventories include number 10 Henrietta Street (1772), Baronscourt (1782), and Gaulston, county Westmeath (1787).
[57] Richard Castle died in 1751, John Ensor, who had worked with him, took over his practice.
[58] IAA, Mitchell Crichton drawings, Townley Hall Collection, M2, 'unnamed, possibly Townley Hall or Rokeby', according to a note on his sketch of the plan by McParland.
[59] Illustrated in McCarthy and Mulligan, 'New light on Ballyfin and the mysterious Dominick Madden, part I' in *LADS*, vol. 8, 2005, pp 86-123, fig. 22.
[60] This unusual ten-sided, spacious room has a doorway that leads directly into the oval bedroom, which is flanked by separate dressing rooms for the couple.
[61] Designed by Richard Morrison.

seventeen houses in the second half of the eighteenth century[62] and in sixteen in the first half of the following one.

In the plans firstly there is no discernible difference in the location of either version of this room and that of a parlour, apart from those already mentioned at Killeen Castle and Pollacton.[63] This raises the interesting question of whether the breakfast room-parlour was used all day as a multi-purpose room by the family or only in the mornings? Among the eighteenth-century plans, there can be no doubt that at Ardbraccan, county Meath (1773-74) the patron required a breakfast room as it appears in all of the plans.[64] Thomas Penrose's planned extension for the Clements family at Woodville, county Dublin (1779, **Fig. 3.6**) includes a circular Breakfast Room with three windows, linked by an enfilade along the garden front to the Eating Parlour, the Withdrawing Room and the 'Antiroom'. Access to the backstairs and kitchen from both eating rooms was adjacent to them. Blayney Balfour and his sister Anne played with the idea of a breakfast parlour at Townley Hall, county Louth from about 1790, but obviously abandoned it; no parlour of any description appears in James Playfair's plans for the house (1792), nor in the house as built. In a 1789 plan for Charleville Forest, county Offaly the architect James Byres created an enfilade from one side of the main block to the other: off the oval hall to the right is the Breakfast Parlour through which guests must go to gain access to the Dining Room beyond it (**Fig. 3.7**).[65] Curiously, in Richard Morrison's book (1793), 'parlours' appear in smaller houses, while the larger houses have 'breakfast parlours'.[66]

Of the nineteenth-century breakfast or morning rooms,[67] that at Castle Howard, county Wicklow with its tripartite window overlooking the flower garden, was part of an extension to the building carried out by Richard Morrison in *c* 1811 (**Fig.**

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[62] Includes three from Morrison's book.

[63] There are some curious combinations: 1) on a sketch plan of the ground-floor of Emo, county Laois made by Dominick Madden for Sir Charles Coote of Ballyfin in 1821, the two adjoining rooms to the left of the hall are called by him a Morning Room and a Breakfast Room, the only example of such a combination in this study. McCarthy and Mulligan, 'New Light on Ballyfin', fig. 22. 2) On a plan showing an extension to Straffan House, dated to 1808, there are two rooms one behind the other called respectively 'Eating Parlour' and 'Dining Room' that appear to be almost the same size. There is a 'Breakfast Room' in the older part of the house. IAA, Murray Collection drawings.

[64] IAA, Photograph collection, Ballyfin, county Laois.

[65] A passageway from the dining room leads to the kitchen wing.

[66] Other eighteenth-century plans with breakfast rooms were: Lucan House (1770s) by Michael Stapleton the stuccodor who refers to what was the Common Parlour as the Breakfast Parlour; a villa among the Mount Kennedy drawings by Thomas Cooley (*c*1781), and Johnston's and Wyatt's drawings for Castle Coole (1789 and 1790 respectively).

[67] In addition to those mentioned are Markree Castle, co Sligo (1803), Ballycurry, co Wicklow (1808), Howth Castle, co Dublin (1824), Ballyfin and Emo, both co Laois (both 1821), Durrow Abbey , co Offaly (1829), Castle Dillon, co Armagh (1842) and on an 1843 plan of Powerscourt Wicklow.

2.15). As at Woodville and Charleville Forest (above) that at Mount Bellew, county Galway (*c* 1805, **Fig. 2.20**) was part of an enfilade, here along the front of the house that linked the Library, Drawing Room, Hall, Breakfast Room and Dining Room, with access for guests to the latter only through the Breakfast Room.[68] Finally, an unusually-shaped Breakfast Room at Brook Lodge, also in Galway, had an apsidal end, a doorway in its centre that led to the Dining Room,[69] and a niche on one side of the apse, answered on the other by a curved tripartite window (**Fig. 3.8**).[70]

On a visit to a country house, Lady Morgan's eponymous hero, *O'Donnel* (1814) finds 'a kind of bar' adjoining the breakfast room, 'where breakfast was prepared and served according to orders', noting that, from there, trays were dispatched to guests' dressing rooms.[71]

The contents of the eighteenth-century breakfast rooms are, on the whole, not impressive, and it is difficult to glean any information from them as to their use other than for a quick breakfast, perhaps even taken standing up. That for St Mary's Abbey, Dublin (1751) begins well with two windows dressed in 'crimson Nasaw damask' festoon curtains with a gilt-framed pier glass between them, but apart from '8 rush bottm Chairs with 8 cushions for Do.', a small writing table and a full-length portrait of Lady Belfield, there was little else. As well as a breakfast table,[72] one for cards, a desk and a mirror, there were a 'Settee and 8 Chairs Covered With Cross Stitch' at Dromoland House, county Clare (1753). At the sparsely-furnished 10 Henrietta Street, Dublin (1772) the curtains of the breakfast room were of crimson paragon, eight paintings hung on the walls and a mirror over the chimneypiece, but apart from a marble table top (no frame mentioned) there were neither tables nor chairs.[73] Baronscourt, county Tyrone (1782) had a marble table top also but it *was* on a frame, there was an oval mirror, a picture over the chimneypiece, a Pembroke table and seven elbow chairs covered with red and white check cases. At Gaulston, county Westmeath (1787)[74] where the '3 large mahogany oval tables' were presumably shared with the Dining Room, there were

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[68] Similar to Charleville Forest.
[69] There was an alternative route to the dining room here.
[70] Brook Lodge was built in 1776 to designs by William Leeson. He provided plans for its extension in 1786 which included 'a large room', probably the dining room; the breakfast room linked the 'large room' to the original house. Patricia McCarthy and Kevin V Mulligan, 'Unfulfilled mediocrity: the hapless career of Dominick Madden in the West of Ireland' in *LADS* vol. ix, 2006, pp 98-149.
[71] Lady Morgan (Sydney Owenson), *O'Donnel* (London, 1979 edn), p 231.
[72] This is the earliest breakfast table mentioned in the inventories.
[73] It should be said, however, that the entire house was sparsely furnished and the only chairs were in 'the late Mr Gardiner's bedchamber' and dressing room, and those in the servants'quarters.
[74] 'Inventory of furniture in Galston House, taken December 1787'. My thanks to the Knight of Glin.

ten rush-bottomed chairs painted green and white, a type of oven,[75] and a collection of oval-shaped items – two mirrors with gilt frames, sixteen portraits and a map, also with gilt frames.

The later inventories are more interesting and indicate a greater degree of comfort and colour coordination in breakfast rooms. For example in Clogrenane, county Carlow (*c* 1810) there were green moreen curtains, a 'Large settee and cuichens with green check covers', six green and white chairs, and '2 green silk curtains to Lettice doors' (unclear, unless there were lattice doors on an item of furniture not listed). On the floor was a 'matt to cover whole room', there were two tables, and hanging on the walls, '23 French prints from Don Quixote'. That it was a room that could be used other than in the morning is indicated by the presence of a piano, and confirmed by the press bed with 'feather bed boulster' (which might have been used as a day bed). Castle Coole's breakfast parlour in 1802 contained an exotic touch in its twelve chairs 'with Chinese covers'.[76] Green is also found in Shelton House, county Wicklow (1816) where the mahogany sofa and eight armchairs were upholstered in green leather, and the carpet covering the floor, the silk on the two firescreens, and most probably the 'linen calico' curtains, were all green. There were two oval dining tables, a card table and, on the walls, '59 framed and glazed engravings different subjects'. No colour is mentioned at Moore Abbey, county Kildare (1826), but it sounds like a comfortable room with (apart from tables and chairs) two sofas, cushions and covers, a Turkey carpet, a mirror over the fireplace, a pier glass, and two oval mirrors, possibly hanging over the two pier tables.[77] At Ashfield, county Cavan (1829[78]) was a sofa complete with cushions, a 'lounger arm chair', two armchairs with cushions and two French armchairs. Apart from three tables, there was a work table, a bookcase and '6 shelves for books'. By 1843 there were a few additions, among them: a small ottoman, a ladies cabinet, lots of 'chimney ornaments', eleven prints, and two bronze inkstands.

These later inventories indicate the sort of comfort that has been seen in parlours that were used throughout the day as family sitting rooms. It is not clear if the analogy with a parlour stretched to the evening – did they abandon the

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[75] Indecipherable on the inventory '1 [...] oven'.
[76] Information from Peter Marson, with thanks.
[77] NLI, Drogheda Papers, MS 9743, 'Sale by Auction of Furniture, house, linen, books &c. at Moore Abbey, co Kildare on 29, 30, 31st March...1826'.
[78] TCD, Clements Papers, MS 7344/34 'A list of furniture in Ashfield Lodge House July 1829', added to inventory for same house of 1808.

breakfast/morning rooms at some point during the day and retire to another room?[79]

The dining room

Up to *c.* 1730 and following the French custom, the saloon was sometimes used as a dining room in Britain, particularly when catering for large numbers: that at Ragley Hall, Warwickshire, designed in *c.* 1678 by Robert Hooke, fulfilled the role where there was no named dining space.[80] According to the evidence to hand, the earliest room called a 'saloon' in Ireland is annotated on Richard Castle's plans for Carton dating to 1739 where, as a Dining Parlour adjoined it, it was unlikely to be used on a regular basis for eating. The same might be said of two other early saloons - John Aheron's at Dromoland (where there were two parlours), and Castle's at Headfort (one parlour). But it is entirely possible that when entertaining large numbers of guests the saloon was used for eating.[81]

This section, however, will deal with the formal dining room and will include rooms that were called 'eating rooms', 'eating parlours', 'dining parlours', and those 'parlours' that, from the evidence of plans and inventories, were the main or formal eating rooms. The terms that were most commonly used among both plans and inventories were 'dining room' and 'dining parlour'. The point has been made that the latter term was used from before the mid-seventeenth century, at the time that beds were disappearing from the principal parlour, and the new phrase underlined the exclusive use of this room for eating and entertaining rather than for sleeping.[82] There is a great deal of inconsistency in the terminology used to describe a formal room for eating throughout the eighteenth century, as has been seen, with the term 'parlour' being used infrequently but regularly for the main eating room into the second half of the century, and even longer, especially in some 'castle-style' houses. As the century progressed all of these terms, with the exception of 'dining room', became old-fashioned and were used only occasionally. Inconsistencies are found too in architects' use of the terms, but the choice of

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[79] As alternatives to the breakfast room, St Mary's Abbey had two parlours; at Gaulston there was a library in 1787, as at Clogrenane ('Book Room') in *c* 1800, and at Shelton House in 1816; by 1843, Ashfield had acquired a French room, comfortably furnished and with a desk, bookcase and card table: Moore Abbey had only a drawing room in 1826.

[80] Thornton, *Authentic Décor,* p 51; Girouard, pp 135, 162; Jackson-Stops & Pipkin p 124. The duchess of Northumberland described the 'Salon' in Castle Howard as 'a Very Cold Room where they dine', Percy and Jackson-Stops, 'The travel journals of the 1st Duchess of Northumberland, I' in *Country Life*, 31 January 1974, pp 192-95.

[81] The saloon is not a room that is encountered to any great extent in Ireland, and it does not figure in any of the inventories under discussion.

[82] Nicholas Cooper, *Houses of the gentry 1480-1680* (New Haven & London 1999), p 287.

room names was likely to have been that of the client in many cases. The English architect John Nash used the term 'eating room' in his plan of Rockingham, county Roscommon as late as 1809. For the sake of clarity, the term 'dining room' will be used in the following section to cover the various names used.

It is surprising how early the term 'dining room' was used in Ireland compared to Britain: there is a reference to one ('dyneinge') at Croghan Castle, King's County in 1636[83]; in an Ormond inventory of 1639 for Kilkenny Castle[84]; and in houses in Dublin belonging to the earls of Cork (1645 'Dyneing') and of Kildare (1656)[85]. In Britain the earliest use of the term is quoted as being in an inventory for Ham House dating to 1677.[86] Cornforth says that it is not often found before the mid-1730s, but its use in an advertisement in a Dublin newspaper in June 1711 points to it being in fairly common usage.[87] That said, according to the plans under discussion, it is only in the second half of the century that it becomes a common term as Mrs Delany acknowledged in 1755 referring to 'My "dining room", vulgarly so called,…'.[88]

The importance of the dining room has been acknowledged by a number of writers. Girouard says that from the early decades of the century the dining room 'was always one of the best and biggest rooms in the house',[89] and Isaac Ware said of the spacious dining room – 40 feet by 23.5 feet – on one of his plans: 'this… gives a very noble room; it may be properly the capital apartment of the house, and may be called the great dining-room'.[90] An interesting observation was made by Robert Adam on the reason why the dining room in France never achieved the importance that the English [and the Irish] attached to it: '…our manners prevent us from imitating them. Their eating rooms seldom or never constitute a piece in their great apartments, but lie out of the suite, and in fitting them up, little attention is paid to beauty': the antechambers they used as dining rooms were

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[83] Knight of Glin and James Peill, *Irish Furniture* (New Haven and London 2007), p 15.
[84] Or possibly for Dunmore house or Ormond Castle, according to Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels*, p 30
[85] Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels*, pp 32, 39. Other examples in the same book are on pp 53, 80, both part of the Ormond inventories.
[86] Gervase Jackson-Stops and J Pipkin, *The English Country House: a grand tour* (London 1984), p 122; Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors…* p 43.
[87] *The Dublin Intelligence,* 2 June 1711.
[88] Rosemary Baird, *Mistress of the house: great ladies and grand houses 1670-1830* (London 2003) quotes it as describing Delville in 1746 p 57.
[89] Girouard, *Life,* p 203.
[90] Ware, p 416.

usually decorated quite simply.[91] But Adam explained that the French used their dining room purely for eating in, that they 'trust to the display of the table for show and magnificence', not to the décor, and that as soon as they had eaten, they retired to the 'rooms of company'. He goes on

> It is not so with us. Accustomed by habit, or induced by the nature of our climate, we indulge more largely in the enjoyment of the bottle. Every person of rank here is either a member of the legislation, or entitled by his condition to take part in the political arrangements of his country...these circumstances lead men to live more with one another, and more detached from the society of the ladies. The eating rooms are considered as the apartments of conversation, in which we are to pass a great part of our time. This renders it desireable to have them fitted up with elegance and splendor, but in a style different from that of other apartments. Instead of being hung with damask, tapestry, &c. they are always finished with stucco, and adorned with statues and paintings, that they may not retain the smell of the victuals.[92]

There are a number of points in the passage that will be looked at in the course of this study. In his final point about fabrics retaining the smell of food Adam reiterates the advice given in 1702 by Daniel Cronström who recommends panelling in the room, and approves of gilt leather for the same reason.[93] It was the gilt leather hangings in the Great Dining Room of Kilkenny Castle that caught the attention of John Dunton when he visited there in 1686.[94] John Cornforth made some interesting observations after a visit to Castletown, county Kildare: 'What would have been the Common Parlour [the room to the left on entering Castletown] has been extended into the dining room'. He believed that the Green Drawing Room there was originally the Great Parlour, a belief that was reinforced when he discovered that 'when the silk was [taken] down the walls were panelled and there were traces of pilasters – and pilasters confirm that it was not a drawing room'.[95] Generally, he explains, when a 'dining room' made its appearance, the Great Parlour became a withdrawing room or a saloon, but it retained its panelling [or stucco decoration].[96]

The importance of the dining room and the open hospitality extended there by the Irish gentry has often been commented upon. In 1732 John Loveday remarked

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[91] In a survey of 500 Paris inventories for the second half of the 18c it was found that only 14% of houses had dining rooms, and even up to 1770 they were encountered only among society's elite. Annik Pardailhe-Galabrun, *The birth of intimacy: privacy and domestic life in early modern Paris* (Presses Universitaires de France 1988), (trans Jocelyn Phelps 1991), p 61.
[92] Thornton, *Authentic Décor*, p 147.
[93] Thornton, *Authentic décor,* p 57. Numerous gilt leather hangings are to be found in the Ormond Inventories in Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels.*
[94] Quoted in Fenlon, 'The Ormonde Inventories 1675-1717: a State Apartment at Kilkenny Castle' in Agnes Bernelle, *Decantations: a tribute to Maurice Craig* (Dublin 1992) pp 29-37.
[95] Letter dated October 16 [2002] to the author.

upon their 'continually feasting with one another', but that they 'always praise the dishes at their own tables' and expected the same from their guests.[97] Mrs Delany thought the dinners were rather excessive, 'you are not invited to dinner to any private gentleman of a thousand a year or less that does not give you seven *dishes* at one course, and Burgundy and Champagne: and these dinners they give once or twice a week'.[98] Richard Pococke describes in detail a 'Milesian feast' in Ireland on his travels, the remnants of which were dished up for breakfast the next morning.[99] At Quilca in county Cavan, Thomas Sheridan[100] entertained lavishly 'in the manner of the ancient Irish' with the floor of his dining room strewn with rushes and his table spread with 'antique dishes and cuisinage obsolete'. He enjoyed the effect on his guests of producing on the table a massive meal, 'till he made them all sick with 'swilled' mutton, or a sheep roasted whole, and stuffed with geese, turkeys and chicken packed in vegetables; when lo! all was taken away, and the best of modern dinners served up with plenty of claret and champagne, to wash away unsavoury memories'.[101]

Size and location of dining room:

It is also interesting to note how frequently visitors to houses relate the measurements of some of the reception rooms: was it something that the owner proudly boasted of or was it a talent that visitors had developed? Mrs Delany is quite informative on this point in her letters,[102] in one of which she writes that the dining room in Hillsborough, county Down 'not long added to the house' is 33 by 26 feet.[103] From information and plans to hand, it appears that the largest dining room was at Carton, to designs by Richard Morrison in *c* 1815, at 50.4 x 24 feet. Next in size was in Thomastown House, county Tipperary measuring 50 x 20 feet, suitable no doubt for the extravagant hospitality that was carried on there; then the (double cube) dining room of Headfort at 48 x 24 feet and that at Curraghmore, county Waterford at 40 x 26 feet, 'fine and painted in great taste' according to

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[96] Cornforth, *Early Georgian*... pp 39-41.
[97] Quoted in Glin and Peill, *Irish furniture*, p 61.
[98] Quoted in Maxwell, *The stranger in Ireland*, pp 150-51.
[99] John McVeagh (ed.) *Richard Pococke's Irish tours* (Dublin 1995), p 168.
[100] The father of Richard Brinsley Sheridan.
[101] 'A pilgrimage to Quilca in the year 1852 in a letter to Anthony Poplar esq.' in *Dublin University Magazine* ccxxxix, vol. xl, November 1852, pp 509-46.
[102] As J P Neale is in his *Views of the seats of noblemen and gentlemen in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland,* 6 vols (London 1818-28), in vols ii and iii.
[103] Day, (ed.), *Letters*... p 146. Other measurements include her 'ballroom' at Mount Panther, co Down which is 32 feet long, the Hall of Bishop Clayton's house in St Stephen's Green is 18 feet square and a drawing room is 28 x 22 feet.

Daniel Augustus Beaufort.[104] Among the plans on which the size is annotated, the average size from the earliest plan, *c* 1709 for Old Castle Coole to the end of the century (28 plans) is 28 x 21.5 feet, and from 1800 to 1842 (23 plans) is 36 x 23.5 feet. People were sometimes quite precise, as has been seen, about the size of their dining room. In Scotland Lord Garlies, heir to the 5th earl of Galloway stressed to the amateur architect Sir John Clerk in 1737 that while he required a drawing room of about 16 feet square, the dining room should be 'as good as could be got not above 24 or 27 at most'.[105] And the bishop of Dromore, writing to Andrew Caldwell in 1793 about renting a house in Dublin requires 'a Dining Parlour large enough to give a Dinner to a Dozen Persons'.[106] Isaac Ware commented on the 'addition of a great room now [1756] to almost every house of consequence'.[107] The growth in size is unsurprising as it coincides with a time when there was more mobility in the form of better-sprung carriages, and better roads: as people travelled more they stopped to eat or to stay with friends en route. Social mobility and the use of these rooms for formal entertaining and large groups will be looked at in another chapter, while here we will continue to look at how the dining room fitted into the house and where it was located.

Between 1763 and 1767 Lady Louisa Conolly created a 'great room' at Castletown. It was a Dining Room made out of two adjoining rooms next to the hall to the west of the house. It was a major job as the dividing walls were removed through three floors to roof level, a false wall was built to the west to centre the windows, and fireplaces and flues were repositioned.[108] The duke of Leinster appears to have been responsible for the redecoration of the room, and David Griffin has pointed out similarities between Leinster House and Castletown: Louisa implies this in a letter written in 1767 to her sister Sarah:

> The Duke of Leinster and my sister dined here the other day it was the first time that he had dined here since our new dining room was made which he had the making of, I may say, for it was him that persuaded Mr Conolly to do, he liked it vastly.[109]

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[104] Canon C C Ellison, 'Remembering Dr. Beaufort', in *QBIGS* vol xviii, No 1, January-March 1975, pp 1-36. Other sizeable dining rooms were in Ballyfin and Adare Manor, both 40 x 24 feet, and Rockingham at 39 x 26 feet.
[105] Macauley, *The classical country house in Scotland*, p 101.
[106] Caldwell of New Grange Letters & Papers – 1704-1793. Letter 171 from Tho. Dromore, Dromore House to Andrew Caldwell, 25 Nov 1793. My thanks to Jane Meredith.
[107] Ware, p 433.
[108] David J Griffin, 'Castletown, Co Kildare: the contribution of James, 1st duke of Leinster', in *IADS*, vol I, 1998, pp 120-45.
[109] Griffin, 'Castletown, Co Kildare: the contribution of James, 1st duke of Leinster', in IADS, vol I, 1998, pp 120-45.

Behind the false wall, the two closets became serving rooms with a lead sink and stoves that kept the food warm, after it was brought along the colonnade and in through a side door from the kitchen in the west pavilion.[110]

There was an amount of flexibility regarding the location of the dining room. Of the ninety-six annotated ground-floor plans in this survey, thirty-six dining rooms were, like Castletown, located to the front of the house, and fifty-five to the rear.[111] They are divided into two main types – dining rooms as part of an enfilade, and those that are not. It is interesting to note that of the first type, such as at Carton (*c.* 1739, **Fig. 1.16**, and Morrison's 1815 plan), Rockingham (1809, **Fig. 2.7**), the Johnston and Wyatt plans for Castle Coole (1789 and 1790, **Figs 1.13, 1.14**), one of the Pain brothers' plans for Dromoland Castle (*c* 1826, **Fig. 3.9**), Lissadell, county Sligo (1833), and at Ballyfin (**Figs 2.1, 2.2**), the dining room often terminates the enfilade. Given the use of the room, this makes sense. It is not a room of 'transit', a room through which a guest might 'parade', but rather a destination. In 1807, when Louisa Beaufort visited Lissanoure Castle, county Antrim, she noted that all of the rooms opened in to each other, that 'in going from the parlor to the drawing room you pass through all of them – parlour and drawing room are square octagons 26 feet each way'. She mentions in passing that the 'dining parlor' was located elsewhere, in other words, not enfilade.[112] In plans for Headfort, Castle and Chambers both locate the dining room to the front of the house, off the hall (**Figs. 3.10, 3.4**). There were some rather odd arrangements. For example, located mid-enfilade at Charleville Forest, county Offaly (1789, **Fig. 3.7**), and Mount Bellew, county Galway (*c* 1805), are the hall and the breakfast rooms: while the hall might be called part of the reception rooms, the breakfast rooms would not, and it would seem a little odd that guests have to walk through these rooms to gain access to the dining rooms.

But was there a relationship between its location and proximity to the kitchen? This is a subject that will be touched upon again below when we look at the role of the columnar screen. A study of the plans shows that in the vast majority of cases, access to the kitchen was fairly close to the eating room, usually by a back staircase next to, or close to the dining room, and often with a door into the room for the

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[110] Christopher Moore, 'Lady Louisa Conolly: mistress of Castletown 1759-1821', in Jane Fenlon, Nicola Figgis and Catherine Marshall (eds), *New perspectives: studies in art history* (Dublin 1987), pp 123-41.

[111] Of those to the front, twenty-two were to the right of the hall and fourteen to the left. Others were between rooms to the side.

[112] TCD MS 4034, Louisa, 'Journal of a Tour to the North…1807', ff 18-19. Bence-Jones, in his description of the house, calls the octagonal rooms a drawing room and a dining room.

use of servants. This meant that firstly, servants were not making their way across the hall carrying dishes and leaving a smell of food in their wake, secondly, that the food would arrive efficiently and still warm and thirdly, that servants should not collide with guests or hosts in the doorway. But in some cases food had to be brought to the dining room from the wing halfway across the house, or in others, the back staircase is on the opposite side of the hall.[113] At Kildare House (1745, **Fig. 3.1**), for example, the route to the Great Dining Room leads from the wing into the hall, and through the 'Anty Room'. In all of the earlier Headfort plans (Castle, Ensor, Chambers) there was a long journey from pavilions to the parlour/dining room: Ensor's dining parlour was to the west of the hall while the kitchen was in the east wing, and in Chambers' plan the opposite was the case, but the parlour was closer, to the west of the hall (**Figs 1.20, 3.10, 3.4**).[114]

On an interesting Francis Johnston plan for Killeen Castle, county Meath (**Fig. 3.11**, 1802), is a spiral back staircase rising into a lobby outside the dining room, and a small space to the right on entering the room is marked 'This recess arched over and enclosed by a curtain festooned up'. It is not clear whether this might have been a servery, or might it have been for a collection of plate or desserts to be displayed with a flourish? At both Lough Glynn, county Roscommon (*c* 1830), and at Lissadell, county Sligo (1833) back staircases were conveniently adjacent to serving spaces just outside the dining rooms. Whatever about the requirements of serving food, one has to wonder just how accurate is one writer's assertion that in the eighteenth century 'in most country houses in Ireland there was a cellar underneath the dining room. By means of a trap-door, the host could descend and bring up bottle after bottle of wine'.[115] This architectural innovation was mentioned in the previous chapter at Barbavilla, county Westmeath when the Smythes dined in their hall. Apparently when a visitor to the house 'saw the good beer rise from under ground up to his nose, [he] cried out good God did you Ever see the like'![116]

On the subject of preparing and serving food, and before moving on to take a look at some decorative details of eating rooms, one problem that was potentially more prevalent in town houses than those in the country was the smell emanating from

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[113] Among these were the Grand Parlour at Old Castle Coole (1709), Lucan (1770s), Carriglas, county Longford (1790s), Ballycurry, county Wicklow (1807 and 1808), and Castle Bernard, county Offaly – a convoluted route across the vestibule.

[114] The (usually) vaulted kitchen wing was deemed to be the safest method of protecting the house from fire.

[115] Frances Gerard, *Some celebrated Irish beauties of the last century* (London 1895), footnote in Introduction, p xvii.

[116] Penny, 'Smythe of Barbavilla', privately published, p 4. My thanks to Kevin Mulligan for loaning me this.

the stables to the rear of the house. Their proximity to the house was a concern for the Wide Streets Commission in 1794 in a dispute arising from a house built by Graham Myers on the north side of St Stephen's Green five feet back from the range of the house it replaced. This had the effect of shortening the distance between house and stables, and 'bringing the smell of the stables so near the eating parlour' that 'it may prevent the sale or setting from that circumstance alone'.[117] The earl of Orrery was nothing if not direct when he wrote to the bishop of Cork [Clayton] on 11 December 1736 to congratulate him on his new house in St Stephen's Green [now part of Iveagh House] which he visited in the company of Richard Castle, its architect:

> 'Your Palace, my Lord, appears finely upon Paper, and to shew You that the whole pleases me, I even admire your Coal Cellars…but however good your Hearing or Sight may be delighted, I am in some Fear that your Smell will not be regal'd from your Stables unless you shoft your Garden as soon as possible with Roses, Lilies, and All the Flowers that are celebrated in Song. This inconvenience might be prevented if your Lordship can purchase a little more Ground behind your House; but so that the Stable has a beautiful Cornish, Signor Cassells does not seem to care where it stands.[118]

Described by Mrs Delany (or, as she was at the time, Mrs Pendarves) 'very magnificent *but more for show* than comfortable living', the Claytons' house apparently matched their ambition.[119] The Old Dining Room there has its original shouldered wall panelling, and a wood-carved frieze in the chimneypiece showing putti making wine and a drunken Silenus. Both this and the bunches of grapes in the corners of the naturalistic plaster frieze (dating probably to the later eighteenth century), were suitable decoration for a dining room.[120] While stucco panelling in dining rooms, such as that in the Provost's House (begun 1759), was not unusual in Ireland,[121] we had nothing to rival those in England such as the Marble Parlour (later the State Dining room) at Houghton Hall, Norfolk, and in Scotland the all-over stucco at The Drum, Midlothian (1726). However we do have one of the great dining rooms in these islands of the first half of the eighteenth century, in what is now called the saloon in Carton, county Kildare designed by Castle in

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[117] Wide Streets Commissioners Minutes, vol 12, p 115. My thanks to Conor Lucey for bringing this to my attention.
[118] Countess of Cork and Orrery, (ed.), *The Orrery Papers*, 2 vols (London 1903), I, pp 177-78.
[119] Quoted in Nicholas Sheaff, *Iveagh House; an historical description* (Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin 1978), p 14.
[120] Sheaff, *Iveagh House*, p 34.
[121] Others include Ely House, Dublin and Castle Coole, county Fermanagh. In the twentieth century, Sir Edwin Lutyens provided eighteenth–century panelling with fluted Ionic pilasters and a modillion cornice at Howth Castle, county Dublin.

1739.[122] Here the deeply-coved ceiling of the double-height room was decorated with Baroque exuberance by the Lafranchini brothers, Paolo and Filippo, who also executed the wall drops on the window side.[123] Another Baroque coved ceiling can be seen in Russborough, county Wicklow (also designed by Castle and begun 1741), while at the earlier (*c.* 1730) Bellamont Forest, county Cavan, designed by Sir Edward Lovett Pearce, the ceiling is coved and coffered in the Palladian manner. For Kildare (later Leinster) House, two drawings attributed to Filippo Lafranchini and dating to *c* 1760 show designs for plasterwork for the walls, and one for the ceiling of the ground floor dining room.[124] Lady Kildare's brother-in-law, Henry Fox, was critical of Isaac Ware's scheme for the coved State Dining Room (later the Saloon) there, suggesting that 'the walls would be better without compartments that the pictures may be hung at discretion'. [125] While Fox's point was ignored in the execution, one could say that, as far as the FitzGeralds were concerned, there would be no shortage of paintings and they may well have required much space for them. On the other hand, where there was a dearth of paintings, 'compartments' were a convenient method for decorating walls.[126] While Lord Cloncurry had other plans for the walls of his Dining Room, as shall be seen, among the many pieces of sculpture acquired on his Grand Tour, were three marble relief panels of classical subjects executed by Acquisti, placed as overdoors in the Dining Room at Lyons, county Kildare.[127]

Notable too is the mid-eighteenth-century French *boiserie*-type decoration of shallow stucco panels with foliate designs in eating rooms in three houses, Charlemont House and 86 St Stephen's Green, both in Dublin and at Dowth Hall, county Meath.[128] As the dining room was generally considered a 'male' space, given that men spent so much more time in it than women did, and that French rococo was a style more usually associated with women (together with *chinoiserie*) for their

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[122] On none of the plans in this study is the saloon at Carton called a dining room; it apparently became one in the second half of the eighteenth century, until the Morrison alterations and additions in 1815.

[123] The drops were copied on the remaining walls in the later 19th century. The Lafranchini were paid £501 in 1739 for this work. Joseph McDonnell, *Irish eighteenth-century stuccowork and its European sources* (National Gallery of Ireland 1991), p 18.

[124] Griffin and Pegum, *Leinster House*, plates 61-62.

[125] Griffin and Pegum, *Leinster House*, pp52-53, plate 92.

[126] The dado rail in the dining room at Ardbraccan is trimmed with pewter, as are the chimneypieces in some of the bedrooms and dressingrooms. They are also to be found at 17 St Stephen's Green.

[127] June Eiffe, 'Lyons, county Kildare', in *BIGS* vol. xxvii, 1984, pp 1-37.

[128] Christine Casey, 'Boiseries, bankers and bills: a tale of Charlemont and Whaley' in Michael McCarthy (ed.) *Lord Charlemont and his circle* (Dublin 2001), pp 47-59.

dressing rooms[129] and boudoirs, and even at mid-century for a drawing room, it seems an unusual choice of decoration for a dining room.[130]

Decoration of a somewhat different type was to be found in the 'Painted Parlour' at Quilca House, county Cavan, home of the playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan's grandfather. Jonathan Swift made much fun of Quilca, where he was a regular visitor, memorably in his poem 'To Quilca, a country house of Dr Sheridan, in no very good repair'.[131] According to a writer in 1852, a canvas was spread over the coved ceiling of the parlour, onto which a visitor to the house, John Lewis, the London painter and scene painter for Thomas Sheridan, painted a sky and clouds. Under this, on each of the four walls, contained within large medallions were portraits of Milton, Shakespeare, Swift and Doctor Sheridan. Apparently 'these were supported by allegorical figures, and set off by draperies, and a goodly-sized sphinx or two, for the corners. The whole was cleverly and artistically done, and had a vivid effect'.[132] At Lyons, the panoramic views painted on opposite walls of the Dining Room must have been a talking point: the Bay of Naples on one side, Dublin on the other.[133]

Bows, bays and columnar screens

Other ways of providing architectural interest in dining rooms was achieved by the use of bows, bays, columnar screens and niches. Maurice Craig is of the opinion that the bow 'is so marked a feature of mid eighteenth-century Irish houses that its ancestry should be enquired into'. He also claims that Richard Castle's bowed saloon at Ballyhaise county Cavan of *c* 1733 is the earliest example of this in Ireland and in Britain, and that the bow is a feature that is 'entirely absent from Dublin (apart from the backs of Dublin houses) though not from Cork'. [134] It is seen to superb effect in Castle's Belvedere, county Westmeath of *c* 1740 where the dining room and the drawing room are in the curved end bays, both with Rococo ceilings by Bartholomew Cramillion. The bow undoubtedly enjoyed popularity in Ireland

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[129] Isaac Ware produced a design (not executed) in the French rococo style for Lady Kildare's dressing room in Kildare House *c* 1759. Griffin & Pegum, plate 108.
[130] Gendered spaces will be discussed in Chapter 5.
[131] Linda Kelly, *Richard Brinsley Sheridan: a life* (London 1998 edn), p 3.
[132] 'A pilgrimage to Quilca in the year 1852', pp 509-46.
[133] Quoted in Eiffe, 'Lyons, county Kildare', pp 1-37.
[134] Craig, *Classic Irish houses*, p 13-14. Christopher Wren visited Vaux-le-Vicomte in 1665, and Vanbrugh, with whom Craig associates the bow, may have seen it in the late 17th century. In 1699 William Talman made designs for Castle Howard that included a bow, dismissed by Vanbrugh later as no more than 'two or three little trifleing drawings as big as his hand' (quoted in Smith, Charles Saumarez, *The building of Castle Howard* (London 1997 edn) p 34), and in the first years of the eighteenth century, Thomas Archer placed a bow on the north façade of Chatsworth. Du Prey, Pierre de la Ruffiniere, 'The *bombé*-fronted country house from Talman to Soane' in Jackson-Stops, Gervase

from the first half of the century, but in Britain it was Robert Adam who used the motif repeatedly. Bow-ended dining rooms include that at the Bishop's Palace at Clogher, where it was located in one of the wings,[135] in James Playfair's plan for Townley Hall, county Louth (1792), Richard Morrison's design 'for a Villa, or Hunting Lodge' (published 1793),[136] Lyons, county Kildare (1797)[137], Johnston's plan for Markree Castle, county Sligo (1803), Castle Howard, county Wicklow, altered by Richard Morrison in 1811, Powerscourt Wicklow, and Oakpark, county Carlow, remodelled by William Morrison in 1832.

The countess of Shelburne described 'two very good rooms on each side of a spacious hall, the one a drawing room the other a parlour where we dined'. This was at Dawson Court in county Laois in 1769. She notes that both are of similar size and

> have bow windows with this only difference that the window of one is circular, the other in angles – the circular one has a much better effect and gives such a look of space to the room that it is hardly possible to believe them to be the same size – Kiloine Hill is the principal object of this room and ye whole country in general.[138]

From her description it seems more likely that the room with the view – and the bow - was the drawing room, and the canted bay was in the dining room. Canted bays were also found at Killeen Castle, county Meath in plans by Johnston (1802 and 1803); the Pain brothers' plan for Dromoland, county Clare (*c* 1826); James Bolger's plans for Lough Glynn House, county Roscommon (*c* 1830?); James Pain's plan for Adare Manor, county Limerick with two canted bays (1834), and Daniel Robertson's plan for Carriglas Manor, county Longford (1837-38). Rectangular bay windows were less common: Mrs Delany's dining room had a sizeable one at Delville, in Dublin, described by her in 1744 as '26 feet long and 16 feet and a half wide, with the projection in the middle, which opens thirteen foot and is eight foot deep, with three windows, and large enough for two sideboards, one window between the tables and one at each side, which lights the room very agreeably…'.[139] Another such bay is shown in William Murray's plan (dating to *c* 1830) of Crom

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et al, *The fashioning and the functioning of the British country house* (University Press of New England Hanover & London 1989) pp 29-49.

[135] Mentioned in a letter to Lord Sackville from the Bishop of Clogher dated July 9th, 1782. Mrs Stopford Sackville's MSS, HMC, Appendix to ninth Report, vol. I, p 279.

[136] Morrison, *Useful and Ornamental Designs,* numbers 3 and 4.

[137] Eiffe, 'Lyons, county Kildare', pp 1-37.

[138] Bowood MSS, vol.5, 1769-70. Extracts from the diary of Sophia, countess of Shelburne. My thanks to the Knight of Glin for a photocopy of this.

[139] Day, (ed.), *Letters*, p 158.

Castle, county Fermanagh, where the dining room is en-suite with a succession of reception rooms.

The earliest screen of columns in a dining room in Ireland seems to have been at Bellamont Forest dating to about 1730, later than in Britain. There, according to Cornforth, by the mid-1720s the screen had gained in popularity since Vanbrugh proposed one in an unexecuted plan for Blenheim in 1705, and William Adam provided one at Hopetoun, Midlothian in the early 1720s.[140] But Pearce's columns at Bellamont were engaged and so were purely decorative. While a screen is a decorative feature, there was a practical side to it: it could provide a service area in which the servants operated, frequently with a door leading to the back stairs. Such an arrangement can be seen in a Samuel Chearnley plan (1745-46, **Fig. 3.12**) where an accompanying note explains that the back stairs are 'Private ways from the Kitchen to bring up Dinner' [sic], and intriguingly, a spiral staircase close to it leading directly into the wine cellar below 'Private way to ye wine seller'.[141] In his published plans (1793) Richard Morrison, for whom columnar screens became a *leitmotif*, shows one that is too shallow for a service area, but is designed to frame the sideboard set into a recess.[142] It is interesting to contrast this plan with the convenience of Chearnley's: to get to the kitchen, servants in the Morrison design have to make their way across the vestibule to the other side of the house where the back stairs were located. A more convenient plan by Morrison for Mount Bellew of *c* 1805 has a door from the service area leading into the 'lobby and stairs for serving dinner'. In his new dining room at Carton in *c* 1815 he placed a screen at each end: the route to the kitchen was somewhat circuitous but, as the Butler's Pantry was across a passage from the service area, it was possible that food was kept warm there. The dining rooms created by Morrison, with his son William, at Borris House, county Carlow in *c* 1813, Ballyfin, county Laois in 1822 and Fota House, county Cork in *c* 1825, have in common screens of scagliola columns and friezes of swagged bucrania.[143] At Ballyfin the dining room is some distance from the kitchen which is in a service block linked to one side of the house, but at Fota House [presently it must be said] a jib door in the service area leads into a butler's pantry or servery, and the opposite door leads to a lobby, the wine cellar and on to the kitchen. The French architect Jacques François Blondel preferred the small room or servery next to the dining room where food could be warmed up and

[140] Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, pp 44-45.
[141] There is a similar screen in the dining room at Mount Charles The Hall, county Donegal, which probably dates to about 1740. McParland, 'Notebooks 1-6', 3.24.
[142] Morrison, *Useful and ornamental designs*, numbers 7 and 8.
[143] Rowan (ed.), *The architectore of Richard Morrison and William Vitruvius Morrison*, pp 92-97.

glasses washed in a cistern there rather than *in* the room, to save the diners from the irritating clatter.[144]

From an aesthetic point of view the columnar screen had the effect of framing the sideboard on which the family plate was often displayed.[145] Prior to his departure for his Dublin residence at Kevin Street, Bishop Edward Synge of Elphin insisted that his plate chest be collected from the bankers, Lennox and French of Lower Ormond Street 'the receit for the chest is in the Scriptoire', and cautions his daughter Alicia[146] to 'have a care that a larger Table does not crowd the place, tho' it may shew your plate to more advantage'.[147] Also displayed on the sideboard might be an arrangement of fruits – 'pyramids' – grown in hothouses in the walled gardens of country and large town houses, probably what Bishop Synge was referring to in a letter to Alicia in June 1747: 'I take it for granted that now fruits are coming in, you'll provide largely for Pyramids to be looked at. I'll allow you as much sugar as you please'.[148]

On the subject of desserts, plans for Headfort (*c.* 1750) and for Castle Coole (1789 and 1790) are of interest. A small apsed space that separates the parlour from the drawing room (and with access to both) is called a 'Buffett' on Castle's Headfort plan. Here the ladies and later the gentlemen could pass through the 'Buffett' into the drawing room. The apse here is back-to-back with the semi-circular back staircase. Next to, and connected with the dining room at Castle Coole, Richard Johnston locates a 'Dessert Room', beside which is a back staircase to the basement leading to the kitchen in the east wing (1789). One year later, in his plan for the same house, and with a similarly-located staircase, Wyatt calls this space a 'Beaufetteer'.[149] It is not clear how exactly these room were used: did guests move from the table into this room for dessert? Wyatt's room did have a fireplace. It

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[144] Thornton, *Authentic décor,* p 94.
[145] Called the *buffet* in French houses.
[146] Alicia resided in their Dublin house at Kevin Street with a governess/companion.
[147] Legg, (ed.), *The Synge Letters,* letters 80 (29 September 1749), 176 (15 October,1751).
[148] Jackson-Stops and Pipkin, p 123; Legg, (ed.), *The Synge Letters,* letter 14. The Synges had a walled garden with greenhouse(s) at their house in Kevin Street, Dublin. From the 1790s the silver épergne, holding fruit, sweetmeats and flowers, replaced the pyramid and its individual dishes, and was brought to the table. Sara Paston-Williams, *The art of dining: a history of cooking and eating* (National Trust 1993), p 260-61.
[149] According to the *OED* 'beaufette' is a variation of 'buffet', commonly spelt 'beau-' in the eighteenth century ('the cause of which is not apparent'), and it is defined as 'a sideboard or side-table, often ornamental, for the disposition of china, plate etc'. The word 'dessert' has an interesting etymology, according to Girouard, that goes 'back to the mediaeval ceremony of the void'. It was 'a collation of sweet wine and spices…eaten standing while the table was being cleared or 'voided' after a meal'. In the later seventeenth century when the use of French words became fashionable, 'void' was replaced by 'dessert' a word with a similar meaning. Sometimes 'dessert', by then supplemented or replaced by fruit, would be served in a separate room or even in a garden building. Girouard, *Life…* pp 104-5.

would seem highly unlikely that a buffet laden with the Belmore silver would be hidden away from prospective admirers.[150] It is possible that the sideboard, on which the sugared desserts or pyramids were displayed, was wheeled into the dining room at the appropriate time or, simply, that the room was used by servants for last-minute preparation and checking of the food before serving. That the use of the room was connected with dessert is confirmed by the list of contents there in an 1802 inventory taken by the housekeeper after Lord Belmore's death. In this she lists in the Dessert Room[151] '14 dessert china dishes, 4 dozen and 4 dessert plates, 2 pails for ice, 2 glass sugar bowls and 11 common china froot dishes'.[152]

The dessert course for formal dinners was serious business, underlined by the appearance of a 'Confectioners Room' in the basement of Kildare House in Castle's plan of 1745: it is the largest space at that level.[153] There is no mention of such a room in the basement at Castle Coole. But there was one at Norfolk House in London in the 1750s suggesting, as Rosemary Baird points out 'the elaborate desserts issuing from a room probably adjacent to the [ground-floor] Dining Room'.[154] While more will be said about formal dining in another chapter, Joseph Farington's description of the dessert table at a dinner with the Norfolks gives an example of what an ingenious confectioner could produce and it is worth relating at this point:

> The table was Prepar'd for Desert [sic], which was a Beautiful Park, round the edge was a Plantation of Flowering Shrubs, and in the middle a Fine piece of water, with Dolphins spouting out water, & Dear [sic] dispersed Irregularly over the Lawn, on the Edge of the Table was all the Iced Creams, & wet & dried Sweetmeats, it was such a piece of work it was all left on the Table till we went to coffee.[155]

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[150] In an inventory for what seems to be a town house in Cork, dating to 1763, a 'Buffett' and a 'China Buffet' are listed as spaces, apparently at ground floor level (the front parlour is the formal dining space, the dining room being used as a dressing room). The value of the silver (and glass) listed in the Buffett is almost three times as much as the value of the furniture in the front parlour, the most expensively-furnished room in the house. TCD MS 2010-2015/395, 'Inventory, Laurence Delamain late of the City of Corke, gent deceased, taken 20th January 1763'.

[151] It is interesting that Belmore retained Johnston's nomenclature for this room, though he used Wyatt's plans for the house.

[152] Information from Peter Marson, with thanks.

[153] A 'Confectioner's Office' is mentioned in an inventory of Dublin Castle in 1677. Fenlon, *Goods and chattels,* p 97. The following advertisement appeared in *The Dublin Journal* in October 1749: 'Elizabeth O'Brien, flower maker from London, at the George in Caple-Street, makes and sells all kinds of artificial Flowers, Trees, Hedges, and Arches for Deserts'.

[154] Baird, *Mistress of the house,* pp 126, 129.

[155] Quoted in Baird, *Mistress of the house…* p 128.

Dining rooms and their contents

As might be expected the contents of the formal Dining Room do not differ in essentials from those in the family parlour: in most cases they contain tables, chairs, sideboards or side-tables and a number of screens and of mirrors. The only record of a bed in the room is in the 1717 inventory of Corofin House, county Clare.[156] Incidentally, at Killeen Castle as late as 1735/6 the only rooms not to contain a bed were the Dining Room, kitchen and the Tea Room.

There is a dearth of information on wall colour for dining rooms though Mrs Delany hung hers in 1755 'with mohair cafoy paper, (a *good blue*)'.[157] In 1794 at Dorothea Herbert's home at Carrick, county Kilkenny, a rather Adam-style colour scheme was adopted when no less than 'a Head painter [was employed] to paint [the large Parlour] green with a beautiful lilac Cornice'. Whether Adam would have approved of the 'scarlet marine curtains' bought for the room by her mother is another matter.[158] The Dining Room and the Ante Room (which was used also as a servery) at Baronscourt, county Tyrone were to be painted 'light green in oil', according to instructions in 1795.[159] Also painted green was [at least part of] the Eating Parlour at Caledon, county Tyrone in 1799, listed in an invoice from the painter as 'fine' green while the frieze was 'picked in fancy colours'.[160] In1809 a visitor to a house in William Street, Dublin admired the walls 'hung with crimson' – presumably, at this date, of paper.[161] However, in an auction of furniture at Altidore, county Wicklow as late as1835 'rich red morocco hangings' (matching the chairs) were listed in the dining room.[162] In 1834 J C Loudon recommended that the colour of a dining room should be 'grave',[163] and that the colour of the furniture should influence the general colour used. Dunlevy makes the point that

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156 Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels,* p 128. There is mention of a bed in the Dining Room in the St Stephen's Green house of the Balfour family in March 1741/2. The room hung with tapestry, was probably used as a bedroom, as the Back Parlour was used as a formal dining room.

157 Quoted in Cornforth, *Early Georgian…* p 120. Mrs Delany advised her sister about hanging wallpaper in 1750, 'the best way is to have it pasted on the bare wall: when lined with canvass it always shrinks from the edges'. Day, (ed.), *Letters,* p 162. At Cavendish Row, Dublin the colour scheme was also blue but, despite the room being called 'Dineing Room' the furniture indicates its use as a sitting/drawing room.

158 *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert 1770-1806* (Dublin 2004 edn), p 327.

159 Photocopy of 1782 inventory and other material transcribed by Gervase Jackson-Stops from the Abercorn Papers in PRONI D.623. My thanks to Edward McParland.

160 PRONI, Caledon Papers, D/2433/A/2/4/1-19. 'Painting executed for Lord Viscount Caledon at Caledon Hill including the House, Offices & Garden by S. Stroker, August 1799'.

161 Quoted in Mairead Dunlevy, 'Dublin in the early nineteenth century: domestic evidence', in Raymond Gillespie & Brian P Kennedy (eds), *Ireland Art into history* (Dublin and Colorado 1994) pp 184-206.

162 *Dublin Evening Post*, 25 April 1835. My thanks to Aidan O'Boyle for this reference.

163 'Grave', associated with the dining room seems a rather incongruous word to describe a room so much associated with the drinking and general merriment among men, particularly after the women had left the table.

'grave' often seems to have been interpreted in Ireland as crimson.[164] This is an interesting point when we look at the fabrics listed in the inventories, but before moving on to that a word should be said about a few colour co-ordinated so-called 'Dining Rooms' that were, according to the evidence of their contents, used for other purposes. One is the Great Dining-room at Howth Castle (1746-52) where the predominant colour was yellow and the fabric damask: the three pairs of curtains were lined and had tassels and 'six lace bridles', the walnut chairs in the same fabric also had yellow serge cases, as had the two settees. Apart from the fact that yellow would not be a very serviceable colour, the rest of the furniture indicates that this was used as a drawing room. Another 'Dineing Room' at Cavendish Row, Dublin (1763) was as carefully planned, and it was used similarly, with 'Blue English Flock Paper', edged with 97 yards of 'Guilded Moulding', and curtains, armchairs, settees and 'Conversation Sofas' covered with blue damask and blue check cases.[165]

While there is not a great deal of information about curtain colour and fabric, there is sufficient to ascertain a definite trend: of the fifty-six inventories for dining rooms only twenty-four mention colour, and twenty-five record the type of fabric.[166] Of these, the predominant colour for curtains is red, used in fourteen dining rooms, and broken down as follows: crimson (seven), scarlet (six) and 'rich red' (one). This is followed by green of which there are four examples.[167] According to Steven Parissien, by the end of the eighteenth century plain reds and greens were favoured for decorating the walls and the upholstery of dining rooms in Britain.[168] Turning to the type of fabric used, damask ('India', 'Genoa' and 'Nassau') is listed in sixteen of the twenty-five rooms, followed by moreen (seven) and caffoy and callamanco (one of each). A description of '3 parlour curtains' dated 1808 from Eggleso's in Dublin shows how dramatic these must have looked: 'with parisian draperys on poles, of unwatered Scarlet morin bordered and bound with black velvet and rich corner pieces draperys fringed compleat'.[169] In many cases the covering of the dining room chairs is not specified: many are covered in leather (easy to clean and do not retain odours) and in only one case, at 45 Kildare Street,

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[164] Dunlevy, 'Dublin in the early nineteenth century: domestic evidence', pp 184-206.
[165] Both houses had eating rooms in addition to these. At Park Street, Dublin (1766), the furniture listed in the dining room was also more relevant to a drawing room, and in Cork City, that in the Delamain dining room indicates its use as a dressing room or study.
[166] To which must be added the green rooms at Carrick, Baronscourt and Caledon mentioned on the previous page. Of others among the inventories three listed curtains but gave no detail.
[167] Yellow was to be found in two dining rooms, while there were one room each of blue, drab, dove and grey.
[168] Steven Parissien, *The Georgian House* (London 1999 edn), p 43.
[169] NLI De Vesci Papers MS 38,929/1, 31 October 1808. The price quoted was £85.6s.3d.

do the chair covers match the green damask curtains. There was certainly an effort to co-ordinate colour schemes at Killeen Castle as early as 1735/6 where the rooms were called after the predominant colour there, so it would seem likely that the seat colour of the '12 Oake Chairs fineer'd with wallnutt' matched the 'Green Callamanco' curtains and the green velvet cover on the card table.

As can be seen throughout this study, the houses contained a great number of chairs, particularly those named for the dining room or parlour. For dining rooms throughout the period 'stuff'd' chairs (including tapestry, 'work'd', horsehair and leather) were by far the most popular, with fewer examples of cane- or rush-bottomed chairs.[170] In the dining room at Mount Stewart, county Down (1821) sixteen were of mahogany with leather seats and fourteen painted bamboo chairs with cane seats (neither type appearing to be like the Congress of Vienna chairs)[171]: for Rockingham, county Roscommon '28 small & 2 arm chairs in scarlet morocco & callico cases' were ordered from John Preston of Dublin in 1814.[172] Invoices or estimates from cabinetmakers sometimes give detailed descriptions of the type of chair. One example is in an invoice from Mayhew & Ince of London for Caledon, county Tyrone (1785) for '18 neat mahogany parlour chairs, carved, bannister backs, shaped hollow seats & fluted feet, stuffed with the best curled hair in strong linen, covered with fine green morocco leather & finished with the best burnished brass nails'.[173] Similar lists of furniture ordered for various houses in the early nineteenth century bear this out.[174]

The earliest mention of a mahogany dining table was in 1728 at Powerscourt Dublin in the Large Street Parlour. Up to then the tables were of oak or of walnut. More than one table was the rule in Irish dining rooms from the early eighteenth-century: at Dromoland House, county Clare (1753) a selection of tables is listed –

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[170] According to chair descriptions in the inventories, out of a total of 46, 40 were 'stuff'd', which includes 14 leather-covered chairs, and 6 were cane-bottomed. The trend was consistent throughout the period under consideration.

[171] In 1806, '6 Chinese back cane seat chairs painted' were ordered from Mack & Gibton for Castlegar, co Galway. McParland Notebooks, 5.13.

[172] NLI, Rockingham Papers, MS 8810(4) Part 8, August 1814.

[173] PRONI, Caledon Papers D/2433/A/2/3/9.

[174] NLI, De Vesci Papers, MS 38,929/1, invoice from Eggleso's, Abbey Street, Dublin, 31 October 1808 – '18 mahog. Grecian inlaid parlour chairs, stuffed & covered in Red Morocco leather £61.8s.6d., 2 Arm Chairs to match £10.4s.9d.', for Abbeyleix House, Co Laois; NLI Doneraile Papers, MS 34,112(7), invoice from Lewis & Anthony Morgan, 21 Henry Street, Dublin, to Lord Doneraile dated 11 Jan 1809 – '30 best mahogany parlour chairs with Grecian backs and feet beaded top nails the seats finished in hair cloath squarae stuffed & finished in brass mouldings @ £1.16 each, £53.18s.9d.. Invoice from G & R Gillow & Co, October 1809 – 16 mahogany chairs with splat backs, stuffed seats – for Ross Mahon of Castlegar, co Galway. My thanks to Edward McParland for his notes on this; NLI, Rockingham Papers MS 8810 Part 8 (4), invoice from John Preston, August 1814 for Rockingham, co Roscommon – '28 small & 2 arm chairs in scarlet morocco & callico cases for Parlour',

'One Long Mahogany table, 2 Round Mahogany Tables, One Oval Oak Table, One Round Yeagh [Yew] Table [and] One Little Mahogany Table'. Mrs Delany remarked how the recently-deceased (1752) Mrs Conolly at Castletown generally had '*two tables* of eight or ten people each' to dine.[175] We have seen 2 dining tables of different sizes in the Back Parlour at Cavendish Row (1763). Cornforth says that two oval tables rather than a large table were more usual in the first half of the century, and that the longer, rectangular table with the removable leaves is a post-1760 development.[176] This potentially longer table did not necessarily mean a reduction in the number of dining tables in the room; at Woodville, county Dublin in the 1797 inventory for example, six mahogany tables – two were oval in shape (one listed as a breakfast table) - are listed, and this is not exceptional. The new table with leaves was often called a 'set'or 'sett', and a good description of one is given in a 1785 invoice from Mayhew and Ince, London for Caledon, county Tyrone: 'A large sett of Mahogany dining tables, of extra good Jamaica wood in 4 divisions, with 2 circular framed ends, and made to join together, and separate, in divisions, with slip hinges, brass bolts and fastenings & on therm feet.'[177] Until the early nineteenth century chairs and tables were not left standing in the centre of the room: the chairs were ranged around the walls,[178] and, before the 'sets' of tables came into fashion, gate-leg tables which could fold neatly were placed against the walls or in the hall or passage outside the dining room, and brought in as needed. On this latter point, it is notable in the inventories that tables are not listed in dining rooms or, as at Kilrush, county Kilkenny[179] in 1750, in either the 'Grate' or the 'Little' Parlours, but there were two oval mahogany tables in the hall.[180] When the 'sets' of pedestal-type tables became fashionable, they were sometimes dismantled after meals, the two ends could be used as pier tables or, as Jane Austen described in a letter in 1800: 'The two ends put together form one constant table for everything, and the centre-piece stands exceeding well under glass'.[181] A painting by an unknown artist in *Clerics and connoisseurs* (2001) illustrates this point.[182]

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[175] Day, (ed.), *Letters*, p 53.

[176] Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, p 49

[177] PRONI, Caledon Papers, D/2433/A/2/3/9. Also mentioned here is eight and a quarter yards of 'fine green Broad cloth for covers for dining tables'.

[178] Stuffed-backed chairs generally had a cheaper fabric on the back for this reason.

[179] TCD, St George Mss, Misc. photocopy 175/17, 'An Account of the goods and particulars belonging to Gen.ll St George in his house at Kilrush [1750]. This must have been the old castle as Kilrush House dates to the early nineteenth century. Bence-Jones, p 176.

[180] Similarly at Knapton, county Laois (1763) there were two dining tables in the Hall, none in the 'Big' Parlour; and at Gaulston, county Westmeath (1787) there were 3 mahogany oval tables in the Breakfast Parlour that may have been moved to the dining room when necessary. A note on Jackson-Stops' transcription of the Dining Room furniture in the Baronscourt inventory (1782) reads, '(2 mahog. Dining rables & 2 mahog. Circular tables…kept in Hall outside)'.

[181] Quoted in Paston-Williams, *The art of dining*, p 247.

[182] Alastair Laing (ed.), *Clerics & Connoisseurs: an Irish art collection through three centuries* (English Heritage London 2001), p 58.

At Shelton House, county Wicklow in 1816 was a 'sett of dining tables, thin tables and four leaves', and at Carton (1818) was a 'Sett of Mahogany Pillar Tables (Consisting of 8)'.

