

Newberry Hall, Carbury, Co. Kildare – An Irish Country House and the People

**By
James Robinson M. Phil**

Dublin in the 1700's became the second city of the British Empire, largely due to the planning and enlargement of the city by the actions of the Dublin Wide Streets Commission in 1757. The laying out of new streets, squares and the building of bridges, churches, townhouses and public buildings by the aristocracy was accompanied by the growth of a villa/country house development. This paper references one such country house, Newberry Hall, Carbury, Co. Kildare and the people associated with it. ¹

Carbury, or Castle Carbery derives its name from an ancient castle situated on an isolated hill, which has a commanding view of the surrounding countryside. At the time of the English invasion, Carbury was given to Meiler FitzHenry by Richard de Clare, 2nd Earl of Pembroke, who was also known as Strongbow. The old Anglo-Norman poem, attributed to Maurice Regan, interpreter to King Dermot McMurogh, reads, "Cairbre he (Strongbow) gave to the good Meiler, who was such a noble Lord". In 1181, Kildare and the surrounding country were taken from Meiler by John Constable of Chester and Richard Le Pec, Governors of Ireland at that time. Meiler received Leix in exchange. Isabel, the only child of Strongbow and granddaughter of Dermot McMurogh who was heir to his vast estates, married William Earl Marshall, Governor of Ireland. In 1189, they were resident in Carbury. This union produced five sons, who had no issue, and five daughters. One of Strongbow's granddaughters, Sybil, had a daughter, Agnes, who married William de Vesci. They are recorded as living in Carbury in 1272.²

The family of Birmingham, the descendants of Piers de Birmingham, who were one of the early English Norman settlers in Ireland, occupied the Castle of Carbury in the early 14th century. Sir William Birmingham was created Baron of Carbury in 1541.³

This family came into conflict with the authorities and the property passed into possession of the Cowley or Colley family. First of the name at Carbury was Capt. Henry Colley, who served from the reign of King Henry VIII to that of Queen Elizabeth I. He was the son of Walter Colley, surveyor general of Ireland from 1546 and previously Solicitor-General of Ireland from 1537. He probably served in the Irish Wars and earned a grant of land – the usual reward of officers of the Crown in lieu of arrears of pay. For his military services Captain Henry Colley was granted on March 9 1538 a twenty-one year lease on the site of the castle or manor of Carbury or Castle Carbery. The manor lay in the barony of Carbury, alias Bermingham's country. This had been forfeited by Sir William Delahyde of Moyglare, Co. Meath, who was attainted for joining the rebellion of Silken Thomas, 10th Earl of Kildare. Captain Colley's lease of 21 years was twice renewed before he was eventually given a grant of these manor lands in 1569. On April 23 1576, he was knighted by the Lord Deputy of Ireland Sir Henry Sydney. By his first wife, whose name is unknown, Henry had a son, George, who lived at Edenderry and who died in 1614. By his second wife, Katherine (née Cusack of Cushinstown Co. Meath, eldest daughter of Sir Thomas Cusack, Lord Chancellor of Ireland from 1535 - 1571), he had two sons,

Henry and Gerard. On the demise of her husband, in October 1584, Katherine married William Eustace of Castlemartin, Co. Kildare. She died on January 19 1597.

Descending through five generations, the family dynasty was represented in Carbury by Henry Colley (died 1723), who married Lady Mary Hamilton, third daughter of the 6th Earl of Abercorn. Their successors and co heirs were Elizabeth and Mary Colley. Their first cousin was Garret Wesley, 2nd Baron Mornington and father of Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, who defeated Napoleon Bonaparte at the Battle of Waterloo on June 15 1815. Arthur's grandfather Richard was the brother of the above-mentioned Henry Colley, who died in 1723. Richard succeeded to the estates of his cousin Garret Wesley at Dangan, Trim, Co. Meath, when he changed his name from Colley to Wesley, which later became Wellesley.⁴

It is the Colleys who either built or converted a former castle at Carbury to its present much enlarged form.

Arthur Pomeroy (1723 – 1798), later Lord Harberton, who resided at No. 5 Kildare St., Dublin, obtained the lands of Newberry, which were part of the Colley estate, by his marriage to Mary Colley on October 10 1747. At this time the Colleys were still living in the old Castle at Castle Carbery, although a mere 20 years later it had become the roofless ruin that it remains today. In about 1760, Pomeroy built a countryseat at Newberry. Described as a centre block and linked pavilion-type residence, it is a Palladian-style house, constructed in red brick with stone dressings. The building has some unusual features. The third storey has no windows to the front and its half windows on the garden front are fitted into the parapet. None of these windows has a stone surround, although urns and parapet continue around the house. The L-shaped two-storey pavilions have three sided projecting bays at the front. The curtain wall which links house and kitchen pavilion has a corridor behind it and a central door giving access to the forecourt, whereas the wall between the home and stable pavilion has no corridor and the matching door is a dummy. The whole ground floor is compactly arranged. The dining room has a good rococo stucco frieze with birds and flowers in high relief.⁵ According to Craig, the wings with their half-octagonal bays are very unusual in Ireland.⁶

