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Public & private improvements in eighteenth-century Ireland:

The case of the Conynghams of Slane, 1703-1821

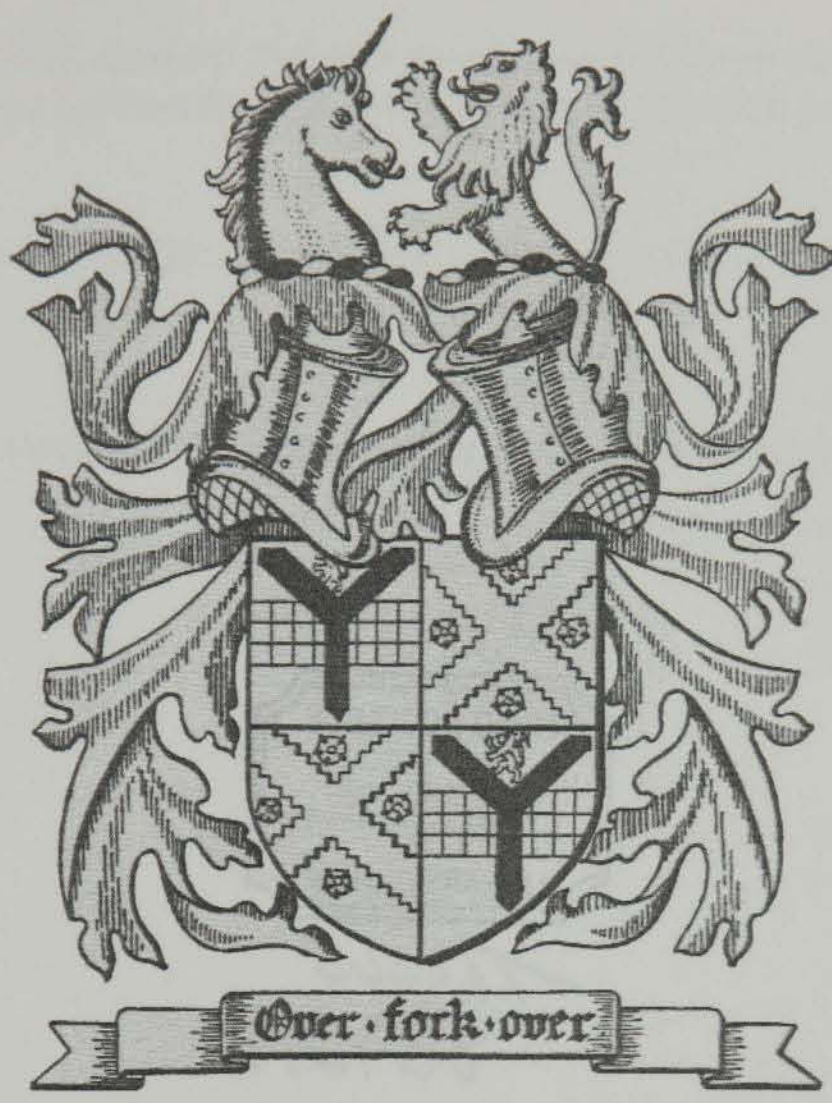
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Public & private improvements in eighteenth-century Ireland: The case of the Conynghams of Slane, 1703-1821.



A thesis in two volumes submitted for the Degree of Masters in Letters
Department of History of Art & Architecture
University of Dublin, Trinity College

Livia Hurley 2009

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Summary

The origins of the concept of improvement lie in the mid-seventeenth century and can be defined as the creation of a new landscape within which new estate villages were laid out, old settlements were restructured and revived, industries and agricultural settlements were established, and the nexus of the demesne - the country seat - was renovated or built entirely new. The Conynghams, who were owners of vast estates in Donegal, acquired the Slane estate in 1703 and took on the mantle of the 'improving landlord', undertaking public and private schemes which embraced the fundamentals of improvement ideals.

The aim of this study is to establish a narrative which fills out the Conynghams' story over a period of one hundred and twenty years. It illustrates the direct results of the family's patronage and of their collaboration with entrepreneurs on the estates and beyond. In the context of the built environment, the work discusses primarily the execution of industrial architecture, engineering works and urban design. In the appraisal of the family's most outstanding and lasting schemes, the study draws parallels with analogous plans carried out elsewhere in Ireland, and architectural set-pieces are defined within the realm of the architectural and urban history of eighteenth-century Ireland.

The research method used in the preparation of this work focussed on three principal sources, namely primary and secondary documentary sources, and the on-site investigation of extant structures on the Conyngham estates. Archival material, not only in Ireland, but also in England, Spain and (through the internet) Australia, revealed a wealth of information about the Conynghams and their schemes.

Together with historiographical publications relating to the Conynghams, which provided significant foundations for extant histories of the family and their estate affairs, additional printed material such as parliamentary acts, contemporary newspapers and travel writings, first edition 6" Ordnance Survey maps and unpublished theses were used to support the outcome of the primary manuscript research. The results of the examination of all documentary sources were supplemented with a high level of fieldwork, involving detailed on-site inspections of extant structures, primarily Slane Mill and its associated waterworks, the Boyne Navigation and the architectural elements of Slane Village. These investigations were in turn informed by eighteenth-century technical treatises, in order to reconstruct the buildings and engineering works in their original eighteenth-century state.

The body of the thesis is divided into six sections. The first two chapters chronicle the Conynghams' purchase of the Meath properties, the involvement of William Conolly in early developments at Slane, and the inheritance issues of the next generation of the family. Presented in these two chapters is an informative context for an introduction to the next set of Conyngham improvers, and a background to their participation in future estate improvements. The following three chapters relate to the main bulk of improvements carried out at Slane between 1760 and the last decades of the century. These improvements encompass the building of Slane Mill, the development of Slane Village and the completion of the Boyne Navigation. The sixth and final chapter seeks to complete the picture of the life of the Conynghams' most distinguished family member, William Burton Conyngham, renowned not only as a tireless patron of the arts and a Wide Street Commissioner in Dublin, but also, as this work will show, architect of extensive improvements on the family estates in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

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And finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Edward McParland, for his invaluable advice and direction during the project, and for his constant enthusiasm which made the process of preparing this thesis all the more enjoyable.

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Fig.6.38 Drawings for a kelp kiln for Rutland Island by Bedford Stewart, c.1800. (Bedford Stewart, 'Explanation of the kelp-kiln', *Transactions of the Dublin Society*, Vol. 2, Part 1, 1800, 205-09).

Fig.6.39 Francis Johnston's entrances to Slane Castle. IAA photographic collection.

Fig.6.40 Henry (III) Conyngham, 1st Viscount Mount Charles, c.1800. Attributed to George Romney. Heinz Archive, National Portrait Gallery.

Fig.6.41 'A moving scene on the road to Slane', 1830, by William Heath. N.K. Robinson Collection of Caricature, Trinity College Dublin, ROB310.

Abbreviations

Barnard, *Ascents & descents*:	Toby Barnard, *Irish Protestants, ascents & descents*, Dublin, 2004.
Barnard, *Making the grand figure*:	Toby Barnard, *Making the grand figure, Lives and possessions in Ireland, 1641-1770,* New Haven and London, 2004.
Bartlett, *Macartney in Ireland*:	Thomas Bartlett, *Macartney in Ireland, 1768-1772,* Belfast, 1978.
***BIGS*:**	*Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, 1958-1997.
BL:	British Library.
***BNCM*:**	Boyne Navigation Company minute book, 1770-90, NLI, Ms. 7,352.
Burke, *Peerage*:	Sir J.B. Burke, (edited by Charles Mosley), *Burke's peerage & baronetage,* 106th edition, 2 vols, Switzerland, 1999.
***CIVM*:**	Minute books of the Select Vestry of St. Patrick's Church of Ireland, Slane, 2 vols.
***Complete Peerage*:**	G. E. Cokayne (edited & revised by various), *The Complete Peerage*, 8 vols, London, 1913 & 1949.
Craig, *Architecture of Ireland*:	Maurice Craig, *The architecture of Ireland, from the earliest times to 1880*, Dublin, 1982.
Cullen, *Eighteenth century flour milling*:	Louis Cullen, 'Eighteenth century flour milling in Ireland.' *Irish Economic & Social History*, Vol. 4, 1977, 5-25.
Delaney, *Waterways*:	Delaney, Ruth, *Ireland's Inland Waterways*, Belfast, 2004.
***DNB*:**	*Oxford dictionary of national biography*, 60 vols, Oxford, 2004.
EKA:	East Kent Archives.
Ellison, *Boyne and Blackwater*:	Cyril Ellison, *The waters of the Boyne & Blackwater*, Dublin 1983.

Abbreviations

Forsythe, *Improving insularity*:	Wes Forsythe, 'Improving insularity: an archaeology of the islands off the north coast of Ireland in the later historic period, 1700-1847', Ph.D., 2006, University of Ulster.
Harbison, *Antiquities*:	Harbison, Peter, *'Our treasure of antiquities'. Beranger & Bigari's antiquarian sketching tour of Connacht in 1779*, Dublin, 2002.
IAA:	Irish Architectural Archive.
***Irish parliament*:**	Edith Mary Johnston-Liik, *History of the Irish Parliament 1692-1800*, 6 vols, Belfast 2002.
IVLRA:	The Irish Virtual Research Library & Archive.
JCAHS:	*Journal of the Cork archaeological & historical society.*
JCKAS:	*Journal of the county Kildare archaeological society.*
JH of C:	*The journals of the House of Commons of the kingdom of Ireland*, 19 vols, Dublin, 1796-1800; index, 2 vols, Dublin 1802.
***IADS*:**	*Irish architectural & decorative studies*: *The journal of the Irish Georgian Society.*
***JRSAI*:**	*Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.*
Kelly, *Donegal fisheries*:	Kelly, James, 'William Burton Conyngham & the Donegal fisheries', *JRSAI,* Vol.115, 1985, 64-85.
***Life*:**	Maurice Craig (ed.), James Gandon & T.J. Mulvany, *The Life of James Gandon*, London, 1969.
Lodge, *Peerage*:	John Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*...revised, enlarged & continued to the present time by [Rev.] Mervyn Archdall, 7 vols, Dublin, 1789.
McParland, *Public Architecture*:	Edward McParland, *Public Architecture in Ireland, 1680-1760,* New Haven & London 2001.

McVeagh, *Pococke's Irish Tours*:	John McVeagh (ed.), *Richard Pococke's Irish Tours*, Dublin, 1995.
NLA:	National Library of Australia (internet source).
***NIAH*:**	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.
NLI:	National Library of Ireland.
OED:	*Oxford English Dictionary.*
Petherbridge, *Monuments of industry*:	Deanna Petherbridge, 'Expressive monuments of industry & order, early industrial architecture in Ireland', *Architectural Design*, December 11, 1977, 742-49.
***PRIA*:**	Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy.
PRONI:	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.
RDS:	Royal Dublin Society.
RIA:	Royal Irish Academy.
ROD:	Registry of deeds.
Simms, *Williamite Confiscation*:	J.G. Simms, *The Williamite Confiscation in Ireland 1690-1703*, London, 1956.
Trench, *Fleming & Conyngham*:	C. E. F. Trench, 'Fleming & Conyngham of Slane', *Riocht na Midhe* Vol. VII, No.2, 1982-83, 69-75.
Trench, *William Burton Conyngham*:	C. E. F. Trench, 'William Burton Conyngham 1733-1796', *JRSAI,* Vol.115, 1985, 40-63.
UCD:	University College Dublin.
WSC:	Wide Street Commissioners.
Young, *A tour in Ireland*:	Arthur Young, *A tour in Ireland: with general observations on the present state of that kingdom*, 2 vols. Dublin, 1780.

Note: Acreage is given in Irish acres and is not converted to statute acres.
1 Irish acre = 1.62 statute acre.

Introduction

Contemporary observers writing about Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries regularly commented on the unprecedented era of self-styled 'improving landlords' and the ambitious improvements undertaken on their estates. The concept of improvement in Ireland was central to the landlord class, who were economically motivated and eager to assert their status in society, and with the conviction that Protestantism was synonymous with the spirit of improvement, took it upon itself to civilise society, assuming that the restructuring of the landscape would eventually restructure the lives of those who lived from it. In delineating the form of improvements undertaken in eighteenth-century Ireland, these developments can be described as the construction of new villages and remodelling of older ones, the imparking of estates and the creation of new agricultural settlements, the renovation of country seats, and the assembling of the associated infrastructure in the shape of new roads, bridges, and canals. These initiatives were usually sustained by the promotion of industries set up within the framework of the estate and were dependant on the union of commerce with the use of land.

This work will assess the improvements, both public and private, carried out by the Conyngham family of Slane in the improving age of eighteenth-century Ireland. Their schemes involved the implementation of urban improvements, industrial and speculative enterprises, progressive agricultural experimentation, and the renovation of their seat and demesne at Slane. This study examines the direct results of their patronage, and in the context of the built environment, discusses first and foremost the execution of industrial architecture, engineering works and urban design.

In recent years considerable progress has been made in the narration of eighteenth-century improvements in Ireland, the results of which have established for the most part that Irish landlords were not always the negligent absentees or economic parasites depicted by earlier historians. Among the leading narrators of the subject, Louis Cullen has shown that absenteeism was not necessarily a good indicator for the total neglect of estate affairs, any more than permanent residency meant the execution of estate improvements (*The emergence of modern Ireland 1600-1900*, 1981). The nature of the planning and laying out of provincial towns and villages from an architect's point of view has been analysed by Valerie Mulvin in her unpublished thesis and suggests that it is the quiet formality of planned and remodelled Irish towns that gives them their special quality ('The morphology of Irish towns', 1992). Although it embraced foreign design concepts, the architecture of eighteenth-century Irish towns and villages undoubtedly had a special quality and like the style of demesne and parkland improvement favoured in Ireland, rather than it being merely a variation on the English approach, it was uniquely Irish. Brian Graham and Lindsay Proudfoot, who have published extensively on urban improvements have analysed the role of Irish landlords in provincial urban planning, concluding that landlords may have simply facilitated improvements through wealthier or more powerful subgroups of tenants, rather than actively implementing the developments themselves (*Urban improvement in provincial Ireland 1700-1840,* 1994). Without substantive micro-studies of specific estates and their associated planned settlements, theories like these are left untested.

Detailed and independent case studies of the kind which fuel our understanding of urban planning and estate management include important works such as James Stevens Curl's account of the Draper's Company estates in Ulster (*Moneymore and Draperstown: The architecture and planning of the estates of the Drapers Company in Ulster*, 1979), Susan Hood's examination of the development of Strokestown,

county Roscommon ('The landlord influence in the development of an Irish estate town: Strokestown, county Roscommon', 1995), and very recently Toby Barnard's series of interlinked essays on the endeavours of a number of Irish improvers, highlighting the work of the Catholic landlords in the seventeenth and eighteenth century (*Improving Ireland? Projectors, prophets and profiteers, 1641-1786*, 2008). Left unaccounted are a large number of important Irish estates and their respective patrons, among them the Conynghams of Slane, owners of vast estates in Meath and Donegal, and prominent in the military field and in the world of politics and art. Induced by the forensic nature of these kinds of monographs and the clear need for further investigation in the area, this work provides an appraisal of the noteworthy improvements implemented by the Conynghams on their estates and beyond.

The branch of the family dealt with here was the southern branch of the Conynghams of Scottish origin, who moved from their earliest residence in county Donegal to settle at Slane in county Meath in 1703, and who from time to time in the chronicles of eighteenth-century history are mistaken for their northern counterparts, the Conynghams cousins who remained on the Donegal estates and the Lennox-Conynghams of county Derry. Through marriage, the Conynghams strengthened their position in society, in particular through their connection to William Conolly, at that time Ireland's wealthiest commoner and a dominant figure in Slane's early years. Raised to the peerage in 1753 by Henry, Baron Conyngham of Mount Charles, the family's most distinguished and celebrated member was William Burton Conyngham, renowned not only as a tireless patron of the arts and a Wide Street Commissioner in Dublin, but also, as this thesis will show, the architect of extensive improvements on the family estates in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Covering a period of about one hundred and twenty years, the time chosen for this study encompasses the most outstanding and lasting elements of the Conynghams' work, beginning in 1703 with the acquisition of the county Meath property at the Sale of the Forfeited

Estates in Dublin, and closing at the zenith of the family's success in 1821, the year of George IV's Irish sojourn with Elizabeth, Marchioness Conyngham, his paramour and chatelaine of Slane Castle.

Aspects of the Conyngham family and their estates in Meath and Donegal have been the subject of some previous investigation, the majority of publications completed more than twenty years ago. The most prominent champion of the Conynghams, and in particular of the illustrious William Burton Conyngham, was the late C.E.F. Trench, who has discussed aspects of Burton Conyngham's varied life as Wide Street Commissioner, antiquarian, patron of the arts and promoter of Ireland's commercial interests ('Fleming and Conyngham of Slane', 1982-83; 'William Burton Conyngham 1733-1796', 1985). In addition to Trench's work, Peter Harbison (*'Our treasure of antiquities'. Beranger and Bigari's antiquarian sketching tour of Connacht in 1779*, 2002) has expanded on Burton Conyngham's profound interest in the world of antiquities in his account of the Irish sketching tours undertaken by artists under the antiquarian's patronage, like Gabriele Beranger and Angelo Maria Bigari. A detailed history of the reconstruction of the old Fleming seat and its evolution as Slane Castle under the Conynghams, specifically the turbulent years of Burton Conyngham's supervision, was traced by Mark Odlum in a series of articles in *Country Life* ('Slane Castle, Co. Meath', 1980). C.E.F. Trench (*Slane*, 1975) and his predecessor T.J. Westropp ('*Slane in Bregia*, county Meath, its friary and hermitage', 1901) have described the formally planned village of Slane, contained within the dramatic topographical setting above the river Boyne, and the wealth of associated artefacts and antiquities at the adjacent Hill of Slane.

One of the most striking monuments of the family's patronage was the great flour mill of Slane, built by the Conynghams and their partners in 1763-6. Louis Cullen has chronicled the foundations and economic success of the mill at Slane in his seminal

work on eighteenth-century milling in Ireland ('Eighteenth century flour milling in Ireland', 1977). Subsequently, industrial archaeologists Deanna Petherbridge ('Expressive monuments of industry and order', 1977) and Colin Rynne (*Industrial Ireland 1750-1930*, 2006) have correctly based their interpretation of the growth of the mill on Cullen's work. Closely affiliated with the mill was the Boyne Navigation, constructed around the same period, and its development has been examined by Ruth Delany (*Ireland's Inland Waterways*, 2004) and Canon Ellison (*The waters of the Boyne and Blackwater*, 1983) as part of the wider history of the canal age in eighteenth-century Ireland. Beyond the Meath estates, Burton Conyngham's highly ambitious scheme for the building of a new fishing village on Rutland Island on the Donegal estates was the subject of a socio-economic history of the enterprise by James Kelly ('William Burton Conyngham and the Donegal fisheries', 1985) and an archaeological history of the island has been recently presented by the marine archaeologist Wes Forsythe in his doctoral thesis ('Improving insularity: an archaeology of the islands off the north coast of Ireland in the later historic period, 1700-1847', 2006).

While all of these sources are essential foundations for extant histories of the family and estate affairs, the studies have significant limitations and in some cases are already outdated. Until now the story of the Conynghams has been left incomplete. The primary objective of this thesis is to unravel and reconstruct the complexities of their history and to provide a study of public and private improvements carried out under the auspices of some of the family members. Using the preliminary foundations to revisit the history, a new perspective of the family's patronage is offered, which is supplemented and enriched by detailed research into a wide range of unexplored documentary sources and a rereading of the extant built environment. A higher level of investigation of the Conynghams' planning, design and implementation of their projects is presented and as a prelude to this, it was

necessary to establish fully the complicated genealogy of the Conynghams and their family connections. Due to the limitations of a number of the available primary sources this work has a certain level of constraint and does not pretend to be an in depth examination of landlord and tenant relations or a discussion of the tenants' influence or power exerted, if any, over developments on the estates. Instead, the role of the collaborators is assessed, the family's associates are introduced and their impetus in the execution of improvements is charted. The study establishes the motivations behind the schemes and analyses the results of their creation. Parallels are drawn with comparable improvement schemes elsewhere in Ireland and architectural set-pieces are defined within the framework of the architectural and urban history of eighteenth-century Ireland.

The research method used in the crafting of this work focussed on three principal sources, namely primary and secondary documentary sources, and fieldwork in the form of on-site investigation of extant structures. The cataloguing in the year 2000 of the Conyngham papers in the National Library of Ireland potentially offered access to a large amount of original, unexplored material concerning the family's estate affairs. With the exception of some clarification of inheritance issues and a number of informative manuscript maps associated with Burton Conyngham's schemes in county Donegal, we are left with the dry details of court settlements and little or no snippets of Conyngham gossip, or more importantly revelations about their built improvements and the architects behind them. A trawl through the Registry of Deeds in pursuit of building records, indications of styles and materials, and terms of construction in the leases, proved to be equally disappointing. Despite this, the dark period before the mid-eighteenth century was illuminated briefly through details of mortgage agreements and renewal of leases.

Forced to cast the net wider, the basis for research moved further afield to the record offices of Belfast, London and Kent, where a detailed examination of the correspondence, estate papers, and surveys of neighbouring and affiliated estates uncovered a wealth of information about the Conynghams and their projects. These data were in turn supplemented with additional documentation from archives in Dublin and Meath, and expanded by the wonderful internet resources which allowed access to highly significant manuscripts in libraries in Spain and Australia.

In addition to the previously mentioned historiographical publications relating to the Conynghams, other printed material such as parliamentary acts, contemporary newspapers and travel writings, first edition 6" Ordnance Survey maps and unpublished theses were scoured for relevant data to support the outcome of the primary manuscript research. Pertinent to the enrichment of the results from investigation into all documentary sources was a high level of fieldwork, involving detailed on-site inspections of extant structures, primarily Slane Mill and its associated waterworks, the Boyne Navigation and the architectural elements of Slane Village. The resultant surveys were in turn informed by guides, such as contemporary technical treatises, in order to produce illustrations of the buildings and engineering works in their eighteenth-century state, and to analyse their form and function.

The body of the thesis is divided into six sections. The first chapter chronicles the Conynghams' departure from Donegal, the purchase of the Meath properties by Henry Conyngham and the involvement of his brother-in-law William Conolly in the supervision of early developments at Slane. The second chapter deals with the next generation of the family and inheritance issues. While the emphasis of these two opening sections is on the genealogy of the family, these aspects serve to fill out the family's story in the early decades of the eighteenth century. Presented here in new

detail are the interrelationships in the second quarter of the eighteenth century: Slane did not descend in conventional ways from father to son, and therefore the nature of patronage required more attention than would be usual to genealogical discussion in this case. Provided in these two chapters is an informative context for the following sections, an introduction to the next set of Conyngham improvers, and a background to the reasons behind their participation, or lack thereof, in the execution of future estate improvements.

The content of the following three chapters relates to the main bulk of improvements carried out at Slane between 1760 and the last decades of the century. These improvements include the building of Slane Mill, the development of Slane Village and the completion of the Boyne Navigation. Each development is assessed in greater detail than ever before, and their evolution and function is illustrated with reconstructions of their original settings. The three chapters are inextricably interlinked and each informs the other. The final and sixth chapter is in essence the climax of the work, and it seeks to complete the picture of the life of the Conynghams' most distinguished family member, William Burton Conyngham, using new information gleaned from archives in Ireland, England, Spain and Australia. Due to the nature of the events in Burton Conyngham's very varied life during the latter half of the eighteenth century, this closing chapter has been divided into sections that concentrate on subject matter and therefore may not always be strictly chronological.

Conyngham Family Tree

John Murray of Broughton
Earl of Annandale

Alexander Conyngham = Marian
Dean of Raphoe (d.1660)

others

Sir Albert Conyngham = Margaret Leslie
(d.1691)

Sir John Williams

Mary Lady Shelburne = **Henry I** (1664-1705/6)
Widow of Chas Petty
1st Baron Shelburne
(d.1710)

William = **Katherine** (1662-1752) **Jane** = James Bonnell **Mary** = Richard Jones
Conolly
(1662-1729)

others **Williams** = Constance Middleton
(*c*.1698-1738)

Billy
(d. *c*.1735)

Henry II (1705/6-1781) = Ellen Merrit (1725-1816)
1st Baron Conyngham of Mt Charles, 1753
1st Viscount Conyngham in Ireland, 1756
1st Earl Conyngham of Mt Charles, 1781

Mary = Frank Burton

Elizabeth Clements = **Francis Pierpoint Burton (Conyngham 1781)** (*c*.1730-1787)
2nd Baron Conyngham of Mt Charles, 1781

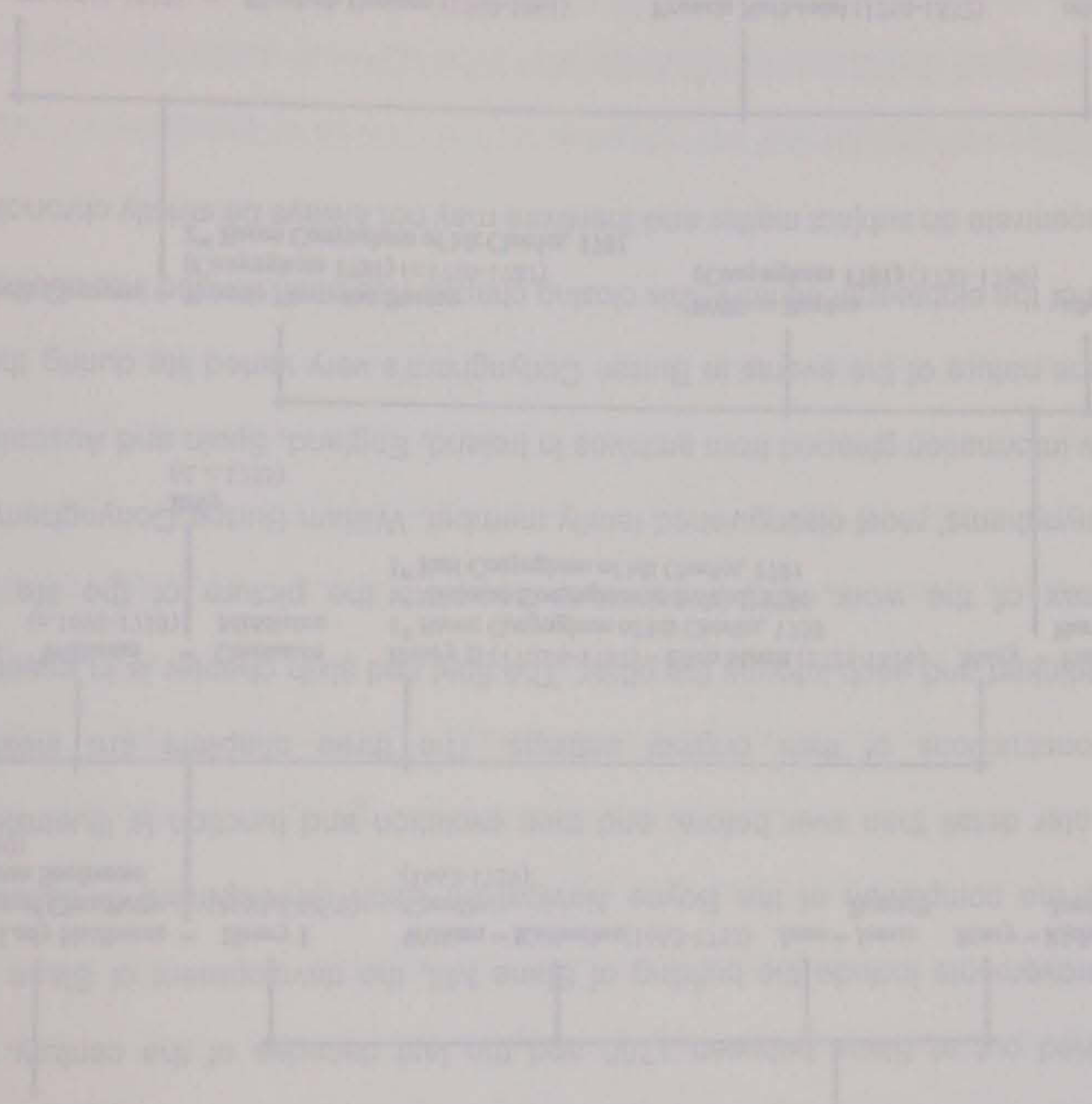
William Burton (Conyngham 1781) (1733-1796)

others

Henry III (1766-1832) = Elizabeth Denison (1769-1861)
3rd Baron Conyngham of Mt Charles, 1787
1st Viscount Conyngham of Mt Charles, 1789
1st Earl Conyngham, 1797
1st Viscount Mount Charles, 1797
1st Earl of Mount Charles, 1816
1st Viscount Slane, 1816
1st Marquis Conyngham, 1816
1st Baron Minster of Minster Abbey, Kent, 1821

Francis Nathaniel (1766-1832)

others



Chapter One

'Unravelled affairs'[1]: Brigadier Henry Conyngham, William Conolly & early improvements on the Slane estate, *c.*1700-20

The sale of the forfeited estates • Henry (I) Conyngham & William Conolly • The acquisition of the Slane estate • Early improvements at the castle & at village of Slane •

In 1699, nine years after James II's forces were defeated by the Williamite armies at the battle of the Boyne, the English House of Commons drew up a bill for a commission to investigate the Irish forfeited estates. **(Fig.1.1)** These forfeitures were made in 1688 by the Williamite authorities, who seized large amounts of property belonging to Catholic landowners and supporters of James II. William was accused of corruption and favouritism in his administration of the estates and the board of commissioners resolved that the distributed grants (with a few exceptions) should be revoked and the properties sold publicly. In 1700 a resumption bill was passed and the forfeited estates were from then on controlled solely by a board of trustees.[2] The estates were to be 'exposed to sale at Chichester House, Dublin', which was to take place between November 1700 and March 1702.[3] The proceedings proved to be difficult and not without controversy, resulting in an extension of the auction until June 1703. The main body of investors, known as the 'Protestant purchasers' (although there were two Catholics among them) remained distrustful of the whole process, mainly due to the disastrous recompense obtained by earlier investors from the trustees, and furthermore, the threat of a Stuart restoration made them anxious to maintain their new acquisitions.[4] Christopher Fleming (the former Lord Slane), who had supported the Jacobite cause, changed sides and was pardoned by Queen Anne. When rumours circulated that Fleming's confiscated estate of Slane in county

[1] Thomas Knox to Andrew Murray, 17 June 1706, Murray of Broughton papers, PRONI, D/2860/4/18.
[2] Simms, *Williamite Confiscation*, 85-93.
[3] 'Accounts of the sale of forfeited estates in county Dublin', 1700, BL, Add. Ms. 15,973.
[4] Simms, *Williamite Confiscation,* 148-55.

Meath, may be indeed restored to him, alarm broke out among the Irish protestants who feared their investments would be arrogated to the trustees once more. The reaction of the investors was described by Archbishop King in a letter to Swift, 'The reversal of my lord Slane's outlawry makes a mighty noise throughout this kingdom; for aught I can remember the destroying of our woollen manufactory did not cause so universal a consternation'.[5] The hysteria subsided when it was discovered that Fleming was only restored to his title and not to his estate, which had been granted to the Dutch general, baron de Ginkel (later earl of Athlone), a commander of the Williamite forces. William had granted de Ginkel a total of 26,480 acres, half of which was the Fleming estate situated in counties Meath, Louth, Cavan and Roscommon and the remainder containing a percentage of the estates of James II in county Meath. These estates were sold at the auction in Dublin in the summer of 1703.[6] Among the seventeen 'protestant purchasers' at Chichester House who bought de Ginkel's land in Meath were Colonel Henry Conyngham (hence called Henry I) and his brothers-in-law, William Conolly of Rodanstown, county Meath, who married Katherine Conyngham (a sister of Henry I) in 1694, and Richard Jones of Dollanstown county Meath who married Mary Conyngham, Henry I's younger sister.[7] Conolly's rise in wealth and status was in some part due to dealings in property purchased at the sale of the forfeited estates. The union of another Conyngham sister, Jane, with James Bonnell, Comptroller and Accountant General and former Registrar to the Commissioners of Inquiry into the forfeitures, may have eased both Conolly's and Jones' negotiations at Chichester House. Conolly's role in the management of Henry I's newly acquired estates shall be dealt with later, while Henry I's origins and pursuits in Donegal before his arrival in Dublin, and Conolly's status must be considered first.

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[5] Simms, *Williamite Confiscation,* 159.
[6] Trench, *Fleming & Conyngham*, 69-75.
[7] Ibid.

Henry Conyngham's origins & the William Conolly connection

Henry I's grandfather, Dean Alexander Conyngham, had come to Ireland from Scotland in the early seventeenth century to be minister of the parishes of Inver and Killymard in the baronies of Banagh and Boylagh in county Donegal. He rented the small estate of Mount Charles from John Murray of Broughton, Earl of Annandale, who owned substantial estates in Banagh and Boylagh. Dean Conyngham's marriage to the earl's daughter, Marion Murray, and the eventual union of their offspring with local planter families, namely the Leslies, Montgomerys, Knoxes and Hamiltons, created a prominent dynasty notably bound up in the affairs of south-west Donegal.[8] Dean Conyngham's son Sir Albert Conyngham, was appointed Master of Ordnance in Ireland by Charles II until relieved of the title in 1688 by James II who doubted his loyalty. **(Fig.1.2 & 1.3)**

Sir Albert, 'a sober gentleman'[9], settled at the Conyngham's residence at Mountcharles where '... he held the Papists in such subjection, that there were no members returned to King James' parliament from that country, or from the boroughs within it...'[10] He returned to the field upon the arrival of the Williamite army in Ireland and raising a regiment of dragoons at his own expense he fought at the Boyne and at Limerick and was killed by rapparees in county Sligo in 1691.[11] **(Fig.1.4)** At the time of Sir Albert's death, his son Henry I, born in 1664, was living at the family seat of Mountcharles where he made a living as a cattle dealer and soldier, serving as a captain with Lord Mountjoy's regiment until he took command of his father's regiment and became Lieutenant-Colonel.[12] Sir Albert's support of the Williamite cause had

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[8] Denis Verschoyle, 'The background to a hidden age', *Donegal Annual,* No. 2, 1965, 110-28.
[9] Barnard, *Ascents & descents*, 272.
[10] Lodge, *Peerage*, Vol. III, 182.
[11] Burke, *Peerage*, 645-6.
[12] William Cairnes to Colonel Henry Conyngham, 10 September 1702, IAA, Castletown deposit, Box 4, Section C/48; *Irish Parliament*, Vol. III, 482.

been a costly matter and Henry I petitioned the Crown for some form of compensation:

> The petitioner shows that his father Sir Albert Conyngham was one of the earliest that appeared in arms for the King of Ireland, where he raised a regiment of dragoons at his own expense, and served at the head of it in most of the considerable actions during the war, till he lost his life in the King's service, leaving the petitioner much in debt. He prays for a grant of the King's title to a forfeited mortgage of 1,400 and a "custodiam" of some lands.[13]

Henry I's plea was turned down - just as his mother's request for a pension had been - marking the beginning of almost half a century of compensation sought by the Conynghams for Sir Albert's allegiance to King William and for the family's loss of income during the war. In 1692, the same year he was returned for the parliamentary borough of Killybegs, Henry I succeeded to his father's estates in the baronies of Banagh and Boylagh. This property had been purchased in 1665 from the Murray relatives who were forced to sell part of their property due to judicial costs arising from disputes concerning Annandale's legacy. The acquired estates comprised the Rosses, including the Mountcharles estate in the barony of Boylagh, most of lower Boylagh and half of the parish of Inver.[14] **(Fig.1.5)** Despite a confirmation of the title by Charles II in 1685, the younger Murrays were wary of the transactions between their uncle and Sir Albert and questioned Henry I's title to the property in 1691.[15]

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[13] William John Hardy (ed.), *Calendar of state papers, domestic series of the reign of William III, 1 January – 31 December 1696,* London, 1913, 132. A custodiam is a temporary grant.
[14] Denis Verschoyle, 'The background to a hidden age', *Donegal Annual,* No. 2, 1965, 110-128. The Murrays also sold land at Killaghtee and at Killymard to Sir Albert's brothers, Alexander and William Conyngham.
[15] Conyngham v. Murray, 29 Dec 1691, *Journal of the House of Lords, 1691-96*, Volume XV, London, 1771, 6.

In addition to the feud between the Conynghams and the Murrays, a group of freeholders on the estate contested Murray's title, resulting in a difficult legal battle, incongruously fought by Henry I on behalf of his Murray cousins. The disputes were bitter, expensive and largely irresolute, leaving both families with large debts and complex land-holding arrangements.[16] The result meant that Henry I kept the title to his family's estate, and while the Murray's property was restored in 1692 - to compensate Henry I for his efforts and funds he had borrowed for their cause - it was agreed that he would farm their entire estate for two years for a sum of £243.10s.[17] When the term of two years expired he settled another deal with his cousin, Lady Murray, to lease a large part of the same property at £300 per annum for twenty-one years and an additional lease for ninety-nine years for the remaining sections of Lochris and Glenesk at £80 per year and Carrigrosse and Ballyduff at £18 per year.[18] The bulk of the land although impressive in size was for the most part uncultivable, its real assets lay along the coastal area, in the herring and salmon fisheries, which held little interest for the Conynghams at that time. Henry I began to let any arable land to local farmers at almost double the rate the Murrays demanded of him and earned a reasonable profit on a relatively infertile estate.[19] Developments on this part of the Conyngham estate (from which Henry I's son took the title of his earldom of Mountcharles) under Henry I's grandnephew, William Burton Conyngham, shall be addressed in Chapter Six.

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[16] Receipts of Henry Conyngham, October 1696, Murray of Broughton papers, PRONI, D/2860/5/2.

[17] Henry Conyngham to 'Dear Cousin', Murray of Broughton papers, PRONI, D/2860/5/23. 'Farming' the estate was a negotiation whereby Henry I paid a fixed sum for an agreed period in order to obtain the right to collect rents and retain profits from the property. The Murray's debt to Henry I was in the region of £1,500.

[18] Statements of accounts between the Conynghams and the Murrays, 1703-1791, Murray of Broughton papers, PRONI, D/2860/5/3, D/2860/5/5, D/2860/5/17 & D/2860/19/4; Graeme Kirkham, '"No more to be got off the cat but the skin": Management, landholding and economic change in the Murray of Broughton estate, 1670-1755', in W. Nolan, L. Ronanyne and M. Dunlevy (eds), *Donegal: history and society*, Dublin, 1995, 357-380. Alexander Murray took control of the expired twenty-one year lease in 1719. Of the ninety-nine year lease, Lochris and Ballyduff were holdings approximately seven miles north of Killybegs on the road to Boylagh. The other holdings were further north along the coast.

[19] A survey of the forfeited lands in the baronies of Banagh and Boylagh in county Donegal, 1702-1714, at BL, Add. Ms. 14,406, f. 14, contains drawn surveys of the 'unforfeited estates' of Murray of Broughton in Donegal. The surveys indicate the areas of arable and uncultivable land. This is often misleading as rivers, bogs and barren mountainous areas were included as arable. The acreage of the Murray land holdings is annotated but does not show the location of Henry I's leased lands, nor does it give the names of his tenants.

By the end of the seventeenth century Henry I's position in Donegal was potentially very advantageous. The arrangement with the Murrays meant Henry I became their largest Irish tenant and head agent, and by marrying the recently widowed Lady Shelburne (daughter of Sir John Williams) he acquired a decent dowry, a considerable amount of land at the Isle of Thanet in Kent and some property in the counties of Carmathen and Cardigan in Wales.[20] Regardless of these assets Henry I grew tired of the tense relations with the Murray family. His interest in the Donegal estate dwindled, forcing him to look further afield for a more worthwhile existence for his family. An opportunity arose with the Williamite confiscations and the sale of forfeited estates. The attraction of relatively cheap property from the operation was luring protestant speculators to stay in Ireland in spite of the bleak economy that prevailed. It can only be assumed that Henry I took the advice of his sister Katherine's husband, William Conolly, who became Ireland's richest commoner through the acquisition of forfeited estates and other speculative property investments, and may have encouraged Henry I, his 'dear friend and brother' to consider investing in a more promising venture.[21]

At this point it is worth leaving Henry I's troubles aside to study briefly Conolly's background and his relationship with the Conyngham family. Henry I's sister Katherine Conyngham married Conolly in 1694 and through this marriage Conolly connected himself to some of the more influential families of the north. Johnston-Liik suggests that the pair met while Conolly was serving in her father, Sir Albert's regiment; there is no documentary evidence of this fact and it is more likely that they simply met in their native Donegal where Conolly (originally from Ballyshannon, county Donegal) sat as MP in 1692.[22] Conolly's rise from obscurity has been often

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[20] Burke, *Peerage*, 645-6. Mary Williams (Lady Shelburne) married Charles Petty, baron Shelburne, who died in 1696, the same year as her marriage to Henry I (Colonel Henry Conyngham).
[21] Thomas Knox to Andrew Murray, 17 June 1706, Murray of Broughton papers, PRONI, D/2860/4/18.
[22] *Irish Parliament*, Vol. III, 474.

puzzled upon and his parliamentary contemporaries ridiculed his origins in later years.[23] Nonetheless, by the time he had encountered Katherine, he was a successful attorney and agent for James Hamilton in the alnage office, where he gained important contacts and learnt the workings of the public revenue. Certainly, Katherine would have measured his potential and saw him as an ambitious man, well-primed for success. Equally, Conolly (once described as 'a cunning intreiguing [sic] spark') would have recognised the status of the well-connected Conyngham family.[24] Katherine not only brought him valuable assets in the shape of a dowry of £2,300 paid by her brother Henry I, and also important connections to her brother-in-law James Bonnell, but she remained an influential figure by his side, complementing his career as a politician in the following years.[25]

While at Chichester House in 1703 Conolly engaged in a significant purchase of almost 10,000 acres of the forfeited estates in the counties of Meath, Westmeath, Roscommon and Wexford, making him possibly the largest of the protestant purchasers. Conolly succeeded in buying the estates at often less than £1 per acre, and in some cases only one-third of the purchase money and the rest in 'Protestant purchasers' debentures'. These were essentially unsecured bonds backed only by the credit standing of the issuer. Conolly had been a prominent land speculator before the board of trustees was formed, buying estates from Lord Albemarle (one of King William's Dutch favourites and a leading grantee of the forfeited estates), to

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[23] Simms, *Williamite Confiscation*, 126. Often criticised for his desire for wealth and for his property dealings which were seen as highly suspicious, Conolly was denounced in a pamphlet published in 1702, *A letter from a soldier to the commons of England...* It contained an odd piece entitled 'Account of Prince Conolly' which stated: "He is one whom fortune in a frolicsome mood has raised him from the lowest of people to make him equal in with the peers of the realm. When his majesty obtained his glorious victory at the Boyne, this man could not reckon so many pounds of his own as he does thousands now"; *Irish Parliament*, Vol. III, 474. Sir John St. Leger wrote to Chief Justice Parker complaining that "many people here, especially our quality and old gentry, are much offended at Mr Conolly's being one of them; this gentleman was lately an attorney, his father keeping an ale-house in the north of Ireland, this being too notorious to be stifled."

[24] Lena Boylan, 'The Conollys of Castletown, a family history', *BIGS*, Vol. XI, No. 4, October - December 1968, 1-46, 5.

[25] Barnard, *Ascents & descents*, 267-89.

whom Conolly had been agent.[26] Conolly's investments did not stop at the confiscated estates. In Ulster the descendants of many of those who received grants or made purchases after the forfeitures of O'Neill and O'Donnell in 1608, were finding themselves in financial difficulties and were anxious to sell their estates and return to England. A noteworthy example of this was in 1697, when the descendants of Sir Thomas Phillips sold their Limavady estate of 1,000 acres in county Londonderry (granted to Phillips at the Plantation), to Conolly. The legacies of this estate eventually became a contentious matter, pushing the Conyngham and the Conolly families apart in later years. After the sale of the forfeited estates Conolly continued to buy land in Ulster; the manor of Castlefin, county Donegal, was sold to him in 1711 and in 1718 he bought the profitable estate of Lord Folliott, in his native Ballyshannon, along with the fisheries of Lough Erne.[27]

In fact Conolly's dealings continued up until 1728, the year before his death. By then he had acquired substantial amounts of land in counties Dublin and Kildare; the most celebrated of these, the Castletown estate in county Kildare, acquired in 1709 for £15,000 from John Dongan and his brother Thomas Dongan, earl of Limerick.[28] At a surprising late stage in his life, Conolly set about building Castletown House, a project conceived in 1718 and possibly the largest private residence undertaken in Ireland in the time of George I. Conolly saw Castletown as a new patriotic monument for Ireland as much as a symbol of his own extraordinary success. Alessandro Galilei (introduced to Conolly by John Molesworth) designed the façade of the main block of the house, but returned to Italy and was not associated with the later construction of the house, which had been initiated by 1722 and was overseen in the following years by the young Edward Lovett Pearce. Pearce had become acquainted with Galilei in

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[26] Simms, *Williamite Confiscation*, 148-9.
[27] Lena Boylan, 'The Conollys of Castletown, a family history', *BIGS*, Vol. XI, No. 4, October - December 1968, 1-46;
[28] Simms, *Williamite Confiscation,* 141.

Florence while on his Grand Tour of Italy and returned to Ireland in 1724.[29] Conolly's brilliant political career will not be considered in any great detail here. However, it is worth noting that after the Hanoverian succession he held three important offices simultaneously: the speakership (1715-1729), the office of the Lord Justice (1716-1729), and control of the Revenue and its patronage as first Commissioner (1709-1729). The combination of these positions and his success in land speculation undoubtedly made him Ireland's most significant public figure in the early eighteenth century.[30]

The Conyngham acquisition of the Slane estate

Returning to the arena of Chichester House, we find Henry I, who had left the Mountcharles estate for Dublin with his family in September 1702, struggling to raise capital for his investment.[31] He had written of his predicament to the Murrays mentioning a purchase he was thinking of making in Dublin (clearly a little reluctantly), " ...the times look so muddy that I am not fond of laying out money, especially in Ireland, which is likely to be made so unhappy a country..."[32] Henry I's financial situation was obviously not good, despite what appeared to be a lucrative business (at least on paper) in Donegal. He had discharged some of his father's debts from the Williamite war but the estate in Donegal was still in arrears and he was left with few ready assets to make any notable purchase without borrowing heavily.[33] Henry I sought payment of outstanding debts owed to him in Dublin and when this failed he resorted to procuring a mortgage, "...notwithstanding that my fortune is pretty considerable, I very much fear for the subsistence of my family I shall

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[29] McParland, *Public Architecture*, 45, 182-83.
[30] *Irish Parliament*, Vol. III, 474.
[31] Henry Conyngham to Lady Broughton, 2 October 1703, Murray of Broughton papers, PRONI, D/2860/5/14.
[32] Henry Conyngham to Lady Broughton, 4 August 1700, Murray of Broughton papers, PRONI, D/2860/5/9.
[33] Bonds, correspondence and accounts of Sir Albert Conyngham and General Conyngham, 1678-1704, IAA, Castletown deposit, Box 4, Section C/47.

be forced to borrow money at interest..."[34] He then joined the group of seventeen protestant purchasers at Chichester House to bid for baron de Ginkel's land in county Meath.

De Ginkel's estate extended from the river Boyne at Slane to Ardagh in the north of the county, and across the river Boyne through the parishes of Fennor and Duleek and southwards to Galtrim and Culmullin.[35] The land was the combination of the confiscated Fleming estate and property belonging to James II himself. In the months of April and June 1703 Henry bought 2,228 acres of land, namely in the baronies of Slane - Upper and Lower. The first purchase comprised 806 acres of the townlands of Rochestown; Roestown; Stackallan; Abelstown; Barnwelltown and Corballis. For this lot, which came from the original estate of James II, Henry I paid £1,766. These lands came with a sitting tenant; the entire 806 acres were being rented by John Blackley who managed a tuck and corn mill at Roestown and who leased the land to subtenants. Henry I's second purchase consisted of 1,422 acres of the combined estates of James II and Fleming. He was due to pay £4,637.19s.3d for the town of Slane and Slane Hill; the manor, capital messuage, and castle of Slane; and the town-lands of Harlinstown, Mullaghdillon and Cashel. This lot was rented out to three principal tenants who sublet the land further. It would appear that Henry I could only raise enough for two-thirds of the total cost of the two lots. Among the other buyers of estates in Meath were well-known names and players in Meath's eighteenth-century history, such as Sir John Dillon, James and Gustavus Hamilton, John Leigh, Henry Ogle and Robert Rigmaiden.[36] Seduced by the manor of Slane, Henry I wrote to Lady

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[34] Henry Conyngham to John Murray, 10 November 1702, Murray of Broughton papers, PRONI, D/2860/5/12. This mortgage was not obtained until 1704, the year after the acquisition.
[35] Trench, *Fleming & Conyngham*, 69-75.
[36] Trustees for the sale of forfeited estates, *A book of postings and sale of the forfeited and other estates and interests in Ireland*, Dublin, 1703. The information on the purchase of the Slane estate is under county Meath; Trench, *Fleming & Conyngham* 69-75, Trench states that in an MS volume entitled *A list of the lands forfeited to the crown in consequence of the rebellion of 1688*, in the former Public Records Office of Ireland, details are given of the sales and payments for the estates. It is recorded there that Henry I paid for his first purchase but only part of the second lot, which in total amounted to two-thirds of

Broughton, contented with his new acquisition and described in part his financial difficulties:

> ...a purchase I made about that time [April 1703] of an estate about 20 miles from a town called Slane. It is one of the noblest seats in the kingdom, which was a great inducement, but I found is so much out of repair that it will cost me great deal of money before I have it to my mind. It is very good land, and in a country where rents are better paid than in the north. It cost me about £5,000, and I hope will be worth to me £700 per annum, but I pay about £200 a year out of it to two ladies during their lives. I am sorry I cannot tell you it is paid for, for as yet I have paid but about £2,000 of the money, and though I have much more than what remains due me in rent and other ways, yet I cannot raise a farthing, so great is the scarcity of money, and I must borrow money at interest...[37]

Despite its brevity the description casts some light on the type of estate Henry was enticed to buy. The manor of Slane was a fine demesne, notwithstanding its state of disrepair, and its surrounding arable lands would undoubtedly be profitable. Henry I still owed money on purchase of the estate in the winter of 1703. He had sold some property in England and used a small amount of Lady Shelburne's dowry to secure the first payment, but, as he was unable to raise rents on the Donegal estate he was forced to borrow as he had predicted. This however, did not happen until the following summer when he turned to friends and fellow members of parliament for assistance:

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the complete transaction. The last one-third appears to remain unpaid. Trench gives the reference for the manuscript in the former Public Records Office of Ireland as PROI, QRO, OW, however the volume is currently not recorded on the National Archives of Ireland database, nor can it be located at this repository at this time.

[37] Henry Conyngham to Lady Broughton, 2 October 1703, Murray of Broughton papers, PRONI, D/2860/5/14; Trustees for the sale of forfeited estates, *A book of postings and sale of the forfeited and other estates and interests in Ireland*, Dublin, 1703. The 'two ladies' mentioned by Henry I refer to Lady Bellasis & Lady Slane. He paid them each £100 per annum, under the terms of the acquisition.

> ...I am now forced to borrow £1200 to complete my purchase of Slane, which I had scraped together by the sale of some of the land I purchased out of my English rents and my wife's dower for that purpose and though I did all that was possible to get a little money out of Boylagh to answer these exigencies, ...my agent could not raise me a shilling out of the rents. [38]

In August 1704 Henry I mortgaged the Slane estate to a group of his contemporaries, namely Edmund Stafford of Brownstowne, county Meath; William Cairnes of Dublin MP for Belfast; Thomas Knox, Murray's agent in Donegal; Reverend Dr. Ezekiel Burridge of Dublin; William Whitshead of Dublin; James McCartney and Alan Brodrick - current speaker of the commons. The lands mortgaged were not only the entire estate of Slane but also part of Henry I's property in the baronies of Banagh and Boylagh in Donegal. Broderick later passed his part of the mortgage on to his one-time ally, William Conolly, in January of the following year.[39]

What of Henry I's noble seat and a town called Slane? In the late twelfth century, under Hugh de Lacy, Slane was 'a considerable town, in one of his boroughs in his palatinate of Meath'.[40] It was around this time that one of de Lacy's knights, Archembald the Fleming was granted lands around Slane. From then until the end of the seventeenth century the Fleming family dominated the history of the estate, although the title, lord or baron of Slane was not formally recognised by the Crown until 1489.[41] At the end of the seventeenth century, villages in Ireland were quite small and isolated. The concept of a 'planned' village is primarily a post-1660

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[38] Henry Conyngham to 'Dear Cousin', 11 November 1704, Murray of Broughton papers, PRONI, D/2860/5/23.
[39] Toby Barnard, *Making the grand figure,* 66; Deed of assignment of 1 January 1704[05], Denbighshire Record Office, DD/BK/I/228. I am grateful to the Denbighshire Record Office's research service for providing this information. Stafford was a distant cousin of Henry I and a close friend, as were Cairnes and Burridge. Henry I would have met Cairnes through Conolly who had dealings with his brother Sir Alex Cairnes. Burridge eventually became one of many guardians to Henry I's children after his death.
[40] Francis Grose (ed. Edward Ledwich), *Antiquities of Ireland*, London, 1791-6, Vol. II, 1.
[41] *Complete Peerage,* G.H. White (ed.), London, 1949, Vol. XII, Part 1, 2.

development and in county Meath they were few in number. Villages were minimal nucleated settlements, acting as monastic centres and focal points for markets and fairs. Located at strategic sites, the most significant of these centres in Meath were Slane (in its case a riverine location) Nobber, Kells, Trim, Duleek and Skreen.[42] Slane was possibly the first fordable river crossing upstream from Drogheda. The decisive factor in the village's evolution was its siting at the crossroads of ancient trade routes between Dublin and the north, and Drogheda and the west. One of the earliest maps, Allen's survey of the barony of Slane from 1655 **(Fig.1.6)** shows the parish of Slane **(marked [1] in Fig.1.7)** with the Fleming tower-house and a large courtyard encompassed by the estate walls, the stone bridge of Slane (built in the fifteenth century) and a church.[43] Below the Fleming demesne there is a symbol indicating a ruin, called *Remaines*; this may refer to St. Erc's hermitage or the ruins of an older Fleming stronghold. The settlement of Slane village is not immediately discernible and there is no documentary evidence for the church shown directly north of Slane bridge. Allen's survey is slightly confusing for this reason. The symbols depicting particular structures and settlements are irregular, individualistic and often misleading. To the north of the parish **(marked [12] in Fig.1.7)** the wooded hill of Slane is visible with its ruined Franciscan church friary and college. The friary deteriorated after the expulsion of the Capuchins by Cromwell in 1641, but was still in use despite its ruinous status at the end of the seventeenth century. The rector at that time, Lawrence Jones, lived at Painstown and preached at the friary twice a fortnight.[44] The *Civil Survey* for Meath of 1654-56 supports some of the information on Allen's map, and records one large stone house, two chapels, a friary, an old castle and twenty-five tenements in the village. It also records a stone bridge with a

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[42] Brian Graham, 'The evolution of the settlement pattern of Anglo-Norman east Meath', in R.H. Buchanan, R.A. Butlin & D. McCourt (eds.), *Fields, farms and settlement in Europe*, Down, 1976, 38-47.
[43] 'The barony of Slane', by P. Allen (1655). At a scale of 160 perches to an inch. Reproduced from the original in the Bibliothéque Nationale, Paris, 1908. BL, Maps 10795 (1) 16.
[44] T.J. Westropp, 'Slane in Bregia', *JRSAI*, Series 5, Vol. XI, 1901, 405-30.

salmon weir and flourmill beside it.[45] T.J. Westropp writing about Slane in 1901 describes William Petty's Down Survey from 1652, which showed sixteen houses (one large one with gables) in the village, extending down the hill from the crossroads towards the bridge.[46] The bridge can clearly be seen on Petty's map of East Meath from 1670 but contains no real evidence for the buildings mentioned in Simmington's Civil Survey, other than a distinctive symbol used for tower houses and a group of buildings to the north west of the river, typically depicting a settlement. **(Fig.1.8)** Bradley concurs to some extent with Westropp's description, claiming that the earlier settlement was in fact in two portions, one near the bridge and one at the top of the hill near the crossroads.[47] A report of the forfeited estates in 1700, produced by the commissioners for potential investors, illustrates in greater detail the nature of the land at Slane, and the increased scale of the town:

> There is a lord's mansion house, a large orchard and gardens, a large stable and coach house. Slane town consists of 44 tenements, 4 of which belong to the rector of Slane. There are two fares [sic] kept annually and also a patent for weekly markets. It is bounded on the south by the river Boyne, where there is one salmon weir rented at 16 pounds per annum and a corn mill rented at 15 pounds per annum. One Cony [rabbit] warren rented at 10 pounds per annum. Some ash growers, 30 acres of meadow and about 100 of very good dry pasture, very arable. The town is situated 20 miles from Dublin, 5 from Drogheda, 5 from Navan and 10 from Kells.[48]

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[45] R.C. Simmington (ed), *Civil Survey AD 1654-56*, Vol. VIII, Dublin, 1931-1961, 343.
[46] T.J. Westropp, 'Slane in Bregia', *JRSAI*, Series 5, Vol. XI, 1901, 430. The original parish map for Slane from the Petty's Down Survey has been destroyed.
[47] John Bradley, 'The medieval towns of County Meath', *Riocht na Midhe*, Vol. VIII, No.2, 1988-9, 30-50.
[48] 'Survey of forfeited estates in counties Louth and Meath', 1700, BL, Add Ms. 41,159 f.33. The written survey does not include a drawn survey or a map for these counties. There is a microfilm of the survey at the National Library of Ireland, p1279-80, but it is a poor copy. The British Library holds maps to accompany the written survey for counties Donegal, Galway, Leitrim, Mayo and Sligo only. The maps were commissioned by the trustees and resembled those of the Down Survey showing the principle outlines of denomination boundaries.

Scattered around the Hill of Slane, were approximately thirty small tenements and about thirty acres of hazel wood and large shrubs. This land was well valued for the raising of crops as well as providing food and shelter for cattle in the winter. Due to the shortage of early eighteenth-century maps of the area, both Henry I's enthusiastic description of Slane and the trustees' report of 1700 must be considered significant in providing a picture of the village and its infrastructure at that period.

Henry I and his family moved to the old Fleming Hall at Slane, shortly after they acquired the estate. Henry I 's wife, Lady Shelburne, who evidently suffered from her nerves, preferred to be at Slane rather than in Donegal, in order to be closer to her Dublin physicians.[49] Slane, rather than Mountcharles, was then regarded as their principal seat. The Murray's agent in Donegal recognised Henry I's merits on the Murray estate and regretted his departure:

> I doubt not but you have heard of his [Henry I] purchase of one of our forfeited estates called Slane, near Dublin, worth about £700 per annum. He has settled all his family there and has altogether quit Mount Charles, and left one of my name living there to be his agent. If there were nothing else, this would be £1500 a year lost to that country.[50]

Henry I's time at Slane was short lived. Frustrated by constant rejections from the Crown for compensation for his family and with the lack of furtherance in his military profession, he lobbied the Lord Lieutenant for support. He was finally made Brigadier-General in December 1703.[51] This promotion marked the beginnings of a new unrest for Henry I. By the summer he was called up by the second Duke of

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[49] Thomas Knox to Andrew Murray, 14 November 1705, Murray of Broughton papers, PRONI, D/2860/4/16.
[50] Thomas Knox to Andrew Murray, 7 June 1704, Murray of Broughton papers, PRONI, D/2860/4/10.
[51] *Irish Parliament*, Vol. III, 482.

Ormonde to serve in Portugal under the Earl of Peterborough, in the War of the Spanish Succession. Ormonde was a traditional Tory and having been made a privy councillor, he succeeded Rochester as viceroy of Ireland in 1703, a post which he held until 1707. As a vociferous Whig, Henry I's open contempt of Ormonde in parliament lost him his brigade, causing the unnecessary expense of financing of an entirely new one to join up with Peterborough in Lisbon. Leaving his seat of Slane behind, Henry I mortgaged his estates to his contemporaries, drew up his will and departed for Portugal in the late summer of 1704, with Dudley Cosby of Stradbally and a brand new regiment. His time abroad was a liberal one; a while free of the concerns of his Irish estates he lived well, adopting the high manners and customs of the Iberian Peninsula.[52] The next year brought another military promotion; in January 1704[05], following persistent appeals to the Duke of Marlborough, he was made Major-General.[53]

Early improvements at Conyngham Hall & Slane village

In his absence Henry I's wife, Lady Shelburne, attended to his affairs in counties Meath and Donegal. Encountering comparable difficulties in Banagh and Boylagh she kept up an animated correspondence with the young Murray cousins regarding estate matters. At Slane she continued to execute her husband's plans for the embellishment of the old castle, renamed 'Conyngham Hall', and set about improving the village of Slane. Before Henry I left for Spain he engaged a master builder to begin restoration work and an extension at the castle immediately. Surviving building accounts kept by Abraham Wilson, a carpenter from Drogheda and Henry I's builder, show that works at Conyngham Hall had already started by June 1703, very shortly

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[52] Thomas Knox to Andrew Murray, 7 June 1704, Murray of Broughton papers, PRONI, D/2860/4/10;Thomas Knox to Andrew Murray, 22 July 1704, Murray of Broughton papers, PRONI, D/2860/4/11; Toby Barnard, *A new anatomy of Ireland, The Irish Protestants, 1649-1770,* New Haven and London, 2003, 194.