Tables that seem to be rather exceptional and interesting are those found in dining rooms in Howth Castle (1746-52) and in Antrim House, Dublin (1801).[183] In the Dining Parlour at Howth is a 'round mahogany drinking table' and a mahogany 'bottle-tray' indicating as one writer put it, 'the habits of the time'.[184] It was a table that probably incorporated a mechanism that enabled the bottle-tray to be moved about the table in relative safety. In Antrim House there was a 'Horse shoe table' in the Back Parlour (Lord Mark Kerr's eating room). These became fashionable towards the end of the eighteenth century for after-dinner drinking round the fire, after the ladies had withdrawn. According to Paston-Williams, 'some had folding screens as a protection against the heat, and a network bag in the centre to contain biscuits, while coasters attached to a metal rod, or sliding in a well, were provided to hold the bottles'.[185] One appears in Gillow's costbooks in 1801, described as a 'social table', fitted with japanned ice pails. On these, bottles might be contained in two metal coasters hinged to a brass rod.[186]

Mention has been made of the buffet as either a space in itself or a type of sideboard on which silver, glass, china or desserts could be displayed.[187] The precursor to the sideboard (in its modern-day meaning) was the marble-topped side table on a wooden frame, frequently mentioned in the inventories. While this continued to be part of the dining room furniture throughout the period under discussion, the first time a sideboard of wood is listed (mahogany) is in the Big Parlour at Knapton, county Laois and in the Street and Back Parlours at Cavendish Row, all in 1763. Often, as has been seen above, they are set into a recess in the room. The recess at Baronscourt, county Tyrone was one foot deep, according to John Soane's superintendent there, Robert Woodgate, who describes the two (very long) sideboards as '10 (?) feet by 2 foot 6 inches at the bottom on each side the

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[183] The inventory of Antrim House, Merrion Square, Dublin (dem.) was made after the death of the Marchioness of Antrim in 1801. The house at that stage appears to have been divided between her two daughters, Anne Catherine, Countess of Antrim who married Sir Henry Vane-Tempest, and Charlotte, who married Lord Mark Kerr.

[184] Elrington Ball, *Howth and its owners,* p 133.

[185] Paston-Williams, *The art of dining,* p 262.

[186] Christopher Christie, *The British country house in the eighteenth century* (Manchester University Press 2000), p 257.

[187] It may also have been a cupboard, built-in or otherwise. In a Cork City inventory a 'Buffett' and a 'China Buffett' are mentioned, and they are both listed separately to the dining room or the front or back parlours. TCD MSS Dept. Inventory Laurence Delamain late of the City of Corke, gent deceased, taken 20 January 1763, MS 2015/395.

window recess one foot into the wall, that they may project only 1 foot 6 inches into the room'.[188] But even these did not appear to be sufficient for the Abercorns. Woodgate goes on: 'There are marble slabs in this house; two may be placed in the piers (?) to assist the sideboards which I think will be sufficient for the room, especially as the ante room is so convenient'.[189] Frank Mitchell, in his descriptive 'vision' of the dining room at Townley Hall, county Louth at the end of the eighteenth century, indicates a somewhat shorter sideboard:

> In the centre was the table, 13' x 6', of San Domingo mahogany, and round it a set of new Regency chairs. Beside the door through which the food entered was the side-board, 8'6" long and 3' deep, against the west wall. The north wall had three windows, and the east wall two, and the single fireplace in the centre of the south wall must have found it hard to keep the room warm in winter. There was a door at each side of the fire-place; one opened into the front hall, and the other into the butler's plate cupboard.[190]

At Kedleston, Derbyshire, Robert Adam, in the 1760s, fitted a 'sideboard suite' into a domed apse in the dining room. This generally consisted of a long flat table (curved at Kedleston) to show off the silver (not as 'baroque' a display as that of the early eighteenth-century), flanked by two urn-shaped wine-coolers standing on pedestal cupboards in which dining accoutrements could be stored. Under the sideboard was a cistern or wine-cooler which, when filled with crushed ice could keep wine cold or, if filled with water, glasses could be rinsed in it.[191] A similar suite was made for the dining room at Castle Coole, together with two pier tables, to designs by James Wyatt.[192] An invoice among the De Vesci Papers lists '2 neat mahogany pedestals one fitted up as a plate warmer', and one from Gillows for Castlegar, county Galway describes the 'mahogany sideboard with cupboards, one fitted up with warming plates lined with tin' (both dated 1809).[193]

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[188] Might these have been the '2 tables for holding plate covered with Crimson' in a later, *c* 1840 inventory added to the 1782 manuscript? In 1844 John Ynyr Burges mentions a single sideboard, remarking on Baronscourt's dining room where 'a colossal shield of arms enriched the wall where the mighty sideboard rested, glittering with plate'. PRONI, T/1282 'Diaries of John Y Burges', 4 vols, I, 24 January 1844, pp 95-96.

[189] Letter from Robert Woodgate, Baronscourt to Marquis of Abercorn, London, 16 (6?) March 1793. Photocopy of abstract from PRONI (T.2541/IA1/19/24): my thanks to Edward McParland.

[190] Frank Mitchell, 'The evolution of Townley Hall: a personal view', in *BIGS* vol xxx, 1987, pp 4-61.

[191] Paston-Williams, *The art of dining*, p 246.

[192] Peter Marson, *Belmore: the Lowry Corrys of Castle Coole 1646-1913* (Belfast 2007), p 74; Glin and Peill, pp 185-188 (fig. 253). Marson states that the joiners on-site at Castle Coole made a dining table, a sarcophagus, pedestals, and pier tables for the dining room (p 73), while Glin and Peill state that four pier tables, a sarcophagus and the sideboard, complete with urns and pedestals, were made by John Stewart of Montgomery Street, Dublin. This does not preclude the possibility that Stewart or his workshop made the items on-site as Stewart does not appear in any directory.

[193] NLI De Vesci Papers, MS 38,929/1, Invoice from Tatham & Bailey, Upholsterers, dated October 1809; McParland, MS notes from Mahon Papers.

Accoutrements strictly for dining, however, did not always fill both cupboards of the sideboard. While in England, a horrified La Rochefoucauld found that '[it] is furnished with a number of chamber pots and it is a common practice to relieve oneself while the rest are drinking; one has no kind of concealment and the practice strikes me as most indecent'.[194] Another European visitor to England, Prince Pückler-Muskau, (who also visited Ireland) was of a similar opinion in 1826. He writes to his wife that 'immediately after the departure of the ladies and immediately beside the table, free rein is given: a relic of barbarism which is extremely repugnant to our notions of propriety'. He tells her of 'an old admiral who, clad in his dress uniform...made much use of this facility for a good ten minutes, during which period we felt as if we were listening to the last drops from a roof gutter after a long past thunderstorm'.[195] It was common practice in Ireland, too. At Newbridge House, county Dublin, a small cupboard in the Dining Room contains a chamber pot, and in Strokestown House, county Roscommon one was kept in a 'secret' compartment outside the Dining Room door, to be brought in by a servant as required. They were also to be found in spaces behind shutters in some houses, for example at Ardbraccan.

The Scottish architect William H Playfair designed dining room furniture for Drumbanagher House, county Armagh in 1833-34. His design for the sideboard is interesting: it has a shallow step on its back for the display of plate 'characteristic of Scottish sideboards' (Playfair was from Edinburgh), and the slatted 'Openings for Hot Air' [noted on the drawings] in each end compartment 'probably reflect the client's [Maxwell Close] enthusiasm for central heating rather than being an example of the built-in plate-warmers incorporated in some late Georgian sideboards'. Playfair also designed the chairs for the room and, to ensure quality control, he not only sent full-size drawings for a chair 'leaving nothing to the imagination of an Irish tradesman', as Gow puts it, but he wrote 'I would recommend that instead of a Drawing that I should get a Pattern chair made here and send it over for approval'.[196] If the English architect Francis Goodwin was the perfectionist that Playfair appeared to be, he would have been rather annoyed to find that the sideboard ordered for Lissadell, county Sligo and attributed to

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[194] Quoted in Paston-Williams, *The art of dining*, p 262. An example of a Scottish-made sideboard has, in a central compartment under the drawer, sliding doors that part to reveal the chamber pot. It can be seen the National Trust's Georgian House at Charlotte Square, Edinburgh.

[195] *Pückler's Progress: the adventures of Prince Pückler-Muskau in England, Wales and Ireland as told in letters to his former wife 1826-9*, trans. by Flora Brennan (London 1987), p 86.

[196] Ian Gow, "'An architect's melancholy": furniture by W H Playfair for an Irish House', in *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* 1998, vol. 14, pp 57-60.

Williams & Gibton, was too wide for the recess provided by him, and channels on each side had to be hacked off the plaster to allow it fit in.

Richard Lovell Edgeworth was more preoccupied with comfort in his home rather than where each piece of furniture was to be placed. Beaufort was greatly impressed with the early form of central heating at Edgeworthstown, county Longford when he visited in 1787, 'Every chimney emits warm air from over the mantelpiece into all the rooms and in the Eating Room the warm air comes from the Kitchen it passes through a [place?] were plates are put to heat'. Here too he found both the sideboard and supper table were on wheels 'extremely easily moved and convenient'.[197] Does the fact that the sideboard was on wheels mean it was used in the manner of a dumb waiter? A combination of table and dumb waiter was apparently available: 'a large mahogany Octagon Table on hollow Claw and a Dumb Waiter to fix on the Centre' was ordered by the De Vescis in 1809.[198] It is surprising how few dumb waiters are listed in the inventories in either parlours (where only two are found – in Mary Street and Cavendish Row[199] or dining rooms, where there are only eight.[200] This piece of furniture was intended to dispense with the services of a servant at the table. It was typically, according to the *OED* 'an upright pole, bearing one or more revolving trays or shelves', which could be placed next to the table, laden with wines and decanters when left with the gentlemen after dinner, or plates, dishes and cutlery when the company wanted to help themselves. The circular design of this gave way in the late eighteenth century to rectangular tiers.

We have looked at what were the most important items of furniture in the dining room: tables, chairs, sideboards, and dumb waiters. As one would expect there were also numerous screens, used sometimes to shield the diners from the activities of the servants. Another type of screen, only one of which is found among the inventories, in the Delamain house in Cork City (1763), is a fire- or

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[197] TCD, 'Journal of a Tour through part of Ireland begun August 26, 1787', MS 4026 (I), folio 77.
[198] Might this be a type of drinking table (see above on the horseshoe table), or for supper, in the absence of servants?
[199] There was also one in the New Parlour at Drumcondra House, Dublin in 1773, 'Inventory of Drumcondra House, October 17th, TRIARC, Crookshank-Glin archive, ref. TRIARC/1/13, photocopy of Alexander de Lapere Kirkpatrick, *Chronicles of the Kirkpatrick family* (Privately printed, undated).
[200] Park Street (NLI, Conyngham Papers, MS 35,339(4), 'Roger Murray to Henry Viscount Conyngham, assigment of lease by way of mortgage of a house in Park Street, Dublin, 27 October 1766'), Denmark Street (PRONI, Erne Papers D/1939/24/11/2, 'Schedule of furniture attached to lease of house from Earl of Rosse to David Courtney, Esq., 18 December 1793'); Antrim House (1801) and North Great George's Street (1805), all in Dublin; Gaulston, co Westmeath (1787); Prospect (Ardgillan) (1795), co Dublin; Killadoon, co Kildare (1807), and Shelton House, co Wicklow (1816).

chimney-board, a decorative painted screen that was made to fit the fireplace opening.[201] It was convenient in rooms where a fireplace remained unused over long periods. They often depicted a large vase of flowers that, in some American examples at least, is surrounded on three sides with simulated delft tiles, like those used in fire surrounds.[202] Grates and locks were not mentioned (except rarely) in inventories post-1760s when they were 'fixed' rather than movable; and from the 1780s a great deal of more sophisticated items such as mahogany plate buckets, wine coopers, bottle, glass and knife trays, cisterns, and mahogany and 'japann'd' plate warmers became common-place. Some of the items, however, are worth looking at in some detail.

Mahogany pedestals and vases (in the Adam style, presumably) 'for warming Plates and holding Water &c' appear on an estimate for Caledon in 1783;[203] in the Street Parlour at Antrim House in 1801 and Ashfield Lodge, county Cavan[204] in 1808. For the St Legers of Doneraile in 1821, '2 rich oval coolers of fine Spanish mahogany on rich carved feet with scrolls, massive handles and covers all carved and lined inside with stout lead' were purchased for £55.10s.0d. Adding to their already richly furnished dining room at Killadoon, county Kildare, the Clements acquired in 1836 a mahogany carved sarcophagus, an inlaid mahogany stand for a silver cistern, four bronze ormolu lamps for the sideboard and, intriguingly, a 'cord from bell pull to table'. Also for the sideboard in North Great George's Street, Dublin were two brass-mounted reflectors, probably for the servants to keep an eye on the guests' requirements.[205]

In Chapter 2 the question of oil floor cloths was examined in some detail. Unsurprisingly they crop up again in the Dining Room, for the obvious reason that they would protect the carpet or flooring (frequently Turkey carpets) from food or

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[201] TCD Ms 2010-2015/395, 'Inventory of Laurence Delamain late of the City of Corke, gent deceased, taken 20 January 1763'.

[202] Wedgwood & Bentley made vases for the fireplace, but were particular about the type: Wedgwood wrote in 1772, 'Vases are furniture for a chimney piece, bough pots for a hearth…I think they can never be used one instead of the other'. A bough pot can be seen behind Samuel Richardson in his portrait by Joseph Highmore (1692-1780) in the National Portrait Gallery, London, and in David Garrick's farce *Bon Ton: Or High Life above Stairs* (produced 1775) Colonel Tivy is hidden behind such a chimney board to avoid a confrontation. James Ayres, *Domestic interiors: the British tradition 1500-1850* (New Haven and London 2003), pp 33-34.

[203] PRONI, D/2433/A/2/3/1-21, 'Estimate to James Alexander Esq. for furnishing the principal Story in Caledon House', from Mayhew & Ince, 1 May 1783.

[204] By 1829 the tin plate warmer had been replaced by one that was 'Japanned', according to a note on the 1808 inventory.

[205] In the state dining room at Holkham Hall, Norfolk were mirrored panels on the reveals of the sideboard niche for the same reason.

grease stains.[206] In Britain it was apparently often the practice to cover the carpet with an oil-cloth, on which was painted the pattern of that carpet, before dining tables were set up and the chairs brought forward from the walls.[207] Thoughts on the subject from an unknown source in the Mahon Papers about the plan for the use of oil-cloth in the Dining Room at Castlegar are, while a little perplexing, of interest :

> In my opinion the oil-cloth should in front of sideboard cover 3'6" over the Carpet & be 22' long...I do think that a piece of oil Cloth the length of the Pier will be very necessary because at the ends of the table which always stands in the Pier, on one end is placed the Knife boxes for dirty Knives during dinner time, and at the other end of same table the Camp table & tray for the dinner dishes when removed from the dinner table - by this means the Carpet at both ends of the table would be very subject to Grease - but I should suppose that for that table half yard wide oil-cloth may be sufficient or the less it appears the better.[208]

At Dromana, county Waterford in 1755, a 'Large Irish carpet' covered 'the whole intire floore'.[209] In the 1782 inventory for Baronscourt there was a Turkey carpet on the floor of the Dining Room: in 1791 during the remodelling of the house, Woodgate made some suggestions about coverings for the carpet there, advising Lord Abercorn against his proposal to use baize with a lining:

> ...unless it was a very strong 'linning' the baize being 'lymp' would give way with the feet and be very uncomfortable and likewise be very expensive...When I was in Dublin at a carpet warehouse I saw a pattern for a carpet that would...suit your Lordships ideas and would come cheap; its ground was green, with a dark spot about the size of a half crown, not very frequent and promiscuously placed; it was 4/6 per yard. A carpet 30 by 20 would cost about £17. I know not the price of the baize but I think by the time it is lined and made up it will be as expensive as the carpet and not one quarter the wear in it.[210]

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[206] They appear in inventories for Howth Castle (1746-52), Woodville (1797), the Street Parlour in Antrim House (1801), Nth Gt George's Street (1805), Killadoon (1807, again as '2 pieces under sideboard' in 1812), at Shelton House (1816) covering the hearth, Newbridge (1821) and Doneraile Court (*c* 1830).

[207] At Saltram in Devon the Axminister carpet was designed by Robert Adam, following the design of the ceiling: it was not intended at the time (1780-81) that this design would be covered with furniture on a permanent basis: that became fashionable only *c* 1810. Jackson-Stops & Pipkin, pp 131.

[208] McParland, MS notes from Mahon Papers, now missing.

[209] Ada K Longfield, 'History of carpet-making in Ireland in the 18th century', in *JRSAI*, vol. lxx, 1940, pp 63-88. This is quite interesting as, according to Longfield's research into eighteenth-century carpet-making in Ireland, from 1741 the Dublin Society offered premiums to encourage the industry. It was extremely slow in getting off the ground, as few were prepared to take the risk and invest in purchasing a broad loom to make Turkey carpets. Prior to 1750 there was little carpet-making in Ireland but between 1755 and 1775 things improved. So it would appear that there would have been only two or three carpet weavers and manufacturers who could have produced the Dromana carpet.

[210] PRONI, Abercorn Papers, T2541/IA1/19/24, Letter from Robert Woodgate, Baronscourt to the Marquis of Abercorn, London dated 16 (6?) March 1793.

Drugget, a coarse woollen stuff used for carpet, was also used on floors: it was to be found at Carton, county Kildare in 1818 in grey, along with a Turkey rug, a Turkey carpet and '2 Farmed Sheep Skins'. There was a printed drugget at Brownlow House, county Armagh in 1848, and one in crimson at the Provost's House, Dublin in 1852.

In the above letter to Lord Abercorn, Woodgate makes some points about the importance of light in this room, one of the aspects of the dining room to which we will now turn.

An interesting series of changes evolved in the dining room in the course of the eighteenth century that affected furniture, furnishings, silver and china and, indeed, a way of life. To begin with, the hour for serving dinner became gradually later moving from 1pm to about 4pm by 1780: by the end of the century it had moved to 6pm, but there was a great deal of flexibility. Mrs Conolly of Castletown, according to Mrs Delany in 1752, always dined at 3pm (a very substantial meal), and had tea and coffee at 5.30pm. At Hillsborough in 1758 Mrs Delany dined at 3.30pm, had supper at 10pm and retired to bed at 11pm.[211] Later in about the 1830s Frances Power Cobbe wrote that they dined at Newbridge, county Dublin at 6pm or 6.30pm 'at the latest', and after that 'Tea, made in an urn, was a regular meal taken in the drawing-room about nine o'clock; *never* before dinner'.[212] The later hour for dinner meant that for much of the year it would be dark by the time it was served. In the country, to facilitate guests' safe return home, invitations were often issued to coincide with a full moon.[213] Mrs Delany intended 'to breakfast and dine at Lucan [House] this day, and to come home by moonshine'.[214] The orientation of the dining room was mentioned occasionally; it was not desirable that it would be exposed to much sun as that would not only damage the furniture and furnishings, but would not be pleasant for some of the guests to have sun in their faces. Roger North thought that 'cupolo-lights' are 'no where better than in the eating room' because

> they are indifferent to all the company, and promote society by equall observation to and of all. In a side-light room, those that sitt averse are not observable to and of all. And a raised light is an

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[211] Day, (ed.), *Letters*, pp 53, 146. In Britain in the late eighteenth-early nineteenth century lunch was gradually introduced to fill the long gap between meals, according to Jackson-Stops, though Paston-Williams dates this development to the 1830s, Jackson-Stops & Pipkin p 124; Paston-Williams, *The art of dining*, p 244.
[212] *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, I, p 16.
[213] Baird, *Mistress of the house*, p 36.
[214] Day, (ed.), *Letters*, p 262.

> advantage to feature, for it lays the shaddow of the prominencys downewards, and strong, which setts off the lights in each object.[215]

Robert Woodgate puts forward an argument, in his letter to Lord Abercorn, for the re-opening of the window that separates the two sideboards (see above) at Baronscourt, so that 'if ever the sun be so powerful as to oblige the [three] windows in the west [of the room] to be blinded this will be free; its small projection into the room will be a relief to the side-boards and give a pleasing effect to the end of the room'.[216] Blinds reduced the tendency of the sun to bleach wood and textiles and to damage paintings. Roller blinds were available from 1700, and Venetian blinds were fashionable by 1760.[217] Probably Lord Lyttleton was right when he wrote that a dining room facing north 'will be best'.[218] Despite the dire warnings about the retention of food smells in fabrics, most Irish dining rooms had curtains.[219] The festoon curtain had become fashionable after 1720 and was listed in 1751 at Lord Howth's Dublin house in St Mary's Abbey ('crimson Nasaw draw-up'), at Caledon in 1785 ('146 yds rich drab stripe sattin damask…curtain lined, fringed & finished, to draw up in festoons complete with a pully lath…a rich silk tassel with button hangers'[220]), and North Great George's Street in 1805.

As Cornforth has pointed out, it cannot have been just a coincidence that dining late influenced 'the ordering of silver and the laying of the table, because few candlesticks were provided as part of early silver dinner services'; 'taller' candlesticks were now in demand, and the silver that was previously displayed on the sideboard or buffet was now being used on the table.[221] From the early eighteenth century in Ireland silver was beginning to replace pewter and brass in reception rooms, though pewter remained popular. The nineteenth and twentieth earls of Kildare were renowned for the extravagance of their silver services: the latter commissioned a silver-gilt dinner service and a pair of candelabra in London with which to decorate his table.[222] The nineteenth earl 'makes a much greater show

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[215] Colvin & Newman (eds), *Of building,* p 55.
[216] PRONI, Abercorn Papers, T2541/IA1/19/24,Letter from Woodgate to Lord Abercorn, 16th (6th?) March, [17]93.
[217] *The Georgian Group Guides,* 'Curtains and blinds' No. 14. Venetian blinds were in the dining rooms at Caledon in 1785 and Killadoon in 1807. At Carton there were roller blinds in the dining room in 1818, as there were at Mount Stewart (1821), Doneraile Court (*c* 1830), Convoy, co Donegal (1844), Brownlow House (1848) and the Provost's House (1852.
[218] Quoted in Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors,* p 49.
[219] Twelve inventories do not list curtains in dining rooms. In the Small Dining Room at Brownlow House (1848) only a window cornice and two sun blinds are listed. The contents of the formal dining room are not listed, only those in 'Anti Room, off Dining Room'.
[220] PRONI, Caledon Papers, D/2433/A/2/3/9. Invoice from Mayhew & Ince…to James Alexander, Esqre. for Caledon House 1785.
[221] Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors,* p 49.
[222] Barnard, *Making the grand figure* p 139; Elise Taylor, 'Silver for a countess's levée: the Kildare Toilet Service', *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* 1998, pp 115-124: no date is given for the dinner service.

of his plate than of his virtues' observed the rather catty earl of Orrery in 1736.[223] Another collector was Sir Thomas Taylor who had houses in Smithfield, Dublin and at Kells, county Meath: by 1728 his silver weighed 2,529 ounces and valued at almost £620. Joseph Leeson purchased a suite of plate in 1742 to be displayed in Russborough, county Wicklow, on its completion.[224] In the Nugent family's Dublin house the 'sideboard of plate' in the back parlour, worth £60, made up about 30 per cent of the total worth of the family's effects,[225] and the silver displayed in the 'Buffett' in Laurence Delamain's house in Cork City was valued at £33.16s.0d, almost as much as the other contents of his house in 1763. But much of this early silver, sometimes of a quite baroque design, might have been too old-fashioned and unsuitable for table use in the later decades of the century.[226] Cutlery sets with family crests were ordered, and specially-made knife-boxes were left on or near the sideboard.

Along with the silver, there was Chinese porcelain, much of which bore families' coats of arms, which cost about ten times more than the everyday ware of the time. David Howard reckons that 'more than a hundred dinner and tea services were ordered for Irish families and made and painted in central China and at Canton with coats of arms', in the one hundred years from 1720.[227] Among the items advertised for sale at Lord Donegall's house in Belfast in 1803 were a Wedgwood dinner service and a Colebrookdale dinner and dessert service in gold and scarlet.[228] Frances Power Cobbe described as 'exceedingly beautiful' the Indian (perhaps Chinese?) and Worcester china that belonged to Thomas Cobbe: one dessert service for thirty-six people 'was magnificent'.[229]A profusion of wax candles lit dining rooms from torchères, candlesticks, candelabra and sconces, the latter often fitted with a mirror to reflect light. Together with the mirrors on the piers between windows and over the chimneypieces in many dining rooms, the effect of the reflections and the flickering light on the silver, porcelain and glassware on the table must have been striking.[230]

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[223] Barnard, *Making the grand figure* p 139.
[224] Part of the Milltown Collection now in the National Gallery of Ireland. Desmond FitzGerald, 'Some thoughts on Russborough', in *IAR* , Winter 2005, pp 124-25.
[225] Barnard, *Making the grand figure,* p 139.
[226] One of the advantages of silver was that it could be melted down and re-designed.
[227] David S Howard, 'Chinese armorial porcelain for Ireland', in *BIGS*, vol. xxix, Nos. 3 & 4, July-December 1986, pp 3-24.
[228] Maguire, *Living like a lord* p 30.
[229] *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, p 19.
[230] One such mirror in the Ingoldsby's Dining Room in Mary Street (1731) measured 43 inches by 23 inches, and was in a glass frame. Such a large size was hugely expensive, particularly for such an early date. Nessa Roche in her research into mirrors in Ireland, found only one eighteenth-century advertisement where the manufacturer gave measurements for some of his looking glasses, the largest of which was 44 inches by 22 inches. Roche, Nessa, 'Irish eighteenth-century looking glasses:

The inventories imply that there were many well-furnished and luxurious dining rooms in Irish houses, but not all were like that. Others were probably similar to Elizabeth Connor's (née Longfield) description of her grandfather's house at Longueville, county Cork when she visited it in the early nineteenth century where there was a

> large diningroom very scantily furnished, curtains that didn't reach the ground and no drapery, a carpet just the size of the dining table, a spindled-legged sideboard and chairs, and a large four-leaved screen covered with silk or what I think what was called taffeta. The entire house was most scantily furnished.[231]

In the context of this, the earl of Longford's comment on the luxurious furnishings at Inverary, Argyllshire in Scotland in 1793 (where the decoration of the drawing room alone cost 4,000 guineas) is interesting.[232] The dining room there, he says, was

> finished in the first style of superb elegance…the furniture is all suitable. However, I should be very sorry to be the master of such rooms or such furniture, for the thoughts of making any use [of] them which might endanger their being damaged or dirtied would set me distracted.[233]

The one inventory that stands out because of its almost disarming frankness about the condition of the goods listed, is that of Stackallen, county Meath (1757).[234] Here the emphasis is on how old, worn and broken the objects are, and the sparseness of furniture in the 'Dineing Room' must mean that it was rarely used: '15 long backed chairs with cane bottoms, backs and frames worm-eaten; 2 ordinary square tables; large settee mahogany frame covered with green […] and 6 pillows', twelve pictures and a brass lock complete the list. The 'Smal Parlour' must have been used for eating as it contained an oval dining table, and twelve rush-bottomed chairs with two similar armchairs covered with green paragon '& Bottoms out'. The matching green window curtains 'much worn & faded and each curtain lengthened by added pieces' bring to mind the dining room at Longueville House. However, the inventory was attached to a lease made between Richard Hamilton of Stackallen and a John Fitzmaurice of Dublin, so it is possible that the house was not occupied for some time and that the better goods had already been removed. This is an important point that has to be borne in mind when looking at inventories.

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makers, frames and glass' in Brian Austen (ed.), *Irish Furniture: Papers presented at the Symposium of The Furniture History Society on 6 February 1999 at The Victoria & Albert Museum, London,* pp 16-23.

[231] Glin and Peill, p 149. FitzGerald makes the point that Longueville was the house of a viscount!

[232] Begun to Roger Morris's design in 1745; decorated in the 1780s in the Louis Seize style, associated with Carlton House, London. Cornforth, *Early Georgian,* p 10.

[233] Quoted in Glin and Peill, p 191.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter both parlours and dining rooms have been looked at in much detail. In many cases they were rooms that had much in common with regard to furniture, furnishings, and room use. Throughout the eighteenth century the term 'parlour' was used for a room that combined eating with general family activities, similar to the 'family room' of the twentieth century. In Britain the same room was generally termed the 'Common Parlour' an expression that has been found to have little currency in Ireland. Town houses were fairly straightforward with ground-floor parlours called 'front' and 'back', that at the back mostly used as a formal dining room, the front parlour as a sitting room or room of business for visitors. In the country the room use was similar, but the parlour had a range of descriptive adjectives applied to it that seemed to fill a gap for new room names. As the century progressed the 'parlour' became less popular with the rise of the 'dining room', and later still, the appearance of the breakfast or morning room refined the place of eating even more.[235] Noted too is the comfortable seat furniture that began to make its appearance in these new rooms. It would seem that the advent of more specialised rooms facilitated the demise of the parlour.

But in the absence of a parlour, where the family congregated and entertained themselves and their friends, what took its place? It would appear that the drawing room or the library (if there was one) fulfilled this need, and alternatives were dressing rooms and closets.[236] Mrs Delany and her friends constantly entertained each other in these latter rooms, and it will be seen in a later chapter that in many houses a dressing room formed part of the suite of reception rooms. Furthermore, a number of houses had more than one drawing room – Mrs Clements, it has been seen, had four or five in her Dublin house. Or did it really bother anyone using the morning room in the afternoon or evening?

It has been seen that architects, and probably house owners, were ambivalent about these rooms, the terms were often interchangeable as people began to adjust to a new room type. From the early nineteenth century parlours were not often found in newly-built or extensively-renovated houses. Richard Morrison's book in 1793 may have been pointing the way forward where he showed the larger and more

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[234] My thanks to Edward McParland for his notes on this inventory.
[235] It is interesting that the morning room is always a *room*, while a breakfast room can also be a breakfast *parlour*. These terms are only used in cases where there is no other parlour in the house.
[236] And later still, in the boudoir.

expensive houses having 'breakfast parlours', while presumably if one lived in a smaller house, one had to be content with the all-purpose 'parlour'.

The dining room as a named space has not had as long a history as the parlour, but it was a term used in Ireland from the 1630s. This is forty years earlier than the earliest quoted for Britain, and the reason for this might be, according to a number of writers on the subject, that dinner was taken in the saloon there before the advent of the dining room. In this study it was found that the earliest saloon, so called, in Ireland was that at Carton in 1739 (**Fig. 1.16**) and, as there was a dining room there, there would have been no need to eat in the saloon. Therefore that does not seem to have been an option in Ireland at that time. It is true in general that the dining room, together with the hall, and the saloon, is often the most architecturally articulated space in a house, decorated with columns and panelling, and different to other reception rooms, as Robert Adam advocated. We have looked at bowed and canted bays, and at the decorative and practical uses of the columnar screen.

The formal dining room has been, throughout the period of this study, together with the drawing room, one of the biggest rooms in the house with a decided increase in its size in nineteenth-century plans. The preferred location of the room was to the rear of the house, though a sizeable number were found to the front. A brief look was taken at the question of whether or not the dining room formed part of an enfilade of what is called the 'rooms of parade'. It was found that the dining room frequently terminated the range of formal rooms, and was therefore, not a room through which one would 'parade'. This rather pompous expression, 'rooms of parade', is not one, except in a handful of cases mentioned, that sits easily on the Irish house, but it is one that will be examined in more detail in the next chapter when all of the receptions rooms will be looked at.

It was found that in most cases access to the kitchen was close to both the Parlour and the Dining Room, serviced by a back staircase leading to the offices. But it is also clear that the food must have been well cooled in some long journeys from kitchens in the wing, along the passage to the main block, and across half the house to get to its destination. Also noted on some plans was a convenient servery outside the dining room. And on the subject of a servery, was that intriguing space, the 'Buffet', as at Headfort and Castle Coole, just another term for one?

Turning to colours and fabrics used in dining rooms, from a number of sources it was found that green was a popular colour for dining room walls. Wall colour, however, was rarely mentioned in inventories, but fabrics and their colour are quite frequently listed. For curtains,[237] red (more precisely, crimson and scarlet) dominates, as does damask as a fabric. In the hierarchy of colours, red has the grandest associations, with crimson used in state apartments of royal palaces from the seventeenth century.[238] The damask did not usually extend to dining chairs, most of which were upholstered and covered with leather (in black, green or red), tapestry or horsehair. Less popular were the cane- or rush-bottomed chairs, many of which can be seen in other parts of the house. It is interesting to note that the term 'parlour chair' was used consistently throughout the period under discussion, particularly by furniture makers, in preference to 'dining chair'.

Mahogany dining tables were noted at Powerscourt Dublin in 1728, replacing the oak or walnut used up to then. Several tables in the dining room were the rule, often folded up and left by the wall, or outside the room (which accounts for so many missing from dining room inventories), and from the 1770s the longer table, with detachable leaves, became fashionable. It would seem that tables and leather-seated chairs, similar to those in the dining room, were sometimes moved from the parlour to the dining room, as needed. At Drumbanagher, Lissadell and Castle Coole we saw sideboards that were designed especially for the rooms, and at Edgeworthstown the sideboard and supper table that were 'on wheels'.

The portability of such furniture led to the question of the dumb waiter of which it was noted there were remarkably few. Because it enabled family and guests to help themselves to its contents without the presence of a servant, it was considered a boost to the need for privacy that was perceived throughout the eighteenth century.[239] Does this mean that families living in Ireland did not mind the presence of servants (who probably knew all of their business anyway), or did they simply prefer being waited upon?

Undoubtedly the late eighteenth-century dining room, with its polished mahogany and japanned furniture, its silver and porcelain, shown to their best by candlelight, must have been a sophisticated space in many Irish houses. On the whole, there

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[237] Despite Adam's advice on fabric retaining the small of food, curtains are to be found in most Irish dining rooms.
[238] Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, p 119.

were a fair number of well-furnished dining rooms among the inventories. But as has been seen, there were exceptions. With large amounts of money expended on rather large pieces of furniture for this room, as the Knight of Glin has often remarked, it is no surprise to find that much time was spent there, particularly by men. We should not be surprised, therefore, to find that when Robert Graham visited Drumbanagher in 1835, the house was still building, but 'the dining room [was] finished as well as the family apartment…'.[240] Obviously William Playfair's furniture was in place by then, and perhaps Mrs Close, 'my Lady Patroness in Architecture' as he chose to call her, took his advice on how to 'finish' the dining room in a letter (together with sketches) sent in June 1833:

> …the floor is of oak…all the woodwork in imitation oak, walls to be covered with flock paper or to be painted in oil without any gloss upon the paint, and in either case to be of a beautiful warm brown tone of colour. The ceiling to be a light shade of the same, several of the mouldings to be gilded. Chimney-piece of Black and Gold marble. All the handles of Doors to be of black polished horn…The curtains to be of brown or red Cloth or Moreen and the Chairs and Tables of Mahogany and the chairs with red or green leather. A mirror over the fireplace, another one over the Side Board and another over the marble slab opposite the Fireplace. Pictures by the Old Masters, so as to balance the effect of the mirrors properly. In this way I conclude, with all submission to your better judgement, that the room will be properly finished.[241]

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[239] Linda Pollock, 'Living on the stage of the world: the concept of privacy among the elite of early modern England' in A Wilson (ed.), *Rethinking social history: English society 1570-1920 and its interpretation* (Manchester 1993), pp 78-96.

[240] Henry (ed.), *A Scottish Whig*, p 231.

[241] Gow, '"An architect's melancholy"', *IAR Yearbook 1998*, pp 57-61.

CHAPTER 4

OTHER FORMAL ROOMS

From the second half of the seventeenth century and into the following one the arrangement of the house into a 'formal plan' was based on French models, an example for which was Vaux-le-Vicomte where the oval double-height salon, located to the centre, was flanked by *appartements* comprising *antechambre, chambre* and *cabinet.* In England and in Ireland these rooms became the drawing room, the bedroom and the closet. The dressing room too made its appearance in the second half of the seventeenth century, sometimes replacing, or in addition to, the closet. According to Isaac Ware writing in 1756, 'In large houses where there is a garden behind, [the?]best disposition possible is to throw the whole first floor of back rooms into a string or suit'. However he added more spaces: 'these should consist of a saloon, an anti-chamber, drawing room, bedchamber, and dressing-room'.[1] This was fairly typical of early to mid-eighteenth-century planning: the formal rooms on the first,[2] rather than the ground floor, and its hierarchy leading from the most public room through the saloon, the drawing room, the bedroom, the dressing room and/or the closet, the most private and intimate of the spaces. An enfilade close to the window walls provided a vista through the rooms. These suites were called in England (erroneously for the most part[3]) 'state apartments', an old-fashioned term that dates back to when royalty spent much of the year travelling from one great house to another. In Ireland, with a couple of exceptions (Dublin Castle and Kilkenny Castle), the term is rarely to be found, so the bedroom suite attached to reception rooms (at ground level) in the earlier houses might be kept for important guests or used by the master of the house.

This chapter will look at ranges of formal rooms in the house that were used for the entertainment of important guests and/or large parties and, with the aid of plans, will show how circulation was managed through them. It will be seen how, as the eighteenth century progressed, Girouard's 'formal plan' of drawing room, bedroom and closet, evolved into the more informal arrangement of rooms for entertaining, often referred to as 'rooms of parade'. While these latter rooms generally comprise the saloon, drawing room, dining room and dressing room, an

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[1] Ware, p 328

[2] 'The floor of taste, expense, state and parade', Cornforth, 'Houghton I' in *Country Life*, 30 April 1987.

[3] See Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors* pp 13-19.

ante-room and a boudoir sometimes accompany them, and the bedroom became a private space, often moved upstairs. As houses seem to have been planned around the formal rooms, questions such as how easy was it to 'parade' through them, something that was not only taken for granted by visitors to the house, but desired by the owner, and whether guests collided on their return journeys, will be addressed. Here too the various names given to the bigger room for entertaining in the second half of the century, e.g. 'great' rooms, 'long' rooms and ballrooms, will be looked at. The flexibility of room use in general is of particular interest in this chapter.

To place the concept of planned apartments and the progression of formal spaces within the house into a perspective, the chapter will begin with a brief look at the State Apartments used by the duke and duchess of Ormonde at Kilkenny Castle and at Dublin Castle. Then, after a brief introduction to the important issue of circulation, the rooms themselves, together with their contents, will be looked at in some detail, i.e. the saloon, the drawing room, the ante-room, the dressing room and the boudoir.[4] As the dining room, its location and contents has been examined in Chapter 3, it will be mentioned here only in the context of its place as part of the formal rooms. Libraries too could be seen as part of the formal suite but because they play a larger part as family accommodation, they will be dealt with in the next chapter. It will be seen that, like the parlour and the dining room, some rooms are frustratingly interchangeable such as firstly, the saloon and drawing room; and secondly, the dressing room, closet and boudoir. It is hoped to discern some differences between the first two rooms; and to look at the dressing room in its context as a public rather than as a private room. The closet, a term that is often understood to mean a dressing room, will not be dealt with in this chapter, but will appear in the next where it will be studied with the 'private' dressing room. Some consideration will be given to the boudoir, a room name for which there was no great demand in Ireland.

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[4] Bedrooms as part of suites of rooms will be looked at in that context. As noted, there were few 'state' bedrooms in Ireland, though a state bed festooned with red silk was prepared at Castle Coole in anticipation of a visit by George IV, who never used it. Also disappointed was the owner of Annesbrook, co Meath who built a 'banquetting room' or ballroom to the west of the house in which to entertain George IV to dinner while the monarch was visiting his mistress at Slane Castle. Apparently the weather was so clement he preferred to dine out of doors. It is notable that neither Leinster House nor Russborough had a bedroom on the ground floor. Headfort retained its 'formal' bedroom into the 19th century. While bedrooms continued to be found at that level, most were used by family members, were located away from the reception rooms and formed no part of them as, for example, at Woodville, Mount Kennedy, Rockingham, Adare Manor, and Lissadell. As late as the 1840s at Roxborough Castle the 'Master's bedroom' is beside but without direct access to, the Drawing Room.

After an examination of the rooms individually, it is intended to look at them together as connected (or not?) suites of formal rooms, to see how they worked in practice. The ways in which people negotiated, occupied and used these rooms will be based on both plans and contents (from inventories), and from letters, travellers' accounts, diaries and novels of the time. One occupation that has been greatly neglected in the study of life in not only country houses but also those in towns and cities in Ireland, is the presentation of amateur theatricals in private houses. A fashion that began at the vice-regal court at Dublin Castle in the early decades of the eighteenth century, and swept the country in the second half of the century deserves to be looked at in some detail. The theatre in Ireland was greatly supported by both classes but in the second half of the century the production of sketches and plays at home for the benefit of each other, close friends and tenants, was an attractive prospect and for some, literally, a theatre for display. It is hoped to redress this imbalance with an account of some of the domestic theatricals produced in their own homes by a number of families across the country.

The introduction of the formal plan to Ireland was probably due to the duke and duchess of Ormonde. Having lived for some time in France the couple would most likely have encountered it, but would certainly have enjoyed it at Clarendon House, London where they lodged for a time. Roger Pratt, who designed the London house, had spent some years absorbing architecture in France and Italy resulting in the innovative plan at Coleshill, but also at Clarendon House. On his return as lord lieutenant in 1662, the Ormonde inventories reveal changes to the interior planning of their principal residences in Ireland – the provision of apartments - reflecting that experienced by them in England and France.[5] The first floor state apartment at Kilkenny Castle is contained in the range between the duchess's Closet in the north-west tower and the Great Dining Room in the north-east tower.[6] It extends from the dining room, a drawing room, 'the Alcove' which was the State Bedroom (the bed was in a curtained alcove), and the closet, the most intimate of these hierarchical rooms. As an inventory of 1684 records that bedrooms for the duke and duchess already existed at the Castle, the Alcove, with its green damask bed furnishings, green silk wall hangings 'edged with silver and gold fringe', was for the use of important visitors.[7]

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[5] Jane Fenlon, 'Episodes of magnificence: the material worlds of the dukes of Ormonde' in Barnard and Fenlon (eds), *The dukes of Ormonde, 1610-1745* (Woodridge 2000), pp 137-59.
[6] Floor levels vary somewhat between the towers. Jane Fenlon, 'The Ormonde inventories 1675-1717: a state apartment at Kilkenny Castle' in Agnes Bernelle (ed.), *Decantations: a tribute to Maurice Craig* (Dublin 1992), pp 29-37.
[7] Fenlon, 'The Ormonde inventories…', pp 29-37..

The sumptuous fabrics mentioned in the Ormonde inventories for their apartments in Kilkenny Castle, Dunmore House and at Dublin Castle, befitted a ducal and vice-regal family. It should be borne in mind that in the mid-seventeenth century more value was attached to textiles and tapestries than to 'built' furniture. The duchess of Ormonde's closet at Kilkenny in 1684 had blue damask wall hangings with fringes, fifteen cushions covered in the same fabric ('with blew Silke Tassells'), as was the counterpane of the couch bed, and white Indian damask window curtains. After the death of the duke in 1688 the closet was refurbished for the second duchess and the blue hangings were replaced with crimson and white damask, window curtains and valance of white damask with a green silk fringe, and silver green silk and velvet for the soft furnishings.[8] In 1705 the duke's state bedchamber at Dublin Castle was hung with crimson damask trimmed with gold, with the same for the window curtains, the bed furniture, fire screen and the chairs; the duchess had a similar matching arrangement in her bedchamber but the fabric was a flowered silk damask. Scarlet and white striped fabric was chosen for his grace's closet and for the duchess's dressing room where one side of the room was hung with the fabric, three door curtains and the seat furniture covered in it.[9] Fenlon also mentions the interesting fact that 'clusters of paintings' hung 'up to five deep on the walls, staircases, passages and entries along the route leading to the state apartment', and that two-thirds of the Ormond picture collection were contained in just four rooms: the gallery, the supping room, the dressing room and the duchess's closet. The latter room was 'extravagantly hung with paintings', so that the more important the visitor, the further they penetrated the formal rooms, the more the collection was revealed to them.[10] Such a 'parade' through these hierarchical spaces brings us to the issue of circulation in houses into the eighteenth century and after.

Circulation

In the plans under consideration, while many of the dining rooms were located on the opposite side of the house to the drawing rooms, there was, in most cases, an ease of access between these rooms, sometimes in the form of a circuit, sometimes in enfilade.[11] Ease of circulation was important, becoming more so as the century progressed and entertaining large numbers of guests occurred more frequently.

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[8] Jane Fenlon, '"Her Grace's Closet". Paintings in the duchess of Ormond's closet at Kilkenny Castle', *Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, vol. xxxvi, 1994, pp 30-47.
[9] NLI, Ormonde Inventories 1667-1753.
[10] Fenlon, 'Her Grace's closet', pp 30-47.
[11] In the second half of the century Robert Adam advocated the drawing room on the garden side of the house and dining room to the front, apparently to remove the ladies from the sometimes raucous behaviour and conversation of the men as they remained in the dining room. Eileen Harris, *The genius of Robert Adam* (New Haven and London 2001), p 6.

After the middle of the eighteenth century the string of reception rooms that included bedrooms began to go out of fashion, and rooms that could be easily converted to different purposes heralded a new and less formal way of entertaining. In this way, a drawing room, dining room and library could be transformed into a ballroom, supper room and card room.[12] Mrs Delany describes a ball she gave in her 'ballroom' at Mount Panther, county Down in 1758: 'my room is 32 feet long: at the upper end sat the fiddlers, and at the lower end next the little parlour the lookers-on'. Tea was served in the hall, and a cold supper in the drawing room.[13] It is likely that the 'ballroom' would be used for purposes other than dancing, particularly as it was, in this case, part of the dean of Down's residence, and her use of the word here indicates its temporary use.

This new way of entertaining and of room usage was evident in many Irish houses in the second half of the century. Anne Cooke from Rahan in county Laois, by removing a wall between two rooms in her house, created a 'Long Room' in May 1771, where she and her husband gave a ball for their son's coming-of-age party the following August, entertaining seventy guests to supper.[14] Cooke's 'long room' might equally have been called a 'great room', a gallery or even a saloon. It is notable that a number of 'great rooms', as distinct from saloons or drawing rooms, appear from the mid-eighteenth century for the purpose of entertaining large numbers of guests. These were often built as additions to houses, such as the Pearcean room of uncertain date at Luke Gardiner's Mountjoy House in Phoenix Park,[15] and the 'saloon' of number 10 Henrietta Street. Of the addition of the drawing room at Newbridge in *c.* 1760, John Cornforth states that it was 'evidently intended both as a great room for company and for pictures, which both Thomas [Cobbe] and Lady Betty were collecting'.[16] This shows an overlap with a gallery, a room designed for the display of pictures and sculpture. Another variation was seen at Shane's Castle, county Antrim where, in 1787, Beaufort was impressed by the 'pretty and large theatre and magnificent ballroom', located to one side of the

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[12] Jeremy Musson, *How to read a country house* (London 2005), p 164.
[13] Day (ed.), *Letters…*, p 222.
[14] T U Sadleir, 'The diary of Anne Cooke', *Journal of the Co. Kildare Archaeological Society*, 8, (1915-17), pp 205-19.
[15] This room, with an apse set into a canted bay at one end, and a shallow barrel-vaulted bay at the other, was reputedly built for the production of amateur theatricals. Casey, *Dublin*, p 301.
[16] Cornforth, 'Newbridge, Co. Dublin – I', *Country Life*, 20 June, 1985, pp 1732-37. Other 'great rooms' are that at Bishop Clayton's at St Stephen's Green ('Your great room will probably bring the Earl of Burlington over to this Kingdom…', Letter to the Bishop of Cork from the Earl of Orrery, Dublin, 11 December 1736, in Countess of Cork and Orrery (ed.), *The Orrery Papers*, vol. I, and at Dromana where 'Lord Grandison…is to give me a ball in his new great room', Letter to her sister from Lady Portarlington 7 September 1786 in Mrs G Clark (ed.), *Gleanings from an old portfolio containing some correspondence between Lady Louisa Stuart and her sister Caroline, countess of Portarlington*, 3 vols, (Edinburgh 1895-98), ii, p 60.

house. The O'Neills were passionate about the theatre and much involved in amateur theatricals in their own home and in others, as will be seen later in this chapter. The room measured 60 feet by 30 feet, 'all of wood and canvas painted and so sent ready made from London'.[17]

Cornforth states that the difference between the saloon and the great room seems to have depended 'on the overall plan and how they were placed in relation to the hall'.[18]A great room with a difference is still to be found on the third floor in 11 Parnell Square where the large bowed room to the rear is also curved on its inner wall, creating an elongated oval plan. The coved ceiling has a long central panel filled with rococo plasterwork. Access to this room was gained by the insertion of a third staircase (i.e. in addition to the main stair and the service stair) of granite added by John Butler, later earl of Ormond, who acquired the house *c.* 1770, and must have used such a grand room for entertaining. [19]

The architect Robert Adam was greatly interested in planning and in the relationship of one space to another, deeming it 'above all the others the most essential to the splendour and convenience of life'. He had an eye for the picturesque, the theatrical and, as Harris put it:

> For him, a 'proper arrangement and relief' also depended upon an ascending gradation or progression of spaces which, in the words of his friend, Lord Kames, 'gradually swells the mind' and culminates in a 'climax'.[20]

That climax was the most important room of the house, the drawing room, often preceded by an ante-room. The importance of this dramatic progression from one space to another was stressed by the Morrisons in their plans for Ballyfin, as has been seen in Chapter 4, and by John Nash at Rockingham. Rooms mentioned on the plans of the above houses require further investigation as to their use and their relationship with each other. The saloon, described by John Aheron as a 'kind of hall in the middle of a house', [21] will be looked at first.

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[17] TCD MS 4028, D A Beaufort, 'Journal of a Tour through part of Ireland begun August 26 1787', f 45. This could refer to 'architectural salvage' where a room interior (often from France) could be moved from another house, or designed and made specifically for a space, and installed. See Catherine Kelly and Patricia McCarthy, *Farmleigh* (OPW 2001), p 48.
[18] Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, p 58.
[19] Information on this room is taken from Casey, *Dublin*, p 225.
[20] Quoted in Eileen Harris, *The genius of Robert Adam* (New Haven and London 2001), p 5.
[21] Aheron, *A general treatise of architecture,* III.

Rooms: Saloon

The *OED* quotes Ephraim Chambers' *Cyclopedia* (1728) in which the saloon is described as 'a very lofty spacious Hall, vaulted at Top, and sometimes comprehending two Stories, or Ranges of Windows…Embassadors, and other Great Visitors, are usually received in the Salon', a definition that Isaac Ware concurred with in 1756.[22] According to William Chambers, 'The usual method, in buildings where beauty and magnificence are preferred to oeconomy, is to raise the Hall and Salon higher than the other rooms, and make them occupy two Stories'.[23] The Saloon derived originally from the Great Chamber of the medieval house and later from the Italian *salone* and from the French *salon*, a room for the reception of guests. While the term 'salon' does not appear in a survey of houses in early modern Paris before 1720 or 1730, it was described in the *Dictionnaire de l'Academie Francaise* as early as 1694 as 'a large room, very high and vaulted, often with two stories or ranks of arches'.[24] The oval salon at the Chateau of Vaux-le-Vicomte (1657-61), located to the centre on the garden front and on axis with the vestibule, separates matching apartments. This was seen as a model of French planning (called a *salle à l'Italienne*) that was to exercise much influence on early eighteenth-century Baroque architecture in England, and on Palladianism in both England and Ireland.

Throughout its history and despite its change of name, according to Gervase Jackson-Stops, this space remained a room 'with certain definite characteristics: highly architectural in treatment, a magnificent setting for great gatherings rather than for everyday life, and essentially masculine in feeling, as opposed to the feminine attributes of the withdrawing room beyond'.[25] He points out that saloons 'with their great coved ceilings, massive doorcases and vast pictures, were always arranged formally as befitted their position on axis with the hall, as part of the 'state centre' of the house'.[26] Cornforth says that saloons seldom occur in late 17th-century houses because great apartments were often located at first floor level and opened off the great staircase.[27] He also states that the difference between the saloon and the great room seems to have depended 'on the overall plan and how they were placed in relation to the hall'.[28] By the mid-eighteenth century as Aheron

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[22] Ware, p 337.
[23] William Chambers, *A treatise on civil architecture* (London 1759), p 82.
[24] Annik Pardailhe-Galabrun, *The birth of intimacy: privacy and domestic life in early modern Paris* (Presses Universitaires de France 1988), (trans. by Jocelyn Phelps 1991), p 62.
[25] Gervase Jackson-Stops & James Pipkin, *The English country house: a grand tour* (London 1984), p 82. Rooms as gendered spaces will be examined in Chapter 5.
[26] Jackson-Stops & Pipkin, *The English country house: a grand tour* (London 1984), p 142f.
[27] Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, p 59.
[28] Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, p 58.

mentioned, the saloon usually appears centrally, on axis with the entrance hall or, infrequently, over the hall as will be seen. At Castletown recent work on the Green Drawing Room (on axis with the hall) when hangings were removed, revealed panelling on the walls, and traces of pilasters, the latter confirming to Cornforth that it was not a drawing room, but a Great Parlour[29] (or even a one-storey saloon).[30] It was, however, described by a visitor in 1797 as 'the great saloon very superb, and containing many fine paintings, with some excellent sculpture'.[31] It has been said that few mansions in Scotland would have been considered grand enough to have a saloon,[32] but such modesty did not daunt many Irish and Anglo-Irish families.

While the saloon may have retained its physically central position in the house, by the 1730s in England, Girouard points out, its importance was on the wane; 'the reasons for putting it in the centre of the house with a great portico in front of it had gone also'.[33] Neither point was true for Ireland: the portico was never popular here (see Chapter 1) and, as the earliest mention of a saloon among the plans under consideration is at Carton dating to 1739, it went out of fashion with the formal plan only after the middle of the century, when larger dining and drawing rooms of a similar size were being created to facilitate a different way of entertaining. It did not, however, disappear as will be seen, but it is notable that a saloon was not considered essential in plans (dating to 1745) for Kildare House.

It is often difficult to differentiate between a saloon and a drawing room, to ascertain exactly how architects and owners intended them to be used. At Carton for example, what was originally the Saloon became a dining room by the second half of the eighteenth century; by *c.* 1815 it appears as a drawing room on Morrison's drawing,[34] and was later (1828) referred to as a saloon by Thomas Creevey.[35] The original oval hall at Castlegar was called a saloon when the house was turned back to front by 1820, and the room where Lord Colooney's body lay in state in 1786 at Bellamont Forest, was described in a newspaper report as the

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[29] Letter to Edward McParland from John Cornforth, 16 October [2001].
[30] The countess of Shelburne called it an ante-chamber in 1765. Bowood MSS Vol. 5 1769-70, Extracts from the Diary of Sophia, countess of Shelburne, 1 August 1769. Thanks to the Knight of Glin for a photocopy.
[31] Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, 'Dublin and its vicinity in 1797' in *Irish Geography,* 35, (2002), pp 133-55.
[32] James Macauley, *The classical country house in Scotland 1660-1800* (London 1987), pp 79-80.
[33] Girouard, *Life,* p 162.
[34] The same year, 1815, the measurer Bryan Bolger refers to it as the 'Saloon and Musick Room'. NA 58 125 (Carton insert), my thanks to Edward McParland for photocopies.
[35] FitzGerald, *Correspondence of Emily,* I, p 281.

saloon, but was in fact that particularly Irish space, the upstairs lobby (off which were eight bedrooms), lit by the cupola.[36]

As mentioned, the earliest contemporary reference to a saloon is at Carton, though Craig mentions the oval saloon at Ballyhaise, county Cavan dating to *c.* 1733. Of the annotated plans for fifty-four houses in this study, thirteen include a saloon, i.e. just over one quarter of the houses. The spelling of the word varies on the plans: mostly it is a 'saloon', but 'sallon', 'salon' and 'salloon' are also used. In the period 1700 to 1750 a saloon appears in eleven plans: five for Headfort, four for Carton and one each for Dromoland and for Chearnley's design.[37] Of the eleven, six are located to the centre of the garden front, on axis with the hall;[38] two Carton plans locate it to the front of the house at first floor level (over the hall). One ground-floor plan for Carton places the saloon to the right of the hall; the other to the rear with only the door on axis with the main entrance; and the 'Sallon' at Dromoland is located to the west of the house between the Great Parlour to the front and the drawing room to the rear.[39]

A saloon appears on only eight plans relating to five houses between 1750 and 1800: three for Ardbraccan, two for Castle Coole, and one each for Headfort, Carton and in one of Richard Morrison's published drawings.[40] Six are located to the centre of the garden front and on axis with the hall – two for Ardbraccan,[41] two for Castle Coole,[42] one for Carton[43] and in Chambers' plan for Headfort. Another plan for Ardbraccan[44] shows the saloon spanning the depth of the house to the east, and in Morrison's drawing it is in the form of a rotunda located to the centre of the house, on axis with the hall and the drawing room to the rear.[45]

In the third period, 1800-1850, the popularity of the saloon seems to be on the wane. Of thirty-one houses it appears in nine plans that relate to only six houses.[46]

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[36] An account of the funeral of the earl of Bellamont's only son is in *Faulkners Dublin Journal,* 18 May 1786, and quoted in Brian FitzGerald, *Lady Louisa Conolly 1743-1821* (London 1950), p 141.
[37] There are plans for a total of 11 houses during the period 1700-1750.
[38] These were five plans for Headfort House, co Meath, and a plan for a house by Samuel Chearnley.
[39] Thomas Creevey, in writing about the new internal arrangement in Carton following Richard Morrison's additions and alterations (*c.* 1815), describes 'the former dining room' as a saloon. The same space was called a saloon in original drawings by Castle, *c.* 1739.
[40] There are plans for a total of 22 houses during the period 1750-1800.
[41] NLI drawings 2780 and 2966.
[42] Richard Johnston's plan of 1789 and James Wyatt's of 1790.
[43] Drawn by the Marquis of Kildare in 1762.
[44] NLI drawing 2965.
[45] Morrison, *Useful and ornamental designs,* 'No. 9 and 10, A Design for a Villa'.
[46] Powerscourt, county Wicklow is included here in the plan by Daniel Robertson dated 1843, as there are no original plans for the house.

At both Old Adare House and (new) Adare Manor, county Limerick, the saloon is located to the centre of the garden front. It also appears on the centre of the garden front at Castle Dillon, county Armagh and on two plans for Emo Court,[47] county Laois where, in addition, it is on axis with the hall. Daniel Robertson's plan for Powerscourt, county Wicklow shows Richard Castle's saloon on the first floor over the Great Hall to the front. In Ballyfin the circular top-lit 'Saloon' is by no means the most important room, and is called a vestibule in another plan (**Figs 2.1, 2.3**). Both are part of a sequence of rooms to the centre of the house leading to the library on the left. In the latter drawing, the space next to the vestibule to the centre of the house is called 'Inner Hall or Saloon' which, in a plan closest to what was built (**Fig. 4.1**), is called a 'Gallery or Saloon'. On these two plans it is a large rectangular top-lit space on axis with the hall.

The majority, therefore, of the drawings in which the saloon appears locate it on axis with the hall to the rear of the house, flanked by reception rooms. Saloons for which original plans do not exist, are the Provost's House, Trinity College, and 85 St Stephen's Green, both in Dublin, both of which take up the full breadth of the house to the front and are located on the first floor. In the case of the Provost's House, this room was referred to in 1790 as a 'ballroom', in 1820 as a 'Great Drawing Room' and a 'ballroom', and as a 'drawing room' in 1852.[48] It is therefore not clear at what stage it was called a saloon, but its decoration, as will be seen, concurs with Jackson-Stops' definition mentioned earlier, and it will be referred to as here a saloon. The 'very ornate' saloon at Rossanagh, county Wicklow was located, uniquely it seems, in the east wing.[49] It should also be noted that a rear first-floor room at Kildare House, called a dining room on Castle's plans (1745), was later finished to designs by Isaac Ware in *c.* 1759: by 1775 it had been renamed the saloon.[50]

Up to 1750 saloons are rectangular in shape, after that other room shapes were to be found: a rotunda appears in a plan possibly dated to the 1770s for Ardbraccan[51]

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[47] James Gandon, Emo's architect, designed the house with a rotunda c.1790. It was not completed until about 1860. The earliest annotated plan found for Emo is one drawn by the architect Dominick Madden in 1821.