Other features of the Newberry demesne include a farmyard with a redbrick walled garden, which included glasshouses and a pond. There are also flax holes, which were used for the processing of flax. The growing of flax was common in the late 18th century and early 19th Century Ireland. A plaque at nearby Kilglass from disused flax mills reads '*Kilglass Mills, built by George Tyrrell 1817*'. An account of linen, sent to market in 1770 by Stephenson, stated that Kildare had linen to the value of £20,000 out of a total value of £2 million. There is an icehouse on the estate, which was used to store ice taken from the pond in wintertime to preserve food for the house. A tennis court was added in the 1880s and another was laid a decade later. There is a well on the demesne known as 'Trinity Well'. This well has been a place of pilgrimage from early Christian times to the present day. Pilgrims still attend on Trinity Sunday of each year. On Trinity Sunday 1305, Sir Piers de Bermingham of Carrig, or Carrigoris, invited the O'Connors of Offaly to dine. Subsequent to this, he slew 26 of their number.⁷ This well is also the source of the River Boyne, famous in Irish history. There is a haw-haw fence to the front and back of the house, thus giving an unrestricted view, in particular, from the house front to Carbury Castle. An unusual feature adjoining the tennis courts is a large weeping beech tree grafted

upside down onto another beech tree. This is reputed to be the work of a gardener named Stapleton, from the 1880's.⁸

The house is credited to the design of the amateur architect Nathaniel Clements (1705 - 1777). He is also reputed to have designed houses at nearby Williamstown, Lodge Park, Straffan, Co. Kildare, Colganstown, Co. Dublin and Beau Park, Co. Meath.

Nathaniel Clements, banker and politician was a close friend of property designer Luke Gardiner and Clements succeeded the latter as both Deputy Vice Treasurer and Deputy Recorder and Paymaster General of Ireland in 1755. Both worked on the development of Dublin's north city. In April 1751 Clements was appointed Chief Ranger of the Phoenix Park where he built the residence known today as Áras an Uachtaráin - the residence of the President of Ireland. He married Hannah Gore, the eldest of the Very Reverend William Gore, Dean of Down, and the seat of the rest of the family is at Killadoon, Celbridge, Co. Kildare.⁹

Clements is depicted as the first propagator of an architectural idea, which was born in 18th century Italy. It was apparently unique to Ireland in its great period of demesne building. Newberry Hall stands supreme as Clements' most satisfying composition.¹⁰

Nathaniel Clements sat as an M.P. for a number of constituencies in the Irish Commons and also served as High Sheriff for counties Cavan, Donegal and Leitrim. Further to this for 1728 – 1755, he was agent for Irish regiments serving overseas which increased his wealth and influence. He was a central figure in the Irish administration from 1728 to 1755.¹¹

Mrs. Mary Delany (1700 – 1788), the noted 18th century social commentator and friend of Dean Jonathan Swift, described Nathaniel and his wife thus:

Not heard of Mr and Mrs Clements! Why she is finer than a lady in England. Dress, furniture, house equipage – excellent all! They set out in life very young and humble, though both from very good families. He has gathered together, by degrees, an immense fortune, if one may judge by the magnificence of his living.

She made these comments having visited the Clements' residence in Phoenix Park in May 1769.¹²

The first owner of Newberry, Arthur Pomeroy, (1723 –1798) husband of Mary Colley, was a grandson of Rev. Arthur Pomeroy who came to Ireland as chaplain to the Lord Lieutenant the Earl of Essex in 1672. The Pomeroy family trace lineage back to the 11th century to the Chateau Ganne in Normandy, France, to a Ralf de la Pommerai who died in 1102. Some of this family joined William the Conqueror, in his invasion of England in 1066 and were rewarded with large estates near Totnes in the county of Devon in England. The largest of these was (and still is) known as Berry Pomeroy. However, there were uncertain times in the family fortunes. In 1549 they became involved in what were called the 'Western Risings', which arose from changes to the liturgy following the dissolution of the monasteries in the reign of King Henry VIII. Pomeroy obtained a pardon while his fellow rebels were executed at Tyburn. In the English Civil War the Pomeroy family took the Royalist side. Captured by Parliamentary forces in 1645, the family estates were seized including the Harberton estate in Devon. However, they negotiated the release and liberation of these estates.¹³

On his marriage to Mary in 1747, Arthur Pomeroy was 24 years of age – a year older than his bride. He was returned an M.P. for Co. Kildare in successive elections between 1761 and his elevation to the peerage in 1783. Pomeroy was a loyal parliamentary ally of the 2nd Duke of Leinster. As a contemporary dryly put it, ‘The value of the estate is great but that of the man is not greater’.¹⁴