[53] Henry Conyngham to the Duke of Marlborough, January 1704/5, Correspondence of the Duke of Marlborough, BL, Add. Ms. 61,285, f.117.

after its acquisition.[54] Henry I had agreed a time span of a year and a provisional cost with Wilson for preliminary works to the building. A second set of building works was established between August 1704 and December 1705, which were overseen by Lady Shelburne. Henry I would have certainly returned to Slane intermittently and must have cast an eye over the works during his sojourn. His presence at Slane is assumed by the fact that his wife bore him a second son, Henry II, the future first Baron Conyngham of Mountcharles, in 1706. Early the following year the news broke of Henry I's untimely death at St. Estevan de Litera, where having received a single bullet wound on 25th January 1705[06] he died the following morning.[55] Clearly Henry I had feared for the future of his home at Slane when embarking to Portugal and had instructed the following to the executors of his estate, '...I devise same to my executors in trust to raise £400 and apply same to fit up the house at Slane for reception of my wife and children ...'[56]

As an executor of the estate, the rationale behind Conolly's involvement in the management of the Slane estate after Henry I's death can be clarified by this extract from the will. Henry I's will of 1704 was highly significant; it defined the subsequent state of play at Slane and also the relationship between the closely-knit families of the Conynghams, the Conollys and the Bonnells. Under the terms of the will, Lady Shelburne, the Reverend Henry Lesley (Henry I's cousin) and William Conolly were made executors of the estate.[57] Naturally Lady Shelburne was made guardian to their three children for as long as she remained a widow.[58] However Lady Shelburne's widowhood lasted a mere eleven months and in December 1706, when she married Robert Dallway, of Bellahill county Antrim, she was relieved of her role as guardian

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[54] Rev. T. Gogarty, *The council book of the corporation of Drogheda,* Vol. 1, Cork, 1988, 264.
[55] Thomas Knox to Andrew Murray, 17 April 1706, Murray of Broughton papers, PRONI, D/2860/4/17.
[56] General Henry Conyngham's will, 1704, Conyngham papers, EKA, RU438, T124/2.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Burke, *Peerage,* 645-6. Henry I and Lady Shelburne had six children, three are known to have survived infancy; Williams the eldest, named after his maternal grandfather, one daughter Mary and Henry II, the youngest, posthumous son.

by the other named guardians, Reverend Lesley and Henry I's close friend Dr. Ezekiel Burridge.[59] Conolly, not only took on the burden of his 'dear friend and brother's unravelled affairs' both at Slane and Donegal, but also took an interest in the rearing of Henry I's children.[60] This became more apparent when Lady Shelburne and Burridge both died in the same year, leaving the children in the care of the Conollys. There is no real evidence that the Reverend Lesley was involved at any level at Slane other than his guardianship (on paper) of Henry I's children. This was commented on by Lady Shelburne when cautioning the Murray's cousins in Donegal about Conolly, 'But I find he [Lesley] leaves the management of all to my brother Conolly, so it's likely you may fall into the hands you would avoid, which I am sorry for...'[61]

Her warning may have been well considered for the Murrays were not entirely happy with these new developments in Donegal. With one eye on the parliamentary borough of Killybegs, where most of the burgesses were said to be 'his relations and particular friends', Conolly gladly took on the estates of Boylagh and Banagh, much to the dismay of the Murrays who distrusted his motives.[62] By 1718 the estate was finally appearing to be profitable (to some extent due to Conolly's own resources) but the Conyngham's 21-year lease on the largest part of the property was about to expire. Conolly immediately expressed an interest, inquiring of the Murrays '...whether you continue the resolution you once had of selling. If not what you design about the lease my nephew holds, which I think expires soon and what you

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[59] General Henry Conyngham's will, 1704, Conyngham papers, EKA, RU438, T124/2. Dallway was an ex-army man who sat as MP for the borough of Antrim between 1696-9.
[60] Thomas Knox to Andrew Murray, 17 June 1706, Murray of Broughton papers, PRONI, D/2860/4/18.
[61] Lady Shelburne to Alex Murray, 25 November 1710, Murray of Broughton papers, PRONI, D/2860/9/27.
[62] Thomas Knox to William Conolly, 6 August 1710; 12 January 1711[12]; 28 January 1711[12] & 16 November 1713, IAA, Castletown deposit, Section C/48. Conolly's nephews, Williams and Henry II Conyngham both sat as MPs for Killybegs for relatively long periods after the principal lease on the Donegal property had expired. Perhaps they were promoted by Conolly or were simply following the family tradition. Their father, Henry I, sat for Killybegs in 1692-3.

would do about reserving it to the family that hold it...' However nothing came of his efforts and Alexander Murray took total control of the property from 1719 onwards.[63]

It is worth noting that Lady Shelburne inherited all of Henry I's goods and chattels including his debts on the estates, both in England and in Ireland. (If she married again the personal estate would go directly to her eldest son Williams when he came of age.) As she was an executor of Henry I's will, she was very involved with Conolly in undertaking the management of her husband's estates and discharging his debts. This was an area she would have been familiar with in Henry I's absence and her relationship with Conolly, whom she relied on heavily, was very good.[64] She took a keen interest in the 'repair of Conyngham Hall' and improvements at Slane village, proving popular with the tenants during her time there.[65] The following years at Slane should have gone smoothly under Conolly's interregnum there, but due to his reluctance to release funds to cover building costs and his determination to ignore the tenant's petitions, Lady Shelburne struggled with her plans for improvements. Eventually, affected by a long series of illnesses, she died in 1710, at the young age of 37, leaving debts and anxious tenants behind her.

Returning to improvements at Conyngham Hall after Henry I's demise, we find the building works being carried out after plans by John Curle, who had converted the former residence of the bishop of Clogher into the Weymouth school at Carrickmacross in 1698, and designed the original house at Castle Coole in county Fermanagh.[66] Barnard dates the plans of Conyngham Hall to around 1709-10, at

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[63] Graeme Kirkham, '"No more to be got off the cat but the skin": Management, landholding and economic change in the Murray of Broughton estate, 1670-1755', in W. Nolan, L. Ronanyne and M. Dunlevy (eds.), *Donegal: history and society*, Dublin, 1995, 357-380. Conolly's inquiry is on page 361.
[64] Lady Shelburne to Conolly, 30 October 1707, NLI, Ms. 15,550. I am grateful to Patrick Walsh for this information and for his comments regarding Henry I's will.
[65] Anonymous petitions to William Conolly, undated, Folder of accounts of building work on Slane Castle & town, 1706-12, Slane estate, IAA, Castletown deposit, Section F, box 4.
[66] 'Bill of works from John Curle', 1712, Folder of accounts for building work on Slane Castle and town, 1706-12, Slane estate, IAA, Castletown deposit, Section F, box 4.

least four years after Henry I's death, and Curle's name appears in the building accounts in 1712.[67] Henry I's connection with Curle is unknown but the architect was admitted a freeman of Kells, county Meath in 1697 and after his spell at Slane he stayed in the area, making alterations at Beaulieu in county Louth, one of finest houses in the vicinity in the style of Roger Pratt.[68] **(Fig.1.9)** It has also been suggested that Curle designed Stackallen House in county Meath in 1712 for Major-General Gustavus Hamilton, the future Lord Boyne, where there are some similarities in the building details.[69] **(Fig.1.10)**

Mark Odlum gives an interesting account of the early days at Conyngham Hall in *Country Life*, but he attributes the plans for building to George Garret a local builder. Garret had been commissioned to cut a pair of Corinthian capitals for the main entrance and it is very likely that he supervised much of the stone work. The mason was significant enough to have been assigned a house and 10 acres of land with a forty-one year lease.[70] Because Conolly was the principal controlling figure at Slane at the period, can we assume that he was responsible for choosing Curle to 'fit up' the incomplete residence for the Conyngham family? Henry I's notions regarding design and the aesthetic of the period are unknown and a carpenter, such as Abraham Wilson (the master carpenter whose accounts reveal much about the interior of the house), may not have been appropriate to satisfy his desire for an improved residence at Slane. If Curle arrived on the scene as late as 1709, then he may have indeed been Conolly's choice to complete Conyngham Hall.

Occupiers of tower-houses at the end of the seventeenth century often added new and spacious living quarters directly onto the older structure. Thomas Dinely's

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[67] Toby Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, 67.
[68] The original house was built between 1660-67 by William Tichbourne.
[69] Christine Casey & Alistair Rowan, *The Buildings of Ireland: North Leinster,* London, 1993, 155-6. Ann-Martha Rowan suggests that Curle may have been already working at Beaulieu as early as 1697.
[70] Mark Odlum, 'Slane Castle, county Meath', *Country Life,* July 17, 1980, 198-201.

sketches of Ireland *c.*1680 show tower-houses with new one and two-storey additions, this practice continuing well into the next century. Westropp's description of the old Fleming Castle from Petty's Parish Survey of 1652 evoked a complex ensemble:

> It then consisted of a large courtyard; along the river front (south) stood, at the south-east angle, a strong square tower with large windows; a short distance to the west a round tower with pointed roof; then a low range of buildings, with a high square tower with arched recesses to the south-west. The west side was closed with a battlemented wall, having a walk along the summit curving, to meet a gatehouse with battlements, a large archway and a house with a lofty chimney to the right in the centre of the north face; a curtain wall, with a postern, connected it with a round tower having a pointed roof, at the north-east angle; and the east wall is hidden behind this. There was a fosse to the land side.[71]

Westropp concludes that the Conynghams chose to maintain the site of the old Fleming house for the location of their new scheme but his description bears little relationship to the extant drawings of the remodelled stronghold. From the drawings in the Castletown papers, it appears that Henry I incorporated part of the existing structure into the ground plan, observed in the irregular and unusually massive walls in the western wing of the building.[72] **(Fig.1.11)** The identity of this retained portion in the western section of the older building is unclear but Odlum implies that the existing Fleming house was a three-towered seventeenth-century strong house (closely related to the type at Kanturk Castle), which was adapted for the new Conyngham

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[71] T.J. Westropp, 'Slane in Bregia', *JRSAI*, Series 5, Vol. XI, 1901, 430. A 'fosse' refers to a moat or a ditch.

[72] Only three drawings survive: a ground floor plan, the northern entrance façade and the south-eastern façade to the river.

Hall.[73] Westropp mentions only two square towers to the south-east and south-west of the original complex but it is possible that his deduction is inaccurate here since it was based solely on Petty's drawings for the Parish Surveys. Curle's ground plan of an L-shaped structure with three square towers and a retaining wall on the south-west side to square off the plan would have been a curious idiom if entirely modern and we can assume that it was an adaptation of an extant structure as Odlum suggests. Interestingly when Conyngham Hall came to be rebuilt under the guidance of William Burton Conyngham, Henry I's grand-nephew, the arranging of the original L-shaped ground plan into a square brought the figure closer to the Kanturk type than before. This is not the place to trace the complicated architectural history of Slane Castle (as it was later known) which has been done effectively by Odlum. However, the earlier history of the house and information regarding the architect is now of interest and merits analysis.

Curle attempted to give the building front a consistent and assertive facade, presenting all the necessary elements of a tripartite elevation of nine bays. The most striking features were the new curved profiles to the roofline of the three towers and the little cupola decorated domes, which flank the pedimented entrance front. **(Fig.1.12)** The capitals cut by stonemason George Garret were to grace the entrance aedicule leading to the grand hall - not unlike the entrance at Beaulieu - where two Corinthian pilasters support a large segmental pediment that almost touches the window above it. From Curle's drawings of the main entrance at Castle Coole a similar aedicule can be perceived; this time with a broken pediment over an arch and keystone entrance, above four curved stone steps, as at Conyngham Hall. **(Fig.1.13)** At Slane, the cornice strips over the arched windows in the upper storey are a decidedly odd detail. The side elevation, towards the river front, was of seven bays

[73] Mark Odlum, 'Slane Castle, County Meath', *Country Life*, July 17, 1980, 198-201. According to Viscount Slane, excavation work carried out following the fire at Slane Castle in 1991 showed evidence of the original three-towered seventeenth-century structure at basement level.

with a tower at either end, the base of each having simple arch and keystone details. **(Fig.1.12)** Wilson's building accounts reveal stone was sourced for the building either from the Carrick Leck quarry or from the nearby Ardbraccan quarry.[74] Odlum comments that any attempts at symmetry on the overly busy roofline at Slane failed, resulting in a jarring asymmetry.[75] It was due to this asymmetry of the whole volume, the capriciousness of the elevations and of the roof that the building lacks the architectural cohesion and symmetry of the likes of Stackallen and Beaulieu. Loeber notes that Curle must have been an experienced architect as his draftmanship was accomplished, but Curle was suspected of being unprofessional by Lord Weymouth at Carrickmacross where his work was not entirely satisfactory.[76] Weymouth commented to his agent Fitch: 'I could have wisht you had given me some account of him, as what buildings he has made where he lives... and whether he undertakes to build by the great.'[77] Had Conolly been an ever-present or an authoritative figure, the scheme may have turned out differently, or at least more effectively. Whatever occurred, this eccentricity is hardly perceived in Thomas Roberts' view of Slane Castle in 1773 before its alteration. Roberts' wonderful oil painting of the castle seen from the banks of the River Boyne, illustrates quite accurately Curle's original work. The only discernible difference is the treatment of the turret roofs. Roberts was more interested in nature, light and ambiance than the depiction of gentlemen's seats.[78] **(Fig.1.14)** Despite the architecture playing a secondary role in the painting we can see that the whole effect is indeed busy but lightsome and somehow gracious, complimenting Curle's efforts to deal with such a heavy handed palimpsest. Barnard, when remarking on the layout of the rooms at Slane notes that there was a 'tension

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[74] Folder of accounts for building work on Slane Castle and town, 1706-12, Slane estate, IAA, Castletown deposit, Section F, box 4. The limestone from Ardbraccan was used extensively throughout the eighteenth century as material for cut stone and its use in the architecture of Slane is discussed in later chapters.
[75] Mark Odlum, op.cit.
[76] Rolf Loeber, *A biographical dictionary of Architects in Ireland, 1600-1720*, London, 1981, 44; Michael Quane, 'Viscount Weymouth Grammar School, Carrickmacross', *JRSAI*, Nr. 86, 1956, 39.
[77] Michael Quane, 'Viscount Weymouth Grammar School, Carrickmacross', *JRSAI*, Nr. 86, 1956, 39.
[78] Anne Crookshank, Knight of Glin & William Laffan, *Masterpieces by Irish Artists 1660-1860* (Pyms Gallery), London, 1999, 30-5. This view was copied by Gabriel Beranger who was patronised by William Burton Conyngham in the late 1770s. For this watercolour see Harbison, *Antiquities*, Plate 1.

between modernity and tradition'.[79] At Castle Coole there was a similar classification, the rooms laid out in a sequence of 'entrance hall', 'lesser parlour' and 'grand parlour', all placed to the right of the main staircase and a 'drawing room' and a 'bed chamber' to the left of the entrance hall. This bedroom was substantial and was most likely for guests, as it would have been too generous for a servant's quarters. **(Fig.1.13)** Curle adds a generous amount of vertical circulation at Slane, three new staircases in total, with the convenience of a back stairs to the cellars, kitchen and larder. In order to compensate for the level change where the site slopes dramatically to the west, a large basement storey was constructed. Roberts' painting shows four windows at that level. The steward and servants' halls were strategically placed off the central 'Great Hall' with its dominant fireplace. By 1712 Conyngham Hall was taxed on twenty-one hearths.[80]

Upon Lady Shelburne's death in 1710, her bereaved husband Dallway disputed Henry I's will, claiming ownership of several articles of furniture and accoutrements. Fortunately an inventory of the items in dispute at Conyngham Hall was kept and later settled by his nephew Williams' will of 1738.[81] In addition to Wilson's accounts, the documents from Gallway's dispute with the Conollys and heirs of the estate, provide some insight into who lived at the Hall, the naming of rooms and the family's personal effects.[82] All of the sleeping quarters for the Conyngham family, their agent and their guests were in the upper storeys. Lady Shelburne had a small parlour and dressing room off her chamber. Her eldest son, Williams (referred to as 'master' in the records) had his own room, as did the Conyngham's agent, Mr Billings.[83] The younger children had a nursery, possibly in the uppermost storey. There were a total

[79] Toby Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, 67.
[80] Ibid, 66.
[81] Folder of inventory of goods and accounts in dispute at Slane Castle 1710, Slane estate, IAA, Castletown deposit, Section F, box 4; Williams Conyngham's will, 10 October, 1738, ROD, 95/146/66005. Dallway was left the sum of £500 by Williams.
[82] See also Appendix A.
[83] Billings only appears in the inventory record and not in the building accounts, although as their agent he would have had supervisory powers and dealings with Conolly.

of thirteen rooms, other than the bedrooms listed for the family.[84] They were either guest rooms or dressing rooms or playrooms for the children. Servant sleeping quarters are not specified so we can assume that they either slept in the top storey or in the basement adjacent to their work areas. As a rule, accommodation for servants was usually quite rough, servants often sharing beds, if they had them at all. Housing staff in bedrooms or dormitory type chambers in attics or windowless rooms in basements was considered normal. Outdoor staff, who tended to the gardens, orchards and general demesne, were accommodated in stables and in outhouses. One exception to the rule was at Stradbally Hall in 1729, where Pole Cosby provided new rooms for his servants and those of his extended family.[85] Many of the rooms at Conyngham Hall were simply titled 'red room', 'gray [sic] room' and 'yellow room'.[86] It can be assumed that the rooms were named after the colour or textile of their furnishings, or simply by the colour of the paint surfaces or wall hangings. Refined textiles such as Indian quilts, silk and calico were included in the list of textiles in the inventory of the dispute - the trappings perhaps of Henry I's time abroad.

The rest of the building work at the Hall took a total of six years, an excessively lengthy project, but given that Conolly was the only controlling figure for the duration of the works it comes as no surprise that it was an unhappy enterprise. Ever the negotiator, Conolly paid the builders somewhat slowly and there were long delays in the execution of stonework and carpentry. As with the records from Dallway's dispute, Abraham Wilson's surviving building accounts (uncommon for the first decade of the eighteenth century) are very enlightening. They reveal the time spent on the construction, the cost and the variety of building works executed. Wilson employed between eight and ten men, all local craftsmen, carpenters and

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[84] Folder of inventory of goods and accounts in dispute at Slane Castle 1710, Slane estate, IAA, Castletown deposit, Section F, box 4.
[85] Patricia McCarthy, 'Vails and travails: how Lord Kildare kept his household in order', *IADS,* Vol. VI, 2003, 120-40.
[86] Folder of inventory of goods and accounts in dispute at Slane Castle 1710, Slane estate, IAA, Castletown deposit, Section F, box 4.

stonemasons.[87] The men laid the 'great hall' and parlour floors, made window sashes, shutters, wainscoting, a false ceiling over the gallery, new staircases, doorcases, casements, and drawers and cupboards for the housekeeping rooms.[88] The type of timber used for laying the floors was not specified but given the early date of the construction of the Hall it was possible that oak was used. By 1720, oak was no longer a structural option for any thing other than the most prestigious buildings and there was a dependence on imported northern softwoods (already extensively in use in England) from parts of Norway, Sweden and the Baltic coasts.[89] From Curle's ground plan we can ascertain new partitions and what appears to be supports or slender columns intended to support the roof of that section and the new retaining wall to support the roof. However the partitions appear to be very slight. They may simply be of timber frame construction with panelling, to divide the larger rooms. **(Fig.1.11)** Thomas Penrose's sketch perspective of Slane Castle from the hill west of the castle circa 1785 shows the partially demolished and partially newly constructed castle after plans by a Mr. Robinson. **(Fig.1.15)** We can ascertain the remnants of Curle's original building, namely the old towers, domed turrets and the awkward roof form, with its three to two-storey level change to the south-west.

Garret and Wilson also charged Conolly for exterior works including extensions to the old stables, an entirely new set of stables and outhouses, a coachman's house, a lime-house, a set of palisades and gates. A new park wall was built at the demesne and various minor alterations were carried out at tenants' houses at the village of Slane, which Wilson included in his bill of quantities. Wilson was involved in building at Slane until around 1716. As payments for the work were delayed; both Garret and Wilson were still petitioning Conolly for money in 1711, complaining that they were

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[87] Folder of accounts for building work on Slane Castle and town, 1706-12, Slane estate, IAA, Castletown deposit, Section F, box 4. See also Appendix B.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Arthur Gibney, 'Studies in eighteenth-century building history', Ph.D., University of Dublin, Trinity College, 1998, 126.

out of pocket since 1709. Wilson had to wait for four more years; in 1716 payments were still being made to him from Conolly for carpentry work at Conyngham Hall and for the work at 'two new houses at the new town' towards the end of that year.[90] As Wilson's bill of quantities and charges for labour is incomplete (and somewhat inaccurate) the total cost of building work is difficult to calculate, but it would seem to have been in the region of £1000, which was not anomalous for a building of that size.[91]

Although Henry I had left £400 to renovate his home no apparent provisions were made for any developments at the existing village of Slane, which was, by all accounts, quite run down. In terms of infrastructure, we know from the trustees survey of 1700 that there were '44 tenements, 4 of which belong to the rector', there was a salmon weir and a corn mill, supplying industry to the village and the ruined Franciscan friary on Slane hill was still in use as a place of worship.[92] However in 1706 there were only twenty-eight tenants on the rent roll at Slane village and the rents were bringing in approximately £280 - £300 per year for the Conynghams. These rent rolls indicate that St. Erc's Hermitage was being lived in and there were large 'slate houses' in the village along with some small cabins.[93] The descriptions of dwelling houses are poor but the scale and style of the village can be gauged. Roche notes that 'cabin' was used to depict small dwellings ranging from hovels to farmhouses, but the term is often misconstrued and often understood to imply a sub-class dwelling when in fact low-profile Catholic gentry and clergy often 'retired to

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[90] Various petitions to William Conolly, 1710-21, Folder of accounts of building work on Slane Castle & town, 1710-21, Slane estate, IAA, Castletown deposit, Section F, box 4; 'Abraham Wilson's accounts 1707-09', Folder of accounts for building work on Slane Castle and town, 1706-12, Slane estate, IAA, Castletown deposit, Section F, box 4. The 'new town' referred to here was the development at the top of the hill, around the crossroads, as distinct from the earlier settlement at the bridge, as referenced by Westropp and Bradley.

[91] Folder of accounts for building work on Slane Castle and town, 1706-12, Slane estate, IAA, Castletown deposit, Section F, box 4.

[92] The corn mill was on the north-east bank of the river Boyne, the same location as Slane Mill, built in 1763-5.

[93] It may be assumed that the term 'slate house' describes a building with a slate roof rather than a slate clad building.

reside in their cabins'.[94] When Henry I died, Conolly promptly raised the rents and renewed a small amount of leases held at the village. Typically renewed leases were held for either twenty-one or thirty-one years, and stipulations included instructions to the tenants to build their own dwellings. Larger tenants were obliged to build slated houses, set amid orchards and outhouses and surrounded by enclosed fields. It was presumed that by having their own gardens or orchards, the tenants would enhance their subsistence. These autonomous developments were not always welcomed. The tenants had hoped for the building of a completely 'new town' or at least a remodelling of the old one by their new landlord. In their petitions to Lady Shelburne, and later to William Conolly, there was talk of 'throwing the old town down' and requests for houses in a 'new town'.[95] Suggestions for improvements from tenants included the building of a new house with a chimney and an orchard of ash trees for the use of 'Mr Cunningham' and a large new slate house to be built by Ben Wallace, a tenant who also held the lease of the salmon weir at Slane bridge.[96] Lady Shelburne had welcomed their desire for progress at Slane in stark contrast to Conolly. Although he succumbed to some pressure from the tenants he generally ignored their pleas.

Small industries eventually established themselves slowly at Slane; Blackley built a malthouse in 1712 on the main street leading from the crossroads in Slane village to Collon, there were several weavers in residence, and the old corn mill was revived and set up to grind wheat, malt and oats.[97] The *Civil Survey* lists over a hundred mills

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[94] Nessa Roche, 'A contemptible habitation: Some contemporary views of Irish cabins from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries', in Terence Reeves-Smyth and Richard Oram (eds.), *Avenues to the past: essays presented to Sir Charles Brett on his 75th year*, Belfast, 2003, 235-252.

[95] Petition to William Conolly from Katherine Mathews, undated, Folder of accounts for building work on Slane Castle and town, 1706-12, Slane estate, IAA, Castletown deposit, Section F, box 4. As previously mentioned the 'new town' refers to the settlement around the crossroads.

[96] Slane rent rolls, 1710-1721; Petitions to William Conolly from Slane tenants, Folder of accounts for building work on Slane Castle and town, 1706-12, Slane estate, IAA, Castletown deposit, Section F, box 4. 'Mr Cunningham' refers to Williams, Henry I's eldest son.

[97] Receipt of April 1721; Slane rent roll 1710-21; Petition to William Conolly from Thomas McCracken, undated, Folder of accounts for building work on Slane Castle and town, 1706-12, Slane estate, IAA, Castletown deposit, Section F, box 4.

in county Meath in 1654, many of which were very primitive or indeed in ruins at the time of the survey and were in need of rebuilding. While Lady Shelburne resided at Slane she busied herself in acquiring new custom for the mill and saw to its success. After her death the business dwindled rapidly to the consternation of the millers, who complained of significant losses to Conolly. Five years later the building suffered extensive damage in a violent storm and the millers characteristically failed to obtain funding from Conolly towards its repairs.[98]

This chapter began with the sale of the forfeited estates, which changed the face of property ownership in Ireland, and more importantly, underpinned the fortunes of the Conyngham and Conolly families. Henry I's untimely death, shortly after the acquisition of the new estate in county Meath, left the future of Slane in his beloved brother-in-law's hands. Other than the long, drawn-out renovation of Henry I's new seat, the estate seemed to languish and any remodelling of the extant village plan would appear to have been haphazard, with little deliberation in the laying-out of buildings. Industry was not encouraged and any payments due were made rather reluctantly, as we have seen. Alterations to tenant's houses and the 'two new houses at the new town' were the only evidence in Wilson's building accounts of improvements made at the village during Conolly's early administration, with the tenants themselves more decisive and enterprising in their appeals for progress. This comes as no surprise. Conolly's own speculative property dealings and political advancement preceded the management of a relation's estate. Would it have been any different if Henry I had survived the war and returned to Conyngham Hall? Urban historians, Proudfoot and Graham, state that landlords preferred to facilitate urban and village improvements by other groups (in the form of tenants or estate agents),

[98] Petition to William Conolly from Thomas McCracken, undated, Folder of accounts for building work on Slane Castle and town, 1706-12, Slane estate, IAA, Castletown deposit, Section F, box 4.

rather than pursuing the activity themselves.[99] Conolly had prevented this from occurring under his supervision at Slane and had denied the tenants most of their plans. But Henry I, who was clearly excited by his new estate, may have encouraged the concept of passive improvement, seeing it as a viable option while he pursued a political career in Ireland. This is merely speculation, but as we shall see in the following chapter, Slane's future remained uncertain until Henry I's wayward son, Williams, came to recognise his responsibilities as heir to the property following Conolly's death in 1729 and his younger brother fought to keep both the Meath and Donegal estates in Conyngham hands.

[99] L. Proudfoot & B. Graham, 'The nature and extent of urban and village foundation and improvement in eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Ireland', *Planning perspectives*, 1993, 259-81.

Chapter Two

Families and inheritance: The Conyngham brothers and the Burton nephews, *c.*1720-60

The Conollys: relations and bequests • Williams Conyngham's tenure at Slane • The public & private affairs of Henry (II) Conyngham • The Burton boys: Francis-Pierpoint & William • William Burton's early career •

This chapter deals with the next generation of the Conyngham family and although matters of estate improvement are addressed only in terms of Williams Conyngham's short tenure at Slane, the lives of subsequent Conyngham improvers are illustrated here to provide a background to the following chapters, and to complete the Conyngham family history for the early decades of the eighteenth century.

The Conolly family & William Conolly's bequest

Where William Conolly was lacking in the management of Henry I's Slane estate, his role as guardian to Henry I's children was well fulfilled. With the formidable Katherine Conolly by his side, the childless Conolly took a keen interest in the welfare of the Conyngham children until they came of age. **(Fig.2.1)** Katherine held a strong matriarchal role in her extended family on both sides and maintained a close relationship with her two sisters Jane Bonnell and Mary Jones, busying herself with their offspring. **(Fig.2.2)** After her parents' death Mary Conyngham went to live with Katherine in Dublin, where she was indulged by her doting aunt and where she encountered Frank Burton, the Conolly's neighbour at Capel Street who became her future husband. Burton had bought a large part of Lord Clare's land in the sale of forfeited estates in 1703 and was making a tidy profit of between £2,000 and £3,000 annually. A nervous delicate girl, Mary was often sent abroad to alleviate her ailments, leaving her husband Frank to entertain her aunt at Castletown where he

became a favourite of the Conollys.[100] Deterioration in the Conyngham girls' bond became evident when Mary Jones drew away from the sorority due to differences between her husband, Richard Jones, and William Conolly. Jones had also bought property at the auction at Chichester House in 1703, where he purchased 116 acres at Gallow, near Dollanstown in county Meath. The Joneses lived well at Gallow, preferring a comfortable rural existence to the opulent lifestyle of the Conollys and refused to be drawn into the Conolly inner circle. When politics intervened in their quiet lives, Jones and Conolly clashed over the lack of support for Conolly's friend, Thomas Wharton (the Lord Lieutenant at that time). Jones was denied a seat as MP in Killybegs by Conolly and eventually Katherine sided with her husband against her own sister.[101] The malice towards Mary Jones was perpetuated in Katherine's will and her betrayal of her sister Jane Bonnell in another family row, involving the younger Conynghams, showed her whimsical nature and disloyalty.[102]

Lady Shelburne, the mother of Williams and Henry (II) Conyngham died in December 1710 and was buried at St. Mary's in Dublin, where the church entry refers to 'the unfortunate Lady Shelburne aged 37 years'.[103] Her early demise was indeed unfortunate and seemed to colour events for the Conollys' guardianship of her children and the early heady days of Williams' tenure at Slane. In the year of their mother's death Williams was only twelve and his brother Henry (hence called Henry II) a mere four years of age. The Conollys set about engaging tutors at Slane for the boys and suggested tours abroad to further their education. Despite their best efforts Williams proved to be an errant, capricious fellow, who showed a preference for the

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[100] For a full account of Katherine Conolly's relationship with her husband, sisters and their families see 'A tale of three sisters: Katherine Conolly of Castletown', 266-89, in Barnard, *Ascents & descents*.
[101] Barnard, *Ascents & descents*, 270-4.
[102] Letters from Katherine Conolly to Jane Bonnell, 1742-3, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,578 (15-16).
[103] Lodge, *Peerage*, Vol. II, 358.

company of the lower classes and a fondness for 'Dublin sluts'.[104] **(Fig.2.3)** At the age of thirteen he was already being treated for a venereal disease (possibly syphilis), which plagued him for the rest of his days. Dispatched on a grand tour in 1717, he encountered Adamina Wilhelmina, a native of Utrecht, whom he promptly married, to the despair of his accompanying tutors and without the consent of his uncle Conolly.[105] His new wife took the name Conyngham but never set foot in Slane and Williams eventually remarried, this time Constance Middleton of Essex.[106] The couple lived extravagantly, flitting between London and Dublin, and constantly in debt. Williams managed to produce a string of illegitimate children and only one legitimate heir, his son Billy Conyngham.[107] At this point Conolly, who was at the height of his speakership, found the time to encourage his nephew and his wife to return to Slane, where the pair could be easily observed and eventually manage the estates rather than live out their lives as absentees - a status which Conolly abhorred. Enticed by the promise of the release of their debts (*c.* £4,000) by the Conollys, the couple duly returned to Conyngham Hall.

Once installed at Slane, Williams, whose motives could hardly have been honourable, applied to the Conollys for funds to improve the village and demesne. The appeal was seen as somewhat disingenuous by the Conollys, and tired of indulging their nephew they turned down the request for the financing of some houses, a new mill and a church.[108] Progress towards the foundation of a new church for the parish of Slane had, in fact, already been initiated. A plot to replace the old friary church on the hill of Slane was granted in 1712. Williams would have been too young then to allocate a new site for the church and it may have been Conolly

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[104] Katherine Conolly to Jane Bonnell, 15 January 1738[9], Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,578 (12).
[105] William Conolly to Jane Bonnell, 7 October 1711, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,578 (1); Misc. letters to Jane Bonnell, June 1719 & March 1720, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,578 (3).
[106] *Irish Parliament*, Vol. III, 484.
[107] Jane Bonnell to William Conolly, undated, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,578 (2); Katherine Conolly to Jane Bonnell, 15 January 1738[9], Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,578 (12)
[108] Barnard, *Making the grand figure,* 66.

who took the decision for its location between the edge of the demesne and the village. The site was considered more convenient for the Conynghams and the parishioners. By 1718 it was reported that Williams 'has been building, and is to build a church for this part of his parish'.[109] According to the vestry records the new church was not fully complete until twenty years later, with funds advanced by the rector John Maxwell.[110] In 1726, the ever-restless Williams informed the Conollys that he planned to sell off the entire Slane estate to cover mounting debts. Horrified that any of their previous efforts at Slane and Henry II's dream for a family seat would now be lost, the Conollys persuaded him to mortgage the property instead. Slane was duly mortgaged in 1726 to Ulrich Browne, James Browne, John Forde and James Crofts, all residents of central London.[111] With coffers full Williams abandoned his wife and returned to London. Constance sought recourse with her brother-in-law, Lord Onslow (in England) and eventually left with her son, despite Frank Burton's commitment to assist with the rearing of Billy.[112] The spree in London did not last long and Williams, ailing and contrite, returned home once more with some aspirations to fulfil his role as the squire of Slane.[113]

Such was the state of play at Slane in 1726, twenty years after Henry I's death. His sons, no longer under a guardian, were free at the helm of his estates and his daughter Mary had married well into the Burton family, endowing the Conyngham family even further with property from the Williamite forfeitures. In 1729 Conolly collapsed in the House of Commons and died four days later at his house on Capel Street. Frank Burton, disgusted with Conolly's physicians, described for Jane Bonnell how they prolonged his death throes with 'cordials', aggravating his condition. His grieving widow Katherine arrayed her house on Capel Street with expensive black

[109] Andrew Hamilton, Archdeacon of Raphoe, to Jane Bonnell, March 1717[18], Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,580 (6).
[110] *CIVM*, Vol. I. preface.
[111] Mortgage deed, 1726, ROD, 51/60/32787.
[112] Francis Burton to Jane Bonnell, undated, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,579 (10).
[113] Katherine Conolly to Jane Bonnell, October 1738, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,578 (11).

and grey crepe in preparation for an extravagant interment, quite possibly arranged by Conolly himself before his death. Attended by both houses of parliament, Conolly's spectacular funeral procession began on foot, leading from his house on Capel Street to the end of Arran Quay before departing towards Castletown House at Celbridge. Mourners wore linen scarves, which Frank Burton reckoned if introduced as a custom in Ireland would 'create a great consumption of [its] own manufacture'.[114] Katherine was already sixty-three when Conolly died but putting her mourning aside she indulged in her obsession with status, holding her own form of court at Castletown House. By all accounts Conolly's generous side revealed itself in his will. He left a surprising amount of property to his wife and large sums of money to his extended family. This topic has been assessed in detail by others and what concerns us here is the Conyngham's bequest.[115]

On his nephews, Williams and Henry II, Conolly settled his substantial Limavady estate, which would eventually revert to the Conolly family if neither of the Conyngham brothers managed to produce a surviving male heir. Under the terms of the settlement, drawn up on 12 February 1705[6] after Henry I's death, Conolly was allowed to put a charge of up to £15,000 sterling on the estate. This was essentially a type of mortgage, whereby the estate was used as a guarantee against that sum. Upon his death the sum was to be paid to his executors to discharge his debts. In another settlement made in September 1725, Conolly charged the estate with a further sum of £15,000, on this occasion in legacies to members of the Conyngham family. This settlement was subsequently revoked in his will, with the loss of the legacies but leaving the burden of the £15,000 mortgage from the first settlement. The legal debacle between the Conynghams and William Conolly Junior as a result

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[114] Francis Burton to Jane Bonnell, 31 October 1729; 19 November 1729, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,579 (9).
[115] For a full and comprehensive account see Patrick Walsh, 'The career of William Conolly, 1689-1729', Ph.D., 2008, University of Dublin, Trinity College.

of the settlement of the Limavady estate was somehow resolved by 1740.[116] But the families fought again in 1765, when Conolly Junior brought an injunction against Henry II to prevent him from trying to secure control of the Limavady borough for his own heirs when the estate passed back to the Conolly family. Finally, the estates reverted to William Conolly Junior's son Thomas, when Henry II died childless in 1781.[117] Thomas had expected the responsibility for the £15,000 charged on the estate would pass to Henry II's heirs, but when he officially challenged the issue the verdict was unfavourable. As it turned out, the only Conynghams to benefit directly from Conolly's will immediately after his death were Williams' widow, the long-suffering Constance and her son, who received a bequest of £1,000.[118] Resentful of her inheritance she declared that it would never make up for her hardships or be enough to maintain her child's welfare.[119] The question remains, why did Conolly settle the Limavady estate on the Conyngham boys in the first place? His motivations are still unclear although the timing of the original settlement of 1706 suggests it was linked to the death of their father, Henry I.[120]

The Conyngham roué plays out his final years at Slane, 1729-1738

Both Malcomson and Barnard note that Williams' licentious lifestyle continued upon his return to Ireland and before his death in 1738.[121] Recent evidence indicates that despite his shortcomings he showed signs of regret, possibly triggered by continuous ill-health or his troubled marriage with Constance. By 1729 he was ready to begin

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[116] William Conolly Junior was Conolly's blood nephew and principal heir.
[117] Under the conditions laid out in William Conolly's will, the estate of Limavady would revert to the Conolly family if Williams and Henry II failed to produce a legitimate heir. Williams outlived his son Billy, and died childless in 1738. Henry II also died without a legitimate son in 1781 and the property devolved into the hands of Thomas Conolly.
[118] On his niece, Mary Conyngham, Conolly had already settled £5,000 on her marriage to Francis Burton.
[119] Constance Conyngham to Jane Bonnell, 15 November 1729, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,579 (2).
[120] My thanks to Patrick Walsh for his comments on Conolly's will and on the Limavady issue.
[121] Barnard, *Making the grand figure,* 68; A.P.W. Malcomson, *The pursuit of the heiress, Aristocratic marriage in Ireland*, Belfast, 2006, 172, 224-5.

'repairing Slane'.[122] Before any improvements could be undertaken, there was the small matter of the family's debt, which then amounted to approximately £30,000. The London creditors Ulrich Browne, James Browne, John Forde and James Crofts held almost half of this sum in the mortgage agreement (from 1726) for the entire Slane estate. In June 1733 Williams chose to adjust the mortgage, negotiating manageable terms whereby he could renew leases and also raise rents, leaving him with a moderately wider margin with which he could invest in any improvements.[123]

Since Mary Lady Shelburne's death in 1710, Conyngham Hall had been neglected and a substantial amount of its furniture and fittings had been removed by her husband, Robert Dallway. Upon their return to Slane from London, Constance had complained '...tho' we thought this house was thorough furnished, we did not find one chair in the whole house nor indeed any other furniture, except for old stuff beds and a few pictures'.[124] A lack of documents for the building at this period leads us to believe that Williams had retreated to Dublin from where he initiated developments at the village. New indentures were granted on the estate for forty-one years. They stipulated specific improvements to existing houses and directives towards newly-built houses. Under a market charter in the late seventeenth century, Slane was granted a license to hold a weekly market on Thursdays and also a patent for a fair to be held twice annually. A market place was appointed at the main crossroads, known then simply as the 'market square'. Included in Williams' plans were two sites on the north-east and south-east sides of the market square. Tenants were instructed to build a 'good slate house' with gardens attached to each.[125] Opposite 'the new church' he renewed the lease on a house and garden known as 'the three chimneys

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[122] Constance Conyngham to Jane Bonnell, February 1728[29], Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,579 (2).
[123] Mortgage deed, 1758, ROD, 197/128/129845. This deed refers to Henry II's subsequent repayment of the mortgage but it outlines in detail Williams re-mortgaging of the estate in June of 1733.
[124] Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, 68.
[125] Deed of lease, 1729, ROD, 60/158/40323.

or 'the red house' to the rector of Stackallen, Reverend Richard Fisher.[126] There were several weavers in the village, living and working in the 'old barracks', which had been divided up into four tenements with a shared garden.[127] On the periphery of the village Williams granted new plots for mansion houses, orchards and gardens.[128] The deeds from this period give us some indication of the scale of house building and the materials used but like the earlier records they reveal little in terms of the village layout. From mid eighteenth-century maps we can determine that the plan developed in an organic pattern along the roads radiating from the market square, principally towards the north to Collon and westwards towards Navan (as we shall see in Chapter Four). Williams' attempts to erect new public architecture at Slane did not extend further than the new church, but the old mill by the river Boyne which had been encouraged by Lady Shelburne was revived and used as a Stamps Mill.[129] A mill of this kind was water-powered and used in early paper-making for preparing the pulp, or alternatively in the mining process for breaking up the ore. Significant investment in industry (including the coalmining industry) at Slane was not made until forty years later, but the deeds do inform us that 'a clerk of the mines' lived at a large house in the village in 1726.[130] The clerk may have been managing local coalmines in the townland of Cashel, known as Golden Spot or at Gernonstown, to the north west of Slane.[131]

In the summer of 1736 Williams' showed early signs of deterioration. The following year he reunited with his estranged wife Constance, who was given clear instructions

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[126] Deed of lease, 1735, ROD, 83/314/59042. The Fishers were to become a prominent family at Slane and were involved at a later stage in the rebuilding of the market square.
[127] Mortgage deed, 1726, ROD, 51/60/32787. The *OED* describes a barrack(s) as 'A large plain building or range of buildings, tenements, or flats in which a number of people are housed'. It is unlikely that the barracks were originally intended for military use, unless they had provided temporary accommodation for soldiers at Slane during the Battle of the Boyne. The early tenant rolls at Slane village during Conolly's tenure indicate that every dwelling fit for human habitation was lived in, including Erc's hermitage on the demesne.
[128] Deed of lease, 1729, ROD, 38/534/25278.
[129] Deed of lease, 1727, ROD, 54/457/35403.
[130] Deed of lease, 1726, ROD, 51/60/32787.
[131] Ellison, *Boyne and Blackwater*, 58-9.

by Williams' stepfather Robert Dallway not to stay with her husband in Dublin for fear of her own well-being. Williams finally succumbed to his illness and returned to Slane to die 'of a decay'. His aunt Katherine Conolly reported in October 1738 that 'he has been in all this illness and some time before, the most penitent creature I ever heard of'.[132] Williams had outlived his son Billy, leaving Constance to dispose of his 'two bastards' whom she delivered into the hands of a 'decayed gentlewoman, to teach them to read and say their prayers'.[133] Under the terms of his will the Conyngham estates in Donegal and Slane, the former Conolly estate of Limavady and any leasehold interests in Dublin were left to Williams' younger brother Henry II. Williams' hapless wife Constance was to be paid £1,000 upon his death and a jointure of £300 per annum out of the estates' profits - in addition to jewellery and sundries including a precious '*crystall Cabinett*' mentioned previously in Henry I's will.[134] Amongst the several modest sums left to his aunts, cousins and men-servants he bestowed Col. Dallway with the sum of £500, in an attempt to settle their old dispute. Unlike his father who had led the Northern Whig Party, Williams was swayed by the Tories and left £200 'for the effectual carrying into execution the Reverend Dean Swift's scheme for erecting and endowing a proper house for the reception of idiots and lunaticks and such like'.[135] Despite his efforts to resolve family matters in his final years, Williams had dealt his brother Henry II a blow in leaving him unresolved debts, a troubled estate in Donegal, the decaying manor of Conyngham Hall and the 'poor town' of Slane.[136]

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[132] Roger Jones (husband of Mary Jones) to Jane Bonnell, October 1738, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,579 (6); Katherine Conolly to Jane Bonnell, August 1736, August 1737, October 1738, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,578 (9 -11).

[133] Katherine Conolly to Jane Bonnell, January 1738[39], Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,578 (12).

[134] Probate of last will & testament, Williams Conyngham, 1738, Conyngham papers, EKA, RU438, T124/4. The estates in this case were Limavady and Slane.

[135] Ibid.

[136] McVeagh, *Pococke's Irish Tours*, 142. At that time the Conyngham estates both in Ireland and in England yielded the total sum of £6,400; the full Slane estate rental had risen marginally in the preceding twenty years from £700 to £1000 but the Donegal estate profits had dropped somewhat from £1,500 to £1,300. From Arthur Dobbs to Robert Walpole, June 1741, Cholmondeley (Houghton) papers, Cambridge University Library, Ms. 3097. I am grateful to Edward McParland for this information.

'An ornament to his country'[137]

Happily, Henry II's ambitions outshone his wayward brother's legacies and fighting to salvage the estates, he proceeded to drag the Conyngham family out of their forty-year-old debt. In character and temperament he was highly motivated, even to the point of being ruthless, and as a public figure he was inherently irritating, given to riling the likes of George Townsend (Lord Lieutenant 1767-72) and other fellow parliamentarians. Privately he was extremely benevolent, hospitable and easy-going, and 'his company was incessantly solicited by every party of the *bons vivans*'.[138] Joining the 4th Dragoon Guards in his early twenties, he was quickly promoted to Captain of the Royal Irish Dragoons in 1725 and eventually *aide-de-camp* to the Lord Lieutenant (William Cavendish, 3rd Duke of Devonshire) in the year of his brother's death in 1738. His interest in politics had been encouraged by Conolly and in 1727 he began his first year of many, as MP for Killybegs in Donegal.[139] The twenty years following his brother's demise were spent applying for commissions and compensation for his father's campaign, canvassing for parliamentary seats and more importantly raising the family to the peerage.

Disagreements with his aunts initially hindered Henry II's progress. His first quarrel was with Katherine Conolly, who had inherited a small amount of property in Wales from her husband. These estates had been purchased by Conolly from Henry I and his wife Lady Shelburne in the summer of 1700.[140] Williams, bitterly depicted by Katherine Conolly as 'the greatest brute alive', had questioned the validity of the sale of the property, challenging the transaction and claiming ownership.[141] In 1735 he

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[137] Dean Swift's prediction for Henry II in *Tête-à-tête* portraits in *The Town and Country Magazine*, 1774, Vol. VI, 570.
[138] *Tête-à-tête* portraits in *The Town and Country Magazine*, 1774, Vol. VI, 569.
[139] *Irish Parliament*, Vol. III, 483.
[140] Henry Conyngham and Lady Shelburne conveyance to William Conolly of their estates in Wales, 16 July 1700, Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms 35,423 (1). The estates were in the counties of Carmarthen and Cardigan in Wales and came originally from Lady Shelburne's dowry.
[141] Katherine Conolly to Jane Bonnell, November 1735, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,578 (8).

brought an action against his aunt, which was subsequently settled by Henry II after Williams death, in a agreement whereby the Welsh estate would pass directly to him in the event of Katherine's death.[142] Where the Conolly dispute had been resolved in a relatively amicable fashion, a subsequent lawsuit with the Bonnells was difficult and raised doubts regarding Jane Bonnell's moral stance. Again the disagreement was born out of Henry I's transactions; on this occasion Jane Bonnell had been persuaded by Henry I (before the acquisition of Slane), to invest £1,500 in a mortgage agreement on part of the Donegal estate. Henry I proposed a relatively high interest of over 9%, yielding an annual income of £140 from her investment.[143] After her husband's death in 1706, Lady Shelburne faithfully paid Jane Bonnell the interest stipulated by her husband. Their son Williams followed suit while resident in London, but three years following his return to Slane in 1721 he failed to make payments and was pursued by his aunt for her full profit. Upon his death she claimed she had lent him money for repairs at Slane and for the erection of new houses for the tenants on the Kent estate in England. She demanded remuneration for this loan and for all back payments due on the Donegal mortgage. Henry II, supported by his brother-in-law Frank Burton, doubted these claims and immediately entered into a lawsuit with Jane Bonnell. Complaining of bullying by the Conynghams, she sought consolation from Katherine Conolly who curiously turned on her sister, accusing her of 'forgery and perjury'.[144] Henry II's lawyer (at that time) and close friend, Alfred Nesbit, confirmed the corruption. An inspection of the accounts showed that the usually devout and righteous Jane Bonnell had falsified the figures:

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[142] Indenture between Nathaniel Gould and Katherine Conolly, April 1731, Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms 35,423 (6); John Gould to Henry, Lord Mountcharles, draft conveyance of property in counties Cardigan and Carmarthen, Wales, May 1754, Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms 35,423 (7). Katherine Conolly had sold a portion of the Welsh estate in 1731 to the Gould family. Upon Katherine's death in 1752 Henry II inherited the remainder of the estate but two years later in 1754 he bought back that same portion from the Goulds, uniting the two properties once more. A few years later, in 1758, Henry II attempted to sell part of the property again in order to finance his purchase of Brook Farm, a substantial piece of land bounding the Isle of Thanet in Kent. According to later documentation he succeeded and extended his Kent estate accordingly.

[143] Henry Conyngham to Jane Bonnell, July 1702, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,579 (1).

[144] Jane Bonnell to Constance Conyngham, April 1743, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,579 (3); Francis Burton to Jane Bonnell, November 1729, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,579 (9); Katherine Conolly to Jane Bonnell, 1743, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,578 (16).

> I also see an amount which was lent to your nephew, the amount was I am sure never received by any blood of the Conynghams. I am justified in saying so for many reasons... you [Jane Bonnell] received interest at 10% and 8% to the year 1724 and everyone knows the legal interest is only 5% and the current interest only 3.5% per annum. I do not know what security you have, bond or mortgage, nor did I ever hear a creditor could receive more than the penalty of a bond, which is the same sum as the principal debt.[145]

In 1744 Henry II's luck changed. An advantageous marriage to Ellen Merrett in December of that year allowed him to settle the lawsuit with his aunt and pay off the Donegal mortgage of £1,500 and half the interest due to her.[146] His new wife, Ellen Merrett, was the only daughter and heiress of Solomon and Rebecca Merrett of London. The subsequent owner of properties at Sackville Street in Piccadilly and Stanhope Street in Mayfair, Ellen brought Henry II a generous dowry of £15,000 on their marriage, and a further £11,000 to be paid upon the death of her mother, Rebecca.[147] Their marriage was convenient for Henry II but not entirely ideal; his wife failed to bear him an heir and he made no secret of his extramarital affairs. Ellen was considered 'a humdrum, stupid kind of woman that is neither liked or disliked' and who took pleasure in the late-night revelries in Dublin and London. She was 'quite shocked at the early hours of the London ladies' who 'ran away quite frightened at half an hour after ten' and liked to throw large parties during the winter months.[148]

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[145] Alfred Nesbit to Jane Bonnell, October 1743, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,579 (7).
[146] Henry Conyngham to Jane Bonnell, April 1743, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,579 (3).
[147] Papers relating to Ellen Merrett's fortune, 1732-1770, Conyngham papers, EKA, RU438, E91/4. Solomon Merrett was already deceased by the time Ellen married Henry II. Her mother, Rebecca, was the only daughter of Charles Savage a successful London businessman. Upon Rebecca's death in 1762, the Conynghams received the inheritance due. After Henry II's death in 1781, Ellen Merrett resided between London and Kent, where she lived at the demesne at Ramsgate left to her by Henry II and earning a jointure of at least £1000 per annum. She died in 1816, at Lower Grosvenor Street in London, at the age of 91, and was buried at Hughenden, on the Buckinghamshire estate inherited from the Savage family in 1786. Her portrait hangs in the dining room of Hughenden Manor. A generous benefactor and promoter of charities, she left substantial legacies for the repair and upkeep of buildings, which included the renovation of a range of seventeenth-century almshouses on the Hughenden estate.
[148] Brian Fitzgerald (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily Duchess of Leinster*, 1731-1814, Vol. I, Dublin, 1949, 193, 201; ibid, Vol. III, Dublin, 1957, 258.

Like his elder brother, Henry II was quite the *Lothario*. His dalliances were exposed in the notorious *tête-à-tête* portraits in *Town and Country Magazine* and also in a series of settlements drawn up for his mistresses by the eminent Joshua Sharpe, Henry II's lawyer at Lincoln's Inn.[149] **(Fig.2.5)** The periodical noted that Henry II's popularity had begun at a very young age: 'In his juvenile years we find Lord C[onyngha]m a great favourite of the ladies in Ireland, and he distinguished himself at the Castle upon every 'gala', as one of the gentlest men and best dancers at the court. When he quitted that kingdom and came hither, he was no less distinguished by the ladies at St. James's, who seemed to outvie each other in attracting the attention of the young C[onyngha]m'.[150]

Before embarking on his grand tour in the 1720s Henry II had won the affections of a wealthy young widow who was swiftly cast aside once the charms of the Parisian ladies had been discovered.[151] His character fully formed, he returned to London to enter into a rather sordid affair 'with the celebrated Signora Campagni' which left him bruised and ready to retreat to his house in Hammersmith where he was cared for by his housekeeper until his marriage to Ellen Merrett. Once married Henry II was dissatisfied with just one mistress and kept at least two or three concurrently. The annuities proposed in his mistresses' settlements left his finances unstressed; at the most £100 was to be paid annually to a Mary Perfect, the daughter of a minister in Bedfordshire and smaller sums of £40 and £50 to Elizabeth Bulstrode and Ann Barker. Henry II's cynicism is reflected in a comment to Sharpe, declaring the bonds (to be paid as legacies to these ladies upon his death), are 'nothing to me, as I have

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[149] The details of these settlements are contained in a series of circa fifty letters between Henry II and Sharpe, from 1759-78. Formerly part of the Phillips papers, NLI, Ms. 18,682, they are now held at PRONI under the title Lord Conyngham papers, D/2274. Sharpe also represented Henry II in various lawsuits with the Murray family.

[150] *Tête-à-tête* portraits in *The Town and Country Magazine*, 1774, Vol. VI, 569-71.

[151] The exact dates of Henry II's grand tour are unclear but it was probably at some point between 1720 and 1730. Neither Williams nor Henry II's travels are illustrated in John Ingamells, *A dictionary of British and Irish travellers in Italy, 1701-1800*, New Haven & London, 1997.

no child'. A typical settlement was to be revoked 'in case she marries without my consent or if she has carnal communication with any person but me' and would be valid as long as 'she lives with me during my life...that she shall not contract matrimony without my consent and that she shall keep no company but such as I approve of'. The stipulations were adhered to except in the case of Mary Perfect who absconded with a man named Gardiner and pursued her claims to annuity from abroad.[152] As usual a lawsuit followed and was won successfully in 1771 by Sharpe, who wrote to Henry II (by then living in Paris), 'rejoicing in our success of the trial against Mrs Gardiner'.[153] An affair with young widow Mrs Farrer, which had begun on the Isle on Thanet in Kent, was to be Henry II's last. The devoted couple moved from Ramsgate to his home in London and finally to Paris where she reigned until his death as the 'empress of his affections'. [154] **(Fig.2.6)**

Resuming the Conyngham family's quest for compensation for Sir Albert and Henry I's military campaigns, Henry II beset (an unimpressed) Duke of Newcastle with begging letters, appealing for assistance in gaining reimbursement and employment for his relatives, and generally bemoaning his own situation. In one of these letters he mentions his reluctance to 'quit the service' on the decease of his elder brother.[155] However he must have been inclined to stay as he was made a colonel in 1752 and received a decent salary from the army, facilitating his debt rebates and election campaigns.[156] During his early electioneering days, while canvassing for his seat in

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[152] A.P.W. Malcomson, *The pursuit of the heiress, Aristocratic marriage in Ireland*, Belfast, 2006, 169-71. This would indicate that Henry II was estranged from Ellen at this point. Certainly there is no evidence of her living at Slane or Dublin during this period and ultimately her interests lay in London with her family and later at Ramsgate where she resided at the house left to her by Henry II.

[153] Sharpe to Conyngham, December 1771, Lord Conyngham papers, PRONI, D/2274.

[154] *Tête-à-tête* portraits in *The Town and Country Magazine*, 1774, Vol. VI, 569. In *Notes and Queries,* 1905, Vol. IV, on pages 241-2, 342-4, 462-4 and 522-3, Horace Bleackley, who used Frederick George Stephens' (then unpublished) work, *A catalogue to the prints and drawings in the British Museum,* identifies the majority of the characters in the portraits but fails to reveal the identity of the mysterious 'Mrs F...r'. However she has been more recently catalogued under 'Conyngham' by the National Portrait Gallery, who reveal her to be as a Mrs Farrer.

[155] Henry, Lord Mountcharles to Duke of Newcastle, 1754-1761, Correspondence of the Duke of Newcastle, BL, Add. Ms. 32,753, f. 252.

[156] *Complete Peerage,* Hon. Vicary Gibbs (ed.), London, 1913, Vol. III, 410-11.

Tiverton, Henry II was frustrated by the effort and threatened to abandon his English interests exclaiming, 'the villainous treatment I have met with both in my election and petition have given me such a fait of mankind that I am determined to retire from this part of the world when the situation of my affairs will permit'.[157] These were idle threats and he eventually gained seats as a member of the English parliament for Tiverton (1747-54) and Sandwich (1756-74), as well as retaining his Irish seat for Killybegs (1727-53).[158] Preferring not to engage in debate in St. Stephen's Chapel, he entertained at his houses in Hammersmith and Mayfair in London, and also at Ramsgate on the Isle of Thanet. In addition to a relatively successful military and political career, Henry II had by 1754 gathered several key public positions: governor of Donegal (1746-81) and of the city and county of Londonderry and Coleraine (1754-81), he was sworn in as a privy councillor in 1748 and vice-admiral of Ulster (1748-79) and was made a trustee for the Linen Board in 1769.[159] His triumph however was the raising of the Conyngham family to the peerage. Created Baron Mount Charles in October 1753, the unabashed Henry II aspired to a higher title and sought a viscountcy from the Duke of Devonshire three years later.[160] **(Fig.2.7)** Successful in his plea he became Viscount Conyngham in July 1756, prompting the countess of Kildare to comment to her then beloved earl: 'I suppose you have heard that Conyngham is to have the rank at last. The Duke of Bedford was vastly against it, Rigby says, and was obliged to do it because Hotham had got it here'.[161] As revealed in his letters to Newcastle and Grenville, Henry II was not entirely happy with his lot. In 1765 we find him pursuing his crusade for the position of Master of the

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[157] Henry Conyngham to Jane Bonnell, February 1745[6], Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,579 (5).
[158] *Irish Parliament*, Vol. III, 483. For a detailed account of Henry II's English parliamentary affairs see Sir Lewis B. Namier & John Brooke, *The history of parliament: the house of commons* 1754-90, Vol. II, London, 1985, 247-49.
[159] *Complete Peerage,* Hon. Vicary Gibbs (ed.), London, 1913, Vol. III, 410-11; Bartlett, *Macartney in Ireland*, 8.
[160] *Complete Peerage,* Hon. Vicary Gibbs (ed.), London, 1913, Vol. III, 410-11; Toby Barnard, *A new anatomy of Ireland, The Irish protestants, 1649-1770*, New Haven and London, 2003, 27. Henry II was finally created Earl of Mountcharles in January 1781, three months before his death in Bath aged 76.
[161] Brian Fitzgerald (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily Duchess of Leinster*, 1731-1814, Vol. I, Dublin, 1949, 57.

Ordnance (once held by his grandfather Sir Albert), remarking to the prime minister that he is growing old and would like to enjoy some success in the latter part of his life: 'that employment suits me better than any other'.[162] This particular application was unsuccessful, as were his demands in 1769 for 3,000 acres of the Curragh and the extraordinary sum of £100,000 as recompense for his family's grievances during the war, as well as a pension of £3,000 per annum for thirty-one years.[163] Lord Townshend's poor opinion of him undoubtedly played a role in his failure and naturally Henry II was infuriated. In a letter from Thomas Allan to Sir George Macartney (Townshend's chief secretary), Allan discusses Henry II's bullying tactics towards the government describing the Conynghams as 'insatiable as ill-bred' and mentions that:

> Lord Conyngham is exceedingly angry that he has not got the Ordnance. I do really believe he is not right in his senses...Your old acquaintance, my namesake of the city, who is very plainspoken, asked him what title he has to expect such an employment, when neither he nor those he brought into parliament were in Ireland to attend the service of the government.[164]

'Those he brought into parliament' refers to his nephews Francis-Pierpoint and William Burton, and also William's friend and business colleague William Colville, in addition to their relatives in Donegal, Henry Hamilton, Alex Murray and John Knox. Henry II and his alleged favourite nephew, William Burton, were unpopular under Townshend, persistently complaining of unfair treatment in their appeals and distancing themselves from Francis-Pierpoint, who wholly supported the Lord Lieutenant. Francis-Pierpoint, considered 'by far the most fair and decent man', had

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[162] Henry, Lord Mountcharles to Grenville, 1765, letters to G. Grenville, BL, Add. Ms. 57,825, f. 116. Henry II had sought the position from Dorset as early as 1755.
[163] Bartlett, *Macartney in Ireland*, 136.
[164] Ibid, 29, 105.

obtained a pension of £600 for his wife Elizabeth Clements from Townshend who was eager for him to move up the ranks: 'it would be right and good policy to bring him forward and to let the others bite on the bit a while...'[165]

The Burton boys

Not unlike the childless Conolly, Henry II devoted time to his immediate relatives - in this case his sister Mary's two sons. Mary and her husband Frank Burton had four children: Francis-Pierpoint, William, Mary, and Alice. Frank Burton was the son of Samuel Burton from Buncraggy, a High Sheriff of Clare in 1669. Like his father-in-law Henry I, he purchased a substantial estate (part of Lord Clare's property) at the auction at Chichester House in 1703, and from 1727 to 1744 he sat as MP for the county. Four years later in 1731 Burton was one of the founding members of the Dublin Society set up to promote agriculture, arts, industry and science in Ireland. A favourite of the Conollys, he regularly entertained with Katherine Conolly who fashioned her own form of court at Castletown with his help, while his delicate wife Mary recuperated abroad.[166] Conolly settled £5,000 on the couple on their marriage and they received a further sum upon his death in 1729. Despite Burton's ample yearly profit of £3,000 from the Clare property, money, and lack thereof, was a constant source of trouble in the Burtons' marriage and it was rumoured that he died bankrupt at the young age of forty-seven.[167] His eldest son Francis-Pierpoint, born circa 1730, was also a popular figure at Castletown in his younger days, where Katherine Conolly strove to keep him 'from the baneful influence of his grandmother,

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[165] Bartlett, *Macartney in Ireland*, 27. William Burton had voted for Townshend as Lord Lieutenant in 1771 and was slow to oppose him unless obliged to by Henry II, on whom he was entirely dependant. For a full account of their political skirmishes see also C.E. F. Trench, 'William Burton Conyngham (1733-1796)', *JRSAI*, Vol. 115, 1985, 40-63.

[166] Barnard, *Ascents and descents*, 270-4.

[167] Katherine Conolly to Jane Bonnell, July 1744, Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,578 (17); A.P.W. Malcomson, *The pursuit of the heiress, Aristocratic marriage in Ireland*, Belfast, 2006, 21.

old Alice Burton'.[168] In 1748 he began his grand tour with his tutor Alexander Scott. In Turin they encountered Lord Charlemont and travelled with him to the Levant the following year. **(Fig.2.8)** Their escapades in Turkey and Greece were recorded by Charlemont and well noted by W.B. Stanford and E.J. Finopoulos, who portray Francis Pierpoint playing Sancho Panza to Charlemont's Quixote.[169] Maurice Craig describes him as 'a young man of Falstaffian figure with an inexhaustible fund of animal spirits, and some inability to conceal his emotions. If the Italians, Turks and Greeks considered him to be an Englishman (as they presumably did) it must have been more on the score of evident madness than phlegmatic taciturnity'.[170] Charlemont was kinder to his travelling companion: 'endowed by nature with every endearing faculty which could render a friend amiable; with every perfection of heart which constitutes the best, and surest foundation for friendship and secures its duration'.[171] Despite their affinity there is no evidence in Charlemont's correspondence that the friendship was maintained and Francis-Pierpoint is conspicuously absent from Charlemont's circle once both were back in Ireland.