[48] TCD Muniments, P4 59(6) Invoice from J S Cranfield dated 30 November 1790; P4 183(24) 'Valuation of sundry articles of household furniture, the property of the Rt Revd Lord Bishop of Limerick in the Provost's House 27 October 1820'; TCD Muniments (uncatalogued), 'An Inventory of Furniture &c belonging to T.C.D., in the Provost's House [1852] 'drawn up by Upholsterer, Mr Durham', in which is a note received from the bishop of Limerick dated 12 October 1820 listing 'Heirlooms in the Provosts House'. My thanks to Edward McParland for a copy of this.

[49] *The Georgian Society Records,* v, p 33.

[50] Griffin and Pegum, *Leinster House,* pp 52-53.

[51] The Farnham Drawings are now in a private collection.

(**Fig. 4.2**), a shape used later at Emo Court and at Ballyfin. The circular rotunda in Morrison's drawing has already been noted, and oval saloons can be seen on the Castle Coole plans by both Johnston and Wyatt.[52] Early saloons were often larger than other rooms in the house, as in two of three plans by Castle for Headfort[53], and in two plans by him for Carton and also at Powerscourt. In two other Headfort plans, and in Chearnley's plan, the saloon is the largest space except for the gallery in each. [54] By the 1820s the saloon had begun to lose its special place on axis with the hall, becoming smaller and just another reception room,[55] if required at all. In view of the general acceptance by writers mentioned above that the saloon would tend to be of two storeys, it is perhaps significant that the only examples of that appear at Powerscourt Wicklow (on the first floor), at Carton and at Emo Court.

Decoration

The highly decorative architectural decoration of some of these saloons would often be associated with halls, as has been seen in Chapter 2, and applies to a greater extent in some of the great houses in England. Christopher Hussey says that the baroque characteristics of the period 1715-30 'are most fully expressed in the decoration of the hall, saloon, and staircase, in which modelled stucco became almost universal', [56] the orders usually progressing from Doric in hall and/or staircase to a 'superior' order in the saloon. It is interesting to find that not alone had the architectural decoration of these spaces a relationship with each other, but that dining room walls were frequently panelled with stucco rather than tapestry or fabric to avoid the smell of food that was perceived to lodge there.[57] In a description of a house in 1758, Horace Walpole wrote 'I have seen a plan of their Hall...and both their eating-room and their salon are to be stucco, with pictures'.[58]

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[52] Also at Ballyhaise in county Cavan. Bence-Jones, p 22.
[53] Arthur Young describes the saloon at Headfort as being of the same dimensions as the hall, i.e. 31.5 x 24 feet by 17 feet high. Arthur Young, *A tour in Ireland: with general observations on the present state of that kingdom. Made in the years 1776, 1777, and 1778,* 2 vols (Dublin 1780), I, p 53.
[54] Two of the three plans for Headfort by Castle show the saloon measuring 27 feet by 23 feet and 30 feet by 20 feet, and the drawing room measures 24 feet by 20 feet and 20 feet square; the third (attributed to Castle, but which may be by John Ensor) shows a bow-ended gallery larger and higher (24 feet high) than the saloon, and Ensor's plan shows the saloon as 30 feet by 25 feet and a 5-bay gallery measuring 55 feet 10 inches by 29 feet. Chearnley's plan shows a first-floor gallery which spans the front of the house; one plan for Carton shows it the largest space after the hall, in another it has been moved to the hall space making it thus the largest space, and the third plan, where it is located on the first floor, it is the largest space in the house measuring 46 feet by 19 feet 7 inches.
[55] At Adare Manor (1834) the saloon (located between the drawing and dining rooms) measures 31 feet by 26 feet, while those flanking it measure 40 feet by 24 feet.
[56] Christopher Hussey, *Early Georgian 1715-1760* (London 1965 edn), p 17
[57] Eighteenth-century gilt leather hangings can be seen in the saloon of Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham, county Dublin. Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, p 99.
[58] Quoted in *OED* under *salon.*

Powerscourt's saloon was an example of an early Georgian Baroque style, described by Cornforth as 'architecturally, the most dramatic saloon of the 1720s'.[59] Nine bays wide, it measured 55 by 41 feet, the lower level had screens of Ionic columns with arches in the centre bays on each side and pilasters on the end walls. Above the entablature were Corinthian pilasters and pedimented aedicules on the end walls and at the centre of the long walls where arcades opened into galleries.[60] The 'Curious Stucco Work' in the 'Salloon' at Hazelwood, county Sligo shone 'like polished marble' in a description dated to the 1730s.[61] The coved and coffered ceiling of the saloon in Bishop Clayton's house (now Iveagh House) on St Stephen's Green, is Palladian in style and quite different from the Great Room or Saloon at 85 St Stephen's Green, which is one of the great interiors of the period being examined. Built from 1738 to designs by Castle (who also designed Clayton's house), it can be entered either from the landing or through an ante-room, and is lit by a Venetian window flanked by two others, all framed by Corinthian columns, repeated on the doorcases. The plasterwork of the coved ceiling is second only to that in Carton's saloon, also executed by Paolo and Filippo Lafranchini.[62] Rossanagh's decoration appears to date to the 1740s; the room is panelled and has a coved ceiling with a deep cornice and entablature supported by Corinthian pilasters. Its elaborate chimneypiece incorporates female herms, a convex mirror to the centre of the frieze, and an overmantel framed by drops and swags of flowers held by an eagle.[63] The saloon at Carton has survived, facing the garden since the main entrance was moved to the other side of the house *c.* 1815. Of two storeys, the room has a deeply coved ceiling of sumptuous baroque plasterwork by the Lafranchini brothers (1739) representing the 'Courtship of the Gods'. Like the decoration on the walls, the stuccowork was picked out in gilt.[64] In the 1740s the Lafranchini executed the coved ceiling of the single-storey saloon at Russborough, county Wicklow. A section by Aheron showing the interior decoration at the 'Sallon' at Dromoland indicates panelled walls with Ionic pilasters and 'shouldered' doorcases flanking the chimneypiece.[65]

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[59] Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors,* p 60. According to Bence-Jones, Powerscourt Wicklow was built between 1731 and 1740.

[60] Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, p 60.

[61] W Henry, 'Hints towards a natural, tupographical [sic] history of the Counties Sligo, Donegal, Fermanagh and Lough Erne', NA M.2533, pp 464-5.

[62] Casey, *Dublin*, p 507.

[63] The date for this room is given in *The Georgian Society Records* as the 1760s (v, p 33); Glin and Peill suggest the 1740s, Knight of Glin and James Peill, *Irish Furniture* (New Haven and London 2007), p 95.

[64] The brothers were paid £501 in 1739 for their work on the ceiling and the wall drops on the window side (those on the other walls were copied in the later 19th century). Joseph McDonnell, *Irish eighteenth-century stuccowork and its European sources* (National Gallery of Ireland 1991), p 18.

[65] IAA, Photograph collection, Dromoland, county Clare, 'The Section for Ye Hal & Sallon', by John Aheron (1740s?).

The saloon at the Provost's House (begun 1759) is a highly architectural space containing three Corinthian orders, at the doorway, the windows and as columnar screens to each end of the room. The plasterwork in the coved ceiling has a light touch that can be seen in the frieze and on the walls where birds (a motif much used in Dublin stuccowork) look as if they are about to take flight. The Dublin stuccadores, Patrick and John Wall, executed it. At Emo Court, the saloon or rotunda (planned by James Gandon in 1790), measuring twenty-six feet in diameter and fifty feet to the top of the dome) with its giant Corinthian pilasters and coffered top-lit dome, was completed in 1860 by the architect William Caldbeck. More architectural decoration in the form of grey and black scagliola Corinthian pilasters surround the walls of the oval Saloon at Castle Coole, where the plasterwork by Joseph Rose, and the joinery are of the highest quality: even the inlaid mahogany doors are curved. The description of the 'principal' room in Moira House in Dublin (built *c.* 1752) sounds perhaps more like a saloon than a drawing room. It was octagonal in shape (20 feet square) and about 16 feet high, 'having one window, the sides of it inlaid throughout with mother-of-pearl reaching from the top of the room to the bottom; the ceiling, sides and furniture of the room were equally elegant'.[66] Another writer on the house states that the ceiling of the room 'was decorated in a style of...magnificence, to which I should think Angelica Kauffmann contributed in her Dublin visit...'; this was apparently executed by 'a Dublin artist named Healy', who was responsible for much of the interior decoration in the house.[67]

In conclusion, amidst all the confusion, a characteristic of rooms which in this period are referred to as saloons is that – along with entrance halls – their decoration tends to be more architectural (for example, in the use of the classical orders) than that of other rooms in the house and they tend to be located on axis with the main entrance, to be of two storeys and often with coved ceilings.

Contents

Among the inventories only two saloons are listed: Stackallen (1757), and Brownlow House, county Armagh (1848). In view of the above, the saloon at the Provost's House at Trinity College can be added to these even though it was referred to as a ballroom in 1790 and 1820. (The contents of ballrooms will be

[66] Quoted from Rev John Wesley's visit to Moira House 1775 in Constantia Maxwell, *Dublin under the Georges* (Dublin 1997 edn), p 80.
[67] Rev. G T Stokes, 'Moira House' in *JRSAI,* 29 (1899), pp 113-15.

included in this section and dealt with in chronological order: 10 Henrietta Street (1782), Antrim House, Dublin (1801) and in 1808 at Brook Lodge, county Galway).

The earliest saloon is at Stackallen, where it is called in the inventory 'The Great Hall or Salloon' and gives no clue to contents except for the marble chimneypiece, a large lock 'to the Street door', a brass lock to the door leading to the 'Great Stairs' and ten large walnut armchairs 'of Antient make'. This austerity confirms – as was suggested earlier – that the inventory was taken at a time when the house was not fully furnished. The ballroom at 10 Henrietta Street is marginally more helpful: apart from full-length portraits in gilt frames of George I, the duke of Bolton, and of Lord Stafford and his Secretary, were '2 large Pictures of the Cartoons [Raphael's?]. In addition there were '2 Marble Table Tops with brass borders, 2 Mohogany [sic] Card Tables' and two framed mirrors. The ballroom at Antrim House has three pairs of green damask curtains and linen blinds. Matching the curtains were a 'stuft' settee with a gilded frame, and three cushions; '2 tub chairs Gilt' and cushions[68], and twelve armchairs. Gilt pier tables with marble tops ornamented with flowers were set between the windows and had their own leather covers. The room was well lit with '5 Gilt Chandeliers' and one of glass on the mantelpiece. Behind the ballroom was a 'Bow Room' which was perhaps an ante room to it as the furniture continues the colour scheme: '14 chairs stuft Backs & Seats frames painted Green & white with Green & white Damascus Covers' with three window curtains to match. Also there were five chandeliers, two of glass on the chimneypiece over which was a 'Painting of Mount Etna in a Gilt frame'; two other paintings and a card table.

The decoration of these rooms at Antrim House is described in *The Georgian Society Records* where the ballroom is called the front drawing room ('splendidly proportioned') from where its windows

> [command] a long vista up Fitzwilliam Street and Place... terminated by the Dublin Mountains. This is decorated in typical Adam style; the ceiling in low relief, with medallions at regular intervals, and door-cases of conventional type. [It has a] handsome and costly mantelpiece, in verde antique, with carved panels of statuary marble...Originally there were five doors...but the two that remain are of mahogany, richly finished, and have cut-glass handles.

[68] The two chairs were covered with 'flannell' and had green and white damask loose covers.

> Off this is the back drawing-room, which has a bow, but is not so long as the front room. It contains a pleasing example of an early Adam ceiling and an original mantel of Siena and white marble.[69]

The dining room furniture and furnishings supplied by Eggleso's of Abbey Street, Dublin for the dining room at Brook Lodge, county Galway have already been looked at in Chapter 3. On the same invoice (1808) are the details of those ordered for the ballroom.[70] The overall colour scheme seems to be white and pink with lots of burnished gold in the furniture. The '3 rich window curtains and suitable draperies' comprised 280 yards of white calico, almost the same of pink lining and 116 yards of a very expensive 'rich light ground English Ellwide Chintz Callico'. Also included were a rich Parisian silk and worsted fringe, 12 rich tassells and 60 yards of plaited rope, and 'rich painted transparent window blinds'. Above the draperies were '3 rich bow cornices highly ornamented in burnished gold, eagles rings…faulse arcretives [architraves]', and beneath the windows were stools 'with carved lions claws'. Against the piers, commodes with inlaid marble tops and decorated with bronzed figures had doors wired and lined with pink silk, and above them were large mirrors framed with a rope motif and 'burnished gold and bronze'. The seat furniture comprised a 'Grecian lounger with cushions and bolsters', '18 Drawing room Grecian cane chairs…, 6 arm chairs to match with bordered cushions'. Mentioned also is a 'set of rich Dunstable sliding sattinwood tables highly ornamented 4 in number', that might mean a nest of tables? Some light was provided by '2 rich pedestals in burnished gold and bronzed ornaments with bronzed figures and lights'. As with Antrim House the 'Room next Ball Room' was probably an ante room in which were twelve cane-seated chairs ornamented, a similar pedestal with lights, and smaller versions of them for the mantelpiece.

While the cost of the elaborate draperies at Brook Lodge was in the region of £165, it was modest enough compared to those at the Provost's House in 1820 (for the newly-elected Provost Kyle) where, for the 'Ballroom', '5 Parisian Window Curtains with crimson cloth draperies fringed & rich burnished gold ornaments' were valued at the enormous sum of £250. Seat furniture was covered in 'Pearl colour embossed moreen with crimson border and lace', i.e. eight large easy chairs, two couches and five window seats. A large 'Brussells' carpet covered the centre of the room with '2 grey cloth carpets for Recess', presumably the areas behind the

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[69] *The Georgian Society Records* v, pp 21-22.
[70] NA, Ballyglunin Papers, M6933, Parcel 20/57b.

screens, and two hearth rugs. Two 'Grecian lamps' with three burners are also mentioned.[71] The following year (1821) Lewis and Anthony Morgan provided '12 rosewood drawing room chairs, with carved legs and top rails, ornamented with brass inlaying and moulding and having upholstered seats in linen' for £27.6.0d. for which tabouret covers were provided. Also included was the making up of grey Holland covers for the new chairs, the armchairs and the window seats. In 1838 Venetian blinds of white linen were provided by Jones & Sons, 134 Stephen's Green for all seven windows[72], finished with a 'crimson line and tassels'. Despite the fact that the original curtains had been taken down and cleaned on at least two occasions,[73] by 1842 they needed to be replaced. Williams & Gibton made up new curtains for the room of crimson silk damask, 'lined with fine tammy bound with silk lace, decorated with fringe tassels & rope and suspended from rich gilt cornices and to run on pully rods with trap hooks to preserve the architectural appearance of the windows'. The cost of these was £200.[74] They must be the curtains listed in the 1852 inventory, which also lists the blinds and, in addition to the other items of furniture already mentioned, a square ottoman, 2 glass chandeliers, and a mahogany circular table.

The saloon at Brownlow House, county Armagh had curtains of scarlet and gold damask and '5 Spring blinds'. Whether or not the seat furniture – two long ottomans and '1 Centre do.' with accompanying cushions – matched, is not specified. However, a 'tete-a-tete chair oak frame' was covered in crimson damask with a cover of chintz. Other items of interest were two carved chairs, painted, with shell seats; an oak table with an inlaid 'Diamonded Top' and 'richly carved truss legs', a 'magnificent chandelier with 18 branches' and four portraits.

Drawing room

According to Girouard, a 'withdrawing chamber' was known in England before the end of the fifteenth century at Charlecote, Warwickshire, where it contained not much more than a bed and was probably used by a servant of whoever slept in the adjoining bedchamber. Located between the great chamber (later the saloon)

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[71] The valuation was carried out at the end of Provost Thomas Elrington's (later bishop of Limerick) term of office. Elrington, in a list of 'Heirlooms in the Provosts House' states that the following items were 'all bequeathed by Provost Andrews' in the 'Great Drawing Room' (Saloon or Ballroom): 'Large Lustre; Pictures of late King, of a former Duke of Bedford, of Queen Elizabeth, half-length, of Primate Ussher do.; Two large sophas, Five window stools, Eight arm chairs (all without covers), and Four marble busts on brackets'. TCD Muniments (uncatalogued).

[72] This number include the three windows that make up the Serliana window.

[73] In August 1821 Morgans rehung them after cleaning and in 1837 George Gillington of Abbey Street dyed, retrimmed and replaced them (TCD Muniments P4 187(43)); and P4 214(18)).

and the ('state' or best) bedchamber, it gradually became 'the private sitting, eating and reception room of the occupant of the chamber' to which it was attached and was slept in by servants until the end of the sixteenth century 'at least'.[75] As indicated by its name it was a room to withdraw to, from the great chamber or, later, from the dining room. Therefore it has always had a relationship with another room or was part of a bedroom suite. In an early inventory of Geashill, county Offaly dated 1628, the contents of the 'Drawing Chamber' are listed directly after those of the 'Great Chamber' indicating their physical proximity.[76] It is notable that by the mid-eighteenth century the drawing room no longer related to the bedroom, but to the dining room.[77]

It has been seen in Chapter 3 that parlours were frequently used as drawing rooms in the country but particularly so in town. In this chapter, however, we are looking at the drawing room as part of the formal suite of rooms in grand houses. The drawing room tended to be a rather formal space in which the most expensive fabrics such as silk damask and velvet were to be found. In some cases it is difficult to work out differences between the drawing room and the saloon, particularly when the saloon is also hung with fabric rather than architecturally articulated, and the term can be interchangeable, as has been seen. However, while the vast majority of the house plans in this survey do not include a saloon, each has a drawing room.[78] Indeed, some houses had more than one drawing room, but no house would have more than one saloon.

In this survey, drawing rooms are found in seventeen plans (for nine houses) in the period 1700 to 1750: of these, fourteen are located to the rear. [79] In all cases the drawing room relates to at least one other room: nine are part of an enfilade along the garden front that often includes a saloon to the centre, and seven are part of a circuit through which people move between the front and rear of the houses. The smallest in size is also the oldest – Curle's drawing for Castle Coole (1709) – in

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[74] TCD Muniments P4 234(107).
[75] Girouard, *Life*, p 94. The point is also made that the term 'bedchamber' came into use in the mid-sixteenth century to underline the fact that the room was used mainly for sleeping in, and not as a sitting room, p 99.
[76] Jane Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels: a survey of early household inventories in Ireland* (The Heritage Council, Kilkenny 2003), pp 22-23. In other early inventories in the same book, Drawing Chambers are mentioned in Kilkenny Castle in 1630 (p 27), 1639 (possibly Dunmore house or Ormond castle, p 31); by 1675 the Kilkenny inventories call it a Drawing Room. Inventories for Dublin Castle of 1677 and 1678 mention 'The King's with Drawing Roome' (pp 92, 100) with few contents but the latter also lists rich furnishings for 'The Draweing roome' (p 101).
[77] Cornforth, 'The key to the drawing room' in *Country Life*, 11 December, 2003, pp 44-47.
[78] Or a parlour used as a drawing room.

which the 'Withdrawing room' (the only example of this term in the plans of this period) measures 17 feet square. The largest is in the Charleville Forest drawing at 36 feet by 24 feet, but it is interesting to note that in all four of the Carton drawings the size remains the same at 19 feet 10 inches by 17 feet 8 inches. At Kildare House the difference between the drawing room on the ground floor and that on the first floor is minimal – 23 feet 9 inches by 22 feet and 24 feet by 23 feet respectively.[80] The shapes are square or rectangular.

As with the saloon there is some variety in the shapes of the drawing room in the period 1750 to 1800, for which there are twenty-seven plans (for seventeen houses).[81] Twenty plans show the room to the rear of the house: of these three are oval and located to the centre,[82] Morrison's drawing shows a bow located likewise and Old Townley Hall (**Fig. 2.22**) and Newbridge House show bows to the right. Woodville has a canted bay (curved within) to centre back (**Fig. 3.6**) , where a Mount Kennedy drawing shows an octagonal drawing room (**Fig. 4.3**). The largest in this period (1750-1800) is at Headfort measuring 25 feet by 36 feet, the smallest at Prospect and in a Mount Kennedy drawing, both 20 feet by 28. Enfilades appear in eleven plans, but in all cases there is easy access from one reception space to another. There are no original plans for Castle Martyr, county Cork singled out by Arthur Young who visited there in the 1770s, as having the best room he had seen in Ireland. It is one of those rooms already referred to that, like the Provost's House, are called variously saloon, ballroom and drawing room[83]: Young called it a drawing room, and it may have been the largest in Ireland at the time: a double cube (50 feet long, 25 feet wide and 25 feet high).[84]

In forty-two plans for thirty-one houses between 1800 and 1850,[85] twenty-two

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[79] Old Castle Coole (1); Carton (4); Dromoland (1); Charleville Forest (1); Mr Barnet's (2 drawing rooms on one plan); Chearnley's drawing (1); Leinster House (2); Headfort House (4); Doneraile House, Dublin (2)

[80] The four drawings for Headfort vary in size between 20 feet square and 28 by 25 feet.

[81] Old Townley Hall (1); Carton (1); Newbridge House (1); Headfort (1); Lucan House (1); Ardbraccan (3); Woodville (1); Mount Kennedy (5); Slane (1); Prospect (1); Charleville Forest (1); Castle Coole (2); Morrison drawing (1); Townley Hall (4); Carriglas (1); Killeen Castle (1), and Garvey House (1).

[82] Lucan, Mount Kennedy and Carriglas.

[83] Bence-Jones refers to it as a saloon.

[84] Young, *A tour in Ireland,* ii, p 46.

[85] Castlegar (2); Cloncarneel (1); Corbalton Hall (1); Farnham (1); Headfort (1); Killeen Castle (3); Markree Castle (1); Polerton (1), Ballycurry (1); Straffan House (1); Rockingham (1); Castle Howard (1); Carton (1); Mount Bellew (1); Pakenham Hall (Tullynally) (2); Ballyfin (4); Emo (2); Howth Castle (3); Dromoland (2); Brook Lodge (1); Durrow Abbey (1); Lough Glynn (1); Old Adare House (1); Adare Manor (1); Lissadell (1); Crom Castle (1); Castle Bernard (1); Carriglas (1); Roxborough (1); Castle Dillon (1), and Powerscourt (1).

drawing rooms are located to the rear and fifteen to the front (of these ten are located next to the hall). Those at Dromoland, Old Adare House, Adare Manor and Lissadell are on the garden front where the entrance is on the short axis. Enfilades of reception rooms are to be found on twenty-six plans, with ease of circulation evident in eight others. Regarding size, drawing rooms in general between 1800 and 1850 are larger than in the other periods[86], examples being Adare Manor 40 by 24 feet; Howth Castle (3 drawings) 42 by 17 feet; 41 feet 6 inches by *c.* 18 feet; and 35 feet 6 inches by 24 feet 6 inches; Castle Bernard (county Offaly) 38 by 23 feet; Ballyfin 36 by 24 feet, and Carton 36 feet 6 inches by 19 feet 5 inches.[87] Another sizeable room was Rockingham's rotunda at 35 feet in diameter. The majority of the room shapes are rectangular; a bow window appears only at Old Adare House, and an elliptical bay at Ballycurry; Lough Glynn has a canted bay, and there are two of these in the drawing room at Adare Manor.[88] In one plan for Ballyfin the Large Drawing Room has apsed ends and the Small Drawing Room an arched recess (**Fig. 2.1**).

The view from the drawing room windows was important to show the gardens or the extent of the demesne or a landmark, and bay or bow windows helped to extend it. In 1765 the countess of Shelburne described the drawing room and dining room at Dawson Court as being of similar size, one with a bow the other with a canted bay. From her description of the view from the 'circular' window 'which has a much better effect...Kiloine Hill is the principal object of this room and ye whole country in general', it is probable that it was the drawing room that had the bow, as a view was important from that room.[89] A columnar screen frames the view of Ben Bulben from Lissadell's Drawing Room. At Castle Howard in the new three-storey battlemented tower designed by Richard Morrison (*c.* 1811), the ground-floor drawing room opens into two Gothic belvederes in the turrets from which to enjoy the views[90] (**Fig. 2.15**): later Dominick Madden proposed a boudoir in a turret off the drawing room at Brook Lodge. Beaufort, on his visit to Dromana, co Waterford, remarked that all of the principal rooms enjoyed a view

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[86] This was also the case with the dining room in this period.

[87] Carton's saloon has become the drawing room in this plan by Richard Morrison (1815). The drawing room at Castle Freke, county Cork, was described by Neale as 'in the gallery style, 50 feet by 20 feet', J P Neale, *Views of the Seats of Noblemen & Gentlemen in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland,* 6 vols (1818-28), iii (not paginated).

[88] Cangort Park , county Offaly, attributed to Richard Morrison (1807) also has an elliptical bay. McParland Notebooks, 1.68; Rowan (ed.) *The architecture of Richard Morrison and William Vitruvius Morrison* (IAA 1989), p 45.

[89] Bowood MSS, Vol. 5 1769-70, Extracts from the Diary of Sophia, Countess of Shelburne, 17 August 1765.

[90] Rowan (ed.), *The architecture of Richard Morrison*, pp 65-66.

of the River Blackwater, and he particularly admired the large oval drawing room.[91] The following year (1807) his daughter Louisa described as a 'square octagon 26 feet each way' the drawing room at Lisanour Castle (county Down?), and that at Killymoon, county Tyrone had two views from 'a round-topped gothick at the end and a large window in the side....[92]

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the provision of double or folding doors between rooms added drama and grandeur to the house.[93] J P Neale noted that 'large folding doors have been added uniting the two back drawing rooms into one spacious apartment...overlooking a Flower Garden' at Bellinter, county Meath.[94] They are marked on a plan for Durrow Abbey where they separate the dining room from the rear drawing room, and the wide doorways on a Straffan House plan suggest their use there too (**Fig. 4.4**), but they do raise the question of quite how safely 'withdrawn' were the ladies after dinner in one of a pair of interconnecting rooms? Other possibilities for them in both houses were libraries and, at Straffan, an anteroom beyond the drawing room.

Decoration

We now turn from the drawing room as a space on an architectural plan to its decoration and contents. We have seen the architectural articulation of halls, dining rooms and saloons: drawing rooms are quite different in that the decoration depends more on fabric, colour and indeed as Cornforth suggests, on upholstery and pictures.[95] However, there are some architectural details in drawing rooms that are worth mentioning such as the shallow dome at Somerville, county Meath, and the curved corners behind the screens of grey-black scagliola Ionic columns in the Large Drawing Room at Kilruddery.[96] There were columns of scagliola also at Thomastown, county Kilkenny, and an Ionic doorcase in the drawing room at 45 Kildare Street, Dublin.[97] A great survivor from the late eighteenth century is the ceiling painting by the painter Nathaniel Grogan (*c.* 1740-1807) at Vernon Mount, county Cork.[98] At Castle Coole the windows in the drawing room were set with

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[91] Representative Church Body Library 'Beaufort's Journal of Irish travels 1806', , Ms 49/3-4, vol 4, f 84.
[92] TCD, MS 4034, Louisa Beaufort, 'Journal of a Tour to the North...1807', f 9.
[93] Parissien, *The Georgian House*, p 43.
[94] Neale, *Views of the Seats,* iii.
[95] Cornforth, 'The key to the drawing room' in *Country Life,* 11 December 2003, pp 44-47.
[96] McParland Notebooks, 1.41, 5.8.
[97] Neale, vol ii; David J Griffin, 'The building and furnishing of a Dublin town house in the 18th century' in *BIGS*, vol xxxviii (1996-1997), pp 24-39. John Kelly was responsible for the carving on the doorcase (now removed), also for the Ionic capitals on the newel posts of the staircase, the Corinthian doorcases of the dining room and the bedchamber.
[98] Desmond FitzGerald and Donough Cahill, 'Vernon Mount' in *LAR,* Winter 2007, pp 13-35.

false arched heads designed to be fitted 'with French style curtains' that fitted over the space.[99] At Baronscourt the 88-feet-long principal drawing room[100] on the garden front created by John Soane in the 1790s from three rooms, is divided by screens of Corinthian columns that 'replaced the existing Ionic ones in order to complete the development of the orders along this axis'. It might also be mentioned that in another room at Baronscourt, the Marchioness's drawing room, the motifs used in the 'star-spangled, *Empire*-inspired ceiling' designed by Richard Morrison in the 1830s in the style of Percier and Fontaine, appeared originally in his design for the drawing room at Ballyfin (1822). Similar motifs were used by the Morrisons at Fota House, county Cork (enlarged *c.* 1825) in the shallow bowed drawing room, and in the Small Drawing Room at Kilruddery with its attractive shallow sail vault with feigned draperies in the lunettes.[101]

Lady Sarah Bunbury was extraordinarily detailed in her letters in 1775 about the planning, decoration and furnishing of Frescati, the seaside home of her sister the duchess of Leinster in Blackrock, county Dublin. The drawing room there, she writes, 'will gather the whole expense' and goes on to suggest how that can be minimised by shopping in France (where her sister was living). Apart from fabrics and colours she advises Emily that a gilded oak leaf border for the ceiling, 'as French gold is both better and cheaper', can be 'smuggled over by Mr Power from Bourdeaux'. She explains that the 'idea of so showy a border is stolen from a drawing of Mr Gardiner's for a room he means to fit up in Dublin'. For the ceiling, Sarah suggests compartments 'filled with light Herculean figures, and the four corners with pretty ornaments', and that the door opposite the window ('I beg [it] may be French') be 'made of looking glass' to reflect the garden opposite.[102] As regular visitors to family and homes in France, the Lennox sisters absorbed much of French taste.[103]

Cornforth's claim for England that from about 1740 many drawing rooms acquired a 'French character' is not immediately obvious in Ireland,[104] apart from

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[99] McParland Notebooks 1.9, Cornforth 'Castle Coole, co Fermanagh' in *CL*, 17 December 1992.
[100] Called the 'gallery' as it was building (PRONI, Abercorn Papers T/2541/IAI/18/33 Letter from James Hamilton junior, Strabane to Marquis of Abercorn, Grosvenor Square, London, 14 May 1791); a 'saloon' in A Rowan, *North West Ulster* (Harmondsworth 1979), p 131; a 'drawing room' in Rowan, *The architecture of Richard Morrison*, p 27.
[101] Rowan (ed.), *The architecture of Richard Morrison*, pp 24-28;17; 92-93;115-116. The firm of Sibthorpe, Dublin executed the painting and stencilling of the ceiling of the drawing room at Fota in the 1890s.
[102] FitzGerald (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily*, II, pp 152-54.
[103] In light of this, it might be surprising that Lady Kildare did not opt for the French rococo design by Isaac Ware for her dressing room in Kildare House, but chose instead one in the Palladian manner, in line with the other rooms in the house.
[104] Cornforth, *Early*... p 55.

the later (1760s) rococo plasterwork: the white and gold walls with enormous mirrors that were so prevalent in France at the time gained no currency here. The 'character' he mentions applies mostly to hangings, furniture and furnishings. Christine Casey notes French decoration in some houses, but a drawing room is not included among the rooms mentioned.[105] One visitor remarked on Rockingham as being (generally) 'fitted up in the French style, with a good deal of arabesque painting, gilding etc…'.[106] The aforementioned Large Drawing Room at Kilruddery has Louis XV revival wall panels and pelmet cornices.[107] Another writer was impressed with the drawing room at Ballyfin[108] 'said to be one of the finest apartments in Ireland…decorated in the French style, the…prevailing tone being grey and gold; the walls are hung with pale grey satin brocade; exquisite old French brocade covers the white and gold furniture'.[109]

Wallcoverings

The description of Ballyfin's drawing room brings up the subject of wall coverings. Surprisingly, the only references to them among the inventories are at Dromana, county Waterford (1755) and at Stackallen, county Meath (1757). The Dromana inventory is interesting as it implies a very grand principal apartment, comprising (as they are listed) Lady Grandison's dressing room, Lord Grandison's bedchamber, the 'Anntie Chamber or Drawing room, commonly called the Picture Room' and Lord Grandison's dressing room. With the exception of the drawing room (for which it is not specified though implied), all are hung with 'crimson silk stuff damask', lined with linen. Curtains and upholstery in the four rooms match the wall covering.[110] Other rooms at the same house were the Blue Damask room (a bedchamber) with its dressing room which are hung with 'rich blue damask silk'.[111] At Stackallen two walls of the drawing room were hung with gilt leather 'the one with the heads of King William and Queen Mary and the other Queen Ann's'. Despite the dearth of information on them from this source, it is a subject worth examining because of the references to them found elsewhere.

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[105] In her article 'Boiseries, bankers and bills: a tale of Charlemont and Whaley' in Michael McCarthy (ed.), *Lord Charlemont and his circle: essays in honour of Michael Wynne* (Dublin 2001), pp 47-59. The room at Charlemont House is called the 'dining room or French room'; at 86 St Stephen's Green it is a front parlour; at Dunsandle, co Galway it is a saloon; at Dowth Hall it is the dining room, and a design for a 'boudoir' or dressing room at Kildare House.

[106] Heaney (ed.), *A Scottish Whig in Ireland…* p 284.

[107] Rowan (ed.), *The architecture of Richard Morrison* (IAA, 1989), p 115.

[108] The decoration of the drawing room at Ballyfin was either undertaken or changed in 1848 by the London firm of Gillows and Conefed, though the house was completed in 1826. Kevin V. Mulligan, 'Ballyfin, county Laois, architectural history, February 2002', unpublished report, p 56.

[109] M Carey, 'Ballyfin, from *"Condensed History"* of the Queen's County and Co. of Kildare' (1903).

[110] Mrs Delany's bedroom at Delville was hung with crimson damask, the same used for furnishings and curtains.

[111] The dressing room hangings are called 'blue Indian silk damask'.

Late seventeenth-century drawing rooms were often hung with tapestry, as at Dublin Castle (1678) and Kilkenny Castle (1684)[112], and it has been seen (in Chapter 3) that tapestry and gilt leather wall hangings were in use in rooms other than drawing rooms in the early eighteenth century. It is not unusual to find, however, that fabric other than tapestry, leather or needlework panels, was hung in various rooms in the 1680s. Indeed, an inventory for Rathcline, county Longford (1688) shows that an effort was made at colour co-ordination. [113] The room over the 'Damask room' was hung with striped grey serge, while Lord Lanesborough's closet, his dressing room and the 'closet within dressing room' were hung with grey fabric, the latter two spaces containing matching chairs ('6 grey broadcloth chairs' and ' 3 grey chairs' respectively).[114] In 'Drumcondrah', county Dublin (1689), where the Parlour and the Best Chamber were hung with tapestry, other rooms were hung with 'Druggett' and with 'Brown Bays'. In a novel of 1845 set in the early part of the eighteenth century, two young women were described as sitting 'in a large old-fashioned drawing-room; the walls were covered with elaborately-wrought tapestry, representing, in a manner sufficiently grim and alarming, certain scenes from Ovid's Metamorphoses…'.[115]

Mrs Delany's drawing room at Delville was hung with tapestry as late as 1744.[116] While tapestry continued to appear on walls well into the eighteenth century it was largely replaced in the early part of that century by other fabrics such as damask, caffoy and mohair, and from the 1730s by wallpaper.[117] The Edgeworths purchased stamped flocked paper for their drawing room in 1749.[118] The duke and duchess of Bedford, when taking up their positions as viceroy and vicereine at Dublin Castle, were asked in 1759 whether they would prefer paper or silk hangings in their apartments; if their preference was for paper they had a choice between flock or a chintz pattern; and whichever they chose had to match the

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[112] Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels,* pp 101, 104.
[113] Throughout the seventeenth century, other fabrics such as silk damask and plain velvet, were used for hangings. Mohair was to be found in the last two decades of the century. Thornton, *Seventeenth-century Interior decoration,* p 133.
[114] NLI Ms 8644(5), 'An Inventory of Goods, Pictures & houshold stuffe belonging to the Rt Honble the Lord Viscount Lanesborough…in his Lordsps. House at Rathcline dated this tenth day of April 1688'. No mention of damask fabric in the Damask room, but it contained 5 pieces of tapestry hangings that had been removed from the 'Castleroom' and 3 pieces from the 'old drawing room', together with 4 white serge window curtains 'all brought out of the room over the Damask room'.
[115] J Sheridan Le Fanu, *The Cock and Anchor*, (Dublin 1845), p 52.
[116] Day (ed.), *Letters…*, p 158.
[117] The earliest surviving wallpaper in Ireland is dated to *c.* 1680-1700, found pasted to the back of a door in the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham during restoration in the 1970s. David Skinner, 'Irish period wallpapers' in *Irish Arts Review*, 1997, pp 53-61.
[118] NLI, Edgeworth Papers, MS 1518.

curtains.[119] While wallpaper was being manufactured from the latter part of the seventeenth century, it was only in the 1740s that it was advertised in Irish newspapers.[120] One such advertisement was placed by Bernard and James Messink who styled themselves

> original Paper-Painters opposite the great Mahogany Shop on the Blind Quay, [they] *do make and sell* superfine Imbost shaded Paper Work, in imitation of Tapestry or Needlework, fit for hangings of Rooms, Skreens, Fire Skreens, Chimney Pieces and Door Pieces: and *make* all sorts of common Imbost paper Work in imitation of Coffoy, or Green Damask; as also all other sorts of painted paper with variety of colours, and patterns from London…'.[121]

Among discoveries made during the recent restoration of 10 Henrietta Street, Dublin was a flock paper found in the Blue Drawing Room that shows a small geometric pattern. Plainer papers with small patterns (or simply plain) became popular from the middle of the century from which this dates, as does the original yellow moreen wall hanging found in the Yellow Drawing Room in the same house.[122]

The formal rooms in the Claytons' house on St Stephen's Green, according to Mrs Delany, 'were furnished with yellow Genoa damask', and the drawing room in another house on the Green was described in a novel as hung with silk damask of 'azure blue' with seat furniture and festoon window curtains of the same.[123] Hangings did not go entirely out of favour for some rooms but the fabric became lighter, as has been seen in the drawing room at Ballyfin (above). Lady Caroline Fox, after visiting Paris in 1764 wrote to her sister in Ireland,

> I am out of conceit with India paper, and am all for the magnificent style of single velvet damask. I have three immense looking glasses to put in my drawing room and propose hanging it with a damask or brocatelle of two or three colours. I am rather changeable to be sure in these things; but though whims and fripperies may have a run, one always returns to what is really handsome and noble and plain'.[124]

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[119] Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p 95.
[120] Ada K Longfield, 'History of the Dublin wall-paper industry in the 18th century' in *JRSAI*, vol. lxxvii, 1947, pp 100-120.
[121] *Pue's Occurrences*, June 17, 1746.
[122] *Numbers 8-10 Henrietta Street, Dublin 1* (Dublin Civic Trust 2003), pp 40-43. The paper was handmade in sheets measuring 22" x 18", joined together.
[123] Llanover, Lady, *The autobiography and correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs Delany*, 3 vols (London 1861), i, p 305; Elizabeth Hervey, *The history of Ned Evans. Interspersed with moral and critical remarks…*, 2 vols (Dublin 1796), i, p 196-97.
[124] Quoted in Cornforth, 'A Georgian patchwork' in G. Jackson-Stops, *The fashioning and functioning of the British country house* (National Gallery of Art, Washington 1989), pp 155-74.

For the drawing room walls at Frescati, Lady Sarah Bunbury recommended grey, green or white in damask, satin, India taffeta, lutestring or velvet.[125] Lady Shelburne remarked in 1765 upon the drawing room at Castletown being 'furnished with a damask of four colours'. The fact that she does not specify a colour, when she has described the 'Antichamber' (saloon) as hung with pale green damask, it is probably safe to assume that the drawing room was hung with a variant of red, a colour associated with the room in England.

Chinese paper lined the walls of Lady Steele's drawing room in her house in Dominick Street, Dublin in 1800, when Lady Morgan visited it. The owner was not long dead, but the house had lain empty for some time and, having found her way through a 'tapestry of cobwebs' in the drawing room, she discovered curtains of 'rich crimson satin damask heavily lined and wadded and finished at the bottom with leaded weights to regulate their rise and fall', and a thick Turkey carpet covered the floor. Other items included a range of Etruscan vases over the marble chimneypiece; chairs and sofas were placed around the walls and a number of folio volumes lay on a large table in the centre of the room. On inheriting the house, Lady Steele's daughter refurbished the room in what Morgan scathingly called 'the frippery influence of Carlton House on the taste of the day': a fashionable Dublin upholsterer provided hangings of lemon-coloured glazed calico, with dark chintz borders. [126] An alternative to Chinese paper or other hangings was found at 49 Merrion Square where Italianate mural paintings decorate the two first-floor rooms, 'the most ambitious C19 painted interiors in Dublin', landscape scenes that are framed by fictive pilasters from the dado.[127]

Because fabric as a wall covering could be very expensive, it was sometimes decided to omit it from behind mirrors or pictures: Mrs Delany felt 'it would have been ridiculous' to hang her room with mohair rather than paper 'when I desire to cover it with pictures'.[128] Before turning to the inventories, a few words should be said about the walls of the room as a background for paintings. Much consideration was given to this subject: crimson was considered the most suitable background, be it velvet, damask or flock paper, and it complemented the gilded

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[125] *FitzGerald* (ed.), *Correspondence with Emily,* II, p 153.
[126] Maxwell, *Dublin under the Georges,* p 81.
[127] Casey, *Dublin,* p 587.
[128] Cornforth, 'A Georgian patchwork' in Jackson-Stops, *The fashioning and functioning of the British country house* (National Gallery of Art, Washington 1989), pp 155-74. Bishop Synge extended this economy to wallpaper, advising his daughter not to paper behind large pieces of furniture. Barnard, *Making the grand figure,* p 95.

frames.[129] Crimson flock paper can be seen at Newbridge where there were thirty-one paintings in the drawing room in 1821. That more were added to this is evident from two drawings of the room, one dated *c.* 1830 in which many pictures can be seen on the end walls, and a plan of the pictures on the chimneypiece wall of 1868.[130] Crimson cut-velvet hung in the drawing room in England at Holkham, where a plan of the picture-hanging was painted in watercolour on a hand firescreen. Dated to 1853, it was to help visitors identify the paintings and their artists.[131] As the other rooms of the suite at Dromana were hung with crimson silk damask, as has been seen, it must have provided the background for the drawing room's substantial number of portraits.[132] An early nineteenth-century watercolour shows the arrangement of pictures on the chimneypiece wall in Carton's drawing room against a lighter background.[133] At Russborough, it is the saloon that has crimson cut-velvet hangings as a background, while the drawing room has rather heavy stucco frames on the walls that were made especially to contain four oval *Times of the Day* by Joseph Vernet, commissioned by Lord Milltown in 1749. Panelling, used by Pearce and Richard Castle, and as portrayed in Maria Spilbury Taylor's watercolour of the drawing room at Rossanagh, county Wicklow, began to go out of fashion as paintings were acquired. At Russborough, where the plaster frames in the dining and drawing rooms were created around the pictures, the panelling worked well, but problems arose when paintings did not fit. A painting attributed to Strickland Lowry in the Ulster Museum, *The Bateson Family* (1762),[134] illustrates this: it became easier to have walls hung with fabric or paper, subjects to which we now return.

Colours and fabrics became progressively lighter from *c.* 1760s, as houses and, at the same time gardens, became liberated from the rigid formality that had been adhered to until then. Glass technology introduced larger panes of glass that provided rooms with more light and the light that had previously been absorbed by rich fabrics was now reflected on wallpaper, particularly plainer wallpaper. Isaac Ware made some interesting comments on lighting : 'a wainscoted room painted in the usual way, is the lightest of all; the stucco is the next in this consideration,

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[129] Cornforth, 'A Georgian patchwork' in Jackson-Stops, *The fashioning and functioning,* pp 155-74.
[130] Glin and Peill, *Irish furniture,* illus. 258, p 192; Julius Bryant, 'The Newbridge drawing room: a picture gallery for a Georgian villa' in Alastair Laing (ed.), *Clerics & connoisseurs: an Irish art collection through three centuries* (English Heritage, London 2001), pp 63-72, figs 70 and 71.
[131] Francis Haskell, 'The British as collectors' in Jackson-Stops, *The treasure houses of Britain: five hundred years of private patronage and art collecting* (New Haven & London 1985), pp 50-59, fig. 4.
[132] The drawing room at Dromana was 'commonly called the Picture Room', according to the 1755 inventory.
[133] Glin and Peill, *Irish furniture*, p 131, illus. 177.
[134] Crookshank and Glin, *Ireland's painters 1600-1940* (New Haven and London 2002), illus. 218.

and the hung room is the darkest'.[135] Therefore a painted room required only six candles to light it: a stucco room required eight, but ten were required for the hung room.[136] This was an important economic factor as candles were expensive.

Contents

The inventories are surprisingly lacking in information on both colours and fabrics used in drawing rooms. In most there is no information at all about curtains (perhaps there was no need for them if the room was on the garden front?) and where they are listed, in many cases only the fabric is specified. In the case of the 'Scarlet Room' in Killeen Castle which, according to Rosemary ffolliott, is likely to have been a drawing room,[137] the bed (it is the only drawing room in the inventories to contain one) and window curtains are of scarlet paragon and the eight chairs are covered with green and white satin and have calico covers. In some a more co-ordinated scheme is apparent, such as at 10 Cavendish Row where the walls are covered in yellow flock paper, the curtains are of yellow damask which is also used on the ten armchairs, a 'dutchess' (couch?), and yellow check loose covers were provided to protect the furniture. The curtains and chair covers at Delville were of crimson mohair.[138]At Dromana where the curtains are of crimson silk damask, the eleven chairs are covered with a tapestry flower pattern and the loose covers are of 'scarlet stuff'. The invoice from Mayhew & Ince for the 'Oval Drawing Room' at Caledon, county Tyrone in 1785 lists 'rich dove colour'd water'd Tabby, used for the festoon window curtains, chairs, sofa's & screens'. The pelmets above the curtains were richly carved, and painted dove and white. A 'fine Tabby' was used for the backs of the seat furniture.[139] Two first-floor rooms at Antrim House (1801) share an orange colour scheme. In the White Room the couch and ten armchairs are covered in a 'flowered orange' fabric, the colour of the curtains is not mentioned, but they are striped and fringed with green. The curtains in the Orange Room are also 'flowered orange', but the colour of the seat furniture is unspecified. The top of the japanned 'demy table' (presumably a pier table) was 'painted orange & black small stripes', but two chandeliers were 'painted Black white & red to match the looking Glasses'. Again, the Killadoon inventories show how, over time, fashions changed and rooms were given a more up-to-date look. In 1807 the drawing room walls were probably covered in a flock wallpaper (a fragment of which can still be seen between the bases of the pier mirrors and

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[135] Ware, p 469.
[136] Cornforth, 'A Georgian patchwork' in Jackson-Stops *The fashioning and functioning*, pp 155-74.
[137] According to Rosemary ffolliott, 'Household stuff' in *Irish Ancestor*, vol 1, No. 1, 1969, pp 43-51.
[138] Glin and Peill, p 97.

the dado rail) that dates from the 1770s.[140] In the 1807 inventory the three 'green clouded silk curtains' with the gilt pelmet cornices, which Cornforth thinks were 'not new' at the time, probably date from the same time (1770s). The cushions on eight green painted chairs and the upholstery on four gilt chairs were also covered in 'clouded green'. Other seat furniture that included a sofa with four cushions, a couple of 'Grecian' armchairs, two hunting chairs and three gilt chairs covered in tapestry, had chintz covers. In keeping with the colour scheme the firescreens were mahogany with green silk, the handscreens and two footstools were green. By 1833 six muslin curtains had been added to the existing window curtains and three years later, the 'mahogany leg sofa' was covered with crimson cotton velvet in a damask pattern as were the four gilt chairs,[141] and the eight green chairs and two armchairs had green and white striped calico cases. By now the original flock wallpaper was replaced with a running spray pattern and elaborate gold border which dates to the 1820s. Each wall is 'panelled' in a wide border with a white ground with the border scroll along its inner edge that runs all around the 'panel'.[142] It seems that shortly after the 1836 inventory the drawing room was refurbished rather dramatically, and the rest of the upholstery was redone with crimson printed cotton velvet, with curtains and draped valances in red and gold damask that had a small, dense pattern. By 1844 the bell pulls were of red and yellow silk with rich tassels and a new Axminster carpet, with crossed Ls (made for the 2nd earl of Leitrim) in the corners, had been acquired.

In a house called Neptune (later, apparently, Temple Hill) the colour scheme in the drawing room in 1789 was blue and silver. The five curtains were of blue damask hung on silvered brackets, chairs with silvered frames were covered in the same, and the two sets of covers for the chairs were of blue and white cotton, and of white linen. Two mirrors in the piers had silvered frames as had the two marble inlaid tables beneath them. The grate was plated as were the fire-irons, the glass sconces were set in silver and the '2 silver handled Locks' had silver moulding. An item of note was the oil cloth cover on the hearth stone, a fairly common feature that protected it.[143]

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[139] It was customary to use a less expensive fabric on the backs of seat furniture, as they were generally positioned against the wall.
[140] Cornforth, 'Killadoon, co Kildare – 1', *CL*, 15 January 2004, pp 46-51.
[141] The inventory states that the gilt chairs had 'cotton velvet covers' – no colour mentioned.
[142] Cornforth, 'Killadoon', pp 46-51.
[143] Public Records Office 1095 14/5/1789, 'A Schedule or Inventry of the fixtures household Goods furniture and other Articles …contained in the House and premis of Neptune', [county Dublin?]. Copy in TRIARC, ref. TRIARC/1/13,

Rooms mentioned in the previous chapter that had names other than 'drawing room' but where the furniture indicated its use as one are included here as follows: the Back Parlour in Mary Street (1731) had curtains of red silk damask lined with red serge, the seat furniture being similarly covered, with cases of red serge. At the Balfour house on St Stephen's Green (1741/2) scarlet camlet curtains hung on the windows of the Street Parlour, and the chairs had tapestry seats. Two other instances were the Great Dining room at Howth Castle which, when an inventory was taken in the mid-eighteenth century, had become the drawing room; and the so-called 'Dineing Room' at 10 Cavendish Row (1763) in which the furniture indicates that it was a drawing room.[144] Both inventories give details of the fabric used which was damask for curtains and upholstery: yellow in Howth with yellow cases in serge, and blue in Cavendish Row with a similar-coloured flock wallpaper edged in a gilded moulding.[145]

Not all of the inventories are as informative. At Powerscourt House, Dublin (1728) the curtains of the drawing room were of white silk, the couch was green 'with fine Needlework Cover', but no colour is listed for the eight armchairs. The two windows of the Donerailes' drawing room at 45 Kildare Street had crimson 'nassau' curtains and both settees were covered in 'rich crimson silk damask'; the colour and fabric of the '8 stuffed backed chairs' is unspecified, but linen covers were supplied for all of the chairs. Crimson damask and green (damask?) were also to be found in the Drawing (or Tapestry) room at Drumcondra House (1773). While Mrs Clements' house at North Great George's Street (1805) was very well furnished, the window curtains in two of her drawing rooms had cotton curtains, in one room lined with white calico, in the other lined and 'made in French fashion', but the Small Front Drawing Room had two suites of Nassau damask on its windows. The Great Red Drawing Room at Newbridge, 'the glory of the house' according to Frances Power Cobbe, retains the red flock wallpaper hung there possibly in the 1790s and the crimson silk damask curtains paid for in 1828.[146] Cotton was also used at Mount Stewart (1821) where the curtains were lined with orange cotton, with printed drapery of the same fabric, and had a white fringe with tassels. A letter to Lady Dunraven from her husband at Adare Manor in 1840 refers to drawing room chairs covered in crimson velvet, which probably implies a colour scheme for the room.[147]

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[144] The 'Drawing Room' at Cavendish Row has already been looked at above.
[145] At Cavendish Row was an 'oyl cloth' cover for the hearth and a blue cloth to cover the steel grate.
[146] *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, I, p 10; Julius Bryant, 'The Newbridge drawing room: a picture gallery for a Georgian villa' in Laing (ed.), *Clerics and connoisseurs*, pp 63-72.

Looking at fabrics and colours for wallhangings, curtains and upholstery among the inventories, and from other sources, with reference to drawing rooms from the beginning of the eighteenth century, in sixteen out of twenty-seven cases, damask was the principal fabric used, of which eight were in red, three each in blue and in yellow, and two unspecified. Overall, red[148] was the predominant colour (eleven), followed by yellow (five)[149] and blue (three).

In a letter to Lord Lorton of Rockingham, from the London firm of Morgan & Sandes, dated the 9th September 1815, advice is offered about colour, 'respecting the two colours of the Damask for the Drawing Room Curtains, we feel inclined to recommend the Tea colour as being the most Elegant and genteel, in unison with the Blue, the Fawn is more showey, but in our opinion not so Genteel...'.[150] An estimate for furniture including '4 Elegant French Window Curtains...etc.', two sofas and eight armchairs covered with the chosen fabric, amounting to 360 guineas, was sent four days earlier accompanied by a note in which they anticipate that Lorton will require more items for his room: 'an Ottoman is now a very handsome article for the centre of the Room,[151] also sofa tables, card tables and round Loo tables with Glasses, Pier Tables and Commodes...'.[152] The firm sent Lorton drawings of their furniture to aid his selection, which was the practice.

In *c.* 1809 an Irish firm, L & A Morgan, cabinet makers and later upholsterers, of Henry Street, Dublin, sent Ross Mahon of Castlegar plans for rooms in his house that demonstrate how furniture was arranged at the time, which are of great interest (**Figs 4.5, 4.6**).[153] The plan for the Oval Room (or saloon, formerly the entrance hall) showed chairs and sofas dispersed around the walls of the room with a central circular table measuring less than five feet in diameter. One plan for the drawing room shows a circular table to the centre of the room flanked by 'Grecian couches', three chairs to each side of the fireplace and six lined up against the wall opposite the tripartite window to the front of the house. This window, flanked by

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147 University of Limerick, Dunraven Papers D/3196/E109, 10 February 1840.
148 Includes scarlet, crimson and 'red'.
149 Including lemon and gold.
150 NLI, Rockingham Papers, MS 8810 Part 7 (4).
151 This is the earliest mention of an ottoman, a seat that is similar to a sofa, but without back or arms, known since 1806, according to the *OED*. Ottomans form part of the drawing room furniture in the following inventories: Furry Park, Raheny (1834), Ashfield House (1843), Convoy, county Donegal (*c.* 1844), Brownlow House (1848) and Provost's House, TCD (1852).
152 NLI, Rockingham Papers, MS 8810 Part 8 (1).
153 Edward McParland extracted details from the Mahon papers at Castlegar in 1973. These include the furniture plans mentioned, two for the drawing room and, it appears, one for the 'oval room', formerly the hall. My search through some of the material, which is now in the National Library of Ireland, did not produce them, and there is no mention of them in the Calendar. My thanks to him for photocopies of his drawings.

commodes, and the two smaller ones contain window seats. The other plan by Morgan's is more interesting: Grecian sofas with sofa tables in front of them flank the fireplace, in front of which is a semi-circle of five chairs. To the centre of the room are a grand piano with stool and a rectangular table with pillar and claw feet: the main window is flanked by card tables and has six chairs lined up along it. The six chairs along the wall opposite are broken up by a commode to the centre, while a 'Maltese' couch, flanked by a chair to each side and with a sofa table in front of it, is located between the east windows. Within these two windows are 'Grecian stools'.

Important items of furniture in a drawing room would be fairly similar to those used today - upholstered seat furniture, mirrors and tables. Pier tables, sometimes gilded and marble-topped, were placed between windows often beneath a rectangular or oval mirror. The drawing room at Moira House (1808) contained a large amount of furniture such as thirty-one chairs including a green leather 'exercising chair', seven pier glasses and nineteen tables including '2 chinese gilt tables' with white marble tops. According to the inventories there were, on average, about ten chairs (including all seat furniture) in drawing rooms up to the last decades of the eighteenth century when there is a notable increase in number. This may be due to larger rooms, extended or built. Drawing rooms in the following houses contain twenty or more chairs: Woodville (1797) thirty-two; two rooms at North Great George's Street (1805) thirty-six and thirty-eight;[154] Killadoon (1807) twenty; Ashfield House (1808) twenty-two; Mount Stewart (1821) twenty; Newbridge (1821) twenty-four; Doneraile Court (1830s) twenty-six; and Brownlow House (1848) twenty-four. It is notable that fire grates, which were moveable and which people tended to take with them when they moved house, are listed consistently. Most of the floors had carpets (Turkey, Wilton, Brussels), though none of the inventories mention whether or not these covered the entire floor, and hearth rugs appear more frequently from the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Only twelve inventories dating between 1700 and 1850 list pictures in the drawing room.[155] Of these nine mention portraits, mostly of family, but the subjects are usually not specified. The location of portraits in drawing rooms would appear to

[154] However, the only chair listed in the Small Front Drawing Room is a sofa.
[155] Barbavilla (1742), Dromana (1755), Henrietta Street (1772), Baronscourt (1782), Gaulston (1787), Denmark Street (1793), Antrim House (1801), Killadoon (1807 & 1844), Moira House (1808), Doneraile Court (1830s), Brownlow House (1848) and Mount Stewart (1821).

be at odds with English practice, as Cornforth describes of an eighteenth-century owner:

> He would have tended to concentrate his Italian history pictures, classical landscapes and Dutch cabinet pictures in a saloon or drawing-room, whose walls would have been hung with damask…; and he would have grouped portraits, sporting pictures or still lifes in a dining room, which would definitely not have been hung with material and might have been panelled until about 1740 and then plastered.[156]

A description in a late eighteenth-century novel of the paintings in the drawing room of a St Stephen's Green house might be close to the above description: 'Here were the works of Titian, Guido, Correggio, and Tintoret. A landscape, by Claude, had caught his eye…'.[157] On the other hand, Dromana's inventory (1755) names the subjects of the portraits (mostly family) hanging in the drawing room as Lady Shrewsbury, Lady Morton, Lord and Lady Grandison, Lady Viscountess Grandison, Lady Janey Villiers, Mrs Mason, duke of Grafton, Lady Suffolk, Miss Villiers, Master George Villiers, Mrs 'Stuerts' and Lord William Grandison, all in gilt frames. In 1758 a portrait of 'Mr Pitt' was added. At Mount Stewart (1821) was a portrait of Lord Stewart over the chimneypiece, 'a Head of the Honble Wm. Pitt framed and Glazed', and '37 prints Various Framed'. Killadoon's 1836 inventory lists portraits of the Duchesse de Clermont, of the countess of Leitrim by Lawrence, of Lady Clements and one 'after Rembrandt'. By 1844 another two portraits in gilt frames had been moved into the drawing room from the dining room. In many cases the frame and the size seems to be of more interest than the picture itself to the person making the inventory: Barbavilla (1742) had a total of seventy-three pictures in the drawing room, listed as '26 Picturs Gilt, 20 with Black frames, 6 Pictures with Brass frames, 12 Large Picturs with Black frames, 9 More small Picturs with Black frames'. Baronscourt (1782) had '16 pictures', the Orange Drawing room at Antrim House (1801) had '4 small square paintings over chimney' and '10 oval likenesses' all in gilt frames. At Doneraile Court (1830s) the Middle Drawing room had eleven engravings and the Small Drawing room had thirty-three 'framed and glazed'. Finally, at Gaulston (1787) two flower pieces are listed as being over the doors in the drawing room, as was a watercolour of Lucca at Killadoon in 1844.

Paintings of interiors in Ireland sometimes show a piano in the drawing room,

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[156] Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, p 244.