Created Baron Harborton in 1783, Arthur became Viscount Harborton in 1791, taking the name, no doubt, from his ancestral home in England. As a person of high position, Lord Harborton was a director of the Grand Canal Company in 1772/3; a trustee of the Linen Board of Leinster for 1783/8 and he was also a member of the Royal Dublin Society. According to the redoubtable Mrs. Delany, in February 1752 she wrote that Lord Harborton was ‘sensible, gentle and good humoured’ and that he had a wife who was a ‘dry stick of a thing, who never commends anything and shows great conceit of her understanding’.¹⁵

Arthur’s younger brother, John Pomeroy, became a general in the British Army and fought in the American War of Independence. Arthur wrote to his brother, then Col. John Pomeroy, 64th Foot, then stationed in Boston on March 15 1769. An extract reads:-

Capt. Hardwick has been with me... the ducks are safe and well and exceedingly pretty... they go to Newberry tomorrow and to be kept by themselves in the walled gardens where there’s a little round pond of water but I don’t suppose they will breed this year as they are so young...the captain seems a good sort of man... he is much worried but is to dine with me in a few days and then I will try to get all the Boston Politiks he has out of him.

A dispatch dated July 4 1775 to General John Pomeroy for one Edward Callen reported on the Battle of Bunker Hill. It stated that, ‘the rebels were about 5,000 strong and the British forces were not above two thousand’. The rebels, he mentions, had the advantage of a strong redoubt and entrenchment on an eminence with some cannons. The assault on this fortified position resulted in great slaughter and there were at least 1,000 killed and wounded of whom 85 were officers. ‘When these troubles will end God only knows but it is a war that is much to be lamented’, Callen said. He concluded his account of the Battle, which the British won by asking General Pomeroy to remember him with a view to promotion.¹⁶

On April 30 1790, General John Pomeroy was returned an M.P. together with his cousin, Arthur Wesley (1769 – 1852). Due to his (Wesley’s) straightened financial position, Pomeroy insisted on paying the election expenses of both Arthur and himself. Could Wesley ever have foreseen, from this humble start, a political career that would culminate in his being elected Prime Minister of England?¹⁷

Lord Arthur Harborton died on April 9 1798, having been predeceased by his wife Mary in 1794.¹⁸

The title and demesne of Newberry then passed to Henry, eldest son of Arthur and Mary who became 2nd Viscount Harborton. Born on December 8 1749, Henry was educated at Eton (1746/7); Christ Church Oxford (1768); Lincoln’s Inn (1771) and became a barrister, having attended King’s Inns (1775). He was M.P. for Strabane (1776 – 97) and Commissioner of Barracks (1789 – 1798). Henry succeeded to the

title in 1798 and the traumatic effects of the insurrection of that year did not bypass Newberry.

Following the battle of Clonard, which took place on July 11, 1798, the defeated rebels made their way to Carbury. The following day a band of insurrectionists took over Lord Harberton's home at Newberry. They looted table linen, sheets and blankets and drank all the alcoholic beverages from the cellar. Further to this, they took 4 guineas from Lord Harberton's desk together with four horses and the clothes of the Lord's estate agent Brian Forde. They also murdered two dairy hands - Mary and Esther Gratten - the only Protestants employed on the demesne. In the following year, 1799, John Browning and Andrew Kenny were tried, convicted and sentenced to be hanged beside the pond where the Grattens were killed. At a later trial, Henry Kilgallon and Thomas McCann were also condemned to die at the scene of the outrage. One Jack Bermingham escaped from jail in Dublin while awaiting trial for the same crime by dressing as a woman, and so cheated the gallows.¹⁹

The rebels were cleared from Newberry by Lt. George Gough and his Limerick Regiment. He wrote that in July 1798, he marched with some 400 troops against 4,000 rebels in Kings County. While there he was informed of the Newberry rebel occupation. "Immediately, I ordered out my division and marched and before daylight arrived at Lt. Harberton's where we shot and destroyed the rebel advance guard - drove them out of the home and from their camp, 'killing fourteen of them and took their stores, which I next day carted into Edenderry and shared to all my little party - 19 stockings apiece'. He added, 'I marched back next day and with the blessing of all the inhabitants who will, long as they live, remember Col. Gough and his gallant Garryowen Boys'. This story was recounted in 1947 by Col. Gough's descendent, General Hubert Gough to the 8th Viscount Harberton.²⁰

In June 1799 James Cuffe or Ld. Tyrawley, as he became, wrote to Ld. Harberton. He told him that he had seen Newberry, which he described as a 'very pretty place'. He added that the late Ld. Harberton had neglected the demesne or rather had not "laid out one penny on it for some years past". The consequence of this is that "the house and offices have suffered much and will require immediate and considerable repair". He estimated that it would cost £800 to £1000 to make the required repairs. Further he stated that if he were given a lease he (Tyrawley) was to carry out the repairs at his own expense. In this event he thought that Harberton would not hesitate to lease him the whole of the land at a rate of 20s per acre.²¹

Also in June 1799, Newberry, having been leased to Lord Tyrawley, the lessee, wrote to 2nd Viscount Harberton:

Re Newberry, the rebels have done great mischief as they have destroyed all the locks and presses and almost every door upon the underground floor.