By March 1750 Francis-Pierpoint was in Dublin preparing his marriage to Elizabeth Clements, daughter of Nathaniel Clements.[172] Three years later he began a rather unexciting career in parliament in his uncle's parliamentary borough in Killybegs (1753-60) and later in his native county Clare (1761-8-76). Unlike his younger brother William, who was under Henry II's wing, he was entirely independent - although Nathaniel Clements may have had a certain influence over him.[173] In 1769 he applied

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[168] Katherine Conolly to Jane Bonnell, July 1744], Smythe-Barbavilla papers, NLI, Ms. 41,578 (17). In 1765 Alice Burton died at Meelick in county Clare, at the mature age of 100. The *Freeman's Journal* of November 1765 reported that 'Her whole life was a series of doing good'.

[169] John Ingamells, *A dictionary of British and Irish travellers in Italy, 1701-1800*, New Haven & London, 1997, 163.

[170] Maurice Craig, *The Volunteer Earl*, London, 1948, 45.

[171] Francis Hardy, *Memoirs of the political and private life of James Caulfeild, Earl of Charlemont*, Vol. II, London, 1812, 10-11.

[172] Elizabeth brought Francis-Pierpoint a dowry of £5,000 and shortly after their marriage they received a further sum of £2,000 from Katherine Conolly's will in 1752.

[173] A.P.W. Malcomson, *Nathaniel Clements, Government and the Governing Elite in Ireland, 1725-75*, Dublin, 2005, 311.

to Townshend for a vacancy of one of the commissioners of revenue in England but was never offered the position. His landlord interests lay chiefly in Clare, on the Burton family's estates where characteristically he was popular among his tenants despite being an 'absentee', residing for the most part in England. In the earliest issue of his uncle's will in 1758 Henry II stipulated that his title and estates in England and Limerick would go to Francis-Pierpoint, and that the Meath, Donegal and Welsh estates would be left in the hands of William Burton. In addition to this, the nephews could take the name 'Conyngham' upon reaching the age of 25 years if they wished.[174] This did not occur until the year of Henry II's death in 1781, when both brothers took the surname Conyngham by royal license, in lieu of Burton, and Buckinghamshire obtained a remainder for Francis-Pierpoint to ensure he succeeded as 2nd Baron Conyngham. A little while later Francis-Pierpoint applied for a viscountcy, an application which was supported by the Duke of Rutland and the home secretary Lord Sydney only on account of their friendship with his brother William. Francis-Pierpoint was plagued with numerous illnesses throughout his life, and spent long periods convalescing in the south of France. He died at the Hot Wells in Bristol 'of a burst blood vessel' in May 1787.[175] The viscountcy was not granted before his death.

The younger brother, William Burton (hence called Burton Conyngham), was born in county Clare 1733 and was possibly the family's most distinguished member of the eighteenth century. Renowned as an influential parliamentarian and promoter of Ireland's diverse commercial interests, he was also a tireless patron of the arts: a founder of the Hibernian Antiquarian Society, which was the forerunner of the Royal Irish Academy, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in London and a member of the

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[174] Will of Henry Viscount Conyngham, 1758, Conyngham papers, EKA, RU438, T125/1-5.

[175] *Irish Parliament*, Vol. III, 323-4; Thomas Bartlett, *Macartney in Ireland, 1768-1772,* Belfast, 1978, 135. The *Analecta Burtoniana* held at (Ms. 980-81) Manuscripts, TCD was formerly in the possession of the Burton family of county Clare and contains a collection of European travel writings, religious dissertations and short biographical memoirs, some in the hand of Francis-Pierpoint. None relate to family matters or their estates.

Dublin Society. Some of these pursuits and others will be addressed in Chapter Six. For now, his early career, his relationship with Henry II and their impact on the Slane estate from the mid to late-eighteenth century will be discussed. In 1750 Burton Conyngham entered Queen's College Cambridge and he matriculated at Lincoln's Inn in 1753.[176] There are no documents to indicate that he completed his education in Cambridge or in London and a few years later we find him on the grand tour with his sister-in-law's brother, Robert Clements.[177] Burton Conyngham's portrait was drawn in pastel by Mengs and painted by Nathaniel Dance-Holland who was in Rome between 1754 and 1765. Mengs had become director of the Vatican school of painting in 1754 and it is likely that Burton Conyngham sat for his portrait in Rome around this time.[178] **(Fig.2.9)**

While his nephew was being entertained in Italy, Henry II endeavoured to obtain a position for him in Ireland. In the usual grovelling manner he badgered the Duke of Newcastle (and also Grenville) with begging letters for 'an employment for his nephew who has not yet taken a profession'.[179] Burton Conyngham was back in Ireland by 1759 and choosing army life over law, he began his career as a professional soldier. Like his uncle he moved swiftly through the ranks in a short space of time, rising from lieutenant-colonel with the 64th foot and 12th dragoons, to aide-de-camp to Lord Harcourt, of whom he was a zealous supporter. Acting as a police force in support of the civil power, the army in Ireland failed to offer Burton Conyngham the chance to excel as a soldier, and whether he served abroad or not before 1762 has yet to be established. His greatest achievement however was the

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[176] *Irish Parliament*, Vol. III, 327.
[177] A.P.W. Malcomson, *Nathaniel Clements, Government and the Governing Elite in Ireland, 1725-75*, Dublin, 2005, 412.
[178] John Ingamells, *A dictionary of British and Irish travellers in Italy, 1701-1800*, New Haven & London, 1997, 163-4. Strickland notes that in 1767 Burton Conyngham presented the Society of Artists in Ireland with a picture by Mengs for the use of the new academy set up in the same year to cater for painting, sculpture and architecture. However the Mengs painting is not described, nor is its provenance stated. See Walter Strickland, *A dictionary of Irish artists*, Dublin & London, 1913, Vol. II, 598.
[179] Henry, Lord Mountcharles to Duke of Newcastle, 1754-1761, Correspondence of the Duke of Newcastle, BL, Add. Ms. 32,876 f 423.

conversion of the 12th dragoons into a regiment of light cavalry between 1768 and 1770. From its appearance and context a portrait of an unidentified Conyngham in the Heinz Archive at the National Portrait Gallery is very likely to be of Burton Conyngham. **(Fig.2.10)** Part of the dragoon's transformation in 1768 was a change of uniform: the cocked hat edged with lace was replaced with a copper helmet adorned with a lion's head and a black horse hair plume, and the white facings were changed to black with paired metal buttons, setting off a blood red coat. The sitter's epaulettes appear to be mounted on black velvet, indicating his rank as lieutenant-colonel.[180] In addition to the characteristics of his garb, the context of the painting - with a classical bas-relief adorning the lower right side - and the strong resemblance to the Mengs portrait **(Fig.2.9)**, reinforces the argument for Burton Conyngham. His military career continued with relative success until 1772, when he became anxious to sell out due to the mishandling of his regiment's funds by the administration, in particular by Lord Townshend.[181] Unable to obtain leave, and said to be 'nettled' by this development, he retired officially from the army in 1774. A year later he was made Comptroller and Commissioner of the Barrack Board with an annual salary of £600.[182] Towards the end of his life Burton Conyngham acted as agent for regiments serving abroad and was also elected Colonel to the Donegal Militia. The *Drogheda Journal* gives a wonderful account of the celebrations in honour of the Prince of Wales at Slane Castle, the year before Burton Conyngham's death. The piece gives us a glimpse of his flair for entertainment amidst the austerity of militaristic rituals:

> Wednesday last being the anniversary of the birthday of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, Col. Burton gave a splendid entertainment at the Castle of Slane, to the officers and privates of the Donegal Militia and several

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[180] I am very grateful to Dr. Ken Ferguson and F. Glenn Thompson (Vice-President of the Military History Society of Ireland) for this information.
[181] Bartlett, *Macartney in Ireland*, 7.
[182] *Irish Parliament*, Vol. III, 327.

families in the neighbourhood. The regiment marched from this town [Drogheda] at nine o'clock and at one were reviewed by the colonel and three rounds were fired in celebration of the event. Tents were erected on the lawn of that delightful demesne, which for richness and luxuriance of prospect and picturesque scenery stands unrivalled. At three o'clock the company sat down to an elegant cold dinner, where every luxury was prepared, which the season could afford, and the value of the whole much enhanced by the politeness and attention of their host. At eight o'clock the company retired after having enjoyed the feast of the season and flow of soul. On the return of the regiment they fired three vollies at the Obelisk, and were regaled with wine and punch by Mr. Blayney Balfour [of Townley Hall]. At ten the regiment marched into town and returned, full of gratitude to their Rt. Hon Commander, to their respective quarters.[183]

Burton Conyngham was brought into parliament as protégé of his uncle, who nominated him for his own borough of Limavady, and where Burton Conyngham sat as MP in 1761, and again in 1768 and 1776. It was clear that Townshend was not impressed with Burton Conyngham, perhaps not only due to what Townshend referred to as the family's 'fallacious demands', but as a consequence of Burton Conyngham's criticism of Townshend's handling of his regiment.[184] Despite this Burton Conyngham was well respected in parliament, particularly during Harcourt's time as Lord Lieutenant (Townshend's successor) and from that period onwards. Harcourt gave various employments in the revenue office to Burton Conyngham's nominees and in 1776 appointed him Teller of the Exchequer (1777-1793) a position worth £1,500 per annum and strongly supported by Nathaniel Clements, father of his

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[183] *Drogheda Journal or Meath and Louth Advertiser*, 15 August 1795. Although William Burton changed his name in 1781, attaching the name Conyngham to his own, he is regularly referred to in contemporary texts simply as Col. Burton, or Col. Conyngham, even up until his death in 1796. Blayney Balfour was Burton Conyngham's neighbour and business associate. Their relationship is addressed in the following chapter.

[184] Bartlett, *Macartney in Ireland*, 7, 18.

close friend Robert Clements.[185] Of all the descriptions of Burton Conyngham's character as a parliamentarian none sums up his qualities better than 'Falkland':

> To the advantage of a voice good, though not excellent, being clear, distinct and thoroughly audible, but some tendency to a lisp, he adds a pronunciation perfectly accurate and a delivery very well tempered between vehemence and languor, but more inclining to rapidity than slowness ..... Being a man of considerable information in all parts of elegant learning and well versed in the principles of trade and policy, though not of profound erudition, the matter of his speeches possess real merit: not feeble or nugatory or amusive, but full of instruction, apposite and solid, well digested and better chosen, it is obviously the effect of studious care and attentive investigation.'[186]

Henry II's motives in making Burton Conyngham the primary beneficiary of his will are a little unclear. Francis-Pierpoint was the eldest nephew and would have been a likely candidate as heir of both the title and property. However he had been displaced by his younger brother, who was publicly favoured by his uncle. The division of the estates meant that Francis-Pierpoint was left the family's estates in Limerick and in Kent, and Burton Conyngham inherited the remaining Irish estates of Slane and Donegal, and also the smaller estates of Carmarthen and Cardigan in Wales. Francis-Pierpoint's interest in England and Clare perhaps facilitated Henry II's decision regarding property. Burton Conyngham's aptitude as a promoter of Ireland's commercial interests, his talents as an engineer and his potential for undertaking improvements, would have seemed the better choice for the task of managing the family seat at Slane and the vast underdeveloped property in Donegal.

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[185] G.O. Sayles, 'Contemporary sketches of the members of Irish Parliament in 1782', *PRIA 56*, 1953-4, 227-86; A.P.W. Malcomson, *Nathaniel Clements, Government and the Governing Elite in Ireland, 1725-75*, Dublin, 2005, 412.

[186] 'Falkland', John Robert Scott, *Principal Characters of the Irish Commons*, Dublin 1789, 69-71. For the full account see Appendix C.

By 1758 Henry II had succeeded in paying off his late brother Williams' mortgage of Slane and some of the family debts with the help of his army salary and the dowry from his marriage to Ellen Merrett.[187] Katherine Conolly's death had also benefited the Conynghams. The inimitable Mary Delany wrote in 1752:

> 'We have lost *our great* Mrs Conolly...I am afraid [she] has not shewn such justice and judgement in the disposition of her fortune as could be wished. She has left Mr. Conolly (her husband's nephew William) £10,000; to Col. Cunningham [Henry II] a small estate of hers in Wales; but to her sister [Mary Jones] very inconsiderable legacies, but Mr Conolly, who is a very generous good man, will, they say, make up her deficiencies.'[188]

Henry II eventually bought back part of the Welsh property which Katherine Conolly had sold in 1731 and then proceeded to resell it a few years later (in 1758) in order to finance his purchase of Brook Farm, a substantial piece of land bounding his property on the Isle of Thanet in Kent.[189] Later still in 1771, he used the Welsh estate to raise £7,000 to save the Mount Charles property in Donegal, which had been in extreme debt for over ten years.[190] His aunt's legacy gave Henry II the support to expedite his financial affairs but the death of his mother-in-law, Rebecca Savage, enhanced his position further. Rebecca died in 1762 leaving a sum of *c.* £11,500 to Henry II and Ellen, which meant that in addition to the amount received on their marriage they had inherited more than £26,000 from the Savage family in total.[191]

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[187] Mortgage deed, 1758, ROD, 197/128/129845.
[188] Angélique Day, (ed), *Letters from Georgian Ireland, The correspondence of Mary Delany 173-68*, Belfast, 1991, 53-4.
[189] Will of Henry Viscount Conyngham, 1758, Conyngham papers, EKA, RU438, T125/1-5.
[190] Henry Conyngham to Joshua Sharpe, March 1761, December 1771, December 1773, Lord Conyngham papers, PRONI, D/2274.
[191] Papers relating to Ellen Merrett's fortune, 1732-1770, Conyngham papers, EKA, RU438, E91/4. Henry II bought the Shannagolding estate in county Limerick at some point after Rebecca Savage's death in 1762.

Although Henry I's estate at Slane was very nearly forsaken by his eldest son, Williams Conyngham's eventual retreat back to Slane after Conolly's death and towards the end of his own life, brought about the first authoritative improvements in the twenty years. Despite repercussions from the lawsuits which followed the speaker's death, the patience shown to his nephew in earlier years and his generosity in the Limavady settlement reveals Conolly's devotion and the strength of the former bond with Henry I. Progress at Slane under Williams was very poor but the estates, which remained in Conyngham hands, was salvaged perhaps by his early death in 1738 and his younger brother's apparent ambitions. Henry II's determined endeavours to resolve family disputes, outstanding debts and to obtain compensation for former military campaigns were somewhat overshadowed by his triumph in raising the family to the peerage. Having said all that, we see more of Henry II 'the saviour' rather than Henry II 'the improver' at this point. This is primarily due to the absence of sufficient documentation concerning estate management, but it is also evident from maps and documents of a later date that little occurred at Slane after Williams' death and before the initiation of the new mill in 1763 and subsequent developments at the village, which shall be addressed in the following chapters. These changes were brought about under the watchful eye of Henry II's chosen one, his nephew William Burton Conyngham, who would ultimately thrust Slane into the impending economic boom of the mid-eighteenth century.

Chapter Three

The building of Slane Mill & other speculative ventures under the Conynghams in the mid-eighteenth century.

The improvement scene • The Slane Mill partnership • An analysis of the mill building and its internal mechanisms • Slane Mill in an architectural landscape • Further projects under Burton Conyngham in county Meath •

This section, and subsequent two chapters, discusses the main body of improvements carried out at Slane between 1760 and the last decades of the century. These improvements include the building of Slane Mill, the development of Slane Village and the completion of the Boyne Navigation in the vicinity of Slane. The latter subjects are studied in Chapters Four and Five. The architecture of the mill and its associated waterworks are examined in this chapter in greater detail than in previous publications with the purpose of providing a clearer understanding of the workings of the new canal (analysed in Chapter Five). Continuing the narrative of industrial developments, Burton Conyngham's endeavours to promote other speculative schemes at Slane are briefly addressed.

Returning to the coulisse of the demesne and village of Slane we find little obvious improvements carried out there since Williams' death. Like many of his contemporaries Henry II preferred to remain in England, at Hammersmith in London or at Ramsgate on his estate at Kent. He was listed as an absentee landlord in Thomas Prior's *A list of absentees in Ireland,* and there is little documentary evidence to suggest his presence at Slane between his brother's death in 1738 and the mid-eighteenth century.[192] Henry II's correspondence with the Duke of Newcastle indicates that he was keen to dabble in the world of business. He presented the duke

[192] Thomas Prior, *A list of absentees in Ireland*, Dublin, 1783, 10. Malcomson describes Henry II as an 'internal absentee' only in the context of his Limavady and Donegal estates. See A.P. W. Malcomson, 'Absenteeism in eighteenth-century Ireland', *Irish Economic and Social History*, Vol. I, 1974, 15-35.

with a mysterious 'scheme for trade with North America' and we can assume that an interest in industry and enterprise may have surfaced at this point.[193] Before 1760, we are led to believe that Henry II had shown little concern for the affairs of the Slane estate other than to maintain a firm grip on it. The opportunity to be among the improving landlords of Ireland arose when the first issue of his will in 1758 revealed that his youngest nephew - William Burton Conyngham - would be heir to the vast Meath and Donegal estates. The impact of the early will was almost immediate, despite the fact that Henry II was still alive. Burton Conyngham chose to continue the use of Slane as the Conyngham family seat and his ambition as the future squire of Slane encouraged his uncle's investment in improvements at the village and brought about the eventual renovation of the Slane Castle. The choice was well considered. Slane village had significant advantages; it was closer to Dublin geographically and well-situated at a prominent position between Drogheda and Navan on the river Boyne. Its pre-existing modules in the form of the village settlement, the old river mill and the demesne, provided stable foundations with which to bring about improvements.

Concepts of improvement in eighteenth-century Ireland & county Meath

By the time the Conynghams returned their attention to Slane in the mid-eighteenth century, Ireland was flourishing in an improving age. **(Fig.3.1)** The great momentum of urban building had begun in the early half of the century and although initially development was concentrated in Dublin and larger towns, smaller towns were gradually being improved and extended, older settlements were revived and new model villages were established. The rate of growth depended on trade and industry and in the early eighteenth century the harvest failures in the second and fourth decades decelerated urban expansion. Developments quickened between 1750 and

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[193] Henry, Lord Mountcharles to Duke of Newcastle, 1754-1761, Correspondence of the Duke of Newcastle, BL, Add. Ms. 32,852, f. 538.

1780, following progress in trade, and climaxed in the 1760s. Contrary to popular belief most landowners took a healthy interest in their estates. The landlord class took it upon itself to civilise society through the medium of carrying out improvements, which was seen to be important as much for its social consequences as for its material gain, and even to have a certain moral perspective.[194] Daniels and Seymour define improvement as being "the progressive restructuring of the landscape for social and economic as well as aesthetic ends and by extension the restructuring of the conduct of those who lived in, worked in, and looked upon it."[195] It was clear that the term improvement implied not only physical changes made to the landscape in the imparking of estates or laying out of new agricultural settlements, but also in the construction of new villages or remodelling of older ones, and the building of houses, bridges, roads, and canals. These improvements were frequently sustained by industries set up within the town or village infrastructure and were dependant on the amalgamation of industry and the use of land.

Contemporary observers writing about Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries regularly discussed so-called 'improving landlords' and the improvements carried out on their estates. No one depicted this scenario as succinctly as that 'apostle of *la grande culture*', Arthur Young, who commented in 1779: 'Ireland has been absolutely new built within these twenty years, and in a manner far superior to any thing, that was seen in it before; it is a fact universal over the whole kingdom; cities, towns and country seats; but the present is the era for this improvement, there being now far more elegant seats rising than ever were known before'.[196] Chief Baron Edward Willes summed up the potency of these new developments when describing the situation to Lord Warwick in c.1758-9: '... the taste of building and improving

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[194] Graham, B. J. & Proudfoot, Lindsay, *Urban Improvement in provincial Ireland 1700-1840,* Athlone, 1994, 3.
[195] S. Daniels & S. Seymour, 'Landscape design and the idea of improvement 1730-1914', in Dodgshon, R & R, Butlin, (eds) *An Historical History of England and Wales*, London, 1990, 487-520.
[196] Young, *A tour in Ireland,* Vol. II, 195.

seems to be the universal passion of the kingdom, ...a man makes a figure in his country in proportion to the improvements he makes'.[197] These comments reveal the pretentiousness of established landowners who were keen to follow a fashion, as it were, and show-off the fruits of their work to their contemporaries. Willes undertook his lengthy tour of Ireland between 1757 and 1762 when the country was at the height of its activity. At that time the county of Meath was in an era of relative stability. Young and other late eighteenth-century travellers wrote glowing reports of the county's fertile pasturelands, its natural resources and the high level of agricultural cultivation. With agriculture organised on a commercial basis throughout the county, the new market economy brought about improvements in trade and communications. Road and land carriage had proven to be too expensive, leading to the birth of the navigation canal on the river Boyne, which played a vital part in Slane's economic development. In addition to a rich source of salmon, the Boyne provided a direct means of transport to the Port of Drogheda and beyond, and consistent waterpower for the local mills. Willes remarked that 'The county of Meath is exactly like Northamptonshire and, I believe, as full of noblemen and gentlemen's seats, some of which are very magnificent.'[198]

In the milieu of architectural improvements the grand house or mansion was at the centrepiece of the demesne, often replacing the redundant fortified tower-house. The elegant country houses built at Stackallen, Dowth, Beauparc, Townley Hall and Beaulieu had prominent positions on the Boyne and established an important architectural landscape in the county. Lambert's mansion at Beauparc was observed in 1753 by Pococke as 'a very good house on an eminence over the Boyne where it makes a short turn, so that this situation commands a fine view of the river.'[199]

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[197] James Kelly (ed.), *The letters of Lord Chief Baron Edward Willes to the Earl of Warwick, 1757-62, an account of Ireland in the mid-eighteenth century*, Kilkenny, 1990, 27, 96.
[198] Ibid, 27.
[199] McVeagh, *Pococke's Irish Tours*, 142.

Embracing foreign design concepts, landowners rejuvenated and extensively improved their demesnes with tree-lined approaches, radiating avenues through their ornamental parks, woodland plantations and gate lodges. The largest of the demesnes adjoining Slane were the Netterville estate at Dowth, the Caldwell estate at Newgrange and the Coddington estate at Oldbridge, all connected to the Boyne navigation and to the primary market centres by newly laid out roads. In addition to enhancing their demesne buildings (which included a larger order of stables, outbuildings, kitchen and walled gardens), landowners constructed cottages for farm labourers, flax growers and linen weavers, and for workers attached to local industries such as milling and mining. The Coddington family planned and built terraces of labourer's cottages at Oldbridge and Sheephouse, as did the Conyngham's neighbour and friend, John Foster, near the village of Collon in county Louth. Foster was one of the century's renowned 'improvers', commended by both Young and Thompson, who noted that 'he has built some very neat cottages, where the internal comfort of the cottages is studied with success'.[200] The Conyngham's built a small row of six terraced house to accommodate workers at the mill, but this did not happen until the end of the eighteenth century.

The men behind the milling enterprise at Slane

In county Meath milling exceeded the coal and copper-mining industry both in terms of scale and profit. Bounties on the land carriage of corn and flour to Dublin commenced in 1758, triggering the restoration of older, vernacular watermills and the construction of new flourmills using more modern methods of milling technology; Thomas Newenham noted, 'the erection of many of the finest mills perhaps in the world'.[201] The reaction to the new measures was slow at first. Initially, Meath was the

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[200] Robert Thompson, *Statistical Survey of the County of Meath with observations on the means of improvement*, Dublin, 1802, 73.
[201] Thomas Newenham, *The natural, political and commercial circumstances of Ireland*, London, 1808, 115.

only county from which flour was transported to Dublin, until 1762, when it was joined by counties Westmeath and Kilkenny. By 1766, full advantage was taken of the grants, farmers converted pasture to cultivation and the figure increased to nine counties.[202] This was the era that marked the arrival of Burton Conyngham at Slane and his engagement in the entrepreneurial fever that was beginning to grip the country. In 1763, Henry II leased the large salmon weir and the old river mill (revamped by his elder brother Williams in 1727), along with 14 acres of adjoining land to Burton Conyngham and his two partners Blayney Townley Balfour, and a young miller from Drogheda, David Jebb. The planning by the three partners of a sophisticated mill complex at Slane comprising a mill, its associated waterworks, and a millhouse for the use of the manager, would activate the need for further improvements to the estate and village, propelling Slane into the impending provincial industrial revolution.

Prior to a study of their enterprise at Slane, the background to Burton Conyngham's new associates and their relationship should be briefly addressed. Blayney Townley Balfour was a neighbour and contemporary of Henry II's, who sat as MP for Carlingford from 1760-6 and 1773-6, and was High Sheriff for Drogheda in 1761.[203] His family were descendants of an influential Cromwell supporter, Major Charles Townley, who settled at Athclare Castle near Dunleer in county Louth in the mid-seventeenth century. Born in 1705, he is described as entering the Carrickmacross Grammar School in 1722. He married in November 1734 his cousin Mary Tennison (daughter of Hamilton Townley his father's half-brother) and went on to live at Townley Hall in county Louth, the mansion inherited from his wife's father.[204] In 1759, a few years before the foundation of the mill partnership at Slane, his nephew William

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[202] Cullen, *Eighteenth century flour milling*, 5-25.
[203] *Irish Parliament*, Vol. VI, 425-6.
[204] B.R.T. Balfour, 'Notes on the Balfour family', *County Louth Archaeological Society Journal*, Vol. 4, 1924, 268-9. Blayney Townley Balfour was Mary Tennison's second husband.

Charles Balfour of Balfour Castle in Lisnaskea in county Fermanagh, died childless leaving his entire estate to Blayney Townley, who promptly took the name of Balfour out of 'love and affection' for his nephew.[205] His marriage to Mary and this fine inheritance consolidated his position and by 1760 he was the proprietor of 4,000 acres of the original Townley estates in county Louth and another 4,000 acres, with a substantial house and its contents, in county Fermanagh.[206] Balfour could count among his friends, his fellow politicians and neighbours, the Fortescues, the Brabazons and the Fosters. His alliance with Burton Conyngham originated not only from their strong parliamentary alliances, their staunch support of Lord Harcourt and their affiliation to the Dublin Society, but also their shared interest in architectural improvements.[207] Balfour was responsible for early building works at Townley Hall between 1746 and 1757, supervised by Hugh Darley, who was engaged locally in the supervision of the building of St. Peter's Church of Drogheda to his own designs from 1748-52.[208] The building works at Townley Hall comprised repairs to the existing stonework in addition to the design and execution of internal and external door and window cases. Balfour also commissioned various ancillary buildings for the demesne, including a slaughterhouse for the farm attached to the property but it would appear that Darley was not responsible for these structures.[209] Between 1771 and 1773 Balfour added two new wings to the old mansion, which was also raised by an additional storey, and revamped the main drawing-room using a plasterer and stucco-worker called Eustace from Drogheda.[210] **(Fig.3.2)** No other building works were recorded until Francis Johnston's monumental plan for the house began at the

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[205] Extracts from Blayney Townley Balfour's diary, 1785-87, Townley Hall papers, NLI, Ms. 11,888.
[206] Frank Mitchell, 'The Evolution of Townley Hall' in *BIGS*, Vol. XXX, 1987, 3-61.
[207] William Hunt, (ed.), *The Irish parliament 1775*, Dublin, 1907, 3. For a detailed picture of Balfour's political ambitions and his relationship with Fortescue and Foster and the bitterly fought by-election see A.P.W. Malcomson, *John Foster, The politics of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy*, Oxford, 1978, 112, 117-21, 125, 129.
[208] Record of domestic accounts kept at Townley Hall, Townley Hall papers, NLI, Ms. 9,601-2; McParland, *Public Architecture*, 44. Two other distinguished projects overseen by Darley during this period were the construction of the Drogheda Mayoralty House and the building of the west front of Trinity College in 1759.
[209] Record of domestic accounts kept at Townley Hall, Townley Hall papers, NLI, Ms. 9,601-2.
[210] Frank Mitchell, 'The evolution of Townley Hall' *BIGS*, Vol. XXX, 1987, 3-61.

end of the century under the instruction of Balfour's grandson and his wife Lady Florence Cole.[211] A final project before his death in 1788 was the foundation of a new parish church at Tullyallen, eventually completed in 1814 on land granted by his heir and grandson.[212]

Burton Conyngham's second partner, David Jebb, appeared at Townley Hall in 1760 (with Henry Fisher, a prolific tenant at Slane), supplying Balfour with bags of barley.[213] Jebb was born in 1738, the second son of the Reverend John Jebb who became Dean of Cashel in 1769. The dean's brother, Richard Jebb, settled in Drogheda as a merchant in the early-eighteenth century and had the custom of the fish-market there for sixty years.[214] Through his business he had links with England and possible connections to Chichester (an export market to Ireland), where Jebb worked as a young apprentice for a miller by the name of Woodruffe Drinkwater in 1755. **(Fig.3.3)** An ambitious and astute businessman, Jebb's versatile talents embraced highly competent engineering skills (later implemented in works on the Boyne navigation) and a deep understanding of the milling industry, not merely from a technical perspective but his finely-tuned business acumen was undoubtedly key to the new mill's success. Lauded by Young and a firm friend of Foster's, who referred to him as 'the great miller of Slane',[215] his agricultural expertise extended to publishing a piece entitled 'A dissertation on the Bounty Laws for the encouragement of Agriculture' and in 1768 he was awarded a silver medal by the Dublin Society for 414 perches of hedges he planted at his farm at Fennor, on the south side of the

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[211] Johnston also built a very austere villa at Galtrim, Summerhill, for Reverend Vesey Dawson who married Anna Maria, Balfour's granddaughter. In *Classic Irish houses of the middle size,* Craig suggests that Galtrim is a hybrid between Kilcarty (also in Meath) built by Ivory and Gandon's Emsworth in Dublin.
[212] Entries made by B.R.T. Balfour in the *County Louth Church of Ireland Parochial Magazine*, Vol. XXX, July 1914, not paginated.
[213] Record of domestic accounts kept at Townley Hall, Townley Hall papers, NLI, Ms. 9,601-2.
[214] John D'Alton, *The History of Drogheda,* Dublin, 1844, 115.
[215] Cullen, *Eighteenth-century flour milling*, quoted on page 24.

Boyne opposite the new mill.[216] A marriage in 1773 to Susanna Duggan, the daughter of Francis Duggan an eminent Dublin attorney and Susanna Brabazon of Drogheda, strengthened Jebb's position.[217] The couple lived at Slane for the best part of thirty years fulfilling their roles as influential tenants. His character is best summed up by a comment on a Jebb family trait by John Jebb's biographer:

> With strength, however, weakness was sufficiently mingled, and prudence in the ordinary sense of the term, was by no means their characteristic. Some of them were tolerably successful in the acquisition, but none proceed to the accumulation of goods of fortune. They were apt to spend with more rapidity than they acquired, and many of them were liberal in the transactions and almost profuse in the charities of life'.[218]

At the end of the eighteenth century Jebb left the country to live in England where he supervised the rebuilding of his late father's house, Runnymede, at Egham in Surrey, left to him in a bequest of 1787.[219] Jebb demolished the former mansion at Runnymede and hired Samuel Wyatt (who he may have met through his brother James Wyatt - one of Burton Conyngham's many architects) as the designer of a plain but well-proportioned house, built over marshy ground on solid raft foundations with shallow brick vaults to counteract problems with subsidence.[220] This innovative method was unusual for such an early period and typical of Jebb's tactical decision making.[221] The house at Runnymede was sold in 1807 to pay off Jebb's mounting debts, incurred by buying commissions for his sons, and he moved to Sansome Lodge in Worcester where he died in 1826.

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[216] Eileen McCracken, 'Tree planting by tenants in Meath.' *Riocht na Midhe,* Vol. VIII, No.2, 1989-90, 3-20.
[217] R.B. Hobson, 'David Jebb of Slane.' *Riocht na Midhe,* Vol. VIII, No.3, 1990-91, 36-40.
[218] Charles Forster, *The Life of John Jebb, Bishop of Limerick*, Vol. I, London, 1836, 3.
[219] John Martin Robinson, 'Runnymede Park, Surrey', *Country Life,* 11 May 2000, 163.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Samuel Wyatt also used the solid raft method at the Albion Mill of London in 1783-6.

The mill buildings and associated waterworks at Slane

Building began at the new mill of Slane in September of 1763, the year of Henry II's lease to the three partners. The proposed investment was to be £1,500 from each partner, but ultimately they each invested £1,250 and an additional £3,750 was raised from the proceeds of a lottery win.[222] Borrowings on bonds supplemented further accretions for the mill complex. The total cost for the complex was £19,187. The bonds were bought by friends of the mill's patrons and wealthier tenants at Slane. They included Faithful, James and Thomas Fortescue from county Louth; Alice Prat, Sarah Waring and Lucy Bury from Dublin; and Henry Fisher and Francis Leigh from Slane. Burton Conyngham's uncle Henry II also invested £500.[223] By 1766 the business was in full swing and according to Jebb's own accounts - due to rigorous reinvestment of the mill's profit - it had paid for itself within twenty-five years. The grain was bought locally (within a radius of *c.*10 miles) and the mill supplied granaries in Dublin, Dundalk, Balbriggan, and Drogheda as well as further afield to companies in Liverpool and Bristol.[224] It was capable of grinding up to 120 barrels of grain, at 20 stone (280 lbs) each, on a daily basis and for the first few years around 13,000 barrels per annum were ground, producing an output far greater than any other Irish corn-mill of the time.[225] Even at its peak the mill only employed ten to twelve men at one time, keeping production costs low relative to output. This may be explained by the highly sophisticated mechanism implemented by the mill owners to reduce labour costs. Burton Conyngham commented to Young that '... 20 years ago if he had given notice at the mass-houses that he wanted labourers, in two days he could have 2 or 300; now it is not so easy to get 20, from the quantity of regular

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[222] ROD, 223/581/149353; 223/582/149354; 243/76/158559. Also quoted in Cullen, *Eighteenth-century flour milling*, 19.
[223] Accounts of Slane Mill 1767-1877, Townley Hall papers, NLI, Ms. 10.273 (4) & (5). Francis Leigh was a local engineer who assisted Thomas Steers, John Lowe, Thomas Omer, Davis Ducart and David Jebb on the Boyne Navigation between 1748 and 1770. See also Appendix D and Chapter Five.
[224] Accounts of Flour Consignments, Slane Mill, 1768-97, Townley Hall papers, NLI, Ms. 9,520; Accounts of Slane Mill 1767-1877, Townley Hall papers, NLI, Ms. 10,273 (5).
[225] Young, *A tour in Ireland,* Vol. I, 36.

employment being so much increased'.[226] The salaries for the mill hands amounted to £2..10..0d a month, whereas the partners received anything from £300-£500 per annum from the profits with Jebb awarding himself a further £200 a year for his managerial role.[227]

The measure of the mill's success was undoubtedly aided by Foster's Corn Law of 1784 (under this law the growing of corn was encouraged by export bounties), and also the result of the input by Dublin-based flour agents (or factors as they were known in the milling business), who advanced cash on the proceeds of flour, facilitating the purchase of grain by the millers in the lengthy growing seasons.[228] The factor for Slane Mill was William Colville, a firm friend - and like Balfour - a parliamentary ally of Burton Conyngham's. They served together as Wide Streets Commissioners from 1785-1796 and Colville was on the board of the Slane Colliery, founded by Burton Conyngham with Jebb in 1773.[229] Colville was a respected member of the Presbyterian Strand Street Chapel and was twice deputy governor of the Bank of Ireland.[230] He lived for a time on Rutland Square, close to fellow members of the Wide Streets Commissioners, Andrew Caldwell and Travers Hartley.[231] Between 1777-83 he sat as MP for Burton Conyngham's borough of Limavady, and, interestingly for Killybegs in Donegal between 1783-90.[232] In his *Sketches of the members of the Irish parliament* in 1782 Sayles describes Colville as

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[226] Young, *A tour in Ireland,* Vol. I,34.
[227] Letter book of Slane Mill, 1789-1798, Townley Hall papers, NLI, Ms. 9,521
[228] Cullen, *Eighteenth century flour milling*, 5-25.
[229] The Colville family were closely connected with the Tarrant family, in particular Major General Charles Tarrant, a Wide Streets Commissioner and canal engineer, who travelled to Portugal with Burton Conyngham and who was consulted for advice regarding the building of docks at Rutland Island in 1785-6. See also Chapter Six of this work, *Report on private collections*, NLI, Nr. 406 and Colville papers, NLI, microfilm, p. 4138.
[230] F. G. Hall, *The Bank of Ireland* 1783-1946, Dublin, 1949, 483.
[231] My thanks to Jane Meredith for this information.
[232] *Irish Parliament*, Vol. II, 21.

'Agent to the widows of officers – a place given him by Lord Buckingham', and alludes to his ambition for the position of Treasurer of Ordnance.[233]

Using petitions to the Irish House of Commons and deeds of indenture from the Registry of Deeds, Louis Cullen has traced the foundations and economic success of the mill at Slane in his seminal work on eighteenth-century milling in Ireland. Subsequently, industrial archaeologists Deanna Petherbridge and Colin Rynne have correctly based their interpretation of the evolution of the mill on Cullen's work.[234] But, until now we have only Arthur Young to thank for a detailed contemporary account of the technical workings of the mill to support a more complete analysis of the structure, both externally and internally. Using his much-quoted description together with eighteenth-century milling treatises and an on-site survey of extant structures and waterworks, the following study of the mill complex seeks to illustrate the buildings and the waterworks in greater detail than previously.[235]

The mill was designed to be located on the former site of the earlier river mill. Scalé's map **(Fig.3.4)** shows the older mill at a considerable distance from the bridge which coincides approximately with the position of the new building. This situation created an exceptionally long millpond, 800ft long and 64ft wide, between the bridge and the mill, which fed water power into the mill through sluice gates using water from the 650ft weir above Slane Bridge. The stone-lined millpond, which completes the mill's

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[233] G.O. Sayles, 'Contemporary sketches of the members of Irish Parliament in 1782', *PRIA 56*, 1953-4, 257.

[234] Cullen, *Eighteenth century flour milling*, 5-25; Petherbridge, *Monuments of industry*, 742-49; Colin Rynne, 'The development of milling technology in Ireland, c. 600-1875', in Andy Bielenberg, (ed.), *Irish Flour Milling, A history 600-2000*, Dublin, 2003, 11-37.

[235] Slane mill was used in the eighteenth century as a flourmill and was adapted to produce oatmeal from the 1820s onwards. During the nineteenth century the building continued to produce both flour and oatmeal although there was a severe decline in production throughout this period. In 1919 the mill was taken over by Messrs Leitch & Co. who ran a short-lived flax-scutching operation, introduced electric turbines and industrial lifts into the building and erected a tall freestanding brick chimney to the front of the mill. A Wigan based textile firm, Thomas Taylor & Brothers acquired the lease for the site in 1935 and added the ancillary buildings including the weaving shed, still extant today. Various firms including the Goodbody family from Clara, who manufactured calico and muslin, managed the complex during the mid twentieth-century. The Quigley family bought the entire site in 1983 and have been restoring the buildings since then. My thanks to Jayney Quigley, current owner of the mill, for this information.

frontispiece, not only fulfilled its role as the source for the mill's waterpower but also held a wharf and dry dock for lighters. From the millpond's position on a direct axis with the mill, a spectacular entrance vista is provided from the bridge, evoking the finer tenets of classicism despite the weight of the industrial setting. **(Fig.3.5)**

The narrow, T-shaped mill building is built in two types of grey limestone. An impressive 138 feet in length and five storeys high, the building sits on a salient base course, with raised chamfered quoins and is finished with a fine cornice at the eaves. The tail of the 'T' is in the form of a deep, pedimented breakfront, sitting to the centre of the nine bays of the front façade, with two large timber waterwheels on either side of the breakfront. **(Fig.3.6)** High quality stonework embellishes the façades of the building. The front façade is dressed in ashlar stone, while the gable ends and the rear elevation, extending to eleven bays, is of simply coursed limestone. The breakfront apex is of random coursed limestone, in contrast with the elegantly hewn stone below, and is topped with raised overlapped ashlar verges. Its central feature is the sack hoist opening with a hoisting beam above. A small bellcote with finely cut ashlar surrounds and semicircular head adorns the centre of the uppermost section of the northern gable. The five storeys are of graduated height, with an ashlar string-course separating the ground floor and first floor windows, suggesting a rusticated basement. This classical idiom is exploited again by the larger windows at first and second floor level, and diminishing fenestration to the upper levels. Central windows to both facades are elongated to extend to just above floor levels with the exception of the fifth storey. Gibbsian surrounds frame the lower floor windows and doors, while moulded ashlar architraves, decorate the upper floors. Described by Craig as having 'virtually all the refinements of an elevation proper to a country house'[236] the mill's distinctive architectural style lies in this dichotomy of the marriage of the country house idiom with the pure industrial function of the building.

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[236] Craig, *Architecture of Ireland*, 196.

Historians are quick to assume the limestone for the mill was brought down river from the nearby Ardbraccan quarry. The stone was used extensively in Louth and Meath: at Summerhill, Ardbraccan House, Bellinter House, Headfort House and St. Peter's Church in Drogheda.[237] At Slane it was used in the construction of a guard lock between the river and the new navigation, shortly after the completion of the mill building, and in late eighteenth-century works carried out at the Church of Ireland.[238] Wilkinson described Ardbraccan stone as 'used for many miles around as the material for cut stone, when work of a superior kind to that which the local stones can produce is required. It is very crystalline and [it] works of a very light grey: [it] can be obtained in blocks of good size and has been used at Trim, Navan, Kells and Slane, and generally throughout the surrounding country.'[239] Its dramatic colour change, from light grey to black, is briefly summarised by Craig: 'it takes fine detail, remaining hard and slowly turning black'.[240] **(Fig.3.7)** In fact Ardbraccan quarry yielded limestone of varied colours, from the well-known delicate grey to a dark blue.[241]

The recent cleaning of the mill's stonework reveals a warm light grey not unlike the colour of Ardbraccan House, but without a petrological study of the existing stonework the source of the primary stonework cannot be accurately determined.[242] **(Fig.3.8)** Wilkinson also mentions a similar type of grey limestone from the Sheephouse quarry near Drogheda, 'chiefly used for dressed work and is a very crystalline and beautiful working stone... its colour is intermediate, between the Ardbraccan and Crossdrum stones. The stone is very crystalline in structure, of

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[237] Tony Hand, 'The white quarry, Ardbraccan', *IADS*, Vol. VIII, 2005, 138-160.
[238] Accounts of Slane Mill 1767-1877, Townley Hall papers, NLI, Ms. 10.273 (2); *CIVM*, Vol. I, 10 April 1770, unpaginated & Vol. II, April 1802, 28.
[239] George Wilkinson, *Practical geology and ancient architecture of Ireland*, Dublin, 1845, 251.
[240] Maurice Craig, *Dublin 1660-1860*, Dublin, 1980, 133. Prior to the restoration and the cleaning of the stonework of the mill *c.* 2003, the rough surface of the limestone had acquired a dirty dark grey hue, not unlike the tones of the facades of the Provost's House at Trinity College in Dublin, built by the Darleys using Ardbraccan stone.
[241] Tony Hand, 'The white quarry, Ardbraccan', *IADS*, Vol. VIII, 2005, 138-160.
[242] A petrological study of the existing stonework could not be carried out due to on-site constraints. The mill is currently being refurbished and the stonework has been cleaned and repaired in places. A large section of limestone would be required in order to carry out the study, which would result in unnecessary damage to the newly restored masonry.

whitish grey colour, works freely and can be obtained in blocks of large size.'[243] This would fit the description of the limestone employed in the chamfered quoins and the Gibbsian surrounds (which we can describe as secondary stonework), its existence overlooked in previous accounts of the mill. The stone is paler and softer than the stonework facing the main body of the mill and exhibits its crystalline structure in coarse mosaic of calcite crystals, easily perceived in strong light. **(Figs. 3.9 & 3.10)** But again, its source cannot be precisely established without the assistance of a detailed geological survey. There was a more obvious source of stone in the sheer limestone quarry walls that lined the site to the north. However, this type appears to be of a dull, dark grey, with little charm, and unsuitable for dressing the mill's elevations. Its use may have been confined to shape the infill blocks on the external inner leaves and internal walls, which were subsequently painted.[244]

The mill's functional plan is reflected internally where the heavier machinery was placed in the projection closest to the waterpower and the floors fulfil their role as granaries. **(Fig.3.11)** The ceiling heights are typically low, other than at fifth floor level where the roof timbers are exposed. **(Fig.3.12)** There is no evidence for the presence of iron stirrups or cotter pins on the trusses, common in the eighteenth century, but as the spans were relatively small it is unlikely that they were necessary. **(Fig.3.13)** The plain timber boarded floors are supported at each level on exposed joists spanning across pine beams, which are in turn supported by timber posts.[245] At fifth floor and attic level the posts have flat capitals like broom-heads, a typical detail in mills of this period, described by McCullough and Mulvin as derived from the

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[243] George Wilkinson, *Practical geology and ancient architecture of Ireland*, Dublin, 1845, 251.
[244] Account of internal paintwork at the mill, Letter book of Slane Mill, 1789-98, Townley Hall papers, NLI, Ms. 9,521. I am very grateful to Tony Hand for his comments on the stonework of the mill buildings.
[245] Following the removal of a section of the first floor in the breakfront projection in the twentieth century, cast-iron columns were inserted at ground floor level, extending fully to the second floor level. Likewise, some metal posts were added to support the floors of the upper levels at a later date and steel brackets were inserted in the walls to carry many of the beams, indicating a certain instability to the original internal construction.

construction of wooden warships.[246] Mezzanine platforms are evident at attic level, not only inside the breakfront apex, but also on the southern gable, suggesting points where grain was hoisted into the granaries directly from the dock below.[247] Red stock brick is used in the lining of the external walls (with the exception of the fifth floor) and window openings have splayed brick reveals and shallow arches. Modest administrative quarters, of one large panelled room and two smaller ancillary offices, accommodated the manager on the ground floor in the northern wing, close to the rear entrance to the mill. The whole effect is highly utilitarian and industrial, in contrast to the building's mannered exterior. Following a rendezvous with Jebb at the mill Young described what he saw of the milling process at Slane:

> The corn upon being unloaded, is hoisted through the doors of the upper storey of the building, by a very simple contrivance, being worked by the water-wheel, and discharged into spacious granaries which hold 5000 barrels. From hence it is conveyed, during seven months of the year, to the kiln for drying, the mill containing two, which will dry 80 barrels in 24 hours. From the kiln it is hoisted again to the upper storey, from thence to a fanning machine for redressing, to get out the dirt, soil etc. And from thence, by a small sifting machine, into the hoppers, to be ground, and again is hoisted into the bolting mills, to be dressed into flour, different sorts of pollard and bran. In all which progress, the machinery is contrived to do business with the least labour possible.[248]

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[246] Niall McCullough & Valerie Mulvin, *A lost tradition, the nature of architecture in Ireland*, Dublin, 1987, 91.

[247] An on-site survey also revealed a sealed opening in the apex of the southern gable, barely discernible on the external facade.

[248] Young, *A tour in Ireland*, Vol. I, 35-36. The *OED* defines pollard as 'Bran sifted from flour; *spec.* a fine grade of bran containing some flour; also flour or meal containing fine bran'. The use of the term granaries here refers to the internal storage of grain in the mill building rather than off-site in an ancillary structure.

A slight inaccuracy occurs in Young's account with the mention of only one waterwheel, although this may have been simply for the sake of clarity. The Slane Mill Stock Book (1780-84) contains details of repairs to two wheels, referred to therein as 'spur wheels' and 'large cog wheels' on both 'north' and 'south' ends of the building. These were the respective inner wheels, driven by the primary timber water-wheels and this reference, together with on-site evidence, indicates the position of the main waterwheels to be on either side of the break-front.[249] Beech and hornbeam was used in repairing these wheels and was provided directly from the plantations on the castle demesne.[250] Confirming the presence of these two waterwheels and also a third, a later documentary source, *The Ordnance Survey Field Name Book* from 1836, mentions three undershot wheels, each of them 38ft in diameter. One wheel of metal, which was 4ft in breadth and two remarkably large wooden mill wheels, 5ft 2ins each in breadth, which drove no less than seven sets of millstones, the largest number in Ireland up until that date.[251] In *The Millers and Mills of Ireland of about 1850*, Hogg's list indicates that the vast majority of waterwheels in Ireland at the time were between 12ft and 18ft in diameter.[252] All three wheels were undershot, which meant that they were fixed vertically on a horizontal axle and in the case of the timber waterwheels held flat paddles (called floats or float boards), which were mounted around the rim of the wheel. The wheels were turned by the impact of water striking the boards as it flowed under the wheel at its lowest point, pushing the wheel away

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[249] The ground floor and first floor southern end of the break-front is currently enclosed in what was part of a mid twentieth-century extension in the form of a weaving shed with concrete walls and a saw-tooth roof. On the south elevation of the mill's breakfront, close to its centre, a semi-circular-headed arch is visible protruding slightly above ground level. This would appear to be the position of the axle for southern water wheel. There is no surviving evidence of the wheel opening on the corresponding northern elevation to the breakfront and a large metal sliding entrance door now occupies the wheels original position. The door was inserted when the mill was adapted to process flax.

[250] Slane Mill Stock Book, 1780-84, Meath County Library, Navan.

[251] Wakefield, E., *An account of Ireland statistical and political*, London, 1812, 746. The third (metal) wheel's location is undefined as it is currently not possible to enter the waterways under the mill. We can assume it was located within the central volume of the breakfront.

[252] W.E. Hogg, *The Millers and Mills of Ireland of about 1850*, Dublin, 2005. The information is summarised from Hogg's lists of mills and their wheel dimensions.

from the water source.[253] One of the wheels (mentioned by Young and possibly the central metal wheel) also serviced a water-powered bucket elevator in addition to driving millstones. Cast-iron wheels and axle shafts were first experimented with by John Smeaton, the British engineer, in *c.*1770 and it is likely that this metal wheel was originally constructed with timber prior to its replacement before 1836, as referenced in *The Ordnance Survey Field Name Book.* Two large kilns were housed in the north and south wings (of the narrow head of the T-shape) and at a lower level, where warm air would be sourced from the coal fires to dry out the grain.[254] Petherbridge notes that kilns used in Ireland from 1760 onwards were standard 'flat-headed' anthracite fired kilns and were either located in separate ancillary structures or contained within the wings of the mill, generating the characteristic T-shaped plan.[255]

Waterpower was driven from the millpond, using the water diverted from the weir above the bridge. To facilitate the lighters entering the millpond, Jebb raised the level of the weir and remodeled the bridge during the building works to the mill, inserting a new semi-circular arch at the northern end.[256] The water passed through the mill wheels via the headrace (also known as the millrace), which flowed under the mill building through a 7ft wide, arched channel, accessed at the eastern end of the mill pond. **(Fig.3.6 &3.14)** To reflect the quality of stonework of the main mill building, the east end of the millpond is dressed with ashlar limestone and coped with chamfered

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[253] W.A. McCutcheon, *Wheel and Spindle, aspects of Irish industrial history*, Belfast, 1977, 11-13. Undershot wheels are not very efficient, but they are fairly simple to build and can be placed into a rapidly flowing stream with a minimum of site preparation. When placed in a carefully channelled raceway, however, their efficiency increases somewhat. They are most suited to shallow streams in flat terrain and therefore ideal for Slane Mill. In the case of overshot millwheels, the water flows up and over the wheel and the force of water pushes the wheel in an anti-clockwise direction.

[254] Slane Mill Stock Book, 1780-84, Meath County Library, Navan. There is no surviving evidence for kiln ventilation other than the areas at roof level where repairs have been carried out to the roof structure, linings and covering, indicating the presence perhaps of former kiln flues.

[255] Petherbridge, *Monuments of industry*, 742-49. Anthracite is a mineral coal containing little of the volatile hydrocarbons and burning with an exceptionally low flame.

[256] P. O'Keeffe & T. Simmington, *Irish stone bridges*, Dublin, 1991, 153-156, 309. O'Keeffe concludes that the original bridge structure dates from the fifteenth century. There is a down-river elevation of the current bridge illustrated in *Irish stone bridges* on page 309, fig. 225.

blocks, a detail echoed in the design of the guard lock and river bank walls erected during the works to the Boyne Navigation. The chief headrace was then divided into sub-channels in order to feed the three mill wheels and curved under the building towards three tailrace tunnels (finished with fine segmental archways) and exiting into the River Boyne. Here the river bank was deliberately formed and finished with retaining walls to cater for the tunnel openings. **(Fig.3.15)** Given the pre-existence of an older mill on the site, it may be assumed that one of the sub-channels was extant prior to the construction of the building, and the advanced route of the three channels was subsequently modelled by the owners.

As the mill is currently an empty shell, with all its former internal mechanisms removed during the twentieth century with the exception of its floors, Young's description and the technical treatises and illustrations of Andrew Gray, an English canal and mill engineer, provide us with the tools to interpret the complex workings of the mill at Slane and to reconstruct a conceivable account of how it operated when built in 1763. Therefore the following description should be read in conjunction with the diagrammatic section through the breakfront illustrated in **Fig.3.16.**[257] Where a breast shot or overshot millwheel was employed, the ground and first floors of a mill building were frequently one full, double-height space. At Slane, the three wheels were undershot, with their axles just above ground level, so double-height spaces could be omitted, other than the mezzanine platforms at attic level, where flour sacks could be lowered from the granaries to the dock below through doors in the apexes. The workings and vertical circulation of the mill were linked simply through a series of openings and trapdoors in the floor structure, with plank flooring laid in place once the heavier sets of machinery were set up within purpose-built timber frameworks.[258]

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[257] Gray, Andrew, *The experienced millwright*, Edinburgh, 1806.

[258] Alterations to the mill building in the twentieth century have obliterated much of the floor structure to the lower levels but on-site evidence of the extant structures indicates the presence of openings for machinery, now filled with new boarding or in some cases an entire new concrete floor.

Although the location for two of the primary waterwheels on either side of the breakfront is defined, the exact setting of the third wheel is still unclear. Its position indicated in the section is conjectural, but given the location of the central tailrace tunnel in relation to the adjoining channels and the arrangement of the bolting machines between the timber post grid to the front of the breakfront, it is likely that the wheel was set in the central volume of the building, joining the internal spaces of the T-shaped building together.

The diagrammatic section shows a plausible stacking arrangement of two sets of millstones (contained inside protective vat casing) placed within timber scaffolds on either side of the breakfront. The central wheel (positioned behind the boulters on the cross-section) hoisted the wheat by means of a bucket elevator into the granaries on the upper floors of the mill for its storage in barrels or bins. Before the grinding process began the wheat was dried out in kilns, housed in the northern and southern ends of the narrow block. Once dry the wheat went through a complex process of cleaning and grinding before reaching the boulters, where it was separated in flour and bran. Boulters were essentially large sleeves of a woollen cloth or a very fine wire weave, stretched within a timber box frame which was fixed at an angle. The sleeves acted as large sieves which shook with the turning of the boulters by leather belts or gears.

In the right-hand stacking system (at waterwheel B), the wheat was introduced through the hoppers into a sieve where loose sand and small seeds were removed before it was conducted into the eye of the runner stone (upper millstone). Here, the runner stone and bed stone were driven by the primary waterwheel at a grinding force, sufficient to remove the husk of the wheat. Once the wheat was shealed, it was fed into the fanners where it went through a cleansing process to separate husk and inner grain before the grain fell into a sack below. Sacks were raised by hoists

connected to axles at attic level, and when carried upwards the hoists automatically interrupted the workings of the wheels' mechanism. From the upper levels the next process commenced on the left-hand side, driven by waterwheel A. The grain went through the hoppers to the slippers and into the eye of the millstones to be fully ground before being hoisted to cooling boxes and from there to either the wire or cloth boulter, serviced by leather belts turned by a barrel, also driven by waterwheel A. Through the bolting machines the ground wheat was shaken and dressed in flour and bran or pollard and fell out into sacks at ground level. This cross section **(Fig.3.16)** illustrates four sets of millstones and two waterwheels. The third waterwheel serviced the remaining three sets of millstones and their function was primarily grinding, as distinct from shealing. This method whereby the grain was cleaned before grinding marked the departure from one vertical waterwheel which ground the grain while it was still uncleaned, leaving the process of bolting and sieving to the bakeries. Undoubtedly the need for manpower was relatively low and the highly sophisticated mechanism developed by the owners of the mill reduced labour costs substantially, as indicated by Arthur Young.[259]

Beyond the main mill building Jebb's own residence nestles against the sheer limestone face of the grounds to the north. Built in 1765, it was originally a relatively dreary two-storey house faced with coursed rubble limestone, flush quoins and a projecting stone cornice. While its prominent side elevation five bays looked onto the river Boyne, its rear quarters remained permanently in the shade of the quarry to the north, an odd choice of planning for an ambitious engineer. **(Fig.3.17)** Its plan was extremely simple, of single pile construction with two rooms on each floor around a central staircase. Free of sophisticated embellishments the rooms were decorated with plain plaster covings and un-moulded timber joinery. As Jebb's purse and family expanded the need for larger accommodation was clear but curiously he chose not to

[259] Young, *A tour in Ireland*, Vol. I, 35-36

extend his house until 1799, three years after Burton Conyngham's death. By then a series of altercations had caused a rift between the partners of the mill and Jebb was already exploring alternative possibilities at Egham in Surrey at his father's former home.[260] The new addition to his house at Slane (called 'Janeville') was built between 1799-1802, for the sum of £90 by a Mr Gilbert, as a two-storey over basement building, with a stairwell placed between two rooms and in this case to the rear of the house.[261] The older house is connected to the new addition by a decidedly odd link, which may in fact have been an earlier extension with stables and a courtyard to the west.[262] The walls are faced with finely hewn limestone, with simply moulded architraves to the windows of the entrance façade and a projecting cornice at the eaves, complementing the worked details of the mill. The new front elevation, of three bays and single storey breakfront entrance, faces west towards the avenue leading to the mill complex. **(Fig.3.18)** The building's idiosyncratic character lies in its elegant, entrance doorcase arrangement and its overstated fenestration, primarily in the six-over-nine sash windows on the east façade, which faced onto a private garden and afforded generous views of the river. **(Fig.3.19)** Jebb's obvious pride in his mill, his house and its grounds is reflected in his instructions from Surrey to his assistant, James Morton:

> I must beg you to give particular attention to keeping the walks in the plantation around the house clear from weeds and to preserve the flowering shrubs and trees from injury of any kind, particularly from cattle, for which purposes the fences adjoining the land are to be constantly attended to. You will write to me constantly every week of a Wednesday or oftener if

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[260] R.B. Hobson, 'David Jebb of Slane.' *Riocht na Midhe,* Vol. VIII, No.3, 1990-91, 36-40.

[261] Letter book of Slane Mill, 1798-1802, Townley Hall papers, NLI, Ms. 11,877. Gilbert was a builder and one of Jebb's assistants, who regularly carried out repairs at the mill.

[262] Deirdre Conroy, 'Slane mill house', unpublished paper, UCD, 2003. My thanks to Deirdre Conroy who allowed me access to this unpublished paper. Conroy attributes the design of the later house to Francis Johnston, who was engaged in domestic and public architecture in counties Meath and Louth at that period, particularly at Slane Castle and at the village. However there is little evidence in the façade treatment, particularly in the stone detailing, or in the layout of floor plans to suggest Johnston's hand.

necessary. In case of you not being well, Mr. Gilbert is to write to me giving me a full account of the whole business... I must beg you and Mr. Gilbert to particularly attend to keeping the Mills and premises in the most perfect repair, for which purpose John Meade will be constantly employed, not only in the immediate repairs but in providing cogs and other materials to be ready when needed, and to get timber from the Castle for floats. He is this summer to prepare posts and railings to go along the lawns at the river, and to re-lay the office floor.[263]

Young announced the mill of Slane to be unrivalled: 'a large and handsome edifice, such as no mill I have seen in England can compare with it'.[264] Several other glowing tributes followed in the years to come. Atkinson summed up the mill's charm declaring it 'the most elegant edifice I ever saw in the character of a flour mill' and in a report on the river Boyne in 1771, General Charles Vallancey stated that 'Slane is remarkable for the flourmills and spacious granary lately erected there by Mr. Jebb, which can manufacture 20,000 barrels of wheat. This mill and all its appurtenances are built with all the strength required for such works and at the same time with so much undecorated elegance as renders the whole light and pleasing to the eye'.[265] Young also praised the sustainable effect the mill had on the neighbouring tillage situation and the establishment of a constant corn market, which qualified the foundation of the enterprise.[266] Following the precedent set at Slane, the country subsequently produced a series of eighteenth-century multi-storey mills, notably at Millbrook at Oldcastle in county Meath (1777), at Millford in county Carlow (1786), at the Lee Mills complex in Cork City (1787) and at Ballyduggan county Down (1789). The success of the thriving corn industry in counties Meath and Louth was reflected

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[263] Letter book of Slane Mill, 1789-98, Townley Hall papers, NLI, Ms. 9521.
[264] Young, *A tour in Ireland*, Vol. I, 35.
[265] *BNCM*, 19. Also quoted in C. E. F. Trench's *Slane*, Meath, 1987, iv.
[266] Young, op.cit., 37.

in *c.*1796, in the building of the Drogheda Corn Exchange by Francis Johnston. Not unlike its counterparts at Ardee and Collon in its elevational composition, it was planned as an arcaded market, open on four sides, with characteristically and economically detailed facades, and crowned with an elegant cupola and weathervane of a plough and wheatsheaf.

By the end of the eighteenth century relations between Jebb and the mill owners had become strained with the refusal of the other partners to sign off accounts and to reinvest their dividends into new building work at the mill.[267] Eventually Jebb left the country to live in England where he supervised the rebuilding of his late father's house, Runnymede, at Egham in Surrey, left to him in a bequest of 1787.[268] From there he managed the mill through postal correspondence with his assistants, and apart from brief annual visits his interest dwindled and in 1810 he eventually sold his share of the mill to Balfour's grandson and to Burton Conyngham's nephew, Francis Nathaniel Burton.