[157] Elizabeth Hervey, *The history of Ned Evans. Interspersed with moral and critical remarks: anecdotes and characters of many persons…* 2 vols, (Dublin 1796), vol. I, p 197.

such as in Spilsbury Taylor's image of that at Rossanagh, and Anne Maria La Touche's of Bellvue, both of county Wicklow, but they appear in only five inventories.[158] Surprisingly, perhaps, for a room that is associated with the taking of tea, only eleven mention tea tables and/or items connected with it. It should be noted, however, that many of the parlours mentioned in the previous chapter contained similar items. The tea tables came in a great variety of woods and finishes: Powerscourt Dublin (1728) has an 'India' tea table, that at Killeen Castle (1735/6) is of walnut; Barbavilla (1742) has a 'jepan' table and tea board, in addition to a table of 'oack'; Dromana (1755) has a round mahogany table with claw feet, and at Stackallen (1757) the small table is described as old-fashioned, 'painted black much worm eaten'. Both Barbavilla and Dromana list china tea and coffee cups and small trays, one of china, the other, at Dromana, 'Indian, with 11 handled chocolate cups, a milk jugg with a silver spout and a sugar dish', all in blue and white china. Significantly perhaps, much china for tea and coffee was kept in the 'passage next the door leading to Lady Grandison's dressing room' that included 'enamelled china' bearing Lord Grandison's crest. Tea chests or tea stores (lockable) were also to be found, bringing to mind Jonathan Swift's satirical *Directions for Servants* (1745) in which he sympathised with the 'waiting maid' for one of the 'accidents' that has happened to lessen the profit of her employment:

> The Second [accident] is, the Invention of small Chests and Trunks, with Lock and Key, wherein they keep the Tea and Sugar, without which it is impossible for a Waiting maid to live: For, by this means, you are forced to buy brown Sugar, and pour Water upon the Leaves, when they have lost all their Spirit and Taste...Therefore, I fear you must be forced, like the rest of your Sisters...[to] pay for it out of your Wages.[159]

The serving of tea could be quite a performance. In Lady Morgan's *Dramatic Scenes from Real Life* (1833) she tells how one of the upper servants enters:

> ...while other servants, in long file, bring the tea equipage. A table-cloth is laid on a distant table; and two French maids, elegantly dressed, with white gloves, &c., commence the elaborate process of tea-making, assisted by the page, and a groom of the chambers...[160]

A visitor to England in 1784, François de la Rochefoucauld, stated that it was the custom for the youngest lady in the household to make the tea. He expressed surprise to discover that 'the whole of England' was drinking tea, and was of the opinion that 'it provides the rich with an opportunity to display their magnificence

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[158] Gaulston (1787), Prospect (later Ardgillan) 1795, Killadoon (1807), Convoy, co Donegal (1844) and Brownlow House (1848).
[159] Swift, *Directions to servants,* pp 82-83.
[160] Lady Morgan, *Dramatic Scenes from Real Life,* 2 vols (London, 1979 edn), vol ii, p 89.

in the matter of tea-pots, cups, and so on, which are always of most elegant design based upon Etruscan and other models of antiquity'.[161]

In addition to the tea table in the 'Scarlet' or drawing room at Killeen Castle (1735/6), there is a bed of 'scarlet parragon' with matching curtains, the only drawing room in which a bed is located among the inventories. Within the room are '7 Oacke chairs fineer'd with walnut with green & white sattin seats' and two stools similarly covered, that match the décor in the adjoining Tea Room, where the curtains are of green and white calico and the walls covered with 'green paper Hangings'.[162] The tea room contained five cane chairs with silk cushions, three stools, a dressing mirror and two square tables, one a tea table of oak, the other described as a Japan table but, curiously, china is not listed nor is the equipage that accompanied the serving of tea.[163] However, a list of items brought to Killeen from Dublin included sets of blue and white china.[164] Such a room must have been unusual in a private house before 1735,[165] (a 'Small Tea room' is located off the Parlour in a design for the Hon. Mr Barnet, dating to *c.* 1740[166]), but perhaps it was a small space off the main reception room used by the lady of the house, rather like a closet, for the entertainment of her friends. Later, in 1787, Beaufort found a Coffee room at Shane's Castle, county Antrim and his account of it indicates its use:

> '...off breakfast room is rotunda coffee room where in recesses are great quantities of china, a cistern with a cock and water, a boiler with another, all apparently for making breakfast; a letter box and a round table with four sets of pen and ink let in, for everybody to write....[167]

Ante-room

The *OED* defines an antechamber as 'A chamber or room leading to the chief apartment; an ante-room, in which visitors wait' and 'any space forming an entrance to another'. In addition it mentions its definition in Johnson's *Dictionary*

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[161] F de la Rochefoucauld, *A Frenchman in England 1784* (Cambridge University Press 1933), pp 24.
[162] Green wallpaper is listed at Killeen Castle in the Green Room also.
[163] A rectangular table with a black and gold Chinese lacquer top from Killeen Castle, and dated to *c.* 1750, is illustrated in Glin and Peill, *Irish furniture,* p 241, cat. no. 156.
[164] ffolliott, 'Household stuff', pp 43-51.
[165] Toby Barnard reckons that 'tea-drinking as a ritual was known among the elite by the end of the seventeenth century' though imports of tea to Ireland were recorded only in the second decade of the eighteenth century. Barnard, 'The political, material and mental culture of the Cork settlers, *c.* 1650-1700' in P O'Flanagan and C G Buttimer (eds), *Cork history and society* (Dublin 1993), pp 309-65. A tea house was build in the grounds of Newhailes in Scotland in mid-eighteenth century. Macauley, *The classical country house in Scotland 1660-1800* (London 1987), p 80.
[166] IAA, photocopy of the Dromoland Album from the NLI, f. 56v.
[167] TCD, MS 4028, D A Beaufort, 'Journal of a Tour through part of Ireland begun August 26 1787', f 44.

(1755) where it is noted that 'It is generally written, improperly, *antichamber*'. The *Dictionnaire de l'Academie Francaise* adds to its definition that it is a room 'where the servants of those who come to visit must stop'.[168] It was used in France as a dining room, as has been seen (Chapter 3). In Paris the ante-room moved from its aristocratic beginnings to the city's bourgeois apartments, and the homes of merchants.[169] Roger North describes it as 'fitt for many uses, and need not have a chimny, because it is for passage, short attendance, or diversion. Musick is very popular in it...it must not be large, for that kills the rest of your rooms, and makes them seem less'. He is referring in this case to an 'apartment of state' on the first floor, where the ante-room, which one encounters on mounting the stairs, separates two sets of apartments. Isaac Ware, as has been seen, saw it as part of the suite of reception rooms on the garden front.[170]

Of the thirty-three plans that include ante-rooms (for twenty-three houses[171]) only three – Lough Glynn and Castle Bernard (county Offaly) in the 1830s and Emo Court in the Encumbered Estates plan of 1852 – are spelt 'ante-room'. Richard Castle is consistent in his use of the term 'anty chamber' and John Aheron prefers 'anti chamber' in the first half of the 18th century.[172] After that, 'room' is generally preferred to 'chamber' though Richard Morrison uses both on different plans for Ballyfin (1821-2). All appear at ground-floor level, with the exception of two of the three Carton plans, Chearnley's plan, James Byres' plan for Charleville Forest, and Aheron's plans for Dromoland, which show ante-rooms on both ground and first floors.[173] The rooms are located almost equally between the front and rear of the house.

A room that was flexible in its usage, the main function of the ante-room was to serve another room. It could also use up redundant or awkward spaces on plans, or to achieve a spatial effect of constriction between two grander spaces, as will be seen on Morrison's plan for Carton (1815). Newbridge House is another example where an ante-room with niches for sculpture leads to the new drawing room

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[168] Quoted in Annik Pardailhe-Galabrun, *The birth of intimacy: privacy and domestic life in early modern Paris* (Presses Universitaires de France 1988) trans. by Jocelyn Phelps 1991, p 65.
[169] Pardailhe-Galabrun, *The birth of intimacy*, p 65.
[170] Ware, p 328.
[171] Carton, Dromoland and Killeen Castle are each counted twice because of major refurbishing and rebuilding that they underwent: other houses are Kildare House, Samuel Chearnley's drawing, Headfort, Slane Castle (a reconstructed drawing), Charleville Forest, Woodville, Mount Kennedy, Straffan House, Farnham House, Markree Castle, Rockingham, Lough Glynn House, Castle Bernard, Lissadell, Ballyfin, Emo Court, and Ballycurry.
[172] Castle was already four years dead before Johnson's dictionary was published and Aheron's plans are dated prior to 1750.
[173] At Dromoland (1740s), Charleville Forest (1789) and Chearnley's plan (1746) the ante-rooms serve bedrooms.

through a pedimented doorcase flanked by Corinthian columns. At Charlemont House, Dublin designed by William Chambers an ante-room was part of the library suite to the rear of the house, described by Arthur Young as 'a pretty ante-room, with a fine copy of the Venus de Medicis'.[174] Called the Venus Library, the room contained, as well as valuable books, four antique copper busts, and two marble busts of William Pitt and of the earl of Chesterfield, according to a visitor in 1797.[175] At Lord Charlemont's house in Marino, county Dublin the vicereine, the duchess of Northumberland took breakfast in the ante-room to the 170 feet long 'Hot House'.[176]

The rooms flanking Richard Morrison's tripartite hall at Mount Bellew, county Galway were described by J P Neale in 1820 as ante-rooms, that led to the dining room to the left and to the 'gallery' (probably the 'library') to the right. These 'ante-rooms', described by Neale as measuring 24 feet by 17 feet 8 inches, appear on a Morrison plan dated to *c.* 1819 as a breakfast room and a drawing room **(Fig. 4.7)**.[177] Mention has been made above of the countess of Shelburne's reference to the Green Drawing room at Castletown ('furnished with pale green damask') as an 'Antichamber'. Another house enlarged by the Morrisons is Fota, county Cork (from 1826) where the hall, as at Mount Bellew, is created out of the original hall and two flanking rooms. Here a room off the hall to the right of the stairhall is an ante-room that gives access to the bowed drawing room, but the small spaces to each end of the hall are interesting. They provide a vista or an enfilade terminating on each side with a niche. As they 'announce' the entry into two important rooms, the dining room to one side and the library to the other, they could be called ante-rooms. They bear a resemblance to that at Rockingham where a vaulted ante-room links the rotunda drawing room with the rectangular dining room. It provides a decorative architectural entrance from the 'Gallery of Communication' (**Fig. 2.7**).

The absence of an ante-room was criticised by de la Rochefoucauld when he visited England in 1784, 'since the dining-room door always leads…into the hall and the drawing-room door…onto the staircase, with the result that when they are

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[174] Quoted in Cynthia O'Connor, *The pleasing hours: James Caulfeild, first earl of Charlemont 1728-99* (Cork 1999), p 207.
[175] Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber (eds), 'Dublin and its vicinity', pp 133-55.
[176] Cynthia O'Connor, *The pleasing hours: James Caulfeild, first earl of Charlemont 1728-99* (Cork 1999), p 217.
[177] Neale, *Views of the seats,* iii.

opened one feels a considerable breeze around one's legs'.[178] This was a practical use for the room not specified by any of the architectural writers mentioned above.

The plans under consideration confirm the multiple uses of the ante-room. Its location on ground floor plans for Carton and Kildare House are similar: both serve the main reception rooms, and the doorways are on axis with the main entrance.[179] In both houses the rooms are flanked by a dining room to one side, and a drawing room to the other and have doors leading to the garden (**Figs 4.8, 3.1**). At Carton (pre-Morrison) the ante-room leads into a drawing room which leads into a bedchamber and closet creating a formal apartment. In the two first-floor plans for Carton it serves bedroom suites on each side on the garden front, and the (first-floor) saloon to the front of the house. In the Morrison plan for Carton (1815) the room called the Billiard Room on the southeast corner was transformed into a domed ante-room between the drawing room and the new dining room.

As in the houses mentioned, the ante-room often forms part of the parade rooms, as at Woodville (1779, **Fig. 3.6**); Dromoland (*c.* 1826, **Fig. 3.9**); Straffan House (1808, **Fig. 4.4**) and Lough Glynn (*c.* 1830) (where in both cases it is on axis with the main entrance); and Lissadell (1833, **Fig. 4.9**). In other cases it serves the library where it might be used as a more private reading room or a sitting room, as at Slane Castle (1784), Ballyfin[180] (1821), Farnham (1802), Castle Bernard (1833) and Emo Court (1852). Other ante-rooms, located next to halls, seem to be for waiting in, as at Ballycurry, at Killeen Castle where they also are located next to the chapel, and at Mount Kennedy where one plan shows it next to the servants' staircase, where it could also be used to keep food warm for the adjoining dining room, and which has a mezzanine overhead (**Fig. 4.10**). The ante-room functions also in relation to bedchambers though what precise function it has is not clear.[181]

There is a notable lack of ante-rooms in the terraced town houses (not surprising as space was at a premium), though there is one at 10 Henrietta Street. Some of the history of that room has come to light recently that is of interest to this study. The room was formed, probably *c.* 1760, from the upper part of the double height

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[178] Francois de la Rochefoucauld, *A Frenchman in England 1784* (Cambridge University Press 1933), p 41.

[179] In both houses the ante-room itself is off-axis.

[180] Various changes of mind are noted in the plans for Ballyfin where it is called an 'Anti Chamber and Billiards' to the rear, and to the left of the hall on the other 'Music Room or Anti Room' where it could relate to both the hall and the library.

entrance and stair hall and has retained its coved and compartmented ceiling from the 1730s, which is rather overpowering in a relatively small room. When the staircase was relocated to the rear of the house in the 1760s, a floor was inserted in the original staircase hall, creating this upstairs ante-room. A chimneypiece was installed and it became part of the formal rooms, located at the top of the staircase and between the Blue Drawing room and the ballroom to the front. It was given raised and fielded dado panelling; the flat of the ceiling was originally painted pale blue and the coving off-white. Above the dado the walls were lined with flush oak panelling covered in hessian over which was hung 'pillar and arch' wallpaper that dates to the 1760s.[182]

The inventory for the ante-room at 10 Henrietta Street gives little information as to its function. In 1772 it contained a mahogany dressing table and three paintings. At Shelton House (1816) where it is described as 'off Drawing Room leading to Back Stairs', it contained just eight chairs, six more than at Mount Stewart (1821) where the two chairs are described as of bamboo and painted. There was a hand screen, an Indian sword and scabbard and, intriguingly, '2 Bell Pulls with rings'. At Doneraile Court in the 1830s there are two ante-rooms listed in the inventory, one appears to serve two bedroom suites (the 'Blue' and 'Orange' bedrooms and dressing rooms) and contains a window curtain and drapery, sofa with cushions, an armchair, four other chairs, a commode and two mirrors. There was also a wardrobe, an Indian chest and a trunk stand. The other ante-room is used for storage. At Brownlow House (1848) it is listed as being 'off Dining Room' and contains an 'oak plate warmer'. Also listed are ten mahogany chairs with cane seats, two tables (one with leaves), a Brussels carpet, a rug, '2 Spring & Sun Blinds' and a box of periodicals. Perhaps ante-rooms were rooms used to house objects that did not find a natural home elsewhere.

Dressing room

Not unlike the ante-room, a dressing room may be found on any floor in a house and frequently assumed the role of a sitting room, particularly when it formed part of the rooms of parade. Its original function was clear: it was a room for dressing in, located next to the bedroom and, usually, to a closet. Reference to the earl of

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[181] Some appear next to bedrooms in Aheron's plan for Dromoland (1740s), in Byres' plan for Charleville Forest (1789), and in plans for Headfort by Castle and Ensor (*c.* 1750).

[182] An example of this wallpaper can be seen in Philip Hussey's painting, *An interior with a family* (NGI) which is dated to the 1770s. An advertisement in *Faulkner's Journal* of 13 April 1762, placed by John Gordon who produced wallpapers 'and others consisting principally of Gothic or Grecian Architecture, in due Perspective, and proportioned agreable to their respective Orders'. Quoted in Cornforth, 'Triumph of Pillar & Arch' in *CL*, 23 September 1993, pp 72-75.

Northumberland's 'chamber where he maketh him ready' in 1512 indicates that he dressed in a separate room to that in which he slept.[183] Girouard's assertion that the term 'dressing room' first appeared in the second half of the seventeenth century places the earl of Kildare (1611/12-1660) at the vanguard of fashion in his Dublin house, according to a 1656 inventory which names such a room.[184] The *OED* mentions it first in 1675 in a quotation from William Wycherley's *Country Wife*: 'I…was made free of their society and dressing rooms for ever hereafter', an interesting quote that indicates the use of the room for the entertainment of guests. Both men and women used dressing rooms, but usually in different ways, as will be seen in the next chapter. By the second half of the eighteenth century ladies' dressing rooms, especially those in London, had become like jewel cabinets, sumptuously decorated and furnished; they were on public display on grand occasions and at other times were for the reception of close friends.[185] An auction advertisement in a Dublin newspaper in 1765 mentioned 'several Cabinets of Ebony, and other scarce Materials most pleasingly embellished with inlay of Pearl, Turquoise- [tortoise?-] shell and Ivory; they are that desirable (Dressing Room) Size, so deservedly seeked and esteemed by the Ladies, as being in the present Taste'.[186]

There appears to be no obvious reason why the dressing room was sometimes used as a well-furnished and decorated reception room. It may have had something to do with the fact that there was considerable flexibility in its usage, as Cornforth has shown at Holkham Hall in Norfolk where reception rooms served the state bedrooms as dressing rooms when required. The fact that dressing rooms appear on the *piano nobile*, unattached to bedchambers, indicates their separate function as sitting rooms. Robert Adam designed dressing rooms specifically for women: they were the most inventive spaces in his houses, sizeable 'rooms of consequence', designed to be seen and admired. One of them was at Wynnstay, where the dressing room was entered directly from the drawing room, to which it became an appendage, 'a coda to the parade of grand reception rooms, thrown open to the public at large assemblies and expected to be as glamorous as the rest, yet different'.[187]

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[183] Girouard, *Life,* p 54.
[184] Girouard, *Life,* p 150; Jane Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels: a survey of early household inventories in Ireland,* (Heritage Council 2003), p 40. The contents of Lord Kildare's room were '1 Great Lookinglasse, 1 Still, ! Great presse wch is my Lord of Corkes' (the countess's father).
[185] Eileen Harris, *The Genius of Robert Adam* (New Haven and London, 2001) p 7.
[186] *Faulkner's Dublin Journal,* 26 January 1765, quoted in Ada Longfield, 'Up for sale' in *Irish Ancestor* vol. xvii, No. 1, (1985), pp 30-34.
[187] Eileen Harris, *The genius of Robert Adam,* (New Haven and London 2001), p 265.

For the dressing room as a public space, there are degrees of formality. Many that were located next to bedrooms on an upper floor seem to have been richly decorated, as evidenced by Lady Coote's room at Ballyfin with its tripartite plan and domed ceiling, which was undoubtedly at least a semi-formal sitting room (**Fig. 4.11**). The same might apply to Mrs Clements' octagonal room at Woodville (**Fig. 4.12**), and to Killeen Castle where Lady Fingall's oval dressing room led into her spacious morning room (**Fig. 3.5**).[188] But evidence for formal dressing rooms is scant and little information can be gleaned from the plans, apart from the fact that they sometimes exist alongside reception rooms.

At Carton, in all of Castle's drawings, main reception rooms are found on both ground and first floors. In his earliest ground-floor plan (**Fig. 1.16**), a dressing room is located in the north-west corner on the garden front: it leads *en enfilade* to a bedroom, drawing room, salon and dining parlour. His other plans vary only slightly, with the same space becoming either a closet or a dressing room, with a bedroom, as part of the formal suite. A first-floor plan shows a dressing room in the same location (the north-west corner) next to a drawing room, bedroom and 'anty chamber' (creating an apartment), with the saloon on the same floor to the front of the house. Lord Kildare's plan for Carton of 1762 (**Fig. 1.17**) locates a suite of dressing room-bedchamber-closet to the right of the saloon. At Kildare House the bow-windowed space that became part of the supper room by 1759 (**Fig. 1.19**), and which spanned the depth of the house, was originally planned (and built) as one of three rooms,[189] the central one (with the bow) being a dressing room, and part of the formal suite along the garden front.[190] In the family quarters, located on both floors to the south of the house, are the dressing rooms of Lord and Lady Kildare. While her husband's rooms were private, the countess could open her bedroom and dressing room to extend the rooms of parade from the gallery, dining room and drawing room. The view from the 'State' dressing room at Westport House, Mayo that Daniel Beaufort visited in 1787 was enhanced by the mirrored panels in the window shutters 'which has a good effect in reflecting the bay and the surrounding hills'.[191]

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[188] IAA Photograph collection, Ballyfin, county Laois; NLI, AD 2674, Thomas Penrose plan of Bedchamber story at Woodville, 1779; IAA Murray Collection, Killeen Castle bedchamber floor Francis Johnston 1802.

[189] Griffin and Pegum, *Leinster House,* p 31.

[190] Other bow-shaped dressing rooms as formal rooms were at Headfort, Co Meath (William Chambers 1765); at Brook Lodge, Co Galway (Peter Madden 1836), National Archives, Ballyglunin Papers M6932/63; and at Antrim House, Merrion Square, Dublin in 1801.

[191] TCD MS 4027, D A Beaufort, 'Journal of a Tour through part of Ireland begun August 26th 1787, f 34.

An Ardbraccan plan shows a dressing room (**A**) off the library (**B**) (**Fig. 1.22**). The circulation here is not completely straightforward: the saloon (**C**) is to the centre of the garden front, with the library to the left, the drawing and dining rooms (**N, L**) to the front. These latter two rooms are not inter-connected and there are no doors from the hall/vestibule except into the saloon. While dressing rooms are sometimes related to libraries, a room that will be dealt with in the next chapter, its proximity at Ardbraccan to the saloon indicates its public or semi-public role, with the dressing room as a reading room, a sitting room or both.[192]

Because of the narrowness of a town house it was customary for the gentleman to have his dressing room on the ground floor, unrelated to a bedroom, and the lady to have hers on the first floor. This was the case at 45 Kildare Street, Dublin for which both Richard Castle and John Ensor made plans in about 1746. With Lady Doneraile's dressing room we are in the happy position of having both a plan (though a later reconstruction, **Fig. 4.13**) and an inventory. It was located on the first floor next to the bedroom she shared with her husband, both rooms to the rear of the house. The bedroom, smaller than the dressing room, was private. From the top of the stairs a door led into the drawing room next to which, through a central pedimented doorway flanked on both sides by engaged columns, one gained access to the dressing room, which was richly furnished.[193] On the floor was a 'Turkey carpet' with 'three bits [sic] for the doors' (to the landing, bedroom and drawing room), the window curtains were of 'imaged chintz' as was the upholstery on six chairs (which had two sets of 'loose chequer linen covers'). There is a great number of chairs here: as well as the six mentioned, there were two settees and an easy chair, and twelve 'new rush bottomed chairs with green frames'. Between the windows was a gilded pier glass, and other items included a 'dressing glass with Japanned frame', two bookcases with glass doors, a 'writing veneered walnut chest of drawers with locks and keys for do.', a small India cabinet and frame, and a deal dressing table covered with a 'scarlet calamanco petticoat'.

Plans by Thomas Cooley for Mount Kennedy (1781) show ground floor dressing rooms (one called 'Mrs Cunningham's'), with doors leading to drawing rooms, oval on one plan, rectangular on the other. Both dressing rooms are attached to bedrooms, but they could be used as formal rooms (**Figs. 4.10, 4.14**).

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[192] At Powerscourt a dressing room connects with the octagonal library, but neither is part of the formal rooms.

[193] John Kelly carved the Ionic drawing room doorcase. Griffin, 'The building and furnishing', pp 24-39.

Inventories for other formal dressing rooms are scarce, but there is an early example at Barbavilla (1742-3) where its location next to the drawing room, the absence of a bed, the presence of a card table, and the crimson mohair covers on the stools and walnut armchair, point to its being a room in which guests were entertained. At Moira House (1808) the dressing room, listed after the drawing room and billiard room, has 'a Conversation Bed with Green Parragon curtains', twelve chairs – six of which are described as Chinese and gilded; the other six, with round stuffed backs and seats, are covered with blue calico cases. There are two settees in gilded frames, two japanned tables 'with wire doors', two 'India cabinetts' and two card tables.

The fabrics listed in the inventories of Howth Castle and Dromana are almost as luxurious as the Ormond residences. At Howth Castle (1746-52) the sequence of rooms listed – Lady Howth's bedchamber; her dressing room; Lord Howth's dressing room; drawing room, and the 'Castle Bed Chamber' – constitute a formal apartment. Lady Morgan referred to the 'two state bedrooms' in Howth, describing them as 'rich, cumbrous, and spacious…'.[194] The same can be said of the Grandisons' suite of rooms at Dromana (1755), where the furnishings and wall hangings were of crimson silk damask. Lady Howth's bed and her window curtains were of scarlet damask and eight chairs had covers of the same and a spare set in red serge. Her dressing room had '2 pairs blue door curtains' and chintz loose covers on her six walnut chairs: other furniture included two writing tables, a tea chest and seventeen glazed prints. The contents of her bedroom included a large amount of china, three still-life paintings of flowers as overdoors as well as ninety-nine 'great and small pictures', a mahogany bureau and bookcase with a mirrored door, japanned boxes and an 'Indian screen'. No fabric is mentioned in Lord Howth's dressing room: Spanish leather covered the six walnut chairs and an oak stool; and it contained a cache of arms. While the dressing rooms of Ladies Grandison and Howth were likely to be semi-public, it would appear that their husbands' were private. The Castle Bed Chamber was furnished with blue silk mohair on the bed, the windows and the chairs, which were also draped with 'Persian scarves', and had a spare set of blue serge cases. Other furniture included a mahogany writing table, a japanned Indian desk on a black frame and an eight-

[194] Quoted in Glin and Peill, *Irish Furniture*, p 85. A 'State Room' appears off the entrance hall in an 1825 plan of the Castle by the Pain brothers.

leaved Indian screen[195], a large mahogany clothes chest and red leather cover, twelve green varnished dressing-boxes[196] and two straw powder boxes.

Lady Grandison had in her dressing room, a bookcase 'with desk & drawers',[197] a dressing chair 'with redd Russia Leather' covering the seat, seven mahogany carved chairs with quilted backs and seats covered with crimson silk damask, with loose covers of blue and white check linen. Over the marble chimneypiece was a 'Picture of our Saviour, the virgin Mary & their shepherds, in a Gilt frame', and in the grate was an iron fireback 'with the Pope and Cardenials' on it! All of the doors mentioned in this suite had 'a brass lock with key & asscotchin [escutcheon]'. Also in her dressing room, Lady Grandison had an amount of china, tea equipage and a teapot described as having 'a Silver spoute, the handle ebboney joyned on with silver & the cover with a silver chain'. This brings us to the interesting subject of collections of china, often to be found decorating public and private dressing rooms, and the boudoir.

China

By the mid-eighteenth century, 'china fever', the collection of fine china or porcelain, was at its height and it became a commodity that was enormously popular with rich and poor alike.[198] One writer states that china 'changed from being unknown in 1675 to being a normal part of household equipment by 1715'.[199] Listed in an inventory of the first duchess of Ormonde's closet at Kilkenny in 1684 were 'fower small Pedistalls gilt for China'.[200] The duchess

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[195] 'Indian' sometimes meant 'Chinese'.

[196] Holding dressing and grooming accoutrements, it would seem to be a fairly essential item at a time when people moved from house to house, but it does not appear as frequently as one would expect, though it might be mentioned simply as a 'box' in inventories. Apparently these boxes were made mostly for men in the late eighteenth century but Thomas Sheraton illustrated one, 'a lady's travelling box', in 1792. Made of mahogany or frequently, coromandel, they were often lined with velvet or gold-embossed leather and made to hold dressing accoutrements such as brushes, combs, perfume flasks, bowls and covers, or a shaving basin with a notch to fit the neck. The countess of Kildare's silver-gilt toilet service dated 1698/1722, given to his wife by the 19th earl of Kildare, comprises twenty-eight pieces and includes a table mirror and a pair of small candlesticks. Maria Edgeworth, visiting Trentham in 1819 was told by Lady Stafford's maid that the valet of her fellow guest Mr Standish (who was rather a dandy), invited all the ladies' maids to view his master's toilette 'which I assure you, my lady, is the best thing worth seeing in this house, all of gilt plate, and I wish, my lady, you had such a dressing box'. http://www.hygra.com/vanitybox.htm; Gervase Jackson-Stops (ed.) *The Treasures Houses of Britain* (New Haven and London 1995) catalogue numbers 108, 124; A J C Hare (ed.) *Life and Letters of Maria Edgeworth,* 2 vols (London 1894), p 258.

[197] A writing desk, or *scriptoire*, was a common item in dressing rooms on both sides of the Irish Sea. Maria Edgeworth observed when she stayed with a family in England in 1813, that there was one in each dressing room together with 'a table with everything that could be wanted for writing', Christina Colvin (ed.), *Letters from England 1813-1844* (Oxford 1971), p 25.

[198] Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: women, shopping and business in the eighteenth century* (New York 1997), p 55.

[199] Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer behaviour and material Culture in Britain, 1660-1770* (Cambridge University Press 1988), p 31.

[200] Jane Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels*, (The Heritage Council 2003) p 110.

enjoyed a collection of china that, as Fenlon has described, was disbursed around her closets in the fashion of the day, 'piled under and on top of the japanned cabinets, stacked up along the chimney piece and overmantel, standing grouped in the corners of the room, on the silver table and displayed on small pedestals around the walls'.[201] The Dutch imported much of the Chinese porcelain that arrived in Europe and it was they who set the fashion for displaying it in this type of massing arrangement.[202] Queen Mary of England, wife of William (of Orange) was a passionate collector who, according to Daniel Defoe, was responsible for introducing this habit of collecting and display to England, where china was piled 'upon the Tops of Cabinets, Scrutoires, and every Chymney-Piece to the Tops of the Ceilings and even setting up shelves for their china'.[203] Though usually associated with women, men were not immune to the charms of this commodity,[204] which was frequently associated with the fashion of tea-drinking. In 1709 and again in 1733 Jonathan Swift acquired a number of cups including some of blue-and-white with handles[205]; and Bishop Synge's daughter, Alicia, kept china in her closet in 1747.[206]

Women certainly bought or acquired small items of china with which they decorated their rooms, but one wonders to what extent did they purchase large-scale pieces such as urns, items that would be architectonic as well as decorative? Purchases of china, such as the set recorded in Dromana's inventory that bore Lord Grandison's crest, were frequently purchased by men. In the years between 1720 and 1820 over one hundred porcelain dinner and tea services with family coats of arms were made in China for families such as those of the duke of Leinster, Pole Cosby, Baron Kingsborough and the earl of Ely.[207]

Both the dressing room and the boudoir (and the closet, which will be looked at in the next chapter) were rooms where women liked to display their china. Louisa Conolly wrote to her sister Sarah in 1760 describing her newly-finished dressing room at Castletown: hung with green paper to match the green and white linen

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[201] Jane Fenlon '"Her Grace's Closet". Paintings in the duchess of Ormond's closet at Kilkenny Castle', *BIGS,* vol. xxxvi, 1994, pp 30-47.
[202] Thornton, *Authentic Décor,* p 49.
[203] Quoted in John Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors* (New Haven and London 2004) p 253, footnote 2, p 340.
[204] See Lorna Weatherill, 'A Possession of One's Own: women and consumer behavior in England, 1660-1740', *Journal of British Studies* (1986), 25: 140; Elizabeth Kowalski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects,* pp 57-58.
[205] Barnard, *Making the grand figure,* p 129.
[206] Legg (ed.), *Synge Letters,* Letter 7, 23 May 1747, p 29.
[207] David S Howard, 'Chinese armorial porcelain for Ireland' in *BIGS*,vol. xxix, Nos. 3 & 4, July-December 1986, pp 3-24.

covers for her chairs, she had a number of tables, a bookcase, pictures and a display of china.[208] She may have been influenced by the décor of her sister's dressing room at Holland House, London. In June 1759, Lady Caroline Fox wrote to their sister Emily (countess of Kildare) that she had painted it 'pea-green' and 'fitted it up with a good deal of pea-green china'. She goes on to say that she has been 'extravagant enough to buy a good deal of china lately'.[209] By the mid-1760s her dressing room had an enormous collection of china.[210] Emily wanted her husband's portrait to hang over the chimneypiece in her dressing room in Kildare House in 1762 'upon the hangings, not to be made up as part of the chimney, for a lady's room that is not pretty. Besides I like the blue hanging should appear a little behind my fine china which is to stand on the white marble mantelpiece, then your picture above…'.[211] Lady Shelburne described Castletown in 1769 as 'full of cabinet work of inlaid wood made in London and pieces of French and old China which gave it great elegance.[212]

'Roan [Rouen] Ware' and china feature as part of the kitchen and domestic ware in lists like those of 1763 for 10 Cavendish Row, Dublin, where blue-and-white china is listed separately from red-and-white. In a dressing room in the same house are listed two girandoles with china figures, fifteen china figures, china ornaments on the tallboy and two 'mandarines China'. The two 'China Jarrs and a beaker' may refer to a garniture which was popular in late-seventeenth, early-eighteenth century European and English country houses.[213] Other references to china as ornaments include a 'press of china desert ornaments' in Mrs Rochfort's closet at Clogrenane, county Carlow, and pieces of Worcester, Wedgewood and Dresden on the mantelpieces in Lady Leitrim's bedroom and two dressing rooms at Killadoon in 1807 where, in the entrance hall and under the main staircase, were twenty large china items. The Donerailes at their house in Cork had twelve china ornaments and twenty-seven flower pots in the Bow Closet, a teapot and two cups in the Bow Dressing Room and a further five teapots, a teapot stand and ewer, two jars, a handbell, and other items of china were recorded in Lady Doneraile's dressing room, but whether these were for practical or for decorative use is not clear. While

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[208] IAA, Bunbury Letters, 94/136, letter from Lady Louisa Conolly to her sister Lady Sarah, 17 September 1760.
[209] FitzGerald (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily*, I, letter from Lady Caroline Fox to countess of Kildare, 28 June [1759], pp 238-39.
[210] Stella Tillyard, *Aristocrats: Caroline, Emily, Louisa and Sarah Lennox 1740-1832* (London 1994) p 148.
[211] FitzGerald (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily*, I, letter to her husband from Lady Kildare, 17 December [1762], pp 158-59.
[212] Bowood MSS, Vol. 5 1769-70, Extracts from the Diary of Sophia, Countess of Shelburne, 1 August 1769.
[213] Gervase Jackson-Stops (ed.), *The Treasure Houses of Britain* (New Haven and London), catalogue number 131.

Lady Lurgan had '36 China and other ornaments' in her dressing room at Brownlow House in 1848, the fact that they are lumped together may indicate that none was particularly precious.[214]

With this short diversion to look at china in both dressing rooms and boudoirs, we now turn to look at the boudoir as a room of parade.

Boudoir

In the late eighteenth-century the boudoir made its appearance,[215] a room that originated in France, and basically served a similar purpose, in Ireland and in Britain, to the formal dressing room. It did not find much favour in Irish houses, appearing only ten times in our survey,[216] but in its capacity as a public room on the plans, six examples are included here. The boudoir has always been perceived exclusively as a woman's space, while dressing rooms (frequently associated only with women) were used by both sexes. However, examples of the use of the word 'boudoir' in the *OED* show otherwise, though it must be said that they are exceptions. The writer William Cowper is quoted in a letter dated 1785: 'I write in a nook that I call my boudoir', and the following year John Adams (later second president of the United States) refers to his boudoir as a little room between his library and drawing room. The dictionary defines the room as 'a small elegantly-furnished room, where a lady may retire to be alone, or to receive her intimate friends'. As implied, the boudoir is a room with an interesting and amusing history not appropriate for this chapter but the room may also be looked at here in its role as a public space.

The earliest mention of a boudoir in the plans and inventories under discussion is among drawings for Townley Hall, by Blayney Townley Balfour and his sister Anne. It is dated to about 1794, well after the boudoir became popular in France, and appears just off the library.[217] It is part of an enfilade of rooms on one side of the house comprising from the front, a drawing room, a library and a boudoir to the rear: small in size (11' x 24'), it would make an ideal sitting room/dressing room/closet for Mrs Balfour.[218] In a plan of the tower house of Killeen Castle

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[214] PRONI, Brownlow Papers, MS D/1928/H/9 Inventory and valuation of Furniture and Plate in Brownlow House, Co Armagh made by Robert Pasley of Bachelors Walk, Dublin and James Dowell of George St, Edinburgh, Upholsterers & valuators appointed to make such valuation by order of 11 November 1848.

[215] The word 'boudoir', according to the *OED,* was first mentioned in 1781.

[216] In plans for Townley Hall, Killeen Castle, Ballyfin, Brook Lodge, Lissadell, Crom Castle, Adare Manor, Castle Bernard, Powerscourt Wicklow; and in an inventory for Mount Stewart.

[217] IAA, Townley Hall Drawings, M14. Attributed to Blayney and Anne Balfour.

[218] Mr Balfour had his 'Own Room' and dressing room on the other side of the house.

dated 1795, a boudoir is located off the drawing room, in one of the towers,[219] and in Portumna Castle in 1808 Mary Beaufort described one of the towers off the 'Grand drawing room' as 'fitted up as a nice little boudoir'.[220] In both of these cases the descriptions must refer to recent replanning, as the original castles of Killeen and Portumna long pre-date the invention of the room name. At the Gothic Revival Charleville Forest, county Offaly (1800-12) a small boudoir is located in the north-east tower, and has a tent-like vault of plaster surmounted by an eight-pointed star.[221] Already mentioned is a proposed boudoir in a turret off the drawing room at Brook Lodge (*c.* 1826-29). Lady Booth's boudoir at Lissadell (1833) is located next to the bowed library where a doorway links the two rooms and, while the room also leads to her and her husband's private quarters, it would also be possible to use it as part of the circulation space (**Fig. 4.9**). There is an intriguing suite of ground-floor rooms on an 1833 plan of Castle Bernard, county Offaly, by G R Pain (**Fig. 2.21**). [222] Mr and Mrs Bernard each has their own study, with Mrs Bernard's longer than her husband's by four feet and having a canted bay. A door connects her study to a boudoir where there is a quadripartite vaulted ceiling, this door being the only means of access to the room. References to a study for a woman are unusual, as is the allocation of two rooms for her use on the ground floor.

Lady Erne's boudoir at Crom Castle, county Fermanagh is enfilade after the library and drawing room. Though an inventory for this room, dated to the 1860s, is outside the limits of this study, as the only example of a public boudoir,[223] it gives an idea of contents. As well as a large collection of Dresden china and other porcelain and an amount of Bohemian glassware, other items included a mirror-backed cabinet, a bookcase, two whatnots, a writing table and a writing desk, three tables (two covered in velvet), a sofa and cushion, with other cushions, three easy chairs, two cane-bottomed chairs, a small chest of drawers, a screen, and a folding chair. There is no mention of floor covering, light fittings, mirrors or pictures. The overall impression is one of a room of display, where Lady Erne could work at her desk surrounded by the objects that gave her pleasure, much as other women such as Lady Louisa Conolly and her sisters did in their dressing rooms one hundred years earlier.

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[219] IAA, Murray Collection of drawings, Killeen Castle, plan of tower house.
[220] TCD Ms 4035, 'Journal of our Tour to the Westward…1808', f 117.
[221] Mark Girouard, 'Charleville Forest, Co. Offaly, Eire' in *CL*, 27 September 1962, pp 710-14.
[222] IAA, Photograph collection, Castle Bernard, county Offaly.
[223] The only inventory in the survey that lists a boudoir is Mount Stewart, but it is a private room.

In Sheridan Le Fanu's *The Cock and Anchor* of 1845, set in Ireland, part of Mary Ashwoode's apartment at Morley Court is referred to variously as a 'study', a 'little drawing-room' and a 'small dressing room or boudoir', but it should be remembered that the author, who set his novel in the 1740s, was writing one hundred years later.[224] It does not seem to have been a popular room name in Irish houses where, if the name 'dressing room' did not quite fit, 'sitting room' or 'morning room' appears to have been the preferred alternative. It is noteworthy that on Francis Johnston's plans for the enlargement of Killeen Castle from 1802, the name 'boudoir' that had been given to a small room in one of the towers previously, is not used at all, but where Lady Fingall may have lost a boudoir, she gained a 'Morning Room'.

In Lady Morgan's book, *O'Donnel* (1814) one of the protagonists, Lady Llanberis, is in the habit of acquiring two to three copies of any book that she finds particularly amusing, 'one for each of the rooms: those are just the kind of books one should have lying about, they are so very amusing'.[225] That this was part of her own experience in country house visiting is evident. In 1829 she published *The Book of the Boudoir*, a manual with essays on various topics, the result of nightly entries composed in private – in her own boudoir, one supposes. Reviewers mocked its rather haphazard route to publication, but of the title Lady Morgan writes,

> All who have the supreme felicity of haunting great houses, are aware, that those odd books, which are thrown on round tables, or in recesses of windows, to amuse the lounger of the moment, and are not in the catalogue of the library, are frequently stamped, in gold letters with the name of the room to which they are destined: as thus;- 'Elegant Extracts, Drawing-room'; 'Spirit of the Journals, Saloon', &c. &c. As my Book of the Boudoir kept its place in the little room which bore that title, and was never admitted into my bureau of official authorship, it took the name of its *locale*.[226]

Having examined in some detail the rooms that make up the formal suite, we now turn to take a look at how these rooms worked in practice.

The formal rooms in action

The entertainment of guests in the house took on various forms: it could be informal where a number of close friends or acquaintances came to dinner; or

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[224] J Sheridan Le Fanu, *The Cock and Anchor*, (Dublin 1845) pp 58, 64, 109, 193.
[225] Lady Morgan, *O'Donnel*, 3 vols, (London 1979 edn), ii, pp 174-75.
[226] Quoted in Tita Chico, *Designing women: the dressing room in eighteenth-century English literature and culture* (New Jersey 2005), pp 219-20.

formal where important guests were invited. From the middle of the eighteenth century, a time when people were extending or adding on a large room or two to the house, larger parties could be facilitated, and all of the formal rooms were thrown open to the guests through which they could wander at will. Usually food was served in one room, another was for cards, one for dancing, and one in which to sit. It made possible different types of parties – routs, drums, masquerades, musical – and in many cases, amateur theatricals were performed. The house party in the country that extended over a number of days (and sometimes weeks) became popular, and many types of entertainment were provided including field sports – hunting, shooting, racing – and, if there was a lake or river nearby, boating. It is, however, indoor entertaining that is of interest here and how the formal rooms were used in the course of these occasions.

As guests arrived at the house for dinner, they were ushered by a servant into a reception room, usually the drawing room, where they endured, what one writer referred to as, 'the melancholy twilight half-hour preceding dinner'.[227] Robert Adam called such a space 'the Room for Company before dinner'.[228] It was not the custom to serve drinks prior to dinner making it a potentially awkward period for a group of people who may never have met. In a novel of the time a male protagonist calls the half-hour 'that purgatorial period of suspense that one undergoes in the drawing-room'. [229] A young American woman accompanied by two relatives, was invited to dine at an English country house in 1852, wrote later that, having been shown into the library on arrival 'an elegant circle of ladies and gentlemen rose to meet us' but no one was introduced.[230] A novel way of passing the time was found by Lord Blessington at his house in Mountjoy Forest, county Tyrone in the early nineteenth century, where John Ynyr Burges and two companions were invited to dine. In Burges' opinion, Blessington was a very fine gentleman 'so that his conversation did not suit his company, who were all country neighbours'. Their host recited Thomas Moore's poetry 'thinking to please us, but he was just as much at sea as ever' and, until dinner was announced, he 'began to act for us'.[231]

Once the serving of dinner was announced, the 'procession' of guests with their hosts to the dining room offered an opportunity to show off the décor, paintings, furniture and furnishings in other rooms en route. It is obvious from some of the

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[227] Quoted in Alison Ardburgham, *Silver fork society* (London 1983), p 205.
[228] Quoted in Cornforth, *London Interiors from the archives of Country Life* (London 2000), p 89.
[229] Quoted in Ardburgham, *Silver fork society*, p 205.
[230] Cornforth, 'The key to the drawing room' in *Country Life,* 11 December, 2003, pp 45-47.

plans that there could be variations in the route, but display was the object of the exercise. Plans for Kildare House, Headfort, Townley Hall and Lissadell help to illustrate how circulation for guests might be managed through the formal rooms of a house.

At both of the FitzGerald houses, Carton and Kildare House, there was an enfilade of reception rooms that included the dining room, along the garden fronts. Kildare House (**Figs 3.1, 4.15**) was ideally suited to entertaining great numbers of guests by utilising both the ground and first floors, with formal rooms proposed at both levels. At ground floor level guests could pass from the hall, through the ante-room and into the drawing room; after dinner (in the dining room to the left of the ante-room) the ladies could retrace their steps to the drawing room or pass through the parlour to the bow-ended dressing room.[232] When the first floor was used, guests arrived at the top of the stairs from where they passed into the gallery which spans the depth of the house. The actor John O'Keefe was received there by the second duke of Leinster when he attended a masquerade in 1775, the year the gallery was finally completed.[233] From the gallery an enfilade extends through the dining room, drawing room, Lady Kildare's bedroom and her dressing room.[234]

At Kildare House the dining rooms were part of the enfilades on both floors, but that was not the case in William Chambers' plan for Headfort dating to 1765 (**Fig. 3.4**) in which there is little processional sense. He located the dining room to the front, off the hall, with a corridor between it and the drawing room behind. On arrival guests could assemble in the saloon or drawing room or, indeed the library[235] and, when dinner was announced, move from the drawing room across to the dining room. The ladies had a choice of rooms to which they could withdraw – the drawing room or the dressing room next to the saloon, beyond which is a bedroom and a closet. The presence of another dressing room here is rather puzzling: it is a large room with a bow. Was it to be part of the private rooms – a sitting room for the family? Or was it yet another formal space?

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[231] PRONI, T/1282/1, 'Diaries of John Ynyr Burges' , pp 4-6.The earl of Blessington held amateur theatrical events at Mountjoy Forest, sometimes using professional actresses from London.
[232] The three rooms shown on Castle's plan (parlour, dressing room and servants' waiting room) were built, but the walls dividing them had been removed by 1759 when the space was referred to as the 'great' or 'long' room, which later became known as the Supper Room.
[233] Griffin and Pegum, *Leinster House* (Dublin 2000), pp 30, 49.
[234] By 1775, the bedroom and dressing room would probably not be part of the formal rooms.
[235] Robert Graham, a visitor to Carton in 1835, noted that 'gentlemen were already in the library where they meet before dinner'. Henry Heaney (ed.), *A Scottish Whig in Ireland 1835-38: the Irish journals of Robert Graham of Redgorton* (Dublin 1999), p 46.

In a compact plan (unexecuted) for Townley Hall, county Louth (**Fig. 4.16**) *c.* 1790, there is a good flow of circulation. Guests could be led through the hall to a semi-circular staircase hall at the centre of the house: from here they could enter the drawing room (left of the hall) which had a door into the library. Access to the dining room could be gained from either of these rooms, as can be seen on the plan. In another plan for the same house the semi-circular shape of the staircase hall became a rotunda, and there can be little doubt that the Balfour family guests were treated to the drama of this space as they left the drawing room (and possibly library) to get to the dining room. Drama was also to be found at Lissadell (1833, **Fig. 4.9**). As has been seen, guests arrived under the protection of the porte-cochère [or the 'Propylea entrance']. From the hall they could hardly fail to be impressed by the vista (and the parade) through the long 'Gallery and Music Room'[236] to the bow-ended library and the drawing room from which they could enjoy a view of Ben Bulben. From there they approached the dining room via the ante-room. Another route allowed them to assemble in the gallery and move from there through the ante-room to dine.

In Sydney Owenson [Lady Morgan]'s *The wild Irish girl* (1806), the protagonist is warmly welcomed when he arrives at a house unexpectedly. Interestingly, he is ushered into 'the refreshing comforts of a dressing-room' where the hosts dispensed with the servants and looked after him themselves. The dinner, 'composed of every luxury the season afforded: though only supplied by the demesne of our host and the neighbouring sea-coast', served with much elegance, was excessive 'compared to the compact neatness and simple sufficiency of English fare in the same rank of life'.[237] On her tour in the west of Ireland Mary Beaufort describes her visit to the bishop of Killala's palace. On her arrival a number of servants ushered the Beauforts into a hall, where Mrs Stock (the bishop's wife) greeted them with pleasure and took them upstairs to the drawing room where they met the family. They took tea and 'plumb cake' in 'another' room, then returned to the 'large' drawing room where they played cards: supper was served later in the small drawing room. On the same tour Beaufort describes a rather unsatisfying dinner at Hazelwood, county Sligo where seven sat at the table:

> There was not much conversation and the Ladies retired to the Drawing Room pretty early. Miss Wynne sang and played and the Gentlemen soon followed – after their Tea we were summon'd to prayers…it was now near 11 and no appearance of supper, so we

[236] It was also intended to be used as a ballroom, according to notes by the architect, Francis Goodwin, quoted in Josslyn Gore-Booth, 'Lissadell', *LAR*, Summer 2003, pp 112-19.
[237] C Connolly and S Copley, (eds), Sydney Owenson, *The wild Irish girl: a national tale* (London 2000 edn), p 188.

> ordered our Carriage and were not asked to stay, nor to meet Mr Edgeworth, who was expected there next day.[238]

An elegant and very formal dinner took place in county Westmeath in 1773 when Lord Belfield invited just three guests, men who were known to each other, to Belvedere, his beautiful lodge designed by Richard Castle on the banks of Lough Enell. One of them, Sir James Caldwell, gave the following account of the occasion:

> Only think…, a complete service of plate, covers and all, two soups, two removes, nine and nine, a dessert in the highest taste, all sorts of wine, burgundy and champagne, a load of meat on the side table, four valets-de-chambre in laced clothes, and seven or eight footmen. If the Lord Lieutenant had dined there, there could not have been a more elegant entertainment.[239]

In his diaries, Joseph Farington had a habit of drawing illustrations of the shapes of tables and the location of guests.[240] For larger dinners, plans of the table were drawn up by the hostess. A number of these are to be found among the Maunsell Papers[241], where the rectangular table seats between sixteen and eighteen diners (two on each of the short sides), with their names noted, and plans of the dishes annotated. In one, dishes bearing rabbit, fish, ham and onions were laid along one side, while on the other were French peas, boullie [?], turkey and trout; calf's head at one end of the table, venison and oyster soup at the other. Four dishes of butter were laid symmetrically, and hock and Burgundy flanked the centrepiece. Mrs Delany wrote to her sister that a long table was easier to set than a round or oval one, and she regularly sent her details of her menus.[242] Often diners could sit where they chose, but the host and hostess sat at the head and foot of the table, with principal guests on either side. The table was generally covered with a white cloth that extended to the floor, protecting the wood and covering any joins in the table. But it had two other roles. One was that it was used like a napkin: people wiped their mouths with it; but the other was that 'its removal at the end of the main courses signalled a change in the nature of the dinner: before, the business was eating; after, it was drinking'.[243] The job of the servant was to ensure that guests' plates were never empty, so that asking for, or reaching too far for a dish (signs of ill-breeding), were unnecessary.

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[238] TCD, MS 4035, Mary Beaufort, 'Journal of our Tour to the Westward…1808', ff 31-32.
[239] Desmond Guinness & William Ryan, *Irish houses and castles* (London 1971), p 301.
[240] Kenneth Garlick (ed.), *The diary of Joseph Farington,* 16 vols, (New Haven 1979).
[241] Photocopies of which were kindly given to me by the Knight of Glin.
[242] Day (ed.), *Letters…*, p 174.
[243] Sara Paston-Williams, *The art of dining: a history of cooking and eating* (The National Trust 1993), p 249.

After the meal, ladies generally withdrew to the drawing room once more for tea, coffee and conversation, or, as Congreve put it, 'they retired to their tea and scandal after dinner'.[244] After a dinner at Dawson Court in 1778, the young Lady Caroline chose a different location for the ladies: 'to make it as pleasant as I could, I carried them into the little study, instead of the great drawing-room, and as soon as the men came out I sat the old lady down to cards with three of them and I remained chatting with the girls'.[245]In England François de la Rochfoucauld described the retirement of the ladies ('and servants') after dinner as 'the signal for alarming drinking', when the 'real enjoyment begins – there is not an Englishman who is not supremely happy at this…moment'. Endless toasts ensued, and conversation 'sometimes in gross bad taste by French standards'.[246] But it was not the custom in all houses in Ireland: a young woman writing in the 1770s describes how her husband 'not approving the custom of ladies retiring after dinner, has laid his injunctions on me, and we have none but mixed societies at this house'.[247] According to Edward Wakefield, writing in the first decades of the nineteenth century, excessive drinking 'is now entirely out of fashion', and men are free to leave the table when they wish, and retire to the drawing room.[248] In his *Memoirs* (published in 1820) Richard L Edgeworth states that

> The gentlemen and ladies are not separated from the time dinner ends, till the midnight hour, when the carriages came to the door to carry off the bodies of the dead; or, till just sense enough being left, to find their way straight to the tea-table, the gentlemen could only swallow a hasty cup of cold coffee or stewed tea, and be carried off by their sleepy wives, happy if the power of reproach were lost in fatigue.[249]

The custom of ladies quitting the dining room after dinner was unknown in Europe and appears to have come from England from where it was adopted in Ireland. As has been seen on examination of the plans, it is rare to find the dining room and the drawing room next to each other: one reason might be that an intervening space, be it hall or saloon, put them at a little distance 'from the noise and talk of the men when left to their bottle', as Lord Lyttelton delicately put it in 1752.[250] Lady Morgan provided her readers with an insight into how women felt about this habit in a conversation between two women:

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[244] Quoted in Parissien, *The Georgian house,* p 43.
[245] Clark (ed.), *Gleanings,* i, p 57.
[246] Quoted in G E Mingay, *English landed society in the eighteenth century* (London 1963), p 147.
[247] A lady, *The Irish guardian: a pathetic story in two volumes* (Dublin 1776), ii, p 220.
[248] Edward Wakefield, *An account of Ireland, statistical and political* (2 vols), (London 1812), ii, p 787.
[249] R. L and Maria Edgeworth, *Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth,* 2 vols, (London 1820; 1969 edn), ii, p 375.
[250] Quoted in Girouard, *Life,* p 204.

> Lady Elizabeth to Mrs O'Neal: You know, they say you would rather stay with the men after dinner; and vote women a bore.
>
> Mrs O'Neal: Don't believe more than half what is said of me, dearest Lady Elizabeth: so far from desiring to stay with the men, I think the foreign habit of men and women, rising from the table together, is *lèze coqueterie.* Besides, the half-hour's repose, for silence and digestion, is a great luxury. I hate talking between dinner and coffee… The men have the advantage of us, every way. Men have always the excitements of stirring subjects after dinner, - politics, - fun; - and then the exhilaration of wine and good fellowship: while we women rise from table upon clotted cream, iced; or on clammy compots…and then we come out to gossip with each other, about nothing at all, and when we are fit for nothing at all, but a lounge, a book, or a sleep.[251]

According to Mrs Delany, at Castletown when the ladies retired to the drawing room, Mrs Conolly would take a nap while the others chatted. At 5.30 precisely when tea and coffee were served, she awoke, after which she and her guests played cards until 10pm.[252] To amuse herself at Hillsborough, county Down after a wish that the ladies '*command the house*', Mrs Delany chose instead to investigate the garden: on her return, the candles were lit and 'tea-table and gentlemen come together'.[253] In 1805 Mrs Hamilton, whose daughter lived at Rossanagh, co Wicklow wrote a poem on a country dinner party in which she describes the departure from the dining room:

> A wink makes the table with laughter resound
> While the Hock and the Claret go briskly around
> So Madam conceives it high time to retire
> And the ladies encircle the Drawingroom fire
> The dress of her neighbour each handles and praises
> Examines her trinkets, gown, ribbons and laces
> Then [buidling ?] her chest looks exaltingly down
> Most perfectly now in conceit of her own
> At length all the toils of the tea-table over
> In silence each Miss sits expecting a lover
> Till weary with anxiously watching the door
> She frowns at her fidgeting Mother no more
> Who quite out of patience no longer delays
> To send for her husband and order her Chaise…[254]

Richard L. Edgeworth applauds the passing of such interminable dinners 'where the gentlemen could talk only of claret, horses or dogs' and the women 'only of dress or scandal'. Nor is he sorry about the passing of the 'stupid circle'[255] where

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[251] Lady Morgan, *Dramatic Scenes from Real Life* (1833, London 1979 ed.) vol. ii, pp 58-60.
[252] Day, (ed.), *Letters,* p 53.
[253] Day (ed.), *Letters,* p 146.
[254] 'Copy of a poem on a country dinner party. Written by Mrs Hamilton at Rossana, 1805. From Mrs Hamilton's Ms'. My thanks to the Knight of Glin for a photocopy of this document.
[255] The tyranny of incessant card-playing after dinner was challenged somewhat by the introduction of the 'circle' for conversation among (mostly) women. Mrs Vesey, the wife of the builder of Lucan

chairs were arranged in that configuration to encourage conversation: 'the chairs, which formerly could only take that form, at which the firmest nerves must ever tremble, are allowed to stand, or turn in any way which may suit the…pleasure of conversation.'[256] His daughter, Maria, referred to the circle in *Ormond* (1817), when Sir Ulick O'Shane walked into his drawing room, 'accompanied by what he called his rear-guard, veterans of the old school of good fellows, who at those times in Ireland, times long since past, deemed it essential to health, happiness, and manly character, to swallow, and show themselves able to stand after swallowing, a certain number of bottles of claret per day or night':

> 'What! no music, no dancing at Castle Hermitage tonight; and all the ladies sitting in a formal circle, petrifying into perfect statues', cried Sir Ulick O'Shane, 'of all the figures in nature or art, the formal circle is universally the most obnoxious to conversation, and, to me, the most formidable…Lady O'Shane, let us have no more of these permanent sittings at Castle Hermitage…'.[257]

Lady Kilmaine's invitation in 1789 to a rout at Gaulston, county Westmeath was in the form of a poem to her friends. It is notable that the evening is planned around the full moon, which was general practice in the country, to facilitate a safe journey home:

> and requests they will come
> to grace her first drum[258]
> on next Tuesday night
> as the moon will be bright…[259]

As was usual practice at such an event, a room would be set aside for the playing of cards, an almost essential ingredient in an evening's entertainment. The duchess of Northumberland was a prolific card-player. She and her husband landed in Dublin on the 22nd September 1763 and four days later she lost forty-eight guineas playing loo at the Clements' house in Phoenix Park. Her diary records card games four times and more per week.[260] According to Lord Chief Baron Willes 'there is scarce a gent or lady who has not one or more cards for a rout every night in the week' in Dublin.[261] Records of Dublin ladies' modest losses and gains at cards were

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House, was the first to hold such a 'conversation' as early as the 1750s in an effort to unite the literary and social worlds. She, together with a number of her friends became known as 'bluestockings'. However, she did not agree with the placing of chairs in a circle, a fashion that came later: instead she arranged her chairs and sofas in small clusters in her London home, with the idea that people could move from one to another.

[256] Edgeworth, *Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth,* ii, p 375-76.

[257] Edgeworth, *Ormond* (London 1817, 1972 edn), p 1.

[258] A drum is an evening party, and 'her first drum' refers to the recent ennobling of her husband.

[259] 'Alicia, Lady Kilmaine's Book of Verses etc. etc. in her own handwriting, Dedicated to her oldest Son', copy of MS given to me by the Knight of Glin, to whom I am grateful.

[260] Alnwick Archives 121/11 [number unclear], Reference SEP.OCT 1763, Diary of the duchess of Northumberland, 20 October 1763. My thanks to Edward McParland for a photocopy.