Further he added that there were still soldiers in the house and when it will be safe to dismiss them, 'God only knows'.

Nor can I calculate whether I might venture to put wine in the cellar if there were a new door and lock. Tyrawley went on to refer to his lease of the lands for one year, which amounted to between 70 and 80 acres. He said he regarded them as part of the Newberry demesne as much as the lawn, as did the Late Ld Harberton and

so would your Lordship – were you to see them for without them the remaining part of the demesne is not sufficient for the supply of a gentleman’s table who lives as he ought to.

Ld. Tyrawley wrote again to the 2nd Viscount in 1799 telling him that the 1st Viscount:

had a most infamous pack of rebels and cut throats about him and until some of these shall be hanged, which I hope will soon happen, Newberry will not afford a safe residence to anyone.

Henry 2nd Viscount Harberton married Mary Grady, daughter of Nicholas Grady, of Grange, Limerick on January 20 1778. She died on January 22 1823 and is buried in Westminster Abbey. They had one son, Henry, who was born in 1788 and died in 1804. Henry senior is listed in Judges & Barristers (1789 – 1800) and was a trustee of the Linen Board for Leinster in 1796. Following Tyrawley’s lease in 1799, Newberry demesne was leased over the succeeding years to the following: - in 1807 (Thos Palmer); 1809 (Richard Newton Bennett); 1818 (Cecelia Henry, daughter of Hugh Henry of Straffan) and in 1819, 1824 and 1825 to Edward Southhall.²⁰ This leasing activity suggests that the Harbertons were seldom living at Newberry. Henry 2nd Viscount Harberton died in London, on November 29 1829, aged 80. In his will dated September 30 1829, Henry, whose address was given as Upper Brook St., Grosvenor Sq., London, gave the residue of his estate to the Misses Grace and Frances O’Grady, sisters of ‘my late dearest wife’. He appointed Frances as his sole executor. Henry willed to his faithful butler and valet William Rogers:

200 pounds and also his gold snuff box, silver watch, good sleeve and knee buckles, body linen, wearing apparel and a suit of best cloth.

To all other servants, Henry left 10 pounds each. To his Coachman, Benjamin Mason, he left 20 pounds. Henry desired that he be buried ‘as privately as possible, in the burial ground of St. George, Hanover Square in the County of Middlesex’, and also that his funeral be at as ‘early an hour as can conveniently be and that the expence shall on no account exceed 150 pounds’.

Henry particularly requested that ‘no carriage attend except my own, with 2 footmen with blinds up, 2 mourning coaches and pair and hearse with 4 horses – the coffin to be covered with best Manchester velvet’. Ld. Harberton requested that the coffin plate inscription be as follows: ‘Henry Viscount Harberton died ... aged... No monument or tablet’. In a codicil to his will, Henry bequeathed all his rents from his estates in Ireland to his nephew George Frances Pomeroy.²³

Newberry demesne and the title 3rd Viscount Harberton passed to Henry’s younger brother Arthur James (born March 3 1753). Educated at Eton, Arthur James pursued a military career and became a major in the 5th Dragoons. In a letter dated July 1 1776, Arthur James wrote to his uncle Rt. Hon John Pomeroy, commenting on the state of hostilities in North America. He opined that the rebels were dispirited having but 900, some of who died of the small pox or were killed by Capt. Montgomery’s attack. Pomeroy went on to state that he visited the latter’s grave, where he lies with his two aide-de-camps. He further related that a Capt. Foster of the 8th Regiment had been attacked by about 500 rebels. With a force of only 40 regulars and 300 Indians, Porter took them all prisoner with the loss of only two men. The reality of war is evidenced by his chilling statement that, ‘the Indians have scalped some of them and it is with great difficulty that General Carleton can contain them’.

Arthur James Pomeroy married Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Kinsley, drug merchant who was High Sheriff of Dublin in 1799 – 1800. She died November 10 1862. They had no issue. In a letter dated April 27 1799, the 3rd Viscount wrote to his younger brother John Pomeroy, complaining of his medial treatment in England. Apparently Arthur James suffered from a nervous disorder and explained, ‘*that it was the barbarity of the man put over him*’ which prevented his recovery there. As he put it, ‘*a kind and mild attendant would have brought about a speedy recovery*’. ²⁴ In 1830, he leased Newberry to Edward Wolstenholme.