Architectural Context

As already stated the interest of the landlords in new enterprises such as milling, cotton manufacture or small-scale mining was part of a broader enthusiasm of their class in carrying out improvements. The construction of the mill at Slane marked the departure from the smaller vernacular structures, containing horizontal millwheels or the workings of one vertical waterwheel which ground the grain while it was still uncleaned, leaving the process of bolting and sieving to the bakeries. (Mills of this scale on the river Boyne were located at Dowth, Proudfootstown, Kilcarne, Stalleen, and Rosnaree).[269] In the newly established flour mills this bolting and sieving process

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[267] David Jebb to Francis Nathaniel Burton, 5 March 1808, Foster Massereene papers, PRONI, D/562/3348.
[268] John Martin Robinson, 'Runnymede Park, Surrey', *Country Life,* 11 May 2000, 163.
[269] Geraldine Stout, *Newgrange and the bend of the Boyne*, Cork, 2002, 137.

was carried out mechanically, hence the term 'bolting mill'. In order to house such a large-scale operation with additional procedures of grain cleaning, flour dressing, mechanically operated fans and granary stores, the mill had to be at least three storeys high. There were indeed a few millers already experimenting with the concept of bolting. Andrew Mervyn's mill at Naul in county Dublin pioneered the use of multiple millstones and flour boulters in 1761, by using modern 'layshaft' or spur gearing to drive the boulters and a similar model built by the marble merchant William Colles' at Abbeyvale on the River Nore, was described as being three storeys high - a novelty within the realm of industrial architecture at that time. These innovations were quickly eclipsed by the enterprises at Limerick and Slane. Edward Uzold's Lock Mills on the Limerick Canal contained two waterwheels, six millstones and four boulters, and was ideally located on a virgin site on an inlet of the Abbey River, which allowed barges 'coming from the sea or by the new navigation' to approach its granaries directly.[270] **(Fig.3.20)** The second business partner at the Lock Mills was Andrew Walsh, but Uzold has been ascribed the title of architect of the building, 'who planned the construction of it and carried it into execution'.[271] Described by Christopher Colles (William Colles' nephew) as 'very cleverly executed'[272], the U-shaped building was six storeys high, with fourteen bays to the northern facade and flanked by granaries and ancillary structures.[273] This scheme began in 1762, a year before Henry II leased his property at Slane to the three entrepreneurs. A conceivable trip by Jebb to the banks of the Limerick Canal to inspect Uzold's project cannot be ruled out. Plans for a similar docking canal at Slane emerged in the spectacular millpond, which completed the set-piece of the new mill and echoed the

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[270] *JH of C*, 1765-72, Vol. VIII, Part I, 29-30. Colin Rynne, 'The development of milling technology in Ireland, c. 600-1875', in Andy Bielenberg, (ed.), *Irish Flour Milling, A history 600-2000*, Dublin, 2003, 11-37.

[271] John Ferrar, *The history of Limerick...*, Limerick, 1787, 205. Edward Uzold was also a canal engineer, who worked on Shannon Navigation and is accredited by Ferrar with the design of the New Bridge at Limerick. We shall see some more of Edward Uzold in Chapter Five.

[272] Christopher Colles to William Colles, 8 August 1766, Colles papers, Newbury Library Chicago. I am very grateful to Tony Hand for permission to consult his transcripts of these manuscripts.

[273] My thanks to John Logan for this information.

formality of the canals in the man-made Baroque landscapes at demesnes like Stradbally, Kilruddery and Mount Ievers. The scale of machinery at Slane was on a par with Limerick, but the need for large granary space to facilitate the booming corn market in the county and the high demand from the factors in Dublin allowed the owners to erect a mill on a grander scale and with a level of sophistication not seen at the Lock Mills. Their achievement would indeed topple Uzold's aspirations and Slane Mill's status was maintained as the largest mill of its genre in the country until superseded fifty years later by the Alexanders' leviathan at Milford in county Carlow in 1813.[274] The need for a building of its size becomes clear but the pride and ambition of the owners is defined in their own words (in a petition to the parliament for further funding) when they refer to their scheme as 'equal if not superior to any structure of this sort in Europe'.[275]

One question remains: who was the architect behind their 'superior' structure at Slane? A surprising lack of information regarding this subject in eighteenth-century newspapers, in indenture deeds, and in the meticulously kept accounts of the mill has resulted in general speculation by architectural historians. A favourite suggestion for the designer of the mill is the aforementioned Hugh Darley. This assumption is purely based on his dealings with the Ardbraccan quarry and his engagement in local architectural schemes.[276] This study has revealed Darley's connection to Balfour and his early works to Townley Hall between 1746-57, which may reinforce the theory of his involvement. But again this is based purely on connections, often an unsound presumption. The preferred choice of designer of the contemporary observers, such as Atkinson and Vallancey, was David Jebb himself. The lack of concrete

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[274] Cullen, *Eighteenth-century flour milling in Ireland*, 5-25.
[275] *JH of C*, 1765-72, Vol. VIII, Part I, 25. Quoted in Cullen, *Eighteenth-century flour milling in Ireland*, 22.
[276] Craig, *Architecture of Ireland*, 196; Petherbridge, *Monuments of industry*: 742-49; Kevin Mulligan, *Buildings of Meath: A selection of protected structures*, Kells, 2001, 209. Although it is widely stated that the Darleys owned the stone quarry at Ardbraccan there is no documentary evidence to corroborate this.

documentary evidence, such as invoices (from a builder or an architect), a bill of quantities or a schedule of works, or if luck would have it - a drawing, signed by the same, may simply imply that the three partners were responsible for the design themselves. It would have been highly efficient in terms of expenditure and management. Burton Conyngham's special interest in antiquities and architecture, his active role in the cultural life of Ireland and above all his knowledge of military engineering certainly meant he would have paid close attention to the execution of the plan. The same could be said for Balfour, in terms of his active involvement, but again, this is hardly a sound basis for their designation as the architects. Jebb, who clearly mastered the skill of engineering and who was aware of modern milling procedures from his apprentice days in England, is a likely candidate as the designer of the waterworks and promoter of the sophisticated mechanism of the mill. Architectural parallels can be drawn from the compositional device used at the mill at Sidlesham, with its nine bay front façade and central gable punctuated with sack hoists. **(Fig.3.3)** Aspects of Jebb's character indicate a highly innovative and dedicated businessman: his public struggle to remodel the weir and bridge to facilitate the mill, his rigorous supervision of the mill's building works and his thorough management of the building, its apparatus, and its commercial success. But are these signs of an accomplished artist, proficient in the implementation of the tenets of Classicism, or the creator of a very original type of industrial monument?

So this question remains unanswered, but in conclusion we can deduce that the dual nature of the mill's design - the refined country house and the heavy technical mechanisms contained within - offers the simple theory that it was a meeting of two minds; an engineer, like Jebb, to plan the internal workings of the mill and an architect (or craftsman), like Darley, to design the shell with which to house them. And ultimately, a celebration of the mill's architectural significance supersedes the need to identify a potential designer. It was clearly intended to be an architectural

statement as much as a functional industrial building. The quality of materials and their execution, the classical detailing and perfect symmetry all pay testament to the partners' grand plans. Slane was the precursor for a type of larger mill structure built by the landed classes, for flour milling and flax scutching. These new or remodelled mills were often adorned with vulgar castellation recalling the earlier tower-houses, such as at New Haggard, Ballitore, Levitstown and Milford, but they were rarely formed with the attention to detail indulged at Slane Mill. (**Fig.3.21)**

Other industrial projects under Burton Conyngham

Despite the commercial success of Slane Mill, Burton Conyngham was effectively still dependant on the financial support of Henry II and in order to consolidate his situation at Slane he sought other methods of speculative enterprise. The premiums granted on native coal production and the duty on coal imports was sufficient enticement for him to try his hand at coal mining on his uncle's estate. The Slane Colliery was founded in June 1773 with David Jebb and the financial backing of seven other businessmen and local landowners including William Colville, John Foster and members of the Fortescue family.[277] The exploitation of coal and copper ore had been limited in county Meath with Butler in 1748, and Pococke in 1753, reporting on the poor state of mining in the barony of Slane.[278] An amusing account in *Universal Advertiser* of the escapades of a local wide-boy, Thomas Williams, told of his charades and assumed guises as a leveller, land surveyor and miner in the vicinity of Meath, and especially as an engineer-general in the collieries of Slane in 1748.[279] Five years later Pococke remarked that, 'they were in search of coal about a mile from this town and it is said there is certainly coal there, of the kind of Kilkenny

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[277] Slane Colliery accounts, 1773-1776, Meath County Library, Navan. This group of gentlemen also sat as commissioners on the Boyne Navigation Board.
[278] Ellison, *Boyne and Blackwater*, 58-9.
[279] *Universal Advertiser*, 17-21 October 1758. My thanks to John Montague for this information.

coal, but they cannot get it worked by the obstinacy of the proprietors'.[280] Pococke was referring to the property of Robert Rigmaiden, a close friend of David Jebb's, who had leased the mine to an English collier who had let the business there lapse.[281] Another futile venture was that of Richard Price from Wales, who was commissioned by Henry II in 1759 to sink shafts in search of copper ore near Slane. Henry II was to receive 1/5 of the profits but Price packed up and returned to Wales before the year was out.[282] Burton Conyngham's colliery was located in Rathmaiden (to the north of Slane) near the townland of Coalpits. After a brisk start to the business, with the employment of fifty men to sink the first shaft, the shareholders were dismayed to find that the seams of the pit were too small and unproductive. John Evans, an engineer from the Drumglass Colliery in county Tyrone, was engaged to oversee the drilling of new boreholes up to 45 yards in depth in the hope of finding better seams.[283] This too failed, and by April 1776 the company was dissolved.[284] The failure of the exercise was succinctly summed up by Thompson: 'circumstances of the mine are such as to damp that laudable spirit of exertion, from an idea that the profits would not be equivalent to the expense'.[285]

Once clear to Burton Conyngham that the world of mining was unfruitful, he turned to promoting the manufacture of cotton on the Slane estate. Like mining, the cotton trade was quite limited in the county and the few mills that thrived on the Boyne were the water-powered cotton mills of Roughgrange and Beamore, until eclipsed by

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[280] McVeagh, *Pococke's Irish Tours*, 142.

[281] Accounts of Slane Mill, 1789-93, Townley Hall papers, NLI, Ms 11,913. Jebb was executor of Rigmaiden's vast estate comprising the Rathmaiden demesne, part of Higginstown, lands at lower and upper Knockerke (leased by William Colville), lands at Brienstown and Fieldstown (leased by Henry Fisher) and a few 'good houses' in Drogheda and Meath Street in Dublin. Rigmaiden left large sums to the Church of Ireland towards repairs to St. Patrick's church and the parish of Slane.

[282] Deed of release, 1759, ROD, 203/24/133436.

[283] Slane Colliery accounts, 1773-1776, Meath County Library, Navan. From this information we must assume that the method was not open-cast mining but sub-surface or underground.

[284] Slane Colliery accounts, 1773-1776, Meath County Library, Navan. Henry II's neighbours, on the estates of Sir Marcus Somerville and Gustavus Lambert the south of the Boyne, had better luck with their attempts to mine copper ore. The mine at Beauparc was worked until the twentieth century and the ore was exported to Wales for smelting.

[285] Robert Thompson, *Statistical Survey of the County of Meath with observations on the means of improvement*, Dublin, 1802, 15.

Coxon's successful production at Stackallen in 1802.[286] None of these productions however matched the ambitious scale of cotton manufacture established elsewhere in Ireland in the late eighteenth century, such as at Prosperous (county Kildare), Stratford-on-Slaney (county Wicklow) and at the adjacent village of Collon (county Louth). In 1783 we find Robert Collello under the patronage of Burton Conyngham, petitioning the House of Commons for a subsidy for an extension to his cotton business at Slane. An earlier business in Dalkey, county Dublin had been destroyed by fire and Collello, a native of Slane, had approached Burton Conyngham for assistance in re-establishing the scheme. Burton Conyngham agreed on the premise that it should be moved to 'Slane town' and urged Collello to apply for additional funding for 'the newest kind of machinery form England'[287] The petition was granted by the House in February 1785 and with assistance of another partner, Edward Harman from Drogheda, Collello supposedly proceeded to set up the industry.[288] The extent or success rate of their business is unknown, as is the location of their cotton mill. The minute book of the Church of Ireland Select Vestry mentions a trip made by Collello to the West Indies and from his conspicuous absence from the records between 1785 and 1797, we might make the iniquitous assumption that he absconded with the funds meant for the cotton mill, returning to Slane after Burton Conyngham's death in 1796.[289]

This section has revisited the history of Slane Mill - indisputably one of the most important industrial monuments of eighteenth-century Ireland - with the purpose of completing its architectural history and of paving the way for the study of further improvements on the estate, both public and private. In the narrative of improvement

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[286] Ellison, *Boyne and Blackwater*, 55.
[287] *JH of C*, 1773-78, Vol. IX, Part II, 44, 313-4, 333-4.
[288] Ellison, *Boyne and Blackwater*, 55.
[289] *CIVM*, Vol. I, 1786-96 unpaginated; Rent roll for the Slane Estate 1820, Conyngham papers, NLI. Ms. 35, 416 (1); Deed of lease, ROD, 785/121/531056/, quoted in *Eighteenth-Century Flour Milling in Ireland*, 23. Collello is listed as a tenant of the 'Woodlands' at Slane from 1797 onwards and in 1802 he leased lands at Fennor, on the north side of the Boyne, from David Jebb.

the relationship of the estate to its associated developments was crucial to their success. Landlord endorsed schemes required continuous nurturing and maintenance to militate against failure - not unheard of in Ireland under absentees' supervision (and lack thereof). The economic and architectural triumph of Slane Mill was undeniably thanks to the financial backing and consistent supervision of the Conynghams, and their shrewd choice of Jebb as manager and co-owner.[290] At Slane, the geographical relationship between demesne and industry reinforced the significance of these improvements, and, their affect on the surrounding area. Subsequent implementation of plantations at the Slane Castle ensured unbroken views through the landscape towards the nexus of industry at Slane bridge. Not only could the landlord inspect his schemes *en route* to his country seat, but from the higher echelons of his mansion he could also admire the happy results of his investment. **(Fig.3.22 & 3.23)** With these achievements, came the need and the desire for further improvements at the demesne, village and canal, as we shall see in the following chapters.

[290] The accounts of Slane Mill indicate the involvement of all of the partners in the decision making process and in key financial matters. As Henry II was living in London and Paris during this period, the responsibility lay with his nephew Burton Conyngham, who was a constant presence, at least in the first two decades of the mill's history.

Chapter Four

'The handsomest village in Ireland as it was in the time of Colonel Cunningham'[291]: Developments at the village of Slane, *c.*1766-1824.

Slane village before developments in 1766 • The new octagon & its architecture • Urban derivatives & comparable forms in eighteenth-century Ireland • The emergence of the village plan •

This section deals with the development of the village of Slane under Henry II and his nephew Burton Conyngham. Using Bernard Scalé's survey from 1763 of the neighbouring Howard estate, the extant village plan is assessed prior to new developments in 1766-7. Just as the mill of Slane was analysed more explicitly than in previous studies, the new octagon at Slane village and its architecture is examined here in greater detail than before - both in the context of urban history and similar contemporaneous developments in Ireland. Finally, the filling out of the village form in the last three decades of the eighteenth century is briefly illustrated with both documentary evidence and on-site investigations of the extant plan.

The form of the village of Slane prior to urban improvements in 1766.

Reviewing developments at the village since the early eighteenth century, we find the square at the crossroads used as the central market place, and a new Church of Ireland built by Williams Conyngham at the edge of the demesne and village. From chapter two we know that Williams had renewed some of the leases in the village, including two new sites on the north-east and south-east sides of the square with 'a good slate house' and garden on each site. Dr. Pococke was able to comment on the 'poor town of Slane' in the 1753, and ten years Bernard Scalé's map of 1763 shows little change in the village expansion or design.[292] **(Fig.4.1)** Scalé's survey indicates a

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[291] Capt. William Gethin to Marquis Conyngham, 1824, Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms. 35,346 (1).
[292] McVeagh, *Pococke's Irish Tours*, 142.

simple linear pattern of street-lined development concentrated westwards. The single building shown as a three-dimensional symbol illustrating the street elevation (to the south) indicates the scale of the house type forming the streetscape, which is punctured at intervals by carriage-arches leading to L-shaped courtyards on the north side. Under a market charter in the late seventeenth century, Slane was granted a license to hold a weekly market on Thursdays and also a patent for a fair to be held twice annually. It thrived under a strong corn market economy, sustained by the success of the mill, but by the middle of the nineteenth century although the fair was maintained Slane's market had failed due to competition from Navan and Drogheda.[293]

At Slane's market place on the square, distinctive right angles of the four streets are formed at the crossroads but the buildings are randomly placed, with little coherent relationship to the so-called square, or to each other. Curiously the location of the Church of Ireland to the west of the village centre is neglected, but a place of worship (to the north of the road towards Navan) is depicted as a T-shaped building, called a 'chapple', with a symbolic cross imposed on its plan. In Curran's *History of the Diocese of Meath*, a protestant bishop is recorded as having stated that in 1733 the barony held '189 families (in the parish); about twenty thereof are protestant and the rest popish; no mass-house, but there is a popish priest.'[294] The street running north from the square towards the hill of Slane was named Abbey Street, until the building of the R.C. Church by the Conynghams in 1802, when it was renamed Chapel Street. Census data extracted from hearth-tax returns in 1764 (thirty years after Curran's account) reinforces the case for a Catholic place of worship, as it details one church

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[293] 'Survey of forfeited estates in counties Louth and Meath', 1700, BL, Add Ms. 41,159 f.33; Tom Harris, 'Fairs & markets in the environment of County Meath', *Riocht na Midhe*, Vol. IX, No. 4, 1998, 149-69.
[294] Olive Curran, *The history of the diocese of Meath*, Mullingar, 1995, Vol. II, 830.

and one chapel for the village of Slane.[295] We can therefore surmise that this chapel mentioned in the census records is that depicted on Scalé's map of 1763.[296]

There is no evidence on the manuscript map of the remains of the sixteen houses extant in 1652, described by T.J. Westropp as extending down the hill from the crossroads towards the bridge.[297] In his analysis of medieval towns of county Meath, John Bradley concurs with Westropp's description, stating that the town was 'in two portions, one near the bridge, the other at the top of the hill'.[298] The lower part of this settlement had clearly disappeared in the hundred year interim. Equally, Williams Conyngham's 'good slate houses' on the square were either removed before 1763 or the schemes were never realised. Both of these points highlight the problems in the use of certain documents for the study of urban history, and in this case, the validity of Scalé's map must be questioned. As a survey, Scalé's drawing certainly has its failings; the route of canal (the Boyne Navigation) shown on the map is incorrect, but Scalé would have been informed of the commissioners' design intentions at that point and obviously chose to include them. For that reason the term 'survey' in itself is imprecise. His draft is in fact a hybrid of a survey of Howard's property and a proposal, or a projection, of the Boyne Navigation at that location.[299] The appendage of Slane village to the survey is primarily to clarify the canal's location, but its portrayal is whimsical and inaccuracies cannot be ruled out. Having said that, given the scarcity of mid eighteenth-century documents relating to Slane's development,

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[295] Brian Gurrin, 'Navan, Co. Meath in 1766.' *Riocht na Midhe,* Vol. XV, 2004, 96-7. Either the population had risen dramatically in thirty years or the Protestant bishop miscalculated his returns in 1733, for by 1764 there were 110 Protestant families and 550 Catholics in the parish.

[296] Definitions for the term 'chapel' in the eighteenth century are sometimes ambiguous, the word often attached to buildings or places of worship for both Protestants and Roman Catholics. The *OED* defines the word 'chapel' as used regularly by Roman Catholics in Ireland as their place of worship, at least until 1830-40. The title 'mass-house' was a broader title for an R.C. church or place of worship, usually portrayed as a simple structure with a small thatched-over space or with no roof covering at all. It may be assumed that Scalé would have used the title 'chapple' without inserting R.C. before it, or simply used R.C. as Rocque had done on his Dublin map of 1756.

[297] T.J. Westropp, 'Slane in Bregia', *JRSAI*, Series 5, Vol. XI, 1901, 430. The original parish map for Slane from the Petty's Down Survey has been destroyed.

[298] John Bradley, 'The Medieval towns of county Meath, *Riocht na Midhe,* Vol. VIII, 1988-9, 30-50.

[299] My thanks to John Montague for his comments on the Bernard Scalé survey of 1763.

the Scalé survey must be considered of some significance in generating an analysis of the village form.

The octagon at Slane: its true form and its architectural components.

While Burton Conyngham slowly established himself as the future squire of Slane, his uncle fought out his private battles with the Murray and Conolly cousins, complaining to Joshua Sharpe that '....in short all my affairs are so perplexed and delayed that I neither can or will bear it any longer...[300] Happier entertaining in London or philandering in Paris, his desire to leave Ireland was becoming more evident. The high costs of the Murray lawsuits forced him to sell one of his London homes on Great Georges's Street near Hanover Square in Mayfair. It was at this point too, that he was actively seeking the position of Master of the Ordnance in Ireland, an employment that never materialised and perhaps was the motivation for his eventual move to Paris.[301] Referring to refurbishments carried out at Slane Castle (the former Conyngham Hall) Young was able to comment in 1776 that 'Lord Conyngham scarcely resided at this seat in Slane at all, but spent great sums of money on its upkeep'.[302] Ten years prior to these comments, however, Henry II had joined in the spirit of urban development, keen to be among those landlords who were embracing current concepts of improvement and renovating or laying out new villages attached to their estates. The era of textile promotion had been marked by enterprises such as the Linen Board and the Dublin Society, who together with the Irish parliament advocated the creation of new villages for the industry. Notable early examples of this level of planning were the linen villages of Newburgh's Ballyhaise (c.1735), French's Monivea (c.1750), Annesley's Castlewellan (c.1764) and the

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[300] Henry Conyngham to Joshua Sharpe, 1767, Lord Conyngham papers, PRONI, D/2274.
[301] Henry, Lord Mountcharles to Grenville, 1765, Letters to G. Grenville, BL, Add. Ms. 57,825 f. 116.
[302] Young, *A tour in Ireland*, Vol. I, 41. Burton Conyngham's remodelling of Slane Castle and works carried out there by James Gandon, James Wyatt, Francis Johnston and Capability Brown in the latter half of the eighteenth century can be gleaned from a comprehensive and very complete account by Mark Odlum, 'Slane Castle, County Meath', *Country Life,* July 17, 1980, 198-201.

highly formal Villierstown (c.1751), where Grandison would appear on Sundays at church with his weavers.[303] Cosby's Stradbally (c. 1740) and Mahon's Strokestown (c. 1760) were exceptional cases of the deliberate, formal re-planning of villages at the demesne gates, rebuilt not only to house labourers but also to attract the wealthier tenants to live on their wide avenues and on their residential squares. Slane can be considered a combination of both concepts. The revamped village would accommodate long-standing tenants, estate labourer and mill workers from the new mill of Slane, and Henry II's plans for an amalgamation of a market and residential square would attract the prosperous and the professional.

Between 1766-7 new leases were drawn up specifically for the old market square at Slane and on this occasion with rigorous stipulations, outlining the framework for the evolution of a formal set-piece at the centre of the village. The corners of the main crossroads, which had served as an open market space, were pushed back to form an octagon or circus, and four houses were planned to face each other transversely. The topographical situation of the new octagon at the junction of the steep hill from the river through the village northwards, and the gentler slope from the Drogheda Road westwards towards the Church of Ireland, added to the ceremonial approach to the square from all directions. The first house to be built was on the northwest corner and served as an inn. Called the 'King's Arms', it was frequented by travellers *en route* to Dublin and by members of the Boyne Navigation board, where their meetings were regularly held. Conditions attached to Henry II's indentures required the other three houses to be built in the same manner. On the 13th August 1767, Jebb's friend Henry Fisher was granted a lease by Henry II for the northeast corner, with the prerequisite that the 'house to be built within five years to the same plan as

[303] L. M. Cullen, *Irish Towns and Villages,* Dublin, 1979, unpaginated; L.M. Cullen, *The emergence of modern Ireland*, 1600-1900, Dublin, 1981, 61-82.

new inn opposite, recently built ...in the circle laid out in the Towne of Slane'.[304] The houses on the remaining corners followed suit, one for the princely sum of £400.[305] The octagon was carefully designed as a unit with four, three-storey over basement residences, diagonally positioned and connected by screen walls to outbuildings forming pavilions to the four intersecting streets, which radiate from the square. **(Figs.4.2, 4.3, 4.4)** The four houses flanking the octagon appear to match in their façade treatment but their varied floor plans adapt to sloping site constraints and lend idiosyncrasies to each building in their fenestration (including dummy windows in the south-eastern house) and the height of their roof structures. The northern houses were laid out in a compact double-pile form with the principal rooms flanking a central staircase and twin stacks on the outer walls. Smaller in scale the two southern houses were also double pile but tighter in depth and with the staircase tucked away into the corner, not unlike John Payne's designs for a 'small double house'. **(Fig.4.5)** The house fronts are faced with squared limestone stonework and are dressed with a plinth, eaves course and ashlar quoins. Each house has a hipped slate roof, of varied height depending on the floor plan, with elegant red brick chimneystacks. Like the lower level of the mill, the windows have Gibbsian stone surrounds, with a projecting keystone, limestone sills and timber sashes. The buildings express their eccentricity in their splendid doorways, each of a different design with decorative keystones, simply glazed fanlights and timber panelled doors, and each approached by flight of stone steps.[306]

Each of the four houses is linked by a screen wall to a pair of outbuildings which complete the octagon form. Their low gables facing the square making eight flanking

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[304] Deed of lease, 1767, ROD, 259/302/166928.
[305] Deed of lease, 1767, ROD, 255/524/166947; 257/258/166931.
[306] The houses were originally planned to be open to the square and the low curved stone walls with central gateways that currently separate the houses from the open public space were a nineteenth-century addition. Their presence disarticulates the pure form of the original octagon plan somewhat. A central drinking fountain was also added to the mix but was removed by the end of the nineteenth century.

pavilions, each faced with a pair of arches, picked out in stucco render under ashlar limestone arches. **(Figs. 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9)** The square's individualism lies in this arrangement, creating a unifying arcade around the square, fragmented only by the cruciform intersection of the four streets. While modest domestic facades front the street elevations of the eight pavilions, the heavily-set blind arches surrounding the square assume the imagery of the open arcaded ground floor of the market-houses which dominated the civic squares of cities, towns and villages throughout the country. In general the bulk of this building type, described by McParland as rustic vernacular classicism, was constructed towards the end of the eighteenth century and adopted extensively in the nineteenth century, but the more obvious cases prior to the building of Slane's octagon were the Dublin and Kilkenny Tholsels, the Exchanges at Waterford, Antrim, Cork and Derry, and the more provincial examples of the market-houses at Dundalk, Portarlington, Athy and Dunlavin, all articulated with regular ground floor arcades. **(Fig.4.10)**

The use of this architectural imagery at Slane provokes the theory that the pavilions (or at least one of them) flanking the principal houses on the square were in fact reduced market-houses (perhaps with fully open arcades facing onto the square), providing internal commercial areas to complement the open market space defined by the octagon. Thus the hybrid of the residential and the commercial spaces could be fully exploited, celebrating the economic prosperity of both worlds. The main function of the ground floor of a market house was to provide a sheltered space for market activities, to accommodate small scale operations and to provide storage for weighing machines and produce.[307] At Slane, each pavilion gable is finished with a stone plinth running the full width of the facade below the arches, and is set at varying heights from the surface level - ranging from one to two feet depending on

[307] Christine Casey, 'Courthouses, market houses and town halls of Leinster', M.A., 1982, University College Dublin, 26.

the extremity of the slope. An examination of the stonework has revealed a lack of evidence for steps or other forms of access to what might have been an arcade from the square's surface level and given the depth of the arches it is also unlikely that the random courses to the blind arches (which were finished with a stucco render) were a nineteenth-century infill.[308] **(Figs. 4.6, 4.8)** Their use as a public-house, a barracks for the constabulary and a local dispensary in the nineteenth century is alluded to in secondary documents, but evidence for the function of the pavilions in the eighteenth-century is lacking. The understated shop-fronts and the domestic style of the street-side façades indicate their use as either private residences or a combination of residential with commercial premises below, and reduces the possibility of their use as market houses. **(Fig.4.11)** In the absence of documentary, or concrete on-site evidence, it may be concluded that the blind arcade to the gable ends was merely a device employed to unify the four houses, and to articulate the square's role as an external market space, while maintaining the architectural language of the ubiquitous market house within the space of the octagon.

The octagon at Slane in the context of urban history & comparable forms in Ireland.

The developments at the square were the result of a studied urban plan, devised either by Henry II or his inspired choice of builder and the resulting set-piece shows a high degree of enlightened planning. De La Tocnaye claims that Henry II's nephew was responsible for the building of the 'town of Slane'.[309] The admiration the writer held for Burton Conyngham was evident in his writings and may have influenced these comments, but was Burton Conyngham the force behind the provisos laid out in his uncle's leases? His presence at Slane is obvious, highlighted by the comment

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[308] My thanks to Tony Hand for his comments on the nature of the stonework to the pavilions on the square at Slane.
[309] Chevalier de La Tocnaye, *A Frenchman's walk through Ireland 1796-7, translated from the French of de La Tocnaye by John Stevenson*, Belfast, 1984. 274.

made retrospectively by Capt. William Gethin (in the title of this chapter), but without concrete documentary verification we can only assume a certain influence on his part. A builder or a mason assuming the role of an architect would have had access to the pattern books and copybooks of Isaac Ware or James Gibbs, but undoubtedly someone acquainted with sophisticated principles of European urban planning and competent in the execution of classical ideas was involved here. Like the mill of Slane, the architectural significance of the set-piece eclipses the desire or need to discover its planner. A more pertinent question is what kind of urban space had been created in terms of eighteenth-century urban planning in Ireland and abroad.

The layout of eighteenth-century Irish villages combined Renaissance urban design principles with Baroque concepts of space, rhythm and movement. Their planning depended on vistas closed or framed by public buildings, malls aligned with uniform street fronts and greens, squares or diamonds at regular intervals and everywhere a sense of symmetry and rigour, even in the smallest of towns and villages. Layouts varied from the rigid linear form, such as Cookstown and Strokestown to the elliptical layout at Tyrellspass; from the triangular greens such as Malin to the striking grid-iron pattern of Fermoy. Squares or diamonds were either regular, like the formally planned civic spaces of Birr and Mitchelstown or layered like the diamonds at Clones and Monaghan. Spatial expression was exploited with axial arrangements of architectural elements such as the church, the market or courthouse, the entrance and avenue of the demesne and the main square.[310] In the mid-eighteenth century Slane's central feature was the octagon at the crossroads. The remaining streetscape was linear, with four streets radiating from the octagon and no attempt made to introduce new architectural elements or to rotate life around a secondary public space in the form of a civic square, fronted with a courthouse or a new place of

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[310] B. J. Graham & Lindsay Proudfoot, *Urban Improvement in provincial Ireland* 1700-1840, Athlone, 1994, 3-12.

worship. More importantly, no efforts were made by the Conynghams to exploit the octagon and relate the space to a new formal entrance for their demesne, which bordered the square at its highest level. In its place an insignificant Gothic Revival gate-lodge and entrance were added just below the square on Mill Hill by successive generations during the nineteenth century.

To study the type of square created at Slane we need to look briefly at the typology of urban squares. The function of the traditional square was defined in the process of its formation; as a servant to an important building such as a courthouse or a church, or identified as having a specific social and economic function such as a market place.[311] In the analysis of square types, urban theorists like Sitte, Stübben and Zucker use the classical writings of Vitruvius and Alberti to organise the square type into four categories. The first category is that of traffic squares or interchanges in circular or polygonal form, well characterised by the 'star plazas' of Paris; the second type is the functional space, used by the public as a market place or for parades and festivities; the third section categorised is landscaped squares, specifically the English garden square; and finally what Stübben calls architectural squares. This type incorporates forecourts serving important buildings, the square inhabited by a free-standing single building or monument and the *umbaute platz*, which are either layered spaces, the product of a historical process, or of uniform design.[312] These types can be translated to the smaller squares of eighteenth-century Ireland, where naturally due to the scale of the towns and villages the typologies overlap. At Slane's octagon, there is no church, no courthouse, no adjacent castle gates, no historic monument or landscaped garden and as we have ascertained no singular market-house where economic and social life was centred. Slane's uniqueness lies in the marriage of a uniformly built, residential square and a functional open market place

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[311] The R.C. Church at Slane was not built until the end of the century (1798-1802) and was typically located at the edge of the village - in Slane's case, to the north.
[312] Spiro Kostoff, *The City Assembled*, London, 1992, 146-152.

located at an interchange. The form is a derivative of the French *rond-point* or the English circus, the geometry stretched to engage four diagonals and to become an octagon. Exploited extensively in nineteenth-century urban planning in Europe, the octagon model created a dual space - an external public space and an internal courtyard or patio space. At Slane, its function was to define and create external space. The regularity of the skyline and the arcade, suggested in the flanking pavilions, is a nod to the enclosed plaza of Spain and the Italian forum. The enclosure of space in this manner is the purest expression of the sense of place, - the centre. The square's building height is elegant and proportional to its size, although not as perfectly proportioned as perhaps Alberti would have intended. In his *De re aedificatoria*, he argues that the size of the square and its architectural frame are interdependent; if the surrounding buildings are too low, the open space will appear too large and if the buildings are too high, the space would be disproportionately limited. His formula for the correct height for the surrounding buildings is 'one third of the breadth of the open area, or one sixth at the least'.[313] This reasoning was difficult to achieve at the crossroads of Slane, but the geometry of the pure octagon form counteracts any sense of restriction.

In terms of urban development in eighteenth-century Ireland, Louis Cullen describes the octagon at Slane as a 'feature in ambitious planning'.[314] Comparable geometric forms, such as the circus or elliptical space (and not always the rigid octagon form) were planned at Johnstown (*c.* 1760), Castlewellan (*c.*1764), Westport (*c.*1780) Stratford-on-Slaney (*c.* 1785) and later at Nurney (*c.*1790) and Tyrellspass (*c.*1815). Despite the frequency of the plan, the disparities between the villages are of course quite pronounced. The plain low-scale buildings lining the octagons at Johnstown and Nurney were loose, random arrangements around their junctions, the result of a

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[313] Alberti, Leon Battista, *On the art of building in ten books, translated by Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach & Robert Tavernor*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), 1991, 196-7.
[314] L.M. Cullen, *The emergence of modern Ireland*, 1600-1900, Dublin, 1981, 71-2.

layering process rather than a conscious plan. **(Figs. 4.12, 4.13)** Tyrellspass is a good example of a planned village centre in the English manner. Here the combination of the crescent form, around a large green, with the rigid line of the main street, creates a wonderful civic and residential square, with ample detached houses flanked by the customary courthouse, church and school. **(Fig.4.14)** A similar scheme is observed at the 'old town' of Castlewellan. **(Fig.4.15)** The circus of the 'new town' was a much later addition, incorporating the important elements of the corn market and the various places of worship. The formality of the streetscape of the mall and octagon at Westport engages, but the focussing of the elements into a single composition is unsuccessful. A more convincing urban plan can be seen at Stratford-on-Slaney where Aldborough had dreamt of building a little metropolis to be supported by his cotton and calico industry. It was to comprise thirty streets and a number of squares, with fountains at the centre of each square. The model town was to be paved and lighted, and to have its own town hall, schools and churches. **(Fig. 4.16)** Only a fraction of Aldborough's dream materialized.[315] To borrow a phrase from Atkinson's *Irish Tourist*, all of these forms can be considered 'scenes of architectural grandeur', but the type of octagon observed at Castlewellan and Stratford are irregular and even disproportionate, leaving Slane unrivalled as an exercise in meticulously planning and the creation of highly sophisticated architectural space.[316] In 1785-6 the idiom was exploited once more at Burton Conyngham's newly planned fishing village on the island of Rutland (on the Donegal estate), as we shall see in the final chapter of this work.

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[315] George Newenham Wright, *A guide to the county of Wicklow*, London, 1827, 166-7; L.M. Cullen, *The emergence of modern Ireland*, 1600-1900, Dublin, 1981, 72.
[316] A, Atkinson, *The Irish Tourist...*, Dublin, 1815, 326.

The emergence of the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century village.

The nascent development of the village of Slane evolved slowly between 1767 and the end of the century, with the effects of economic growth seen primarily in the filling-out of the pre-existing plan rather than in the creation of new urban spaces and public architecture. A feature of eighteenth-century provincial Irish towns and villages is the visual unevenness, created by wide boulevards lined with low and unassuming houses. At Slane, the streets were narrow enough to generate a well-balanced streetscape, an amalgamation of the domestic and the commercial. Much of the character of the village was derived from the materials used in the buildings; the dominant material used at Slane was limestone, which was either quarried at Ardbraccan or at Sheephouse near Drogheda. Brickwork was kept to a minimum, reserved for the elegant chimney stacks defining the roofline at the octagon, for door and window surrounds (which were then finished with stucco render) and for similar details to outbuildings and coach-houses hidden from the streetscape.

Three plots to the north of Henry Fisher's new house on the northeast corner of the square were also leased to him in 1767 for speculative development.[317] Title deeds to the properties reveal that the location of the malthouse, built in 1712 by John Blackley, was just to the north of Fisher's three plots, on the formerly named Abbey Street.[318] Instructions to build a new house there were laid out in a lease to another tenant, Richard Barry, and the old malthouse was removed.[319] The four sites were planned as a pair of two-storey terraces which would lead us to believe that Barry and Fisher combined forces to develop the plots in this symmetric manner. The façades are of rough cast limestone, embellished with blocked surrounds to the window and door openings, complementing the buildings at the octagon. Barry's

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[317] Deed of lease, 1767, ROD, 259/302/166928.
[318] John Blackley, who was mentioned in Chapter One, was a sitting tenant with the Slane estate when purchased by Henry I in 1703.
[319] Deed of lease, 1767, ROD, 259/256/166929.

house was later described by the *Drogheda Journal* as consisting 'of a kitchen, a parlour and two bed chambers, all in complete order and a small garden with a stable for five horse, with rack and manger'.[320] The same publication gives a short account of a residence on the opposite side of Abbey Street: 'Conyngham Lodge, situated in the most pleasing part of the town of Slane and in complete order for the reception of a family. There is near three acres of a paddock and a pleasure ground at the rear of the said lodge, with wood and plantations well enclosed'.[321] The house in question was built about the same time as the octagon and is a three bay, two-storey building set back at a distance from the street, with a fine range of outbuildings to the rear and substantial gardens to the front. It fulfilled its role as the Conyngham's hunting lodge until after Burton Conyngham's death in 1796. From William Larkin's plan (1809-12), and from an examination of the extant ground plan, we can surmise that the village grew steadily from the primacy of the octagon towards the Church of Ireland to the west and to the north along Abbey Street - eventually terminated by the new Roman Catholic Church. **(Fig.4.3)**

Curiously, the streetscape towards the east - namely towards the port of Drogheda - was the most underdeveloped. Bounded to the west by the rubble-stone demesne walls, the southern tail was laid out as a tree-lined avenue to the mill and river. The addition of another house on its own grounds, set back at a distance from the street, the Glebe House (constructed at the beginning of the nineteenth century *c.*1802) and a small range of labourers' cottages placed perpendicular to Abbey Street on the east side, confounded the prevailing linear pattern of the village plan. Although they date from the early-nineteenth century, these labourers' cottages are not shown on Larkin's plan and like Bernard Scalé, his depiction of the overly homogeneous layout of the village and the accuracy of his survey must be questioned. Larkin's

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[320] *Drogheda Journal or Meath and Louth Advertiser,* 8 October 1796.
[321] *Drogheda Journal or Meath and Louth Advertiser,* 25 June 1796.

contemporaries, the engineers Alexander Nimmo and Richard Brassington, and, also the commissioners of the county Meath survey, were quick to criticise and find topographical errors in his work.[322] These are most evident at Slane in the uniformity of the row houses lining the streets, the somewhat exaggerated development to the east of the village, the exclusion of certain buildings and the loose illustration of elements of the mill complex. Having said that, Larkin's map must be considered just as relevant as Scalé's in our analysis of the village layout before the Ordnance Survey of 1837. The map confirms the extent of development since 1763 and the addition of significant buildings and features such as a new gate-lodge for the demesne at the edge of the village, a small terrace of houses on Mill Hill for the mill-hands, a church for the Catholic congregation, a new steeple for the Church of Ireland and a central drinking fountain on the octagon.

Between 1768 and 1775 a series of repairs and new works were overseen at the church by David Jebb (then church warden) and the rector, the antiquary Mervyn Archdall, who maintained his role at Slane until his death in 1791. Then a simple rectangle in plan, the building held a small porch at the west gable and was lit by high level *demi-lune* windows on the north and south sides. An entrance lobby and a vestry room 'according to a plan approved of by Mr Jebb', replaced the old porch and the grounds were enclosed with a new boundary wall and entrance gate framed by piers to the street.[323] Here, the architecture becomes more refined, reflecting the work of skilled craftsmen supported by a more prosperous community to that of earlier decades. Stone was quarried from Ardbraccan for the new building work, which was planned to include the construction of a schoolhouse enclosed by a section of the churchyard.[324] This proposal had emerged as early as 1768 but was never realised, and while no educational centres were built at Slane until 1812, two

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[322] Arnold Horner, *Mapping Meath in the early nineteenth century*, Bray, county Wicklow, 2007, 54.
[323] *CIVM*, Vol. I, April 1773, and accounts in the minutes from 1768-1775.
[324] *CIVM*, Vol. I, accounts for the year 1775.

small schools were recorded at Slane, typically held in private accommodation at the village and supported by the Conynghams.[325] In 1784 the old belfry of the church was deemed ruinous and removed, together with the roof, and the materials were sold off for £7. A new roof was paid for with a combination of cess levied on parishioners, and donations made by the Conynghams and local businessmen.[326]

The appearance of Francis Johnston at Townley Hall in 1794-5 and at Slane Castle the following year, triggered a further bout of renovations at the church, the most significant of these being the erection of a new square bell-tower and steeple, completed in 1797. **(Fig.4.17)** Johnston's steeple, with its mix of uncoursed limestone and finely dressed ashlar masonry details crowned with pinnacles, counterbalances the monolithic nature of the main body of the church. Technically the construction of the tower was not entirely successful and records show that repairs were required as early as 1804.[327] A local landowner by the name of Thomas Wilkins, who was unimpressed with Johnston's work, presented the sum of £100 to the acting rector, Reverend Turner, towards the removal of the new steeple and its rebuilding at the west end of the church. Mulled over by the vestry the proposal was eventually rejected, and the restoration was completed with the donation of a church bell by Burton Conyngham's successor and nephew, Henry III - the first marquis of the Conyngham family.[328] In fact Johnston remained in the employment of the marquis after Burton Conyngham's death and in 1805 he draughted plans for a new window on the eastern facade (dedicated to the marquis) and a gallery to the north end to accommodate the marquis and his family.[329] These amendments were carried out a few years later, followed by further alterations in 1830 with the addition of the south transept and a vaulted ceiling fixed to the truss-ends and finished with a plaster

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[325] *CIVM*, Vol. I, April 1768.
[326] *CIVM*, Vol. I, accounts for 1783-5.
[327] *CIVM*, Vol. II, September 1804, 49.
[328] *CIVM*, Vol. II, April 1806, 65; August 1806, 66.
[329] *CIVM*, Vol. II, June 1805, 57.

cornice. At the end of the nineteenth century, the final touches were made internally by local builders from county Louth, P.J. Dodd and Stephen Henly, who formed a new chancel, raised timber platforms for seating and installed communion rails and a reading stand.[330] The twentieth century saw the external adhesions of medieval fragments, rescued from the demolition of St. Collan's at Stackallen, county Meath.

A few years after Johnston's arrival in Slane, the Catholic 'chapple' observed on Scalé's survey of 1763, 'fell suddenly ... and mass was, in the interim, celebrated in a barn attached to the hotel of Slane'.[331] This situation was rectified by the construction of Mount Charles Chapel, built between 1798 and 1802, on land granted by the marquis on the east side of Abbey Street (renamed thereafter Chapel Street). Located at the edge of the village and typically set back at a distance from the street, the cruciform building is an eccentric addition to the architectural landscape of the village. Its imposing tripartite elevational treatment evokes the Greek vernacular, rather than the Greek Revival style which ecclesiastical architecture embraced in Ireland from 1815 onwards, and a stone-clad free-standing belfry, purportedly the first erected in the diocese since the Reformation, its type likened to an early Celtic Revival round-tower.[332] **(Fig.4.18)** Kevin Whelan notes that where a landlord was hostile towards the Catholic community, the chapel was pushed accordingly to the peripheries of the estate or to a back street location in the town. He does concede that some improving landlords erected chapels as part of their development programme, listing De Vere Hunt at New Birmingham (county Tipperary), Lord Palmerstown at Cliffony (county Sligo) and Lord Stewart de Decies at Toor (county Waterford) as examples.[333] Despite locating the new chapel at the edge of the village at Slane, the Conynghams might be added to the aforementioned list, their actions in

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[330] P.J. Dodd, 'Slane Parish Church: re-opening after improvements', *Irish Builder*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 745, 1891, 12.
[331] Account by Meath historian Fr. Anthony Cogan in Olive Curran, *The history of the diocese of Meath*, Mullingar, 1995, Vol. II, 831.
[332] Casey, Christine & Alistair Rowan, *The Buildings of Ireland: North Leinster*, London, 1993, 475.
[333] Kevin Whelan, 'Parish Chapel Village' *Irish Geography* Volume 16, 1983, 1-15.

building a new place of worship were seen not only as an open-minded response to the requirements of the parish, but also as an acknowledgement to its instigator, Reverend Michael O'Hanlon, who had saved the young Henry III from a military tribunal in France while in service there.

By the end of the century the population of Slane had risen from the mid eighteenth-century figure of 660 to 896.[334] The marquis had endorsed a postal service, serving the village three times weekly. The Conynghams also supported a soup kitchen for the needy, and as previously mentioned there were some efforts made to educate the younger residents. Documentary sources from this period illustrate the classic characteristics of a country village replete with commercial elements such as bakeries, butchers, blacksmiths, and a dispensary - supported by the Conynghams and located in one of the pavilions on the square.[335] But the documents also reveal a certain disquiet among the tenants, not unlike the anxiety experienced at the beginning of the century while Henry I's widow, Lady Shelburne, was at the helm of the estate with the assistance of her brother-in-law William Conolly. Again, their main concern appears to have been the lack of new housing or funding towards the improvement of their own properties. In 1799 a small terrace of six two-storey stone-clad houses (Miller's Row) was built on Mill Hill, overlooking the river and adjacent to Slane Mill, to accommodate some of the mill workers. A benevolent gesture but slight, and perhaps a little tardy, in comparison to the ample accommodation planned for employees at Stratford-on Slaney, Portlaw and Bessbrook. This addition was seen as inadequate by the tenants and William Deane, the Conyngham's long-suffering agent at Slane, was plagued with requests for additional housing on the estate or improvements to their own, while the marquis preferred to spend his days in

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[334] Brian Gurrin, 'Navan, Co. Meath in 1766.' *Riocht na Midhe,* Vol. XV, 2004, 96-7.
[335] Slane Mill Letter Book, 1798-1802, Townley Hall papers, NLI, Ms.11,877; Estate accounts & correspondence, Conyngham papers, 1822-4, NLI, Ms. 35,346 (1)&(4).

search of minerals on his late uncle's estate in Donegal and embellishing Slane Castle in preparation for King George's visit in 1821.

A measure of the tenants' anticipation for improvements to their own properties is illustrated in a little sketch bravely presented to John Benbow (the marquis's lawyer) by one John Brown, seeking approval for the building of a new house. Brown, who confessed he was 'not good at drawing' and open to any amendments to his proposal, mentioned he was willing to pay one shilling per foot towards its construction.[336] **(Fig.4.19)** Another proposal, this time for a large scale project at Slane, is revealed in a series of letters between the marquis, his lawyer and the garrulous Capt. William Gethin, a prominent figure at Slane during the early nineteenth century.[337] Gethin's scheme comprised the laying out of two small squares with thirty, two-storey houses which he would let for £3 upwards per year. Willing to invest £200 in the project, Gethin sought financial support from the marquis for the outstanding costs. His business plan included sourcing the building materials from a reliable and inexpensive supplier and a subsequent splitting of the profits with the marquis. In the absence of drawings or plans the exact location at Slane for this proposal is unknown and sadly the idea was rejected by the Conynghams, as were Gethin's suggestions for the reinstatement of a linen or cotton industry which he anticipated would make Slane 'the handsomest village in Ireland as it was in the time of the Col. Cunningham'.[338]

By the end of the 1770s Henry II had departed, thrusting Slane into the hands of his beloved nephew who was, perhaps, the driving force behind the ultimate desire to

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[336] Correspondence of John Benbow and Marquis Conyngham, 1824, Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms 35,346 (1).
[337] Correspondence of John Benbow and Marquis Conyngham, 1824, Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms 35,346(1). Gethin, who leased one of the Fishers' properties, seemed to have a hand in numerous small-scale business ventures at Slane, and he appears frequently in the accounts of Slane Mill. In 1824, he attempted to promote himself as land agent for the Conynghams in place of William Deane, but was never instated and disappears from correspondence with John Benbow soon after.
[338] Capt. William Gethin to Marquis Conyngham, 1824, Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms 35,346(1).

carry out improvements. Proudfoot has noted that there was an eagerness 'to invest in encoding aesthetic values in the townscape to a point beyond that justified by mere economic considerations'.[339] Burton Conyngham clearly possessed the right virtues, both in terms of economic acumen and aesthetic reasoning, to see his uncle's personal ambitions through. At Slane, a thriving enterprise in the shape of the new flour mill had been established and the Conynghams, who were not simply capitalists, had set about improving their estate village (and to some extent tenant conditions), sending out a powerful message to their contemporaries about their status in society. Slane did not just function at a utilitarian level but was fashioned with a significant level of sophistication for its scale. If the village was fully functional at both a social and practical level, then in the context of the industrialisation of provincial settlements, was Slane an early industrial village? It was certainly improved in order to complement the new flourmill, just as the new linen villages were built to sustain their adjacent industries. However, it is important to recognise that Slane was not a typical industrial village when compared to the highly ambitious, model industrial villages created by the Quakers and others, such as Portlaw in county Waterford, Bessbrook in county Armagh and the fiasco that was Prosperous in county Kildare, where hundreds of houses were planned and built to accommodate workers on a grand scale. This was in stark contrast to the highly progressive enterprise established at Slane Mill, where only ten or twelve mill hands were employed at one time, even at its peak. During the eighteenth century, these workers may have lived at the village or in the vicinity, and then later at Miller's Row. The opulent residences at the square in Slane were certainly not planned for them, but rather for the well-heeled tenants of the Conyngham estate.

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[339] Lindsay Proudfoot, *Urban patronage and social authority: The management of the Duke of Devonshire's towns in Ireland, 1764-1891*, Washington, 1995, 241.

What defined Slane then, if not a typical model industrial village? Slane was an imperfect settlement (with a poor history in terms of improvement) remodelled by its owner who, in this case, had created an exotic. Slane had all the charm and characteristics necessary to evoke the language of a typical estate village, but in essence it was a hybrid of a refined residential square imposed on an ancient market place, unlike other analogous spaces in provincial Ireland, where important civic and ecclesiastical buildings vied for attention in the same sphere. Henry II could leave Ireland content; he had rescued, and begun to nurture, his father's estates in Meath and Donegal, and above all else, he obtained a peerage for the Conyngham family. Burton Conyngham was left with the task of maintaining stability on the estates and the renovation of the largely unaltered Conyngham family seat at Slane to his own liking - as we shall see in the final chapter of this work.[340] The establishment of the mill of Slane and the emergence of the village plan have been addressed. The third aspect of the economic development of Slane was the navigation of the river Boyne, which saw the arrival of the architect and engineer, Davis Ducart, and some of his contemporaries at the new canal. An assessment of their tendering process and the respective schemes for the new navigation will be examined in the following chapter.

[340] The view of Slane Castle, c. 1773, by Thomas Roberts in Chapter One (Fig.1:14) of this work illustrates the castle's state, which was more or less as it was when inherited by Henry II from his brother Williams in 1738. The earliest known proposals made for Burton Conyngham for an overhaul of the building were by a Mr. Robinson and subsequently by James Wyatt through his agent, Thomas Penrose, in 1773-5.

Chapter Five

'Perseverando Superandum'[341]: Davis Ducart & developments on the Boyne Navigation near Slane.

Canal development • Early works on the Boyne • Thomas Omer and the Boyne navigation • Davis Ducart & his previous work • Tendering for commissions at Slane • Ducart retreats to county Tyrone • Final works to the Lower Boyne under David Jebb •

The birth of the canal age played a vital part in Slane's economic development and determined the success of the Slane Mill Company established by Burton Conyngham and his associates on the banks of the Boyne in 1763. Using recent evidence gathered from archives in Dublin and Belfast and on-site investigation, new light may be shed on the development of the Boyne navigation, in particular the section near Slane Mill. This chapter deciphers the tendering process for the commission of the works and discusses the architects and engineers involved, and the consequences arising from their engagement.

Canal development in eighteenth-century Ireland

In addition to a rich source of salmon, the Boyne provided a direct means of transport to the port of Drogheda and consistent waterpower for local mills. The navigation of the river was part of an ambitious scheme of canal development in Ireland, conceived in the early decades of the eighteenth century and marked by the passing of a parliamentary act in 1715, 'To Encourage the Draining and Improving of the Bogs and Unprofitable Low Grounds and for the easing and despatching the Inland carriage and Conveyance of Goods from one part to another within this Kingdom'.[342] An elaborate plan comprised eighteen individual schemes, including the navigation of

[341] Motto of the River Boyne Company, Minute Book of Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1770-90, NLI, Ms. 7352.
[342] 2 Geo I, c.12 (Ir), 1715; *JH of C*, 1715, Vol. III, Part I, 64. See also Delany, *Waterways*, 10-11.

the Liffey, Shannon, Nore, Barrow and Boyne rivers. After the failure of the first major project (the navigation of the river Liffey) due to engineering complications and inadequate funding, the parliament feared the results would discourage further private investment and passed another act in 1729 whereby commissioners for inland navigation were established for each of the four provinces and funding of public works was then subsidised by duties on luxury goods.[343] Twenty years later the four provincial boards were amalgamated into a single navigation board. Both Delany and McParland have pointed out that despite the enthusiasm expressed by the schemes and the setting aside of ample sums of money for improvements, very little was accomplished before 1755, other than the troublesome Newry Canal and Tyrone Navigation.[344] Contemporary commentators deplored the inevitable misappropriation of funds by the 'undertakers' (commissioners), as they were then known, but it was the incompetence and lack of efficiency among the pompous engineering fraternity in eighteenth-century Ireland that led to the decline and the failure of many of the navigation schemes.

How did the Boyne Navigation fit into this master plan? Not only was the main goal of the navigation to provide water carriage from Navan town to the port of Drogheda and beyond, but it was also envisaged as part of a grander unrealised project: the connection of Ireland's major rivers. A survey of the central plains shows the Grand Canal linking Dublin directly to Tullamore and from there to the Shannon. This main artery would accommodate secondary canals traversing the Bog of Allen to connect to rivers such as the Barrow and the Boyne.[345] **(Fig.5.1)** Sources for developments on the Boyne are quite rich. A copy of an early scheme for a navigation of the river from 1710 is in the National Library of Ireland, along with the minute book from 1770 to 1790 of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners. Fortunately the library also holds

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[343] Delany, *Waterways*, 217.
[344] Ibid, 13; McParland, *Public Architecture*, 25.
[345] Delany, *Waterways*, 14. This scheme was planned before the Royal Canal was projected.

maps, sketches and surveys of the Boyne from 1750 to 1770, providing a significant level of information relating to the positioning of locks and weirs. Details of the river are often included in the estate maps of county Meath. An examination of the Coddington papers at PRONI has unearthed the proceedings, accounts and orders of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners from 1746 to 1779, which reveals new material on engineers and their work at Slane, in particular Davis Ducart who ranked among the most distinguished architects in Ireland at that time.[346] None of the drawings or plans formerly attached to the commissioners' proceedings survive among the Coddington papers, but detailed estimates and a bill of quantities produced by Ducart and others provide adequate technical facts to describe events at Slane. Published accounts of the navigation's history such as Cyril Ellison's *The waters of the Boyne and Blackwater* and Ruth Delany's *Ireland's Inland Waterways* which outlined the first scheme in 1748 and late eighteenth-century developments on the Boyne, may now be expanded and revised with details from the Coddington papers and contemporary maps in the National Library of Ireland.

Early works towards the navigation of the river Boyne, 1748- *c.*1759

On the 30th September 1703, the Irish House of Commons ordered the formation of a committee to prepare a bill for making the Boyne navigable and to report back to the House.[347] Little was achieved at that point, but a plea was made for a navigation on the Boyne in 1710 by Markes Plunkett, an armchair engineer, describing himself as 'Cleark and Convert'. Plunkett claimed that 'Meath could become, by means of this navigation traffic, as rich and prosperous as the Indies with trade and employment booming'. The Boyne was a perfect candidate 'for the carrying of very large flat-

[346] The Coddington estate was at Oldbridge, surrounded on three sides by the river Boyne, and where Dixie Coddington built Oldbridge House circa 1750. With his brother Henry Coddington, he sat as a member of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners during the principal works to the Lower Boyne. Ducart mentions his work on the Boyne in his will (NLI, G.O. Ms 424, 237-8), but until now his input at Slane has not been examined.
[347] *JH of C*, 1703, Vol. II, Part I, 325.

bottomed boats all along from Drogheda to Navan' and the river had the convenience of 'rocks just hanging over the water ready at hand for the workmen to make walls for the enclosures of the river, and the shallow waters may be made deep'.[348] Draft boats used the obligatory 'King's Gap' (a break in a weir for the passage of vessels) to negotiate a number of fishing weirs constructed by the Cistercians on the river. Plunkett's scheme for the Boyne is often sketchy and abounds with pious comments and citations, but it is a valuable source of early eighteenth-century vignettes of the villages and riparian properties along the Boyne. Outlining the different stretches of the river Plunkett recommends how each landowner might promote the navigation on their respective stretch and advises the owners of fisheries and mills on methods of conserving fish stocks. A future connection to the north and the west was also envisaged, linking the Boyne to Lough Erne and the River Shannon. Predicting what might have happened at Conyngham Hall had Henry I lived to enjoy the fruits of canal transport, Plunkett states enthusiastically in one of his many cameos that:

> The Lord Rochford and the Lord of Stackallen may be pleased to join the young Lord of Louth, and show his Lordship the way to improve the country at Carrickdexter, and will be welcomed by young Mr Conyngham at Slane, whose father (if he had but a few longer days to live) did not doubt but to have his coals, his wine, his candles and all other necessaries all along from Drogheda by boat to the very Castle of Slane at his own charge and cost.[349]

Eventually in 1746, a reputable engineer, Thomas Steers, was brought in by the Leinster commissioners to survey and plan a navigation of the Boyne.[350] Works on the river generated a whole host of engineers. Steers' arrival in the mid-century was reasonably effective, producing the first professional draft for a scheme for the river.

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[348] Markes Plunkett, 'A Scheam of the navigation of the Noble River Boyne', 1710, NLI, Ms. 500.
[349] Ibid.
[350] Boyne Navigation Accounts, 1746 - 1779, Coddington papers, PRONI, T/2519/12/11.

Forty years later Richard Evans appeared at Slane to rescue the Boyne from deterioration, the interim engineers often proving to be an unwieldy lot whose arrogance often impeded progress.[351] Steers, who was born in Holland, was best known for his work at the Liverpool docks and as architect of the first St. George's Church, built in 1734 on the site of the earlier Liverpool Castle. In 1738 he was engaged as a consultant by the highly industrious Hugh Boyd at Ballycastle harbour in county Antrim, where he advised Boyd to construct a harbour using a framework of timber piles connected by iron straps and packed with stone rubble. The pier was not entirely successful and was rebuilt in stonework and extended ten years later. The Newry Canal, the first modern summit canal in the British Isles, possibly Steers' greatest achievement in Ireland, was completed between 1736-1741.[352] His work on the Boyne started in 1748 with the assistance of a younger engineer called John Lowe and a local engineer from Slane, Francis Leigh.[353] Markes Plunkett had enthused about the ample supplies of rock, gravel and clay for the construction of canal walls and embankments and anticipated the navigation as being a relatively simple task. The elderly Steers was not as confident, declaring that the Boyne was 'the most difficult river he ever saw to make navigable'.[354]

The river from Drogheda to Navan was spilt into two sections, namely the Upper and Lower Boyne, with Carrickdexter below Slane Castle acting as the divisor. **(Fig.5.2)** In 1748 a survey was carried out by Steers, which shows the 'intended navigation' of the river Boyne from Drogheda to Navan and a canal extension as far as Trim.[355] Steers had planned a total of nineteen locks between Drogheda and Trim, the first

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[351] See Appendix D.
[352] Mike Clarke, 'Steers, Thomas', in A.W. Skempton (ed.), *A biographical dictionary of civil engineers in Great Britain and Ireland, 1500-1830*, London, 2002, 651-5.
[353] Orders, and warrants of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1746 - 1779, Coddington papers, PRONI, T/2519/12/11.
[354] Ibid.
[355] Manuscript map, 'Mr. Thomas Steers Map of the River Boyne coppyed in the year 1754 by order of the corporation for promoting and carrying on an inland navigation in Ireland, by John McDowell', NLI, 16.M.7.

lock at the west side of Oldbridge. There were only four locks (A, B, C, and D) and three stretches of canal (marked as 'cutts' on the survey) intended for the Lower Boyne, between Drogheda and Carrickdexter, all on the south side of the river. **(Fig.5.3)** Of interest is the trajectory above and below Slane Bridge, which was 420 perches long - almost one and half miles - and designed as a straight run of canal from Fennor Mill to the sweeping bend in the river under Slane Castle. **(Fig.5.4)** At that point Henry II was squire of Slane but was struggling with family feuds and debts, with little or no funds for immediate improvements at the demesne and no plans for restoring the old stamps mill on the Boyne. Nevertheless, the prospective easy transport of fuel, commodities and, perhaps, building materials for future building work, could not be ignored and the Conyngham seat was significant enough to warrant projecting the new canal to their doorstep.