[261] PRONI, volume entitled 'Miscellaneous observations on Ireland, 1759-60' by Lord Chief Baron Willes.

entered in diaries in the mid-eighteenth century as they pursued the rounds of fashionable assemblies.[262] According to Frances Power Cobbe, 'card-playing was carried on incessantly' at Newbridge:

> Tradition says that the tables were laid for it on rainy days at 10 o'clock in the morning in Newbridge drawing-room; and on every day in the interminable evenings which followed the then fashionable four o'clock dinner. My grandmother was so excellent a whist-player that to extreme old age in Bath she habitually made a small, but appreciable addition to her income out of her 'card purse', an ornamental appendage of the toilet then, and even in my time, in universal use.[263]

At Woodstock, county Kilkenny Lady Betty Fownes enjoyed playing cards so much that in summer she would have the card table set up under the oak tree in the garden, 'when dinner was to be, as it frequently was, on the grass', much to the chagrin of her husband who would beg her to allow them dine in the parlour 'for variety'.[264] In the early 1730s Mrs Conolly, widow of Speaker Conolly, had a thriving 'basset bank', playing cards at Castletown. Her sister, Mary Jones, feared for her moral well-being as 'her crowds of young Gaye compeney may dow her harm...Mr Burton [a member of parliament and a nephew by marriage] keeps a basset bank at her house, she goes a third with him, he has had it but one night and she and he lost 100 pound...I am sorry she duse it, its what the Duke [of Dorset, Lord Lieutenant] does not alow at the Castell...'.[265] They lost £131 on another night.[266] Jones worried that 'my sisters house is is [sic] grown a gaiming house for ther is sometimes 40 or 50 pound lost of a night, all to Devart [divert?] Lady Ann...' [her daughter-in-law, Lady Anne Conolly].[267] According to Mrs Delany, the usual routine at Mrs Conolly's house was that at half past five, when tea and coffee had been served, 'a party of whist was made for her till ten, then everybody retired', a pattern that does not quite fit in with Mrs Jones's account.[268] Cards continued to be played at Castletown after Mrs Conolly's death, as a letter from Lady Caroline Fox to her sister Emily makes clear when she asks her (enviously?) if it is true that 'you have four or five loo tables at an assembly? One is the most can be pick'd up here'.[269] But at Carton in 1778, as Lady Caroline Dawson explains in a letter to her sister, 'it is not the fashion...to play at cards',

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[262] H F Berry, 'Notes from the diary of a Dublin lady in the reigh of George II' in *JRSAI*, 1898, vol 28, 5th series, pp 141-54; Maria Luddy (ed.) *The diary of Mary Mathew* (Tipperary 1991), pp 47-48.
[263] *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, i, p 18.
[264] Mrs G.H. Bell (ed), *The Hamwood Papers of the Ladies of Llangollen and Caroline Hamilton* (London 1930), p 9.
[265] NLI, Smythe of Barbavilla Papers, MS 41,577/1-5, Mrs Jones to Mrs Bonnell, 16 October [1733?].
[266] Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p 75.
[267] NLI, Smythe of Barbavilla Papers, MS 41,577/1-5, Mrs Jones to Mrs Bonnell, Letter dated 11 May [1734?].
[268] Day (ed.), *Letters*, p 53.

but it was something that would be arranged, if a guest requested it.[270] Finally, Maria Edgeworth's eponymous hero, Ormond, prudently decided in advance to lose a sum of perhaps 500 guineas on gambling. Upon reaching that sum, he would stop short; 'By this means I have acquired all the advantages of yielding to the fashionable madness, without risking my future happiness'.[271] The numbers of card tables listed in inventories in drawing rooms and in parlours throughout the period under consideration show that many indeed 'yielded' to the fashion. Most houses had at least a pair, though at Mrs Clements' house at North Great George's Street (1805) there were seven divided between the Small Bow Drawing room and the Small Front Drawing room.

Playing cards was one thing: people arriving and expecting to be entertained if only to a 'dish' of tea or coffee was another. Many resented the dullness of entertaining in the country. The essayist Joseph Addison said: 'Giving and receiving visitors in the country from a circle of neighbours who…can be neither entertaining or serviceable to us, is a vile waste of time and a slavery from which a man should deliver himself if possible'.[272] Being entertained there was not all fun for a visitor in the 1820s, who considered country life 'too social' for his tastes: he was seldom alone in the library when he wanted to read. Writing letters in one's own room 'is not usual, and therefore surprises and annoys people'; so 'you sit at a great common writing table, and they [the letters] are then put in a box with holes and taken to post by a servant'.[273]

But there was always entertaining in one's town house to revive the spirits. By November the coaches were making their annual pilgrimage to town and the newly-arrived denizens of Dublin readied themselves for the numerous social events of the winter season. Every year, whether or not Parliament met,[274] the season meant a great round of dinners, parties, balls and suppers every night, not to mention theatre (including amateur theatricals which will be looked at later), and concerts. According to Arthur Young, some of these events held in private houses were very elegant, 'but you almost everywhere meet a company much too

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[269] FitzGerald (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily,* I, letter dated 1 March [1760], p 277.
[270] Clark (ed.), *Gleanings,* i, p 84.
[271] Maria Edgeworth, *Ormond,* (London 1817, 1972 edn), pp 352-53.
[272] R Bayne Powell, *Housekeeping in the eighteenth century* (London 1956), p 102.
[273] *Pückler's Progress: the adventures of Prince Pückler-Muskau in England, Wales and Ireland as told in letters to his former wife 1826-9,* trans. Flora Brennan (London 1987), p 183.
[274] Between 1715 and the 1780s, Parliament met in Dublin usually every second winter for five to eight months, with little difference shown in the number of events held every year regardless, according to Tighearnan Mooney and Fiona White, 'The gentry's winter season' in David Dickson (ed.), *Dublin: the gorgeous mask* (Dublin 1987), pp 1-16;

numerous for the size of the apartments'.[275] This was no exaggeration as a Frenchman, visiting Dublin in 1797, was of the same opinion that:

> where a house might comfortably entertain twenty persons, sixty are invited, and so in proportion. I have seen *routs* [large evening parties] where, from vestibule to garret, the rooms were filled with fine ladies beautifully dressed, but so crushed against each other that it was hardly possible to move...[276]

At a function in Leinster House in 1782, two women, 'not being able to get out sooner without danger of losing our lives...in the most uncomfortable crowd that ever was' found themselves sitting for one hour 'in a cold upper room not being able to live in the dreadful crowd below' before being able to leave at half past two.[277] Crowd control was in action in the gentlest way at a 'Grand Ballet' performed at Antrim House, Dublin in April, 1794 by, among other notable ladies, the countess of Antrim, Lady Leitrim, Lady Theodosia Meade and 'both the Hon. Misses Clements'. The whole company crowded into the ballroom to watch, leaving little space for the performers but, 'by the polite and persuasive interference of the noble marchioness, the room was tolerably well cleared, and the press of the company restrained by barriers of ribband, held by noblemen'. The company was later summoned to the 'supper-rooms'.[278] It was unfortunate for Lady Farnham that her ball was held in the same week as Lady Bective's, each in their Rutland Square houses, when details of both were trumpeted in *The Gentleman's and London Magazine* in 1789. Both had guests 'of the first distinction', but Lady Farnham's guests were 'not numerous' while Lady Bective hosted almost four hundred.[279] Almost twenty years before, in *c.* 1770, Lady Moira wrote to her brother that she had more than 480 guests (600 were invited) at a fancy dress party in her house on Ussher's Quay. The way she arranged her house to facilitate such a number is of interest, as it underlines the flexibility in room use. Rather like the painting of the ball at Dublin Castle in 1731,[280] she provided 'benches one above another in the great room which gave seats to 220 persons' making it more comfortable and easier to see what was going on. Her bedroom, the bed removed, was used for dancing, as were two rooms on the ground floor. Her dressing room and two other rooms were 'for the strollers and had chairs set round them', as had the long gallery 'upstairs' (presumably on the second floor), where tea was

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[275] Young, *A tour in Ireland*, I, p 5.
[276] Quote from Mooney and White, 'The gentry's winter season', pp 1-16.
[277] From the diary of Mrs Lucy Goddard, entry 14 April [1782], in Mrs G H Bell (ed.), *The Hamwood Papers of the Ladies of Llangollen and Caroline Hamilton* (London 1930), pp 51-2. It was said that the Leinsters had issued one thousand double tickets for a masquerade at Leinster House in 1785, according to Mooney and White.
[278] *Anthologia Hibernica,* vol iii, Jan-June 1794, p 315.
[279] *The Gentleman's and London Magazine 1789*, p 278.

available; and cards were played in her husband's dressing room and another bedroom.[281]

Popular in London society since the middle of the eighteenth century, the masquerade as an amusement spread to Dublin where 'the gay, versatile nature of the people lent itself more readily to [its] humours… than did the gravity of the English who were content with looking the character each had assumed without any sustained effort in supporting it.[282] An account of a masquerade in Dublin gives an insight into how it worked. Leading members of society kept open house from 7pm until midnight to receive the masked partygoers, after which they all made their way to the assembly rooms at Fishamble Street where some remained until 8.30am. The open houses were listed as 'Lord Roden's, Mr Rowley's, Mr Kilpatrick's, Mr La Touche's, Lady Arabella Denny's…At…several houses the masks were entertained with wine and cakes'. The costume worn by the duke of Leinster, that of a 'fruit-woman', was singled out as was 'Mr Gardiner' who dressed as an old woman for the early part of the evening, then changed into a 'black domino' for the supper.[283]

No expense was spared in the decoration of a house for occasions such as those mentioned, and Maria Edgeworth may not have been too far off the mark in *The Absentee* (1812) when Mr Soho, 'the first architectural upholsterer of the age' recommends to Lady Clonbrony some lavish decoration for a 'gala' she is hosting at her London house. One room, he suggests, could have 'Turkish tent drapery' with a canopy and 'seraglio ottomans'; the next 'Alhambra hangings' with 'trellice paper', while a third could be transformed into a Chinese pagoda or an Egyptian room complete with sphinxes. Cards could be played in one room, music in another, and the 'snuggery' as Lady Clonbrony called the pagoda room, contained 'prints and chessboards &c.'. Supper would be served in a room decorated to imitate Vauxhall [Gardens].[284] For their masked ball in Limerick, the staircase in Lord and Lady Glentworth's house was decorated with arches of flowers and lamps; transparencies of Hibernia and Britannia were hung in the windows. Chalk was used to decorate the floor with the 'Prince's plume' [Prince of Wales'?] to one end of the ballroom, the family's coat of arms to the centre and a harp hung with

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[280] Illustrated in McParland, *Public architecture,* p 100, Fig. 125.
[281] Aidan O'Boyle, 'The earls of Moira: their property and cultural interests' in *Artefact,* 1, Autumn 2007, pp 66-83; Historical Manuscripts Commission, Hastings Mss, 3, pp 150-52. Lady Moira's description of the eating arrangements is interesting.
[282] Frances Gerard, *Some celebrated Irish beauties of the last century* (London 1895), p 174.
[283] *The Hibernian Magazine* 1778, p 189.
[284] Maria Edgeworth, *The absentee* (OUP 1988 edn.), p 12ff.

shamrock and the rose and thistle at the other end. The drinks were served in a room decorated as a tent and the table decorations included 'several illuminated cottages, vases of marble, and gold pillars and trophies'.[285] But it is evident that at smaller houses the owners were quite inventive: Lady Leitrim in 1823 wrote to her husband that having gone to 'Lady Waterford's where there was good music, shabby looking people' she proceeded to Mrs Chambers's 'where there was an extremely small shabby House only of two rooms, with the addition of a very pretty temporary Room, ornamented with flowers…the Company was very good' but few could dance for lack of space and supper was served in a room below stairs.[286]

In her book Frances Gerard mentions an eighteenth-century etiquette book called 'Hints to introduce Decorum at City Feasts and Sunday [sundry?] Ordinaries in Dublin'. Among the 'hints' were the following (and it is not clear that they are being offered ironically):

> Not to heap more than 2 lbs of victuals on your plate at starting. Not to be too eager to have the first cut. Not to drag the leg of a fowl through your teeth in order to secure your property in it, and then lay it by to pick at your leisure. To remember that although fingers were made before forks, the latter were substituted for the sake of cleanliness. Not to throw the scraps off your plate into the dish.[287]

This would have applied more to the gentry than the nobility, who continued their frantic rounds of entertainment throughout the season. Lady Carlow declared the ball at Dublin Castle in April 1782 as 'very full' – she attended there twice a week, the opera once a week, and plays, assemblies and suppers filled up the time. It was so hectic that she sometimes forgot the name of her host: 'We were engaged to the opera and after to somebody's to supper and a ball this evening, which was put off, so we cut the opera and sent our maids to the play.'[288] How to spend time in a country house must have presented difficulties. Hunting, card-playing, reading were all easily accommodated in the typical building. One enormously popular pastime made unusual and sometimes extravagant architectural demands.

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[285] Benson Earle Hill, *Recollections of an artillery officer*, 2 vols (London 1836), vol. i, p 127.
[286] NLI, Killadoon Papers, Ms 36,033/2, letter dated 10 June 1823.
[287] Frances Gerard, *Some celebrated Irish beauties of the last century* (London 1895), p 18.
[288] Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*, i, p 188-89.

Amateur Theatricals

> It is impossible to peep into a social corner of Irish life without getting a glimpse of the amateur stage with lamps lit and noble ladies and noble gentlemen in rich dresses playing their parts.[289]

It was probably at Dublin Castle in the early eighteenth century that the enthusiasm for amateur theatrical presentations was first encountered in Ireland. As the century progressed the Castle became the scene of many a theatrical performance including, in 1709 at the instigation of Lord Wharton, the lord lieutenant, Joseph Addison's musical play *Rosamund.*[290] The earliest play in the Castle for which details of the cast and the setting exist was *The Distressed Mother,* acted by amateurs in January 1732-3 under the patronage of the lord lieutenant, the duke of Dorset, an active supporter of the theatre in Dublin.[291] The performance took place in the council chamber. Lord Mountjoy, who played the part of Pyrrhus, invited Mrs Delany to join his party of twelve, the number of tickets each performer had to dispose of. She wrote that 'all the Bishops, Judges and Privy Counsellors [were] to be there'. Lord Molesworth's daughter, Mary,[292] was playing the part of Hermione, while the Hon. Mr Barnewall played Orestes, and his brother Lord Kingsland, had an unspecified role.[293] Robert Hitchcock describes the scene: 'The room was fitted up in the most elegant stile. All the chambers and passages were illuminated with wax. There was a crowded audience of persons of the first rank in the kingdom'.[294] The appointment in 1741 of the painter James Worsdale, author of a ballad opera, *A Cure for a Scold* (1735),[295] as deputy to the master of the revels (Luke Gardiner, himself an amateur of ability) probably ensured a continuation of this trend.

Among the public theatres in Dublin, Smock Alley, the first purpose-built Restoration theatre, built in 1662 close to Dublin Castle, on whose patronage it would depend for some time,[296] was reopened in 1735 having been rebuilt. Together with the Theatre Royal at Aungier Street designed by Edward Lovett Pearce, which opened in 1733, and Fishamble Street Musick Hall, which opened in

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[289] Quoted in Frances Gerard, *Some celebrated Irish beauties of the last century* (London 1895) p xix.
[290] Quoted in Wm H Grattan Flood, *A History of Irish Music* (Dublin 1905) p 271.
[291] Day (ed), *Letters,* p 255; Robert Hitchcock, *An Historical View of the Irish Stage* (Dublin 1788), p 75; McParland, *Public Architecture,* p 101.
[292] Mary Molesworth later became the countess of Belvedere.
[293] Frances Gerard, *Some celebrated Irish beauties of the last century*(London 1895) p 5.
[294] Robert Hitchcock, *An Historical View of the Irish Stage* (Dublin 1788), p 75.
[295] Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, *Ireland's Painters 1600-1940* (New Haven and London 2002) pp 48-49; Wm H Grattan Flood, *A History of Irish Music* (Dublin 1905) pp 273-4.
[296] Christopher Morash, entry on Smock Alley Theatre in Brian Lalor (ed.) *The Encyclopaedia of Ireland* (Dublin 2003).

1741 and opened as a theatre in 1777, they were the most popular. Among the strong following for theatre in Dublin was Mary Mathew, a relative of the Brownlows of Lurgan, county Armagh. She recorded in her diary that between January and April 1761 she saw at least fourteen plays, generally taking a box in the theatre which cost 6*s.*6*d.*, and in May, like Lady Carlow (above), she gave money to her servants to attend the theatre.[297] Regular theatre-goers like the FitzGerald and Conolly families from Carton and Castletown frequently exchanged details of plays and actors with each other and with their relatives in London. Almost all of the London successes came to Dublin, although John Greene concludes that the Dublin managers did not slavishly follow that lead, and that while they 'shared London tastes…[they] were very selective…'.[298]

But in the last quarter of the eighteenth century the upper classes in Dublin began to desert the theatre, finding the prospect of putting on a play in the privacy of one's own home a more appealing prospect. One reason for this may have been a reaction to the rowdiness of the audiences, sections of which were not slow about voicing their opinions of the actors during the performances. Further, the lords lieutenant had largely ceased attending by this time.[299] Only in 1762 were spectators removed from the stage, where they had up to this point been allowed to stand, and it and the orchestra were railed off. According to Laetitia Pilkington 'the men in the pit had the habit of standing on their benches between the acts, apparently to peer into the boxes'.[300]

More enjoyment could be had in the preparation and production of a play during the long winter evenings in the country that would be played to a more appreciative audience - their families, friends, tenants and servants. In England there was a similar pattern, but the catalyst there, according to one newspaper in 1776, was the resignation from the theatre of the actor David Garrick, after which '…the rage for dramatic entertainments in private families has increased astonishingly; scarce a man of rank but either has or pretends to have his petit théâtre, in the decoration of which the utmost taste and expense are lavished.[301] The rage for theatricals in England coincided with that in Ireland but the period

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[297] Luddy (ed.), *The Diary of Mary Mathew,* p 48.
[298] John Greene, 'The Repertory of The Dublin Theatres, 1720-1745' in *Eighteenth-Century Ireland/Iris dá chultúr* 2 (1987) pp 133-148.
[299] Mooney and White, 'The Gentry's Winter Season' in David Dickson (ed), *Dublin: the Gorgeous Mask* (Dublin 1987) p 1-16.
[300] A C Elias Jr, (ed.), *Memoirs of Laetitia Pilkington* (Georgia, USA 1997) p 613.
[301] *London Post*, 5 November 1776. Quoted in Sybil Rosenfeld, *Temples of Thespis: some Private Theatres and Theatricals in England and Wales, 1700-1820* (London 1978) p 11.

leading up to the 1798 Rebellion and following the Union with Great Britain in 1800, was a rather fallow one for Ireland in this context. The fashion was revived somewhat from about 1805, but not with the same enthusiasm.

Private theatricals can be defined as performances of plays acted and produced by amateurs for their enjoyment and that of their friends. They took place in a house or a garden, in a specially built theatre adjacent to or adjoining the house, in a barn, or sometimes in a theatre, rented for the occasion, to which they would invite friends. Now and again the actors would perform in aid of a charity, when tickets were sold to the public in advance of the performance. They occurred on a fairly regular basis from the middle of the century, reaching their height of popularity in the 1770s and 1780s. But the fashionable elite's partial abandonment of the Dublin theatre was only a shift in the *locus operandi*. The print media were a valuable tool for the fashionable elite and more so for the politically active, and newspapers and periodicals of the time frequently reported on the private theatricals and the accompanying festivities at various houses. It may be deduced from the amount of reportage that the newspaper-reading public avidly followed details of the plays, the performers, the dresses, the houses, and the food. However, neither the FitzGeralds nor the Conollys desired or required publicity for their theatricals which were purely family affairs, with close friends, some details of which can be gleaned from correspondence between the families, as will be seen, and not from the print media.

The earliest reference to *private* theatricals in Ireland, i.e. those held on private estates or in private houses, is in the 1740s and the early 1750s at Quilca, county Cavan, where Richard Brinsley Sheridan's father Thomas, boarded over the top of a grassy mound in his garden[302] to provide a *mise-en-scene* for his productions with family and friends. Also out-of-doors where 'the stage was the green sward, the scenery the leafy woods', *The Masque of Comus* was performed at Rathfarnham Castle before the viceroy, Lord Townshend, (1767-72), and at Kilruddery, county Wicklow, where the surviving Sylvan Theatre with its high hedge and grassy banks was the scene of private theatricals from the latter part of the eighteenth century.[303]

There is little information about plays performed by amateurs before 1760. Unfortunately the location of a performance by Joseph Leeson, the builder of

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[302] Linda Kelly, *Richard Brinsley Sheridan: a life* (London 1997) p 3.
[303] Knight of Glin and John Cornforth, 'Killruddery, Co. Wicklow - I', *CL*, 14 July 1977, pp 78-81.

Russborough, is unspecified, but it can be assumed that it took place in a Dublin house: in 1752 Bishop Marlay wrote to Lord Charlemont that Leeson was to play the part of the unprincipled Lothario in Nicholas Rowe's play *The Fair Penitent* (1703) which was to be 'acted in town by some ladies and gentlemen…They say he will do it very ill'.[304] But what is fairly well documented is that at Lurgan,[305] the seat of William Brownlow MP, in 1759, *Midas* by the Irish playwright Kane O'Hara was performed. Members of the Brownlow family played the parts with the part of Pan reserved for the author, who was one of the houseguests.[306] According to Grattan Flood the performance took place in 'the private theatre attached to the [Brownlow] residence'.[307]

Castletown and Carton

Despite the fact that the FitzGeralds and the Conollys were popular with Dublin theatregoers and continued to attend a number of performances, from at least 1760 plays were being produced in their homes in which family, friends (among them many members of parliament) and even servants took part. Because the theatre was very much part of their lives - their copious correspondence is littered with references to it - it is worthwhile to look in some detail at their private theatricals. It is also noteworthy that Emily FitzGerald (countess of Kildare) and her sisters, Lady Louisa Conolly and Lady Caroline Fox did not hesitate to befriend members of the acting profession and invite them to their houses, something that Louisa was criticised for in 1778,[308] due to a puritan prejudice that prevailed against the theatre which was considered 'the favourite resort of the irreligious'.[309] As arguably the two 'first' families in the land it is not surprising that their theatricals began a trend that gathered momentum into the mid-1770s, by which time it had spread to other parts of Ireland.

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[304] Letter dated 16 April 1752, quoted in Sergio Benedetti, *The Milltowns: a family reunion* (Dublin NGI 1997) p 4, and footnote 24.

[305] The original house must have been called 'Lurgan'. Brownlow House was built from 1836. Bence-Jones, *A Guide to Irish Country Houses,* p 49.

[306] Kane O'Hara (1722-1782) also wrote *The Two Misers, Tom Thumb: a burletta,* and *Tom the Great,* a burlesque tragedy in two acts, the latter two adaptations. There is a portrait etching of him by Edmund Dorrell dated 1802 in the National Portrait Gallery in London. He was a friend of Garret Wesley, the future earl of Mornington, with whom he founded the Academy of Music in 1757, Wm H Grattan Flood, *A History of Irish Music* (Dublin 1905) p 296.

[307] Wm H Grattan Flood, *A History of Irish Music* (Dublin 1905) p 299.

[308] Finola O'Kane, *Landscape Design in early Eighteenth-century Ireland* (Cork 2004) p 147.

[309] Harold V Routh, 'The Theatre in the Eighteenth Century and its Audiences' in A W Ward and A R Waller (eds) *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature in 18 Volumes* (New York Putnam 1907-21) vol xi, chapter xii; http://www.bartleby.com/221/1202.html

At Carton in December 1760 *The Devil to pay* was performed, the cast consisting of houseguests 'none of us knowing any of our parts which we had been studying all morning'. Lady Louisa played the part of Lady Lovecrale [?],

> Mr Coote Sir John, Mr Conolly the Cobbler, Lord Kerry the Butler, my Sister and Fanny [Conolly, her sister-in-law] the two Maids, Lord Inchiquin the Footman, Lord Kildare the Coachman, Mr Leeson the Conjuror, Mr Moore the Cook…We all laughed immensely. We are to act it again next Thursday.[310]

The switching of social roles in performances such as this must have been half the 'fun' for all concerned.

Lord Powerscourt, another member of the party, is not mentioned as acting a part, but his duties may have been backstage. The following year the family put on *The Beggar's Opera.*[311] Lord Charlemont played Peachum; Tom Conolly, Filch; Louisa, Lucy; Lady Kildare, Mrs Peachum; Captain Morris, Macheath;[312] Miss Martin (described as a 'belle' of Dublin), Polly, and Miss Vesey, Jenny Diver. Viscount Powerscourt took the part of Mrs Slammeckin, and Dean Marlay, later bishop of Waterford, who played Lockit, wrote and spoke the prologue, the concluding lines of which are:

> But when this busy mimic scene is o'er,
> All shall resume the worth they had before;
> Lockit himself his knavery shall resign,
> And lose the gaoler in the dull divine.[313]

Thus the divine reassures his audience that the performance was but a sport and that normal life would resume at its end. A word should be said here about prologues and epilogues. These had the effect of giving a contemporary resonance to the occasion where criticism could be passed on current preoccupations. They gave prospective poets among the party an opportunity to display their skills, and were generally well received.[314]

The FitzGerald children put on plays on summer evenings for their own amusement at their county Dublin villa, Frescati in Blackrock,[315] as their Fox cousins did at Holland House in London. At Holland House, between January and

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[310] IAA, Bunbury Letters 94/136 Box 1. From Louisa Conolly at Carton to her sister Sarah, 30 December 1790.
[311] Frances Gerard, *Some celebrated Irish beauties of the last century* (London 1895) p 200-201.
[312] A Captain Morris also took part in the production of *Midas* at William Brownlow' house, Lurgan in 1759 or 1760.
[313] Thomas Moore, 'Essay on Private Theatricals' (1827), in R H Shepherd (ed.) *Prose and Verse by Thomas Moore* (London 1878) pp 145-176.
[314] James Kelly, *Henry Flood: Patriot and Politician in eighteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin 1998) p 176.
[315] FitzGerald, *Emily, duchess of Leinster* (London 1749), pp138-39.

April 1762 *Creusa, Tom Thumb* and *The Revenge* were acted.[316] However, they were more formal affairs than at Frescati. Caroline wrote Emily that her son Charles Fox acted 'most astonishingly well; there never was a play better acted', Offaly's [Lord George Offaly, Emily's son and heir to the marquis of Kildare] playing of the father was 'perfection; the audience were numerous, and the applause they met with very great'.[317] The marquis attended a performance in April in which two of his sons took part. He wrote to his wife that they 'did extremely well…George did much better than I expected; William did the Princess Hurchquamurka, and made a fine jolly, bold-looking girl…'.[318] Lord Kildare had some misgivings about the propriety of his children taking part in these events, and perhaps worried about 'the political judiciousness of Irish noble families indulging in such play-acting'.[319] In September 1771 Louisa wrote to her sister Sarah that 'The Duke of Leinster…does not approve of his Children's acting therefore only indulged my sister with these plays for her own amusement provided there was to be [no] company therefore the audience consisted only of the Servants, and ourselves'.[320]

As a ten-year-old in September 1771 Lord Henry FitzGerald (who was later recognised as a fine actor) had played Lucia in *Cato* at Carton, and William Ogilvie, the childrens' tutor and future husband of the duchess, played Portius. Not alone did the servants play the part of audience for these productions, but they too acted. The minor parts in *Cato* were 'done by the Servants among whom we have some good ones'. A month before, the footmen and postillions at Carton had acted *The Beaux Stratagem* and it appears to have been an annual event as 'they acted last year very tolerably and are improved this year'.[321]

Late evidence of theatricals among the FitzGeralds and Conollys was in 1775, when Louisa refers to plays put on in January by members of the large party she entertained at Castletown over Christmas, as 'the prettiest things I ever saw, and incomparably well acted'. Her guests included Luke Gardiner, his wife and family, Ned Malone[322] and Robert Jephson, 'Mr Jephson and Mrs Gardiner…are equal to

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316 One of the young actors mentioned by Horace Walpole in a letter to George Montague was sixteen-year-old William Flower, viscount Ashbrook, Castle Durrow, co Laois. Sybil Rosenfeld, p 122.
317 FitzGerald (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily,* I, letter from Lady Caroline Fox to marchioness of Kildare, [April 1762], p 323.
318 FitzGerald (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily,* I, letter from marquis of Kildare to his wife, 22 April 1762, p 120.
319 Finola O'Kane, *Landscape design in eighteenth-century Ireland* (Cork 2004) pp 146-7
320 IAA, Bunbury Letters, Louisa to Sarah, 24 September 1771.
321 IAA, Bunbury Letters, Louisa to Sarah, 24 September and 19 August, 1771.
322 Presumably Edmund Malone, the Shakespearian scholar, friend of Robert Jephson.

any actors (Garrick excepted) I ever saw'.[323] Praise indeed for the actors, and not surprising that the Gardiners, with their friends, took part in dramatic productions in their 'Great Room' at Mountjoy House in the Phoenix Park where, in January 1778 a double bill of *Macbeth* and *The Citizen* was performed in the presence of the vice-regal couple. No less than four different dresses were worn by Mrs Gardiner as Lady Macbeth, lovingly described as 'dreams of beauty', and worn with diamonds 'to the amount of £100,000'.[324] Praise for her performance was lavish in *The Hibernian Magazine,* as was the location:

> the beauty of the theatre, its superb decorations, and the inimitable taste displayed therein by the elegant master of the whole, rendered the entertainment one continued scene of delight.[325]

Kilkenny

In the early 1770s in Kilkenny, a group of gentlemen, Sir Hercules Langrishe MP of Knocktopher, Gervais Parker Bushe of Kilfane, Francis Flood of Flood Hall and Henry Flood MP of Farmley, got together to put on plays in their houses. They were joined in this endeavour by Bushe's brother-in-law Henry Grattan, who took a seat in Parliament in 1775. Henry Flood's biographer states that the plays performed 'ranged from quality Shakespearean drama, through Goldsmith and Gay to ephemeral pieces of little substance'.[326] Close friends and voracious readers, they were an erudite group, with a shared interest in politics as well as literature. In an interesting connection between parliamentary oratory and amateur acting, it appears that Henry Flood studied public speaking partly by scrutinising 'the expressions and delivery of the best actors' and like Grattan, he memorised all his speeches to the House of Commons in advance.[327] As a result he gained a reputation as an exceptional orator and debater at Westminster. As an amateur actor, his ability not only to act a range of parts, but also to extemporise, ensured his place in dramatic circles.[328] The group resembled a company of strolling players going from house to house to perform. Though it seems they performed a substantial number and range of plays, the only ones documented are Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* and *Macbeth* in 1774.[329] Unfortunately no indication is given as to what space in any house was used for these events.

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[323] FitzGerald (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily,* III, letter from Lady Louisa Conolly to duchess of Leinster, 8 January 1775, p 112.
[324] Gerard, *Some celebrated Irish beauties*, p 177.
[325] *The Hibernian Magazine*, January 1778, p 62.
[326] James Kelly, *Henry Flood: Patriot and Politician in eighteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin 1998) p 176.
[327] Kelly, *Henry Flood,* p 438.
[328] Kelly, *Henry Flood,* p 176.

Nothing more was heard of Henry Flood in connection with theatricals but Grattan took part in *The Masque of Comus* at Marlay, the home of David La Touche at Rathfarnham, Dublin in 1776. Marlay had its own theatre 'The Mignonette Theatre, Fairyland', where it would appear that two performances of *Comus* were held, one with adults, the other with the many La Touche children. On 30 September, at least eleven members of the family (including Mrs La Touche, the only adult) are listed as comprising the cast.[330] In the adult version Grattan, Burgh and Bushe performed 'along with 17 of the La Touche family'. Grattan wrote the epilogue, which was spoken by young Elizabeth La Touche.[331]

Shane's Castle

Rivalling the Gardiner theatre in the Phoenix Park for grandeur was that built by John O'Neill MP,[332] at Edenduffcarrick, known as Shane's Castle, county Antrim in 1779. The original seventeenth-century castle grew during the following century into a large castellated house, three storeys over basement, with projecting end bays and curved bows.[333] O'Neill and his wife, the former Henrietta Frances Boyle (daughter of Lord Orrery), added a conservatory or orangery to one side of the ancestral seat, described by Beaufort who saw it in 1787 as 'a fine apartment along the lough [Neagh]... at the end is an alcove where they frequently have their meals...'. On the other side of the house, he says, 'there is a very pretty and large theatre and magnificent ballroom 60 x 30, all of wood and canvas painted, and so sent ready made from London'.[334] C T Bowden described it as 'in a style of great elegance, which may be converted instantaneously into a ball-room or supper-room'. He says of the O'Neills that they were 'amateurs of all the fine arts, and give every encouragement to the professors of poetry, painting, music, sculpture &c'.[335] They loved the theatre and had regularly invited players to act at their house, which encouraged them to build their own theatre and to act themselves. Mrs O'Neill was a patron and friend of the actress Mrs Siddons who performed and was a guest at Shane's Castle in 1784.[336] In January 1780 they opened their theatre with a double bill of *Much Ado about Nothing* and *All the World's a Stage*; Mr O'Neill read the prologue written by his wife, while she not only played the female lead in the

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329 [R Power], *The private theatre of Kilkenny, with introductory observations on other private theatres in Ireland, before it was opened* (privately published 1825) pp 3-4.
330 [R Power] *The private theatre of Kilkenny,* p 4.
331 Henry Grattan, *Memoirs of the Rt Hon Henry Grattan by his son* (London 1839) p 135.
332 Created 1st Viscount O'Neill in October 1795. MP for Randalstown 1761-83 and for county Antrim 1783-93. Died June 1798 of wounds from insurgent pikemen.
333 Bence-Jones, *A Guide to Irish country houses*, p 257.
334 TCD MS 4028, D A Beaufort, Journal of a Tour through part of Ireland begun August 26th 1787, f. 44.
335 Charles Topham Bowden, *A Tour through Ireland* (Dublin 1791) pp 233-235.
336 Bence-Jones, *A Guide to Irish country houses*; Bowden, *A Tour through Ireland,* p 235.

Shakesperean play, but composed and recited the epilogue. After the plays, a magnificent supper was provided for all.[337]

In 1785 the O'Neills held what Clark calls 'a theatrical fete', an evening programme of plays, a ball and supper. Invitations were sent out 'to the elite of Belfast and vicinity' to attend on Monday, 28 November. A neighbour, Dr Haliday, reported that on the day before, the guests were 'pouring in from all parts…to be at hand, and my own house is filling fast with Sabbath-breakers - for the hairdressers are at work'.[338] The plays, Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and the farce *The Upholsterer,* concluded before midnight when the theatre became a ballroom and there was dancing until 6 am. A 'sumptuous' breakfast followed in the conservatory amid 'a profusion of flowering shrubbery', with a rose bush filled with lights as a centrepiece.[339] Mrs O'Neill acted in both plays and while the press was as usual effusive in their praise, one member of the audience, Dr William Drennan, was unimpressed: 'It is really singular that she should like playing when she is so totally devoid of all theatrical power…Her manners are those of a finished Courtesan'.[340] One of the actors in *Cymbeline* was Lord Edward FitzGerald, the United Irishman and son of the first duke of Leinster; the others included Isaac Corry, who had played in *Macbeth* at Luke Gardiner's theatre in 1778, Charles Powell Leslie, Cromwell Price and his wife, and Mrs St Leger. These seemed to have been the core members of what became known as the Shane's Castle Association[341] and, as in Kilkenny, they brought their productions to other houses.

The Shane's Castle theatricals give the impression of being almost semi-professional productions. The driving force behind them seems to have been Mrs O'Neill who was not shy about acting or performing, and who seemed to go to immense trouble regarding costumes, quite apart from the large-scale entertaining that she did at the same time. The difficulty of getting the company together for rehearsals and discussions in Antrim should not be underestimated, nor the effort of taking a production to Dublin. However as many of the actors were playing at Ely House at about the same time, enjoyment must have prevailed over the effort.

Ely House and Aldborough House

The countess of Ely's 'Attic Theatre' at Ely House, Dublin was located in 'the upper part of the house', which, according to the *Freeman's Journal* description,

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337 William Smith Clark, *The Irish Stage in the CountyTowns 1720 to 1800* (Oxford 1965) p 240.
338 Quoted in William Smith Clarke, *The Irish Stage…* p 258
339 William Smith Clark, *The Irish Stage…* p 258.
340 Quoted in William Smith Clark, *The Irish Stage…* p 258.

> forms a suit[e] of apartments of distinct dressing rooms for the ladies and gentlemen, with a very neat green room immediately connected with the theatre, which has the advantage of an excellent stage and very ample space for the performers behind the wings, these are painted in a neat and expressive stile that combines utility and simple elegance. The company are seated on benches covered with Aurora-coloured silk which when the room is [lit] up with a brilliant display of patent lamps, has a most enchanting effect.[342]

In this 'large square room', apparently in the top storey, there was seating for sixty persons.[343] The tragedy of *The Distressed Mother* and the farce *All the World's a Stage* were performed there by Charles Powell Leslie (whose performance in the former was pronounced 'a most exquisite piece of acting' by the *Journal*), Cromwell Price and his wife, and Mrs St Leger, who were joined by, among others, Leslie Westenra, Mrs Munroe and Robert Langrishe. A few nights later *Lear* was performed, presumably by the same group, and Langrishe read the epilogue. The following year, 1787, there were performances of the tragedies *Lear* and *Douglas*, and in May 1789 the double-bill of *Every man in his humour*[344] and *Lethe* was presented, and a few nights later, *King John*. The lord lieutenant, the Marquess of Buckingham, attended on both nights. [345]

Also attending the double-bill at Ely House in1789 was the 2nd earl of Aldborough, whose diary entries add small details that are of interest. The performances began at 8.30 and ended four hours later: after a 'handsome supper in the long room' his party departed at 2am. The 'long' room is on the first floor to the front of the house and was extended, apparently in the 1780s, across the archway leading to the stables.[346] The earl also attended *King John* some nights later, 'which was excellently well done, and magnificently drest', when supper was served in the parlour: some nights later he returned for the last play in Lady Ely's 'season' and supper was held in the 'great room'.[347]

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[341] [Richard Power], *The private theatre of Kilkenny*… p 7.
[342] *Freeman's Journal,* 20-22 April 1786.
[343] *The Georgian Society Records of Eighteenth-Century Domestic Architecture and Decoration in Dublin,* 5 vols (Dublin 1909-13) I, p 120.
[344] A prologue to a performance of this play, dated 7 May, 1789 is in Yale University Library Folio Pamphlets, 4, p 13, T H Vail Motter, 'Garrick and the Private Theatres…', in *English Literary History,* vol 11, No. 1 (Mar. 1944), pp 63-75.
[345] [Richard Power] *The private theatre of Kilkenny*… p 6.
[346] There is some debate about whether the Attic Theatre was located in this 'long room' where the end of the room with the screen of columns would have been an ideal stage setting for plays, but the account in the *Freeman's Journal,* where a 'suite of apartments' is mentioned, including dressing rooms for ladies and gents, and a green room, points to the theatre being located in the upper storey, i.e. closer to the attic.
[347] Ethel M Richardson, *Long forgotten days (leading to Waterloo)* (London 1928), pp 285-87.

The previous year (1788) Lord Aldorough had ordered entertainment that included theatrical performances at Belan, county Kildare to celebrate his homecoming with his new wife and with members of her family, as has been seen in Chapter 1. He built his own theatre at Aldborough House, Dublin (begun 1793): an architectural sketch for it drawn by him is of interest not least because it is the only drawing for a domestic theatre in Ireland (**Fig. 4.17**).[348] While a simple sketch, it gives a great deal of detail showing five boxes, a refreshment room, the pit, orchestra, proscenium and backstage area, a green room, and two dressing rooms with water closets.[349] As built, the theatre was a scaled-down version of this drawing. It was contained in one of the two pavilions (the other contained the chapel) linked to the house by curved quadrants in the Palladian style. Approached by steps, the entrance to the pavilion was located in the centre of the three-bay elevation facing into the courtyard. On the street sides the pavilions had blind arches and Coade stone panels, and were surmounted by lions and sphinxes in the same material. A diary entry for the 6th July 1798 records the 'cornice to theatre columns done'. Apparently only one large reception was held in the house as it was finished only in 1799, and Aldborough died in January 1801 at Belan.[350] The theatre still stands, though devoid of its interior decoration.

Theatricals in other houses

As well as those mentioned above, plays were performed in houses large and small around the country. In all cases they were for entertainment, but they did vary in degree of sophistication. Dorothea Herbert describes the 'fun and merry house' at Castle Blunden in Kilkenny in the 1780s where the young people put on 'small plays' in the evenings.[351] She, with her family and friends also used 'Mrs Jephson's large parlour' as a makeshift theatre for a play, *The Padlock*: 'we made a real farce of it - we had only some old Bed Curtains for scenery and everything else suitable to them'. Their audience consisted of a 'friend Mr Billy Galwey and Mr Roukee our drawing Master'.[352] Herbert gives an entertaining description of a production in her

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[348] While not a domestic theatre in one sense, there are fascinating drawings executed by the architect James Lewis (*c.*1751-1820) in 1788 for a theatre (unexecuted) in Limerick City next to the Assembly Rooms on ground donated by John Prendergast Smyth MP for the city (1785-97) and later 1st Viscount Gort. Rather lavish living accommodation was provided within the building for Smyth that included private access to his own box, and, while the public gained access to the theatre either from the rear of the building or through the Assembly Rooms, his entrance was from the front. James Lewis, *Original Designs in Architecture consisting of plays, elevations and sections for villas, mansions, town-houses etc. and a new design for a theatre* 2 vols (London 1780 and 1797) i, plates xxi-xxiv.

[349] Aidan O'Boyle, 'Aldborough House: a construction history', *LADS*, vol iv, 2001, pp 102-141, Fig. 10. References to the building of this theatre are taken from this article.

[350] Ethel M Richardson, *Long forgotten days (leading to Waterloo)* (London 1928), p 321.

[351] *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert 1770-1806* (Dublin 1988 edn) p 70.

[352] La Tourette Stockwell, *Dublin Theatres and theatre customs 1737-1820* Tennessee 1938) p 353, footnote 21.

parent's home at Carrick-on-Suir where the 'theatre' was in the garret: her job was to paint the scenes:

> all the money we could rap or run was expended in Canvas, Whiting, Gambouge, Stone Blue and Oil for the Painter - and many a time the poor Boys denied themselves a halfpennyworth of...Gingerbread to devote their little pocket Money to the Theatre - We got a friend to dig up a skull in the Church Yard...My Father's old black Cassocks served for hangings...We had the whole stage decorated with Pictures, flower pots Ribbons Shells Moss and Lobster Claws...we Limitted our Audience to the Carshores, Jephsons, Mr Rankin and...others...Our Prompter not yet out of his spelling Book miscalled his Words or lost his place - The gallant gay Lothario grew sulky and refused to act his Part when the brave Horatio tilted him too roughly - The venerable Sciolto burst out laughing just in the act of introducing the lost Calista to the dead Body of her Lover - Calista and Lavinia fought desperately behind the scenes about change of Dresses - and finally the Candle snuffers set the Stage on fire.[353]

A less primitive production was called for to celebrate the completion of work by the architect James Wyatt at Westport House, county Mayo in 1783, when Lord Altamont invited Richard and Elizabeth Martin of Dangan, county Galway to take part in a round of festivities, and put on a play.[354] A large room was converted into a theatre with 'a raised stage, gallery, scenery and magnificent chandeliers' where *Douglas* was played with the Martins taking part. Richard Martin, MP and High Sheriff of Galway opened his own theatre, Kirwan's Lane Theatre, later that year in August, with *Douglas* and *All the world's a stage.* Theobald Wolfe Tone, who shared the Martins' passion for amateur dramatics, and who was at the time tutor to Martin's younger brothers, made his public debut as an actor in this double-bill. It is not clear whether he also took part in the play at Westport House.

At Roebuck Castle, county Dublin in 1795 Lord Trimleston put on a play in French. It appears that it took place in a room in the castle, where 'a neat and commodious theatre was fitted up...for the reception of about a hundred friends'.[355] In November 1798 at Edgeworthstown, Maria Edgeworth wrote to her cousin that she and her father were writing a comedy, called *Whim for Whim*, and that her father 'is making a charming theatre in the room over his study - it will be twice as large as old Poz's little theatre in the dining room'. The play was acted

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[353] Dorothea Herbert, *Recollections*...p 170-1; quoted in Gillian Russell, *The Theatres of War: Performance, Politics and Society 1793-1815* (Oxford 1995) p 128.
[354] Shevawn Lynam, *Humanity Dick: a biography of Richard Martin, MP 1754-1834* (London 1975) pp 47, 49-50. My thanks to Aidan O'Boyle for this reference.
[355] *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 14 July 1795. My thanks to Charles Benson for this reference.

twice in January 1799 to 'great applause'. Her stepmother painted the scenery and her father's mechanism for it was 'most ingenious'.[356]

By far the most popular location for the presentation of a play was in a room converted temporarily to that purpose, a 'fit-up'. Richard Edgeworth was asked by Sir Richard Delaval to fit up a theatre in his house at Westminster, London, where the duke of York acted in amateur theatricals.[357] The actor and portrait painter John Dowling Herbert (1762/3-1837) describes his encounter with Colonel Mansergh St George, who invited Herbert to spend a few months with him in the country,[358] 'where I am fitting up a private theatre', to paint scenery. In his dual capacity of actor/painter he was also invited by William Smyth MP to his home, Drumcree House, county Westmeath where he, too had fitted up a private theatre, 'and would feel obliged if I would lend my aid to forward a play then in progress, the parts not quite filled, that if I brought my palette and colours he could promise me some portraits, so that I should not be entirely idle'. He found there the theatre 'fitted up with taste; the scenery painted by Miss Smyth, who had been taught to draw by West'.[359]

There was advice on how to transform a hall or saloon into a theatre: 'flanked with interior columns and surrounded by galleries [they] would with the aid of proper draperies or scenery in the inter-columniations take a rich and elegant appearance, and at the same time the music might be so disposed in the gallery, as to produce a most animating effect'.[360] For the not-quite-so-rich, there was advice on how to transform a drawing room or library to the same purpose.[361] It seems likely that Lady Borrowes' Kildare Street theatre was a converted space, as was the suite of rooms at Ely House. The 'Mignonette Theatre' at Marlay, because it was mostly for the amusement of the numerous La Touche children, might have been a converted outbuilding.

In August 1787, the *Dublin Evening Post* reported that 'a very beautiful theatre is now erecting' at Dromana, the earl of Grandison's seat in county Waterford, and noted that the 'rage for private dramatic exhibitions appears to spread to the

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[356] A J C Hare (ed), *Life and Letters of Maria Edgeworth* 2 vols (London 1894)vol i, p 62.
[357] Sybil Rosenfeld, *Temples…* p 100.
[358] Possibly at Altamont, county Carlow.
[359] John Dowling Herbert, *Irish Varieties for the last fifty years* (London 1836) pp 27, 126. West was probably Francis Robert West (*c.*1749-1809) who, in 1777, succeeded his father Robert West as Master of the Figure School of the Dublin Society. Crookshank and Glin, p 90.
[360] Richard Cumberland, quoted by Sybil Rosenfeld, *Temples of Thespis* (London 1978) p 14.
[361] [an Old Stager] *Private Theatricals being practical guide for the home stage* (London 1882); Henry J Dakin, *The Stage in the Drawing Room: amateur acting for amateur actors* (London n.d.)

furthest parts of the Kingdom'.[362] The following December Prince William Henry (later duke of Clarence) paid a visit to the theatre where the band greeted the prince with 'God Save the King' and, at the conclusion of the plays (*Venice Preserved* and *Rosina*), accompanied by the audience 'in full chorus', they played 'Rule Britannia'.[363] A ball and supper followed. Lord Grandison, presumably out of deference to the prince, to whom he was host, did not take part himself, but appeared three days later in another double-bill, *The Provoked Husband* and *The Beggar's Opera.* Most of the same people appeared in the two evenings' productions. Among them were the earl of Glandore, Sir John Carden and Sir Richard Musgrave with members of their families,[364] Edmund H Pery of Limerick, Mr G. Ogle[365] and Mr Westenra[366] of Monaghan.

Another reference to a built theatre is at Stillorgan House, county Dublin (begun 1695) where one of the pavilions was reputed either to be a 'miniature theatre' or to have one within it.[367] A ground-floor plan of the pavilions give no such indication (one was a stable), but it may have been located on the first floor, a dormered attic.[368] Undoubtedly there must have been a degree of competitiveness among these builders of theatres: in Lady Morgan's *O'Donnel*, Lady Lorton is planning theatricals, but 'she had, however a theatre to build, and Lady Llanberis was determined to outdo her and has almost finished her own…'.[369] . For Lord Mountjoy in Tyrone it was not just about the building: it was about lavish display, theatricals forming part of a series of entertainments laid on for his friends just once a year.

The townland of Rash,[370] was part of the Mountjoy Estate in county Tyrone, owned by Lord Mountjoy, Charles John Gardiner, (created 1st earl of Blessington in 1816), son of Luke Gardiner. In the early nineteenth century his annual income was said to be £30,000.[371] Mountjoy spent a great deal of money there *c.* 1807

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362 *Dublin Evening Post*, 21 August 1787. Unfortunately no description of this building, which was apparently separate to the house, has been found.
363 [Richard Power], *The private theatre of Kilkenny…* p 7.
364 The Cardens perhaps of Barnane, Templemore, Co Tipperary: the Musgrave seat, Tourin, was a little upstream from Dromana, on the opposite bank of the Blackwater in Cappoquin.
365 The Ogle family home was Dysart, Delvin, co Westmeath, built 1757 to design of George Pentland. Bence-Jones.
366 The same Mr [Leslie] Westenra who acted in the Attic Theatre, Ely House in April 1786?
367 Francis Elrington Ball, 'Stillorgan Park and its History', *JRSAI*, 28, 1898, pp 21-34.
368 From the Elton Hall Drawings Collection, Stillorgan Album, 'Plan of the Principal Floor of Still-Organ House, with the North front, as at present', facsimile in the Irish Architectural Archive.
369 Lady Morgan (Sydney Owenson), *O'Donnel* 3 vols (New York and London, 1979 ed) iii, p 38.
370 Information on Rash and the theatricals held there is taken from R R Madden, *The Literary Life and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington,* 3 vols (London 1855), vol i.
371 John Coleman, 'Luke Gardiner (1745-98) an Irish Dillettante' in *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* 1999, pp 161-168.

when he extended his kitchen and wine cellars and erected a 'spacious and elegantly decorated theatre' for which he provided props 'and a suitable wardrobe of magnificent theatrical dresses for it', described by his tenants in 1855 as 'a terrible waste of money'. The productions were sometimes professional with actors and actresses brought from Dublin and London, but frequently they were amateur, or rather the gentlemen were, while the ladies were always professional actresses. These women were apparently lodged at the house of the schoolmistress, close to the avenue leading to the house.

The entertainment was held usually during the shooting season, and lasted for three or four weeks, during which time no expense was spared with field sports, parties and theatricals. No details of the plays acted or the players have come to hand except that Lord Mountjoy enjoyed taking part, and another who might have done so was his friend and neighbour in county Tyrone, the marquess of Abercorn, who had acted in at least one play at his seat, Baronscourt, in 1793.[372] From their correspondence it is evident that they shared this interest.[373] Occasionally the gentlemen brought their wives to Rash, and for his guests, Mountjoy fitted up and furnished temporary accommodation. For the rest of the year, Rash was, as Madden describes it, 'a dull, solitary lifeless locality, in the midst of a forest and some fourscore miles from the metropolis'. The joys and excitement of the season at Rash soon bored Mountjoy and he returned to live in England, though keeping his house at 10 Henrietta Street until 1829.[374]

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has taken a look at the formal rooms of the house, both separately and together as 'rooms of parade', and an attempt has been made to examine the *modus vivendi* they supported. In so doing the issue of circulation through reception rooms for visitors has been examined, as have furniture, furnishings and the uses to which the rooms were put.

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[372] Sybil Rosenfeld, *Temples of Thespis* (London 1978) p 154.
[373] PRONI, Abercorn Papers D/623/A/167/9. Letters from Lord Mountjoy to Lord Abercorn, July and August 1811. Lord Abercorn held theatricals at his seat in Middlesex, Bentley Priory, where he built a theatre in 1805, though he did not act in them. Rosenfeld, p 159.
[374] Coleman, 'Luke Gardiner…' pp 161-68.

The first of the rooms to be discussed was the saloon and, as with the other rooms, its location in the house and its relationship with other spaces were examined. It appeared in just over a quarter of the house plans, in contrast with the drawing room that appears in all of them, so it could be concluded that it was not considered an essential room in the Irish house. Perhaps, like the portico, it was considered too expensive for most pockets and could be a waste of a useful space. The saloon was located mostly on axis with the hall to the rear of the house, flanked by reception rooms. Compared to England it was a late arrival in Ireland (the 1730s), a time when it was going out of fashion there. While it is described by writers of architecture as a particularly architectonic space, often relating to the hall and staircase, it was in practice, as has been seen, referred to frequently as a ballroom or a drawing room, or even a great room.[375] With its appearance in only a few inventories, it is difficult to find a reason for this. Was it because it often contained comfortable furniture, better suited to a drawing room? Its original function was to be a formal waiting and reception room, more luxurious than a hall but just as lacking in comfort. But perhaps many saloons were furnished as drawing rooms. The inventories for the Provost's House describe it variously as a saloon, a ballroom and a drawing room, and the furniture there would be described as comfortable. So would the furniture in the ballroom at Antrim House (also called a drawing room) and that listed in an invoice for the ballroom at Brook Lodge. Whatever about the type of furniture that was to be found in saloons, an examination of their decoration confirms that this was indeed an architecturally articulated space. But, ultimately, a precise definition of the saloon and its use may be illusory.

As a room name, the drawing room (at least one) was found in each house under consideration though, as has been seen, it was frequently called a parlour in town houses. Throughout the eighteenth century the drawing room was generally located to the rear of the country house. From 1800 onwards just over half of the plans show it to the rear, a few less to the front, but it should be noted that extensions to existing houses in order to facilitate entertaining were sometimes built at angles to it, and that the view to the garden and/or surrounding countryside (which was important and much commented upon), would have been a decisive factor in its location. Variations of room shape came into fashion in the second half of the century for the drawing room, but settled back to a rectangle, occasionally with apsed ends and bay windows, in houses built or altered from

[375] A late use of it is to be found at Ballyfin, where its role is that of an ante-room.

1800. With regard to size, as has been seen with dining rooms in Chapter 4, after 1800 the drawing room is larger, often of similar dimensions to the dining room. Colour and fabrics played a large part in this room, which was usually the most expensively furnished room in the house, as Lady Sarah Bunbury noted. Wallcoverings of both wallpaper and fabric have been looked at. The earl of Fingall had green wallpaper in his 'Green room' and in his 'Tea room' as early as 1735.[376] Damask was the most desired and the most popular fabric not only for walls but for curtains and furnishings for much of the period under discussion, particularly in red. That it was a desirable commodity from the early part of the century is underlined by a robbery that occurred in Dublin in 1736 in which 'three new pairs of crimson silk damask window curtains…lined with crimson serge' were stolen from William Handcock's house in King Street.[377] Possibly coinciding with the less formal plan around mid-eighteenth-century, fabrics and colours became lighter, larger panes of glass provided more light from the less formal and more 'picturesque' garden, which reflected better on walls covered with paper rather than with fabrics. Red damask did not go out of fashion entirely: at Killadoon, the 'clouded green silk' of 1807, gave way sometime after 1836 when the room was transformed with crimson velvet furnishings and red and gold damask curtains and drapes. So much for the advice sent to Lord Lorton from London upholsterers, albeit in 1815, recommending 'tea colour' damask as the most elegant and genteel, with blue, but perhaps at Killadoon as Viscount Clements (after the death of his elder brother in 1839) he felt a rich red to be more apposite for his position as heir.

For a room that is synonymous with tea-drinking, there is a surprising dearth of tea equipage among the inventories for the drawing room. Similarly it was found that musical instruments were in surprisingly short supply there too, with pianos appearing in only five. But it must be concluded that smaller musical instruments, and items for the serving of tea would be brought into the room as required. Card tables were ubiquitous in most houses where cards would appear to have been played almost every night. Tea and coffee rooms have been examined, and the tea room at Killeen Castle must have been considered quite *avant garde* in a private house before 1735.

The ante-room was found to be a convenient multi-purpose space, always serving another room. Most are found at ground level and quite surprisingly, at Straffan

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[376] NLI Fingall Papers, MS 1678 'The Inventory of Goods belonging to the Earl of Fingall Bt in Ireland for the Use of Killeen Castle, March 23rd 1735/6'.
[377] *Pue's Occurrences*, November 20-23, 1736.

House and Lough Glynn, are on axis to the entrance, taking the place often given to the saloon: at Carton and Kildare House the ante-room doors are on axis with the entrance doorway, though the rooms are off-centre. In its capacity as part of the rooms of parade, the ante-room 'announced' the importance of the room to which it was attached or it effected the transition between two important spaces; and was sometimes a decorative space, as at Rockingham. Next to the hall, it was a waiting room; beside the dining room it could be a servery, and next to the library it could be a reading room. But they also appear on the first floor next to bedrooms where they most likely became sitting rooms: another, less likely, role there could be a waiting room for personal servants.

The dressing room is a room that has two roles: here it has been examined in its public guise. Smaller than the drawing room or dining room and larger than an ante-room, both it and the boudoir were generally associated with women but while many men had dressing rooms (as will be seen in the next chapter), there is no evidence uncovered yet in Ireland to confirm a male boudoir. As a comfortable and luxurious sitting room, it could be attached to the formal, public rooms of the house, displaying rich furniture and furnishings, paintings, *objets d'art* and curiosities. There are not many examples of the formal dressing room either in plans or inventories. All of those mentioned have bedrooms within the suite, with the exception of Ardbraccan where it relates to the library. The rich furnishings in the suites at Howth Castle and Dromana were noted, as was the location and furnishings of a dressing room at the Doneraile's Dublin town house. The prevalence and the use of china in dressing rooms and boudoirs (and incidentally in other parts of the house), was examined, large collections of which were found in a number of houses. The boudoir was almost like a later edition of the dressing room, fulfilling a similar purpose in the formal suite. Few are to be found among the plans and inventories of this survey but, interestingly, a large proportion of these are located in towers, as at Killeen and Portumna Castles, Charleville Forest and Brook Lodge, where their privacy is accentuated by their having only one entrance door. More so than the dressing room it is perceived as a woman's space, and boudoirs that are attached to bedrooms on the first floor were decorated in such a way that there is no doubt that they were meant to be seen, if only by women. In 1851 an English architect, Gervase Wheeler, described the boudoir as 'a little gem of a room – if octagonal or oval…so much the better – for the lady of

the house; and whether boudoir, book-room, or work-room, as its fair presiding deity may determine, let it have the sunniest aspect…'.[378]

The following section looked at how the formal rooms were used by visitors, using a variety of sources to demonstrate the social life of the house. It was seen that the drawing room was used for what seemed to have been for some people a rather painful half-hour before dinner was announced. By all accounts the dinners were extravagantly large with lots of servants in attendance and plenty to drink. It was a serious business, with hostesses drawing diagrams of the food placed on the table and the names of the guests, and we saw how one guest drew the table shape as well as noting the names of the other guests in his diary. Lady Kilmaine even went to the trouble of composing an invitation in verse. After dinner the men remained in the dining room while the ladies departed to tea and coffee, not a habit that was universally approved of by both sexes. That generally took place in the drawing room or, sometimes in the dressing room. People living in more remote areas of the country sometimes longed for a visitor to relieve their tedium, but their visits to Dublin for the season compensated somewhat.