Having been 3rd Viscount and owner of Newberry for about three years, Arthur James died on September 27 in 1832 in Dublin. In his will dated May 1821, he left the lease on his house in Summerhill to his wife. Curiously, his solicitor, represented by one Wm. Shepherd swore an oath that, ‘*having acted as his banker for 15 years past and having been acquainted with his handwriting, that the will was indeed that of Arthur James, 3rd Lord Harberton*’. His brother Rev. John Pomeroy swore an oath to the same effect. For the final ten years of his life Arthur James was ‘*in an insane state of mind and under the restraint of a keeper*’.

Arthur James’ wife Elizabeth, in her will dated February 26 1862, left her Co. Fermanagh estates to her Co. Executors Hon. George Colley and Rev. Edward Perry Brook. Amongst many bequests, she left monies to the following religious societies: - *The Hibernian Bible Society; The Church Missionary Society and the Society for the Conversion of the Jews*. Obviously a woman of religious conviction, the Dowager Lady Harberton ended by stating, ‘and now having settled all my earthy affairs, I pray that the Lord Jesus, that name above every other name, may be glorified from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof’. Finally she expressed the wish that we might all meet before the ‘*throne and Lamb to praise him throughout the countless ages of eternity. Amen*’. No doubt her stoicism was influenced by her husband’s nervous condition. ²⁵

On the death of Arthur James, his brother Rev. John Pomeroy (born in 1758 in Co. Kildare) inherited fourth to the line, the Viscounty. Educated at T.C.D., at the time of his death he was an incumbent of two livings including St. Anne’s, Dawson Street, Dublin. He was for 39 years prebendary of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, sometime treasurer of Christ Church Cathedral Dublin and some time chaplain to the Viceroy. In 1817 John was elected Dean of St. Patrick’s Cathedral and in a letter to his brother George, who died unmarried in 1794, he described in some detail the ecclesiastical politics involved in his election. However, the result was challenged after Pomeroy received the ‘*kindest congratulations from all Ranks – from the Ld. Lieutenant – to the humblest shopkeeper*’. Unfortunately for Rev. John Pomeroy the result was declared invalid. ²⁶

In a busy public life he was: - Chairman of the Grand Canal Company in 1811; a member of the Society for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland; Vice-President of the Royal Dublin Society from 1822 to 1833; Governor of St. Patrick’s Hospital for Lunatics and Idiots (founded by Dean Swift in 1745) ²⁷ and Chairman of the Royal Hospital, Donnybrook Governing Board in 1816. ²⁸ In 1785 John married Esther, eldest daughter and co-heir of James Spencer of Rathangan, Co. Kildare. Spencer was killed by insurgents in the Battle of Rathangan in 1798. The Pomeroy family lived in Rathangan House and demesne. Esther died in 1840 and the Rathangan estate was sold by the Harberton family to the Duke of Leinster in 1858 for £30,000. ²⁹

Nine months after his succession to the title and ownership of Newberry, Rev. John Pomeroy, 4th Viscount Harberton, died on July 4 1833, at his Merrion Square, Dublin residence.

Ownership of the Newberry demesne and the title 5th Viscount Harberton fell to John James eldest son of the 4th Viscount. Born on September 25 1790, he married Caroline, the 6th daughter of Rev. John Robinson Bart of Rokeby Hall, Co. Louth, on March 1 1822. Following his acquisition John James, through his agent Charles Hamilton, of 27 Dominick St. Dublin leased the estate to the following: in 1833, Edward Wolstenholme (150, 20 and 20 acres); William Murphy (19, 8 acres); James McCann (6, 17 acres); Jane and Laurence McCann (51, 10 and 8 acres); Rev. C Palmer (49, 6 and 6 acres). These reported acreages referred to indicate that each tenant had a portion of arable, pasture and bog sections rented respectively and the total amount leased quantified as 245 acres approx. This leasing of Newberry to several tenants was in contrast to the earlier lettings to just one lessee.³⁰

In his will, the 5th Viscount Harberton left £800 yearly rent charge to his wife Caroline, £5,000 to his daughter Mary Wigham, to his son James Pomeroy, £14,000 and to his daughter Caroline Pomeroy, £2,000. He gave to his wife ‘all linen, jewellery - ...all books, paintings’. He also gave her, during her life, the use of the plate, which came into his possession through her father Sir John and Lady Robinson. After her death, the items were to go to his aforementioned son, absolutely for his own use. He directed that his son pay Mrs. Jane McLeod, the mother of the Postmaster in Rathangan...an annuity of £20 per year. This will was made on July 24 1861 at Tunbridge Wells, Kent and gave his address as Osbourne House, Burnbury, Co. Middlesex, England.³¹

Published in 1876, John Bateman’s “*The Great Landowners of Britain and Ireland*” state that Viscount Harberton, with a residence at Lyston Court, Ross, Co. Hereford, is listed as having 5,233 acres.