Included in Steers' scheme were 'wires and winches' denoted in lower case lettering on the survey. **(Fig.5.3)** Delany describes a weir as a low wall built across a river, which holds the water in the stretch above it at a constant level and lets the surplus water flow over the top. Weirs are generally used for fishing, diverting water into the mill races and improving navigation by raising the level of water over areas too shallow to navigate.[356] It is not clear what use Steers had intended for the winches; either they were provided to open a gate in the weir (for example a floodgate) or they were used to haul craft through difficult stretches on the canal, as used on the navigation of the river Thames in England. Steers' plan was put into effect - but not strictly adhered to - and was adapted and developed further. The original four locks between Drogheda and Carrickdexter (A, B, C, and D) became ten, and the three tracts of canal became four, with one of the tracts on the north side of the Boyne. The

[356] Delany, *Waterways*, 9.

works to the Lower Boyne were the first to be executed. A sum of £2000 was put towards the development and it began in 1748.[357]

The lock at Oldbridge was completed just before Steers' death in November 1750, a fitting reminder of his past where he had fought under William at the Battle of the Boyne. Steers had continued to fight in subsequent campaigns against the French in the Low Countries where he may have had an opportunity to study developments in canal engineering. Contrary to Steers' original plan, two locks were constructed at Oldbridge. The first lock was a guard lock, positioned on the east side of the peninsula of the Coddington demesne.[358] Numerous underground springs in the area resulted in a problematical construction and it was eventually rebuilt many years later. A further lock was built on the west side of the peninsula. **(Fig.5.5)** After Steers' death his assistants' work was hindered by discussions with riparian landowners along the river who imagined the navigation was purely for their benefit.[359] For the following ten years excavations continued slowly upstream where they cut the proposed section at Stalleen, below Netterville's estate at Dowth, and a new and controversial canal on the north side at Broe, below Newgrange. The location for the north side tract was chosen in preference to the southern rocky terrain, which would be too expensive to excavate. Scalé's map of the Caldwell estate from 1766 shows that two tracts were cut at Broe, one for the main navigation and one for a mill race to feed water supply to Broe mill. **(Fig.5.6)** The lack of bridges between Stalleen and Broe forced the tow horses to transfer to barges (by means of 'horse jumps' or

[357] Orders, and warrants of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1746 - 1779, Coddington papers, PRONI, T/2519/12/11.
[358] A guard lock is a lock situated between an inclosed basin or canal and the tide water of a harbour or a river when they are on different levels, so that craft can pass either way at all times of the tide. They are also known as tide or tidal locks.
[359] Ellison gives a detailed account of the various disputes between the commissioners and landowners. Ellison, *Boyne and Blackwater*, Dublin 1983, 12-17.

floating platforms), which were then poled across the river, a treacherous operation during floods.[360]

Thomas Omer and his work on the Boyne navigation, *c.*1759-1765

In 1755 Thomas Omer a Dutch engineer was invited to Ireland, from England, by the Commissioners for Inland Navigation. He quickly gained positions in the north of Ireland, surfacing at Slane around 1759. Omer (whose work is described by Delany as often showing 'a lack of understanding of the problems of river navigations') was an overly ambitious engineer, frequently leaving his engineering works unfinished, which were infamous for their lack of progress and high costs.[361] Despite being examined before a House of Commons Parliamentary Committee in 1761 and inspiring numerous contemporary criticisms, Omer (along with his aide Ockenden), was employed by the commissioners on most major inland navigations schemes until his death in 1770, highlighting the dearth of quality among canal engineers in Ireland after Steers' death.[362] By the time he arrived at the Boyne, a body made up of about twenty local gentlemen called the Boyne Navigation Commissioners had been founded, to oversee the work of 'making the Boyne navigable and commodious for the passage of boats, barges, lighters and other vessels.'[363] In addition to the three partners at Slane Mill, board members included Sir Thomas Taylor, Gustavus Lambert, James Fortescue, Dixie Coddington and Steers' assistant Francis Leigh.[364] The members advocated such things as the planting of trees along the Boyne, the maintenance of the towpaths on the new canal, and allocated jobs to local

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[360] Delany, *Waterways,* 41.
[361] Ibid, 41.
[362] Ron Cox, 'Omer, Thomas' in A.W. Skempton (ed.), *A biographical dictionary of civil engineers in Great Britain and Ireland, 1500-1830*, London, 2002, 493-4. Omer was chief engineer on the Lagan, Shannon, Nore and Barrow Navigations, the Grand Canal in Dublin and the Newry Ship Canal. He was lampooned in the *Freeman's Journal* of 31 May - 2nd June 1770. Ockenden arrived in Ireland in 1756. He worked on the Limerick to Killaloe line with Edward Uzuld, builder of the Lock Mills in Limerick City, and later on the Blackwater and Nore navigations.
[363] Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1756, NLI, D. 14,917.
[364] Orders, and warrants of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1746 - 1779, Coddington papers, PRONI, T/2519/12/11.

Protestants - the 'Papists' proving to be too insolent and unruly.[365] Between 1756 and 1771 government grants amounting to circa £43,000 were assigned to the development of the navigation from Drogheda to Trim, but, as it turned out, most of this money was spent on the Lower Boyne to facilitate the mills and riverine properties along that stretch.[366]

Before Omer's arrival *c.* 1759, six locks had been constructed: Oldbridge upper and lower, Stalleen upper and lower and Broe upper and lower - all on the Lower Boyne.[367] **(Fig.5.7)** Landowners on the Upper Boyne became increasingly nervous and insisted works should commence above Carrickdexter as soon as Omer was engaged as overseer. His role meant supervising any remaining works downstream, in particular between Rosnaree and Slane Castle, and excavating the navigation upstream between Slane Castle, Carrickdexter and Stackallen. During the same period he was employed by the Drogheda Harbour Commissioners to carry out improvements to the harbour.[368] Omer began upstream, avoiding the southern banks due to the high rock formation at Beauparc and devised a convoluted scheme for the three miles between the existing weir below Slane Castle and Stackallen, comprising short lateral canals, separated from the river by narrow walls and poorly constructed locks which were eventually to become unsafe to water traffic.[369] In 1763 the *Gentleman's Magazine* reported the navigation downstream to be in use between Drogheda and Rosnaree, where a forty-ton vessel laden with coal from Tyrone arrived in August of that year.[370] Two years later a petition was made to the

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[365] Resolutions of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1766 - 1779, Coddington papers, PRONI, T/2519/12/11.
[366] Ellison, *Boyne and Blackwater*, 13.
[367] These locks were also known locally by their adjoining landmarks or demesnes, i.e. Knowth, Newcomen's, but their official names as applied by the Boyne Navigation Commissioners are used here.
[368] Ron Cox, 'Omer, Thomas' in A.W. Skempton (ed.), *A biographical dictionary of civil engineers in Great Britain and Ireland, 1500-1830*, London, 2002, 493-4.
[369] Delany, *Waterways*, Belfast 2004, 41, 43.
[370] *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 22 August 1763, also quoted in Ellison, Boyne and Blackwater, 14. The new canal was open as far as the Rosnaree area although the double lock at Rosnaree was not yet built. The lighter from Tyrone would have come through Broe as the last lock before docking on the river upstream at Rosnaree.

parliament by Jebb, Burton Conyngham and Balfour, requesting an interest free loan of £5,000 for the completion of their flourmill and waterworks at Slane. Despite pressure from the Upper Boyne clique, Jebb, who acted as treasurer for the board, persuaded the members to concentrate their efforts to improve the crucial situation near the new mill, which needed urgent attention in relation to its waterworks. The proposed canal between Rosnaree and Slane Castle, which encompassed the area near the new mill and the bridge of Slane, was as yet undeveloped. Steers' plan to cut one stretch between Rosnaree and Slane Castle on the south side of the Boyne was outdated and left the mill on the north side almost inaccessible. **(Fig.5.4)** To the consternation of local fishermen, Jebb had raised the old weir above Slane bridge by 2 feet in order to create a better head of water in his millpond. The bridge was modified with a new semi-circular archway at the northern end to allow the lighters access to the millpond, which Jebb had formed as a canal for this purpose. Lighters were able to enter the mill travelling downstream from Slane Castle, along the newly elevated weir and under the bridge into the mill. But craft travelling upstream from the Drogheda Port direction were forced to negotiate the obligatory 'King's Gap' in the weir in order to gain access to the millpond, or, endeavour to dock in the rapid waters of the mill's tailrace at the southeast end, both difficult options in times of floods and shallow water in the summer months. **(Fig.5.8)**

At this point Omer, who was tackling the works at Stackallen, was asked by Jebb to prepare preliminary plans and estimates for the execution of the canal between Rosnaree and Slane Castle. Henry II, with the agreement of his nephew Burton Conyngham, had stipulated that no towpath should be allowed through the Conyngham demesne, for fear of disturbances and the discarding of waste, which naturally prevented a trajectory of navigation on the northern side of the river

between Slane bridge and the castle.[371] Omer decided to modify Steers' plan from Rosnaree to the castle weir (as illustrated on his survey) **(Fig.5.4)** by adding a new traverse canal and a guard lock near Slane bridge, where craft could be diverted back across the river above the mill weir and downstream towards the new millpond. He planned a double lock at Rosnaree to cope with water level change along that stretch, and the bridge at Slane would be extended and modified with an additional arch at its southern end to facilitate access for the lighters. **(Fig.5.9)** Francis Leigh and his assistants began to make 'a cutt 20 perches long' (circa 330 feet) at Rosnaree and 'a lodging house and a workshop for carpenters and blacksmiths' above Slane bridge.[372] As soon as the works began Omer disappeared, preoccupied with plans and estimates for bridges over the Grand Canal in Dublin, forcing Jebb who had become somewhat sceptical about the scheme, to seek the advice of Davis Ducart, an engineer engaged as an architect on public commissions in Cork and Limerick. Under pressure from Jebb, the board then ordered a report on the work proceeding on the navigation, and a plan and estimate for its continuation, or a design for an entirely new stretch of navigation between Rosnaree and Slane if appropriate - from both Omer and Ducart.[373]

Omer was jolted by this development and a struggle for control of the works began, prompting another arrival, that of Christopher Myers, to act as arbitrator of their plans.[374] It was Ducart's first encounter with Omer and Myers, who were overseeing a navigation scheme at Coalisland in county Tyrone together. It was also Ducart's first opportunity to prove himself as a proficient canal engineer in Ireland and he was eager to succeed. In order to appreciate this trio of Ducart, Omer and Myers, it is

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[371] Report by Charles Vallancey, Minute Book of Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1770-90, NLI, Ms. 7352.
[372] Orders, and warrants of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1746 - 1779, Coddington papers, PRONI, T/2519/12/11. No cost estimates survive for this scheme.
[373] Resolutions of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1766 - 1779, Coddington papers, PRONI, T/2519/12/11.
[374] Ibid.

worth leaving the scene at Slane briefly to look at their previous and concurrent public commissions and engineering works in the country, in particular Ducart who was to become one of Ireland's prolific architects of the mid-eighteenth century.

Davis Ducart and his work in Ireland before Slane

Speculation about Ducart's exact origins has filled the few articles written on his work and they still remain somewhat of a mystery.[375] Unlike Richard Castle, who came to Ireland from England, possibly through the Vanbrugh circle to work under Edward Lovett Pearce, Ducart arrived free of English ties and his work has been described as 'totally retrogressive' and 'distinctly European'.[376] William Brownlow of Lurgan, when bemoaning the pitiful state of engineers on offer in Ireland to the Earl of Abercorn in 1768, described Ducart as '...the favourite at present...a Piedmontese; his name is Du Carte; he dropped into this kingdom from the clouds, no one knows how or what brought him to it...'[377] Ducart himself maintains that he came from the 'hilly parts adjacent to the Alps...so often visited by the English Nobility and Gentry'[378] and the *Freeman's Journal* of 31 May to 2 June 1770 notes that he was '...a gentleman Adventurer on board a French privateer in the last war and fortunately brought prisoner into the west of this happy island' and he '...employed himself drawing portraits and little Landscapes (being bred a Painter)....' It has also been suggested that Edmund Sexton Pery or Thomas Penrose may have invited him to Ireland, and even that a connection to the Lafranchini family of stuccadores existed but there is no evidence to support those claims.[379] Craig describes Ducart as a provincial figure, who was mainly concerned with private houses beyond the realm of Dublin and with

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[375] Various forms of his name include Dukart, Duckart, Ducarte and Daviso de Arcot - used in his will of 1785. The form Davis Ducart is adhered to here.
[376] McParland, *Public Architecture*, 14, 177; The Knight of Glin, 'A baroque Palladian in Ireland, The architecture of Davis Duckart', *Country Life,* Sept 28, 1967, 735-9; Oct 5, 1967, 799-801.
[377] William Brownlow to Abercorn, 8 August 1768, Abercorn papers, PRONI, D/623/A/38/82.
[378] Report by Davis Ducart on the extension of the Coalisland Canal, published in the *JH of C*, 1767, Vol. VIII, Part I, Appendix, clxxx-clxxxii, and reproduced in W.A. McCutcheon, *The industrial Archaeology of Northern Ireland*, Belfast 1980, 61.
[379] Frederick O' Dwyer, 'Making connections in Georgian Ireland', *BIGS*, Vol. XXXVIII, 1996-7, 6-24.

engineering works in the north.[380] This is an apt description of Ducart although his engineering endeavours in county Meath are now evident from the Coddington papers. His will, proved in March 1786, mentions commissions for diverse private houses in county Cork, and his work as an engineer for the Newry Canal and on the Tyrone and Boyne Navigations.[381] The better-known country houses have been well documented by the Knight of Glin, John Logan and Judith Hill, who also deals with Ducart's town-planning scheme for Newtown Pery and his work at the Custom House in Limerick.[382] W.A. McCutcheon and Ruth Delany have examined his work on the Tyrone Navigation and it is primarily his public commissions and engineering work which will be briefly chronicled here.[383] It is worth differentiating between the Newry canal and Tyrone Navigation as the reference in Ducart's will to his employment on the Newry Canal is deceptive and often misused in accounts of Ducart's work. The Newry Canal commenced in 1731 with the purpose of conveying coal from the Tyrone collieries to Newry and then by sea to Dublin. Thomas Steers completed the early section between Newry and the river Bann in 1742 and a ship canal connecting Newry to the sea was built by Omer between 1759-1769. To date there is no documentary evidence of Ducart's work on this particular canal, i.e. the stretch directly north and south of Newry. The Tyrone Navigation began in 1732 in order to connect Coalisland to the Drumglass collieries and to link Coalisland to the river Blackwater and then eastwards to Lough Neagh. The note in Ducart's will is misleading as it refers to the Newry Canal and Tyrone Navigation as one entity, possibly due to their proximity and their connection in terms of the transportation of coal to Newry. In June and July 1767 Ducart advertised for 'stonecutters, masons,

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[380] Maurice Craig, *The architecture of Ireland, from the earliest times to 1880,* Dublin 1982, 192.
[381] NLI, G.O. Ms.424, 237-8. This will was not proved until 1785, four years after his death and it superseded an earlier will made by Ducart in 1768.
[382] The Knight of Glin, 'A baroque Palladian in Ireland, The architecture of Davis Duckart', *Country Life,* Sept 28, 1967, 735-9; Oct 5, 1967, 799-801; Judith Hill, *The building of Limerick,* Cork 1991, 105-6; Judith Hill, 'Davis Ducart and Christopher Colles: architects associated with the Custom House at Limerick', *IADS,* Vol. II, 1999, 119-145; John Logan, 'The Irish career of Davis Duckart, architect and engineer, 1761-81', *IADS,* Vol. X, 2007, 34-89.
[383] W.A. McCutcheon, *The industrial archaeology of Northern Ireland,* Belfast 1980, 59-65; Delany, *Waterways,* 27-30.

quarrymen, and brick-makers' in *Finn's Leinster Journal* and in the *Cork Evening Post*, for the 'execution of sundry works laid out on the River Boyne and in the county of Tyrone', but the Newry Canal was never mentioned. Ducart was employed on the Tyrone Navigation from 1767 onwards, residing at a property in the vicinity of the works, at Drumreagh Etra.[384] To date there are no buildings in Dublin attributed to Ducart, but there are indications that he may have entered the Royal Exchange competition anonymously.[385]

Ducart's first employment as engineer was in Cork in 1761 where he was commissioned to survey the levels of the River Lee and to draw up plans for the city water supply for Cork Corporation for which he was paid £25.[386] These works were carried out according to his plans by the Cork Pipewater Company at the Lee Road works in Cork City, where the first waterwheel and pumps were mounted in 1768. By 1765 Ducart had established himself as an architect in the Cork area and had obtained two public commissions: a Custom House in Limerick City and a Mayoralty House in Cork City. John Morrison, father of the renowned Richard and William Vitruvius Morrison, had drawn up a scheme for the Mayoralty House in 1764, but an agreement was made between Ducart and the corporation in May 1765 when Ducart presented his plans.[387] Work began later that year. A similar displacement of a local architect and builder occurred at Limerick where a new Custom House was authorised by the commissioners of the revenue. New information contradicts previous theories that Ducart was engaged as the earliest designer of the building. The commissioners' architect Edward Smyth had drawn up plans and elevations for

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[384] NLI, G.O. Ms 424, 237-8.
[385] *Freeman's Journal* 13-16 May 1769.
[386] The Cork waterworks were the only known engineering works Ducart planned in Ireland before his spell on the Boyne although the Hervey Bruce papers suggest he may also have been involved on works to improve the Munster Blackwater Navigation (1755-*c.*65) while in the south. I am grateful to John Logan for this reference.
[387] John Morrison, *An essay on the convenience, strength and beauty, which should be connected in all private and public buildings. With a design for a new Mayoralty House in the city of Cork, The Dublin Magazine,* September 1764.

the Custom House in 1763, which were to be executed by Edward Uzuld (a prominent Limerick builder and engineer as we have seen in chapter three), once the commissioners approved his bid. Uzuld's tender was accepted a year later, but in 1765, Pery unexpectedly offered Uzuld's post to Ducart to act as overseer of the building. Within a few months the commissioners had also been persuaded to adopt a new scheme and budget by Ducart in preference to Smyth's design. This was Ducart's second concurrence with Uzuld, a fellow entrant in a competition for the Assembly Rooms at Limerick. Neither succeeded and the project was ultimately carried out by Reverend William Deane Hoare between 1768 and 1770.[388]

Why was Ducart chosen in preference to Morrison, Smyth and Uzuld? Ducart was highly persuasive and articulate, as is evident from the arguments for a lock-free system on the Tyrone navigation made to the Irish House of Commons, and he was certainly a fashionable architect in Ireland at that time, whose European style lured his clients. There is no visual evidence of Smyth's design at Limerick to date but Ducart's design and consistently low-budget methods would have been very enticing. Morrison claimed his design for Cork possessed 'grandeur and economy' but his proposal was dull and unexceptional, and Ducart's 'curiously Continental building' was clearly more convincing.[389] Ducart usurped the positions of local architects and engineers continuously throughout his career, in particular on the Boyne and on the Tyrone Navigation, where the board in a surprise move selected his plans rather than the scheme Christopher Myers laid before them. Again this was due to his persuasiveness and low budgeting. The impressive standard of workmanship in Ducart's country houses would indicate his insistence on availing of the best craftsmen but they were consistently used as scapegoats to cover any of his

[388] My thanks to John Logan for this information.
[389] John Morrison, *An essay on the convenience, strength and beauty, which should be connected in all private and public buildings. With a design for a new Mayoralty House in the city of Cork, The Dublin Magazine,* September 1764; The Knight of Glin, 'A baroque Palladian in Ireland, The architecture of Davis Duckart', *Country Life,* Sept 28, 1967, 737.

shortcomings.[390] A pattern of neglecting duties and inaccurate financial planning emerged in his public work, from the Mayoralty House in Cork to the Custom House in Limerick, both suffering from lack of supervision. Ducart engaged the young Christopher Colles as site architect on the Limerick project and later proposed that Colles go north with him to assist him with the works at the Tyrone Navigation, but Colles chose to stay in Limerick where he bought an interest in a local quarry and became the Director of Inland Navigation of the Shannon. Colles wrote in 1769 "Dukart and his schemes are quite laid aside."[391] This comment is not unsurprising given the extent of work Ducart carried out concurrently. Like Omer, Ducart had exerted himself in gathering commissions and had obviously exceeded his limit by 1769, paying insufficient attention to some of his public projects.

As Ducart gained status in the south, Omer and Myers combined forces in 1760 while they were engaged as the principal engineers on the Newry Canal. The early section of the canal had begun in 1731 under the supervision of Edward Lovett Pearce, the Surveyor General at that time, with his assistant Richard Castle, until Castle took over the works upon Pearce's untimely death in 1733.[392] Castle had prepared a paper entitled *Essay on Artificial Navigation* in 1730 for the Commissioners of Inland Navigation, outlining proposals for practical canal engineering, drawing from his knowledge of Dutch and French canal construction, in the form of six detailed and illustrated theoretical problems.[393] **(Fig.5.10)** Castle was proving his suitability for a post with the board but the early date of his essay is significant as it preceded the period of canal building in England, which began

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[390] The stuccodor Patrick Osborne was among the craftsmen working at the Mayoralty House in Cork. He must have impressed Ducart who employed him again to carry out the plasterwork at Castletown Cox in county Kilkenny in the 1770s.
[391] Christopher Colles to Billy Colles, 23 December 1769, Colles papers, Newberry Library Chicago, I am very grateful to Tony Hand for permission to consult his transcripts of these manuscripts. William Colles, Christopher's uncle, had written to Ducart in 1761, advertising his marble water-pipes when Ducart was active on the Cork Pipewater scheme.
[392] Delany, *Waterways*, 21.
[393] There is a copy of Castle's essay in NLI, Ms. 2737.

effectively in the second half of the eighteenth century. The majority of contemporary pamphlets published on inland navigation dealt with various acts drawn up by the commissioners of the board, and selected canal works and their progress or lack thereof. [394] Observations on the controversial Tyrone Navigation featured strongly. In 1763 Charles Vallancey wrote *A treatise on inland navigation or the art of making rivers navigable, of making canals in all sorts of soils, and of constructing locks and sluices*, this being the first instructive or technical pamphlet since Castle's unpublished piece.[395] It is very likely that engineers such as Steers, Ducart, Omer and Myers may have referred to this publication in the following years. The next work of this kind that we know of was Rees' *Cyclopaedia* published in England, which reviews skills and knowledge gained by civil engineers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. When Castle indicated that his architectural pursuits were more significant than the Newry canal works, he was discharged by the commissioners and Thomas Steers took over the works in 1736, finally completing the canal in 1741. However, a report by the manager, 'Pastor' Acheson Johnston (whom Delany describes as suspect) showed that the canal, despite being considered a feat of engineering, was imperfect.

Omer took on the development of the canal in 1760 and advanced it seaward by cutting an entirely new ship canal from the town of Newry to Lower Fathom, which would accommodate vessels of up to 120 tons.[396] At this stage Omer employed Christopher Myers, whom he considered 'a very knowing and experienced workman', and with whom he had worked on the river Shannon, to assist him in the supervision of the works, which were finished by 1769.[397] This was their first venture together. Myers had come to Ireland in 1754 from Cumberland and had been working on

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[394] Christine Casey, 'A list of works pertaining to architecture, building and engineering published in Ireland between 1700 and 1780', *BIGS*, Vol. XXXV, 1992-1993, 25-36.
[395] Vallancey was a military engineer, well versed in art of masonry, carpentry and ironwork, who worked alongside Charles Tarrant as a consultant on the Grand Canal in the greater Dublin area.
[396] W.A. McCutcheon, *The industrial archaeology of Northern Ireland*, Belfast 1980, 59-60.
[397] *J H of C*, 1780, Vol. VI, 223-4.

Ballycastle harbour in county Antrim, until 1760, which had been undergoing a series of public works to facilitate the transport by sea of coal from the local colliery. Myers claimed that he had been invited by the Earl of Antrim to rebuild the Castle of Glenarm around the same time.[398] A year before he was summoned to Slane his advice was sought on designs for the Tholsel in Drogheda, where he chose George Darley's designs rather than those of Hamilton Bury.[399] (Bury subsequently became Ducart's assistant engineer, overseeing the works at Slane). Despite taking eleven years to complete, the Newry ship canal was possibly one of Omer's more successful works. Omer and Myers collaborated again on the extension of the Tyrone Navigation, linking the canal at Coalisland with the adjacent collieries at Drumglass.

The tendering process at Slane, 1766- *c.*1768

How did the trio of Ducart, Omer and Myers fare at Slane? The navigation board had requested reports and proposals from Ducart and Omer to be submitted by the end of March 1766, which allowed both engineers less than a month to arrange surveys and estimates. Omer presented his report to the board on the 27th March. He chose to abandon part of the works then under the supervision of his assistant Leigh, who was following Omer's proposed scheme on the south side of the river and erecting the double lock at Rosnaree. Omer claimed that the expense of its completion at £2,930 would exceed the cost of constructing an alternative stretch of canal on the north side of the river beside the new mill at Slane. The greatest difficulties in excavation work had been encountered downstream between Rosnaree and Slane bridge, where a vast expanse of rocky terrain hindered the route of the canal. Following a consultation with the mill owners Omer envisaged a new stretch of navigation on the north side of the river from Knowth to Slane, and from Slane south of the river upstream towards the castle weir. **(Fig.5.11)** The canal would begin at a

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[398] *Freeman's Journal*, 5-7 June 1770.
[399] Christine Casey & Alistair Rowan, *The Buildings of Ireland: North Leinster*, London, 1993, 242.

new lock at Knowth (upstream from Broe), carried for almost two miles as far as Slane mill and from there conveyed under the north end of the mill, through the millpond exiting under Slane bridge and onto the weir, which was at the same level as the millpond. As a tow-path was prohibited on the Conyngham demesne, craft would then travel along the river, flanking the mill weir upstream until diverted through a guard lock and into a south side canal towards the castle weir. The canal circumvented the weir here until it met the river at a good level; without the use of a lock the lighters could navigate their way upstream until Carrickdexter.[400] **(Fig.5.11)** This final stretch incorporated part of both Steers' idea and Omer's earlier plan, but now, Omer's principal argument was based on the concept of the millpond as a canal and its adaptation into his scheme:

> Whereas the proprietors of the Mills of Slane have been at the expense of forming a new weir and a canal sixty feet wide, and of a proper depth at an expense of upwards of two thousand pounds, and likewise will admit part of the canal to pass through their mill. [401]

The estimate for this highly contrived undertaking came to a mere £2,401..2..0, a rather inaccurate figure given the extent of the labour and material costs. Omer was undoubtedly keen to remove Ducart's presence by submitting an elaborate scheme, but his reports and estimates were somewhat inadequately carried out. Ducart tendered his report and proposal to the board a day earlier and delivered a scathing criticism of the state of Omer's current work on the south side of the river, providing a detailed account of how these works might be rectified. He claimed Omer's canal had been constructed 'in a wretched and imperfect manner' with narrow walls and foundations piled into 'soft and spongy soil, which would not withstand the force of

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[400] Resolutions of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1766 - 1779, Coddington papers, PRONI, T/2519/12/11.
[401] Ibid.

water during winter floods'.[402] Ducart came to the conclusion that the original scheme designed by Steers was at fault and like Omer before him bemoaned the difficulties in excavation work on the southern banks between Rosnaree and Slane. He recommended the current works begun by Leigh would require an immense overhaul at great expense. Oblivious to Omer's proposition for the north side of the Boyne, he too opted for a new canal on the north side of the Boyne for which he quoted a slightly higher sum of £2,693.17.1.[403] However, in Ducart's scheme, the new canal would run parallel to the millpond, facilitated by a wall between it and the river, and then maintained along this side of the river until connecting up with a new lock at Knowth downstream. **(Fig.5.12)** No designs or estimates were submitted for the area upstream between the bridge and the castle weir. Ducart, who was clearly not an advocate of a lock system, and perhaps concurring with Castle's thesis that locks were 'at best but necessary evils', insisted no locks were necessary here and maintained the river between the bridge and Slane Castle to be sufficiently benign for craft to navigate between the two points as in the past.[404] He succeeded in convincing Jebb and the majority of the commissioners with what seemed like a relatively straightforward scheme on the north side of the river, free of the travails of burrowing under the new mill. Unlike Omer, his assessments, proposals and estimates were comprehensive and articulate. Ducart continued a trend, begun in Cork and Limerick, for appropriating positions from his contemporaries with superior presentations and attractive budgets and in April 1766 he was appointed chief engineer on the Boyne at a salary of £100 per annum.[405]

The new arrangement did not last very long; by the next meeting of the board Burton Conyngham had demonstrated his doubts as to the validity of Ducart's scheme and

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[402] Resolutions of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1766 - 1779, Coddington papers, PRONI, T/2519/12/11.
[403] Ibid.
[404] Richard Castle, 'Essay on Artificial navigation', 1730, NLI, Ms. 2737.
[405] Resolutions of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1766 - 1779, Coddington papers, PRONI, T/2519/12/11.

had arranged for an inspection of the existing lines and a reassessment of the proposal. Charles Tarrant, a military engineer and a close friend of Burton Conyngham's, was called upon to carry out an inspection of Omer's partially completed canal and to take levels of the river.[406] Tarrant's report indicated he favoured the completion of the original southern line (begun by Omer) with a few modifications and it was suggested that Omer should be given the possibility to defend his former proposals and respond to Ducart's criticism of his scheme.[407] Tarrant also allowed Ducart the opportunity to submit a final tender for a more convincing scheme. A beleaguered Omer returned to Slane to contest Ducart's office and a mêlée for positions began once more.

Laden with grievances, Omer's response was read to the board of commissioners in May 1766:

> ...his [Ducart's] paper seems more designed to throw reflections on my character than to do any service to the publick, which I trust will appear when my answer to his several objections to my plans, estimates and execution are considered: I have had the honour to be employed for thirty years past on many great works of this sort in England and Ireland and have always had the good fortune to please my employers and indeed till now was never so severely, not to say spitefully remarked on.....[408]

He rejected all claims that the works on the Boyne were ineffective and cited the celebrated Duke of Bridgewater's canal in Lancashire (begun in 1759) as a similar type of canal construction. Unsurprisingly, he then went on to criticise Ducart's plan

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[406] Tarrant worked as a draughtsman to the Board of Ordnance of Ireland from 1763-76 and was engaged as a consultant on the Grand Canal, the Shannon and Barrow Navigations. His close ties to William Burton Conyngham and William Colville are examined in more detail in the following chapter.
[407] Resolutions of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1766 - 1779, Coddington papers, PRONI, T/2519/12/11.
[408] Ibid.

for a lateral canal flanking the millpond while withdrawing his own scheme for the northern line, confessing an error of judgement and requested the board to accept a new proposal for the completion of the original southern line.[409] Omer's final proposal to the board was effectively a return to his former scheme on the south side with alterations. These modifications included the removal of part of the canal between the bridge and the castle weir in order to maintain a low tender which ultimately amounted to the modest sum of £2,940.16.9. Ducart, indicating signs of dispassion at this point, supplied the board with a short set of estimates but failed to submit his usual lengthy reports. Persevering with his plan for the northern canal, Ducart altered his former sums slightly to include unforeseen contingencies, bringing the total cost to £2906.18.11, marginally less than Omer's tender for the southern line. In addition to this Ducart included an outlandish sum for the blasting of rock between Rosnaree and Slane and surmised the completion of Omer's plans for the southern line would amount to the grand figure of £8,270..17..6.

Perplexed by Ducart's antics Tarrant introduced Christopher Myers, a second arbitrator, to the equation. His role was to adjudicate and to present a report on both Ducart's and Omer's plans and estimates, and to prepare his own design for the navigation between Rosnaree and Slane if the need arose. In 1766 Myers was still occupied with the supervision of the ship lock at the Coalisland basin on the Tyrone Navigation and had recently been appointed inspector to the Barrack Board in succession to Henry Keene.[410] He was considered a reputable engineer by the board and 'a very knowing and experienced workman'.[411] His association with Omer is clear; perhaps he showed favouritism in his assessment of the schemes but it became all too evident that Ducart's contrived scheme and ridiculous calculations

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[409] Resolutions of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1766 - 1779, Coddington papers, PRONI, T/2519/12/11.
[410] Frederick O' Dwyer, 'Making connections in Georgian Ireland', *BIGS*, Vol. XXXVIII, 1996-1997, 6-24.
[411] Cited by Thomas Omer in *J H of C*, 6 May 1760, Vol. VI, Appendix, ccccxiii.

were spurious - planned merely to distract the commissioners and to maintain his position as chief engineer.

Myers inspected the river level and extant canal works and in order to compare Ducart's northern solution with Omer's southern plan, he simply laid the two plans before the board. Proceeding with the northern line, according to Ducart's plan, would mean the dismantling of the partially built double lock at Rosnaree and the closing of the canal begun on the south side by Omer's men, which Ducart had failed to calculate in his estimates. As Ducart's navigation was intended to run alongside the mill, the tailrace of the mill would need to be conducted through small channels under his proposed canal - a highly complicated undertaking. Myers speculated this would result in a pond of surplus water in floods and may impede the performance of Jebb's waterworks for almost six months of the year and expressed concern that 'this masterly piece of work' (i.e. the new mill) would be 'quite destroyed by it'.[412] On the other hand Myers paid tribute to Omer's work and he went on to suggest that Omer's plan was the most practical under the circumstances. Ducart had castigated Omer for planning extremely deep canal walls for considerable distances, arguing that they would never withstand the lateral force of water. Myers quickly discouraged this hypothesis, giving further examples of the successes of Brindley's work for the Bridgewater at Lancashire, the Royal Canal at Peking in China and Riquet's work on the Languedoc canal under Louis XIV. He concluded with his defence of Omer: 'Why then may not a wall as intended by Mr Omer do the same on the Boyne Navigation, or why should the reputation of one man be established and that of another destroyed by the same practice?'[413]

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[412] Resolutions of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1766 - 1779, Coddington papers, PRONI, T/2519/12/11.
[413] Ibid.

Ultimately, Myers presented a modified version of Omer's southern line as the most appropriate scheme to the board for a more realistic sum of £3298..10..0. A year after the tendering process the commissioners then came to a highly unusual compromise; Omer's amended scheme, as proposed by Myers, was selected as 'the cheapest and most secure' route, but it was to be executed under Ducart's supervision who was reinstated as chief engineer to the navigation.[414] The works would be carried out with the assistance of Hamilton Bury, a local engineer who was a member of the Boyne Navigation board, and who had submitted designs for the Tholsel in Drogheda in 1765.[415] It is not clear what motivated the board to choose Ducart as overseer of Omer's plans. Perhaps Omer's dwindling presence and poorly constructed work upstream on the Upper Boyne had fazed the commissioners or perhaps the friendships Ducart had already gained at Slane played a role in his success. Among his friends Ducart could count William Colville, the agent at Slane Mill and an executor of Ducart's earliest will drafted in 1768, and also James Fortescue, another prominent board member, mentioned in Ducart's will, who was undoubtedly among the 'freemen and merchants' who engaged the engineer to carry out plans and estimates for improvements to Dundalk's harbour in 1767.[416] Fortescue was a professional lawyer and an MP for Dundalk and county Louth, who owned an estate at Grangegeeth situated between Slane and Collon, as well as the demesne at Ravensdale Park.[417] Their friendship eventually brought Ducart to Tyrone, where he had the direction of the collieries from 1768 to 1773.

Myers' amendments to Omer's plans involved the addition of floodgates at the mouth of the millpond to control the water intake and an additional gate at the spit of land to the west of the mill weir, which would work in conjunction with maintaining the level of

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[414] Resolutions of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1766 - 1779, Coddington papers, PRONI, T/2519/12/11.
[415] Christine Casey & Alistair Rowan, *The Buildings of Ireland: North Leinster,* London, 1993, 242.
[416] *JH of C*, 14 Nov 1767, Vol. VIII, 184.
[417] Johnston-Liik, *Irish parliament*, Vol. IV, 212-3.

water along the weir.[418] In times of flooding, surplus water would be routed through the sluice and downstream through the flood arches at the southern end of the bridge and then onto the flood plains. A contemporary map commissioned from Samuel Bowie by Jebb in 1771 depicts the final scheme for the area between Slane bridge and the castle weir.[419] **(Fig.5.13)** The lighters travelled upstream from Rosnaree on the south side navigation until above the bridge where the guard lock facilitated the passing of craft from the level of the canal onto the higher level of the river. From there they could either travel back downstream along the weir and into Jebb's millpond to load and unload goods or the craft could travel on the river upstream, where, as Ducart had pointed out it was safe enough to navigate without the use of a canal. **(Fig.5.15)** In order to avoid the castle weir a short tract of canal was accessed on the southern bank and from there the lighters met the river again and travelled upstream towards Carrickdexter. The map's inaccuracies lie mainly in this latter trajectory, which was eventually constructed by Jebb with a guard lock due to problematic levels, and although the floodgates **(Legend:*8*)** at the mill weir are depicted on Bowie's survey their construction was delayed for almost ten years.

Omer retreated from the scene at Slane to complete his tenure on other navigation schemes, such as the Shannon, the Lagan and the Barrow, before his death in 1770. Myers returned to Dublin to take up his career as inspector to the Barrack Board and was appointed architect to Trinity College in 1775. From the Coddington manuscripts it is clear that although Ducart advertised in the summer of 1767 for 'stonecutters, masons, quarrymen, and brick-makers' for the works at Slane, it was Hamilton Bury who supervised the construction while Ducart was engaged at the Dundalk docks and on the Tyrone canal. The works were still in progress in 1769 when Jebb, who

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[418] See also glossary of terms.

[419] Bowie drafted sea and river charts in the Meath and Louth area, including 'A survey of the river Boyne from Drogheda to the bar (the mouth of the Irish sea) showing the sand banks and different channels with their soundings and high water marks etc.' from 1765, currently held by the Drogheda Port Company.

had been promoted from treasurer to director engineer at that point, wrote to him to inform of him developments.[420] Earlier locks downstream were formed in traditional rubble fashion with 'the largest rude stones available and the walls of lime and stone in the best manner, with long tie stones not more than eight feet apart'.[421] The guard lock at Slane was built by a trained hand however, with its main chamber in finely hewn Ardbraccan stone, recalling the elegant architectural detail of Jebb's spectacular mill pond.[422] Jebb's presence can be observed too in the adjoining riverbanks, lined with ashlar stone and embellished with chamfered edges and the immense piers erected to house three sets of floodgates at the mill weir. **(Fig.5.16)** The bulk of the proposed works were complete by 1771, when Charles Vallancey, a military engineer from the same tradition as Tarrant, noted that the River Boyne was 'navigable from Carrickdexter above Slane Castle to the lock at Rosnaree'.[423]

Ducart seeks success in county Tyrone

If Ducart's experience at Slane was somewhat bitter, his triumphant ousting of Myers in Tyrone the same year was sweet. When the board rejected Myers' new scheme for Tyrone Navigation, Ducart stepped into the role of chief engineer and overseer of the works - a difficult task requiring expert engineering skills to overcome the 250 feet climb between Coalisland and Drumglass.[424] Omer's original plan had been to replace work carried out by Pastor Johnston in 1732 and extend the ship canal from Newry up to the coalfields at Drumglass, which meant enlarging the width of the canal to provide for ships of up to 100 tons. This rather ambitious plan went ahead under Myers' supervision but once the first large ship-lock at the Coalisland basin was partially completed Myers abandoned it, admitting defeat. He then proposed to

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[420] Resolutions of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1766 - 1779, Coddington papers, PRONI, T/2519/12/11.
[421] Ellison, *Boyne and Blackwater*, Dublin 1983, 13.
[422] See Appendix E.
[423] Report by Charles Vallancey, Minutes of Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1770-90, NLI, Ms. 7352.
[424] W.A. McCutcheon, *The industrial archaeology of Northern Ireland*, Belfast 1980, 61. A facsimile of Ducart's report to the Irish House of Commons is printed here.

construct a more reasonable canal of similar dimension to the original Newry Canal, which would take craft capable of navigating not only the canal, but also Lough Neagh, and making sea voyages during the summer. An aqueduct at Newmills would negotiate the turbulent river Torrent and the cost of this total venture would be considerably less.[425] The parliament sought a second opinion from Ducart and his tub-boat canal using smaller dimensions was adopted. His proposal included a subterranean navigation canal with vent shafts to act as a drain for all the collieries and to communicate with the old navigation.[426] As in Myers' design, an aqueduct would be built over the river Torrent. James Brindley's scheme at the Duke of Bridgewater's Canal in Manchester had a very similar format. In October 1768 an account from the *Freeman's Journal* tells us that Ducart had travelled to England to study Bridgewater's *tour de force* with James Fortescue, a commissioner of the Boyne Navigation, whom he had befriended at Slane. Ducart reported that 'the duke's plan is excellent: I went 40 miles in one day without the least inconvenience, even to Mrs Fortescue who was of the party'.[427] Ducart's plan was partly executed at Coalisland but also proved too costly, and Ducart modified the plan to include the building of three inclined planes or dry hurries, known locally as *wherries*. The idea was to eliminate the use of a stepped lock system to raise or lower boats from one level to another. The tub boats, of smaller scale than the normal canal boats, would be floated onto cradles and then hauled out of the water and up onto the inclines by rollers to reach the next level of water. Ducart, whose tub boat canal and dry inclines were possibly the first of their kind in Europe in the eighteenth century, would have known of the Italian incline erected in 1437 at Lizzafusina or Zafosina, on the river Brenta dam at Fusina near Venice.

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[425] W.A. McCutcheon, *The industrial archaeology of Northern Ireland*, Belfast 1980, 61. McCutcheon gives a highly detailed account of Ducart's scheme at Tyrone.
[426] *Transactions of the institution of Civil Engineers of Ireland*, Vol. VI, 1859-61, 24-6.
[427] Davis Ducart to William Brownlow, 19 October 1768, Abercorn papers, PRONI, D/623/A/38/100. I am very grateful to John Logan for this reference.

A visit from the English engineer William Jessop in 1773, sent north by John Smeaton, who was inspecting the Grand Canal to Shannon line, changed the course of Ducart's plans. Jessop proposed that the inclined planes should be doubled; a loaded boat descending would draw up an empty one, ultimately saved Ducart from discarding his original ideas and abandoning the scheme as Myers did before him.[428] His aqueduct at Newmills was built in 1768 **(Fig.5.17)** and the inclines by 1777, but the work on this part of canal alone had dragged on for ten years costing eventually as much as £26,802, substantially more than Myers' original budget.[429] The navigation between Coalisland and the river Blackwater had not yet been completed so nothing could be done on Ducart's canal other than pass a few boats by way of trial. Ten years later, in 1787, the main navigation was finished but the dry hurries proved unsatisfactory despite Jessop's sensible interventions, and Ducart, who had died two years earlier, never saw his 'whim' in full operation.[430] Arthur Young, who had described Ducart as 'a very ingenious architect' commented in 1773 'Mr Dularte [sic] has not the support which he thinks necessary to do anything effectual'.[431] Was this an unspoken criticism of Ducart's work at Coalisland? Ducart received more money from the Board than originally planned and his experiment had proved frustrating and a failed investment as '...instead of seeing coals come to Dublin, nothing but gold is sent from Dublin...' We have seen Ducart blaming inept craftsman and poor workmanship on badly financed and lengthy projects but a lack of supervision and experience on Ducart's part can be detected here once more.

During the same period as engagement on the Tyrone Navigation and following his work at the Boyne, Ducart's engineering commissions were relatively modest. A small bridge was built for his friend John Staples, to embellish the waterworks in the

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[428] D. Tew, *Canal inclines and lifts,* Gloucester 1984, 5-6.
[429] See 'An elevation of the navigable bridge on the new Tyrone Navigation, designed and executed by Davis Dukart, engineer, in the year 1768, under the inspection of Thomas Penrose', in George Breeze, *Society of artists in Ireland; index of exhibits 1765-80*, Dublin 1985, 21.
[430] Delany, *Waterways*, 30.
[431] Young, *A tour in Ireland,* Vol. II, 91.

grounds of Lissan House near Cookstown and two proposals for a bridge over the River Foyle were sought by Hervey, the Earl-Bishop of Derry, although neither was deployed. A further opportunity to design a navigation arose when the Earl of Abercorn, while improving his estate at Baronscourt in county Derry, requested Ducart to draw up plans and estimates for a canal from the Strabane basin along the River Foyle. An ingenious and imaginative scheme was promised to the earl who was not convinced by Ducart's plans or his fees and the project was abandoned until the latter decades of the century.[432] It is from Abercorn's uncle, William Brownlow, that we have evidence that Ducart was involved with the building of Castletown Cox in county Kilkenny, when he reported that 'Ducart... was on his way to the south of Ireland where he had the direction of a palace built by the Archbishop of Cashel.[433] Following his acquittal for the murder (probably a duel) of a young man in Londonderry in 1776, Ducart settled down to concentrate his efforts at mining at Drumreagh, where he was a shareholder in the Tyrone Mining Company.[434] Among his colleagues in the company were Daniel Mussenden from Belfast and John Staples of Lissan House. Ducart died in 1781 and in his will he mentions James Fortescue, John Townshend and Hervey, Earl-Bishop of Derry as his friends, but no spouse or family members are revealed.[435]

The final stretch of the navigation under Jebb's supervision

Back at Slane with Jebb installed as chief engineer in Ducart's absence, the development was typically concentrated on the Lower Boyne where Jebb controlled efforts in order to perfect the route from Drogheda to Slane upon which 6,000 tons of produce was carried annually. As Markes Plunkett had predicted commodities

[432] Davis Ducart to William Brownlow, 19 October 1768, Abercorn papers, PRONI, D/623/A/38/100.
[433] William Brownlow to Abercorn, 17 September 1768, Abercorn papers, PRONI, D/623/A/38/93.
[434] My thanks to John Logan for this information.
[435] Ducart may have begun his friendship with John (Rocky) Townshend of Castle Townshend while he was employed on diverse public and private commissions in the Cork district in the 1760s. Townshend was MP for Dingle, Castlemartyr and Doneraile and was a staunch supporter of Lord Shannon. See also Johnston-Liik, *Irish parliament*, Vol. VI, 429-30.

conveyed varied from wool, beef, hides, tallow, butter and wine, in addition to the coal and wheat travelling upstream and flour downstream. However his dream for a river 'as rich and prosperous as the Indies' did not materialize and the Boyne produced a paltry revenue of around £400, with little hope for an extension upstream towards Navan or Trim. At a sitting of the board in 1782 it was discovered that Jebb was making arrangements for a new section of canal on the Lower Boyne between the locks at Stalleen Upper and Rosnaree. This meant the entire navigation from Drogheda to Slane would be projected on the south side of Boyne, rendering the locks at Broe redundant but greatly improving access for the lighters. **(Fig.5.18)** A sum of £2,000 was calculated for the new scheme.[436] Clearly aggrieved by this proposal, merchants and landowners from the Navan district sought a report into works above Carrickdexter from the commissioners. A sub-committee was appointed and Tarrant, who led an inspection into the development, declared 'the navigation from Drogheda to Slane Bridge in its present state to be perfectly useful'.[437] He warned if Jebb's bid went ahead, progress with upstream developments would be hindered or at worst abandoned due to lack of funding. The proposed cut was renounced and the commissioners ordered Jebb to improve the completed works at Slane including Myers' proposed flood piers and gates at the mill weir. At this point, Jebb, who had carried out his own report in 1779 on the state of the navigation above Slane bridge, decided to circumvent the castle weir with a small tract of canal and a guard lock. Omer's scheme upstream had been inspected by Vallancey in 1771 who proclaimed it to be 'executed with such bad materials and with so little judgement that most of them are in ruins without having been used'.[438] Jebb's account was equally negative, describing the 'wretched contrivance' at Stackallen which remained closed

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[436] Yet another bid for a southern line to link Stalleen with Rosnaree arose in 1834 when Owen, the engineer for the board of works, ordered a survey of the Lower Boyne and estimated a sum of £6,000 to excavate the proposed tract. The figure was deemed exorbitant and apart from building a new bridge at the Rosnaree double lock and repairing the various lock gates little else was achieved. (See also Fig. 4.19.)

[437] Minute Book of Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1770-90, NLI, Ms. 7352, 47-9.

[438] Report by Charles Vallancey, Minute Book of Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1770-90, NLI, Ms. 7352, 1-2.

for five months of the year during floods.[439] It was obvious an extensive overhaul of the Upper Boyne navigation was essential and by 1790, when the Boyne Commissioners became a corporate body, funding up to £37,500 had been granted for the development of the line from Carrickdexter to Navan.[440] When Jebb retired from the board, Tarrant's former apprentice Richard Evans began works upstream with assistance of Daniel Monks and John Brownrigg.[441] Evans adapted Omer's old scheme on the north side of the Boyne by replacing the ruinous guard lock at Stackallen and rectifying one stretch of canal which had become impassable. Omer had begun a bridge to bring the towing horses across the river but this was removed by Evans, who claimed the piers were obstructing the flow. At Stackallen the canal swung once more back to the south side of the river (resulting in the use of horse jumps) and continued as one single tract from there to Navan.[442] By 1800 the Boyne navigation was open from Drogheda to Navan, serviced by seventeen locks with an additional three locks for the town quays and the proposed extension to Trim.[443]

Between 1748 and 1800 approximately £181,000 was allocated towards the construction of the Boyne navigation between Drogheda and Navan. We have seen most of these funds squandered on the diverse tracts of canal on the Lower Boyne. Developments on the river spawned a plethora of engineers who jostled for rank, while simultaneously bidding for other public commissions elsewhere in the country. Jebb's suspicions regarding the quality of plans and proposals during the pivotal works near his mill at Slane, triggered a bizarre exercise in tendering for positions

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[439] Minute Book of Boyne Navigation Commissioners, 1770-90, NLI, Ms. 7352, 47-9. Jebb's report on the Upper Boyne navigation, commissioned by the board in 1779, is chronicled in detail in Ellison, *Boyne and Blackwater*, Dublin 1983, 19-23.

[440] *JH of C,* 25 Feb 1790, Vol. XII, 189. In 1787 the Inland Navigation Corporation was dissolved and in 1790 the government agreed to the establishment of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners as a company. An undated plan of a timber bridge at Carrickdexter lock, by Robert Wright, is in the Slane Castle drawing collection at Beauparc, county Meath.

[441] Delany, *Waterways*, 42. Evans worked with Tarrant on the Grand Canal but later took up employment on the Royal Canal. Monks spent his last years on the Tyrone Canal and Brownrigg began a long career as a canal engineer, employed at the Shannon, Lagan, Newry and the Royal Canal.

[442] Ibid, 43.

[443] The extension to Trim was ultimately abandoned due to lack of funding.

between two major players in the engineering fraternity. A highly prolific eighteenth-century architect, whose character showed equal measures of ingenuity and foolishness, Davis Ducart's presence at Slane is significant and merits study despite the failure to have his own designs implemented there. We have seen his overthrowing of Morrison, Smyth and Uzuld in Munster using well-crafted, articulate proposals and low-cost estimates. At Slane this approach was not entirely successful. His endeavours to dupe the commissioners for the navigation failed and he was compromised into a position which he abandoned for greater ventures in the north, leaving his assistant to deal with a rival's scheme while pocketing his fee annually. By stepping into the role of chief engineer it was Jebb's work that won out on the Lower Boyne. Unlike the structures executed by the likes of Steers and Omer, Jebb's expertise and his rigorous overseeing of others meant that the locks, piers, floodgates, quays and miscellaneous alterations made to the weir and bridge, were maintained without reconstruction, ultimately paying testament to what was clearly his hand at work in the complex waterworks and mechanisms at Slane Mill. The following chapter deals with Jebb's business partner at Slane Mill, William Burton Conyngham, the Conyngham family's most celebrated member, and the private and public improvements carried out before his death in 1796.

Chapter Six

'The Maecenas of Ireland... blesst with a noble fortune'[444]: The exploits and legacies of William Burton Conyngham

Antiquarian tours • Some proposed works at Slane • A trip to Spain & Portugal • Promoting Ireland's commercial interests • Developments on Rutland Island • Final projects before death • Henry (III) Conyngham inherits the Conyngham estates •

Aspects of Burton Conyngham's life as Wide Street Commissioner, antiquarian, patron of the arts, promoter of Ireland's commercial interests and his reconstruction of the family's seat of Slane Castle, have been examined by Odlum, Trench, Kelly and Harbison.[445] **(Fig.6.1)** In chapter two and three, we glimpsed Burton Conyngham's early career as soldier and politician, his succession as Henry II's chief heir and his industrial enterprises at Slane. In a series of vignettes and discussions, this chapter seeks to complete the picture of the life of the Conynghams' most distinguished family member, using recently gleaned information from archives in Ireland, England, Spain and Australia.[446]

Antiquarian tours in Ireland, *c.* 1776-79

Once industries were established on the Conyngham estate and improvements at the village were in place, Burton Conyngham settled at Slane Castle, the seat of his inheritance. Correspondence between the Conolly family and Burton Conyngham

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[444] George Hardinge, 'Two tours in Ireland, in the years 1792 and 1793', Lough Fea, Shirley papers, and quoted in Trench, *William Burton Conyngham*, 57.

[445] Mark Odlum, 'Slane Castle, Co. Meath', *Country Life*, 17 July 1980, 198-201; 24 July 1980, 278-81; 31 July 1980, 382-5; Trench, *William Burton Conyngham*; Trench, C. E. F. 'William Burton Conyngham, profound scholar and antiquary 1733 - 1796,' *Riocht na Midhe,* Vol. VIII, No.1, 1987, 113-128; James Kelly, 'William Burton Conyngham and the Donegal fisheries', *JRSAI,* Vol.115 1985, 64-85; James Kelly, 'William Burton Conyngham', *DNB*, Vol.13, Oxford, 2004, 80-81; Peter Harbison, *'Our treasure of antiquities'. Beranger and Bigari's antiquarian sketching tour of Connacht in 1779*, Dublin, 2002; Peter Harbison, 'Barralet and Beranger's antiquarian sketching tour through Wicklow and Wexford in the autumn of 1780', *PRIA,* Vol. 104, No. 6, 2004, 131-190.

[446] Due to the nature of the events between c. 1770 and Burton Conyngham's death in 1796, this chapter has been divided into sections that concentrate on subject matter and therefore may not always be strictly chronological.

show that he was already living at the castle by 1771 and when received at Slane in June 1776, Arthur Young commented that Henry II scarcely resided at the demesne but left ample funds for its upkeep which was maintained and improved by his nephew.[447] Throughout this decade a number of artists were received at Slane Castle, among them Thomas Roberts, Gabriel Beranger, Angelo Maria Bigari, Francis Wheatley and Jonathan Fisher. Burton Conyngham liberally devoted part of his private funds towards employing some of these artists to assemble an important collection of drawings of Irish antiquities and monuments, largely based on the format of Paul Sandby's *Virtuosi's Museum* and Francis Grose's *Antiquities of England and Wales.* Burton Conyngham had begun a collection of drawings of antiquities shortly after his Grand Tour of Italy, some of the works dating back to 1744, including one of Clones in county Monaghan and some associated with the work of the Physio-Historical Society such as Anthony Chearnley's views of Ardfinan Castle and Burntcourt in county Tipperary.[448] Many of Burton Conyngham's collection were then copied by the ubiquitous Beranger thirty years later.

This is not the place to trace the results of the antiquarian drawing tours of Connaught and counties Wicklow and Wexford sponsored by Burton Conyngham, which have been examined in great detail by Peter Harbison, but his aptitude as a draughtsman and artist has recently come to light in a series of copies by Beranger of Burton Conyngham's own drawings.[449] Eager to proceed with his 'very laudable plan in rescuing from oblivion the antiquities of this country', Burton Conyngham had occasion in 1776 to travel north to inspect various monuments and carry out some of

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[447] Burton Conyngham to Thomas Conolly, Conolly letters, TCD, Ms. 3984/1746-52; Young, *A tour in Ireland,* Vol. I, 41. At this point Henry II spent most of his time between Paris and London, from where he controlled his Kent estates.

[448] The Chearnley drawings in Burton Conyngham's collection were subsequently copied for Grose's *Antiquities of Ireland* (1791-6): Ardfinan Castle is in volume one, page 67, and Burntcourt is in volume two, page 58. For Anthony Chearnley see William Laffan (ed.), *Miscelanea Structura Curiosa,* Tralee, 2005, 159-60.

[449] I am indebted to Peter Harbison (who discovered the watercolours) for alerting me to the existence of the drawings and for kindly allowing me access to his copies of the Beranger reproductions.

his own sketches before commissioning Beranger and Bigari to begin their own drawing tour of Connacht three years later.[450] From the copies of his drawings it is clear that Burton Conyngham travelled to county Fermanagh and throughout his uncle's estates in Donegal. Beranger and Bigari reached the borders of Fermanagh during their tour in 1779 but there is no evidence to show that they ventured to Donegal on their journey. Of the six Beranger watercolour reproductions, four formed part of the Elizabeth Mossop collection, a large part of which was sold in 1965 to various universities, public institutions and private individuals. Three of these are now in the Ulster Museum: a depiction of Portsory Castle in county Fermanagh, Lough Doon Fort (Dunford) in county Donegal and two cromlechs sketched from two different angles at Killcooney, also in Donegal. The fourth watercolour from the Mossop collection, which is a drawing of Clegland (Killegland) Castle in county Meath, can be found in the Beranger watercolour collections at University College Dublin. The remaining two Beranger drawings are in the Austin Cooper Collection in the National Library of Ireland, one of which is a plan of a burial ground at Rashin in the Barony of Boylagh on the Conynghams' estate in county Donegal. None of the original drawings by Burton Conyngham are known to have survived. It should also be noted that this was not a unique instance where Burton Conyngham's documentation of antiquities and his ability as an artist was perceived, as we shall see later in this chapter.

The watercolours are reproductions but Burton Conyngham's hand is very apparent, and the original style is obviously not that of Beranger. Where the Frenchman is fastidious about his perspective technique, Burton Conyngham's composition is looser - his eye somewhat untrained in the rules of foreshortening - not unlike his friend Austin Cooper, whose work often showed little artistic merit. Despite his drawing technique, Burton Conyngham's buildings are not lacking in detail, indicating

[450] Ledwich to Burton Conyngham, Beranger letters, NLI, Ms 1415, f.115-6.

a deep understanding of their architecture and a familiarity with their setting. Of the six surviving drawings the most architectural (and perhaps least successful in its composition) is a representation of Clegland Castle. **(Fig.6.2)** The ruined castle is depicted in a quiet pastoral scene, where Beranger adds rooks to his typical Irish sky, and cattle and peasants finish the ensemble. The artist was either sketching from a greater height opposite the castle or the vanishing points of the perspective are somewhat inaccurate; it is more likely to be the latter, revealing Burton Conyngham's shortcomings. The success of this genre of studies of ancient monuments relies principally on the relationship of the artist to the object and, equally, the object to the landscape. In the engravings and watercolours of Beranger and Bigari the archaeological objects dominate the page, fulfilling their aim as exact recordings of the buildings or monuments, much as a photograph would do today. Burton Conyngham's arrangement is asymmetrical and more picturesque. This would be logical if the adjoining landscape was of some special interest, but Burton Conyngham has employed a technique which reflects elements of late eighteenth-century landscape painting rather than rigour of the art of topographical exactitude.[451] Despite this, the eye is drawn to the ruins, its architectural features illustrated with attention to detail and a thoroughness that we can imagine from his pen. Comparing his study with that of the Bearcroft's, the latter's composition is tight, the castle fills the picture and landscape plays a secondary role.[452] **(Fig.6.3)** Equally, it may be said that adhering to the rules of exact recording might result in a less successful piece of art. Beranger's own line-and-wash study of Carrick Castle (at Carrickdexter on Burton Conyngham's estate) in county Meath, is a noteworthy example, evoking the startling bleakness of the ruins - almost to the point of blandness - and lacking the charming naivety of Burton Conyngham's pastoral setting. **(Fig.6.4)**

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[451] This arrangement is used again in his other topographical scenes, bar his depiction of the cromlechs at Killeluny, where the monuments drawn in great detail and dominate the piece.
[452] Bearcroft's identity is unknown.

In February of 1779, the year of the Connacht tour, Burton Conyngham founded the ill-fated Hibernian Antiquarian Society, ultimately the forerunner of the Royal Irish Academy, which was established six years later. Among the founding members were men of a similar disposition, namely Edward Ledwich, Col. Charles Vallancey, Charles O'Conor and the rector of Slane, Rev. Mervyn Archdall.[453] The society lasted a mere four years, finally dissolving due to in-house disputes between Vallancey and the truculent Ledwich. But its foundation was to mark a period where the collection of drawings of Irish antiquities (to complement those of Sandby and Grose) was paramount in Burton Conyngham's life. In 1794 his vast collection of antiquarian drawings was described by the *European Magazine* as 'the most valuable extant' but for reasons unknown his dream of publishing them never came to fruition.[454] Fortunately, many of the illustrations were subsequently used for Vallancey's *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis* (1770-84) and Grose's *Antiquities of Ireland* (1791-6), completed and edited by Ledwich - the first volume dedicated to Burton Conyngham, saluting his munificence in the donation of 'his noble collection of drawings for the use of this work'.[455] **(Fig.6.5)**

Gandon, Bigari & Wyatt: thoughts of improvement at Slane, *c.*1773-1785

The early years of the next decade at Slane brought about improvements at the castle and on the demesne. Contact with James Wyatt in London as early as 1773 had triggered the initial plans for a reconfiguration of Slane Castle, through his agent Thomas Penrose, who carried out detailed surveys of the extant building. Wyatt was supplying plans (from abroad) for a number of houses in Ireland at that time including Bishop Henry Maxwell's country house at Ardbraccan near Slane, and it is no surprise that the Conynghams wished to be among the clients of a fashionable

[453] Trench, *William Burton Conyngham*, 43.
[454] *European Magazine*, March 1794, 112.
[455] Francis Grose (ed. Edward Ledwich), *The antiquities of Ireland*, 2 vols, London, 1791-6, preface.

English architect. However, little was achieved in the way of building work until after Henry II's death and it would be another ten years before Wyatt set foot in Slane. He was the first in a lengthy series of architects, landscapers, builders and surveyors commissioned by Burton Conyngham at Slane Castle. These included a Mr. Robinson, John Sutherland, James Gandon, Capability Brown, Thomas Penrose and Francis Johnston.[456] The rebuilding of the castle was highly complex and Burton Conyngham's frustration with the results is revealed in the length of this list. But his choleric disposition was never more evident than in his dealings with Gandon, whom he had rescued from a frosty reception in Dublin in the spring of 1781. Their early differences at Slane were perhaps triggered by Gandon's awkward and rejected sketch designs for Gothic Revival fronts to the castle, made *c.* 1783.[457] Gandon had already made what he called 'several slight sketches designs' at Slane Castle in 1781. Five, unsigned and undated, sketch proposals survive for the castle in the NLI architectural drawing collection: three of the drawings are proposed variations on the south elevations of the building and the other two are sketches (front & side elevations) for a stair-flight arrangement for the southerly slope between the ground floor of the castle and the gardens below.[458] Based on the architect's own remarks and McParland's tentative attribution, there is a general assumption by architectural historians like Odlum, Howley and others that all five of these drawings are Gandon's. Until now this has only been discussed in any detail by McParland, who

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[456] Sutherland and Brown were enlisted to carry out landscaping work on the demesne although Brown also completed proposals for the castle. McParland notes that two possible contenders for Mr. Robinson are: Robert Robinson, the 'late Draughtsman and Executor of the Designs of Lancelot Brown, Esq.' and William Robinson who was employed by Walpole at Strawberry Hill, see Edward McParland, *James Gandon, Vitruvius Hibernicus*, London, 1985, 196, n 39. For a full account of the building works see Mark Odlum, 'Slane Castle, Co. Meath', *Country Life*, 17 July 1980, 198-201; 24 July 1980, 278-81; 31 July 1980, 382-5.

[457] These two original drawings are in the Slane Castle Drawing Collection at Beauparc, county Meath; they are the only two surviving drawings dated by Gandon. See also Edward McParland, *James Gandon, Vitruvius Hibernicus,* London, 1985, *plates 117-118*, 116.

[458] NLI, Architectural Drawing Collection, AD 9-65.

concludes that the latter two drawings have all the plausible markings of a Gandon design.[459]

This section briefly addresses the discrepancies in attribution and argues that while three unsigned proposals for the southern elevation might be Gandon's, the drawings of the stair-flight ensemble may not be. In one of the three variations for the southern end **(Fig.6.6)**, which is based on and constrained by Robinson's proposal made in *c.*1773-5, the architect is concerned with ideas for regulating the symmetry of the facade and the adaptation of a triple stairs encompassing the extant circular tower. There is no reason to believe that this is not Gandon's work. The arrangement is conservative and the statuary is solemn and austere. The wash is applied effectively to cast shadow and the openings are rendered entirely opaque, in typical Gandon style. In the principal sketch for the stair-flight arrangement the ensemble fronts the circular tower of the southern front and leads from the lower range of the castle to meet the river banks below. **(Fig.6.7)** The curved form of the southern tower is repeated at one level below ground floor, punctuated by four *oculi* and a central, salient archway serves as a niche. The architect excels here in a composition of curved stair-flights, connecting to a series of formal terraces adorned with voluptuous statuary and a fountain as a striking centrepiece.