There was much to amuse in Dublin where it was not unusual to fit in three parties per night, as people stuffed themselves into already overcrowded houses. Hostesses in the capital vied with each other for the most extravagant entertainments and decoration, sometimes in emulation of the festivities at Dublin Castle, and there was always the professional and the amateur theatrical productions, as has been seen, to attend. As in Britain, the spectacle of theatre had its beginnings at the royal court, and amateur theatricals, as part of the social life of the 'big house' was dealt with in some detail. It was found that at the Irish viceregal court there was a number of courtiers who were greatly interested in the theatre, two of whom were playwrights. Viceroys such as Lord Wharton, the duke of Dorset and Lord Townshend were also enthusiasts, who encouraged and patronised the theatre in Dublin, and whose presence at the patent theatres was of much benefit to their survival.

Private theatricals were held not alone in houses but in gardens, and in a few private theatres. The 'golden age' of amateur theatricals in Ireland coincided with that in England and Wales and there must have been an amount of advice and information moving both ways across the Irish Sea. In this respect the Conollys

[378] Quoted in Thornton, *Authentic Décor…*, p 219.

and the FitzGeralds led the way, and many of their friends, as we have seen, were participants in their productions and in others'. Not many built theatres, but rather 'fitted-up' a suitable room, and the countess of Ely seems to have given over a floor in her house to that purpose. The craze for theatricals spread all over the country, emanating from Dublin Castle and the viceregal court. Many of the productions were highly sophisticated, such as those at Phoenix Park, at Shane's Castle and at Rash, but for all of these there were probably a great number of less urbane presentations.

For those involved, like Maria Edgeworth and Dorothea Herbert, it was fun. Putting on plays occupied the participants for weeks, ideal for all those long winter's days and evenings in the country. The inclusion of servants in some of the performances underlines the social cohesion that existed between them and the family they served. Theatricals were social events, usually accompanied by a supper and/or a ball creating an evening that lasted up to twelve hours long, and made the sometimes long and hazardous journey to attend them worth the effort. In bringing people together they had the effect of stimulating artistic endeavours and cultivating the various arts of the theatre. A great deal of work went into the venture - arranging a venue, choosing a play and players, painting scenery, organising props and rehearsals, all so well described in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*. For some the costumes were of the greatest importance. While Edgeworth and Herbert had some fun putting theirs together from bits and pieces in the house, others viewed costumes as serious business and an opportunity for display. In that area the public theatres simply had not the resources to compete with the amateurs. Aristocratic actors vied with each other in the sumptuousness of their dress and jewels, and in the number of times a player could change outfits, as Mrs Gardiner managed so well at Mountjoy House. All of these details were carefully reported in the drooling descriptions of the contemporary print media and, indeed, the costumes played a major part of any (of the elite's) theatrical presentations and were an attraction in themselves.

But just how good were these performances? It is very difficult to get an even-handed view of them. With a few exceptions one can assume, not unexpectedly, that they were not good. Lord Henry FitzGerald was generally accepted as a fine actor and, if we accept the word of the experienced theatre-goer Louisa Conolly, Robert Jephson and Mrs Elizabeth Gardiner were creditable performers, leaving aside the ravings of the press. It would be fair to say that the main faults would have been 'inaudibility, rapidity of speech, self-consciousness and

awkwardness'.[379]As a spectacle it must have been worth seeing as no expense was spared regarding the accoutrements; they had the advantage of a respectful audience and, unlike the actors in public theatres, did not have to almost shout to make themselves heard above a din. Joseph Farington's comment on Lady Caher's performance at Lord Abercorn's in 1806, where she played opposite the portrait painter, Thomas (later Sir Thomas) Lawrence, might sum up the attitude of these elite amateurs: she was '...very imperfect in her part, which was a disadvantage to Lawrence, who assisted her as well as he could. - Her Ladyship, however, did not seem embarrassed by her difficulties, but went on with perfect self possession'.[380] Perhaps she too was looking forward to the prospect of further entertainment when the play was over.

Finally, taking these formal rooms together in terms of plan and circulation, it is evident that the 'formal plan' took a long time to disappear, i.e. the presence of a bedroom in the suite. But by mid-century when bedrooms had moved upstairs and any remaining on the ground floor were part of the owner's quarters, the 'informal' plan had been developed that created more of a circuit about the house than the enfilade through the rooms. This facilitated the various types of entertainment that were common at the time – balls, ridottos, masquerades, drums, and, later, amateur theatricals – and meant that if a guest wanted to dance, to play cards or simply to engage in conversation, there were spaces for such activities, adjusted to the requirements of the evening. Rooms that were close together, within easy access were conducive to this type of socialising. When food was served it was not necessarily to be found in the dining room, which might have become the ballroom for the evening. The saloon or drawing room might be given over to the performance of theatricals, and cards might be played in the dressing room. The hall too was often incorporated for these occasions as we know from Mrs Delany. Reception rooms, particularly dining and drawing rooms, increased in size, either extended or new additions built. But in the event of a shortage of space it was possible to erect a temporary room in which to entertain, as Lady Leitrim reported. Temporary accommodation was a clever idea, as was the inventiveness to be found in decorations for celebrations not only at Dublin Castle where they might be expected, but also at houses around the country, as has been demonstrated. It seems that the house therefore, responded well to the requirements of the occasion.

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[379] Rosenfeld, p 168.
[380] Kenneth Garlick (ed), *The Diary of Joseph Farington,* 16 vols, (New Haven 1979), vol vii, 3 May 1806, p 2745.

This flexibility of room usage is a recurring feature of the chapter, as for example at Moira House where both private and public rooms were requisitioned to facilitate a party, and the temporary 'supper rooms' at Antrim House. Rooms were interchangeable, becoming whatever was required for a particular event. There was always a dining room in a house, be it parlour or eating room, and the same was the case with a drawing room. Furniture and furnishings in both of these rooms were carefully chosen, with the most expensive items in the drawing room. Rich fabrics were enjoyed and used by both aristocracy and gentry. House owners were adaptable to changes in fashion for the most part but do not appear to have been slaves to it. Some differences in room names were discerned between the country and the town house. The 'parlour' often covered both dining and drawing rooms in the town house but with the use of inventories, it was possible in many cases to separate their functions. One question it raises might be, did different generations of the family change its name to suit their own use? Another is about inventories: did the person making it check the room names with the family, or use their own terminology?

Using a number of sources it has been seen that there is a (sometimes haphazard) pattern as to how these rooms were used for formal or less formal occasions, when numbers of guests were being entertained. This type of hospitality suited houses in Ireland which were, for the most part, smaller and more compact than those in England, many of them more like villas than great houses. There are exceptions, of course, such as Castletown, Carton and Castle Coole. But, as will be seen in the next chapter, the informality of life at Castletown, where everybody used the gallery as a living room, was something that was encouraged by Lady Louisa Conolly, and she was not alone in that. House parties, known in the late medieval period when separate but matching tower houses accommodated family and guests,[381] became very popular in the later eighteenth century, when people came to stay for numbers of days or weeks, particularly when roads and carriages had improved, thus making it easier to visit. But house parties and overnight guests also meant in increase in the numbers of servants to be catered for, something that will be looked at in the next chapter. Overcrowding was not a problem for

[381] Charles McKean, 'The evolving country seat in Scotland'; paper read at 'The Greater House in the Middle Ages', a study weekend, 4-6 January 2008, University of Oxford Department for Continuing Education.

everybody: one hostess in county Cork told one of her guests that 'Sammy [her husband] is very accommodating, he sleeps with the butler'.[382]

[382] Peter Somerville-Large, *The Irish country house a social history* (London 1995), p 244.

CHAPTER 5

SERVANTS, FAMILY AND THE ISSUE OF PRIVACY

So far this study has looked at the Georgian house in Ireland from the point of view of the visitor. This chapter will look at it as a place in which to live and how its inhabitants, the family and their servants, used it. Divided into three sections, the chapter will open with a look at the accommodation provided on plans for domestic servants. In the case of sleeping accommodation, information gleaned from inventories might show some differences between plan and practice. It will be found that, as well as the ubiquitous servants' halls, servants' accommodation comprised in some cases, sitting rooms, dressing rooms, powdering rooms, and even their own library. It will also examine a number of perquisites that were available to servants.

In Section II the private accommodation of the family will be considered, that is, the rooms used by them on a day-to-day basis. Perhaps surprisingly, the library will be included here. As well as its role as a 'public room' when required, it was not long before it became a room where the family congregated: an early 'living room',[1] a space that was generally large enough to allow individual occupations to be carried on by them (and friends). The other important rooms to be discussed here are bedrooms, children's rooms, dressing rooms, closets and boudoirs, as well as WCs and bathrooms. Rooms specifically for men - dressing rooms, studies, and 'own rooms' - will be examined, as will the intimate and private spaces enjoyed by women, and comparisons will be drawn between the contents of both.

Section III will examine just how private was the life of the family; how difficult was it to ensure privacy, and whether servants were omnipresent. While backstairs and corridors in the mid-seventeenth century helped to improve circulation within the house, Mark Girouard's argument that it answered a desire for privacy that was perceived at that period may not be true for Ireland either at that time or, indeed, until much later. It is hoped to tease out the question of how well defined was the dividing line between the family and their domestic servants in this country, and if there was a point at which there was a discernible change in attitudes to servants.

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[1] In Humphrey Repton's *Fragments*, published in 1816, the author explains that the 'modern custom is to use the library as the general living room'. Quoted in Jackson-Stops, *The English country house*, p 204.

Section I: Servants' sleeping accommodation

The Irish nobility and gentry were well known for the numbers of servants they kept. They 'are in the lower sort', said Arthur Young in 1772, 'owing not only to the general laziness but also to the number of attendants everyone of a higher class will have'.[2] The numbers pandered to the employers' desire for status. 'We keep many of them in our houses, as we do our plate on our sideboards', wrote Samuel Madden in 1738, 'more for show than use, and rather to let people see that we have them than that we have any occasion for them'.[3] Lady Caroline Dawson remarked in 1778 on the 'servants without end' at Carton,[4] and at a dinner in Kilkenny Castle about a decade later James Dowling Herbert noted 'a servant nearly behind every man'.[5] Taking advantage of the 'open door' hospitality visitors were frequently coming and going. Invited guests arrived with their servants, like Mrs Delany and her husband the Dean of Down. When travelling between their Dublin home and the dean's residence in Down, they were accompanied by their cook and two maids in a separate coach, and a baggage car. Including three men to drive the carriages, their entourage totalled eight people plus horses, all requiring food, and a night's accommodation.[6]

The question of accommodation, not alone for the servants of the house but also for visiting servants, is an interesting one. For servants generally, 'a berth within a comfortable house was to be preferred before many more precarious situations', as Toby Barnard puts it, quoting Madden who criticises the many who 'squeeze into houses for an easy and indolent life where they may feed and lie well'.[7] But Barnard's 'berth' and Madden's 'squeeze' appear to be apt descriptions of the sleeping accommodation for servants in many houses. On paper, as in architectural drawings, it looks neat and ordered. But whether or not it reflects the numbers of staff in the house is not easy to ascertain. The constant comings and goings of servants makes it difficult to calculate how many were living in a house at any particular time. It is important to remember too, that some servants would have lived locally and, during the 'season' in Dublin, would have been hired as required. Furthermore, the total numbers of servants mentioned per house do not differentiate between domestic and outdoor staff,[8] the latter, usually in the majority, being accommodated elsewhere. Annotated plans of houses show where they slept, but do not tell us whether they slept

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[2] Arthur Young, *A Tour in Ireland,* I, p 108.
[3] S. Madden, *Reflections and Resolutions Proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland* (Dublin 1738), quoted in Maxwell, *Dublin under the Georges,* p 104.
[4] Clark (ed.), *Gleanings,* i, p 81.
[5] J.D. Herbert, *Irish Varieties for the last fifty years* (London 1836), p 159. No date is given, but it must be between 1786 and 1795.
[6] Day (ed.), *Letters,* letter dated 20 May 1745, p 203.
[7] Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland,* p 302.

two or three to a bed, if any slept on the floor, or if indeed they actually slept in a bedroom. Nor is it possible in most cases to work out where visiting servants slept. Isaac Ware in 1756 advised that if garrets proved too small, 'a bed for one man, or two maid-servants is contrived to let down in the kitchen'.[9] Accommodation for servants was fairly rough, and some may have slept on straw, or upon rugs on the floor, particularly in town houses.[10]

Lady Sarah Bunbury gave some thought to the matter when she advised her sister, the duchess of Leinster, on the layout of the servants' quarters at Frescati, Blackrock, county Dublin in 1775. However, the thought seems to have been directed more towards filling any gaps in the house with servants' quarters, rather than to a consideration of their comfort. She recommended that the servants' hall be located under the dining room where the smell of food and the 'riot that goes on at supper wouldn't disturb you there, as it would under your sitting room'. Two rooms could be made into one for 'the men lie there' and another room, which would seem to be a small space, could be used as a 'lock-up' plate room for the butler, 'or that space can be given to the footmen for another bedchamber'. She also suggests that the maids could be 'sent' to 'that long strip up at the top of the house over your bed', presumably an awkward space in the garret.[11]

An inventory taken at Stackallen, county Meath in 1757 indicates a similar pattern of accommodation as an afterthought for some servants. One of the maids shared her bedroom with the household brushes: 'Mary's apartment near the back door' had no bed frame but a 'feather bed boulster, a pair of blanketts' and a rug, as well as a broken deal press and '2 racks for cloaths', with other broken bits of furniture, in addition to the various brushes.

Pole Cosby, on the other hand, provided new rooms for maidservants and six rooms for manservants at Stradbally, county Leix, after his father's death when his mother and sister came to live with him in 1729. Together with the furniture from her house, his mother brought a coach and six horses, coachman, postillion, footman and one maid, while his sister brought her maid and a manservant. Cosby was obliged to

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[8] Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland,* p 295.
[9] Ware, pp 346-7.
[10] J.P. Mahaffy, 'The furnishing of Georgian houses in Dublin in the earlier part of the century', *The Georgian Society Records,* vol. IV, (Dublin University Press 1912), p 10.
[11] Fitzgerald (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily,* II, letter from Lady Sarah Bunbury to duchess of Leinster from Castletown dated 10 September 1775, p 150.

provide more accommodation, building not just for the servants but for his extended family.[12]

Field beds with foldable frames are frequently mentioned in inventories.[13] Numerous references in an early inventory of Dyrham Park, Gloucestershire (1710) to pallet beds in workrooms and in employers' bedrooms confirm that personal servants slept all over the place, in order to be on call quickly if they were needed,[14] and personal maids sometimes slept in the same bed with their mistress, particularly when travelling.[15] Accommodation for servants was relatively straightforward in plans: bedrooms were to be found in the basement, in the attic storey, garrets, in service blocks separate from the house, or in the pavilions of Palladian-style houses. Sleeping accommodation for those servants connected with the stables – coachmen, grooms, postillions and stable hands – is provided in the stable block or in its proximity. In the Carton inventory (1818) some servants slept next to their place of work, for example there is a bedroom next to the dairy, another next to the 'smoothing room' in the laundry; 'oak beds' in the 'Mangle Room' and a bedroom adjoining it. Other accommodation, such as servants' halls and sitting rooms are generally located in the basement of the house or in the pavilions. A rather more realistic picture emerges when one looks at the inventories.

It is clear that many servants did not have bedrooms at all but slept in kitchens and elsewhere on palliasses (mattresses filled with straw[16]) thrown on the floor. In 1656 a settle bed is listed in the hall of the 16th earl of Kildare's Dublin house, something that was not unusual throughout the eighteenth century in town houses where 'servants…were stowed away anywhere, footmen constantly sleeping on trestle-beds in the front hall'.[17] A bed appeared in each of the 'Boarded' and 'Stone' halls at Powerscourt, county Wicklow (1728), in the 'little room under oak stairs in the hall' at Mary Street (1731), in the hall at Antrim House, Dublin

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12 'Autobiography of Pole Cosby of Stradbally', v, pp 165-184.
13 These could be used by people when travelling, or as extra bedding for servants or visitors.
14 C. Hardyment, *Behind the scenes: domestic arrangements in historic houses* (London 1997), p 43.
15 E. Dillon, *Wild Geese* (New York 1980), p 49.
16 In 1813 Lord Lorton's agent wrote to him about Mr Murphy, the upholsterer, who had informed him that 'good oat straw will make better palliasses for the servants where there is no feather bed than wheat and I think so too as it will be much softer…'. NLI, Rockingham Papers MS 8810 Part 7(1), 28 November, 1813. According to R Bayne Powell in *Housekeeping in the eighteenth century* (London 1956), they could be filled with 'bog-moss, willow catkins, cottongrass and flock and chopped straw'. Palliasses were often put under feather mattresses to preserve them. P 42.
17 Mahaffy, p 28.

(1801),[18] while at Cloncarneel,[19] county Meath a plan of the old house reveals a tiny bedroom in the hall. Other spaces for beds included 'over the Crowhouse' at Burton Hall, county Cork in 1686; two in the 'Malt House' at Drumcondrah, county Dublin in 1689, one in the Boot Room at Kilrush (c. 1750), a palliass in the Mangle Room at Woodville (c. 1797) where there were also '2 stump beds' in the 'Dark room' (i.e. no window). At Mount Stewart (1821), apart from bedding to be found in the dairy, four 'Cabin bedrooms' are mentioned in the 'old house' but their use for servants is not specified, so it may imply small bedrooms.

Often mentioned in architectural plans, diaries and novels are barrack rooms,[20] a name that is probably a throwback to fortified dwellings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when soldiers doubled as servants.[21] They were remarked upon by Prince Pückler Muskau in the 1820s on his visit to England where he wrote 'To save space, visitors usually get only one large bedroom on the second floor, and the English rarely enter this apartment for any purpose other than to sleep and to perform their twice daily toilette'.[22] This dormitory-type accommodation applies usually to surplus single male guests, but not exclusively, as is clear from Richard Johnston's plans for Castle Coole, county Fermanagh (1789, **Fig. 5.1**), where it applies equally to young lady guests. But the term is used also for male servants. Instead of a number of rooms each accommodating two or three servants, it made more sense and was less expensive to provide a barrack room.[23] In the basement at Castle Coole two rooms of similar size to those in the attic are called 'servants bed room',[24] though why he did not call the latter barrack rooms is unclear. At Townley Hall (1794)[25] and at Farnham (1802) there were two in the attic storeys but it is unclear whether they were for servants. Similarly at Markree Castle, county Sligo (1803) a large bow-windowed room that is located in the attic storey among 'Bed Chambers' and 'Servants Bed Rooms' is annotated 'Nursery or Barrack Room' and 'Library', for the owner to make up his mind, and that on the bedchamber floor at Ballycurry, county Wicklow (1808) is most likely for

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[18] Together with a chest containing old livery clothes.
[19] Formerly known as Clown, it was remodelled in 1801 by Francis Johnston. Bence-Jones, *A Guide to Irish country houses,* p 88.
[20] None appear in the plans or inventories under discussion before 1780.
[21] Lady Morgan in her *Memoirs* wrote of the earl of Rosse's description of one in a house in a remote part of Ireland: 'At festive seasons, when the country houses were thronged beyond even their expansive power of accommodation, the 'Barrack-room', the room appropriated to all latecomers, had a hearth in the centre, and an opening in the roof for the emission of smoke, when they all lay down on the floor, with their feet to the fire, in a ring, and their heads on the portmanteaus'. William Hepworth Dixon (ed.), *Lady Morgan's Memoirs* (London, revised edn 1863), footnote on p 169.
[22] *Pückler's Progress: the adventures of Prince Pückler-Muskau in England, Wales and Ireland as told in letters to his former wife 1826-9,* trans. by Flora Brennan (London 1987), p 85.
[23] J.H. Gebbie (ed.), *An introduction to the Abercorn Letters (as relating to Ireland 1736-1816)* (Omagh 1972) 5 November 1808, p 388.
[24] James Wyatt's basement plan (1790) shows one similarly sized 'servants bed room'.
[25] IAA, Mitchell/Crichton drawing collection, M21.

guests. So too is the bed, ordered for Brook Lodge, county Galway from Henry Eggleso, Abbey Street Dublin in 1808, listed for the 'Barrack Room Below stairs': a 'Waggon Roof bedstead' and the 'making up 2 suits bed curtains' in calico trimmed with lace.

Dorothea Herbert relates an amusing incident at Castle Blunden, county Kilkenny in 1780 where she and her sisters were lodged in

> a small Closet in the upper Story – with a Window looking out on a Dark Lobby which parted it from the large Barrack Room where all the Gentlemen dress'd and lay…One Day in a Hurry we found ourselves without Pomatum and had a great battle for the Scrapings of the Pomatum Pot and the use of the Powder Puff – When we were startled by a loud Tittering at the Lobby Window – We found to our great Confusion that we forgot to draw the Window Curtain and the Whole Set of Gentlemen were stationed giggling at the Casement where they had heard our fracas and seen our Tears besides catching us En Chemise – With the assistance of Mammy Shortal [the family dry nurse] we routed them back to their Barrack but no sooner was this Victory gained than another Disaster completely undid us – We in our Confusion overturned the Pot-de-Chambre and the two Doors being opposite the Whole Contents meander'd across the Lobby into their Barrack – Immediately the House rang with their laughter and left us au Desespoir.[26]

The inventory for Killeen Castle (1790) lists two beds, four chair, two tables, a wash stand and a mirror in the 'Nursery or Barrack Room' (possibly a room for children of varying ages). A 'Gents Barrack Room' (in which there is a tent bedstead with bedclothes), together with a 'Strangers Servants Room' (where there is a 'cubbard' bed), both notable by containing just one bed in each, is located in 'Stables to West'. Here too is a barrack room for the 'coachman' containing two beds and bedclothes. More like one's expectation of a barrack room is that for servants at Prospect (Ardgillan), county Dublin (1795) where there were five deal bedsteads. At Doneraile Court, county Cork (*c.* 1830) is a 'Soldiers room' with two bedsteads and hangings and two tables: this might have a specific meaning or it may be similar to the barrack room. In the Carton inventory (1818) is a heading 'Barrack' under which are listed 'Coachmans room no. 1-4'; 'Sportsmans Room', and 'Post Boys Room'. To service these rooms is a list of equipment for the 'Barrack room maid'. It should be noted that accommodation in an attic storey was by no means reserved for servants – many houses had guest bedrooms at this level.[27] On his visit to Castle Coole, the French

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[26] *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert 1770-1806* (London 1929, Dublin 2004 edn), p 68.

[27] Christine Casey mentions some decorated attic rooms in Dublin. At 22 Merrion Street is a three-bay rear room with a coved Early Rococo ceiling with birds, strapwork motifs and acanthus scrolls in its central panel; and at 11 Parnell Square, already mentioned in Chapter 4, the bow-windowed rear

tourist De la Tocnaye described the attic rooms 'intended for visitors' as 'like cellars'.[28] The attic, in the eighteenth century, did not have the pejorative meaning that it has today, and should be distinguished from the garret, usually for the use of servants.[29]

Care was taken to keep the maidservants sleeping quarters separate from those of the men, as at Headfort (both *c.* 1750, by Castle) where the women were accommodated on the opposite side of the house from menservants. Often the housekeeper's bedroom served as a barrier between maids' and menservants' quarters as at Lissadell (1833). It is difficult to know how many servants slept per room in practice. A first-floor plan for the kitchen block at Kildare House (1745, **Fig. 5.2**) shows four beds in a room for maids: two were larger than the others, indicating double beds, so at least six maids could sleep there. Similarly, listed in the inventory of the Provost's House at Trinity College (1852) are two 'painted wood press bedsteads with double pallyasses on each' in the maidservants' room in the basement. While most servants seem to have slept in rooms – single, shared or barracks, depending on their status – the evidence in inventories shows that press beds and portable beds were by no means unusual. No bed is indicated in the kitchen at Kildare House but it was common practice, borne out by the inventories in this study, that kitchen maids or boys slept there where, on the one hand, it would be warm, but on the other they were prey to unwanted advances from other staff or from employers.[30] For servants with bedrooms the furniture was scant, particularly in the first half of the eighteenth century when there was rarely more than a bed, bedclothes and sometimes a chair and/or a deal table. It is important to bear in mind that during that same period their masters and mistresses may not have been accommodated in conditions that were much better,[31] but this continued to be the case for servants in the majority of houses throughout the period of this study.

The servants' hall was another room in which servants slept and where the inventories list settle beds,[32] press beds,[33] two beds at Barbavilla (1742/3), two settle beds at 45 Kildare Street (1762) with '2 Racks for liveries', and at Cavendish Row (1763) are two painted deal beds with bedding, a rack for hanging clothes and a chest 'for Servants cloaths'. Other beds in the servants' hall are found at Killeen Castle (1790) '2 mattress

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room is also bowed on its inner wall making an elongated oval with similar plasterwork on its ceiling. Casey, *Dublin*, pp 591, 225.

[28] De Latocnaye, (trans. J Stevenson), *A Frenchman's walk through Ireland 1796/7* (Dublin 1984 edn), p 187.

[29] Fowler and Cornforth, *English decoration in the eighteenth century* (London 1974), p 76.

[30] Patricia McCarthy, 'Vails and travails: how Lord Kildare kept his house in order' in *LADS*, vol vi, 2003, pp 120-39.

[31] Letter to author from Toby Barnard dated 13 April 2003.

[32] Also listed in the servants' halls at Mary Street (1731); Killeen Castle (1735/6); Woodville (c 1797), and Ashfield Lodge (1808).

[33] At Neptune (county Dublin?) and Antrim House (1801)

etc and a cubbard bed'; there was a 'tallboy bed' in North Great George's Street (1805), one in Strokestown (1806), a settle bed and a press bed at Clogrenane (c 1810), and a field bedstead with curtains and a press bed in 34 Merrion Square (1811).

Servant hierarchy

In a plan for servants' quarters by James Playfair for Townley Hall, county Louth (1792), four blocks of offices and accommodation range around a court. On the second floor he organised his accommodation for servants. One range of rooms is for women servants, another is for upper servants, a third for footmen and the fourth for 'strangers' servants'. Accommodation for the steward, butler, housekeeper, and for 'strangers' upper servants' was located in the four projecting corners of the square.[34] Within the footmen's range is a 'hospital' or sickroom. Some of this brings up the hierarchy of servants that existed: in a plan by the Balfours for the same house there are separate halls for upper and lower servants, and at Rockingham, Nash provided the upper servants with a 'dinner table' in a small area separated from the bigger servants' hall by a screen of columns in the upper basement (**Fig. 5.3**). Not only that, but there is an 'Upper Mens Privy' and a 'Maids Privy' there too. At Castle Bernard, county Offaly (1833, **Fig. 5.4**), G R Pain's plan shows a 'Servts Dining Room' in the basement where there was also an 'Upper Servts Sitting Room'.[35] The butler here had his quarters located in the basement of the round tower, divided into his 'room' or pantry, a bedroom and a closet.[36] In Wyatt's plan for Castle Coole, and in one for Ballyfin, the butler's bedroom is located between the pantry and the strong room. Butlers' pantries frequently had beds in them for the use, not of the butler, but of a footman as security. Housekeepers generally had, as well as a bedroom, a sitting room and a closet in which china was kept. Those holding positions in the upper echelons of the servant hierarchy - steward, butler, housekeeper, cook – generally occupied single rooms that were sometimes quite well furnished. Valets and ladies' maids slept either in designated servants' bedrooms or in dressing rooms attached to their masters' and mistresses' bedrooms, a practice that all but disappeared in the course of the eighteenth century. 'The Duke's Own Man's Room' at Carton does not appear to be a bedroom (no bed listed), but a room in which he took care of the duke's clothes. As early as 1751 the furniture in the bedroom of Lady Howth's personal maid in their Dublin house at St Mary's Abbey comprised a yellow paragon four-poster bed with bedclothes, four black

[34] Accommodation for 'strangers' servants' occurs quite rarely on plans/inventories. There are four at Killeen Castle (1790), and one in the servants wing on Daniel Robertson's plans for Carriglas, county Longford (1837-38) at first-floor level. In Castle's plan for Carton is a 'Room for a second table' to facilitate visiting servants.

[35] An early plan of Ballyfin shows a 'Maids Sitting Room' in the service block.

leather chairs, a dressing table and mirror: it also had a fireplace and a 'Pr of chamber bellows'.[37]

While there is no named steward's bedroom in the Baronscourt inventory, his 'Parlour' is listed with much furniture including two mahogany dining tables and twelve chairs covered in silk, indicating its use as perhaps a dining room for upper servants. From the list of its contents it seems that the housekeeper's sitting room at Carton probably served a similar purpose. The housekeeper, and the two ladies' maids (the latter shared a room) at Woodville (c 1797) even had their own 'oak close-stool chairs'. At Antrim House (1801) the housekeeper's room was furnished with a desk, two round tables, an armchair and a bureau, all of mahogany; an oak table, two oak press beds, seven rush-bottomed chairs and a mirror over her chimneypiece. The butler's bedchamber at Mary Street (1731) had 'green Kidderminster hangings to room and bed curtains', an oak bedstead and chair, a rug and a deal table covered with green cloth.

Powdering rooms, dressing rooms and sanitation

Also in Playfair's plan for Townley Hall a 'powdering room', where servants could powder their wigs (or hair), adjoined the servants' hall. Other houses with such a room for servants were Carton (1739), Dromana (1755), Ardbraccan (1790s), Castle Coole (1790) and Townley Hall (c.1794). These rooms, also to be found 'above stairs',[38] contained wig blocks and stands, powder troughs with lock and key, a chair, table and often an oilcloth on the floor. In the Baronscourt inventory of 1782 the 'Room over Blue Morine dressing room' in the attic storey is annotated: 'This is a roome for all Gentlemen to Powder in, with a table and one chair and a sett grate'. By the end of the eighteenth century hair powder had gone out of fashion and powdering rooms are absent from both the plans and inventories under discussion after that.

In a plan for Carton, Richard Castle locates the butler's pantry and the housekeeper's room at ground-floor level at the east end of the main block.[39] The basement plan for Carton is interesting, comprising: the butler's pantry, his bedroom and the plate room, the cellars, the powdering room and the 'room for a second table'. Here, surprisingly perhaps, are three servants' dressing rooms (**Fig. 5.5**).[40] This appears excessive: while

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[36] Francis Johnston's plan for a large extension to Corbalton Hall, county Meath (1801) shows accommodation for a butler and a 'housekeeper or cook' fitted into spaces created by the acute angle of the old and new houses.

[37] Lady Grandison's personal maid's room was similarly furnished (Dromana 1755). But the furniture in ladies' maids' rooms at Clogrenane (*c.* 1810) and at Doneraile Court (*c.* 1830s) was very sparse.

[38] Powdering rooms for gentlemen appear on plans for Mount Kennedy (1781), and Ardbraccan (Johnston 1794), and in inventories for Caledon (1783) and Prospect (1795).

[39] In another plan he replaces the housekeeper's room (to the rear) with one for the steward.

[40] The servants' hall and other service rooms are presumably in the kitchen pavilion.

many of the male servants would be dressed in livery, women servants generally did not wear a uniform. At Townley Hall the basement plan (M13) attributed to the Balfours shows a dressing room for servants and both Playfair's and Johnston's plans (1792 and 1794 respectively), locate 'dressing rooms' next to baths in the basement. Playfair's is a large bowed space where he has a 'cold bath' and a 'warm bath' while the rest of the basement, except for a space for coal, is given over to beer and wine cellars. The only entrance to Johnston's bathroom (9 feet by 8 feet, **Fig. 5.6**),[41] is through the dressing room to the rear of the house. As neither of these plans is annotated for the use of servants, might the bathrooms be for the use of the gentlemen of the house and/or their guests, after hunting or riding? It is notable that Johnston's dressing room is next to the passage leading to the yard.

In the 1850s Sir Charles Domville expected every man working for him to have a bath once a week. A fire would be lit for one hour for each bath 'and the person using [it] must empty it, mop the room and leave all tidy'. He further expected all of his servants to have clean hands 'even if they have to wash them 10 times daily'.[42] One wonders if Sir William Ponsonby Barker of Kilcooley Abbey, county Tipperary, had been more strict in the 1830s about the personal cleanliness of his servants, would he have had a less disturbed night's sleep. After evening prayers this aged evangelical, apparently inspired by the biblical example of King David, was in the habit of selecting one of his maids to act as a human hot water bottle in his bed. One night the odour from his chosen one was so strong that he got out of bed and grappled in the dark to find some eau de cologne to sprinkle over her, only to find the next morning that he had covered her with ink.[43]

Before we move on to look at what seems to be an Irish phenomenon – the underground tunnel connecting house and offices – other, more specialised rooms should be mentioned. At Kildare House are rooms in the basement for the 'Groom of Chambers', the man who not only kept all of the furniture in good order but had some duties similar to the butler, and the 'Confectioners Room',[44] indicating the importance of table decorations and desserts, as has been seen in earlier chapters (**Fig. 5.7**). Another room that appears in the same house, is a 'servants waiting room' to the front of the house at the west that has a small staircase leading from it to the basement.[45] It was there, presumably where servants waited to be on call for any room on that floor

[41] Another plan by Johnston for Townley Hall (M18) is annotated 'Hot & Cold baths'.
[42] Domville Papers, NLI, MS 11,297.
[43] Quoted in Valerie Pakenham, *The big house in Ireland,* (Cassell & Co., n.d.), p 58.
[44] A 'Confectionary' is listed in the Powerscourt Wicklow inventory (1729-29) as a space in which were '2 Oak presses for Sweet-Meats', a bed, and other furniture.

(or elsewhere), and the two windows to the front court allowed them to see anyone approach the house. A door leading into the colonnade allowed servants to take care of visitors' horses and carriages or to direct their staff to the stable yard, without having to cross the staircase hall and use the front door.[46] Chambers' plan for Headfort (**Fig. 3.4**) has one in a similar position, a plan of Powerscourt (Wicklow) dating to 1843 shows one next to the great hall to the east,[47] and in Morrison's plan for Carton (1815) a large room with a canted bay to the west (of the new front[48]) is for the same purpose. 'Shoe Rooms' are noted at Townley Hall and at Ardbraccan, and in two of James Lewis's designs published in 1797 - Coole House, Galway 'seat of Robert Gregory, esq', and the villa designed for Silver Oliver at Cork ('to be close to Cork city with a view of the Cove and the beautiful scenery near it') - are large rooms in the basement 'for brushing clothes'.[49] Specialised spaces such as these became more common throughout the nineteenth century. One room, however, seems quite unique: the servants' library at Pakenham Hall (Tullynally Castle). A plan in the house shows it in the main block (presumably in the basement) in front of the strong room.[50]

Tunnels

The idea of connecting the house to the offices by tunnel was fairly common in Ireland, as noted in Chapter 1. The advantages to owners of houses such as Bellamont Forest, Rockingham and Lissadell, were that, like a piece of sculpture, the house could be viewed in the round, that every window gave a view of the surrounding countryside, with servants and offices out of sight. Robert Graham explained Castle Coole's tunnel 'so that the [house] is free in all its fronts and no servants or people connected with the place of grounds are seen'.[51] They were neatly tucked away in the basement and/or a service block discreetly hidden from view, as Graham describes at Rockingham: 'The house offices are in a sunken court, arched and covered over, so as scarcely to be discoverable from without, and they are connected by a sunken passage at the stables'.[52]

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[45] The basement plan calls the staircase 'Stairs to ye Servants Hall'.
[46] This room, together with the two rooms behind it, were converted into what became known later in the eighteenth century as the Supper Room. Griffin and Pegum, *Leinster House*, p p 31.
[47] There is also a 'Postman's Room' on this plan.
[48] Carton was turned back to front at about this time, to a design it is suggested, by Johnston. Rowan (ed.), *The architecture of Richard Morrison…*, p 53.
[49] James Lewis, *Original designs in architecture consisting of plans, elevations and sections for villas, mansions, town-houses etc. and a new design for a theatre*, 2 vols (London 1780 and 1797) ii, plates xxix and xxxi.
[50] Rolf Loeber and Magda Stouthamer-Loeber, *18th – 19th Century Irish Fiction Newsletter*, September 1998, No. 9, [p 2], endnote 7. The plan was shown to the authors by Mrs V Pakenham in 1996.
[51] Heaney (ed.), *A Scottish Whig*, p 291.
[52] Heaney (ed.), *A Scottish Whig…*, p 284.

Maria Edgeworth describes in *Ormond* (1817) how after his death, Sir Ulick's body (in his coffin) was carried through the underground passage 'that goes to the stables, and out by the lane to the churchyard'.[53] A plan by Francis Johnston for St Catherine's, Leixlip (1799) shows a similar passage from the basement of the house to a spiral staircase at the top of which was a colonnade linking the kitchen block to one side to the dairy on the other.[54] They were not unknown in Dublin houses either: number 25 Merrion Street (now 5 Upper Merrion Street) was connected to the mews at the rear by an underground passage.[55] As well as those mentioned in Chapter 1, other houses with tunnels are Lucan, Drumcree, Seaforde, Abbeyleix, Strokestown, Baronscourt, and Bellevue.[56]

Servants and their perquisites

The subject of servants' wages is not particularly pertinent to this study, but to put it into perspective it probably suffices to say that wages in Ireland were low, on average 30% lower than in England, according to Arthur Young in 1780. This accounted for the large number of servants and retainers to be seen in houses. Frequently servants were not paid at all, having board and lodging in lieu, and when they were paid, it was at the end of each year of service. The result of this was that the servant had to borrow on his or her wages, leaving little to collect at the end of the year. In his will made in 1765 Sir Edward O'Brien of Dromoland instructed his son to pay his debts 'in particular my poor servants wages to some of whom I stand indebted for many years'.[57] Similarly in the 1790s, his agent wrote to the 2nd marquis of Downshire, then residing in his London home, saying that all the Hillsborough servants were due three years' wages: 'For God's sake, my Lord, have the goodness to direct Mr Lane to pay me something for the servants…some are really starving'.[58] Under such circumstances it is no wonder that servants found numerous ways to supplement their income (if they were lucky enough to have one), that included board wages, cast-off clothes, bequests, card money and vails.

Board wages were cash payments to servants in lieu of meals and in addition to wages.[59] They were given when employers were away from home, or on occasions when servants travelled with the family and meals (and sometimes accommodation) were not provided for them. While their employers were at Kildare House servants on

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[53] Edgeworth, *Ormond*, p 388.
[54] IAA, Murray Collection, St Catherine's Leixlip.
[55] H M Hyde, *The rise of Castlereagh* (London 1933), pp 197-98.
[56] Mary Davies, 'Paradise Lost' in *IAR*, vol. 21, no.2 (Summer 2004), pp 104-09.
[57] J. Ainsworth (ed.), *The Inchiquin MSS*, Doc.1511, p 525. Will of Sir Edward O'Brien of Dromoland, Bt., dated 26 August 1765.
[58] Quoted in Kathy Trant, *The Blessington Estate 1667-1908* (Dublin 2004), p 51.

board wages at Carton were allowed 'such Garden Stuff as they may want'. How this was to be measured by the gardener (to whom it is addressed) is not disclosed. Married servants were not allowed to live in the house but were given board wages for living outside the estate. The steward was instructed that they were not to eat or drink in the house 'except now and then, they and their Wives may be asked to Dinner on Sunday to live in Harmony with them so far as to carry on their mutual Business to Lord Kildare's advantage'.[60] Servants managed to find ways of saving board wages, one of which was to get themselves invited to eat in the servants' halls of houses where they had friends. This payment gave the servants more independence than most employers desired.[61]

Cast-off clothes given to servants by the family could be sold off or, more often, worn by them. At the upper end of the scale, Mrs Clotworthy Upton (later Lady Templeton when her husband was created Baron Templeton in 1776) of Castle Upton, county Antrim, who was Woman of the Bedchamber of Queen Charlotte from 1772-78, made an amount of money by selling her employer's cast-offs. Apart from dresses, items listed were 'dirty gloves' and 3 pairs of the Queen's stays'.[62] This perquisite was probably agreed in advance of employment. Female servants did not fare as well as their male counterparts who frequently had clothes supplied in addition to their wages. In 1767, the duke of Leinster upgraded his footmen in line with his new ducal status, providing them with 'a Pair of black Worsted Shag Breeches…a fine Felt Hat with a Silver Chain Loop and Buttons and a Horse Hair Cockade'.[63] Rev. Robert King of Ballylin, county Offaly paid his coachman £12 per annum 'with Hat, Coat, Breeches and Jackett & Trowsers & Waistcoat' in 1821.[64] At Strokestown House in the 1840s a bill shows clothing for nine male servants, down to the 'Pantry' and 'Kitchen' boys, each of whom received 'a suit of moleskin'.[65]

Family papers give lists of liveries made for servants, the buttons of which were often stamped with the family's crest: the liveries were on loan to the servant, left behind on departure to be worn by a successor, and replaced when needed. Bishop Edward Synge of Elphin's servants were 'so shabby they will not be fit to appear in town' and he

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[59] According to the *OED* they are 'wages allowed to servants to keep themselves in victual'.
[60] Northumberland, Alnwick Castle Archives, MS 670, 'Rules for the government of the Marquis of Kildare's (Duke of Leinster's) household 1763-1773', f. 88, f. 15. My thanks to the Knight of Glin for making available his photocopy of the document.
[61] J.J. Hecht, *The domestic servant class in eighteenth-century England*, (London 1956) p155.
[62] John Stevenson, *Two centuries of life in Down* (Belfast 1990 edn), p 439.
[63] Northumberland, Alnwick Castle Archives, MS 670, 'Rules', f 69.
[64] Peter Somerville-Large, *The Irish country house* (London 1995), p 230.
[65] It should be noted that the pantry and kitchen boys might also have been postillions when required.

ordered, in September 1747, frocks and waistcoats for liveried servants at his palace at Elphin (where there were five) and his Dublin home at Kevin Street.[66] Male servants were, on the whole, more visible than female: it reflected well on the employer and the household to have them well dressed. Female servants, on the other hand, were rarely to be seen. Bridget Hill quotes James Boswell asking Dr Johnson: 'What is the reason that women servants, though obliged to be at the expense of purchasing their own clothes, have much lower wages than men servants to whom a great proportion of that article is furnished and when in fact our female house servants work much harder than the male?'.[67]

Servants who had given years of service were often left bequests in their employers' wills. These varied between employer's clothes, or linen, to sums of money. The dowager Viscountess Powerscourt who died in 1785 was generous to the female servants who were in her service at the time of her death. Those who had been with her one year were given one year's wages and those with her less than a year, a half-year's wages. But to every man servant she left just one month's wages.[68] However female servants were not so highly esteemed by Sir Edward O'Brien of Dromoland. He left one year's wages to male servants of five or more year's standing 'having met [with] not one woman servant worth salt to her pottage since Mrs Barnwell left me…'.[69] Lady Powerscourt also bequeathed to every servant the sum of five pounds, which 'will do them more good' than putting them all in mourning clothes, a custom of the time.[70]

'If your Lady loves Play, your Fortune is fixed for ever: Moderate Gaming will be a Perquisite of ten Shillings a Week; and in such a Family I would rather choose to be Butler than Chaplain… It is all ready Money, and got without Labour.'[71] So said Jonathan Swift on a rather lucrative perk for the butler, or sometimes the footman, whose job it was to supply cards and candles whenever the lady of the house invited her friends to play cards. The system, whereby he 'sold' the cards to the guests, allowed for greater numbers at these parties than perhaps the hostess's own means would

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[66] Legg, (ed.) *The Synge Letters*, Letter 37 from Elphin dated 9 September 1747, p 83.
[67] Johnson 'remarkably' made no response. Bridget Hill, *Servants: English domestics in the eighteenth century* (Oxford 1996), pp 24-25.
[68] NLI, Powerscourt Papers, Ms 43,066/2, Probate of the will of Dorothy Beresford, 1st viscountess, née Rowley, 1 August 1785.
[69] Ainsworth (ed.), *The Inchiquin MSS*, p 525.
[70] When a member of the royal family died, prominent families, particularly those connected with the church or the parliament, put their servants into mourning. Three months full mourning meant dress in matt black, followed by second mourning when the effect could be lightened somewhat. Legg, *The Synge Letters,* Letter 133, p 276. Letter from Elphin dated 24 May 1751, footnote 12; L. Taylor, *Mourning Dress: a costume or social history* (London 1983), p 104.
[71] Swift, *Directions to servants,* pp 33-34.

allow, as Marshall has pointed out,[72] and the guests were expected to leave on the table for the butler double and treble the amount of the cards' purchase price. The higher the stakes, the more new decks of cards were called for, and the more money the butler made.[73] Added to that he was free to sell off the old cards to coffeehouses, or to poorer families who liked to play cards.[74] It might be more difficult to cheat on candles, as wax candles would be expected, and those made of tallow were rather odorous.

There will be further discussion of domestic servants relating to privacy in the house in Section III. Before that the private accommodation in the house will be discussed, beginning with the library, frequently used as a living room for all the family.

Section II: Family spaces – libraries and billiard rooms

Interestingly, the majority of house plans in this study contain libraries (or 'book rooms'), particularly among those dating to the first half of the nineteenth century, when they are almost notable by their absence. One of the earliest designs for a library in a great house in England was the second design for Wanstead in *Vitruvius Britannicus*, published in 1715.[75] Neither Blenheim nor Castle Howard was planned with libraries.[76] Closets or studies may have been early 'libraries': the earl of Kildare kept a 'standard [a great chest] for Bookes' in the study of his Dublin house in 1656;[77] the duke of Ormonde at Kilkenny Castle kept books in his closet, according to an inventory taken in the 1680s which mentions, after listing the furniture, 'Besides the Shelves & books which his Grace hath an account of'.[78] In the period 1700 to 1750 there is a small number of architectural drawings pertaining to libraries in Irish houses: a proposal for Stillorgan House, the Barnet house in the Dromoland Album, a design by Samuel Chearnley, one from the Charleville Forest Collection, one for Dromoland, and plans for Kildare House. In 1729 Robert Howard, bishop of Killala, wrote that 'books go off very heavily, in this Country, where there is little Money, and too little Inclination to read'.[79] A cultured cleric himself, there is evidence that at least some other members of the

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[72] D Marshall, 'The domestic servants of the eighteenth century' in *Economica*, vol. 9, April 1929, pp 15-40,

[73] As each new pack of cards was called for, the money was placed under the candlesticks on the card tables. It was a practice that was denounced at the same time as vails (below). J Jean Hecht, *The domestic servant class in eighteenth-century England* (London 1956), p 168.

[74] Swift, *Directions to servants,* p 34; Marshall, 'The domestic servants', pp 15-40.

[75] Cornforth, 'Books do furnish a living room' in *Country Life*, 13 December, 2001, pp 56-59.

[76] A library was not included in the original plan of Blenheim, and it was not until 1744 that the house got its library. Cornforth, 'Books do furnish a living room', *CL*, pp 56-59.

[77] Fenlon, *Goods & chattels,* p 40.

[78] Fenlon, *Goods & chattels*, p 120.

[79] NLI, Wicklow Papers, Ms 38,598/5, Letter from Robert Howard, bishop of Killala to his brother Hugh Howard 18 Sept & 5 Oct 1729.

clergy possessed libraries during this period, for example Bishop Thomas Rundle at his house in St Stephen's Green, and Dean and Mrs Delany at Delville. By 1739, Rundle had created a library with a coved ceiling, 64 feet long, twenty feet wide and sixteen feet high, with a bow window to the rear which he describes as 'exactly half a circle' and states, most interestingly, that 'the glass is bent to answer the curvature of the building'. He describes his 'lesser' books arranged uniformly on shelves between thirty-two three-quarter Ionic columns supported on a pedestal 'that goes round the room the height of window to floor. In this pedestal are my largest books…'. Here he created a *salon* where he described the 'gentlemen and ladies, old and young, rich and poor, soldiers and bishops' who brought 'learning into chit-chat'.[80] This was an interesting, and early, development that will be looked at below. By 1744 Mrs Delany describes their library at Delville as 'most plentifully filled' though half the length of Rundle's at thirty-two feet, and eleven feet wide. Three years later they extended it creating 'a sort of closet to which you ascend by one step…adorned with pilasters', twelve feet square with a window at the far end and, to one side, 'looking glass representing a sash window, which will reflect the prospect'. There she intends to have a table in the middle 'for writing and holding papers' with chairs around it.[81]

The earliest appearance of a library among plans is a section showing four bays of a double-height library with a gallery, among proposals for the refurbishment of Stillorgan House by Edward Lovett Pearce, dating to the late 1720s (**Fig. 5.8**).[82] This shows three bays of bookshelves with double columns between each bay (Ionic at ground level, Corinthian in the gallery) and, behind a columnar screen the fourth bay has round-headed niches on each level. The section coincides with a plan for the house (not annotated), where the library projects forward from the main body of the house. With no windows at ground-floor level, three overlook the forecourt and two to the front light the room at the upper level. Drawings for another house are three executed by Richard Castle *c.* 1745 for the earl of Kildare at his Dublin house.[83] One is a plan showing its location on the ground floor, the other two are proposals for the room itself with its fittings, both showing recessed, glazed bookcases decorated with Ionic pilasters (**Fig. 5.9**). In Scotland there was an early tradition of book rooms on upper floors,[84] but the only example of an Irish

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[80] Barnard, *A new anatomy of Ireland*, p 81; J Dallaway (ed.), *Letters of the late Thomas Rundle LL.D…to Mrs Barbara Sandys* (Dublin 1789), pp cxxxv-cxli.
[81] Day (ed.), *Letters*, pp 159, 161.
[82] IAA, Elton Hall Drawings Collection, 'Stillorgan Album'.
[83] Illustrated in Griffin and Pegum, *Leinster House*, pp 43-44, plates 74-76.
[84] Cornforth, *Early Georgian…*, p 69.

library above ground-floor level among the plans in this survey[85] is a Castle drawing from the Charleville Forest collection[86] that shows it on the first floor, where it spans the depth of the house, is two storeys high, and measures 61 x 24 feet (**Fig. 5.10**). Access is gained from the main staircase through an arched screen into a 'Gallery' (11 feet wide) lit by a window.[87] A library for 'Honble Mr Barnet' in the Dromoland Album (1740s) is located to the rear of the family apartment where it is annotated 'Library or small Bedchamber 19 by 12'. Also in the 1740s a 'Library museum' appears on the upper storey of one of four pavilions attached to a house by Chearnley.[88]

In the second half of the eighteenth century, libraries appear on sixteen plans[89] in my survey and between 1800 and 1850 they appear on twenty-seven.[90] There is no pattern to the location of a library within the house, but a large number are off the hall, to the front of the house. Most are rectangular in shape, exceptions being the 'Round room' at Slane Castle where the alcoves were used to accommodate Burton Conyngham's 'extraordinary' collection of books[91], and the circular library in the turret at Castle Bernard (1833). It appears that in *c.* 1775 Robert, the 2nd viscount Kingsborough, converted a tower that had been part of the former outworks of Mitchelstown Castle, county Cork, into a library, and employed a librarian: and at Clonbrock, county Galway, the Dillons' library was located in a turret in the bawn.[92] Richard Morrison proposed an intriguing design for a 'Book Room' at Mount Bellew (*c.* 1817, **Fig. 2.20**)[93]: octagonal in shape, with its own entrance from the garden through an oval vestibule, off which was the staircase to the gallery. This was obviously not executed nor was Dominick Madden's proposal

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[85] The proposed library at Portumna Castle, county Galway is mentioned by Mary Beaufort as being on the third storey (1808), and by John Bernard Trotter as in 'the highest story', some years later. TCD MS 4035 Mary Beaufort 'A journal of our tour to the Westward…1808', f 117; Trotter, *Walks through Ireland in the years 1812, 1814 and 1817* (London 1819), p 561. The library at Borris House, county Carlow is on an upper floor, according to Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, *18th – 19th Century Irish Fiction Newsletter,* September 1998, No. 9, [p 2], endnote 3.

[86] IAA, Charleville Forest Drawings collection.

[87] On each side of the gallery are arched recesses on the walls and around the doors: there is a main bedroom suite on this floor with interconnecting bedroom, dressing room and closet, and another bedroom. More bedrooms were located on the second floor.

[88] William Laffan (ed.), *Miscelanea Structura Curiosa by Samuel Chearnley* (Tralee 2005), Plate 75.

[89] Slane Castle (Wyatt), Headfort (Wm Chambers), Charleville Forest (Byres), Ardbraccan, Lucan, Castle Coole (2 - Johnston and Wyatt), Townley Hall (4 plans by Playfair, FJ and Balfours), Richard Morrison drawing (9+10), Carton (Lord Kildare), Coole House, co Galway (Lewis), Villa for Silver Oliver, co Cork (Lewis), and Killeen Castle tower house (Johnston).

[90] Headfort (FJ), Carton (RM), Castle Dillon, Howth Castle (Pain), Powerscourt W (Robertson), Rockingham (Nash), Emo (2 – RM and DM), Straffan House (Haslam), Killeen Castle (2-Wogan Browne & FJ), Farnham (FJ), Castlegar (n.s.), Markree Castle, Pakenham Hall (Tullynally), Mount Bellew (RM & DM), Brook Lodge, Durrow Abbey, Castale Bernard, Dromoland (Pain), Carriglas (Robertson), Ballyfin, Lissadell, Ballycurry, Roxborough and Adare Manor.

[91] The collection was sold off by his nephew in 1810. E-mail from Livia Hurley 15 November 2007.

[92] Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, *18th – 19th Century Irish Fiction Newsletter,* September 1998, No. 9, [p 2], endnote 4.

[93] According to the drawing this is in addition to his bow-windowed Library.

two years later for a more modest rectangular plan, also with a gallery. Another octagonal library is that seen on Daniel Robertson's plan of Powerscourt Wicklow (1843) on the garden front.

The importance of light for reading possibly accounts for bow and canted bay windows that are to be found in libraries.[94] At Emo Court and Ballyfin the library is tripartite in plan, the full depth of the house, with columnar screens.[95] That at Rockingham (1809, **Fig. 2.7**) had a space called a 'Logia' (with bookshelves) behind a screen leading into the circular drawing room. A plan for Howth Castle (1824) shows a long 'Book room' leading into a small 'Reading room', and the library at Carton, part of which was part of the original hall and staircase, leads into a 'Reading room' with a gallery, called the 'Small Library' in the 1818 inventory.

Possibly the most extraordinary library in Ireland (for which no original plan has yet come to light) was that built at Charlemont House for Lord Charlemont in the 1760s. It comprised a number of rooms in the rear garden linked to the house by a long corridor, in which were windows to the garden on the right, and niches on the left filled with statues. Halfway down the corridor was a lobby to the centre of which was Giovanni da Bologna's *Mercury*, and a short flight of steps to accommodate the rising level of the ground to the rear. At the end of the corridor was what was called the Venus library (after the copy of the Medici Venus in a large arched alcove), top-lit with an ornamental ceiling and the bookcases framed by the Ionic order. Announcing its importance, the main library had Corinthian pilasters, and was a double-height room with 'light well managed coming in from the cove in the ceiling', as Arthur Young described it.[96] Two smaller rooms lay beyond it, one for Lord Charlemont's collection of medals,[97] the other for part of his collection of pictures and antiques. But Charlemont did not stop there: in about 1788, he built the Rockingham Library, designed by James Gandon, which was at the centre and to the west of the corridor, in the space behind the sweep wall of the house. This room with its curved end-walls, had a columnar screen to each end.[98]

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[94] Canted bays appear on plans for those at Dromoland (*c.* 1826) and at Carriglas (1837-38). Bow windows were more popular and appear in plans for Headfort (Chambers 1765), Emo Court (Gandon *c.* 1790), Killeen Castle (Johnston 1802), Markree Castle (Johnston 1803), Ballyfin (1822), Madden's proposal for Brook Lodge (*c.* 1826-29), and Lissadell (1833).

[95] Such screens were proposed in Johnston's plan for Townley Hall (1794) but abandoned in execution.

[96] Arthur Young, *A Tour in Ireland*, I, p 3. Young described the main library as measuring 'about 40 x 30'.

[97] Kept in a medal cabinet designed by William Chambers for Charlemont, now in the Courtauld Institute, London.

[98] Sean O'Reilly, 'Charlemont House – a critical history' in Elizabeth Mayes and Paula Murphy (eds), *Images and Insights: Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art* (Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin 1994), pp 43-54.

The furnishings and fittings for Charlemont's library occupied his thoughts in letters not just to Chambers, but to others. To his friend, Andrew Caldwell, to whom he entrusted its guardianship when he was out of the country, he refers to it as 'my favourite Mistress', and 'an object so highly interesting to me as my Library'. In the same letter he is of the opinion that 'marble pilasters would be improper and cold…I am preparing colours here, under Chambers' directions, to paint the whole body of the library'.[99] In a letter to Chambers, Caldwell writes of the best way to light it: '…the Great Room, will…be sufficiently illuminated by the Lights which are to stand on the Chimneypiece and by candles placed on the Tables, but with regard to the Ante Chamber [Venus library]…nothing could be more proper than girandoles of two candles each fix'd in the centre of the two long panels at each side of the room'. He goes on to describe a suitable ornament on the girandoles, 'an Amazonian shield, cross'd by branches of Laurel and Palm…', and is 'distressed' about the delay in delivery of the 'purple carpeting' from Moorfields in London.[100]

It is interesting to note that at such an early date (1739) Bishop Rundle created in his library a room for social intercourse with presumably a number of comfortable chairs for his guests. While those interested in books might have spent a part of their day enjoying their libraries (or studies/closets) from the seventeenth century,[101] it was not until after the middle of the eighteenth century that they became in addition, 'living rooms' where people gathered to pursue their various interests.[102] These bear no relation to the 'gloomy' library at Cullenaghmore, county Laois, remembered by the owner's grandson, Jonah Barrington which he described as 'rather scantily furnished with everything but dust and cobwebs: there were neither chairs or tables' in it.[103]

John Byng, on a visit to North Wales in 1784 saw Berrington Castle where he lamented 'the want of a good library, that first of all luxuries'.[104] But the luxury of choosing a book and taking it to one's room was not allowed at Brandon-Castle in

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[99] Caldwell of New Grange Letters & Papers – 1703-1793, vol. 3, Letter no. 159, p 94. My thanks to Jane Meredith.

[100] Quoted in Cynthia O'Connor, *The pleasing hours: James Caulfeild, first earl of Charlemont 1728-99* (Cork 1999), p 213.

[101] In the 1686 inventory of Burton Hall, county Cork, 500 books ('of all sorts, great and small') are listed in Sir John Percival's study.

[102] On a plan for Ballyfin, the bow-windowed library is annotated 'Library and Living Room' (1822). At Holkham, Kent's library (1741) has always been what we would now call the 'family room', and part of Lord Leicester's private apartments. Jackson-Stops & Pipkin, *The English country house*, p 200-201.

[103] Quoted in Maxwell, *Country and town…* p 95.

[104] C Bruyn Andrews (ed.), *The Torrington Diaries,* i, p 129.