It is believed that Newberry estate passed to George Francis Pomeroy, Rathangan, Co. Kildare, brother of the 5th Viscount John James. Born on November 11 1798, George Francis married Frances Trench in 1825 and changed his name to Colley in 1830.³² He then became the owner of the total Colley estate including Castle Carbury and that part left to Elizabeth, sister and co-heir of Maria or Mary, wife of Arthur 1st Viscount Harberton. In 1851, the Newberry demesne listed the following as lessee from the Hon. George Francis Colley: Edward Wolstenholme (339 Acres). The latter sublet a vacant flaxmill and water (19 acres – 1 rd – 8 pers) to the following: Thomas Mooney (1 rd – 20 pers); Wm Grady (1 rd – 20 pers); John Ward (1acre – 2 rd – 20 pers); James Mills. The acreage listed totalled 360 acres – 3rd – 11 pers.³³

The 6th Viscount Harberton was James Spencer Pomeroy (1836 – 1912), who succeeded his father. He married Florence Wallace Legge (1843 – 1911) – a noted dress reform Campaigner and eccentric. Her basic belief that female clothing devalued women was expounded in the ‘*Rational Dress Gazette*’ in 1898. Viscountess Harberton was a keen suffragette in her later years.³⁴

Sometime about 1851, Edward Breton Wolstenholme acquired ownership of the demesne of Newberry and is believed to have added the term ‘Hall’ to the name. On August 10 1811, Edward of Newberry Hall and Downbarton Manor, Kent in England

married the Honourable Arabella Catherine, sister of Edward Ward, 3rd Viscount Bangor of Castleward Co. Down³⁵. The Wolstenholmes were a well connected family. Eliza, (1781 – 1862) sister of Edward, married Thomas Parker, 5th Earl of Macclesfield. Their daughter, Lady Laura Parker, married Hugh McDonnell, 5th Earl of Antrim.

The Wolstenholme family descend from the Saxons and are seated near Rochdale in Lancashire, England. They are listed there at the time of ‘William the Conqueror’. A John Wolstenholme was knighted in the reign of Charles I. As staunch Royalists, family members fought and were slain in the army of Prince Rupert during the English Civil War. They were fined £100,000 for loyalty to the crown during this conflict. After the Restoration, John Wolstenholme was granted a baronetcy by King Charles II in 1664. He was restored to ‘Patent of Collector Outward’ in the port of London- a position from which he was sequestered during the Civil War. His grandson, also called Sir John Wolstenholme (1650 – 1708), from Mincendon, Edmonton, Middlesex married Mary Rainton, (c.1660 – 1696) from Forty Hall, Enfield in Middlesex in 1675. It is noted that Mary was about fifteen years of age when she married. Mary was descended from Sir Nicholas Rainton who was Lord Mayor of London in 1632. Sir John and Mary’s great-great-grandson was Edward Breton Wolstenholme, who lived at Newberry Hall.³⁶

Arabella, the daughter of Edward Breton and Arabella Wolstenholme, married William George Prescott, banker, of Threadneedle Street, on October 27 1838. They were married by Graham P. Crozier, Vicar of Monasteroris³⁷ in the Church of Ireland, Carbury which is adjacent to the Newberry Demesne. The society wedding must have been an impressive sight in Carbury.

In 1864 Arabella Prescott commissioned a stately home, designed by Henry Curzon, at Bockleton Court, near Birmingham in the county of Worcestershire, England. This estate, which totalled some 5,000 acres, remained in the Prescott family thanks to a considerable bequest from Arabella’s brother, Edward Wolstenholme. He died in 1908, leaving a sizable fortune to his great-nephew Francis Prescott. After World War II, Birmingham City Council purchased Bockleton Court and it is still extant as a study centre.³⁸

Edward Breton Wolstenholme of Newberry Hall, died at Woburn Lodge, Torquay, in the county of Devon, England on September 18 1862, aged eighty years³⁹. He predeceased his wife Arabella who died December 24 1868 aged eighty years.

About 1870, the Wolstenholme family sold Newberry Hall and demesne to Frederick Pilkington. The Pilkington family descend from a ‘right and ancient family, gentlemen of repute from before the conquest. They originate from near Manchester in Lancashire, England. The Pilkington name is derived from Pil-kin-ton meaning the town or dwelling of the ‘kin’ or family of ‘Pil’ (a famous Saxon deity). The country around Manchester was largely colonised by Freisians from the first cohort of Freisians of the 20th Roman Legion (some 700 strong) who garrisoned this area. Leonard Thane of Pilkington held this Lordship of Thane under King Edward the Confessor and King Harold, whose estates are mentioned in the Domesday Book. He is reputed to have commanded at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 A.D. From the conflict he escaped as a scythesman or ‘mower’, which is the crest of the family.