This beautiful and startling scheme is a highly capricious gesture for an architect of Gandon's ilk. How do we attribute these two drawings to Gandon? McParland concludes that certain elements of Gandon's other work are recalled here, there is a discernible Chambers influence and the combination of freehand with measured drawing work (seen in his signed drawings of the Four Courts, the Custom House

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[459] Edward McParland, *James Gandon, Vitruvius Hibernicus*, London, 1985, 117. The two drawings are listed in the NLI, AD, 9-65 and in *The Life of James Gandon*, Appendix 3 as *Slane Castle, Proposed elevation of basement, grottoes etc...* Maurice Craig and the Knight of Glin, compilers of the appendix, have also assumed the sketches were Gandon's from his remarks on the 'several slight sketch designs' made at Slane, Maurice Craig (ed.), James Gandon & T.J. Mulvany, *The Life of James Gandon*, London, 1969, 51-2.

and the House of Lords in Dublin) make him a plausible candidate as draughtsman. However, the drawing technique is not at all typically Gandon, and despite the more extravagant elements of his work in Dublin, the tenets of the baroque and its spectacle do not always sit comfortably with an architect of the austere. In his proposed sections for Coolbanagher church in county Laois, Gandon's distinctive wash is applied with a light stroke and the fine draught lines are skilfully delicate, sometimes to the point of being invisible.[460] **(Fig.6.8)** This drawing style is reflected again in his line and ruled measured drawings (mentioned above), although these executions are obviously more rigorous, fulfilling their technical function. The Slane drawings are dramatic, carried out by a determined draughtsman and displaying a freedom in design not seen in Gandon's hand. This is particularly evident in the voluptuous baroque figures and central fountain. Furthermore, the masonry is hidden and the windows mullions and fanlights are well-defined in a black pen-line over the wash - the latter technique never employed in a Gandon drawing.

If not Gandon then who was responsible? Of the previous attendees at Slane there is one possibility - the artist Angelo Maria Bigari - who was at the castle with Beranger at the outset of their drawing tour in May 1779. Described by Beranger as a 'painter and architect', Bigari came from Bologna to Dublin, where he was employed in 1772 as a screen painter by Thomas Ryder at Smock Alley Theatre.[461] Four years after his drawing tour with Beranger he returned to paint stage scenery once more, designing and constructing sets for various plays in Dublin, including a Temple of Love and Hymen for Giordani's burlesque opera for *Orpheus & Eurydice*. In 1788 the *Dublin Evening Post* reported his work could be viewed in the ceiling of the New Theatre Royal and his figures of Comedy and Tragedy adorn the walls of the middle

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[460] Although these drawings are based on interior sections, in their freehand style they may be used as comparables for the sketches at Slane.
[461] Sir William Wilde, *Memoir of Gabriel Beranger and his labours in the cause of Irish art and antiquities from 1760 to 1780*, Dublin, 1880, 34.

gallery.[462] Bigari's wonderful sense of the theatrical is most evident in a copy of his depiction of the cave of *Leabbie Yearmaid* at Ballinchalla in county Mayo, which evokes the coulisse for *opera seria*, complete with dramatic figures and scenery. **(Fig.6.9)** Beranger depicts Bigari as a convivial companion on their travels, and in a revealing letter to Burton Conyngham he extols his skills as a draughtsman, with a curious reference to Piranesi: 'I am sure you will be pleased with Bigary's views, the excellent perspective deceives the eye, and one thinks to see the buildings themselves. Piranesy cannot do better'.[463] **(Fig.6.10)**

While awaiting instructions from Burton Conyngham in May 1779, Bigari corresponds with his patron, seeking approval for a design he has made for a grotto at Slane Castle: '... *li disegni che ho fatto in Slane... della grotta...*'[464] The term grotto has its roots in the classical world of Greek and Roman antiquities, denoting a type of natural or artificial cave, later evolving to include in its meaning artificial decorative elements, which were among Alberti's recommended garden features. These elements often took the form of the classical *nymphaea,* a lavish display of fountains or temples dedicated to nymphs, especially those of springs and rivers. The function of a grotto extended to accommodate chapels and theatres, and to provide sanctuary from the scorching heat of southern climates. In his description of the *Grotto de Thetis* at Versailles in 1676, André Félibien captures their definition when declaring: 'there are only two types of grotto, one which is the work of nature and the other which is made by art; and since art can only aspire to great beauty when it is imitating nature well, so nature never produces anything so beautiful as when it seems that art has had a hand in its production'.[465] Howley concludes in his section on grottos and shell houses in *The follies and garden buildings of Ireland,* that the

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[462] Harbison, *Antiquities,* 8-9.
[463] Beranger correspondence, NLI, Ms. 1415, f. 101. Quoted in Harbison, *Antiquities,* 9.
[464] Beranger correspondence, NLI, Ms. 1415, f.111. I am very grateful to Peter Harbison for drawing my attention to this letter, and for all of his references and comments on Bigari in this section.
[465] Liane Lefaivre (ed.), *Emergence of modern architecture*, London, 2004, 199.

concept of a grotto in eighteenth-century Ireland was rather ambiguous. Formality could be found in Lovett Pearce's splendid seven-chambered grotto in Stillorgan. A man-made cavern served as an icehouse at the subterranean grotto at Turvey House in Donabate, and the gardens of Powerscourt held one of Ireland's only water-fronted grottos from where pleasure boats could come and go.[466]

In his correspondence with Burton Conyngham, was Bigari alluding to the proposals for the stair-flight arrangement at the southern end of Slane Castle? Perhaps. The term *grotta* encompasses some of the principal elements in the drawings, but above all its characterisation as a nymphaeum is the key to its analysis. The dramatic figures embellishing the ensemble, and surrounding the Bernini-like fountain, have all the attributes of an Italian nymphaeum. Here, parallels are drawn between theatrical design and garden design, where the notion of a stage set for a water display is reminiscent of the semi-circular water theatre in the baroque garden of Villa Aldobrandini's at Frascati, undoubtedly familiar to an artist like Bigari. **(Fig.6.11)** Other than the title of 'painter and architect' bestowed on him by Beranger and a design of 'a Cabinet or Passage to a Ball-room' exhibited in 1777, we have no other evidence of Bigari's talent as an architect.[467] But, his experience as a set designer in Dublin and his representations of architectural details in his engravings would indicate a mature understanding of the discipline. It was obviously not beyond an accomplished artist and draughtsman like Bigari to produce architectural plans for Burton Conyngham, making him a credible candidate for the Slane drawings. However, regardless of who designed this composition, it is regrettable that the arrangement was neither built, nor ever adapted, leaving the building perched on the

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[466] Howley, James, *The follies and garden buildings of Ireland*, New Haven & London, 1993, 25-31.
[467] George Breeze, *Society of artist in Ireland: Index of exhibits 1765-80*, Dublin, 1985, 3.

promontory without a formally landscaped approach to the southerly plantations or to the river below.[468] **(Fig.6.12)**

A more public falling out between Gandon and Burton Conyngham occurred during the planning of the House of Lords and in particular the Four Courts, revealing a more profound and still unexplained hatred. A small group of Burton Conyngham's cronies and fellow Wide Street Commissioners, including John Foster (his neighbour at Collon) and Samuel Hayes, rallied against Gandon's commissions in Dublin and sought to promote their favourites such as Cooley and Wyatt. Burton Conyngham's condemnation of Gandon's plans for the Four Courts can only be explained by the fact that he had been unjustly omitted from the discussion. Despite these grievances at Slane and in Dublin, and as Craig has suggested, it is clear that without the generosity shown by Burton Conyngham upon his arrival in Dublin, Gandon might have retreated to London, denying the country the legacy of one of the finest architects of the late eighteenth-century.

Gandon's appearance in Dublin in April 1781 coincided with the death of Burton Conyngham's uncle in London. Having spent his life obsessed with status, Henry II would have been flattered by the ceremony surrounding his obsequies and the size of the crowd that turned out for his benefit in Dublin:

> Last Wednesday arrived from England the corpse of the Rt. Hon. Lord Viscount Conyngham, and immediately was brought to the house of William Burton at Harcourt Place, where it lay until yesterday morning, and was then carried in a grand funeral procession and pomp through the city (attended by great numbers of the nobility and gentry) on its way to Slane, and was

[468] A simple, narrow flight of steps, centred on the circular tower, was added at a later stage to give access to the lower areas of the demesne.

expected to arrive there the same night, where it is to be interred tomorrow morning.[469]

Henry II's wish to be buried on his estate at Slane and for a monument to be erected to his memory (and to that of the Conyngham family) was expressed in a codicil to his will in 1770. In addition to a small portion of land for the building of a Charter School at Slane village and £400 annually (for ten years) for improvements at Slane demesne, an unknown sum of money released from his properties in Wales was to be left for the executors to cover his outstanding debts and for the erection of a mausoleum for the Conyngham family. The monument was to be attached to the church at Slane.[470] Henry II's desire to set himself apart from the rest with a memorial is not unexpected, but given the family's strong military connections the choice of a mausoleum rather than a monumental column (placed conspicuously within the demesne) is surprising.

Until 1785 Wyatt had been represented in Ireland by his agent Thomas Penrose. Anxious for the works to proceed at the castle and with Gandon estranged, Burton Conyngham may have coerced Wyatt to finally grace Slane with his presence in the autumn of that year. Mark Odlum has skilfully traced Wyatt's involvement at Slane Castle and attributed the completion of its shell to his designs, but for the purposes of this work Wyatt proposals for Henry II's mausoleum are briefly addressed.[471] There was a small number of prolific architects involved in mausolea design in eighteenth-century Ireland, namely Pearce, Gandon, Adam, Wyatt and Cooley. Wyatt had

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[469] *Faulkner's Journal*, 19-21 April 1781. De la Tocnaye gives an interesting account, towards the end of the eighteenth century, of the funeral procession of a tenant at Slane, which was led by a child carrying a timber rod decorated with paper cuttings, followed by a group of wailing women who sang in the fashion of Presbyterian psalm singers. The paper cuttings were placed at the head of the grave with a handful of willow twigs where a tree might grow in place of a headstone. De la Tocnaye, *A Frenchman's walk through Ireland 1796-7, translated from the French of de La Tocnaye by John Stevenson*, Belfast, 1984, 274.

[470] Will of Henry Viscount Conyngham, 1758, Conyngham papers, EKA, RU438, T125/1-5.

[471] For Wyatt's designs for the library ceiling and plans for a barrel vaulted entrance hall see Mark Odlum, 'Slane Castle, Co. Meath', *Country Life*, 17 July 1980, 198-201; 24 July 1980, 278-81; 31 July 1980, 382-5.

produced designs in 1772 for a cenotaph for Lord Dartrey's monument to his late young wife, Lady Anne Dawson, at Dartrey, in county Monaghan.[472] Described by Beaufort in 1778, *The Temple* was 'a square brick building covered with a leaden dome, lighted from top only' (subsequently replaced with a hipped roof). The building was rather dull in its detail, with a simple portico, blind window reveals and circular openings in the side panels, its singular glory was Joseph Wilton's sculptural group in white marble commemorating Lady Dawson.[473] **(Fig.6.13)** The Malone mausoleum built for Lord Sunderlin at Kilbixy Church in county Westmeath has recently been plausibly attributed to Wyatt by Jennifer Moore.[474] **(Fig.6.14)** His associations with the Gothic Revival church at Kilbixy are clear, and the parallels drawn between the square ground plan of Dawson Park and the elevational treatment of his Darnley mausoleum in Kent, make him a good candidate.

Wyatt's two variations as described by Odlum for the Conyngham mausoleum at the church of Slane were again based on a square ground plan, with coffin racks on all four walls.[475] One of the plans was accentuated with curious Greek cross shaped indentations in three of the corners. The second plan was in the form of a small space at the east end, the same width as the church and accessed by a flight of steps from a door in the centre of a large apse, which was to have terminated the church nave. In place of the indentations, each corner had a large niche. Wyatt's designs for the facade treatment are unknown but given our knowledge of Dawson Park, Darnley and now Kilbixy, it is easy to imagine a similar ensemble, crowned either with a dome or a pyramid structure on a stepped base, derived from Halicarnassus and popular throughout Europe. Perhaps too late to embellish his

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[472] Maurice Craig & Michael Craig, *Mausolea Hibernica*, Dublin, 1999, 44-5.
[473] C.C. Ellison, 'Remembering Dr. Beaufort', *BIGS*, January-March, 1975, Vol. XVIII, No.1, 28.
[474] Jennifer Moore, 'A new Wyatt church in Ireland', *IADS*, 2007 Vol. X, 246-63.
[475] Mark Odlum, 'The Architectural History of Slane Castle', B.A., 1978, University of Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, 59. The drawings are described in Odlum's thesis and entitled 'Plan of Chapel & Mausoleum, Slane' and 'Ground-plan of alternate design for Chapel, Mausoleum'. They were originally in the Slane Castle Drawing Collection but it appears that they perished in the fire at the castle in 1991.

uncle's monument with a likeness of Henry II by a favoured sculptor, Burton Conyngham settled for two classic marble funeral urns at the cost of £11.2..0, which were ordered from John Bacon in London. Bacon, who could count Sir William Chambers among his clients, had just completed his bust of Inigo Jones for Carpenter's Hall and the immense memorial to Chatham in Westminster Abbey.[476]

Burton Conyngham may have influenced the designs of the Conyngham mausoleum to some extent but neither plan was executed. Odlum appropriately compares Burton Conyngham to the earl bishop of Derry who as a 'connoisseur... knew enough to be difficult to satisfy', and like Robinson and Gandon before him, Wyatt's spell as executant architect at Slane Castle was short-lived. Henry II was buried in the graveyard adjacent to the church, Bacon was never paid for his marble urns and the mausoleum project was abandoned, reducing the possibility of adding a memorial to the Conyngham dominion at Slane.[477] As an alternative, Burton Conyngham was eventually bestowed his own memorial (in honour of his public works in Dublin for the Wide Street Commission), in the form of a new entrance boulevard to the city, as we shall see later in this chapter.

A tour of Portugal & Spain, 1783-1784

Amidst dealings with architects and surveyors at Slane Castle, Burton Conyngham became ill and left the country for the warmer climates of Spain and Portugal in the summer of 1783.[478] Writing to John Beresford he complained of 'a peculiar mortality' prevailing in the country, and he chose to spend almost two years on the Iberian peninsula, travelling extensively throughout the two countries before returning via

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[476] John Benbow to Henry (III) Conyngham, 1796, Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms 35,344(1); Rupert Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculptors, 1660-1851*, London, 1968, 24-8.
[477] John Benbow to Henry (III) Conyngham, 1796, Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms 35,344(1).
[478] Michael Shanahan to Hervey, Earl Bishop of Derry, May 1783, Hervey Bruce papers, PRONI, D/1514/1/2/3.

France and Holland in the winter of 1784.[479] His companions on his trip were Colonel Charles Tarrant and a Captain Broughton. Tarrant features largely in Burton Conyngham's life, most significantly as a fellow Wide Street Commissioner and member of the Royal Irish Academy, and later as an advisor on the execution of the new port and village on Rutland Island in 1785. A military engineer, Tarrant worked in the drawing office of the Tower of London between 1750 and 1755, before he was employed as a draughtsman to the Board of Ordnance of Ireland from 1763-76, where he worked closely with Colonel Charles Vallancey. He was engaged later as a consultant on the Grand Canal, the Shannon, the Barrow and the Boyne Navigation, as we learnt in the previous chapter.[480] At Athlone Castle he prepared detailed reports towards its repair and in Dublin he carried out a design for a meeting room for the Dublin Society's premises, of which he was a member.[481]

Tarrant was also an accomplished mapmaker and artist; he produced a forty-page manuscript a *Report on the store houses, powder magazines and fortifications in Ireland,* including rendered illustrations of fortifications at twelve locations and a commentary of each.[482] **(Fig.6.15)** At some point Tarrant's drawings were removed from the manuscript and it is very likely that they came into Burton Conyngham's possession. They were eventually dispersed and sold on to various institutions, possibly through Austin Cooper who bought much of Burton Conyngham's catalogue in 1810.[483] A glimpse of Tarrant's personal life and his close ties to William Colville

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[479] Burton Conyngham to Arthur Young, 11 July 1783, Correspondence of Arthur Young, BL, Add. Ms. 35,126, f. 246; *Dublin Evening Post*, 1 July 1784; William Beresford (ed.), *The correspondence of the Rt. Hon. John Beresford*, Vol. I, London, 1854, 247-248.

[480] Delaney, Ruth, *Ireland's Inland Waterways*, Belfast, 2004, 42, 52, 56, 69. Tarrant was brought in as an adjudicator by Burton Conyngham to assess Omer's work and oversee the tendering process on the Boyne navigation.

[481] Christine Casey & Alistair Rowan, *The Buildings of Ireland: North Leinster,* London, 1993, 129-30; Minute Books of the Dublin Society, RDS, 14 April 1768. I am grateful to Edward McParland for the reference to the Dublin Society meeting room.

[482] Emer Singleton, 'Charles Tarrant, surveyor, architect, artist & cartographer (1730-1818)', *Old Bray Journal*, Vol. I, No.5, 1991, 7-15.

[483] The National Library of Ireland hold three sketches drafted by Tarrant: a map of the entrance to Cork Harbour (undated, 18th century); a plan of Athlone Castle, 1793 and a sketch of Carrickfergus Castle, 1793. A map of the neighbourhood of Lismore dating from the mid-eighteenth century is at the Public

(the factor at Slane Mill, Tarrant's banker and a fellow Wide Street Commissioner), are revealed in a series of letters between the two families.[484] Within the realm of local history he will be remembered for his curious (and possibly unfounded) behaviour on his property at Rathdown, county Wicklow, where G. N. Wright accused him of the destruction of the church of St. Crispin's Cell and adjoining graveyard, a remarkable gesture given his background.[485]

Broughton's profile is unknown but the two most likely candidates are Captain William Broughton, a member of the Royal Navy, who travelled to North America on an expedition on the Colombia River with the explorer George Vancouver in 1792, and Richard Broughton who was secretary to the Ballast Board otherwise known as the Corporation for Preserving and Improving the Port of Dublin, founded in 1786.[486] Broughton's role on the trip is not clear but the attendance of a naval officer would have been a practical measure and he may have been skilled in the art of surveying. Burton Conyngham's primary aim was to recuperate and to visit noteworthy Iberian landmarks and archaeological sites. But, aside from this aspect of the tour, a secondary interest lay in the promotion of commerce between Ireland and Spain and Portugal, and the study of contemporary local industries with a view to their introduction in Ireland - an inevitable consequence of his trip which will be discussed later in the chapter.

Record Office at Kew, and a copy of Tarrant's drawing of the market cross of Kilkenny is at the Crookshank Glin Archive at TRIARC, Trinity College Dublin. His interest in the botanical world is revealed in a wonderful illustration of a *Honey Plant c.*1770, in the Currier Museum of Art in New Hampshire: http://collections.currier.org.

[484] *Report on private collections*, NLI, Nr. 406 & Colville papers, NLI, microfilm, p. 4138.

[485] G.N. Wright, *A guide to the county of Wicklow*, London, 1827, 20, quoted in Emer Singleton, 'Charles Tarrant, surveyor, architect, artist & cartographer (1730-1818)', *Old Bray Journal*, Vol. I, No.5, 1991, 7-15. Singleton notes that Tarrant's neighbours at Rathdown were John Brownrigg, surveyor and engineer, Redmond Morres, director of the Grand Canal Company and David La Touche, a fellow Wide Street Commissioner.

[486] There is no evidence to connect either of these Broughton men with Burton Conyngham's cousins, the Murray of Broughton family from the Donegal estate.

The group began their tour of the peninsula in Portugal (probably landing in Lisbon) and moved directly northwards along the coast to the fashionable spa-town of Caldas, where the Royal family regularly took the waters.[487] The nature of transport throughout the peninsula in the late eighteenth century meant that the group could travel by coach along the newly laid out principal routes before attempting the secondary thoroughfares by mule; a journey of *c.*350 Spanish miles, with interruptions, could take almost a fortnight.[488] **(Fig.6.16)** From Caldas they travelled north on the main artery to Alcobaça and from there to their first landmark destination, Santa Maria da Vitória at Batalha, in the district of Leiría, where they carried out a series of drawings of the fourteenth-century building. The monastery was a hybrid of various Gothic styles which took two centuries to complete. It was begun by Afonso Domingues, a Portuguese architect in 1386, until supervision of the building works was undertaken by Huguet in the early fifteenth century. Huguet, who was allegedly of Catalan descent, introduced the Flamboyant Gothic style to the building.[489] This troupe of Irishmen were not the first travellers from northern Europe to be fascinated by Batalha. In 1760, the young Thomas Pitt (nephew of William Pitt, first earl of Chatham) and his companions - the earl of Strathmore and Philip Francis, who was of Irish origin and William Pitt's secretary, landed at Lisbon from where they began a journey through central Portugal and Spain. Pitt's account of events in Portugal was recorded in a journal, providing detailed descriptions and sketches of the buildings they visited, - the highlight of which was the Dominican monastery at Batalha.[490] Pitt was an amateur architect, a member of his neighbour Horace Walpole's 'Committee of Taste', to whom he provided plans for a Gothic interior at

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[487] Burton Conyngham to John Foster, 18 May 1783, Foster Masserene papers, PRONI, D/562/8575.
[488] Gonzalo Anes, *El antiguo regimen: Los Borbones*, Madrid, 1983, 223-5.
[489] In his preface to *Plans, elevations, sections....of Batalha*, London, 1795, Murphy suggests that Huguet was in fact an Irishman called David Hacket, giving his authority as Jose Soares da Sylva, author of *Memorias para a historia de Portugal,* Lisbon, 1730-4. In *Notes & Queries*, 8 July 1854, 29, Hacket's identity is queried by James Graves, who asks whether he was a church dignitary and a native of Kilkenny, who filled the see of Ossory from 1460 to 1479.
[490] John Frew & Carey Wallace, 'Thomas Pitt, Portugal and the gothic cult of Batalha', *Burlington Magazine,* 1986, Vol. 128, No. 1001, 582-5. I am very grateful to Peter Harbison for this reference.

Walpole's fanciful Strawberry Hill in 1763.[491] A full appreciation of architecture is reflected in his Iberian journal, and he concluded that if Batalha had been finished 'it would have been the richest Piece of Gothick Work in Europe'. Pitt's journal also embraced the Moorish antiquities of Spain, culminating in a significant piece of architectural history, possibly the earliest account of a fine array of Iberian antiquities written in the English language. Although the journal remained in unpublished form, it was widely distributed as a transcript among fellow dilettanti, and by 1771 it was in the hands of Richard Gough, director of the London Society of Antiquaries.[492] Given Burton Conyngham's connections with this society (of which he was made a Fellow) he would have undoubtedly seen a copy of Pitt's manuscript, prompting his interest in Batalha and ultimately his exploration of Spanish architectural antiquities. It is well known that Batalha's free mix of Gothic styles, ranging from Rayonnant to Flamboyant, from English Perpendicular to Manueline, inspired James Wyatt, who was shown Burton Conyngham's drawings of the building and subsequently influenced his work at Lee Priory in Kent *c.*1785-9, as well as other domestic and ecclesiastical commissions in England. **(Fig.6.17)**

James Cavanah Murphy, the Cork artist turned 'ingenious and deserving young architect' under the liberal patronage of Burton Conyngham, was commissioned to travel to Portugal and publish engravings from his detailed study of the monastery at Batalha in 1789.[493] **(Fig.6.18)** Although McCarthy has stated that Burton Conyngham purchased drawings of Batalha locally, Murphy recalls in his correspondence to

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[491] Roland Thorne, 'Thomas Pitt, 1737-93, first Baron Camelford, politician and dilettante', *DNB*, Vol. 44, Oxford, 2004, 448-50.

[492] John Frew & Carey Wallace, 'Thomas Pitt, Portugal and the gothic cult of Batalha', *Burlington Magazine*, 1986, Vol. 128, No. 1001, 582-5. Pitt's journal would also have been of Interest to James Cavanah Murphy, who went on to carry out his splendid study of *The Arabian antiquities of Spain*, published in 1815.

[493] Anthologia Hibernica, Vol. I, 1793, 55. For biographical sources for James Cavanah Murphy and an account of his tour through Portugal see James Cavanah Murphy, *Travels in Portugal*, London, 1795; John Nichols, *Illustrations of the literary history of the eighteenth century*, London, 1831, Vol. VI, 429-444; Count Plunkett, 'James Cavanah Murphy' *The Irish Builder*, 15 May 1909, Vol.LI, 295-7; Michael McCarthy, 'Unpublished drawings of James Cavanah Murphy', *Irish Arts Review*, Summer 2002, Vol.19, No.1, 114-117.

Burton Conyngham in 1789, his excitement upon seeing 'your elegant sketches of this fine building' which he refers to as 'very correct representations of the original'.[494] It was certainly not beyond these gentlemen to produce a few drawings of the monastery. We have already studied Burton Conyngham's artistic talents, revealed in his capacity to sketch *in situ,* and Tarrant, who in his previous role under Vallancey had trained surveyors so that 'sketches [might be] taken in books chiefly on horseback - not laid down to scale, but the nature and appearance of the country proportioned by the eye only'.[495] Burton Conyngham subsequently confirms his authorship of the drawings in a letter to Sir Joseph Banks: 'This letter which is delivered to you by a young artist who made a visit to Portugal to compleat the drawings of a very beautiful Gothic church & monastery, of which I had taken some sketches...'[496]

Nevertheless, as draughtsmen they were not entirely alone. In his travelogue published in 1795, Murphy refers to a Signor Glama, an artist from Oporto, who was employed by Burton Conyngham and his companions to assist them with the bulk of the drawings on the trip.[497] Given the scale of the monastery, and, the extent of Burton Conyngham's subsequent compilation of Iberian antiquities, the employment of local artists, surveyors and other workmen, to measure and draw plans or to excavate sites is predictable. Their studies of Batalha were partly sponsored by the Bishop of Béja, who announced that Burton Conyngham 'has done more for the Arts than all of Portugal put together'.[498] The bishop, a collector of Roman inscriptions and artefacts, shared a special interest in Roman antiquities with Burton Conyngham and

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[494] John Nichols, *Illustrations of the literary history of the eighteenth century*, London, Vol. VI, 1831, 432-6.
[495] William O'Reilly, 'Charles Vallancey and the *Military Itinerary* of Ireland' *PRIA,* Vol. 106C, 2006, 125–217.
[496] William Burton Conyngham to Sir Joseph Banks, 3 October 1790, Joseph Banks papers, NLA, Ms.9/43-43d, http://www.nla.gov.au.
[497] James Cavanah Murphy, *Travels in Portugal*, London, 1795, 10. Glama accompanied them on the Portuguese leg of the trip but there is no evidence of him accompanying the group to Spain.
[498] James Cavanah Murphy, *Plans, elevations, sections....of Batalha*, London, 1795, preface.

may have encouraged his visits to the sites of Sagunto and Tarragona in Spain the following year. From his letters it appears that Murphy had traced a selection of Burton Conyngham's drawings whilst still in Dublin and used the tracings as templates to set up his study of the church once he arrived at Batalha.[499] Horrified by the diverse gothic styles of the monastery, William Beckford remarked rather boorishly in 1835, that had the designs of 'that dull draughtsman Murphy' been employed in completing the unfinished mausoleum of King Emanuel, the result would have been 'most preciously ugly'.[500] But, the young artist went on to fulfil Pitt's prediction that, 'it is impossible to give an Idea of the Work [Batalha] by Words, or by any Drawing, except of the most exact & skilful Pencil'. Murphy's experience under Thomas Ivory in the Dublin Society School is very evident in his exquisite measured drawings of Batalha published in 1795 and dedicated to his patron.[501] **(Fig.6.19)** An original watercolour of the lavabo at Mellifont, the base for an engraving for Grose's antiquities, is held at the Royal Irish Academy but we know little else of his drawing commissions in Ireland other than a drawing of Slane Castle, as executed to Wyatt's design, and a plan for Col. Clements House in Cork, dated 1786 and signed later - James C. Murphy, the Alhambra Arch[t] [sic].[502] He was among the seven architects consulted on additions to the House of Commons, which irritated Gandon, exposing again the rift between the architect and Murphy's patron.[503] Surprisingly there is no evidence that Murphy was requested by Burton Conyngham to make other proposals for Slane Castle (in particular for the family mausoleum), and if he did, regrettably none have survived.

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[499] John Nichols, *Illustrations of the literary history of the eighteenth century*, London, 1831, Vol. VI, 436.
[500] William Beckford, *Recollections of an excursion to the monasteries of Alcobaça and Batalha*, London, 1835, 136.
[501] John Frew & Carey Wallace, 'Thomas Pitt, Portugal and the gothic cult of Batalha', *Burlington Magazine*, 1986, Vol. 128, No. 1001, 582-5. Pitt was among the long list of subscribers who were issued the early drafts of Murphy's work between 1792 and 1795.
[502] Edward McParland, *William Burton Conyngham and some members of his circle*, unpublished paper. Col. Clements may refer to Theophilus Clements, Robert Clements' cousin. The signature on the drawing makes reference to Murphy's seminal work, *The Arabian antiquities of Spain*, published in 1815. Murphy's facade of Slane Castle is in the Murray Collection, Nr. 1131, IAA.
[503] Maurice Craig (ed.), James Gandon & T.J. Mulvany, *The Life of James Gandon*, London, 1969, 116.

From Batalha the group travelled north through Marinha Grande, Coimbra and Oporto, before arriving in Braga in September 1783, where Burton Conyngham visited the pre-Roman settlement of Calcedonia in the hills above the town.[504] From there they moved eastwards on the main highway from Oporto to Salamanca and through the Castile region of Spain. In early November 1783 Burton Conyngham enthusiastically recounted his trip from Salamanca to Segovia to his friend Robert Clements. He spoke in glowing terms of the architecture of Castile, adding that he planned to go to Madrid and from there to the east coast.[505] However, before reaching Valencia Burton Conyngham visited Andalucía, where in Seville, Jaen, and Linares he began his collection of inscriptions and copied those he found in Hebrew and Latin.[506] He was diverted once more between Alicante and Valencia to gather barilla seeds and plant samples for future cultivation in Ireland and England, and to inspect an 'extraordinary phenomenon', as he described it, at Alcira in November 1783.[507]

Alcira is situated to the north of Alicante; its terrain is quite irregular ranging from low lying flatlands to the three mountain ranges of *de Corbera, la Murta* and *les Agulles*. Requested by the Reverend Charles Peter Layard, foreign secretary to the Royal Society, to document what he had encountered at Alcira, Burton Conyngham relates the effects of abundant flooding (typical in the eastern region of Spain during the autumn months) on a hill called Monte Baladic, which lay within one of the three

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[504] William Burton Conyngham to Sir Joseph Banks, 7 May 1791, Joseph Banks papers, NLA, Ms.9/43-43d: http://www.nla.gov.au; John Nichols, *Illustrations of the literary history of the eighteenth century*, London, 1831, Vol.VI, 438-440. It is possible that the group also travelled to Évora and Béja to visit the Roman temple of Diana and the Gothic castle of Menagem, as James Cavanah Murphy had done, but there is no hard evidence that Burton Conyngham had been there from his correspondence.

[505] Burton Conyngham to Clements, 5 November 1783, Clements papers/letter books, TCD, Ms. 1743. Other than Salamanca, most of the Irish colleges in Spain had closed with the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767.

[506] William Conyngham, 'Observations on the description of the theatre at Saguntum', *PRIA*, Vol.3, 1790, 21-49.

[507] William Burton Conyngham to Sir Joseph Banks, 22 February 1788, Joseph Banks papers, NLA, Ms.9/43-43d, http://www.nla.gov.au; 'William Burton Conyngham's account of the convulsion of a hill at Alcira', undated, Correspondence between the Royal Society and the European periphery 1600-1800, Royal Society London, RS/PPI/L&P viii/148.

mountain ranges of Alcira. During the floods the river Júcar and smaller neighbouring rivers had broken their banks, inundating the plains of Alcira. The phenomenon that Burton Conyngham observed was the sinking of the summit of Mont Baladic (during the flooding) and the resulting displacement of limestone rubble which was 'jumbled together and the ruins tumbled down the sides to the foot of the hill'.[508] The convulsion of the hill had cracked the outer surface extensively, revealing various geological formations, including very soft grey and white limestone, and a clay stratum, like Fuller's Earth. This clay usually contained high levels of magnesium oxide and was used with water to absorb grease or oils on cloth, as part of the finishing process in the textile industry. Despite mentioning Fuller's Earth, Burton Conyngham did not dwell on the material's properties or the fact that this clay exhibits thixotropic characteristics and liquefies under duress, a detail that Layard would have been familiar with. In essence, this meant that heavy rainfall could have saturated the clay strata and caused the hill or slope to be become unstable with changes in mass and volume. Burton Conyngham did not draw any definitive conclusions in his letter to Layard, but the mere title of his piece ...*account of the convulsion of a hill at Alcira,* and his detailed narrative, was sufficient to demonstrate that the hill had erupted like a volcano and that this was not the direct result of floods alone, but was a natural manifestation of the combination of heavy rainfall and the nature of the inner strata.[509] In essence we can interpret his piece as an observation rather than a conclusion. The reaction to his letter to the Royal Society is unknown and there is no evidence to show that his account of the geological formations was related further to the Dublin Society or to the Royal Irish Academy. It was simply one more event that coloured Burton Conyngham's trip and reveals for us, yet another side to the antiquarian.

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[508] 'William Burton Conyngham's account of the convulsion of a hill at Alcira', undated, Correspondence between the Royal Society and the European periphery 1600-1800, Royal Society London, RS/PPI/L&P viii/148. For a full transcription see Appendix F.

[509] The *OED* defines the word 'convulsion' as a violent physical disturbance; *esp.* said of an earthquake or similar phenomenon.

By January 1784 Burton Conyngham had reached the region of Valencia, with the intention of excavating the Roman theatre of Sagunto - probably his best-known expedition on the tour of Spain.[510] Burton Conyngham was among a group of erudite tourists such as Wilhelm von Humboldt, Alexandre Laborde and Filippo Schiassi who, with their detailed treatises on the theatre, provided a complete view of the structure at the end of the eighteenth century. **(Fig.6.20)** Humboldt, Laborde and Schiassi visited Sagunto at the end of the eighteenth century and with the exception of Humboldt, all of these men produced measured drawings of the building. Burton Conyngham's study has been described as the most accurate depiction of the theatre until a photometric survey was carried out at a much later date, and it may be assumed that Tarrant, in his capacity as a surveyor, had a hand in these drawings.[511]

Until 1784, the remains of the theatre had been examined solely by like-minded Spaniards, the most celebrated of these was Emanuel Martí, the dean of Alicante. Burton Conyngham based his thesis on Marti's work in a paper presented to the Royal Irish Academy in 1789, this being the first monograph on the theatre to be produced by a foreigner. [512] His paper reflects an awareness of classical sources such as Vitruvius, Pólux and Pausanias, and the contemporaneous texts of Le Roy, Stuart, Choiseul and of course Martí, all of which he complements with references to antique theatres in Italy and Greece. Burton Conyngham noted that Martí, and other Spaniards who followed a similar method of analysis, had preconceived ideas based on the principles of Vitruvius, which were superimposed on the theatre without a formal survey, therefore assuming that it was of Roman origin. Declaring this method redundant, Burton Conyngham proceeded with his own 'profound study of the theatre' and concluded that it might not have been the work of the Romans but a

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[510] William Beresford (ed.), *The correspondence of the Rt. Hon. John Beresford*, Vol. I, London, 1854, 247-248.
[511] Alicia León-Gómez, *El teatro romano de Sagunto en el siglo XVIII*, Seville, 2006, 156.
[512] William Conyngham, 'Observations on the description of the theatre at Saguntum', *TRIA*, Vol.3, 1790, 21-49.

theatre of Greek origin, a strong possibility given Sagunto's history as an important Greek colony. He supplemented his hypothesis with measured drawings, demonstrating the similarities between Sagunto and the plans of the Attic theatres. The highly descriptive plates show that the measurements of Sagunto related closely with those of the Athens theatre devoted to Dionysius at the foot of the Acropolis, considered to be the prototype for Greek theatres. Burton Conyngham produced five plates in total for his paper to the Royal Irish Academy but only four were published: two plans of the theatre, one sectional elevation and one perspective view. The fifth plate was the plan of an unnamed theatre, intended for comparative purposes.[513] **(Fig.6.21)**

In order to excavate the ruins, dozens of workmen were employed at the site; their presence aroused the usual curiosity and it was rumoured that Burton Conyngham was digging for gold bells worth £100,000, concealed there according to local tradition. These gold bells may refer to bronze or copper resonance vases inserted in the tiered seating by the Greeks (and Vitruvius) to improve the reverberation of sound within the theatre space. No bells were discovered but various treasures were unearthed during the works, 'a number of ancient inscriptions, bases and capitals of columns, and a curious Roman altar'.[514] Once drawings had been made of these artefacts, the originals were presented to Burton Conyngham in a generous gesture by the locals 'as a reward for his trouble'.[515] These drawings and an account of Burton Conyngham's archaeological interventions were illustrated in a plan commissioned by the Conde de Floridablanca, José Moñino y Redondo. **(Fig 6.22)** The count was a highly effective statesman, gaining the title for his services in 1773 from Charles III, Spain's enlightened autocrat who was leading the country into a

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[513] Burton Conyngham mentions it in his addendum as the 'Athenian Theatre' but does not attach the drawing in his paper to the academy.
[514] John Nichols, *Illustrations of the literary history of the eighteenth century*, London, Vol. VI, 1831, 435.
[515] Ibid.

brief cultural and economic revival at that time. Floridablanca subsequently became First Secretary of State, a post equivalent to Prime Minister, and in this role he was responsible for the rebuilding of Madrid, and the execution of canal networks and irrigation systems throughout Spain. His interest in antiquities is unknown, but he certainly shared the spirit of improvement with Burton Conyngham, and the nature of the excavation works at Sagunto would have been of sufficient importance to merit documentation. The manuscript plan commissioned by the count is conserved in the Historical Cartographic Library of the Geographical Military Service with the following legend: 'Plan of the location of the castle, marked by the letter 'A' in the main plan, in which excavations carried out by Mr. de Coningham [sic] to unveil ancient monuments are shown, and through which fragments have been discovered and these are represented separately though plans and sections, as well as several stones, with inscriptions which have been represented with full accuracy...'[516] **(Fig.6.23)** The document is significant in its depiction of the context and scale of the work executed by Burton Conyngham, and, is valuable evidence of his fascination with architectural antiquities and his attention to detail.

From Sagunto the troupe followed the eastern coastline to Alcalá de Xisbert in Castellón and further north to Teruel, where further inscriptions were copied and documented for publication in Burton Conyngham's paper.[517] Excavation work continued once more at the Roman circus of Tarragona, an event originally attributed to Burton Conyngham's uncle, due to errors made by previous authorities concerning excavation dates and peerage titles. **(Fig.6.24)** This has been clarified more recently by Jaume Massó, the Catalan archaeologist. Massó states that Burton Conyngham was the first foreigner to excavate the structure and that he belonged to a small

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[516] I am very grateful to Alicia León Gómez of the Archaeological Department of the University of Seville for obtaining a copy of this manuscript.
[517] William Conyngham, 'Observations on the description of the theatre at Saguntum', *PRIA*, Vol.3, 1790, 21-49.

group of military engineers like J.A. Rovira who restored the monumental Bará Arch, and J. Boy who designed the main water supply to the city and who was responsible for a large collection of artefacts entitled *Recopilasion sussinta de las antiguedades romanas*. Against a background of reform led by the 'urbanist archbishop' Joaquín de Santiyan, Burton Conyngham's main contribution to the examination of Roman remains in the city was the unearthing of a passage around the entire circus, which he claimed was constructed at a larger scale than previously reported by the native Canon R. Fouget in the Flórez's *España Sagrada* in 1769.[518] This was to be Burton Conyngham's last major work that we know of in Spain and the next we hear of him was in Bordeaux in July 1784, where it was reported that he 'is likely to return to his native country perfectly recovered... stout and hearty, and intending to return at the beginning of the winter'.[519] There is no evidence that Burton Conyngham's cohorts accompanied him for the entire tour. A wonderful sketch of a street monkey in Oporto by Tarrant, dated 30 April 1784, implies his presence in Portugal at this date, but Captain Broughton was never heard of again.[520]

Hibernian Superfine and cultivating the barilla plant, 1784-1792

In October 1784, Burton Conyngham returned to Ireland through Holland, full of plans for the promotion of the country's commercial interests and the development of new trade links with Spain.[521] Earlier indications of his economic patriotism were publicised in the *Belfast Newsletter,* in a description of a large breakfast party held by Burton Conyngham at his house in Dublin, after which his guests were induced 'to proceed to diverse shops in the city and its liberties, and purchase considerable

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[518] Jaume Massó, 'Un Irlandés, el primer excavador del Circ, l'any 1784'. *Diari de Tarragona*, 2 December 1987.
[519] *Dublin Evening Post*, 1 July 1784.
[520] There is a copy of Tarrant's sketch at the Crookshank Glin Archive at TRIARC, Trinity College Dublin.
[521] John Beresford to Thomas Orde, 27 October 1784, NLI, Ms.16,353. I am very grateful to Edward McParland for this reference.

quantities [of goods] of Irish manufacturers'.[522] His trip to the Iberian Peninsula had coincided with the shambles that was the trade dispute between Portugal and Ireland (1780-87) which had followed the concession of free trade in 1779. Before the free trade acts, Ireland had struggled with extremely poor conditions of trade in commodities, in particular salted meat, wool and glass. Early proposals to relieve the situation by England's prime minster, Lord North, were rejected due to the continuation of embargos on wool and glass exports. In 1779 pressure from Grattan precipitated North's decision to remove restrictions on imports and exports and the free trade acts were finally brought about. However, Portugal, a country that had no previous argument with Ireland, was unhappy with its commercial treaties with England, and the court of Lisbon began to force London to discuss new trade agreements by prohibiting the entry of Irish woollens and linens into Portuguese ports. London sat back, slow to negotiate knowing they would gain little, and the dispute continued for seven years. The years 1782-3 saw economic relations between Ireland, England and Portugal at their lowest point in years, and despite the embargo, a lively scheme of smuggling woollens (mostly camlets) and linens existed between the Ireland and Portugal.[523] In his letter to his friend John Foster, Burton Conyngham indicates his support of the contraband, wryly remarking that 'the only method to get a sale for our coarse linnen is to send ships on the southern whale fishery and smuggle the linnen into the barrels'.[524] Throughout his tour of Spain, Burton Conyngham maintained his correspondence with Foster, and also with John Beresford, commenting on contemporary local developments, quality of goods and expressing his enthusiasm for cutting ties with Portugal and settling a new trade treaty with the Spanish, 'I am anxious to know what has been done in the Portugal business. I hope that you have raised the duties on their wines; it is worth trying. I am

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[522] *Belfast Newsletter*, 19-22 May 1778.
[523] James Kelly, 'The Irish trade dispute with Portugal', *Studia Hibernica*, No. 25, 1989-90, 7-48.
[524] Burton Conyngham to John Foster, 12 May 1783, Foster Masserene papers, PRONI, D/ 562/8574.

of opinion that something might be done by negotiation with Spain, at least a foundation laid for an extensive commerce with this country...'[525]

This option appealed to public opinion, especially to the mercantile community, and Burton Conyngham (along with Sir Lucius O'Brien) was the most persistent parliamentary lobbyist for this movement. He supplied several Iberian merchants with letters of introduction to John Foster - at that time in the influential position as Chancellor of the Exchequer - and he sent home from Spain, trade samples, seeds, Indian rice (with a view to its cultivation), and publications on agriculture and husbandry which would be of benefit to the country. The purchase of books and journals was supported by the Dublin Society's committee of commerce, who allowed Burton Conyngham funds amounting to £200 for this purpose. Most of the publications were foreign and the artist Gabriel Beranger was engaged in Dublin to translate various titles and indexes.[526] Also of interest were the lists sent to Foster of diverse woollen produce imported into Lisbon from England and the two merino rams dispatched illegally (with the assistance of the governor of Almeida) from the borders of Castile to his farm at Slane Castle.[527] This was one area that Burton Conyngham firmly pursued upon his return to Ireland and although agricultural themes have not been addressed in this study of the Conyngham family (with the exception of the success of their corn mill at Slane) Burton Conyngham's experiments in the world of husbandry and botany merit inclusion here.

Merino sheep were introduced to Spain in the twelfth century by the Beni-Merines, a tribe of Arabic Moors. During the following centuries out-crossing (cross-breeding with foreign flocks) was carried out with sheep from England and Germany, the

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[525] William Beresford (ed), *The correspondence of the Rt. Hon. John Beresford*, Vol. I, 1854, 247-248.
[526] Trench, *William Burton Conyngham*, 47.
[527] Harold Burnell Carter (ed), *The sheep and wool correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks 1781-1820*, London, 1979, 159.

Castile region being renowned for its quality flocks, prized for their very fine quality of wool and their adaptability. Like the Germans who, with their out-crossing techniques, could be proud of the finest wool in Europe with the introduction of merino blood to their flocks, Burton Conyngham strove to improve the rather coarse wool produced by his sheep in county Meath by the same methods. Once his foreign rams had settled into their new environment, directions were given by him 'to receive such ewes as any of the gentlemen of the Dublin Society might please to send there'.[528] The rams and their offspring, whose numbers increased rapidly, were kept apart from their Irish counterparts at Slane and 'every care was taken' with their development. The new race was slow to take to the Irish pasture and their fleece was 'by no means equal to the quality of those produce in Spain'.[529] Not to be discouraged, Burton Conyngham demanded a fresh supply from Almeida and with two new sets, comprising one ram and two ewes from both Castile in Spain and Alemtejo in Portugal he crossed the sheep with stock from Connaught (rather than from Meath). By 1788 he had produced a very high quality wool, calling it *Hibernian Superfine,* which he claimed was superior to any fleece produced in Scotland or in Herefordshire.[530] His contacts in the English textile business complained of overly lengthy staples in the fleece of the new Hibernian breed, but, his experiments had been noticed by a fellow Royal Society member, Sir John Sinclair, the self-appointed agricultural improver and author of the vast twenty-one volume tome, *Statistical Account of Scotland*, who relayed the news to Sir Joseph Banks, then president of the society.[531]

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[528] Trench, *William Burton Conyngham,* 47.
[529] Harold Burnell Carter (ed), *The sheep and wool correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks 1781-1820,* London, 1979,149.
[530] William Burton Conyngham to Sir Joseph Banks, 7 May 1791, Joseph Banks papers, NLA, Ms.9/43-43d, http://www.nla.gov.au; Harold Burnell Carter (ed), *The sheep and wool correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks 1781-1820,* London, 1979, 205, 232.
[531] In Sinclair's *Statistical account of Scotland*, Sinclair includes the parish of Kilronan in county Roscommon as a tribute to the 'very public spirited individual Rt. Hon. William Burton Conyngham', who had sent him the document, the result of the Dublin Society's circulation of queries regarding the state of Ireland in 1773. John Sinclair, *Statistical account of Scotland*, Vol. 21, Edinburgh, 1799, 371.

Banks was an eminent agriculturist and the first court collector for the botanical gardens at Kew. An immensely wealthy man he devoted himself to the pursuit of natural history and sponsored many foreign expeditions in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. He gained international acclaim following his trip to Australia and New Zealand aboard the *Endeavour*. Upon his return to England he shaped colonial politics, was an intimate of George III and served as an adviser to the government on all matters relating to science and agriculture. He opposed the wool bill of 1788, which favoured manufacturers at the expense of the farmers, and with his strong sense of public duty he held much in common with Burton Conyngham.[532] **(Fig.6.25)** Banks' preoccupation with sheep breeding began in 1781, when he was engaged by Lincolnshire farmers to investigate the market for long wool in the Low Countries and in France. Aware of the excellent results of out-crossing experiments with merinos in Saxony, Banks' main goal was to import merinos to Britain and to produce a superfine cloth, superior to anything manufactured in Europe. French mixed breeds were easy to obtain but due to the prevailing embargos Banks struggled to import a pedigree Spanish ram for almost five years. In 1786 he finally acquired his long desired Spanish merinos (indirectly through France) and began out-crossing with various English breeds.[533]

Banks' initial interest in the out-crossing techniques of Burton Conyngham was based purely on his need for connections with those who could assist him with the illegal exportation of high quality merinos from the Portuguese Spanish border. It is clear from Banks' correspondence with the likes of John Baker, earl of Sheffield, who sardonically remarked on the 'strange mixture' of the new Slane flocks, that he

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[532] John Gascoigne, 'Sir Joseph Banks', *DNB* Vol. 3, Oxford, 2004, 691-95; Harold Burnell Carter (ed), *The sheep and wool correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks 1781-1820,* London, 1979, xvii-xxv.
[533] Harold Burnell Carter, *Sir Joseph Banks 1743-1820*, London, 1988, 227-231.

distrusted Burton Conyngham's high opinion of his precious *Hibernian Superfine.*[534] Fleece samples and cloth specimens were sent back and forth for inspection until the sceptics gave in and Sinclair announced to Banks, 'I have written to Mr [William] Conyngham [in Ireland] that we wish to have a slice of his flock'.[535] Unruffled by the gentlemen's previous doubts about his methods of husbandry, Burton Conyngham generously supplied them with contacts in Portugal, and Banks procured two rams and four ewes from Portugal for his own breeding trials. It is surprising that Banks, a man at the cutting edge of eighteenth-century agricultural science, with important connexions throughout Europe, was unable to introduce merinos to England during its industrial evolution without Burton Conyngham's assistance.[536] More significantly, from their correspondence it would appear that Burton Conyngham had in fact pioneered the out-crossing of merinos with native sheep in Ireland and, although the new Leicester flocks were immensely popular, his husbandry trials soon influenced neighbouring landlords in Meath, among them Brabazon Morris who had relative success with the integration of a Spanish merino breed.[537] Burton Conyngham's interest in the improvement of wool in the British Isles (particularly in Scotland) continued in a series of papers given to the Dublin Society in 1791, but regrettably the results of his own experiments did not flourish beyond his death.[538] As part of a remarkably aggressive clearance carried out by Burton Conyngham's successor at Slane, his beloved flocks were sold off in October 1796. They were described by the

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[534] Harold Burnell Carter (ed), *The sheep and wool correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks 1781-1820*, London, 1979,165. The earl was a neighbour of Burton Conyngham's on the Monknewtown estate in county Meath.

[535] William Burton Conyngham to Sir Joseph Banks, 9 May 1792, Joseph Banks papers, NLA, Ms.9/43-43d, http://www.nla.gov.au; Harold Burnell Carter (ed), *The sheep and wool correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks 1781-1820,* London, 1979, 202.

[536] In 1792, Banks purchased forty Negrettis (a type of high quality merino) from the Royal Escurial flocks above Madrid, laying the foundation for the King's royal flock at Kew.

[537] Robert Thompson, *Statistical survey of county Meath...*, Dublin, 1802, 310-12. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the English agricultural improver Robert Bakewell, mixed merinos with his celebrated Leicester flocks. This *New Leicester* breed was in turn introduced to Ireland, and mixed with Connaught ewes evolving to become the typical long-wool Galway sheep, the best-known breed in nineteenth-century Ireland.

[538] Trench, *William Burton Conyngham*, 47.

Drogheda Journal as 'the produce of Spanish half-and-three-quarter bred sheep. The wool is of a remarkably good quality'.[539] **(Fig.6.26)**

In addition to their correspondence on aspects of sheep breeding, Burton Conyngham pressed Banks (with a set of his own botanical drawings) for his opinion on plant life discovered during his tour of Spain. Of interest was the mistletoe he came across at the fort of Calcedonia, growing independently in tree form without its usual semi-parasitic qualities, and a barilla plant (a valuable Iberian maritime species) blooming at 'an uncommon size and vigour' from the walls of the Castle of Alicante.[540] **(Fig.6.27)** Barilla was used for the production of ash employed in bleaching Irish linen and in the making of glass and soap. It usually depended on saline soils and a very warm climate, and was therefore imported into Ireland. Its ability to exist on the stone walls of the castle Burton Conyngham put down to the high presence of salts in the lime mortar.[541] On his return to Ireland he conducted experiments of cultivating the plant in his gardens at Slane Castle. Following an initial failure due to poor quality seeds, his second attempts were successful and again he liberally sent Banks a specimen from his newly grown crop with suggestions for its introduction at Wyches in Cheshire, where it would thrive on the local salt springs.[542]

Burton Conyngham's method involved sowing the seeds in May (rather than in Spain where it was sown in January) and watering the crops by hand, while applying ample amounts of lime manure. The plants grew well and reached their full height until October, when they were burnt in kilns for ash production. The results of his experiments were subsequently published in the *Transactions of the Dublin Society,* where he had hoped the society would be persuaded to encourage the carrying out

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[539] *Drogheda Journal*, 8 October 1796.
[540] William Burton Conyngham to Sir Joseph Banks, 22 February 1788; William Burton Conyngham to Sir Joseph Banks, 7 May 1791, Joseph Banks papers, NLA, Ms.9/43-43d, http://www.nla.gov.au.
[541] William Burton Conyngham to Sir Joseph Banks, 22 February 1788, Joseph Banks papers, NLA, Ms.9/43-43d, http://www.nla.gov.au.
[542] Ibid.

of further tests and set premiums for the plant's development - an immense benefit to the country's manufacturing industry.[543] Sadly there are no further accounts of the society's own endeavours or the barilla crop at Slane, and just as his flocks were sold off by his heir, the farm garden was also cleared of his endeavours to make way for the pig breeding the marquis excelled at. In one of his last letters to Banks, Burton Conyngham recounts the discovery of a wild beet, good for fattening sheep, by 'the Master Builder of my dockyard' on his island in county Donegal.[544] The dockyard he was referring to was of course the new port of Rutland in the Rosses area of county Donegal, Burton Conyngham's largest and most expensive enterprise on his estates since his uncle's death and the subject of the following section.

'An Irish Pompeii...'[545]: Plans for Rutland, 1781-1788

In order to examine Burton Conyngham's plans for the fishing station on Rutland Island we must retreat to 1781, two years before his Iberian tour. As a member of the Dublin Society since 1768, Burton Conyngham was deeply involved in the society's committee of commerce and was a keen promoter of indigenous industries - as we have already seen in the previous section. He gave various papers on the manufacture and importation of salt for the purpose of curing fish, a scheme subsidized by the society, and his parliamentary reports on the Irish fisheries were the source for Arthur Young's documentation of the fishing industry in 1780.[546] With respect to the Donegal regional industries, Young had noted during his tour that 'the farmers here in general pay half a year's rent with fish, the other half with yarn'.[547] Young was referring to the vast shoals of herring, in addition to mackerel and white

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[543] William Conyngham, 'Letters on the culture of barilla', *Transactions of the Dublin Society*, Vol. 2, Part 1, 1800, 197-204. The original letters were mislaid and published posthumously, once they had been recovered by Reverend Lyster, the secretary of the society.
[544] Harold Burnell Carter (ed), *The sheep and wool correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks 1781-1820*, London, 1979, 155.
[545] 'An Irish Pompeii', *The Irish Builder*, Vol. XIV, 1 August 1872, 209.
[546] Trench, *William Burton Conyngham*, 46-7.
[547] Young, *A tour in Ireland*, Vol. I. London, 184-5.

fish, which invaded the north-western seaboard during the summer months. An opportunity to exploit this natural source expeditiously arose after the death of Henry II in 1781, when the estate fell into Burton Conyngham's hands and a new fishing station was planned for the Rosses (in the barony of Boylagh). In the same year, Burton Conyngham's influence in parliament was evident in the introduction of a new bill amending the 1763 *Act for the encouragement of....fisheries*, which strongly supported the north-western fisheries. A further legislative achievement under Burton Conyngham occurred in 1785, when the bill was amended to remove legal loopholes and to benefit the north-western fisheries once more.[548] The socio-economic history of Rutland has been documented in great detail by Dr. James Kelly and an archaeological history of the Rosses area (from 1700 to the mid-nineteenth century) has been recently presented by the marine archaeologist Wes Forsythe in his doctoral thesis.[549] This section revisits Rutland's history and summarises the evolution and decline of Burton Conyngham's scheme while examining the development of the ground plan for his new town using both extant and new material gleaned from the Conyngham papers in Dublin in addition to private sources.

After a period of relative inactivity in the 1770s of town and village planning by entrepreneurial landlords, a resurgence in the establishment of new settlements in the form of purpose-built industrial villages occurred towards the end of the century. While the early and mid-eighteenth century saw the rise in milling and linen based settlements, the new wave of late-eighteenth century industrial villages was founded on produce varying from cotton, to coal, to fish. Robert Brooke's idealistically titled village of Prosperous in county Kildare and Lord Aldborough's Stratford-on-Slaney in county Wicklow were both planned to support cotton industries and both failed within

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[548] William Burton Conyngham, *Extracts relative to the fisheries on the north-west coast of Ireland*, London, 1787; Kelly, *Donegal fisheries*, 69.
[549] Kelly, *Donegal fisheries*; Wes Forsythe, 'Improving insularity: an archaeology of the islands off the north coast of Ireland in the later historic period, 1700-1847', Ph.D., 2006, University of Ulster.

a relatively short period.[550] The Gandon-designed New Geneva in county Waterford, an optimistic plan for a colony of 1,000 exiled Genevan watchmakers, never went beyond the construction of a set of central structures, eventually used as a military barracks.[551] Rutland would be the first of these villages to exploit a local natural resource, a highly ambitious venture with obvious risks, particularly with an unpredictable fish like the herring, which had a propensity to disappear from its usual haunts due to minor changes to its environment.

Plans for Burton Conyngham's scheme began in 1781 and with the encouragement of earl Temple (lord lieutenant 1782-3), who had also advocated the villages of Prosperous and New Geneva, capital was sought and designs were drafted for the development of the estate. In his will of 1758, Henry II had left the sum of £600 towards improvements on Mountcharles estate, specifying the building of a new lodge and the remaining funds to be invested in plantations.[552] There is no evidence for the fulfilment of these wishes and the monies were probably put towards his nephew's plans for improvements at the nearby Rosses. A sum of £20,000 was raised by Burton Conyngham using the estate rental as a guarantee, and through the means of the fishing bill of 1785, and with his friend John Beresford's support, a petition for a further £20,000 was granted by the Irish parliament.[553] Burton Conyngham's commitment to the Rosses project promised the building of a large harbour and dockyard, warehouses, a custom house, salt and rope works and dwelling houses for new settlers. In the true spirit of improvement, Burton Conyngham's correspondence with Buckingham revealed, not only proposals for a new fishing station within the islands, but also a much grander, master plan for the

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[550] Kelly, *Donegal fisheries*, 64.
[551] For a full account of the history of Prosperous village see James Kelly, 'Prosperous and Irish industrialisation in the late 18th Century', *JCKAS,* Vol. XVI, No. 5, 1985-86, 441-467, for Stratford-on-Slaney see A. K. Longfield, in *JRSAI*, Vol. lxxv, 1945, 24-31, for New Geneva see Edward McParland, *James Gandon, Vitruvius Hibernicus*, London, 1985, 175-77 and P. J. Jupp, New Geneva, *JCAHS*, Vol. LXXV, 1970, 29-35.
[552] Will of Henry Viscount Conyngham, 1758, Conyngham papers, EKA, RU438, T125/1-5.
[553] Kelly, *Donegal fisheries*, 75.

entire estate. The master plan focused on the further development of coastal areas and the county's mining resources, in addition to the building of new highways, which would redirect local produce of Donegal (and adjoining counties) away from Dublin and towards the newly north-western expanded ports.[554] Naturally there was some opposition to his plans, principally from Cork merchants disenfranchised by the encouragement of a domestic fishing industry and locally from Alexander Montgomery, the Conynghams' nemesis, whose family members had acted as their agents on the Donegal estate since the Murray of Broughton days. Montgomery, described in 1782 as 'an impractical and dangerous man', was an MP for the county and an active promoter of the fisheries, establishing a salt-works and 'red-herring house' at Mountcharles for the curing of herrings and other fish.[555] In essence Montgomery disagreed with Burton Conyngham's concept, and advocated the founding of a board to remove the fisheries from under the control of the revenue.[556] His proposals failed to convince the parliament, mainly due to his unpopularity in the house, but Burton Conyngham would later face further unrest from his own tenants who resisted the arrival of outsiders at Rutland as the *Belfast Newsletter* reported:

> 'It is with concern we have been informed that a riotous mob composed of the Rt. Hon. William Burton Conyngham's mountain tenants at the Rosses, lately came down and almost destroyed the new settlements at Rutland, and drove the inhabitants from their dwellings. Mr Conyngham is now there and peace is restored for the present...'[557]

The earliest works on the estate involved the building of a new road, locally known as 'the road to Rutland', which in fact connected the Mountcharles region with the

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[554] Kelly, *Donegal fisheries*, 81.
[555] G.O. Sayles (ed.), 'Contemporary sketches of the members of Irish Parliament in 1782', *PRIA* Vol. 56, 1953-4, 242; Burton Conyngham to John Townshend (then Parliamentary Under-secretary), June 1786, Sydney papers, NLI, Ms. 52, L1-11.
[556] Kelly, *Donegal fisheries*, 72-3.
[557] *Belfast Newsletter*, 5-9 May 1786.

fishing village of Burton's Port. It was described in the *European Magazine* as one of the finest roads in Ireland, laid out by 'a very excellent engineer'.[558] Three inns were established along the route, at Doocharry, Dungloe and Lackbeg near Burton's Port, where a new quay, stores, dwelling houses and another inn were erected to service a ferry point for the islands in the west.[559] Burton Conyngham chose the northern end of the island of Inishmacduirn rather than Burton's Port for the heart of the new fishing station due to its location and navigable channel, described by naval officer and hydrographer Capt. William O'Brien Drury as 'extremely narrow but perfectly secure, being land-locked and much sheltered from all Winds. It is capable of containing a great Number of Vessels... where they lie in great Safety, in not less than 4 or 5 Fathom Water'.[560] **(Fig.6.28)** The island was subsequently renamed Rutland to compliment the flamboyant Charles Manners, 4th duke of Rutland and lord lieutenant (1783-87), a strong supporter of Burton Conyngham's activities as a Wide Street Commissioner. Before his trip to Spain in July 1783 Burton Conyngham mentioned to Arthur Young that he 'had begun building a town' at the Rosses. Two months previously, the Cork architect and sculptor Michael Shanahan had been summoned 'to set forth Col. Cunningham's works'.[561] The reference to Shanahan is the single piece of evidence that Burton Conyngham had engaged an architect to advise him on the design of the new town plan. His connection with the architect may have originated through James Cavanah Murphy, a fellow Cork man, or through Davis Ducart who had met Shanahan in Cork while working at Lotamore House. But Shanahan, who owned a marble works in Cork City and was in the employment of the earl bishop of Derry, was back at the bishop's Downhill estate in county Derry a few months later, and it is unlikely that he ever oversaw the execution of the works

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[558] John Nichols, *Illustrations of the literary history of the eighteenth century*, London, Vol. VI, 1831, 430.
[559] Burton's Port was subsequently improved by his nephew in the nineteenth century and renamed Burtonport.
[560] Captain William O'Brien Drury, *Surveys of the harbours of Rutland and the road of Arran...* Dublin, 1789.
[561] Michael Shanahan to the earl bishop of Derry, May 1783, Hervey-Bruce papers, PRONI, D/1514/1/2/3.

on Rutland. The 'master-builder' of the dockyard at Rutland is frequently mentioned in periodical sources and a clue to his identity in *Faulkner's Dublin Journal* reveals he may have been Burton Conyngham's agent, a Mr Corbet: '... his agent is actually settled at Rutland, and from the known abilities of this gentleman there is no doubt of a rapid progress in the conveniences for trade; a dockyard is already established and a vessel of 60 tons is completed...[562] An indication of the variety of tradesmen sought for the fishing station and the building works is illustrated in the *Dublin Evening Post*: 'merchants, boat-builders, sail makers, rope-makers, coopers employed in fishery; masons, carpenters, smiths, slators [sic] and other persons employed in building'.[563] However, architects, overseers or controlling figures were not alluded to again, and in March 1785, upon his return from the continent, an unimpressed Burton Conyngham expressed his dissatisfaction with the situation:

> I could wish for no other object but for the service of Col. Tarrant, that he might be ordered to go down to county Donegal to find the best situation for making the necessary establishments for the fishery, to plan the docks, quays, and other conveniences for shipping; lay out the necessary roads and point out everything necessary for carrying into creation this great national object.[564]

Tarrant was still in Portugal in the early summer of 1784 and his return date to Dublin is unclear, but we can assume some involvement in the planning of Rutland from Burton Conyngham's correspondence and from the denomination of *Tarrant Street*, one of the earliest streets to be laid out in the town. By the summer of 1786 his agent

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[562] The full transcript from *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 1-3 August, 1786, is transcribed in Rupert O'Cochlain, 'Notes & Queries', *Donegal Annual*, 1974, 71.
[563] I am very grateful to Wes Forsythe for this reference.
[564] William Burton Conyngham to Cornelius Bolton, March 1785, Bolton papers, NLI, Ms. 15,863(4). During the same period Bolton established a little port at the village of Cheekpoint, county Waterford, where he built a textile factory and an inn. He also started a small cobalt mine at Faithlegg. By 1819 the enterprises had failed and he was bankrupt.