1771, as 'Lady P----[sic]', perhaps conscious of the 'most valuable volumes' that were located there, forbade reading in any other part of the house.[105] That would not have bothered Richard Lovell Edgeworth who, when entrusted with the key of the library at Pakenham Hall (Tullynally) by its chateleine 'passed whole days devouring the contents'.[106] His daughter, Maria, wrote descriptions of numerous libraries that she visited, describing one 'with nice books, small tables upon castors, low sofas, and all the other things which make rooms comfortable'.[107] She admired the earl of Moira's library in Castle Donnington, Leicestershire:

> fitted up entirely with books in plain handsome mahogany bookcases, not a frippery ornament, everything grand, but not gaudy, marble tables, books upon tables, nothing littered, but sufficient signs of living and occupied beings. At the upper end of the room sat two ladies copying music: a gentleman walking about with a book in his hand...[108]

Mrs Delany found the Moira library in county Down just as compelling in 1758, admiring

> recesses where you may sit and read books of all kinds, to amuse the fancy as well as improve the mind - telescopes, microscopes and all the scientific apparatus. Everyone chooses their employment; it is the land of liberty, yet of regularity.[109]

As can be seen it was not just books that furnished a library, it was curiosities, pieces of sculpture, objets d'art collected by the owner, many of whom had done the Grand Tour, and so became, as time went by, more and more a place where members of the family and their guests would assemble. The 'excellent' library at Castle Saunderson near Cavan had a fire lighting in it from early morning, as a guest mentioned in 1822, in which he 'luxuriated, often wishing for a Briarean power of eye and intellect to read fifty books at one; then all the periodicals of note...'.[110] We have to be careful, however, in necessarily equating the existence of libraries with learning: Edward Wakefield, in his book published in 1812, remarked that 'libraries are not common in Ireland; by some families they are purchased on their first commencing housekeeping, as a part of the furniture, and the choice of the

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[105] A lady, *The Irish Guardian: a pathetic story in two volumes* (Dublin 1776), p6.
[106] Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, *18th – 19th Century Irish Fiction Newsletter,* September 1998, No. 9, [p 2], endnote 6. It is interesting to note that the library must have been kept locked.
[107] Other libraries mentioned by Edgeworth are Ballynahinch, county Galway, where she admired the 'two book-rooms opening into one another, and an excellent sitting room beyond', and Moore Hall, county Mayo, 'a most livable and elegant literary room – papered with a sort of gothic paper representing a colonade of pillars and fretwork arches above and all manner of tables and armchairs and low and highbacks...'. Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, *18th – 19th Century Irish Fiction Newsletter,* September 1998, No. 9, [p 2], endnotes 12 and 14.
[108] A J C Hare (ed.), *Life and letters of Maria Edgeworth,* 2 vols, (London 1894), I, p 82.
[109] Quoted in F G James, *Lords of the ascendancy: the Irish House of Lords and its members, 1600-1800* (Dublin 1995), p 154.

volumes depends greatly on the elegance of the type and binding'.[111] Richard Cumberland's comment about Lord Eyre of Eyrecourt House, county Galway who 'lived in the enviable independence as to reading, and of course had no books', comes to mind.[112] George Hardinge, while very impressed with Lord Portarlington's library at Dawson Court in the early 1790s, whose 'books of drawings prints maps architecture &c. are perfect of their kind', observed that 'this in Ireland is a phenomenon as in the best House of the Island you can scarce find a common book for amusement – Learning is out of the case'.[113] Their use as family rooms, and their accommodation of musical instruments suggest conviviality rather than scholarly retirement.

The inventories confirm in many cases how libraries were used also as sitting rooms. Not all mention bookcases or shelves, which possibly means that they were built-in, or that it was just a room called a library. The books are rarely mentioned, but in some cases might have comprised a separate inventory. The earliest is for Dromana (1755) where bookcases are mentioned: '4 Large Wynscote book cases with glass sash doors, with locks/keys' and one similar bookcase in ebony. There were some walnut chairs covered with yellow flowered satin (and covers of scarlet paragon), and three stools to match, as well as a high chair and a low chair for children. There was no desk, and the only tables were a 'mahogany tea table & frame with a tea chest fixt in the drawer', and a 'small one-leaved wynscote table and frame'. The only book mentioned is almost a piece of furniture in its own right: 'Large book of maps with a marble cover in a dale case'. An estimate for library furniture for Caledon (1783) listed '4 mahogany cases for Books so contrived as to form the room into an Octagon (£210)', a 'Large mahogany library table with drawers all round, the top covered with Leather' and six chairs covered with black leather. Also received were a mirror for over the chimneypiece and a 'carpet to cover the floor'. At Gaulston (1787) the library contained a mahogany writing table, a brazier and three rush-bottomed chairs painted green and white.

Killadoon's library was well furnished in 1807. In 1800 Lady Leitrim wrote: 'We live in a small Round Room [it has a bow window] at the end & have kept it very cool. We sit in this room all morning. We dine at six, walk from seven till ten &

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[110] Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, *18th – 19th Century Irish Fiction Newsletter,* September 1998, No. 9, [p 2], endnote 15.
[111] Edward Wakefield, *An account of Ireland, statistical and political,* 2 vols, (London1812), ii, p 784.
[112] Quoted in Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, *18th – 19th Century Irish Fiction Newsletter,* September 1998, No. 9, [p 4].
[113] 'Two Tours in Ireland, in the years 1792 and 1793…By George Hardinge, Esq, MA. FRS. FSA, Chief Justice of the Counties of Brecon Glamorgan and Radnor'. Transcript by Edward McParland from the Shirley Papers at Lough Fea, county Monaghan.

then drink tea'.[114] Again, the bookcases are not listed, but two Wedgwood sphinxes and twelve bronze figures and groups are listed 'over' the bookcases. Otherwise there was a rosewood library table and two other tables, an 'Egyptian' sofa and footstool, various chairs including '2 cane chairs with 2 leather cushions & a mahogany reading desk & brass candlestick to each', a silver ink stand with a sand box and ink bottle, a paperweight and a 'mahogany railed stand for loose papers. There were draped curtains of blue and orange calico around the bow with cushioned window seats. The contents of the room varied only slightly up to the 1836 inventory. The 'book room' at the Rochfort house, Clogrenane, county Carlow is interesting, mainly because according to the inventory (*c.* 1810) it contained '6,774 volumes large and small' in eleven recessed bookcases: this was in addition to the '400 books on book shelves' that lined Mr Rochfort's dressing room at the house. The book room was obviously large, with two fireplaces, '2 large bed settees with Posts', nineteen chairs, a 'very large' mahogany dining table and a mat that 'entirely covers the room'. The room had some curiousities: a 'prospect box', a 'standing tenniscope and a marine tenniscope [sic]', two globes (celestial and terrestial), and '7 maps' perhaps on the walls. A later painting (NGI) of the Irish poet and writer, Thomas Moore (1779-1852) shows him in his study in his English home seated at a drum table surrounded by shelves of books and with his harp and piano to one side. Its modest chimneypiece and the shape of its elliptical ceiling indicate that it might be an attic room,[115] and the framing archway suggests that it is annexed to another room, possibly a library?

Carton (1818) had two libraries, 'large' and 'small' – the latter having a gallery. As one would expect they were well furnished with, presumably fitted bookcases, as none are mentioned. Green damask curtains lined with 'green silk persian with draperies, rich gilt cornices, silk fringe & bordering' with white roller blinds, are listed on the five windows of the larger room and on the single window of the smaller. As in Clogrenane there were curiosities, here in two cabinets in the larger room, where there were numerous sofas, chairs, tables, many ornaments, pieces of sculpture and china, chess and card tables, and a grand piano. Among the furniture in the small library were two library tables, one was circular in satinwood, 'lined with green cloth and a pair of plated branches in centre', a reading chair covered with black leather 'and Mahogany Desk attached'. At Mount Stewart (1821) were '6 mahogany Bookcases Inlayed and Full of Books', with busts and other ornaments on top of them, two writing tables and two desks, various other tables including a

[114] Cornforth, 'Killadoon, co Kildare – II' in *Country Life,* 22 January, 2004, pp 54-57.
[115] Dunlevy, 'Dublin in the early nineteenth century', pp 184-206, fig. 12.17.

'square mahogany table Inlayed, game Box with 9 Holes and 9 Balls', two sofas, and fourteen chairs.[116] The 'Anti Room' listed next to the library, that has cabinets of curiosities and ornaments of all types, as well as a mahogany 'swing Bookcase full of books', five tables and two backgammon boxes, appears to be a room that might be used in tandem with the library. Both rooms (together with the Music Room where, incidentally, no musical instruments are listed) have printed blue cotton curtains with muslin drapery. Finally the library at Brownlow House, county Armagh (1848) has an 'open elm wood bookcase, carved and gilt' matching the mirror above it, and the curtains on the oriel window are of crimson satin with crimson and gold border with richly carved cornices. The ottoman and its cushions are covered with the same.

It is evident from an estimate dated 1811 for furnishing the library at Mount Bellew that Lewis & Anthony Morgan of Henry Street, Dublin provided drawings of the furniture for Christopher Dillon Bellew.[117] A large mahogany table 'in the Gothic style', with an armchair to match, and six bergère chairs were illustrated. A sofa for the window recess, and three smaller sofas for the side windows, were all to be covered in blue velvet (with blue calico covers), to match the window curtains.[118] Instructions are given for the bookcase doors (all of mahogany) that include '505 ft of highly finished brass work for the pannells of the mahogany doors [and] 240 yds of blue sarsanet to make side curtains for the doors'. Also mentioned are two reading and book stands 'made as pidestals' and, in 1812 'a very tall mahogany ladder' was required. The library amassed by Dillon Bellew was recognised as one of the finest private collections in Ireland[119] so it is not surprising that he would take great care in the provision of fittings for it.

Apart from books in libraries, it can be seen that libraries contained much of interest that owners were proud to display for their own enjoyment and that of their friends. They were on the whole, well furnished, with comfortable chairs and many tables. Despite Humphry Repton's claim in 1816 that 'The most recent modern custom is to use the library as the general living room' it seems that this custom was well established not only in Ireland but in England where Lady de Grey

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[116] A transcript from the Londonderry Papers in PRONI lists a payment on 18 February 1805 for 'Binding Mock Books for Window Shutters' £14.7s.7d. Photocopy of typscript from Gervase Jackson-Stops addressed to Edward McParland at Jesus College, Cambridge dated 30 April [no year].
[117] NLI, Bellew Papers, MS 27,477(5), 'From Lewis & Anthony Morgan, Cabinet Makers & Upholders, 21 Henry Street Dublin', estimate dated July 1811.
[118] One window described here as a 'Wyatt' window.
[119] NLI, Bellew Papers, MS 27,477(5), July 1811 and May 1812, Estimates from Lewis & Anthony Morgan, Cabinet Makers & Upholders, 21 Henry Street, Dublin; Karen J Harvey, *The Bellews of Mount Bellew: a Catholic gentry family in eighteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin 1998), p 77.

wrote from Wrest Park in 1744: 'Our Residence is fixed in the library, & you may imagine us if you please, for Tea…till Supper, sitting on each side of the great Table with a Competent quantity of candles, Books & Papers upon it & looking most profoundly Wise'. The following year a visitor to the house wrote in her journal 'Tea in the library Everybody reading or writing or Sleeping, just as they pleas'd'.[120] It is interesting to note that on an early Morrison drawing for Ballyfin (1822) 'Library and Living room' appears. The painting of the library there by the Marquis de Massigny de la Pierre (*c.* 1850) is an illustration of this relaxed approach to the room, used by all the family. According to a source in 1864 the Edgeworths never had a drawing room: 'the family room was the library, where all the family read and drew and worked together around the long centre table, with Maria's little desk-table [used for writing] in the corner'.[121]

Often attached to a library was a billiard room, used by family and friends. Over the period of this study, with few exceptions, billiard rooms were located either next to the hall[122] or to the library[123] and seem to have become increasingly popular into the nineteenth century, but appear in only one town house. Shortly before she was beheaded in 1587, Mary Queen of Scots complained that her *table de billard* had been taken from her by her captors, and the following year it was noted that the duke of Norfolk owned a 'billyard bord covered with greene cloth…three billyard sticks and 11 balls of yvery'.[124] Shakespeare's Cleopatra suggests playing billiards in *Antony and Cleopatra* (*c.* 1606-07, Act II, Scene V).[125] In Ireland a billiard table is listed among other tables in an inventory for the duke of Ormonde's Dunmore House, county Kilkenny in 1684,[126] but Barnard makes the point that while billiard tables were 'commonplace in aristocratic dwellings' at this time, billiard rooms were less so.[127] The earliest plan in which such a room appears is one for Carton (*c.* 1739) where it is located off the saloon to the east of the house.

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[120] Cornforth, 'Books do furnish a living room' in *Country Life*, 13 December, 2001, pp 57-59.
[121] Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, *18th – 19th Century Irish Fiction Newsletter,* September 1998, No. 9, [p 3].
[122] Those located next to the hall are on plans for Dromoland (1740s), two of Richard Morrison's published drawings (1793), Townley Hall (1794), Markree Castle (1803), Lissadell and Castle Bernard (both 1833).
[123] Those located next to a library are on the following plans: Townley Hall (1794), Straffan House (1808), Rockingham (1809), Ballyfin (1822-23), Brook Lodge (1826-29), Powerscourt Wicklow (1843), Emo Court (1852).
[124] Clive Everton, *The history of snooker and billiards* (West Sussex 1986), p 8.
[125] According to Thornton, *Seventeenth-century interior decoration,* they appeared in inventories for Hengrave (1603), at Knole (1645) and in the 1679 inventory of Ham House. P 231 and endnote 28, p 379.
[126] Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels*, p 124.

More unusual locations for these rooms can be seen on Chearnley's drawing where it is on the upper storey of the south west pavilion.[128] Among the Headfort drawings Castle (prior to 1751) places it in the west pavilion at ground level and Chambers, in 1765, in the east pavilion next to the stables. In both Johnston's and Wyatt's plans for Castle Coole (1789 and 1790) it is at a distance from the formal rooms, tucked away discreetly into the west wing. A plan for Mount Kennedy shows an octagonal room in the lobby of the first floor (**Fig. 5.11)**. According to Cornforth, this space was to function as a billiard room.[129] Byres' plan for Charleville Forest (1789) gives access to the billiard room either from the stair hall on the garden front, through the steward's room, or directly from the dining room. At Castlegar (1802, **Fig. 2.19**) the billiard table was located in the vestibule to the centre of the garden front. That year Johnston planned a top-lit billiard room above the porte-cochere for Killeen Castle, and at Carton in 1818 the billiard table is located in the hall, on what was earlier the garden front. In 1833 the Bernards were undecided whether the room linking the hall with the drawing room at Castle Bernard should be a gallery or a billiard room. The choice in nomenclature has already been noted at Ballyfin in the last chapter where the ante room next to the library on the garden front on one plan is annotated 'Anti Chamber & Billiards', and on another 'Billiards or Small Drawing Room'. At Rockingham the table can be seen on Nash's drawing at the far end of the house beyond the gallery, in room with a canted bay, again next to the library (**Fig. 2.7**).

From the inventories we learn that a billiard table was part of the furniture of the Long Gallery at Stackallan (1757), and, while there was a Billiard room at Moira House in 1808, the billiard table 'etc.' was in the Large Parlour together with what appears to be a lot of old furniture. At Newbridge (1821) there was a billiard table in the hall, but the only inventory that lists a specialised room (and that *has* a table) is that at Mount Stewart (also 1821). In addition it has half a dozen mahogany chairs plus three chairs painted black with cane seats, a few prints on the walls, a bust of Napoleon on the marble chimneypiece, and two busts (of the duke of Wellington and the Hon. F Stewart) on pedestals. The curtains here are of printed cotton lined with white calico, with white muslin drapery lined in blue calico, a white fringe and tassels.

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[127] Barnard, 'The Political, material…Cork settlers, *c.* 1650-1700' in P O'Flanagan, and C G Buttimer, *Cork history and society* (Dublin 1993), pp 309-65, endnote 64.
[128] Laffan (ed.), *Miscelanea,* Plate 75.

It is interesting to note that billiard rooms, or billiard tables, in the houses mentioned above, were accessible to all members of the family at a time when playing billiards was just another occupation. In the Victorian age it was a different story: billiard rooms were considered a male preserve, and were to be found at a remove from the rest of the rooms, often adjoining a smoking room.

Family spaces – bedrooms

Before looking at family bedrooms, it is interesting to note a letter sent by Lady Kildare to her husband in *c.* 1762, in which she complains of the cold in Carton ('the stairs running with wet'), 'I feel the want of my winter rooms now sadly and shall set about finishing them directly. You'll say, was the Print Room cold? No, but the way to it from the apartments we are in at present perishingly so'. She 'lives' in the India-paper room chiefly, as 'tis near my own and that I have no passage or staircase to pass'.[130] It is an interesting comment on the reality of private lives in large houses, and is the only reference to winter or summer apartments in Ireland that this study has produced, but it is unlikely to have been unique.

On the plans up to mid-century most houses have bedrooms on the ground floor, as part of the formal rooms or, or in the wings as at Headfort, suites of bedroom, dressing room and closet, and upstairs a mix that occurs frequently – a suite, some bedrooms with closets or dressing rooms, others with neither. Castle's Headfort plan was more coherent than his earlier drawings for Carton, where bedrooms, dressing rooms and closets abound on plans for both ground- and first-floor, but the attic storey here shows fifteen bedrooms. Only one proposal among the drawings for Kildare House shows a bedroom on the ground floor, with a closet and a WC. As built, Lord and Lady Kildare's bedrooms and dressing rooms were located opposite to each other on the first floor (**Fig. 4.15**). Privacy was ensured with the location of a door at the top of the main staircase to the right that led into the family quarters. Access for personal servants to those quarters was by way of a spiral staircase,[131] the only stairs that went from basement to attic storeys. In the attic was the nursery suite that comprised a large room for the children (there were many in the family), a bedroom for their nurse and a closet. Similar to Castle's plan

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[129] John Cornforth, 'Mount Kennedy, Co. Wicklow – I' in *Country Life,* 28 October 1965, pp 1129-31. NLI, Mount Kennedy drawings, AD 3568(52f) , Bed Chamber Story, drawing by Thomas Cooley, November 1781.

[130] FitzGerald (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily,* I, letter from marchioness of Kildare to her husband dated 9 December [1762], pp 149-50.

[131] Castle's plans for 45 Kildare Street show a similar spiral staircase from basement to attic. David J Griffin, 'The building and furnishing of a Dublin townhouse in the 18th century' in *BIGS, vol. xxxviii,* 1996-1997, pp 24-39. Another can be seen at Castle's Bellinter House, co Meath.

for Castle Coole is a couple of bedrooms on a plan for the first floor at Carton showing them with alcoves, the small triangular spaces lit by the window, creating closets (**Fig. 5.12**).[132] It is noteworthy that the Castle Coole drawing shows no bedroom at ground-floor level (though the later plans by Johnston and Wyatt do, but in the family wing), nor is there any evidence that there ever was one at that level at Russborough, another Castle building.[133]

In Castle's plans for the Dublin house of the Donerailes at Kildare Street, there is a dressing room and closet to the rear on the ground floor; an inter-connecting dressing room-bedroom-closet on the first floor, and on the second floor, four bedrooms and one closet. In plans probably by John Ensor, who executed the house from *c.* 1745, when Castle was occupied with Kildare House, the dressing room on the ground floor was for Lord Doneraile, while the first-floor one was for his wife, and was part of the formal rooms. It can be seen by looking at these plans of an early townhouse in Dublin, how difficult it must have been to avoid encounters with servants in such a confined space.

From mid-century, while bedrooms continued to be on the ground floor, they were not part of the formal rooms, but generally for the master (and mistress?) of the house. At Castle Coole, though, they were confined to the wings of the house in both Johnston's and Wyatt's plans, the latter managing the spaces better, finding space for two bedrooms with dressing rooms in the west wing and three bedrooms with two dressing rooms between them in the east wing. The house was completed to Wyatt's plans and, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the west wing was where the private accommodation for the family was located. By comparison, Johnston provided two bedrooms to each wing, with neither dressing room nor closet. Three plans for Mount Kennedy (1781) show General Cunningham's preference for a ground-floor bedroom with his study off the hall to the right. Two of these have a bedroom behind the study[134] and to the rear is 'Mrs Cunningham's dressing room', off the drawing room. Thus the private quarters are separate with the option of using the dressing room with the formal rooms. The third has the bedroom off the hall to the left with an apsidal end within which the bed is drawn, with a closet behind it, and behind that is the dressing room with a Wyatt window overlooking the garden (**Fig. 5.13**). Here the family quarters take up the depth of the house, with no direct access to the formal rooms from the dressing room. At

[132] Similar alcoves are in the bedrooms at Russborough, county Wicklow.
[133] In conversation with David Griffin.
[134] One has a powdering closet between the study and bedroom.

Townley Hall (1794) one of the proposals was for a bedroom, together with a dressing room and powdering room for Mr Balfour to the left rear of the house on the ground floor, with 'own study' to the right, but this was abandoned and, as built, the study remained, with a dressing room next to it and his bedroom upstairs (**Fig. 5.14**).

In the nineteenth century it was increasingly the case that bedrooms disappeared from the ground floor in newly-built or altered houses. There were exceptions, for example, at Dromoland. In one of the drawings attributed to the Pain brothers (*c.* 1826, **Fig. 5.15**), the private rooms there are on the same level as the formal rooms, but at a distance from them along ranges that form a quadrangle to the rear of the house. The spaces for the family are located to one side of two corridors, and beyond that, spaces for servants and offices. The family spaces are worth a closer look. Access is gained to the family wing via a lobby off the (formal) gallery. This accommodation comprises 'Lady O'Brien's bedroom', off which is a dressing room at the top left of the quadrangle: there are two rooms for her husband 'Sir E O'Brien's room' and 'Sir E O'Brien's room of business' which are almost diagonally opposite each other. This introduces an interesting question that shall be briefly looked at before continuing with the Dromoland plans: did couples share a bedroom? People of all classes thought nothing of sharing rooms even with perfect strangers when travelling or visiting. Dorothea Herbert, when staying at Castle Blunden in 1784, shared a room with her parents who slept in one bed while she and her sister slept in another.[135] Lord Aldborough wrote that in 1792 he and his wife shared a room with their nieces when travelling, and that Lord Rochford and his man slept in the dining room.[136] And in the last chapter it was seen that, to ease the overflow of guests at his house, the owner shared the butler's room.

According to Girouard, the dressing room was an English refinement of the French plan, introduced as a result of English couples sharing a bedroom, unlike the French who enjoyed separate quarters. [137] In Maria Edgeworth's *Ormond* (1817), the hero was proudly shown 'the convenience, and entire liberty, that result from the complete separation of the apartments of the husband and wife' in a Paris hôtel, 'with their own staircases, their own passages, their own doors in and out…'.[138] Roger North, writing in the 1690s, while recommending a dressing

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[135] *Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert 1770-1806* (London 1929-30, Dublin 1988 edn), p 102.
[136] Ethel M Richardson, *Long forgotten days (leading to Waterloo)*, (London 1928), p 308.
[137] Girouard, *Life*, p 150. Lord and Lady Kildare enjoyed them too, at their Dublin house, as has been seen.
[138] Maria Edgeworth, *Ormond*, (London 1817, 1972 ed.), p 339.

room each for a husband and wife, states that if there is a shortage of space, then the man should have the dressing room 'who most needs it, because of the roughness of his service and dressing, and the lady keeps possession of the bedchamber'.[139] North implies that it is a shared space. The second room for O'Brien (above) is self-explanatory: was the other room a dressing room (bearing in mind that dressing rooms frequently contain beds), or a bedroom? Where did he sleep or did the O'Briens share a bedroom? An oddity about the plans is that, despite Roxborough Castle above, the bedroom of the [male] owner is usually not specified, but there is little hesitation in mentioning a wife's bedroom, as here and at Ballyfin, as will be seen below. Yet in the fairly detailed inventory for Dromana (1755), in the red damask suite of rooms used by the Grandisons, a bedchamber is listed only for his lordship, together with a dressing room each (beds in neither, though a 'large couch…with a thick matterass' appears in his) and an 'anntie chamber or drawing room'. With lots of china listed in Lady Grandison's dressing room and in the bedroom, and little in her husband's dressing room, it might be concluded that they slept in 'his' bedroom.

That bedrooms were at least sometimes shared is confirmed by the 4th duke of Rutland who wrote to his wife on 12th May 1787, 'I have passed ye 2 last days at Castletown, & slept in ye same room when we did together at ye Ball', and a week later from Dublin Castle, 'Alas my dear it is very melancholy to go to Bed night after night without you. I lie on your side but I long to be turned over & sent to ye other side of the bed'.[140] There is little doubt that Lord and Lady Fingall shared the large circular bedroom at Killeen Castle, flanked as it is by the oddly shaped dressing rooms for each. The inventories, however, show that the Clements at Ashfield House (1808) and the Londonderrys at Mount Stewart (1821) had separate bedrooms and dressing rooms. Furthermore, beds were to be found in Mr Clements' dressing room, and in both of the Londonderrys' dressing rooms. With regard to the O'Briens, it seems more likely that the bedroom was shared by the couple: the adjoining dressing room was either for Lady O'Brien, or shared, and 'Sir Ed. O'Brien's room' was a dressing room or a private study for her husband.

The plans for Ballyfin show similar private accommodation. Lady Coote's first-floor apartment on the garden front in one of the Morrisons' early designs (1822), consists of 'Lady Coote's Room' (a dressing room/boudoir), rectangular in shape

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[139] Colvin and Newman (eds), *Of Building*, p 134-5.
[140] Belvoir Castle muniment room, Add. ms 43 'Letters from Charles 4th Duke of Rutland to his wife ... 1775-1787', a bound volume. My thanks to Edward McParland for the reference.

with curved corners, a tripartite arrangement with a central domed area and arches (**Fig. 5.16**). To the left the room opens to a private staircase,[141] called on the plan 'a private Staircase to Lady Coote's apartment', and a water closet. The dressing room is linked to 'Lady Coote's Bedchamber' on its right. Like Dromoland, there is no mention of Sir Charles Coote's bedroom, unless it is the 'Bed chamber' across the open court to the front of the house, which would mean a fair distance between the two bedrooms. The ground-floor plan shows his 'Writing room' (**Fig. 5.17**) with an accompanying dressing room below his wife's bedchamber, but no sign of his bedroom. Another plan of about the same date might throw some light on the subject (**Fig. 5.18**). Here Lady Coote's suite consists of three interconnecting rooms on the garden front - boudoir, bedchamber and dressing room. Interestingly, the bedchamber has a private staircase that connects with Sir Charles Coote's dressing room on the ground floor, at which level there were no bedrooms (**Fig. 5.19**). It might be concluded then, that they shared the bedroom.

Similar to the earlier plan (**Fig. 5.16**) where a door from Lady Coote's bedchamber leads via a lobby to the Nursery, and thence to the Nursery School room to the front of the house, another (**Fig. 5.18**) shows from her dressing room, a passage to the nursery on the first floor of the service wing, where the school room is also located, together with a room for Lady Coote's maid, and one for the governess. In the main block a door in the gallery or corridor effectively cuts off the family apartments from the rest of the house, as the arch at the top of the private staircase cut off half of the first floor for the use of the family. The Dromoland plan shows a not dissimilar layout. Next to 'Lady O'Brien's bedroom' and the adjoining dressing room is a 'Young Ladies bed room', a 'School room', and a room for their governess (**Fig. 5.15**). Continuing after the business room is a bathroom, followed by the 'Childrens Bed room' adjoining a 'maids room' where the solid wall indicates the end of the family quarters. In England at least, it was common by the 1820s for the 'family' bedroom and the wife's dressing room and boudoir to be on the first floor and the husband's study and dressing room to be at ground level.[142]

It will be noted that an emphasis is placed on the proximity of the nursery at Ballyfin to the mother's or the parent's apartments, an emphasis that was more

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[141] Upon installing herself at the Hôtel Carnavalet, Paris, Mme de Sévigné was pleased to find close to her room 'a fairly adequate little private staircase; it will also be the morning stairs for my servants, my workpeople and my creditors'. Quoted in Michel Gallet, *Paris Domestic Architecture of the eighteenth century* (London 1972), p 80.

[142] Girouard, *Life*, pp 231, 286.

pronounced in nineteenth-century houses. Before then, children were generally accommodated on the top floor, fitted in wherever it was most convenient. It is not clear if the Cootes were specific about this requirement, but the architects mention it in a hand-written note on the second set of plans. It coincided, according to Girouard, with the trend leading to the Victorians' sense of family values and the advent of the family apartment.[143] But in 1791 Lady Portarlington, after a visit to Abbeyleix, had some interesting remarks about Irish families:

> I wish you could see the sort of comfort all these families have in each other, you would then think a large family a blessing. I must admire the Irish manner of bringing up children, for in all the families I have happened to know there seems the most perfect ease and confidence and except from their attention to each other, you would never find out which were fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, everyone amusing themselves in the manner they like best, and nobody expecting any particular attention or respect...Even at the Duke of Leinster's, where there is a great deal of state, I could not help admiring the great grown-up girls stealing an opportunity when they thought the company did not mind them to hug their father and mother with an appearance of affection that did one good.[144]

Like Ballyfin and Dromoland, a ground floor plan of Powerscourt Wicklow (1843, **Figs 5.20, 5.21**) shows the proximity of the childrens' rooms to those of their parents'. Here an inter-connecting sequence from the centre of the garden front comprising Lord Powerscourt's study-breakfast room-boudoir-bedroom-dressing room, leads into the nursery rooms in the wing. As the formal rooms were on the first floor, this was obviously the family area, where Lord and Lady Powerscourt shared a bedroom; she had her boudoir and he his study.

It has been noted in Chapter 4 that Mr and Mrs Bernard each had a study at Castle Bernard, county Offaly (1833). Doors from both studies leads across a passage to the 'Childrens Room' at the return. On the first floor are two bedrooms directly over the studies, and a dressing room (shared?) over the children's room. It is also worth noting that a back staircase in the return adjoins these rooms, and that access to the ground-floor suite is under the main staircase. This keeps the family quite private and at a remove from the formal spaces.

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[143] Girouard, *Life*, p 286.

[144] Letter to her sister, Lady Louisa Stuart, from Lady Portarlington dated 10 January 1791. Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*... ii, p 167-68. The countessof Kildare's correspondence from as early as the 1760s is full of references to her expanding number of children. She espoused Rousseau's principles on the education of children, even asking him to be their tutor, an offer he declined. She acquired Frescati in county Dublin as a seaside home where her children enjoyed a healthy and balanced lifestyle under the direction of their tutor William Ogilvie.

Family spaces : dressing rooms and closets

Another early reference to a dressing room in the *OED* is in 1683 when John Evelyn notes in his *Diary* that 'I went…into the Duchess of Portsmouth's dressing-room within her bed-chamber'. At the end of the seventeenth century it became fashionable for women to dress in their bedchambers,[145] but in the course of the following one the dressing room became an important space, particularly for women. As has been seen in Chapter 4, it was sometimes used as a room of display, part of the sequence of formal rooms. But it also had a more private and personal use, part of the bedroom suite that usually included, in addition, the closet.[146] In seventeenth-century French houses it was not unusual that two or three closets adjoined a bedroom and their usage varied: one for the close-stool, another a *garde-robe* (which has a similar meaning to wardrobe) where clothes were stored and a personal servant slept, and a third might be for prayer, study or work. The latter room was called in France a *cabinet* where small, expensive works of art and sumptuous furnishings could be privately enjoyed or shared with a few select friends.[147] Gradually one of the closets became a dressing room as furniture suitable to its new use was acquired: a table covered with a carpet, over which a *toilette* was placed to protect it from stray hairs and cosmetics; a mirror and a pair of candlesticks, all of which evolved into an ensemble of furniture that showed off the silver dressing-sets that were fashionable by the end of the century.[148] In inventories of the latter part of that century e.g. those of the Ormonde family, the terms 'dressing rooms' and 'closets' are used fairly continuously, both separately and as adjuncts either to bedrooms or to each other.

In Sir Roger Pratt's plan for Coleshill, Berkshire (*c.* 1660), which has already been looked at, a coherent and compact form of interior planning was conceived that allowed a flexible system of circulation within the house. Sets of three rooms - one was large (flexible in function, it could be used as a bedchamber, parlour or withdrawing room) with two small rooms or closets off it - are located at each corner of the house on both main floors. This layout placed the formal rooms - the hall, the Great Parlour and above it, the Great Dining Room - to the centre of

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[145] Girouard, *Life*, p 150.

[146] The *OED* defines the closet as a 'room for privacy or retirement' and quotes as early examples Chaucer (*c.* 1374),'In a closet for to avyse her better, She went alone' and Caxton (1490) 'In her closet she hideth herself sore sighying'.

[147] Thornton, *Authentic Décor,* p 25.

[148] Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration,* pp 302-303. A silver gilt toilette service was given to his wife as a wedding present by the 19th earl of Kildare on their marriage in 1709, illustrated the exhibition catalogue of *The treasure houses of Britain: five hundred of private patronage and art collecting,* National Gallery of Art, Washington, New Haven and London 1985), catalogue no. 124. A list with details of Lady Grandison's toilette service ('My Lady's Dressing Plate') at Dromana is listed among the Villiers-Stuart Papers T/3131/F/2/18 at PRONI.

the house. The central or spinal corridor provided access to rooms and apartments and had back stairs at each end. Pratt explained that the bedchambers 'must each of them have a closet, and a servant's lodging with chimney both which will easily be made by dividing the breadth of one end of the room into two such parts' and, from the servant's room, 'a pair of backstairs ought to be adjoining…'.[149] One of the closets in each set opened onto the corridor, which had two advantages. One was that the servant could carry the contents of the close-stool directly down the backstairs, thus avoiding unsavoury odours throughout the house. The other was that a mode of escape from unwanted visitors was created. Pratt's plan was an architectural response to a demand for privacy and convenience that was not new but was articulated in the seventeenth century, an important point that will be dealt with elsewhere. It provided more privacy than had heretofore been possible, and more comfort, with smaller rooms that were easier to heat.

The dressing room, however, served a dual purpose for men. It was the precursor of, and sometimes in addition to, the study or 'own room', and often located on the ground floor. There it was, ideally, according to Isaac Ware, next to a waiting room where business callers with a previous appointment, and 'of better rank than those who remain in the hall', waited to see the master. As the morning was the usual time for business, they were admitted to the dressing room whilst *en déshabille.*[150] In a great number of the plans of Irish houses dressing rooms are located next to or close to the hall as will be seen. Most of these do not name it as that of the owner of the house, but it was likely to be understood at the time that this was at once 'a place of dressing' and a room in which business was conducted. Before looking at the more intimate women's dressing rooms, we shall look at those for men.

Men and business

In 1759 Lady Louisa Conolly of Castletown described her husband's wainscoted dressing room to the right of the hall at Stretton, their Staffordshire residence.[151] In his plans Richard Castle was fairly consistent on this point. In all three ground-floor plans for Carton (c. 1739) he places a dressing room to the left of the main staircase leading into a closet and a WC in the south-west end bay. This suite was probably for Lord Kildare's business meetings and must have suited him because in a proposed plan drawn by him in 1762 (he was created marquis of Kildare in 1761) he retained these

[149] Quoted in John Bold, 'Privacy and the Plan' in John Bold and Edward Chaney, *English Architecture public and private: essays for Kerry Downes* (London 1993), pp107-119.
[150] Ware, p 432.

rooms but placed them to the right of the hall. In a design for Castle Coole (*c.* 1741) the dressing room and closet are again located to the left of the hall with two inter-connecting bedrooms to the right, where it is likely that the earl of Belmore slept. In a plan for Kildare House, a parlour and a dressing room are to the right of the hall: the former as a waiting room, the latter in which to conduct business. Some dressing rooms or studies had a door leading to a courtyard either directly or via a back hall so that people coming to the house on business were not required to use the main entrance. This occurs at Headfort in two plans by Castle,[152] at Lucan House,[153] at Townley Hall in plans by both Johnston and by Blayney and Anne Balfour,[154] at Dromoland (*c.* 1826), at Tullynally (Pakenham Hall),[155]and at Killeen Castle.[156]

Because of the narrowness of a town house it was customary for the gentleman to have his dressing room on the ground floor, unrelated to a bedroom, and the lady to have hers on the first floor. This was the case at 45 Kildare Street, Dublin, for which both Richard Castle and John Ensor made plans in about 1746. An inventory of 1762 confirms that the ground-floor dressing room was indeed Lord Doneraile's where he had a 'mahogany escritoire', a 'mahogany writing table' and a 'mahogany tall boy', '6 walnut chairs stuffed seats covered with green damask' and a black leather arm chair. Over the chimneypiece was a picture of Doneraile, and there were seven maps and a barometer, items not at all associated with women's dressing rooms as will be seen later, though he also kept a mirror there.[157]

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, it is interesting to note a new trend in room names on plans. 'Study'[158] and 'own room' or 'Mr (owner's name)'s room' began to grow in popularity and are used at times in conjunction with a dressing room, but eventually replace it at ground-floor level.[159] The study as a room name was known from the early seventeenth century. It had established itself in England by the end of

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[151] Brian FitzGerald, *Lady Louisa Conolly 1743-1821* (London 1950), p 25.
[152] John Harris, in *Headfort House and Robert Adam*, states that in a portfolio inscribed 'Mr Ensor's Plans' are 'plans that are clearly by Castle'; David J Griffin, 'A Richard Castle design for Headfort, Co. Meath', in Conleth Manning (ed.), *Dublin beyond the Pale: studies in honour of Patrick Healy* (Bray, Co Wicklow 1998). pp 269-272.
[153] NLI Prints and Drawings, AD 1590 and 1589.
[154] IAA/EMcP, Mitchell/Crichton Drawings, M11 and M14.
[155] IAA Murray Collection, Tullynally (Pakenham Hall).
[156] IAA, Murray Collection, Killeen Castle.
[157] David J Griffin, 'The building and furnishing of a Dublin townhouse in the 18th century', *QBIGS*, vol. xxxviii 1996-1997, pp 24-39.
[158] Thornton indicates that this room name was established by the end of the seventeenth century. *Authentic Décor*, pp 25, 52.
[159] Ware recommended an eastern situation 'most proper for a study, for the morning is the time for resorting thither'. Ware, p 324.

the century, and is listed in three Irish inventories dating to 1645, 1656 and 1686.[160] The earliest study among the plans is much later, among the drawings by Thomas Cooley for Ardbraccan in 1773 where, to the right of the hall in one of them, there is a grouping of study, dressing room, powdering room and WC. The earliest reference to the term 'own room' appears on a drawing by Johnston for Townley Hall in 1794 where a 'wardrobe' adjoins it and, in another, undated and unsigned drawing at the same locations are 'Mr Balfour's own room' and 'Mr Balfour's dressing room'.[161] According to the plans 'own room' was a name much favoured by Johnston and his clients who were perhaps aware of a trend whereby the 'public toilette' was going out of fashion for men who now preferred to dress in an upstairs dressing room. 'Own rooms' and studies, such as that at Mount Kennedy, where business was contracted, were overtaking these dressing rooms for men (**Figs 5.22-24**).

In *Vanity Fair,* Thackeray described how the master's study and its location enabled him to control his household:

> Behind Mr Osborne's dining room [at his house in Russell Square, London] was the usual apartment which went in his house by the name of the study; and was sacred to the master of the house. Hither Mr Osborne would retire of a Sunday forenoon when not minded to go to church; and here pass the morning in his crimson leather chair, reading the paper…No member of the household, child or domestic, ever entered that room without a certain terror. Here he checked the housekeeper's acccounts and overhauled the butler's cellar-book. Hence he could command, across the clean gravel courtyard the back entrance of the stables with which one of his bells communicated, and into this yard the coachman issued from his premises as into a dock, and Osborne swore at him from the study window.[162]

Women's spaces

That women's closets, dressing rooms and boudoirs were perceived as essentially female spaces possibly owes much to the Enlightenment and its emphasis on the autonomy of the individual. From letters, journals, diaries and visitors' accounts, it is clear that these spaces held a fascination for women in the course of the eighteenth century. Details of furniture, décor and objets d'art were seized upon, eagerly discussed and imitated. From inventories and plans, it is evident that there is often a blurring of distinction between them: they can have similar furniture and can be of a similar size, though the closet is usually smaller than the dressing room or boudoir. But in novels,

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[160] Thornton, *Seventeenth-century,* p 303, and *Authentic Décor,* pp 25, 52. 'The Earl of Corke's study' in Cork House, Dublin (1645) and at the earl of Kildare's Dublin house (1656) both in Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels,* pp 33, 40; Burton Hall, co Cork (1686) in ffolliott and de Breffny, 'The contents of Burton Hall, co. Cork in 1686' in *Irish Ancestor* vol. v, no. 2.

[161] IAA Mitchell/Crichton collection, Townley Hall, Principal Floor June 1794; NLI, AD 2499.

[162] John Sutherland (ed.), William Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* (OAP, World Classics 1983 edn), p 281.

correspondence and journals a difference is discernible: the closet was a small, intimate and secluded space in which to pursue one's personal interests, a room that furnished the need for privacy and relaxation. In his essay in *A History of Private Life* (devoted mainly to France it must be said), Orest Ranum observes that in the early modern era architects created new private spaces in houses 'or, rather they increased the amount of private space by transforming into rooms what had previously been mere objects of furniture'. He concludes that 'a man who once kept a locked writing desk could now closet himself in his writing room and lock the door'.[163] Lord Chesterfield's comment in 1746 that 'the knowledge of the world is only to be acquired in the world, and not in the Closet' underlines its seclusion.[164] But it was precisely that quality of undisturbed privacy that appealed to women. In a letter dated 1769 to her brother the duke of Richmond, Lady Louisa Conolly wrote from Castletown that she has locked herself up 'in my Closet and am sure of no interruption, for the very act of setting down to write to you…'.[165] Lady Carlow wrote to her sister in 1782 that she was going 'to do up a small room above stairs for my sanctum sanctorum, in which I intend to have everything to myself, and retire to it to paint, read or write let who will be in the house [Dawson Court, county Laois]' - surely a reference to a closet.[166]
Similarly Maria Edgeworth describes a visit to Trentham, Staffordshire in 1819 where she and her sister were taken to sit in Lady Elizabeth Gower's 'darling little room at the top of the house, where she has all her drawings, and writing, and books, and harp', at a distance from other spaces.[167]

Mary Ashwoode's room in Sheridan Le Fanu's *The Cock and Anchor* contains the same items but a guitar and a spinet in place of a harp. Throughout the book the space, which is next to her bedroom, is rather confusingly called by different names - 'room', 'study', 'little drawing-room', 'dressing-room' and 'boudoir', but perhaps they all amount to something similar.[168] It should be borne in mind that while the author set his story in the first decades of the eighteenth-century, it was written 100 years later. He describes the 'dressing room' as where Mary and her cousin sat, worked, read and sang together, and that it 'had grown to be considered, by long established usage, the rightful and exclusive property of the ladies of the family, and had been surrendered up to their private occupation and

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[163] Quoted in Bold, 'Privacy and the Plan', pp 107-119.
[164] Philip Dormer Stanhope, earl of Chesterfield, *Lord Chesterfield's advice to his son, on men and manners; containing the principles of politeness* (Edinburgh 1787 edn), p 63.
[165] IAA, Bunbury Letters, ref. Typescript 97/84, 10 June, 1769.
[166] Clark (ed.), *Gleanings,* i, p 184.
[167] Hare (ed.), *Life and Letters of Maria Edgeworth,* I, p 258.
[168] J Sheridan Le Fanu, *The Cock and Anchor,* 3 vols (Dublin 1845), iii, pp 40, 58, 64, 109, 193.

absolute control'.[169] This privacy is underlined by her response to Nicholas Blarden whose unwelcome attentions she spurns 'I am sure you are not unaware, Mr Blarden, that this is my private apartment; no one visits me here uninvited, and at present I wish to be alone'.[170]

Family spaces: boudoir

Those sentiments could also be applied to the boudoir. In its formal sense it has been mentioned in Chapter 4, and here it will be looked at in its role as a private room. The etymology of the term is interesting. It comes from the French word *bouder* - to pout or sulk and, according to a 1752 dictionary, was defined as a small closet or cabinet 'named because of the habit of retiring there, to sulk unseen, when one is in a bad mood'.[171] According to Lilley, it came into being in the mid-eighteenth century in France when women began to abandon their roles as courtiers and *salonnieres* to take more seriously those of wife and mother: this gave them a more flattering image of themselves, and more control over the domestic sphere. It also coincided with a desire for privacy and intimacy that grew from the early part of the century, and that included the provision of smaller, more comfortable, rooms. Women were better educated, read books, wrote letters and probably required a private space for themselves, just as their husbands had their study or cabinet.[172] The French were quite clear about the function of the boudoir. It was a private room for a woman, where she could relax, read, contemplate, pray or entertain her friends. It was decorated luxuriously: Madame de Pompadour in the 1750s had embroidered silk hangings, and a blind of Italian painted taffeta with a 'silk and gold cord ending in an elaborate tassel' in her boudoir at Bellevue.[173]

As a room name, the boudoir was not long in acquiring overtones of sexual intrigue: a private space, controlled by a woman, into which men might be specifically invited, could titillate the imagination. The architect Le Camus de Mezières set the scene: 'the boudoir is regarded as the abode of sensual delight, where plans may be meditated and natural inclinations followed. It is essential for everything to be treated in a style in which luxury, softness and good taste predominate'.[174] Thornton describes a number of sumptuous boudoir interiors of *demi-mondaines* in France, one of which, in 1788, boasted a ceiling and walls of

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[169] J Sheridan Le Fanu, *The Cock and Anchor,* iii, pp 40-41.
[170] J Sheridan Le Fanu, *The Cock and Anchor,* iii, p 55.
[171] Quoted in Ed Lilley, 'The Name of the Boudoir', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians,* 53, June 1994, pp 193-198.
[172] Lilley, 'The Name of the Boudoir', pp 193-198.
[173] Quoted in Thornton, *Authentic Décor...*, p 101.
[174] Quoted in Lilley, 'The Name of the Boudoir', pp 193-198.

mirror.[175] Such an interior was known at least in satire in Dublin in the early 1730s. Adjoining her bedroom, Lady Newburgh's small room, 'where she was accustomed to lie with people' was hung with mirrors 'so that wherever [she] might look…the image of her pleasant work might be given back to her and so that by this ingenuity…her pleasures might be doubled'. She boasted that she was the first to design such a scheme, but, while her room sounds every bit as intriguing as some of the French boudoirs of the latter half of the eighteenth century, no indication is given of its name, apart from the innocuous-sounding 'little room'.[176] Apart from the mirrors and, one assumes, a bed or cushions, we know nothing of furniture or furnishings in Lady Newburgh's room, nor is there any indication that she started a fashion in Ireland. Fifty years later the boudoir of Mlle Dervieux must have caused a ripple of excitement when it was described as having not only walls of mirror but the ceiling and the floor too, on which cushions were strewn about for 'amorous combats'.[177]

The possibilities of the boudoir had perhaps narrowed slightly as the nineteenth century progressed, if the locations of Lady Coote's and Lady Powerscourt's rooms as part of the family quarters, and close to their children, are taken into consideration. It is interesting to note that among the drawings for the three houses, Ballyfin, Adare Manor and Powerscourt, no closet is to be found attached to bedrooms in the family quarters. This was possibly because bathrooms were becoming popular, a room that now had a specific purpose. So was the boudoir sometimes seen as a replacement, a larger version of the closet, now that privacy for a woman was established and respected? Lady Coote had a four-room suite of boudoir, bedroom, dressing room and a room (unnamed) in which is a WC and a bath. Morrison refers to the boudoir as a 'sitting room' in a note on the plan, and on another it is called 'Lady Coote's room', indicating the fluidity of room names. At Adare Manor in the Pains' plan dated 1834, Lady Dunraven's boudoir terminates the family wing comprising bedroom (shared?) flanked by dressing rooms, followed by a bathroom (**Fig. 5.25**). Just over thirty years later, in a privately published book, the boudoir is also referred to as a sitting room.[178]

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[175] Thornton, *Authentic Décor*, p 146.
[176] Frederick Scheffer [i.e. William King], *The toast….*, (Dublin 1747 edn) xiii-xvi, Ver 56. Latin notes translated into English by Oscar Timoney. My thanks to Edward McParland for use of these notes. McParland, *Public Architecture*, p 180.
[177] Thornton, *Authentic Décor…*, p 146.
[178] Caroline, countess of Dunraven, *Memorials of Adare Manor,* (Oxford, printed for private circulation 1865), p 28.

Thornton (1978 and1984) and Cornforth (1992) have both pointed to the fact that the closet and the dressing room were spaces where women tended from an early date to experiment with decorative ideas that often became fashionable. The Princess of Orange, in the first half of the seventeenth century, 'cannibalised' Oriental lacquer screens to insert them as panels in the walls of her closet. For her imitators, when the genuine article was unattainable, European painters could produce chinoiseries using ordinary paints and varnishes.[179] 'It was here', according to Cornforth, meaning the dressing room and by implication, the closet,

> that ladies seemed to indulge their fantasies..., often using less expensive materials with a short life span. It was from here that lighter and less formal methods spread through houses, for example, the taste for Chinese decoration was associated with bedrooms and dressing rooms and so later, was the rise in the popularity of painted furniture.[180]

As the seventeenth century closet was a place of comfort and ease for one's temporary retirement, it was here, according to Thornton, the comfortable seat-furniture 'that was so striking a product of the late seventeenth-century upholsterer's skills' could be seen, such as cushioned couches and easy chairs.[181]

Details of schemes for these rooms were enthusiastically related in correspondence: women enjoyed designing decorative projects, exchanging ideas and selecting colours and fabrics. From a very young age, Lady Louisa Conolly worked unceasingly on her home and gardens at Castletown, county Kildare. As a sixteen-year-old bride in 1759, she described her plans for the closet next to her bedroom at Stretton Hall, Staffordshire, the Conolly seat in England:

> I am now sitting in [the] small closet next to my bedchamber that is going to have a window down to the ground and hung with pretty paper and pictures, and my things for writing, and all litter in it. The closet is not larger than Mrs Vesey's little tidy one at Lucan.[182]

By April 1761 she had decorated two closets at Castletown with India paper, sent to her by her mother-in-law, Lady Anne Conolly, who was frequently commissioned by Louisa and her sister Emily (Kildare) to purchase items in England that were either not available in Ireland or more expensive here.[183] In her attic storey Louisa created a 'delightful pretty room' out of a lumber room, 'with

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[179] Thornton, *Authentic Décor*, p 21.
[180] John Cornforth, 'More than a dressing room', *Country Life*, 16 April 1992, pp 112-115.
[181] Thornton, *Seventeenth Century Interior Decoration*, p 302.
[182] FitzGerald (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily*, III, letter from Lady Louisa to countess of Kildare dated 28 July 1759, p 23.

blue paper and white knotted furniture in it' and hanging white satin in another.[184] At Castletown in 1769, the countess of Shelburne admired Louisa's 'very pretty dressing room fitted up in ye French taste hung with white damask and ye portraits tied with knots of purple and silver ribbons'.[185] Caroline Fox, Louisa's sister, had a white damask dressing room on the first floor at Holland House, London, where the hangings had gilt borders,[186] and their sister Emily had a similar colour scheme at Leinster House, Dublin.[187]

Lady Glandore's dressing room at Ardfert House, county Kerry, was on a fairly modest scale. The room was 'a sweet little place' according to Lady Carlow who was less than complimentary about the house after her visit in 1785, when she described it as 'an old fashioned place in a very bleak country, with a bowling green surrounded with clipped hedges to look out upon…a dismal place'. Its chatelaine, Lady Glandore, has 'been here these two years without stirring which…is doing penance for a young woman that likes diversion as much as she does…'. The rooms were small, low and wainscoted. Lord Glandore, however, grudgingly allowed his wife to 'fit up a little dressing room belonging to the apartment I am in', and Lady Carlow describes it:

> hung with white paper, to which she has made a border of pink silk, with white and gold flowers stuck upon it, and hung the room with all Mr Bunbury's beautiful prints; the window curtains are pale pink linen with white silk fringe, the chairs pink linen with a border painted on paper, cut out and stuck on gauze and then tacked on the linen. It does not sound well but it has a very pretty effect, especially for a little room. The mouldings are gilt, and the windows down to the ground, the toilet gauze, with flowers of foil and straw, etc…two charming little screens done with prints from Lady Spencer's drawings.[188]

In 1747, Bishop Edward Synge of Elphin took pains to ensure that his young daughter's dressing room in their house on Kevin Street, Dublin, was in tune with the latest trends. In letters to Alicia he encouraged her to have her 'whole dressing room painted', but was unsure whether or not to paint over the new carvings just put up by John Houghton (probably wainscoting). Two years later he suggested that she might want sprigged muslin for the room as it is so pretty, and he

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[183] IAA, Bunbury Letters, 94/136, letter from Lady Louisa Conolly to her sister Lady Sarah, 28 April 1761.
[184] IAA, Bunbury Letters, 94/136, letters from Louisa to Sarah, 22 May 1762: 16 December 1760: 14 February 1768.
[185] Bowood Papers, 'Extracts from the Diary of Sophia, countess of Shelburne', vol. 5, 1 August 1769.
[186] Baird, *Mistress of the House*, p 105.
[187] IAA, Bunbury Letters, 94/136, letter from Louisa to Sarah, 2 August 1768.
[188] Clark (ed.) *Gleanings*, ii, letter from Lady Carlow to Lady Louisa Stuart 4 September 1785, pp 39-40.

informed her that papering down to the floor (the skirting board) was now all the fashion.[189] Maria Edgeworth's father purchased blue and white paper for his wife's closet as early as 1742.[190] Mrs Delany was busy with her decorative ideas at this time too. She wrote to her brother in 1750 that she had 'greatly improved' her dressing room by covering the painted olive walls with 'a dove-colour flock paper', and some years later informed her sister that she had hung her closet with crimson paper with 'a small pattern that looks like velvet'.[191] The Bedfords, when taking up their positions as viceroy and vicereine at Dublin Castle, were asked in 1759 whether they would prefer paper or silk hangings in their apartments; if their preference was for paper they had a choice between flock or a chintz pattern; and whichever they chose had to match the curtains.[192]

The inventories are not informative about wall treatments: in 1728/9 tapestry and Kidderminster hung on the walls of Lord Powerscourt's closet at his Wicklow house (1728/9) while there were gilt leather hangings in 'Mr Wingfield's Dressing room and Closet' in the Dublin house. At Dromana (1755) the dressing room belonging to the Blue Damask Room was similarly hung with blue Indian silk damask and matching curtains, while at Kilrush (*c.* 1750) there were four panels of caffoy[193] in a dressing room with a matching settee bed. Beds were contained in many dressing rooms, closets, (but in only one boudoir[194]) in the 'long eighteenth century', underlining the historical importance of the bed as the major piece of furniture in a house. Interestingly, the trend continued well into the nineteenth century if the Crom Castle inventory of *c.*1860 is anything to go by where almost every dressing room had one.[195] It also seems to be the case that from the second half of the eighteenth century dressing room beds were often in the form of sofa, or settee, or couch beds, though they did appear earlier. It is not quite clear how the beds in these rooms were used. In some cases earlier in the century they may have been for servants, but mostly they seem to have been for resting in during the day, if required, and perhaps as an occasional alternative to the marital bed.[196]

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[189] Legg (ed.), *The Synge Letters,* dated 9 September 1747; 4 July 1749; 18 August 1749, pp 84, 126, 154.
[190] Barnard, *Making the grand figure,* p 94.
[191] Day (ed.), *Letters*, pp 164, 171.
[192] Toby Barnard, *Making the grand figure,* p 95.
[193] 'Caffoy' is described in the *OED* as 'some kind of fabric, imported in the 18c', but quotes Mrs Delany using a caffoy paper with a 'pattern like damask'.
[194] Mount Stewart inventory, 1821.
[195] Neither boudoir had a bed at Crom Castle. PRONI, Erne Papers, D/1939/27/26, undated inventory, possibly *c.* 1860.
[196] Lord Powerscourt had a 'Green Paragon Couch Bed' in his closet at Powerscourt (1728/9); field beds appear in dressing rooms at Killeen Castle (1735/6) and the old bishop's palace at Elphin (1740); oak table beds at Killeen Castle and at Barbavilla (1742/3), and settee beds at Ashfield House (1808), Clogrenane Carlow (*c.* 1810) and Lord Howth's at St Mary's Abbey, Dublin (1748). At

Looking at items of furniture in the inventories that were most frequently to be found in dressing rooms and closets, it is perhaps surprising that there is not a great deal of difference between those in women's and those in men's rooms. Leaving aside beds, furniture that was generally common to both were upholstered seat furniture, and painted, rush-bottomed or cane chairs and covers (to protect them when not in use, and/or to ring seasonal changes). Dressing tables were often made of deal as they were covered - painted at Newbridge House - concealed by fabric, as at 10 Cavendish Row, Dublin (1763), where red tammy (a twilled worsted fabric) is used, over which was flowered muslin, and a 'vail' (perhaps of muslin) which could be placed over the dressing table or the floor to protect it from stray hairs, pins, or hair or face powder. Mirrors of different sizes (usually more in women's rooms), desks, writing tables, chests of drawers, shelves and various small tables made up most of the furniture, together with fire guards, fire irons, firescreens (sometimes with its own cover as at the Ingoldsby house in Mary Street, Dublin (1731), which was of blue paragon), fenders, and prints. It seems surprising that full-size screens (as opposed to firescreens) were not common items in these rooms, but perhaps the need for privacy when attending to one's ablutions was minimal. There were also utilitarian items such as clothes airers, washstands, basins, ewers, tumblers and foot pans. 'Necessary' pieces, such as the close-stool or bidet - sometimes called 'deception commodes', as at Furry Park[197] and Carton, were often found in dressing rooms, but perhaps more frequently in closets. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu explained to a friend why her close-stool was painted with the spines of books by Pope, Swift and Bolingbroke: 'They were the greatest Rascals, but she had the satisfaction of shitting on them every day'.[198] Chamber pots were sold in Ireland with the face of Richard Twiss painted on the bottom, after some unflattering remarks by him in the account of his tour in Ireland.[199]

There is neither close-stool nor chamber pot in the couple of boudoirs for which there are inventories. The 'boudouar' at Mount Stewart (1821) on the first floor

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Killadoon (1807) and at Judge Vandaleur's property at Furry Park, Raheny (1834) were sofa beds: Carton (1818) lists a 'wardrobe bed with red check curtains', a 'couch bed with green furniture' and a 'bookcase bedstead' in the Summer, Spring and Winter Dressing Rooms respectively, and tent bedsteads appear at Mount Stewart (1821). As well as bed steps, beds usually had pieces of carpet either to step out upon, or to go around them. At Carton most beds were surrounded by 'Venitian Bedround' carpets: Mrs Delany made one for her bed in 1752.

[197] *Dublin Evening Post*, 30 June 1834, 'Sale of the late Judge Vandeleur's property at Furry Park near Raheny'.

[198] Quoted by Norma Clarke, 'Refining Tastes: Literacy and Consumerism in the Eighteenth Century', *Gender and History*, vol 6, No 2 August 1994, p 276.

[199] Richard Twiss, *A Tour of Ireland in 1775* (London 1776).

appears to be *ensuite* with the 'Pink Bedroom' and dressing room. The window curtains are of pink cotton and white muslin trimmed with blue and black cotton that matches the drapery of the mahogany (day?)bed, held in place by an eagle and ring. Apart from the bed, two armchairs and a carpet, the only other item of furniture listed is a 'mahogany inlayed chamber bath with white lyner'. Lady Crichton's boudoir at Crom Castle (*c* 1860) was also on the first floor. Not quite as sophisticated at Lady Erne's downstairs (cf. Chapter 4), there is evidence of her ladyship's interest in music as it contains a piano, a harp, a music stool and a music stand. Also there is a sofa and pillow, three armchairs, and nine other chairs with white satin covers, a number of tables, including two for writing, four mirrors including one over the chimneypiece, ten pictures, a chandelier and, curiously, a 'chimney board and curtains'.[200]

It is worth noting that of the five men's dressing rooms in the inventories where fabric is specified (one was Lord Powerscourt above), four had chintz furnishings and date to the first half of the nineteenth century: They are Lord Leitrim in 1807 at Killadoon[201]; 'Mr Cobbe's dressing room' at Newbridge in 1821, Judge Vandeleur at Furry Park (1834), and Lord Lurgan's oriel window at Brownlow House was hung with chintz in 1848.[202] Lord Howth's dressing room at Howth Castle (inventories dated 1746-52) was quite austere with six walnut chairs covered in Spanish leather. (His wife also had walnut chairs, but with chintz covers, in her dressing room.) He had a walnut escritoire, a 'delf fountain and basin', a pair of backgammon tables, and a large cache of arms.[203] Lord Leitrim had fifteen oil paintings on his walls (many painted by his wife), eleven of them with gilt frames, and Lord Lurgan had an unspecified number of prints.