The Pilkingtons of Newberry Hall descended from Miles Pilkington of Branganstown, Co. Louth, who gave a lease of 115 acres to one Brent Pilkington of Rathbody, Co. Louth in 1726. A descendent Joseph Pilkington became a clergyman who was a chaplain to the British Embassy. He was on board the British warship '*Bellerophon*' when the vanquished Napoleon Bonaparte was transported after the Battle of Waterloo in July 1815. It is ironic that Newberry should again relate to Waterloo after the earlier reference to Wellington and his Newberry connection. Several of this family including General Sir Andrew Pilkington and a Major General Robert Pilkington fought with Wellington at Waterloo. Joseph's son Frederick J.P. of Newberry Hall was the government bookbinder and he married Margaret Thom of the noted publishing family. A return of landowners in Ireland in 1876 listed Frederick Pilkington as owning 588 Acres - 3 Roods and 10 Pers.

The same census lists Viscount Harberton as having 5,167 acres with an address at 60 Rutland Square, London. Ownership of Newberry passed to Frederick and Margaret's son Alexander Pilkington. He married Agnes Mayhew and they in turn were succeeded by their son Lionel. He was baptised in Carbury Church of Ireland on 23rd May 1879. Lionel served in The Royal Irish Rifles 35th Regiment in the British Army.⁴⁰ The Carbury parish records list the burial of Margaret, wife of Frederick Pilkington, on May 23 1878, aged 53 years. Her husband was buried in the same cemetery on May 21 1898 aged 79 years.⁴¹

In his will dated February 5 1898, Frederick left in trust to his grandson Lionel Pilkington the sum of £20,000, '*in case he should become tenant entail in possession of Newberry Hall. He shall obtain this bequest at the age of 26 or shall marry after my death under that age with the consent of my trustees*'. Curiously he left £1000 to his son Frederick C Pilkington as a 'mark of affection', the sole reason for not leaving him a larger legacy being '*that he is already, through his own ability, a wealthy man*'. Frederick Pilkington died on May 19 1898 and the gross value of his personal estate was £64,801-14-0. A noted member of this family was Letitia (nee Van Lewen), wife of Rev. Matthew Pilkington, who married in 1725. She was a close friend of Jonathan Swift and it is from her memoirs that most anecdotes of Swift's private life are taken. Letitia died of consumption aged 39 years on July 29 1750. She is buried in St. Anne's Church of Ireland, Dawson St., Dublin.⁴²

The 1901 Census records Lionel Pilkington as a non-resident of Newberry demesne. The property comprised some thirty outhouses and farm buildings. It listed the following staff: John Hall aged 40, Coachman; Sarah aged 35 his wife, a domestic servant and their children Malcolm (2) and Gertrude (1) who were born in Scotland. Other servants included Patt Chisholm aged 42 – a gamekeeper; his wife Jean aged 27 – a housekeeper and their children Alexander aged 9, Jessie aged 7, Robert aged 5 and Donald aged three.⁴³

The 1911 National Census lists Lionel Pilkington as the Newberry demesne land holder with the following servants; Pat Doran, aged 35 – a gamekeeper; his wife Margaret aged 33 and their children Christy (aged 12); Annie (aged 10); Thomas (aged 8); Joseph (aged 6) and John (aged 3). The place of birth of the children was given as Sligo and Kildare, which suggests family mobility in line with their father's place of work. Also listed in this census are Joseph Reddy (aged 49), an RIC Constable; his wife Mary (aged 29); their son Richard aged five and a visitor Bridget O'Neill aged 19.⁴⁴

In 1911, Newberry Hall was sold by Lionel Pilkington to Richard Robinson of Jonestown, Edenderry. The estate comprised some 583 acres and is reputed to have been sold for £8,500. Richard (born 8 May 1853) married May (1857 – 1941), daughter of Darby Kelly of Ardnaghue, Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath.

This Robinson family descend from Daniel McRobin or Cribben (1690 – 1777) from nearby Cornamuckla, who married Catherine Shaw (1701 – 1764). The family name changed to Robinson about 1780, when a grandson of Daniel and Catherine, Fr. John Robinson wrote to his father James from the Irish College Seminary in Salamanca, Spain. He changed the surname from McRobin to Robinson in consecutive letters.⁴⁵

First mentioned in the 15th Century in Scottish records, McRobins were retainers of the Sutherland estate and were connected to the Gunn clan from Caithness. They probably came to Ireland in the early 1300s with Edward Bruce as gallowglass mercenaries and were listed as under-tenants and true co-habitants in Kilulta in 1647, in what is now Antrim.⁴⁶

In 1908 Richard Robinson was High Sheriff of Kings County (now Offaly). This position existed from 1655 when Henry Gilbert of Kilminchy, Queens County first occupied the post.⁴⁷ As befitted a member of the gentry, Richard hunted four days a week in season and is recalled in verse by the Earl of Longford, Master of Foxhounds, who wrote in 1898 of the Westmeath Hunt.