Corbet had settled at the town and *Faulkner's Journal* reported that, '...a most regular and beautiful town is laid out, with convenient stores, salt works etc, and near 20 houses...'[565]

Until recently a methodical study of the urban plan and architecture of Rutland has been inhibited by the lack of contemporary proposals, maps, plans and drawings in the manuscript sources. Two maps published by Trench, *Plan of Rutland...1786* from the Montgomery papers and Captain William O'Brien-Drury's bathymetric chart of the Rosses of 1789 commissioned by Buckingham, in addition to the first Ordnance Survey of 1835, have been the sole instruments in the study of Burton Conyngham's plan.[566] **(Fig.6.28 & Fig.6.29)** The correspondence of Burton Conyngham's nephew, marquis Conyngham (thence known as Henry III) between c.1796 and 1826, reveals little in terms of early proposals, but the discovery of a map of the islands (*c.*1812) in the Conyngham papers drawn by the surveyor John Hanlon provides a new tool towards the analysis of extant and newly built structures on Rutland.[567] Further to this, a small collection of maps and plans, drafted for the laying out of the town, in the possession of Jim McGarrigle in Strabane, county Tyrone has thrown some light on the distribution of the older settlement. The maps, which were unearthed by McGarrigle in a house once owned by the Montgomery family, are unsigned and undated, but their watermarks predate the Rutland development and the draughtsman was obviously proficient in the composition of nautical charts. The marine archaeologist, Wes Forsythe, has also used these documents to record an archaeological survey of pre-development structures and the remains of the fishing enterprise on the islands of Rutland, Inishcoo and Edernish and his work presents

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[565] *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 1-3 August, 1786.
[566] Trench, *William Burton Conyngham*, 50; Captain William O'Brien Drury, *Surveys of the harbours of Rutland and the road of Arran...* Dublin, 1789. A bathymetric chart is a sea chart which also depicts coastal land mass. It is the submerged equivalent of an over-water topographical map. O'Brien Drury used Murdoch Mackenzie's survey to furnish the chart.
[567] Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms. 35,392 (4).

valuable information on building methods on all of the islands.[568] Five of the McGarrigle maps relate to the Rosses, their context and their style complement the *Plan of Rutland...1786* published by Trench from the Montgomery papers in 1985.[569] Their significance lies mainly in various depictions of the extant site, illustrating the older fishing station with tenants' names attached and providing Burton Conyngham with an existing survey for his plans for the islands. Some elements of the older settlement are also shown on the *Plan of Rutland...1786,* underneath Burton Conyngham's proposed layout for the new town of Rutland. **(Fig.6.29)** Due to the similar style of hatching and shading to both extant and proposed buildings on the *Plan of Rutland...1786*, Burton Conyngham's superimposed proposal is often unclear. The McGarrigle maps therefore provide a tool for the distinction between extant and proposed structures.

The existing station consisted of small dwellings and larger buildings for the accommodation of boats, fishing equipment and stock. There is no evidence for the nature of the architecture of extant stores or warehouses, but the depiction of the dwellings indicates typical byre-dwellings and the Donegal long-house type. The byre-dwellings were single-storey, one roomed cottages with a central hearth, ultimately partitioned in the nineteenth century to contain a separate living space and a byre for cattle.[570] The repeatedly extended linear cottage evolved to become the Donegal long-house, replete with appendages and adjoining byres. The form remained just one room deep, following the vernacular idiom with a central hearth and opposing entrance and exit doors, but its evolution relied on the separation by a cross-wall of the living quarters from farm animals while under one roof. The dwellings were constructed with unsophisticated and inexpensive methods of rubble stone walling or mud-wall construction, primitive roof trusses and sod or thatched

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[568] Forsythe, *Improving insularity*, 114-6; 143.
[569] Trench, *William Burton Conyngham*, 50, Fig.19.
[570] Forsythe, *Improving insularity*, 118.

roofs. Lighter materials such as plaster-and-lath and wattle-and-daub were commonly used as internal partitions. Costly materials like brick and slate were rarely employed.[571] Curvature in the ridge-line, formed by locking the roof structure with a short collar brace, was a method of protecting the house from the frequently violent north-western gales. **(Fig.6.30)** Some of these vernacular dwellings were not cleared to make way for the new town, and early nineteenth-century surveys show their existence, as we shall see shortly.

Two of the McGarrigle maps, the *Plan of Rutland...1786* and John Hanlon's survey of c. 1812 will be analysed in the study of Burton Conyngham's new town plan. The McGarrigle maps illustrate the first proposals towards an urban plan, indicating preliminary sketches of the residential block of Granby Row and Tarrant and Welles streets on the south-east side of Rutland. One of the undated maps shows a survey of the islands, with line drawings of twelve houses in two terraces of six, broken by a single laneway, at the south-east side of Rutland. **(Fig.6.31)** The nature of this map corroborates the notion that Burton Conyngham, his surveyor and his architect were using extant surveys (possibly drawn by naval officers or marine surveyors) as templates for the preliminary sketches of their proposals. The residential terrace model on **(Fig.6.31)** is repeated on the *Plan of Rutland...1786,* but here it is illustrated in simple block form without plot lines. The author of *Plan of Rutland...1786* is unknown; its rather primitive style indicates that it may have been drafted by a surveyor under instruction from an architect or directly from Burton Conyngham. It is unlikely to have been drawn by a member of the Montgomery family but a plausible candidate was John Hanlon, who was responsible for a survey of the Rosses (*c.*1812) commissioned by Henry III.[572] A survey from 1786 of Stranadarragh, in McGarrigle's Donegal collection, was draughted by Hanlon, whose drawing and

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[571] McCullough, Niall & Valerie Mulvin, *A lost tradition, the nature of architecture in Ireland,* Dublin, 1987, 73.
[572] Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms. 35,392 (4).

hatching techniques reflect the approach depicted in the *Plan of Rutland...1786.* Hanlon was a hydrographer who worked in the admiralty under the marine surveyor Murdoch Mackenzie, a mathematician and author of *A maritime survey of Ireland and the west coast of Great Britain...* in 1776.[573] Regardless of its simplicity, the *Plan of Rutland...1786* is the key to Burton Conyngham's ideas for his new town at the northern end of Rutland Island. Illustrated by a regular grid and following the line of the coast to the north east, the urban plan extended southwards as far as the residential terraces depicted on **(Fig.6.31).** Burton Conyngham's experience as a Wide Street Commissioner in Dublin is demonstrated in the ambitious scale of the town plan and hopes for expansion. In an altruistic gesture streets and quays were denominated with the names and titles of his close friends, and some fellow commissioners and MPs. **(Table 6.1)**

Place	Person
Corbit [sic] Hill:	Corbet was Burton Conyngham's agent at the Rosses
Beresford Quay:	John Beresford, W.S.C.
Foster Street:	John Foster, speaker 1785-1800, W.S.C.
Conyngham Quay:	Family
Duke Street:	Charles Manners, 4th duke of Rutland
Clements Street:	Clements family, possibly after Robert Clements
Pery Street:	Edmund Sexton Pery, speaker 1771-1785
Dutches [sic] Street:	Manners' wife, Mary Isabella Somerset
Conolly Street:	Conolly family, possibly after Thomas Conolly
Gardiner Street:	Luke Gardiner, Lord Mountjoy, W.S.C.
Granby Row:	Manners family
Tarrant Street:	Colonel Charles Tarrant, W.S.C.
Welles Street:	Thomas Knox, Baron Welles

Table 6.1: Rutland Island place names. W.S.C. denotes Wide Street Commissioner.[574]

[573] I am grateful to Jim McGarrigle for this information. O'Brien Drury employed Murdoch Mackenzie's survey to make the bathymetric chart of the *Surveys of the harbours of Rutland and the road of Arran...* Dublin, 1789.

[574] Welles was MP for Dungannon, county Tyrone. His family had connections with the Conynghams since their time in Donegal and like Burton Conyngham he was a strong supporter of Lord Harcourt.

The choice of a rectilinear grid-iron plan is logical given the nature of the chosen site and no better urban solution recommends itself as a scheme for the balanced distribution of land. The virtue of the grid is its unending flexibility; it adapts well to changes in level and affords a variety of vistas of the coastline on Rutland through primary and secondary streets. Notable eighteenth-century Irish examples, in their diverse forms and scales, are at Kilrea county Donegal, Warrenpoint county Down, Portarlington county Laois, Fermoy and Mitchelstown, county Cork. These urban plans were based on grid-iron schemes with a central or asymmetrical open public space, usually in the form of a square or diamond. The contemporaneous plan of New Geneva of *c.*1784 used an approximate symmetry in its rectilinear layout. The highly sophisticated grid supported three main public spaces, a market place on the periphery and an extensive quadrant closing the views to the coast, terminating with a church at either end. Unlike Rutland, New Geneva has a beginning and an end. The block size is regular and elegant on plan; but as McParland points out 'it is arranged too regularly to be picturesque'.[575] **(Fig.6.32)** Of interest is the central vista, on axis with Temple Square, interrupted by another ecclesiastical structure to the north, and also the dimension of the 'town houses' designated for the watchmakers.

Parallels can be drawn here to the Rutland scheme, with its little church breaking the vista on Church Street and the dimension of the neatly laid out terraces on Granby Row, Tarrant Street and Welles Street. **(Fig.6.29)** An emphasis to the gridiron plan of Rutland is made through Duke Street, which acts as a spine or central street to hold secondary streets, 40 or 50 feet in width, running from west to east. An octagon framing a central church breaks the grid asymmetrically at the intersection of Church Street and Duke Street. This set-piece recalls the residential square laid out by the Conynghams at Slane village, but from the plot lines draughted on either side of Church Street and the resulting building spaces, we can infer the octagon planned

[575] Edward McParland, *James Gandon, Vitruvius Hibernicus*, London, 1985,175.

here was to accommodate public buildings rather than residential town houses. We have seen squares of similar character such as at Castlewellan, Johnston and Stratford-on-Slaney in chapter four, but the formality of the Conynghams' designs for Slane and Rutland are outstanding examples of sophisticated provincial urban planning and overshadow similar eighteenth-century set-pieces. The blocks on either side of Duke Street are irregular in scale, devoid of comprehensible internal organisation and garden layout, with the exception of the spaces around Church Street and the southern residential blocks.

The most ambiguous and involved area is concentrated around Conyngham Quay, at the north end of Duke Street, where the superimposed grid clashes with extant structures and the hatching technique blurs the plan. From Hanlon's survey, we know that the larger industrial buildings, combined with dwelling houses, were designated for this area, as we shall see shortly. Further stores were planned for the quays to the east (Conyngham Quay and Beresford Quay) which were to be constructed on reclaimed land to provide sufficient depth for the 300 - 400 boats Burton Conyngham intended to accommodate.[576] Below Beresford Quay, a smaller reclamation scheme can be perceived at Corbit [sic] Hill. On the western firth, a dotted line, the elongation of Clements Street, illustrates more plans for the regularisation of the coastline. The wide axis of Duke Street terminates with the southern residential block of Granby Row the most northern of three terraced streets to house the new settlers from North America and England, whom Burton Conyngham hoped to tempt to Rutland with attractive leases.[577] Rough sketches on the opposite island of Edernish and Inishcoo illustrate the early outlines of a range of warehouses and dwellings to service the new fishing station.

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[576] *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 1-3 August, 1786.
[577] Trench, *William Burton Conyngham*, 56.

Using a combination of Hanlon's map from *c.* 1812 and the first Ordnance Survey of 1835, we can decipher what was eventually built. **(Fig.6.33; Fig.6.34 & Fig.6.35)** Hanlon's map appears to be an exact survey of the islands as commissioned by Burton Conyngham's nephew, the marquis, with a view to reviving the fishing industry in the early nineteenth century.

Ref. Nr.	Legend text
1 & 2	Large and commodious stores and dwelling houses with enclosed yards. Vessels of burthen [sic] may discharge at the quay, at the rear always afloat.
3 & 4	Custom house & custom house garden.
5	Are two good dwelling houses, one at the quay very convenient for a ware-house.
6 & 7	Are four good dwelling houses.
8	Two stores and a dwelling house.
9 & 10	A very fine store & good dwelling house.
13	A street containing 15 small houses.
14	Ship builders yard & pattern house.
15	Good stores and dwelling house enclosed with a wall.
16	A small store.
17	A dwelling house & garden.
18	Walls of salt works unroofed.
19	Two small stores.
---	Thatched cabins shaded black

Table 6.2: Legend to John Hanlon's map of Rutland Island and harbour, c. 1812.

The survey indicates that the majority of vernacular structures shown on the McGarrigle maps were removed, and the main artery of the original gridiron plan, Duke Street, was developed, but of the other planned secondary streets, only Gardiner Street, Conolly Street and Tarrant Street were laid out. Buildings coloured and hatched either red or yellow depict new build, whereas black denotes brye-dwellings and long-houses which were retained. In terms of building mass, the emphasis is at the northern end, where warehouses, dwellings and a custom house were constructed. [578] The northern range of buildings formed a uniform streetscape with their yards looking eastwards onto the Conyngham Quay. As indicated by Hanlon's legend, the large L-shaped warehouses (also perceivable on the *Plan of Rutland...1786*) could hold boats in their open yards - with direct access onto the water - and their upper floors were used for accommodation. **(Legend: *1, 2, 3, & 5*)** This is confirmed by Forsythe's account of buildings, which he describes as three storeys high and slated, with evidence of a vaulted ceiling to the ground floor level, serving for the gutting, salting and packing process of herrings during the fishing season and a cooper's shop for the rest of the year.[579] Within this range were a custom house, with its own garden of *c.* 1 acre **(Legend: *4*)** on the west side of Duke Street, and an inn (known as Sailor's Inn) well-established by the early nineteenth century.[580] The three quays depicted on reclaimed land shown on *Plan of Rutland...1786,* were all constructed accordingly, but as Clements Street was never laid out, the coastline remained as it was on the western firth. In 1787 the *Dublin Evening Post* reported that at the harbour, 'From 300 to 400 vessels have lain perfectly secure during the winter fishery, for 2 or 3 years past, and timber vessels of 700 tons enter the port with ease and there are six fathoms water to lie in'.[581] The new docks at Conyngham and Beresford Quay were built using stone quarried from

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[578] Rutland was given port status to prevent additional journeys to the customs at Ballyshannon. Kelly, *Donegal fisheries*, 80.
[579] Forsythe, *Improving Insularity*, 139-140.
[580] Nassau Forster to Henry III, Conyngham papers, March 1822, NLI, Ms. 35,392 (14).
[581] *Dublin Evening Post*, 28 August 1787. One fathom equals 6 feet, approx 1.8 metres.

islets in the eastern channel and incorporated into the quay walls.[582] A third and more ambitious intervention occurred at Corbet Hill - its construction involved the building of a stone infill bridge to connect the main island with the islet to the east. A large storehouse was built at this promontory; by 1822 it was known as Union Store **(Legend: *9*)**.

At the southern end of the town, Tarrant Street contained 'a street consisting of 15 small houses'. One street of the three planned terraces to be built was Tarrant Street - now known as Duck Street - possibly after Duck Island situated to the north of Rutland **(Legend: *13*)**.[583] Described as fifteen houses, it was in fact built as sixteen - two rows of eight per terrace – and without a breakthrough laneway. The street represents a strong urban element in the plan and proposals for its elevational treatment serve as a means towards understanding the effect of Burton Conyngham's grid in three dimensions. His ambition for improvement through this scheme is expressed in the house type planned for the workers engaged in the fishing industry, which raised the status of the single storey Donegal longhouse to the two storey terrace. Unsigned and undated drawings in the Conyngham papers reveal designs for a terrace *c.* 179 feet long, of uniform facade with two floors, punctuated by a symmetrical scheme of fenestration and centrally placed doorways.[584] **(Fig.6.36)** Shared chimney stacks enliven the roofscape. The rendered walls, timber doors, sash windows and slated pitches reveal the quality of materials to be employed. On plan the arrangement is minimal; the house is of single pile construction, around 17.5 feet deep and free from partitions, with opposing entrance doorways. The rear of the terrace faces onto large garden plots, separated from the row by a narrow laneway. The survival of this single street to the present day shows discrepancies in the

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[582] Forsythe, *Improving Insularity*, 141.
[583] Ibid, 114.
[584] Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms. 35,401 (3). I am very grateful to Wes Forsythe for guiding me to this reference.

realised project but it pays testament to the standard of building executed by Burton Conyngham's builders. **(Fig.6.37)** The main disparity in the facade treatment lies in the fenestration: three square openings to the upper floor and a rectilinear windows on either side of the entrance. A staircase was situated in the middle of the room (rather than on the spine wall where the hearth was placed) providing a central vertical circulation and removing the vernacular idiom of the opposing doors. Granite (particular to the Rosses area) was used in the construction throughout, with the exception of limestone cills and internal leaves of red brick.[585] The remaining buildings on Hanlon's survey were randomly placed houses and stores, in principle fronting the coastline to the east. In addition to the enclosed garden of the custom house **(Legend: *4*)** the arable nature of the area was exploited with generous plots attached to Tarrant Street and to the stores and dwellings to the west of Union Store **(Legend: *8 & 10*)** for cultivation on a domestic scale. On the opposing shores of Edernish and Inishcoo, the structures of the saltworks, ship builder's yard, stores and dwellings intended to service the fishing station at Rutland, complete the picture.

By the summer of 1786 Burton Conyngham's development was in full swing; the fishing enterprise proved to be extremely lucrative in the early years - between 1783 and 1786. It was then worth c. £40,000 and employed 3,300 men, 339 vessels of 16,245 tonnage, and was capable of accommodating an additional 600 boats from other harbours.[586] The herrings were salted and packed to be distributed to larger Irish ports, in addition to meeting Scottish demands.[587] So impressed was Burton Conyngham by the expertise of the fishermen, he suggested to John Townshend that the Rutland fishing station might be a fruitful ground towards the recruitment of naval

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[585] James M'Parlan, *Statistical survey of county Donegal*, London, 1802, 99; Forsythe, *Improving Insularity* 114-6.
[586] Trench, William Burton Conyngham, 56-57.
[587] Nassau Forster to Henry (III) Conyngham, Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms. 35,392 (4).

officers.[588] Herring catches decreased for the first time during the season 1787-8, and although they remained relatively stable for the next few years, so began the immediate decline of the enterprise. Burton Conyngham's last request was for the building of a lighthouse on the nearby island of Arran and a barracks for Rutland, but, by 1793 the vast shoals of herring had vanished and his new town languished in its incomplete state.[589] Reasons for the herrings' withdrawal ranged from - intensive over-fishing in the area and the catching of sprats (young herring) during the summer - to the disturbance of the shoals, frightened by the blasting of rock for the erection of buildings and quays.[590] Dixon's bizarre account of 'sharks with heads like Dutchmen' who drove the herrings from the bay was overshadowed by Wakefield's more reasonable explanation that their departure was the result of 'a red animalcule, perhaps the 'cancer halecum', with which the whole surface of the water seemed to be covered'.[591] This was a naturally occurring algae bloom, commonly known as red-tide, a microscopic planktonic species, which in large concentrations can lead to the death of the prevailing fish and shellfish within its territory.[592] Although Rutland harbour was used for the repair of vessels at the end of the century and had a fully working post office and coast guard, its ultimate downfall was realised in the early nineteenth century when sandstorms ravaged the island, engulfing buildings in their path and virtually destroying the southern half of the settlement.[593] Burton Conyngham's one time boomtown was rendered deserted. The apocalyptic scene is related by the tourists who ventured to Rutland in the first half of the nineteenth century and bleakly illustrated by the first Ordnance Survey of 1835 **(Fig.6.35).**

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[588] Burton Conyngham to John Townshend (Under-Secretary to the Duke of Rutland), April 1786, Sydney papers, NLI, Ms. 52, L1-11.
[589] Burton Conyngham to Buckingham, August 1788, Buckingham papers, BL, Add. Ms. 40,180, f.38.
[590] James M'Parlan, *Statistical survey of county Donegal*, London, 1802, 71-2.
[591] Wakefield, E., *An account of Ireland, statistical and political*, Vol. II, London, 1812, 102; Kelly, *Donegal fisheries*, 82.
[592] 'Red tide threatens marine life along western seaboard', *The Irish Times*, 9 July 2005, 2.
[593] 'The Irish Pompeii', *The Irish Builder*, Vol. XIV, 1 August 1872, 209.

The paltry efforts made by Henry III to resurrect the fisheries after his uncle's death in 1796 included the commission of surveys by John Hanlon, Robert Fraser and others, of the harbours in the Rosses, but on the face of it, his enthusiasm for the trade was lacking. Fraser's proposal that [Milltown] Malbay in county Clare (land inherited from Francis-Pierpoint) would provide a preferable location for 'not only a fishery station, but a considerable town' under the guidance of Nimmo the engineer, was rejected by Henry III whose interests lay primarily in restoration of the mining industry both at the Slane collieries in county Meath and on the vast territories of the Boylagh and Banagh estates.[594]

Burton Conyngham had explored the fruits of mining in county Donegal as early as 1785, pre-empting the *Belfast Newsletter 's* report from Rutland in 1788:

> I am sorry to inform you that our fisheries having been for some years past on the decline, have this year totally failed. But Providence which provides for the wants of all creatures has bountifully supplied us with another equally exhaustive mine of wealth, a mine of the purest quicksilver, which has lately been discovered in this country and promises to become as great a national object as our former inexhaustible mine – the fisheries. The mine is the general conversation: our fishermen are all reconciled to the idea of diving underground for the slippery God, being well accustomed to the slippery tails of the herrings.[595]

Henry III requested Donald Stewart, mineralogist to the Dublin Society, and Thomas Dodd from Bath, to investigate the potential for mining in both counties Meath and

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[594] Robert Fraser to John Benbow (Henry III's lawyer), December 1822, Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms. 35,346 (2). Fraser signed himself civil engineer and political economist. The Clare estates were inherited by Henry III upon the death of Francis Pierpoint Burton in 1787.
[595] Kelly, *Donegal fisheries,* 81; 'Letter from Rutland', *Belfast Newsletter*, 11-15 January 1788.

Donegal. Coal, lead, iron ore, marble, blue slate and limestone were discovered by Stewart on the Donegal estates, and Dodd unearthed coal and some copper deposits in Meath.[596] The Slane Collieries established by Burton Conyngham were briefly revived, but Stewart's exertions in the baronies of Boylagh and Banagh amounted to little more than the leasing of prospective land by the marquis to English miners for £500 per annum.[597] Concerned for the welfare of the tenants at the Rosses since the demise of the fisheries, Forster pressed a reluctant Henry III to commence further studies into the founding of indigenous industries. Suggestions for a woollen stocking industry (then flourishing on the Island of Arranmore) and the establishment of a malt liquor distillery were snubbed by the abstemious marquis.[598] The single most successful endeavour to improve conditions on Rutland (before the sandstorms) was the manufacture of kelp which exploited the maritime source of seaweed. Throughout the nineteenth century the term kelp referred to seaweeds that could be burned to obtain soda ash (primarily sodium carbonate) for use in the soap and glass production – not unlike the function of the barilla plant. A secondary purpose was the production of seaweed manure, a powerful fertilizer, used extensively in the cultivation of fruit and vegetables. Interest came from Edmund Rogers, 'an active bustling little man', who presented proposals for the industry to Henry III, but the most comprehensive account of its manufacture on Rutland was from Bedford Stewart a member of the Dublin Society.[599] Stewart presented a plan, section, and model of the reverberating furnace, otherwise known as the kelp-kiln which could be built on Rutland for £300, using a combination of local and Scottish stone. **(Fig.6.38)** Ironically, Stewart indicated the main advantages of employing kelp meant the

[596] Henry (III) Conyngham to John Benbow, February 1820, Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms. 35,392 (3).
[597] Henry (III) Conyngham to John Benbow, September 1826, Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms. 35,346 (5).
[598] Nassau Forster to Henry (III) Conyngham, Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms. 35,392 (9) & (10).
[599] Henry (III) Conyngham to John Benbow, June 1821, Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms. 35,345 (1).

eventual elimination of the barilla plant, which had failed in Ireland despite Burton Conyngham's endeavours, and which was still imported from Spain.[600]

De la Tocnaye had commented on the ghost town of Rutland after Burton Conyngham's death: 'It looks very funny, but it must not be forgotten that the intention was praiseworthy and that it could not have been foreseen that the herrings would desert the neighbourhood'.[601] His remarks sum up the essence of the enterprise concisely. Burton Conyngham's extraordinary vision and investment was indeed praiseworthy, but, as Kelly has pointed out, he let his enthusiasm for the development of the backwater that was the northwest coast and the potential gains cloud his decision-making, and chose a site and an industry which were not without risks.[602] Like Brooke at Prosperous, Stratford at Stratford-on-Slaney and the enthusiastic founders of New Geneva, Burton Conyngham's grand plans were too elaborate, and ultimately failed through a combination of inexperience and the depletion of the industry's natural source. Nevertheless, Rutland was an outstanding example of late eighteenth-century landlord improvements. Burton Conyngham's most significant contribution in fostering these improvements was the imposing of a very formal urban plan on this very rural Irish landscape, which introduced modern concepts of industrial architecture and a more sophisticated approach to labourers' housing. A revival or an attempt to improve the venture at a later stage was never adopted, leaving this particular legacy of our champion more or less abandoned. Its failure must have been a source of great disappointment to him, but true to form Burton Conyngham was already making other (and perhaps less ambitious) plans.

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[600] Bedford Stewart, 'Explanation of the kelp-kiln', *Transactions of the Dublin Society*, Vol. 2, Part 1, 1800, 205-209. The reuse of stores on Rutland for the purpose of storing kelp, and the position of the respective kilns are illustrated on a naval chart of Boylagh bay, draughted by the hydrographer Captain G.A. Bedford in 1854 (published 1862) in the British Library, maps, section 1/1879.
[601] Chevalier de la Tocnaye, *A Frenchman's walk through Ireland 1796-7: Translated from the French of de La Tocnaye by John Stevenson*, Belfast, 1984, 191.
[602] Kelly, *Donegal fisheries,* 81-83.

Final projects before death & Burton Conyngham, the private man, *c.*1786-1796.

By the time signs of deterioration were evident at the Rutland fisheries, Burton Conyngham had already moved on and was ensconced in new projects in Dublin and at Slane in the last years before his death. The best known of these was the making of a new entrance to the city from the west, in his capacity as a Wide Street Commissioner. Burton Conyngham was elected to the commission in 1772, amongst a powerful group of men of discrimination and taste, many of whom were his close friends, sharing his architectural and antiquarian interests. These included familiar names previously mentioned in this study, some of them complimented with street names at the new village on Rutland Island: John Foster, William Colville, Lord Carlow, David La Touche, Luke Gardiner, Charles Tarrant, and the most active of all, the pervasive John Beresford. The history of the Wide Street Commissioners is well-known, and for the purpose of this very brief study of Burton Conyngham's undertakings, it must be assumed that the reader is acquainted with the work of the commission in Dublin during the late eighteenth century.[603] Like Beresford, Burton Conyngham was highly effective in his role as a commissioner, attending numerous weekly meetings and frequently occupying the chair. The earliest plan involving by Burton Conyngham was the widening of Dame Street from the Parliament House to Dublin Castle initiated in 1772, a scheme based on an alliance with David La Touche, both men members of a parliamentary committee founded for that purpose. From 1778-80 he served on the Paving Board (set up in 1773 for 'paving, cleaning, lighting, draining and improving the streets') and in 1785 he was requested to ask his architect James Wyatt (then at Slane) for his advice on proposals for buildings to

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[603] For the work of the Wide Street Commissioners see Edward McParland, 'The Wide Street Commissioners: Their importance for Dublin architecture in the late 18th – early 19th century', Vol. IV, *BIGS*, 1972, 1-31; Edward McParland, 'Strategy in the planning of Dublin, 1750-1800', in P. Butel & L.M. Cullen (eds.), *Cities & merchants: French & Irish perspectives on urban development, 1500-1900*, Dublin, 1986, 97-107; Niall McCullough, *A vision of the city: Dublin and the Wide Street Commissioners*, Dublin, 1991.

front the newly laid out streets.[604] Minutes of the commission reveal discerning judgements made by Burton Conyngham regarding the projection of Westmoreland Street, the new street projected to connect Gandon's Carlisle Bridge with the college; his key contribution was the stipulation in the layout that its axis should terminate at college green.[605]

In a different part of Dublin the inception of Conyngham Road began as early as 1786, generated by proposals for the widening of the existing Barrack Street, westwards from the Royal Barracks to Island Bridge.[606] The first section of Barrack Street, as far as Park Gate, was enlarged at Burton Conyngham's own expense, 'for a sum not exceeding £30' with a view to a further extension as far as Island Bridge.[607] In May 1787 the scheme for a newly widened stretch from Park Gate to Island Bridge was approved by the commissioners; at the commission meeting with Burton Conyngham were Colville, Gardiner and La Touche. A small parcel of land let out by Burton Conyngham, between the deer park wall and the existing road, was given to the commission, in addition to a segment of the park released by his friend the duke of Rutland, to allow for the expansion. The road was built for £100 and in November 1790 it was resolved the newly enlarged stretch should be called Conyngham Road, serving as a grand entrance to the city along the river Liffey from the Mullingar Turnpike.[608] The minutes reveal little else concerning the road and Burton Conyngham may have anticipated a more elegant extension of the city quays, with his riverside boulevard enriched and enlivened at a later stage. Happily, he did not live to see the insignificant nature of development conceived there.

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[604] 20 June 1765 – 3 July 1779 WSC minute books; 10, 24, 31 May & 10, 20, December 1785, WSC minute books, Dublin City Archive.
[605] 1 February 1793, WSC minute books, Dublin City Archive.
[606] 18 August 1786, WSC minute books, Dublin City Archive. Maps and drawings showing plans and sections of the proposed Conyngham Road are currently in conservation in the Dublin City Archive.
[607] 18 May 1787, WSC minute books, Dublin City Archive.
[608] 26 November 1790, WSC minute books, Dublin City Archive.

Once Conyngham Road was in place, Burton Conyngham's attendance at the Wide Street Commission waned considerably, possibly due to ill health or time expended at Slane, where further projects were undertaken at the castle by architects Charles Henry Sillery and Francis Johnston. Sillery was a local architect, born into a well-established family at Slane, who was responsible for repair work to a bridge on the Dundalk to Ardee road in 1822 and associated with the Glebe House built at Slane village in the early nineteenth century as we have seen in chapter four.[609] In 1792 he produced two designs for ancillary buildings at Slane Castle entitled 'Plan and elevation of intended offices for Lord Conyngham in Slane'.[610] Text attached to the drawings elucidates the technical issues of stables and farmyard design, but of greater interest is the allusion to Lord Conyngham, Burton Conyngham's nephew Henry III and future marquis, who may have already been marking his territory at Slane. Aware of Francis Johnston's presence at Blayney Balfour's nearby Townley Hall in county Louth, Burton Conyngham seized the opportunity to invite the architect to present proposals for the castle in c.1794-5. These projects marked the beginnings of Johnston's illustrious career, imbued in its early days by a distinctive Wyatt influence.[611] In his architectural memoir (in the form of a letter to J.N. Brewer) recounting his career from 1784 onwards, Johnston notes that he had, 'planned and executed several detached works, about the castle of Slane, as the Gothic Gate opposite the mill, the steeple of the church and finished the hall, staircase and entrance to the Castle'.[612] **(Fig.6.39)** He was the first Irish born architect to be engaged at Slane, his residence at the castle and the village indicating the change in attitude towards the employment of Irish architects over their foreign contemporaries.

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[609] Notes by H.A. Richey on the Sillery family of Slane, NLI, Ms. 8,316.
[610] NLI, Architectural Drawing Collection, AD 9-65.
[611] For Francis Johnston see Edward McParland, 'Francis Johnston architect, 1760-1829', *BIGS*, Vol. XII, 1969, 62-139.
[612] 'A letter from Francis Johnston' (1820) Courtesy of Armagh Museum, *BIGS*, Vol. VI, 1963, 1-5.

A short and final episode in Burton Conyngham's life was his collaboration with Bartholomew Duhigg, a barrister and junior librarian at King's Inns, and their endeavours to record the extant public records of Ireland, 'as those sacred links which knit the islands'.[613] Duhigg was a vociferous Whig and an active writer of pamphlets from 1786 to 1810, notably on Irish legal topics and frequently under the pseudonym of William Russell. His *piéce de resistance* was a *History of the King's Inns*, published in three parts in 1806, a rambling and distorted account of the society which was somewhat clouded by his political persuasions.[614] Duhigg was introduced to Burton Conyngham by fellow antiquarian, Edward Ledwich, whose editing of Grose's *Antiquities of Ireland*, has been referenced by critics as the birth of modern Irish historiography. Burton Conyngham triggered the barrister's interest in the preservation of Irish public records, a project that would preoccupy him for the rest of his life. The intention was to publish a tome on Irish public records along the lines of Thomas Rymer's fifteen volumes of the *Foedera,* produced at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Rymer was a critic and historian (appointed historiographer to William III in 1692), and assigned to publish records of English alliances, treaties and any other foreign transactions from 1101 onwards, using manuscripts and documents from the royal archives and libraries.[615] Duhigg was encouraged to do the same and preliminary research for the project began in various Irish archives and libraries. Upon the presentation of their scheme to government (while seeking funds for a more structured investigation into the public records) they encountered immediate opposition from Duhigg's nemesis, John Fitzgibbon, earl of Clare. Fitzgibbon, a prominent unionist and attorney-general, doubted Duhigg's political motives, referring to Duhigg's *Letters of William Russell...* published in 1786. This was a two-hundred page pamphlet criticizing Fitzgibbon's prosecution of the county Dublin sheriff Henry

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[613] Bartholomew Duhigg, *Letter to Charles Abbot on the assimilation of Irish to English Law and the arrangement of Irish records*, Dublin, 1810.
[614] Colum Kenny, 'Counsellor Duhigg: Antiquarian and activist', *Irish Jurist*, Vol. XXI, 1986, 300-25.
[615] Arthur Sherbo, 'Thomas Rymer (1642/3-1713): Literary critic and historian', *DNB*, Oxford, 2004, Vol. 48, 495-7.

Stevens Reilly, who had called a meeting at the request of the Volunteers to push for parliamentary reforms. Burton Conyngham, unstirred by the earl's protest, pressed Duhigg to continue with his research, resolving to raise funds by alternative methods. Duhigg remained doggedly committed to the project, despite Burton Conyngham's sudden death in 1796, and citing his collaborator as his inspiration, he published two more pamphlets on the matter, *Letter to Charles Abbot on the assimilation of Irish to English Law and the arrangement of Irish records,* and *Letter to the Rt. Hon. Lord Manners on the expediency of an immediate and separate record commission for Ireland*, eventually wining a lengthy campaign for the establishment of an Irish Record Commission in 1810.[616]

Until recently, little was known of Burton Conyngham's private life, but a clearer picture of his character emerges now with every new anecdote. A volatile temperament is revealed in dealings with architects and, from time to time, with those closest to him. Passion, tenacity and patriotism are obvious attributes, not only from Falkland's personal parliamentary accounts, but also from the nature of his endeavours at home and abroad. George Hardinge's apt allusion to *Maecenas* is upheld by the freehanded generosity shown to a notable list of artists and architects, whom Burton Conyngham patronised throughout his whole life.[617] The full-blooded Irishman showed his true political colours when blackballed from Daly's club and also in the many duels fought, either on election grounds, or simply for honour. This schism from Daly's precipitated the foundation of the Kildare Street Club, eventually accommodated in Burton Conyngham's former property on the east side of Kildare

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[616] Colum Kenny, 'Counsellor Duhigg: Antiquarian and activist', *Irish Jurist*, Vol. XXI, 1986, 300-25; Colum Kenny, Bartholomew Duhigg (*c.* 1751-1813), antiquary and barrister, *DNB*, Oxford, 2004, Vol.17, 150-60.

[617] John Robert Scott, 'Falkland', *Principal Characters of the Irish Commons*, Dublin, 1789, 69-71. See Appendix C.

Street, together with the adjacent building purchased by David La Touche on behalf of the members in 1782.[618]

With duelling at its height in Ireland in the latter decades of the eighteenth century, electoral duels were not uncommon, particularly at a local level and Burton Conyngham did not disappoint. Once the polls were closed on the general election of 1776 (during the contest for county Clare) Burton Conyngham sought to settle a score and challenged Dillon Massy, who was reluctant to yield the burgesship of the Ennis borough.[619] The duel was relatively modest; only one shot was fired and both parties emerged uninjured. Arthur Young's account of his host's nocturnal duels is more stimulating, implying a certain skill in the art of *rapier* fencing:

> He had great care and elegance, united with a measure of roughness, which may be attributed to a sort of personal courage which was apt to boil over. This led him into many quarrels, and not a few duels, one of which was fought across a table of no great length from end to end, and, strange to tell of in Ireland, several of the party stood near enjoying the sport.[620]

Unlike his uncles, Williams and Henry II, we are led to believe that Burton Conyngham did not enjoy the company of women, and he remained unmarried and (purportedly) childless until the end. Hardinge complained of the want of the fairer sex at an evening of entertainment at Harcourt Place: 'The House is a very noble one – the dinner was magnificent & the wine capital in variety as well as richness & flavour - *but we had no women!* And if they are absent I enjoy nothing - I drank two

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[618] R. B. McDowell, *Land & learning; Two Irish clubs,* Dublin, 1993, 44.
[619] James Kelly, *'That damn'd thing called honour': Duelling in Ireland, 1570-1860*, Cork, 1995, 141-2. Burton Conyngham sat for the borough of Ennis between 1776 and 1783.
[620] Matilda Betham-Edwards (ed.), *The autobiography of Arthur Young,* London, 1898, 67-8.

bottles at least & we did not rise till 11.'[621] From the society pages, and from the scandalmongers, some gossip does filter through: a romance with a Miss C---e was reported in 1787 and the yearning of Miss Herbert (a niece of the earl of Pembroke) to settle at Slane with her 'dear Colonel Cunningham' was hotly discussed by Lady Louisa Stuart and Lady Carlow - the latter's husband a close friend of Burton Conyngham.[622] After his death in 1796, a Mrs. Robert Hill saw fit to fill a few pages with her talents, in a dreary poem addressed to his nephew, Henry III, entitled *A poem, to the memory of the truly-Right-Honourable William Burton Conyngham, lately deceased...*[623] A flagrant woman, Mrs. Hill was author of at least eight such publications, and she played a part in the *Beaux' Stratagem* in Brighton in 1786, for which she later wrote a fascinating *Apology* for her behaviour.[624] A friend of the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Fitzherbert, she claimed to have adopted her husband's name 'for distinction sake'.[625] It would appear that she had encountered Burton Conyngham in Paris, and was liberally offered his sanctuary when arrested upon her arrival in Ireland, an occurrence caused by the actions 'of a low malicious jealous woman'.[626] As the title suggests, Mrs. Hill's ode to Burton Conyngham is not exactly *poesie d'amour* but rather a maudlin account of his life. At the heart of the poem is high praise for his honour, patronage and endeavours – 'to succour and improve was his delight' - but the piece adds little to our understanding of the man.[627]

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[621] George Hardinge, 'Two tours in Ireland, in the years 1792 and 1793', Lough Fea, Shirley papers and quoted in Trench, *William Burton Conyngham*, 57.
[622] *Freeman's Journal*, 31 May 1787. I am very grateful to Edward McParland for this information.
[623] Mrs. Robert Hill, *A poem, to the memory of the truly-Right-Honourable William Burton Conyngham, lately deceased...*, Dublin, 1796. I am very grateful to Toby Barnard for the full text of the poem. See also Appendix G.
[624] Mrs. Robert Hill, *Mrs. Hill's apology, for having being induced, by particular desire, and the most specious allurements, that could tempt female weakness, to appear in the character of Scrub, Beaux Stratagem, for one night only...* London, 1787.
[625] Mrs. Robert Hill, *A poem, sacred to freedom*, London, 1800. I am very grateful to Andrew Carpenter for his comments on Mrs Hill.
[626] Mrs. Robert Hill, *A poem, to the memory of the truly-Right-Honourable William Burton Conyngham, lately deceased...*, Dublin, 1796, 12.
[627] Ibid, 15.

Burton Conyngham was no stranger to the stage himself. The inimitable Lady Louisa Conolly regaled her sister in 1775, with tales of private performances held at Castletown, where the Gardiners outshone their fellow players in their amateur dramatics: 'Their two plays were the prettiest things I ever saw, and incomparably well acted. Mr Jephson and Mrs Gardiner, I think, are equal to any actors (Garrick excepted) I ever saw. Colonel William Burton, William Gardiner, Robert Gardiner, Ned Malone, Miss Graham and... The Gardiners all very good, which made the plays go off vastly well.'[628] And again the society pages disclose glimpses of the amateur thespian, announcing his role in a comedy, the farce of *Lothe*, at the Countess of Ely's Attic Theatre in Dublin. Treading the boards with Burton Conyngham this time were Lord Tyrone, Lord Portarlington, Lady Carhampton, Lady Kingsborough, Lady Antrim and Lady Glandore.[629] A final, and not unsurprising, occupation pursued by Burton Conyngham was the world of horse racing and hunter trials, usually held at the Curragh track.[630] This recreation was enjoyed with yet another social set comprising Robert and Thomas Lambert, the Earl of Drogheda, Lord Westport, Charles O'Hara, Thomas Conolly (who appeared to win every sweepstake) and Burton Conyngham's close friend Robert Clements, who was less successful - at least at the post chase gambling tables:

> I won every day upon the turf, backing the field against the crack horse, but was every night broke at the round table. We had a very good party – never dined less than twelve at the hunt room... [Conolly] won about £300...at the hazard table... Dublin is now deserted. All at the Park desire their compliments to you.[631]

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[628] Brian Fitzgerald (ed.), *Correspondence of Emily Duchess of Leinster*, 1731-1814, Vol. III, Dublin,1957, 112.
[629] *The London Times*, 15 May 1789.
[630] *Belfast Newsletter*, 21 September 1770.
[631] Robert Clements recounts a recent Curragh meeting to Burton Conyngham in June 1764. Quoted in A.P.W. Malcomson, *Nathaniel Clements, Government and the Governing Elite in Ireland, 1725-75*, Dublin, 2005, 398.

Part and parcel of the good life were the epicurean evenings, the flow of wine and its heavy consequences. And Burton Conyngham did not escape these bacchanalian nights. Yet again the judicious Hardinge provides us with a frank account of the effects on his host whom he found 'all over humours on the face and legs – this comes of your eating and drinking I could have said to him – but the physicians tell him it's without, and will go off. He is agreeable and kind as ever.'[632]

Henry (III) Conyngham inherits the Conyngham estates, 1796-1821.

Burton Conyngham died in May 1796, 'surrounded by his family and by an army of apothecaries, surgeons and doctors' at his house at Rochestown county Wicklow.[633] His corpse was moved later to his house on Harcourt Place before interment. Lord Westmoreland remarked to Beresford upon the unexpected loss: 'I was very much hurt at the news of the death of poor Conyngham; was it not very sudden?' [634] His inheritance was initially left unsettled due to the displacement of his will, drawn up in August 1782, a year after Henry II's death. The will, which had been common knowledge among his successors for some time, stipulated his share in Slane Mill, the Welsh estates of Cardigan and Carmarthen, and £8,000 should be left to the younger nephew, Francis Nathaniel Burton, while the remainder of his estate would pass to his brother Francis-Pierpoint. Burton Conyngham was predeceased by his brother in 1787 and the residue of the estate then passed directly to the elder nephew Henry III, the future and first marquis of the family.[635] The mislaid will was eventually recovered (concealed inadvertently in Burton Conyngham's library) by

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[632] George Hardinge, 'Two tours in Ireland, in the years 1792 and 1793', Lough Fea, Shirley papers, and quoted in Trench, *William Burton Conyngham*, 57-8.
[633] Chevalier de la Tocnaye, *A Frenchman's walk through Ireland 1796-7: Translated from the French of de La Tocnaye by John Stevenson*, Belfast, 1984, 38.
[634] Beresford, William (ed.), *The correspondence of the Rt. Hon. John Beresford*, Vol. I, London, 1854, 124-5.
[635] Will of William Burton Conyngham, 8 August 1782, Conyngham papers, EKA, RU438, T126/2. Francis Nathaniel Burton was under the guardianship of his uncle since his father's death in 1787 as instructed by Francis-Pierpoint in his will of 1779, Conyngham papers, EKA, RU438, T126/1.

Austin Cooper who had been directed to manage Burton Conyngham's affairs.[636] The exact date of the document's retrieval is unclear, but by the autumn of 1796 his nephews had begun to remove every trace of their uncle from Slane. Carpenters were prevented from continuing their work for Francis Johnston at the castle and Robert Doolittle, an auctioneer, was sent from Dublin to evaluate Burton Conyngham's furniture and other belongings.[637] On 17th of November 1796 the entire contents of the castle were auctioned off:

> To be sold at auction on 17th November 1796 at the castle of Slane. All the household furniture of the Rt. Hon. William Burton Conyngham consisting of mahogany, dining, card, breakfast, sideboard and spider tables; mahogany chairs stuffed in leather, Chinese chairs in linen, a very elegant set of cabriole chairs and two window stools stuffed in silk damask with window curtains to match; a variety of rush and oak chairs; pier and dressing glasses [mirrors]; mahogany four post beds with chintz and cotton curtains - with window curtains to match; a variety of mahogany four post and field bed heads quite new, a number of featherbeds blankets, quilts and sheets. A very curious inlaid cabinet; a great variety of useful ornamental china, delft and glass; two clocks, several pieces of elegant furniture, chintz and cotton uncut; a very great variety of articles too numerous to insert. Six pence to the pound will be allowed for prompt payment on any sum exceeding £20, or 3 months credit on approved security. The sale is to begin at 11 and will continue from day to day until all sold. Sold by order of Lord Viscount Conyngham.[638]

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[636] John Nichols, *Illustrations of the literary history of the eighteenth century*, Vol. VI, London, 1831, 429-444.
[637] Letter book of Slane Mill, 1789 - 1798, Townley Hall papers, NLI, Ms 9,521.
[638] *Drogheda Journal*, 15 November 1796.

Cooper was left to deal with other matters, including the collection of Burton Conyngham debts, of which there were a few. As treasurer of the Royal Irish Academy, from 1785 to 1796, Burton Conyngham was often omitted from the council for lack of attendance and was somewhat unreliable with his figures. At the time of his death the accounts indicated that a sum of £978..4s..8d., plus interest at 4 per cent was owed to the academy. Considering his overtly generous nature it may be assumed that this was an oversight on his part. The academy did accept the error and recovered the amount due through Cooper.[639] As previously mentioned in this chapter, various individuals in London were also owed outstanding monies, namely the sculptor John Bacon and a handful of booksellers on New Bond Street in London.[640] These debts were subsequently recovered from the estate by his nephew's lawyer John Benbow. As well as the removal of Burton Conyngham's goods and chattels, his extensive library of books (including some rare editions) and drawings was left at the disposal of Cooper.

Burton Conyngham's remarkable collection serves as a fitting metaphor for his life and his pursuits, its contents comparable with those of other eighteenth-century antiquarians with specific architectural interests, namely Lord Charlemont and Wogan Brown.[641] Everything that we have seen from Burton Conyngham as antiquarian, improver and socialite is represented here: treatises on agricultural improvements, botany, engineering, commerce, poetry, theatre scripts, and art-based subjects - with books and essays on architecture and antiquities preeminent. Burton Conyngham's profound understanding and fascination with architecture is reflected in the classic sources he accumulated from Vitruvius and Palladio to Félibien and Semple. In 1810, Cooper went on to sell his old friend's library by auction at Slane

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[639] I am very grateful to Peter Harbison for this information.
[640] John Benbow to Henry (III) Conyngham, 1796, Conyngham papers, NLI, Ms 35,344(1).
[641] *Sale catalogue of the library of William Burton Conyngham*, TCD, Ms. RR. K. 82; Christine Casey, 'Architectural books in eighteenth-century Ireland', *Eighteenth-century Ireland*, Vol.III, 1988, 105-113.

Castle. Recounting the impending event to his brother, Cooper alludes to Henry III's shame for the disposal of his uncle's life and implies that the task was to be undertaken by himself and Col. Vallancey:

> My bargain with Vallance is to go Halves, he taking all the trouble which in fact I could not attend to, & paying Half the Expenses of the catalogue & not charging Com^{m}. on the sale of 10%... All are to be sold & I buy what I like, but it is not to be known that we have anything to say to the business, but merely selling for Col. B. & he [Henry III] has stipulated that they are not to be declared as the Library of his Uncle and as he fears any imputation by doing so... If I choosed [sic] to take the House Books Pictures & all I am sure I would get a bargain...[642]

Austin Damer Cooper later asserted his grandfather's purchase of 'all Colonel Conyngham's drawings, Books and works of art' at the auction, much of which was disposed of by Cooper's son 'who unlike his father, was devoid of all literary taste'.[643] Of course this description was a slight exaggeration; Cooper did purchase the drawings and a considerable amount of art-based books, but not all of them. Present at the sale were notable bargain hunters, among them Lord Lismore, Lady Radcliffe, the bishop of Down, Blayney Townley Balfour III, the ubiquitous Dr. Beaufort and the earl of Normanton, who paid the exorbitant sum of £210.8s.9d. for seventeen volumes of Piranesi's etchings 'of the finest impressions, expressly picked for the late proprietor, who was a benefactor of Piranesi'.[644]

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[642] Austin Cooper to his brother in Tipperary, January 1803. I am very grateful to Edward McParland for allowing me access to his copy of the letter.
[643] Quoted in Harbison, *Antiquities*, 217.
[644] *Sale catalogue of the library of William Burton Conyngham*, TCD, Ms. RR. K. 82. Also of interest in the auction were a set of maps and survey of the Slane and Donegal estates by Taylor & Skinner and others. The sale of these manuscripts is particularly regrettable.

Once Burton Conyngham's two nephews had marked out their territories on their new estates, a period of neglect ensued, particularly at Slane where the tenants' pleas for reform were ignored and the castle lay abandoned. Tourists who were inclined to visit Slane, were dismayed by the dereliction during that period:

> We then visited the wooded hills planted by the late Col. Burton Conyngham, a man of great taste... It is situated in a rich valley on the Boyne, but is totally deserted by its present possessor, Lord Conyngham. The weeds predominate over all the grounds, and a picturesque ruin of a church in the park is now hid by the trees... We could not help regretting, that what had been the pride and delight of one man should be so neglected by his successor.[645]

Interest finally came at the beginning of the nineteenth century when Henry III and his wife installed themselves at the castle, initiating a revival of the farmlands on the demesne and carrying out new interventions at the castle. Before we look at these developments it is worth unravelling Henry III and Elizabeth Denison's story.

Henry III was born in 1766, the elder of twin boys born to Francis-Pierpoint and his wife Elizabeth Clements. **(Fig.6.40)** He succeeded to his father's title upon Francis-Pierpoint's death in 1787, and two years later he was created 1st Viscount Conyngham of Mount Charles. For his efforts in raising the Londonderry regiment he was created Earl Conyngham in 1797 and through his strong support of the Act of Union he held the office of Representative Peer from 1801 until his death. The early nineteenth century saw successive promotions through the army ranks, and in 1816 he gained for the Conyngham family, the prestige of the title of Marquis Conyngham - in addition to the titles of 1st Earl of Mount Charles and 1st Viscount Slane. His elevation to the marquisate was attributed to his wife's status as the royal mistress

[645] C.M. Howard, *Reminiscences for my children*, Vol. IV. Carlisle, 1838, 37-8.

and a final title, Baron Minister of Minster Abbey, was bestowed on him in the year of the coronation of George IV. He married Elizabeth Denison in July 1794, the daughter of a London merchant banker, and she bore him five children who survived to adulthood. Their second son became second Marquis Conyngham and the third, Albert Denison, succeeded to Elizabeth's brother's fortune and was created Baron Londesborough. Henry III was made a general in 1830, and died two years later at his house in Hamilton Place, Piccadilly. He was buried in the new family vault at St Mary's Church, at Patrixbourne, Kent. [646]

For all her affected piety, Elizabeth Denison could count Lord Ponsonby and Tsar Nicholas I among her lovers until 1820, when she ousted the sixty-year old Lady Isabella Hertford and won the prince regent's affections. The prince's secretary Sir John McMahon noted, 'After a connexion of three years her ladyship sojourned a while on the Continent... where she brought forth a daughter, which many said was very little like her lawful husband and was exceedingly like someone else'.[647] He was referring to Charlotte, born after 1811; she is listed in *Debrett's Peerage of England, Scotland, and Ireland* but omitted from all other sources for the peerage.[648] Regarded a beauty in her younger days, Elizabeth had become an ample woman by the time she fell under George's gaze. Earning the nicknames *La Regnante & the Vice Queen*, the corpulent middle-aged pair became a favourite source of public amusement, their antics caught drolly by the caricaturists of the day. The gossip she generated and her alienation by the Duke of Wellington and the wives of George's ministers caused her considerable distress, an anxiety calmed by the love-struck King with the endowment of controversially grand gifts of jewellery, including some gems from the crown jewels. Although Elizabeth was left the King's plate and jewels

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[646] Hon. Vicary Gibbs (ed.), *Complete Peerage,* London, 1913, Vol. III, 412-413.
[647] *Secrets of the Castle!! The Life of the Marchioness of Coy-n-h-m, first lady of the Royal Bedchamber, and private companion to the late G--e IV,* London, *c.*1830, 4-5.
[648] *Debrett's Peerage of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, 17th Edition, London, 1826, Vol. II, 872.

upon his death in 1830, she declined the bequest, keeping only her original souvenirs which eventually became part of the Conyngham family's legacy. **(Fig.6.41)** She died at the age of ninety-two at her home, Bifrons, in Patrixbourne, Kent, on 11 October 1861. Her only surviving son Francis Nathaniel II, and the second marquis, inherited an estate worth just under £200,000 in addition to the family jewels. The marquis was lord chamberlain to William IV until the King's death in 1837, upon which he broke the news of her accession to the young Victoria. He retained his post until 1839.[649]

Little is known of Henry III's character but considering his political opinions and his military achievements it may be assumed that he was a forceful, persuasive, and perhaps, a greedy man, who was reluctant to tend to the needs of his newly acquired tenants either in Slane or Donegal as we have already seen. In 1801 he hired an English agricultural improver, Richard Parkinson, to assess his 500-acre farm on the Slane demesne, with a view to reviving what he considered to be an unsuccessful enterprise. Parkinson was the author of various treatises on agricultural improvements including *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Rutland (1808)* and *Treatise on the breeding and management of live stock... (1810)*. He encountered Henry III at a cattle fair in Ballinasloe, county Galway, where the viscount was judging hogs (a favoured animal) and Parkinson, who was at a loose end since a trip to North America to promote his first book, *The Experienced Farmer...* (1798), willingly took on the assignment and spent two years in Ireland, making observations on Irish practices and local traditions.[650] What he found at the farmlands of Slane Castle shocked him:

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[649] Mark Odlum, 'Slane Castle, Co. Meath', *Country Life*, 17 July 1980, 198-201; 24 July 1980, 278-81; 31 July 1980, 382-5; K.D. Reynolds, 'Elizabeth [née Denison] Conyngham', *DNB*, Oxford, 2004. Vol. 13, 76-8.

[650] Richard Parkinson, *The English practice of agriculture...*, London, 1806, 5.

> Where barley, oats and potatoes once had grown...now weeds had grown, the roots of which were 3 feet underground, while the part above ground was as thick as a man's leg: from their strength they had obstructed the plough, which had passed them like the roots of trees. Other than at the Big Park, all of the tillage was in very poor state: a continued bed of couch [couch grass on light soils], and so covered with stones as to resemble a pavement broken up. Such rubbish altogether in one farm I had never seen, and I was at a loss where to begin my task.[651]

Parkinson entered into a partnership with Henry III and between them they set about restoring the land to tillage as well as engaging in domestic husbandry, raising bullocks, boars, heifers and pigs. In 1802 Robert Thompson was able to comment that earl Conyngham's 'sow is the most beautiful animal of the kind that I ever saw.'[652]

Henry III's vanity was cast in improvements at Slane Castle where he created a spectacular ballroom in 1812, in his uncle's former library [the Round Room]. The circular space was adorned with full-length mirrors, set between the bookcases on opposing walls, allegedly a feature whereby the King could admire himself in full pirouette when he visited. It was well acknowledged however, that Henry III had installed the features for his own adulation. The design of the ballroom has been attributed to Thomas Hopper junior, a favourite of the Prince of Wales, who built Craven Cottage in Fulham and the Carlton House conservatory on Pall Mall. Designs made for Dromoland Castle were his first Irish commission, which may have coincided with his work at Slane.[653] To embellish the park, with its arboreal

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[651] Richard Parkinson, *The English practice of agriculture...*, London, 1806, 5-9.
[652] Robert Thompson, *Statistical survey of county Meath...*, Dublin, 1802, 332.
[653] Mark Odlum, 'Slane Castle, Co. Meath', *Country Life*, 17 July 1980, 198-201; 24 July 1980, 278-81; 31 July 1980, 382-5.

amphitheatres and its lush avenues planted by Burton Conyngham and John Sutherland, Henry III's most worthy and lesser-known endeavour to make improvements at Slane Castle was the engagement in 1818 of Lewis Kennedy, an English landscape architect and champion of the *Picturesque*.

Sutherland had been criticised for his attempts at Slane to blend the new demesne landscape with its natural surroundings and Henry III had high hopes for Kennedy's elaborate designs.[654] Kennedy was born *c.*1789, son of John Kennedy who began the renowned Vineyard Nursery at Hammersmith with James Lee, providing plants and advice to Empress Josephine at Malmaison. The young Kennedy continued his father's work at Malmaison and also at Navarre in Normandy, before establishing himself at offices on St. James's Street near Piccadilly. Among his works were design portfolios for Oddington Park, Gloucestershire; Trent Park, Middlesex; Chiswick and Wanstead House, London, where he laid out the American garden. His son George Penrose Kennedy assisted him at Drummond Castle where he became land agent in 1818, coinciding with his work at Slane.[655] Kennedy's portfolios were very highly considered and Slane was no exception; splendidly bound in blue leather it comprised 16 pages of text, 10 colour plates, 2 line-and-wash plates, interspersed with various little ink sketches, replete with rustic follies and strolling couples. The drawings were not depictions of the extant landscape with appropriate projections, but took the form of illustrated proposals for the demesne in Kennedy's favoured approach, clearly inspired by his client's spectacular setting: 'To this well-chosen site

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[654] Mark Odlum, 'Slane Castle, Co. Meath', *Country Life*, 17 July 1980, 198-201; 24 July 1980, 278-81; 31 July 1980, 382-5; Lewis Kennedy's portfolio of landscape designs, are currently held at Beauparc county Meath, copies of which are at the IAA, County boxes for Slane, county Meath.
[655] Mark Odlum, 'Slane Castle, Co. Meath', *Country Life*, 17 July 1980, 198-201; 24 July 1980, 278-81; 31 July 1980, 382-5. Ray Desmond, *A dictionary of British & Irish botanists and horticulturists*, London, 1994, 615.

nature has, with a profuse hand dealt out her rarest gifts, whereby to combine all that is wanting to produce a masterpiece in the Grand and Picturesque'.[656]

Kennedy's plans were ultimately rejected by Henry III, overshadowed by the exciting prospect of the imminent visit of George IV in 1821, the year of his coronation. On 12th of August 1821, George IV, somewhat inebriated, disembarked from the steam packet *Lightening* at Howth Harbour in Dublin. To the cheers of bemused onlookers, the King planted his unsteady feet on Irish soil, the first British monarch to visit Ireland since the Williamite Wars. A few days later he set out for Slane to be reunited with his paramour, Elizabeth, with whom he visited the Battle of the Boyne obelisk at Oldbridge:

> ...without a guard of any kind, though surrounded by thousands of the Peasantry, he feared not to mingle among them. His majesty knew he reigned in the hearts of his Irish subjects, and had a protector in every Irishman'.[657]

Their little jaunt to Oldbridge marked the setting of the battle that ensured William III's possession of the throne and the subsequent Hanoverian succession. The consequences of the Battle of the Boyne had also brought about the arrival of Henry I from Donegal to purchase a new seat for the Conyngham family - almost one hundred and eighteen years previously. George IV's visit to Slane is therefore an appropriate bookend to this study, his presence highlighting the climax of the family's success and completing the circle of events from 1703 to 1821.