A few items are worth noting in some of the men's rooms. Dressing boxes appear in Lord Powerscourt's closet ('a set of fine India Japan'd Dressing boxes') in

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[200] Mentioned also in Chapter 3, chimney or fire boards fitted the opening exactly. The services of a decorative painter were secured to do the job, or alternatively it was possible to buy wallpaper from a warehouse such as McCormick and Benn, located opposite the piazzas in Essex-Street, who advertised their paper 'for hanging Rooms, Staircases, Ceiling and Chimney Boards' in *The Dublin Journal*, 7-10 June, 1766.

[201] Inventories of Killadoon, 26 September 1807, and 1830.

[202] PRONI D/1928/H/9 Brownlow Papers, 'Inventory and valuation of Furniture and Plate in Brownlow House, Co Armagh made by Robert Pasley of Bachelors Walk, Dublin and James Dowell of Geroge St, Edinburgh, Upholsterers & valuators appointed to make such valuation by order of 11 November 1848'.

[203] Frances Power Cobbe writes that her father kept 'a few' pistols, 'two or three blunderbusses, sundry guns of various kinds' and his regimental sword, all of which hung in his study. *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, I, p 10.

1728/9, in a more 'formal' dressing room at 10 Cavendish Row (1763),[204] and in Cobbe's dressing room at Newbridge House (1821). A 'Morocco hair case for travelling' in Mr Clements' dressing room at Ashfield House (1808) might be one (or is it to hold his wigs?) and, in a later (1843) inventory for the same house, two appear in another dressing room. They are also listed in the Best Bedchamber at Killeen Castle (1790) 'sett of dressing boxes Indian and glass', and in two bedrooms at Clogrenane (c.1800). Holding dressing and grooming accoutrements, such a container would seem to be a fairly essential item at a time when people moved from house to house, but it does not appear as frequently as one would expect, though it might be mentioned simply as a 'box' in inventories. Tool boxes are listed in the dressing rooms of George Cockburn at 10 Cavendish Row (1763), of Lord Fingall at Killeen Castle (1790), and of the duke of Leinster at Carton (1818) where he also kept a 'bench with vice and anvil'. While these might indicate an interest in DIY, another explanation might be that it was a safer place to keep some essential tools in case of emergency. Apart from over 6,000 volumes in his Book Room at Clogrenane, Mr Rochfort had 400 books on his dressing room shelves, as has already been mentioned. Books to the value of £150 were kept in Cockburn's room, and at Convoy, county Donegal (*c.* 1844) the books in the study were worth £600. Cockburn used the 'Small dressing room' as a place of safety where he kept an iron chest containing jewels and, notably, two guns. It was not unusual to find arms in these rooms: together with a 'gold-headed Kane', Mr Balfour kept '2 Small Silver-headed Swords and a Mourning sword in his closet (c.1741) at Stephen's Green. Sir Edward O'Brien, in his will dated 1765, left to his son, Donough, all his pistols and guns 'kept in my little armory or guncase in my closett at Dromoland';[205]at Carton (1818) the duke of Leinster kept a case of pistols, a sword and a sword blade in one of his dressing rooms (in addition, he had a tomahawk in his study, though his proficiency in using it remains undocumented), and Lord Erne kept a sword and handcuffs in his room at Crom Castle (c.1860).

A 'grater for tobacco', a 'Leather Case with four Tortois Shell Razors, 2 Small Daggers, one of them a Poison'd Blade, a Pair of Nail Nippers' and '2 Spy Glasses', together with '12 Chairs covered with Barbary Leather' seem to point to the Dressing Room at the Ingoldsby house in Mary Street, Dublin (1731), as being a man's room. Similarly a 'bootjack', a device for holding the boot by the heel to ease

[204] The room is quite richly decorated with, among other things, gilded moulding around the chimneypiece, a mahogany tea chest, a card table, lots of china and objets d'art.
[205] Ainsworth (ed.), *The Inchiquin MSS*, p 525.

withdrawal of the foot, is mentioned occasionally; at Carton they seem to be attached to mahogany clothes horses.[206] Items such as estate maps, topographical images, paintings of their houses and demesnes, were proudly displayed as reminders of their wealth in the studies and offices belonging to men. The horse-mad Sir Edward O'Brien had, appropriately, 'A Landscape of Newmarket' over the chimneypiece in his closet at Dromoland, county Clare in 1753, and a 'Small Hunting Piece' among other paintings in his closet. The five paintings listed in his wife's dressing room are portraits of family members.[207]

Bathrooms and WCs

In all of the inventories throughout the period of this study close-stools, 'necessaries', chamber pots, commodes and bidets are mentioned. Yet, according to Michel Gallet, in eighteenth-century Paris 'sanitary installations were already in wide use and greatly improved'.[208] In Le Blond's 1710 revision of D'Aviler's *Cours d'architecture* (1691) he writes about the closet in which heretofore the close-stool stood, and which now has a water-closet, though he does not use that term, explaining that 'this sort of place is entirely new', but he mentions pipes, a tap and a valve.[209] Whether the 'delightfull Waterhouse' seen by Thomas Dineley in the 1670s at Kilkenny Castle, had anything to do with water closets is unclear. He described it as 'adjoining to the B[owling?] Green, which with an Engine of curious artifice by the help of one horse furnisheth all the offices of the Castle with the necessary Element', which had apparently been in place ten years previously.[210] Also in the 1690s Celia Fiennes describes a water closet designed for Queen Anne as 'a little place with a seate of easement of marble with sluices of water to wash it all down', and at the same time ten water closets were installed at Chatsworth.[211] However, close-stools are to be found in the Ormonde inventories in the 1670s – the duke's covered in leather with pewter pans. The box-like close-stool continued to be used throughout the century, sometimes decorated with velvet or leather, sometimes disguised and called a 'deception commode'.[212] It certainly deceived the duchess of Northumberland who complained in her journal that at Hopetoun, 'the

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[206] Mentioned in the dressing rooms of Lord Doneraile at Doneraile Court (c.1830s), Eagle Dressing Room at Killadoon (1807), Autumn Dressing Room and Dressing Room adjoining Study at Carton (1818).

[207] Jane Fenlon, *Goods and Chattels*, pp 130-134.

[208] Michel Gallet, *Paris domestic architecture of the eighteenth century* (London 1972), p120.

[209] Thornton, *Authentic Décor,* p 50.

[210] Quoted in Pakenham, *The Big House in Ireland,* p 56.

[211] Thornton, *Authentic Décor,* pp 60, 97.

[212] At Dunham Massey, Cheshire, the wood of which the close-stools are made match the importance of the apartment to which they are attached: deal, mahogany, walnut to 'veneered walnut edged with ebony and with the earl of Warrington's coronet and monogram in marquetry on the lids'. The latter came supplied with silver pans. Jackson-Stops and Pipkin, *The English country house*, p 183.

Housekeeper sent me into the Closet to look for a Chamber pot but it being in a Box I could not find it'. She also complained that the water closet at Harewood in 1771 'stinks all over the House'.[213] Archbishop Charles Agar in 1784-85 built a study over offices to the rear of the Cashel palace, equipped with a water closet.[214]

During the 1780s cabinet-makers in England such as Hepplewhite and Sheraton were producing what they called 'harlequin' furniture (magic transformation being the business of the Harlequin in a pantomime) with ingenious sliding and folding parts that disguised the real purpose of the piece, i.e. as a container for the bidet or chamber pot.[215] 'Mahogany and red leather bidets' appear in bedrooms in the 1807 inventory at Killadoon; Eggleso provided '2 maho[gan]y Bedsteps with commodes covd. in Carpeting' at £5.13.9d. and a 'Mahoy night stool & pan' for Brook Lodge in 1808.[216] At Carton (1818) bedrooms and dressing rooms contained 'deception' and 'night' commodes, and frequently bidets with delph pans.[217]

A 'water closet', drawn on the plan as a circle within a rectangle (the standard architectural illustration for the space), is annotated on all of Castle's ground-floor plans for Carton (*c.* 1739), and a similar configuration, though with three circles (a 'three-seater'[218]) appears on one of his plans for Headfort. It appears that the water closets of the late seventeenth century were not efficient and, according to Hardyment, no patents for such a device were entered between 1617, when the Patent Office opened, and 1775, indicating that none of the varieties available were worth patenting.[219] Thomas Cooley has a WC on a ground-floor plan for

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213 Victoria Percy and Gervase Jackson-Stops, 'The travel journals of the 1st duchess of Northumberland, I', in *CL*, 31 January, 1974, pp 192-95.
214 A P W Malcomson, *Archbishop Charles Agar: churchmanship and politics in eighteenth-century Ireland, 1760-1810* (Dublin 2002), pp 58, 354.
215 Lawrence Wright, *Clean and decent: the history of the bathroom and the W.C.* (London 1960, edn 1966), pp 114-15.
216 The 'commode' originally referred to a piece of furniture with drawers. The 'night stool' or night table' with the hidden chamber pot became known as a 'night commode', then simply 'commode'. Wright, *Clean and decent*, p 118.
217 According to Wright, the bidet originated in France in the early eighteenth century and advertised in Paris from 1739: 'To the English the bidet has always carried a certain aura of Continental impropriety, and has never quite been accepted. It is found in bathroom designs of the naughty nineties, but then only in the most palatial, made for a sophisticated and well-travelled few, and there it has its discreet upboard'. *Clean and decent*, p 115.
218 The owner of Felbrigg wrote to his architect James Paine in 1752 about 'the little house' near the bleach field: 'I think it the best place imaginable. Should not the inside be stuccoed, or how do you do it? how many holes? There must be one for a child; and I would have it as light as possible. There must be a good broad place to set a candle on, and a place to keep paper. ..the holes should be wide and rather oblong, and the least broad and not quite level, and rather low before, but rising behind'. Quoted in Christina Hardyment, *Behind the scenes: domestic arrangements in historic houses* (National Trust, 1997), p 212.
219 Hardyment, *Behind the scenes*, p 215.

Ardbraccan in 1773,[220] and on ground and first floors at Mount Kennedy in 1781; both Playfair and Johnston have them on the ground floor at Townley Hall (1792 and *c.* 1794), and, while Richard Johnston's ground plan shows one to each side of the main block in the wings at Castle Coole, Wyatt has none (1789 and 1790). James Gandon planned one for Carriglas (*c.* 1794-6) and Penrose provided two: one on the ground floor at Woodville in 1797, the other directly below in the basement for the servants. In one of Morrison's published drawings (no. 10) he has two WCs side by side, one across a lobby from the dining room (for the ladies?), the other was approached through the 'Gentleman's dressing room' (**Fig. 5.26**). These later eighteenth-century water-closets may owe something to the patent taken out in 1775 by Alexander Cummings on his valve-closet and his invention of an early version of the S-bend in the waste pipe that remained filled with water, thereby preventing unsavoury smells from below. Joseph Bramah, a cabinetmaker improved this valve in 1778.[221]

While they grew in popularity throughout the nineteenth century, and the plans demonstrate this, their provision seemed to be at the discretion of the owner. Was Castle indicating a water closet complete with valve, cistern etc. at Carton and Headfort? A French architectural treatise of 1738 described a ceramic pan with a valve and a cistern with a tap: a handle opened the valve, or it could be opened by lifting the flap-seat. [222] According to the *OED* (quoting its first mention in 1755) a WC is 'a small room...furnished with water-supply to flush the pan and discharge its contents into a waste-pipe below'. Significantly, perhaps, it continues that the term is 'sometimes applied...loosely, to any kind of privy'. So might it just be a space within which a close-stool can be located? It is notable that the term 'close-stool' had all but disappeared from inventories by the end of the eighteenth century. Servants used the outdoor 'bog houses', located at a safe distance from the house.

Baths

Wash-stands with ceramic bowls, jugs and soap dishes are frequently mentioned in dressing rooms and, as the eighteenth century progressed, attractive pieces of furniture were designed for that purpose. Some of the plans show baths. One of Castle's designs for Kildare House is interesting: to the right of the hall is a room

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[220] On the attic floor at Ardbraccan is a window box on a staircase landing, lined with lead, with a drain and a lid, into which the contents of the chamber pots were dispensed and disappeared down a pipe. Conversation with the owner, David Maher, September 2007.

[221] Hardyment, *Behind the scenes*, p 216.

[222] M Gallet, *Paris domestic architecture of the eighteenth century* (London 1972), p 120.

in which a monumental walk-in bath is approached by steps and flanked by columns (**Fig. 5.27**). It adjoins a bedroom and closet and is an early design for what looks like a plunge bath. According to Girouard, a number of very elegant plunge baths were being installed in houses in England from about 1730 when 'any country house could in theory have running water on all floors': they were generally located in the basement or on the ground floor due to the difficulty of getting running water above that level.[223] At Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire a plunge bath designed by John Soane in *c.* 1792 is located on the ground floor, on the servants' staircase, where a double staircase leads down into it and steps are built into its wall.[224] Thomas Coke, 1st earl of Leicester wrote to his architect in the 1730s about his proposed plunge bath:

> I would not have the floor in the bathing room done anything to, till I see you for we shall have a trap door in it into the cellar. Wt. I mean is I shall have a bath made in the cellar wch. will rise to that story & fit for me to jump into, besides the bath that stands on the floor for a hot bath.[225]

The bath at Kildare House may have been raised rather than sunk towards the basement, as was another unexecuted plan by Nash for Rockingham (1809) which showed a mezzanine floor containing five nurseries and a large bathroom within which was a 'large raised plunge bath and a smaller hot bath'.[226] The hot and cold baths, with accompanying dressing rooms provided for in plans by Playfair and Johnston in the basement at Townley Hall in 1792 and 1794 have already been noted.

Some of the plans on which a bath or bathroom is annotated are by Benjamin Hallam for Straffan House (1808) where it is on the first floor, and there is a strange layout to the first-floor of Pakenham Hall (Tullynally) in a drawing by R Richards (1820).[227] Lady Longford's Sitting Room is on the garden front, and her 'Bath' is in a room off the 'Earl of Longford's Bedroom' to the front of the house: between her two rooms is the staircase and a passage, a dressing room (shared?), back stairs and, of course, her husband's bedroom.[228] Bathrooms and baths form

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[223] Girouard, *Life*, p. 256, Plate 161.
[224] Hardyment, p 205.
[225] Christine Hiskey, 'The building of Holkham Hall' in *Architectural History*, 40, 1997, p 152.
[226] Wheeler, 'John Nash and the building of Rockingham', pp 169-95. Castletown, Lucan and Luttrellstown each had eighteenth-century bath-houses in their grounds.
[227] This drawing is displayed in the entrance hall of the house. My thanks to Edward McParland.
[228] One might assume they shared the bedroom. In a ground-floor plan that could be part of the same set, the earl has his 'Own Room', left of the hall, off which are his dressing room and his office.

part of Lady Coote's suites in Ballyfin plans (*c.* 1822) and part of the family wing at Adare Manor (1834). Lord Belmore installed a 'genuine ancient marble bath from his tour in Italy' and had it fitted into a small room in the basement in 1820 at Castle Coole.[229] While fixed baths were convenient, the portable bath, filled by servants, and placed next to the fire in the bedroom, was more comfortable, like the mahogany 'Chamber Bath Tin Lyne' in the marchioness of Londonderry's bedroom in Mount Stewart in 1821.

Lady Londonderry lounging in her tin-lined bath while being attended by servants underlines the theme of privacy or otherwise that informs this discussion of both the private spaces used by families, and the accommodation provided for servants in Irish houses. The following section will examine that theme in more detail.

Section III: Privacy

All visitors to a house in the period under discussion would have understood that the family apartments were private and therefore, out-of-bounds, leaving them to the family, and their servants. This is something that is visible in the plans of the house: the separation of private from public spaces. It facilitated comfort in the use of smaller rooms, and more intimate spaces. During the eighteenth century, according to Philippe Ariès, 'the family began to hold society at a distance, to push it back beyond a steadily extending zone of private life' with, for example, beds becoming confined to bedrooms (increasingly upstairs), and corridors providing a more direct way from one space to another without having to pass through rooms. Some specialisation of rooms became apparent, bells could summon servants from a distance, and people were visited by their friends on a specified 'at home' day, emphasising a new respect for privacy. He also mentions that people became more health- and hygiene-conscious, something that can be seen in inventories for dressing rooms, closets and later, bathrooms.[230]

Solitude was sought for activities such as reading and the pursuit of particular interests: Linda Pollock points to the 'development of self-knowledge as witnessed by private diaries, memoirs and correspondence'.[231] This coincided with a new

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[229] Hardyment, p 205. By the 1820s the technology for plumbed-in bathrooms with hot and cold water was available.

[230] Philip Ariès, trans. Robert Baldick, *Centuries of childhood; a social history of family life* (New York 1962 edn), pp 390-91.

[231] Linda A Pollock, 'Living on the stage of the world: the concept of privacy among the elite of early modern England' in A Wilson (ed.), *Rethinking social history: English society 1570-1920 and its interpretation* (Manchester 1993), pp 78-96.

emphasis on family life, and children in particular, a quality noted and commented upon in Irish houses, as has been seen. Ariès was of the opinion that:

> Ultimately the family became the focus of private life…It became something it had never been: a refuge, to which people fled in order to escape the scrutiny of outsiders; an emotional center; and a place where, for better or worse, children were the focus of attention.[232]

This was, therefore, privacy for the family from society. But two questions can be asked: firstly, how private were the private apartments from servants, and secondly, *was* there a desire among Irish families for privacy from servants?

With regard to the architectural plan, quite how segregated the servants were from the family is difficult to quantify in practice. Architects' plans probably showed the 'ideal' way of accommodating servants, as has been seen. Obviously personal servants – ladies' maids, valets or 'own men', nurses, and governesses – had their sleeping quarters close to or in the family area, and there was probably little they did not know about those they were serving. Employers were aware of this and some measures were taken to enable private conversations, one of which was the dumb waiter which, when set up, dispensed with the presence of servants. In at least one case in England, the owners spoke to each other in French.[233] It was sometimes considered an advantage if a servant was illiterate so that letters could not be read. But it must be stressed from looking at plans, that there were places, like the closet, in which one could isolate oneself. The design of a town house was not conducive to privacy, not least because backstairs were frequently used by the employers to get to their bedrooms, as the main staircase rarely went beyond the first floor (this occurs in many country houses, too), and space was at a premium. But despair at lack of privacy on the owner or his family's behalf, is not obvious from the material examined in this study.

As to the question of whether there was a desire for privacy from servants, Tim Meldrum makes the very pertinent point that the 'quality of the interaction between household members was more important in determining the degree of 'privacy' available than bricks, mortar, wainscot' or separate accommodations.[234] Well into the eighteenth century the 'family' referred not just to blood relations but included the servants: both Bishop Synge in the 1740s and Lord Kildare in the 1760s

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[232] Quoted in Pollock, 'Living on the stage', pp 78-96.
[233] Pollock, 'Living on the stage of the world', pp 78-96.
[234] Tim Meldrum, *Domestic service and gender 1660-1750* (Essex 2000), p 125.

referred to theirs as such.[235] Their role was paternalistic: they ensured that their servants were warmly dressed, well fed and taken care of when ill. While the term may well have continued to be used, especially in the few large households (such as Kildare's) where a real effort was made to maintain discipline in tandem with the paternal role, towards the end of the century that seemed to change. Irish houses were remarkable for the numbers of servants and various hangers-on, some of whom were given odd jobs for payment in kind. Punishments for misdemeanours were handed out, as one would treat an unruly child. In an effort to curb any excess among his staff, the duke of Leinster ruled in 1769 that he would not for the future 'permit any dancing to be in any part of my House without my leave or the Dutchess [sic] of Leinster's, which Occasions Neglect, Idleness and Drinking and makes the Family Irregular'.[236] A letter that appeared in *The Hibernian Magazine* in November 1781 indicates what could happen if discipline was not imposed:

> On Thursday evening last, or rather Friday morning, a scene of 'High life below stairs' was exhibited in the house of a person of distinction near Stephen's-Green. Mrs Margery the cook gave a grand *route* to several ladies and gentlemen of her acquaintance. But they were all *routed* about 4 in the morning by the unexpected appearance of the house steward, who had come from his master's country seat on particular business. The butler was instantly discharged, just after having amused the company with the finest exertions of theatric excellence in the soliloquy of Hamlet.

In many cases, there was a fairly good relationship between Irish servants and their employers: depictions of them in novels such as Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* convey an amount of intimacy between them. Employers sometimes gave them tickets to the theatre and time off for the races and even included them in their amateur theatricals. Mrs Delany (as Mrs Pendarves, in January 1732/3) attended 'a masquerade among the servants at Plattin [Platten Hall, county Meath] that entertained mightily. Lord George Sackville dressed himself up in women's clothes, and played his part archly; he is a comical spark'.[237] The household servants at Carton attended performances of plays put on by the Leinsters' children in 1771, and minor parts in *Cato* were 'done by the Servants among whom we have some good ones'. A month before, the footmen and postillions there had acted *The Beaux Stratagem* and it appears to have been an annual event as

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[235] Patricia McCarthy, 'Vails and travails: how Lord Kildare kept his household in order' in *IADS*, vol. VI, 2003, pp 120-39. Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1757) defined 'family' as 'those who live in the same house'.

[236] Quoted in McCarthy, *Vails and travails*, p 125.

[237] Thomas U Sadleir and Page L Dickinson, *Georgian mansions in Ireland* (Dublin 1915), pp 84-85.

'they acted last year very tolerable and are improved this year'.[238] The play *High life below stairs* caused riots by the servant class in England, led by footmen 'who regarded the farce as an insult to the 'fraternity'. This was one of the reasons why private theatricals in houses became popular there, and quickly extended to Ireland, where the 'elite were able to savour fully the pleasure of aping the lower orders',[239] as well as the doubtful pleasure of seeing the lower orders aping them.[240] At Shane's Castle, county Antrim it was a *sine qua non* in the engaging of a servant that he should play an instrument, as part of a band 'which was always ready either for orchestra or pleasure-boat'[241] or to accompany the many private theatrical performances put on there by the O'Neills.

It is evident that most Irish employers at best tolerated and at most enjoyed the idea of numerous servants, as Samuel Madden noted.[242] Their presence indeed proclaimed the social standing of the employer, particularly if they were in livery.[243] But Barnard's observation that calculations of the numbers of servants in a house seldom distinguished between those working indoors and outdoors and make it entirely possible that both types of servants might be found rambling about the house and its immediate environs. As late as 1842, William Thackeray, on his visit to Ireland noted the 'numerous people loitering about the stables and outhouses', the 'immense following of the Irish house, such as would make an English housekeeper crazy'. He tells of his arrival at a house where:

> Three comfortable, well-clothed, good-humoured fellows walked down with me from the car, persisting in carrying, one, a bag, another a sketching-stool, and so on: walking about the premises in the morning, sundry others were visisble in the courtyard and near the kitchen-door…As for maids, there were half a score of them scurrying about the house.[244]

Yet for all this apparent camaraderie and inclusiveness, there was another side to the situation outlined as early as 1738 by Madden. Addressing the 'Gentlemen of Ireland', he deplored the insolence, greed and idleness of the Irish servant, and warned that 'if we do not resolve to remedy matters in time, and reform [the servants] by proper laws, we shall find ourselves very soon in as uneasy a

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[238] IAA Bunbury Letters, Louisa to Sarah, 24 September 1771.
[239] Gillian Russell, *The theatres of war: performances, politics and society 1793-1815* (Oxford 1995), p 124.
[240] At a masquerade in the assembly rooms in Fishamble Street, Dublin in 1778, Lord Jocelyn dressed as a housemaid, and Lady Ely as a washerwoman. *The Hibernian Magazine*, 1778, p 189-90.
[241] Ita M Hogan, *Anglo-Irish music 1780-1830* (Cork 1966), p 30.
[242] Madden, *Reflections and Resolutions,* quoted in Maxwell, *Dublin under the Georges,* p 104.
[243] Barnard, 'Public and private uses of wealth in Ireland, *c.* 1660-1760' in J Hill and C Lennon (eds), *Historical Studies* xxi (Dublin 1999), pp 66-85.
[244] William M Thackeray, *The Irish sketch book 1842* (Belfast 1985 edn), pp 209-10.

situation…as they are in England'.[245] Later in the century, when perhaps an 'uneasy situation' had arisen, the earl of Clonmell gave vent to his frustration in a tirade of abuse about servants, calling them 'an absolute band of robbers'.[246] By the mid-1760s, the vexed question of vails was being addressed by Irish employers, undoubtedly much to the chagrin of the servants.

There are other points to be made about Irish servants. The preferred servants from the early-eighteenth century were English and Protestant, as these were considered cleaner in their habits and dress. Lady Portarlington wrote to her sister from Dublin in 1781, 'I am out of all patience with the slovenliness and dirt of the people in Ireland, and I have just been hiring a housemaid who is an Englishwoman in hopes of getting my house kept clean'.[247] As the century progressed it became more difficult to find Protestants, some of whom had an aversion to being dressed in livery, which they considered to be a badge of servitude or of bondage, and Barnard makes the point that Protestant employers, while 'uneasy about entrusting the impressionable young to those of another confession, resigned themselves to being served by Catholics'. [248] Added to this were the political tensions of the latter part of the century leading to the 1798 Rising that must have in themselves caused a degree of unease in the 'family'.

It should be stated that comments from families and correspondence regarding problems with servants is limited, and that what attitudes prevailed in houses like those of the FitzGeralds, Conollys and Delanys, are not necessarily echoed in other houses where the domestic life of that family is undocumented. The majority of houses were smaller than Castletown or Carton and so family and servants lived in close proximity to each other. Bearing these points in mind, throughout their correspondence the servants of both Lady Emily Kildare and her sister Lady Louisa Conolly, are referred to in a way that is not abstract: servants are individuals, often referred to by their name. On the other hand, how particular servants were about the conditions of their employment, and how anxious an employer was to get a suitable servant can be gleaned from a letter written by Louisa[249] on behalf of Emily, who required a maid for Carton:

> 'She [Emily] begs that you will make her understand that the not dining at the Stewards table in this house is different from what it

[245] Madden, *Reflections and Resolutions*, p 62.
[246] John Scott, 1st earl of Clonmell, 'Life in the Irish country house', *QBIGS*, vii, April-December 1964, p 68-70.
[247] Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*, i, Letter to Lady Louisa Stuart, November 1781, p 166-67.
[248] Barnard, *A new anatomy*, pp 302-303.
[249] Probably to a contact in England.

> is in others for the maids Table is a more orderly creditable thing than in other Familys as they all dine by themselves in the Still Room and of course do not mix with the grooms, postillions &c. There is a better sort of Servant belonging to the Nursury here at present upon the footing that the other would be upon, who dines with the maids, and has very good wages, the Wet Nurse also dines there.[250]

On the occasion mentioned above when the servants went to the horse races, Emily wrote to her husband: 'All our servants ask'd leave to go; Sarah [her sister] and I stay'd at home to take care of Charles and Charlotte, who the women wanted to carry with them, but I wou'd not consent, as you may imagine'.[251] Three years later, in 1762, she remarks that the two nurses at Carton 'are the best play-fellows for children I ever saw; they invent some new diversion every night, they play and romp in Lady Kildare's dressing-room, and I sit in the India paper drawing-room, so I have them or not just as I like'.[252]

But revealingly, in an (unfortunately) undated letter from Castletown, Louisa observes, 'As to Servants, I think we treat them too much as if they were dependants, whereas I cannot think them so much so, for I am sure they give us a great deal more than we give them, and realy, if we consider it, tis no more than a contract we make with them'.[253] This opinion, undoubtedly shared by others, would point to a major shift in the way servants were looked upon. Their membership of a 'family' was beginning to be a thing of the past, their employment now on a businesslike or 'contractual' basis. In Britain, one of the many causes for this was the ban on vails, a perquisite that servants believed themselves to be entitled to, and that gave them independence, particularly when employers were tardy with paying wages.[254] It is fair to say that a similar situation prevailed in Ireland, though that has not been so well documented.

CONCLUSIONS

In Section I, where the question of servants' sleeping accommodation was discussed, it was seen that, despite the intention of architects' plans, the reality was

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[250] IAA, Bunbury Letters, Lady Louisa Conolly at Carton, 11 Sept. 1766.
[251] FitzGerald (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily,* I, letter from the countess of Kildare to the earl from Carton dated 17 April 1759, p 61.
[252] FitzGerald (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily,* I, letter from countess of Kildare to the earl from Carton dated 10 [December 1762], p 151.
[253] IAA, Bunbury Letters, in box marked 'bits & undated', letter from Lady Louisa Conolly, 29th September.
[254] Marshall, 'The domestic servants…', pp 15-40.

often quite different. It was noted that the higher up the servant was in the hierarchy, the better was the accommodation. The bedrooms of personal servants were, if possible, physically close to those of the family members that they served, while the other upper servants - stewards, housekeepers and butlers - were accommodated in basements or pavilions attached to Palladian houses.[255] Beds for the rest of the servants were located in garrets, attic storeys, basements, pavilions, or service blocks. They slept in varying degrees of comfort (or discomfort), in barracks and other rooms shared with others, if they were lucky, or on beds unfolded in tiny spaces, and often on straw and blankets on the floor of the kitchen, of the hall, or under the stairs. The proliferation of portable and foldable beds in the inventories confirms this mutability. In large houses like Carton and Kildare House, it was seen that servants often slept close to their places of work.

It would have been impossible for an architect to provide accommodation on plans for the great number of domestic staff that populated houses in Ireland. While Isaac Ware was not thinking of Irish houses when he advised that, if short of space, a bed for one man or two maids could be put in the kitchen,[256] Lady Sarah Bunbury had Frescati in county Dublin in mind when she suggested that the maids could sleep in a 'long strip' in the attic over her sister's bed. But accommodation such as this, with a guarantee of meals, was probably preferable to that in the servants' own family homes. It should also be noted that the inventories do not indicate any difference in contents between barrack rooms for guests and those for servants.

Segregation was noted: between the sexes in their sleeping arrangements, and between upper and lower servants where meals were taken in separate rooms, and it has been seen how prospective servants, particularly those at the upper level, required reassurance in advance of accepting a position regarding the table at which they were expected to eat. And the hierarchical boundaries were maintained in the basement at Rockingham where there were two privies, one for upper servants, and the other for 'maids'. Other accommodation for servants, apart from the servants' hall, were powdering rooms, dressing rooms, waiting rooms, a sitting room for upper servants at Castle Bernard, one for the maids at Ballyfin, and a library at Pakenham Hall (Tullynally). 'Brushing rooms' and 'shoe' or 'boot' rooms enter the architectural lexicon at the end of the eighteenth century, leading to the more specialised spaces in Victorian houses. The Irish predilection for service tunnels has

[255] Stewards were frequently given houses on the estate, but had a room as an office in the servants' quarters.
[256] This became a feature of Irish kitchens.

been outlined both here and in an earlier chapter. While undoubtedly many house-owners preferred to oversee what was going on in the stable/kitchen/farm yards from the window of their study or dressing room, there were some who wanted the house to stand alone in the landscape, keeping the business that sustained it at arm's length.

Finally Section I looked at the perquisites that were available to servants. It was probably the sum of these that brought about a shift in the perception and status of domestic servants by the end of the eighteenth century. Board wages could be pocketed and they provided the servant with time and money to spend on drink. Servants wearing the cast-off clothing of their employers and aping their manners were felt by many observers to encourage ideas above their station. Card money was particularly lucrative for butlers and footmen so much so that in London at least, they refused service in houses where gaming parties were not held.[257] But it was vails that finally undermined the authority of the employers, who virtually allowed servants to dictate whom should be received, and then pretended not to notice when the servants extracted money from the departing guests. But another point is worth mentioning. It has been seen in Section III that, in the amateur theatricals that took place in the later eighteenth century in cities and towns across Ireland, the inclusion of servants was enjoyed by both sides. One of the positive side effects of this was that, while it blurred the social boundaries between masters and servants, even temporarily, it reinforced the sense of 'family', a quality that was becoming at thing of the past at that time.

The family's private accommodation was discussed in Section II. This began with a look at the library, a room that was sometimes used for formal entertaining but, as has been seen, rapidly became a space that was often the focal point for family activity. A few libraries were recorded on architectural drawings for houses prior to 1750, when the majority of those collecting books were clerics. Bishop Rundle's description of his library dating to 1739 is valuable from an architectural point of view, and his use of the room as a *salon* gives an early indication of its possibilities. The number of plans that included libraries steadily increased into the nineteenth century. The shapes – circular, rectangular, octagonal - and locations of these rooms were looked at and the point made that the prevalence of canted and bay

[257] Marshall, 'The domestic servants…', pp 15-40. Having supplied the candles also for the card parties, butlers or footmen could sell the candle ends to grocers. Two footmen, Fortnum and Mason, at the Court of Queen Anne used this perquisite as capital to begin their grocery business in London. *Lighting the country house 1660-1890* (Temple Newsam Country House Series No. 4).

windows suggested an optimum use of light. Libraries contained not alone books but curiosities, maps, and works of art collected by the owner. The inventories show that they were very well furnished with, apart from bookcases and shelves, numerous tables and comfortable chairs.

One perhaps might wonder at George Hardinge's remark in the 1790s about the unique quality of Lord Portarlington's library, and the difficulty of trying to find 'a common book for amusement' in even the 'best House of the Island' – to what degree was that true? Or was it true of the houses that he visited? Did some people, as Wakefield later said, buy libraries 'as part of the furniture' and only for show? Undoubtedly this was true of some, but the evidence shown in this chapter surely gives another picture. Many libraries were lovingly and carefully planned by their owners, from the architectural decoration that included the bookcases through to the comfortable furniture and furnishings that made them such seductive spaces to 'live' in. Creating an attractive space was one thing, reading the books contained therein was another. But again, evidence gleaned from novels, diaries, letters etc. and family papers, shows that people did occupy themselves reading in their libraries or elsewhere throughout the house.

With regard to bedrooms, while they gradually made their way upstairs, many remained on the ground floor, but in a private capacity, well into the second half of the eighteenth century. It was suggested that on architectural plans where the husband does not appear to have a bedroom of his own, the marital bedroom was usually given the wife's name. Taking into account that dressing rooms usually contained beds, perhaps it was accepted that wives always slept in the marital bed, (and so it was more her room than theirs) and that husbands sometimes slept in their dressing rooms. The upper classes in France preferred separate quarters, but not so in England nor, it appears, in most Irish houses.

Dressing rooms for men are frequently found on the ground floor. Originally for dressing in, many evolved into studies or 'own rooms', frequently with a door leading into the stable yard, while their dressing rooms became more private, often next to the bedroom upstairs. It was noted that studies appeared on three Irish seventeenth-century inventories, the earliest being 1645, yet it does not appear among the plans under discussion until 1773. Women's dressing rooms or later, boudoirs (sometimes both, as at Ballyfin) were located next to the bedroom, as was the closet. It was in these rooms that they enjoyed privacy and solitude, in which they entertained their women friends or invited male friends, where they worked,

read and wrote letters. While being the *locus operandi* of many an intrigue in fiction and plays, as well as in real life, it was here too that attention was lavished on the décor, ideas shared, opinions sought and plans put into effect. In a space such as the closet, it was easy to experiment with decorative effects, a room often so small that ladies would need to remove their hoops, something that undoubtedly encouraged informality.

The use of chintz fabric in four of the five men's dressing rooms was perhaps surprising, as it might be associated more with women's rooms. While the furniture in dressing rooms for both sexes was similar, there were some differences. One was the presence of the dressing box in men's rooms, which was apparently used by men in the eighteenth century, and contained grooming accoutrements. Guns, pistols and swords – Sir Edward O'Brien's 'little armory [sic]' - were also to be found there, as were items such as estate maps and topographical images.

The appearance of water closets on plans is interesting. One has to assume that the architect was indicating one with a valve and cistern, even though these did not work satisfactorily until after Bramah's invention of 1778. Or does this configuration merely indicate a location for a close-stool? Nor is there a noticeable increase in the number of water closets installed in post-1800 houses – for example, on the first floor of Ballyfin two appear, but both in the family accommodation. No doubt their guests made do with close-stools or chamber pots. Bathrooms do not figure greatly in the plans or inventories, but hot and cold baths were proposed in the 1790s for the basement at Townley Hall.

Section III examined the issue of privacy. Long before Roger Pratt designed Coleshill (*c.* 1660) private spaces had existed, and neither backstairs nor corridors were unusual, even if they were simply for defence against possible violation of that privacy. A look at seventeenth-century domestic interiors by Dutch painters such as Vermeer and Metsu underlines that sense of a private scene being revealed to the viewer. So, as John Bold puts it, it was not the existence of service stairs, closets and corridors, 'but the articulation of the need for them and the overall form of their accommodation' that distinguished the latter part of the seventeenth century.[258] He also states that the perception of privacy and how the need for architectural options to satisfy it 'appears to be mutable yet recurrent, but we have insufficient evidence to gauge the extent to which the requirements of earlier

[258] Bold, 'Privacy and the plan', pp 107-19.

generations matched those which were stated so strongly by the writers of the seventeenth century'.[259] What is obvious is that there was a desire for order in the plan, in which both family and servants had their own spaces, that was articulated by Pratt and at the end of the century by North. Robert Morris (*c.* 1702-54) stresses organic unity rather than privacy: on his plans he leaves the rooms devoid of names 'because every different Room may be, by every new inhabitant, converted to a different use…My general Design has been to introduce Convenience, Proportion, and Regularity'.[260] However, the Victorian architect, Robert Kerr stressed privacy as a 'first essential' in a gentleman's house.[261]

The plans in this study were examined to see how the family's private quarters were located close together and separate from the public areas in the house, often through the use of doors strategically placed across corridors and passageways. Children's rooms, and quarters for personal servants were located close to the parents' rooms, noticeable on plans dating from the early nineteenth century. It has been suggested that privacy was desired from society due to two factors: one, a need for solitude, to read and write and confide thoughts to diaries and in letters to intimate friends; and two, a stronger emphasis than before on the health and education of children. The informality in the relationships of children with their parents in Irish houses was frequently admired and remarked upon, as has been seen.

With regard to privacy from servants, it seems that servants were never at a great distance from the family, particularly in a town house where it would be very difficult for servants to be invisible. Mentioned above were the personal servants, close at hand for whenever their services were required, but undoubtedly dismissed whenever privacy was desired. The relationship that existed between employer and servant was crucial in this case and two positive examples are those of the Kildares and Bishop Synge. Lady Kildare wrote about her servants generally in a rather benign way, while her husband was the disciplinarian, doing his best to maintain order in 'his family' by issuing a series of instructions that were, it must be said, not unreasonable. Bishop Synge wrote to his daughter, 'you know me to be strict and Severe with regard to the Conduct of Servants: This is not the effect of temper, but of prudence. Harshness, irksome to myself, I find necessary to keep them in

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[259] Bold, 'Privacy and the plan', p 116.
[260] Quoted in Christina Marsden Gillis, *The paradox of privacy: epistolary form in* Clarissa (Florida 1984), p 22.
[261] Quoted in Gillis, *The paradox of privacy*, p 22.

order'.[262] People like Samuel Madden complained, probably justifiably, about servants but employers could be just as bad, and often imposed disproportionate punishment for minor transgressions.

The paternalism of the eighteenth century did not extend into the following one, and reasons were suggested for this (above). However, in spite of a new *modus operandi* between employer and servant, on a contractual rather than a paternal basis, and taking the political and religious tensions of the time into account, it appears that the two sides continued to get along together, or to put up with each other, sometimes in a haphazard way, into the following century. Irish employers still enjoyed the spectacle of large numbers of servants about the house, some of whom would be old retainers, others who came and went. Madden's comment that they were kept more 'for show' than out of necessity was probably still true but it may have been considered worth the odd incursion into the employers' privacy.

To conclude, it would appear from the evidence cited, that the family's privacy from servants was not a major problem. Nor, indeed, was privacy from society. When privacy was sought it was eminently possible to achieve it. The architecture of the house, with spaces such as closets,[263] dressing rooms and boudoirs, which were known and accepted to be private, amply facilitated it.

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[262] Legg, *The Synge Letters*, letter 175, p 383.
[263] Closets rarely appear on plans from the late eighteenth century onwards, perhaps due to the advent of 'working' WCs, and bathrooms.

CONCLUSIONS

To help flesh out some of the conclusions already noted at the end of each chapter, it might be useful to take another look at two houses that were referred to throughout the thesis: Headfort and Ballyfin. The Headfort plans date close to the beginning of the period under discussion (the 1740s) and, with their Palladian lay-out, look back to the early eighteenth century to the tradition of Richard Castle and others. Those for Ballyfin come towards the end (the 1820s) and in many respects look forward to the country houses of the Victorian period. Plans for Headfort were still being sought in 1765 when William Chambers made his proposals for the house. The Headfort plans are fairly representative of the typical economic Palladian layout that was much favoured in Ireland, where the kitchen or service wing was to one side of the main block, and the stables to the other. This differed with English practice where, as in Castle Howard and Blenheim, a wing accommodated the family while the central block was reserved for state rooms, an arrangement found, perhaps uniquely in Ireland, in Castle Coole. Ballyfin, on the other hand, while its kitchen wing is an asymmetrical appendage, has its stables (characteristic for the nineteenth century) removed to a separate block.

Both houses are large, both built for seventeenth-century settlers and both as built were remarkably luxurious: Sir Thomas Taylour engaged Adam to decorate his two-storey high great room (whether or not at the expense of alternately coloured guttae), and Sir Charles Coote lavished expenditure on inlaid floors. Such luxury, while remarkable, was not exceptional. Together with the inventories, the invoices and estimates show that huge amounts of money were spent on furniture and furnishings. A Galway businessman, Thomas Hynes, who purchased the relatively modest Brook Lodge, ordered items of furniture and furnishings for his house in 1808 that were fashionable, and very expensive. Similarly, the provost of Trinity College enjoyed remarkably expensive curtain arrangements in his saloon. It demonstrates the fact that the purchase and appreciation of such luxury was not the sole preserve of the ennobled owners of houses such as Castle Coole, Caledon, Howth Castle and Dromana. One characteristically late indication of extravagance, strangely unusual in the early eighteenth century, is Ballyfin's free-standing portico. And, perhaps popularised by the Morrison practice, and commonly seen in other Irish houses of the first half of the nineteenth century, is the proliferation of internal columnar episodes. On the other hand, a point of comparison between the Headfort drawings and Ballyfin is an interest in the variety of room shape: in one drawing for Headfort, a library (deriving from Leinster House) is the same shape

as that of Ballyfin. Maurice Craig's claim that the earliest example of the bow in both England and Ireland was Richard Castle's oval saloon at Ballyhaise, county Cavan, is interesting. Despite the increase, within our period, of the size of dining and drawing rooms, Ballyfin's two-storey high gallery was unusual in the nineteenth century.

Characteristic of the early period is the provision in all of the Headfort drawings of ground floor bedrooms, elaborated in some cases into *apartement* planning of ante-chamber-bedroom-dressing room. Bedrooms are more private and more family-orientated by the time that the Morrisons are planning Ballyfin. The *apartement* planning evident in the Headfort drawings is related to the development of enfilades on the garden front, a feature which Morrison seems, perhaps deliberately, to ignore in favour of corridors.

A number of Irish architectural characteristics have been noted: one is the grandiosity of locating a gate lodge across the road from the gateway in the country, announcing ownership of that land. Another is the underground service tunnel to which access was gained from the basement, or area, of the house. While not unknown in England, the tunnel appears to have been introduced to Ireland by Edward Lovett Pearce at Bellamont Forest. There too, Pearce introduced what seems to be an entirely Irish phenomenon – the 'Irish' lobby. Unknown in England, it had a strong following in this country, and was remarked upon by many visitors. It is notable that the latter two of these 'Irish' characteristics are to be found in, among many other houses in Ireland, Castle Coole, a house designed by an Englishman.

Irish houses generally had a basement or a half-basement, the latter being more common in England. The 'rustic' or ground-level basement where the main entrance was sometimes located, as has been seen, was not at all popular in Ireland, the only example found in researching this thesis, is at Powerscourt, county Wicklow. In this respect both Headfort and Ballyfin are characteristic in their different ways of Irish practice. In Dublin houses it was noted that, unlike in London, some have long and rather steep steps to the front door, giving the house an elevated and rather grand appearance.

Moving inside the house it was found that the importance of the saloon as a space had waned by the middle of the eighteenth century in both countries (earlier in England), notwithstanding the fact that it appears on Chambers' plan for Headfort.

Its decline is underlined at Ballyfin where, in the final plan, it had become a vestibule. The dining room's importance was underlined by its increasing size throughout the period under discussion, and the drawing room also grew in size, particularly from the beginning of the nineteenth century. The differences in size are evident when one contrasts the Headfort plans with those of Ballyfin (though admittedly Headfort was given one of the grandest eating parlours in the country). Also evident from these is the decline of the parlour as a room name. Absent from Ballyfin, but present in Chambers' and Castle's Headfort, it was replaced during the latter part of the century by breakfast rooms, morning rooms, studies and, later perhaps, by the library, though the term continued to be used in town houses. It was found too, that the term 'common parlour' used in England, was rarely used in Ireland.

It was interesting to note that the term 'dining room' (or, in this case 'dyneinge' room) was in use in Ireland as early as 1636, forty-one years before the earliest record of its use in England. Despite the early use of the name, of course, other names were used. 'Dining room' is the conventional term by the time we reach Ballyfin, but some of the Headfort drawings refer to the space as a parlour. Similarly, a precocious use of the term 'dressing room' was found in a Dublin house in 1656, nineteen years before its first use was recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. The relative dearth of 'state' rooms in Ireland compared to England (apart from those at Dublin and Kilkenny Castles) is probably not surprising, but the state bedroom at Castle Coole has been noted. Mention has been made in this study of rooms that were described as 'state' rooms, but a more likely interpretation of that term would be 'best' rooms. Throughout the thesis the flexibility of room names and room use has been a recurring theme. While extra space for entertaining could be created by the use of double or folding doors between rooms, in practice, entertaining large numbers of guests did not appear to create insurmountable problems: other spaces were converted to whatever use was desired of them. In addition to use, the names of rooms were also flexible, with rooms sometimes retaining the old name even though the use had changed. It was noticeable that in inventories, the use of room names may in some cases have been dictated by the owner, or simply named at the pleasure of the assessor. This almost casual approach to room use and room names changed as the specificity of the Victorian era took hold, described by Girouard in *The Victorian country house* (1971), and the beginnings of this can be seen at Ballyfin. A very clear premonition of Girouard's Victorian 'green baize door' is found in some of the drawings for Ballyfin which in other respects (not least its size) points to a later type of country

house. There, and in other early nineteenth-century plans, a clear division is evident between the public and the private areas of the house. Rooms specifically for children - nurseries, schoolrooms, bedrooms, rooms for a governess – are shown on plans, as are baths and an increased number of WCs.

Today both Headfort (in its later guise) and Ballyfin survive. Both were turned in the twentieth century into schools, and both enjoyed a late twentieth-century renaissance thanks to the generosity of the World Monuments Fund, and a private owner. Taking them as examples of the Irish house of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century enables us to look across a landscape that spans these years and highlights differences, sometimes quite subtle, in how owners in Ireland wanted their houses to serve them.

APPENDIX

LIST OF INVENTORIES

Altadore, co Wicklow:	'To be sold by Auction at Altadore, nr Newtown Mountkennedy, on Monday 4th May [1835]'. *Dublin Evening Post*, 25 April 1835.
Antrim House, Dublin:	'An Inventory of the Furniture &c. of Antrim house taken by Mr S[...] & Michl. Campbell this 19th day of August 1801.' PRONI, Earl of Antrim Estate Papers, D/2977/5/1/7/2.
Ashfield Lodge House, Cavan:	1) 'Inventory of furniture and linen in Ashfieldlodge House Jan. 27th 1808'; 2) 'A List of the Furniture in Ashfield Lodge House, July 1829'. TCD, Clements Papers, MS 7344/34. 3) 'Inventory and valuation of Farming, Stock, Crop, Farming and Garden Utensils etc. the Property of the late Henry John Clements, Esq MP of Ashfield. Dated 28 Jany 1843'. TCD Clements Papers, MS 7279.
Barbavilla, co Westmeath:	'Account of all ye goods of Barbavilla given in charge to Mary Doyle March ye 9th 1742'. NLI, Smythe of Barbavilla Papers, MS 9940.
Baronscourt:	'Inventory of household furniture at Baron's Court 1782'. PRONI, Abercorn Papers, D/623/D/4/1
Baskin:	'An Inventory of the Goods & Chattills, Now Remaining at Baskin, March 11th 1734.' TCD Ms 3575/16.
Brownlow House, co Armagh:	'Inventory and valuation of Furniture and Plate in Brownlow House, co Armagh made by Robert Pasley of Bachelors Walk, Dublin and James Dowell of George St. Edinburgh, Upholsterers & valuators appointed to make such valuation by order of 11 November 1848.' PRONI, Brownlow Papers, D/1928/H/9.

Burton Hall, co. Cork:	Rosemary ffolliott and Brian de Breffny, 'The contents of Burton Hall, Co. Cork in 1686' in *Irish Ancestor*, v, No. 2, (1973), 104-113.
Carton, co Kildare:	'Inventory of furniture &c of Carton House, January 1st, 1818'. By kind permission of Patrick Guinness.
Cavendish Row, 10:	'Inventory of Houshold Furniture in Cavendish Street House 1st January 1763'. British Library, Cockburn Papers, Ms Add. 48314.
Chancery Lane:	'Schedule attached to lease of a house &c. on the east side of Chancery Lane, City of Dublin, Rt Honble Robert Lord Viscount Wicklow to Messrs Curtis and William Crofton, 28 April 1791.' NLI, Wicklow Papers, Ms 38,564/14.
Clogrenane, county Carlow:	'An Inventory of the Furniture of Clogrenan Lodge and of all the Moveables in the Offices, farming uttensills &c.' [sic] (undated, probably early 1800s) NLI, Rochfort Papers, Ms 8682(3).
Convoy House, co Donegal:	Inventory of Convoy in memorandum book, *c.* 1844. TCD Ms 11,258.
Conyngham Hall, Slane:	'Inventory of goods in dispute at Conyngham Hall, Slane, 1710.' IAA, Castletown Deposit, Section F, Box 4.
Corofin House, co Clare:	'An Inventory of the Goods in Corrofin House' [9th March 1717] NLI, Inchiquin Papers Ms 1804. Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels*, pp 127-29.
Delamain, Laurence, Cork:	'Inventory of Laurence Delamain late of the City of Corke, gent deceased, taken 20 January 1763'. TCD Ms 2010-2015/395.
Denmark Street:	'Schedule of furniture attached to lease of house from Earl of Rosse to David Courtney, Esq., 18 December 1793.' PRONI, Erne Papers D/1939/24/11/2.

Doneraile Court, co Cork:	'Inventory of furniture room by room in Doneraile Court' (not dated, possibly *c* 1830s). NLI, Doneraile Papers, Ms 34,104(5).
Dromana, co Waterford:	'An Inventory of the Houshold…at Dromana Belonging to the Right Honourable Earl Grandison, taken August 12, 1755.' PRONI, Villiers Stuart Papers, T3131/F/2/17.
Dromcondra, county Dublin:	'Inventory of Giles Martin, late of Dromcondrah in the county of Dublin Esq. appraised 25 June 1689'. NLI, De Vesci Papers, Ms 38,777.
Dromoland House, co Clare:	'Mrs O Briens rect [receipt] Book given by her to me M[ary] O B'; inventory of Dromoland House, 1753. NLI, Ms 14,786. Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels,* 130-34.
Drumcondra House:	Inventory of Drumcondra House, October 17th, 1773. TRIARC, Crookshank-Glin Archive, TRIARC/1/13, photocopy of Alexander de Lapere Kirkpatrick, *Chronicles of the Kirkpatrick Family* (privately printed, n.d.).
[Earl of Kildare's house, Dublin]	'Goods belonging to the 1st Earl of Kildare, inventory taken by Chas. Hooker and Tho. Phillips', Dublin 1656. NLI, Ms 18,996. Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels*, pp 39-40.
Elphin, [old] Bishop's Palace:	'An Inventory of the household goods belonging to Doctor Robert Howard Late Lord Bishop of Elphin taken this 21st day of June 1740'. NLI, Wicklow Papers, Ms 38,597/22.
Furry Park, co Dublin:	'Sale of the late Judge Vandeleur's property at Furry Park, nr Raheny. On 3rd July [1834].' *Dublin Evening Post*, 30 June 1834.
Gaulston House, co Westmeath:	'Inventory of furniture in Galston House, taken December 1787'. Kindly supplied by the Knight of Glin.

Henrietta Street, 10:	'List of the goods at Henrietta Street House which did belong to the late Luke Gardiner Esq taken and valued by Joseph Ellis and J Kirchhoffer Novr. 9, 1772.' NLI, Gardiner Papers, Ms 36,617/1.
Howth Castle:	'The furniture of the House of Howth, 1746-52'. F Elrington Ball, *Howth and its owners: being the fifth part of a history of County Dublin and an extra volume of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* (Dublin 1917), pp 164-66.
Kildare Street 45, Dublin:	'An inventory of the Rt. Hon. The Lord Viscount Doneraile's Household Furniture at his home in Kildare Street, Dublin April 10th 1762.' David J Griffin, 'The building and furnishing of a Dublin townhouse in the 18th century' in *Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, xxxviii, (1996-1997), 26-39.
Killadoon:	Inventories listing furniture in 1807, 1812, 1830, 1836. Clements Papers, Killadoon.
Killeen Castle:	1) 'An Inventory of the Rt Honble Earl of Fingall's goods in the Castle of Killeen March 23rd 1735/6'; 2) 'Furniture belonging to the Earl and Countess of Fingall in Killeen Castle taken 15th June 1790'. NLI, Fingall Papers, Ms 1678.
Kilrush, co Kilkenny:	'An Account of the Goods and particulars belonging to Gen.ll St George in his house at Kilrush' [1750]. TCD, St George Mss, misc. photocopy 175/17.
Knapton:	'An inventory and valuation of the furniture, cattle, corn, hay and brewing utensils of George Pigott Esq. at Knapton September 9 1763.' NLI, De Vesci Papers, Ms 38,905.
Mary Street, Dublin:	'A catalogue of the Household Goods, Of the late Henry Ingoldsby, Esq: Deceas'd. to be Sold by Auction in Mary's-street, on Monday the 29th day of November, 1731, and to continue until the end of the Week.' NLI, Smythe of Barbavilla Papers, Ms 41,581/8.

Merrion Square, 34:	'Sale by Auction of Household Furniture on Thursday April 25th 1811 at No. 34 Merrion Square, Mack Gibton & Co., Auctioneers.' National Archives, Meath Papers, J/3/27.
Moira House:	'Inventory of Moira House, Dublin, taken by Zach Foxall, Arran Quay, Dublin on 7 May 1808.' PRONI, Granard Papers, T/3765/L/4 (part).
Moore Abbey, co Kildare:	'Sale by Auction of Furniture, house, linen, books &c. at Moore Abbey, co Kildare on 29, 30, 31st March, 1,3 & 4 April 1826, the property of the late Rt. Hon. Ld Henry Seymour Moore. Mack, Williams & Gibton, Auctrs.' NLI, Ms 9743.
Mount Stewart, co Down:	'An Inventory of the Household Furniture belonging to the Most Noble the Marquis of Londonderry taken at Mount Stewart Septr. 1821.' PRONI, Londonderry Estate Office Archive, D/654/S1/1.
Neptune, co Dublin:	'A Schedule or Inventry of the fixtures household Goods furniture and other Articles …contained in the House and premis of Neptune', [county Dublin?]. Public Records Office 1095 14/5/1789; copy in TRIARC, ref. TRIARC/1/13.
Newbridge House, co Dublin:	Inventory of Newbridge House, 1821. Kindly supplied by Alec Cobbe.
Nth Gt George's Street:	'Valuation of house furniture, the Property of Mrs Clements in her late dwelling house, North Great Georges Street, Dublin, April 17th 1805' TCD, Clements Papers, MS 7344/32.
Park Street:	'Roger Murray to Henry Viscount Conyngham, assignment of lease by way of mortgage of a house in Park Street, Dublin, 27 October 1766.' NLI, Conyngham Papers, Ms 35,339(4).

Powerscourt Wicklow and Powerscourt Dublin:

'A catalogue of the Goods and Stock of the late Edward Wingfield, Esq. at Powerscourt, and at his house in Dublin, to be sold by Auction. 25 February 1728/9, and to continue.'
NLI, POS 6071

Prospect [Ardgillan]:

'Inventory of the furniture in Prospect Castle taken 25 September 1795'.
National Archives, Taylor Documents, M 7069 (195).

Provost's House:

1) 'Valuation of sundry articles of household furniture, the property of the Rt Revd Lord Bishop of Limerick in the Provost's house Oct 27, 1820.'
TCD MSS Dept, TCD Muniments 183(24).

2) 'An Inventory of Furniture &c. belonging to T.C.D., in the Provost's House' [1852].
TCD, TCD Muniments (uncatalogued).

Rathcline, co Longford:

'An Inventory of Goods, Pictures and houshold Stuffe belonging to the Rt Honble the Lord Viscount Lanesborough...in his Lordp's house at Rathcline dated this tenth day of April 1688'.
NLI, Ms 8644/5.

Shelton House, co Wicklow:

'Inventory and Valuation of the furniture in Shelton House, co Wicklow. Taken by L. & A. Morgan, January 9th 1816.'
NLI, Wicklow Papers, Ms 38,574/20.

St Mary's Abbey, Dublin:

'An inventory of the household furniture of the Rt. Honble. Lord Howth, in St. Mary's Abbey, April the 23rd, 1751'.
J P Mahaffy, 'The furnishing of Georgian houses in Dublin in the earlier part of the century' in *The Georgian Society Records of eighteenth century domestic architecture and decoration in Dublin*, 5 vols (Shannon, Ireland 1969), iv, pp 1-10.

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St. Sepulchre, Palace of:	'Inventory for Revd Mr Robert Dougatt executor to his late Grace, Dr William King', of the Palace of St Sepulchre *c.* 1730. TCD Ms 1995-2008/2438.
Stackallen:	Inventory annexed to a lease made 1st June 1757 between Richard Hamilton of Stackallen and John Fitzmaurice of Dublin. National Archives M 1148/5/3.
Strokestown House (?):	'A List of the Furniture of the late Luke Mahon Esq as valued by Maurice Mahon Esq and Mr Henry West' (undated but probably *c.* 1806). NLI, Ms 10,139.
Townley Hall:	'List of Townley Hall Furniture 1773.' NLI, Ms 9349.
Woodville, co Dublin:	'Sale of the late Rt Hon. Theophilus Clements household furniture &c. at Woodville, November 25 & succeeding days [*c.* 1797]'. TCD, Clements Papers, MS 7344/30.

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Brook Lodge, co Galway:	'Invoice from Eggleso's Upholstery & Cabinet Ware House, 12 Abbey Street, Dublin to Mr Thomas Hynes, bought of Henry Eggleso, 29 June 1808, for Brook Lodge'. National Archives, Ballyglunin Papers M 6933, Parcel 20 (57b)
Caledon, co Tyrone (1783):	'Estimate to James Alexander Esq. for furnishing the principal Story in Caledon House' dated 1st May 1783. PRONI, Caledon Papers, D/2433/A/2/4/1-19.
Caledon, co Tyrone (1785):	'Invoice from Mayhew & Ince, Cabinet Makers, Upholders…Broad Street, Soho. For Caledon House 1785'. PRONI, Caledon Papers, D/2433/A/2/3/9.

ABBREVIATIONS

BIGS:	*Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*
CL:	*Country Life magazine*
IAA:	Irish Architectural Archive
IADS:	*Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*
IAR:	*Irish Arts Review*
JCKAS:	*Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society*
JRSAI:	*Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*
NLI:	National Library of Ireland
PRONI:	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
QBIGS:	*Quarterly Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*
TCD:	Trinity College Dublin
TRIARC:	Trinity Irish Art Research Centre
UL:	University of Limerick

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