Of the old Palmer family, there's now a young scion,
And we've Hope and his hard riding sons from Knockion,
We had Charlie Lyons, who's now on the Rand
John Kelly of Temple, who is valuing land.

We've Daniel Newforest and Pilkington Tore,
And the Captain from Bracklyn, called Fetherstonhaugh;
A soldier like seat has this Dragoon,
And I hope he'll come back to Westmeath again soon.

There's French on the Bay (think of it "Shan Van Vhoe")
Who makes no delay like they say long ago
Of any more members I'm sure I can't tell,
Except Robinson, Ronaldson and Captain O'Dell

The verse concludes with the following:

Forgive me all good sportsmen omitted in my song
But to name each honest fellow would take me far too long
So as a last conclusion, a fervent prayer I'll breath
That next winter still may find us, hunting in Westmeath⁴⁸

In 1839, Richard's granduncle Garret Robinson (1773 – 1849), who lived at nearby Kilrainey, purchased timber from Newberry to repair his house, which cost £3 –9-6. Could Garret ever have imagined, as an improving tenant farmer, that his great nephew would, seventy-two years later, purchase Newberry demesne and live as a member of the aristocracy.⁴⁹

A year after his purchase, Richard Robinson died aged 59 years. The demesne passed to his son John who was then aged 28 years at the time of his inheritance. John's only

sibling, Richard, died while a student at Clongowes Wood College at May 20 1900, aged 17 years, a school that John also attended.

In 1913, the year after he inherited Newberry Hall and demesne, John Robinson married Margaret Bodkin (1886 - 1959), daughter of Judge Mathias Bodkin K. C., journalist and author and also a nationalist (anti-Parnellite) M.P. in 1892. His numerous publications include: '*Lord Edward FitzGerald*', '*Recollections of an Irish Judge*'. Mathias Bodkin was a friend of John Boyd Dunlop, the inventor of the pneumatic tyre. Thomas Bodkin, his son, was a noted art expert who was Director of the National Gallery of Ireland (1927 – 1935). John and Margaret Robinson had three children: Norah (1914 – 1984); Norman (1917 – 1943) who was an RAF Pilot officer in World War II and who died in that conflict⁴⁸ and Richard, the present owner of the Newberry Estate. Hunting and shooting were normal activities of estates such as Newberry and a photograph dated from October 1 1938 demonstrates this when the then President of Ireland Dr. Douglas Hyde visited the nearby estate of the More-O'Ferrell family at Balyna for a day's shooting. It is recorded that 709 rabbits were shot that day.

On the death of his father John in 1966, aged 82, Richard inherited the estate. The last surviving member of his family Richard Robinson was educated at Clongowes Wood College, as were his father and brother Norman. He trained as an aeronautical engineer in Handley Pages in London, working on the Hambden and Halifax prototype bomber planes. He returned to Ireland to Baldonnell, where he worked during World War II. Subsequently, Richard worked in Aer Lingus, and later as a journalist with the *Irish Farmer's Journal* before returning to farm the estate. In 1967, Richard married Margaret Ryan from Cashel, Co. Tipperary. Margaret died in 1971, aged 48. Of all the people associated with Newberry demesne, none deserves mention more than Maggie Jones, who commenced work there as a nursing-maid in 1915. Maggie worked for seventy years at Newberry. She died in 1985 aged 89 years. A position in service might be looked down upon today but in its time it was a position of some dignity, if not good income, in an era when employment was hard to obtain.

As Newberry Hall approaches its quarter millennium, this paper has referred to its architect Nathaniel Clements and its owners: Pomeroy; and his wife, formerly Mary Colley through whom the estate was acquired; Wolstenholme; Pilkington and Robinson. Mention has also been made of its tenants, servants and visitors as well as those who were murdered there together with their murderers. Its connection to great events such as the American War of Independence, the 1798 Rebellion and the Battle of Waterloo has been outlined also. I think it fitting to conclude the story of this grand house with the following charming episode.

The earlier mention of the ransack of Newberry is recalled by the finding by the present owner of a number of coins (dated 1783) and also a large key, believed to have been stolen by insurgents in 1798. On a visit to Newberry in 2006 by the 11th Viscount Harberton, Richard Robinson gave one of the penny coins to the descendant of Henry Pomeroy – 2nd Lord Harberton - whose desk was looted, with the exclamation, '*That's yours!*' Understandably, the present viscount was delighted to receive the gift and promised to frame the coin and the story.

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