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[656] Lewis Kennedy's portfolio of landscape designs. Currently held at Beauparc county Meath, copies of which are at the IAA, in the county boxes for Slane, county Meath.
[657] *The Royal visit, containing a full and circumstantial account of everything connected with the King's visit to Ireland,* Dublin 1821.

Conclusions

The primary contribution of this study has been the formation of a narrative of one family's implementation of public and private improvements in eighteenth-century Ireland. By the end of the century the Conynghams could count themselves among the improving landlords of Ireland, their accomplishments ranking well with similar schemes undertaken by their contemporaries. The family clearly belonged to the *milieu* who sought to 'make the Grand Figure' (as defined by Toby Barnard), and by displaying wealth, power and taste, their role and position in a prosperous improving society was firmly established.

The early days of estate management proved to be somewhat unstable, with the shrewd William Conolly at the helm of the domain, resisting suggestions towards progress. This may have been influenced by the financial constraints of the Conyngham purse, but undoubtedly the Speaker's own advancement was priority at that point. The inertia on the estates in subsequent decades was counterbalanced by the determination of Henry II to maintain the properties within the Conyngham realm. This thesis has shown that Henry II's dogged pursuit of success, and the impact of his choice of a successor, brought about the most outstanding and lasting monuments of built improvements on the Slane estate, namely the demesne, village and mill, executed under the supervision of William Burton Conyngham in the second half of the century. The remnants of these inextricably linked set-pieces can now be observed in their extraordinary setting within the realm of Slane, each testament to their patrons' grand plans, and as a whole, providing a significant and striking accession to Ireland's architectural and industrial heritage today.

Due to the lack of the documentary evidence concerning tenant power, the focus on how improvements were carried out is turned towards the role of the patrons and their collaborators. In addition to the vignettes of several parliamentary allies and close friends who supported Burton Conyngham, this study indicates that he relied heavily on the resourcefulness of David Jebb, who was undoubtedly behind the triumph of Slane Mill, and architect of the more successful schemes executed on the associated Boyne Navigation. Jebb's hand is still evident at Slane today; in the presently empty shell of the mill (its eighteenth-century interior reconstructed here through text and drawings), in the expanse of the expertly designed waterworks and in the fine detailing of the stonework lining the nearby canal and its locks. The enigma that was Jebb is merely outlined here, his life in Ireland as entrepreneur, engineer, miller and agriculturist, and his final days in Surrey, deserve a more detailed study in the future.

Davis Ducart's unconvincing efforts at shaping the new canal at Slane are revealed for the first time through this work. The outcome of the tendering debacle raises the question of how Ducart would have left his mark on Slane's architectural set-pieces if he had won out and stayed. Other collaborators make fleeting cameos; the most prominent of these the engineer, Col. Charles Tarrant, a like-minded antiquarian whose intellectual curiosity enriched Burton Conyngham's tour of the Iberian Peninsula, and whose own interests undoubtedly merit further research.

Without specific information from primary sources, it is difficult to establish here the link between the restructured built environment and the resulting moral or spiritual improvement, as suggested through the ideals of the Enlightenment. However, the social consequences of the family's work on the estates can be deduced and one important fact emerges which indicates that although all levels of development provided employment and boosted the wider market economy, the scale of building

work at Slane village was low and the associated impact of the flour mill was minimal, with only twelve men employed at its zenith. This effectiveness of this kind of enterprise contrasted with analogous industrial schemes where an abundance of labourers' housing was constructed. In addition to this we have also seen the disappointment of tenants at Slane following rejection of their proposals for additional building stock, both at the beginning and close of the century. Rutland, unlike Slane, was an exemplary industrial village, its failure due to the inexperience of the industrialist and the disappearance of its resource, but its grand plan indicated the beginnings of appropriate building stock and modern concepts for workers' accommodation, which if it had succeeded may have pioneered a template for similar schemes on the western seaboard and beyond.

Without the encouragement and attention of successive generations, the lasting effect of experimental agricultural improvements on any estate is dissipated. This is best demonstrated within the Conyngham sphere by the disengagement and complete lack of interest expressed by Burton Conyngham's descendants, who upon inheriting the properties systematically removed their uncle's innovations at Slane, all effected by him not just for the benefit of the family estates, but also for the benefit of the country.

In addition to the filling out of the Conynghams' history and an appraisal of their patronage, this thesis has emphasized the celebration of the architectural significance of the family's built projects. While suggestions have been made towards the identity of some of their architects, the need for revealing these facts has been superseded by the contribution of a very detailed examination of architectural ensembles and the reproduction of set-pieces in their original eighteenth-century setting through drawings and diagrams. This method has allowed for a comprehensive assessment of their form and function. The style of analysis

undertaken here may inform a similar exploration (with the same level of detail) of extant industrial archaeology within the realm of improvements on eighteenth-century Irish estates.

Finally, this thesis has contributed to the furtherance of our knowledge of William Burton Conyngham's exploits and legacies. A more complete picture of the antiquarian and economic patriot, and most importantly, Burton Conyngham as an improving landlord, can be gleaned from this study. The consequences of his tour to Spain and Portugal and the promotion of Ireland's commercial interests are now documented through this work, but a full narration of this hugely important trip remains incomplete. Further research, specifically in the Spanish archives, may yield a wealth of uncovered sources concerning Burton Conyngham's architectural, antiquarian and botanical interests or indeed an entirely new and unexplored area of his attention.

Glossary of terms

Glossary of milling terms, canal features & associated waterworks

Axle-tree: The main axle that turns the inner wheels in a mill, originally made from the stock of a tree until the eighteenth century when it was made from cast-iron.

Boulters: Driven by either leather belts or gears, the boulters dress (separate) the ground wheat into different grades of flour, bran and pollard.

Central Spindle: The spindle works with the trundle (also known as the wallower) to turn the runner stone - the upper millstone while the bed-stone remains static.

Fanning machine: This machine cleans the shealed wheat, separating the inner grain from the husk.

Headrace: A channel that carries water to a water wheel or turbine.

Hoppers: These conical boxes with angled spouts feed the grain into the sieves and millstones.

'King's Gap': An opening in a weir for the passage of watercraft.

Lock: A section of a waterway, such as a canal, closed off with gates, in which vessels in transit are raised or lowered by raising or lowering the water level of that section. A *guard lock* is a lock situated between a canal and the tide water of a harbour or river, when they are on different levels, so that craft can pass either way at all times of the tide, also known as a *tide or tidal lock*.

Millpond: A pond created by damming a stream, river or canal to produce a head of water for operating a mill.

Millrace: The fast-moving stream of water that drives a mill wheel or the channel for the water that drives a mill wheel.

Millstream: The rapid stream of water flowing in a millrace.

Mill wheel: A wheel - typically driven by water - that powers a mill.

Pit wheel: This partially sunken wheel (hence its name) moves at the same speed as the axle and works to turn the trundle (wallower) and spindle.

Sluice: An artificial channel for conducting water, with a valve or gate to regulate the flow or the valve or gate used in such a channel, i.e. a *floodgate* or *sluice gate*.

Sluice gate: A gate which can be raised or lowered by sliding in vertical guides, also known as a *floodgate*.

Tailrace: The part of a millrace below the water wheel, through which the spent water flows or (more commonly known as) the channel which conducts water away from a water wheel.

Weir: A wall built across a river which holds water in the stretch above it at a constant level and allowed surplus water to flow over the top. According to Ruth Delany the main three purposes of a weir are: fishing; diverting water into the mill races for power, and improving navigation by raising the level of water over shallows, i.e. areas too shallow to navigate.

Winch: A device used to open a gate in a weir (for example a floodgate) or to haul craft through difficult stretches on the canal, as used on the navigation of the river Thames in England.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Appendix A

Inventory of goods in dispute at Conyngham Hall, Slane, 1710.
Irish Architectural Archive, Castletown Deposit, Section F, Box 4

An inventory of goods at Cony^{m} Hall belonging to master Cony^{m} in dispute:

In y^{e} yellow Rome:
2 feather beds & boulsters in disputte
Y^{e} stufe of the 2 beds & the window curtain & the bedstead masters[1]

In one of the romes over y^{e} Hall:
A feather bed & boulster & 2 blanketts in disputte

In the Lobby:
1 feather bed & boulster in disputte
Y^{e} curtains of y^{e} bed

Y^{e} stufe of the bed masters

In Mr Williams Rome:
1 feather bed & boulster in disputte

In y^{e} nursery:
1 pr of blanketts in dispute

In my Lady's Rome:
1 feather bed & boulster in disputte, y^{e} stufe & fringe of y^{e} bed & window curtains & bedstead masters

In y^{e} dressing rome:
1 calico quilt, 2 chairs, a fire shovell, tongs, poker & fender in disputte

In y^{e} big parlor:
Y^{e} silk & fringe of y^{e} window curtains masters
Y^{e} Indian pictures on y^{e} right side of the big screen, masters

In y^{e} littel parlor:
Y^{e} stufe that covers y^{e} double chair bed, y^{e} stufe of y^{e} 3 window curtains & 12 cushions masters

In y^{e} Hall:
2 locks & knocker

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[1] 'Stufe' refers to bed-linen or any other material or textile. 'Masters' here refers to Williams Conyngham, Henry's eldest son, and indicates goods belonging to him and not in dispute.

An inventory of goods at Cony^{m} Hall ...*continued*

In y^{e} House keeper Rome:
Y^{e} corner drawers & bed

In Mr Billings rome:[2]
1 feather bed & boulster & 4 carbines in disputte[3]
2 window curtains half y^{e} stufe masters
A fire shovell tongs & poker in disputte

In y^{e} kitchen:
5 dozen & 2 pewter plates, 4 dishes, 4 saucepans, a brass dish kettle new
An iron dripping pan & trivett all in disputte
A copper cover for y^{e} boyles in disputte

In y^{e} gray rome:
Y^{e} frames of the chairs masters

In y^{e} green Damask dressing rome:
Y^{e} silk of the 2 window curtains
Y^{e} covering of the big chair & 4 stools masters

In y^{e} red rome:
2 feather beds & 1 boulster & 1 blankett in disputte

In y^{e} red rome:
2 feather beds & 1 boulster & 1 blankett in disputte

In y^{e} pantry:
12 beer barrels without iron hoofs & all y^{e} bottles in disputte
A press & drawers

All the brass locks in the house, masters

---

[2] Billings was the Conyngham's agent.
[3] 'Carbines' refers to short rifles used in the cavalry.

Appendix B

The building accounts of Abraham Wilson at Slane, 1703-1709.
Irish Architectural Archive, Castletown Deposit, Section F, Box 4

Ac^{tt} of the work dun at Slaine [Cuningham Hall] for y^{e} Right Hon^{r}able Brigedor Cuningham as it was agreed upon betwixt his hon^{r} & Ab^{r}. Wilson first began y^{e} 13th of June 1703 to y^{e} 6th of August 1704.

	days			
myself wrought	117$^{1/2}$	at 2s.	per day	£11 15s. 00d.
George Capage wrought	199$^{1/2}$	at 2s.	per day	£19 15s. 00d.
Jo^{n} Clugh wrought	98	at 2s.	per day	£09 16s. 00d.
Will^{m} Martin wrought	76	at 2s.	per day	£07 12s. 00d.
Joseph Ranger wrought	112	at 1s. 6d.	per day	£08 08s. 00d.
Jo^{n} Conway wrought	124$^{1/2}$	at 1s. 6d.	per day	£09 06s. 09d.
			total	£86 12s. 09d.[1]

Since y^{e} last bill begun againe y^{e} 13th of August 1704 to y^{e} 23rd of December 1705.

	days			
myself wrought	82	at 2s.	per day	£08 04s. 00d.
George Capage wrought	314	at 2s.	per day	£31 08s. 00d.
Jo^{n} Clugh wrought	277	at 2s.	per day	£27 14s. 00d.
Will^{m} Erwin wrought	73	at 2s.	per day	£07 06s. 00d.
Joseph Ranger wrought	89	at 1s. 6d.	per day	£06 13s. 06d.
Jo^{n} Conway wrought	304	at 1s. 6d.	per day	£22 16s. 00d.
Jo^{n} Magee wrought	160	at 1s. 4d.	per day	£10 13s. 04d.
Henry Dewdan wrought	199	at 1s.	per day	£09 19s. 00d.
			total	£124 13s.10d.

[1] Wilson has added an extra £20 to this total by accident.

Ac^{tt} of the work dun at Slaine [Cuningham Hall]…*continued*

To y^{e} 5th of May 1706.

	days			
George Capage wrought	94$^{1/2}$	at 2s.	per day	£09 09s. 00d.
Jo^{n} Clugh wrought	41	at 2s.	per day	£04 02s. 00d.
myself wrought	15	at 2s.	per day	£01 10s. 00d.
Jo^{n} Conway wrought	42	at 1s. 6d.	per day	£03 06s. 00d.
Jo^{n} Magee wrought	92	at 1s. 4d.	per day	£06 02s. 08d.
Henry Dewdan wrought	24	at 1s.	per day	£01 04s. 00d.

---

	total	£25 13s. 08d.

All y^{e} days works was my agreement wth Gen^{r}all Cunningham £124 13s.10d.

Before he went… £86 12s. 09d.

w^{c}h if y^{r} hon^{r} please to put me to my Oath I shall be ready

---

This sum rec^{d} by me Ab^{r} Wilson total £237 00s.03d.[2]

---

[2] Wilson's mistake in calculations is also revealed in the total here.

Ac^tt^ of the work dun at Cuningham Hall for y^e^ Right Hon^r^able Lady Shelburn by Ab^r^. Wilson. In days from y^e^ 5^th^ of May 1706 to y^e^ first of May 1707.

George Capage from y^e^ 5^th^ of May to y^e^ 1^st^ of May wrought 230 days at 2s. per day	£23 00s. 00d.
Jo^n^ Clugh from y^e^ 8^th^ of 7^br^ [September] to y^e^ 1^st^ of May wrought 141 days at 2s. per day	£14 02s. 00d.
Jo^n^ Camble from y^e^ 1^st^ of 7^br^ [September] to y^e^ 27^th^ of 8^br^ [October] wrought 50 days a half at 2s. per day	£05 01s. 00d.
Jo^n^ Ore from y^e^ 8^th^ of 7^br^ [September] to y^e^ 20^th^ of 8^br^ [October] wrought 42 days at 2s. per day	£04 04s. 00d.
Will^m^ Erwin from y^e^ 2^nd^ of June to y^e^ 1^st^ May wrought 189 days at 2s. per day	£18 18s. 00d.
Laughlan Burn from y^e^ 7^th^ of July to y^e^ 24^th^ of 9^br^ wrought 114 days at 2s. per day	£11 08s. 00d.
Jo^n^ Megee from y^e^ 5^th^ of May to y^e^ 19^th^ of 9^br^ [November] wrought 162 days at 1s.4d. per day	£10 16s. 10d.
Jo^n^ Conway from y^e^ 24^th^ of 9^br^ to y^e^ first of May wrought 72 days at 1s. 6d. per day	£05 08s. 00d.
myself from y^e^ 5^th^ of may to y^e^ first of may following wrought 39 days at 2s. per day	£03 18s. 00d.
to my expenses to y^e^ woods & back againe being abroad six days	£00 14s. 00d.
total	£97 09s. 10d.

Ac^{tt} of the work dun at Cuningham Hall for y^{e} Right Hon^{r}able Lady Shelburn by Ab^{r}. Wilson. In days from y^{e} 5th of May 1706 to y^{e} first of May 1707...
continued

Honrd Sr, I was paid from my Lady for y^{e} £97 09s. 00d. I was paid a hundred pound & I did owe only of y^{e} ballance £2.11s.0d. w^{ch} was all... I did owe her Ladyship at y^{e} time w^{ch} y^{e} sum I have placed to y^{e} rest that I have recd.

Ac^{tt} of Works done by Ab^{r}. Wilson for y^{e} Right Hon^{r}able Lady Shelburn from y^{e} first of May 1707 to y^{e} 1st of 9^{br} 1709.

	days			
George Capage	51	at 2s.	per day	£05 02s. 00d.
Jo^{n} Clugh	97	at 2s.	per day	£09 14s. 00d.
Will^{m} Erwin	62	at 2s.	per day	£06 04s. 00d.
Will^{m} Marttin	53	at 2s.	per day	£05 06s. 00d.
Jo^{n} Right	04$^{1/2}$	at 2s.	per day	£00 09s. 00d.
Will^{m} Lee	12	at 2s.	per day	£01 04s. 00d.
Jo^{n} Conway	74	at 1s. 6d.	per day	£05 11s. 00d.
Jo^{n} Megee	36$^{1/2}$	at 1s. 4d.	per day	£02 08s. 08d.
Edmund Garly	02	at 1s. 6d.	per day	£00 03s. 00d.
Henry Dewdan	107	at 1s.	per day	£05 07s. 00d.
myself	22$^{1/2}$	at 2s.	per day	£02 05s. 00d.

y^{e} floore in y^{e} great parler 7 squares & 21 foot at 8s. per f^{t}	£02 17s. 06d.
y^{e} front turret floore is 1 square & 63 foot at 4s. per f^{t}	£00 06s. 07d.
y^{e} seiling of y^{e} s^{d} Roome 1 square & 63 foot at 2s. per f^{t}	£00 03s. 03$^{1/2}$ d.
y^{e} floore ov^{r} y^{e} Hall 9 Square & 76 foot at 4s. per f^{t}	£01 18s. 09d.
y^{e} seiling Joyce ov^{r} y^{e} winscott 9 square & 76 foot at 2s. per f^{t}	£00 19s. 04$^{1/2}$d.
y^{e} floore in y^{e} new Nursery 5 Square & 74 foot at 4s. per f^{t}	£01 02s. 02$^{1/2}$d.
y^{e} floore in my Ladys Chamber 5 square & 78 foot at 6s. per sq	£01 14s. 00d.
y^{e} winscoting of y^{e} new Nursery is 201 y^{ds} at 1s. per y^{d}	£10 01s.00d.
y^{e} Bed Chamber adjoin to y^{e} great parlor 109y^{ds} at 1s. 6d per y^{d}	£08 03s. 06d.
in y^{e} Lobby at y^{e} sash doore 34 y^{ds} at 1s. 6d. per y^{d}	£02 11s. 00d.
y^{e} Low^{r} back turret is 91 y^{ds} at 1s. 6d. per y^{d}	£06 16s. 06d.
y^{e} back stayr case is 64 y^{ds} at 1s. per y^{d}	£03 04s. 00d.
y^{e} front turret winscott is 109 y^{ds} at 1s. per y^{d}	£05 09s. 00d.
tto 175 foott of Sash windows at 6d. per f^{t}	£04 07s. 06d.
tto 680 foott of Sash windows at 8d. per f^{t}	£22 13s. 04d.
for making of y^{e} press & drawers in y^{e} house keeper roome	£01 10s. 00d.

N^{br} 1	£117 11s. 02$^{1/2}$d.

Ac^{tt} of Works done by Ab^{r}. Wilson for y^{e} Right Hon^{r}able Lady Shelburn from y^{e} first of May 1707 to y^{e} 1st of 9^{br} 1709...*continued*

for making of gates & pallasades at y^{e} end of y^{e} back Avanue	£03 10s. 00d.
for roofing, cornishing, flooring, stayors, door & windows partitions & seiling Joyce att y^{e} two new houses att y^{e} new Town w^{ch} comes to £14 13s. 0d. per house	£29 06s.00d.
for y^{e} roofing of y^{e} back shed 4 square & 60 foot att 4s. per sq	£00 18s. 00d.
tto y^{e} flooring of Mr Hamilton's house is 12 square & 32 foott at 4s. per sq	£02 09s. 00d.
for partitions in y^{e} s^{d} house 5 square & 72 foott att 2s. per sq	£01 04s. 00d.
for making of y^{e} stayr of y^{e} said house	£01 00s. 00d.
for making of 12 doors at y^{e} s^{d} house	£01 04s. 00d.
for 8 windows in y^{e} s^{d} house	£00 08s.00d.
for winscott shuts being 13y^{ds} for y^{e} s^{d} house	£00 13s. 00d.
for roofing of y^{e} s^{d} house, 23 square & 35 foot at 4s. per sq	£04 13s. 00d.
for modillions & Cornish for y^{e} s^{d} house	£01 10s. 00d.
for raising of y^{e} floore in y^{e} new stable & laying of itt level wth y^{e} old stable floore & raising part of y^{e} old stable floors & fitting of both floors & Cutting of y^{e} floors at y^{e} wall in order for letting of y^{e} have down to y^{e} rack & making a partition across y^{e} stable floore ov^{r} head wth a doore to it & making Stay^{r} up to y^{e} same & making a new rack & manger tto y^{e} new stable, wth a new door case to it, also a p^{r} of gates to y^{e} coach house	£04 17s. 00d.
for winscott in y^{e} romes & Gallery ov^{r} y^{e} Hall 316y^{ds} & 6 foot at 1s. per y^{d}	£15 16s. 06d.
y^{e} ffals seiling ov^{r} y^{e} winscott & gallery is 9 square & 76 foott at 2s. per sq	£00 19s. 04$^{1/2}$d.
N^{br} 2	£68 07s. 10$^{1/2}$d.

Ac^{tt} of Works done by Ab^{r}. Wilson for y^{e} Right Hon^{r}able Lady Shelburn from y^{e} first of May 1707 to y^{e} 1st of 9^{br} 1709...*continued*

for laying of y^{e} Hall seiling 9 square & 76 f^{t} at 8s. per sq	£03 16s. 06d.
for 2 Seattes in y^{e} hall windows & fitting of y^{e} shuttes for y^{e} s^{d} windows	£00 04s. 00d.
for making of a Large Table for y^{e} kitchen	£00 04s. 00d.
for making a dresser in y^{e} Larder & a cupboard for y^{e} stores, for fixing of gutters und^{r} y^{e} eaves of y^{e} kitchen & round to y^{e} dairy doore	£01 01s. 00d.
for making of a doore y^{e} back waye by y^{e} dairy	£00 02s. 00d.
for carrying up y^{e} Stayrs from y^{e} seler up to y^{e} tope of y^{e} turret	£02 14s. 00d.
for making of five wheel barrows	£00 10s. 00d.
for making of two trickle beds	£00 06s. 00d.
for hanging of y^{e} Saushes in my Lady's roome & dressing rome & putting of a Lock & 2 Staples & putting of 4 Locks on Mr Hamilton's doors & staples in y^{e} windows & fitting hearths in Christy Camble's House	£00 04s. 00d.
in y^{e} wine Seler putting on boards & making troughs & tilters for y^{e} beer Seler & teaking y^{e} Chests und^{r} & making shuts for y^{e} dairymans house, being 8 windows in all	£00 06s. 00d.
for making a dresr & drawrs to it in Christy Cambles kitchen	£00 08s. 00d.
for making 8 casement & water barrs	£00 04s. 00d.
for making of desser & shelves in y^{e} Seler	£00 02s. 00d.
for making of 12 window boards	£00 04s. 00d.
for making of a sign for y^{e} same house	£00 02s. 00d.
for making of hen coope at Mr Hamilton's	£00 03s. 00d.
for making of a draw^{r} for y^{e} kitchen dresser	£00 00s. 06d.
for making of a table for y^{e} kitchen	£00 02s. 00d.
for fitting up y^{e} doore adjoining to ye new Nursery	£00 03s. 00d.
for making of 2 Casements for Mr Hamilton's house	£00 01s. 00d.
for making of a shelf in y^{e} wett Lard^{r} & in y^{e} little closet hard by it a window case	£00 01s. 00d.
N^{br} 3	£10 17s. 00d.

Ac^tt^ of Works done by Ab^r^. Wilson for y^e^ Right Hon^r^able Lady Shelburn from y^e^ first of May 1707 to y^e^ 1^st^ of 9^br^ 1709...*continued*

for making of 48 windows for all y^e^ out houses at 1s. per window	£02 08s. 00d.
for making of 31 doores and doore Cases at 2s. per case	£03 02s. 00d.
for making of 10 single doore Cases at 8d. each	£00 06s. 08d.
for making of Shelves in y^e^ pantery at Mr Hamiltons	£00 01s. 06d.
for y^e^ making of 3 tables at 2s. each	£00 06s. 00d.
for y^e^ making of a beef rack	£00 03s. 00d.
for y^e^ making of Shelves in y^e^ dairy	£00 01s. 06d.
for y^e^ making of a rack over ye chimney	£00 01s. 00d.
for y^e^ making of a plate rack in y^e^ Kitchen for my Lady	£00 08s. 00d.
for y^e^ making of a bedstead w^th^ Cornish	£00 06s. 00d.
for y^e^ making of a plaine slide and a Truckle bed & two Stilions in y^e^ Seller	£00 05s. 00d.
	£07 08s. 08d.
brought from N^br^ 1	£117 11s. 02$^{1/2}$d.
brought from N^br^ 2	£68 07s. 10$^{1/2}$d.
brought from N^br^ 3	£10 17s. 00d.
	£196 16s. 01d.
rec^d^ as below	£120 10s. 02d.
due to balance	£76 05s. 11d.

rec^d^ from y^e^ right Hon^r^able Lady Shelburn to cash rec^d^ of form^r^ Ac^tt^	£02 11s. 00d.
rec^d^ a Gray Colt price	£06 00s. 00d.
rec^d^ by my wife in Dublin	£02 14s. 02d.
rec^d^ againe by my wife in Dublin	£09 05s. 00d.
rec^d^ by bill in Dublin	£100 00s. 00d.

Ac^{tt} of Works done by Ab^{r}. Wilson for y^{e} Right Hon^{r}able Lady Shelburn from y^{e} first of May 1707 to y^{e} 1st of 9^{br} 1709...*continued*

All y^{e} particulars y^{r} mentioned in y^{s} Ac^{tt} of y^{e} measured work I agreed wth my Lady for at first & if there be any discrepancies in y^{e} measurement it may be rectify^{d}

Due to balance y^{e} above Sum £76 05s. 11d.

Appendix C

Extracts from 'Falkland', John Robert Scott, *Principal Characters of the Irish Commons*, Dublin, 1789, 69-71.

Right Hon. WILLIAM CONYNGHAM.

IT ſeldom happens that gentlemen who have addicted themſelves early to the military profeſſion, and endeavoured to excel therein, make any conſpicuous figure as public ſpeakers, or in the civil departments of the ſtate. A man

——" The State's whole thunder born to weild,
And ſhake alike, the Senate and the Field,"

is confeſſedly an uncommon character; and the habit of warlike purſuits in various inſtances, indiſpoſes the mind to the attainment of thoſe acquiſitions eſſentially neceſſary to the due diſcharge of civil employments.—If the latter are aſſumed, they are oftener taken than adequately filled; if the former is attempted, boldneſs of manner, more than juſtneſs of execution, is what excites to it attention. Mr. Conyngham is, indeed, an exception to this general obſervation, who, having early in life entered into the army and continued in it long, being for ſome years a Lieutenant-Colonel, has diſtinguiſhed himſelf much as a parliamentary orator, and now fills an office in the ſtate, with credit and ability.

To the advantage of a voice good, though not excellent, being clear, diſtinct, and thoroughly audible, but, with ſome tendency to a liſp, he adds a pronunciation perfectly accurate,

and

and a delivery very well tempered between vehemence and langour, but more inclining to rapidity than ſlowneſs. His language has always the merit of preciſion, and unites with much force ſome elegance; ſparing, though not deſtitute of ornament, it keeps more within the level track of animated converſation than it ſoars into the regions of figurative and ſublime expreſſion: and his manner is warm and ſpirited, but certainly too ſtrongly marked with the remains of ſoldierly importance, and military inſolence. As Mr. Conyngham is eminently well acquainted with the whole circle of the polite arts, this, we truſt, he will ſpeedily correct; for he is too ſkilful a judge to admire a manneriſt. His action is ſtrong, forcible, and energetic, pointedly conveying his ſentiments, and evidently the effuſion of the moment, not the ſtudied exhibition of the day.

In reaſoning, tho' neither unwilling, nor ignorant how, to uſe the ſophiſtry of the ſchools, he is in general condenſed and argumentative; often pointed, and often powerful, never introducing tireſome digreſſions, nor fatiguing his hearers with trite reflections, uſeleſs remarks, or affected witiciſms, that play round the imagination, but touch not the underſtanding: and the arrangement of his thoughts, which is clearly not the beſt, has yet a degree of method ſufficiently

per-

perceivable. Being a man of conſiderable information in all parts of elegant learning, and well verſed in the principles of trade and policy, though not of profound erudition, the matter of his ſpeeches poſſeſſes real merit: not feeble or nugatory, or amuſive, but full of inſtruction, appoſite, and ſolid, well digeſted, and better choſen, it is obviouſly the effect of ſtudious care and attentive inveſtigation. Even when weakeſt, it has ſhew where it wants ſolidity, and when ſtrong it is not readily refuted. In his political capacity he has ever been a ſteady ſupporter of adminiſtration, enforcing its meaſures, and palliating its miſconduct; and has always deſerved the thanks of the miniſter, although but ſometimes thoſe of his country.

Appendix D

Table of Engineers on the Boyne Navigation, *c*. 1748 - 1800

Boyne dates	Engineer	Section of the navigation	Eng. works in Ireland
1748-50	Thomas Steers	Surveyed & planned the navigation between Drogheda and Trim. Steers built the first tide lock at Oldbridge before his death in 1750. It was rebuilt *c*. 1830.	Ballycastle harbour Newry Canal
1748-59	John Lowe	Steers' assistant who completed five more locks between Drogheda and Broe.	
c.1748-70	Francis Leigh	Leigh was deputy to Steers, Lowe, Omer, Ducart and Jebb. He was also a board member of the Boyne Navigation Commissioners	
c.1759-67	Thomas Omer	Works upstream included lateral canals with locks between Slane Castle and Stackallen. Omer began a double lock at Rosnaree and a new section of canal between the double lock and Slane until his work was halted by David Jebb and the arrival of Davis Ducart.	Newry Ship Canal Grand Canal Shannon Navigation Nore Navigation Lagan Navigation Drogheda harbour Barrow Navigation
c.1759-62	William Ockenden	Assistant to Omer on the works upstream above Slane Castle.	Shannon Navigation Nore Navigation Blackwater Navigation
c.1766-70	Davis Ducart	Proposed a scheme for a new tract of canal on the north side of the Boyne between Knowth and Slane Oversaw the initial works between Rosnaree and Slane as proposed by Omer and amended by Myers.	Cork waterworks Tyrone Canal
c.1766-82	Charles Tarrant	Surveyed and arbitrated schemes proposed by Omer, Ducart and others.	Grand Canal Shannon Navigation Barrow Navigation
1766-67	Christopher Myers	Surveyed and arbitrated schemes proposed by Omer and Ducart.	Ballycastle harbour Newry Canal
c.1767-70	Hamilton Bury	Completed the scheme between Rosnaree and Slane while Ducart was engaged on the Tyrone Canal.	Nore Navigation

Table of Engineers on the Boyne Navigation, c. 1748 - 1800

Boyne dates	Engineer	Section of the navigation	Eng. works in Ireland
c.1769-90	David Jebb	As chief engineer oversaw works carried out by Hamilton Bury and implemented modifications to the scheme at Slane. Attempted to introduce a new canal between Stalleen and Rosnaree but was turned down and subsequently his accounts were investigated by the board. Remained as chief engineer to the Boyne until *c.* 1790.	Probably had a hand in designing the water-works at Slane mill.
1770-1	Charles Vallency	Surveyed various completed schemes on the navigation and carried out reports for the board.	Grand Canal
1790-1800	Richard Evans	The former apprentice of Charles Tarrant who rectified Omer's works upstream and rebuilt the guard lock at Stackallen.	Grand Canal Royal Canal
1790-1800	John Brownrigg	Assistant to Evans	Shannon Navigation Lagan Navigation Newry Canal Royal Canal
1790-1800	Daniel Monks	Assistant to Evans	Tyrone Canal

Appendix E

Appendix E

An estimate for the cost of a guard lock to be built at Slane Bridge by Mr. Clements.

Record of accounts of Slane Mill,1763-1767.
National Library of Ireland, Townley Hall papers, Ms. 9,601-9,602.

Ardbraccan & blue cut stone	£380 16s. 06$^{1/2}$ d.
Journeymen & stonecutters	£57 02s. 06d.
Masons	£137 01s. 08d.
Carpenters	£58 13s. 04d.
Pumpsmen	£183 09s. 00d.
Labourers &quarrymen	£339 18s. 08$^{1/2}$ d.
Horses & cars	£104 13s. 08d.
Sand	£34 03s.00d.
Lead for fastening clamps & collars	£06 16s. 09$^{1/2}$ d.
Terras	£90 11s. 05d.
Timber & Barrows	£71 07s.11$^{1/2}$ d.
Smiths & ironwork	£28 06s. 02$^{1/2}$ d.
Lime kiln & burning	£123 05s. 06d.
Bricks	£23 03s. 02$^{1/2}$ d.
Cast collars, nutts, screws &bolts	£54 04s. 05d.
Pitch & tar	£06 13s. 10$^{1/2}$ d.
Carriage & freight	£85 15s. 03$^{1/2}$ d.
Gratuities & drink to the men	£13 16s. 05$^{1/2}$ d.
Total	**£1799 19s. 06$^{1/2}$ d.**

Appendix F

Appendix I

William Burton Conyngham's account of the convulsion of a hill at Alcira. Correspondence between the Royal Society and the European periphery 1600-1800. Royal Society London, RS/PPI/L&P viii/148.

On the account of the convulsion of a hill at Alcira, two leagues from Valencia in Spain in a letter from William Burton Conyngham, Teller of the Exchequer in Ireland and one of his majesties most honourable Privy Council to the Reverend Charles Peter Layard, foreign secretary to the Royal Society.

Dear Sir,

In compliance with your request, I send you a relation of a very extraordinary phenomenon which happened in Spain in the month of November 1783. There had been incessant rains from the beginning of September till the latter end of November, so as to occasion the River Júcar and other smaller rivers in the neighbourhood to overflow their banks and lay the whole country under water. On the 25th November, a Hill called Monte Baladic about 2 minutes from Alcira; huge masses of rocks were jumbled together and the ruins tumbled down the sides to the foot of the hill, upon which it was reported and taken for granted that the violent rains had undermined and softened the inferior strata and that the hill had sunk. Curiosity induced me to turn by Alcira from a tour lately made to Alicante in order to examine the spot and I shall endeavour to explain to you what appears to me, which with the annexed drawings may perhaps discover the cause of this convulsion.[1]

---

[1] There are no drawings attached to the manuscript.

The hill, as appears by the drawings, is insulated. Its foot is considerably higher than the river and it has a small drain on either side – at present dry – to carry off waters from its sides, and the sides of the neighbouring mountains in time of rain. There is no appearance of any spring or course of water from its bowels except at the north end where I discovered under the rubbish that was thrown from the hill; four small threads [rills] of water perfectly clear and well lasted. These, however, could not have been the cause of this convulsion as the same effects are visible on the top of the top of the neighbouring mountain of Peña Roja. The body of the hill is limestone which on the top of the hill for 800ft in length and about 100 ft in breadth is of a grey colour and extremely soft and where the bowels of the hill have been opened, there is a great deal which is quite white and extremely soft. At the edge of the bed of the Torrent on the East, I perceived a stratum of clay, like Fuller's Earth. On approaching the north side of the hill I perceived a ridge that ran across from east to west, entirely cracked and opened, with the stones and gravel poured down to the foot like the effect of water bursting from the sides of mountains. The cracks run north east and south west. On ascending the mountain to the south west, cracks appear in the same direction, all in the soft limestone, opening from one to three feet and some of them thirty feet deep or more. Advancing on the side a vast space is perceived where the rocks are entirely jumbled together, no appearances of the ancient surface of the mountain remaining and here you perceive the end of the hard grey rock on top, which has had a correction, the softer part being separated from it, so as to leave a perpendicular cliff of about 60 feet which was originally had not been 20 feet. Crossing from there to the north side, which is rendered difficult by the heaps of broken rocks and wide cracks you come to the part most violently affected. There being a space of near 300 feet in diameter which appears as if a mine had been sprung. Some of the pieces of rock that are jumbled together measure as much as 12 feet square, and the ruins are spread down both beds of the Torrent.

Appendix G

That, all the miſchief having done,
The life political he'd ſhun
And, when reliev'd from public care,
For Mecca's pilgrimage prepare,
With Turks and Saracens remain,
From wine and ſtumbles-meat abſtain,
To keep him ſound in fleſh and bone,
Free from the Fiſtula and Stone,
And Gout, which cries at every ſtep, Oh!
Build him a palace at Aleppo,
Where ghoſts of Smugglers ſhall not haunt him,
In dripping-wet Great-Coats, to daunt him,
In ſelf-conceit, another GALLIO,
A great Baſhà——without Seraglio.

W.N.H. Bib. Bodl. HARDING

FINIS.

POEM,

TO THE MEMORY

OF THE

TRULY-RIGHT-HONOURABLE

WILLIAM BURTON CONYNGHAM,

LATELY DECEASED;

WRITTEN, AND MOST RESPECTFULLY ADDRESSED

TO THE

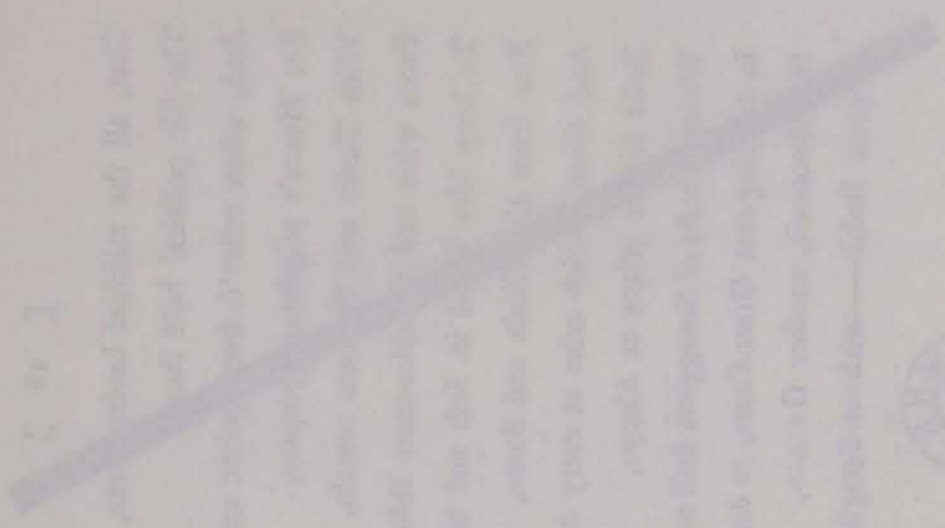
RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD CONYNGHAM,

BY HIS LORRDSHIP'S MOST OBEDIENT,
MOST OBLIGED, HUMBLE SERVANT,

Mrs. ROBERT HILL.

DUBLIN:
PRINTED IN THE YEAR
MDCCXCVI.



N.N.H. Bib. Bodl. HARDING

A

POEM, &c.

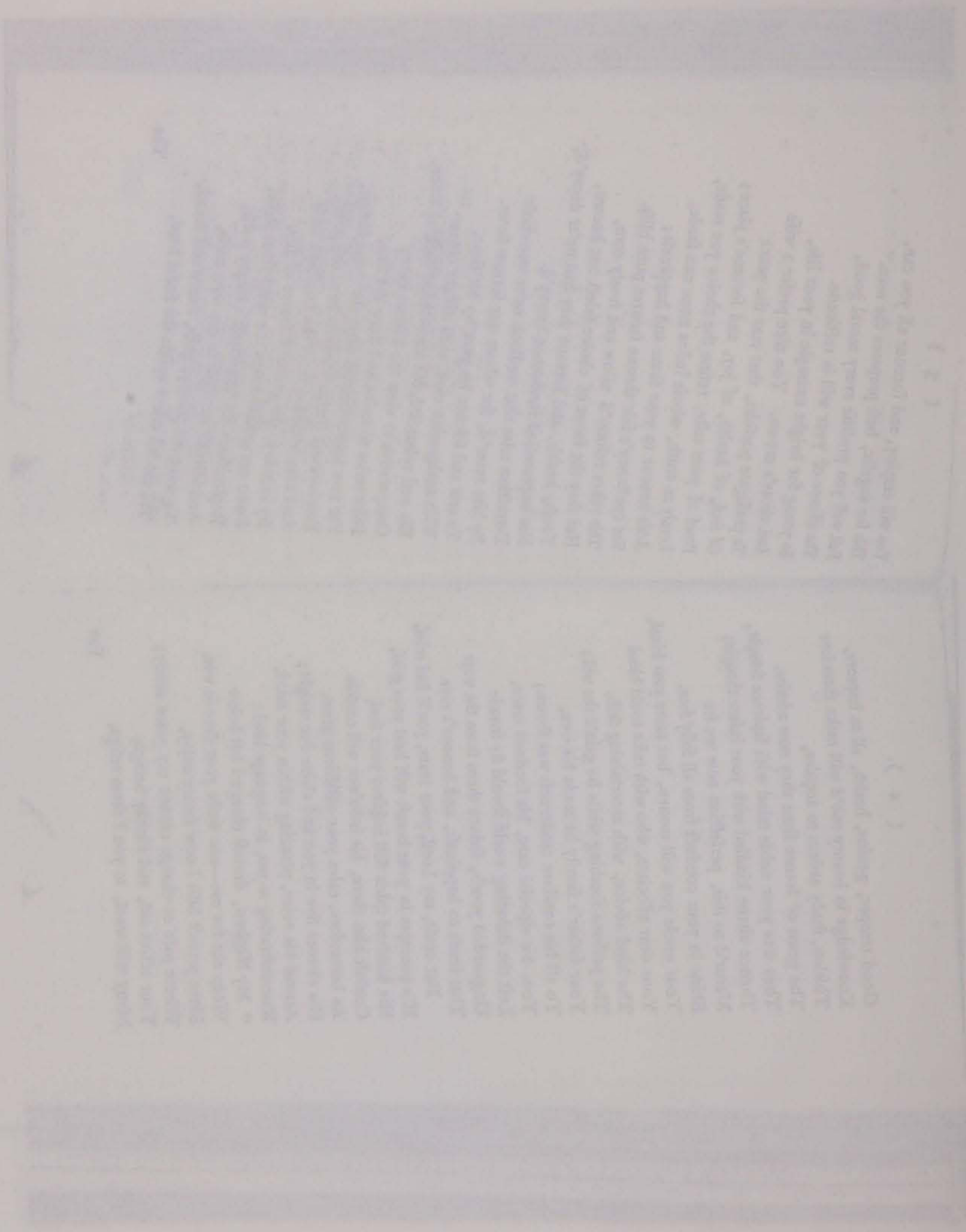
YOU, my good Lord, have loſt a boſom friend,
Whoſe care parental did your youth attend,
And well ſupply'd that loſs with tender zeal,
Forming your mind to love the public weal,
And ſocial happineſs, by maxims taught,
On virtue's baſis, pure enriching thought!
Pleaſing to fancy made by gentle modes
The precepts ſhone; not harſhneſs that corrodes
The tender thought, oft ſicken'd by the ſmart
Of corp'ral puniſhment, that chills the heart
Of genial talents; while, by dread impreſs'd,
Fears free to ope, or ſtand the tutor's teſt.
The milder rules his bright enlighten'd mind
Wiſely adviſ'd! abhorr'd the brutal kind,
The long deteſted practice of the ſchools,
That ſcholars treat as drivers treat their mules;
Degrading nature, decency and pride,
While intellectual ſolely ſhould be ply'd
With nice regard, attention bold to win,
Then learning's charms diſplay'd take root within
The breaſt allur'd! thence ſpring her flowers and fruits,
Bleſt wiſdom fertilizing novel ſhoots,

Good temper, genius, health, all to improve,
Knowledge in beauty rob'd will make them love
Tuition, ſtudy ardent to acquire,
The gems of future fame they now admire.
Thus was your noble mind with ſapience fraught,
Thence virtue kindled with your infant thought;
Matur'd to this, perfection now we ſee
Shine in your conduct from all folly free.
Your uncle you will mourn, but more your friend,
Your dear aſſociate, who with taſte could blend
The kind advice, with entertaining ſkill,
The paſſions ſoothing while he gain'd the will;
Your father's family he made his own,
To all his conſtant tenderneſs was ſhown;
You, his eſpecial care, his fondneſs made,
Leſt the deluding world ſhould fly invade
Unguarded youth, ſeduce them from the ways
That leads to happineſs, and honour's rays.
But ceaſe, my Lord, your tears, you'll find relief,
His precepts in your breaſt will heal your grief,
His kindred ſpirit ſtill inſpires your ſoul,
Conſult him there, his influ'nce will conſole
As heretofore, calm your afflictions great,
His virtues live in you and claim due weight;
Attend his voice, pleading within your mind,
Remonſtrating *to you*, in language kind:
" My Nephew, deareſt charge I left below
Weep not for me—nor waſte your time in woe,
Since perfect bliſs I now ſecure enjoy,
Where pain or change cannot my peace annoy;
Your active aid, and charity benign,
Many will want, to you I them reſign,

You

You will employ, and ſuccour all you can,
This for angelic, beſt prepares the man."
Full well you practiſe every moral good,
The eſſence of your will is rectitude.
So young for bright example in your life,
And virtue's crown. You nice prefer a wife
To profligate purſuits, that mar the peace
Of ſoul, of health, of joy, and fortune's place;
Proof of your taſte, refine the choice you made,
Lovely as truth, whoſe luſtre none can ſhade,
Adds honour to your fame and happineſs;
For conſtancy's fair throne ſecures pure bliſs.
This rakes reform'd allow and freely own,
Had they the ſweet of choice ſelect but known,
Youth, health, and fortune they had ne'er decay'd,
Nor unprotected innocence betray'd.
Detraction cries that wedlock ne'er was choſe
By him rever'd, for whom our ſorrow flows.
To arts and ſcience he gave up his time,
With antiquarian care, each diſtant clime
His zeal reſearch'd, for knowledge back to trace,
Comparative to view the human race;
Diſcoveries to make and draw the line,
For new improvements form the great deſign,
Employment ſetting forth to ſerve the poor,
And keep affliction from the humbleſt door.
By induſtry, the grandeſt ſource of life,
Sweet occupation keeps the mind from ſtrife,
Repleniſheth the ſpendthrift's empty purſe,
And idleneſs conſigns to her own curſe,
To want and miſery, guilt, ſhame and dread,
Till the laſt crime uplifts the ſinful head,

The



The halter and the gallows fix their doom,
As many late have felt in youth's high bloom;
This to prevent and firm eſtabliſh good,
Our much lamented friend well underſtood,
That fineſt talents without exerciſe,
Like gems unpoliſh'd in oblivion lies,
That great abilities can never ſhine
Unleſs exertion with thoſe gifts combine;
Moſt perfect ſyſtems into ruin fall,
If unſupported by due action's call,
If but an atom without motion ſtood,
The univerſe would jar, and chaos rude
Deſtruction hurl, all nature's plan ſubdue,
But her activity her charms renew.
Freedom! that darling jewel of the ſoul,
Loſeth her worth, rejecting good controul;
Sweet liberty to riot ſoon will turn,
If work and order bright her vot'ries' ſpurn.
Without good rule can any thing gain place,
Devoid of action, beauty would efface
Her lovely ſelf, fine health and life muſt ceaſe,
Could nature yield her annual encreaſe,
If order was not follow'd in her round,
The ſeaſons ſoon would ſtop and all confound.
This Wiſdom knew, and guarded well her plan,
When the formation of the world began;
A given pow'r for every purpoſe good,
Within itſelf firm as its baſis ſtood.
The earth impregnated with hidden ſtore,
For ages giving, ſtill producing more

For

For man's enjoyment, if content to plough,*
Abundant crops his harveſt will allow;
The plough his treaſure greatly will encreaſe,
Since exerciſe is health, time's golden fleece,
All nature prompts to motion, and diſplay,
Whoſe progreſs various in the minds ſurvey.
The contemplative mind is joy ſupreme,
Active obedience in her ſyſtems teem.
No war they wage, but joyfully perform
Their duties part, without contention's ſtorm.
Oh man! look nature through, thyſelf inſpect
With grateful eye! what finds thou to reject
In Heav'n's great work! is it the fertile plains,
Rivers, or azure ſphere that thou diſdains?
While years unnumber'd they have held their courſe,
The ſame intrepid change, nor wanted force,
Or foreign aid their functions to complete,
But on ſublimely ride in wiſdom's ſeat,
Whence ſpring thy murmurs and thy diſcontent?
Becauſe all heaven is not to thee unpent.
Are not the charms of earth fully diſplay'd?
So rich in all her fruits and flow'rs array'd,
Her ſpacious canopy in glory's blaze,
On which the peaſant unreſtrain'd may gaze,
Free as the majeſty of crowned heads,
As ſafely ſleep on their more peaceful beds,
Kings have their troubles, but they muſt not weep,
Their dignity of ſphere muſt ſorrow keep,
They muſt conceal their deepfelt woe at heart,
Leſt to their ſubjects grief they ſhould impart.

Did

* The plough is mentioned metaphorically, to repreſent the benefit reſulting from proper purſuits and active life.

Did low ambition know but half the pain
That majeſty, too oft, by wrongs ſuſtain,
In place of cenſures they would praiſe beſtow,
And heaven invoke that comfort thence may flow,
On them that have the toil to wear the crown,
That happineſs on ſubjects may redown.
Come, ſons of labour! and with reaſon talk,
Ye honeſt men that ne'er in darkneſs walk,
Say, while your health and appetite is good,
Would you not wiſh to earn your daily food?
By induſtry maintain yourſelves! and proud
To boaſt that to ſly knaves you never bow'd;
Maintain'd your freedom by your innate zeal,
And ſtrength of arm, that all your wants can heal;
Thus, independent, on yourſelves you reſt,
Your thoughts and actions all will ſtand the teſt
Of nice inſpection, ſure to gain applauſe,
From Lords and Commons, and from reaſon's laws,
Reaſon your helm, while ſhe life's compaſs ſteers,
No dread from guilt, filling the ſoul with fears
Can e'er diſturb the boſom's peaceful queen,
Contentment reigns where innocence is ſeen;
Hail! Innocence, bleſt pow'r, for ever hail!
Thy captivating charms muſt ſure prevail,
And induſtry will firm thy reign ſupport,
Thence ſpring the graces that the virtuous court.
From induſtry the arts and ſcience roſe,
'Tis induſtry that genius muſt diſcloſe;
Exalt it high on pyramids of fame,
And to eternity hold up her name.
'Tis occupation fills the vacant hour,
While ſloth the very bliſs of eaſe will ſour,

Contaminate

Contaminate the mind where it reſides,
For indolence to ſin, though ſlow, ſure guides;
What prompts the thief to ſteal? the ſot to drink?
Becauſe from labour ſlothful both would ſhrink;
In filthy rags, ſkulking from place to place,
At firſt, perhaps, aſham'd to ſhew their face
(Where honeſt men in decency appear,
The day employ'd with friends, the eve to cheer,)
They loiter on, till by ſome harden'd band
Seduc'd with them, the deſperate guilt to ſtand;
To rob and murder, then no quarters give,
Till on the fatal tree dread ſtop they have;
This is the tree of liberty thoſe found,
Who ſpurn'd at government, all peace to wound,
But occupation gives to life new ſoul,
Our minds enrich, and characters enrol;
Muſt we not ſtand or fall by this alone,
Belov'd or hated, by deportment ſhown,
Nay, bleſs'd or curs'd, if goſpel light is true,
When the account of our whole life to view,
In the laſt day is openly diſplay'd;
Induſtry then with joy will be repaid.
Be patient then, ye ſons of labour bleſs'd,
The Author of our being knows what's beſt
For all his children, though on earth you toil,
Think you are working through this temp'ral ſoil,
To reſt in infinite of joyful eaſe,
Where poverty or pride no more can teaſe;
Where your great Maſter will your pains reward,
While ſaints and angels join with ſweet accord,

Hailing

Hailing your ſpirits to the realms of bliſs,
Which thoſe that practiſe virtue cannot miſs.
Thoſe are the maxims him regreted taught,
And reformation in the world thus wrought.
Devoted well his time to aid the cauſe
Of nature's right, and ſtudious of her laws;
Beheld her ſyſtems, follow'd them at large,
Thus knowledge gain'd, ſparing no pains or charge.
He ſaw the ground work of the higheſt plan,
Muſt be ſupported by induſtrious man;
He ſaw that man by induſtry muſt live,
Thence the projections ſprung his judgment gave,
Turning the current of the river's tide,
Urg'd by compaſſion, ſtrenuous to provide
The weary labourers with plenty's cheer,
That hunger or diſtreſs they might not fear;
Their wives and children bleſt his honour'd name,
His ſchemes were crown'd with great ſucceſs and fame.
Whole towns he built his neighbours to employ,
That comforts like himſelf all might enjoy,
And, had it pleas'd Omnipotence divine,
To ſpare him longer, his humane deſign,
Perfection's ſummit would have reach'd with ſpeed.
Dead! all is widow'd, and muſt wear the weed.

And art thou gone! great friend of human kind!
A philanthropic heart where ſhall we find
Like thine, enrich'd with ſuch deſire to bleſs,
To ſuccour all that felt the leaſt diſtreſs.
Weep! Science, weep! fine arts and commerce too,
Your Lord, your patron, you no more can view.
Weep! genius weep! for he, alas! is gone,
That animation gave, urging you on

To

To fine diſplay, your talents to improve,
With taſte and generoſity he ſtrove
Abilities to cheriſh, if a ſpark,
An infant ray, appear'd, his zeal would mark,
The dawn of promiſe give them ſcope to ſhine,
And with judicious care new flow'rs entwine;
The huſband of fine arts he may be ſtyl'd,
His cares ſurpaſs the father's to his child;
In his own perſon lab'ring to regain,
The long loſt luſtre of the arts bright reign,
To bring great ſcience to her priſtine light,
He ſtudy'd hard, and often paſt the night,
Of literature the maſter and the friend,
His patronage to talents knew no end.
Whate'er the bent, if inclination well,
Encouragement he gave them to excel,
Knowing that practice judgment muſt impart,
Perfecting thence the beauty of each art,
He knew the value of time's fleeting glaſs,
Without purſuit let not a moment paſs;
Convinc'd high Providence had ſent him here,
Not for himſelf alone to domineer
O'er all beneath him plac'd within his pow'r,
Culling the fruits of their laborious hour;
His mind inform'd, the rights of nature ſaw,
(And ſcorn'd to trample on her ſacred law;)
To univerſal good her ſyſtems tend,
Impartially to all her bleſſings ſend.
That heaven for all mankind proviſion made,
Till cunning tyrants baſe their rights invade,
And ſloth neglected to improve the charge
Of fortune, talents, whether ſmall or large,

Of

Of health poſſeſs'd, without a foot of land,
With induſtry and care all may command
Sufficient for their wants; unleſs miſchance
Should their endeavours cruſh, then not like France,
Who baſe deſtroy bright hope, for you remain,
Since guilt or blood doth not your conduct ſtain,
Atrociouſly to plunder every where,
Your diſappointment but redoubles care
To crown your wiſhes; ſince by honeſt means
You ſtrive to live, and ſhun inſidious ſchemes,
But if in idleneſs you waſte your days,
Fortune in vain may ſhed auſpicious rays;
All muſt diſſolve and totally decay,
Or, to the active watchful fall a prey;
Such good unlimited his ardent zeal
Strove to promote! and for the public weal
An advocate ſo ſtrong, that time nor change
His ſteady principle could ne'er derange.
To government attach'd, loving the king
Since from his reign his country's bleſſing ſpring;
The ſenſualiſt came not within his plan,
Or breaches made, undignifying man,
And ſinking him below the beaſt of prey,
That hath not mental to illume his way;
Of appetite the ſlaves and fancy'd oft,
Strangers to real bliſs and manners ſoft.
To that delight which purely e'er brings,
Nor torture dreads from retroſpection's ſtings;
Mad impulſe of the moment to enjoy,
Regardleſs of the objects they deſtroy,
Till paſſions fail and reaſon ſeize the reigns
Then wretched ſtate their juſt reward are pains,

Pains

Pains of the mind! of corp'ral languor too,
Then conſcience holds the glaſs, in which they view
All their paſt follies, ſee their pleaſures gone,
A female friend of worth, they have not one;
Inconſtancy their taſte, ſtrangers to love,
And the whole ſex their conduct diſapprove.
Weak individuals, now they feel at length,
By hypocondriac ſeiz'd, and loſs of ſtrength,
The ſacrifice of all they fooliſh made,
Remorſe and woe their feeble hearts invade;
No kind companion to afford relief,
Preferring none who pities them in grief;
All trembling, tott'ring like a moulder'd wall,
Nature gives way, and down in death they fall:
While others in this ſtate will take a wife,
Their anguiſh to conſole and give new life,
Seek for a lovely, young, accompliſh'd fair,
Without a fortune, ſhe with him muſt ſhare
The ſad effects of his miſconduct paſt,
Or with fond youth and health tranſgreſs at laſt.
At the crown'd huſband, e'en his friends now laugh,
In vain his breaſt ferments with ire and wrath,
He frets and fumes, yet no redreſs can have,
And like the former ſinks into his grave.
But this is not a proper time to write
On ſubjects ſo impure, or to recite
Intrigues and follies the unwiſe tranſact,
Some future period vice we may attack.

Ceaſe then, my pen! nor ſtain the mournful page,
Sacred to him, whoſe conduct ever ſage,
Example worthy of an honour'd man,
All radiant ſhone, for goodneſs form'd each plan,

His

His ſkill deſign'd to other's welfare prone,
Comfort diſpenſing, thus he found his own.
Ah! much regretted! To thy noble fame
Could we but add a liſt with thy bright flame,
Inſpir'd, their fellow creatures to improve,
Happy the age cemented by ſuch love,
Would pleaſant live, united with the zeal
Of ſweet philanthropy, that ſorrows heal.
Hail! to thy virtues, brilliant active will,
Ever employ'd, not ſtudying how to kill
The precious moments, Providence beſtows,
Genius like thine, vacuum never knows,
Thy all-creative fancy e'er on wing
Embelliſhments to make! of taſte the ſpring,
Uſeful with ornamental nice to blend
In that perfection which thy works* attend,
And to the muſe ever polite and kind,
When liſping infancy ſcarce numbers join'd;
At Paris then in ſplendid peace and eaſe,
I ſaw him good, with every charm to pleaſe;
Here too I ſaw him, after twenty year
Had gone their round, as courteous then appear,
No change of countenance or manners ſweet,
As oft when fortunes change the beſt will meet,
Quite the reverſe, he more attention paid,
Although the muſe oppreſs'd,§ was then diſmay'd,
And

* The fine production of paintings done under his inſpection at a great expence.

§ Through the contrivance of a low malicious jealous woman, Mrs. Hill was arreſted in a ſhort time after her firſt coming to Ireland, and alſo hurt in the good eſteem of the Right Hon. the Earl of Miltown, through the machinations of an amanuenſis, ſent to her by his Lordſhip, from motives of friendſhip.

His noble heart inſtant aſſiſtance gave,
And through my lays his worth my praiſe ſhall have.
Could I expreſs the feelings of my heart,
Could my weak verſe the nerve of thought impart,
The grateful flow in heavenly ſtrains ſhould ſhine,
His virtues deck the wreath and tomb enſhrine,
Thoſe to immortal will for ever bloom,
Eternal fragrant ſpread the rich perfume.
But three ſhort weeks elaps'd, we ſaw him well,
Heading his troops, apparent to excel,
His uſual health, in elegance of ſtate,
Who could have thought his melancholy fate
So ſoon would follow, then ſo well and grand,
In order, ſplendid gave his corps command.
The Downſhire regiment meeting with his own,
His tenderneſs and care affection ſhown,
The noble Colonel halted all his men,
The ranks drew up, the baggage waggons then
His ſweet compaſſion ordered ſafe-guard to
The ſoldiers wives and children in his view,
Rode up and down the ranks till all was plac'd,
To ſtand at eaſe, and with his preſence grac'd;
Not like a tyrant inſolence, of power,
With violence, that e'en would courage ſour,
Then Downſhire Marquis with his regiment came,
Paſt in great ſtate, high too in martial fame;
Both bands performing in ſo fine a ſtile,
I dreamt I was in ſome enchanted iſle,
Till rous'd from ſleep, and to my window flew,
Then the reality moſt ſurely knew;
The ſcene was novel, grand in ſuch a road*
Where harmony divine and colours flow'd,
Augmented

* Drumcondra.

Augmented by ſurpriſe if that could be,
Until both Colonels I could plainly ſee,
Then wonder ceas'd, their elegance and taſte,
Familiar to my mind, in courts they grac'd,
Each corps refreſh'd, march'd off in ſtile their way,
To Laughtown's camp our Colonels not that day,
That day fatigu'd, he gave them kind, to reſt,
And at his houſe made every man his gueſt,
Next morning to the camp he led them well,
Their fine appearance beſt his goodneſs tell,
There left them ſafe equipt with all they need,
And then return'd to town! Oh! fatal ſpeed!
His anxious boſom with parental care,
For all their wants eſpecial to prepare;
Too much exerted in his country's cauſe,
(While his bright conduct glory muſt applauſe,
Friendſhip muſt weep,) his life the ſacrifice.
He took his bed, alas, no more to riſe!
Finding his ſickneſs ſoon would end in death,
Prov'd his compaſſion to his lateſt breath,
Requeſting that his men might not attend
His funeral obſequies, ſince no good end
Could be deriv'd, deſir'd they might remain
In camp, on duty, ſaving them the pain
Of a long journey, toiling ſad and ſlow
To grieve their hearts, and ſpirits flag with woe,
His charity benign and bounteous heart
To all the world at large did good impart,
His gracious acts ſuch bright example yield,
His private life, his public was the ſhield
Of honour's worth, ineſtimably bright,
To ſuccour and improve was his delight.

He's

He's gone! alas! and numbers now will mourn,
Behold a ſolemn troop ſurround his urn,
With weeping willows all in ſable clad;
A gloomy train with lamentation ſad,
Theſe are the group his lib'ral grand oft bleſt,
Meek drooping merit whom misfortune preſt,
Another band approaching to his bier,
Dejected come, their ſorrows who will cheer;
Arts! ſcience! commerce! weeping at his ſhrine,
To their great patron's ſhade they thus repine:
Bleſt Conyngham! the glory of our reign,
To thee we owe the luſtre we regain,
'Twas thy all-bounteous hand our fame reſtor'd,
Now we muſt mourn the death of our lov'd Lord,
What multitudes advance to meet his hearſe!
The poor he daily fed, but ceaſe my verſe!
Leſt grief beſiege the breaſt of all he knew,
And Ireland's genius die with ſorrow too;
Behold the ſtate! the government in tears,
All his lov'd country ſolemn ſadneſs wears,
Apollo, and the Nine, in woe appear,
His harp unſtrung, the muſes pale draw near;
All proſtrate mourn around his corpſe as mutes,
Grief fills their pow'rs, and ſorrow only ſuits:
But his bleſt ſpirit's now in joy ſupreme,
Cloſe! cloſe! my muſe, this melancholy theme.
Reward for all his virtues here below,
Omnipotence on him will now beſtow.

FINIS.